Chapter One
Background to the Study

1.1. Introduction

8The interest of linguists in analysing conversational texts has gradually shifted from the traditional focus on the linguistic structure to investigating language use as a social phenomenon. The functional approach to language studies goes beyond the study of sentences in abstraction to describing the use of language in concrete situations. In other words, a study about a language is not just about the linguistic or formal studies of language but what language is used to achieve in real situations. Speakers formulate their utterances in order to achieve their intentions and goals of communication. In order to achieve this goal, one needs not just the basic linguistic competence, that is, competence in phonology, morphology, semantic and syntactic competence but, also, competence in the pragmatic use of language. Thomas Holtgrave citing Hymes holds that 'to use language to communicate successfully requires much more than linguistic competence' ('Speaking' 207). He goes further to say that one must be able to translate intentions into words and do so in such a way that these intentions will be recognized by the recipient ('Speaking' 207). According to him, all interactants must be able to do this in such a way so as to avoid offending each other. This according to him is referred to as pragmatic competence ('Speaking' 207). This shows that apart from trying to understand the structure of language, language users should also know how to use language in order to achieve the desired goal. Niroomand Masoumeh citing Scollon and Scollon holds that the violation of pragmatic rules is bound to lead to communication breakdown (2). Obviously, this suggests that

competence, whether linguistic or pragmatic competence should be learned and developed systematically.

Language is the principal means of communication amongst human beings. Invariably, the possession of it makes us human. Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman & Nina Hyams put it succinctly in these words:

> The possession of language, perhaps more than any other attribute, distinguishes humans from other animals. To understand our humanity, one must understand the nature of language that makes us human. According to the philosophy expressed in the myths and religions of many peoples, language is the source of human life and power. (284)

It is deduced that language is the exclusive preserve of humans. Without language, it will be difficult for humans to live and interact in society. Humans use language to convey and receive information in society. It is an important means of communication. Given the importance of language, different scholars have tried to define language in varied ways. John Lyons quoting Edward Sapir writes that 'language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols'(3). From the foregoing, it is only humans that have the innate ability to use language effectively using symbols which are consciously produced.

Moreover, there are some basic properties which every language is expected to possess. One of such properties is *arbitrariness*. Marianne Jorgensen and Phillips Louise remark that the meaning we attach to words is not inherent in them but a result of social conventions whereby we connect certain meanings with certain sounds (10). This simply means that there is no relationship between speech sounds and the meanings they represent. In other words, there is no

link between form and meaning or between the signal and the message. This further explains why different languages have different names for the same object. Conversely, there are sporadic situations in all languages of *onomatopoeia,* that is a situation where form is directly related to meaning as in *kokorookoo* meaning *roaster*, *gbam-gbam* meaning *zinc, kom-kom* meaning an *empty tin*, *kpom-kpom,* meaning a *knock at door* as noticed in the Igbo language. From this, it is possible to predict the meaning of a word and once the meaning is predicted, it is then, possible to predict the form. However, most of the words in all languages are non-onomatopoeic. On the other hand, the obvious case of arbitrariness in language makes it such that the users have to associate a particular form to a particular meaning which must be learnt independently. Lyons makes it explicit in these words:

> The fact that the link between form and meaning at the level of the vocabulary-units of language-systems is, in general, arbitrary has the effect that a considerable burden is placed upon memory in the language acquisition process. The association of a particular form with a particular meaning must be learned for each vocabulary-unit independently. (19)

From this, it could be seen that the arbitrariness of language has advantages and disadvantages. However, it can be argued that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages since it makes the system 'more flexible and adaptable' but 'more difficult and laborious to learn' (Lyons 19). The property of arbitrariness is peculiar to human language. In animal communication, there seems to be a relationship between the conveyed message and what it signifies. The set of signal used in animal communication is limited and predictable. For example, in animal communication, each form coincides with a definite signal. George Yule has it that 'each variety of animal communication consists of a fixed and limited set of (vocal or gestural) forms. Many of these

forms are used only in specific situations (e.g. establishing territory) and at particular times (e.g. during the mating season)' (22).

Another property of language is *duality*. Duality in language simply means that every language has two levels of structure: the primary level and the secondary level. At the primary level the individual sounds do not convey any meaning. In other words, they are semantically empty. At the secondary level, the sounds are combined with one another to produce meaning. All human language systems have both levels of structure. This quality is extremely rare in other communication systems including animal communication systems.

Yet, another property of human language is *organization*. It is only human language that can be organized to produce meanings. The organization is carried on from very simple to most complex structures. The individual units are combined with one another in order to form phrases; phrases are further combined to form clauses, and these clauses are in turn, combined to form the sentences.

Besides, *productivity* is another feature of the human language. The human language continues to grow because novel utterances are continuously created in languages. This feature is also noticed among children who, most times, produce sentences which they have never heard before. On the part of adults, situations often arise that they manipulate words in order to describe such situations, thereby producing new sentences and expressions. The property of productivity makes human language creative in nature. It also explains why it is possible to have infinite number of expressions in a particular language. On productivity as a feature of human language Larry Andrews contends as follows:

Animal languages do not possess productivity. A cicada, for example, has four fixed sounds, not five and not three. A vervet monkey has 36 signals it can emit, not 35 and not 37. Given this aspect of permanence, these animals cannot change their systems of communications. Neither the vervet monkey, the cicada, nor any other animal we might consider has the potential for the creation of new sounds or new strings of sound combinations and permutations. Human language, on the other hand, is anything but permanent; it is extraordinarily productive. (11)

In addition, *discreteness* is another property of language. It shows that each sound unit in a language is treated as a discrete unit. This feature accounts for the differences in the meaning of words. The difference between *pat* and *bat, or park* and *bark* is in the phonemes at the initial positions: /p/ and /b/.

Displacement is another feature of the human language. The ability of humans to refer to past, present or future events make human language versatile and flexible. Other forms of communication including animal communication, undeniably, lack the feature of displacement. Yule observes that if you ask the cat where it was the night before and what it was up to, you may get the same *meow* response. According to him it appears that animal communication is almost exclusively designed for this moment, here and now (20).

Conversely, in the view of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, as translated by Roy Harris, 'language is not a mere tool devised for the presentation of a pre-existent reality; it is rather a constituted part of reality deeply implicated in the way the world is constructed' (1). He summarizes Saussure's comments about language in these words:

Language is no longer regarded as being peripheral to our grasp of the world we live in, but as central to it. Words are not mere vocal labels or communication adjuncts superimposed upon an already given order of things. They are collective products of social interaction-essential instruments through which human beings constitute and articulate their worlds. (1)

In different situations and discourses, language performs different functions and acts which could be to advise, order, promise, request, bet, condemn, counsel, appreciate, praise, assert, appeal, warn, criticize, apologise, persuade, insult, console and lots of other things. Such use of language has been described in terms of speech acts.

Apart from the above functions, language performs other functions which include: expressive function, directive function, aesthetic function, referential function and dressing of thoughts to mention but a few. With this, cultural values, customs and norms of different linguistic communities are handed down to younger generations. Yule unequivocally states that one acquires a language in a culture with other speakers and not from parental genes. He goes further to say that cultural transmission of a specific language is crucial in the human acquisition process (24). From this, it is seen that language is not inherited, but it is transmitted and learnt from one's culture.

It is fitting therefore to say that language is an integral aspect of society which reflects the culture of the people. By implication, there is a necessary connection between language and society. Ronald Wardhaugh lists several possible relationships between language and society. One of such relationships is that social structure may either influence or determine linguistic structure and/or behaviour. According to him, it is mostly noticeable in the age-*grading system* phenomenon whereby children talk differently from older children and mature adults which

shows that particular ways of speaking, choices of words, and even rules for conversing are in fact highly determined by certain social requirements (10).

Another possible relationship is bi-directional, a situation where language and society influence each other. He contends that 'speech behaviour and social behaviour are in a state of constant interaction' (10). Obviously, it shows that language and society are interwoven. Language cannot exist without society and vice-versa. The inter-relatedness between language and culture explains the different uses of language by different people all in the bid to reflect their culture. Thus, Micheal Byram sees language as a communal possession that people use and not an abstract self sufficient system (556). Based on this premise, sociolinguistics assumes that language cannot be studied in isolation from the communicative intensions of the users and the socio-cultural context in which a person uses a particular language variety. Femi Akindele and Wale Adegbite hold the view that language does not exist in a vacuum. It is always contextualized. In other words, it is situated within a socio-cultural setting or community (3). In looking at the relationship between language and culture, one discovers that culture is communicated through instruction using language or by observing the behaviour of others in society. As a result of this, R.A. Hudson defines culture in these words:

> Culture may be defined as the kind of knowledge which we learn from other people, either by direct instruction or by watching their behaviour. Since we learn our culture from those around us, we may assume that we share it with them, so this kind of knowledge is likely to play a major role when we communicate with them, and in particular when we use language. (78)

Furthermore, Hudson rightly observes that a deal of culture is transmitted verbally. On this, hear him:

> However, a good deal of culture is transmitted verbally, and it is often said that the development of the faculty of language by the human species made it possible for 'biological evolution', working on genes, to be replaced as the dominant factor in our development by 'cultural evolution', working on our minds. There is no need to labour the point that speech is a crucial component in the process of socialisation. (92)

The issue of language and culture arose out of an attempt to explain the relationship between language and the interpretation of social reality. Femi Akindele and Wale Adegbite observe that Edward Sapir (1929) explores this relationship in his discussion of the interrelation between language, culture and personality (6). From this it shows that the social structure and culture affect the way we use language. It is fitting, therefore, to say that language is an integral aspect of society which reflects the culture of the people. It should be understood that language is universal largely because of cultural transmission which makes every language unique to the people who use the language. Radford Andrews agrees that the choices we make in language use are shaped by one's culture. According to him, 'one choice is not especially better, from a linguistic point of view, than another.' He affirms that the language options we select are largely determined by the culture of which we are a part of (13). Little wonder, Spolsky, Bernard claims that language is a powerful symbol of national and ethnic identity (181).

In addition, apart from the functions that language plays in different societies, it also plays the role of social interaction. In these situations, one uses language in order to fulfil the social

norm/convention or to participate in the social ritual as expected in society without necessarily communicating, but to build and maintain rapport between people. David Crystal admits that the use of phrases like *good morning, how are you?, fine thank you, pleased to meet you, have a great day* and other ritual exchanges about health or the weather do not *communicate ideas* in the usual sense of the term *communicate* (10). These forms of language are only used in society to maintain mutual co-operation and to ensure harmonious interaction and do not communicate factual content. Crystal further explains that the sentences used in such interactions are usually automatically produced and stereotyped in structure (10). For example, if Mr Igwe sneezes, Mrs Igwe says: *bless you*, and Mr Igwe says: *thank you* or if Miss Obi says: *Happy Christmas* to Mr Eke and he replies: *I wish you the same*, such use of language is to signal friendship and not necessarily for real communication. The use of language in this way to build a kind of relationship and maintain a rapport in society is referred to as *phatic communication*. Crystal observes that the term is coined by the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (10).

Conversely, Janet Holmes holds the opinion that *phatic communication* is also important in society. She writes:

> The phatic function is, however, equally important from a sociolinguistic perspective. Phatic communication conveys an affective or social message rather than a referential one. One of the insights provided by social linguists has been precisely that language is not used to convey only referential information, but also expresses information about social relationships. (*Introduction* 275)

From the foregoing, it is expected that every member of the linguistic community obeys the social ritual. Deliberate attempts to shun such forms of language use are seen as a possible sign

of *distance or a signal of disapproval* between the speaker and the hearer. Sometimes, *phatic communication* displays some kind of inherent arbitrariness. This is sequel to the fact that most times, there is no connection between situation and language use. If one wakes up in the morning and sees another, there is an exchange of greeting: *good morning.* This is done irrespective of how the morning is. John Lyons admits that one of the most important facts about language is that there is, in general, no connection between words and the situations in which they are used such that occurrence of particular words is predictable as habitual behavior is predictable, from the situations themselves (5-6). On the other hand, there are situations where the use of words in *phatic communication* is predictable, such as *opening a telephone conversation* or ending it. Normally, telephone conversations are opened in a socially approved way which is normally *a greeting.* In all, language helps to maintain social relations.

 Apart from means of social relation maintenance, language also plays a major role in the conveyance of information. There is no gainsaying that every individual uses language to communicate. However, no individual uses language the same way all the time. Individuals constantly change styles, registers, dialects as well as language depending on their audience, situation, location, purposes of speaking, and so on. Of course, when people speak, hearers can make guesses about the level, age, profession, interest, education, place of origin of the speaker. Holmes expatiates that our speech provides clues to others about who we are, where we come from, and perhaps what kind of social experiences we have had (*Introduction* 2). This is further substantiated by Gisbon, K. when he writes that 'language is a control feature of human identity' (1). Obviously, the way a person uses language plays a key role on how the individual is assessed.

Besides, in language use, one considers who one is speaking to as some expressions may be considered rude or impolite. It is therefore important that one understands and identifies the social values of a linguistic society in order to speak politely and avoid expressions that may be considered impolite or rude. No matter the language, one of the uniting points of all languages is that every language has got ways of expressing politeness in order to avoid conflict, imposition, lack of respect, being too forceful or direct. In the use of speech acts such as *requesting*, *commanding*, *questioning* and *informing* in our everyday lives, speakers, most times, try to employ strategies that may help to reduce frictions in communication. While some speakers may prefer addressing the speakers directly, others may choose indirect forms of address. Crystal presents the argument in these words:

> Some speech acts directly address a listener, but the majority of acts in everyday
> conversation are indirect. For example, there are a very large number of ways of
> asking someone to perform an action. The most direct way is to use the imperative
> construction (shut the door), but it is easy to sense that this would be inappropriate
> in many everyday situations - too abrupt or rude, perhaps. (125)

All the same, Crystal further suggests that a request as *shut the door* could be done indirectly by using any of the following:

I'd be grateful if you'd shut the door.

Could you shut the door?

Would you mind shutting the door?

It'd help to have the door shut; it's getting cold here.

Any of these could, in the right situation, function as a request to *close the door* without the sentences being structured in the form of an imperative. Unlike direct requests, indirect requests are sometimes open to misinterpretation either deliberately or accidentally. The bottom line in such indirect requests is that both the hearer and the speaker share a common ground of understanding. In addition, although, the expressions above may be considered indirect and polite but being direct or polite according to Holmes involves assessing the social relationship along the dimensions of social distance or solidarity between the speaker and addressee, the relative power or hierarchy in status and the context: whether in a formal or informal setting (*Women* 16-19). Since sociolinguistics seeks to understand the uses of language and the social structures in which the users of language function, this work therefore, seeks to examine how language functions in a social milieu with emphasis on politeness among undergraduates in selected universities in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Educational discourse (such as students' interactions) is one instance in which language performs different acts including polite and impolite functions. In schools or university campuses, students engage in a lot of activities, the most crucial of which is conversations. They talk, tell stories, discuss, argue and engage in all kinds of conversations. Students (both speakers and hearers) engage in conversations in such a way that one person speaks at a time under a normal circumstance. In other words, they take their turns. Micheal McCarthy, Christian Matthiessen & Diana Slade have it that a turn is each occasion that a speaker speaks and a turn ends when another speaker takes a turn (61). According to him, it is based on 'social interaction in the first place rather than on any phonological, lexico-grammatical or semantic considerations' (61). Most of the students' conversations obey or disobey some intentionally recognized implicit rules, which make conversations either successful or unsuccessful. For conversations to be successful,

people who engage in it must try as much as possible to live up to a set of conventionalized norms of behaviour otherwise, known as *politeness maxims*.

Politeness in conversations is an age-long phenomenon in human societies. It is an important aspect of social activities in which students engage in during different social and pragmatic acts. It is mostly used in a bid to manoeuver, negotiate and perform other speech acts using language. As a sociolinguistic phenomenon, politeness has generated a lot of debates on its nature and characteristics amongst sociolinguistic and pragmatic scholars. The contention has always been centered on what constitutes polite expressions and behaviour. Many scholars hold different views about politeness. They view it from many dimensions in terms of lexical, syntactic, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, kinesthetic, and even in terms of culture. This is sequel to the fact that a word which may be viewed as polite by one person may be viewed as grossly impolite by another person. More so, what may be considered as polite in one culture may be viewed as grossly impolite usage in another culture. Holmes admits that norms for polite behaviour differ from one speech community to another and that linguistic politeness is culturally based. She further explains that different speech communities emphasize different functions, and express particular functions differently (*Introduction* 274).

Furthermore, Geoffery Leech holds that to be polite entails following and observing politeness principles (*Principles* 80). On their part, Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson believe that politeness presupposes 'potential for aggression as it seeks to disarm it and makes possible communication between potentially aggressive parties' (1). In addition, they remark that politeness is paying attention to others' 'face wants' (61). Holmes holds that 'being considered linguistically polite is often a matter of selecting linguistic forms which are perceived as

expressing an appropriate degree of social distance or which acknowledge relevant status or power differences' (*Women* 274). However, one central thing is that politeness shares a close boundary with culture. In other words, different cultures have different views about values, which affect the criterion of politeness. Thus, what the Nigerian people and culture consider to be polite may not be so according to other nations' cultures such as the Western countries. In the same vein, what the Igbo culture portrays as polite behaviour may be impolite in Hausa or Yoruba cultures and values. Though different cultures determine polite behaviour, there is still polite and impolite behaviour that is universal. For instance, a young person who offers his/her seat to the elderly person on a bus is considered *a polite act* while an interruption when someone is talking or being silent at the wrong time is considered an impolite act. Greeting is also generally, considered polite.

There is no doubt that politeness can also be in the form of non-verbal communication. Larry Samovar, Richard Porter & Edwin McDaniel hold that 'non-verbal communication involves all those non verbal stimuli in a communication setting that are generated by both the source and his or her use of the environment and that have potential message value for the source or receiver'(245). From the foregoing, it shows that non-verbal communication is an indispensable and all-pervasive element of human behaviour. In considering the importance of non-verbal cues in communication, Samovar et al. citing Barnlund put it succinctly in these words, 'many, and sometimes, most of the critical meanings generated in human encounters are elicited by touch, glance, vocal nuance, gestures, or facial expression with or without the aid of words' (244). In addition, Descartes quoted in Samovar et al. remarks as follows: 'to know what people think, pay

regard to what they do, rather than what they say' (243). The above comments suggest that non verbal cues are true reflections of one's mind.

Furthermore, students show politeness by the way they greet their lecturers, sometimes, in a warm embrace. Oftentimes, they exhibit politeness through postures. In this case, students bow or genuflect in an attempt to greet their lecturers. Besides, they also use some kind of facial expressions such as warm smiles to show politeness. Furthermore, students occasionally use proxemics, in which case, they observe politeness through space and distance by giving ways for their lecturers to walk past.

From this, it shows that non- verbal communication is a subtle way of communicating thoughts and feelings that cannot be communicated verbally. Nalini Ambady et al. are of the opinion that such behaviour is often used to convey the *true* meanings of statements (998). It is fitting therefore to say that non verbal cues enable a speaker to hint, express and imply politeness without really expressing them directly or verbally. While the study observes that politeness can also be shown through non-verbal behaviour as earlier discussed, the study is however, restricted to verbal politeness.

Despite the universality of politeness, the actual manifestations of politeness and the standards of judgement differ in cultures and language communities. In order to investigate the polite language of students as used on university campuses, the researcher has selected two universities from Anambra State, Nigeria: Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, (a federal university) and Madonna University, Okija, (a Catholic based private university). These universities are meeting points of people from various ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. The differences in language use among the students are mostly noticed in terms of gender differences, address

systems, honorifics, vulgar expressions, swearing words, and others. As earlier said, different cultures have different ways of showing polite acts and address system for elders as a mark of respect. In like manner, there are different ways of addressing the lecturers as a mark of respect for their social status. Such address forms include: *Mr, Mrs, Dr, and Prof*. Hence, if a foreign student addresses his lecturer in Nigeria by using his first name for example, *Nnamdi,* such an act from the student could be considered an *insult, impolite or a face-threatening act* to the lecturer. Ironically, such an act could be considered polite in western culture. Also, in Igboland, there are some topics (such as issues on age, marriage, children, salaries) that are considered private especially, to a stranger on first meeting. Thus, questions on these areas are simply regarded as an intrusion upon a person's privacy and are therefore adjudged as impolite.

From the foregoing, politeness can be said to be a social and linguistic phenomenon and means to achieve good interpersonal relationships. It entails everything a person does in order to show good feelings, friendliness, and intention to maintain smooth and harmonious relationships in interpersonal communications. In addition, it involves an observance of some kind of social norm imposed by the conventions and standards of the community. A non-observance of these standards is considered impolite, rude and ill-mannered.

1.2.   Statement of the Research Problem

Politeness is a universal phenomenon observed in all cultures and languages. In the university setting and everywhere, it is a major behaviour that determines the success or breakdown of communications. Given the importance of politeness in interpersonal communications, researches on politeness have been carried out between doctors and patients in the hospital

setting, market interactions, political interviews, telecommunication providers and their clients and even in some government-owned public institutions like the post office in most geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The researcher therefore intends to fill the gap in knowledge by carrying out a similar research in the university setting in Anambra State, Nigeria.

More often than not, some undergraduates consciously or unconsciously exhibit or use impolite expressions to their lecturers, non-academic staff, bus drivers, tricycle drivers, food vendors, small business operators, fellow students and other members of the university staff. This impolite language use/behaviour, in turn, leads to impolite responses. Such impolite responses often result in quarrels, frictions, misunderstanding, conflicts, wrong impressions, disharmony, bad feelings and incompatibility. Although, some undergraduates try to maintain polite usages, others do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes polite or impolite behaviour/usage. Sometimes, unexpressed behaviour/action could connote impoliteness and rudeness which the student may or may not be aware of. Actions such as students intruding into their lecturers' discussions uninvited are viewed as impolite behaviour which can also lead to rude responses. In addition, the use of formulaic expressions such as, *thank you, sorry, please, I beg your pardon* as used by undergraduates may be used in ways that negate politeness and expresses impoliteness without students' knowledge. Adopting a gentle tone of voice may suggest politeness whereas a harsh tone when used even in greeting, compliment or apology may still be viewed as an act of impoliteness. Again, words like *mandated, kindly* and so on may equally be used in a way that constitutes a face threatening act to the addressee.

Against this background and gap in the employment of politeness strategies as observed among undergraduates, this study, therefore, seeks to examine the strategies of politeness,

impoliteness, face management tact and face threatening acts among undergraduates in selected universities in Anambra State, Nigeria.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the dominant politeness, impoliteness strategies, face management tact and face threatening acts in the conversations of undergraduates in selected universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are:

(1) To identify and examine the dominant politeness, impoliteness, face management and face threatening strategies employed in the conversations of undergraduates in the selected universities

(2) To discuss the sociolinguistic phenomena and functions of the strategies in realizing the overall pragmatic functions of maintaining harmony (or otherwise) in their interactions

(3) To determine the socio-cultural features that influence polite or impolite behaviour in students' interactions

(4) To find out whether or not there are differences and similarities in the strategies employed by students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Madonna University undergraduates

1.4.   Research Questions

In order to achieve the above objectives effectively, the study seeks to provide answers to the following questions:

(1) What are the dominant politeness, impoliteness, face management and face threatening strategies in the conversations of undergraduates in the selected universities?

(2) What are the sociolinguistic phenomena and functions of the strategies in realizing the overall pragmatic functions of maintaining harmony (or otherwise) in their interactions?

(3) Are there socio-cultural features that influence polite or impolite behaviour in students' interactions?

(4) Are there differences and similarities in the strategies employed by students of the two universities in their interactions?

1.5.   Scope of the Study

The study centres on a sociolinguistic investigation of politeness, impoliteness, face management and face threatening strategies in language use of undergraduates in selected universities in Anambra State, Nigeria. In order to manage the topic effectively, the study is further limited to Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Madonna University, Okija campus. While the first university represents federal universities, the second stands in for private universities. The choice

of these universities is based on the fact that the universities are among the leading universities in Anambra State and comprise students from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds in Nigeria.

Undeniably, an exhaustive and comprehensive study of polite language amongst undergraduates in Anambra State would have included studying various texts (both spoken and written) from various private and government owned universities, polytechnics and colleges of education in Anambra State. This will give a very wide scope which cannot be adequately handled in just one study. Since it is not possible to study all forms of students' interactions in all higher institutions in Anambra State, in a single research, this study is therefore limited to the investigation of polite language, impoliteness, face management and face threatening strategies among undergraduates of the two universities selected for the study.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The study will contribute to the relatively, few available literature on students' discourse by providing a more systematic and thorough interpretation of undergraduates' discourse in terms of their polite, impolite, face management tact and face threatening acts. More so, the study will help students to understand the principles of politeness and various ways of structuring their speech acts in order to avoid conflict situations on campus. In addition, it will reveal the nature/forms, functions and intricate use of language in students' conversations in order to understand their mindsets. Apart from the fact that it will be used for pedagogical reasons, it will also help undergraduates to have a better knowledge of politeness strategies in order to function properly in society. Finally, it will provide a comprehensive reference guide for relevant government agencies (especially the Nigerian Universities Commission) on how to formulate policies concerning university education in Nigeria.

Chapter Two
Review of Relevant Scholarship

2.1. Conceptual Framework

2. 2. Sociolinguistics and the Sociology of Language

Man is always using language in its spoken or written form. Joshua Fishman holds that man is also constantly linked to others via shared norms of behaviour (25). He affirms as follows:

> The sociology of language examines the interaction between these two aspects of human behaviour: the use of language and the social organization of behaviour. Briefly put, the sociology of language focuses upon the entire gamut of topics related to the social organization of language behaviour, including not only language usage per se but also language attitudes and overt behaviour towards language and towards language users. (25)

From this, it shows that the sociology of language is concerned with describing the generally acceptable social organization of language usage within a speech community. This can be seen as the descriptive aspect of sociology of language. This aspect seeks to answer the question who speaks (or writes) what language to whom, when and where. The descriptive aspect of sociology of language also tries to look at the norms of language usage, that is, the generally accepted social patterns of language use and behaviour and attitude towards language. Yet, another aspect of the sociology of language seeks to know what accounts for change in the social organization of language use, and behaviour towards language. This aspect of sociology of language is known as the dynamic sociology of language. In all, Fishman is of the view that these two sub divisions taken together, that is, descriptive sociology of language plus dynamic sociology of language, constitute the sociology of language, a whole which is greater than the mere sum of its parts (27).

He therefore summarises the sociology of language in these words: 'the sociology of language is the study of the characteristics of language varieties, the characteristics of their functions, and the characteristics of their speakers as these three constantly interact, change and change one another, both with speakers and speech communities'(29).

Sociology of language remains one of the several approaches to the study of the relationship between language and society. The term sees society as being broader than language. Therefore, it is taken that society provides the framework for language to function in. It encompasses linguistic features as ethnography of communication, linguistic mannerism and so on. It should be understood that the universality of language is a natural phenomenon in as much as there are many differences in grammatical and lexical structures ascribed to differences in culture. By implication, there are similarities which exist in language structures due to similarities in culture, a kind of cultural overlap due to common cultural heritage or contact. As earlier pointed out, sociology of language studies the forms of interaction that go on within our society; the people involved in the interactions and the characteristics of such interactions.

Nevertheless, scholars have made a distinction between sociolinguistics and sociology of language. Wardhaugh explains that sociolinguistics is concerned with investigating the relationships between language and society with the goal of understanding the structure of language and how languages function in communication. On the contrary, sociology of language tries to discover how social structure can be better understood through the study of language (12). In addition, Hudson differentiates between the two concepts when he writes that sociolinguistics is the study of language in relation to society whereas the sociology of language is the study of society in relation to language (4). Hudson further affirms that there is a very large area of overlap between the two; and of course, it is needless trying to divide them (4).This

position is further substantiated by Wardhaugh citing Coulmas who expresses his views in these words:

> There is no sharp dividing line between the two, but a large area of common concern. Although sociolinguistics research centers about a number of different key issues, any rigid micro- macro compartmentalization seems quite contrived and unnecessary in the present state of knowledge about the complex interrelationships between linguistic and social structures. Contributions to a better understanding of language as a necessary condition and product of social life will continue to come from both quarters. (13)

Obviously, sociolinguistics and sociology of language are two inter-related and complimentary areas of language study that require a systematic study of language and society to be successful (Wardhaugh13).

Conversely, in looking at sociolinguistics critically, Dell Hymes holds that the term means many things to many people (13). Hudson remarks that it is the study of language in relation to society (1). He further holds that the value of sociolinguistics is the light it throws on the nature of language in general, or on the characteristics of some particular language (4). For Wardhaugh, sociolinguistics is the study of the social uses of language (10-11). This shows that it aims to understand the uses of language and the social structures in which the users of language function. By extension, sociolinguistics explores the social influences on language and the role of language in society. Similarly, Andrew Radford et al. see sociolinguistics as 'the study of the relationship between language use, and the structure of society' (16). According to them, sociolinguistics takes into account such factors as the social background of both the speaker and the addressee (that is their age, sex, social class, ethnic background, degree of integration into their neighbourhood and others), the relationship between speaker and addressee (good friends,

employer-employee, teacher-pupil, grandmother-grandchild) and the context and manner of the interaction (in bed, in the market, in church, at school). These factors are crucial to the understanding of both the structure and the function of language used in particular situation.

