

**(IM)POLITENESS IN THE INTERACTIONS OF SELECTED  
NIGERIAN NEWS-BASED VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES**

**BY**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

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## **DEDICATION**

To God again: all that there is.

To Theophilus Ifedemilade, Edna Ifeoluwa and Nathaniel Adeife: sources of joy.

To Grace Ruby: unending comfort and witness.

To Mrs Alice Temitope Cole: pillar of support.

And all my FRIENDS online and offline.

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## ABSTRACT

Virtual communities have become the largest and most diverse domains since the turn of the century where language plays a dominant role. Studies on communities in the Nigerian cyberspace have concentrated on discourse structure and general language use than on politeness and its connection to online news reportage. This study was, therefore, designed to examine (im) politeness behaviour of participants in Nigerian news-based virtual communities, with a view to determining how participants negotiate and process (im)politeness, as well as how the cultural heterogeneity of the Nigerian society impacts on (im)politeness behaviour.

Tae-Seop Lim and John Bower's model of Face alongside Miriam Locher and Richard Watt's Relational Work were adopted as the framework, while the interpretive design was used. *The Sahara Reporters*, *Yabaleftonline* and *Biafra TV*, representing Internet-based online news, and the online versions of *Leadership* and *The Nation*, based on conventional newspapers were purposively selected for their non-censorship of participants' behaviour and representation of different political ideologies. Twenty-five threads of comments on the online news posts were collected through participatory observation between 2014 and 2018. Data were subjected to pragmatic analysis.

Participants engaged in a multi-directional pattern of interaction with news characters, writers and co-interactants perceived as interactants in the community and engaged directly in negotiating (im)politeness. Observed tools of politeness, including 'likes', graphemes and fellowship/competence face observance, were often the same for impoliteness since their interpretations rely mostly on emotions linked inextricably to each interactant's side of the argument. The expression of both politeness and impoliteness were multimodal. Impoliteness, however, exploited more memes, GIFs, pictures and emojis, while polite expressions were mostly verbal but for the use of 'approval smileys' and 'likes'. Face observance strategies most frequently used included 'agreement', 'praise of opinion' and use of indigenous expressions and sociolects. These, in turn, served to express face threats to opponents who are also excluded from the linguistic manoeuvrings. Although politeness in the virtual communities proceeded from the need to maintain rapport and enhance communication, impoliteness is often a tool to generate responses. The perceived truth-value of online news items and other aspects of contextual configuration constantly swayed the choice of politeness behaviour. Homogenous *Biafra TV* community generated the most frequent use of agreement. Less serious news in *Yabaleftonline* generated more politic banter, while serious news generated unfriendly conversations in virtual communities of *the Sahara Reporters*, *Leadership* and *The Nation*, especially when such news is perceived as untrue or culturally biased. When netizens found themselves in communicative situations involving argument across ethno-social or geopolitical divides, impoliteness, via trolls, was used as a polarity antenna and tool to sustain conversation, while otherness and distance were enacted as basis for impolite behaviour. Impolite behaviour was sustained as long as posters enjoyed support. Politeness does not necessarily sustain conversation, compared to face-to-face interactions.

(Im) politeness behaviour in Nigerian news-based virtual communities reflects diverse attitudes to news reportage, which, in turn, points at the polarised nature of the Nigerian society. Participants' concern for face is lessened by the anonymity/impersonality that characterises conversations in virtual communities.

**Keywords:** Computer-mediated interaction, Online newspapers, Nigerian virtual communities.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

The world, as we know it, is changing. Since the turn of the century, humanity has been confronted with new problems and novel experiences. Chief among them are issues around climate change captured in the discourses of the scientific field, issues of nuclear weapons proliferation, political dialectics of democracy, the emergence of a global village marked by a continuous disappearance, shrinking and conflation of international boundaries and such other modern issues which are testament to an undeniable heightening of evolution in the affairs of the physical world. All these politico-economic issues notwithstanding, a major social-cultural issue permeates all the strata of 21<sup>st</sup> century life. New forms of social interaction have emerged since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century permitting the meeting of people across the world and undeterred by the factors of social, spatial, and temporal distance. Interactants in these novel interactions transcend the sociolinguistic factors which had hitherto defined interactions and had limited the intensity of rapport while clearly defining power relations. Given the new forms of social interactions, a person might easily register their presence in more than one place different from their immediate physical environment. To a large extent, in fact, these new forms of interaction are posing a problem to real-life interactions with many people losing grip of human social interactions, losing grip of physical company and often neglecting ‘offline’ interactions while prioritising their “hang-out with friends” in their new and now ubiquitous virtual communities.

‘Friendship’ as concept has assumed a new definition. In fact, such semantic extension which occurred to ‘friendship’ is extending to related terms like ‘meeting’,

‘discussion’ and ‘spending time together’. Each of these terms which used to carry a connotation of physical (in the flesh) presence has since evolved as internet terms connoting the virtual presence of interactants in dispersed locations around the physical world. While several studies and a lot of attention have been dedicated to the explication of how the old and more familiar physical interactions operate and are enhanced through the use of language, an investigation of how these virtual interactions work has, by the same token, become imperative. This need had motivated a number of investigations into Computer-mediated communication (CMC). Lamidi (2011) investigated “linguistic borrowings as markers of informality in Nigerian English focusing how Netizens’ seek to achieve some form of ‘less-formality’ in the use of English, and thereby increase closer rapport on the Naijaworld forum, through the strategy of linguistic borrowings. Lamidi’s (2014) inquiry was targeted at the identification of discourse strategies most utilised on ‘Nairaland’ while Oha’s (2006) examination of “hyper-communication” was concerned with how “electronic survival” becomes achieved through netiquette in Whole Earth ‘Lectronic Links (WELLS)”. The present study is a further contribution to the conversation. It attempts to investigate politeness in two specific ways: first, it focuses on news-based virtual communities. Also, it places emphasis on specifically Nigerian virtual communities which are built around online news. Part of the necessity of such an inquiry is predicated upon the significant role that such communities play, although informally, in the formation of policy as well as how people receive policy in the Nigerian political space (taken as an emerging democracy). It considers how they influence the attitudes of netizens to issues in the real world, given how, by extension, these netizens invariably are virtual projections of citizens of the country.

Rouse (2006) in her iconic work defines a virtual community as “a community of people sharing common interests, ideas, and feelings over the Internet or other collaborative networks.” Her expatiation of the concept is as follows:

Virtual communities might be thought of as subgroups within Marshall McLuhan's notion of cyberspace as a "global village." Before the Web, virtual communities existed on bulletin board services (BBS) and many still do. Some virtual communities or facilitators of them use the metaphor of a coffee house or something similar to help users visualize the community. In general, there are two kinds of communication among virtual community members: message postings and real-time chat.

Usenet newsgroups are an example of the former. Many Web sites, such as Geocities, foster subject information exchanges. For real-time chat, Internet Relay Chat (IRC) is a system used by many Web sites that foster virtual communities.

Rheingold (2000) in his “The Virtual Community”, published online, opines that virtual communities are “social aggregations that emerge from the Internet when enough people carry on public discussions long enough and with sufficient human feeling to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace.” His definition points at the heart of virtual community as an aggregation of ‘real people’ who have only not appeared physically. It must be noted therefore that such relationship must yet be based on a vital factor known with successful human interactions: politeness. Rheingold further asserts that virtual communities’ co-interactants make use of language to conduct phatic communication, prosecute arguments, conduct commerce, engage one another in dialectics, and achieve all that language is employed to achieve in real human interactions, making the communities akin to an ecosystem of subcultures including the frivolous and serious life only without people using their physical bodies.

Various attempts have been made in the literature to classify these communities. One of the most accepted classifications is the one that proposes a tripartite classification of online communities into

1. Virtual communities of interest,
2. Organizational communities( intranet, web conferences, first class, lotus, etc.)  
and
3. Local communities.

This research is more interested in the virtual communities comprising people, (irrespective of number) connected by a common interest or cause even when they might not have ever met in the physical sense, converge using the internet. Such interests that the members share could include, but are not limited to, politics, hobbies, religion, sports or entertainment. Oftentimes, the interest is their convergence to read the news and converse about issues emanating from the news which appeal to them. Netizens in the so formed news-based virtual communities read articles posted by online newspapers and interrogate the writers’ ideas and styles. Beyond that,

readers go ahead to respond to the opinions of other readers and thus form webs of relationship around the news report. Real-time chats and newsgroups are the major tools for such virtual communities which may wax or wane in terms of quantity and quality of interactions and are sometimes volatile in pattern often as a result of participants' divergent cultural backgrounds and absence of overt rules of behaviour guiding interactants' exchanges. The members often have no prior relationship offline and thus behave in manners common to politics, romance or games chatrooms including the quite interactive and (as widely perceived) addictive communities including multi-user dungeons (MUDs), multi-user adventures (MUAs), whole earth 'lectronic links(WELLS) and a host of others.

Politeness is a vital human trait and arguably one of the most vital keys to social cohesion in human communities. The need to be polite becomes even more important when dealing with strangers or negotiating a new relationship. Politeness must also be sustained in one form or other as a way of keeping the relationship going. The expression of this phenomenon can be both linguistic and extra-linguistic. In the extra-linguistic cases, language is used in an ancillary mode to enhance the success of the communication of deference (Odebunmi, 2002; Thomas, 1995). This makes politeness a peculiar human trait which is worthy of study to clearly unravel its form, functions and different manifestations in human societies and especially how it is evolving with the evolution in human interaction patterns. Such a study would enhance peoples' understanding of societal cohesion as a whole and the fact behind the success or failures of the relationships that people form or try to form in virtual communities. Thus, participants in such community would better understand how to consolidate these positives and prevent communication breakdown.

Cases abound of clashes, legal actions, suicide and homicide ensuing due to the failure of participants to show deference to other participants in virtual communities. The evolution of social media especially has imposed additions to the penal codes of real human societies. We often hear of cybercrimes, cyber bullying and such related offences. Participants have been blocked on certain media on grounds of inappropriate use of language and failure or refusal to use certain forms of politeness. As a tool, politeness can be used in these communities to measure participants' desire to sustain, further widen or bridge the "distances" that exist between them and other participants in these communities (Adeyanju, 2007; Thomas, 1995).

However, there are so many germane questions to ask. Should scholars evolve new tools for the study of politeness in these novel communities or simply apply the same tools used in its study in physical interactions? The answer to this would be based on the answer to the more fundamental question of whether these communities employ the same language forms that are used in the physical forms of interaction. Obviously, even when we can argue that language is the tool in use, we cannot deny the fact that adaptations must occur to cater for the features of language and paralinguistics that can only be decoded with the ears and eyes (while listening to and looking at the co-interactant).

While politeness can be simply encoded in the tone of voice, facial expressions or gesticulations in a physical interaction, something else must compensate for these extralinguistic features of language in a virtual interaction. Another issue worthy of note is the way virtual communities are constituted of participants who are involved in parallel interactions simultaneously. This makes concentration and commitment to timely and fully informative responses in the interactions difficult and is usually an indicator of impoliteness in physical interactions. It is worthwhile to examine if these tacit rules about politeness also apply in the virtual communities or whether virtual communities have evolved new rules about what is polite and otherwise. There is a need to inquire into how users of Facebook, for instance, really care for their, and others', positive and negative faces (Brown and Levinson, 1987), how, and to what extent, users of 2go observe the politeness maxims (Leech, 1983) or how users of LinkedIn attempt to remain clear and polite (Lakoff, 1989) or whether everything they do is simply to be understood within the framework of conversational contract with a set of rights and obligations that participants must stick with and which keeps being renegotiated and adjusted in the course of conversations (Fraser, 1990, Nishimura, 2008, Locher and Watts, 2015). The answers will be expected to ensue as the discussions of participants in Nigerian news-based virtual communities shared on some of these forums are subjected to analysis and used as basis for conclusion on the nature of politeness in online interactions.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

This study is necessitated by a need to unravel more deeply how, through politeness practice, conversations are maintained for a length of time sufficient to communicate important ideas and opinions and how fairly lengthy conversations and interactions are sustained by interactants in Nigerian news-based virtual communities. Often times, interactants carry over expressed or contracted opinions and emotions from online aggregations into their real offline life. This fact makes such groups worth some intense study. Undoubtedly, a number of such online congregations have been known to metamorphose (or devolve) into offline groups or real-life movements, and relationships (Skinner, 2011; CNN, 2011). Therefore, it becomes pertinent to study how such interactions are sustained and how confrontations and chaos are avoided enough for the opinions to get exchanged effectively.

Pragmatic and sociolinguistic theories of politeness have been applied by several studies to examine the use and impact of politeness in human interactions (Anupam Das, 2010, Hemphil, Otterbacher and Shappiro, 2016, Oha, 2006, Lim and Bowers, 1991, Locher and Watts, 2005). These theories have served as tools in the analyses of several forms of communication in different languages and contexts of use. However, there is a need to focus on Nigerian news-based virtual communities convening around Facebook which present dynamic and interesting communicative patterns that continuously call for scholarly attention. Scholarly inquiries abound on specific social media and virtual communities of particular social/cultural groups. Further, the pattern of social interaction is evolving and so must the focus and tools of research into it.

Consequent upon the argument in the preceding paragraph, virtual communities have, undoubtedly, enjoyed much scholarly attention in linguistics and other fields including anthropology (Graham, 2015; Bastian, 1999), and even computer studies and engineering (Sadau, 2013). In linguistics particularly, studies have paid attention to issues including the discourse structure and strategies in virtual communities (Lamidi, 2014; Lamidi, 2011; Pauwells, 2005), politeness behaviour and other forms of language use (Oha, 2006; Oyadiji, 2016, Anupam Das, 2010; Nishimura, 2008; Langlotz and Locher, 2012) and other issues relating to language use in this hitherto new domain of human interaction. In spite of the volume and quality of such enquiries

however, not much focus has been directed at virtual communities that aggregate around online news. Rarer still are such studies with a focus on the Nigerian cyberspace context. The present study attempts to respond to the requirement to build on and extend the existing body of works on virtual communities through an expansion of the scale and scope of inquiry. It also seeks, to verify the applicability of existing theories – Face work (Lim and Bowers, 1991) and Relational work (Locher and Watts, 2005), which have been mostly applied to Western and native English speaking environments, to a virtual community of non-native English and extremely multicultural Nigerian netizens.

Langlotz and Locher (2012), a quite profound investigation into news-based virtual communities, gave some impetus to the present research. Its focus on the virtual community of readers around *mailonline* provided significant insights about discursive politeness and the patterns of talk in news-based virtual communities. The research, nonetheless, created a scholarly gap as it neglected instances of support, agreement or solidarity among participants in the majorly confrontational interactions investigated. Besides, data sampled for the study was limited to only one online news medium which is also limited to mainly a community of American and British native speakers of English.

The present study attempts to fill these gaps first by widening the scope of the online news investigated. To achieve this, it bases the investigation on five online newspapers demonstrating a potpourri of journalistic tendencies, audience demographics and patterns of readership. It targets a wider platform and ensures the sample comprises of more heterogeneous communities which Facebook often bring together. It also targets a platform of non-native English speakers by focusing on netizens from Nigeria, a country acclaimed to boast of upwards of 500 different ethnicities (ESA.UN.org, 2017). Finally, rather than limiting its data to disagreement, the study attempts to explicate politeness behaviour throughout the agreement – disagreement spectrum.

### **1.3 Research questions**

Among other things, the study sought to ask and provide answers to the questions:

1. How do participants in Nigerian news-based virtual communities negotiate politeness?

2. How do participants in Nigerian news-based virtual communities process and respond to (im)politeness in these communities?
3. What (im)politeness strategies are used in these Nigerian news-based virtual communities?
4. What factors account for the expression/perceptions of (im)politeness by the members of these communities?
5. In what ways do cultural and linguistic forces of homogeneity (or heterogeneity) impact on politeness behaviour of Nigerian news-based virtual community members?
6. To what extent does politeness in Nigerian news-based virtual communities rely on the same rules that apply in face-to-face interactions?

#### **1.4 Aim and objectives of the study**

This study aims to investigate and explicate politeness behaviour in selected Nigerian news-based virtual communities.

Its objectives, in response to the research questions put forward are to:

1. Explicate how the participants in the communities negotiate politeness behaviour towards others in their posts,
2. Explicate how the participants identify and understand politeness behaviour towards them,
3. Identify and describe the politeness strategies that are commonly used in the communities,
4. Describe what similarities or dissimilarities exist between the identified latent rules of politeness in these communities and those established in the literature as applying in face-to-face conversations,
5. Identify and explain the factors underlying the use of politeness or impoliteness by the members of the communities,
6. Explicate the different ways interlocutors in Nigerian news-based virtual communities respond to (im)politeness, and

7. Identify and explain ways by which cultural and linguistic heterogeneity of the Nigerian society impact on politeness behavior in Nigerian news-based virtual communities

### **1.5 Scope and justification of the study**

This study, as earlier hinted at, seeks to unravel how politeness is used and how it affects discourse in Nigerian news-based virtual communities. Further, it aims to test several existing politeness theories in the literature and examine their universal validity especially in a terrain which remained either unknown or yet uncharted at the time of their postulations. It shall be brought into perspective against other works in the literature as an attempt to stretch the tools for the study of politeness beyond real or physical human interactions and linguistic behaviour into the realm of cyberspace with an intention of examining whether these linguistic behaviours remain the same and capable of being studied with these same tools.

It examines (im)politeness behaviour in Nigerian news-based virtual communities. While there is a myriad of linguistic issues worthy of study in this domain of interaction, the scope this study only covers (im)politeness behaviour which can be accounted for through the modes of text and graphics and which are recoverable from the reactions of co-interactants. Its data was limited to five news items each from five online newspapers and the virtual communities they generated between 2015 and 2018 in order to achieve a reasonable depth of inquiry as permitted within the duration of the research programme. Its attention is limited to the explication of politeness strategies and tools used, the factors behind the choice of such strategies (and tools) as well as the role of cultural peculiarities of Nigeria in the choice of politeness behaviour in Nigerian news-based virtual communities.

Nigerian news-based virtual communities deserve scholarly attention as a result of their significant replication of the Nigerian society (as a speech community and a social aggregation) in cyberspace. Further, they deserve such a study as this due to their ability to reflect the ‘true’ attitudes of people to national issues in the face of the various misleading (mis)representations in the media, perspectivisations and official manipulations constantly churned out to the public and the global community by mainstream news media. Finally, they represent a major source of contact, opinion

sharing and ideological influence with respect to the current political issues in the country.

### **1.6. Significance of the study**

The study's significance is established, in the light of the previous section, as a viable contribution to the literature, research and pedagogy in the area of politeness and enquiries into virtual communities and the new media. Among other things, It would help to update knowledge on the use of English in contemporary times and especially in the cyber world where people seem to spend more time today. It would also provide insights to users of the Internet on the use of and the perception of politeness in the virtual communities in which they are involved.

Finally, it would draw attention to certain factors leading to pragmatic failure, unintended rudeness and breakdown of social cohesion including all signals of poor impression in virtual communities. It would, in the same vein, open up a line of inquiry into how politeness might be studied especially as it concerns what conceptual tools are apt in such terrains as Nigerian virtual communities

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.0 Overview**

This section attempts a review of related literature on politeness as well as inquiries into politeness which are motivated by CMC and virtual communities. It shall attempt to probe into the various positions hitherto expressed on the subject, as well as how it is expected to be studied, tracing back through the post-modernist paradigms to the traditional paradigms in order to bring out the contributions of each to politeness studies and to use them as leeway to the present.

##### **2.1.0 General views on politeness**

Politeness generally captures the sense of a conduct that is socially acceptable and worthy to be called polished (as against crude) behaviour. In its simplest form, it is best described as the practical application of etiquette or polished rather than crude or abrasive manners. Politeness is a culturally defined phenomenon as what is considered polite in a given culture might be perceived as quite rude, unacceptable or outright strange in another culture. In a broad sense, politeness is employed to make all parties in interaction relaxed and comfortable with one another.

Several scholars have over the years made submissions on what politeness is, each having a universally acceptable standard as its aim (Leech, 1983; Brown and Levinson, 1989; Watts, 2003; Jemmy, 2007). It has however been found that politeness – both in expression and in reception - is likely to remain relative as some of the findings have failed woefully to prevail across time, space and societal strata. Some studies (Beeching, 2002; Lakoff, 1976) have posited that women tend to use (more) politeness formulas than men but such a claim when critically viewed and when empirically tested may not stand as women are at the same time likely to be

more confrontational and abrasive in either intra-gender or inter-gender discourse. It is therefore still a very slippery ground that researchers in the language (of politeness per se) and gender nexus tread. A better verifiable and more reliable study would therefore take only a situation-specific and descriptive rather than prescriptive stand, associating politeness with factors of circumstances (context of situation and context of culture) within which the disparities of gender, class and status are concretely brought to bear on language use.

It is rather outlandish to claim for instance that a woman would always be polite to a co-interactant of either gender. This problem could however be resolved if the situation is considered: is the co-interactant her husband or co-worker, a superior or a subordinate? Are they operating in a culture with a parochial tilt or a gender-sensitive society? Do they both subscribe to the overarching norms? Such and other factors need be considered before any claim on gender and politeness can be safely made.

Diverse as the shades of opinion are however, we may posit that a consensus emerges on how politeness is expressed. Below are some of the ways it is expressed:

1. Avoidance of taboo words in asymmetric discourse situations. This may also include the avoidance of short forms and non-universally accepted abbreviations and slangs.
2. Hedging and indirect acts to express uncertainty and ambiguity.
3. Polite lying.
4. Euphemisms and connotation.
5. Preference for tag questions over direct speech acts
6. Adherence to turn-taking rules.
7. Vocabulary (words expressing recognize like sir, ma, Dr., Prof. etc)
8. Diction (separating formal expressions from colloquial ones).

(Thomas, 1995; Shea, 1997; Rheingold, 2001)

When considered diachronically, studies on politeness could be said to be divisible into two eras: the traditional era of politeness studies and the post-modernist era of politeness studies. While the traditional (classical) era includes works like Lakoff (1975), Brown and Levinson (1987), Leech (1973) and others who employed a generally taxonomic approach to the study of particular languages, the post-modernist include the likes of Beeching (2002), Mills (2003), Watts (2003), Jemmy (2007),

Locher and Watts (2005) who, employing a marriage of different approaches – sociolinguistic, discourse analytic and pragmatic, attempted more universal studies of politeness with bold forays into gender, social status and other human sociolinguistic variables. The two approaches notwithstanding, this proposed study shall be predicated upon the notion that a more intense and easier to understand study would be produced when the strong points of different approaches are pulled and pooled and applied especially to a linguistic situation where a language bears the faces of many (not just one) cultures as is the case in the virtual communities in particular.

Viewed synchronically however, politeness studies can be classified into the attempt at purely sociolinguistic as well as those who bear a pragmatic tag. Among those who fall into the former group are Holmes (1995) in Mills (2003), Holmes (1993), Mill (2003), Phillipson (1975), Shertzer (1983), Yusuff (1992) and others who attempted to study politeness strictly within the precincts of what societal strata dictate using the ubiquitous Ethnography of communication, Labov's variability concept and other sociolinguistic tools. Those who belong to the latter group include Leech (1973), Brown and Levinson (1989) and others who take politeness as an intrinsically communicative phenomenon as part of the factors considered in the encoding and retrieval of meaning in context (Kempson, 1983; Osisanwo, 2003).

The current wave of opinion that pragmatics which chronologically, succeeds sociolinguistics also subsumed (not replaced) it has produced a new breed of politeness theorists who study politeness as both communicative of intention and indicative of social class. These theorists, operating majorly as pragmaticians, adopt the Ethnography of communication in particular and weave several other pragmatic tools and biases like the negotiation and transience of context into it. Such works produced have been found to be of acceptable interdisciplinary relevance and fairly acceptable universality. (Beeching, 2002; Watts, 2003, Locher and Watts 2005).

Such an integrative approach however has the problem of arriving at highly contestable conclusions owing to its marriage of two opposing opinions on context. Context being a primordial factor in the consideration of what is polite therefore has to be clearly defined as negotiable, artificial and transient rather than concrete, primary and relatively permanent as expressed in the sociolinguistic view. To find a way around such a controversy, this study proposes a complementarist position where

the two theories of pragmatics and sociolinguistics are considered as separate but intertwined and mutually aiding. Thus, a position on context is taken which, here, is presumably pragmatic while other admissible sociolinguistic biases are employed. A detailed discussion of both theories' view shall ensue presently. However, it is equally important to examine, however cursorily, the weakness and relative strength of theorisation in politeness studies generally before each theory is examined in details either as sociolinguistic or pragmatic theory of politeness.

Eelen (2001) expresses a major critical attitude to theorisation on politeness especially due to theorists' claim to the universality of their theories. He is also critical of their reliance on speech act theory which seems to conscript them into focusing disproportionately on the speaker while too little attention is given to the hearer. He takes exception to their theoretical assumption that all politeness is strategic. That assumption makes them reify the phenomenon characterising it as something which encoder and decoder can recognise without problems. This position of Eelen's is never as apt as when considered in virtual communication where the patterns of communication has become so fluid and several internet users are practically chasing the pack, learning the modes of expression that was last considered (im)polite online from the pool of new communication strategies that include trolling, stalking, lolling, miscommunication (Oyadiji 2016) textese, hyperbole (Bennet, 2015) and a host of other communicative behaviours.

He prescribed two politeness perspectives which, according to him, a lot of theorisation about politeness tend to mix up: politeness 1 "the common-sense notion of politeness" and politeness 2 "the scientific conceptualisation of politeness". He maintains that the concepts should be distinguished in politeness research. For him "politeness 2 concepts should not just be different from politeness 1 concept or given different names but rather the relationship between both notions should be carefully monitored throughout the entire analytical process: not only at the input stage" (Eelen 2001:31).

In his critique, politeness 1 is taken as involving the two aspects of action-related manifestation of politeness in communicative behaviour as well as the conceptual side of common-sense ideologies of politeness both of which can be identified by their evaluativity (being linked to social values and always evaluative in nature),

argumentativity (associated with situations where something is there to lose or gain), politeness (where each individual considers themselves and their own social/cultural groups as polite, where only others are viewed as rude), normativity (where politeness is the result of the pressure of social norms) and modality and reflexivity (referring to optionality of polite interactional strategies for the actor). On the other hand, politeness 2, he argues, is the scientific conceptualization of the social phenomenon which politeness 1 embodies. In other words, it is the theory of politeness 1. 2 describes how 1 works and what it does for participants in communication.

Unlike politeness 1 which is restricted to the polite end of the polite-impolite continuum, he argues, politeness 2 should cover the whole range of the continuum. His reservation is about how most politeness theorists fail to distinguish the two due to their normative nature. Eelen opined that impoliteness becomes not only a matter of behaviour getting evinced by speakers, but also of such behaviour being evaluated by hearers. He argues further that the norms governing appropriateness are social norms which pertain to situations and cultures rather than individual norms held only by the hearer. This position is shared in this research and is partly responsible for the choice of relational work (due to its focus not on only the theorisation on politeness as brought by researcher to bear on talk but also on the sociopragmatic dimension of the phenomenon as it holds among all the co-interactants).

### **2.1.1 Politeness in ethnography**

A number of studies have employed the theory of ethnography as a framework for linguistic and anthropological research. Philipsen (1975) studied the communicative behaviour of blue-collar workers around Chicago within the precincts of contexts of communication, (a)symmetry in social status, relationship dynamics and identity. In the same connection, Katriel (1990) studied Israeli communicative behaviour with a focus on speech acts including joking and griping about public and national issues. Each of the studies identified communicative choices, acts, norms, linguistic codes, functions and rules of communication while at the same time offering available options for the deployment of ethnography of communication (EOC) in academic research.

Shertzer (1983) examined how Kuna people of Panama speak. It was a ground-breaking study focusing on healing methods, everyday speech patterns, adolescence

and coming-of-age rites and house gathering speeches. The study has been hailed as the first monograph explicitly taking an EOC perspective to the investigation of a whole spectrum of verbal practices within a speech community.

The number and intensity of such studies notwithstanding, there is an observed lack of focus on politeness alone as a distinct aspect of communication. It thus goes without saying that the ethnography of communication is a wide network of tools which therefore has to be thinned down and impinged with a much narrower tool if focus is to be restricted to just one aspect of communication like politeness. It is, however, still theoretically correct that politeness is an inseparable seed of ethnography since it is, like ethnography, “linked to judgment of situational appropriateness” (Philipsen 1975:13) and at the same time, like ethnography again, requires a shared code, communicators who know and use the code, a channel, a setting, a message form, a topic and an event created (by its transmission) (Cameron, 2001:312).

In its simplest form, ethnography of communication, as proposed by Hymes (1962) and refined in Hymes (1964) to better cater for non-vocal nuances and non-verbal aspects of communication, explains the factors of context that aid the explication of the progression of interaction and meaning making. Its submission, based on the mnemonic SPEAKING can be approximated to the explanation presented in table 2.1 overleaf.

**Table 2.1: Ethnography of Communication**

Factors of context aiding communication	S	Setting	The place, time and circumstances
	P	Participants	The interlocutors (and their statuses)
	E	Ends	The goal of interaction (why?)
	A	Acts sequence	The types of speech acts used
	K	Key	The tone and mood
	I	Instrumentation	The channel, medium and means
	N	Norms	The cultural rules/conventions around talk
	G	Genre	The field of discourse/ subject matter
Encoder SPEAKING Decoder			

Adapted from Hymes, Dell. 1964. Introduction: Toward ethnographies of communication. *American Anthropologist*. Vol 66, Issue 6 pp 1-34

It is pertinent to observe how the theory takes communication, just like (im)politeness, as an unsegmented whole rather than breaking down encoder behaviour as a separate piece from decoder behaviour. This theory bears a vital relevance for the consideration of politeness as a phenomenon that involves the interaction of the encoder and decoder within the given context as other theories that are entirely focused on politeness would reveal.

To further interrogate the interesting tilt that this theory brought to politeness studies, it is apt to consider how the setting might affect a discussion between a teacher and a student when the student addresses the teacher as ‘darling’ during a class (given their romantic relationship). He might have instructed her to call him so but would view it, just like other students would, as grossly impolite in that situation. The same scenario can be used in interrogating the other components of Hymes’ SPEAKING and thus showing its relevance to theorising on politeness. The theory’s weakness is however, for the purpose of this thesis, in its broad approach to politeness issues as it focuses mostly on actual pragmatic success of communication rather than the specific issue of politeness as a major strategy of communication. In other words, it takes politeness in its stride (*en passant*) as a component of rather than as an instrument of communication (as content rather than style or as ‘what’ rather than ‘how’) while this thesis is poised to view it as both.

### **2.1.2.0 Politeness as face recognition**

The initial literature used in the study of politeness to create the theoretical framework was Goffman’s (1967) work on the notion of ‘face’ found in Hudson (1996). The notion of ‘face’ concerns itself with the idea that people present themselves in a certain manner and by what others do it is possible by a number of means to either offend that manner or to not do so. In conversational situations, the theory can be applied by realizing that what you actually say can affront the others’ ‘face’ and is a choice whether to do so or not depending on the situation you find yourself in. Goffman’s theories can be linked similarly to the Eastern idea of ‘face’ as in keeping face in front of others’. What this entails is not showing a weakness in front of others and similarly not threatening or exploiting others’ weakness yourself. The way in which this has contributed to the dissertation is that it is possible to examine the data not only by the linguistic factors alone, but also at an extra-linguistic level also. In

short, relationships between participants are examined and the level of affront caused by a certain speaker to another can be gauged.

In looking for relevant literature in order to create a linguistic framework to work from, Grice's (1975) work on the 'co-operative principle' in Wardhaugh (1986) contained a simplified version of a framework by which recorded conversational data could be analysed. Grice's work concerned itself with four conversational maxims that enabled conversations to work. His four maxims were 'Quantity', 'Quality', 'Relevance' and 'Manner'. These conversational maxims clearly show the inherent understanding participants have in order to make a conversation work but are not necessarily implicitly aware of during their conversations. For example, the maxim of 'Quantity' refers to the understanding between participants in a conversation that neither less nor more information is required than needed. To not provide enough information to another person would breakdown the conversation so that it would not be able to work. Another person not providing enough direction to where he wanted to go would bemuse a man asking for directions. The other three main maxims follow in similar suit, in that they are what is logically expected from a conversation, being genuine and truthful, making appropriate and relevant contributions and being clear about what you are expressing.

The contribution this literature gives to this inquiry is that it provides a basic framework by which conversations can be analysed and by what the data collected for the dissertation can be analysed by also. In processing a basic analytical framework, it is possible to see where conversations do not work (i.e. they may not agree with the prescribed maxims) and this becomes a focus of the dissertation. A separate review of this theory shall ensue in the next unit. Looking back to the previous work by Goffman (1967) on the notion of 'face', more recent studies into this area can be found in Brown and Levinson (1987) in their study of 'politeness' in Mesthrie. Swann, Deumert and Leap (2000). Brown and Levinson take Goffman's earlier ideas further and apply it to their 'politeness strategies' and 'model of politeness'. In this, they explain that there are certain 'politeness strategies' to use as to not offend and save others' 'face' when participating in a conversation. 'Positive' politeness implies an approval from another participant as in having a first name basis rapport with a superior, 'negative' politeness implies a wish to not impose upon or not to be imposed

on oneself, as in referring to a superior as ‘Sir’ or ‘Mr’. A further explanation of this pragmatics of politeness was found in Stockwell (2002).

This literature helped present Brown and Levinson’s ideas in a clearer and more logical manner that aids better understanding. This literature again helps build a more accurate, detailed and up to date framework by which collected data can be analysed. In using the previous cited literature, it was impossible to analyse the recorded conversational data and be able to produce a framework by which the data could be analysed.

In the simplest form, and in conclusion, the link between Grice and face theory is summarized here. The purpose of politeness is to maintain social grace, finesse in the face of the need to avoid insult. It functions to encode relationship between interlocutors. Showing awareness of someone’s face when the other person is socially distant is called showing respect or deference. Showing the same to an equal is called friendliness or camaraderie.

Rabin Lakoff who developed Grices principles has sets of rules for politeness.

- i. Don’t impose
- ii. Give options
- iii. Make your addressee feel good Lakoff (1973)

For Brown and Levinson (1987), they see politeness as having two faces. POSITIVE and NEGATIVE faces as shall be examined in more details later. They argue that politeness is in every culture and have markers which are triggered off by different circumstances. Their concept of face is based on the perspectivisation of Goffman’s concept of face as self-esteem.

POSITIVE politeness is to be complimentary and gracious while NEGATIVE is when we impede the desire of others. We thus try to mitigate this imposition by sounding polite.

Could you please close the door?

Could I borrow your biro please?

That is why, according to them, we use different conversations to suit different situations: with friends we take liberties, avoid over-formality and avoid embarrassment.

### **FTAs: Face-Threatening Acts**

These are acts that infringe on the other person's face. Politeness, strategies are developed to deal with FTAs. Brown and Levinson sum up politeness behaviour in four strategies.

- i. Bald on record: Saying something without mitigating it. It does not minimise face threat.
- ii. Positive politeness: The recognition that the hearer has a desire to be respected. It also confirms friendliness and expresses group reciprocity.
- iii. Negative Politeness: Recognition of the hearer's face but it also recognizes that one is in some way imposing on the other. (I know you're busy but this floor needs to be swept).
- iv. Off-record: This strategy takes some of the pressure off your shoulder by avoiding direct FTA [use of hedges].

#### **2.1.2.1 Facelift for Face: refining Brown and Levinson's Facework**

Arguably, the most comprehensive review of face theory was undertaken by Lim and Bowers(1991) in a more contemporary and less rigid analysis of what constitutes politeness. Lim and Bowers (1991) take face a step further by expanding the bi-partite classification of positive and negative face of Brown and Levinson (1987). The positive face is expanded into two faces, viz; fellowship face and competence face which are made to tally with Leech's politeness maxims of approbation, agreement, generosity and sympathy. The aspects to be catered for, according to the theory, include:

1. **Fellowship face:** solidarity, affection, understanding and co-operation. Thus, such expressions either linguistic, paralinguistic or extra-linguistic, that express thoughts resembling "I'm with you on this", "I agree with you", "I love you", "I get what you are saying" and the likes, would be treated as taking cognizance of the hearer's positive face and therefore polite while the direct opposites of such either

overtly or covertly expressed would appear as impolite as it would have threatened the bearer's positive face.

2. **Competence face:** Here, emphasis is based on the hearer's need for recognition, positive evaluation, respect for their ability and approbation. Here, polite expression would include "yes, that is correct", "you are so good at that", "I know you are able to handle this" while such expressions like "you are wrong" or "you are at fault" or "you can't handle this" would be threatening to the competence face.

The negative face is retained as one but loses its nomenclature to the more self-explanatory term "**autonomy face**" which is related to the tact maxim of Leech (1983). In its clearest term, it holds that a participant in an interaction does not want to be imposed upon. No one feels good when told "you have to do that now" except there is enough contextual indication which reflects a tacit or overt negotiation of approval for such imposition. Issues of negotiation shall be reviewed later under Sociopragmatic Interaction Principles (Spencer-Oatey and Jiang, 2003) and Conversational Contract (Mills, 2005).

Essentially, autonomy face relates to the desire to be independent, to not be imposed upon, bossed around or even manipulated. Such a need might however become problematic and end in a clash with the positive face. In other words, a hearer might (mis)interpret a speaker's attempt at being nice to them by praising their looks and abilities (competence) as grossly insincere or even hypocritical and therefore manipulative (threatening their autonomy face) and thereby impolite (see Crawshaw and Harrison, 2004) as a result of differences in perception about what is pretty or good or cultural values about praise. This highlights some of the cultural issues encountered in theorising about politeness and remains one of the major grey areas that politeness theorists grapple with especially when they dare to take a prescriptive/proscriptive rather than a descriptive stance.

For Ting-Toomey(2005) who stops just short of providing further taxonomy or nomenclature expansion, "our face needs and face work choices are both enabled and constrained by culture, context, relationship and personal development". It is therefore very difficult, if not absolutely counter-productive to attempt to discuss face divorced from the afore-mentioned factors. In a Yoruba cultural setting, for instance, a child who has committed an offence for which they expect a scolding or at least to

be sent to Coventry by parents or teachers will not feel any better if a mate begins to tell them how ‘nicely’ or bravely they have behaved and how ‘proud’ they are about the act. Conversely, such a child, who is ill at ease, will take some scolding from such a mate as the absolute truth and a sign of good friendship and sincerity rather than as a threat to their positive face. This is probably why Ting-Toomey (2005) refers to the concept of face as a “matrix” which constantly requires being negotiated. In fact, Nwoye(1992) who tested the face theory in the Igbo culture arrived at an interesting tilt where a “community face” ensues alongside the individual face, making the polite speaker’s task to involve not only the need to save the speaker’s face and theirs but also the community’s. All this goes to present the concept of face as a core politeness theory but which must constantly evolve and get stretched as it is applied in novel contexts of culture and situation.

### **2.1.2.2 Face negotiation and rapport management**

Among the models of politeness analysis that have evolved from the stretching and continued interrogation of the face theory are face negotiation, face management and rapport management which have been employed in a number of studies (Odebunmi, 2005; Warner-Garcia, 2014 and Spencer-Oatey, 2005).

The basic thrust of rapport management and face negotiation as theories is an explanation of how interactants maintain the progress of talk irrespective of factors, including impoliteness, that might act as impediment to the talk. Oyadiji (2016), citing works of Glenn (2003), Goffman (1967), Haakana (2010), Warner-Gracia (2010) and Spencer-Oatey (2005) opines that people employ strategies that could help them to bypass obstructions to their predefined goals of conversation - phatic or semantic. They also employ these devices to not only maintain conversation but to keep it within the desired tone.

Oyadiji (2016) cites Warner-Garcia whose work centres on ‘coping laughter’, a strategy which he equates with ‘lol’ or smiling emotions in CMC, as utilized to manage the face-threatening relational aspects of disagreements rather than to deal with the actual content of disputes (Warner-Garcia, 2014:1). The relevance of this study to the present study is quite deep and readily observable as virtual communities present, maybe even more, situations of talk breakdown, disagreements or failure to come across as polite which interactants are wont to repair or manage from either end

of the encoder-decoder spectrum. For Warner-Garcia, coping laughter performs four main functions in interactions:

- i. Face-threat mitigation
- ii. Face-loss concealment
- iii. Serious-to-nonserious frame and
- iv. Topic transition facilitation

The extent to which the laughter performs any of those functions is however reported to depend on several contextual factors including, but not limited to, “who initiates the laughter, how other participants respond to the laughter, and the overarching context and participant roles at play in the interaction”.

For Ting-Toomey (2005) a person’s face is their claimed “sense of favourable social image in a relational and network context”. Facework, based on her model, is thus a cluster of communicative behaviour which a person chooses as a means of enacting self-face and by extension to observe, threaten, or save the other’s face. Her works thus revolve around the investigation of intercultural conflict styles emanating from content, relation and identity. The content and identity aspects hold more relevance for this study as it seeks also to interrogate the perception of politeness by netizens based on their notions of acceptability of issues raised as well as their perceptions of the other community members’ competence based on their ethnicities and face-orientations.

### **2.1.3.1 Politeness as maxim observance**

In Geoffrey Leech’s opinion, politeness principles operate through conversational maxims much akin to those of H.P Grice. Six maxims were proposed which have been found to relate to Brown and Levinson’s concept of Face (Oyadiji, 2010:16). However, the maxims’ acceptability as principles of politeness varies from culture to culture as what is considered polite in one culture may be considered strange or downright rude in another. Summarised below are the six maxims postulated by Leech (1983).

**The Tact Maxim:** Minimise the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other:

Maximise the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to other.

**The Generosity Maxim:** Minimise the expression of benefit to self:

Maximise the expression of cost to self.

**The Approbation Maxim:** Minimise the expression of belief which implies dispraise of other:

Maximize the expression of beliefs which express approval of other.

**The Modesty Maxim:** Minimise the expression of praise of self:

Maximise the expression of dispraise of self

**The Agreement Maxim:** Minimise the expression of disagreement between self and other:

Maximise the expression of agreement between self and other.

**The Sympathy Maxim:** Minimise antipathy between self and other:

Maximise sympathy between self and other.

Leech's politeness theory also establishes five scales, which are used for determining how the maxims should be used and balanced.

- i. The Cost Benefit Scale: weighs the act's costs and benefits to the interactants.
- ii. Optionality Scale: weighs how much choice the goals of the speaker allow the hearer.
- iii. Indirectness Scale: weighs how hard the hearer must work to access the speaker's meaning.
- iv. Authority Scale: weighs the speaker's right to impose on the hearer.
- v. Social Distance Scale: weighs the degree of familiarity between the speaker and hearer

(Fraser, 1990)

According to Leech, different situations call for different degrees of politeness. He outlines four main situations, which call for politeness.

- i. Competitive: the speech goal competes with the social goal. In this situation politeness is viewed as being negative. For example, giving an order.

- ii. Convivial: the speech goal matches the social goal. In this situation politeness is viewed as being positive. For example, thanking someone.
- iii. Collaborative: the speech goal is indifferent the social goal. For example, making an announcement.
- iv. Conflictive: the speech goal conflicts with the social goal. For example, making an accusation (Fraser, 1990).