Given its emphasis on social context, sociolinguistics according to Micheal Byram assumes that language cannot be studied in isolation from the communicative intensions of the users and the socio-cultural context in which a language variety is used. (556). According to them, it is mainly concerned with the study of how language is shaped by the social nature of human beings and the functions it serves in society. From a broader perspective, sociolinguistics analyzes the many and diverse ways in which language and society are interconnected and interrelated. Thus, sociolinguists are more interested in examining the interplay of language and society. Janet Holmes puts it superbly in these words:

> Sociolinguists study the relationship between language and society. They are interested in explaining why we speak differently in different social contexts, and they are concerned with identifying the social functions of language and the ways it is used to convey social meaning. Examining the way language works, as well as about the social relationships in a community, and the way people convey and construct aspects of their social identity through their language. (*Introduction* 1)

The basic premise of sociolinguistics is that language varies and changes. It changes according to context, age variation, social status, gender, and so on. As a result of the varying nature of language, it is said to be heterogeneous. M. S. Abdullahi-Idiagbon citing Hudson and Holmes comments that sociolinguistics studies language in relation to the people who use it with emphasis on *why* they speak in a *certain* way (202). Besides, the discipline has to do with language policy and planning which help to solve inherent language problems in society such as

the problem of lingua franca. Akindele and Adegbite in one of their definitions submit that 'sociolinguistics examines the interaction between the use of language and the social organization behaviour' (4). In other words, it refers to what Fishman refers to as sociology of language which focuses 'upon the entire gamut of topics related to the social organization of language behaviour, including not only language use per se but also language attitudes and overt behaviour towards language users (25). Furthermore, they describe sociolinguistics as the patterns of language use within the monolingual or multilingual speech community.

Abdullahi-Idiagbon citing Adeyanju lists the sociolinguistics variables that influence linguistic behaviour of humans as sex, status, literacy level, exposure, setting, idiosyncracies and socio-cultural values. According to him, the social identity or the speech community of a speaker can be signalled through one or more of these factors (202). By implication, linguistic variation across individuals and groups at social, regional, national and even at international level occurs with respect to factors such as occupation, age, gender, ethnicity, education socio- economic status and many others. From these factors, it is possible to identify a speaker and his linguistic background.

From the social point of view, it is clear that individuals use language differently depending on who they are talking with. They have different languages for speaking with colleagues in the office, neighbours at home, students in the classroom, traders in the market, asking for help, giving an order or instruction, declining an invitation and so on. S.T. Babatunde and T.O. Shobomehin quoting Adeyanju sum the views of sociolinguistics as a branch of study that concerns itself with relating the study of language to the study of society. They further believe that meaning cannot be gotten from the linguistic level alone; therefore, sociolinguistics studies the participants in a linguistic exchange and the context of the exchange. Lastly, they view

sociolinguistics as the socio-cultural values of a society which have influence on its language (148). From the foregoing, it shows that sociolinguistics deals mainly with those realistic linguistic social aspects of language.

Furthermore, Babatunde and Shobomehin quoting Adeyanju believe that certain assumptions must be made in an attempt to pursue an adequate theory for a sociolinguistic analysis. These assumptions among others include that language varies according to region, sex, status, level of literacy, occupation, socio-cultural values and idiosyncrasies and that no variety of language is superior to others (149). In other words, all varieties irrespective of their functions cannot be considered superior or inferior to any other variety. For them, any variety could be developed to play any role if the society so desires.

Different approaches and theories of sociolinguistics have been utilized in the analysis of sociolinguistic phenomena. Some of the theories include: ethnography of communication, variability concept, speech act theory, deficit hypothesis, politeness theory and others. However, for the purpose of this study, politeness theory will be used since it is concerned with polite and impolite language use and behaviour.

Finally, Radford et al. call for further research into the form and function of politeness in everyday interaction (16). This call for research in the area of politeness is one of the reasons that informs the researcher's interest in investigating the sociolinguistic nature of politeness, impoliteness, face management and face threatening acts among undergraduates in Southeast Nigeria.

2.3. Interactional Sociolinguistics

The growing interest in discourse analysis has made linguists to turn from analysing language in isolation to analysing language in use. In other words, linguists are now more interested in

analysing language of face-to-face interactions. On this, John Gumperz and Jenny Cook expatiate: 'communication cannot be studied in isolation; it must be analysed in terms of its effect on people's lives.' They further remark that we must focus on what communication does: how it constrains evaluation and decision making, not merely how it is structured (1). By implication, they are of the view that rather than concentrate on ethnography, grammar, semantics, or linguistic variation alone; we should find ways of analysing 'situated talk that brings together social, socio-cognitive and linguistic constructs and develop relevant analytic methods that build on the perspective of sociolinguistic theory outlined in discourse analysis'(1-2).

From the foregoing, it is understood that language cannot be studied in abstraction; rather, its study is better situated in its use in concrete situations/interactions. Moreover, the meaning of words/sentences in isolation may differ considerably, when they are used in relation to other words/sentences in interactions. Tannen recapitulates on this when she writes that most recent linguistic research has been concerned with the fact that interpretation of utterances in conversation often differs radically from the meaning that would be derived from the sentences in isolation ('Ethnic'218). This recent interest has lead to a branch of linguistic study called interactional sociolinguistics. It is a branch of linguistics which uses discourse analysis to study how language users create meaning through social interactions. It is equally related to anthropology as it concerned with culturally identified interactional strategies. The branch of study was introduced by John Gumperz.

Again, the form of interactions mostly studied in interactional sociolinguistics include conversations, interviews, public lectures, classroom discourse, specific strategies such as asking questions, storytelling, cross-cultural miscommunication, politeness, framing and others.

Research on interactional sociolinguistics is distinguished by its relative focus on either linguistic phenomena or on interactions. To this end, analysis in interactional sociolinguistics is mostly done through analysing recorded language use of real interactions. Such analyses go beyond word and sentence analysis to other contextual cues.

Moreover, the major concern of interactional sociolinguistics is the detailed transcription of audio or videotaped recordings. Deborah Tannen points out that transcription systems vary depending on conventions established in particular disciplines and the requirements of particular theoretical assumptions and methodological practices ('Discourse'451). She further opines that most interactional sociolinguists attempt to represent intonational and prosodic contours in the transcription, since they are often crucial in the analyses. By implication, contextual cues such as prosody and register play a major role in interactional sociolinguistics.

Corroborating the position, Tannen citing Gumperz shows that speakers use contextualization cues-prosodic and paralinguistic features, familiar formulaic expressions and conversational routines and identifiable conventions for organizing and sequencing information-to signal not only what they mean to say but also what speech activity they are engaged in, that is, what they think they are doing at each point in interaction ('Discourse' 452). Toeing the same line of argument, Benjamin Bailey contends that the contextual cues are 'constellations of surface features of message form' which are 'the means by which speakers signal and listeners interpret what the activity is, how semantic content is to be understood and how each sentence relates to what precedes or follows' (2315). He goes further to say that the surface forms range across semiotic modes, including such varied phenomena as prosody, code and lexical choice, formulaic expressions, sequencing choices and gestural phenomena. These are united in a

common, functional category by their use commonly in constellations of multiple features (2315).

Conversely, it should be pointed out that contextualization cues are culturally specific and usually unconscious. These unconscious cues may be interpreted differently and could lead to misunderstanding especially when the people involved in interactions are from diverse backgrounds. Bailey puts it succinctly in these words:

> Because socio-cultural differences in contextualization conventions are unconscious, they are not a readily available explanation to participants for breakdowns in communication or stilted, asynchronous interactions. When a person recognizes an apparent communicative break down or disjuncture in interaction, a psychological idiom is readily available to explain an interlocutor's behaviour, i.e., the other's behaviour can be accounted for in terms of rudeness, insensitivity, selfishness, or some other personality trait. When such problematic interactions come to be associated with interaction across ethnic or cultural lines, it can result in pejorative stereotyping of entire groups and the reinforcement of intergroup boundaries. (2316)

There is no doubt that cultural differences as far as contextual cues are involved can undermine communication. This is sequel to the fact that individuals are unconscious of that aspect of interaction. Bailey elaborates that contextualization cues have several characteristics that make them difficult to recognize (2315). According to him, they tend to be scalar, that is, they vary along a continuum, such as pitch, rather than existing as discrete forms or individual lexical items. He further remarks that most of the cues are non referential, that is they carry no direct propositional information, but, rather, serve meta communicative framing functions. Finally, he

holds that their meanings are a function of the context of their use, so that individual cues cannot be analysed in isolation or assigned a single, stable function or meaning. According to him, it is very difficult for individuals to recognize these cues or the roles that they are playing in communication (2315). He concludes that while individuals from different cultures may well be aware of speaking different languages or dressing differently, they are seldom aware of the ways in which slight differences in contextualization conventions can create interactional difficulties (2315-16).

In sum, interactional sociolinguistics with its notions of contextualization cues and conversational inferences provides a powerful framework for examining meaning at the intersection of interaction and culture which further explains the relationship between language and anthropology. In other words, interactional sociolinguistics uses discourse analysis to study how language users create meaning through social interactions. Again, it helps to account for how different dimensions of communicative behaviour are related, for example, the relationship between words and prosody. It also contributes to theoretical issues in linguistics by shedding light on the nature of meaning in language, and on the nature of language in interactions. Finally, the findings in interactional sociolinguistics have helped scholars to gain insights into the social and cultural nature of communication. Such insights, no doubts, will help to solve real world problems involving communication.

2.4. The Concept of Politeness

Politeness is an everyday simple term that most people are familiar with. Gumperz in Brown and Levinson holds that ' a major reason for [interest in politeness], as the authors define it, is basic to the production of social order, and a precondition of human cooperation, so that any theory

which provides an understanding of this phenomenon at the same time goes to the foundations of human social life'(xiii). However, the description of the term may not be as easy as it looks. Watts captures the situation when he writes, '… although, most of us are fairly sure of what we mean when we say polite behaviour, the description may, however, not be quite as easy as we think' (1). In the view of A. J. Meier, there are 'disconcerting amount of divergence and lack of clarity concerning the meaning of politeness' (345). From these assertions, it shows that politeness is relative to an extent. However, there is no gain in saying that despite its relativity, there is obvious polite and impolite behaviour as defined by the linguistic community or culture.

One of the main reasons for the lack of uniformity on what *politeness* is comes from the fact that cultures differ and what might be considered as a polite usage in one society may be viewed as grossly impolite usage in another culture. For example, a child can call his father by his name in the western world but such an act is viewed as an insult in Africa.

Again, the Aniocha people of Delta State use the word, *Ndoo* as a polite way of thanking a person, making polite requests, accepting a thank you, greeting a person who is in pains, accepting various forms of greeting and so on. On the contrary, the same word when used in these ways in the southeastern part of the country may be seen as odd, as the word, *Ndoo* is mainly used in the southeastern part of the country when someone is in pains or as an ironical way of correcting a person. This is because the word, *Ndoo* is used mainly when someone is in pains and cannot be used in the ways it is being used in Delta State such as in accepting a greeting. Furthermore, in Agbor area of Delta State, the polite way of asking a married woman about her husband is the word *mgbai*. In contrast, such a word is seen as being insulting when used in the Aniocha/Oshimili area of the same state, as it implies that you are asking the woman about her *concubine*.

However, no matter the differences in culture, every language and/or culture has a way of showing appropriateness, proper mannerism and deference in language use. Geoffery Leech recapitulates the position when he asserts that there is often a sense of what is normal recognized by members of society as to how polite to be for a particular occasion (*Pragmatics* 5). Given the significance of politeness in interaction, E. A. Adegbija records that politeness remains 'a pervasive phenomenon' in social interactions through which we establish our roles and maintain our integrity (57). Leech concludes the argument on the premium placed on politeness in these words, 'unless you are polite to your neighbour, the channel of communication between you will break down, and you will no longer be able to borrow his mower' (*Principles* 82).

In a simple term, politeness entails having or showing good manners or respect to other people. In everyday usage, it describes behaviour that is somewhat formal and distancing, where the intention is not to intrude or impose. Beyond that, it encompasses adherence to correct or proper social behaviour. Every society or linguistic community has a set of norms or values and strict observance of those values are considered polite behaviour. Thus, politeness is mainly defined from the angle of social appropriateness.

In addition, different scholars have defined politeness in different ways. Robin Lakoff posits that '… to be polite is saying that socially correct thing (*Language* 53). From Lakoff's view, when one says what is socially correct /acceptable by other people in the same linguistic community, such a person is taken to be polite. Lakoff's position seems to be in line with Onuigbo Nwoye who maintains that 'being polite is not predicated on making a hearer feel good or not feel bad, but, rather, on conforming to socially agreed codes of good conduct' (310). Similarly, Sachiko Ide holds the view that politeness is a cover term for behaviour 'without friction' (7). By implication, politeness is an all encompassing term for all the behaviour that one puts up in order

to avoid friction in language use. From this, one understands that politeness is not a one-off thing which is done only once, but should be a continuous process in order to maintain positive interactions. In the words of Adegbija, politeness is associated with situations in which one 'speaks or behaves in a way that is socially and culturally acceptable and pleasant to the hearer' (58). For Adegbija, politeness should be considered in terms of situations and it is closely bound to culture. According to him, when a speaker speaks in a manner that sounds pleasant to the hearer, it is taken that the speaker is polite. One can therefore say that politeness is speaking to the hearer in a way that he (the hearer) is made to feel important and that his/her rights are not being tampered with. By this, it implies that the speaker should consider the relationship between him and his hearer(s) and then speak in a way that is fitting.

Similarly, Bruce Fraser and William Nolen present a more general approach. According to them, 'to be polite is to abide by the rules of the relationship. The speaker becomes impolite just in cases where he violates one or more of the contractual terms' (96). For them, violation of such rules is viewed as impoliteness. In a nut shell, it is viewed that when one behaves or talks in a way that shows that he/she cares about other people's feelings, such a person is taken to be polite.

Conversely, Watts shares the position of other scholars but tries to characterize polite language use. He puts it succinctly in these words:

> To characterize polite language usage, we might resort to expressions like 'the language a person uses to avoid being too direct' or 'language which displays respect towards or consideration for others.' Once again, we might give examples such as 'language which contains respectful forms of address like *sir* or *madam*, language that displays certain

'polite' formulaic utterances like *please*, *thank you*, *excuse me* or *sorry* or even elegantly expressed.' (1)

The argument shows that being polite entails not being too direct to the hearer, showing consideration for the hearer's feelings as well as the use of formulaic utterances. Toeing the same line of argument, Byram quoting Laver remarks that linguistic politeness may be encoded in formulaic expressions which occur in greetings, partings, please, thanks, excuses, apologies and small talks (473). Although, Watt and Byram have attributed the use of formulaic utterances to politeness, however, their use in the context of utterance is actually what depicts the level of politeness or impoliteness. As earlier said, a lot depends on the tone or voice in order to show politeness. Adopting a gentle tone of voice may suggest politeness whereas a harsh tone when used even in greeting, compliment or apology may still be viewed as an act of impoliteness. It is fitting, therefore to refer to linguistic politeness as language usage which enables smooth communication between participants according to the norms of social interaction and showing consideration for each other's feelings.

The reason for being polite is to show the listeners or readers that you value and respect them. With this, the speaker softens what he/she says to his/her hearers so as not to be too direct or forceful (hedges). In other words, politeness is about keeping good relations with your listener or reader. For example, in asking a person to close the window, it may be too direct to say, '*it's cold in here, close the window'.* However, it is more polite perhaps, to say '*it's kind of cold in here, could you close the window*.' Besides, in a phone in radio programme, it may be considered an impolite request if the presenter, tells the caller, '*turn down the radio*' (the imperative is very direct when used in requests). Rather, it would be considered more polite if the presenter says, 'could you turn the radio down a little?'

Also, it may not be considered too polite if a coach who is criticizing a player's performance says, 'you must improve on your performance; you need to go back to the training school.' It would be more polite if the coach says, '*your performance could possibly be improved upon; you may need to go back to the training school.*' It is also important to note that the choice of these polite expressions largely depends among other things on the level of closeness and power relations between the interactants.

Other markers include courtesy titles like *sir*, *madam*, *sweetie,* and others. Other behaviour that can be tagged as polite include apologising for interrupting a speaker, apologising for an intrusion, opening a door for another especially an older person, avoiding swear words or vulgarism in conversation with older people and others.

The different politeness strategies: positive and negative are targeted at maintaining or redressing threats to hearers. Holtgraves avers that positive politeness strategies are intended to avoid giving insult or offence by emphasizing friendliness in interactions ('Speaking' 212-213). According to him these strategies include putting side by side criticisms with compliments, using jokes, nicknames, honorifics, special discourse markers (please), and in-group jargon and slang.

On the other hand, negative politeness strategies are intended to avoid giving insult by showing deference and respect ('Speaking' 212-213). Hudson elaborates more on the concept of positive and negative face. According to him, both kinds of face are valuable. He calls positive face *solidarity face* which is respect, as in: *I respect you for*… 'that is the appreciation and approval that others show for the kind of person that we are because of our behaviour, values and so on' (114). According to him, we have a feeling of shame and embarrassment when our solidarity face is threatened. He also refers to negative politeness as *power face* which is the respect one has for another person's rights, not to interfere. In addition, he adds that 'when our power face is

threatened, we feel offended' (114). He concludes by saying that 'solidarity - politeness shows respect for the person, whereas power- politeness respects their rights.' In all, it is seen that being polite means expressing respect towards the person you are talking to and avoiding offending them. In this study, politeness entails behaviour (both verbal expressions and non verbal) as well as non-imposing behaviour which actively expresses positive concern for others.

2.5. Politeness and Social Variables

In looking at politeness and social variables, the social factors would be considered from different dimensions:

2.5.1. Politeness and Gender

Gender and language use is a popular and an interesting area of sociolinguistics. The major concern in gender and politeness focuses on the way women and men express politeness verbally. Holmes holds that the preference for *gender* instead of *sex* is that sex has to do with the distinction between a man and a woman on the basis of biological characteristics. Gender, on the other hand, has to do with socio-cultural behaviour between men and women in society including language use (*Introduction* 159). This explains why the choice of *gender* is apt for the purpose of this research. Some scholars have tried to adduce reasons on why men and women speak differently and different explanations have also been offered to that effect. Some scholars believe that the innate biological differences and psychological dispositions between men and women account for the differences in language use. Yet, others believe that socialization between boys and girls plays an active role in determining the differences in language use. From socialization,

each group learns appropriate ways of interacting with their peers, including ways of interacting verbally. Holmes puts it categorically clear in these words:

> In many societies, girls and boys experience different patterns of socialization and this, it is suggested, leads to different ways of using and interpreting language. In modern western society, most girls and boys operate in single-sex peer groups though an influential period of their childhood during which they acquire and develop different styles of interaction. The boys' interaction tends to be more competitive and control-orientated while the girls interact more cooperatively and focus on relative closeness. Gender differences in patterns of language use can be explained by the fact that girls and boys are socialized into different cultures. (*Introduction* 7)

From this, it shows that boys and girls are socialized into different styles of interaction based on gender even at the early stages of life. On this, Akindele and Adegbite maintain that 'there is a feminine and masculine linguistic variety' and stress that using a female linguistic variety is as much as a case of identifying ourselves as a female, and of behaving 'as woman should as in say, wearing a skirt'(10). This manifests itself in what Lakoff describes as 'talking like a lady' (10). Often times, the idea of 'talking like a lady' is viewed from two fronts: when a lady does not talk like a lady, it is taken that such a lady is unmannered and uncivilized. On the other hand, the idea of 'talking like a lady' is often viewed as a sign of weakness or powerlessness. Holmes puts it succinctly in these words:

> … a girl is damned if she does, damned if she doesn't. If she refuses to talk like a lady, she is ridiculed and subjected to criticism as unfeminine; if she does learn, she is ridiculed as being unable to think clearly, unable to take part in a serious discussion: in

some sense, as less than fully human these two choices which a woman has – to be less than a woman or to be less than a person- are highly painful. (*Introduction* 301)

In addition, society expects a kind of better behaviour in language use from women. Even as young children, girls are always taught to be conscious of the language they use and by extension to be talking like ladies. Philip Smith citing Parsons, Frieze and Ruble expatiates as follows:

> Each culture has its own prescriptions of sex-role and appropriate behaviour. In the process of acculturation, we come to accept these prescriptions about the roles of men and women as fact; we evaluate ourselves and others in terms of these prescriptions; we raise our children to fit the designated patterns; and we punish deviations from the cultural norm. By providing the evaluative framework for oneself and others, these cultural stereotypes affect men's and women's judgements and beliefs regarding the appropriateness of various roles… women acquire, through a process of socialization, a set of attitudes and beliefs and choices and behaviour which are consistent with the sex roles they are expected to play in society. (112)

It goes to show that teaching and enforcement of manners as they affect talking is often considered to be the preserve of women. Maintaining the same position, Akindele and Adegbite quoting Trudgill claim that women consistently produce linguistic forms which approach more closely to standard language or have higher prestige than those produced by men (10). However, the explanation that women use more standard forms in social settings is not always true. It is arguable that the use of standard language is a function of the individual and not as a result of one's gender. Therefore, the positions of these scholars may not accepted wholly.

Besides, Holmes quoting Lakoff suggests that women's speech is characterized by linguistic features such as lexical hedges or fillers, e.g. *you know, sort of, well, you see*, tag questions, e.g. *she's very nice, isn't she?* precise colour terms, e. g. *magenta, aquamarine.* 'hyper correct' grammar, e.g. *consistent use of standard verb forms,* 'super polite' forms, e.g. *indirect requests, euphemism* among others (*Introduction* 302-303).

Corroborating the position of Lakoff, Smith affirms that women's speech contain more expressions like *that's adorable, oh dear!* and *my goodness!* In contrast to men's speech which contains expressions like *damn right, shit! (*150). Nevertheless, Holmes holds that Lakoff's claims were based on her own intuitions and observations. However, Lakoff's observations have 'sparked' off a lot of investigations and researches into gender and language use because 'they appear to be so specific and easy to investigate' (*Introduction* 302).

Again, Holmes comments that in communities where women are powerless members of a subordinate group, they are likely to be more linguistically polite (*Women* 8). In some societies, women do not address their husbands by their first names as a mark of being subordinate to him. This explains the use of such words as *nna anyi, di m,* and others. Similarly, Holmes (*Introduction*) holds that in Bengali society that a wife being subordinate to her husband is not permitted to use his first name. She addresses him with a term such as *suncho* 'meaning do you hear'? (162). Most studies on language and gender have examined issues bordering on language use by men and women and different scholars have also tried to argue on who is more polite between men and women. The burning question has always been if women are more polite than men. Most sociolinguists have found it difficult giving an answer to the question. However, Holmes attempts an answer to the question in these words:

When a sociolinguist is asked this question, her first reaction is to say 'it depends what you mean by politeness, and it depends which women and which men you are comparing and it also depends on the 'context in which they are talking'. Considerations such as these mean that answer needs to be hedged and qualified in all sorts of ways. But perhaps I should say right at the onset that, when all the necessary reservations and qualifications have been taken into account, I think the answer is 'yes', women are more polite than men. (*Women* 1)

She goes further to say that women tend to use questions, and phrases such as *you know* to encourage others to talk and that women compliment others more often than men do, and they apologise more than men do too (2). Toeing the same line of argument, Hudson holds the view that women tend to put more effort than men in keeping conversation going by giving supportive feedback with words like *yeah, mhm and asking questions* (142).

In addition, Penelope Brown carried out a research on politeness using the Mayan community. She also discovered that women are generally more polite than men. She points out that 'in most cultures women among women may have a tendency to use more elaborated positive politeness strategies than men do among men' (251). Brown believes that politeness involves treating people in a special way, and saying and doing things in such a way as to take into account the other person's feelings. She concludes that speaking politely involves being less forward straight or more complicated than what one would say if one wasn't taking the other feelings into account (114).

On the contrary, Sara Mills challenges the position of Holmes and Brown that women are necessarily more polite than men. She argues that there are situations where women because of

their feminine nature guide their behaviour and behave in a more polite way. However, she states categorically that there are also situations where women also behave just as impolitely as men do (1). She goes further to argue that politeness is not a 'warn off' thing. She believes that politeness is something which only the members of a speech community are in a position to assess. On this, hear her:

> Theorists such as Holmes who asserts that women are more positively polite than men, have tended to adopt a very functional form of analysis, whereby they argue that particular language items or strategies can be simply classified as polite. This enables such linguists to undertake quantitative research and measure whether women are more polite than men. However, this assumption that politeness can be so easily codified is one which I contest, since it is only participants in specific communities of practice who are competent to judge whether a language item or phrase is polite for them or not.(2)

In all, Mill's position questions the stereotypical assumptions of politeness and gender as proposed by other scholars. For her, a new and a more contextualized form of analysis which focuses on the conversational strategies should be adopted in order to reflect the true position about politeness and how it affects gender. The new strategy will reflect 'on the complexity of both gender and politeness, and the complex relation between them' (2).

2.5.2. Politeness and Age

Age is a cultural resource which people in a conversation exploit daily. Many cultures/ languages take age into cognizance in matters of language use and politeness in particular, although it varies from culture to culture. Nwoye quoting Uchendu writes that the Igbo world is based on an equalitarian principles and that age is also revered (313). In most cultures in Nigeria, it is

mandatory for children to greet their parents in the morning. Besides, wives or younger people are expected to greet their elders. Akin Odebunmi ('Greetings') citing Elegbeleye comments as follows, '… in Yorùbá culture of western Nigeria, it is culturally mandatory for a child to greet his parents in the morning where they live under the same roof, for the wife to do the same to her husband and her husband's people in the morning, and for the surbordinate to do same to his superior each time they encounter one another in a work place' (104 -105).

Conversely, he further argues that age does not determine the greeting initiator in hospital meetings (105). He goes on to say that the older client may initiate greetings as an index of respect for the institutional power of the doctor (105). Besides, given the perceived assumptions that doctors are usually busy during consultations, there is always no elaborated or extended greeting, although, sometimes, the greetings are pragmatically accommodated.

In addition, Ifeanyi Arua citing Poulious agrees that age identity entails a series of actions or category bound activities, as well as rights, responsibilities, expectations and rules that govern age and appropriate behaviour ('Pragmatics of Politeness'58). Against this backdrop, it is observed that utterances have been used to indicate seniority, which in turn, signals polite language use. Arua further cites Ugorji who examines polite strategies in Igbo focusing on address forms which are used in negotiating politeness within the family. The study however, reveals that interactions are governed by social relationships dominated by age. To this end, the word *deede* which is a respect formula, kinship term, honorific appellation, personal name is used to show the difference in age between the speaker and the hearer. According to her, age is the determinant factor in politeness and not power or status. Furthermore, she agrees that age extends to the wider society as a means of socio-political order and as a cultural grounding for gerontocracy as practiced by the Igbos [sic] (59).

In addition, the way a person or a group of people uses language shows their ages. One discovers that certain use of some kind of language is prevalent among certain age brackets. For example, in Igbo culture, elderly people speak mostly in proverbs. In like manner, Nwoye agrees that oratory is highly admired and the use of proverbs in appropriate contexts is a mark of a good speaker (313). However, the use of proverbs is rarely noticed among younger people in Igbo land.

On the other hand, the speech of young people is mainly characterized with slang. Holmes remarks that current slang is the linguistic prerogative of young people and generally sounds odd in the mouth of an older person. For her, it 'signals membership of a particular group' (*Introduction* 176). Again, the use of swear words is mostly found in the speeches of young people than adults. On this, she maintains that the extensive swear word vocabulary which some teenagers use is likely to change overtime. She holds that the frequency with which they use such words tends to diminish, especially as they begin to have children and socialise with others with young families (176). In all, age is seen as an important factor which conditions the type of utterance one uses in an interaction in order to show respect or deference.

2.5.3. Politeness and Social Status

It has been said that different cultures have different ways of expressing politeness. However, most people tend to express negative politeness more to those they feel are higher in social status. This kind of politeness is what Hudson calls *power face* (114). According to him, power face is respect as in *I respect* your right to …, which is a negative agreement not to interfere. He goes further to say that when our power face is threatened we feel offended (114).

For most English speakers, the most linguistic marker of social relations is shown through the use of personal names. The choice between using *Mr. Ifeanyi, Professor Jibunor, and Emeka* reflects the relationship between participants on social distance. For Holmes when these choices are wrongly used, 'it causes an offence' (*Women* 16). It should be stated that personal names are used in event where there is high solidarity between the speaker and the addressee and names like: *Dr, Prof, Mr, Mrs, and Miss* are used when there is low solidarity between the speaker and the addressee. In other words, colleagues who are intimate and who share high solidarity may address one another with their personal names without any offence. On the other hand, if there is low solidarity and one is higher and has more power, there is obvious need for the use of titles and family names. From this, it shows that the gap in social status determines the type of politeness to be used.