As earlier stated, this framework has been severally criticized as best thought of as an excrescence of or at best an appendage to the Gricean theory of co-operative principle. Besides, it only seems to be quite valid and unproblematic when politeness is seen as a part of an instrument of pragmatic success – Cooperation. It goes without saying that the theory is found wanting when politeness is thought of as something to be communicated – something to say as against “how to say something”.

### **2.1.3.2 Politeness as compliance with sociopragmatic interactional principles**

SIPs are socioculturally-based principles, scalar in nature, that guide or influence people’s productive and interpretive use of language. The principles are typically value-linked so that in a given culture and/or situational context, there are norms or preferences regarding the implementation of the principles, and any failure to implement the principles as expected may result in mild to strong evaluative judgement. (Spencer-Oatey and Jiang, 2003:2)

Spencer-Oatey and Jiang (2003) in their review of the Leechian maxims proposed the “need to move from the notion of politeness maxims to Sociopragmatic Interactional Principles” (henceforth SIPs) and that “this will yield a more powerful and fruitful way of explaining cross-cultural pragmatic findings (pg 1). They examine the level of rapport maintenance which is to be found beyond the co-operative principles of H.P. Grice (1989) or the maxims of Leech (1983) reviewed (1987) as well as Gu’s (1990) and the conversational constraints of Kim (1994) which are limited by the presence of “universal valences” where “one pole of a given dimension is always taken as being more desirable than the other” (pg 1)

In their treatment of the SIPs, they divided them into lower order SIPs which reflect people's stylistic concerns including factors of:

Directness – indirectness

Modesty – approbation

Warmth – involvement

Coolness – restraint

and higher order SIPs which help manage people's basic interactional motivations including concerns about face, rights and obligations as well as task achievement (pg 12)

In summary, their SIP model is proposed to look like the sketch below.

**1. Higher order SIPs (fundamental)**

i. A face SIP

a. Concern for own face

b. Concern for other's face

ii. A rights and obligations SIP

iii. A task achievement SIP

**2. Lower order SIPs (secondary)**

i. A directness – indirectness SIP (clarity vs vagueness)

ii. A cordiality – restraint SIP (comparable to positive or negative politeness)

iii. A modesty – approbation SIP

iv. A routinisation – novelty SIP

This, according to Spencer-Oatey and Jiang (2003) should not be taken as exhaustive and should not be confused with pragmalinguistic conventions as it is perfectly possible for the same SIP to be implemented linguistically in various different ways.

A particular strength of this theory contains in its open-endedness which any theory of politeness requires if it is to stand the test of time given the ever dynamic and fluid nature of human behaviour as well as language which it tries to explain. However, this appraisal is rather subjective and allowance should be given for the expression of reservation that might proceed from researchers who seek a definitive and prescriptive theory for explaining particular transactions that are fixed in time and in a certain

context. It is however noteworthy that SIPs are not proposed to replace face, rather, “SIPs help manage people’s face/rapport management concerns” (Spencer-Oatey and Jiang, 2003:2).

### **2.1.4.1 Politeness as co-operation**

Among the first linguists to study politeness was Robin Lakoff. He ranks among the first to theorise the notion that politeness is an important aspect of interaction and proposed the need to study it extensively. His initial classical theory suggests that people follow a certain set of rules when they interact with each other, which prevent interaction from breaking down (Johnstone, 2008) while many theorists following him have focused on either expanding on or contesting his maxims. For him, there are two rules of politeness aiming at minimizing conflict in interactions which are outlined as follows.

1. Be clear (based on Grice’s Cooperative Principle Maxims)
  1. Maxim of Quantity: state as much information as is needed in the conversation but not more.
  2. Maxim of Quality: Only say what you believe to be true based on your own knowledge and evidence.
  3. Maxim of Relations (be relevant)
  4. Maxims of Manner: Be concise, avoid confusing, ambiguous statements
2. Be polite
  1. Don’t impose
  2. Give options
  3. Make others feel good

These subsets of “Be Polite” have also been referred to as the maxim of formality or distance, the maxim of hesitancy or deference and the maxim of equality or camaraderie (Johnstone, 2008). He suggests that interlocutors must try to strike a balance among the three maxims because they cannot all be maximised at the same time. When there is disequilibrium in the balance, people tend to perceive behaviour as inappropriate or impolite. Although the theory of politeness considers politeness as universal, this idea would be contested and debated by later theorists.

#### **2.1.4.2 Politeness as negotiated conversational contract**

For Fraser and Nolen, politeness is a conversational contract. In their argument, a conversational contract has a set of rights and obligations that participants must adhere to which are subject to negotiation and readjustment during a conversation. “The conversational contract is based on the expectations of the members involved in a conversation and is determined by the participants” (Fraser, 1990). They opine further that the expectations that people bring to a conversation are shaped by convention, social institutions and history. Conventions including turn-taking and voice projection and modulation to enhance audibility cut across cultures and are applicable in every situation while institutional terms address the rights and expectations dictated by society. The expectation that one speaks in low tones in a library or address the Nigerian President as “Your Excellency”, are examples of institutional terms. The fact that speakers base their expectations for a conversation based on previous conversations with the same, or similar, participants explain historical terms. These include ideas about the power or role of other participants. Any behaviour in conformity with this conversational contract is considered polite, whereas anything outside of the contract is considered impolite. “When people adhere to the rules of the Conversational Contract on politeness, participants in a conversation are unlikely to notice it. It is deviation from the conversational expectations that participants notice and classify as impolite” (Fraser, 1990)

Scollon and Scollon view politeness as a model of social interaction. They focus on how interactants negotiate face relations during conversations (Felix-Brasdefer, 2007). They distinguish between three kinds of politeness systems, which are similar to Levinson’s “deference, solidarity and hierarchy” (Kumiarahman, 2009). For them, this division of deference, solidarity and hierarchy explains why politeness differs across cultures. They further introduce two strategies used in achieving politeness.

**Involvement:** Interactant targeting politeness establishes a connection between them and other participants. It can be achieved by showing an interest in others, paying attention to others, displaying/claiming group membership and using first names.

**Independence:** Much like the opposite of “involvement”, interactant assures co-interactants of their independence. This can be achieved by making minimal

assumptions, giving hearers the option not to respond, using a distinct, unique language or using formal names and titles.

### **2.1.5 The Bulge Theory**

In his explanation of the bulge theory, Wolfson (1990) paid attention to the fact that the theory is based on how the frequencies of certain types of speech behaviour plot out on a diagram “with the two extremes showing similar patterns as opposed to the middle section, which displays a characteristic bulge”. The two extremes referred to are communicative situations involving on one hand intimates, status-unequals and strangers, then non-intimates, status-equal friends and co-workers or acquaintances on the other hand. He found, in his study of middle class Americans that the two extremes of social distance elicit a similar linguistic behaviour but those toward the centre reflect obvious differences.

He places significant emphasis on the factors that influence the data and which holds particular significance for this present study: first, urban middle class Americans live in a complex and open society which explains their network of complex, overlapping and non-overlapping relationships in which they must continually negotiate their roles and relations with others. Secondly, his data on invitations and partings are already rule-guided and so the ‘bulges’ observed are reflections of the interplay of the rules of behaviour guiding those patterns of speech and the rules of behaviour guiding the domain of use in which the speeches are made. Such is the trajectory of enquiry which a research into the nature of communication in Online News Media virtual communities cannot but follow owing to the continually changing and complex networks of relationship among the members of such communities of news readers online.

This theory also features prominently in Anupam’s (2010) inquiry into linguistic politeness and interpersonal ties among Bengalis on the social network site Orkut®. Designed however to test the applicability of the theory in another cultural sphere from the American and real-life communication domain on which Wolfson (1989) built it, the study found that Bengalis on Orkut do not typically demonstrate a bulge in their compliments, gratitude and greetings. After examining the participants’

linguistic politeness practices (or lack of it) in relation to social distance, it found that the intensity increases with proximities in social distance and higher level of intimacy while decreasing with less proximity and intimacy levels. Although, few and far between cases of ‘bulge’ patterns were found, they were not significant enough to prove Wolfson (1989) as always true and culturally neutral. This is especially relevant due to the peculiar nature of the domain of communication (CMC) as well as the contributions of the participants’ cultural backgrounds. Anupam (2010) thus shoots down the theory’s claim to universal applicability, arguing that each communicative situation needs be examined in its own right as each politeness practice interacts with the social scale in unique ways.

#### **2.1.6.0 Politeness as netiquette**

In the words of Rheingold (2014) in “Review of Netiquette”, “the power of the internet comes from the communication that happens between people, not the raw transfer of information from one place to another. Person to person communications grow into relationships. From these relationships, people build communities. Along with these communities come social codes” (emphasis ours). At the heart of this inquiry is the need to examine the communication of politeness vis-a-vis the rules that guide it in virtual communities. But equally important is the attempt to find a nexus between such ‘new’ rules and those that the ‘human’ users already carry with them and are wont to transfer to these new environments. One very important aggregation of such rules is the attempt by Shea(1997) where she assembled a set of written rules which as expected are called “netiquettes” as they are online adaptations of social etiquettes as they apply to ‘netizens’.

In summary, ten basic rules are proposed:

- i. Remember the human
- ii. Adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life
- iii. Know where you are in cyberspace
- iv. Respect other people’s time and bandwidth
- v. Make yourself look good online
- vi. Share expert knowledge
- vii. Help keep flame wars under control
- viii. Respect other people’s privacys

- ix. Don't abuse your power
- x. Be forgiving of other people's mistakes Shea (1997:45)

It is safe to maintain that most of these rules can be interfaced with existing theories of pragmatic politeness with iv, v, viii and x particularly revolving around face saving (Brown and Levinson, 1987) while I, ii, and iii can be sieved through the secondary /lower order SIPs which relate to stylistic choices (Spencer-Oatey and Jiang, 2003). Yet worthy of note is the parallel of effects that exists between neglect of politeness online and neglect of politeness in face to face interaction. They include conflict, getting ignored and of course a need for repair. Interestingly however, while impoliteness remains largely a moral issue in real life, it assumes a new dimension online where it is not only a matter of morality and personal responsibility but also a legal issue which can result in 'blocking or flaming'. Netizens can get pulled from a room and blocked from future use due to lack of netiquette (Rheingold, 2014)

Further, politeness is probably to be considered as more fundamental to rapport on the internet owing to the inadequacies it faces in lack of physiognomic nuances that face-to-face interaction affords. Netizens are thus constrained by more stringent rules which are "not just about niceties of behaviour or avoiding embarrassment" but more like the double yellow line in the middle of a highway (Shea, 1997: 45). It is designed to prevent (pragmatic) damage as much as possible. A rather extreme case was documented of an e-mail sent to a group by a US company's CEO to some facility managers in Kansas City. Owing to the impolite nature of the mail (dotted with instances of 'screaming' and direct threat to the recipients' positive face without mitigation), the company's stock fell by over 22% after the e-mail got leaked and posted publicly on yahoo (Khan, R. and Flynn, N., "E-mail Rules...")

In summary as argued by experts on the subject, these evolving norms are still quite fluid and may be deployed in modified forms in different communities. To mention a few points usually emphasized, netizens are warned against misuse of electronic signatures, posting off-topic, duplicate-posting, hijack of discussion threads, abbreviations and slang (in some communities) and non-use of same (in some), flame wars, spam, all caps (yelling), all lower case/italics (whispering), rude/vulgar/obscene use of language and so on. (Moore, 2009).

### **2.1.6.1 Cyber bullying**

One of the major and mostly discussed fallout of lack of netiquette is cyber bullying. According to an article posted on the Cyber bullying Research Center's blog, bullying is distinguished from other forms of hurtful behaviour like name-calling and targeted insults when it becomes regular and incessant (Patchin, 2014). In other words, when netiquette is repeatedly flouted in a netizen's dealing with another netizen in such a way that it forms a pattern of repeated harassment, the aggressor can be prosecuted as a cyber-bully.

In one of the descriptions proposed online on [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov), an advocacy website dedicated to fighting cyber bullying, cyber bullying is described as a negative teenage behaviour. We however maintain that this impolite behaviour is not limited to teenage circles but permeates any form of online community irrespective of the users' ages. Besides, most virtual communities are either fluid in terms of the sociolinguistic variables of its members or certain underage or incompetent users might gatecrash, thereby making it difficult to rule out all sorts of behaviour including youthful exuberance, delinquent behaviour and cyber bullying.

Closer to the milieu under study, Cyber bullying has been identified as a serious social problem in the Nigerian cyberspace. Much of the inquiries conducted so far have however taken non-linguistic approaches to the explication of the phenomenon while their observations are tailored more towards its psychological effect on the victims, the psychology of the perpetrators or simply a demographic analysis of victims and perpetrators. Olumide, Adams and Amodu (2015) for instance examined the prevalence and correlates of the perpetration of cyber bullying among adolescents in Oyo State high schools while Okoiye, Anyauchi and Thompson (2015) paid attention to the efficacy of strategies to moderate the effect of cyber bullying on in-school adolescents in Benin, Edo State. Although, statistics and psychology formed the crux of their study, much of their data revealed samples of communication patterns that count as cyber bullying among which are unsolicited phone calls, insulting language and untowardly demand for personal information by friends who assume a more powerful position online. What is left as a gap is the lack of attention to the linguistic issues in the study. An attention to the patterns of language use could

yield deeper insights into the constitution of cyber bullying as well as its effect within the social context of language use in a human communicative situation (society).

### **2.1.7 Miscommunication and (im)politeness**

Politeness, especially in the social media domain of communication has also been linked to the strategy of miscommunication which directly feeds into the concept of rapport management, (Oyadiji, 2016; Ting-Toomey, 2015; Haugh, 2007). Rather than respond to impoliteness or perceived potential threat to one's face, interactants have been found to either deflect the FTAs by ignoring them entirely or by deliberately selecting a shade of meaning that is possible but obviously not intended in the original message. This possibility of multiplicity of semantic implication has been dwelt on extensively by Medubi's (2015) Many Worlds Interpretation theory. As observed by Oyadiji (2016), the selection of a potentially polite semantic shade of meaning from a strictly pragmatically impolite expression sends a message of negotiation of context and style to the impolite interactant who, more often than not, is observed to shift the interactional pattern to the polite shade negotiated by the co-interactant.

Its focus on the 2go social media notwithstanding, this study may be found relevant in the examination of politeness strategies in other domains of computer mediated communication since communication patterns and styles have been found to permeate many domains at once, once it starts. This strategy has also been linked, as the researcher observed, to the coping laughter in real life communication as well as the use of LOL or smiling faces (☺) in computer-mediated-communication. In the face of a received FTA or a sent potentially threatening act, coping laughter can serve to mitigate face-threat, conceal face-loss, switch frame from serious to non-serious and facilitate topic transition (Warner-Garcia, 2014). Miscommunication, like coping laughter may thus serve to manage face-threatening relational aspects of disagreements rather than deal with the actual content of disputes.

This study however focuses, not only on rapport management but also on cases of deliberate impoliteness performances including trolling and flamewars quite like the type observable at road side vendors' places where brawls ensue due to arguments about certain news items in spite of (or due to) the face-to-face nature of the interactions. It may thus not be unlikely to find reversals of coping laughter or

miscommunication where the interactants deliberately picks offence by selecting an impolite shade of meaning from a message or where laughter issued to ridicule an interactant's idea or to trivialise an issue meant to be serious incenses the co-interactants.

### **2.1.8 Cross-cultural communication**

Any inquiry into the explication of politeness in online interactions especially where the popular news media is involved cannot be really complete without a consideration of the pragmatic issues of cross-cultural communication. The internet is, though a community of its own, hardly ever a monolithic (homogeneous) or even monolingual community. Members come into the communities with various (often incompatible) pragmacultural rules as well as socio-cultural expectations about politeness behaviour. According to He (2000), this often explains the clashes observed in interactions. This 'pragmatic transfer' leads to the failure or blockage of cross-cultural communication.

In his interrogation of the facework model of Brown and Levinson (1987), Nwoye (1992) observed that certain inadequacies ensue when the facework expectations of a regular 'English' text is transferred to an Igbo interaction. For politeness to be holistic, in Igbo, he observed that there must be a deference to a 'community face' which is unaccounted for in the western model of Brown and Levinson's. It therefore holds that talk across cultures between a Westerner and an Igbo speaker could be hampered by these different expectations of politeness behaviour. Arua (2013) observes, also in Igbo, situations of imposition which in western models of politeness in impolite or inappropriate but which are quite normal, if not required. She argues that power and politeness are thus incompatible. What is probably most instructive is her finding, like Nwoye's, that communal cohesion is the most important goal of politeness in Igbo. 'Impoliteness' from an elder to another (or a man to a wife) is thus taken as inversely proportional along the felicity scale: the higher up a speaker is on the power scale in an interaction, the less their 'face insensitivity' is interpreted as impoliteness and the less the conversation is expected to break down or degenerate into a conflict.

Jelena Durovic in her (2008) inquiry into intercultural communication and ethnic identity sought to identify reactions triggered when individuals partaking in an intercultural communication interaction believe that there is a discrepancy between the way they identify themselves and the way they are perceived on one hand while examining how their reactions can influence the interactions in question on the other hand. In her findings, based on both qualitative data from interviews and quantitative data from surveys, interactants' level of familiarity with the other persons are coterminous with the levels of cultural identity misunderstandings. More interestingly, she found that strangers often try to compensate for their lack of ample information about their co-interactants' ethnic identity by resorting to stereotypes which could further deepen conflicts in the interactions. On the influence of the reactions on the progress of interactions, she found that 'positive' misconceptions are often accepted or pointed out in subdued forms while the talk progresses. However, negative misconceptions often generate unfriendly and impolite corrections which impact the interactions negatively and create face-threats.

This inquiry is particularly relevant for the present study where the members of the various Nigerian news-based virtual communities are in most cases strangers belonging to different and sometimes undeclared ethnic nationalities. Co-interactants however tend to assume some knowledge of their ethnicities or cultural backgrounds via their names (or usernames) and other physical factors from profiles and profile pictures which are often misleading.

Jiang and Yuxiao (2010), whose inquiry was into cross-cultural communication between Chinese and Western counterparts, found, among other things that modesty is better expressed in Chinese in a sense of debasing oneself which is so 'only in Chinese culture' (p 849). Also, they found attitudinal warmth as polite in Chinese while it would be interpreted as undue closeness and imposition in Western cultures based on the Brown and Levinson's model of face. They also found that power relations, especially as defined by age and social rank is a major determinant of the type of politeness principle that certain interactants should select in certain domains contrary to the 'universal' application of face recognition or politeness maxims in western cultures. Of note also is the distinction between the western concept of tact

and how the Chinese counterparts see it. They cited a particular communicative situation to underline this clash of expectation as we present below.

**Western man:** Your dress looks very nice (expects her to feel good and say ‘thank you’)

**Chinese woman:** No, it’s just ordinary, I feel ashamed to hear that (debasing oneself)

**Western man:** (disappointed, feels a threat to his positive face: his sense of judgment is in doubt)

This is also extended to the invitation and acceptance pattern. Whereas in western culture an invitation is to be either politely declined or accepted as soon as possible to be polite, in Chinese culture, a hasty acceptance is impolite while the person doing the inviting is expected to insist and persist in order to be seen as sincere. This insistence, in western culture would be seen as a threat to the invitee’s negative face as well.

It is thus very vital for this kind of study to pay attention to the impact of cultures in interactants’ interpretations of politeness. Jenny Thomas, building on Lakoff’s (1974) notion of pragmalects has also paid a lot of attention to situations of idiosyncrasies in politeness behaviour which might be incompatible with others. She however took this further to a terrain of ‘flouts’ or deliberate choice or deviant communicative patterns in order to make a point (Thomas 2004: 95-94). For her, it is thus not always a question lack of pragmatic proficiency when a second language user of English sounds blunt or impolite in a conversation with a native speaker. In the final analysis, she identifies two types of pragmatic failure in such cross-cultural communicative situations.

- a. Pragmalinguistic failure which occurs when the pragmatic force mapped by S (speaker) onto a given utterance is systematically different from the force most frequently assigned to it by native speakers of the target language, or when speech act strategies are inappropriately transferred from L1 to L2.
- b. Sociopragmatic failure, “a term I have appropriated from leech (1983:10-11) which I use to refer t the social conditions placed on language use.” (P 99)

The significance of these studies for the present study is that the virtual space is unarguably a multi-cultural space where each interactant brings on both real and role-playing cultural personalities while trying to communicate through same to other interactants with their own cultural backgrounds. It thus becomes imperative to examine how interactants try to understand one another across several cultures.

### **2.1.9.1 The language of virtual community and computer-mediated communication (CMC)**

In his analysis of chat rooms or chat groups, Crystal (2004) makes the important observation about a distinction between the synchronous chat and the asynchronous chat where the former is more instantaneous and places less emphasis on the semantic substance of the conversation as the phatic aspect. For Crystal (2004)

Participants frequently provide each other with expressions of rapport.

Subjectively rules: personal opinions and attitudes, often of an extreme kind, dominate, making it virtually impossible to maintain a calm level of discourse for very long (2004:180)

Like, Rheingold (2001), he opines that the chat group would not be a place to find facts but more proper as a place for netizens to find opinions to react to or go to find a platform for getting issues off their chest. Presumably such is an ideal breeding ground for disagreement and insult, known in this context as flamewars (Shea, 1997).

Thurlow, Lengel and Tomic (2004) describe both types of online chats as Internet Relay Chat (IRC) but also emphasize the distinction between public and private chat. In their submission, they strongly make a case for netiquette as a key ingredient in the successful maneuvering of any user within this medium of communication. The key, according to them, is politeness which they aptly enunciated by warning that “IRC is not a game, and we highly recommend you treat people you meet with the same courtesy as if you were talking in person or on the phone”. This goes to lend credence to the correctness of applying known theory that explicate politeness in real life interactions to CMC albeit with special attention to the peculiarities of this virtual terrain which needs to be accounted for as well.

### **2.1.9.2 The effect of internet language on English language usage and perceptions of politeness**

Commentators both in the academic and on the street tend to share in common the idea that the mobile telephone has heralded important new cultures of communication in the modern world (see Rheingold, 2002). The mobile phone has come to evoke and /or embody a range of projected fears and hopes (Turkle, 1995).

According to cultural critic Umberto Eco (2002), “we live in an age where the diminutive, the brief and the simple are highly prized in communication technologies”. Over time, the rise of ICT is attended by biases and opinions about the possible socio-cultural and psychological changes that each new technology might force on people. Projections abound about the geometric increase in volume and frequency of use of cellphones in many countries and by implication the deployment of SMS ‘short messaging services’ (also known as text-messaging or texting) as a medium of communication. Initially designed for majorly commercial transactions text-messaging is in fact yet another example of how the human need for social interaction (a kind of ‘communication imperative’) bends and ultimately co-opts technology to suit its own ends, regardless of any commercial (e.g. the internet) ambition for the technology. In fact, figures published by the Mobile Data Association show that 1.7 billion text-messages were exchanged in Britain in May 2013- a cumulative annual total of some 8 billion messages. (Bellis, 2002)

Typical of representation about the role which mobile phones play in the lives of young people Bryden-brown’s (2001) characterisation in an Australian newspaper presents yet another image of the media-savvy, technologically-enslaved young person. However, partly in response to jaundiced characterisations of young people, scholars are starting to challenge the misleading hype inherent in popular notions like ‘cyberkids’ and the ‘net generation’ (Thurlow and McKay, 2003). In fact, as Facer and Furlong (2001) observe, there are many children and young people in supposedly technologically privileged countries like Britain and the US who still face a kind ‘information inequality’ – not only as a result of poor access at home and school, but also because of individual resistance to, and the perceived irrelevance of, some new technologies. It is precisely for this reason that homogenising assumptions about the

role of technology in the lives of young people and young adult need constantly to be challenged.

Although exaggerations about the significance of technology in the lives of young people may be questionable, it remains an unassailable fact that, in many countries, the mobile phone is an altogether far more popular, pervasive communication technology than any others (Katz and Aakhus, 2002a). Almost a third of all 7-16years-olds have a mobile phone of their own (NOP, 2001a), and marginally more girls (52%) than boys (44%). In fact, the same NOP survey also shows that as many as 77% of 14-16 year olds have mobile phones. Ling (2002) also reports recent figures from Norway, another mobile-saturated country, which specifically identifies young adults/older teenagers as the heaviest users. Unquestionably, a core feature of almost all young people's mobile phone use is the text-message, with most sending upwards of three text-messages a day.

Of specific interest to this study in all the media representations about new communication technologies are concerns about the pattern of communication that these new technologies might throw up and how conventional linguistic and communicative practices are affected. John Humphreys (2000), a British radio journalist popular for his 'verbal hygienist' has expressed deep concerns about, amongst other things, the imminent 'death' of the apostrophe in the written English of Internet users.

Public discourse nowadays attests to the obvious communicative paucity of young people (Thurlow, 2001a). Terms like 'teen-talk' and 'netlingo' (or 'webspeak') are rampant and have often been blamed for probable negative impacts on standard or 'traditional' ways of communicating. The same is especially true of young people's use of mobile phones and text-messaging. The advent of textese is feared to be capable of reinventing (if not damaging) (English) language as we know it.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria is currently one of the biggest mobile phone markets in the world and it goes without saying as well that this large number of phone users access the internet via their cell phones and smartphones. This review thus anticipates the possibility of transfer of the patterns of language use of the "texting community" to the 'internet community' as they are absolutely extensions of the same 'virtual community' and hosted on the same device. This linguistic

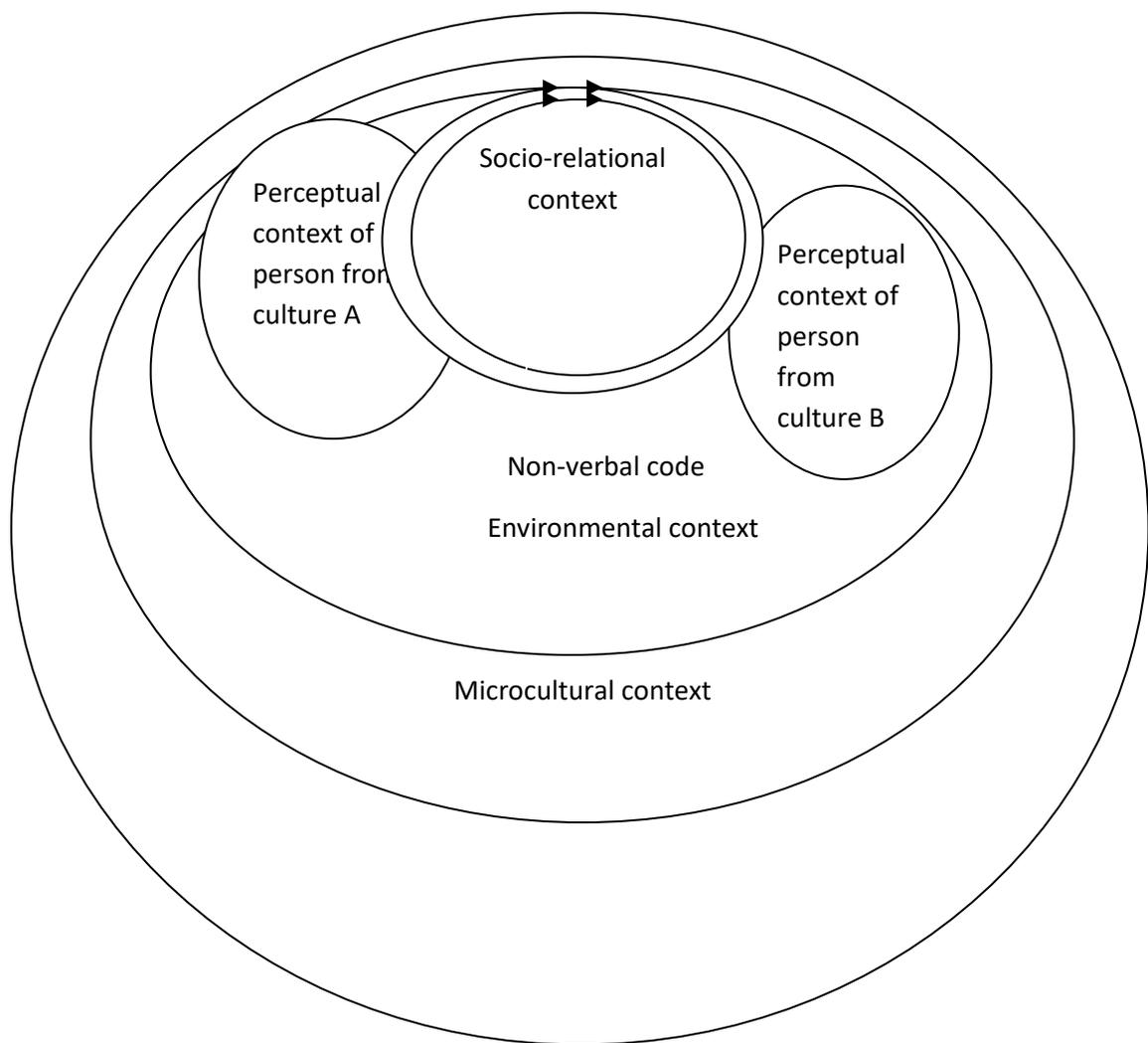
behaviour, if found in the communities, will have implications for the study's attempt at explication of politeness especially in terms of the different participants' attitudes to it.

### **2.2.0 The place of context in online interactions**

There can hardly be any meaningful explication of meaning or communication strategies in any interaction without a recourse to the role that context plays. In his early description of context, Halliday (1990) building on Firth's (1957) concepts of context of situation and context of culture asserts that the linguistic "code" and "behaviour" are one and the same in the realisation and construal of social order. The crux of his argument is that the meanings in interactions as well as the possibility of making such meanings cannot be detached from the social context – a network of information systems which in turn are inextricably woven into the linguistic code in use. For noth (1990), Firth's "context of situation" is taken as referring to pragmatic aspects of meaning and defined as comprising the factors of meaning like

1. The relevant features of participants, persons, personalities, etc.,
2. The verbal action of the participants,
3. The non-verbal action of the participants,
4. The relevant objects,
5. The effect of the verbal action. (p 100)

However, Neuliep's (2009) model of context has been found to have more relevance for this study owing not only to its broader approach to the pragmatic dimension of context but also to the way it has tailored its framework to cater for the germane issues of intercultural communication which pervades computer-mediated communication. Having reworked the Malinowskian concept of context, Neuliep, taking insights also from Berry (2004) found that no human interactant is totally objective or impartial in their observation of the world around them. Their view, according to him, is constrained by the factors of interrelated and mutually dependent contexts which he graphically represented by series of concentric circles as shown in fig. 2.1 (presented overleaf), all beginning from the cultural context and ending with the more specific and personal perceptual contexts.



**FIGURE 2.1: Neuliep's model of context: a contextual model of intercultural communication**

Neuliep, James. 2009. *Intercultural Communication: a Contextual approach*. London: SAGE p11, Fig 1.5

At the heart of the model is the bias that intercultural communication is a group phenomenon expressed by individuals; intercultural communicators therefore view each other not as unique individuals but as members of different cultures, culture having been defined as an “accumulated pattern of values and beliefs shared by an identifiable group of people with a common history and symbol system” (p 17).

The socio-relational context proceeds directly from an intermingling of the perspectives carried into and brought to bear on the interaction by different participants from their own different cultural backgrounds. It is fed directly into by the other dimensions of context and determines (as well as gets negotiated by) the verbal and non-verbal codes selected by the interactants.

The environmental context is particularly of interest for the purpose of the present study as it deals primarily with the impact which the immediate complex relations between ‘humans’ (and netizens) and the environment within which ‘talk’ is taking place has on the interpretations and progress of the interaction. It is particularly instructive that the environmental context holds great implications for the choice of verbal/non-verbal codes as well as the ways their uses are perceived by the interactants.

The microcultural context relates with several factors including ethnocentrism, individualism and collectivism which all underpin what the theorist terms as minority or subcultures associated with race and ethnicity as located within the “national culture”. The national culture which forms the bedrock of the cultural context was contrasted with the microculture as it is a larger normative pattern of behavior against which the various microcultures are compared.

### **2.2.1 The hyperspace as context in virtual communities**

While the conglomeration of contexts in Neuliep’s model serves to explicate the intercultural issues in online interactions, it is apt to locate the hyperspace in isolation as a vital dimension of context of online interactions. For Peter and Trudy Johnson-Lenz in *Humanizing Hyperspace*, “hyperspace is the new media frontier” ([www.context.org](http://www.context.org)). They approach the context of online interaction as a platform for connecting people without clear purposes, processes and norms to guide their interactions who thus end up in scattered, sporadic activities. For them, it is naïve to

expect them to self-organise consistently for much beyond casual conversation. Here, collapsed time and compressed space is the norm.

However, while this context defies the usual norms of interaction in face-to-face situations in the aspects of time and space, the use of language, the intercultural diversity of the participants and the intentions of interacting make the Neuliepian model of context a vital tool within the Hyperspace context in explicating how (im)politeness gets across from user to user on these platforms of interaction. The hyperspace can thus either be located within or made to subsume Neuliep's environmental context as it ultimately dictates the choice of verbal/non-verbal codes, modes of expression of (im)politeness as well as how same is perceived in specific interactions and communities.

### **2.3 Inquiries into virtual communities**

There is undoubtedly a proliferation of virtual communities driven by a corresponding increase in internet access the world over. This, as a consequence, has led to a number of inquiries investigating how interactants use language and interact in such new communities. The foci of the inquiries are, consequently, as multivariate as the many issues in the communities that require linguistic and anthropological descriptions. While Linguistic studies like Oha (2006), Pauwels (2005), Lamidi (2014) and Lamidi (2011) have deployed tools of Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics to explicate how members of virtual communities engage in linguistic behaviour, Oyadiji (2016), Locher et al (2015) and Anupam Das (2010) have paid more specific attention to the politeness dimension of communication in the virtual communities.

Bastian (1999) from a perspective of Anthropology has investigated how nationalist identities were constructed or, better put, how Nigerian immigrants in the United States constructed "virtual" national identities on the news-based virtual community *NaijaNet* which was generated by news related to Nigeria in *Reuters*. She found, among other things that even better cohesive communities than the real-world motherland are constructed by netizens in virtual space. For instance, she reported that "Naija" was found to be the virtual Nigeria for Nigerian immigrants across the US and Europe. She found also that such communities as this become the re-imagination

of the homeland in the netizens' mind irrespective of the ethnic fragmentations that obtains in the homeland in the physical world. However, apart from the anthropological thrust of this study, its trajectory is also guilty of mono-directionality predicated upon its glaring negligence of the news agencies' voice as the conversation initially generating the interactions. In view of the significant impact that such consideration as this could have on the interpretation of the response by various ethnic groups represented in that virtual space, this negligence creates a gap in scholarship. The present research sought to fill that gap through its focus on the linguistic and discursive factors of politeness as part of what sustains a virtual community vis-a-vis roles played by the news items (in terms of content and tone) in the generation of politeness behaviour. It further sought to fill the scholarly gap through an expansion of scope: its analysis being based on a wider group of interactants rather than being limited to Nigerian diasporas and to one online newspaper. This focus affords the study a more broad-based and valid conclusion on both the nature of community and the role played by politeness in building and sustaining such community.

Walther (1996) focused attention on the patterns of interaction prevalent in computer-mediated-communication. His work yielded deep insights into the perspectives and levels of interaction brought into interactions and expected of others in their online interactions by members of a virtual community. Interactions in CMC, he observed, reflect a paradoxical mix of impersonality, interpersonality and hyperpersonality. The impersonality is as a result of insufficient information about the 'true' humans behind a virtual projection of ones co-interactant while the hyperpersonality stems from an absence of social restrictions which are commonplace in offline interactions and are socio-culturally imposed on participants in a conversation. These are lacking in online interactions and participants take such liberties for granted (p 16). Interpersonality forms the mid-point between these extreme interactional patterns. Each interactant recognises the online presence of other participants and accordingly generate assumptions about them with which they form and drive conversational patterns. They base these assumptions on impressions contextually formed from overtly or covertly shared information. This study establishes its relevance for the present research through its in-depth explication of the nature of CMC rather than concentrating on merits and demerits of the interactional patterns. It also ignores CMC where the interactants have some forms of offline acquaintance. Its observations are quite valid

for the present study of a news-based virtual community which is congregated through Facebook and where the interactants are anonymously pooled rather than invited from a known aggregation or offline movement.

Darics (2010) analysed naturally occurring text-based synchronous interactions of a virtual team from the perspective of computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA). In line with her findings, she claimed that in lieu of an approach based on linguistic politeness, the analysis of politeness in virtual communities should be undertaken through an interactional politeness approach. This is because of the inherent capability of interactional politeness paradigms to better explain strategies deployed in compensation for the absence of audio-visual cues in virtual interactions. The study was based on an intense analysis of the interactions of a group of eighteen members who were employees of a UK based consultancy company while hierarchically, culturally and geographically disparate. She observed interactants' representation of audio-visual cues with strategies like deliberate manipulation of spelling (e.g. "nooooo") to evince some sense of exaggerated sympathy and emotional involvement. She also found instances of foregrounded use of all caps to compensate for stress/intonation and emoticons to represent smiles, grins, snickers and other physiognomic nuances (p 15) in order to achieve clarity and politeness in CMC. This strategy is similar to observations of other studies (Oyadiji, 2016; Warner-Garcia, 2014; Herring and Dainas, 2017).

Investigating how interactants on the Najjaworld forum retain informality and project a gist café-like image in their community through the use of linguistic borrowing, Lamidi (2011) subjected the synchronous chats in the community to analysis within the Contact Linguistics, Ignorance Hypothesis and Interference Theory frameworks and found, among other things, that the interactants deliberately attempt to keep the interactions from getting too formal due to the prevalent use of English (English being a language of education and formality in Nigeria) by borrowing expressions from American English, French and the various Nigerian indigenous languages and pidgins in their largely English-medium chats. The study however stopped short of interpreting how individual members might perceive the appropriateness or otherwise of this informality in terms of politeness behaviour. This is a vital part of what this study seeks to investigate.

Ifukor (2011) concentrated on Nigerian Village Square – a virtual community of Nigerian origin which combines the features of listservs and newsgroups and resembles an early precursor to the more elegant news-based virtual communities available today. While availing the CMC literature of the history of Nigerian virtual community as traceable to “Naijanet”, the study further delved into a review of early researches into CMC as pioneered by Bastian (1999). The study represents a bridge between this Bastian anthropological early beginnings and the current linguistic ventures like the present study. For him, Nigerian virtual community is an avenue for linguistic self-assertion among th many tribes and tongues in the Nigerian physical space.

His findings on the performance of polarity, ethnic assertion via code-switching and code-mixing is consistent with the findings in the present study. While these behavioural patterns have deep implications for politeness behaviour however, the focus of the study largely ignores the dynamics of intentional politeness/impoliteness and the aspects of (im)politeness as style of communication. Further, the items generating response in the present study are newsposts of recognized online newspapers as against personal opinions and posts as relied on by Ifukor (2011).

In their investigation of two stories in a Nigerian and a Malawian online newspaper (The Punch and Nyasa Times), Alimi and Matiki (2016) found that criticality and creativity are interactional strategies employed by the co-interactants in the online news-reading sphere when they tread common grounds in their comments on news about politics and politicians. Termed as “translanguaging”, a blend of mixed forms of English and Pidgin is adopted and tolerated as operational resource for creating multiple levels of social meaning. While translanguaging is a linguistic feature in Nigerian news-based virtual communities, the actual implication of the study for the present study is its treatment of comments emanating from politically-slanted online news posts. Netizens, as the study found, engage in critical behaviour towards the politicians which have significant insights for politeness research.

Taiwo (2014) focused on impoliteness in the Nigerian virtual community, Nairaland. Citing factors of anonymity and fluidity of identification as causes of underlying impunity and uncontrolled behaviours, the study found troll as a prevalent behaviour

in the community. Its Facework underpinning holds significant implications for the present study as it found that trolling has a bi-directional effect: it threatens the other's face while both opening up the self to face threats and resonating poorly on self-face. As this study sets out to investigate, strategies of impoliteness including vulgarity, sarcasm, feigning ignorance, posturing, thread-jacking and spam trolling are rampant as strategies of impoliteness. The study however ignores politeness. Its focus also falls short of unraveling a link between news posts and their effects on politeness behaviour.

Lamidi (2014) investigated discourse strategies deployed by participants on Nairaland. In spite of the way its strict categorisation of computer-mediated communication as either synchronous or asynchronous CMCs, a categorisation which invariably constrained it to describe virtual communities as strictly asynchronous and thus negate the position of the present study in its description of CMCs as fluid, it yet holds a significant relevance for the present study. Studies have revealed significant development in the design and utilisation of the Internet by virtue of which virtual communities, like the news-based variants studied in this research, have since evolved from asynchronous chats to the level of synchronous exchanges almost exclusively dealing with real-time chats, except where certain contributors are offline during chat. Asynchronicity in news-based virtual communities thus remains a possibility as a result of participants who contribute to the conversations when other participants have moved on from the conversation or are offline.

Adopting Conversation Analysis with a blend of Lim and Bowers' Face model and Charles Pierce's Semiotic theory, she subjected 147 pages of "popular threads" with several interactions purposively sampled from the archives of the Nairaland forum between 2008 and 2010 to conversation analysis. She found that (a.) the initiation of talk in the threads are similar to face-to-face talk which opens with greetings, narrations of personal experiences, questions and such other topic-initiation strategies, (b.) speaker-selection and turn-taking were technology-based as the computer selects the earliest responses to turns while self-selection happens when there are no multiple posts, (c.) pronounced discourse strategies include graphology, pictures and manipulation of emoticons while reference helped in the achievement of cohesion,

(d.) closing was rare as a discourse strategy as topics naturally died out when the posters were spent.

Interestingly, a significant level of insensitivity to face needs of co-interactants by members was observed although there were few instances of hedges by few posters attempting to mitigate threats to face and enhance interpersonal relationship in the Nairaland community. The gap left by this study contains in the failure to explicate the reasons and nature of (im)politeness in the community. The present study sought to fill the gap by explicating both the factors behind choices of politeness behaviour as well as the nature of politeness behaviour peculiar to certain group. Also it sampled its primary data from Nigerian news-based virtual communities rather than one monolithic community of interest which Nairaland represents.

Oha's (2006) inquiry was into how users pursue human interests in Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link (WELL). He revealed users that language expressed creative freedom and achieved both personal survival and a sense of community found in WELLS through their peculiar use of language. He found that users resolve disagreements and lessen the effects of confrontations, in spite of the tussles for power, through linguistic behaviours that cater for "WELLbeings". The aim of the present study is to explicate more clearly the ways by which politeness, specifically, enhances the progress and success of communication in Nigerian news-based virtual communities which differs significantly from WELLS as a community. Their discussions, unlike in WELLS, are centered around opinions generated by the news writers who do not operate in the community as participant but rather as text to which many participants tend to apportion the role of a participant in order to have them interrogated alongside the other participants in the news-reading community.

Several other scholarly works have made other forms of inquiry into computer-mediated communication and there is no dearth of such works on politeness. These studies have opened up a line of inquiry in both Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (Herring, 2001) and Pragmatics. Most of the resulting inquiries have however focused on discourse strategies and general description of language use. Although quite a number exist on politeness, yet little or nothing has been done on

news-based virtual communities in the Nigerian cyberspace or on a population of Facebook contributors on online news items.