Intimate_____distant

High solidarity   Low solidarity
Positive politeness   Negative politeness

In sum, Smith quoting Brown holds that all inter-personal relations can be characterized in terms of at least two underlying dimensions, status and solidarity (42). Furthermore, she opines that status dimension of a relationship is conditioned by the degree to which individuals differ in the possession of characteristics that are valued in society. The solidarity dimension relates to the degree of concern individuals feel for each other, which could range from none to a great deal (42).

2.5.4. Politeness and Power Relations

Power relations are observed in every social life. These are most times expressed through language. Gunther Kress puts it in these words, 'language is entwined in social power in a number of ways: it indexes power, expresses power, and language is involved whenever there is contention over and challenge to power' (52). Furthermore, John Galbraith holds that power is the ability of participants to influence one another's circumstances or the possibility of imposing one's will upon other persons (2). In their contribution, Brown and Levinson define relative power in a relationship as the degree to which one person can impose his plans and evaluations at the expense of other people's plan and self evaluation (77). Toeing the same line of argument, O' Grady et al. comment that power is concerned with how the participants in an interaction construe the ability of one to dominate, control or in some other way affects the other (230). In other words, power reflects the perceived social distance between the interlocutors. Similarly, Leech views power in terms of the degree of distance in power or AUTHORITY of one participant over another (*Principles* 126). Toeing the position, Galbraith remarks that it is the possibility of imposing one's will upon other persons (2). Similarly, O.P. Gauba quoting Bertrand Russell defines power as 'the production of intended effects' (249). Power is therefore seen as the ability of participants to influence one another's circumstance. In other words, power denotes the ability of a person to fulfil his desires or to achieve his objectives. Generally, the term *power* may be used in multifarious contexts. For instance, we talk of the power of man over nature or material things, and the power of man over man, Gauba claims that most of the theorists of power, including Russel, prefer to restrict its use to power over human being (249). It is in line with this, that power is conceived in this research. Power has been a major component

of Brown and Levinson theory of politeness. The expression of power by a speaker may stem from the speaker's power in terms of social prestige, knowledge, wealth, and so on.

However, Holmes admits that whatever the source may be, high power tends to attract deferential behaviour, including linguistic deference or negative politeness. Therefore, one can regard deference as the respect or honour that we give or show others by virtue of their age, social status and economic status. She further hedges that more formal address terms are frequently appropriate to superiors and to those who have more power and authority in a particular context (*Women* 18). She goes further to say that subordinates can be treated impolitely with impunity-interrupted, talked over, ignored and even subtly insulted. The power dimension is thus an important tool for analysing the politeness patterns which characterize different groups. Despite the fact that power has a role in politeness, interactants may wish to soften the exercise of power in order to protect his face or the face of the addressee. In such cases, it can be seen that the motivation for politeness stems from the desire to maintain the social equilibrium between the interactants and the exercise of power without raising tension in conversations.

On the contrary, Miriam Locher states that 'the interface of power and politeness represents a challenging field of investigation for linguists as both concepts are not limited to a specific linguistic output, but can be realized or implied with virtually linguistic forms' (*Power* 59). One thing that is common to most of the definitions given is that power has the ability of imposing one's will, opinion, ideas on another person.

To further explicate the concept of power, Locher gives various examples of show of power such as a judge who interrupts the well prepared argument of an attorney even before the latter has

had a chance to make his line of argument clear (*Power* 1). In addition, she comments that all of us can remember instances when we felt power were exercised over us, or when we intuitively recognized that we ourselves exercised power over others (*Power* 9). Locher makes the point clearer when she writes:

> We are confronted with the manifestation of power in situations where one interactant takes on a role of an empowered agent with respect to other interactions. Such is the case in relationships between Judges and attorneys, employers and employees, professors and students. These encounters are often characterized by a high degree of predictability and consent about the rights and obligation concerning the respective roles. (*Power* 9)

However, there are times when the interlocutor who has higher social status may decide to avoid explicit expression of institutional or personal power. To this end, the interlocutor with a higher power may resort to certain measures such as preference for indirect speech acts, turn taking, observance of co-operative principle, hedging and other politeness strategies in a bid to hide power relations or to reveal them in the most socially acceptable way.

2.5.5. Politeness and Cross-Cultural Context

The way politeness is expressed in one culture may not be the same it is expressed in another culture. Different cultures have different ways of carrying out their speech acts such as turning down requests, greeting, criticizing, making requests and so on. Such polite usages and behaviour vary from culture to culture. Equally, Jacob Mey expresses that there are certain behaviour which may be counted as polite in some culture, but judged as impolite in another culture. She therefore asks to know if there exists something called inherent politeness (certain

forms always being considered polite), or even universal politeness, the very idea of politeness being common to all people, and realized in more or less the same way across cultures and languages (268). In answering the question, Watts comments that all human cultures have forms of social behaviour that members will classify as mutually shared consideration for others. (14). He goes further to say that cooperative social interaction and displaying consideration for others seem to be universal characteristics of every socio-cultural group. (14). Although politeness may be manifested and understood in different ways through verbal and non-verbal behaviour in different cultures, the whole essence of politeness is to maintain and show respect to the hearer which is universal to all cultures and languages. However, one important thing is that the language user must know how to express or function in the language in a culturally acceptable way in order to show politeness. Leech observes that there is often a sense of what is normal recognized by members of society, as to how polite to be for a particular occasion (*Pragmatics* 5). Similarly, Masoumeh citing Guodong and Jing believes that although being polite is a universally acceptable concept, the meaning of politeness might vary across culture, gender and power relations (2).

On the role of power and social factor as it affects the choice of language, one also discovers that in some communities younger people do not address elder siblings by their first names. For example, words like: *deee or de de, daa-daa* are used in the eastern part to the country and *egboo, bros* are used in the western part of the country to show deference or respect to an older person.

Moreover, L. E. Smith holds that apologies in Japan are not only performed to express admission of fault, which is usually the case, but, also, it serves as a social lubricant, in cases in which both participants accept responsibility for a problematic interchange (1). Similarly, F. Coulmas writes

that in South Asia that speakers do not verbalize their gratitude or indebtedness to family members because helping each other is perceived only as compliance with one's duties; so, any form of verbalization is frowned at and seen as inappropriate and even insulting (81). In addition, Sifianou citing Wolfson records that Americans pay compliments in a frequent way in order to achieve and maintain successful social relationships with others. Such frequent compliments are in contrast to what is obtainable in Indonesia and Malaysia (52). As a result, students from Indonesia and Malaysia are puzzled over the high frequency of compliments in American English. Similarly, Sifianou quoting Herbert and Straight demonstrates that Americans offer a lot more compliments than South Africans do, most of which they tend to ignore or reject (53). Consequently, in intercultural encounters, South Africans will be judged by Americans as being impolite: people who do not offer compliments, whereas the American relative excess of offering compliments will also be judged by South Africans as impolite and insincere.

On the other hand, other cultures do not express their politeness the way it is done in the linguistic communities earlier mentioned. Roy Freedle writes that a Chinese will act according to the situation he or she is in and use different politeness strategies depending on the social relationship (144). He goes further to say that face systems as cultural tools are used differently to mediate social interaction among participants in sales encounters, in business meetings and in family dinners. He tries to make a distinction between how politeness is expressed in state-run businesses, and private enterprise. He reveals that among strangers in state-run business, there is little face work. In private enterprise, sales persons attend to the face of potential customers by cultivating a relationship (144).

In sum, Masoumeh notes that researchers need to investigate the denotation of politeness in different cultures and try to identify different patterns and discourse strategies (2).

2.6. Politeness and Greetings

One of the ways to express positive politeness is through greetings. When we greet other people, ask how they are doing, show concern about their welfare or show approval for what they are doing, we are simply appealing to their positive face. Li Wei citing Laver asserts that greetings as conversational routines are part of the linguistic repertoire of politeness. He further claims that they are tools of polite behaviour and their use is guided by a polite norm (57). Similarly, Kourosh Saberi quoting Duranti holds that greetings are rituals of appeasing and bonding that counteract pontentially aggressive behaviour during face-to-face encounters. (63) This shows that greetings are important aspects of social interaction for the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. According to Holmes, greeting formulas universally serve an affective function of establishing non-threatening contact and rapport (*Introduction* 295). In other words, greetings, which are aspects of politeness, are important for social cohesion and showing affection towards other people. As with politeness in general, greetings can be analysed within the framework of theories of face. Felicity Rash opines that greetings, if performed correctly, that is, with appropriate words, tone of voice and body language can attenuate the force of a potential face threatening act (50).

Besides, despite the difference in culture, every language has appropriate ways of expressing greetings in their culture. Saberi quoting Duranti comments that greetings are crucial aspects of communicative competence of every mature member of a speech community. He further remarks that greetings are among the first speech act that children and second language learners acquire or learn (62). Schleicher reiterates the point when he says that the more second or foreign language learners understand the cultural contexts of greeting, the better the society appreciates them and the more they are regarded as well behaved (334). From the foregoing, children and

adult members of every linguistic community are groomed to see greetings as conversational routines in the negotiation of social relationships.

In African culture, in Nigeria, and among the three major ethnic groups, greeting is one of the ways in which face is maintained. This explains why an older person among the three major ethnic groups will make uncomplimentary remarks each time a younger person fails to observe the ritual of greeting. In fact, refusal to greet an older person can lead to impolite responses or decline of requests. Besides, such a person who fails to greet an elder is termed to have been brought up poorly. Among the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, the functions of greetings go far beyond phatic communication. They convey the social rank and status between people in a communication encounter. Normally, the younger person or a person in a lower position initiates a greeting as it is typically for children to greet their parents, wives to greet their husbands and subordinates in the office settings to greet their superiors. Finally, greeting plays the role of manipulating a relationship or situation in order to achieve a certain desired goal. Greetings among the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria will now be examined.

2.6.1. Greetings Among the Three Major Ethnic groups in Nigeria

2.6.1.1. Greetings Among the Yoruba

Greeting is one of the ways the Yoruba people express their culture. Every person in Yoruba land understands the importance of greeting in interpersonal communication. Among the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Yoruba are known for their exceptional use of greeting. The Yoruba people have greetings for different occasions which are different from the way other tribes greet. In fact, they use greetings as a viable means of showing politeness. Odebunmi citing Adegbija confirms that greeting is a major means of showing positive politeness among the

Yoruba. ('Greetings'105). In Yoruba land, greetings remain an exceeding way of attracting attention of a co-interlocutor and facilitate good interactions.

The great importance that the Yoruba attach to greeting is reflected in the fact that every occasion, season, job and event has appropriate greeting. Odebunmi further classifies the greeting forms into three: greetings based of times, seasons and circumstances e.g. (*Kaaro*-good morning), greetings based on traditional occupation or religions, for example *Olókun á gbé ó - Olukun* (the sea goddess will support you) as well as situational greetings–greetings for a pregnant woman, greetings for the new mother and the new baby, and greetings for the children of an older person that dies ('Greetings'105). Anyone who lacks greeting courtesy in Yoruba land is considered uncultured and uncivilized. Furthermore, the hours of the day, such as early morning, morning, mid day, afternoon, evening, and night all have their different greetings. Just as Odebunmi rightly observes, different professions and occupation have different greeting peculiar to each of them. For example,

Traders/sellers   *' E ku oja O,   E ku oro aje*

Blacksmith   *Aroye O*

Cloth weaver   *Ojugbo oro O, Obalufo agbe O*

Hair dresser   *Oju gboro O*

Carver   *E ku ona*

In addition, different states of health have their own greetings. For example, a person who is seriously ill has a greeting which is different from a person who is recuperating. Furthermore, there are different greetings at funerals depending on the age of the deceased. There are different

greetings for premature deaths and another for death that is considered mature. Besides, there are different greetings for one who is preparing for an occasion, who is embarking on a journey, one who has arrived, just as there are separate greetings for barren women, expectant mothers and greeting immediately after delivery among the numerous greeting forms for almost every action.

Again, in Yoruba culture, it is always preferable for the young person to initiate the greeting. However, there are situations where it is not strictly adhered to such as in the hospital setting where the patient who is older may greet the younger doctor first. When greeting an elder in Yoruba culture, the boys prostrate sometimes with their chest on the ground while the girls kneel with their two knees and greet as the situation or occasion demands. It is also forbidden for the younger ones to look into the eyes of the older person in the process of greeting. In response, the older returns the greeting with praise and attributive names for the younger person.

Besides, the Yoruba greeting has honorific pronouns. In that case, it is regarded as disrespectful and dishonour if a young person fails to use the honorific pronouns in address or in referring to older persons. The honorific pronouns include *'E'* you (plural), '*Won*' they/them, '*Yin*' you (plural). So in Yoruba greeting, a distinction is made when greeting an elder and when greeting an age mate all in a bid to show positive politeness. For instance,

Kaaro O   good morning to an age mate or a colleague

E Kaaro   good morning (sir/ madam) to an older person or more than one person

Kaabo   Welcome to an age mate

E Kaabo   Welcome (sir/ madam) to an older person or more than one person

2.6.1.2.Greetings Among the Hausa

Hausa culture has a greeting culture that is close to the Yoruba greeting. In Hausa culture, it is obligatory for people to exchange greetings when they encounter one another. Failure to do that is considered extremely rude. For them, interactions must be preceded by greeting. Ahmed Habib Daba observes that through the message of *gaisuwa* (greeting) that one would understand how social status is the governing factor in Hausa social and political structure. He further cites Trudgill who comments that an important feature of the social context is the context of the person spoken to and in particular the role relationships and relative status of the participants in the discourse. Besides, intonation plays a great role in status identification. The intonation used in greeting would indicate whether the speaker is of higher or lower social status. In fact, every Hausa person is full aware of the fundamental social stratification in the culture. Furthermore, a younger or lower person must initiate greeting to a higher ranked person because the culture makes room for social classes/hierarchies. Daba writes that the hierarchy is divided along *Samu/saranta – rulers, Malamai – educated/learned people in Koran, Attajirai – wealthy people and Saran jama´a talakawa – commoners.* However, under extreme circumstance such as illness and the like, anybody including the higher status individual can initiate the greeting.

In addition, different times of the day, occasions for joy or sorrow, people at work and many others have their specific greetings. The greetings are identified as follows:

Barka da aiki (greetings on work)

Barka da asuba (greetings at dawn)

Barka da rana (greetings at midday)

Barka da dare (greetings at night)

Barka da dare haihuwa (congratulating someone on a new baby)

Sanu da hutatawa (greetings on resting)

Barka da arziqi (for escaping a disaster)

Gaisuwa mutuwa or ta´aziyya (condolence*)*

Gaisuwa   surukai (in-law)

Gaisuwa malami or ziyarar (for visiting people learned in the Quran or Islamic knowledge)

Gaisuwa mara lafiya ko dubiya (for visiting a sick person) and many other greetings.

 Daba goes further to say that an encounter between two parties of unequal social position in terms social status, age or sex that the greeting is more likely to be more formal than between two equals. He equally states that when a Hausa person is interacting with another person whether Hausa or non-Hausa that equality, inequality or solidarity is a determining factor of what type of address he/she would use. He concludes that certain behaviour and gestures accompany the greeting to suit the context in which the greeting is offered, and also to suit the social status of both the speaker and the addressee. Furthermore, in Hausa greeting, when two male peers shake hands they also touch their chests with the right hands. Conversely, when two female peers or a male and a female greet each other, they do not make a physical contact. However, when greeting a person who is higher in social status the young person could kneel, raise a fist with a hand or may prostrate which is a traditional sign of respect to a superior. Besides, in greeting an older person, a younger person is not expected to look into the eyes of the older person as a mark of respect. Again, it is equally viewed as an act if disrespect for a

younger person to stretch his or her hands for a handshake to an older person in Hausa culture. In sum, Daba reiterates that politeness and social status are always associated with Hausa greeting.

2.6.1.3. Greetings Among the Igbo

Greetings among the Igbo are not exactly what it is among the Yoruba or Hausa culture. In Igbo culture, a younger person is expected to initiate the greeting. However, depending on the situation, an older person may initiate it.

Conversely, in Igbo culture there are no specific greetings for specific profession, seasons, festivals or other occasions as specified in Yoruba culture. For example, the general greeting *Ndewo, (well done/ thank you) dalu oru, jisie ike (well done)* are used generally for people who are working to show positive politeness, solidarity and friendliness. Similarly, in the event of death the general word *Ndoo* is used irrespective of the age of the deceased. The same word: *Ndoo* is used in event of illness and there is no separate greeting for the type, nature or duration of illness. In like manner, in event when a woman is delivered of a baby, the normal greeting: *Chukwu alu ka (God has done well)* is used for both the mother and the baby as there is no different greeting for the mother or the baby.

On the other hand, there are greetings which show the different times of the day. *Morning- ụtụtụ ọma, (good morning) afternoon-ehihie ọma (good afternoon) and evening- ụhụrụchi ọma(good evening) or* other socially acceptable greeting forms as may be specified by the linguistic community. These greetings are only heard from some elderly persons in the villages or some media houses during news or programmes in Igbo language. For the youths, even in the villages, these greetings have been replaced by the British *good morning, good afternoon and good evening,* occasionally, with a bow depending on the social standing of the person being greeted.

Otherwise, the greeting is not accompanied by any form of genuflection as noticed in Yoruba or Hausa culture where it is an obligation.

2.7. Politeness and Non-Verbal Communication

There is no doubt that politeness can also be in the form of non-verbal communication. Samovar et al. holds that 'non-verbal communication involves all those non verbal stimuli in a communication setting that are generated by both the source and his or her use of the environment and that have potential message value for the source or receiver' (245). From the foregoing, it shows that non-verbal communication is an indispensable and all-pervasive element of human behaviour. In considering the importance of non-verbal cues in communication, Samovar et al. citing Barnlund put it succinctly in these words, 'many, and sometimes, most of the critical meanings generated in human encounters are elicited by touch, glance, vocal nuance, gestures, or facial expression with or without the aid of words' (244). In addition, Descartes quoted in Samovar et al. remarks as follows: 'to know what people think, pay regard to what they do, rather than what they say' (243). The above comments suggest that non-verbal cues are true reflections of one's mind.

Furthermore, students show politeness by the way they greet their lecturers, sometimes, in a warm embrace. Oftentimes, they exhibit politeness through postures. In this case, students bow or genuflect in an attempt to greet their lecturers. Besides, they also use some kind of facial expressions such as a warm smile to show politeness. Furthermore, these students occasionally use proxemics; in which case, they observe politeness through distance such as giving ways for their lecturers to walk past.

From this, it shows that non- verbal communication is a subtle way of communicating thoughts and feelings that cannot be communicated verbally. Ambady et al. are of the opinion that such behaviour is often used to convey the 'true' meanings of statements (998). It is fitting therefore to say that non verbal cues enable a speaker to hint, express and imply politeness without really expressing them directly or verbally. While the research work observes that politeness can also be shown through non-verbal behaviour as earlier discussed, the work is however, restricted to verbal politeness.

2.8.   Politeness and Modality

Modal verbs, especially the past forms of the modal verbs, *can, may, shall,* and *will* (*could, might, should* and *would*) tend to show more politeness and are less direct when used by speakers in performing speech acts. Ronald Carter et al. write that expressions like *certainly, possibility, supposed to be,* are likely to also show politeness when we ask for something or ask someone to do something. They give these examples:

A: *Could* you take a look at my laptop? It's taking so long to start up.

B: Well, I'll *certainly* take a look. Is there a *possibility* that it might have a virus?

A: Well, the antivirus is *supposed to be* up to date. (387- 388)

Again, they also exemplify that, 'you are *likely to* feel stressed before your exam is less direct than 'you will feel stressed before your exam' (387- 388). Although, the employment of the past forms of modals are ways of being polite but there are some cases where the employment of such past forms would not work. Joy Eyisi opines that an expression like 'would you like me to pay for this?' may suggest that the speaker does not really want to pay. In this situation, it is better to say, 'I'll pay for this.' or 'let me pay for this' (446). In addition, Carter et al. record that 'in

speaking, we often use 'if' followed by will, would, can, or could to introduce a polite request' (338). For them, it would be more polite to say:

>If we can move on to the next point of view of discussion (more polite than can we move on...)

>If I could just say one more thing… (more polite than listen to me, I want to say something)

>If you will follow me, please,… (more polite than follow me, please,) (338).

2.9. The Concept of Face

The term face was first used by Erving Goffman. It was, however, made popular by Brown and Levinson in their theory of politeness. Goffman defines politeness as 'the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself, the line other assumes he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image delineated in terms of approved social attributes- albeit an image others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself' (5).

Drawing upon Goffman's definition of face, Brown and Levinson define face as 'public image that every member wants to claim for himself (61). Face plays important roles in the study of speech acts. Brown and Levinson further draw a distinction in the concept of face. For them, face is divided into two: positive face and negative face. A person's positive face is seen through his/her desire to be *liked, appreciated,* and be *approved of.* On the other hand, negative face is seen as a person's desire not to be imposed, infringed, impeded or be put upon. Brown and Levinson consider negative face as being concerned with 'freedom of action and freedom from imposition' (61). In other words, it is the freedom to act as one desires and be unimpeded by

others. It would be observed that Brown and Levinson built their theory of politeness on the assumption that many speech acts, for example, requests, offers, disagreements and compliments are intrinsically threatening to face. Speech acts are threatening when they do not support the face wants of the speaker and those of the addressee. In that case, either the face of the speaker or the hearer is threatened (65-68). Hence, politeness is involved in order to redress those face threatening acts (FTA). On the notion of face in Igbo language, Nwoye puts it succinctly in these words:

> The face is the gate way to a person's personality. Through it and from it, many things can be read concerning the inner working of a person's capacity for, or lack of shame. The saying *ifele adịro ya na iru-* there is no shame on his face- is a total assessment of a person as completely shameless and therefore capable of any imaginable despicable act. Often the eye brows, perphaps the most prominent features of the face are taken as a locale of shame as in the expression *ifele adịro ya na iku-* there is no shame on his (eye) brows. *Iru oma-* good face- subsumes a variety of attitude, ranging from good fortune/luck as in ịkpo ịru ọma-to bring good fortune/luck to somebody else – personal blessing. One can also bring bad fortune /ill luck to another- *ịkpo ajọ ịru.* This good /bad fortune is believed to reside in the face, because the face is regarded as a mirror of the entire personality. (313)

Furthermore, he gives other expressions as *ịmechu/ịmebo ịru* –literally, to act in a way that brings shame, dishonour or embarrassment to oneself or more importantly to the group with which one is associated (314). Above all, he sees face in Igbo language as a mechanism of social control and a deterrent against anti-social behaviour as in the expression like: *kedu ịru n'ga eji fu ndị be anyị* - 'which face will I see our people with?'(315). From this, it shows that Holtgraves is

right when he argues that the concept of face has relevance or meaning mainly in social interactions ('The Linguistic'142). In other words, face in interaction is a social construct rather than a physical construct.

One central argument of Brown and Levinson's theory is that face is universal and that interlocutors possess mutual knowledge of face (244). However, such over-generalization has also attracted several criticisms. L.R. Mao comments that Brown and Levinson present face as 'an individualistic self oriented image' (455). According to her, it may be an accurate description of face in western society where social interaction is based upon individualism and may be deemed problematic in non-Western contexts (455). In contrast, Mao's position may not be fully accepted given the fact that she based her argument on western society.

In Africa, the notion of *face* is quite in use as people who are in a conversation avoid destroying one another's face. The notion of *saving and losing face* is a widely known concept in Nigeria in particular. Interactants try as much as possible in a social setting to maintain their face as well as their hearer's face. This explains why an act of face threatening is always frowned at. In addition, Matsumoto claims that Brown and Levinson concept of face is the acknowledgement and maintenance of the relative position of others, rather than the preservation of an individual's proper territory (405). Well, Matsumoto's position seems to ignore the fact that the notion of face according to Brown and Levinson sees face as the self esteem or self respect which everybody has and would expect the other person to acknowledge both the speaker and the hearer. Every speaker tries to maintain his face as well as his or her listener's face. Besides, one of the reasons of politeness is to respect the position of others. In addition, Sandra Metts and Erica Grohskopf citing Tracy and Spisak as well as   Wood and Kroger have argued that face threat and politeness are difficult phenomena to put in operation, particularly during ordinary

interactions (364). Lastly, Metts and Grohskofff citing Wilson, Dillard, Aleman and Leatham argue that Brown and Levinson treated positive and negative politeness strategies as linearly arranged and mutually exclusive concepts. Despite their argument, they believe that speakers often consider positive politeness strategies to be more polite and often use both types of strategies within the same utterance (364).

In all, despite the aforementioned deficiencies in Brown and Levinson's framework, their work has inspired considerable research into the use of politeness strategies which has implications for cross-cultural communication and language teaching. Besides, they acknowledge all these concerns but still maintain their confidence in the essentials of the theory (17-22).

2.10. Face Threatening Acts

Brown and Levinson conceive face threatening acts as those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/ or of the speaker (65). In other words, they are capable or liable to damage or threaten either the speaker or the hearer's face. This simply shows that any utterance that demands or intrudes on another person's autonomy can be regarded as a potential face-threatening act. Brown and Levinson further record that face threatening acts can be considered from two perspectives:

1. Whose face is being threatened (the speaker's or the hearer's)

2. Which type of face is being threatened (positive or negative) (65).

Brown and Levinson further maintain that acts that can threaten the hearer's positive face include those acts in which the speaker shows that he/she does not approve or support the hearer's positive face or self image. These acts include: expressions of disapproval, contempt, ridicule, complaints, reprimands, criticisms, accusations, insults, mentioning of taboo topics, raising

dangerous emotional or divisive topics, blatant non-cooperation in an activity or disruptive interruptions, use of address terms in an offensive or embarrassing way and so on. In this case, if a hearer is insulted, being criticized or that what he holds highly is being disapproved of, it will be said that the hearer's positive face has been threatened.

On the other hand, the hearer's negative face can be threatened when he/she is being ordered, warned, advised, dared or threatened. In this case, if the hearer is ordered out of a place, his negative face has been threatened.

In a similar manner, the speaker's positive face can be threatened when such a speaker confesses to any act of wrong doing, admits guilt, tenders apologies, loses physical control over body, self humiliation or accepts compliments.

In addition, acts that can threaten the speaker's negative face include expression of gratitude, acceptance of a thank you or an apology, acceptance of an offer, and making promises and offers unwillingly (66-68). For instance, if a student admits stealing a fellow student's laptop, his positive face is threatened and if the said student is coaxed into tendering an apology, his negative face is damaged or threatened.

In a similar vein, Metts and Grohskopf comment that there are some acts that threaten both the speaker's and hearer's face at the same time (362). They give this example: A speaker who asks a favour from another person and prefaces the request with a promise of indebtedness ' *I will owe you one if you do this for me*.' threatens the hearer's negative face in asking the favour as well as his or her own negative face by incurring a reciprocal debt (362). They also remark that even acts that respect a listener's positive face may incur a threat to his or her negative face. For instance, a compliment or a gift shows regard for hearer's positive face but simultaneously,

threatens his negative face by obligating him or her to show appreciation (whether sincerely felt or not) or to provide a comparable expression of regard. The kind and size of politeness that the speaker applies to any speech act is determined by the weightiness of the speech act. According to Brown and Levinson, speakers calculate the weight of their speech acts from three social variables of the perceived social distance between the hearer and the speaker, the perceived power difference between them and the cultural ranking of the speech act (74).

Since everybody has got two types of face which they want to protect, it is in the interest of the interactants to avoid face threatening acts (FTAs). Brown and Levinson posit that given 'the mutual vulnerability of face' rational agents seek to avoid FTAs or employ strategies to minimize the threat (68). The essence is that people avoid obvious face-threatening acts in order to be polite. They avoid insults, giving orders, requests or warnings and use polite utterances such as greetings and compliments.

In any particular instance, the decision to avoid face threat or to employ various strategies to minimize threat could be based on three key factors: the desire to communicate the content of the message, the need for efficiency and the desire to preserve either one's own face or other's face or both.

In order to avoid face threatening acts or damage to hearer's face, Brown and Levinson provides a list of five strategies:

        a) Performing an FTA without redress (bald –on-record)

        b) Performing an FTA with Redress (Positive Politeness).

        c) Performing an FTA with Redress (Negative politeness).

        d) Performing an FTA using off-Records politeness.

e) Do not perform FTA   (69).

According to them, the first four acts are to be performed, while the fifth strategy is adopted as a super strategy which may be used if the speaker decides not to perform any of the acts. Invariably, it means saying *nothing*. Similarly, Holtgraves holds that not to perform the act at all is the least polite strategy ('Linguistic'144). On the contrary, he further remarks that 'if the act is performed, then, the most polite strategy is to do so with an off- record form.' He further comments that the defining feature of off record forms is their ambiguity and hence deniability (144). In addition, Brown and Levinson hold that 'the uses of each [politeness strategy] are tied to social determinants, specifically the relationship between speaker and addressee and the potential offensiveness of the message content' (2). For clarity purpose, the strategies listed above will now be explained.