Langlotz and Locher (2012) examined “disagreement” using the UK-based online news media *mailonline* and the interactions of a virtual community of readers aggregating around it. Their findings reveal that online news-based virtual communities portray a conflict pattern based on the externalisation of conceptual implication, expression of feelings in explicit manners and description of emotion. They found also that interactants explicate feelings as a way of recognizing threats to face. This finding holds some implications for research questions 5, 6 and 7 of the present study. Their inquiry emphasises that emotions expressed are significant factor which underlie disagreement as it mostly neglects instances of supportive behaviour. The study, on one hand, calls for further studies to investigate online news-based virtual communities with attention to the expression of agreement/disagreement. Besides, it opens up a line of inquiries in other communities that are generated by news but featuring other speech communities. The present study responds in part to this need as it examines agreement along with disagreement within the broader spectrum of politeness and relational work. It also bases the study on a larger, more diverse and more populated community – Facebook (Pappacharissi, 2009) with its attention to a non-native English speaking virtual community.

Nishimura (2008) relying on Herring’s (2004) model of computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) and Ide’s (1989) Wakimae or discernment model of politeness focused on the perspectivisation of (im)politeness by Japanese netizens on Japanese BBS websites. He found that discussion topics and communal norms on politeness are particularly relevant for the levels of and choices of politeness styles deployed in their online interactions. However, Donath (1995) was rather interested in the effects that anonymity and identity deception has on interaction in online forums. Drawing an interesting parallel between virtual role players and adaptatively deceptive animals, she examines the benefits and costs of this identity effacing and role-playing to the virtual individuals and the virtual group. Among the costs identified is misinformation due to lack of sufficient knowledge and authority level of information providers (p 7). “Lurkers”, she found also pose a problem as they mislead the posters into illusions of agreement by silence or of a peaceful virtual environment which signals a positive

evaluation of their posts even when this may not be the case. Part of the benefits observed however is the ability of members to transcend social boundaries and relate above stereotypes and rituals of society that could have served as hindrance to the interactions (p 8).

In *Going Bald on Record...* Hemphill, Otterbacher and Shapiro (2014) investigated public officials' grandstanding, posturing and creation of clear boundaries on issues through the use of language in tweets. Their sample comprised 30,000 US congress members' tweets harvested from their Twitter accounts. They observed that these politicians deliberately use polarising language as a tool to demonstrate their opposition to issues mostly by using supportive language about themselves and pejorative language about the opponent and the opponent's opinions. The "self" is papered over by deploying a face-saving strategy of fellowship and group identity achieved by including the followers and supporters in the expression of self-praise while the "other", conversely, gets criticised as a member of an improper/unacceptable other via unmitigated threat to their competence face.

Graham, Beth and Audrey (2015) took a linguistic anthropological look at the examination of how people negotiate commitment in a context of volatile sociality using the online competition forum "hackathon". The study provides insights into how politeness is used as a tool to demonstrate commitment by a member to the joint goal of the group while impolite behavior is considered disruptive and a signal for a lack of further interest by a member. The study's relevance for the present study is particularly located in its choice of data. The "hackathon" studied is dedicated to the world of digital news-making with competitors in their groups monitoring journalistic issues relating to the relationship between the news readers' mood and their response to the news, the perspectives of people about the relationship between the media/news and the readers (either as curator – tourist or as Food vendor – consumer) and developing apps accordingly to help advance the cause of digital journalism. They found, rather interestingly as this study sought to explicate in Nigerian news-based virtual communities, that participation in the forums was achieved based on a principle of "technoliberalism" that favours "freedom of association over lasting social obligations" and is inscribed in the organizational parameters of the hackathon itself (p 328). They found a paradoxical emphasis on project-based collaboration but

limited interpersonal responsibility. Among their findings on the use of (im)politeness to negotiate commitment include the use of hedging to opt out of groups, enactment of solidarity through agreement and the construction of shared stance.

Herring and Daina (2017) inquired into the deployment of “graphics” which were relatively new features in online chats and were setting Facebook apart from other CMC environments. Their inquiry gave much impetus to the study of news-based virtual communities converging on Facebook in order to investigate the impact of novel graphic tools on members’ interactions. They argued that this range of graphical tools of communication found on Facebook makes possible multiple shades and patterns of expressions hitherto considered impossible or complicated in CMC. They identified, among other functions of graphics, “mentions”, “reactions”, “riff”, “tone modification”, “action” and “narrative sequence”. These functions of graphics bear direct implications on the present study. Mentions and reactions are particularly key in the identification of direct targets of (im)polite behaviour just as “tone modification” directly interfaces with face-threat mitigation when placed within the broader context of facework or relational work where a modification of tone translates to an agreement to behave according to expectation.

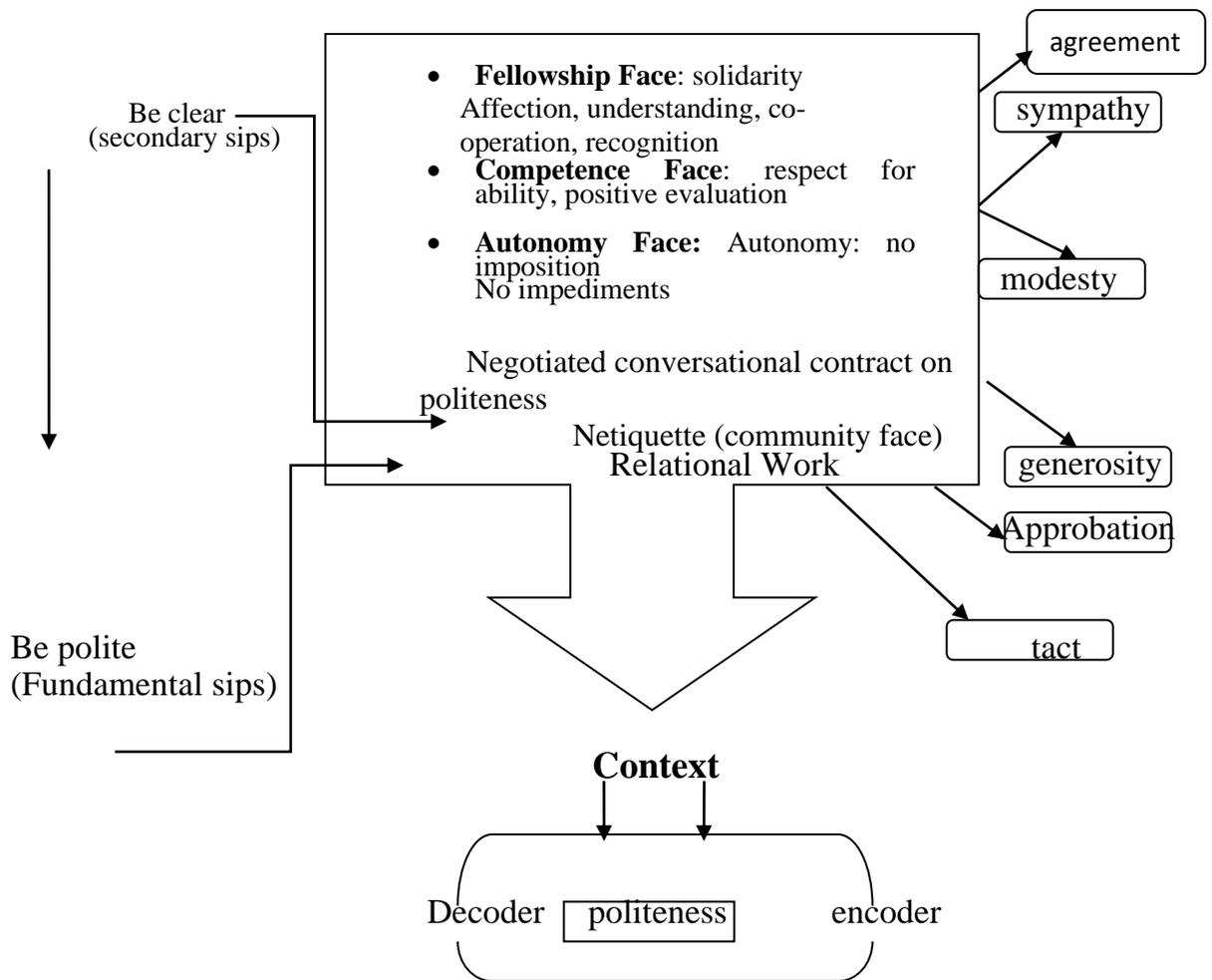
## **2.4 Theoretical framework**

Face work and Relational work are the two contiguous paradigms which formed the theoretical framework for this study. The framework, as demonstrated in the meshed paradigm (fig 2.1), has been fed into by the various pragmatic theories of politeness earlier discussed, including Lim and Bowers’ Face theory, Sociopragmatic Interactional Principles, Politeness Maxims, Conversational Contract, Netiquette and Rapport Management. However, there was a heavy reliance on the bias for politeness as a negotiated conversational contract since the virtual communities investigated in the study are best considered as negotiated communities where interactants present (rather decide to conduct themselves) with hidden, pretended or new identities. This knowledge compels co-interactants to simply interact with one another based on the available identity projected or based on representations made accessible to them by the factors of contexts in the virtual communities. The choice of Relational work as a theory was necessitated by the observation that participants in the sampled population

more frequently belong to the group of those seeking phatic communion above ideational interaction as more prevalent in asynchronous CMC (Crystal, 2004). They therefore invest more in the progress of interaction than in expectations of linguistic politeness (Locher and Watts, 2005).

This study is in alignment with Locher and Watt's (2005) opinion about facework as hardly sufficient as a model to study politeness in conversation given the true nature of politeness itself as merely a part of what facilitates interactions. Face work, in their opinion, accounts for mitigation of face-threatening acts but cannot entirely account for the specific situations where politeness does not constitute the adopted norm of conversation (p 1). They thus propose a "relational work" model to cater for the "work interactants invest in negotiating relationships with others including what is polite, what is impolite or what is merely acceptable behavior in talk". The adaptation of this model in order to fit into the framework for the present study became imperative in the light of its observed capacity to cater for arts of the interactions exhibiting apparent impoliteness yet treated as acceptable communication patterns and seem to be strategies aimed at advancing the chats under investigation. It also more accurately explicates exchanges displaying linguistic politeness facetiously but which are adjudged as impolite/unacceptable in the chats due to their markedness in certain environments (p 15).

Overleaf in fig 2.2 is a graphical representation of what a meshed paradigm hitherto identified in the literature for studying politeness in virtual communities might look like.



**Figure 2.2. A meshed politeness paradigm (mpp)**

Conceived based on the interface of Fraser (1990), Mills (2005), Spencer-Oatey and Jiang (2003), Brown and Levinson (1987), Lim and Bowers(1991), Leech (1973), Locher and Watts (2005) and Neuliep (2009).

Politeness is cyclical (more like a two-way street). It is easier to understand in a holistic pattern that involves both the encoder and decoder at the same time rather than separately. An interactant most times saves (or threatens) both their own face and the co-interactant's at the same time. Politeness thus stems from a decision by interactants to subscribe to the contract of politeness negotiated in the community. Yet this contract can hardly be understood without a reference to face, SIPs and the maxims which form the framework for agreements that can be made concerning what is (im)polite. It is such agreements that take on local colourations and become woven into the fabric of netiquette and conversational contracts in particular virtual communities especially as people from different cultural milieu converge.

To begin with, every communicative act (be it an emoticon, a sound, a link a word or sentence, picture or video) is taken as an attempt to engage a co-interactant in some way. A consideration of (im)politeness must therefore begin here at the level of whether adequate attempt has been made at being clear enough and being polite vis-à-vis the environmental context within which the act is introduced. Thus, a post of a picture of a cute fat cat during a discussion thread on the relationship between the United States' president and the Nigerian president will be seen at first as 'not clear' and an impolite intrusion/disruption until factors that could render it meaningful are considered.

Among the other factors that would explain an act as polite or otherwise are the implicit or explicit attempts by the interactant to recognize the face needs of the individuals. This factor would be complimented by the maxims in the form of a simple question – are they agreeable, approbative, modest, generous, tactful and sympathetic? If yes, they come across as polite but only if that is the norm which the particular chat group or community has created for its consideration of behavioural appropriateness or interactional politeness (relational work). A group of gregarious intimate friends in a hyper-informal exchange might be shocked at, and intolerant of, an 'artificial' modest and suave post. That explains the need for deference to a community face which interlocks with netiquette (and localized in the community) and negotiated contract on politeness.

Finally, the ultimate interpretation of each act or the totality of acts depends on the factors of context, in this case the socio-relational cum environmental context which

involves how the decoder(s) perceives the encoder(s) based on their various cultural milieus, religious affiliations, political leanings, ideological tilt, geographical space, linguistic proficiency, educational background, intellectual prowess and even other evasive factors like age and economic status. This is the framework within which the analysis of the interactions shall be done before conclusions are drawn on its encoding and perception as well as interpretation in the communities.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Overview**

This chapter discusses the research methodology employed in the collection and analysis of the data for the study. It explains the source and form of the data, the population studied as well as the sampling method, research instruments and procedure of analysis. It concludes with a statement of pilot and ethical issues around the study.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The study as a qualitative research adopts an interpretive design similar to hermeneutic phenomenology. Due to the nature of the study as an inquiry into human interactions, the data are necessarily presented as produced while their interpretations are based on an etic perspective. There is, however, a heavy reliance on meta-statements and participants' reactions in arriving at the interpretations given. Data are collected through participatory observation in order to make for a reality and naturalness in the collected samples.

#### **3.2. Study population**

As the title of the thesis suggests, the target population for this study is Nigerian online news. The primary source of data for the study is online news items together with comments and discussions that ensue around the different online news items posted on Facebook between 2015 and 2018 by five Nigerian online newspapers.

Online news is selected as study population due to the uncensored nature of its community. Members are usually unrestricted in their use of language as well as in the airing of their opinions. This may be largely due to the impersonal nature of the medium as no real-life relationships exist among the members. This affords them a

level of anonymity and impersonality that some members exploit to disregard the ‘positive/negative politeness burdens’ represented by face-to-face politeness rules. Also, the heated nature of arguments in online news communities makes for an interesting study given its sustenance despite the usual chaos to the extent that opinions are exchanged and members tend to carry on conversations long enough for webs of relationships to form.

The online news communities purposively selected for study are *Sahara Reporters*, *The Nation*, *Yabaleftonline*, *Leadership* and *BiafraTV* due to their relative popularity, propensity to generate diverse opinions which are capable of generating face loss and repair, wide readership in the Nigerian cyberspace and their treatment of various issues including politics, entertainment, sports, education and others. Specifically, *Sahara Reporters* was selected for its claim to breaking news, investigative journalism (and relatively wide readership for same reason) as well as its observed controversial stance and reportage of burning issues that generate a lot of controversies in online circles where a lot of face-negotiation and conflict management has to be done. Its claim to Nigerianness for the purpose of this research is based on its keen reportage on Nigerian issues and the intensity of the attention it generates from its Nigerian readers who form the majority of its virtual community. Conversely, *Yabaleftonline* was selected based on its dedication to soft-sell news, yellow pages journalism and a gist-café-like approach which appeals to a large portion of Nigerian news-reading public because of its offerings of rumours and dirty ‘secrets of ‘celebrities’. Its name is especially significant as a symbolic allusion to the psychiatric ward of the Federal Neuro-psychiatric Hospital which is located at the left side of the Yaba expressway in Lagos, Nigeria. One of its main peculiarities in the online news-based virtual world is its promotion of “crazy news” and laughable issues with an expectation of an all-comers type of membership who comment without restrictions (just like a psych ward). *The Nation*, *Leadership* and *The BiafraTV* are selected to incorporate both regional representation and patterns of ownership with all the impacts these factors have on news presentation and reception by the reading public.

*The Nation* is published daily in South-West Nigeria and is known to be privately owned by a renowned Lagos businessman and politician of a well-known political leaning whose party is currently the ruling party since 2015 in Nigeria as well as in a

number of South-West Nigerian states while acting as opposition in most South-South and South-East states. Its print copy is rated by certain organisations monitoring the print media in Nigeria (ADVAN, AAPN and MIPAN) as the second most-widely read newspaper in Nigeria in 2009. Its news coverage includes politics, entertainment, sports, lifestyle, education, fashion and human angle stories.

*Leadership* is published in Abuja by a Northern pharmacist-turned-publisher who also belongs to the ideological camp cum political party of the owner of “The Nation”. Its choice is majorly predicated upon its Northern Nigerian representation rather than its political ideology and private ownership.

*The BiafraTV* is an online news media (Video clips posted online and) selected to represent the South-East and South-South regions respectively. It also covers hard news and has no known bias for the ruling party. In fact, it expresses antithetical views to the Nigerian nationhood and is popular for secessionist biases as well as an anti-government stance which is wont to generate conflict between pro-government readers and government critics popularly known in the Nigerian democratic parlance as “wailers” after the victory of General Mohammadu Buhari at the 2015 presidential poll. Five news items each are selected with their comments based on the need to reflect different genres including politics, entertainment, religion, security, health, education and events after a purposive sampling. Table 3.1 overleaf summarises the population studied.

**Table 3.1: Population Studied**

<b>Online news agency</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Population sampled</b>	<b>Interactions selected</b>
Sahara reporters	All	20	5
Yabaleft online	All	20	5
The Nation	All	20	5
Leadership	All	20	5
Biafra TV	All	20	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>

### **3.2.1. Method of data collection**

The data for the study were collected through direct capture on Facebook and the news media's websites. Copies of the selected news shared on Facebook alongside the members' comments were printed and subjected to analysis. The data were collected through participatory observation without any indication to the interactants about the sampling and collection of comments for research purposes. This was done in order to ascertain that the interactions remained spontaneous and original. The samples are printed as undistorted within the limits of decency and ethical constraints and sorted into labeled groups represented by table 3.2 overleaf and showing the different levels of conviviality observed in the chat vis-à-vis the role of politeness in the attainment of these.

**Table 3.2: Grouping of Data**

<b>Group A</b>	<b>Group B</b>	<b>Group C</b>	<b>Group D</b>
Friendly and sustained	Unfriendly but sustained	Unfriendly and jagged	Unfriendly and fiery

### **3.3. Description of the data**

The data for this study is of a multimodal nature. Researchers into computer-mediated communication have established that conversations in online platforms are technology-based (Lamidi, 2014: i, Montgomery, 1995: xxi). Lamidi's (2014) exception to Montgomery's description of online communication modes as merely an extension of pre-existing forms of communication without a detailed look into its peculiar linguistic behaviour is quite apt.

This mode of communication is distinguished from face-to-face interactions by a number of features. The limitations of the computer-messaging system, for example, place a deficit on the interactants in terms of ancillary modes of communication. Communication takes place in the absence of most of the contextual features present in face-to-face situations, particularly audiovisual cues. This has a direct effect on interaction management, as no visual or auditory feedback can be given. Also, as a result of the technical aspects of the communication systems, the exchange of information can seem very fragmented, messages may overlap, sometimes long waits for message to deliver can occur. The disrupted turn adjacency is caused by the fact that messages are posted in the order they are received from the system, regardless of what they are responding to (Herring 2001). Besides, reception and signal strengths may vary on each side of the interactants' locations thereby resulting in disrupted adjacency pairs. As a result, messages that are supposed to be physically adjacent do not necessarily form relevant turns or pairs.

Due also to the nature of computer-based messaging systems, interactants take time to consider and compose what they have to say before typing it at a speed normally much slower than speech. However, as exchanged messages remain displayed on the screen for a longer period of time than face-to-face interaction affords, message persistency thus becomes another feature that distinguishes face-to-face communication and CMC. Participants can quote, refer to, or expound previously sent messages. These features constitute a novel communicative environment. Another new feature is the use of video/audio clips, even beyond the level of the popular emoticons, emojis, GIFS and memes, in comment threads to buttress points or to perform other communicative functions hitherto uncommon in face-to-face talk.

Further, online interactions are based primarily on role-playing and identity cultivation especially in the virtual communities built on social media (Donath, 1995). Co-interactants are denied of the advantage of immediate and obvious context fixtures that drive communication in face-to-face talk and written communication between familiar people or people whose roles in the context of the exchange are fixed and well-defined (Walther, 1996, Darics, 2010). At the extreme of this role-playing are computer viruses of various natures communicating with ‘people’ in communities or agents of news media or other concerned interest groups participating in news-based virtual communities and playing the devil’s advocate or attempting to inject ideologies that drive propaganda.

Another feature of our data is the hyper-integrated nature of different modes of communication. A picture with an emoticon could combine with verbal cues (sometimes even oral data) to engage the other participants. An interesting example would be a caricature or cartoon image with an inscription of what the entity depicted is saying or thinking. Even, thought and stream of consciousness need analysis in virtual communities.

Localized textese will also form a major characteristic of our data. This will include forms of textese that mix letters with words within the phonotactics and lexico-semantic framework of the users’ culture and linguistic abilities. Such phonolexical maneuvering like “l8a” (later), “ppu” (people), “common” (come on) and LWKMD (laughter wan kill me die) constitute aspects of our data with far-reaching implications for politeness study. That is beside the universal forms that include hyperboles and metaphors like LOL (laughing out loud), ROTFL (rolling on the floor laughing), “literally dead”, and other textese forms like “brb” (be right back) and TTYL (talk to you later).

Issues emanating and eliciting various shades of politeness behaviour could include:

- i. Reactions of members to news items/contents (and related issues) ,
- ii. Reactions of members to people mentioned in the news,
- iii. Reaction of members to the ideology perceivably reflected in the news,
- iv. Reaction of members to the news writer or news agency,

- v. Reaction of members' to opinion of other members on the news or (i-iii) (Langlotz and Locher, 2012; Mutingl and Turnbull, 1998), and
- vi. Activities of members' (which may be unrelated to the news) as well as reactions of other members to such activities.

Finally, the study considers every communicative act in the communities, irrespective of its mode, from the perspective of politeness and argues for the ability of the framework adopted to be stretched to account for the expression of (im)politeness embedded in each act.

### **3.4. Technique of data analysis**

This study as a qualitative research employs an entirely descriptive method. As earlier hinted at, the study takes an etic approach rooted in hermeneutic phenomenology to the data analysis. This affords a clear presentation and contextual interpretation of pragmatic issues regarding politeness in the comments based on the interpretations and reactions of the interactants rather than the researcher's opinion.

### **3.5. Procedure of data analysis**

- Every exchange ensuing from a news item was labeled and assigned a group according to a broad perception of its level of conviviality and success.
- The context of each interaction (both the news item and the socio-political milieu of the interaction) was examined based on the paradigm before focus shifted to the components of the paradigm vis-à-vis their interface with the exchanges.
- An explication of the interaction was then attempted to emphasise the strategies, functions, reasons and perceptions of (im)politeness by interactants in the comments. The interactions were necessarily examined against the background of the face work cum relational work paradigm as they progressed towards the (im)politeness levels identified.
- What counted for (im)politeness was thus identified in the exchanges.
- Observations were then generated to form the basis for conclusions on politeness in the exchanges analysed in particular and prediction or generalisations of politeness behavior in news-based virtual communities as a whole.

### **3.6. Pilot and ethical issues**

The study, as earlier mentioned is a study in human relationships and therefore cannot pretend to be free of ethical issues. Such issues include intrusion into people's privacy when their interaction in the virtual communities are being studied and reported without being solicited or following any prior notice. Even when the researcher uses interactions he is involved in, it is still the case that the co-interactant(s) is/are being denied the privacy that they expect as they did not intend their comments for academic scrutiny. Another ethical issue involves the use of plagiarized/unreferenced materials by group members in their arguments in the communities.

Among the steps proposed in resolving these issues were:

- i. Obliteration of interactants' name where 'utterances' are of a sensitive or potentially embarrassing nature. This may include obliteration in the captured data and outright removal of name or use of pseudonym in the discussions and analysis. Also, to avoid undue exposure of the contributors' faces via the Facebook profile pictures that appear on their posts, the posts are zoomed out enough to render their faces unrecognizable.
- ii. Inclusion of citation to sources of unreferenced data where the researcher can find such sources.

Such precautions were however not needed where the interactants appear to have already protected their own identities as many participants in virtual communities are wont to do.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.0 Overview**

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the data collected for the study. There is an attempt to group the data collected, on face value, into four groups (where possible) of (A) friendly and sustained interactions, (B) rather unfriendly yet sustained interactions, (C) unfriendly and jagged interactions and (D) unfriendly and fiery interactions. For the purpose of clarity, and easy referencing, each of the 25 interactions is labelled from A to D based on this grouping. Each interaction is further labelled with numbers from 1 to 5 for easy identification within the group. The hard copies are attached as appendices.

#### **4.1.0 Group A interactions (friendly and sustained)**

These interactions, constituting a significant forty per cent (40%) of the sample population, are so grouped and labelled based on a number of factors including but not limited to the smoothness of the exchanges and the perceived minimal volume and harshness of flame wars. Unmitigated face threats are also observed to be rarer in the interactions relative to other groups. Operationally, “smoothness” is employed as a concept to include features observed in the interactions including:

- i. Friendly tone of talk (usually achieved through graphology, lexico-semantic strategies and graphicon-effected tone modification).
- ii. Responses given when sought and in the expected quantity.
- iii. Traceable smooth turn-taking pattern consistency especially through mentions.
- iv. Prevalent use of friendly terms in addressing others
- v. prevalent use of honorifics to observe face

- vi. prevalence of face-enhancing graphicons relative to face-threatening ones in comments

Further, these interactions, apart from their display of concern for face towards other posters, also acquired the friendly tone by featuring a relatively higher level of face threat mitigation towards the news agencies and the characters in the news when juxtaposed with the other categories of interactions in the study population.

#### **4.1.1 Contextual mapping of A**

A1 is an interaction of posters responding to *Yabaleftonline*'s news report on a young celebrity in the Nigerian music industry as presented in plate 4.1. Sophia's celebrity status has however been questioned by many as she is deemed to have only risen to stardom by raising a child with a popular musician whom she is not even married to. This perspective paints a picture of the microcultural context while the socio-relational context and environmental context are made clear by other factors. First, this kind of news item interests the youth (and young at heart) more and they are likely to form the highest percentage of the audience. Besides, the fans of the music star have at different times demonstrated hatred for the lady on different forums while many others have shown support for the lady and condemned the man for his lack of a sense of responsibility over the lady and their child. Also, forming part of the environmental context is the fact that this community is generated by *Yabaleft* where decorum or social correctness is hardly imperative. Yet, there is a prevalence of camaraderie and concern for face needs of interlocutors which renders the interaction friendly rather than a heated argument.

**YabaLeftOnline.com**  
1 hr · €

"I am not spending Davido's money" — Baby mama, Sophia Momodu tells follower who says she's looking good because of Davido's money.

**"I am not spending Davido's money" - Baby mama, Sophia Momodu tells follower. - YabaLeftOnline**

For a while now, Nigerian singer, Davido's baby mama, Sophia Momodu has been sharing on the gram, photos from the vacation she's having and one can tell...

YABALEFTONLINE.NET

Like Comment Share

479 Top comments (unfiltered)

5 shares

Write a comment...

**Plate 4.1. Yabaleft News on Sophia**

A2 likewise, is set in a context of show business. Also posted in *Yabaleftonline*, it surrounds a report on a Nollywood star as found in plate 4.2. However, apart from the news post's appeal to the youth and its humour generation capacity, it is capable of generating sexist concerns among the demographically diverse community as the Nollywood star's claim (of being offered free sex by female fans) constitute a potential face loss mechanism to female posters. While the character in A1 is seen challenging male hegemony (chauvinism) and the culturally-held notion that a woman's wealth is always traceable to her male partner, A2 raises the potentially explosive and often volatile issues of sexual harassment, sexual immorality and male dominance in the movies industry. There is however a considerable level of lethargy demonstrated by the members towards the controversy. Rather, there is an obvious choice to poke fun at the news, the character in the news as well as members of the virtual community in a back-patting merry-go-round pattern that markedly portrays the interaction as a friendly one (A). Its most outstanding features include repeated instances of face loss repair, face loss concealment and rapport management which enhances its status as a friendly banter in spite of its sheer length and the potential for controversy stemming from diverse opinions and temperaments.

The image is a screenshot of a Facebook post from the page 'YabaLeftOnline.com'. The post is titled '"A female fan once walked up to me and offered me free sex" — Handsome Actor, Yomi Fabiyi says.' It features two photographs of Yomi Fabiyi: one where he is sitting and talking, and another close-up portrait where he is wearing a yellow shirt. The post text reads: 'Nigerian actor, Yomi Fabiyi recounts the day a desperate female fan offered him free sex. - YabaLeftOnline'. Below the text, it says 'Nigerian actor, Yomi Fabiyi lost his mother recently but much as he still feels the agony of her demise, he still takes solace in the advice she gave him while alive. In...' and 'YABALEFTONLINE.NET'. The post has 553 reactions (likes, loves, wow) and 24 shares. The left sidebar shows the page's navigation menu with options like Home, About, Photos, Events, Reviews, Videos, Posts, Community, and Groups. A 'Create a Page' button is also visible.

**Plate 4.2. Yabaleft’s news on Yomi**

A3 in plate 4.3., unexpectedly, is an interaction around a piece of politics-related news in *Leadership*. News items around politics in multicultural settings like virtual communities have been known to generate heated arguments among netizens who align with different and frequently antagonistic political ideologies, parties and ethno-social orientations. This interaction however features more fun-poking and agreement than angry outbursts and disagreement. A contextual factor underlying this ‘anomaly’ can be traced to the personality of the character in the news who has been portrayed on many occasions in the media as a ‘jester’ due to his much-derided political manoeuvrings. The character, a Muslim politician and leader of the Nigerian parliament which has been widely labelled as a ‘parliament of fools and fraudsters’ by their political rivals especially in the executive and in the media, advises the Christian church to pray for Nigeria at Easter. A pragmatic reading of the responses of the posters reflects a decoder-generated miscommunication pattern whereby the posters renegotiate the meaning of prayer to reflect only the closing of the eyes (literally). Thus they ascribe an illocutionary force akin to deception to the statement. Further, they tune down the impolite import that this ‘deceptive’ tactic carries, rather selecting the jocular import similar to a prankster attempting to make a smarter person close their eyes while attempting to rob them of their belongings.. It is this negotiated cultural and environmental contexts that birth a socio-relational context featuring audience members whose sole intention is to join other smart people to laugh the prankster to scorn.

**Leadership Newspapers**  
@LeadershipNGA

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Posts  
Community  
Create a Page

**Leadership Newspapers**  
· 16 April at 09:25 · e

<https://leadership.ng/.../saraki-to-church-pray-for-nigerias.../>

**Saraki To Church: Pray For Nigeria's Peace, Development – Leadership Nigeria Newspapers**

Abdullahi Olesin, The Senate President. Dr. Bukola Saraki has appealed to churches and Christian leaders in the country to keep praying for Nigeria's peace and...

LEADERSHIP.NG

Like Comment Share

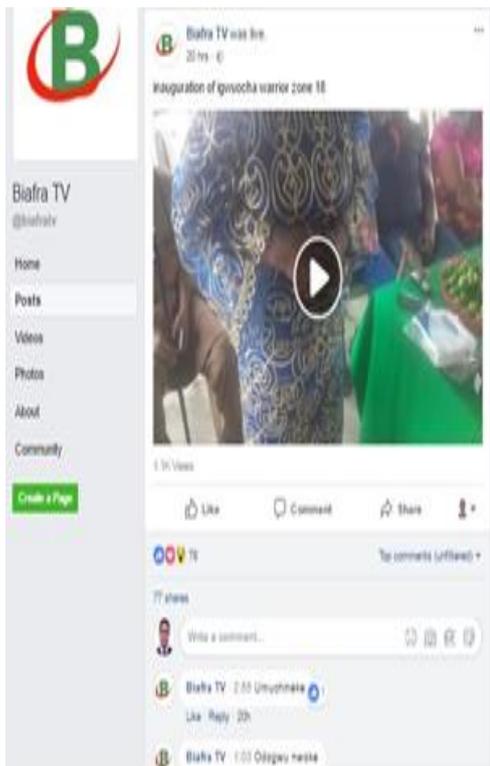
54 Top comments (unfiltered)

8 shares

Write a comment...

**Plate 4.3. Leadership’s news on Saraki**

A4, A5, A6, A8 and A10 are all generated by *Biafra TV*. It is very instructive that all five samples from this media outfit fall within the category marked as friendly and sustained. While their contextual configurations including the news genre and non-verbal codes employed (including frowning faces and fighting gestures of the reporters and the interviewed personalities in the video broadcasts) portray a potentially volatile relation with the Nigerian government and citizens, the micro-cultural and environmental contexts portray a rather simplified background of an online news agency broadcasting to netizens who share a similar cultural background and who are being rallied for a cause they all subscribe to. Except in very negligible cases, netizens entering the community share the same view of the necessity and inevitability of a separate Biafran nation, hence the high prevalence of agreement, solidarity and tact which enhance the members' ability to observe one another's fellowship and competence faces. All but few instances of face threats are employed as relational investment into a joint attack on the common enemies of Biafra – the Nigerian government, Hausas/Fulanis or, in some cases, Yorubas and Igbos identified as saboteurs.



**Plate 4.4. BiafraTV news on Nnamdi Kanu and Nigeria**

The image is a screenshot of a Facebook post from the page 'Biafra TV' (@biafratv). The post features a video thumbnail showing two men in traditional attire, one wearing a white turban and the other a red vest with a Biafra TV logo. The video has a play button icon overlaid on it. The post text reads 'Biafra TV was live. 22 hrs · 🌐' and includes a link to the video: 'https://m.facebook.com/story.php... inauguration of the warrior zone 18'. Below the video, it shows '1.4K Views' and interaction buttons for 'Like', 'Comment', 'Share', and a profile icon. At the bottom, there are icons for Facebook and WhatsApp with the number '58', and a dropdown menu for 'Top comments (unfiltered)'.

**Plate 4.5. BiafraTV news on Ipob inauguration**

A7 is around another news item from *Leadership* featuring the same political character in A3 earlier discussed. An interesting contextual picture arises around this personality and the way the media (which is known to be aligned with his political party) attempts frantically to sell him in positive light as a philanthropist or advocate of peace while the audience perceive him as a fraudulent politician. This clash of perception creates a tension that however results in mock anger and insults rather than emotional outbursts. Most of the posters express a reversion to the comedian context in A3 even when he is obviously being perceived as attempting to buy votes and thus threatening the competence faces of the elders and youth alike. This choice of desirable interpretation from a pool of available ones (Medubi, 2015, Oyadiji, 2016) realigns the audience's processing of impoliteness towards them to a perception of entertainment for them.

#### **4.1.2 Analyses and discussion of findings in A**

Linguistic impoliteness in the form of fellowship face threat combined with an unmitigated competence face threat was set to dictate the tone of A1 as Ikechukwu, the first poster, obviously presenting self as male fails to respect the female gender – first by referring to them in the stereotyped term “naija girls” and then associating them with call girls who prioritise money over love. There is however a tone negotiation effected to signal a positive intention with which the post should be interpreted. First, his graphological manoeuvre of writing the next statement in all caps portrays a voice representation style akin to a mixture of laughter and talk causing the sound to be louder. Secondly, this modification is strengthened by deliberately committing a grammatical blunder which has been known as a cliché in jokes and comical acts of all sorts in Nigeria “LOVE IS IMPORTANT BUT MONEY IS IMPORTANTER”. The jocular effect of this strategy is immediately observable, generating seventeen likes 🍌 and emojis including the popular teary-eyed laughter 😂 which have been observed to feature in highly fun-filled online conversations. Further probing revealed that ten of those who liked and laughed are female members. The attempt at camaraderie is met with a similar strategy by Christian James whose riff is enveloped between two LOLs. His decision to reply in pidgin, his use of textese “u” and other markers of a relaxed tone and carefree language use capture the friendly atmosphere that had been negotiated. Hence, an impolite interpretation cannot be imposed on his seemingly impolite verbal expression “lol ”importanter” guy you don

craze finish. Lol”, rather it sounds even more polite in this context than ‘you are funny’ or ‘May I say I find that funny?’ (Locher and Watts, 2005).

Success Chinyeremugo’s sticker (plate 4.6.) has the capacity to be interpreted as derisive laughter at the character in the news. However, its presentation as a reply to Ikechukwu’s post rather than a separate post enhances a quick trace of turn-taking to the post as an expression of enjoyment of the post alongside the other members in the thread. Yet, if it were taken as derision of the character in the news, it still qualifies as competence face observance given the desire of the poster in the thread to create humour from the news anyway. Taken together with the next comment by Idris, the reply gives approval to the poster’s ability to create humour as a jovial person and stay within an acceptable level of politic behaviour while little or no premium is placed on the truth factor of the post.



**Plate 4.6. Laughter meme as politic behaviour**

Rapport management and face-loss repair features prominently in the maintenance of the friendly tone in the interaction and prevent degeneration to an impolite exchange. An obvious attempt to sound funny is processed as impolite by a member due to a lack of conformity to negotiated verbal code and tone. Succeeder Adebajji's attempt at a joke is perceived as impolite majorly because it fails to recognise the use of pidgin. Contextually, it comes across as a form of fellowship face threat and Chase Lane's ire is obviously based on this failing as he posts a competence face threat at him to condemn his attempt at trying to sound linguistically superior. Yet, Chase Lane's reprimand is mitigated through indirectness and further humour. First, rather than condemn Succeeder's error directly, s/he simply points it out and creates a signal for further jokes to other members by asking whether the actor whom Succeeder had claimed to have sent him money also sent him a good dictionary and some English textbooks. A direct face threat could have simply condemned the error and resort to name-calling rather than ask questions. The questioning strategy comes across as a relational investment to open up the possibility of a response, a change of behaviour by the targeted poster or further mockery by other members. Through this, strategy, further friendly banter is generated as the thread is extended by eleven replies including graphicons showing emotions like mock surprise and laughs.

The first reply observes Chase Lane's competence face by praising its effectiveness in attacking the poster while the next reply by Darling Chris is a face loss repair mechanism deployed to save the poster's face by employing two strategies. First, his use of pidgin seeks to restore the relaxed tone that is heating up. This reversion to pidgin can also be taken as a covert signal to Succeeder to identify the source of his face loss as his attempt to switch the conversation to an acceptable linguistic code. Secondly, he observes Succeeder's competence face by validating his joke "Abeg the comment funny I'm laughing" thus drawing attention to the joking essence rather than the linguistic infelicity and its pragmatic effect. By lining up behind the victim who is increasingly becoming isolated and endangered in the thread, Darling Chris offers a sign of friendliness which emboldened the victim to counter his detractor with more competence face threats as he belittles him and retorts that he is "nothing" 'according to his profile'. Restoration of friendliness would however take deeper strategies and an agreement to return to the earlier negotiated politeness as Christian James negotiates a topic change. By directing attention to the pidgin expression "kukuma"

used by the victimised poster, this reply both foregrounds the poster's unrecognised attempt to comply with the tacit pidgin rule as well as create an avenue for relation through efforts to unravel the meaning of the word. The diversion of interactional energy to the resolving of "kukuma" seemed to force the contentious Chase Lane from the thread while the rest explain the word to one another in polite manners.

Udobia Salome's comment in another thread brings a polarising factor to the surface by indirectly implying that the character in the news have her followers divided – while some believe that she only looks good due to her boyfriend's wealth, others disagree. However, her direct question should rather be interpreted as a relational strategy to generate discussion. She employs sufficient signal that her question is not rhetorical by ending it in ellipsis and thus graphically imitating voice trailing off as if to pause for reactions. The first reply by Pweedy Queen demonstrates an intention to be polite by latching on to its friendly tone and further deepening the interaction by asking questions of her own. First, her reply recognises the poster's competence face by agreement, and then it extends to potentially recognise the female members' faces by expressing the ability of ladies to live fine without relying on their male partners' wealth. By answering Pweedy Queen's question also, the next reply by Cynthia Ezekiel observes competence face while agreeing tacitly to the slight topic change it negotiates. The continuous cycle of likes underlines the interactional success of the thread and gives a picture of the role of politeness in rendering the whole interaction a friendly and sustained one.

Other comments in the interaction, part of which plate 4.7 presents, maintain this predominantly polite tone by observing the competence face of the supporters of the character in the news through agreement. However, rather than argue that she does not spend the man's money, others argue for the appropriateness of spending it with recourse to the custom of the characters' ethnicity which allows people who have children together to share resources. Others employ politeness by creating further humour for members by role-playing the other suitors to the character in the news while portraying the real boyfriend as an intruder. Cases of impoliteness towards the news agency also count as politeness strategies in this interaction because it sits well with the members whether it questions the news-worthiness of the report or accuses the agency of stirring up hatred for an innocent lady. Ever May's post for instance

suggests a topic change as a way of condemning the worth of the news. Her attempt to bring up an even more ridiculous topic demonstrates her attitude to the present news

“is that supposed to be a news...  
Pls how is bobrisky?  
I have missed him”

Rather than processed as an attack on the members’ intelligence, the post is perceived as an addition to the joke and fun-poking created in the context and is thus approved by eleven likes and laugh emoticons. Babalola Jogunomi’s retort is an addition to the funfair as he brings a connection from the real-world context between the musician’s new girlfriend and the present discussion. By emphasising that the one in question has a child for the musician, he underlines other members’ approval for her right to spend the money.



Plate 4.7. Sample joke-depicting exchange

Plate 4.7 taken with other comments reflects the jocular tone of the interaction. Eberechi's threat to the character's competence face by accusing her of jealousy or Dopexencial's direct face threat are both modulated by the laughter emojis which signal their intention as jokes while other members join in the joke by liking or adding laughter emojis. Bright Ndubuisi's meme is a friendly dismissal of the members' gossip as he plays the role of the spoilsport to send them scampering home.

A2 takes an even more hilarious form as the members form a team of fun-poking opponent against the character in the news whose purported quoted speech is reported in the news post. The news agency is not spared in the mockery and snide remarks. Irrespective of the gravity of linguistic impoliteness used however, the level of conviviality among the members maintains an upward move towards acceptance of one another's politeness behaviour. While Ikechukwu's first comment, like in A1, resembles a fellowship/competence face threat to the female gender as the post "Nigerian girls can do anything for ego (money)" seems to suggest, its selected import by members replying him, female inclusive, is that the character in the news is too unworthy of the 'feat' arrogated to himself. The comment thus comes off as a face observance to ladies given that a man is criticising another man as ugly and undeserving of 'beautiful' ladies. It generates eight friendly responses in the form of LOL, replies displaying an exaggerated statements of how funny the post was ("laughing my balls out"), laughter stickers and laughing face emojis with one 'like'.

The next comment by Ikechukwu Ebubeogu takes a similar pattern of covertly poking fun at the ladies to please the men while threatening the competence face of the character in the news to please the ladies at the same time. His use of pidgin represents an additional strategy to further negotiate a fun-filled context while his writing comment style mimics a live comedy show by his introduction of a dramatic style. Finally, the capitalisation of his last sentence is a graphical demonstration of laughter mixed with speech thereby modulating the intonation to reflect a loud joke

The amount of likes and laughs accentuates the appalling success of this relational strategy as many recognised tools of competence face observance including non-verbal digital tools mentioned earlier are deployed to approve the joke (see plate 4.8).