2.10.1. Performing an FTA without Redress (Bald-on-record)

 Brown and Levinson state that bald-on-record strategy is the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise possible way of saying things without any attempt to minimize imposition on the hearer (69). This, according to them, is roughly identified with the specifications of Grice's Maxims of cooperation (69). In other words, it does nothing to minimize threats to the hearer's face; rather, it addresses the hearer in a direct, clear, concise and unambiguous manner, such as in the expression: '*leave here*'. They further remark that the primary reason for the use of bald-on- record strategy is to do the FTA with maximum efficiency than trying to maintain the hearer's face. There are two kinds of bald -on- record strategy usage in different circumstances. The first category is where the face threat is not minimized and face is ignored. The second is where the speaker minimizes the face threats by implication. Brown and Levinson give an

example of bald on- record strategy and say that direct imperatives can be softened with hedges or conventional politeness markers for example, *please come in, (sir).*They further comment that the verb *do* can also be used with imperative as in, *don't worry about me*, *do go first* all in a bid to minimize the face threats (101).

2.10.2. Performing an FTA with Redress (Positive Politeness)

By redressive action, Brown and Levinson mean that the action 'gives face' to the addressee (69). In other words, it attempts to counteract the potential face damage of the FTA by doing it in such a way to show that no such face threat is intended or desired. By this, it shows that the speaker recognizes the face needs of the hearer. Performing an FTA (On record) with Redress (positive politeness) is another politeness strategy. Using this strategy, a speaker will present an FTA in a way that shows regards for the hearer's positive attributes probably as a friend or as a person who is valued. To this end, the speaker employs positive politeness strategy. It is usually used among group of friends and it minimizes the distance between them by expressing friendliness. Unlike negative politeness it does not redress the face imposed by the FTA. Brown and Levinson comment as follows:

> The linguistic realizations of positive politeness are in many respects simply representative of the normal linguist behaviour between intimates, where interest and approval of each other's personality, presuppositions indicating shared wants and shared knowledge, implicit claims to reciprocity of obligations or to reflexivity of wants, etc. are routinely exchanged. Perhaps, the only feature that distinguishes positive-politeness redress from normal everyday intimate language behaviour is an element of exaggeration;

this serves as a marker of the face-redress aspect of positive- politeness expression by indicating that even if S can't with total sincerity say 'I want your wants', he can at least sincerely indicate 'I want your positive face to be satisfied.' (101)

2.10.3. Performing an FTA with Redress (Negative politeness)

A speaker who frames an FTA in terms that minimize imposition on the hearer's autonomy is using negative politeness with redressive action. For Brown and Levinson, negative politeness is redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded. (129). They go further to say that it is the heart of respect behaviour, just as positive politeness is the kernel of 'familiar' and 'joking' behaviour. This simply shows that negative politeness is specific and focused and performs mainly the function of minimizing impositions, thereby avoiding FTA effects. Obviously, the linguistic realization of negative politeness, conventional indirectness, hedges, on illocutionary force, polite pessimism, and emphasis on hearer's relative power are the main thrust of negative politeness. They further hold that negative politeness in all forms is used for social 'distancing'. For them, it is 'the most elaborate and the most conventionalized set of linguistic strategies for FTA redress' (130). In addition, they introduce five main strategies of negative politeness as follows: speaker should be conventionally indirect in communicating sender's wants, speaker should not presume or assume about hearer's wants or what is relevant to hearer, speaker should not coerce hearer into any act, speaker should not impinge on hearer and finally, speaker should redress other wants of hearer's derivative from negative face. (131).

2.10.4. Performing an FTA Using Off-Records Politeness

Brown and Levinson see off records politeness strategy as a communicative act which is done in such a way that is not possible to attribute one clear communicative intention to the act (211). In this case, the hearer leaves himself or herself out by providing himself or herself with a number of defensible interpretations. The hearer cannot be held to have committed himself or herself to just one particular defined interpretation of his /her act. To this end, Brown and Levinson further claim that if a speaker wants to do an FTA, but wants to avoid the responsibility for doing it, he can do it off record and leave it up to the addressee to decide how to interpret it (211). From the above, it shows that off record utterances are essentially indirect uses of language. So, for one to apply an off record strategy, one either says something that is either more general or he/she says something that is actually different from what he/she actually means. By implication, it is the hearer's responsibility to infer the intended meaning. Linguistic realizations of off records strategies include metaphor and irony, rhetorical questions, understatement, tautologies, all kinds of hints as to what a speaker wants or means to communicate, without doing so directly, so that the meaning is to some extent negotiable. They further list conversational implicature as one of the main strategies of off record strategy. The subcategories include giving hints, giving association clues, presupposing, understating, over stating, using tautologies, using contradictions, being ironic, using metaphors, using rhetorical questions. The other main strategies of going off record include: being vague, ambiguous and its subcategories include being ambiguous, being vague, over-generalising, displacing hearer and being incomplete (213-226).

2.10.5. Do not Perform FTA

This is a likely choice when the desire to maintain face is stronger than the desire to communicate the content of the message. In this case, the speaker chooses to 'say nothing' (silence) or may use the opting out choice in order not to do the FTA.

2.11. The Concept of Impoliteness

There has been, however, little analysis of impoliteness in researches generally. The reason may be because emphasis is more on the harmonious and social relationship of interlocutors which is seen as being more important thereby, downplaying on impoliteness. There are occasions and situations where people in a conversation openly or directly attack one another or the speaker attacking the hearer. These attacks are considered by others as *impolite behaviour*. Different scholars have defined impoliteness from different points of view. Jonathan Culpeper et al. define impoliteness as 'communicative strategies designed to attack face and thereby cause social conflict and disharmony' (1546). In other words, any use of language or behaviour that is geared towards attacking the face of the addressee is viewed as grossly impolite. Such use of language can cause social conflict and disharmony. In addition, Tracy and Tracy view impoliteness or face attacks as communicative acts perceived by members of a social community (and often intended by speakers) to be purposefully offensive (227). This definition is also in line with Goffman who relates such face-threat to situations where the offending person acts maliciously and spitefully with the intention of causing open insult (14). From this, it shows that impoliteness is viewed when a speaker speaks purposely and intentionally to spite the hearer thereby causing offence.

On their part, Holmes et al. state that verbal impoliteness is linguistic behaviour assessed by the hearer as threatening his or her face or social identity and infringing the norms of appropriate behaviour that prevail in particular contexts (196). Toeing the same line of argument, Lakoff remarks that impoliteness is rude behaviour which does not utilize politeness strategies where they would be expected, in such a way that the utterance can only almost plausibly be interpreted as intentionally and negatively confrontational ('The Limits'103). So, when a speaker refuses to use politeness strategies and intentionally confronts the face of the hearer, the speaker is said to be impolite.

In addition, Culpeper comments that impoliteness comes about when (1) the speaker communicates face attack intentionally or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-attacking or a combination of 1 and 2 ('Impoliteness Questions'4). The key point here is that impoliteness is constructed in the interaction between speaker and hearer. Then, the instance of impoliteness is perceived when the speaker communicates face attack intentionally and the hearer perceives/constructs it as such. For example, in a situation where a hearer openly interrupts a speaker without an apology, or a speaker openly insults, swears, abuses verbally, calls names threatens or shouts at the hearer and the hearer perceives it as such , then, it is taken that the speaker has acted impolitely. The hearer may react to such impolite behaviour through overt protests, ignoring, facial expression or a raised voice in order to show perception of the impolite act. To this end, it would be said that for impoliteness to be considered *successfully conveyed*, the intention of the speaker (or author) to offend, threaten or damage face must be clearly understood by the receivers such that there will not be a mismatch between the perspectives of the speaker and hearer.

The position is further substantiated by Miriam Locher and Derek Bousfield who define impoliteness as behaviour that is face-aggravating in a particular context' (3). Again, Marina Terkourafi holds that impoliteness occurs when the expression used is not conventionalized or related to the context of occurrence which threatens the addressee's face (70). In other words, when one uses an expression that is out of context such as *taboo words* or matters relating to *sex* in an offensive way, such a person is taken to be impolite.

Similarly, Leech observes that impoliteness often manifests in the way interactants treat one another in the management of dialogue (*Pragmatics* 227). According to him, asking certain personal questions such as hearer's age, how many children they have or how much they earn unless they are close acquaintance is often felt to be a trespass on private territory: in terms of *conversational etiquette*. It is an infringement of the tact maxim (227-228).

Furthermore, Culpeper ('Reflections') maintains as follows: 'impoliteness as I would define it, involves communicative behaviour intending to cause the 'face loss' of a target or perceived by the target to be so. A face loss in the context of impoliteness involves a conflict and clash of interest'(36). In all, Culpeper, summarizes the argument on the concept of impoliteness in these words:

> Impoliteness is a negative attitude towards specific behaviour occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and/or beliefs about social organization, including, in particular, how one person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviours are viewed negatively - considered 'impolite' when they conflict with how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be. Such behaviours always have or are presumed to have emotional

consequences for at least one participant, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence. Various factors can exacerbate how offensive an impolite behaviour is taken to be, including for example whether one understands a behaviour to be strongly intentional or not. (*Impoliteness Using Language* 23)

In sum, it would be said therefore that impoliteness is the use of language either in speech or in writing to explicitly and unambiguously attack the face of the hearer or reader which is clear to both the speaker and the hearer in the context of use.

2.11.1. What Impoliteness Is Not

Since the work has explained what impoliteness is, it is also pertinent to explain what impoliteness is not. Culpeper proposes four things which impoliteness is not. First, he holds that impoliteness is not incidental face threat ('Impoliteness and Entertainment'36). In other words, it does not happen by chance. Similarly, Goffman agrees that there are incidental offences which arise as an unplanned, but, sometimes anticipated by product of the action which the offender performs. (14). Obviously, such an action is not done to spite or undermine the hearer. For example, lecturers regularly give critical comments to students which may have potentially offensive consequences, but is done as a way of helping students to improve. Such should not be labelled impoliteness.

Second, he maintains that impoliteness is not unintentional ('Impoliteness and Entertainment'37). This is also in line with Goffman's position that the offending person may appear to have acted innocently and his offence seems to be unintended and unwitting (14) For example, a master of ceremony who addresses a guest as *Mr Obi i*nstead of *Prof Obi* may not be

considered as being impolite since he acted innocently by not using the designated and appropriate title as may be desired by *Prof Obi*.

Third, he maintains that impoliteness is not banter ('Impoliteness and Entertainment'37). He goes further to distinguish between 'mock impolitenesses' from 'genuine impoliteness'. According to him, banter or mock impoliteness remains on the surface because it is understood in particular contexts not to be true. For example, a colleague who calls a slender colleague *fatty* or says: things such as: *here comes trouble* when another colleague walks in, especially in a joking or friendly manner cannot be said to be impolite. Leech expresses that such banter is used in order to show solidarity with hearer, by saying something which is obviously untrue and obviously impolite to hearer (*Principles* 144).

Finally, he holds that impoliteness is not bald on record politeness (37). According to Brown and Levinson, bald on record politeness occurs in specific contexts such as emergency situations when the face threat is very small (69). For example, a secretary who addresses his boss in a direct, clear, concise and unambiguous manner as in: *Sir, run!* would not be seen as giving a command to his boss or being impolite because he did that probably to prevent his boss from missing his flight.

Conversely, Mills however, argues that impoliteness should not be measured in relation to politeness but should be considered in its own terms. She states categorically:

> Rather than assuming that there is something intrinsically impolite about certain utterances or exchanges, I argue that impoliteness is attributed to a speaker on the basis of assessments of their intension and motivations. I examine impoliteness in its own terms, rather than in terms of its relation to politeness, considering what factors contribute to the

assessment of an act as impolite, and what consequences the judgment of impoliteness

has on individuals and communities of practice. (122)

From this, it goes to suggest that sometimes, when an act is viewed as impolite that it is based on the assessment of the hearer's intentions and motivation. The argument may sound true to an extent, but, there are overt cases of impoliteness in every culture and organisation. Outright attack or deliberate refusal to be courteous is viewed as strict impoliteness. Most scholars following Brown and Levinson's idea of face believe that behaviour such as reproaching, threatening, and insulting have intrinsic purpose of undermining the hearer's face.

Conversely, Mills quoting Culpeper questions Leech's notion that there are some speech acts which are inherently impolite, and suggest that although there may be a few, they are in minority (122). She goes further to say that only those acts which are offensive in themselves should be seen as inherently impolite (122).

For the purpose of this research, impolite behaviour and utterances are taken to mean all behaviour and utterances which contravene conversational and politeness maxims as well as threaten the face of the hearer. In other words, impoliteness is conceived in this work as an outright rudeness in discourse through verbal or a non-verbal means which causes an offence to the hearer. This however, does not include minor insults as used by close friends. It should be noted that such friends only use them to signal camaraderie. Notice that such friends do not take offence; rather, it fosters social intimacy among them.

Apart from outright verbal attack to threaten the face of a hearer, intrusion or interruption in discussions can also be viewed as an act of impoliteness. Leech states unequivocally that another

politeness violation that relates to the management of dialogue is the interruption of someone else's turn (Pragmatics 228). The following conversation will exemplify:

(Mr. Agwu and Mr. Okeke are in a conversation.)

Mr. Agwu: I don't like this issue of same sex marriage that the president is trying to consider.

Mr. Okeke: (tries to intervene) Emmh! but I think…

Mr. Agwu: No! let me finish.

This can be interpreted as an outright rejection of Mr.Okeke's intervention. The expression: *No!* followed by *let me finish* implies that Mr. Agwu interprets Mr.Okeke's intervention as not wanting him to complete his turn as he has been granted by the conversational floor.

In addition, Holmes affirms that when we describe someone as polite or impolite, there are many possible aspects of their use of language that we might be referring to (*Women* 115-116). According to her, such behaviour include arriving late without an apology, giving peremptory orders, failing to thank someone for a gift - these are all examples of behaviour which may be considered rude in certain contexts. She further opines that polite people tend to apologise for their offences, request assistance in indirect way, express appreciation for gifts, and pay appropriate compliments. According to her, expressions of gratitude and sympathy, invitations, jokes, greetings and other phatic or social utterance as well as the use of friendly address forms are all ways of expressing politeness in appropriate contexts (115-116). In sum, Watts is of the opinion that impoliteness is clearly a salient form of social behaviour, in the sense that it appears to go against the cannons of acceptance and appropriate behaviour operative in social interactions (18).

2.12. Empirical Studies

2.12.1. Review of Related Studies on Educational Discourse in Nigeria

A number of linguistic studies have been carried out on educational discourse, especially on language use by undergraduates in Nigerian universities. Most of the researches have focused on four different aspects of language use by the students, which include: use of slang, Pidgin, error analysis and pronunciation patterns. Some selected studies on these aspects will be reviewed.

One aspect of educational discourse in Nigeria that has generated a lot of studies is the use of slangy expressions by undergraduates. In line with this, Chinomso Dozie and Lovina Madu examined the language of communication with emphasis on slangy expressions in Federal University of Technology, Owerri. In analysing the slangy expressions, the researchers randomly collected data from 3000 students through oral interviews and informal interaction. The study discovers in general that the students widely use different slangy expressions and terms as effective means of communication to enhance group identity and solidarity in the institution. In addition, the findings show that the slang types differ from those used in other institutions. They further discover that their coinages reflect creativity among the students and are equally, sex-dependent with more usage noticed among male students than female students. Finally, the study recommends that students should sustain the use of slangy expressions and make them thrive with time as this will help in the evolution of those expressions into a standardized local vocabulary.

On their own part, Sola Babatunde and Folorunsho Ayotunde studied the nature and functional impact of slang in distinguishing different groups in the University of Ilorin. The study analyses

eighty slangy expressions collected from the repertoire of students in the university and discover that many slangy words are not all dirty terms for indecent ideas. Some slangy expressions expose the euphemism of vices in society. Finally, the study concludes that slang is important as it mirrors social conflict.

Also, Chuka Ononye and Romanus Aboh examined slang used in text messaging amongst Nigerian university students. The study analyses seventy slangy expressions in fifty text messages collected from students of the University of Ibadan using Speech Act Analysis of Austin (1962) and Searle (1979). The findings show that slangy expressions exhibit four types of speech acts, namely: representatives, verdictives, expressive and directives. These acts are used to depict seven major themes of students' communicative behaviour such as refreshment/relaxation, sustenance, studying/examination malpractice, fashion, sex/promiscuity and many others. It concludes that slang has become part and parcel of Nigerian university undergraduates as there is a correlation between the students' slangy expressions and the actual themes and/or aspects of their lives that these expressions connote.

Finally, M. A. Aremu looked at the different forms and types of slang among university students in randomly sampled tertiary institutions in Southwestern Nigeria. It discovers that slang is characterised by metaphors, semantic shift, lexical borrowing, coinages and euphemistic expressions.

The use of Pidgin English is another area that has also been studied. For instance, M.S. Abdullahi-Idiagbon undertakes a sociolinguistic study of the use of Nigerian pidgin on Nigerian federal universities campuses, in Bayero University, Kano (BUK) and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (ABU) in the North; University of Lagos, Lagos (UNILAG) and University of Ibadan,

Ibadan (UI) in the West; Imo State University, Owerri and University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) in the South East. The study is carried out with a view to establishing the popularity of Pidgin among the Nigerian students on the selected campuses. The study discovers that the speaking of pidgin variety of English in Nigerian Universities is a veritable way of demonstrating comradeship and solidarity among students of the Nigerian higher institutions of learning. In general, the findings reveal that on Nigerian campuses, pidgin expressions are commonly used to perform four functions which are: to herald musical concert of interest within or outside campuses; to womanize or talk about ladies or ladies discussing their male friends; to express their basic domestic needs like eating and clothing and for interpersonal/private discussion. It concludes that the processes of forming Pidgin are code mixing and borrowing from different indigenous languages and that Pidgin is nobody's language.

Akinmade Akande and Oladipo Salami analysed attitude and use of Nigerian Pidgin among undergraduates of University of Lagos and University of Benin in the Southwestern and Southern Nigeria respectively. The specific objective of the study is to find out the degree of Nigerian Pidgin usage as well as to account for attitude towards its use among the students of these two universities. The analysis reveals that despite the fact that NPE is spoken by the majority of Nigerians, a greater number of Nigerian students of both universities do not have a positive attitude to the teaching of Nigerian Pidgin in Nigerian schools and do not want it to be adopted as an official language.

Ubong, Bodunde and Robert examined pronunciation patterns of English words by final year undergraduates from four Nigerian universities: Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (North); Federal University of Technology, Minna (North); University of Ilorin, Ilorin (North) and

University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt (South South). The researchers selected sixty-five (65) respondents from nineteen linguistic groups using the stratified random sampling technique. The subjects for the study comprised Nigerians with varying sociolinguistic, ethnic, cultural and educational backgrounds. The study is carried out with a view to establishing the challenges that the undergraduates face and proffering solutions to them. Analysing the data corpus using an eclectic approach, the paper discovers that the performance of the respondents poses some major challenges to L2 teachers of English in Nigeria generally. The study concludes that there is the need for the use of computer-aided programmes as teaching aids for proactive and heuristic results in teaching pronunciation.

Besides, Aina Jacob, Alexander Ogundele and Shola Olanipekun analysed the relationship between students' proficiency in English language and academic performance among students of science and technical education. Using a descriptive statistical method of data analysis to analyse the performance of 120 students, the findings reveal that there is a correlation between proficiency in English language and academic performance of students in science and technical education as students who passed English language performed better than those who failed both in science and technical education. The study therefore recommends that admission into any course in science and technical education should be based on credit pass in English language and that English language should be central to what students will learn in general studies upon their admission into Science or Technical Education.

Theodore Iyere looked at errors in English compositions. The study is basically an investigation of lexical errors in the Open and Distance Learning students' essays at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The study made use of tagged sample essays to find out the

frequency and types of lexical errors in different registers of guided writing administered to randomly selected 300 and 400 level students undergoing the B.A. English programme in the University. It discovers two types of errors: interlingual and intralingual errors. While the former involves a transfer of features of first language to the second language, the latter is a result of inadequate knowledge of the second language. According to the study, these errors are products of simplification and over generalization based on low L2 proficiency. It concludes that lexical errors are natural and necessary phenomenon in language teaching and learning and learners benefit immensely from them, especially as they will try to avoid committing those errors identified in subsequent writings.

Politeness is an important phenomenon that recurs in students' interactions and could either accelerate or hamper conversations and social relations. However, a critical look at these studies reveals that the sociolinguistic aspects of politeness in the interactions of students in universities in Anambra State, Nigeria have not been fully explored.

2.13. Previous Studies on Politeness in Nigeria

2.13.1. Politeness in Print Media/Political Interviews in Nigeria

Odebunmi ('Politeness in Print Media') explores print media political interviews in two Nigerian news magazines: *The Tell* and *The News*. The researcher employs a revised version of the theory of relational work of Locher and Watts (2005) and also incorporates relevant portions of face work and specific aspects of contextualization theories. The researcher analyses sixty editions of each of the magazines published between 2000 and 2004.The study shows that participants in print media political interviews in Nigeria engage in three contextual beliefs in order to be polite.

These beliefs are shared knowledge of subjects, shared knowledge of political gimmicks, and shared knowledge of ideological expectations. The study shows that participants in the interviews put up politic, polite and impolite verbal behaviour which are respectively characterized by confrontations and criticisms, veils, condemnations and accusations. These indexes are respectively achieved with context-based understanding of discourse and activity types, face-threatening acts with redress, and face threatening acts without redress (bald- on-record). The researcher concludes that the revised relational work theory enhances a clear understanding of media political interviews and explains more clearly the beliefs and tendencies that participants invoke in the interactions.

2.13.2. Politeness in Market Interactions

Arua ('Politeness') studies and analyses market interactions. The researcher applies the modified version of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model by Lim and Bowes (1991) to analyse market discourses obtained from IIe-Ife market. The researcher holds that although politeness is used in managing social relations, there are some strategies which ordinarily cannot earn the participants their set out objectives, yet, these goals are achieved. Similarly, Kehinde Ayoola looks at the social activities surrounding haggling during service encounter. The researcher identifies the stages and describes the discourse strategies. In his research, he discovers that the participants used code mixing (English, Pidgin and Yoruba). He also identifies the discourse strategies to include humour, dysphemism and euphemism, cajoling, flattery and flirting in order to achieve the goals of maximizing profit/bargaining during the encounters. Again, Yemi Ogunsiji takes a look at language attitude in market transactions in the new Gbagi shopping complex in Ibadan. The research deplores Halliday's contextual categories of field, mode and tenor of discourse to explore the attitudinal factor in the use of language in market transactions.

He holds that transaction in trade and commerce deals extensively with the effectiveness of language for both parties in business to arrive at an agreeable conclusion. Finally, he concludes that attitude and the general disposition of language users go a long way in determining the end result of a market transaction.

2.13.3. Politeness in Hospital Interactions

Odebunmi ('Politeness and Face') studies the conversational interactions between doctors and patients in the hospitals in Southwestern Nigeria. He applies Leech's Politeness Principle (PP) (1983) and Brown and Levinson's (1987) Face Threatening acts (FTAS) to analyse his data. He discovers the observance/employment of tact maxim, the generosity maxim, the sympathy maxim, Pollyanna principle, face threatening acts without redress, (bald-on- records) and face threatening acts with redress (positive politeness). The researcher concludes that is not just about medications and procedures but, also, largely linguistic. In a similar study, Adegbite and Odebunmi analysed discourse tact in diagnosis in doctor and patient interactions in English, in some hospitals in southwestern Nigeria. They base their analysis on the contextual beliefs of the doctor and patient, speech act patterns, the linguistic patterns exploited in the conversation, the pragmatic acts performed in them and participant's orientations to conversation and politeness maxims.

They conclude that doctors obey mainly the maxims of quality but most times flout the maxims of quantity, relation and manner. Furthermore, Odebunmi examines greetings and politeness in doctor-client encounter. The researcher discovers that institutional and cultural (dis)alignments occur in respect of adjacency and non-adjacency pairs greetings. According to him, face support, threat and stasis are noticed in both types of greetings which doctors and patients participate in

during their interactions. He concludes that adjacency pair greetings attract mutual interpretations between the parties; interactive disalignments are differentially pragmatically accommodated by doctors and clients. Whereas, in non-adjacency pair greeting, doctors' threats are co-constituted as appropriate by both parties, the institutional power of doctor and shared Western cultural orientation playing significant roles.

2.13.4. Politeness in the Telecommunication Industry

Sony Okpeadua examines the politeness strategies in conversational interactions between Globacom agents and clients in Ibadan, Nigeria. The researcher analysed ten episodes of electronically recorded (audio) interactions between agents and clients of Globacom. The researcher used the integrated functional politeness model in his analysis. He discovers that agents utilize all eight politeness strategies used in the integrated politeness model which include the Leechian maxims: tact, agreement, approbation, modesty and politic/appropriate behaviour. His study also discovers some culture bound data specific strategies of politeness, such as address forms, expressions of gratitude, the use of indirectness/ hesistation, simple exclamation, silence, first person plural, pronoun and complementarity.

In like manner, Arua ('Pragmatics') investigates the pragmatics of politeness in post office service in Ibadan metropolis Nigeria. The researcher investigates five post offices from the five local government areas within Ibadan metropolis. She used a combined theoretical framework of Lim's and Bowers' facework theory and Spencer-Oatey's rapport management to analyse her data. The research established that members of staff at the post office show a high degree of politeness in contrary to earlier assumptions of gross impoliteness among members of staff. She also discovers other politeness strategies such as tact, approbation solidarity, greeting, agreement

and many others are noticed among the members of staff and their clients. She concludes that there is a considerable degree of politeness in Ibadan post office service encounter as shown by the members of staff and their clients.

The only available study on politeness on educational discourse is S.T. Babatunde and M.A. Adedimeji's paper entitled 'The Theory and Practice of Politeness Phenomena in a Nigerian University'. The paper examines the dynamics of politeness as a pragmatic concept and highlights how it operates in University of Ilorin community. Since politeness determines and influences the nature and effectiveness of conversations in universities, it therefore becomes necessary to investigate its deployment by students. Unlike Babatunde and Adedimeji who studied only students' conversations in one university in Kwara State, Nigeria, the present study analysed interactions in one private and one federal university in Anambra State, Nigeria. Also, the study is purely sociolinguistic as it collected natural discourses and data from the students and described the various politeness strategies they employ in order to maintain other students' faces or otherwise in their social interactions and relationships.

Also, this study is not only interested in the form of language use but also the underlying sociolinguistic functions achieved by the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Madonna University, Okija. In addition, the study attempted a comparative study of the strategies employed by undergraduates of both universities. The reason for undertaking a comparative study of undergraduates of both universities is hinged on the assertion of Sifianou who cites Saville- Troike that a comparative approach to a subject such as politeness is inevitable (3).

Summary

From the empirical studies reviewed, it is observed that most of the studies were carried out in other states in Nigeria. Again, the empirical studies show that the sociolinguistic aspects of politeness, impoliteness, face management and face threatening strategies in the interactions of students in universities in Anambra State have not been explored. This study is therefore an attempt to investigate the politeness, impoliteness, face management and face threatening strategies among the undergraduates in Anambra State in order to fill the gap in knowledge. It is also interested in the underlying sociolinguistic functions of the strategies observed among the students of the institutions selected for the study.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter contains a description of the method and procedure used in carrying out this study. These are presented under the following subheadings:

Research Design

Consideration Informing Area of Study

Population of the Study

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Instrument for Data Collection

Validation of Instrument

Procedure for Data Collection

Method of Data Analyses

3.2. Research Design

The design of this study is a survey research design. A survey research design collects a sample from the entire population. The result from the sample is expected to be generalized to the entire population. A survey design is considered appropriate in this study because the research only studied a limited sample out of the population.

3.3. Considerations Informing Area of the Study

There are many universities in Anambra State, Nigeria where the researcher could have done the investigation. However, the research is limited to Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, a foremost federal university and Madonna University, Okija campus, the first private university in Anambra State. The researcher believes that the federal nature of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka would serve her purpose since it has students from different states in Nigeria. Besides, her studentship at the institution created an easy-contact with the respondents. In addition, the choice of Madonna University Okija, is also necessitated because the university is the oldest private university in Anambra State. The researcher believes that the premier status of the university would give it a leading position over other private universities in the state. Also, the researcher's cordial relationship with the respondents also made it easy to relate with them.

Moreover, the choice of the two universities saved the researcher some cost in terms of finance and time of travelling from one state to the other to collect data. Besides, the choice of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (government-owned university) and Madonna University, Okija (private-owned university) gave the researcher the basis to compare the polite language use of undergraduates from government-owned and private-owned universities in Anambra State.