Plate 4.8. Laughter as tone-agreement and politeness strategy

This friendly and fun-filled atmosphere is further heightened by Carson Adeshi Jnr whose comment would have been processed ordinarily as an impudent and impolite criticism of an elder's looks in another context. In this environmental context however, where age, social status and even decorum seems not to matter anymore, the comparison he draws between this ugly character and a past Nigerian president is taken as humour for which he generates approval by twenty eight likes and laughs as well as fur replies observing his competence face on their comments. Memes are particularly deployed as tools for recognising competence face in this interaction.

A topic change introduced by Osaze Duke served the analysis to identify another defining dimension to the nature of these friendly interactions. The members are observed to be less concerned with the actual content of the news. Rather they seek to find and maintain the fun and laughter. Hence, there is little or no resistance to topic change negotiation in most friendly interactions because these are netizens in search of entertainment rather than information. Osaze's unrelated joke in this instance receives twenty-four likes and laughs with four replies in agreement to the hilarious tone used.

Face loss repair and rapport management however also comes into play in this interaction. BaHecca Dununn's post in plate 4.9 is processed as impolite and is widely flamed by some members while some agree and approve of the move. Having been friendly and politic so far, the impolite detour was traced to identifiable factors retrievable from the context. Firstly, Bahecca's comment has come in the form a flame rather than a joke as observed in the tone of her post. This is made even further evident by her failure to post in the language of the community (pidgin) and the attendant relaxed tone. Rather, her post carries a tone of serious anger and attempt to sound 'correct'

**Ванесса Филипп** She must be Blind and very very stupid, even with your money ladies will still not offer you sex, you are too ugly. Like · Reply · Edited · 20

^ Hide 30 Replies

**Chinonso Precious Onovo Mumu** Like · Reply · 2h · 4

**Emjay Shakur** Shut up Like · Reply · 2h · 1

**Johnbull Ogunike** No body ugly my sister. Like · Reply · 2h · 1

**Muhermmerd Syed Hanty** as long his money is handsome,na hin matter!! Go follow fine broke ass nigga na.. Like · Reply · 2h · 1

**Asiwaju Ahmed** I had to check your dp to see who was calling someone else ugly and to be honest with you, I'm totally disappointed. so you can open your mouth and call someone ugly ah I blame Mark Zuckerberg Like · Reply · 2h · 10



Like · Reply · 2h · 10

**Lekan Snigo Brown Egbeniyi** Nothing feels heavier than your legs when escorting an ugly girl from a compound house after chopping her. Like · Reply · 2h · 11

**Mohammed Abbas** Legends will relate Like · Reply · 2h

**Yusuf Abdullah** My bro.... Nasooo, u go be like I forgot something at om jare or I forgot to close the door.. Legends are u with me Like · Reply · 1h · 1

**Okechukwu Sijmple Onyeloiti**



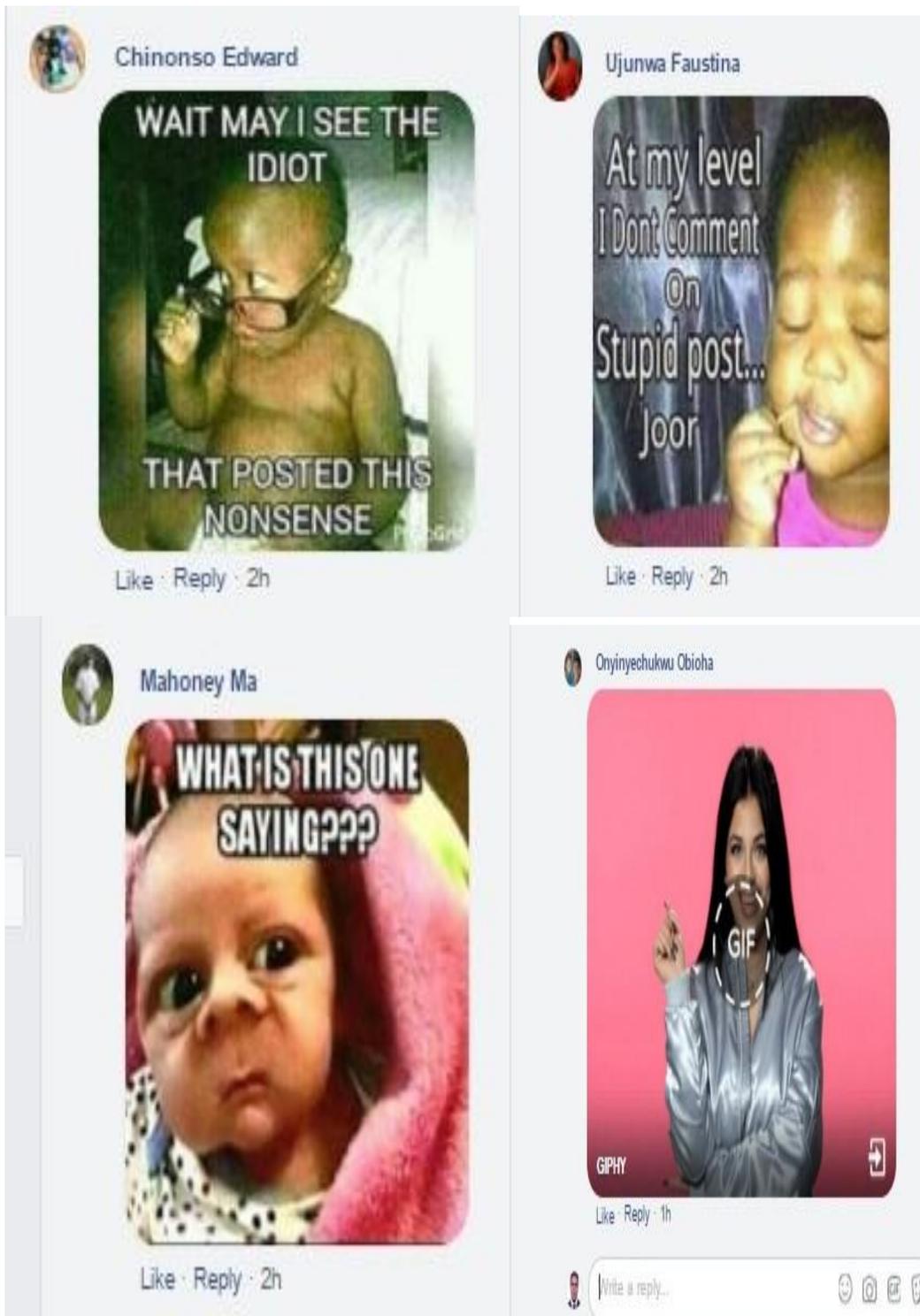
Like · Reply · 1h

**Ahaji Tribills Çhrşıkégó** My son not all Breasts You See Standing Are Standing on their own. Some Are Using Crutches Becareful child. Like · Reply · 1h · 1

**Ahaji Tribills Çhrşıkégó** But you no know say she ugly Like · Reply · 59m

**Mujoh Anthony Goddey** I dey tell you guy...just hola your guy make una escort her together.no be only me go shame the shame Like · Reply · 35m

Write a reply... 😊 📷 🗨️ 🐾



**Plate 4.9. Meme as tone-switch strategy and impoliteness tool**

The members' expression of intolerance for the post can therefore be further seen as a demonstration of desire to keep interaction at the sustained tone and tenor and reject anything that threatens it. Relationally, the flames at this post generates more approval (forty-three likes as against the post's twenty eight) than the post itself showing the members investment in maintaining the tacit rule of 'decent' fun. Polarity can also be identified as a factor for the perception of impoliteness in this thread. Interestingly, all twenty eight likes for BaHecca's post came from female posters while forty-one of the forty-four for the flames were by male members. There thus appears to be a tolerance for male members attacking the character that is male and less leeway allowed the female members to do the same. A quick scan of the emojis threw up the demography of the posters liking and it was found to be surprisingly along gender lines. Further, all the posters mocking BaHecca's looks were revealed to be male at a quick check of their profiles while they also mentioned checking BaHecca's profile to determine that she is ugly and therefore unqualified to criticise the movie star.

It could be further observed that the intensity of the criticism played a part in the processing of BaHecca's post as impolite given her gender (and probably looks). It would therefore take an admission of ugliness (self-face threat) to observe the other posters' competence face and achieve community face recognition (Nwoye, 1993, Scollon and Scollon, 1991). Johnbull Ogunmike's replies also helps save her face by linking her fellowship face need to the group's competence face need. First, he addresses her as "my sister" thus extending an invitation to the group as well as signalling the group on how to treat a member. Then he suggests a correction that the other members would find polite by saying "nobody ugly". This strategy is followed up by Mohermmerd Syed's suggestion to her on a different perspective to looking at handsomeness and thus avoiding a clash with men. He also employs the tool of endearing term by addressing her as "hanty" (some Nigerian netizens' social media term for aunty). Bros Felix attempts a different strategy by attempting to achieve two things. First, he covertly redraws a new context from which the poster is operating – being Ghanaian – and therefore tolerable if she does not understand the Nigerian culture. Secondly, he offers her self-effacement as a face- saving mechanism. It is instructive to observe how Bros Felix's 'impolite' expression 'someone with bad mouth...you know how naija people be' is yet not attacked but accepted as politic behaviour given his gender and context of use. In other words, Nigerian men know

they are ugly and rude and can laugh about it but would not have a woman or outsider say it to their face. Polarity is largely an unavoidable factor in accounting for the perception of politeness behaviour as who a poster is and where they belong determine what they are allowed to post.

In spite of the flame war, the desire to continue to relate and keep the interaction alive can be traced directly to these strategies and indirectly to other strategies like mentions and questioning. In a reply to Prince Ekene Okpalaugo's reply for instance, Cynthia Christlike jokingly asks where he was coming from while mentioning his name. She uses the tone modification strategy of laughing faces to highlight the jocular tone of her question while in another reply poses another question to clarify the extent to which the detractors see their victim as ugly. This strategy tries to defuse tension and return the thread to a polite banter. Likewise, Owolaye Oluwadarasimi negotiates a topic change through a joke to douse tension and bring the thread to a less tense end.

Another supposedly female poster in the next thread launches a tirade at society for devaluing sex. As the analysis of the previous thread demonstrates, processing this post as impolite relies on the interlocutors' assumption that she was female as reflected in the reply "My sister what is so special about sex?" The riff was not meant as a question obviously but an expression targeted at threatening the competence face of the poster. However, the poster's clarification of his gender as male forced a renegotiation of the context within which the poster is then adjudged as not impolite. This signalled an hitherto unnoticed (or ignored) gender disparity and antagonism with male posters' mockery of female posters repeatedly processed by male posters as polite, however, the retention of humour as a relational strategy kept the interaction from devolving into an unfriendly one. Lekan Shigo Brown's post for instance highlights the targeting of women as the butt of the jokes with his post expressing the shamefulness of being ugly as a woman (leaving men out) while referring to the sexual act in a manner that causes a face loss to the female partner.

The free and unchallenged enactment of face threat towards the female members by this predominantly male group can either be attached to a fear of flame war by female members or a lack of desire to fight since they are enjoying the jokes. Also, as observed elsewhere in the analysis of other interactions, advertisements are seldom

processed as disruptions to the interactions and therefore do not appear impolite. Four pieces of advertisement by members in four separate posts are featured in this interaction. Yet there is no demonstration of intolerance towards such members. It can be inferred that the space is seen as nobody's space and thus there is a tolerance for everyone to exploit it unmolested. Further, this lack of interest in the adverts can be traced to a lack of relevance to the members despite the use of conspicuous screaming capitals, pictures and even audio modes.

Other threads in the interaction may be categorised as face threat targeted at the news agency. Given the context portraying the agency as a 'bedlam', such face threats are not considered as being so inappropriate. Two factors mentioned earlier have justified the appropriateness of jocular face threats and mockery at the news. In fact, it adds to the fun. Kenneth Nwadike exploits this contextual factor when he adds to the fun by comparing the news item with "tales by moonlight" and "aproko". This, like most other jokes are enacted in memes that portray the farcical quality of the face attacks. All the memes are aimed at portraying the news as laughable and childish.

While A3 also shares the foregoing patterns and strategies, it is set apart slightly by its unique context. While 1 and 2 naturally tended towards friendliness and sustenance due to a pervading feeling of fun and entertainment set in the news item itself as well as the nature of Yabaleft as an entertainment news agency, A3 belongs to hard news. Readers of Leadership newspaper, as demonstrated from offline newsstand experiences, seek information and are often found to be eager ready to dissect opinions and share thoughts either by arguing logically or by attempting to rudely impose their perspectives on others. Such expectation is more concretised in the light of persistent disagreement offline occasioned by the diversity of attitudes expressed by the netizens and news readers towards the governing political party and incumbent administration which seem to be a carry-over of the country's volatile political atmosphere since the 2014 transition period.

Nigerians themselves acknowledge that Nigeria is a deeply religious country which yet is bedevilled with an unacceptable level of abject poverty as a result of years of corruption coupled with neglectful leadership. Canvassing for prayers as a remedy to the problems of the country is thus likely to be derisively laughed away. Such an appeal descends deeper into the realm of the ridiculous when it emanates from a

personality who has been touted as the face of that corruption by large sections of the mass media among which are those loyal to his political party. A re-negotiation of the socio-relational context therefore begins to emerge based on this narrative. Put more succinctly, the interactants in this group perceive one another more as a united people seeking to agree on or justify one another's perspective on the report and the government. Conversely, they see a point of convergence for themselves as group of concerned citizens who are here united in derision and laughing to scorn the 'jester' in the news by collectively enacting FTAs at him.

The FTA in Ebredeni Ebiegberi's comment in plate 4.10 is to be interpreted in the light of both an invective and an insult. He distances self from the opinion of the person in the news while negotiating what would become the opinion of every interactant in the group. "*Idiot...thunder for you.*" The co-interactants find this communicative behaviour easy to accept for two reasons: first the character in the news has a tarnished reputation, unlike other funny characters in A1 and 2, he has actually offended the members in their imagination of his person. Secondly, the use of pidgin by members and embedded sarcasm gives it a humorous colouration. Relational investment in this post thus supersedes the face threat which the verbal expression might pose. It thus enhances its politic assessment by other interactants.



**Plate 4.10. Derisive laughter as face threat and group solidarity marker**

Every interactant commenting in this thread agrees with and recognises Ebredeni's competence and fellowship face. Olohunwa Owolabi recognises the post as ingenious much in the same way Peace Ngozi's comments with a sticker signalling the comment's overall effect interaction. This serves to highlight the tacit rule that retrieves the perception of camaraderie and politeness from seeming linguistic impoliteness. In this connection, majority opinion commands acceptance and agreement rather than the character in the news or his supporters who are who get neglected in the scheming of the interactional contract.

Although, Danladi Dutse comments a rather emotional outburst graphically represented by his all caps scream thereby presenting itself as a departure from this rule and undermining the camaraderie so far established in the interaction, yet, he sufficiently agrees with the previous poster's idea thus providing his comment with sufficient mitigation to render it appropriate. Further, the next move by Seyi Oguns creates a reconnection between the interaction and the jocular tone through established. This is achieved by jokingly mimicking a newscast style. Basically, the poster intends is to evoke a parallel re-imagination of the sadness and interruption of Nigeria people's happiness by the 'Nigerian' news. By so doing, Seyi achieves a repositioning of the earlier interruptive post as a normal phenomenon which connects ultimately with the pool of jokes. In another sense, Danladi's post can as well qualify as a joke in its own right considering the interpretability of the all-caps strategy as graphical depiction of laughter rather than anger.

Subsequent posts conflate competence face threats to the news character with fellowship or competence face recognition towards co-interactants. Adeniran Omo for instance addresses the senator as "bros" as a way of downgrading him down to the street-level comradeship which fits perfectly within the interaction's context as the community here does not honour him as a senator but scoffs at his bad attempt at a joke as a prankster.

Although the interaction does not feature as much smoothness in its interactional pattern as A1 or A2, its observed longevity, minimal flame war and sustained face among interactants indicate friendliness occasioned by the application of politic behaviour. While stalkers and other silent participants may hold opinions which conflict with the popular opinion and could thus have threatened this pattern of

politeness, yet, they refuse to express them and make their behaviour count for the effectiveness politeness rule negotiated in the interaction.

The virtual community gathering around Biafra TV generated A4, A5 and A6 although the interactions are around different news item. While A4 is anchored on the picture story of the popular arrowhead of the Biafran struggle in a 'Nigerian court', 5 and 6 depict the congregation and motivation of supporters to pursue the Biafran cause. Another interaction depicts the inauguration of a propaganda machinery known as "warrior units" in Biafran parlance. Solidarity among the interactants is observed as the commonest strategy deployed to recognise face. The strategy is employed through a multiplicity of patterns ranging from choice of indigenous Igbo words and expressions, a trance-like, praise singing and worshiping style of interaction, and the use of common lexical terms from the Biafran micro-cultural context. Among Biafran expressions most observed in the interaction are "zoo" as label for Nigeria, "Shalom" as a greeting form associating Biafra with Israel, and mentions of the locations in the diaspora from which many of the posters are contributing to the conversation. The persistence in interactants' mention of diaspora location is interpreted after careful observance and research as validating the Biafran narrative of Jewish roots. The strategy therefore serves to underscore a sojourner status in other lands which for the purpose of this study is interpreted as face observance to the community. Jews were first dispersed into the world and became a Jewish diaspora which was persecuted all over the world before their return to their 'promised land'. Even though this Israeli roots narrative is found objectionable by some community members, there seems to be a largely positive attitude towards it as it represents a metaphor for Biafrans persecution and 'imminent exit' from Nigeria to their promised "Republic of Biafra". The prevalence of solidarity easily mops up any expression of disagreement. Therefore, there exists an exaggeration of a sense of politeness and agreement with behaviour in these.

Laughter and likes do not feature prominently as politeness tools in the present interactions as the other friendly groups. Nonetheless, individual comments are linked all to one another in terms of recognition of fellowship face. As a consequence, the group members form a unified group in support of the Biafran leader featuring in the news. This interpretation supplies another angle in the interpretation of camaraderie in

virtual interactions. In contrast to Yabaleft or such other online newspapers dealing with entertainment news and thus attracting fun-seeking audiences who share funny comments and well-mannered banter, Biafra TV features a community imbued with 'serious' colouration as it was designed to show solidarity to a cause outlawed by government of Nigeria (rightly or wrongfully) and whose proponents have been jailed or alleged to have been murdered in their numbers.

Thus, the most prominent tools of politeness in this group are not laughter, jokes or back-patting as observed in the other friendly communities. Politeness and a friendly atmosphere are achieved via vociferous and almost ritual-like expression of group solidarity and hatred towards a common adversary. The approved hatred enacted towards the enemy is majorly achieved through criticism, name-calling and other forms of competence and fellowship face threat. Irrespective of the subtle configuration of the community as English-based (the videos and pictures posted as headlines use the English medium), Ekene Ejiro feels relaxed and at home enough to post his entire comments in Igbo: a move which would have come across as potentially polarising and therefore unacceptable and impolite in a culturally heterogeneous context. That no interactant criticises the move is testament to its acceptance into the group's norms. In fact, how more of such instances dot the interaction would help the study conclude that the group has a mono-cultural setting where unilateral selection of indigenous language and other Biafra cultural enactments are not only acceptable but desirable.

Eugene Ohakamma's comment in plate 4.11 observes the fellowship face of the character in the news. Although dropping the leader's title could be interpreted as face threat within the Igbo cultural context, but the environmental context of Facebook chat which demands verbal economy and spontaneity renders such a need for long titles superfluous and unnecessary. Beyond that, the context of hyperspace significantly weakens the expectations of deference to age or other forms of asymmetry in social status given the scant contextual clues provided about the character. Compared with Sampeace Brown's comment therefore, both comments pass as equally acceptable and polite.



Plate 4.11. Back-patting and agreement as marker of politeness

Fellowship face recognition is also featured in Bernard Eric's post. He observes the group goal and sufficiently commits to fulfilling it. Bringing up instances of reports in 'Nigerian' newspapers' about the heroic exploits of the Biafran leader, he accentuates the groups' sentiments and by so doing contributes sufficiently to relational investment in the interaction.

Almost like a continuation of A4, A5 displays the same strategies and patterns that rendered A4 friendly. The self-reply of this news agency to its own post as captured in plate 4.11 further validates our assertion about the close-knit formation and homogeneity of the community. The sole purpose in the group is to enact solidarity towards one another and forge a common front in the pursuit of a common goal rather than a convergence of people who might express divergent opinions on issues in some online news. The agency's self-reply is observed to be crafted in Igbo thus deliberately negotiating the tone for the interaction. The interactants as expected heap accolades on the Biafran agitators in the news referring to them as sons of God and great men in the indigenous tongue and spirit.

Linguistic impoliteness targeted at the Nigerian state and President Buhari is at the same time couched as face observance strategy towards the group in as much as the group is favourably disposed to such comments. Ezekwesiri for instance in plate 4.12 enacts group solidarity by performing distancing, both on behalf of self and community, from Nigerians and the Nigerian government who in the Biafran consciousness are cowardly and stupid.



**Plate 4.12. Attack on common enemy as group solidarity strategy**

The strategy underlines the tripartite deployment of politeness identified by this thesis. First, it is deployed face recognition, secondly it is deployed to negotiate interaction and finally (conversely too) it is deployed to achieve face threat. Interestingly, interactants in this interaction achieved outright linguistic politeness via choice of verbal code given that all Igbo expressions used are targeted at performing politeness while English expressions are preferred for the performance of impoliteness. Examples of such polite Igbo expressions are glossed below.

Nwa Chineke – Child of God

Umu Chineke – Children of God

Chinemeem – My ‘Chi’ helps me

Chukwu Okike – God almighty (bless you)

Odogwu Nwoke – Great man

In A6 parts of which are presented in plate 4.13, Anthonia Emezu seems to be attempting to mitigate autonomy face threat while seeking information. Her attempt to generate a *tete-a-tete* however fails and she seems to readjust her interpretation of the rules in the interaction by recasting her question, after almost an hour of waiting, in an even more ‘linguistically polite’ manner. One can argue that Anthonia is struggling with the tacit rule of interaction here, as she mistakes the friendly tone for a possibility of enjoying some personal conversations. She might also be seen as operating within a personal frame of politeness rather than the one contextually accepted. Though she got a relevant response by from another poster, it is observed that she fails to generate a chat since that response was not posted as a reply to her post and it comes almost two hours apart. The posters silence thereafter demonstrates an eventual recognition of the rule – person-to-person interaction is not considered necessary for social cohesion and sustenance of interaction in this community. Rather, a mono-directional interaction between the group and the news agency as a symbol of the ideal Biafran nation is encouraged.



**Plate 4.13. Mono-directional interaction with news agency**

This pattern can also be traced into Adolphous David's and Gerald Ugochukwu's posts (plate 4.13) where failure to generate responses does not translate to ostracism but a signal of the rule of self-effacement in deference to the need of the group's image to prevail. This is best explained as similar to a worship centre or a rally where person-to-person chats would be considered as distractions and unnecessary especially as each participant is expected to either be paying homage or listening to the priest/speaker.

The pattern of these interactions can be juxtaposed with the pattern in A7. Whereas friendliness in the earlier interactions have been expressed either through shared jokes, mockery of the news agency (and the characters in the news) or praise of the news agency and the characters in the news, A7 achieves friendliness more by the reversed pattern of disagreement with the news and its characters in order to agree with participants in the interaction. The difference is especially pronounced by the tone of the disagreement. Majority of the posts display a lack of tone modification and outright threat to competence face in expressing the posters perception of the news and some people at the receiving end of the messages. Such people include the political leader reported in the news, the kings who are being paid by the leader as well as the entire people of the state concerned.

Olaide Oriole whose comment in plate 4.14 is placed immediately closest to the news post fails to mitigate their face threat directed to the electorates in the political leader's constituency as he describes them as hungry people whose votes are always bought. They threaten the leaders face as well by implicating him as a corrupt politician whose electoral victories are only based on rigging. Interestingly, they threaten their own face by identifying with the population of sheepish followers whose voting pattern is dictated by money. However, by encapsulating a condemnation for this evil act in the post, the poster supplies a unique context within which the post is to be explicated. One, the Nigerian socio-political context demonstrates the helplessness of the masses whose only way of expressing disgust at the rot in the system is to say "this is not new!" Also, the environmental context is being perceived as appropriate for expression of bottled up anger which has hitherto been impossible to vent in the real-life context. It took the observance of validation for this post by a number of participants who liked it and replied to arrive at the

interpretation that it is viewed as an acceptable form of behaviour in the interaction. While TonyBasic Okpunwa's comment even goes ahead to supply examples of how the alleged evils by politicians are not new, Barr Julius accuses the leader even more directly by attaching his 'philanthropic gesture' to a perceived specific selfish goal of winning the next election.



**Plate 4.14. Agreement-induced insults as group-solidarity and politeness tool**

Face threat has become the implicitly adopted principle for the interaction and other posters can be seen performing as expected. The exception would be an attempt to direct such threat at a participant in the interaction which would be frowned upon as a negation of the popular opinion of the community. The rules are generated around an ideal of co-suffering which is expressed in different ways throughout the interaction. Omokunrin Naa for instance delves into the leader's history to validate the accusations against him by revealing how his father was notorious for pocketing traditional rulers financially. This is an exacerbation of the FTA when placed within the context of Nigerian cultures where insults to a person's parents (or ancestors by extension) are considered the worst form of insult and cause of face loss. Yet, Omokunrin's behaviour is acceptable in the interaction because impoliteness towards the object of common hatred has been accorded a direct proportionality with politeness towards the participants (the group). Audu Ajayi's comment is interpreted within this frame as well. He agrees with the designation of the beneficiaries as hungry people while his choice to scream in indigenous codes from two languages from North and South serves to further deepen the strength of the FTA and enact inter-ethnic unity in the condemnation of the political leaders ("barawo" and "ole" are Hausa and Yoruba words for thief respectively).

Impoliteness is also targeted at the news media which has a reputation for portraying this politician in positive light and which is considered as a face threat to the participants in this interaction. Most of the FTA in this category, expressed in memes and stickers, are given a rather less angry tone while employing more of mockery to portray their view of the news as ridiculous, time-wasting or needless.



Plate 4.15. Perception of ridiculous news as factor for (im)politeness

The interpretation of face threat in Moshood Olanrewaju's meme in plate 4.15 is located in the Nigerian working class/students psychology where Mondays are sacred and any waste of time is a sacrilege. Thus, the agency's attempt to waste his time with this news is attributed to a bucket of 'shit' holding him down. Meanwhile, Ajayi Kudos emotional state – unconcerned and relaxed, and Eddie Greene's laughter portray their attitudes to the news and the agency behind it.

For type 2 politeness (Eelen 2001), several strategies are involved in the interaction to demonstrate face observance when the interaction is examined from an entirely etic research perspective. Such strategies include likes, verbal agreement through reiteration of others' posts and sometimes meta-statement of agreements by posters. For instance, Hammed Olaide's comment in plate 4.16 is repeated and validated in others' comments in the interaction while Asiwaju's comment and Lagbaja's reply to it are also in accord on a topic.

 Hammed Olaide Asiwaju if ik pay 4hundred m is aware money collect it ok  
Like · Reply · 20h · Edited

 Asiwaju Busari Shaamsuddeen Akande Is he the Governor? Rubbish.  
Like · Reply · 19h

 Lagbaja Omo Tamedun I tire ooooooooooooo  
Like · Reply · 3h

 Elder Christian Chioma That's Buhari's, Nnia Nwodo's and southeast governors wickedness.  
Like · Reply · 8d  2

 Kachi Eze na so, no peace and there will be no peace  
Like · Reply · 5d

 Abdullahi Yusuf They only collect what is actual belong to them nonsense  
Like · Reply · 23h

 Peter Abioye Yoruba says, "Owo Abu le fi ns"Abu lalejo?  
Like · Reply · 20h

#### 4.16. Mono-directional engagement of characters in the news with face threat

Lagbaja's reply does not only agree with Asiwaju but also demonstrates a level of emotional involvement beyond merely answering the question through the use a textual equivalent of the interjectory emphasis marker common in face-to-face talk carried on in informal Nigerian English.

A8 employs much the same strategies and is reliant on much the same rules as in A4, A5 and A6. The character in the news has expressed what all participants in the interaction desire as a group thus raising expectations of approval and further validation of his statement by the posters as presented in the second part of plate 4.15, in an almost absolute contrast with the first part,. Politeness and friendliness therefore is based on the compliance of interactants with this rule. Yet, there is an allowance for impoliteness as an alternative as long as it is directed at any outside agent holding any principle that negates the ideal of the community. Given its perception of itself as the maligned minority, an aggressive behaviour from its members towards the enemy is considered as empowering and therefore acceptable. Thus, Elder Christian Chioma's comment perfectly fits within the context of acceptable behaviour like the other seemingly impolite post by Kachi Eze.

Also, directly observing the character's competence face, as explained earlier, forms a major feature of the interaction. Enyioma Eze and four other posters observe the character's competence face by associating him with ideals that have come to be associated with the Biafran movement – truth, intellect, soundness, royalty and trustworthiness while other posters perform the same act through expressions of good will and prayers. Others similarly enact theirs via the use of honorific “sir”. The pragmatic implication of this tool is further highlighted when compared with the use of “bros” for a senator in A3. Deference is employed here as a tool of politeness to demonstrate the credit apportioned to the character's verbal expression as well as the illocutionary force behind it.

In A9 impoliteness and superficial appearance of unfriendliness is contextually re-examined to reveal implicit friendliness and politeness. While the newly-promoted head of the house in the reality show reported in the news may have her detractors in the audience, there is sufficient evidence of relational investments that demonstrates that the interaction is carried on without real obvious tension that threatens its breakdown. The instances of arguments are imbued with elements of make-belief

which mimic the show itself, thus pointing as anger and heated arguments as fun and acceptable patterns of behaviour. The very first thread can be observed as displaying a flame war. However, it would be far-fetched to argue that the respondent who brings in the flame was reacting to an autonomy face threat by the poster who had made an effort to campaign for another housemate (who would turn out to be the eventual winner) to win the show other than their favoured character in the news (notorious for having verbally attacked the eventual winner). Firstly, the post demonstrates sufficient hedging and mitigation that neutralises the linguistic interpretation of impoliteness into the post. Secondly, the configuration of the interaction allows for free expression of support for any candidate. Thus, her response is hard to explain as a reaction to face threat. Rather, it is more of acting the role of an insulted fan whose hero is also known in the reality show for outbursts of anger and rude remarks. Whether npocTo BukTop's bald on record face threat is directed at the poster or the respondent does not matter as the interpretation of the intention remains the same. It is a continuation of the politic banter that has started. By and large, the absence of evidence of serious antagonism in the tone of the thread validates the interpretation of its context.

 Louisa Edet This is Captain Miracle Igbokwe. A 23 year old calm, calculated, handsome gentleman. He needs your votes to win the Big brother naija reality show. Please SMS VOTE Miracle to 32052. May God of miracles meet you at the point of your needs.



Like · Reply · 19h

 Просто Виктор U 're crazy and mad. Let such miracle locate u and ur family alone.

Like · Reply · 19h

 Louisa Edet Просто Виктор. Bad belle will not kill you. Idiot.

Like · Reply · 19h

 Doo Timbir she is likely to work away with the 45m....that's the beauty of having connections with the host of big brother....

Like · Reply · 21h

 Kunle Ogunleye You get it

Like · Reply · 20h

 Desire Egwumba If God says yes for ceece no man can say no. If God be for her who can be against her? Free this daughter of Zion.

Like · Reply · 9m

**Plate 4.17. Disagreement as face threat to extratextually-located interactants**

Almost in a similar manner, though slightly open to different interpretations, Doo Timir directs a face threat at the organisers of the show by accusing them of bias towards the character in the news see (plate 4.17). This would also be taken as a face threat at the character as he questions her ability. Also, this post can be taken as threatening the fellowship face of supporters of the character. However, the acceptance received by the post demonstrates a different perspective. For one, it fits within the frame of the interaction as a playful demonstration of antagonism towards a character (after all, that's the beauty of the show), also it seems to embody the belief of a majority of the members given the like and reply that it generates without any contrary opinion. Although comments like Desire Egwumba's express contrary opinions in separate posts, they do not carry sufficient face threats to be considered as capable of breaking down relations in the interaction as their point imbue the character with God's favour and providence rather than merit. Besides, the post carries enough jocular tone to portray it as intended to banter politely rather than to argue vehemently.

Further into the comment, a pattern of acceptance of impoliteness demonstrated at the character is found. This strategy is similar to those observed earlier in other interactions albeit at varying level of seriousness. Each post that posts disagreement and competence face at the character is observed to get a like while such is rare for those recognising her ability to win fairly. Also, advertisements are largely ignored in the interaction as observed in other interactions. The space is considered free for all.

The last interaction in this category shares the same context with other Biafra TV-generated interactions. However, the presence of a numerically negligible number of posters from a different cultural background proves enough to generate a slightly different pattern. While the other interactions are carried on as single posts in the worship-like pattern devoid of distractions, A10 displays instances of threads generated through argument. However, the strength of the rule of interaction seems valid enough to obliterate the effect of the distraction and return the interaction to the accepted pattern. While the Biafrans agree with the news post for a referendum, Sazky Monsuru Seun ridicules the proposition in his reply to Emeka Prince in a move that is considered impolite. Emeka's post in plate 4.18 contains an unmitigated face threat directed at perceived saboteurs (and possibly non-Igbos in Nigeria) as the

identified common enemy. The post sufficiently demonstrates the posters' (and of course the participants') schema regarding the demography of the interaction as he directs the message to Biafrans.

 Emeka Prince Piccolo · 22:01 Any elder or boy or girl in all Biafran land that talk about election in 2019 will die by thunder  
'Referendum 100 % all Biafran land . With one voice under the supreme leader of Nnamdi Kalu our only honest leader. We will get it'

 Emeka Prince Piccolo · Sazky Monsuru Seun I didn't curse you mr seun I make a statement that concern only Biafrans not you. Please park well I don't have your time ' as long as the bbc igbo speaks my language and talk about my people I will tell them what thee need to hear' so don't exchange words with me because you will not like my mouth 🗨️ ' please stay on your lane

Like · Reply · 2d  1

**Plate 4.18. Solidarity in face-threat to a common enemy**

As a vocalisation of the desire of the group, this move is acceptable behaviour and discursive politeness is observed especially as it deploys the plural pronouns “we and our” to enact his identity with the group and emphasise the collective drive of the group. However, to the outsider that Sazky is, it contains a self-face threat to the poster. This interpretation of Sazky’s is reflected in his reply “keep cursing yourself.” However, Emeka’s response demonstrates a relational strategy of secluding the outsider by further deepening the expectation of ethnic delineation of the community to remind him of his status as an unwanted outsider. It also portrays observance of fellowship face toward the other participants as the group he identifies with. Interestingly, Sazky’s like for the reply demonstrates an acceptance of his status and thus triggers a re-imagination of his earlier comment as an error based on lack of knowledge of the rules guiding the interaction. His behaviour can therefore be adjudged as polite.

Similarly, Chinwike Clifford appears to have posted a face threat to Nzaako Ezieke by challenging his ability to meaningfully contribute to the Biafran struggle by remaining in Taiwan as he posted. However, his membership of and identification with the community should rather help to interpret the reply as an expression of concern for the progress of the struggle rather than an expression of desire to pick a fight.

On a macro level of analysis, the posts are either praising Biafra, Biafrans and the Biafran leaders, and mentioning the far-flung diaspora locations from where each poster is posting (a tool earlier explained as politeness behaviour) or finding a common enemy and directing unmitigated face threats towards it. Through either strategy, group solidarity is achieved and the sustenance of friendliness is guaranteed. In conclusion, enactment of solidarity and group-patterned behaviour demonstrate relational investment and help to guide the explication of friendliness and sustenance in the interactions.

### **4.1.3 Summary**

The list below provides a summary of the findings in the group:

- 1. Factors responsible for the negotiation and processing of politeness behaviour**

- A. Environmental context:** The analysis establishes that the environmental context dictates the negotiation, and more importantly, processing/perception

of interactants behaviour as polite. Most prominent elements of this factor are topic and participants. The group demonstrates a number of facts in this regard.

- Light topics usually about entertainment or characters whose acts are considered trivial or inconsequential are found to generate friendly and sustained interactions. Such topics and people are usually associated with little or no emotional attachment and emotional outbursts are rare.
- Fun-seeking, companion-seeking and other kinds of participants whose desire is for the phatic aspect of communication rather than the rhetic (to learn from or influence others) generate friendly and sustained interactions.

**B. Socio-relational context:** Tete-a-tetes, multiple likes and laughs and repeated echoing of ideas and agreement form the pattern of interactions where the participants either share a common socio-cultural background or similar intention for joining the interaction. There is therefore little suspicion of attempt to dominate or terminate others.

## 2. Politeness strategies

Strategies employed to achieve politeness include:

- i. Fellowship face observance towards individual members through tact, approbation and agreement
- ii. Fellowship face observance towards the group through solidarity
- iii. Competence face observance
- iv. Competence/fellowship face threat towards a common enemy

These strategies are usually deployed via the following **tools:**

- Use of suitable honorifics, titles, and endearing terms – sir, mazi, brother, my sister
- Code choice: Use of indigenous language, pidgin language to enact group identity or create and subscribe to a relaxed tone of interaction

- Tone modification: graphological manoeuvrings like ALL CAPS, graphicons, meta-comments of tone, misspellings for emphasis and ellipsis
- Enactment of fellowship through culture-specific choice of words and formulaic expressions like “zoo”, “shalom”, “hail Biafra”, “watching from Taiwan” etc.
- Use of likes, funny memes, riffing, meta-statements of exaggerated laughter, LOL, GIFs, Stickers etc. to observe competence face

### **3 Relational investment and rapport management strategies**

Rapport management often becomes necessary in events of misconstructions of intentions. Strategies including self-face repair and other-face repair are found quite relevant in this connection. Among the prominent tools are topic change and self-effacing. Most often, members of the communities negotiate and invest in the sustenance of interaction through strategies of questioning when desirous of generating responses and seldom resort to trolls. Questions sometimes also demonstrate a desire to gain more information on the content or rules of the interaction or to identify the source of a conflict. At other times, questions are used as tools to divert participants’ energies from heated arguments to the unravelling of a concept. Manipulations of the graphology also signal relational investments. Often, participants seeking responses use ellipsis to indicate turn-taking signals while mentions are employed as turn-selection mechanism.

### **4. Response to impoliteness**

This interaction features mostly cases of rapport management and avoidance as response to perceived impoliteness rather than retaliation or flaming. Here, participants are found attempting to save the faces of targets of FTAs by expressing comments containing the FTAs in more polite manners or attacking the source of the FTAs. Some attempt to save their own faces by rephrasing their comments or deliberately threatening their own faces. This is a distant call from group C and D interactions where response to FTAs is often flaming. Impoliteness cases are seldom

directed at group members but more often directed at agents outside the group and most often in forms of mockery rather than anger.

#### **4.2.0 Group B interactions (Rather unfriendly yet sustained)**

Although labelled as ‘unfriendly’, the interactions in group B presents as, relatively, clear leaders in terms of length, interactive/interpersonal nature and numerical representation in the sample population, forming forty-four per cent (44%) of the entire population. While the analysis already contains details of the factors accounting for their prevalence, sustenance and sheer length, the factors responsible for the “unfriendly” tag (albeit on the surface) are detailed presently below.

- i. The group B interactions feature the highest volume of flame wars and trolls.
- ii. They feature the most finely-split ideological opinions, identifiable ethnic, religious and sociocultural polarity and expressions of intolerance towards opponents.
- iii. They feature the highest occurrence of FTA-posing memes, derisive laughter, and graphics expressing anger.
- iv. They feature the highest volume of foul language and memes depicting violence posted by participants (Facebook, in fact warns about a number of the memes for which the researcher had to accept responsibility in order to have them viewed on his screen)

Aside these factors, there is a common denominator of factors in these interactions. All of them are generated by news posts categorised as hard news, especially politics and security matters. While there are eleven interactions in the group, four are linked to political issues, two are connected to security matters, another two are about education and youth development, while the last three revolve around health, entertainment and religion. In an interesting dimension, the news item described in this group as entertainment news actually has a political background to which the participants’ interaction is more tailored. This adjacent claim throws up a prima facie assumption with which the study runs, that conflict unfriendly interactional pattern is characteristic of interactions where interactants exhibit polarity especially when such splits are along socio-political, sociocultural and ethno-religious lines.

#### 4.2.1 Contextual mapping of B

The image is a screenshot of a Facebook post from the page 'Sahara Reporters'. The page header shows the name 'Sahara Reporters' and a search icon. Below the header, there are navigation buttons: 'Liked', 'Following', 'Share', and a three-dot menu. The post itself is from 'Sahara Reporters' and is dated '28 July 2017'. The post text reads: 'Five Killed In Fresh Boko Haram Attack On Borno Village | Sahara Reporters <http://bit.ly/2eT99LX>'. Below the text is a video thumbnail showing three men in military-style clothing and balaclavas. The man in the center is holding a blue folder and making a hand gesture. Below the video, the post text is repeated: 'Five Killed In Fresh Boko Haram Attack On Borno Village | Sahara Reporters'. A short paragraph follows: 'At least five villagers have been killed and many wounded when Boko Haram terrorists attacked a village in southern part of Borno state yesterday, vigilantes...'. The website 'SAHARAREPORTERS.COM' is mentioned at the end of the text. At the bottom of the post, there are interaction buttons: 'Like', 'Comment', 'Share', and a profile picture icon. Below these buttons, it shows '583' reactions and 'Top comments (unfiltered)'. On the left side of the screenshot, there is a sidebar for the 'Sahara Reporters' page, showing the profile picture (a black square with 'SR' in white and an orange bar below it), the name 'Sahara Reporters' with a verified badge, the handle '@ReportYourself', and a list of navigation options: 'Home', 'About', 'Photos', 'Videos', 'Subscribe', 'Posts' (highlighted), and 'Community'.

Plate 4.19. Sahara Reporters news on Boko Haram

B1 is around the news presented in plate 4.19 and pertains to security. Politics and ethnicity however became the major points of departure among the participants. Hardly a matter to joke, mock or laugh about, the Boko Haram menace has been reduced to an object of joke in this conversation owing to the citizens/netizens' views regarding its handling by the Nigerian government: most specifically the administration of president Buhari whose campaign during the presidential election was based on the promise of an immediate decimation and annihilation of the terrorists and had just been elected almost for the same reason. The loudest voices in the interaction belong to the participants who are disgruntled and, for reasons which may be linked to the terrorism problem or more, are agitating for the secession of the Eastern part of Nigeria to form 'the Republic of Biafra) as a remedy to the 'lies and deceits' that characterise the Nigerian state. Aligned on one side are the Biafran proponents whose behaviour tends towards mocking the Nigerian army, government, the government's supporters, especially the perceived Northern Nigerians in the interaction, who are perceived to be the president's constituents and by that token find it insulting to treat Boko Haram as a joke. The other side of the alignment is constituted of the people just described and some perceived members of the ruling party irrespective of ethnicity or geo-political zones. This alignments therefore fragments the responses in the interaction: some responses focusing the issue as reported, some targeting Boko Haram, some focusing Nigeria and the Nigerian government and politicians, while some are actually directed at the dissenting pro-Biafran agitators.

Other than the binary split along ethnic lines as indicated in their names (real or role-play) and linguistic behaviours especially word choices in particular, this interaction features clearly no reference to age, status or other indicators of a/symmetry in power relations that might significantly require some pragmatic attention.

The portraiture, in plate 4.19, of Shekau heavily-armed and flanked by two even more heavily-armed terrorists in a picture occupying the foreground with the hated and dreaded black Boko Haram flag in the background creates a gory impact coupled with the headline and constitutes an integral part of the environmental context (Neuliep, 2009). Also, the socio-relational context is related to the perceptions of the interactants about other interactants' cultures and attitudes to Boko Haram and the Nigerian government in a two-fold configuration of perceptual stance.

YabaLeftOnline.com  
1 hr · 🌐

Age is No Limit: 25 year old Nigerian Lady bags a PhD at Covenant University. (photos)

25 year old Nigerian Lady bags a PhD at Covenant University - YabaLeftOnline

A 25 year old Nigerian lady, Chiamaka Deborah Motilewa has been awarded a PhD degree at the Covenant University, Otta making her the youngest PhD holder to be...  
YABALEFTONLINE.NET

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👍👎👤 910 Top comments (unfiltered) ▾

10 shares

Write a comment...

**Plate 4.20. Yabaleft's news on young PhD at Covenant university**

B2 is generated by a news item on an educational issue in Yabaleft. Given the predominance of Yabaleft news in the A category of the data, the inclusion of this interaction here calls for a deeper attention to the factors leading to unfriendliness. Most predominantly, the Nigerian cultural context is exploited to give a clue to the unfriendly atmosphere. Basically, the item of the news presented in plate 4.20 taken with its opening caption “Age is no limit” contains a potential threat to the competence face of community members above the character’s age grade while pursuing lower degrees. As retrievable from some of the posts, part of the face loss is caused by the news agency’s failure to question the ‘real age’ of the character in the news as well as the academic standard of the PhD awarding institutions before condemning others for not bagging their PhD at 25. In Nigeria, it is often found offensive to measure people’s achievement by their age as people often find myriads of reason to justify their ‘late academic achievements’. Most blame it on economic factors while most blame it on the structure of their academic institutions. The socio-relational context also churned up interesting factors coming into play in the conflicts. Perceptions about gender, marriage, economic power as well as attitudes to education and attitudes to academic standards in Nigerian universities form crucial points of difference which remained largely unresolved in the interaction. Rather, members subscribing to opposing ideas align to observe one another’s face need thus using politeness and impoliteness in a bi-directional pattern to please and offend as well as prolong the life of the interaction. This primarily underlines the designation of the interaction as sustained. Besides, attempts are made at rapport management and face loss repair which have opposing posters reunited at different junctures and thus contributing to relational work.

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12 April at 14:51

<https://leadership.ng/.../2019-pdp-chairman-charges-youths-t.../>

2019: PDP Chairman Charges Youths To Take Over Mantle of Leadership – Leadership Nigeria Newspapers

...accuses APC of dividing the country with sentiments Ahead of 2019 general elections, the National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Prince...

LEADERSHIP.NG

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101 Top comments (unfiltered)

**Plate 4.21. Leadership’s news on PDP chairman’s charge to the youth**

B3 is generated around issues of politics in *Leadership*. The news is presented in page 4.21. Like other news items around politics, with the exception of A3 and A7, it features unresolved polarity along ethno-national and ethno-political divides. With recourse to the cultural context, the character in the news is ethnically related to the past Nigerian president from the Niger-Delta region, an ethnic group often viewed with suspicion and possibly irritation by Northern Nigerian groups to which the present president belongs. Further, the characters' political party lost the presidential seat in the last election to the ruling party but has been acclaimed to be rallying strongly to regain power in the next round of election. These considerations form a large part of the socio-relational context as we have community members who simply see other members in the light of opponents bent on destroying the APC/North or the PDP/South as the case may be. Like other interactions in the B group, expressions of impoliteness form the largest part of the content and these are taken as tools for advancing talk as well as prolonging the life of the interaction long enough for ideas to get exchanged. Attempts at face loss repair are interspersed along the threads as found in strategies used to draw the interactions back from mere insulting language to rational arguments.



**Sahara Reporters** ✓  
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**Sahara Reporters**

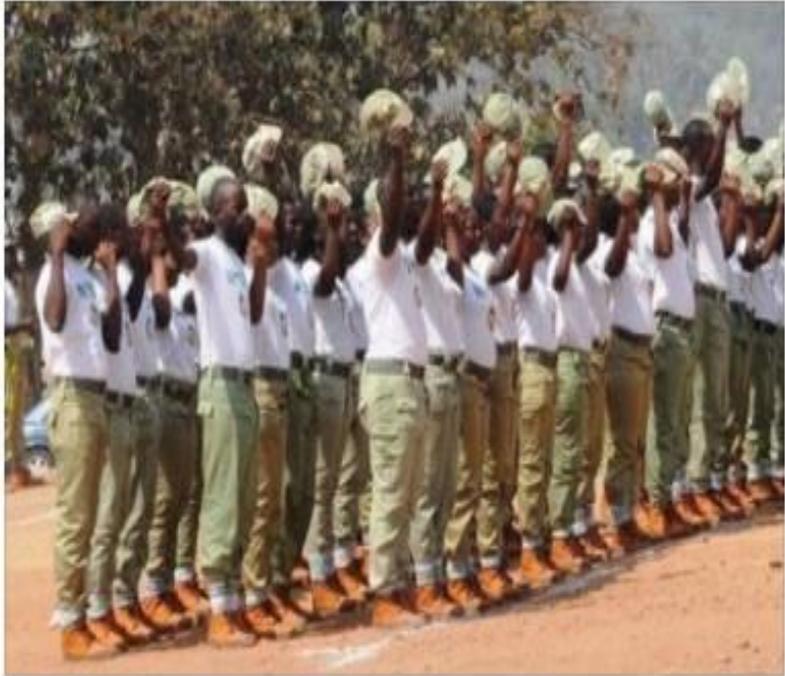
12 April at 22:08 · 🌐

...

### NYSC To Draft Corps Members To Farms

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), has revealed its plan to include farming and crop production as part of the one-year primary assignment for corps members starting from next year. Mr. Bello Ballama, NYSC FCT Coordinator, revealed this while speaking with journalists in Abuja on Thursday.

READ MORE: <http://bit.ly/2EGOpOA>



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💬 Comment
🔗 Share
👤

👤👍👎 414
Top comments (unfiltered) ▾

249 shares

**Plate 4.22. Shara Reporter’s news on NYSC and farming**

B4, another fairly long interaction is generated by a news report in Sahara Reporters about the National Youth Service Corps' proposal to post graduates to farms for their youth service see (plate 4.22 overleaf). The news item poses an interesting contextual question. While education or seems to be the topic in the background, participants in the discussion are overtly negotiating a discussion of politics and security. Given the context of culture, most farms with commercial capacities are located in the Northern and Middle Belt regions of the country which have been reported to be ravaged by armed groups like Boko Haram and Herdsmen in recent times. In most cases, farmers and their farms have been reported to be the targets of these groups while the massive kidnap of women and young ladies are usually the high points of such reports. Hence, the fear expressed by some members validates the emotions underlying their reactions in the interaction.

The socio-relational context thus reveals different shades of perception based on polarity of ideas along religious groups, belief in or scepticism about a conspiracy theory, support for the government and the policy in question and other ideas. Despite the lack of large scale flame wars or a consistency of heated exchanges, this interaction is tagged as unfriendly on the strength of a sheer amount of differing opinions expressed without concern for face (especially gong by the tones). Unlike in 'A' interactions where anger is directed only at a common enemy to enact group solidarity, anger here is expressed in several directions including towards the community members who hold conflicting opinions.



YabaLeftOnline.com

8 hrs · 🌐

...

"Biafra is a fraud, it was in the mortuary, but now in cemetery" — Igbo monarch



"Biafra is a fraud, it was in the mortuary, but now in cemetery" – Igbo monarch - YabaLeftOnline

A traditional ruler from Mbaise in Imo State, Eze Nwabueze Soronnadi Ezewiro, has dissociated himself from the struggle for Biafra, an agitation he described as fraud...

YABALEFTONLINE.NET

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💬 Comment

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👍👎👤 874

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88 shares

Plate 4.23. Yabaleft's news on Biafra as fraud

B5 is a fairly long and equally unfriendly interaction in *Yabaleftonline*. The data provided significant justification for much of the conclusions reached about the impact of heterogeneity on the performance and perception of politeness behaviour. Though dealing with an issue surrounding Biafra as seen in the headline in plate 4.23, unlike other such news, it generates an unfriendly interaction because of the heterogeneous nature of the community. The supposed Igbo monarch's sub-ethnic group has been found to carry the stigma of being connected socio-politically to the Northerners and the Monarch's state is the only Igbo state governed by the ruling party. Also, Yoruba people are often imagined by Igbo Biafra proponents in the light of the historical roles played by certain prominent Yoruba leaders in scuttling the first Biafran secession move. Stereotypes also exist in the country among the ethnic groups who tag others with negative acts like armed robbery, ritual killings, Boko Haram, Islamic fundamentalism, cowardice and treachery among others. The socio-relational context of this interaction thus becomes clear enough to understand the negotiation of politeness behaviour as well as its processing given the ideological fragmentation of the community vis-à-vis the volatility of the issue in the news. Flaring of emotions is the expectation. The emotion flaring summed up with several observed rapport management strategies to varying effects are cited as factors aiding the sustenance of this very unfriendly interaction. Trolls are apt as explanations for the longevity of the interaction as well; the different sub-groups whose community face have been threatened are encouraged by trolls to counter with more face threat as a means to saving their own face.



The Nation Newspaper

...

Yesterday at 10:19 · €

"The imam is not paid monthly. Where would he get the money to be doing that? We try to practice what is possible. So the text message or any other message is not a problem. But I don't think it is necessary," Ahmed said.



### Ghana urges mosques use WhatsApp for call to prayer

In Ghana, mosques and churches are seen to be compounding the problem of noise...

THENATIONONLINENG.NET



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Comment



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121

Top comments (unfiltered) ▾

Plate 4.24. The Nation's news on Ghanaian imam

B6 has a religious dimension to it. Given the religious diversity of the Nigerian population as well as the level of religious intolerance seen displayed in certain spheres of national life, such issue as plate 4.24 conveys already carries the potential for face threat and outright emotional outbursts. By extension, the heterogeneity of this virtual community brings up the expectation of different perspectives to the discussion of the news. Hyperspace is fluid. Thus, a conflation of Ghana and Ghanaians into Nigeria and Nigerians is not much of a surprise. While the physical context of the story is pushed into the background, the participants in this interaction become the Muslims and Christians in question. Ethnicity is also vital to the socio-relational configuration of the context as most Hausa/Fulanis are perceived as Muslim (fundamentalists) while Igbos/Yorubas and other Southerners are perceived as Christian (infidels). Instances of participants steering a middle course in the arguments are seen as face repair attempts. However, fights are already anticipated by the participants and thus impoliteness is found to be more acceptable than attempts at linguistic politeness.



Sahara Reporters

13 April at 19:54 · 🌐

...

### Borno Govt Confirms 3 Dead From Fresh Cholera Outbreak

Borno commissioner for health, Dr. Haruna Mshelia, has confirmed the death of three people in the fresh cholera outbreak ravaging the state. The commissioner disclosed this while receiving the Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus who visited WHO's Emergency and Response Centre on Friday in Maiduguri.

READ MORE: <http://bit.ly/2HnsLEs>



👍 Like

💬 Comment

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👍👎👤 133

Top comments (unfiltered) ▾

**Plate 4.25. Sahara Reporters news on cholera in Borno state**

Much shorter but equally unfriendly, B7 has a similar factor behind the unfriendliness. An issue about the problems in Nigeria's health sector, the participants however end up interrogating politics along partisan and ethnic lines. While *Sahara Reporters* has contributed to the emotional effect of the report on the audience by posting a picture of patients in terrible conditions without adequate health facilities (see plate 4.25), the acceptance of such behaviour is based on audience's perception of integrity in the newspaper. Also, the participants' real life experiences of hospitals around the country create frames that make them able to relate with the perception in the news. There are linguistic evidences citizens' judgement of poor performance by the president who himself is from the North where this outbreak occurred. Critics of the president also attack his ambition to re-contest as they link it to his inability to concentrate on the present problems. For such critics, the ambition of the president is fuelled by his supporters who in their perception are represented by the Northerners in this interaction. This explains the socio-relational configuration of the interaction where most of the posters are in direct opposition to the pro-Buharists.

**SR** Sahara Reporters is with Shuaib Jamiu and Dorothy Nyabam. 24 September 2014 · €

Denrele Addresses [Charlie Boy](#) Rumors

TV Personality Denrele sits with SaharaTV's Fatima Sesay to give an exclusive account of the controversial images circulating on the Web of he and [Charlie Boy](#).

WATCH HERE..... See more

Like Comment Share

309 Top comments (unfiltered)

**Plate 4.26. Sahara Reporter’s news on Denrele and Charly Boy’s ‘gay’ relationship**

B8 from the same newspaper as B7 is long, interactive but equally unfriendly. While entertainment can be said to be the background of the news, it is obvious that sexuality is a volatile issue in the Nigerian space as it raises a lot of moral, religious and political questions anytime it is discussed. With the Nigerian government's anti-gay law in effect, many of the participants evoke the law as a panacea to this 'evil' reported in the news while many resort to spiritual tones. However, cultural context plays a role in the community as most of the harsh comments are directed at the older of the two characters who is expected to be more careful in his social activities given his age. Likewise, the incumbent president at the time comes under fire as his administration has already come under heavy criticism its alleged weak front against corruption and impunity in the country. While fellowship face is largely observed among community members here, there is a level of multi-directionality of impolite behaviour that disqualifies the interaction from being considered friendly. The picture posted by the newspaper (plate 4.26) for instance is perceived as autonomy face threat to some members who react with competence face threats to the writers apart from many other FTA going to the president, the characters in the news and other characters. In fact, many posters perceive the news as false and thus a threat to their competence face. This dimension is responsible for FTAs among interactants in the community as those who believe the news feel their face threatened by those who do not. Others simply consider the obscenity posted as a threat to their face.

 Leadership Newspapers  
20 hrs · 🌐

<https://leadership.ng/.../theresa-may-urges-nigeria-other-co.../>



Theresa May Urges Nigeria, Other Commonwealth Countries To Legalise Same-sex Marriage – Leadership Nigeria Newspapers

LEADERSHIP.NG

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 69    Top comments (unfiltered) ▾

**Plate 4.27. Leadership’s news on Theresa May’s LGBT advocacy**

The decision to include B9 in this group was however more difficult than for the other interactions for significant reasons. It features very minimal instances of face threat among participants. Conversely, there is a palpable sense of solidarity among participants who employ strategies of language enacting solidarity and collectivism – using first person plural pronouns and frequently evoking the sense of Nigeria and Africa as one united entity against homosexuality. However, two factors which cannot be discountenanced set it as unfriendly. Firstly, the interaction features a significant level of tacit attack on the person of the Nigerian President whom other characters support. Secondly, unlike in group ‘A’ where the attack on characters in the news are marked with largely hilarious tones, the interactions here exude more serious tones that reflect emotions closer to anger and hatred than ridicule or mockery. The cultural factor of context plays much the same role as in the last interaction and is presumably deeper here given the character of the Prime Minister as a woman while most of the posters are male. Nigeria meanwhile was experiencing series of security threats, and this accounts for the shades of opinion expressed against the relevance of the president’s visit via-a-vis the plea of the British Prime Minister posted in the news presented in plate 4.27.

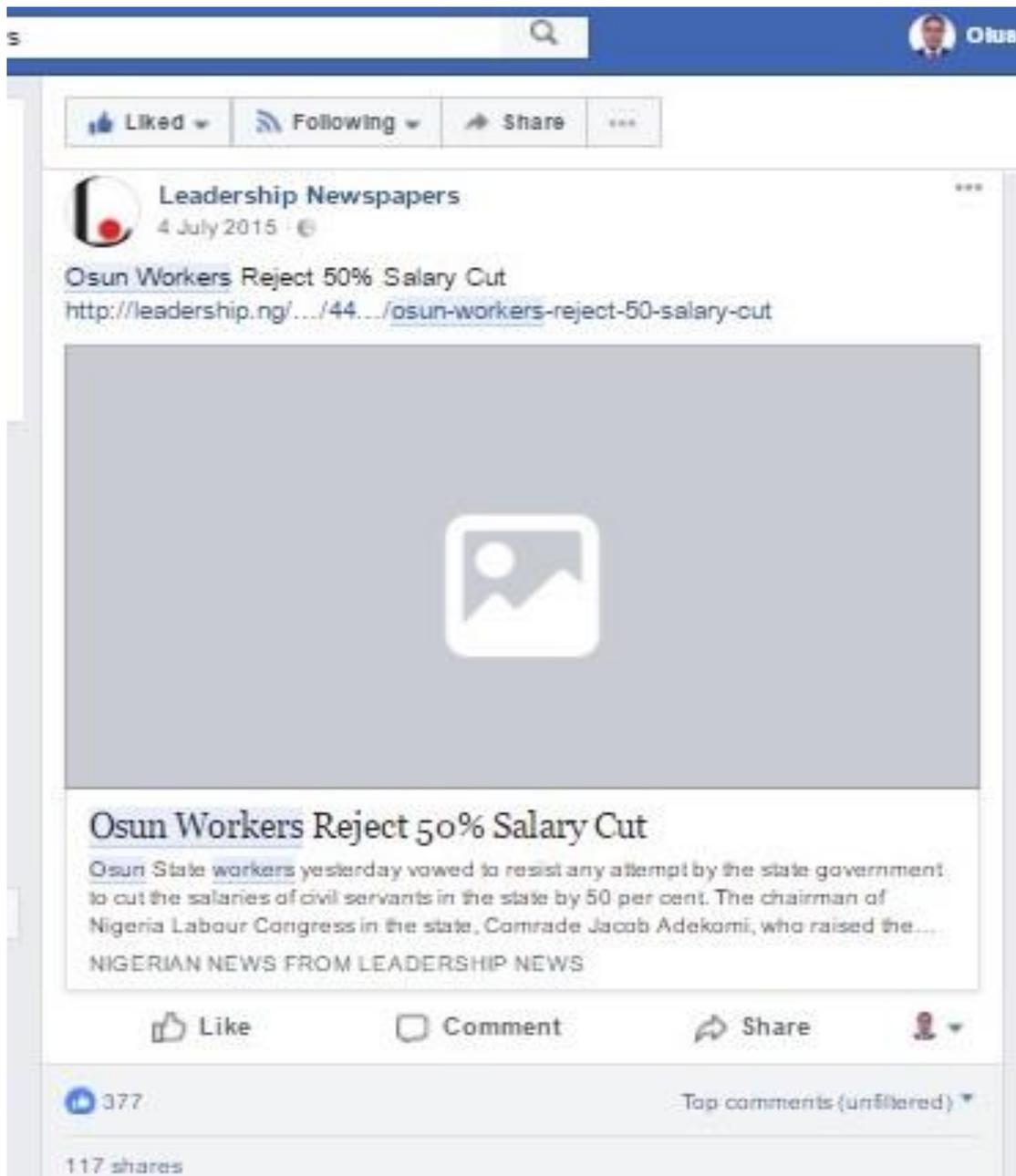


Plate 4.28. Leadership's news on Osun workers salary cut

B10, a reaction to the news presented in plate 4.28, like other interactions is best explicated against the background of its socio-relational context. The participants are not only incensed against the governor who is perceived to be behind the proposed move but also against the people of the state who are blamed as complicit in the election of the governor. Finally, while some participants try to exonerate the governor by providing different interpretation of the story reported, others consider their interpretation as an affront on their own interpretations. There is also a need to pay attention to the groundwork of the dispute which can be claimed to have been laid by the newspaper's deliberate use of ambiguity to provoke discussions. While the news report is about a proposed 50% pay cut, there is no clarification on whether it affects the civil servants or public office holders. Like B9, majority of the impolite expressions are targeted at the governor and the Osun State indigenes who are incapable of responding while most of the posters share a common front. However, the harshness of the tone without significant signal at interpersonal rapport characterise the interaction.



Leadership Newspapers

· 12 April at 04:16 ·



<https://leadership.ng/.../muammar-gaddafi-trained-armed-kill.../>



### Muammar Gaddafi Trained, Armed Killer Herdsmen – PMB – Leadership Nigeria Newspapers

President Muhammadu Buhari said yesterday that the killer herdsmen who have been responsible for the wanton killings in Nigeria were trained and armed by the late...

LEADERSHIP.NG



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Comment



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202

Top comments (unfiltered) ▾

**Plate 4.29. Leadership’s news on Buhari’s position on killer herdsmen**

B11 is largely explicable against the background of the Nigerian real-life context of culture. President Buhari has come under fire for his tendency to blame external factors for the many problems confronting the country three years into his four year tenure. General anger is directed in impolite ways at both the character and participants who support him in the interaction.

#### **4.2.2 Analysis and discussion of findings**

Conflict and disagreement, rather contrary to expectation, drive the flow of the interactions in B1. The exchanges display a glaring case of neglect of face needs and flout of what would count for Sociopragmatic Interaction Principles in a face-to-face interaction. Nonetheless, sufficient evidence persist of instances of members who find one another in agreement and alignment sharing mutual observance of competence and fellowship face and by that token provoking the interactants in opposition to their group to counter with more face threats. In the face of a need to respond directly to threats to one's face, this behavioural pattern can be explicated within the purview of this study as observance of both directness which is a second-order Sociopragmatic Interactional Principle and goal achievement – a fundamental Sociopragmatic Interactional Principle.

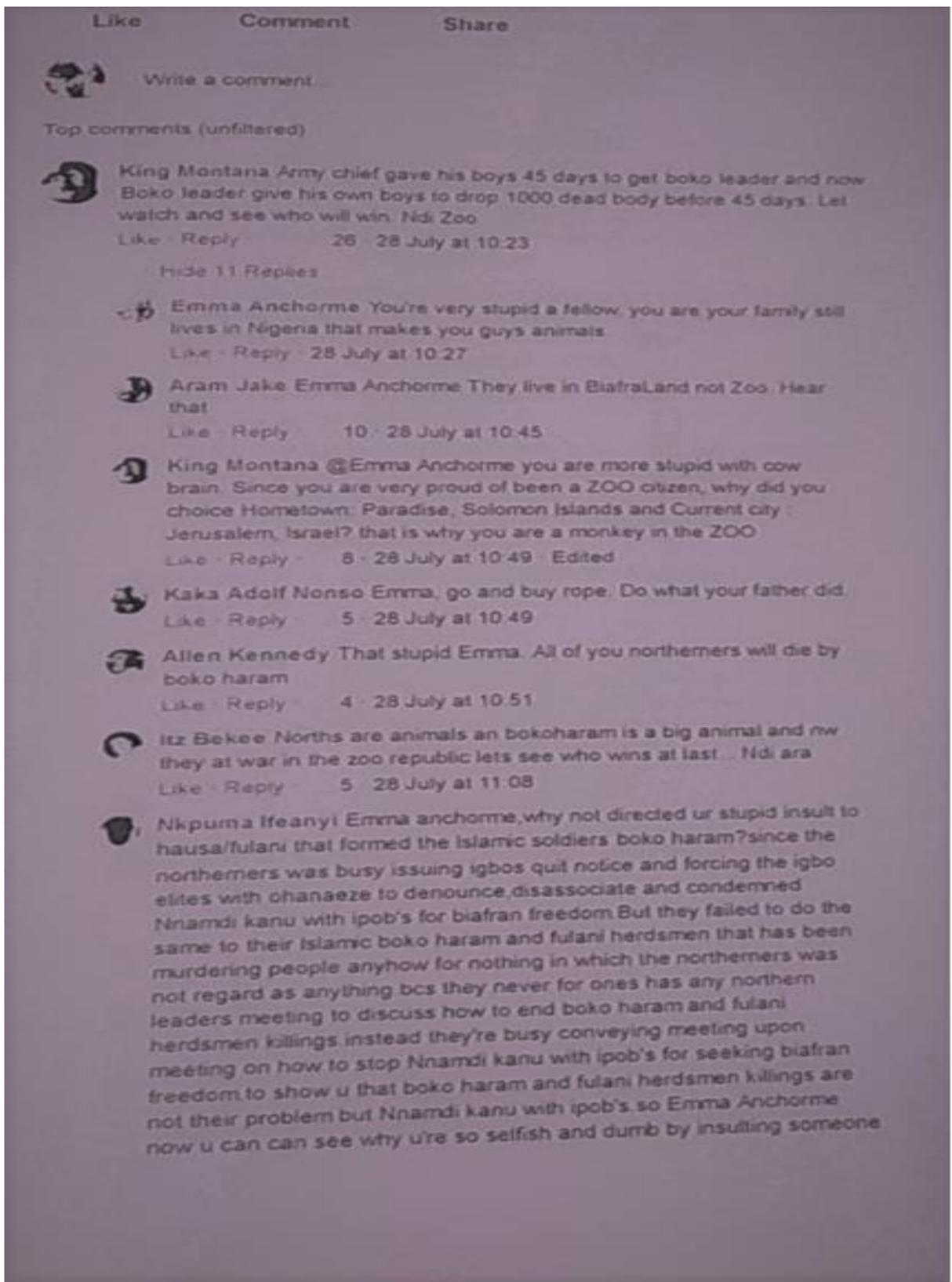


Plate 4.30. Nigerian Northerners-Southerners polarity as impoliteness factor

A direct competence face threat is borne by King Montana's opening comment, in plate 4.30, targeting the Nigerian government and its army as well as anyone favourably disposed to how the government of Nigeria prosecutes its war against terrorism. While this threat can be said to fit the description of directness, in a less overt way it further delivers another fellowship/competence face threat to all 'Nigerian citizens' by labelling the country a "zoo". This explication of the interactants' perception of the "zoo" comment as face-threatening is directly retrievable from the Nigerian political space and its micro-cultural context in which the proponents of the pro-secessionist Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) group have characterised the Nigerian state as a zoo on different platforms. They subscribe to a common dialectic where Nigeria is metaphorically compared to an enclosure where stronger 'animals' are licensed to indiscriminately prey on smaller animals (see also Ugwu Bekee's comment) and from where they must escape being real humans.

In the context of hyperspace, it may be prejudicial or even preposterous to label such a direct threat as this as morally or socially incorrect without a recourse to the higher order Sociopragmatic Interactional Principle of task achievement. In that light, if the comment of the interactant in question is to be taken as a troll, then it must be adjudged as quite successful given the significant return of twelve (12) emotional and sentimental responses which, from this point on, dictate the direction of the ethno-cultural and ideological alignments of members in the exchanges.

*"you are very stupid fellow, you are your family still lives in Nigeria that makes you guys animal"* as posted by Emma Anchorme, accentuates the antagonistic, and potentially impolite, context negotiated by King Montana and interpreted here as a commitment to link up with the co-interactant at the level of conviviality/hostility they have selected for the interaction. Emma can be viewed as negotiating a role with by replying either individually as a citizen of the country being insulted or just a representative of that community. In either role, he has accessed the impolite shade in that comment and is rebuffing by also threatening the King Montana's fellowship and competence faces via a criticism of the logic his comment. In his opinion, King's labelling of Nigeria as a zoo automatically makes him too, as a resident of the country, an animal. Emma's interpretation, though describable as co-operative in terms of relational work, however relies on and aptly reflects a failure to cooperate with the semantic component of the negotiated conversational contract retrievable from the opening

exchange initiated by King Montana. This contract proffers to define of Nigeria as a mental/cultural and geographical entity in exclusion of Biafra, a divergent mental/cultural and geographical entity.

Aram Jake makes an attempt at reiterating this unspoken negotiated conversational contract in his response. Although he remains within the lower-order SIP of restraint while still delivering a competence face threat to Emma, his response bears evidence of sufficient solidarity with King Montana and more clearly accentuates an ethno-cultural battle line along which other members of the community would eventually diverge. A polite and an impolite behaviour collapsed into one expression is observed here as the interactant avoids a direct insult to an earlier respondent (1) but yet recognises their opponent's (2) competence and fellowship face. His veiled competence face threat to Emma's is mitigated through indirectness. It is rather presented as offering a pragmatic repair rather than a criticism of Emma's scanty information or low level of socio-political consciousness. A careful consideration of the timing of this asynchronous chat however would reveal that Aram Jake's reply reintroduced a flame war in the interaction which had been silent for almost thirty minutes and has so far been the longest span of silence observed among the adjacent pairs in the posts.

The micro-cultural context is further more categorically evoked by King Montana who makes a point of revealing his perception of Emma as a polar opposite. Responding with more animal names aimed at him in a direct face threat portrays that Montana has identified Emma as a member of the 'Nigerian' cultural group opposed to the 'Biafran' cultural group. On one hand, the selection of the term "cow" betrays his perception of Emma's cultural alignment. He identifies him with Northerner as Northern Nigerians are often associated with cattle breeding and herding. On another hand, his expression "cow brain" betrays a stereotype about the Fulani subgroup of Northern Nigeria and is here interpreted as a direct threat to the competence and fellowship face of Emma as well as the community face of the Fulanis, the North and Nigeria by extension (Nwoye, 1992). The term 'zoo' forms a background to the explication of impolite behaviour at this point in King's comment, this is achieved through a strategy of graphological foregrounding rendering "ZOO" in all caps and repeated thrice.

King further expresses a perception of Emma as a “monkey”, pretentious and refusing to be identified with its own. His conclusion is made with recourse to the ethnographic factor of “Participants”, which in this case interfaces with the hyperspace context. Most probably, Emma’s Facebook profile (checked by the researcher) which King must have looked up, identifies him as “citizen of Solomon Islands and living in Israel”. This twist throws opens up a new line of explanation in the data analysis with the possibility of considering Emma’s comment as a second layer of troll designed to generate a flame war in the interaction (which has proven to be quite successful so far).

All through thread formed by the replies, only Emma’s fail to criticise the government of Nigeria and, by extension, the Northern part of the country which they perceive as the source of the Boko Haram menace since the president and the culture and communication minister (who is responsible for information management) are from that geopolitical zone.

*“do what your father did”* as commented by Kaka Adolf exploits an “undefined” history beyond the immediate context to deliver a face threat to Emma and his group. The comment connotes a dark history associated with ancestry and sufficiently carries a community face threat aimed at Northerners in the interaction and a fellowship face threat to Emma as an individual.

Ukpong-Collins Akpan in plate 4.31 negotiates another direction in the performance of impoliteness which this analysis has highlighted in a previous section. His own FTA sways from the direction of Northerners and the Northern cultures. Rather, he picks on the Nigerian government. He exploits the non-verbal mode to more explicitly drive his message home with picture portraying all the dead bodies in the Boko-Haram-ravaged battleground as fallen soldiers in Nigerian army uniform.



Ukpong-collins Akpan One horror, too many...  
Let the truth be told, what a demented government?  
Where is Lia Mohammed?



Like · Reply · 37w



Ukpong-collins Akpan Northern elders, Are was youths  
playing ostrich.  
The evil that men sow, live after....  
This is one killing, too many.... See more



Like · Reply · 37w · Edited

**Plate 4.31. Pictures as face threat tool**

In a specific direction, this comment in plate 4.31 appears as a direct rebuttal to *Sahara Reporters'* claim on the number of the dead, showing that the body count is more than five. In yet another direction, the comment directly threatens the competence face of the Nigerian government, hitting hard its style of information dissemination which has been popularly criticised as insufficient and jaundiced. Ukpong-collings exploited the semiotic significance of the wrong spelling of "Lai" (Mohammed), the Nigerian minister of Information and Culture, which he bastardises as "Lia" (to achieve some level of homophony with "liar") as has been popularised in Nigerian online communities. Examined through the lens of relational work, Ukpong-collings's comments could come across as polite if viewed as an attempt to douse tension and shift members' attention from interpersonal conflict to an 'external' entity (the government) in the interaction. This dimension of interpretation will also make the comments admissible as rapport management, especially in the light of the contextual information about the poster (Ukpong-collings profile on facebook reads as someone from Kaduna, a member of the most insulted group in the chat), his comments come across as attempts to restore interpersonal relations as well as to save his, others' and their community faces and redirect the interaction in a more interpersonally polite direction. This rapport management strategy makes immediate impact on the tone drift of the interaction. As a result, there is an obvious respect for competence face concerns permeating the next string of replies save an insignificant number of interactants who refuse to be pacified and thus maintain competence face threat to the Northern community. Even this group refrains from personal attacks which had hitherto been the norm in the interaction.

Chris Favours's comment counts as recognition of Ukpong-collings fellowship face although it would have been taken out of context, as a threat to Collings's competence face. Whereas other interactants are bent on attacking the Northerners, he shares Collings' opinion that all the criticism should be directed at the government. He deepens this detour by pointing accusing finger at the past president (who is a fellow Southerner). His opinion nevertheless throws up some level of disagreement with his fellow Southerners one of whom notwithstanding responds with a mitigated competence face threat by arguing that some past Nigerian leaders founded Boko Haram and that they are Northerners. His comments yet totally steer clear of direct face threat to the Northern interactants. This underscores the claim in this study

regarding polarisation and alignment along cultural lines in the interaction as well as the role of rapport management as a strategy to elongate the life of talk.

The polarisation so observed in the interaction can presents for instance in Chukwu O Chukwu's riff in spite of Chama Joel's rapport management attempt of guiding focus of the criticism away from the North or the government toward the Boko Haram (which generates only two replies from like-minded 'peace lovers'). Chukwu reverts to threatening the (community) competence face of the Northerners again and in the same breath delivering a threat to their fellowship face through the uncaring rhetorical question "*how is it a problem*" (that Boko Haram is killing Northerners?)

Aram Jake attempts to spark a flame war as he did in the first thread. His use of solidarity as face observance contained in the expression "my dear" suffices for the study's interpretation of his stance as agreeable and maybe tolerant of Chukwu's criticism of Northerners. His question can be interpreted as a call for the extension of criticism to other Northern states beside Borno.

Ethnic polarity continues as observed in Obi Victor's comment in plate 4.32 where politeness is manipulated to express impoliteness towards the North. His hash tag [#Istandwithshekau](#) is a direct threat to the Northerners' fellowship face as he attempts popularising a character know for terrorising the North even while portraying them in bad light to the international community. Victor's historical reference and death narrative expectedly provokes another competence/fellowship face threat in the form of a stereotypical insult directed at the Igbos tagging them as 'ritualists', robbers, prostitutes and other unsavoury significations. The responder bases his argument about Obi Victor's incompetence to comment on his micro-cultural perception of him (and all Southerners by extension). For him, 'what they do is no better than terrorism.' Obi Victor's equally impolite and vituperative response further aligns him with the Southern members in the interaction especially through the use of a familiar conceptual signification captured in the word "animal" – 'Nigeria being a ZOO' in their micro-cultural perception.

The major tools of through which threats are delivered to competence and fellowship face in this thread include pictures, hash tag designed to taunt, laughter emoticon and derisive laughter which includes its netspeak equivalents 'LOL' and the exaggerated 'hahahahaha'.

 Obi Victor The blood of the 2 million biafrans is still hunting the north and will never rest untill 2 million northerners are dead. About 600,000 has perished. Remaining like 1.4 million soals. Ride on shekau.  
#istandwithshekau.  
Like · Reply · 37w

 Abdulkadir Umar Arm robbers ar u still open ur mouth 2 comments nonsense kidnappers prostitution bloody



Like · Reply · 36w

 Obi Victor Shut up.shekawu will kill all of una. Animals  
Like · Reply · 36w

 Peter Ononogbo I think APC government told us that Boko Haram has being technically defeated,who is killing these once we have being reporting since yesterday? Let this #clueless and #Failed administration leave #sambisa forest to come #militarize #southeast and south south with #python dance and #crocodile smile.



Like · Reply · 37w

**Plate 4.32. Pictorial, hash-tag and memetic rendition of face threat**

Observance of others' fellowship face helps to achieve passable levels of rapport management and facilitate a 'smooth flow' of talk irrespective of the volatile language use and lack of face observance towards the Northern Nigerians, politicians of Northern Nigerian extraction as well as the Buhari administration. The subsequent thread portrays that the interactants have perceived Southern members of the group as the group's majority who must be placated. They thus pander to their fellowship face by agreeing to blame the emergence and continued activities of the Boko Haram terrorists on the APC and the Buhari government. As expected, this position pleases all thirty-seven members responding. Only Nasiru Hassan attacks Muhammad's role-playing and political identification, which is easily retrievable via implicature, as non-APC. His response neglects Muhammad's fellowship face but fails to generate any response significant enough to disrupt the agreement and rapport permeating the thread in support of the Southerners. The new-found rapport persists beyond Ohams Nnaemeka's had trolled the Hausa-Fulani sub-community in the interaction. More impoliteness was the response towards the North which invariably translates to Southerner solidarity in the group.

The claim about ethnic, cultural and ideological polarity is further underlined after Adeolu Alex Ladimeji's covert threat to competence face of Nwokeocha David about being 'unchristian' for taunting Northerners massacred by terrorists. Three interactants respond by threatening his fellowship face but stop short of the vile language and name calling observed in their behaviour towards Northern interactants. This of the indirectness SIP compliance and face observance pave the way for the study's conclusion that a lower degree of animosity towards the Westerners by the Easterners is observed in this community irrespective of the ideological difference expressed by such Westerner.

Umar A. Abubakar's attempt at dousing tension via two posts successively made to redirect threat to face in the direction of Boko Haram and the army chief rather than at Igbo/Southern members of the community (and the government) is another important attempt to achieve rapport management. However, responses containing further face threats demonstrate that the major tool for the progression of this interaction is impoliteness. The study observes that acceptance of civility and an end to the confrontation might have ended the interaction to an abruptly.

An analysis of the nine-hundred and ten (910) likes and emojis generated by the news post in B2 revealed seven hundred likes 🙌, one hundred and ninety-eight surprised faces 😮 and twelve loves ❤️. All twelve loves were posted by members identifying as female in their profiles, some of who later posted comments and replies in the interactions while others remained as silent members. This initial analysis helped to unlock a number of key issues around the processing of (im)politeness in the interaction. First, many posters are predisposed to maintaining gender biases and thus interpret an FTA into any male poster's post attacking the news. Secondly, although determining through the Facebook profiles of most of the participants was difficult, a rough sample revealed that most of them criticising the authenticity of the post are above twenty five. Also, the posters who seem to perceive as impolite comments advocating marriage (rather than academic pursuits) are majorly female and under thirty years of age.

Most of the exchange of impoliteness in this interaction is towards other posters. And impoliteness here is often used as a tool of prolonging talk. Particularly, its ten threads are longer and more interactive than any thread found in A, C or D. Also, each thread displays a level of topic consistency that cannot be overlooked as each seems to attack the news item from a different but ultimately connected perspective. One can easily argue, consequently, that the interaction has the pattern of a debate where disagreement is the norm rather than an aberration while the issues generating controversy include one or more of the following:

- i. The possibility of bagging PhD at 25 in Nigeria
- ii. The supremacy of marriage over academic pursuits for a lady of 25
- iii. The integrity of the particular university in the news
- iv. The reality regarding the character's age

Aje O.A Romeo had earlier been observed for instance to be reacting with a surprised face emoji. His comment in plate 4.33 helps ultimately to arrive at an interpretation of his potentially ambiguous emoji. While other emojis could be interpreted as actual surprise – meaning a competence face observance – due to lack of sufficient information on the poster's personality, his is an expression of incredulity as his comment portrays. He is thus posting an FTA at the news writer as well as the

character. By implication, it threatens the fellowship face of all participants who have expressed joy at the news. A sufficient amount of relational investment can however be read into this post through its indication of a desire to reason with others despite the poster's personal conviction.



**Plate 4.33. Enactment of group solidarity against news post and extra-contextual interactant**

Although capable of being conversely interpreted as polarity as well, the poster's consistent use of "we" signals an accommodation intention by locating the disbelief in the group consciousness rather than as a personally held view. The success of this relational strategy can be immediately evaluated as it generates the highest number of reactions in the interaction. Jennifer Chiomso's reply is reflective of the trajectory of this analysis by the way it demonstrates the meandering pattern of predispositions of the participants between the poles of disbelief and belief. By replying "I think you are right o", she demonstrates a shift of position from belief to disbelief. Despite having initially threatened the poster with an angry face, her present approval taken with the emphasis marker "o" betrays the factor behind her initial perception of the post as impolite. She simply followed a pattern where female posters attached angry faces to the post because the poster is perceived as a man trying to deny females of their praise. Waliyah Adenike's counter-analysis further exposes this gender polarity that is becoming the factor for processing politeness behaviour. Although managing to avoid posting a direct face threat like the poster, she gives an alternative explanation to demonstrate the possibility of bagging a PhD at that age. By concluding the reply with "my dear", she signals her subscription to the rule of engagement that portrays the thread as a debate rather than a fight.

On another level of exchange, Tochukwu Anummu engages the character in the news, the newspaper and the participants supporting the character in a multi-directional post of FTA. They however employ mitigating strategies of indirectness and agreement. Rather than pointing out that the character is not 25 for instance, they opt to say "she doesn't look 25.... Then they proceed to extend their "congratulations to her" to fit within the expectations of the predominantly female participants who believe the age. The same strategies were employed by Chamaka Oguh and Ogechukwu in their posts. While they suggest their perception of the character's real age, they however provide sufficient hedge via the lexical item "but" (same as "sha). Both sufficiently invest in relations with other participants by expressing their opinions in ways that do not rule out the expression of contrary opinion. Rather, it encourages the expression of different opinions as one of the posters concludes with an ellipsis.

Commenting from the marriage angle and generating more flames than elsewhere in the interaction, Iyke Eze disagrees with the praise for the character thus causing the

newspaper as well as participants offering the praise to lose face without redress. This disapprobatory comment inflates its own capacity by attacking all academics and would-be scholars by describing academic titles as “useless”. Further, it extends, bringing in a political undertone, to the Nigerian president (around whom there was a high school certificate controversy) to justify his claim.

Gender is identified as the most predominant factor for the perception of this post as impolite. Oloche Oleecious Gabriel (a male poster) had earlier responded with a polite remark which shows competence face observance or the poster. However, Joy Omo (female) would counter with a direct face threat employing an insult and a rhetorical question “what nonsense...so marriage is now a do or die thing?” Another female participant, Ummy Ahmad steps up the harsh tone by extending the FTA to all males – ‘who use marriage only to hurt women’. Justice Eziefule and other female participants turned the thread into a flame war combining insults summarised below.

Mumu – pidgin for a stupid person  
This boy – considering that their target is an adult  
Imbecilic, Olodo – dullard, Ignorance has eaten you up  
Your brain need to be examined

Interestingly also, all seventeen likes and laughter emojis generated by the flames are from female silent participants. Iyke’s attempt at face loss repair can be interpreted from two angles going by the strategies employed. First, he attempted to steel himself and put up a brazen face. He tried to depict his post as a troll by replying “keep the reply coming”. Thus, he seems to portray his processing of the flames as enjoyable rather than face threatening. Secondly, he attempts trivialising the issue generating conflict and suggesting a hilarious tone by joking about the day (palm Sunday) as palm wine Sunday and enjoining all to go drink some palm wine. Also, he attempts the more popular ‘scholars-riding-commercial-motorcycles-to-survive joke’ which seems to succeed more as a face loss concealment strategy although the likes generated are still by male posters. The thread can however not be described as mainly characterised by conflict as sufficient rapport management strategies are observable. For instance, Nonny dave’s post in plate 4.34 displays fellowship face observance towards both sides of the conflict. First, he manipulates graphology by enacting laughter towards the flamed poster while whispering in a remorseful tone at the ‘flamers’ which generates two likes from the flamers and one laugh from the ‘flamed’.