Finally, the two universities selected are among the leading universities in Anambra State and comprise students from various ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

3.4. Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of six thousand, three hundred and one (6,301) students (male and female) admitted to full time degree programmes in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, and a total of eight hundred and sixty one (861) students (male and female) admitted to full time degree programmes in Madonna University, (Okija campus) during the 2013/14 academic session. Also, all the full time lecturers, all the non- academic staff, bus drivers, taxi drivers, tricycle drivers, food vendors and small scale business owners in both universities, during the academic session under study form the population of the study.

3.5. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample of the study consists of two hundred (200) full time undergraduate students admitted to Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and a sample of two hundred (200) undergraduate students admitted to Madonna University, Nigeria, (Okija campus) during 2013/14 academic session. As an additional effort to further confirm what the researcher has noted in the course of observing the students, the researcher used unstructured interview to interview a total of one hundred (100) respondents which include members of the academic staff, non-academic staff, small scale business owners, food vendors, bus drivers, tricycle drivers and other people who deal directly with the students. A simple random sampling technique was used to select students who were observed and the respondents who were interviewed from both universities. The selection was done across all levels, campuses and faculties of the two universities selected for the study.

3.6. Instrument for Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection was unobstrusive observation method. The instrument was complemented by unstructured interview. The essence of choosing unobstrusive observation method is in line with Natalie Schilling- Estes'observation. According to him, when someone knows that their speech is being recorded or otherwise observed, they are likely to start becoming self-conscious about their language use (190). Therefore, he proposes Labov observer's paradox which stipulates, '…to obtain the data most important for linguistic theory, we have to observe how people speak when they are not being observed' (190). To that effect, the researcher did the recording surreptitiously in order to allow for naturalness and not to deter the students in their interactions.

In addition, the unobstrusive observation method was complemented by unstructured interview. For the effectiveness of the interview process and to elicit information easily from the interviewee, the researcher also adopted the position of Schilling- Estes who opines that highlighting one's role as a learner and the role of participants as experts in their communities can go a long way towards obtaining casual speech and building good relations (199). Against this backdrop, the interview proceeded like a friendly, non-threatening and everyday conversations. The data obtained from the unobstrusive observation method were subsequently transcribed and the data from unstructured interview also presented.

3.7. Validation of Instrument

The instrument for data collection was discussed with two experts in research methodology and two experts in sociolinguistics in the Department of English, Madonna University, Nigeria, Okija Campus and in the Department of English and Literature, Nnamdi Azikiwe University,

Awka respectively. The experts were asked to review the appropriateness and suitability of the research instrument in realizing the overall objective of the research. In addition to the instrument, the background to the study, the scope of the study and the research questions were also presented to the experts. The experts' advice and suggestions were also useful during observation and unstructured interview. Finally, the project supervisors approved of the instrument before it was used.

3.8. Procedure for Data Collection

Data were collected through unobstrusive observation of students' interactions and unstructured interview. The researcher observed and recorded the interactions of students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Madonna University, Okija Campus for a period of six months from November 2014 to April 2015. The students were observed at various locations: classrooms, lecturers' offices, parks, departments, Automated Teller Machine (ATM) points, banks, Admission Office, on buses, during ethnic meetings, during examinations, on special seasons like Valentine's Day and Christmas Season. The unstructured interview was randomly done across lecturers, non-academic staff, food vendors, bus drivers, tricycle operators and small scale business operators in the two universities selected for the study.

3.9. Method of Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using a textual analysis method. The analysis was carried out by applying the theories of Cooperative Principle and Politeness Principle using their subordinate maxims at the first stage. The maxims were anaysed in terms of their observance and violations. At the second stage, the theory of Face and Politeness was used to examine and analyse the data

in line with their sociolinguistic properties to determine if there were positive politeness, negative politeness, impoliteness and face threatening features.

However, essentially, the analysis focused on socio-pragmatic behaviour of the participants based on their verbal and non-verbal performances at the scenes of their interactions. The analyses were done in relation to the present socio-cultural world views prominent in the Igbo land where the universities are located. Finally, the researcher adopted a quantitative method of analyses in analysing numerical data from the unstructured interview which was presented in a simple percentage.

3.10. Theoretical Framework

The main theory for analysis is Brown and Levinson's theory of Face and Politeness. The theory is complemented by Grice's theory of Cooperative Principle and Leech's theory of Politeness Principle. In other words, it adopts an eclectic approach. An eclectic approach is an approach that transcends beyond one theory. The multifarious nature of politeness and the nature of the study made it such that one forward straight theory cannot capture the analysis. So, in order to give the work a broader and wider perspective, a synthesis of three theoretical approaches was used. The eclectic approach used in the study has helped to capture local experiences and equally gave the work an exhaustive and scholarly interpretation. The researcher's preference for an eclectic approach is also in line with Bailey's position which states that the tools, methods and implicit theory of interactional sociolinguistics are eclectic (2316). He further explains that the eclectic method is best in interactional sociolinguistics because it shares with conversational analysis an insistence on careful, line-by-line analysis of recorded, naturally occurring talk, but diverges

from conversational analysis in exploring inferential processes and social and cultural worlds outside of that talk (2316-2317).

Furthermore, there is need to justify the synthesis of the three theoretical approaches used in the study. In other words, there is need to explain where a particular theory falls short and where other theories fill the gap established in the other theories. The Cooperative Principle framework together with the subordinate maxims is proposed as a tacit mutual agreement: a communicative sine qua non that will help make conversations smooth and effective for interlocutors. The rules stipulated therein are rules which people who are engaged in interactions are expected to observe or obey in order to achieve harmony in conversations. Since politeness is a strategy for conflict avoidance and maintenance of comity in interpersonal communication, the Cooperative Principle framework covers the aspect of observance or flouting of these strategies in the form of maxims. The maxims are pertinent to linguistic politeness. Violation or flouting of any of these maxims generates conversational implicature - a kind of extra meaning that is not literally contained in the utterance. This explains why the theory is preferred at the first stage of the analysis. However, the Cooperative Principle framework falls short in its analysis as it does not cover indirectness, face work, and other social issues such as the relationship between the participants, their social status or the situational context but only conveys information. These gaps were filled in the analysis by the other theories.

Conversely, Leech's Politeness Principle was introduced after the Cooperative Principle to explain some phenomena that are not captured by the Cooperative Principle. According to Leech, one of the shortcomings of the Cooperative Principle is its failure to explain why people are often so indirect in conveying what they mean (*Principles* 80). Politeness Principle's assumption is that politeness will correlate with indirectness as it decreases the feeling of

imposition on the hearer. To this end, the theory of Politeness Principle with its subordinate maxims fills the gap of indirectness, cost benefit and optionality. Furthermore, the interplay of the maxims gave rise to degrees of politeness all attuned to achieving benefit for speaker and hearer at the minimum cost. On the contrary, the theory does not incorporate face work which is an important aspect of politeness. The Cooperative Principle and Politeness Principle are used at the first stage of the analysis.

In addition, the theory of face focuses on the linguistic strategies that speakers follow in order to save, maintain, mitigate or address face threats. The theory fills the gap of face threatening, positive politeness (expression of friendliness), negative politeness (expression of imposition avoidance) and impoliteness. The use of each is tied to social determinants, specifically, the relationship between speaker and hearer and the potential offensiveness of the message content. The theory helps in harmonizing the linguistic features and social contexts. The theory is the main theory for analysis and is used at the second stage of the analysis.

The analysis proceeds from the stage of maxim violations and observance to face management. At the first stage, the Cooperative Principle (maxim based) is first applied to show the observance of the maxims and how they have been flouted by the undergraduates of both institutions. It is followed by the Principle of Politeness theory which is used to analyse the interactions of students to show polite and impolite conversations. The face theory is applied at the second stage of the analysis to show how the conversations of students have shown positive politeness, negative politeness, impoliteness, face management and face threatening strategies as well as identify the sociolinguistic phenomena and their functions in their interactions.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected for the study. The data include those from the unobtrusive observation of recorded conversations of students and unstructured interview. It is worthy of note that the students were observed at different locations and the unstructured interview spanned different cadre of people who deal with the students directly on campus. The research is guided by four research questions which the work is expected to provide answers to.

4.2. Research Question One

What are the dominant politeness, impoliteness, face management and face threatening strategies in the conversations of undergraduates?

4.2.1. An Analysis of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Undergraduates' Language Use (Maxim Stage)

Before investigating the dominant politeness, impoliteness strategies and face management tact in the conversations of undergraduates there is need to examine their conversations first in terms of obeying or flouting the basic Conversational Principles (maxims) for effective conversations. According to Grice, the maxims are guiding principles for people who are in a conversation to be cooperative (45-46). Leech lends credence to the assertion when he says that a maxim is a constraint influencing speakers' communicative behaviour which is aimed at achieving a particular goal (*Pragmatics* 90). In this study, the principles are seen as part of linguistic

politeness. The analyses below show how the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University have observed the four maxims of Grice.

4.2.2.1. The Maxim of Quality

The maxim postulates that people who are in a conversation should tell the truth. The maxim has two sub-propositions:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.

2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Excerpt 1

Three male students who were waiting for their lecturer in the Faculty of Agriculture:

First student: There would not be lectures next week.

Second student: Why?

First student: It is students' week.

Third student: What does it mean?

First student: Ah! It is a weeklong activity with programmes for students. Other students have been talking about it since in my hostel.

Third student: Correct! I didn't even know about it.

Second student: Oh! Good! So, I can even travel.

Here, the first student said what is true, '*Next week is students' week*'. He further confirmed the position by explaining what students' week is. He went further to say that other students have

been talking about it since in his hostel. The student's comment is said to have adhered to the maxim of quality since he did not tell a lie. Leech comments that if one tells a lie in English that one has broken the maxim of quality (*Principles* 8). The student achieved the goal of convincing the other students because of the truth value of his statement. The other students equally showed cooperation by their acceptance which is reflected in their responses.

4.2.2.2. Maxim of Quantity

The maxim is summarized as *Say just as much as is necessary*. In other words, people who are in interaction should give the right amount of information. However, that does not mean that their contributions should be more informative than is required.

Excerpt 2

Six students (five boys and one girl) who came for practicals at the Engineering Workshop/Laboratories:

Girl: Men! Ifeanyi is so lucky.

First boy: What happened?

Girl: He just got the Shell scholarship. He wrote the exams and passed and
                was   invited for an interview and he equally passed.

Second boy: I don't know the Ifeanyi you are talking about.

Girl: Haba!   How can you say that you don't know him?

Third boy: Ifeanyi that always sits close to Emma.

Second boy: Ok, I know him now! You don't mean it!

Girl: Yes O! Serious.

The tone of the conversation obeyed the maxim of quantity. The girl gave information about Ifeanyi which helped the second boy to know the particular Ifeanyi she was referring to. However, she did not make her description of Ifeanyi unnecessary or more than required. Rather, the information was just as much as necessary for the second boy to know the particular Ifeanyi that was being described.

4.2.2.3. Maxim of Relation/Relevance

This is another maxim of politeness. It is summarized that one's utterance is taken as obeying the maxim of relation and relevance if one sticks to the point. In other words, one's utterances are taken as obeying the maxim of relation and relevance if one sticks to the point. By extension, one's contribution(s) should be seen as being relevant to the topic under discussion.

Excerpt 3

Five male students in the Department of Building who had finished a lecture (One of the male students is the Course Representative of the class):

Course Rep: Engr. Ogbuagu said that I should photocopy this material and return
                it to him immediately.

Second boy: Ok now. Let all of us go to the place and photocopy it now.

Third boy: Any need? Why should all of us go there?

Four boy: Let us contribute money and give to the course rep and let him
                make the photocopies.

Leech citing Grice remarks that one is polite in a conversation if one makes his/her conversational contribution such as is required at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which he/she is engaged (*Pragmatics* 311). The fourth boy made a contribution that was relevant to the topic under discussion, 'Let us contribute money and give to the course rep and let him make the photocopies'.

4.2.2.4. Maxim of Manner

This maxim is guided by the super proposition, be clear. The maxim of manner has other sub-propositions which stipulate that for one to show cooperation in conversations, one should avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity. Again, the person should be brief and avoid unnecessary prolixity. Finally, he/she should be orderly.

Excerpt 4

Two female students at the medical centre:

> First student: Good morning.

> Second student: Good morning.

> First student: Please I came to do medical examination. Where do I do that?

> First student: Ok! Walk into the complex; by your right, you will see a door. The woman there will direct you on what to do.

> First student: Ok. Thank you.

> Second student: You are welcome, bye.

Looking at the conversation, one would see that the students obeyed the maxim of manner. Both students were not ambiguous and obscure. Both the questions and answers were done without any ambiguity. Besides, both students were brief and orderly. In other words, they have obeyed the maxim of manner.

4.2.3. An Analysis of Leech's Politeness Principle

Leech maintains that the politeness principle is formulated in a general way: minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs' and maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs) (*Principles* 81). The principle has other sub maxims. The maxims are analyzed as they were observed in the conversations of undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

4.2.3.1. The Tact Maxim

According to Leech, the tact maxim applies to Searle's directive and commissive categories of illocutions, which refer, in their prepositional content, to some action to be performed, respectively, by the hearer or the speaker *(Principles*107). Such an action is evaluated in terms that it assumes cost to the speaker and benefit to the hearer. Hence the tact maxim:

(a)   Minimize cost to other

(b)   Maximize benefit to other

The following analyses show that some undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University obey the tact maxim.

Excerpt 5

A boy and a girl sitting down under a tree at the Faculty of Education office complex

Girl: Today na my birthday o! but I no get anything.

Boy: Really? Don't worry, I would buy you a drink.

Girl: Mmmmm!

Boy: No for real! Let's go to Madonna Cuisine.

Both students stood up and left.

Leech avers that offers and invitations are presumed to be polite for two reasons. First, because they imply benefit to hearer and imply cost to speaker. He further remarks that there are situations where the tact maxim is relevant such as in a piece of advice (*Principles* 134). In further observance of the tact maxim, the researcher observed another conversation:

Excerpt 6

Two female students who come to check on a computer operator at the back of Chinua Achebe Building, Faculty of Arts:

First girl: Where did this man go to?

Second girl: I saw him when I passed through here few minutes ago.

First girl: I wanted to print my WAEC result.

Second girl: Ok. Let's wait for him. I printed mine here and it was very clear and he
                even used a colour printer to do that for me.

From their conversations, the use of the statement, '*I saw him when I passed through here few minutes ago*', maximizes benefit to the hearer. In other words, it makes the hearer feel that the computer operator was close by since she saw him few minutes before.

4.2.3.2. The Generosity Maxim

(a) Minimize benefit to self

(b) Maximize cost to self

Excerpt 7

A female student in a classroom in the Department of Applied Microbiology and Brewing and another female student walked in:

First student: Hello.

Second student: Hi.

First student: Please are you in this Department?

Second student: Yes,   I am.

First student: Please I am a new student. Has it been long they resumed?

Second student: (Nods her head in affirmation) Why are you just resuming?

First student: My name came out in the supplementary list.

Second student: Ok.

First student: Have they copied a lot of notes?

Second student: (Nods her head again in affirmation)

First student: Hey! I don't know what to do ooo!

Second student: Where do you live?

First student: Aroma.

Second student: I live at government house. Ok we live close to each other. I will
                           give you my note but, you will return it on Monday.

Second student: Give me your phone number.

First student: 070xxxxxxxx, I may even return it before Monday. Thank you.

Second student: Ok bye.

Leech asserts that generosity, as a politeness constraint, does not mean overtly claiming generosity for oneself – which indeed would be a form of boasting (immodesty). It means, rather, acting verbally in a way that attends to the anticipated wants of hearer (*Pragmatics*104). From the conversations, it shows that after the second student's offer has been explored, and its degree of generosity ascertained, then, the first student accepted it without offending tact, *I may even return it before Monday*.

4.2.3.3. The Approbation Maxim

(a) Minimize dispraise of other idea

(b) Maximize praise of other

The basic idea in approbation maxim is to minimize the idea of being critical of others. Leech observes that the Approbation maxim is exemplified in the intrinsic courtesy of congratulations (*Principles* 132). In addition, he claims that a compliment is a manifestation of the Approbation maxim, which is, praising estimable property of hearer or of someone or something that is associated with hearer (*Pragmatics* 210).

Excerpt 8

Four students (three girls and a boy) who were walking along the corridor of Prof Pita Ejiofor Management Building:

First girl: Peter, you have changed from Co-operative Economics to Accountancy?

Boy: Baby, yes o!

Second girl: So, you don leave our Department bi that now?

Boy: No bi say I leave but na Accountancy I bi enter for.

First girl: Peter, but you did very well in JAMB and in the Post UME sha ooo. And even when we were doing our pre-science at Mbaukwu, we know you as guy wey sabi book.

Third girl: Congrats oo! We go shack now?

Boy: Later.   (Walks away)

The female students believe in the academic ability of Peter. They equally praise his ability, thereby, obeying the approbation maxim.

4.2.3.4. The Modesty Maxim

The modesty stipulates that one should:

(a) Minimize praise of self

(b) Maximize dispraise of self.

The modesty maxim is behind speakers being modest in speaking. Leech is of the opinion that it is felicitous to agree with another's commendation except when it is a commendation of oneself. According to him, the understatement of one's generosity is shown to be quite normal, and indeed, conventional, in contrast to the exaggeration of one's generosity (*Principles* 136).

Excerpt 9

Three female students stood in front of Central Utility Building:

First female student:	Ifeoma, you are too much oo!
Second female student:	Over what now?
First female student:	Nne, your performance in the church yesterday was wonderful. Everybody just dey trip for you.
Third female:	So, you mean it was good? Honestly, I did'nt even prepare for that thing. I didn't know it was even a good performance or you dey flatter me
First female student:	Mba, Ify you dey too much. You try well well, you fit ask another person.
Second female student:	Thank you but na God oh!
First female student:	Ok now.

Second female student: Later now. Bye.

Asking the question, '*So, you mean it was good? Honestly, I didn't know it was a good performance or you dey flatter me?*' suggests that the second female student was modest in her response. Leech writes that in keeping with modesty, it is disfavoured to agree with compliments, but hearer may pay a compliment in return like '*Do you really think so?*' or '*It is nice of you to say so*'*(Pragmatics* 94). In the interaction above, the second female student obeyed the modesty maxim by playing down on the compliment and the offer of thank you to the first female student. The strategy is indeed a favoured way of showing that you appreciate a compliment; while at the same time, you are suitably modest about it.

4.2.3.5. The Agreement Maxim

The Agreement Maxim (in assertives)

     (a) Minimize disagreement between self and other

     (b) Maximize agreement between self and other

In conversations, speakers are always sensitive to the existing relationship with their hearers and the nature of the interaction such that they are more concerned with showing agreement rather than disagreement.

Excerpt 10

Three male students walked into the University bookshop to buy books:

First boy: Hey! Look at Achebe's *There was a country*.

Second boy: Men! I don read that book. Omo! The guy write the book!

Third boy: If to say our leaders go fit read that book e for make sense sha.

Second boy: Exactly! But dem no go get time for dat kind thing. The only thing dey know na to embezzle money.

First boy: Na so now!

In their conversations, the agreement maxim was fully observed. When someone expresses an opinion, there is always a tendency in ordinary social conversation for the interlocutors to express agreement with him/her, rather than disagreement. Such observance is an aspect of positive politeness, in which the hearer shows consideration for the speaker's opinion or judgement. In the conversation above, one discovers the use of 'exactly' and 'na so now'. These two expressions are used to show that the hearers agree with the speakers, hence, the use of intensifiers.

4.2.3.6. Sympathy Maxim

The Sympathy Maxim (in assertives)

(a) Minimize antipathy between self and other

(b) Maximize sympathy between self and other

According to Leech, the sympathy maxim explains the reason why congratulations and condolences are courteous speech acts, even though condolences often express beliefs that are negative with regard to the hearer (*Principles* 138).

Excerpt 11

A boy and a girl met at Gauze Pharmaceutical shop:

Male student: I.J. how now?

Female student: I no dey fine abeg.

Male student: Eeeiyaa, what is the problem?

Female student: I get malaria and the thing just dey disturb me anyhow.

Male student: Abeg sorry o! get well soon ooh!

Female student: Thank you.

The expression of '*Eeeiyaa*' followed by 'What is the problem?' is indeed an expression of sympathy. It was also followed by 'Abeg sorry o!, Get well soon ooh'. Leech observes that emotive concern is needed to explain why we give a high value to other people's feelings in speech acts as condolences. He further remarks that it is polite to show others that you share their feelings --feeling sad when they have suffered misfortune (*Pragmatics* 97-98). He goes on to say that inquiries about people's health, showing sympathy and concern are similar to condolences (98). Such an act of sympathy has been shown by the male student as he inquired from the female student how she was doing.

4.2.4. An Analysis of Madonna University Undergraduates Language Use (Maxim Stage)

4.2.4.1. The Maxim of Quality

As earlier stated, the maxim postulates that people who are in a conversation should tell the truth.

The maxim has two-sub propositions:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.

2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Excerpt 12

Three female students standing in front of Omeogo Hostel:

First student: Father Founder is in school.

Second student: How do you know?

First student: I saw his police escorts and their vehicles parked around his office.
As I was going towards Exams and Records, I then saw him walking towards his office.

Third student: Na m bi say jogging dey tomorrow.

They all laughed and dispersed.

The first student said what she believed to be true. She also went ahead to give adequate evidence to show that Father Founder was in school. By implication, the first student did not violate the maxim of quality. Brown and Levinson admit that one violates the maxim of quality

in situations where one uses metaphors such as saying that another person is a real fish. In this case, one does not know if it means that the person drinks, swims, is slimy or is cold-blooded like a fish or is using rhetorical questions such as 'how can I know' or 'what do you want me to say? Or he contradicts himself or herself such as in saying 'yes and no' or 'I am and I 'm not (214). By adhering to the maxim of quality she was able to convince the other students.

4.2.4.2. The Maxim of Quantity

This maxim requires that one should say as much as and not more than is required. The deductions from the maxim of quantity is that when a speaker says less than or says something different from what he/she actually intends to convey that he has violated the maxim of quantity. For speakers to be polite, they should neither say more nor less than is cooperatively necessary.

The conversation below shows how some students have obeyed the maxim of quantity.

Excerpt 13

Ten students (Eight females and 2 males) in Hall I, Entrepreneurship Building:

Female student1:   I am so happy with the announcement that Father Francis made after the morning mass today.

Female student 2:   What did he say?

Female student 1:   He made an announcement concerning the last accreditation.

Male student I: What about that?

Female student I:	Honestly, the various departments that faced accreditation did their best. He told us that Accountancy, Banking and Finance, Sociology, Psychology and English passed the accreditation. So, since our Department has been accredited, we are sure of N.Y.S.C.
Male student II:	Sure!
Female student III:	But my roommate in Marketing said theirs was not accredited. I didn't hear about that one!
Female student I:	Well, I didn't hear about that one.
Male student I:	Make I enter hostel.
Female student 1V:	Ok now. Later.

From the conversation, the student did not say less. She obeyed the maxim of quantity by stating the departments that passed accreditation as announced by Father Francis. Again, she did not over state, even when she was asked if Marketing Department was also accredited, thereby, obeying the maxim of quantity. For according to Brown and Levinson one flouts the maxim of quantity in situations where one understates, overstates or uses tautologies (214).

4.2.4.3. The Maxim of Relevance and Relation

The maxim of relevance and relation is behind one sticking to the point of interaction. Brown and Levinson reveal that one violates the maxim if one gives hints (depending on the motives of the hints), gives association clues or if one presupposes (214). They further assert that if in giving hints, speaker says something that is not explicitly relevant, such a speaker by his action invites hearer to search for an interpretation of the possible relevance (213). It should be clearly

stated that giving hints is not a bad idea in interactions. However, if the hints raise the issue of irrelevance or unrelated issues to the conversation, it becomes a violation of the maxim of relevance and relation.

Excerpt 14

Four students (three females and one male) of the Department of English who sat in front of the language laboratory:

First female student: It's time we went for Dr. Obiorah Eke's rehearsals.

Male student: And we are presenting the drama tomorrow but I don't think we have mastered our various roles.

Second female student: Please if you have Cito and Henry's number, call them to come for rehearsals.

From the interaction, it is observed that the students did not flout the maxim of relation/relevance. They were at least able to make 'the most plausible connection between the utterances' Leech (*Pragmatics* 313).

4.2.4.4. The Maxim of Manner

The maxim of manner is guided by the super proposition be 'clear'. It has the following sub propositions: avoid obscurity, avoid ambiguity, be brief and be orderly Grice (45-46). Leech reveals that Grice was right to have recognized the maxim of manner as one of the elements of his CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLE, and that the charge to 'be clear' is placed on language users

as part of the Interpersonal Rhetoric as well as of the Textual Rhetoric (*Principles* 99-100). He further draws a difference between two kinds of clarity. According to him, one type consists of making unambiguous use of the syntax and phonology of the language in order to construct a clear text. The other type consists of framing a clear message. That is a message which is perspicuous or intelligible in the sense of conveying the intended illocutionary goal to the addressee (100). Obviously, the maxim of manner favours clear communication and orderly presentation of one's points but rejects ambiguity and obscurity in interactions. The position is further substantiated by Brown and Levinson when they assert that if one is ambiguous, vague, over generalizes or displaces hearer, one is flouting the maxim of manner (214).

Excerpt 15

The President of Madonna Writing and Speaking Association (MAWASA), Miss Anny Nkaiso made this announcement to the members of the Association:

> There will be a general meeting of the executive members on Sunday 8th December, 2013 at Pavilion D at 2pm prompt. Please members are reminded to come with their reports. Thank you.

The announcement was not vague, ambiguous or obscure. Rather, the information was given directly and in an orderly manner and the use of formulaic, *Please* was also noticed.

4.2.5.   An Analysis of Leech's Politeness Principle

As earlier pointed out, the politeness principle is formulated in such a way that a speaker should minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs and maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs. The principle has other sub maxims as tact,

generosity, application, modesty, agreement and sympathy. The analysis below shows how the undergraduates of Madonna University have observed the maxim.

4.2.5.1. The Tact Maxim

Excerpt 16

At Emmanuel Building after lectures with about sixty students in the Department of Economics, a male student walks up to a female course mate and the following conversation ensued:

Male student: Hello.

Female student: Hi.

Male Student: Abeg, you still dey make use of your *Jingan*? I wan check something for inside.

Female student: Ok just wait (Copied out some things from the book and gave it to the student).

Male student: Thank you.

Female student: Don't mention.

Leech affirms that a request is normally considered a speech event if it gives the hearer choice as to whether to perform the desired act or not. He further explains that people who give orders or commands allow the hearer no right to choose (*Pragmatics* 135). In that case, speaker tells hearer what to do (or what not to do) without countenancing disobedience. Besides, in order to avoid imposition in requests, speakers are expected to be tactful about it. In the conversation, the tact maxim is seen to have been observed by the male student. This is noticed in the fact that he gave the hearer an option, 'Abeg you still dey make use of your *Jingan'*? Leech recapitulates that the tact maxim means that speakers should be chary of imposing on, or coercing, the behaviour of others and above all, options should be given to hearer whether to comply with speaker's wishes or not (*Pragmatics* 134). In addition, another type of speech event bordering on request

territory is suggestion. In the opinion of Leech, suggestion is useful in a speech event where the proposed action is to be performed by both speaker and hearer to the assumed benefit of both (*Pragmatics* 137). For example, '*Let's go to Mini Mart' or 'Shall we go for Adoration now'.* The tone of the request is mitigated through the employment of suggestion. With this, it has an explicit worth of a suggestion; but it is implicitly a request.

4.2.5.2. The Generosity Maxim

Generosity maxim has two propositions

1. Minimize benefit to self

2. Maximize cost to self

In applying the generosity maxim, it means that speaker should give a high value to hearer's wants.

Excerpt 17

A male student was admitted at the medical centre; on the other bed, a female student was also lying ill with two of his female friends who came to visit her:

Nurse: Obinna, how are you today?

Male student: Aunty, good morning.

Nurse: The doctor said that I should give you some injections this morning.

Male student: Ok.

Nurse: Have you eaten?

Male student: No ma!

Nurse: Can you call any of your friends to buy food for you?

Male student: I don't even have airtime in my phone.

Female student: Hello.

Male student: Hi.

Female student: Sorry o! but if you have money with you I can go to *Girls* to buy
                    food for you.

Male student: Ok. Thank you. (Gives out a five hundred Naira note)

Female student: Takes the money from him and leaves for *Girls'* canteen.

The female student's offer, 'But if you have money with you, I can go to *Girls* to buy food for you' gave value to the male student's wants. In line with this, Leech demonstrates that offers, invitations and promises are generous. Conversely, he remarks that refusals are 'ungenerous' and often have to be very indirect or even unspoken (*Pragmatic*s 92-93).

4.2.5.3. The Approbation Maxim

The Approbation maxim is mainly used in expressions and assertives. It has two sub prepositions:

Minimize dispraise of other
Maximize praise of other

By implication, it means that speakers should give a high value to hearer's qualities, mostly in form of compliments. Holmes defines a compliment as a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some 'good'(possession, characteristic, skill, etc) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer ('Paying'446).