**Plate 4.34. Rapport management**

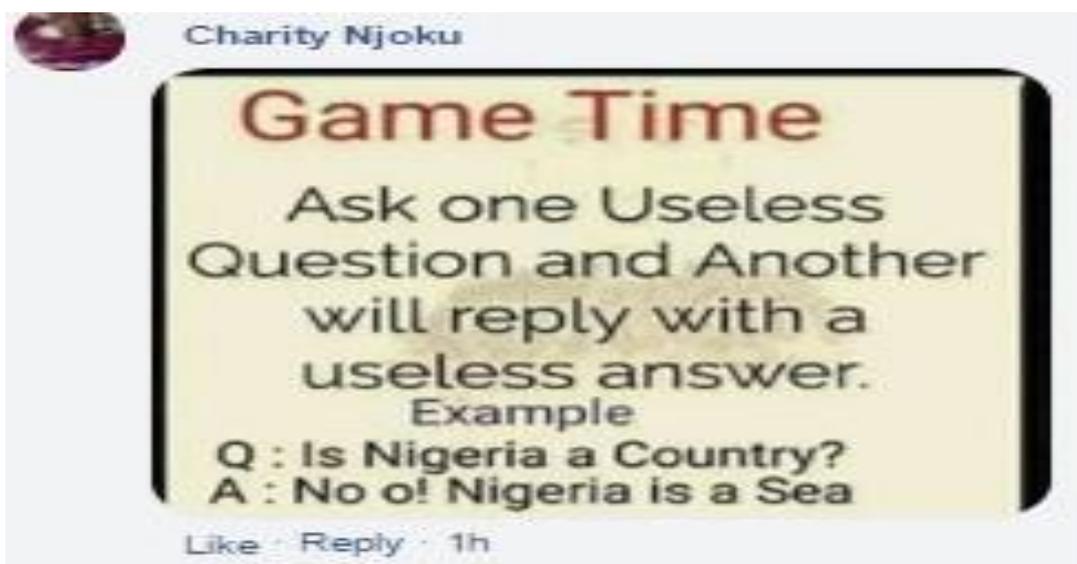
Secondly, Paschalyn's attempt is done through a mitigation of the flames from fellow female posters by explaining their points in a less emotionally charged and insulting form and attracting eight likes from both genders while Anthony Teejay ended the thread on a polite note by signalling a new window for positive relations.

Impoliteness plays a significant role as well in debates about the integrity of the university. Mamah Malachy whose comment in plate 4.35 attracts three likes and two laughs derided the status of the school and, by implication, the achievement of the character as well as the participants celebrating this achievement. The signal for a flame war flared while the poster who seems to admit face loss remained invisible through the thread. While Dio Obaro's and Kyneka Zeebah's replies contain a bit of humour, others are not as generous as name-calling and insults permeated the rest of the thread as a response to perceived face threat.



**Plate 4.35. Flame war as impoliteness tool**

In yet another thread, a degree of conviviality is evident while the bases for conflict are varied. Success Chnyeremugo had expressed doubt about the character's age and even drawn a parallel with the Nigerian president (who has been widely criticised as older than he officially claims by social media users). While some interlocutors challenged this post by enacting disagreement and threatening her autonomy face by asking her to give the real age, others direct their FTA at the newspaper, depicting the news as worthless. Basil Nwakwo threatened the character's positive face by accusing her of bribing her way to the achievement while another respondent expresses yet a criticism of the worth of the achievement and the need to report it in the news. One underlining factor in this conflict is the expression of frustration by netizens about the rate of poverty and corruption in the country which has found its way through the permeable membrane of the environmental context of Facebook. Posts expressing a perception of the news as worthless particularly take centre stage in this thread especially as they employ attention-grabbing tools like the meme in plate 4.36 suggesting a game to distract others from paying attention to the news.



**Plate 4.36. Expression of doubts and irrelevances for topic disruption**

Advertisement in virtual communities, classified as interruptions by the study displays a unique pattern in this interaction. Chisom Onyemaobi's post generated four replies despite being an advertisement. However, the factors behind this unexpected behaviour can be summarised as below:

- i. The advert is not a commercial advert or something impersonal. In fact, the advertiser is talking about herself rather than a product or service.
- ii. There is a perceived level of relevance attached to the advert. On one hand, it is capable of being viewed as an FTA at those paying attention to the 'useless' news when they should be 'hustling' as the poster is. On another hand, it could be viewed as a reaction to an earlier comment in a thread where the character in the news was referred to as a 'bae' (beautiful lady) who 'slayed' the book (slay is a social media term for the flaunting of feminine beauty).

However, true to the claim of impoliteness as a tool for prolonging the life of an interaction, this interaction petered out with repeated expressions of politeness as no argument surfaced to keep the talk alive.

In B3, Jibrin A Musa whose comment generates six likes is perceived as having expressed a competence face threat directed not only at the character in the news but at Southerners in the interaction. Recourse to the socio-relational context is apt to make this claim given the acceptance of similar comments by Southern participants when posted by their Southern compatriots. From Peter Ani's, John Nyong's and Wale Oluwafemi's replies, it becomes obvious that he is perceived as a Northern APC member who has only felt a face loss due to the expression of a possibility of a PDP regeneration. Despite Wale's seeming neutrality, his response betrays a bias against president Buhari and APC, hence his fellowship face threat in the statement "...this present Govt you people are praising". (Emphasis mine) This trend continues in the next thread with Aminu Uba's attack on PDP perceived as a face threat to which Eni Godday responds with a flame employing insults and name-calling. However, Ademola Ajayi's slightly mitigated FTA criticising the sincerity of the character in the news (PDP chairman) would pave way for a more relaxed attitude to the issue, thus forcing the other posters to pay more attention to face needs of the PDP supporters.

Yet, the identified pattern of repeated impoliteness towards an external agent (commonly hated by members) permeates the interaction. This is evident given the sheer number of PDP critics compared with its supporters in the interaction. This can be contrasted with B4 where the direction of impoliteness is conspicuously two-fold. While some members threaten other posters' face directly, others do it tacitly by showing support for the idea in the news. Tools of impoliteness most predominant are insulting words and negative evaluation while ethnicity as well as attitude to the government taken with religion to a lesser extent is responsible for the ways politeness behaviour is processed.

The first thread in the interaction portrays the impact of religious polarity on the processing of politeness. While Okunola Olumuyiwa' post follows the pattern of jokes performed by manipulating the discourse structure of bible verses to deliver a sermon-like speech of the authors design, two participants find it offensive and targeted the poster's face in retaliation. While Omotayo's response contains an unmitigated competence face threat, using a similar biblical pattern, Obiorah Sebastine's FTA (see plate 4.37) is mitigated by stating his threat in a way that reflects more of statement than a correction.



**Plate 4.37. Religious, ethnic and cultural polarity as factors of politeness**

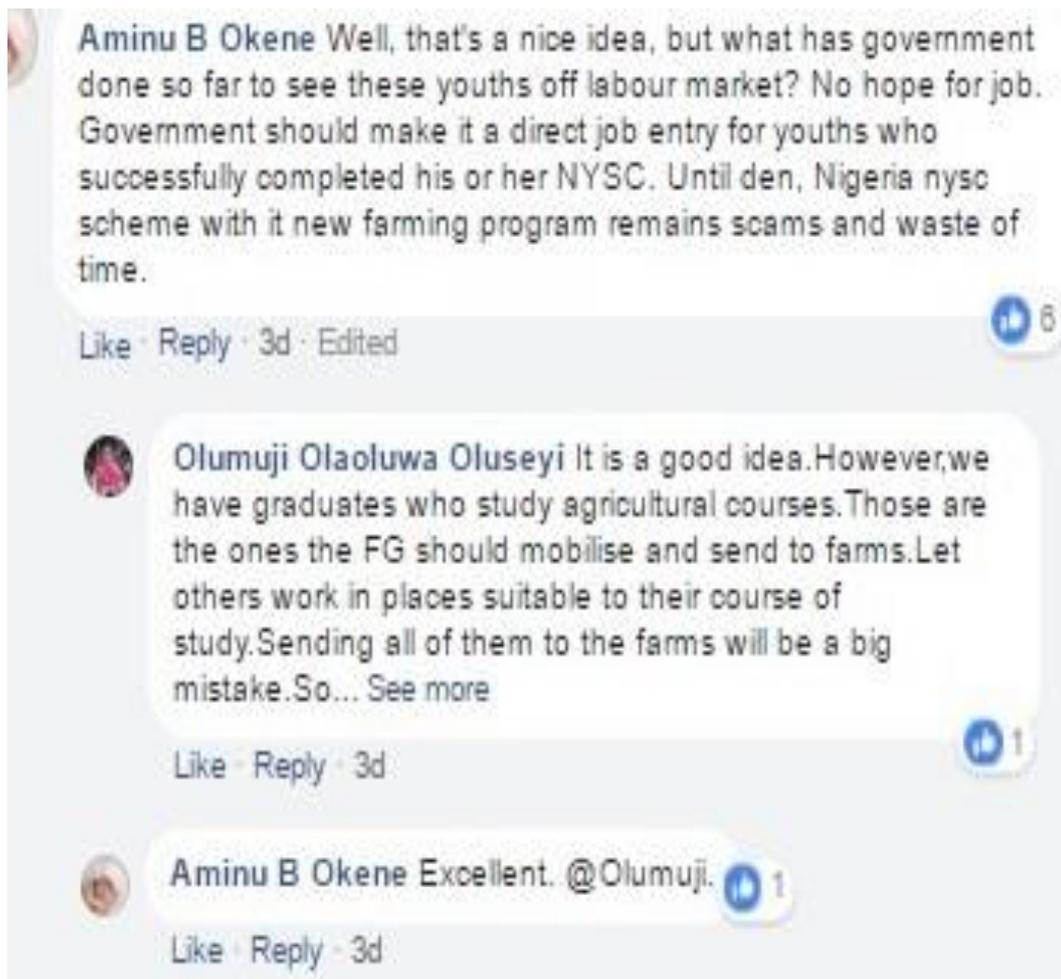
From the responses, it is obvious that the participants perceive the poster as Muslim and their processing of the post as impolite relied on that assumption. While Okunola's attempt at face loss repair by insisting on the same jocular and biblical tone to ask Omotayo to go for deliverance fails, it can be observed that his response to Obiora is more effective. First, it re-orders the socio-relational context by negotiating for an interpretation of his post against the background of his own Yoruba culture. Secondly, he directly hints at his being Christian anyway. Thus, he is able to reposition his post as an honest joke rather than a mockery of the bible. This attempt seemed to douse tension as the exchange of FTAs ceases immediately. Agbaje J F's competence face observance can also be said to have played a significant role in his confidence to remain in the thread to repair face loss. Obviously, Agbaje refers to the content of the post divorced from the religious bias that underlies the impolite responses. His reply - "nice post" and "But that is the way it is" – refers to the comments exposé on corruption in Nigeria while the poster's reply, "I wonder oooo" portrays an attempt to both reciprocate the face observance and use it as a tool to manage rapport with the opponents. His tone modification through the emphasis of interjection "ooo" can also be interpreted as a strategy in that direction, demonstrating his emotional involvement in trying to explain that he meant no insult to the opponents.

The next thread started by Olumuji Olaoluwa (plate 4.36) is more connected to the news than the former thread. While he canvasses for a separation of graduates of non-Agriculture related disciplines from the Agriculture graduates to be posted to farms, he draws opposition from posters who disagree with the prospect of any graduate being sent to a farm. Most of these replies employ FTAs which can be traced to the perception of Olumiji's post as an FTA in its own capacity to the faces of opponents of the proposition. While the first part of his post could be interpreted as polite, the second part contains the threat that triggers negative responses

King Jackson's replies deliver a scathing evaluation on the news and by virtue of turn-taking clue an indirect FTA at Olumuji. Though no obvious reason is stated for his position, Jackson's move can be linked to ideological cum ethnic opposition to the ruling party and its policies. It took a link to his comment in another post to arrive at the factor underlying his perception – arguably the need for safety for his fellow Southerners and a lack of trust in the government and Northerners as expressed by

many other participants referring to Nigeria with the culture-laden term “mumu” and basing their anger on the unchecked rampage of killer herdsmen in the North.

The role of agreement as both a tool of politeness and relational commitment is made more visible in Aminu B. Okene’s post which echoes Olumiji’s earlier post and therefore attracts Olumiji to rapport in the new thread (see plate 4.38). This post encouraged Olumiji to renew their earlier abandoned idea. Having liked Olumiji’s earlier post, Aminu attracts an emotional bond through competence and fellowship face observance.



**Plate 4.38. Agreement as rapport management strategy**

While subsequent comments fail to generate threads of their own, it is still evident that patterns of competence face observance continued with likes and emojis enacting agreement. Posts in support of the posting appear to generate more likes although such posts are fewer (12 of 66) thus creating an impression of a beleaguered minority doing all it could to prevent a drowning of its voice. As such, sustenance of this interaction relied on the resilience of the minority voice.

Memes play the largest role in the interpretation of politeness behaviour in B5 which has the third largest use of memes in the sample population. Like in other interactions, memes here are majorly face threatening to both newspaper and the character in the news taken together as well as opponents in the interaction. The memes in plate 4.39 are samples used in this connection.



Plate 4.39. Memetic attack as impoliteness strategy

Likewise, a couple of them play the double role of both observing the face of aligned posters while at the same time threatening the opponent. One of the memes, as observed is employed by an opponent against the Biafra supporters in a retaliatory post. It expresses the poster's perception of the Biafrans which represents the perception of the anti-Biafran Hausas and Yorubas generally with a derisive laughter that they would like to add to laugh Biafra to scorn

Having disagreed with the genuineness of the Biafra struggle and thus posed a face threat to Igbos in the community, the character in the news becomes the first target of face attacks before the other participants who seem to express the same anti-Biafra bias. Liz Folso for instance posts a comment which lays a template for the battle in the interaction. She aligns the monarch in the news with other Igbos and Yorubas (possibly Hausas too) who are against the struggle. Her thread exposes the underlying philosophy behind her emotions as she uses "everywhere" to evoke a sense of bigger space for her targeted enemies beyond the Igbo cultural or geographical enclaves. This creates a picture of an "us against them" positionality that is made more interesting in this interaction due to its heterogeneous nature. In fact, her post is a reply to a Yoruba poster's comment in support of the Igbo monarch's position that Biafra is dead.

Kenny Arogundade who takes up a role as the face of insulted 'Nigerians' replies with an FTA in pidgin, translated as "fools". His name calling tool is targeted at both Liz Folso and the Igbo participants who retaliate with flames of different forms. Olugbenga Olofinjanaa's reply in plate 4.40 deepens the flame war by linking up with his Yoruba group to further threaten the community face of the Igbo by opining that they lost the first civil war while also threatening the female gender by referring to women as weak.



Plate 4.40. Disagreement as fellowship and competence face threat

The expression of impoliteness in this thread relies heavily on the cultural context as it takes some specific knowledge of the culture to understand the intention behind some expressions. The term “Yorrobers” which was misunderstood by Oluseyi as a misspelling is actually a deliberate corruption done among some Igbo youths to attach stereotypes of robbery to Yoruba people apart from other stereotypes like “chameleon” (pretenders) and “ofe nmannu” (consumers of excessive red oil). Likewise, the Hausas’ reference to Biafrag merges Biafra with rag in retaliation to Igbos referring to them as terrorists.

The other party to the flame war, all Igbos deliver FTAs at Kenny Arogundade, his Yoruba ethnic group as well as Nigeria with various tools. Stevejes Emyevis refers to the cultural context to label Yorubas as chameleons – a stereotype based on the alleged treacherous role played by Yoruba leaders in the defeat of the secessionist movement in the Nigerian civil war. His reply does not only serve to save his fellow Igbos’ face but to further aggravate the flame war which has come to be tacitly accepted as the interactional pattern for this thread and much of the interaction. Orji Vincent based his FA on his perception of Oluseyi’s profile as an older person while Alex’s FTA is couched in the form of a face observance to the Igbos whom he declared as the most successful tribe in Nigeria. Rather than trace the end of the thread to a possible face loss repair, it is more factual to see it as spent energy because polarity and face threat lasted to the end.

Matthew Brown’s less less-face-threatening comment would generate a less fiery thread which of course is not as long as the previous thread. His observance of competence/fellowship face of the Biafra supporters generated fifty-three likes and seven face-observing replies and memes. The two Yoruba opponents in the thread appear to be considered inconsequential and unable to match the population. Here, memes expressing support for Biafra and by extension the Igbos in the interaction are significant as expressions of politeness. In fact, the decision to shun disagreement and emphasise love for Biafra is a negotiation of rules for the thread.

Emeka Eze’s thread is a validation of the study’s claim about the role of ethnicity in the processing of politeness. While his comment could be interpreted in the same light as the Yorubas, his personality as Igbo suggests a different illocution as his post is seen rather as despair and worry and not criticism or mockery. It is therefore easy to

understand SF Jefe Sam's friendly advice to him and other doubting Igbos to be awake and confirm the authenticity of the news. This interpretation also goes for Precious Alberton's thread.

Further, the role of ethnic identity in the processing and negotiation of politeness is accentuated by Chase Lane's thread. His Facebook name and initial comment hides his ethnic identity and portrays him more as Igbo. He thus got positive replies from Ehinmen Solomon who seemed to take him for a despairing fellow. However, Liznazy, revelation of his former encounters with Chase Lane portrays him as an Hausa troll and this immediately causes a change in perception following which disagreement and insults were posted at him.

It can be argued that the continued interruption of the Yoruba posters eventually forced a change in perception which yields an interpretation of their posts as trolls. This phenomenon leads to a reduction in the harsh tone from anger and hatred to mockery. Osita Ezumah's meme with others in plate 4.40 are therefore serving mocking or even jocular purposes rather than expressing anger while insisting on the Biafra agitation. Responses to these memes display a more positive perception of the messages as they are less face-threatening than the entirely verbal comments.

This interaction also serves to demonstrate the role of length in the interactive nature of virtual communities. While comments posted earlier in the interactions seem to generate more replies, comment posted later often appear isolated and are mostly left as interaction between the poster and the character in the news or the newspaper rather than with other posters. The latter part of this interaction contains majorly attacks on the face of the monarch as less and less replies are generated due to spent energy.

Posts in B6 demonstrate complex posters' attitudes to face needs in religious discourse. Like some other interactions in this category, there is an obvious desire to engage in interpersonal communication but less desire to shift grounds as religion seems to be a major factor in identity construction. Throughout this interaction especially, nationality and ethnicity take backstage while the negotiation and perception of politeness are based entirely on religious identity.

Rahman Oke's comment is a fellowship face observance towards Muslims whose face have been threatened by the news. It enacts identity work through its use of pronoun and deixis. By using "you", there is an obvious isolation of Christians who would support the ban on loud call to prayers while "come to pray" is an inclusion strategy portraying the poster as a Muslim himself. He also targets the last part of the post at criticising the proselytising style of Christianity thus threatening Christians' competence face by accusing them of spreading discomfort, essentially shifting the blame back to them. On one hand, Rahman's post has a polarising effect but on another hand, it carries with it a signal for objective and rational arguments rather than explosions of emotions as the rule for the interaction.

Johnson Brain identifying as Christian is seen complying with this rule as his negotiation of Rahman's FTA is done in an even more indirectly face threatening way. H disagrees without sounding particularly confrontational with Rahman. However, his knowledge of Rahman's Muslim identity serves as enough proof that he intends to disagree and express solidarity in an opposite direction. This strategy can be interpreted as a significant investment in relational work despite the difficulty of satisfying face work. Comparatively, KC Holdings PLC's post "at least it will reduce the noise" would be considered as less polite in face work terms than Rahman Issa's. While the latter comes across as an attempt to repair face loss by agreeing with the news without any attempt at tact or indirectness. The aggravation would cause a degeneration of the thread especially as the poster displays gross lack of tolerance for opposition. His response to Adeshina Mohammad's potentially face-threatening question "who make the loudest noise?" contains a flame. Referring to the respondent as "mana" (obviously a typographic error latter recast as "nama" – beef- in his response to another respondent) does not only demonstrate his anger and disregard for Muslims' face needs, it also exposes his perception of them as associated with Northerners who are often stereotyped in charged arguments as cattle. Deep-seated emotion traceable to the cultural context can be cited as the major factor behind KC Holding PLC's impolite behaviour as his retort to his own reply to Adeshina displays a glimpse into his mind mulling on Christians being killed by 'Muslims' in Northern Nigeria. Although his Facebook profile suggests very little contextual cues about his ethnic identity, our interpretation relies on this verbal behaviour to place the

opponents in the socio-relational context of a southern Christian against Northern Muslims.

Alexander Somacree who evokes the Nigerian cultural context to express angst at Saria is also perceived as impolite by the Muslim members. Bashir's and Adeshina Muhammad's responses are both applying an impoliteness strategy kin to appearing disinterested and withholding praise (Culpepper. 1996). While Bashir either feigns lack of comprehension or criticises the poster's inability to express himself coherently (by replying with an exaggerated series of question marks), Adeshina replies with a dismissing single word "Deluded" to treat the post as insignificant and the poster as unappreciated. Alexander's response with the same strategy is a concession of face loss as he attempts to replicate a similar effect on his detractors. This perception of growing disregard for face needs leads to more issues of needless confrontations and flame war. Isah Mahmud's post in Plate 4.41 for instance has no specific addressee. In fact, it comes after a post advising governments to look away from religious centres in its drive to combat noise pollution.



**Plate 4.41. Emotion attached to religion and ethnicity as factors of impoliteness**

It is thus not a response to that post but most likely to the Ghanaian government and to posters identifying as Christians in the interaction. Meanwhile, KC Holdings' reply is a pointer to the role of emotion as an underlying factor as he accuses Issah of being under the influence of some narcotic substance – an impoliteness strategy of associating the opponent with perceived undesirable ideas.

Sustained attempts at other face loss repair and rapport management however plays a significant role in redirecting the chaotic interaction to a more managed exchange of ideas. Afolabi Oyeyemi for instance comments with a move that observes the competence face of the Ghanaian government while avoiding the common threats to fellowship face of Muslims. He achieved this by identifying as a Christian but nonetheless asking for an extension of the ban to Christian churches. Through this strategy, he is able to express an unbiased position that even Christians who have been aggressive in the interaction find acceptable. Likewise, Oyehan Abdulrosheed (Muslim) douses tension by calling the idea a welcome one but advising that places of worship be excluded due to their sensitive nature. Such attempts are successful due to the posters' perceived tactful and approbatory use of language. Olaniyi's post is especially apt in this regard. He calls for a ban on noise from Christian and Muslim worship centres at the same time after criticising Africa (being African himself) for neglecting the health hazards of noise. Such posts are seen as negotiations of non-religious topics on which participants can more easily agree.

B7 has much the same pattern as B6 above. Even though the issue reported in the news is hardly a face threat to any participant, Southern Nigerians seem to insist on negotiating a fight scene context within which it is acceptable to threaten the face of the Northerners by enacting dissociation from the President while blaming his Northern supporters as complicit in his neglect of the health sector. Jide Johnson's post is hardly related to the news about cholera for instance. Rather, his goal is to express criticism of the Buhari administration by evoking the government's handling of Boko Haram as well as Northern citizen's sheepish support for the administration. This post is immediately processed as a face threat by the Northerners and Adamu Ohagenyi's reply exemplifies their response. She counters with an FTA made bald on record, berating the poster for his lack of tact in an attempt to score a political point.

Ugochukwu Osuji specifically chooses the word “sycophants” to refer to the supporters of the President while Emmanuel Samuel’s reply “e tire me ooo” displays an emotional commitment to this string of sustained attack at the president and participants supporting him. Conversely however, this commitment to impoliteness is also to be interpreted as politeness enactment though fellowship and competence face observance towards the posters who have attacked Buhari’s supporters earlier.

By criticising the president also, using the impoliteness strategy of ridicule, Allison Williams directs fellowship face observance at the now-obviously-active group of Buharis’ critics. However, the most obvious reference to clarity as the most critical factor for (im)polite behaviour is demonstrated by Chineyedennis Madubuike below

By psychologically creating a ‘Biafran talking down at Hausas’ scenario, the poster expresses a direct link to socio-relational concerns – portraying his view of Hausas as docile followers of their leaders whom he also perceives as stupid. This imagery is further strengthened by Ogbuiyi Friday’s post below.

Interestingly, the paucity of contrary opinions apart from Umar Aliyu’s “biafools” retaliation to the impolite opinions yields an interpretation of camaraderie among the participants as each insult is seen as fellowship face observance to the participants against the president. There arises an unconventional interpretation for the memes on this basis of this negotiated context. Rather than being considered as FTAs, they serve more as face observance to the mockers and haters.



Plate 4.42. Collective face threat as group solidarity

While the campaign poster in plate 4.42. would have looked like support for the president, the context of its use as well as a careful reading of its “I failed before...” caption makes it clear as mere mockery. These FTAs are increasingly ignored in what can be interpreted as an admission of face loss by the Northern participants.

This is the double-faced manner of politeness in B8 as well. While most of the comments observe other posters fellowship and competence faces, they at the same time threaten the faces of the characters in the news, the news agency and other participants who accept the news as worthy of attention and probably true. Despite the widespread ideological bias found earlier displayed by Nigerian netizens towards homosexuality, there is a general lack of tension in the reaction of most group members in the interaction. However, we characterise the interaction as unfriendly for two reasons: first, the comments on the news are largely impolite irrespective of the posters’ perspectives. Secondly, there is substantial evidence of lack of concern for individual members’ face needs either through direct FTAs performed bald on record or by trivialising others’ opinions.

The largely impolite attitudes to the news have been conditioned by two major factors. The first is that some members of the audience see the picture and its story as too explicit and vulgar for the public eye. That, combined with abhorrence of homosexuality justifies impolite responses targeted at the men in the news or the agency as the case may be. Secondly, a suspicion of lack of authenticity by many members of the audience who see the picture as photo-shopped provoked them to anger and a feeling of ridicule towards the agency and the ‘gullible’ members in the interaction.

Mundi Musa Ibrahim politely encouraged other members to re-assess the ‘photo-shopped’ picture while displaying sufficient relational investment with his laughter as he negotiates a hilarious tone for the news critics. While his politeness behaviour seems to be effective in generating interaction with Chichi Nnandi Musa who though disagreeing sufficiently provides information to support his opinion as a hedge to his FTA, it however comes across to Edward Isaiah as a fellowship face threat to which he responds with an FTA performed bald on record. It can be assumed that Edward deliberately withholds the employment of tact in this reply because he perceives the

post as a tactless criticism of people's (including Edward's) ability to distinguish fact from fiction.

Even though it was difficult to identify the recipient of Constance Chinedu's reply (Dan Fodio who was mentioned had probably deleted his post), polarity-induced perception of politeness is observed as she is seen enacting her identity in support of CAN (Christian Association of Nigeria) and retaliating against Islam in turn.

Apart from these few instances of interpersonal scuffles, most of the comments as hinted at earlier are couched as impoliteness at the characters to the satisfaction of other posters who both decry homosexuality and take the news as true. Adenrele Adebimpe attempts to employ an off record impoliteness act by praying God to have mercy on the 'gay men's' souls. But her choices of expressions like 'barbaric act' and others belies her tactful approach. While linguistic politeness is lacking anyway, discursive politeness is evidently demonstrated and recognised as a respondent even replied "amen". While Adebayo Greatman's comment in plate 4.43 could be taken as a hilarious attempt to douse tension, his statement can still be taken as an indictment of the characters as he jokingly blames the past president for setting the pace with 'his own randy attitude'. His negotiation of humour with a funny meme started a thread of thirteen posts very similar to a politic banter with members who enjoy bashing the past president.

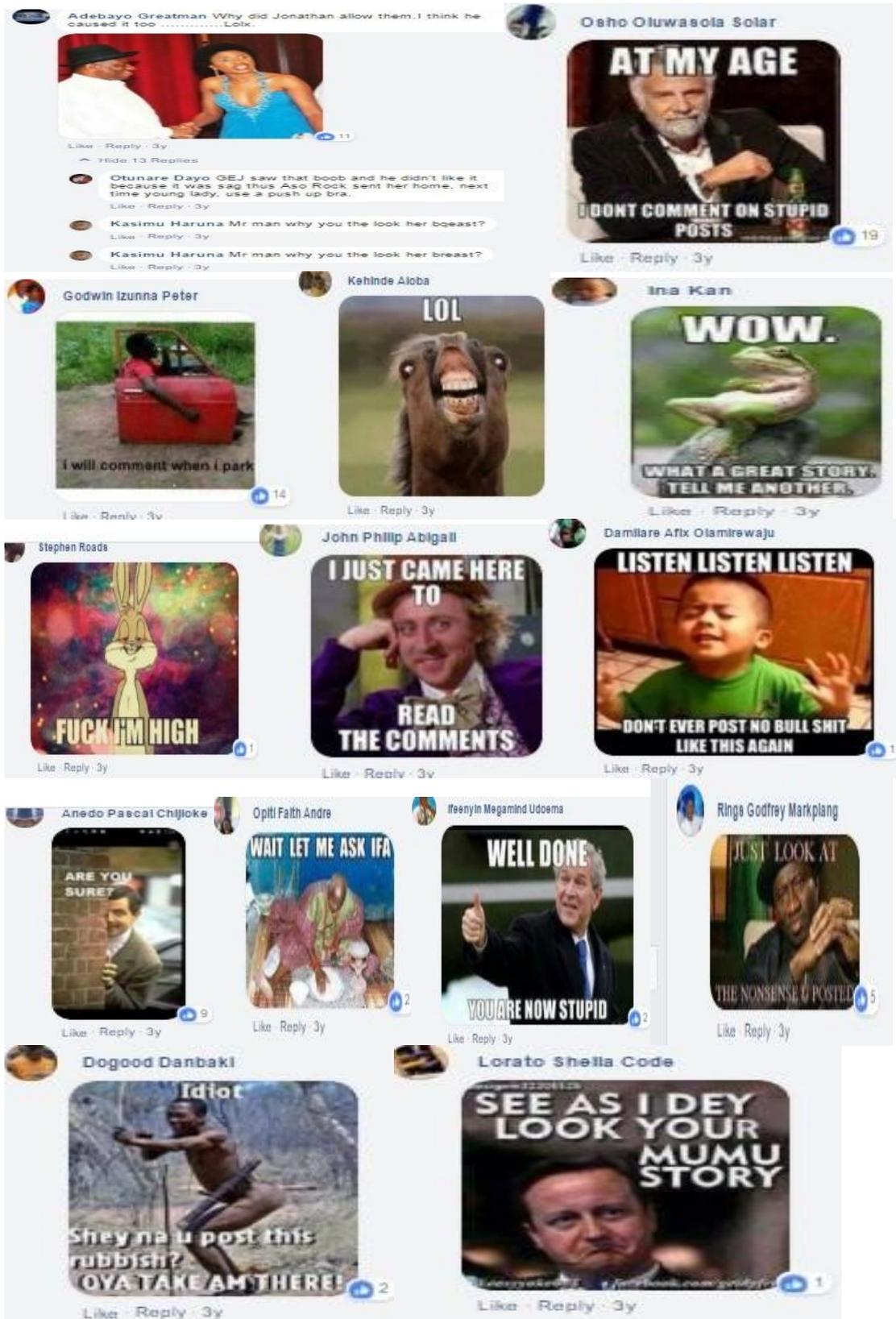


Plate 4.43. ‘Ridiculous’ news as factor for (im)politeness

While Kasimu Haruna jokingly accused Jonathan of staring in a randy manner, Shariff Ibn-Shuaibu threatened to report to the president's wife. Given the irrelevance of this post's claim to the actual subject of discussion as well as the jocular manner in which it goes on, the post can be taken as a negotiation of tone and topic change which is considered polite and acceptable.

Other posts targeted the news agency's 'insincerity' by directly enacting their incredulity. The use of memes adds some cues which help to create visual impressions of ridicule and joke rather than outright anger. Osho Oluwasolar for instance employs his meme to enact age as a factor behind his anger at the stupid news. Given that the meme is his comment however, the intention of creating humour is made even more explicit. Likewise, Godwin Izumma promises to comment only when he has parked his car while giving a visual clue of self-deception or jocular other-deception.

By creating these clashes of expression and reality and adopting virtual reality to question the way reality is imagined by humans, the posters succinctly suggests a dimension to the perception of online news. Other posters use their memes to categorically accuse the newspapers of circulating fake or stupid news. However, some negotiate more acceptance and joke effect for their views by ascribing it to popular or funny characters including football personalities, comedians and politicians.

Other memes, in plate 4.43 simply enact derisive laughter as expected of anyone watching cartoons or comics. However, a number of them from believers are targeted at the characters in the news whose acts they see as deplorable and negating 'morality' and faith. The posters thus enact the characters of pastors, robotic mechanics or other forms of reformation agents to decry the act as presented in plate 4.44.



Plate 4.44. Memetic enactment of FTA

In B9, politeness is enacted entirely via fellowship face observance among group members. Yet, this is also achieved through the performance of impoliteness to the British Prime Minister whose call to African states to legalise same sex marriage has been processed as autonomy face threat given the negative stance of Nigerians towards it. At the same time, the way her advice seems to disagree with their widely-held belief also translates to a competence face threat via disagreement.

Chris Odogwu enacts an FTA at the faces of both the Prime Minister and President Buhari at once by criticising her inability to solve ‘her own problems’. He however loses face with some participants for his indictment of the president as he is interpreted as withholding approbation. That constituted a factor for Kelvin Osagie’s off record impoliteness contained in his reply “hmm wat’s buhari’s own in the Whole matter?” Apart from tis singular instance of impolite exchange, other posts with the exception of two advertisements target the Prime Minister using various impoliteness strategies. Most of them involve association with negative concepts especially located in the indigenous cultures and represented in local expressions that connect the hatred to the cultural standards of the posters. Examples of expressions like “shegiya yar iskar” (Hausa for terrible adulteress), “tsohuwar banza (meaning distorted due to spelling issues but banza means bastard in Hausa), “tufiakwa( God forbid in Igbo) allow the interlocutors to share their hatred for the leader more intimately while English expressions used are meant to complement the local ones (fool, evil, wasted sperm, satanic, abomination...). Many refer to her status as heterosexual and married as a factor for interpreting her intentions as pretentious and misleading, therefore deserving of impoliteness while most simply process it in the light of a threat to their African identity.

B10 also displays a use of mockery and satire to enact impoliteness while negotiating the goal of the participants. Hassan Fatai’s post contains a use of sarcasm that seems to trivialise the pattern of salary payment in Osun State by announcing in a newscaster’s voice that their salary has been paid, only to later interject “in their dreams”. The impolite (and polite) import of this comment is retrievable from the real life cultural context where it had become a common joke and popular form of satire among the civil servants to praise the governor for paying them when the reality was that they had been unpaid for three months. Imitating a news-casting style and opening the post with the governing party’s slogan helps the participants to locate the

mockery as directed at the government rather than the workers and the success of the strategy can be felt in the likes generated.

Likewise, Stephen Umuwe and three other posters who identify as non-Osun indigenes however deliver face threats at Osun indigenes for their perceived timidity and tolerance for mediocre treatment. The processing of these posts however reveals an acceptance on the part of the other participants who seem to agree that Osun indigenes deserve such wake-up call. Being an indictment of the government as well, it feels easier to accept the posts as complying with the goals of the interaction – to disparage the attempt at half salary payment by the government. This explanation also goes to explain the possibility of positive processing for Major Nwakupuda's (non-Yoruba) labelling of Yoruba as tribalistic.

The tacit agreement to enact impoliteness as a form of protest is so powerful that protestations against the rule are ignored while ninety per cent of the participants go ahead with impoliteness at the governor and his regime. Two posters attempt to divert the emotion towards a change of perspective by attempting a renegotiation of the interpretation of the salary cut – portraying it as a cut in public servants and political office holders' salaries rather than the civil servants'. However, here is an overruling of this attempt as impoliteness continue notwithstanding while the posts are ignored.

B11 displays a striking similarity with the impolite barrages uniformly expressed at a common enemy but also displays a significant amount of interpersonal scuffles traceable again to polarity on ethnic and partisan grounds. Noel Unuijiagas and Umar Ibrahims's posts and replies in in plate 4.45 are actually face threats directed at group members for criticising President Buhari of APC.



**Plate 4.45. FTA targeting news agency**

While Noel's expresses a face threat bald on record, linking Chubuikem with other critics (called wailers) 'who have also not accepted responsibility for Goodluck Jonathan's poor performance', Umar's is more indirect as he blames the newspaper for 'the wrong interpretation the critics are operating on'. In fact, he attempts express tact by threatening his own face through an inclusion of self among the Nigerians who do not read. These two attempts notwithstanding, impoliteness towards the president remained the rule of the interaction as members enact solidarity with one another against the 'incompetent leader'.

In conclusion, the interactions feature a 'positive' use of impoliteness alongside rapport management as a tool to keep a controversial matter in discussion and it is a tool that each community member seems to agree to as a conversational contract. Thus, the most impolite comments generate the highest number of replies while the few attempts at face observance across the divides or rapport management tend to drive the intensity of the conversation down. Among the most prominent strategies employed are:

1. **Hash tags.** Each use of hash tag features a fellowship or competence face threat. Hashtags are digital tools for joining a trending idea on social media and for making such ideas available in a pool to anyone looking for such an idea/expression as the one which one has expressed online. By virtue of this operational definition, hashtags appeal to netizens' sense of group identity and similar ideology whenever it is used. Users who use them are either joining an ideological group or creating one.

[#istandwithshekau](#) is a taunt at the Northerners who are suffering the direct effects of Shekau's terrorist acts. It trolls, directly, supporters of the Buhari administration who subscribed to the viral hashtag [#istandwithbuhari](#) during the 2015 elections.

[#yorobaman](#) is a veiled attack on the 'ethnocentric' nature of the Yoruba people.

[#clueless](#) and [#failedadministration](#) both offer threats to the fellowship face, and competence face as well, of the present administration and its supporters.

[#sambisaforest](#) [#militarize](#) [#southeastandsouthsouth](#) with [#pythondance](#) and

[#crocodilesmile](#) all are taunts at the ‘weakness’ and failure of the Nigerian military to either conquer Boko Haram or quell the Niger Delta and Biafra agitations.

[#up\\_biafrags](#) used as taunts from mostly Hausa participants to annoy the Igbo supporters of the Biafran nationalist ideology.

2. **Pictures/Memes.** These tools come as graphic representations of the feelings of the members beyond mere verbal expressions thereby serving both verbal and extralinguistic (emotional) functions. Abdullah’s and Ukpong-Collins’ pictures rubs the death of Nigerian soldiers in the faces of the Nigerian government and its supporters without any words while Abdulkadir Umar’s picture of prostitutes (baby factory), robbers and ritualists obviously culled from another online news source is a threat to the faces of the Biafran apologists. Obi Victor’s counter threat features the picture of a popular comedian in Nigerian home movies with an inset message “FOOLISH IDIOT I BEG SLAP YOURSELF”. The use of this significant semiotic strategy is to totally capture the attitude of the interactant who needs to devolve into a jester before commenting just to show how ridiculous he thinks the earlier comment of the co-interactant was. Peter Ononogbo’s picture is culture-specific in signification, but the verbal layer of the post renders it unequivocal as two eyes dilated with the aid of two fingers pulling down the cheeks could not be misinterpreted as “shine your eyes” as long as the taunting phonoaesthetic Igbo word “NTOOR” is located within the same linguistic context. He further clarifies the target of his taunt by writing in the post “Nigeria”.
3. **Emoticons and laughter.** Other prominent tools of impoliteness in the interaction include the derisive uses of the laughter emoticon :=) ☺ as well as “hahahahahah and LOL which are contextually interpretable not as coping laughter but as laughing in the faces of the targeted co-interactants whose faces have been threatened in earlier posts or the same posts bearing these tools.
4. **Unmitigated verbal face threats.** Finally, these constitute the most prominent tool of impoliteness in the interaction. Examples include name calling, curses and direct taunts.

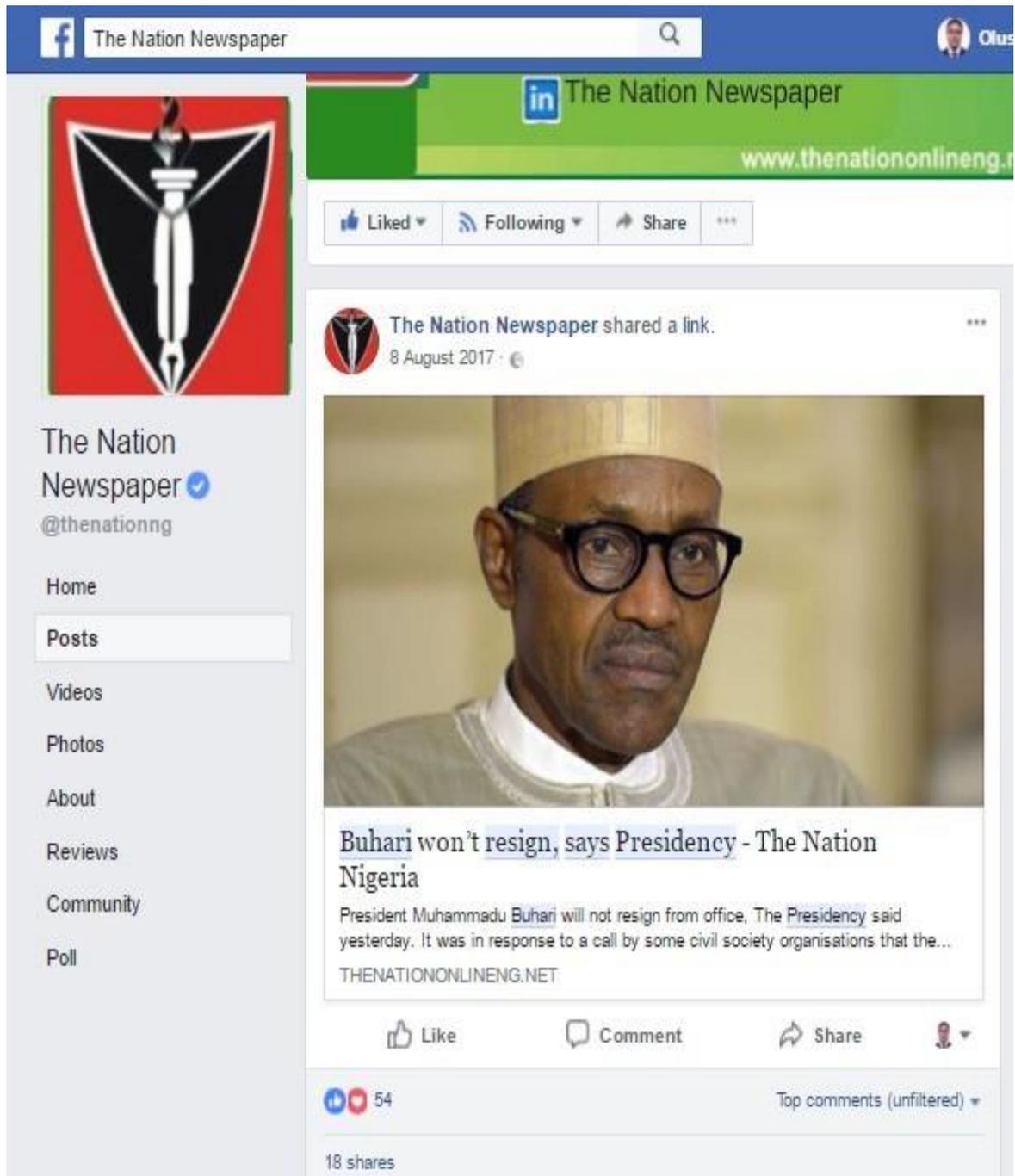
On the other hand, the tools of politeness/impoliteness in the interaction include:

1. **Rapport management.** Rapport management or conflict resolution strategies in this context are taken to be all attempts by any participant in the talk to dispel tension and calm the others down. Despite a lack of any such overt moves, there are few and far between cases of replies or posts that tries to toe the line of some popular posts while appealing to the unpopular ones to ignore the tension. Chama Joel is an example with the move against Boko Haram and a call for all lovers of peace to say amen. He concludes with the word “settled” which overtly betrays his intention of conflict resolution.
2. **Fellowship face observance.** Most of the interactants who ended up on a similar side of the argument, particularly the ‘wailers’ group achieve group solidarity through the observance of one another’s fellowship face through expression of solidarity and agreement by:
  - (a) selecting the same diction pattern like “zoo”, “animal” and so on,
  - (b) attacking the Northerners through fellowship face threat,
  - (c) selecting memes derived from the same Eastern/Southern Nigerian socio-cultural space
  - (d) praise (fellowship face recognition) of any Northerner (real or fictitious) who toes their line of argument and
  - (e) use of endearing terms in the commonly-shared indigenous language for supporters (e.g. “nne” – sister) and negative terms for opponents.
  - (f) use of mentions to direct face threat at opponents and thus seclude supporters

#### **4.3.0 Group C interactions (Unfriendly and jagged)**

These interactions form just 8% of the sample population. They serve to demonstrate the effect of frequent shifting of interactional rules which explain their relative short lengths and lack of smoothness. However, the possibility of agreement on these rules makes for their relative sustenance when compared with D interactions.

### 4.3.1 Contextual mapping and analysis of C



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President Muhammadu Buhari will not resign from office, The Presidency said yesterday. It was in response to a call by some civil society organisations that the...  
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**Plate 4.46. The Nation's news on Buhari's insistence on continuity**

C1 is a conversation around a post in *The Nation*. The factors of context in this post which are almost entirely captured in plate 4.46 are also very crucial to the interpretations arrived at in the analysis. These contextual factors should be taken together as mutually aiding. First, the micro-cultural context brings in the dimension of ownership of the online news agency that generated the virtual community under study. It is an agency that is widely known to have a lot of sympathy for the President Buhari administration, is gravely critical of dissenting voices against the Nigerian nation and government and has a subtle anti-Eastern/Biafran stance. Against this background, the post comes across as a threat to the fellowship face of a number of community members who support the call for the president's resignation on grounds of ill-health and too frequent medical vacations abroad. The choice of picture to accompany the headline is also not to be overlooked. A stern-looking healthy face of President Buhari with a subtle trace of a smirk seems to directly rub the statement of defiance in the headline in the face of anyone holding a contrary view.

Secondly, another dimension of the micro-cultural context also relies on the fact that majority of Nigerians (netizens in this environmental context) are not only aware that the president is unwell (a matter that was kept secret in the political space for a long time) and on medical leave rather than a vacation as portions of the media (including this one) as well as his aides would have the people believe. But also, they hold the belief that a portion of the Nigerian constitution specifies that a sitting president should resign if the need to spend over ninety days abroad ever arises. This legal matter is however still subject to various shades of interpretation in the legal space. All this goes to set the background for the interpretation of the responses in this interaction in terms of politeness behaviour.

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Nigerian couple arrested over \$400,000 wire fraud in Cambodia - Daily Gossip

Another Nigerian couple has been arrested in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Monday, April 9, 2018, for allegedly stealing more than \$400,000 from a bank. Deputy Police...  
DAILYGOSSIP.NG

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**Plate 4.47. Yabaleft’s news on Nigerian couple involved in fraud**

C2 is generated by Yabaleft's report on a Nigerian couple arrested on charges of wire fraud in Cambodia (see plate 4.47). Given the widespread practise and equally widespread condemnation of wire fraud – popularly known as Yahoo Yahoo in the local parlance, the news is expected to generate long threads condemning the act especially in the light of its negative portrayal of Nigerians. With inscriptions on paper hung on their necks, the Nigerian couple are depicted as criminals especially in the context of the Cambodians arresting officers parading Nigerian criminals. The contextual cue is interesting in the way it makes for the anticipation of reactions from the audience as one might expect expressions reflecting face loss descriptions let out through display of anger, remorse and other emotional indicators.

Ifeanyi Okwonkwo's comment in C1 is characterised by an obvious lack of observance of fellowship face. His choice of politeness behaviour however is less impolite if it is taken to be aimed at the news item or the agency per se rather than at any co-interactant in the community. Even when it is interpreted as a face threat to the online news agency or the Presidency to which the statement in the headline is credited, it still comes across as expected and in observance of the lower order SIPs of directness and restraint at the same time. However, the choice of the expressions “zoo” and “animal kingdom” to tag Nigeria does not only flout the higher order SIP of need for face recognition but it also threatens the face of the member himself who as yet can still be termed ‘Nigerian’.

Obi Badmos's reply however brings more clarity to the explication of issues of face threat in the post. He counters with a fellowship and competence face threat that clarifies the socio-relational context of the exchange: Ifeanyi is perceived as non-Nigerian (a Biafran), hence his adjudged incompetence to comment on the problems of the Nigerian nation. This, taken along with the earlier signifier of cultural identity found in Ifeanyi's use of the culturally significant word “zoo” renders Ifeanyi's post as a direct fellowship and competence face threat to the ‘Nigerian’ members of this virtual community.

The next comment by Goodness Merciful also constitutes a competence face threat to the government of Nigeria albeit in a way that avoids directly threatening the face of the members who are sympathetic to it. The devices identified here include a rhetorical question and a popular saying. This rhetorical use of language launches the

comment into a level of acceptability as normal criticism of government reminiscent of the language of the elderly. Hence, irrespective of the ethnic/ideological polarity in the community or the poster's seeming identity as 'Biafran', the post comes across as polite and fails to generate any negative retort except Ola's which comes as usual to remind the Biafran members of their non-Nigerian status. This strategy may also be interpreted to count for rapport management if Goodness Merciful is taken as attempting to represent the Biafran pole of the community.

Yet, the replies to this attempt at rapport management include further polarisation via competence and fellowship face threats to the supporters of the Buhari administration. Also significant for study, though arguably acceptable, is the position that the seeming popularity of the comment made it attractive to 'advertising agents' as the replies feature two unsolicited advertisements hardly bearing any relevance to the issue being discussed.

Interestingly, a repeat of this earlier comment with its successful strategies however becomes perceived as impolite to other members. The apologists of the Buhari administration, presumably counting the repeat of the comment as a troll, countered with series of face threats to the dissenting voices as well as to Goodness: one with a scornful laughter and a reiteration of support for Buhari for even one additional term in office, another with name-calling strategy. Emmanuel Oga Emma's reply in this thread would have been difficult to interpret in terms of its intention except with the aid of recourse to his earlier fellowship face recognition to Goodness in the earlier version of the post. Thus, alignment with a perceptual group forms a strategy to direct comments in this interaction. His face threat expressed here, if not directed at the pro-Buhari group can be said to be directed at the advertiser of "twinkas" who immediately precedes him in the thread. This new dimension is a pointer at the perception of 'unsolicited' adverts or interruptions as impolite behaviour in this community. Akeem Oyeniyi's comment (see plate 4.48) is however hardly traceable due to the unavailability of the source of his post on YouTube (which might have been deleted). However, the post gives enough contextual clues to be interpreted as an enactment of disagreement with the critics of Buhari as the musicians indicated in his link is popular for music eulogising Governor Aregbesola of APC as well as the APC as a party.



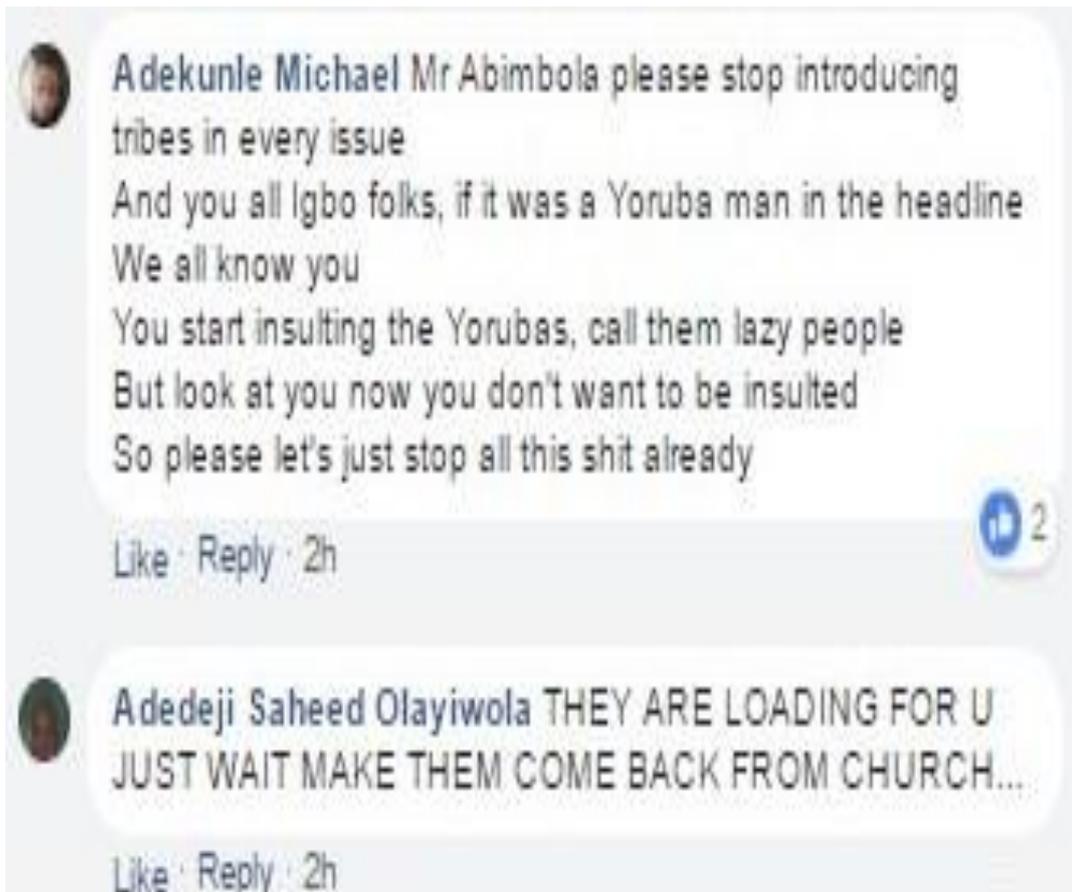
**Plate 4.48. Music as enactment of support**

Laray Grace whose post in plate 4.49 starts off the interaction in C2 however enacts impoliteness by ignoring (using the snub) the news. Her post can be interpreted at a deeper level of pragmatic analysis as a justification for sharp practices which hints at the poster's involvement in the act. The likes generated by her post are traced to some of the posters who seem to favour her strategy by either verbally supporting it or by continued use of same to distract others posters from paying attention to the content of the news. They may be interpreted as trying to prevent the expressions of face threats to the characters in the news and by extension, themselves. Impoliteness is thus found employed as a disruptive strategy to prevent smooth interaction and others' perceived interactional goals. This strategy faces opposition in Oyinkansola's reply. She attempts to insist on what she perceives as the appropriate rule of interaction by questioning the rationality of Laray's post and thus appears to be enacting impoliteness in the context of Laray and friends' goals.



**Plate 4.49. Impolite behaviour as topic disruption strategy**

Adekunle Michael's additional impolite remark however seems to intentionally prolong talk, though not in the direction participants like Oyinkansola would expect. His argument that the challenged poster did not "talk" but "typed" is a strategy to deepen the detour from the content of the news to an impolite banter. This serves to clarify the analysis of polarity in the interaction: while some participants want to discuss fraud and its evils, some want to simply joke it away as a necessary survival at. Impoliteness would generate further argument and deepening of this chasm in the next thread. However, this polarity can be connected to the earlier identified ethnic divisions obtainable in the Nigerian cultural context. Oladiji Abiola and Abimbola Johnson (both Yoruba) threaten the community face of Igbo members by labelling the fraudsters in the news as Biafrans, attacking the Igbo participants for not claiming 'their compatriots'. Expectedly, the post provoked a flame war primarily constituted of insulting words. Interestingly, attempts at rapport management appear to actually be further face threats to the Igbos as Adekunle Michael and Adedeji Saheed in plate 4.50 call for peace from their Yoruba compatriots.



**Plate 4.50. Rapport management via disagreement**

Adedeji's comment signalling laughter is a confirmation of the aggressiveness of the Igbo's whom he perceives to have been largely quiet in the interaction because they were in the church at the moment. Politeness and impoliteness are so lumped in the interaction that traceability of intentions becomes difficult and a little far-fetched. While it can be argued that some posters blame the fraudsters, it is difficult to conclude whether they are blamed for being Biafrans, being pastors, stealing so much, stealing so little, being so careless as to get caught or remaining in the act at their age. Meanwhile, other posters seem to be interested in praising them but they do not even make it explicit whether they praise them for being so smart, being a couple or being good ambassadors for the 'Nigerian fraud business'. These factors contribute largely to the designation of the interaction, like C1, as jagged.

In conclusion, findings about the nature, strategies and perceptions of (im)politeness in these interaction are summarised as follows:

1. **Polarisation/cultural alignment:** This factor plays a crucial role both as a strategy and as a tool for unravelling the perception of interactants about politeness in different ways.
  - a. Community members use their face threats or face observance as the case may be to identify with desired groups in the community/interaction.
  - b. Cultural alignment helps the members of the community to interpret/place the targets of potentially confusing comments/replies and thus react appropriately.
  - c. Word choice once again plays a prominent role in identifying the cultural alignment of members in this community.
2. **Repetition:** Repetition comes across as impolite behaviour in this interaction. Goodness Merciful got negative responses only after a repeat of their earlier 'polite' post. Also, an attempt at advertisement/interruption was simply overlooked/ignored or tolerated at first but generated a competence face threat from Emmanuel Oga Emma in the second thread in which it appeared.
3. **Interruption.** As earlier hinted at, interruptions in this interaction come only in the form of advertisement. The effects are of two types: mostly, the

interruption gets ignored as Illuminate Alfa's comment (an advert) is the only comment in the interaction without a single reply. But also, after being ignored in an earlier thread, advertisement from a certain interactant generates a face threat in the next thread.

Strategies of politeness/impoliteness include introduction of relevance/irrelevance done through tools like hedging, solidarity and polite requests or deliberate neglect of such tools. Others are flames and misleading answers and responses.

Impoliteness thus once again forms the tool for progression in this interaction as the issue in the news is another controversial one given the ethno-cultural composition of this virtual community.

#### **4.4.0 Group D interactions (Unfriendly and fiery)**

These interactions were observed to form another 8% of the sample population (2 of 25) to equal the C category. The group would perfectly fit if meshed with either of the two groups labelled as unfriendly. Nonetheless, certain factors stand the group out and are responsible for the decision in the study to treat it as a unique group. Firstly, these interactions parade the most instances of abrupt endings which make the interactions the shortest in the population sampled. The interactions, arguably, seem so short that interpreting them as sustained would become farfetched. Secondly, the interactions bereft of sufficient attempts at rapport management. They also portray almost no relational investment. Where such are made, they appear to be in disequilibrium at best. Thus, it became hard to keep the conversations sustainable. As a consequence, the group parades the most significant percentage of vulgar language, curses and verbal expressions of ill-will which force interactants away from the interactions rather prematurely.

#### **4.4.1 Contextual mapping and analysis of D**

D1 is generated by a Sahara Reporters' report on the arrest in Rivers State of two alleged members of the Niger Delta Avengers, a group designated as a terrorist group by the Nigerian laws. Portrayed in the media as ruthless vandals who are responsible for the poor GDP of Nigeria as a result of pipeline vandalism, these groups are especially hated by Northerners who also link them to the groups moving for the break-up of Nigeria as a single state. Further interestingly, the Inspector General of Police whose team is credited with the arrest has been much criticised by Southerners

as a clansman of the president selected without merit to subjugate the South in order to maintain the control of oil installations in the South by the Northern nobility. Also, Southerners have often criticised the lack of zeal with which the government has treated terrorist groups in the North relative to the brutal force deployed against Southern groups. All this goes into the explication of factors behind the hate and polarity demonstrated in the interaction.

The Nation Newspaper  
10 hrs · 🌐

The gunmen killed the policeman and abducted the expatriate engineer with Dantata and Sawoe Construction company.

**Six policemen killed in Benue, Kano by herdmen - The Nation Nigeria**

Six policemen have been killed by gunmen in Benue and Kano states. Those who struck during an ambush in Anyone, Ayilamo, Tombo ward Logo Local Government...

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**Plate 4.51. The Nation’s news on gunmen attack**

While D2 as presented in plate 4.51 shares a similar context with D1, its news is from The Nation (often accused of bias towards the North and the central government). The news headline underlines the contextual configuration observed throughout the threads in the conversation. To a significant extent, rage and criticism are targeted at the news report and its style which a group of interactants interpret as biased towards the Fulani ethnic nationality. From the comments of majority of the Southerners observed, there is a sense of expectation that the ‘herders’ be directly called ‘Fulani’, Boko Haram or terrorists. Failure to fulfil this expectation, for them, amounts to bias and ‘unmerited’ favourable disposition for the North.

In D1, Mohammed Isyaku trolls the Southerners in the interaction given the likelihood of his recognition of the group’s solidarity with “the Avenger”. The effect of this impolite behaviour is immediately evident in the five replies it generates. While Amara Obilo for some reason chooses to mitigate her competence face threat by adding “sir” (probably sarcasm) after questioning the poster’s sense of judgement, her reference to Boko Haram is a strategy of impoliteness as she obviously links the poster to the terrorist group. George Nestor makes this strategy of negative association even more conspicuous by stating that “every Northern Muslim is a potential terrorist” while Openaike Olufemi associates the poster with a “cow”, killer herdsmen and Boko Haram. Other replies are seen expressing gloating remarks on the havoc of Boko haram in the North and wishing more evil on them.

Incontrovertibly, this behaviour by the Southerners is a result of face loss that the news imposes on them. However, taking it out on the Northerners is linked to the more proximal factor of Mohammed Isyaku’s troll. Generally, each post in the conversation is a condemnation of some sort while no attempt to repair rapport is found. Ethnic identity is enacted majorly in a more antagonistic way as each group seems to desire to see the other annihilated rather than to demonstrate intellectual superiority like in other interactions in A, B or C.

D2 portrays much the same trajectory of volatile behaviour and the enactment of ethnicity in a manner best considered as aggressive and capable of creating ethnic tension in the group. The interaction ultimately collapsed as a result of flaring emotion linked directly to interactants’ recognition of lack of face concerns by others for their ethnic identities. While Southerners were at the receiving end in D1, they

become the aggressors in D2 however. Here, the news regarding ‘Fulani’ herders activities (murders) occasions loss of face to the North as Northerners recognise the microcultural bias that they are commonly stereotyped and associated with terror acts in the imagination of Southerners. The ensuing comments by Southerners therefore serve to both justify the interpretation and enhance the explication of impoliteness behaviour. As in D1, face loss aggravation is employed as a strategy for performing impoliteness and dissociation from a group towards another group.

As a case in point, Adeola Ande is from Southern Nigeria. He adopted a strategy for directing impolite expression at Northern Nigeria by engaging in praise of the news agency for reporting news which obviously implies face loss to the region. The FTA is further extended by associating the killers with the Fulani ethnic group even when such an association was not stated either overtly or covertly by the news. While this impolite behaviour failed to immediately result in an exchange of impolite expressions as would ordinarily be expected, subsequent posts in the thread reflect the effect of this impolite expression. In the posts that follow, insults and flame wars pervade the interaction and cause a volley of impolitic exchanges. Adeola and Anthonia’s interaction in another thread, demonstrates to a large extent sufficient disagreement and disregard for tact or approbation as they comment on the news media’s reportage of terrorists’ activities in the country.

Directly performing impoliteness in a bi-directional fashion, Dominic Paulinius attacks the ruling party, labelling it as a problem. In one direction, he had threatened others’ autonomy face by starting an incongruous topic without proper hedging or redress although aware of the demographic diversity of the community. In the other direction, his attack on the party threatens both competence and fellowship face of the party and the party’s supporters in a move capable of further polarising the community. Like D1 also, the interaction is demonstrates disagreements marked by vulgarity. This is in sharp contrast with the mock angers, wrist-slapping and mock flame wars observed in other groups.

Group D exemplifies a failed interaction as purists in politeness studies would view it. In this group if interactions, interactants are observed to place no premium on face needs or rapport management. Conversely, individual interactants in the community are concerned with a need to impose their personal opinions on others. They tend to

overtly expect their co-interactants to accept these opinions while not irked by the possibility of rebuttals, riffs and counter-impositions. One clear observation made in this group is how anonymity of interactants in the community has a role to play in this phenomenon of impersonality. A vast majority of the factors responsible for the fiery nature of the exchanges can be traced to perceived bias of the newspapers towards particular ethnic groups vis-à-vis the perceived bias of the Nigerian government in the same direction. The performance of impoliteness and pragmatic violence are direct results of emotions linked to ethnic and political sentiments. Most interactants so responding enact the foregoing as the basis for reactions to perceived impoliteness by others in the communities. An atmosphere of more psychological, physical, ideological or cultural proximity would have demanded better rapport management, face recognition and relational investment in the communities.

#### **4.5. Face work and relational work in the data**

To a large extent, observations from the data have shown face work as grossly inadequate for the explication of politeness in news-based virtual community. Rather than a direct and clear-cut identification of expectations of fellowship, competence and autonomy face observance (Lim and Bowers, 1991), the data reveals more complex dimensions of expectations where certain interactants expect (if not even desire) confrontations and flame war. In such situations, a reliance on face falls grossly short of theorisation on such interactions. As much as politeness remains a key aspect of Pragmatic analysis (which Face work catered for), it becomes obvious that, as politeness has been proven to not be the only goal of conversations, an inquiry into interactions should pay deliberate attention to instances of other forms of behaviour including antagonism and flamewar.

Relational work as proposed by Locher and Watts (2005) fares much better in the explication of the multiple shades of intentions, goals and interactional choices about behaviour. As the data in this study shows, certain conversations operated on tacit rules of common impoliteness to an opponent, while some employ mock impoliteness to exude an atmosphere of banter and camaraderie. In all these cases, politic behaviour superseded politeness and face concerns. Overall, even within the dimension of face work, this study finds that commitment to the goals of the conversation in the forms of relational investments ranks above face needs of

interactants. In fact, the Sociopragmatic Interactional Principles (Spencer-Oatey and Jiang, 2003) fit better within the Relational work framework as interactants in Nigerian news-based virtual communities studied are found emphasising goals of conversation and micro-rules of current interactions above a ‘universal’ rule of politeness which might constrain them to always interact politely with others in the groups.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Overview**

This chapter is presented in three units apart from this overview. Unit 5.1 attempts to summarise the discussion study with particular emphasis on how it has responded to the issues in scholarship which form its motivation. 5.2 concludes the study by discussing its findings and answering the questions that birthed the motivation for it in the form of generalised statements while 5.3 proceeds to pass recommendations for further studies and to various stakeholders in the academics; scholars, teachers and students, internet users as well as Nigerian users of the internet and English language.

#### **5.1 Summary**

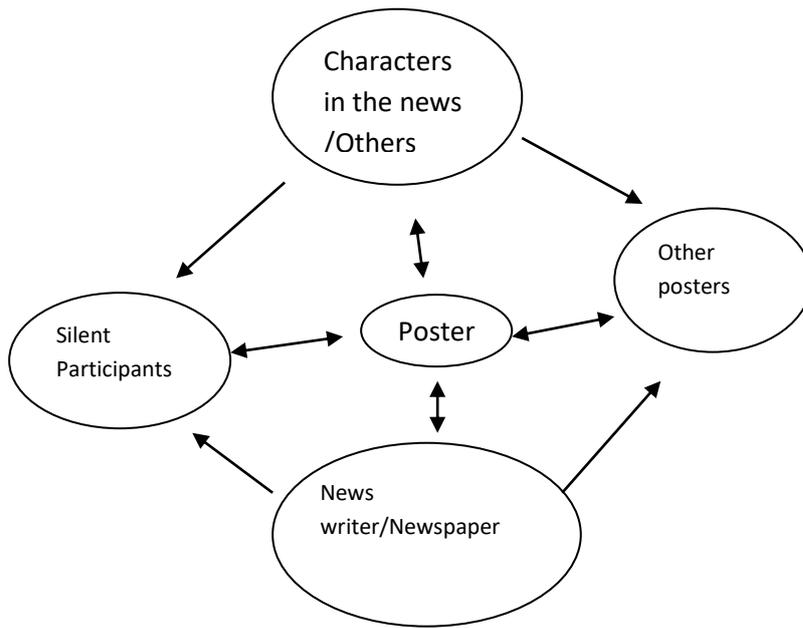
This study has paid attention to politeness practice in five Nigerian news-based virtual communities. Relying on the theoretical paradigms of face and relational work, it subjected the comments on news items in the light of the news item itself (and its context) to detailed analysis to determine the patterns of politeness behaviour that are most common in those communities. These behaviours are necessarily interpreted based not only on the context of the news but also on the factors of context including the peculiarities of hyperspace as well as the social, religious, ethnic and political leanings of the Nigerian citizens who form the largest crop of the netizens in the interactions. It also sought to explicate the tools and strategies employed by these community members to carry out their (im)politeness, the factors behind their choices, the ways they perceive others' politeness behaviour as well as the factors behind this. Finally, it paid attention to the extent to which Nigerian news-based virtual communities can be said to be unique relative to face-to-face communities in terms of politeness behaviour. The next unit presents its findings and conclusions.

## **5.2 Conclusion of findings**

The following are the conclusions of the study based on its findings from the analysis conducted.

### **1. How do participants in Nigerian news-based virtual communities negotiate politeness behaviour towards others in their posts?**

Interactants in virtual communities engage in interaction in a pattern which is largely multi-directional and observably peculiar to this domain of language use. In this unique multi-directional pattern of engagement, interactants generally imagine agents mentioned in the news, the writers (and the news agency personified) and other participants in the news-reading community as almost equal part of the community and engage them almost equally in the interactions as well as (im)politeness behaviour specifically. In other words, virtual communities are unique in the way their populations are constituted. Fig. 5.1. overleaf is a representation of the directions of politeness behaviour as explicated.



**Key**

- ↔ verbal/non-verbal interactions as (im)politeness behaviour
- direction of the effects of poster's politeness behaviour

**Fig 5.1. Representation of the Demographic Structure and Face Network of a Virtual Community**

While the poster who is performing the behavior is at the centre of the interaction, there is a network of possible recipients whose faces are capable of being targeted at once. Behaviour targeted at the newspaper because of the nature of its story or at other agents like the news character or another agent reflects on the faces of other participants who have a different opinion from the poster's on such an agent. As the diagram demonstrates, the effect of politeness behaviour can only be measured on the other posters (active and silent) in the interaction even though such effects could be generated from an act targeted at 'external' agents.

Posters display a level of awareness of the difficulty of identifying the immediate recipient of their posts due to lack of a smooth time sequence or the availability of physiognomy and other face-to-face turn-taking cues. They therefore select tools like mentions or tagging when they want to strictly select their recipient. While comments posted earlier in the interactions seem to generate more replies, comment posted later often appear isolated and are mostly left as interaction between the poster and the character in the news or the newspaper rather than with other posters

The expression of both politeness and impoliteness is multimodal. However, impoliteness seems to exploit more modes than politeness. A significant majority of expressions considered polite are expressed through the verbal mode although there is a significant deployment of 'likes' and 'smileys' depicting approval. Impoliteness tends to fail to be sufficiently expressed via the text mode. Interactants who wish to perform impoliteness are most commonly observed to select memes, GIFs, pictures and emojis which are then combined with texts to sufficiently perform the expression of reservation, condemnation, ridicule or outright disgust.

## **2. How do participants in Nigerian news-based virtual communities identify and understand politeness behaviour towards them?**

- Polarity is one of the most vital factors behind the negotiation and perception of politeness behaviour. Posters often deliberately post FTAs when it is established that other posters belong to an opposite side, aiming to both annoy hem and please those sharing their ideological space. Posters on opposing

spaces therefore process posts that negate their views as taunts, trolls or flame and thus impolite.

- Perception of politeness is often based on polar bias as introduced above. Oftentimes, a post deemed polite when credited to a certain poster may be viewed as impolite when credited to another. A face threat to male posters for instance may pass as politic banter or challenge to action when posted by another male poster while such a post is perceived as a face threat is posted by a female poster. This factor holds for issues around polarity involving culture, ethnicity, political affiliation, religion and even geographical regions of posters.

### **3. What politeness strategies are used in Nigerian news-based virtual communities?**

- Among others, the most prominent strategies of politeness include:
  1. Competence/fellowship face observance through laughter either as a way of validating an earlier post as truly funny or to deepen its sarcastic effect towards a criticized party. The most prominent tools here include emojis, emoticons and GIFS which play largely interactional roles.
  2. Face negotiation via tone modification. Posters often add laughter (as LOL or graphicon) to their posts either to tone down its potential harshness and negotiate a humorous reception or conversely to rub a joke in the face of a recipient thus initiating a volley of derision from other posters.
  3. Fellowship face observance through inclusive use of language mostly by the use of the first person plural pronouns (we/us) to form group ideology in the expression of supposedly personal opinions. This also includes the use of endearing terms like “my dear”, “my brother/sister” or “sir” especially as relational strategy towards an opponent.

4. Fellowship face observance through adherence to group rules including choice of verbal code, choice of tenor of conversation and general observance of community face.
5. Self and other face repair through de-escalation, sudden introduction of humour and trivialization of a heating-up argument, directly soliciting for peace and re-enactment of flaming language in a milder form.
6. Relational strategies in friendly interactions also include questions and answers as well as graphological cues like ellipsis to demonstrate a desire for responses and rapport. Graphicons and memes also feature as tools for this strategy. In unfriendly interactions however, relational strategies include negative rapport generation achieved through tools like trolls, flaming, impolite riffs and derisive laughter as well as harsh memes which force co-interactants to respond with as much impoliteness as was generated by the initiator of talk.

Conversely, strategies of impoliteness include fellowship/competence face threat through any or a combination of the strategies of name-calling, disapprobatory titles like “this boy”, “this girl”, “otondo” (in adult talk), flagrant flouting of group rules and outright insults delivered via trolls or flame wars. Face is observed to be threatened more through the use of derisive laughter to mark earlier posts of others as ridiculous or laughable. Most notably, memes and GIFS were observed to be tools of impoliteness as they help threaten face without the actual verbal efforts of the poster commenting the impoliteness. They thus aid the impersonality needed to justify impoliteness.

**7. What similarities or dissimilarities exist between the identified latent rules of politeness in these communities and those established in the literature as applying in face-to-face conversations?**

- Unlike in real-life communities, introduction of irrelevant topic, non-adherence to turn-taking rules and abrupt topic change are hardly adjudged as impolite in the interactions studied. Rather, these phenomena often count for

politic behaviour on the ground of fluidity of context. Hence, advertisements of all sorts and interruptions of lines of argument are not perceived as thread hijack or interruptions but as an expression of right to comment as desired which often receives attention or simply gets ignored if no poster is interested.

- Unlike in real-life interactions, the use of textese, pidgin and other forms of informal language use in the domain of language use under study is higher on the politeness/relational scale. Textese is favoured as a signal for relaxed tone of interaction unlike in real-life situations where they may be frowned at as undue informality. (Crystal, 2004: Umberto Eco, 2002)
- Most of the interactions including many of those tagged as “A” (friendly and sustained) displayed a high prevalence of linguistic impoliteness which ought ordinarily to render them impolite. However, their acceptability is generated by the context of situation (and environment) and sometimes the cultural context. This thus makes a strong case for relational work a a better suited framework for the analysis of politeness in the virtual environment as mere tag of polite or impolite does not explain why certain exchanges lasted and seemed to be actually enjoyed by the members despite the observed profanity, vulgarity and indecency in language use.
- Impersonality/anonymity seems to make a huge difference between the virtual community and real-life communities in terms of expectations of polite behaviour. Posters form and lose alignments and affiliations in such a fluid pattern that makes the need to remain polite just as fluid and impossible to pin down. In most cases, deep-seated emotions tied to ethnicity and religion form the only bases for affiliations and respect rather than other factors like age, level of education, social class and other social variables of real-life interactions.
- Tacit norms are constantly being formed and reformed in virtual communities. These norms underline the perceptions of members about politeness behaviour rather than any known extant rules of politeness from the individual members’ cultures.

- Predominant use of polite behaviour produces smooth and manageable but often boring and artificial interactions while the use of impolite behaviour produces long, hardly manageable yet interesting (even if fiery) interactions. This fact seems to set the virtual communities apart from real-life conversations where impoliteness often leads to the abrupt end of talk as saving face often means keeping quiet and avoiding the escalation of conflict.

In conclusion, the study observed that the progression of both politeness and impoliteness along the relational scale are in the same direction in Nigerian news-based virtual communities. Interactants express more politeness in response to seeming expressions of politeness towards them and others. In a similar pattern, interactants respond with more impoliteness in the face of perceived expressions of impoliteness. In both cases, the responses are observed to be major factors which deepen the interactions. Relational work, therefore, rather than Facework is responsible for both the length and the success of interactions in the communities. Impoliteness, rudeness or improper behaviour is thus not the major factor behind the failure and lack of (smooth) progression of interaction. Rather, failure or deliberate refusal of interactants to make sufficient relational investments in the conversations can be directly put forward as a factor in that regard.

#### **8. What are the factors underlying the use of politeness or impoliteness by the members of the communities?**

In fact, factors determining the choice of politeness behaviour are often traceable to the style of presentation or content of the news itself. When participants find a news post ridiculous, there are evidences of FTA directed at the writers while such are also extended to characters in the news when their reported behaviours are found as unacceptable by the participants.

- Posts displaying an overt attempt at politeness towards every member in the community seem to generate less comments or likes. Conversely, posts that choose to observe the fellowship face of one side at the detriment of others' face generate likes from 'friends' and more comments from opponents and friends alike. Posters are thus motivated to select impoliteness in a bid to generate prolonged talk while they select polite behaviour to end talk.

- Prominent among the factors that determine the use of (im)politeness are
  1. Topic of discussion. News on politics seems to generate more use of face threat and polarizing language while this is usually directed towards other community members. Even *Yabaleftonline* seems to lose its gist-café-like banter pattern when political news are being discussed.
  2. Type of community. Impoliteness is often used as a strategy for communicating polarity and advancing talk in culturally heterogeneous communities while the homogeneous communities use politeness more in potentially achieving group solidarity while impoliteness is deployed only as a tool to fight and silence the enemies. This strategy is further enhanced by the choice of linguistic code to exclude the outsider.
  3. Tenor of the news item. More often than not, hilarious and light news items generate less relational impoliteness. though linguistic impoliteness seems rife, it is perceived by members as politi banter and approved as strategies for enhancing the camaraderie in the interactions. Often times, linguistic impoliteness is selected as a tool to trialise issues in the news.
  4. Members' perception/evaluation of face concern in the news. In most of the conversations analysed, members respond with more impolite behaviour towards the news and persons in the news as well as the news writers when the news item sounds far-fetched, unrealistic, untrue or fails to sit well with their cultural inclinations while more polite behaviour is observed where a majority of the members do not find the news objectionable.

**9. Identify and explain the factors responsible for the way decoders perceive (im)politeness in the communities**

Emotions and the perception of polarity or disagreement (Mutingl and Turnbull, 1998) largely explain why posters in the virtual community studied interpret certain posts as polite or otherwise. Among the factors that define their positions against

which they measure other members' views and level of challenge to theirs include ethnicity, religious affiliations, political cum ideological leanings and so on. Such emotions trigger counter-attacks to face often done verbally and graphically through memes.

Ethnicity, political affiliations and religion are the three major polarizing factors that mark Nigerian news-based virtual communities. These factors are responsible for the emotional traumas that translate into the trolls, flams and cyber bullying permeating the major communities in almost every sense. In fact, results of the analysis portrays that when potentially ethno-politically and religiously neutral posts are the subject, Nigerian netizens find a way of bringing these polarizing factors to bear on their discussions.

Patterns of language use, just as choice of verbal code also feature as a part of relational signal in the interactions studied. While the predominant use of a favoured pattern by a poster signals politeness towards the group, a discordant use of language signals deliberate impolite behaviour. Use of first person pronouns also features as a factor in the perception of politeness behaviour. Most of the friendly interactions are dominated by the use of "we/us" while the unfriendly ones are dominated by the more individualistic use of "I/me".

#### **10. How do interlocutors in Nigerian news-based virtual communities respond to (im)politeness?**

- While response to politeness is observed to be uniformly stable and predictable response to impoliteness is usually unpredictable with the following patterns observed in order of frequency:
  1. Angry faces (emojis) and derisive laughter
  2. Mocking and harsh memes
  3. Flaming/ Verbal FTAs
  4. Face repair strategies
  5. Silence – untaken turns

Further, posters often resort to topic change as part of the face-loss repair mechanisms. This is however mostly initiated by a third party to a flame war who douses tension by introducing another less controversial issue to sustain talk along a more positive pole but which usually seem to end the life of the conversation.

**11. How does the cultural and linguistic heterogeneity of the Nigerian society impact on politeness behavior in Nigerian news-based virtual communities?**

- While further research may be required in this area, the initial impression got from the *BiafraTV* community is that politeness rather than impoliteness is the norm in a culturally/politically monolithic community. This is found to be especially true when the topic of discussion is a popular ‘intra-national’ cause. Members’ use of politeness towards one another and face threats towards enemies engender a stronger bond and community face is observed in the bid to energise the entire community to commit to the cause even in the face of opposition. On the contrary, multicultural/multipolitical communities are more prone to face threats as tool for enacting individuals’ community face against attempts by others to elevate theirs.

In conclusion, the analysis has revealed the inadequacy of the Face work framework in the analysis of interactions in virtual space. As Locher and Watts proposed, politeness is merely a part of relational work. Rather than a concern for face, posters in Nigerian news-based virtual communities place more emphasis on getting responses to their views and may even resort to impoliteness in order to achieve this. When measured against traditional rules of politeness, such behaviour is prone to be adjudged as inappropriate. However, other interactants’ acceptance and enthusiastic responses when such strategies are used are enough to prove that it is not only acceptable behaviour but probably the more appropriate one.

**5.3. Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following are recommendations emerging from the study.

1. Relational work, compared to Face work, is a better-suited framework for studying virtual communities. Even when Face work is favoured, researchers should engage it within the precincts of relational investments.
2. More studies are required to pay attention to the seeming validation of verbal violence and heated exchanges in virtual community. As such, Pragmatic studies would be able to engage the ongoing conversation that the virtual human in the virtual community is maybe even more homo-hostilis than the predecessor and creators of the virtual projection. Or rather that the virtual community may be a platform that humans have created to display their bottled up violence which “real-life society” continues to proscribe.
3. An experimental study with attention to the role of impersonality/anonymity of posters on politeness would serve to further advance the conversation on politeness in virtual communities.
4. Scholars should pay some deeper attention to the possible transfer of online politeness behaviour to real-life situations. Studies like Culpeper have paid attention to the deliberate performance of impoliteness but there is a need to begin to study it more like a norm in interactions rather than as aberrations.

#### **5.4. Limitations to the study**

Rather curiously, virtual communities, unlike offline communication pose some challenges to research and the ease of documentation. One of the challenges encountered by this researcher in the course of data collection was the seeming endlessness of each conversation selected. On one hand, more comments tend to surface as the data was supposed to be recorded after conclusion of a thread. The researcher thus had to make some painful decisions of printing at a point in the chat while neglecting often rich and relevant comments that come subsequently.

Closely related to this problem was the issue of adjacency pairs. Some posters, probably due to little knowledge of the vagaries of Facebook chats post their replies to antecedent posts without clicking the “replying” button thereby forcing the researcher to consider them as separate threads and making the interaction sometimes disjointed.

Finally, some threads for unknown reasons get deleted and thus inaccessible after some time. One such thread got lost before the researcher could return to take

screenshots in true colour thereby forcing the researcher to resort to the use of an earlier printed copy of same in black and white.

### **5.5. Contribution to knowledge**

As a study in virtual community, this study has delved into the nature of politeness behaviour beyond face-to-face human interactions. It reveals among other things that news-based virtual communities allow participants to subtly negotiate politeness rules for each interaction depending on several factors including type of news, demographics of the interactants and attitudes to the newspaper or personalities reported about.

In contrast to what is known about face-to-face conversations also, this study reveals that the configuration of interaction in news-based virtual communities transcends only those directly present. The conversation includes the news and its writers as well as the characters reported about. It also opens up a consideration of politeness as a bidirectional behaviour which can observe an interactant's face while threatening others' at once. Such dimension of politeness is catered for by relational work where face work accounts only for behaviour as polite or impolite, and an interactant as either observing or threatening face at a time.

Further on the concept of Face, the study interrogates the limitation of face as a concept to individuals and human entities as hitherto treated in the Western practice of Pragmatics which Nwoye (1992) has earlier challenged by identifying a community face in Igbo culture. This study identifies dimensions of face to include non-human players like a government, a newspaper and a community.

The study argues that the choice of a theory in interactional pragmatics would save politeness in hyperspace researchers the trouble of an arduous and futile struggle to explicate behaviour using a theory most suited to face-to-face interaction like several models of face theory. It reveals that sustenance of talk is not merely a function of politeness as readiness to invest into interpersonal relation, in order to achieve interactional goal, is more paramount in the sustenance of talk irrespective of whether politeness, impoliteness or other forms of behaviour is the norm in the interaction.

Finally, the study contributes to studies in virtual communities a four dimensional classification of communities in terms of politeness. It proposes a friendly and sustained group, an unfriendly yet sustained group, an unfriendly and jagged group and an unfriendly and fiery group representing a spectrum of friendliness and sustainability as a result of face and relational considerations in virtual communities.

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"I am not spending Davido's money" — Baby mama, Sophia Momodu tells follower who says she's looking good because of Davido's money.



"I am not spending Davido's money" - Baby mama, Sophia Momodu tells follower. - YabaLeftOnline

For a while now, Nigerian singer, Davido's baby mama, Sophia Momodu has been sharing on the gram, photos from the vacation she's having and one can tell...  
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Ikechukwu Ebubeogu if u are in a relationship with naija girls.....u just have to understand one law.."LOVE IS IMPORTANT BUT MONEY IS IMPORTANTER"

Like · Reply · 1h



Christian James Lol. "Importanter", Guy U Don Craze Finish. Lol.