Excerpt 18

During the 2014 convocation ceremony and as the podium (convocation area) was being decorated in national colours (green and white) by the decoration team, three female students were sitting down at Pavilion C and watching them:

First female student: Hmm men! This people dey try abeg.

Second female student: No bi small.

First female student: Look at how they designed that welcome to Madonna
                               University. It's really fine.

Third female student: It's that tall girl in Psychology that designed it. This one
                               is not even fine. You need to see what she did for Sacred
                               Heart people during their send off.

First female student: No! that girl dey try.

Obviously, the female students paid compliments to the girls in the decoration team from the way they praised what they did. Similarly, Leech recognizes that we like to pay (and be paid) compliments to, that is, if it seems appropriate to do so. He further advocates that insincere or excess compliments count as flattery and may receive a more mixed reception. In such a case,

the Cooperative Principle clashes with the Politeness Principle. On the contrary, he remarks that in some activity types that complimentary language is a virtual necessity such as praising a host or hostess's meal (*Pragmatics* 93).

4.2.5.4. The Modesty Maxim

The modesty maxim is behind one being modest in speaking especially in accepting or responding to a compliment. In responding to compliments, Leech quoting Spencer- Oatey et al. comments that the compliment recipient is in a double bind. According to him, to agree with compliment breaches modesty, and to reject it breaches the agreement maxim. He therefore advocates thanking as a way of showing appreciation for the act of complimenting without committing oneself to assent to, or dissent from the compliment itself (*Pragmatics* 189-190). More so, he points out that the commonest evasive way of responding to a compliment is to say nothing, in effect, to ignore the compliment, and to continue the conversation as if it has not been uttered – perhaps responding non-verbally, by smiling, making depreciatory gestures, and so on (191).

 Excerpt 19

Three male students in front of Public Administration Department exchanged a hand shake and the following ensued:

First student: Oh boy you try wella!

Second student: You get A for Prof. Chinweizu's course.

Third student: (Uses his two hands to close his mouth and then opens his mouth
                   again) No, you no mean am. I dey even dey fear say I no go score
                    pass C.

First student: No dey form! na una sabi the course.

Third student: (smiles) Na God win sha. Anyhow, now later.

First student: Ok. I go bi now.

By smiling and saying, 'Na God win' makes the second male student modest about the compliment. In other words, he did not breach the maxim of modesty.

4.2.5.5. Agreement Maxim

People frequently soften the force of their own opinions, by using propositional hedges such as I think, I guess, I don't suppose and many others. In such cases, speaker consults hearer's opinion, deferring to hearer's supposed greater understanding, experience or wisdom.

Excerpt 20

Six Students (five female students and one male student) in a meeting:

First female student: If we cook twenty cups of rice, I think that would be ok.

Second female student: Yes, definitely.

Another instance:

Excerpt 21

Two male students in front of Economics Department:

First male student: Ecostat is a difficult course oo.

Second male student: True, but regression is quite easy.

Another instance:

Excerpt 22

> Two female students who sat at Pavilion A:
>
> First female student: I know Dozie is a play boy.
>
> Second female student: (Silence) Implying agreement.

The lack of response here implies that the second female student agrees that Dozie was cheating on her (a play boy). However, in being polite, she decided not to voice her agreement. In the second conversation, the second male student agreed that the course is difficult but gave a partial disagreement which is often preferable to complete disagreement. Finally, in the first conversation, there is a complete observance of agreement maxim.

On the contrary, Leech pontificates that there are spheres of communicative activity where robust disagreement is accepted, and indeed, is sometimes highly valued. According to him, such discourses include electioneering battles between members of political parties or academic discourse, where, according to an influential ideology of science, progress can be made only by strenuously arguing against and discrediting contrasting theories and paradigms of thought. He further claims that the discourse of academic debate in conferences and symposia forms an interesting arena of compromise where, on the level of ideas and arguments, a battle takes place, whereas on the more human level of social interaction, there is pressure to main civility and a sense of collegiality (*Pragmatics* 203).

In all, it is important to state that at everywhere and at all times, speakers should try to observe the Agreement Maxim and employ varied ways of softening disagreements in order to minimize conflicts in interactions.

4.2.5.6. Sympathy Maxim

Leech writes that commiserations and condolences are utterances that politely express speaker's sympathy for hearer when hearer has suffered some misfortune. He further points out that commiserations can vary from very formal to casual or informal situations (*Pragmatics* 210).

Excerpt 23

Four students (two females and two males) in the Department of English came to see a lecturer who lost her father:

All the students: Mummy, good morning ma.

Lecturer: Good morning.

First male: Mummy, we came to say sorry to you. We heard you lost your father.

All the students: Sorry ma, sorry ma, ma, sorry oo!

Lecturer: Thank you. God bless all of you.

Students: Ok, bye ma.

4.2.6. Second Stage of Analysis   (Stage of Face Management)

The analysis at the second stage analyses the face management tact that undergraduates deploy to manage face in the Universities under study. The analysis is done in terms of positive politeness and negative politeness, impoliteness, and face threatening acts.

4.2.6.1. Face management Tact Observed by the Undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

4.2.6.2. Positive Politeness

Brown and Levinson assert that positive politeness is redress directed to the addressee's positive face, his perennial desire that his wants (or the action acquisition and values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable (101). In other words, if hearer's wants, actions, values, opinions are desirable by speaker, invariably, hearer's positive face is maintained. Positive politeness is therefore speaker oriented. Leech believes that positive politeness maximizes the politeness of polite illocutions (*Pragmatics* 84).

In addition, Brown and Levinson elaborate that the linguistic realizations of positive politeness are in many respects, simply, a representative of the normal linguistic behaviour between intimates. They further claim that the only feature that distinguishes positive politeness redress from normal everyday intimate language behaviour is an element of exaggeration which serves as a marker of the face-redress aspect of positive politeness expression (101).

The following positive politeness strategies were observed among the undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

4.2.6.2.1. Banter

Leech contends that banter is a reversal of interpretation because the discourteous remark is not treated as serious. According to him, banter is a way of reinforcing or achieving in-group solidarity. In other words, it is a way of saying, 'We do not need to be polite to one another: I can insult you and you will respond to it as a joke' (*Pragmatics* 101). It should be noted that banter is not normally used between people of unequal power status or strangers. Rather, it is used among peers to show solidarity and camaraderie.

Excerpt 24

Two male students were eating at a joint behind the Faculty of Education and a third male student walked in:

Third male student: Guys, how far? (Exchanged handshakes)

First male student: Confirm nothing dey happen.

Second boy: Wetin you find come here?

Third boy: See you! You think say I bi like NAS like you? See them NAS officials.

They all laughed and shook hands. The third male student sat down and ordered his food.

On further inquiry, the researcher discovered that NAS means '*Non academic students*', literally translated as unserious students. So, when a student is described as *NAS* it means that such a student is an unserious student. Besides, the third student did not stop at *NAS* but called them *NAS* officials. That is to say that they were unserious students of the highest order.

Besides, Leech maintains that banter is manifested in a great deal of casual linguistic conversations, particularly among young people. He expressed that the banter principle is used to show solidarity with hearer and in that case, speaker says something which obviously, is untrue and obviously, impolite to the hearer (*Principles* 144). By implication, banter is recognized as expressions that are unserious in which no offence should be attached. He therefore concludes that lack of politeness in banter is only but a sign of intimacy.

4.2.6.2.2. Exaggeration (Interest, Approval, Sympathy with hearer)

Excerpt 25

Two students (one male and the other female) on Valentine's Day, the female student was walking towards the park in front of Social Sciences Faculty:

Male student: Hello baby! You look mmuua! (Uses his hand to touch his mouth) Honestly, you look take away, sumptuous and tantalizing.

Female student: Akụkọ! (story!)

Male student: Mba! Imakazi taa. (No! you look dazzling today.)

Female student: Si ebea puọ, biko. (Please leave here.)

Male student: No! But if you are going to temp site, I don't mind going with you.

Female student: Ngwa nu. (All right and they both left)

The use of exaggerated intonation, stress as well as intensifying modifiers as used on campus shows that the male student approves of the female student's looks.

4.2.6.2.3. Address forms

The researcher observes that the undergraduates make use of in group identity maker which is shown in their use of address forms.

Excerpt 26

Two male students who were walking in front of Chike Okoli Entrepreneurship Building:

First male student: Guy, how far?

Second male student: Ma gee, I dey o?

The researcher observes that the students also use generic names and terms of address like *guy, pal, paddy, paddy man, my man, my person, my personal person, my manest man* among the male students. Conversely, the male students often address the female students as *sweetie, honey, love, babe, dearie, baby, nwa, darling, angel, sweet* among other names. In addition, it was observed that words like *brother, sister, daddy, mummy* and *mama* are used among students (male and female students alike) who belong to the same Christian group on campus.

Again, the use of the address form of *Presido* to mean, *President of any Department* or *Association on campus, father, to mean a sociable and generous /kind male student who cares about other students.* Leech comments that the strategy helps the users to achieve rapport by taking steps to minimize the social distance, and combining it with attitudinal warmth (*Pragmatics* 109).

4.2.6.2.4. Slang

Brown and Levinson admit that by referring to an object using slangy expressions, a speaker may evoke all the shared associations and attitudes that he and hearer have towards that object (111).

Excerpt 27

Two male students were standing in front of Heritage Bank:

First male:	Oh boy, how levels now?
Second male student:	Normal, Normal!
First male student:	I see you yesterday for Admin block with that Kezaya. Wetin you with that butterfly babe dey yarn?
Second male student:	Okotorigba! (Exclamation) No, ooo nothing!
First male student:	I for say! Ha! I surprise to see two of una! (They shook hands and left.)

In the conversation, *Kezeyah* and *butterfly babe* are the slangy expressions for flirts on campus.

Other slangy expressions as observed among the students are attached in the Appendix.

4.2.6.2.5. Jargons

It was observed that students use jargons to maintain positive politeness.

Excerpt 28

Two students (a male and a female) in the Faculty of Physical Sciences:

Male student:	See NK don dey come!
Female student:	Anything?

Male student: No! the girl entropy dey high.

Female student: Chaaaaiiii!

Male student: If she come here now, Ammonia go burst.

Entropy is used by science students to mean someone who is confused and Ammonia to mean trouble.

4.2.6.2.6. Avoid disagreement

Brown and Levinson observe that the desire to agree or appear to agree with hearer will lead to mechanism for pretending to agree (113).

Excerpt 29

Four male students were in a classroom at Sociology Department after their lectures:

First male student: Come oh! How much we fit contribute for that thing?

Second male student: Make we pay 2k.

Third male student: E speak le kwe! 2k dey too much naa!

Fourth male student: Ok no wahala. Let's make it one and half.

Third male student: Eeehen! Na now you come.

The use of the slang: *E speak le kwe* is used to mean 'I don't agree with you or that the option was not a good one'. In addition, with the slang, the third student's disagreement appears mild. Again, the use of *Eeehen! Na now you come* and the tone in which it was said suggests agreement.

4.2.6.2.7. White lies

Brown and Levinson demonstrate that white lies are one of the positive politeness strategies which are used to avoid disagreements, such that speaker when confronted with the necessity to state an opinion wants to lie (115). For Leech (*Principles* 82) white lies are used in order to deceive hearer.

Excerpt 30

Three Students (two girls and a boy) were waiting to board a bus at Aroma Junction:

    First female student: I.K., so you no come for my birthday bash.

    Male student: (smiling)! I no dey. I comot school.

    First female student: Ok oo!

    Second female student: Bye.

    Male student: I go come see you later abeg.

It is a possibility that the male student was in school during the birthday party but did not attend the party. Besides, he may equally not go to see the female student afterwards as promised. However, in order to save his face and maintain positive politeness, he might have used white lies.

4.2.6.2.8.   Use of In-Group Language or Dialect

Brown and Levinson advance that the phenomena of code-switching involves any switch from one language or dialect to another in communities where the linguistic repertoire includes two or

more such codes (110). He further reveals that there are also situations of diglossia which is a switch between two varieties or dialects of a language, one of which is considered *high* and prestigious, and the other *low* and *domestic*.

Excerpt 31

Nineteen students from Igbo ethnic group during their town's meeting at the bus stand Temporary Site:

Male student (President):   Any other business?

Female student (Secretary):   One of us will be having her wedding on Easter Monday. The place is not far. So, we want people who will attend the wedding.

Male student: Kedu ebe ọ bu?(Where is the place?)

Female student (Secretary):   Ọ na Nimo. O te rọ aka from school. Ndi chọrọ ije bia fʊ m ma agbasa meeting.(It's at Nimo. It is not far from school. Those who want to attend should see me after the meeting.)

There are instances of code mixing and code switching in order to maintain positive politeness. The female student (Secretary) switched to the dialect of the male student in order to identify with him. Besides, the English language was used as a H variety because the students are in the university environment where the English language plays a dominant role as the language of communication. On the other hand, the Igbo language played a domestic role given the fact that all the students who were in attendance are from the same ethnic group.   For the purpose of this study, the diaglossic situation described here is from the loose sense of diaglossia and not from the very strict sense of it.

4.2.6.2.9. Use of Compliments

The use of compliments is another strategy through which students show positive politeness. Leech quoting Holmes defines a compliment as 'a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some 'good' (possession, characteristic, skill, etc) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer(*Pragmatics* 186). He further holds that compliments and responses to compliments are respectively the domains of Approbation and Modesty maxims. He concludes that like offers and invitations, compliments obviously exemplify positive politeness which has semantic loading in favour of other people (186).

Excerpt 32

Two female students were sitting under a tree in the Faculty of Education:

> First female student: Honestly, I like Prof Vivian Nwogbo. I like the way she
> dresses and the way she walks.

> Second female student: I also like the way Prof Anadi teaches. She talks gently and
> she is beautiful too.

There are instances of compliments to their two lecturers. The students admired in great measures the way Prof Vivian Nwogbo dresses and the way Prof Anadi teaches. They have maintained positive politeness through compliments.

4.2.6.2.10. Greetings

Greeting is another strategy that the students use to show positive politeness. The Researcher observes that the students use greetings like *hello, hi, how far, what's up, watangwan? what's popping , sup, good morning, good afternoon* and *good evening.* The researcher observed that students mainly use *good morning, good afternoon* and *good evening* and often, with honorifics for people who are not their peers. Besides, it was observed that students from other ethnic groups, most times, greet one another in their local languages while they use other greeting forms for students who are not from their ethnic groups.

Excerpt 33

Fourteen students from Hausa ethnic group at Gas Station Temporary Site, during their ethnic meeting:

    Male Student: Ina wuni ku. (Good evening everybody.)
                  Yaya ne? (How is everything?)
                  Yaya makaranta?(How is school)

    Other students: La fi ya ka lo. (Fine thank you)

    Male Student: Sanu ku dezuwa.(Welcome everybody.)

In addition to the various greeting forms, the researcher observed that students from Hausa ethnic group make a distinction in their use of pronouns even in greetings. The researcher observed the use of *ke* for female gender, *ka* for male gender, *ki* for both genders and *ku* for many people.

4.2.6.2.11. Giving of Gifts

Often times, students give gifts to their lecturers in order to be liked, admired, cared for, understood, listened to and be familiar with the lecturers. Brown and Levinson assert that there is the classic positive-politeness action of gift-giving, not only tangible gifts (which demonstrates that speaker knows some of hearer's wants and wants them to be fulfilled), but human-relations wants (129).

Excerpt 34

A male student walked into a male lecturer's office in the Department of Industrial Chemistry and the following conversation took place:

Male student: Good afternoon sir.

Male lecturer: Good afternoon what can I do for you?

Male student: No, sir. Sir, I overheard you saying that you are looking for a student to buy recharge card for you.

Male lecturer: Oh, yes!

Male student: (Gives the lecturer a recharge card) Sir, I got this for you.

Male lecturer: (Laughs) Oh! Thank you very much.

4.2.6.3. Negative Politeness

Negative politeness is redressive action which is addressed to hearer's negative face. The essence of negative politeness is to avoid imposition. In other words, observance of negative politeness is to make sure that the hearer's freedom is not hindered, impeded, or infringed upon. Brown and

Levinson describing negative politeness hold as follows, 'Negative politeness is the most elaborate and the most conventionalized set of linguistic strategies for FTA redress: it is the stuff that fills the etiquette books' (130). Leech concludes the argument on what negative politeness is when he writes, 'Negative politeness therefore consists in 'minimizing' the impoliteness of impolite illocutions' (*Principles* 83). The following negative politeness strategies were observed among the undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

4.2.6.3.1.   Indirectness

In using the indirect strategy, language is used in such a way that what speaker means is quite different from what he/she says. Leech infers that indirect illocutions tend to be more polite because they increase the degree of optionality and the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its face tends to be (*Principles* 108).

Excerpt 35

A female student walked into the Head of Department of Linguistics' office and this conversation was observed:

Female student: Mummy, good afternoon ma.

H.O.D: Good afternoon, dear

Female student: Mummy, I don't know if you are very busy.

H.O.D: Anything?

Female student: (Holding a library card) The man that gave us this card in the library said that we should give it to our H.O.D.

H.O.D.	Takes the card and signs.

The request is indirect in the sense that what she stated was not the intention of coming to see the Head of the Department, 'I don't know if you are very busy' when she actually wanted the Head of Department to sign her library card. On the other hand, The Head of Department had the option of not performing the intended action from the indirect statement which the student used. This further explains Leech's position when he expresses that the degree of indirectness correlates with the degree to which hearer is allowed the option of not performing the intended action (*Principles* 109).

4.2.6.3.2. Use of formulaic devices

4.2.6.3.2.1. Use of Please

The researcher also observes instances of use of formulaics such as 'please', 'excuse me', 'sorry' and 'thank you'.

Excerpt 36

Twenty-Three Students from Yoruba ethnic group during their ethnic meeting at Rufai Garuba Square:

Female Student:	Ẹkurole gbogboyan. (Good evening everybody)
Other Students:	Ẹkurole. (Good evening)
A female Student:	Ẹ jọ mo fe mọ awon ti o ti san owo ọdodun wọn. (Please I want to know how many of us have paid our annual dues.)

Other Students: (A few students raised their hands)

Female Student: Please o, O daara ki a san owo ti a je nitori nigba ti a ba san
                         owo ti aje ni a le mo awọn ti o ti san owo wọn pe.(Please it
                         is better we   pay because it is only when we pay that we can
                         know those who are financially up to date.)

Other Students: (Silence)

Female Student: Ẹse (Thank you)

The female student first employed the use of greeting (Ẹkurole) to show positive politeness. The

Use of the honorific Ẹ is to show that she acknowledged that some students may be older than

her as Ẹ is usually used to show the social/age gap between speaker and hearer in Yoruba

language. Besides, since she was trying to make a request, she equally employed the use of

please (Ẹ jọ) with the honorific Ẹ. With the honorific, she has shown respect to her hearer and

equally toned down the level of imposition which the request or question may have on the

hearers. Finally, the use of thank you was also noticed.

4.2.6.3.2.2. Use of sorry

Excerpt 37

The phone of a male student in the Political Science Department rang during lectures:

Lecturer: Ifeanyi, bring that phone here.

Male student: (Stood up and took the phone to the lecturer) I am sorry sir.

Lecturer: So, you don't know that it is an offence for your phone to ring during
              lectures?

Male student: Sorry, sir.

Lecturer: Come on, leave here.

The use of 'sorry' here is to make up for the previous action (of his phone ringing during lectures) which interfered with the lecturer's face wants. Leech remarks that *sorry* is by far the most common expression for apology in English (*Pragmatics* 125).

4.2.6.3.2.3. Use of Thank You

Excerpt 38

At UBA Bank, Unizik, many students were in queue trying to pay their fees and three female students walked in:

First female student: Let's find out who is the last person in the line.

Second female student: (Walks up to a boy in the line) Hello.

Male student: Hi.

Second female student: Please are you the last person?

Male student: No, I am not. (Points to another boy who was filling a deposit slip) He is the last person.

Third female: Ok. We are at his back.

Male student: But I think it's better you tell him.

Third female student: Ok. Thank you.

Male student: No wahala.

The conversation opened with the use of greeting to signal positive politeness. At the end, the third female student closed the conversation by thanking the male student. The use of *thank you* here signalled positive politeness. It should be noted that a thank you is another gesture of politeness. Leech quoting Searle advocates that the speech act of thanking (for) has four types of felicity conditions which are as follows:

    i.   Propositional content condition: past act done by hearer.

    ii.   Preparatory condition: the act benefits speaker and speaker believes that the act benefits him.

    iii.   Sincerity condition: speaker feels grateful or appreciative for the act.

    iv.   Essential condition: counts as an expression of gratitude or appreciation. (*Pragmatics*172)

Conversely, in English, there are times when *thank you* preceeds a favour that has not yet been granted. For example, a notice in a restaurant which reads:

Thank you for not smoking.

No credit today come tomorrow, thank you.

This type of *thank you* has been described by Leech as *premature thanks*. According to him, such use of the word contravenes the normal outstanding that *thanks* are not to be given unless the action/favour has been performed. In all, he admits that such use of *thank you* is to attribute politeness to the other party (*Pragmatics* 198). Besides, it is an indirect form of request in which, instead of using the request marker, *Please*, the writer states a general rule, and then, assumes in advance that the reader will be considerate enough to conform to it. In that case, 'positive

politeness replaces negative politeness both in thanking the public and in implicitly complimenting them on their politeness' Leech (*Pragmatics* 198).

4.2.6.3.3. Use of Excuse me

The researcher observes the use of the expression, '*Excuse me'* which is used in various ways.

Excerpt 39

In a class of about twenty students in a multipurpose hall:

      Male student: (Sneezes) Excuse me!

At Madonna cuisine, a female student after eating belches:

      Female student: Excuse me (hits her chest with her left hand).

Excerpt 40

In the Department of Architecture (four male students and one female student) were sitting down in a classroom without a lecturer and the female student's phone rang:

      Female student: Excuse me. (Stood up and left)

Leech reveals that excuse me is largely concerned with mild offences. According to him, it can apply to physical misdemeanors like sneezing, coughing, belching, and yawning, or infringement's of conversational proprieties such as interrupting another speaker's turn or interrupting a piece of conversation in order to do something else as in answering a phone (*Pragmatics* 127).

4.2.6.3.4. Use of Apology

An apology expresses regret over an offence which speaker committed against hearer. Leech writes that an apology is a transaction that gives value to hearer (*Pragmatics* 121). In other words, by apologizing, speaker not only acknowledges a fault, but, pays a debt to the face of hearer. Similarly, he acknowledges that 'If we commit an offence against someone, we talk of owing that person an apology, thereby treating the apology as in some sense an expiation of the offence' (*Principles* 125). By implication, whenever speaker expresses debt of apology, it shows that speaker acknowledges an imbalance in the relation between speaker and hearer and to some extent, as an attempt to restore the equilibrium.

Excerpt 41

In the Department of Geology, the Departmental President came in late during a Departmental meeting:

Departmental President: Good afternoon, great Geologists. I am very sorry for coming
                             a bit late. I went to see the Dean of Students' Affairs. I hope
                             I have been forgiven.

Students: Presido! Presido! (Echoes in solidarity with the President)

Furthermore, Leech comments that the politeness of an apology can be intensified by making the apology appear more genuine and the regret more profound by using words like *really sorry, very sorry, or sincerely sorry* (*Pragmatics* 121)

4.2.6.3.5. Use of Deference (Honorifics)

Deference is used mainly to show the gap in social ranking between speaker and hearer. It is mostly manifested through the use of honorifics. Brown and Levinson posit that by the use of honorifics, we understand direct grammatical encodings of relative social status between participants, or between participants and persons or things referred to in the communicative event (179).

Conversely, Leech contends that the use of honorifics is not specifically goal-oriented in the way that transactional politeness is, but is more dependent on convention and constrained by relatively constant social factors (*Pragmatics* 108).

Excerpt 42

A male lecturer came out from his office in the Department of Parasitology and Entomology:

Male lecturer (Prof Aribodor): Come! Come!

Male student: (Runs to the Professor) Good afternoon, Prof.

Male lecturer: My dear, good afternoon.

Male lecturer: (Gives the student one hundred Naira) Go and get a bottle of water for me.

Male student: Ok, sir. (Brings the water and hands it over to the lecturer with two hands.) (Prof, here is the water.)

Male lecturer: Eeehn! Thank you, my boy.

Male student: Thank you, Prof.

The honorific, *Prof* was used by the male student to signal the social distance between him and the professor. Other honorifics observed among the students include *Dr, Mrs, Mr, Aunty, Uncle* (often times with the course which the supposed *Aunty* or *Uncle* 'teaches'– *Aunty French, Uncle Computer*). Also, the use of *mummy* for female lecturers and the use of *daddy* for older male lecturers were observed.

4.2.6.3.6. Questioning

Excerpt 43

Two female students came to board a bus at Dr. Nnamdi Okafor Omelora's Motor Park:

First female student: Hello, good morning.

Second female student: Hi, good morning.

First female student: Please can I get a bus to temp site here?

Second female student: Oh yes, just go close to where that man (points at a man) is
standing.

First female student: Ok, thank you.

Second female student: You are welcome.

The conversation opened with greetings and the first female student employed the use of questioning which was mitigated by the word *Please* in order to elicit information.

4.2.6.3.7. Hedging

Excerpt 44

Two male students in Science Village (one was standing beside a car and another came out from a classroom):

> First male student: (Comes out from Botany Department Classroom) Oh! My pen just stopped to dey write. Where I go fit buy another one now?

> Second male student: I guess there is a woman there who sells those things.

> First male student: Ok. (He then runs in that direction.)

Brown and Levinson give other hedge words to include 'suppose', 'guess', 'think' and in the colloquial sense may include: 'sort of', 'rather think', 'pretty sure' and others (145).

4.2.6.3.8. Observance of Tact

Through the observance of tact, speakers minimize impositions.

Excerpt 45

A female student and a Departmental Secretary in the Department of Industrial Physics General Office:

> Female student: Aunty, Good afternoon, ma.

> Secretary: Nne! Good afternoon.

> Female student: Ma, please, I just came to ask you who our course adviser is.

> Secretary: Check the notice board. The staff advisers' list is pasted on the wall.

Female student: Ok! Thank you, ma.

The conversation started with a greeting to soften the request. Thereafter, the student employed the use of the word: *just*. Brown and Levinson explain that the word, *Just,* conveys both literal meaning of *exactly* and *only* which narrowly delimits the extent of the face threatening act and its conventional implicature (177).

Another Instance of Observance of Tact

Excerpt 46

Two students (a male and a female student) were standing under a tree in front of Faculty of Arts office complex:

Male student: Hmm! I am tired of waiting for our coursemates oo!

Female student: I know, but let's wait for them a little more time.

Male student: Ok oo, but I don dey tire.

The use of the word '*a little'* tones down the weight of the imposition. Brown and Levinson are of the opinion that the use of expressions like *a tiny little bit, a little, a bit, a taste, a sip, a drop* are all expressions that minimize impositions. They further remark that *a little* functions like English *Please* (177).

4.2.7. Impoliteness

Impoliteness can be defined as the use of words or utterances which have no politeness value in them. In addition, Leech rules that impoliteness can be recognized as a violation of the various maxims of the politeness principle, both those of negative politeness and those of positive

politeness (*Pragmatics* 222). So, when one decides to be impolite to another, he/she obviously gives a direct attack to the hearer's face without any form of mitigation. He makes it emphatic when he says, 'Impoliteness involves taking value from the other person and giving value to oneself' (222). In addition, he makes a distinction between rudeness and impoliteness. According to him, rudeness is an everyday *folk term* but impoliteness tends to be more formal (222-223).

In all, both rudeness and impoliteness denote intrinsically conflictive behaviour which lacks politeness. Besides, in social interactions, behaviour which lacks politeness is more easily noticed than polite behaviour. Watts sums the argument when he writes that behaviour and expressions considered impolite are easily noticed and discussed than polite ones (5). This further explains why people who are engaged in interactions should be polite to one another given the fact that impolite behaviour is more easily noticed than polite behaviour in interactions.

4.2.7.1. Analysis of Impolite Behaviour of Undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University

4.2.7.1. Violation of Tact

Excerpt 47

At Rufai Garuba Square, twenty students (thirteen females and seven males) came for rehearsals and the students were sitting down when the lead singer came to the front:

Lead singer: Stand up, everybody!

The use of the expression, *Stand up, everybody* has the pragmatic force of an imperative which makes it impolite and is seen as a violation of the tact maxim. There is no gain in saying that if the politeness marker *please* was added to the imperative, it would have somewhat softened the impositive force. In addition, an indirect directive beginning with *could or would you* is usually much preferred. Perhaps, if the speaker had used an inclusive expression: *Please let us stand up,* it would have toned down the command nature of the expression.