Like · Reply · 1h



Success Chinyeremugo



Like · Reply · 1h



Idris Enikhe Alugbe Lmao  
wizdom full ya head



Like · Reply · 1h



Write a reply...



Suceeder Adebajji Iroomo Yea , I'm aware of that , I could remembered the day davido transfer 39million to my acct to give her as surprise package on her birthday , she rejected it I kukuma transfer 10m frm d money give my poor EX

Like · Reply · 1h · Edited



^ Hide 12 Replies



Chase Lane Did he also give you a dictionary and a good English textbook?

Like · Reply · 1h





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Collins Nwagbo Savage 🤔🤔🤔

Like · Reply · 1h

Darling Chris chase lane how u want make the guy write the language again , online English teacher. adebanji Abeg the comment funny I'm laffing

Like · Reply · 1h

Succeder Adebani Iroomo Chase Lane. , hu dey chase go soon chase to ur end  
You are absolutely nothing according to ur profile pic

Like · Reply · 1h

Chase Lane Darling Chris, i didn't stop you from laughing.

Like · Reply · 1h

Darling Chris chase now tell us the part of the comment that is incorrect, English teacher

Like · Reply · 1h

Christian James Please Can Someone explain The Meaning Of "Kukuma"

Like · Reply · 1h

Darling Chris kukuma kill me, e mean just kill me.

Like · Reply · 1h

Chase Lane Succeder, don't take it personal okay? Just keep on attending your English classes. You will definitely do well by 2023.

Goodbye!

Like · Reply · 1h

Succeder Adebani Iroomo Darling Chris. Lol



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Darling Chris fool, no matter how many English u know, a grade 1 child in the UK knows it more than u. we r Africans and not English masters so stop backing and next time u wanna talk remove your mothers breast from your mouth so we can hear the clearly

Like · Reply · 1h · Edited



Succeder Adebunji Iroomo Christian James Kuku in Yoruba means , wen u are left with no choice or idea e.g Kuku kill me  
Kuku give me... See more

Like · Reply · 1h



Write a reply...



Udobia Salome Followers and their chalichali...is it ur looking good, wat if Davido doesn't even give her money or maybe she sef doesn't collect his money...

Like · Reply · 1h



Pwedy Queen The girls dad is fucking rich, have you heard of dele momodu?

Like · Reply · 1h



Cynthia Ezekiel D dele dat davido is insulting upan down..abi Wich one...

Like · Reply · 1h



Kazzy West Ojg Nd how's that possible

Like · Reply · 1h



Cynthia Ezekiel Is it not dele dat he use to sing bahd ,baddo baddest... Wen he said mr dele na my boy...abi Wich dele are u talking about..

Like · Reply · 1h



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Pwedy Queen Yes Cynthia Ezekiel

Like Reply · 1h

Pwedy Queen Ezekiel see for yourself



Like Reply · 1h

Kazzy West Ojg Pwedy queen

Dele is still a boy

Like Reply · 1h

Write a reply...



Divine Wisdom Is it wrong for her to use his money?some people who can't mind their business will keep criticising you,not because you did something wrong, but because they don't have your kind of opputunity

Like Reply · 1h



Aniekan Etukudo How will u be spending david's money wen I'm in-charge.. Go ahead baby tell de world dat I'm richer than davido!!

Like Reply · 1h





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Grace Nnadozie My dear u maybe right because chioma is the one eating the whole 30 billion ,and u dey there hmmm sorry ,but u can fast and pray about it oooo

Like · Reply · 1h



Idris Enikhe Alugbe Sombdy like efe will be wondering y he didnt get any nomination in the headies. Even with his sombody sombody, and warri warri warri dem go hear ram na.



Like · Reply · 1h



Ever May Justice Is that supposed to be a news... Pls how is bobrisky? I've missed him ... See more

Like · Reply · 1h



Onunkwo Chikarito Facebook username transformation... 20-24... Itz sweetcurvy chic... See more

Like · Reply · 1h



Babalola Awori Jogunomi Chioma would soon Join the baby mama team.. You even have a stand at least you bear Davido a child. So nothing bad if you spend his money. I just want to laugh at the wailers celebrating a lady without a stand

Like · Reply · 1h · Edited



ONyedika Hillary Furst day i got drunk i Asked My KidBro To Help Me Hold The House Steady While I Open The Door, So The House Won't Collapse! Mehn twas horrible

Like · Reply · 1h



Ayodeji Oyinlola It's illogical to anyone who doesn't realise she's not depending on davido. chioma cruising everywhere with him una no talk pekus

Like · Reply · 1h



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Ayofemi MascheranoSnr Don't mind dem jere.  
You're only carrying davido name upandan like birthright.  
Ur family is ok too la

Like · Reply · 1h



Sandra Gold Gosh  
The way I broke Ehhh!  
To open church just dey hungry me... See more

Like · Reply · 1h



Sylver John Ladies repeat after me,  
My boyfriend's car is not my car 😂😂

Like · Reply · 1h



Collins Nwagbo Don't mind all this followers ...NNE com an be my  
babeh mama and eat money 🤔🤔🤔🤔

Like · Reply · 1h



Laray Grace Johnson "I will die for you"  
Says a guy who can't even swallow pills without putting it inside  
garn 😂😂

Like · Reply · 1h



Shine Edeki So whose money re u spending? Urs?  
...

Like · Reply · 1h



Omotoyosi Ayo Saintz I feel like dropping out of school to further  
my facebook career

Like · Reply · 1h



Jeremiah Olatoyan Wrong reply even if its true, she could have  
just said thanks for the compliment





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DopeXencial NY Sharrap!..... Lie kill you there

Like · Reply · 1h



Princess Pemu Haha

Like · Reply · 1h



Shuaib Kamal OK..u are saving it 4 him..

Like · Reply · 1h



Michael Pryme Yes you're spending my money

Like · Reply · 1h



Ngozi P Adizua Ok you are spending mamido's money

Like · Reply · 1h



Prociouse Donlin Them who money

Like · Reply · 1h



Oladosu Olawale Abiola Yeye mtcheew

Like · Reply · 1h



Ériç Ødiwè lol

Like · Reply · 1h



Valuer Ben Toh Chukwu Hmm

Like · Reply · 1h



Dorathy James PLEASE FRIENDS IF YOU HAVE BROTHER AND SISTER WHO DID NOT MAKE THERE JAMB .. Tell them to contact PROF MICHAEL AJAH 08187232398 my twin sister JUST PRINTED Her JAMB ORIGINAL COPY YESTERDAY THAT WAS UPGRADED TO 240..... THIS IS REAL...

Like · Reply · 1h



Mc Lucky Wise Then stop ask me money owk!!!

Like · Reply · 8d



Victor Idowu Balogun Biko is it Dele Momodu's?

Like · Reply · 8d



Lala Griffin She spend or she no spend it's nobody's business

Like · Reply · 8d



1



Ngozi P Adizua Ok you are spending mamido's money

Like · Reply · 8d



Radikal Williams Hesse And so what

Like · Reply · 5d



Procious Donlin Them who money

Like · Reply · 8d



Chinwendu Onuoha must you naked your self receive sense

Like · Reply · 8d



Uchenna Cheche Faith Dis gal wowo eeeeeeh despite d money

Like · Reply · 8d



Ériç Ødiwè lol

Like · Reply · 8d



Patience Patience Jonah For ur mind now

Like · Reply · 5d



Valuer Ben Toh Chukwu Hmm

Like · Reply · 8d

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20 June 2016 · 🌐

NNAMDI KANU ARRIVES COURT 20/06/2016



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 **Ekene Ajero Nwa Chineke**  
Like · Reply · 1y

 **Eugene Ohakamma** One Love Nnamdi kanu.  
Like · Reply · 1y

 **Bernard Eric** LIKE FOR THIS

  
   1

Like · Reply · 1y

 **Uche Sunday** The lore is ur strength  
Like · Reply · 1y

 **Sampeace Brown** We love you Mazi Nnamdi Kanu!. All hail Biafra!!!  
Like · Reply · 1y

 **Chinwe Tony Nwachineke** on the move ! we love you with a great passion. #FreeBiafra #FreeOhamadike1 #FreeNnamdiKanu #FreeMyHero

 **Tyson Madu** I love Biafra  
Like · Reply · 1y

 **Taqueen Osuwune** Crazy Zoo  
Like · Reply · 1y

 **Sammy Somsak** I LOVE BIAFRA AND NNAMDI Biafrans with Nnamdi Kanu  
Like · Reply · 1y

 **Taqueen Osuwune** DSS and prison office is like they are tired of guiding him with arms.  
Like · Reply · 1y

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The Nation Newspaper shared a link.

23 hrs · €



### Saraki pays N4m salary arrears of Kwara traditional rulers - The Nation Nigeria

Senete President Bukola Saraki Monday cleared the 20 months' salary arrears owed some categories of traditional chiefs in Kwara central senatorial district....

THENATIONONLINENG.NET



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Olaide Oriola This is not new election is coming they have to buy there vote from hungry people

Like · Reply · 23h

3



TonyBasic Okpunwa Yes, just as Buhari now seeks Tinubu.

Like · Reply · 23h

2



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Barr Julius Osifo 2019 loading! What a way to win the people's votes. He should add pensioners to complete the circle.

Like · Reply · 6h

-  **Badmus Ahmed** So he has taken over the duty of the Governor. Anyway the man there is running as a proxy.  
Like · Reply · 23h 3
-  **Omokunrin Naa** that is how to pocket traditional rulers,good of u,UAR so of ur father  
Like · Reply · 20h
-  **Abdullahi Yusuf** They only collect what is actual belong to them nonsense  
Like · Reply · 23h
-  **Olayemi Olokede** Hungry traditional rulers.....anyway elections is around the corner.  
Like · Reply · 21h 1
-  **Salau Akinwunmi** Its their money looted from treachery so nothing has happened.  
Like · Reply · 4h
-  **Abdullahi Umoru** 4m is nothing when referring to saraki now.  
Like · Reply · 19h
-  **Daniel Kassa** Election is at hand all debts will b paid in full  
Like · Reply · 18h
-  **Omosebi Sunday** Sam 2019 Election tactics! Kwarans whatch out wisely!!! No more slavery come 2019!!!  
Like · Reply · 20h
-  **David Daniel Kenos** Why now ? This crop of politicians think they are smart.  
Like · Reply · 22h

-  **Munirudeen Ayo Alarape** Rob peter to pay Paul Saraki you are trying  
Like · Reply · 23h
-  **Hammed Olaide Asiwaju** if lik pay 4hundred m is aware money collect it ok  
Like · Reply · 20h · Edited
-  **Rafiu Alabi** Election is around the corner.  
Like · Reply · 21h
-  **Ibrahim Sulyman** And so what,this state is in bondages youth let rescue our father's land.  
Like · Reply · 23h
-  **Tayo Ayano** Pays N49m and not N4m.  
Like · Reply · 23h
-  **Peter Abioye** Yoruba says, "Owo Abu le fi ns"Abu lalejo?  
Like · Reply · 20h
-  **Anthonia Gladys** Good work.we need more.  
Like · Reply · 21h
-  **Aliyu Muhammed Lemu** Very good  
Like · Reply · 23h



**Moshood Olanrewaju**



Like · Reply · 23h



**Asiwaju Busari Shaamsuddeen Akande** Is he the Governor? Rubbish.

Like · Reply · 19h



**Lagbaja Omo Tamedun** I tire ooooooooooooo

Like · Reply · 3h



Write a reply...



**David Oyetunji** Rubbish

Like · Reply · 23h



**Alade Munheer Olarwaley** Is he the governor?

Like · Reply · 7h



**Tola Awere** Campaign has begun.

Like · Reply · 23h



**Salisu Muhd Abubakar** Insane!!

Like · Reply · 21h



**Hajj Kudus Neat**



Like · Reply · 23h



**Michael Shilong**



Like · Reply · 23h



**Eddie Green**



Like · Reply · 11h



**Don Kelly** Political strategy

Like · Reply · 21h



**Audu Ajayi** This is not new election is coming they have to buy there vote from hungry people. BARAWO OLE are lawmakers.

Like · Reply · 18h

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28 July 2017 · 🌐

Five Killed In Fresh Boko Haram Attack On Borno Village | Sahara Reporters <http://bit.ly/2eT99LX>



### Five Killed In Fresh Boko Haram Attack On Borno Village | Sahara Reporters

At least five villagers have been killed and many wounded when Boko Haram terrorists attacked a village in southern part of Borno state yesterday, vigilantes...

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👍 🧑🏿 🧑🏿 583

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Top comments (unfiltered)



King Montana Army chief gave his boys 45 days to get boko leader and now Boko leader give his own boys to drop 1000 dead body before 45 days. Let watch and see who will win. Ndi Zoo

Like · Reply · 26 · 28 July at 10:23

Hide 11 Replies



Emma Anchorme You're very stupid a fellow, you are your family still lives in Nigeria that makes you guys animals.

Like · Reply · 28 July at 10:27



Aram Jake Emma Anchorme They live in BiafraLand not Zoo. Hear that

Like · Reply · 10 · 28 July at 10:45



King Montana @Emma Anchorme you are more stupid with cow brain. Since you are very proud of been a ZOO citizen, why did you choice Hometown: Paradise, Solomon Islands and Current city : Jerusalem, Israel? that is why you are a monkey in the ZOO

Like · Reply · 8 · 28 July at 10:49 · Edited



Kaka Adolf Nonso Emma, go and buy rope. Do what your father did.

Like · Reply · 5 · 28 July at 10:49



Allen Kennedy That stupid Emma. All of you northerners will die by boko haram

Like · Reply · 4 · 28 July at 10:51

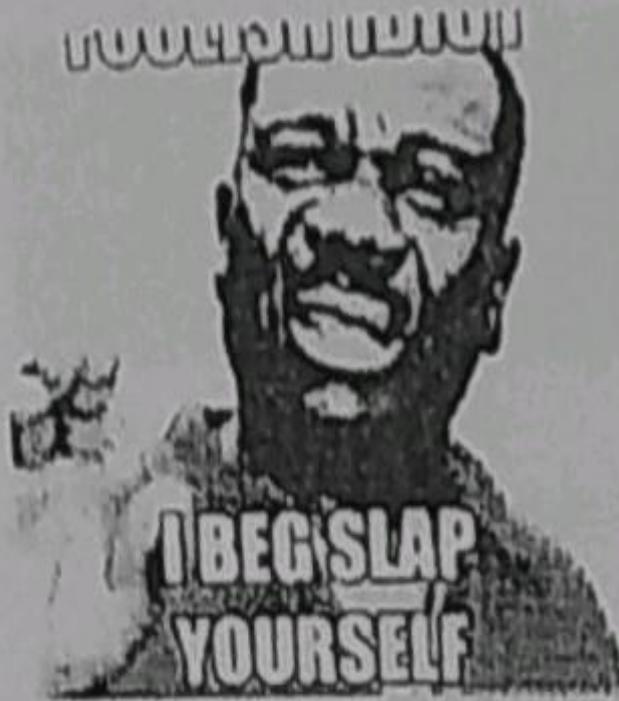


Itz Bekee Norths are animals an bokoharam is a big animal and nw they at war in the zoo republic lets see who wins at last... Ndi ara

Like · Reply · 5 · 28 July at 11:08



Nkpuma Ifeanyi Emma anchorme, why not directed ur stupid insult to hausa/fulani that formed the Islamic soldiers boko haram? since the northerners was busy issuing igbos quit notice and forcing the igbo elites with ohanaeze to denounce, disassociate and condemned Nnamdi kanu with ipob's for biafran freedom. But they failed to do the same to their Islamic boko haram and fulani herdsmen that has been murdering people anyhow for nothing in which the northerners was not regard as anything bcs they never for ones has any northern leaders meeting to discuss how to end boko haram and fulani herdsmen killings instead they're busy conveying meeting upon meeting on how to stop Nnamdi kanu with ipob's for seeking biafran freedom. to show u that boko haram and fulani herdsmen killings are not their problem but Nnamdi kanu with ipob's. so Emma Anchorme now u can see why u're so selfish and dumb by insulting someone



Like · Reply · 1 · 28 July at 11:21

 Ichabod Elem Peterson Hahahahahahaah

Like · Reply · 28 July at 11:35

 Chris Azu #I\_Stand\_With\_Shekau 🤔 🤔 🤔

Like · Reply · 1 · 28 July at 11:37

 Bulky Nelson I was thinking that as soon as Mr Buhari takes over power that boko haram would be a thing of the past as he was ranting while campaigning. It is rather surprising that more than two years in his administration, boko haram are still on the prowl. Mr Buhari, who actually went wrong, I know that you have ran away to your new home in united kingdom, mbok come back and quell your people.

Like · Reply · 1 · 28 July at 18:46

 Juveth Uchechukwu Amadi Lol

Like · Reply · 29 July at 18:06

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Muhammad Yabawa Abdulla APC government have a case to answer about Boko haram. boko haram was founded and sponsors by retired politician soldiers. these retired soldiers all of them are in this present administration. we all know them.

Like · Reply · 37w

👍👎👤 24

^ Hide 19 Replies

Usman Musa Kallamu Shettima must be behind it

Like · Reply · 37w

Abraham Ezekiel Now u guys are talking, boko haram is not just a terror group they are been sponsored by high profile people in the north

Like · Reply · 37w

👍 8

De Christian Northerner are the Boko Haram according to what u said now but why didn't you people condemn their attacks on innocent people, you people had been shielding these terrorists and it will consume you all alone except those like you who says the truth.

Like · Reply · 37w

👍 4

Stecia Ann God bless u for speaking out the truth, u didn't speak like a northerner anyway

Like · Reply · 37w

👍 2

Akpacha Egbe Salami Ejiga Until we put religion aside and we question our politicians abt this boko haram. It wouldn't stop.

Like · Reply · 37w

👍 1



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Alfred Okeiukwu Whether he speaks the truth or not, we are all tired of their wahala. Shiites vs Sunnah, Fulani vs Borno Kanuri, herdsmen, BH blood, blood, blood... Tired Abeg. Need to cut out.

Like · Reply · 37w · Edited

👍 2

Julius Ediae For real I suspect this Ali of custom

Like · Reply · 37w

Mekon Agbedo this bokoharam asult stated during former governor of borno funded as a political torgry because in north in order to sussed everything has to be label religion, but this won has gone beyond their control, and only God no the end

Like · Reply · 37w

Effiong Mbom Why have sponsors like Gov. Shettima not been apprehended?.

Like · Reply · 37w

Nasiru Hassan Yabawa what's so ever called your self, you should be aware your brothers from North East Haven existing during PDP error now why the blame on APC, the founder your brothers are still the chairman of your party, why are you deciving your people.

Like · Reply · 37w

👍 1

Perry Otamere hmmm....

Like · Reply · 37w

Godpower Chukwunedu All bokoharams are hausa/fulani people including buhari.

Like · Reply · 37w



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Chuks Umeh Why not mention them bros  
Like · Reply · 37w

Iffe Xintesix Good morning  
Like · Reply · 37w

Ukpong-collins Akpan One horror, too many...  
Let the truth be told, what a demented government?  
Where is Lia Mohammed?



Like · Reply · 37w

Ukpong-collins Akpan Northern elders, Arewas youths  
playing ostrich.  
The evil that men sow, live after....  
This is one killing, too many.... See more



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Ugwor Anthony Pls if u know dat u are fr south South and  
East pls resign now more harm is about to happen from d  
right source  
Like · Reply · 37w

Chris Favor Mohammad don't say that, let's blame  
Jonathan  
Like · Reply · 38w

Ugwumba Arisco Chris the founders of boko haram are  
terrorit pmb ibb ali shriff abubakar atiku  
Like · Reply · 38w

Write a reply...

Chukwu O Chukwu When the Hausa Fulani were hailing Buhari  
for paying and releasing Boko Haram commanders for the Chibok  
girls, were they asleep? Boko Haram is the product of the north  
and they are killing northerners, so how is it a problem? They ACF  
were able to hold... See more

Like · Reply · 37w · Edited

Aram Jake But why only Bomo my dear  
Like · Reply · 37w

Habib Shettima We do not support of the swap between  
bokoharam n the chibok girls, not even Buhari or the military  
but, its a circumstances made it n we all regretted  
Like · Reply · 37w

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 Chama Joel You this blood sucking demos no de tire? The ark Angels that declared war against Lucifer will declare war against all of you. Let all the lover of peace just say Ameeeeeeen. Settled.

Like · Reply · 37w 👍👍👍 7

↳ 2 Replies

 Obi Victor The blood of the 2 million biafrans is still hunting the north and will never rest untill 2 million northerners are dead. About 800,000 has perished. Remaining like 1.4 million soals. Ride on shekau.  
#istandwithshekau.

Like · Reply · 37w

 Abdulkadir Umar Arm robbers ar u still open ur mouth 2 comments nonsense kidnappers prostitution bloody



Like · Reply · 38w

 Obi Victor Shut up.shekawu will kill all of una. Animals

Like · Reply · 38w

 Write a reply... 😊 📷 📺 🗨️

 Engr Ezechi Ikenna Stephen Kill them all. I don't care until it reaches 3 million.

Like · Reply · 37w

 Habib Shettima Heartless

Like · Reply · 37w

 Engr Ezechi Ikenna Stephen Really? It hasn't happened yet you are feeling the pain. Next time before you say something negative about me and my people, first of all put yourself in our shoes.

Like · Reply · 37w

 Write a reply... 😊 📷 📺 🗨️

 Felix Ajeibi Owoicho And the president sits in comfort in London. Nigerians elected Buhari to take care of his old age sickness, leaving the country at the mercies of terrorists. Boko Haram, what can we do, you are indeed powerful. Buhari your appointed chief negotiator in here, most of your leaderships have been released from prison, Nigerians can't criticized you for fear of your supporters from the North kill all you can, but one day we Nigerians shall be free.

Like · Reply · 37w 👍👍👍 10

 Alhamdu Tijani May God delivered us from boko haram and their sponsors

Like · Reply · 37w

 Samuel Okechukwu Clement hahahaaa why not allah instead of GOD

Like · Reply · 37w

 Paulycarp Nazzar One day you force cock ( fowl) to start shouting Allahaaaaa and not kokorokooooo when they wake up in the morning.

Like · Reply · 37w

 Godpower Chukwunedu Ur people want power, na devil go deliver una idiots.

Like · Reply · 37w 👍 1

 Write a reply... 😊 📷 📺 🗨️



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Peter Ononogbo I think APC government told us that Boko Haram has being technically defeated,who is killing these once we have being reporting since yesterday? Let this #clueless and #Failed administration leave #sambisa forest to come #militarize #southeast and south south with #python dance and #crocodile smile.



Like · Reply · 37w



Paul Daniels Mumu people, northerners killing northerners, but d northern peoples will not talk about it, but putting their mouth into nija delta avengers that is fight for their right. Mumu awusa

Like · Reply · 37w

1 Reply



Chimaobi All PIs where are hausa Fulani's & Yoruba's comments here? Am yet to see them as they used to rush in anything/call Biafra's matter. Have they gone to their holes?

Like · Reply · 37w



Abdulkadir Umar Here u ar nonsense prostitution bloody baby factory's arm robbers just sht up ur mouth



Like · Reply · 36w



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Collins Chukwubuike Hill war against Boko haram is a war against Northerners.... Said by Buhari.... Now we don't need an expertise to tell Nigerians the sponsor of Boko haram!

Like · Reply · 37w



Dapo Abu That's a state that recorded a peaceful election in 2015 under the past government, now oil drillers can't look for oil there in peace even with military escorts. University students and lecturers always killed by Bokoharam while in the past administration, Bokoharam never came close to the school

Like · Reply · 37w



Omolaoye Adetayo Ademuyiwa Anderson This is terrible, for how long shall we continue with this scenario we found ourselves.

Like · Reply · 37w



Obumneme Ogbonna gramar?

Like · Reply · 37w



Emeka Osuji They want to frustrate osibanjo government they same way they did to gej. Watch and see.

Like · Reply · 37w



Okpalaoka Ifeanyi Ekene That one concern BH hv come to stay let them enjoy it

Like · Reply · 36w



Write a reply...



Prince Sam Can Arewa youths arrest those Boko Haram leader and their sponsors, I'm sure Shekau must have a family, kinsmen or kindred, who will tell more of him and his whereabouts. But those Arewa parasites left the big burden on their region and calling for Nnamdi Kanu's arrest. 1967/70 war won't look like 2017 war... Arewa youths beware..



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 **Favour Agba** The northern leaders are using boko haram to reduced our Christian solders. It is a pit that our leaders copies all the oyibos bad life style but they don't copy the good aspects of them. Nigerian need help.

Like · Reply · 37w 👍 1

 **Micke Nelson** Wetin concern Agbero with overload. I can't pity people that don't pity themselves. When their pako brainless imbecile Bokohari released high profile BKHRM terrorists they all hailed him and clapped their leprosy infested hands for him. I cannot pity animalistic fools who love oil and cow more than human beings. They never see anything, it is just the beginning of their woes,sorrows and calamities. The evil that men do live with them and no longer after them. See power see Bokoharam, enjoy all.

Like · Reply · 37w

 **Emmanuel Adimonyegwu** Nigeria leaders will answer for the blood of all these innocent souls being killed every day because they also had known that Nigeria has expired since years ago and let go of Islamic world which the Boko Harams are asking for to be on their own, let Biafra be on their own since they also want to be on their own no need to fuse regions into what they no longer believe in again, it's like this know when the Biafrans will get to the point of carrying arms i don't know what will be of the common man in the society i also wonder how they can bear the heat remember when things fall apart the center can no longer hold

Like · Reply · 37w

 **George Armanii Uchenna** Just come out clean so we can handle this maniacs they have been lounging on the propaganda and lies you tell to the populace to perpetrate evil..  
If you Tell a lie you need more lies to cover it up...

Like · Reply · 37w 👍 1

 **Favour Agba** But I have question to ask, all the northern said the igbo did not love themselves but I have never had any riot in igbo land or this kind of kill in the north. By what we are seeing and hearing everyday do you think the northern love themselves as they claimed to be united?



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 **Nwokeocha David** BOKO BOYS WILL CONTINUE TO DEAL WITH U NORTHERNERS UNTIL U ACCEPT TO DO THE RIGHT THING BY TENDERING APOLOGIES TO THE MILLIONS OF BIAFRANS U KILLED BY UR LEADERS. All hail biafra.

Like · Reply · 37w 👍 7

 **Abdulkareem Mansur** Are you trying to tell us that biafra is sponsoring [boko haram](#)??

Like · Reply · 37w

 **Ahamefula Udokamma Egwuatu** Mansur, he is trying to tell us that you're a member of [boko haram](#)

Like · Reply · 37w 👍 2

 **Blessing Ekene** Hahahaha

Like · Reply · 37w

 **Adeolu Alex Ladimeji** whaoo youre not a true christian

Like · Reply · 37w · Edited

 **Chino Nwaodu** What has Christian got wt dis??yoroba man

Like · Reply · 37w 👍 3

 **Alfred Okeiukwu** Chino Nwaodu, pls always try to be detribalised.. Or at least sound non tribal. # yoruba man.....  
The truth is when all south and the middle belt come together, the Fulani yoke of Usman Dan Fodio and "Mr use our minorities as willing tools" Ahmadu Bello, will be a thing of the parasitic past.

Like · Reply · 37w

 **Chino Nwaodu** Mr Alfred what has question gt to do with tribe?

Like · Reply · 37w



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**Wilfred Agbo** Them ve nt seen anything yet, God ll surely brought them to book 4 killin igbos for reason with de help british i mean brithief.  
Like · Reply · 37w

Write a reply...

**Ike Jude** Remember that our presdo promise us that he will stop gboko haram if dey elect him. Bt gboko boys are increase every day by day killing d innocent ppl like rat. Buhari where are u?  
Like · Reply · 37w

**Umar A Abdulmalik** Shame will be the ends of your miserable life.Keep killing and enjoy the killing as it is the only thing u know how to do best in your so called life.Allah is recording your rewards. Remember there is a big hook for every big fish who think they can eat other little fish forgotten that they are both fish.The Lizard is happy of feeding on insects also forgot the watching of hulks over it's activities on the poor insects .Your end is nearby you if you don't ask for Allah's forgiveness..  
Like · Reply · 36w

**Umar A Abdulmalik** Brutai should stop killing the young innocent soldiers.Where are those who claim to be a dictators?Bring them out to face the Bocos and stop killing our youths. Guys let us tell our brothers not to join Nigerian soldier again if that is the new strategy those old Fools has designed to wipe away the youths.  
Like · Reply · 36w · Edited

**Evra Pompy** This one na normal thing nah.... Arewa youths over to you... Na the ones wey them release dey operate? Abi those ones dry do warm up?  
Like · Reply · 37w · Edited

**Effiong Mbom** Wow,wish we had more of Mohammad Abdulla in d North,this government and everyone knows d sponsors, why r they pretending,people r loosing thier lives in d north, Gov Shettima is a sure soonсор, he should resion asao..



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**Down Town King Nna** **Boko Haram** boyz don vess ooo..... Na the 45 days ultimatum?  
Like · Reply · 37w

**Anyanwumelu Paule Buchy** The Northern Elites Should Tell Themselves The Truth And Stop This Killing For God's Sake.  
Like · Reply · 37w

**Ahmadu Tijjani Annurlectro** The man in the picture did not resemble northern ppl! Please, south eastern ppl's have to leave north! Enough is enough! **Boko haram** or **biafra haram**.  
Like · Reply · 37w

Write a reply...

**Ghod De Phada** Ride on boys.. I just wish they can blow that burata's big head.  
Like · Reply · 37w

**Ahaluekwue Isaac** Arewasted youth should call their boys **boko Haram** in order.  
Like · Reply · 37w

**Don Obi** Those useless animals called Almajiris arewa youths.. carry Kanu/Biafra matter for head why bokoharam dey finish dem one by one  
Like · Reply · 37w

**Samson Kanayo** 18 soldiers and 30 civilians including 3 university of Maiduguri lecturers killed by **Boko Haram** yesterday and Nigeria soldiers are in river state burning innocent people's houses.Nigeria soldiers are more dangerous than **boko haram**  
Like · Reply · 37w



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-  **Godswill Bassey Buhari's** support against the killing of **Boko Haram** during Jonathan's presidency has boomerang!  
Like · Reply · 37w 1
-  **Pat Xito** When you are talking about cabals sponsoring **boko haram**, Abeg include Obasanjo.  
Like · Reply · 36w 1
-  **Adediran Samuel Iyanuoluwa** When the power of love is more than the love of power, that's when the world will know peace...  
Like · Reply · 37w 4
-  **Peter Abioye** Some individuals must have been trading on this **Boko Haram** exploits, reason why this is unabated.  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Ohams Nnaemeka** I can't see any Hausa Fulani comments. If it's about Nnamdi Kanu and IPOB, they'll crawl out of their holes  
Like · Reply · 37w 3
-  **Odily Bartholomew Onyia** Northern governors are more interested in ipob issues than their **Boko Haram** why.  
Like · Reply · 36w
-  **Mayuku Festus** This **Boko haram** issue everyday am tired. Please where is the president?  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Nsidibe Usoro** Yea, but the fact is **boko haram** have been technically defeated.  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Madubuko Abuchi** **Boko Haram** should continue they killing, untill Hausa people is gone.  
Like · Reply · 36w



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-  **Christopher Tony Robinson** Hausa people should worry about **boko haram** and not nnamdi Kanu period  
Like · Reply · 36w
-  **איכבוד פיסרטון** Good news the fear of **boko haram** is the beginning of wisdom for Hausa foolani pigs  
Like · Reply · 37w 1
-  **Native Son** I think it's high time we map out bomo out of Nigeria and dash **boko Haram** dat state e Don do abeg  
Like · Reply · 36w
-  **Okore Nnanna** Where are the Yeras, brutai and Al mustapha the should go and crush the **Boko Haram** before coming to Biafra.  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Unwanabasi Ben** Nigerians army are killing this **boko haram** in thousands yet they keep on reproducing. Pls are they human being  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Elimani Albert Junior** Religion of piss indeed...deceiving their gullible followers.  
Like · Reply · 37w 2
-  **Bartholomew Akpaka Chimex** This **boko haram** are very powerful, They are becoming stronger every day.  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Chukwuemeka Joseph** The politicians that paid this group to destabilize GEJ 're at again. Arewa youths, pls give **boko** boys their own quit notice.  
Like · Reply · 37w 1
-  **Gudboy Pam Shekau** Is More Serious Than Buhari Who Is There Laughing On Those Who Criticize Him.



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 Sunday Ehimare Inegbenose Are we sure that shekau will not capture the army chief before the expiration of the time given by army chief for shekau's capture? Hmmmm.

Like · Reply · 37w

 Des Desac Blind leading the blind.....who is fooling who? Zoological republic of Nigeria

Like · Reply · 36w

 Timothy Chijioke Orji Change for real. Sorry for the common man whose blood is spilled daily to appease Northern Nigeria's insatiable quest for power.

Like · Reply · 37w

 Steve Okoh APC what have you achieved if not to lie and waste funds.

Like · Reply · 36w

 Dr-Austeen Eugene The ultimatum has backfired! Nemesis of high level hypocrisy!

Like · Reply · 36w

 Dejavu Lebi what is happening#bunch of innocent people are dying everyday in the north

Like · Reply · 37w

 Amuda Mercy Oh angel of destruction that visited pharaoh and his host in red sea pls visit Nigeria pharaoh shekau and his host for permanent destruction to nigerians peace. Enough of this blood shed Holy ghost fight this battle to victory for your dear nation nigeria. Show us mercy God

Like · Reply · 37w

 Itoya Emmanuel but during election, with all these killings and war they will have more voters.

Like · Reply · 37w

 Ajani Dayo Micheal When would this people stop killing the innocents. Sense fall on u people

Like · Reply · 37w

 Chibuking D Okeke No peace for the wicked Boko\_ Haram will keep attacking you people Hausa Fulani.

Like · Reply · 37w

 Eze Sylvester This people no dey tire?. Everytime na so and so killing. May God help us

Like · Reply · 37w

 Eze Kenneth Boko by the north, for the north and in the north.na dem sabi, i just dey pass ooo!

Like · Reply · 37w

 **UP FAKE** Kabir Bawa kill them all . idiot country

Like · Reply · 37w

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 Obiadi Charles Chinedu Hausas will soon finish...

Like · Reply · 37w

↳ 1 Reply

 Joan Odiachi Boko Haram Attack Node Finished ????

Like · Reply · 37w · Edited

 De Christian Brutai na boko supporter-#Buhari

Like · Reply · 37w

 Madubuko Abuchi Boko Haram will kill of them. Zoo country Nigeria



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- Godwin Deshi Bokoharam are back again!**  
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- Muhammad Gee Ya subhanallah**  
Like · Reply · 37w
- Usman Musa Kallamu Well dome shettima and bomo rulers**  
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- Kaka Adolf Nonso Technically defeated and flushed biko haram.**  
Like · Reply · 37w
- U.C. Bekee Arewa boys on point... Abeg make run komut here.**  
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- Nwankwo Alexander Jnr I was told they now sleep with their two eyes closed**  
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- Chris Azu**  
  
Like · Reply · 37w
- Alhaji Tunde Danjuma Aliyu**  
  
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Like · Reply · 36w
- Smart Snooty Young Hahahahaha lol animals dey kill dem self inside zoo, chai!**  
Like · Reply · 37w
- Koko Joe Lie Muhammad how market**  
Like · Reply · 37w
- Umar Farukh Everyday,.kill kill kill killll...in maiduguri...why plz..why us.**  
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-  **Stanley Chinedu Onyebukwa** Only five  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Steve James Neeyum** where on earth are those heartless fools hiding.  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Remigius Nnadi Sai Baba !!**  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Obego Frank** All hail Biarfra  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Samuel Adanogu** These beast are @ work again  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Adam Yusuf** we will over come soon shekau will be arrested  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Timothy ED Lovely**  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **John Bernard Ohi** what is happening in bomo buratai need to go  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Norbert Chikez** Good news of the day  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Hyacinth Kosoluchukwu Nnam** God have mercy.  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Asafe Muideen** hhh,...



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-  **Asafe Muideen** hhh,...
-  **Saviour Iwu Na bush hunters**  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Sunusi Haruna K**  
Like · Reply · 30w
-  **Down Town King See** as dem kill Nigerian Soldiers like say dem be boys scouts  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Simeon Okey Junior** Weldone job boko boys.. Zoo nigeria let my people go  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Hausa Christians Foundation-Nig**  
<https://web.facebook.com/VEHCIN/posts/133475083919581>  
Like · Reply · 37w
-  **Michael Adeoye** May God help us in Nigeria  
Like · Reply · 30w

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 **Jibrin A Musa** Which youths ? The youths that yr party and members stolen their futures. You politicians often hide under something. You remember youths now... That u want their votes. You guys are not serious. 16 years of steady loot  6

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 **Peter Ani** Be a part of it , it is advice and it optional. if you like leave it for the old hands.  
Like · Reply · 1d

 **John Nyong** Did u force someone to run, let we support ourself and able to produce a credible youth candidate  
Like · Reply · 1d

 **Wale Oluwafemi** @Jibrin Don't you know that the accused looters then are part of this present Govt. you peole are praising. When have they suddenly become saints? Take Buhari out of this party you will know that it is just like the accused party,and if Buhari decamp to the party,automatically the party's sins are forgiven. We have only ONE GOD but men of integrity who can rule this nation successfullly without excuses and blame game are numerous! I challenge you to trust in GOD and not in man or party for new Nigeria!!  1

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 **Aminu Uba Alhaji** This PDP are incompetent clueless party, Buhari has degraded them to noise making party they can't even campaign, or present their presidential candidate, all the go around telling people is Buhari can't win 2019 election, or when they were called looters they replied we are not alone.  3

Like · Reply · 1d · Edited

 **Eni Godday** You must be a certified moron. 90 % of APC is PDP... NUMBSKULL



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**Aliyu AAllawa** What are you talking about Mr chairman.... What of Sule Lamido, Atiku, are you saying that they should not waste time to contest?

Like · Reply · 1d

**Halimat Danjuma** Thanks to God who through doctor ebhote cured and saved me of hepatitis b you can call him or whatsapp him on +2347051969183

Like · Reply · 1d

**Ademola Ajayi** Let all the old in your party call for their retirement by then we'll know how serious you are.

Like · Reply · 1d

**Ishaku Ibrahim** You are right Ajayi.Lets begin with them if they are sincere about the youths taking over leadership by relinquishing political party leadership to the youths

Like · Reply · 1d

Write a reply...

**Churchill Ofem** 2019- youths vows to attack all who looted and failed to return their money

Like · Reply · 1d

**Ibrahim Abdullahi Abaka** U have to go for clinical check up because u have a mental problem, we the youths we don't need u again, oleburgu

Like · Reply · 1d

**Princely-Joseph Ikhimealo** Then this PDP should give them all slots therein..... Simple.

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**Muhammad Musa** I agree with you seoodus, only if you allow a youth to take your position as the chairman of PDP

Like · Reply · 1d

**Moronranti Salami** Then you should resign and allow youth to take over as chairman of your dead and corrupt party

Like · Reply · 1d

**Steven Ugwu** Ok fyn, your party should present to Nigeria a presidential candidate whom his age fall between 25 to 35yrs to prove your seriousness.

Like · Reply · 1d · Edited

**Ferdinand Nwodo** U ar charging youth to take over power yet u paid heavily to become chairman, who is fooling who

Like · Reply · 1d

**Umar Habibllah Emeje** Hahaha Atiku and Lamido are the Nigeria youth coming 2019 election

Like · Reply · 1d

**Agbaraike Emmanuel Isaac Peters** He has become politically frustrated & confused.

Like · Reply · 1d

**Prince Hephzy** Excuse me sir, take a bow and leave that seat to prove the genuineness of your message.

Like · Reply · 1d

**Tony Okey** Our youths are busy playing 9ja bet drinking codeine and shouting said baba till 2050

Like · Reply · 1d

**Amikadede Marvelous** Hahahaha u are funny sir

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 Muh'd Gambo It isn't yet time to run away when you have already mortgaged their future.  
Like · Reply · 1d  1

 Osahon Oscar Igbinehi with Atiku Abubakar and Lamido as your candidates?  
Like · Reply · 1d  1

 Yusuf Mang'le Are you in your youthful age? If no shut up your mouth. Pmb is ever ready to handover to youth in 2023.  
Like · Reply · 1d  1

 Usman Yuguda Which youth after 16years of failure. PDP are desperate to come back to power.  
Like · Reply · 1d

 Simon Putty Those who are not born in pdp are corrupt because it's heredity, forget about 2019-All we want is our looted funds  
Like · Reply · 21h

 Dahiru Abdulkadir The face of leader of gang of arm robbers  
Like · Reply · 20h

 Hassan Sani Abubakar Vacate the chairmanship and give to a 25yr old pls  
Like · Reply · 14h

 Prince Emynice JP The only one solution\*call back sen Rabi Musa Kwankwaso... Period...  
Like · Reply · 1d

 Sanusi Suleiman Leave us give us d money u stolen first  
Like · Reply · 1d

 Adam Moh'd This is not how a leader suppose to be  
Like · Reply · 1d

 Adamu Suleiman Degri We don't want that cancer known as PDP  
Like · Reply · 12h

 Emmy Tanko an amusing political statement, though hope it's reality.  
Like · Reply · 1d

 Buhari Adamu Criminals it's now you remember youth ole.  
Like · Reply · 1d

 Eni Godday And you are hanging around an old Atiku?  
Like · Reply · 1d

 Chinedu Mojekwu Hahahahahahaha which youth?this kaikai man self  
Like · Reply · 21h

 Abdulhakam M. Ibrahim A word of a corrupt person  
Like · Reply · 22h

 Rabi Shehu Youths like who?at what ages?  
Like · Reply · 1d · Edited

 Umar Baba Present ur candidate pls  
Like · Reply · 1d

 Ibrahim Fineboy Thank u  
Like · Reply · 1d

 Donald Noah Cocaine talk



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Solomon John Pot calling kettle black!

Like · Reply · 23h



Musa Hassan Shame no d your body

Like · Reply · 1d



Mohammed Audu Hhahaahhah

Like · Reply · 1d



Abdulfatai Owodunni Hassan This ur faces look likes no options.

Like · Reply · 1d · Edited



Ondachi Sule Noah Step down for them naa

Like · Reply · 16h



Ibrahim Aminu Have they vote you right?

Like · Reply · 21h



Usie Malami Thief go away

Like · Reply · 1d



Ubong Ekpo Start from yourself. Resign

Like · Reply · 23h



Lawan Umar Lawan Can't you do it yourself? Hope less.

Like · Reply · 1d



Abdullahi Kaliel Step down first. No one country looter.

Like · Reply · 1d



Afodogie Akele Sufyan Thiefy PDP

Like · Reply · 20h



Abiodun Emmanuel Before nko

Like · Reply · 21h



Sadiya Sadauki How??

Like · Reply · 8h



Ejiro Ibojeh Why u help

Like · Reply · 23h



Abdullahi Abubakar very stupid u didn't talk dat one since

Like · Reply · 1d



Johnson Ibrahim Thanks to Dr.momoh who saved and cured me from hepatitis B.. virus. with his herb medicine you can also reached him for similar

\*Or any other....virus...like.. Hepatitis....C... Virus....

You can reach him through this number or you add him up on whatsapp believe me you will never regret it... See more

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