4.2.7.2. Interruption of Someone's Turn

Interruption of turn is seen as another impolite behaviour. For Leech, turn-taking is the possession and passing to one another of a conversational 'good' floor (*Pragmatics* 228). Reiterating the position, Brown and Levinson, quoting Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, argue essentially that conversational location both in terms of local turn-by-turn organization and in terms of overall conversational structure is a crucial determinant of how an utterance is understood (232). In essence, observance of turns in conversations is seen as conversational etiquette.

Against this backdrop, interruption of someone else's turn, especially, without an apology is seen as an impolite act.

Excerpt 48

Four male students standing in front of Prof. Festus Aghagbo Nwako's Library:

> First male student: O boy! How we go do this assignment on Polarization?

> Second male student: Make Nonso do am after that we go dub am.

Third male student: (interrupts the second boy) You say make I do am? See you. You think say I get time?

Fourth male student: (Interrupts the third male student) Why you go say you no go do am? Abi na because say we dey beg you?

From the conversation, there are interruptions and of course, a low tolerance of opinions. Leech presents the point clearly when he asserts that there is a low tolerance of opinionated behaviour, where people express themselves forcefully, as if their opinions matter more than others (*Pragmatics* 97). Such an interruption is potentially offensive; therefore, it is seen as an impolite act.

4.1.7.3. Use of Taboo Language

The use of blatantly offensive taboo words/language is seen as another impolite behaviour exhibited by the students. The study observes that some undergraduates of the institution use obscene, offensive and dirty words.

Excerpt 49

At Chuckies, three male students were drinking and a girl walked in:

First male student: Baby how na?

Female student: Fine.

Second male student: Come I wan ask you something.

Female student: (Ignores the invitation and was walking away)

Third male student: See her yansh, Ashawo! Ass hole! Mother fucker!

Brown and Levinson equivocates that the use of taboo words/language including those that are inappropriate in the context is one of the ways that a speaker indicates that he does not value the hearer's values and does not fear his fears (67). By implication, when a speaker uses such obscene, taboo or immodest words, it shows that a speaker does not care about or that he is indifferent to the hearer's positive face.

Moreso, Leech comments that taboo terms alluding to physical sex, body excretion, or other taboo topics extend from the milder end of the scale such as *piss, shit, bugger, balls* and others through moderately offensive items like *bastard* to the more extreme end like *fucking, cunt, mother fucker*. According to him, the last group has the most aggravating effect (*Pragmatics* 229-230). It is important to point out that such words are used to express a range of negative emotions such as anger, irritation, annoyance and others. Other taboo words as observed in the interactions of the students are attached in the appendix.

4.2.7.4. Use of Animal Metaphors

The use of animal metaphors is another strategy of showing impolite behaviour among the students.

Excerpt 50

A female student was walking to board a shuttle (*keke*) in front of UBA Bank and a male student overtook her and boarded the shuttle:

Female student: But, na me stop the *keke*.

Male student: Come on, comot for here!

Female student: *Ewu*! I don't blame you.

Male student: Look at her, dirty pig! (Then, the shuttle driver drove the shuttle away.)

In addition, the study observes the use of other animal metaphors such as 'a small rat' (a smallish girl), 'hippopotamus' (a girl who is too fat), 'goat' (a foolish person). Leech comments that animal metaphors can be offensive and have insulting overtones, especially when they refer to a human being (*Pragmatics* 230).

4.1.7.5. Sarcasm

Sarcasm is a category of impoliteness which is used to attack the face of a hearer.

Excerpt 51

In the Department of Public Administration during the first semester examination, a female student was talking in the examination hall and the examiner asked her to stand up:

Examiner: Stand up! So you don't know that it is an offence to talk in the examination hall.

Female student: (stood up reluctantly.)

Examiner: Don't make me angry this afternoon!

Female student: I was not even talking in the first place.

The student response, '*I was not even talking in the first place*' is an impolite response given the social gap between her and the lecturer.

4.2.7.6. Insults

The employment of insults is one of the strategies that the undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikwe University show impolite behaviour. Brown and Levinson maintain that through the employment of insults, a speaker shows that he/she has a negative evaluation of some aspects of the hearer's positive face (66). In other words, through insults a speaker shows that he does not like hearer's wants, acts, personal characteristics, beliefs or values.

Excerpt 52

In the Faculty of Law, two female students who were not dressed in black and white (the formal dress code of Law students) were arguing over a matter:

Male Law student: Can't you see that the moot court is in session; therefore, absolute silence is required.

First female student: And so what?

Male law student: Sha! You are not learned. If you were, you would have understood what I am talking about!

Second female student: Learned people under my foot. (Hisses)

From the interaction, the male Law student's use of the expression, '*Can't you see that the moot court is in session, therefore, absolute silence is required*' shows that he did not approve of the way the two female students were chatting in high tones in their Faculty. Consequently, the response of the female student, '*And so what*?' is also another insulting remark showing also that she did approve or like the comment of the law student. As a result, more insulting words emanated from both the two female students and the male Law student.

4.2.7.7. Violation of Modesty Maxim

The modesty maxim has two sub propositions:

(a) Minimize praise of self

(b) Maximize dispraise of self

The modesty maxim is observed anytime one minimizes praise of oneself and maximizes dispraise of oneself. On the contrary, the maxim is violated anytime one praises oneself.

Excerpt 53

Three students (two males and one female) who were drinking at Coke Centre behind Political Science Department:

First male student:	I opened my phone today and the thing was telling me that my yahoo don expire.
Female student:	Mmh!
First male student:	One mind dey tell me say na yahoo-yahoo.
Second male student:	O boy! No just try am. Once you say make you answer them, O boy they don hack your mail be dat!
Female student:	I no dey get that kind message. I get one phone wey dey read messages and once wey e notice say na scam or junk, im go just delete am. But na very expensive phone. No bi everybody fit buy am.

The female student's praise of her phone is excessive. Besides, the expression, *'No bi everybody fit buy am'* is indeed an over praise of herself who was able to buy the phone. Therefore, she has violated the maxim of modesty.

4.2.7.8. Violation of Quantity Maxim

Anytime one makes his/her contribution more informative than is required, it is taken that one has violated the maxim of quantity.

Excerpt 54

A female student and a male visitor in front of Our Lady's Hostel:

> Male visitor: Hello, good evening

> Male visitor: Please I am looking for Suzanne Izuakor. Do you know her?

> Female student: Yes! I know her. She lives in Room 203 Uchechukwu Hostel. She hails from Nawfia. She is in the Department of Banking and Finance, 300 level. She was a onetime Miss Banking and Finance.

> Male visitor: Thank you. Please can you show me the direction to the hostel?

> Female student: (Points to the hostel)

The female student violated the maxim of quantity because she gave more information than is required by the male visitor.

4.2.7.9. Violation of Approbation Maxim

The approbation maxim is behind the idea of one minimizing criticisms of others. In essence, when one criticizes another, especially in a very immodest manner, such a person is said to have violated the maxim of Approbation.

Excerpt 55

Three female students in a 'Buka' at the Faculty of Education:

First female student:	We go soon go for teaching practice.
Second female student:	I no want make that man supervise me.
Third female student:	Which man?
Second female student:	Dr. Amikwo.
First female student:	Why now?
Second female student:	Mmmh! You never hear the man story! The man dey do nonsense. E no dey try at all. E dey do anyhow. I hate the man, eeh!
First female:	So, who you want?
Second female:	I still dey reason am.

The use of direct criticisms for Dr. Amikwo violates the maxim of approbation. If the second female student had allowed other students to arrive at the point of her disapproval through implicature, it would have been a polite judgement. On this, Leech defends, 'If you must cause

offence, at least do so in a way which doesn't overtly conflict with the PP, but allows the hearer to arrive at the offensive point of your remark indirectly, by way of implicature'(*Principles* 82).

4.2.7.10. Non- Engagement in a Conversion

Excerpt 56

A female student was standing in front of Mass Communication building and a male student walked up to her:

Male student: Babe, hello, I'm Mike.

Female student: (Looks at him and says nothing)

The male student initiated a conversation marked by a greeting which indicates his willingness to participate in interaction with the female student. On the contrary, the female student looked at him and said nothing. Obviously, the act of silence shows her unwillingness to participate in the exchange. Leech is of the opinion that failure to engage in a conversation with another person, particularly, an acquaintance is likely to be interpreted as a slight or snub which is a form of impoliteness (*Pragmatics* 228). Racheal Thompson and Kofi Agyekun further comment that anytime a person snubs others in a speech event that it could mean that 'I do not recognize your human presence'(27). They put it starkly in these words: 'A speech participant who often snubs other interlocutors to communicate some form of contempt is seen as impolite as another who does so verbally' (27). So depending on the context of situation, silence (snub) could connote impoliteness.

He further comments that such behaviour implies lack of concern for maintaining that acquaintance or friendship. From the excerpt, the female student's refusal to respond to the male student's greeting or engage in an interaction with him shows overt impolite behaviour.

4.2.8. Face Threatening Acts

Face threatening acts which henceforth will be referred to as FTAs have been defined by Brown and Levinson as those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and or of the speaker (65).

The work observes the following FTAs in the interactions of students and in the dialogue between students and lecturers at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

4.2.8.1. Negative Face Threatening Acts

4.2.8.1.1. Imposition

Excerpt 57

A male Course Representative and male lecturer in the Department of Surveying and Geo Informatics:

Course Representative: Dr, good morning sir.

Lecturer: Yes! Good morning! I have a lecture with your class this morning.

Course Representative: Yes sir, but we have taken this week for revision since exams will start next week.

Lecturer: Therefore, I should not come for lectures?

Course Representative: Sir, we thought we have ended our lectures so that we can use this week for revision. Our course mates are no longer coming for lectures.

Lecturer: Get out of here!

From the dialogue, the student threatened the negative face of the lecturer by imposing on him what they want, '*We have taken this week for revision since exams will start next week'*. Furthermore, given the gap in social status, the student would have minimized the face threat if he had done that indirectly through implicature or allowed the lecturer to inform them when he would round off his lectures. The student further aggravated the situation by telling the lecturer that their course mates have stopped coming for lectures. By implication, the student has put some pressure on the lecturer to end his lectures. Brown and Levinson hold the view that any act that would put some pressure on hearer to do (or refrain from doing) is face threatening (65).

4.1.8.2. Embarrassing Remarks

O' Grady, William, John Archibald and Francis Katamba remark that speech acts like insults and embarrassing remarks that humiliate, impose onerous demands or hurt the addressee's feelings in other ways are referred to as face threatening speech acts (230).

Excerpt 58

A male student and a female student in the Department of Zoology classroom:

> Male student: Hello Nneky!

> Female student: Hi.

> Male student: E don te oo! (It's been a while oo!)

> Female student: I dey oo.

> Male student: You just dey look like sweet sixteen.

> Female student: Mmh no bi only sweet sixteen!

Male student: But you are not more than sixteen years old?

Female student: Why must you know?

Questions on some personal issues like age, number of children a person has, how much they earn, marital status, physique and some personal issues when asked directly is seen as face threatening. Leech asserts that such questions may be felt to be a serious imposition because they threaten the privacy of hearer (*Principles* 140). In other words, the question, '*But you are not more than sixteen years old'?* is face threatening because the male student is indirectly asking for the age of the female student. The response from the female student shows that she perceives the question as face threatening. This further explains the reason for her response, '*Why must you know'?* In addition, he comments that to ask a question about people's age or how much they earn unless they are close acquaintance is often felt to be a trespass on private territory, in terms of conversational etiquette (*Pragmatics* 227-228).

4.2.8.3. Disapproval

Excerpt 59

A male lecturer and a female student in the Department of Library and Information Science:

Female student: Good afternoon, sir.

Lecturer: Eeehee, good afternoon.

Female student: I saw my result in the last examination but you did not add my quiz
                  score to my exam score and that was why I failed the course.

Lecturer: What do you mean?

Female student: I wrote the quiz with my course mates and I even did well in the
                  quiz and the exam.

Lecturer: You don't know what you are talking about!

Female student: Sir, I want you to go through my script and even the attendance for
                  the quiz.

Lecturer: Go and complain to the Head of Department!

By expressing disapproval of the lecturer's judgement in the awarding of marks in the examination, the student has threatened the positive face of the lecturer. Brown and Levinson are of the view that such an expression of disapproval indicates that speaker does not like/want one or more of hearer's wants, acts, personal characteristics, goods, beliefs or values). In turn, the lecturer perceives a face threat. Little wonder, his response, '*Go and complain to the Head of Department*'.

4.2.8.4. Order

Excerpt 60

A female and a male student in the Faculty of Physical Sciences and the walls of the Faculty have a notice:

'Don't litter the compound. Cleanliness is next to godliness'

Female student: (Drinks sachet water and drops the sachet on the floor)

Male student: So, you can't even read this notice? (Pointing at the notice)

Female student: Ọ gbasa gi? (Is it your business?)

Judging from the expression: '*So, you can't even read this notice*', the male student alludes that the female student has littered the compound which was a wrong thing to do. Brown and Levinson demonstrate that in such an act, speaker indicates that he wants hearer to do or refrain from doing some act (66).

4.2.8.5. Threat

Excerpt 61

A male student and a photographer at Rufai Garuba Square:

Male Student: Where is this man? (Asking of another photographer)

Photographer: Onwee?   (Is there anything?)

Male student: I snapped here last week and since then I have not seen him.

Photographer: Ok, bia next week. (Ok, come back next week)

Male student: Maka Chukwu, m bia ebea ozo, ọ nọria, any day m hụrụ ya, ọ bụrụ
nke mu naya!(I swear to God, if I come here again and he is not here,
any day I see him I shall make trouble with him).

Brown and Levinson implore that the use of threats, warning and dares indicates that speaker will instigate sanctions against hearer unless he does something that speaker expects (66). Issuing threat, 'I swear to God, if I come here again and he is not here, any day I see him I shall make trouble with him' obviously, threatens the negative face of the photographer although in absentia.

4.2.8.6. Mentioning of Taboo topics

Excerpt 62

In a multipurpose hall, with a student preaching the gospel, three female students and one male student were sitting at the back when another female student walked into the hall:

Male student: Chai! See this girl Ikebe! Honestly, na dis kind yansh I

dey like. Ọdi kwa tight!

First female student: Ndoo! (Sorry)

Second and third female students: *Tufiakwa gi*! (An expression to show that their
positive faces have been threatened.)

Face attack can include the use of taboo language such as the use of insulting animal metaphors or obscene expletives. The position is further substantiated by Brown and Levinson when they write that mentioning of taboo topics including those that are inappropriate in the context (as used by the student during Gospel preaching) indicates that he (the speaker) does not value hearer's value and does not fear hearer's fears (67). The list of other taboo words as used by the students of Nnamdi Azikiwe undergraduates is attached in the appendix.

4.2.8.7. Direct Criticism through the Use of Obligational Modals

When a speaker who is on the same social ranking with the hearer addresses hearer using an obligational modal like *should/shouldn't*, it threatens the negative face of hearer. By implication, the use of such modals, especially in direct criticisms makes the illocution more imposing on

hearer. Leech is of the opinion that a direct criticism using the obligational modals like *should /shouldn't* can be felt to be downright insulting (*Pragmatics* 192).

Excerpt 63

A student preacher in Chinua Achebe Faculty of Arts Building with about twenty students:

> Preacher: You should be ashamed of yourself if you are among the students who still dress indecently.

Obviously, the use of the obligational modal: *Should* heightens the face threatening act. The weight of the FTA would have been softened if the preacher had employed other politeness strategies like indirectness such as, '*It's not very nice to see students dress indecently.*' instead of a direct criticism and the use of the obligational modal, 'should'. Worst still, both the preacher and the other students are in the same social status. So, the use of language is judged as face threatening.

2.8.8. Direct Advice through the Use of the Semi-modal: *Had better*

Leech contends that the use of the semi-modal: *had better* when combined with the subject *you* is direct and potentially face threatening (*Pragmatics* 205). According to him, it conveys the impression that the speaker is putting pressure on the hearer to do something, either in the hearer's or speaker's interest.

Excerpt 64

During the orientation of the new students in the Department of Guidance and Counselling:

> Vice-President: If you think you had come into the University to while away your

time, you had better change your thinking.

Leech further asserts that *you had better* often strikes an impolite note, perhaps, because the comparative form *better* brings a vestigial implication of blame for the 'worse' situation that exists at the time of speaking (*Pragmatics* 150). Then, to reduce the face threatening potential of such direct performatives especially among equals, he further advises that the adviser may use hedged performatives such as 'may I suggest…' and 'I would like to advise you…' (205).

4.2.8.9. Interruption

When speakers are interrupted, it threatens their faces. Most times, such interruptions degenerate into serious arguments that could, invariably, lead to major crisis. Brown and Levinson admit that disruptively interrupting hearer's talk and showing non-attention indicates that the speaker does not care about the hearer's negative or positive-face wants (67).

Excerpt 65

Ten male students in front of Fine and Applied Arts Department:

First male student: But that thing wey you dey talk….

Second male student: (Interrupts) Which thing?

Third male student: (Interrupts) Abeg no yarn that nonsense here.

The students eventually dispersed without arriving at a compromise.

4.2.8.10.   Wrong Use of Address Forms Intentionally

Brown and Levinson implore that address terms and other status identifications can be used in such a way that the speaker may misidentify the hearer in an offensive or embarrassing way, intentionally or accidentally (67). The study observes that some students intentionally use wrong address forms to threaten the positive faces of their lecturers.

Excerpt 66

In the Faculty of Natural Sciences, a very fat and unmarried female lecturer was going towards her car:

Student: Mummy, good afternoon, ma.

Lecturer: Silence.

The lecturer's use of silence and refusal to respond to the greeting (which was loud enough) simply shows that she perceives the address form: *mummy* as threatening her positive face. Since she was unmarried, addressing her (a young lady although very fat) as *mummy* is face threatening.

4.2.9. Dominant Positive Politeness Strategies Deployed by Madonna University, Undergraduates

4.2.9.1.   The Use of Past Tense Forms of Modals

Excerpt 67

Two male students and a female student in the Department of Accountancy during the orientation of the new students in 2014:

First male student: Guy, wida! (Shakes hands)

Female student: Please could you do the M.C. for us tomorrow? (Master of ceremonies)

Second male student: Ok. No wahala. I go do am.

First male student: My guy you bi correct person.

Female student: Thank you o.

In making a request, the female student has employed the use of the past tense form of *can - could.* There is no gain in saying that if one employs the present form of the modal, it makes the request so direct. Besides, the use of *can* in requests may be a question about hearer's ability or a request for information. Leech opines that the use of *can you* may put the hearer in a position where he/she is constrained to be impolite. He then advises that to avoid the risk of confrontation that a further step of indirectness could be taken (*Pragmatics* 154). In other words, the use of *could you or would you* instead of *will you* or *can you* makes a request more polite. To make the point clearer, Leech presents, 'It is also worth bearing in mind that the hypothetical past forms

would and could are more likely than other forms to be ambivalent in carrying the indirect meaning of a request, rather than, the direct meaning of a question' (*Pragmatics*154). By implication, it means that if the female student had used the expression, '*Can you do the M.C for us tomorrow?'* she may be asking a question about Stephane's ability to do the M.C. for them the next day or just a request for information. Furthermore, he observes that expressions such as '*Will you take a seat'?* may be seen as an offer or a request for information. He then affirms that *could you* or *would you* are more clearly located in request territory (155). In sum, the use of the past tense form of the modal gives an utterance the indirect characteristeric of a polite request.

Conversely, the present form of modals *can or will* can be used in interactions depending on the nature of the speech act. Offers can begin with *Can I* or *can we w*hich of course, shares a border line between offers and requests. For example, *Can I,* can begin a request for permission and it can also be used for offers as in:

Can I get you some food to eat?

Here, *can* means permission, rather than ability. This is sequel to the fact that the person who asked the question was sure of his/her ability to get some food for hearer but seeking permission to get the food.

4.2.9.2.   Use of Vocatives

Leech asserts that a vocative (or term of address) refers to the addressee(s) of an utterance, and has at least three pragmatic functions:

i.   To appeal for attention, that is, making it clear to hearer that he/she is being addressed

ii.   To single out the addressee, i.e making it clear that hearer, and not some other person within earshot, is being addressed

iii.   To establish and/or maintain a social relationship with hearer (*Pragmatics* 172).

In the use of vocatives, the undergraduates of Madonna University use vocatives like *Hey* and first names to signal a known individual, an acquaintance or a friend rather than as a stranger. However, in addressing their superiors, the students employ the use of title and surname form. The research observes the use of the following vocatives:

Excerpt 68

Hey you girl (A girl smiling and waving at another girl)

Another Instance:

Excerpt 69

Two male students in front of Political Science Department

First male student: Guy, how far?

Second male student: Men, I full ground. I want see Mr. Bassey.

Leech opines that the use of title + surname makes an address form more formal and polite (*Pragmatics* 172). In the excerpts, the students address their peers with vocatives like 'Hey!' but address their lecturers in the appropriate address forms given the social gap.

4.2.9.3. Apologies

The researcher noticed that the students use apologies in different ways depending on the purpose they want to achieve. In some situations, they apologize even before the request. This position is in line with Leech who observes that an apology or 'excuse me' added before the request itself functions as a proactive disarming gesture of politeness and also as an *alerter* to get the attention of the hearer (*Pragmatics* 171).

Excerpt 70

A master of ceremony and a male student during a programme organized by Madonna Talent Hunt (MATH):

> Master of Ceremony: Excuse me, could you speak up a bit.

> Male student: Adjusts his voice and speaks a bit louder.

The use of the expression, '*Excuse me could you speak up a bit*' is used to maximize the politeness in the polite expression between the master of ceremony and the male student.

4.2.9.4. Jokes

The use of jokes is another way that the undergraduates of Madonna University tend to express positive politeness.

Excerpt 71

Four students (three males and one female) were sitting in the Mass Communication classroom opposite Father Founder's Office waiting to be called in for their first semester examination:

First male student: Chaai! Look at Ezekiel's head oo! It is emitting smoke O!
                        Please somebody should bring some water.

Female student: (Touches Ezekiel's head and removes her hand)

Second male student: The guy don read tire!

Third male student: See this awoko guy wey dey talk say person head dey hot!
                        Comot for here.

The students use jokes to show familiarity. Brown and Levinson share the same view when they express that jokes are basic positive-politeness technique for putting hearer at ease and it is based on mutually shared background knowledge and values (124).

4.2.9.5. Slang/Jargons

The undergraduates of Madonna University use slangy expressions and jargons to show friendliness among their peers.

Excerpt 72

Two female students in front of Vianney Hostel:

First female student: Where you dey go?

Second female student: I want see Papa Emmy. (I want to use the toilet.)

The study also observes other slangy expressions and jargons like:

I will mend you oo! (I will beat you.)

I will Suarez you (I will bite you.)

Other slangy expressions observed among the undergraduates are attached in the appendix.

4.2.9.6. Euphemism

The work observes that the students, often times, use euphemisms to replace other words which would have been considered offensive or embarrassing.

Excerpt 73

About twenty students were seated at Pavilion D during a competition organized by Infant Jesus Society:

> Moderator: We should be serious with our studies so that we don't end up as home managers after graduation.

The word *home managers* have been substituted for house wives. So, instead of using the low word, *housewives*, which may sound somehow offensive, the moderator used the word, *house managers*. Besides, the researcher observes that the students have words for some taboo words which they use slang to *recode*. Such re-codification makes it pleasant to the ears. The list of slang used as euphemisms is attached in the appendix.

Moreover, the researcher heard a student use this expression:

Excerpt 74

> The Deputy-Vice Chancellor's wife fell asleep on 6th September, 2015 to mean that she died on 6th September, 2015.

4.2.10. Negative Politeness Strategies Employed by Madonna University Undergraduates

4.2.10.1. Softening Words (Hedges)

Excerpt 75

A male lecturer and two male students at Emmanuel Building Hall 3:

Male lecturer: The noise coming from the adjoining classroom is really disturbing my lectures.

First male student: I think they are final year students but let me go and tell them to stop the horrible noise.

Second male student: You may just tell them that a lecture is going on here and that the students are finding it difficult to concentrate because of the noise.

Here, it is discovered that the second male student tries to lessen the possibility of a threat. This is sequel to the fact that the students who are causing the noise may interpret the imperative, '*Stop that horrible noise*' as a negative threat given the fact that they are senior to the student who is coming to talk to them.

4.2.10.2. Apology

Brown and Levinson explain that an apology is an attempt by the speaker to make up for the previous action that interfered with the addressee face wants (187). Furthermore, Leech elaborates that the aim of apologizing is to restore equilibrium between speaker and addressee (*Principles* 125).

Excerpt 76

A male lecturer and a female Course Representative in the Department of English:

Female Course Rep: Dr, good morning sir.

Male Lecturer: Good morning.

Female Course Rep: Sir, please we came to apologize over our inability to read those Anthologies which you recommended long before the last lecture, as a result of which you left our class today.

Lecturer: Why did you not read them?

Student: Sir, we couldn't find them in the market.

Lecturer: Okay! But go to the library and check. I know most of the Anthologies are there.

Student: Okay Sir. Thank you, Sir.

The exchange opens with a greeting and an honorific, Dr, to signal the difference in social status between the lecturer and the student before the student states the reason for coming to see the lecturer. This is immediately followed by the reason for the visit, to apologize for a previously done act in order to restore the positive face between the student and the lecturer.

4.2.10.3. Indirectness

Leech has it that indirectness implies optionality for the hearer; and the degree of politeness can be increased by using a more indirect kind of illocution (*Principles* 108).

Excerpt 77

A female lecturer and a female student in the Department of Sociology:

Female student: Excuse me, ma.

Lecturer: Yes!

Female student: Please ma, our lecturer for SOC 203 is standing by.

Lecturer: Okay!   Have I exhausted my time?

Female student: (No response)

Lecturer: I see! I will see you next week.

Female student: Thank you ma.

The discourse starts with a formulaic, '*Excuse me*' and an honorific marker '*Ma*.' However, instead of telling the lecturer outrightly that she should leave the class for their next lectures, the student employs an indirect means of letting her know that the time for the lecture was up and that the next lecturer was standing by.

4.2.10. Questioning (Indirect)

Direct questioning is often considered rude when speaking to a person of higher social ranking. In order to be more polite, the speaker employs an indirect question as it is considered more polite and formal.

Excerpt 78

Two female students and a female lecturer in the Faculty of Law:

First female student: Ma, please we wanted to find out if you would be in school
                            tomorrow?

Lecturer: Any problem?

Second female student: Ma, we are supposed to start our legal week tomorrow but

                        the   presiding judge, Dr Kekema will not be in school.

Lecturer: So, you want me to stand in for him?

First female student: Yes ma.

Lecturer: Well, I'm very sorry, I don't come to school on Thursdays.

Second female student: Okay ma, thank you ma.

The students started the request with polite markers and also employed questioning although, an indirect form of it, to know if the lecturer would be in school the following day. It would have been rude if the students had asked the question directly: '*Will you be in school tomorrow?'*

4.2.10.5. Use of Honorifics

By using address forms and honorifics, deference is shown. Deference is a distinct phenomenon; it is the opposite of familiarity. It is an obligatory choice among variants reflecting the speaker's sense of place or role in a given situation according to social conventions. In other words, it refers to the respect shown to other people by virtue of their higher status, greater age, upper influence, etc. This is mostly reflected in Madonna University through the use of address forms like Doctor, Professor, Reverend Sister, Brother, Father, Sir, Madam, Aunty, Uncle, and others. These are used to express negative politeness.

Excerpt 79

A female student and a Rev. Sister in charge of signing of exeat cards:

Female student: Sister, good morning.

Rev. Sister: Eeeeh good morning.

Rev. Sister: Any problem?

Female Student: I would have loved to know when to come for final year exeat?

Rev. Sister: Come tomorrow.

Female student: Thank you sister.

4.2.10.6. Use of Formulaic/Mitigating devices

Formulaic/mitigating devices are words which are used to soften the tenor of impositions. These include expressions like *I am sorry, Thank you, I beg your pardon, Please, excuse me.* These expressions help to massage the ego of the hearer and reduce the burden of imposition.

Excerpt 80

A female student and a female secretary to the Dean of Faculty of Management:

Female student: Aunty, Good morning ma. Aunty, I want to see the Dean.

Female secretary: What is the problem?

Female student: I want to change from Marketing to Accountancy.

Female secretary: And that is why you want to see the Dean?

Female student: Yes ma.

Female secretary: Have you applied?

Female student: No ma.

Female secretary: Go and apply and come back next week.

Female student: Ok ma, thank you, ma.

It is observed that formulaic/mitigating devices are among the frequent politeness strategies that the students use.

4.2.11. Impoliteness Strategies among Undergraduates of Madonna University

4.2.11.1.   Violation of Generosity Maxim

Generosity maxim focuses more on the speaker than the hearer. The maxim involves minimizing benefit to self and maximizing cost to self. So, in any situation where a speaker maximizes benefit to self, the speaker is said to be impolite.

Excerpt 81

A male student and a female student of Psychology in a business centre at the back of the Guest House:

> Female student: Why did you tell us that the photocopied material was eight hundred Naira instead of seven hundred Naira?

> Male student: You are an idiot and I will make sure you don't get other materials that I photocopied.

Leech observes that the violation of the generosity maxim can take the form of threats and curses, where the speaker expresses the will to bring harm (rather than benefit) to the other person (*Pragmatics* 225). And by maximizing benefit to self, the speaker has violated the maxim of generosity. Therefore, the language use is adjudged as being impolite.

4.2.11.2. Violation of Tact

For Leech the tact maxim applies to Searle's directive and commissive which is only applicable in illocutionary functions classified as impositives such as ordering, requesting, commanding, advising, recommending and commissives such as promoting, vowing, offering and others (*Principles*107).

Excerpt 82

Two male students and a female student at the Primary School:

> First male student: Go and check if Dr Nwosu is in the office.

> Female student: What did you say?

> Second male student: He said you should go and check if the lecturer is in the office
> or are you deaf?

Here, the female student is surprised that the male students ordered her to check if the lecturer was in the office. The male students' *bald-on-record* command is contrary to the female student's expectation. Furthermore, their impoliteness is further aggravated by the second male student's question which explains that it is only deafness that could explain the female student's failure to obey them without questioning. So, by violating the tact maxim, the male students are taken to be impolite. In addition, the reason why we apply the use of tact in expressions like, *just a minute*, *I will be back in few minutes*, which in actual sense may take a little longer than minutes is to minimize cost to the hearer and also to maximize benefit to him or her (the hearer).

4.2.11.3. Violation of Relation

The Maxim of relation is violated when a speaker introduces unrelated issue especially without an apology in the middle of a discussion.

Excerpt 83

About fifteen students in the Department of Banking and Finance:

> First Male Student: Dr. Ikenna said that he is coming now for our revision on Intro
> to Banking.
>
> Second Male Student: Course Rep, I have to go and see Sister Bead for my exeat.
> That is more important to me now.

The second student's reply has a superficial irrelevant statement which does not either accept or decline the proposal. It appears to be a breach of the maxim of relation. In addition, the first male student can infer that the answer to his proposal is negative and that the statement, '*I have to go*

and see Sister Bead for my exeat. That is more important to me now.' explains why the second male student is not happy to comply with the proposal.

4.2.1.4. Violation of Approbation

The Approbation maxim states that the speaker should minimize dispraise of others and maximize praise for them. The basic idea here is to minimize the idea of being critical of others.

Excerpt 84

> Two female students sitting under the cashew tree close to the football pitch:
>
> First female student: I don't go to that canteen to eat.
>
> Second female student: Why?
>
> First female student: Their food is tasteless; in fact, it is horrible.

 By using the word *horrible* to describe the food, the first female student has maximized dispraise of others; therefore, the language use is said to be impolite.

4.2.11.5.   Violation of Modesty

The modesty maxim involves minimizing the expression of praise of self. The maxim is the idea behind being modest in speaking and avoiding arrogating praise to one's efforts.

Excerpt 85

Three female students standing at Sociology Balcony:

> First female student: I like your dress; it is beautiful.
>
> Second female student: Hmm! This is not beautiful compared to the one I wore
>   yesterday.

Third female student: (Looks at the first female student) and says nothing.

Here, the second female student has maximized the praise of oneself thereby violating the maxim of modesty. She would have been polite if she had said, '*O! thank you, but, I didn't know the dress is as beautiful as that*'.

4.2.11.6 Verbal Aggression through the Use of Prosody

Intonation and paralinguistic features have a way of conveying emotion and attitude that signal rudeness and impoliteness. Besides, the use of formulaics such as *I beg your pardon, excuse me,* and *thank you* can be used in ways that negate politeness. Leech maintains that the use of prosodic and paralinguistic features such as loudness and pitch of voice and position of the intonation nucleus are devices of verbal aggression (*Pragmatics* 251). Highlighting the importance of prosody in realizing the overall meaning of an utterance, Culpeper avers, 'Utterances become 'meaningful'- by which we mean interpretable-only through the interaction of verbal, prosodic and kinesic actions in context' (*Impoliteness* 147). By implication, the meaning of an utterance is also interpretable through the pitch of voice. In other words, politeness or impoliteness can be delivered through prosody.

Furthermore, Culpeper citing Murray and Arnott divides the use of prosody relevant to impoliteness into two:

Anger (rage): Slightly faster, much higher pitch average, wide pitch range, louder, breathy, chest tone, abrupt pitch changes on stressed syllables, and tense articulation.

Disgust (hatred, contempt, scorn): very slow speech rate, much lower pitch average, slightly wider pitch range, quieter, grumbled, chest tone, wide falling terminal contours and normal articulation. (*Impoliteness* 149)

Obviously, in everyday language, these rather technical descriptions correspond fairly closely to raising one's voice' or (more extremely) *shouting as a sign of anger,* and *snarling or growling as a sign of disgust.*

Excerpt 86

A male student and a female student at Mini Mart beside the Primary School:

> Male Student: Suzzy, so you don't pick my calls any longer?
>
> Female student: (Shouting) Please stop calling me! I have warned you before. It is not by force.
>
> Male Student: Na who you come dey shout for now sef?
>
> Female student: Excuse me! (Storms out of Mini Mart)

The use of high tone and of course, shouting shows an act of impoliteness. Besides, *please and excuse me* were equally used in ways that negate politeness. To this end, the loud pitch communicates anger and impoliteness.

4.2.11.7. Swear Words

The study observes that undergraduates employ swear words in their language use to show impoliteness. However, Leech notices that some swear words can be used alone as impolite illocution while others need to combine with other expressions in longer illocutions (*Pragmatics* 230).

Excerpt 87

Two male students (a Hall Representative and a male student) in front of Saint Peter's Hostel:

Hall Representative: Give me that phone.

Male student: The phone is not my own.

Hall Representative: What a fucking hell are you talking about!

Male student: No bi me get the phone. I don tell you.

Hall Representative: You are a bloody liar. So, I no know wetin I dey talk now!

The use of swear words such as *fucking hell* and *a bloody liar* are responsible for the impolite effect. Other swear words noticed among the undergraduates include, *Bullshit, pissed off, get away* and *mad man.*

4.2.11.8. Violation of Agreement Maxim

In conversations, speakers should always be sensitive to the existing relationship with their hearers and the nature of the interaction. With this at the back of their minds, they will be in a better position to show agreement rather than disagreement.

 Excerpt88

 Two male students walking towards the main library:

First male student: Guy, make we go tell the library man say we don buy im book.
                      Make e give us the assignment.

Second male student: No! make we wait till tomorrow.

By using No! the second male student has violated the Maxim of Agreement. The language is therefore viewed as impolite. It would have been polite if he had said, *Okay! But I think we may wait until tomorrow.*

4.2.11.9. Negative Refusal

The researcher observes that the undergraduates of Madonna University refuse requests in a negative/impolite manner especially with the use of the verb, *Mind.* Leech recapitulates that the verb, *mind* itself has a negative meaning to object to something. Thus, *I don't mind is doubly negative*. He further opines that the statement, *I don't mind* is rarely used to introduce a request, but it can signify acceptance of a preceding offer, request or suggestion (*Pragmatics* 166).

Excerpt 89

A female student and a male lecturer in the Department of Marketing:

>
> Lecturer: We have our Faculty meeting now. Do you mind taking the quiz same time tomorrow?
>
> Female student: Yes, I will mind.

From the female student's response, '*Yes, I will mind*', she has simply said '*No*' to the lecturer's polite request. By implication, she has objected to the change or shift on the date of the quiz.

4.2.11.10. Violation of Sympathy Maxim

Excerpt 90

Three female students sitting at Psychology balcony and playing music with their phones:

> First female student: (Points at an obituary poster on the notice board) Eeeiyaa! It is like Dr. Ozoigbondu lost his mother?
>
> Second female student: Ewoo! And she never too old ooo!
>
> Third female student: Eeeeeh! Please that is his business.

By simple refusal to express sympathy, the third female student has violated the maxim of sympathy. This position is in consonance with Leech who holds that the great strategy of 'impoliteness' manifests itself in direct expressions of antipathy which is the opposite of sympathy towards the hearer (*Pragmatics* 227).

4.2.12. Face Threatening Strategies Among the Undergraduates of Madonna University

4.2.12.1. Disapproval

Excerpt 91

An interaction between a male Law student who came to check his result in Advanced Communication in English in the female lecturer's office:

> Student: Good morning ma.
>
> Lecturer: Good morning.

Student: I came to check my result.

Lecturer: What is your registration number?

Student: BIL/13/111

Lecturer: (Goes through the list) 38 'F'

Student: But, I did very well in the examination.

Lecturer: Please leave my office!

The student leaves.

This is a face threatening act because the student did not employ any of the mitigating devices to start his request. Besides, the statement, '*But I did well in the examination.*' threatens the lecturer's positive face because the student did not show value for the lecturer's face hence, the disagreement with the scores.

4.2.12.2. Imposition

Excerpt 92

An interaction between a new, mean looking male student who came to inform a female lecturer about the time for her lecture:

Student: Ma, Good morning ma.

Lecturer: Good morning.

Student: We have you.

Lecturer: (Silence)You have me or you have GS class

Student: Ok we have GS class.

The expression *We have you* threatens the lecturer's negative face. Besides, it is not only seen as an imposition but connotes a different meaning other than what was actually meant. It could even be seen as a threat given the fact that the lecturer had not seen or met with the student before then

and the meanness on the student's face. On the other, the use of direct translation of the expression from Igbo language: *Anyi nwere gi* to English *We have you* gave the expression a threatening status.

4.2.12.3. Insults

The researcher observes that undergraduates of Madonna University employ insults to threaten the positive face of their hearers. On what insults are, Culpeper citing Allan and Burridge puts it succinctly in these words:

> Insults are normally intended to wound the addressee or bring a third party into disrepute, or both. They are therefore intrinsically dysphemistic, and so typically taboo and subject to censorship. Insults typically pick on and debase a person's physical appearance, mental ability, character, behaviour, beliefs and/or familial and social relations. Thus, insults are sourced in the target's supposed ugliness, skin colour and/or complexion, over-or undersize (too small, too short, too tall, too fat, too thin), perceived physical defects (short-sighted, squint, big nose, sagging breasts, small dick, deformed limb), slovenliness, dirtiness, smelliness, tardiness, stupidity, untruthfulness, unreliability, unpunctuality, incompetence, incontinence, greediness, meaness, sexual laxness or perversion, sexual persuasion, violence towards others (even self), ideological or religious persuasion, social or economic status and social ineptitude. And additionally, supposed inadequacies on any of the grounds just listed among the target's family, friends and acquaintances. (*Impoliteness* 143)

Excerpt 93

Two female students and one male Hausa cobbler at Girls Hostel up town:

First female student: Mallam, how much, you go take repair this shoe for me?

Male cobbler: Fay (pay) three hundred Naira.

Second female student: *Onye ori, lenʊ isiya! ịna eji ka charcoal.* (Thief, look at his head, look at him as dark as charcoal)

Male cobbler: Wetin you talk? If you no go do, comot for here.

Obviously, the remarks of the second female student are face threatening. The cobbler may not have understood the exact words, but from the tone of the second female student and the use of the word, *charcoal*, the cobbler could perceive the words as being insulting. Hence, his response, *'Wetin you talk? If you no go do, comot for here.'*

4.2.12.4. Direct Requests

Excerpt 94

A female student who wants to borrow a dictionary from a male lecturer:

Student: Good day, Sir.

Lecturer: Good day.

Student: Sir, borrow me your dictionary.

Lecturer: No! I want to use it now.

The request threatens the lecturer's negative face. This is because it is an imposition on the lecturer; it shows no respect and lacks the right register. If the student had employed face threatening negative redressive action or negative politeness through the use of modals such as *would*, or the use of a mitigating devices or formulaics like *please*, or had even used the word *lend* instead of *borrow* that would have lessened the face threatening effect as in:

Sir, please can I borrow your dictionary?

Sir, would you mind lending your dictionary to me?

4.2.12.5.   Accusation

Excerpt 95

A female student who lost her phone made this announcement in class at Chicago Hall:

> Student: They stole my phone in the class yesterday. Anybody who finds it
> should kindly return it to me.

The announcement threatens the positive face of other students. In fact, it is an accusation on the part of the other students. Besides, the use of the word, *kindly* has been used in a way that negates politeness. The student's announcement would have been redressed if she had employed a redressive action by using a positive politeness strategy or a face saving utterance like *I misplaced* and other formulaic expressions like *please*. Quirk and Greenbaum write that *please* is very commonly used to tone down the abruptness of a command (224).

4.2.12.6. Wrong Use of the Present Tense of Verbs in Requests

Excerpt 96

A male student came to have his course form signed and the following conversation ensued in the lecturer's office:

> Student: Good afternoon, ma.
> Lecturer: Good afternoon.
> Student: I want to sign my course form.
> Lecturer: (Looks at student and takes the form and signs)

The request threatens the lecturer's negative face. This is in line with Leech's position that the use of first-person subject and past tense is a device of distancing (*Pragmatics* 169). He further comments that putting the verb in the past tense does not mean that the attitude of *wanting* does not apply at the moment of utterance. It rather shows that the speaker is ready to abandon that

attitude by avoiding confrontation with the hearer's wishes (169). By looking at the student and signing the course form, the lecturer shows that she understands the face threatening nature of the act but has decided to ignore the student's act.

4.2.12.7. Intrusion

Excerpt 97

Two female lecturers were discussing in one of the offices in the Department of Mass Communication and a male student walked in:

Student: Good afternoon, ma.

Lecturer: Yes, Good afternoon.

Student: Ma, I have done the corrections that you asked me to do in

my project.

Lecturer: So, you can't see that I am discussing with a colleague?

Student: Sorry, ma. (Walks away)

By interrupting the lecturers, the student has threatened the positive face of the lecturer. The lecturer in turn, has threatened the student's positive face as well by asking him the embarrassing question: '*So, you can't see that I am discussing with a colleague?*' The student tries to save his face through the use of a negative politeness marker, *sorry* in order to mitigate the face threatening act.

4.2.12.8. Direct Criticisms

Excerpt 98

Two female students chatting and laughing noisily on the staircase in Eugene Nzom Faculty of Management Building:

A male student: See as una dey laugh like people wey come from Nkwo Okija.

The two female students: Oya, come and flog us now!

It is obvious that the male student threatened the female students' positive face by criticizing their actions directly. Conversely, the female students in trying to defend their own face threatened the male student's face equally. Brown and Levinson share the same view when they assert that when a person's face is threatened such a person in defending his or her own face can threaten other's face (61). The face threatening would have been minimized if the male student had gone off records by expressing his points indirectly and avoid a direct use of language.

4.3.0. Research Question Two

What are the sociolinguistic phenomena and functions of the strategies in realizing the overall pragmatic functions of maintaining harmony (or otherwise) in their interactions?

In a bid to show politeness, convey impoliteness, maintain face or threaten the face of hearer, the students' use of language reflects some concepts/sociolinguistic phenomena. The sociolinguistic phenomena which are reflected through the use of language function as strategies in realizing the overall pragmatic functions of maintaining harmony (or otherwise) in their interactions. The following sociolinguistic concepts/phenomena are identified:

4.3.1. Phatic Communication

The term phatic communication was coined by Bronislaw Malinowski. It is the use of language in society to fulfil or perform social ritual. Such use of language is more for a social reason than for referential information. It helps to maintain a communion among the members of a linguistic community. Since no man is an island, there is need for people to be in communion with others. On the benefit of communion with others in society, Brown and Levinson, citing Durkheim, remark that the human personality is a sacred thing and one dares not violate it nor infringe its bounds, while at the same time the greatest good is to be in communion with others (44).

Besides, Leech, quoting Malinowski, says that phatic communion is a type of speech in which ties of union are created by the mere exchange of words (*Pragmatics* 203). By implication, language is used to build a kind of relationship, maintain a rapport and not necessarily to 'communicate ideas in the usual term communicate' (Crystal 10).

For Leech, the essence of phatic communication is to keep the conversational ball rolling in talking to strangers or casual acquaintances and no serious exchange of information or opinion is needed (*Pragmatics* 204).

In trying to be polite, the undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, and Madonna University, Okija have used language to reflect phatic communication. Excerpts 4, 5, 7, 11, 25, 26, 32, 33, and 54 among others show that the undergraduates use *greetings, compliments, wishes, enquiries about others' health* to observe social rituals. Besides, the study observes the use of expressions like *happy birthday, happy buffday, success in your exams, how was your exams, happy Valentine, happy Christmas, happy new year, compliments, how are you?, how*

you dey?, long time, your eye?, come and eat, good luck and welcome to reflect phatic communication.

It is important to point out that these expressions are used for the purpose of social rapport, and they are often times, devoid of genuine and sincere feeling but are used to fulfil communion needs. This is in line with Leech's position who comments, 'All such propitiatory expressions are highly stereotyped and may often be felt to be virtually empty of feelings. However, their omission in some circumstances may create a negative, alienating impression, and their presence may contribute to a general atmosphere of mutual goodwill' (*Pragmatics* 214). In a nutshell, such use of language as observed from the students' interactions are simply used to maintain social rapport and to perform the expected societal ritual.

4.3.2 Use of Formulaics

From excerpts 7, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 23, 33, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 45, 67, 70 and 80 it is observed that the students make use of formulaics. These formulaics are seen in the use of words like *thank you, please, excuse me, sorry, and I am sorry*. These expressions were used to show positive and negative politeness. However, in excerpt 62, the word, *Ndoo* (sorry) was used ironically. It was not used to express either positive or negative politeness but an inimical way of reacting to the use of *taboo words* which threatened hearers' positive faces.

In addition, the use of formulaics as observed by the study is in line with F. Coulmas' observation that formulaic is a universal phenomenon found in every speech community (234). According to him, formulaics are accepted ways of responding verbally to variety of situations in order to facilitate social relations indicative of conventions and etiquette (234).

4.3.3. Interrogations

Excerpts 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 17, 52, 54, and 78 show that the undergraduates of the two universities make use of interrogations in an attempt to show politeness, impoliteness and face threatening acts. The use of expressions like *Eeeiyaa! What is the problem?, Have you eaten?, So, you mean it was good?, So, you don leave our Department?* were all used to show positive politeness. In addition, in excerpt 3, a rhetorical question which needed no answer was equally noticed: '*Any need, why should all of us go there*'. Conversely, in excerpt 58, interrogation was used as face threatening: '*But are you more than sixteen years old*? Leech believes that such questions/interrogations pose serious threats to the privacy of the hearer (*Principles* 140).

4.3.4. Honorifics

The essence of honorifics is to show deference towards hearer. In other words, it signals the social gap/relationship between the speaker and addressee. Excerpts 35, 36, 37, 42, 57, 59, 69, 76, 77, 78, 79 among other excerpts have instances of the use of honorifics to show deference. The position is in consonance with the observation of M. Shibatani who comments that the system of honorifics constitutes an integral component of the politeness dimension of language use (552). He further comments that although every language appears to have ways of expressing politeness, only certain languages have well-developed honorifics.

From the excerpts, it was observed that students use titles like *Prof, Dr, Mr, Mummy, Daddy, Father, Sister, Aunty, Ma and Sir* which are normally considered high in social standing. On the contrary, in excerpt 66, the use of the address form, *Mummy* for an unmarried lecturer was face threatening to her. Hence, the employment of silence by the lecturer to show that she perceived the honorific, *Mummy* as face threatening.

4.3.5. Code Mixing

Code mixing can be described as the use of two distinct/different languages in one's speech which often occurs within a phrase, clause or sentence. In other words, it is intraclausal or intrasentential. In excerpts 9, 11, 13, 36, and 60 among others, the study observes the use of code mixing in the students' language use. Some of the expressions are:

1. Please o, O daara ki a san owo ti a je nitori nigba ti a ba san owo ti aje ni a le mo awọn ti o ti san owo wọn pe. (Please it is better we   pay because it is only when we pay that we can know those who are financially up to date).

2. *M bia next week* (If I come by next week)

3. *Any day m huru ya, oburu nke mu na ya* (Anyday I see him, we shall make trouble)

4. *Ok, bia next week*. (Ok, come next week.)

5. O te rọ aka from school. Ndi chọrọ ije bia fυ m ma agbasa meeting. (It is not far from school. Those who want to attend should see me after the meeting.)

6. *A na m agwa ya okwu, o na asi m get out from here*. (I am talking to him and he is telling

   to get out from here.)

7. *Talk louder ka m nu ihe I na ekwu*. (Talk louder so that I can hear you.)

8. *Na true o; I was there too* (It is true; I was there too.)

9. *Abeg o! sorry o, get well soon* (Please o! sorry o, get well soon.)

Obviously, the use of two different codes, Yoruba and English, Igbo and English, Pidgin and English, suggests that both the speakers and the addresses are familiar with both codes. The phenomena of code mixing as observed among the students is a confirmation of R. Mesthrie's position who believes that code mixing leans more towards the metaphorical function or solidarity function as when speaker and listener are both familiar with more than one code and

may interchange them for special effect (443). He concludes that the very act of mixing codes signals allegiance to a particular relationship or local set of values (443).

4.3.6. Code Switching

In code switching, two different languages are used in one's interaction or speech. However, the switch does not in any way occur within the clause or sentence. Rather, it occurs across clauses and sentences. Therefore, it is interclausal/intersentential. Code switching is predicated on certain reasons which may be for accommodation, solidarity, topic or nature of the discourse among other reasons.

It was observed that the undergraduates of both Universities employ code switching in their language use. Excerpts 25, 31, 36, 60, 61 show the use of code switching to reflect politeness, impoliteness, face management and face threatening strategies.

Besides, the researcher observes expressions like:

1. *Enyi gi nwoke bu onye ori*. I am going to report him to the School Authority. (Your friend is a thief. I am going report him to the School Authority).

2. *Aguu na agu m*. Do you have any food with you? (I am hungry. Do you have any food with you?)

3. *Enyere m ya otu puku Naira*. She will use it to buy whatever she needs. (I gave her one Thousand Naira. She will use it to buy whatever she needs.)

The observed situation of code switching is in line with Mesthrie's position who comments that code switching leans towards the transactional, the situational or the pragmatic - as when people

switch code according to topic or interlocutor appropriacy, such as in switching from English to a local language of wider communication (443).

4.3.7. Taboo Words

Excerpts: 49 and 62 show that the students use taboo words to threaten the positive faces of their hearers or as an impolite strategy. Furthermore, it is observed that the students, especially the male students, use taboo words more in public than the female students. The male students use more words that refer to parts of the body which are normally considered offensive when used in public. This explains why M. L. Apte regards taboo words as those that are to be avoided because they are deemed unfit for normal linguistic usage and by community consensus are banned in everyday language in the public domain (284). He further comments that societies with attitudes of disgust or repugnance towards sexual and excretory organs and acts consider them as taboo. Undoubtedly, the undergraduates have used sexual organs and acts in offensive ways, which indirectly, have threatened the faces of their hearers. Other taboo words noticed among the students are attached as appendix.

4.3.8. Swear Words

Apte comments that swear or curse words are those which invoke damnation, misfortune or degradation of the targeted person or object (284). He further reveals that swearing and/or cursing reflect a speakers' wrath or frustration towards a person or an object (284). Excerpt 87 shows that undergraduates employ swear words as a way of venting strong emotions.

4.3.9. Pidgin

Pidgin is said to be an emergent or marginal language between a group of people who do not have a common language. L. Todd recapitulates that pidgin is a lingua franca which develops as a simple means of communication between people speaking different languages (525). J. Aitchison lends credence to that point when he expatiates that a pidgin is a subsidiary language system used for communication by people with no common language (530).

Recently, however, the perception of pidgin has gradually changed such that pidgin has a place in linguistic discussions. Todd puts it remarkably in these words, 'In the period between 1950 and 1975, these languages stopped being described and dismissed as 'marginal language' and bastardized jargons and became central to linguistic discussion on acquisition of language linguistic universals and language change' (524).

Excerpts 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18, 19, 24, 27, 29, 30, 46, 48, 53, 55, 65, 69, 93 and 98 show explicit use of pidgin by the undergraduates. The work observes that the constant use of Pidgin among the students is restricted mainly to informal discussions and not in official discussions. The observation is in line with Abdullahi-idiagbon's findings that on Nigerian campuses, Pidgin expressions are used to womanize or talk about ladies or ladies discussing their male friends and for interpersonal or private discussions. From this, it shows that pidgin is the most common language in student's informal discussions which, invariably, is used to show positive and negative politeness, impoliteness and face threatening acts.

4.3.10. Slang

Slang may be described as an informal and unconventional special speech style of subgroups in society. Excerpts 24, 27, 53, and 72 show the use of slang among the students. The constant use of slang among the undergraduates as observed by the study is in line with the findings of Ononye and Aboh who claim that slang has become part and parcel of Nigerian undergraduates as there is a correlation between the students' slangy expressions and the actual themes and/or aspects of their lives that the expressions connote.

Again, the use of slang as observed by the study is in line with Babatunde and Ayotunde's findings that slangy words are not all dirty terms for indecent ideas. The constant use of slang among the undergraduates is a further confirmation of Allen's position that slang is a necessary and inevitable cultural product of a plural, complex, dynamic and highly interdependent modern society (265). He further remarks that slang is used earnestly or playfully in order to lower or to shift laterally, the register of discourse (266). This position is also in conformity with Aremu's stand that slang is characterized by metaphors, semantic shift, lexical borrowing, coinages and euphemistic expressions. The list of slang gathered from the students' interactions is attached as appendix.

4.3.11. Euphemisms

Euphemisms could be seen as a way of presenting offensive expressions in a milder and more tolerable way. In excerpt 73, the word *home managers* was used as against the term *housewives*. Also, in excerpt 74, the expression *fell asleep* was used instead of *to die*. Also, the researcher heard an expression like *carry* which is used in describing a woman who is pregnant.

4.3.12. Jargons

A jargon is a term which is applied to a specialized register of professionals such as lawyers, doctors and other professions. According to P. Mühlhäusler, the term was introduced by Schuclardt in 1883 (484). Besides, the study observes that the undergraduates of the two universities under study employ jargons in their language use in a bid to show politeness, impoliteness or face threats. Excerpts 28 and 72 among others show the use of jargons in the language use of the students. Sociolinguistic scholars have paid attention to the study of jargons because they believe that it is relevant in sociolinguistic discussions. Mühlhäusler sums the argument when he asserts that the relevance of jargons to sociolinguistics lies primarily in the complex way in which structural and situational information combines as well as the cultural differences in use and tolerance of jargons (484).

4.4.   Research Question Three

Are there socio-cultural features that influence polite or impolite behaviour in students' interactions?

To answer the question and to further confirm the strategies observed among the students, the researcher employed the use of unstructured interview to interview one hundred (100) respondents (50 respondents from each of the two universities) selected for the study. The respondents were made up of lecturers, non-academic staff, food vendors, bus drivers, tricycle operators and small scale business operators. The data gathered were analysed in tables as a continuum and not according to the class of the respondents. Although the interview was unstructured, the researcher had certain topics in mind that she covered during the interview.

4.4.1. Question 1

Do you think that the students have been polite in their language use to you as it should be?

4.4.1.1. Table I Responses to Question 1

Yes	No	Undecided	Total
38(38%)	45 (45%)	17(17%)	100%

From the table, 38% agreed that the students have been polite while 45% disagreed that the students have been polite in their language use. 17% were indifferent. They cared less if the students had been polite or not to them.

In addition, the majority of the respondents who agreed that the students have been polite were mainly the lecturers. On further inquiry, most of the lecturers explained that the students are polite as a result of the social gap between them. While most of the lecturers agree that the students use polite language in order to get favour from them, others say that the use of polite language by the students is relative. According to them, a student might be polite in one situation and might tend to be impolite in another situation. Some lecturers further remark that the students, sometimes, may or may not even be aware of the impolite nature of their utterances or non-verbal dispositions.

Besides, among the 45 % who claimed that the students' language use had been impolite were tricycle drivers, bus drivers, food vendors, most non-academic staff and small business operators. Some members of the non-academic staff claimed that the students, sometimes, are a bit polite to them if they want to get information or assistance from them. According to them, apart from

trying to get assistance from them, the students are not polite to them. Furthermore, other respondents claimed that the students are always impolite, authoritative, and sometimes, abusive in their language use. According to them, the students look down on them because most of them are not very educated or not even educated at all. Besides, they earn their living from the students. Based on these percentages, the research concludes that the students are not as polite to others who are not their lecturers as they are to their lecturers. Again, the study concludes that though the students are somewhat polite to their lecturers, there are also occasions of impoliteness and face threatening.

4.4.2. Question 2

Of the male and female students, who do you think are more polite?

4.4.2.1.   Table II   Responses to Question 2

Female	Male	Both students	Total
62(62%)	34(34%)	4(4%)	100%

Table II shows the responses of the respondents to question 2. 62% of the respondents claimed that the female students are more polite than the male students, while 34% of the respondents claimed that the male students are more polite than the female students and 4% claimed that the female and male students are equal in their polite language use depending on the situation. On further enquiry, most of the respondents claimed that the students are not always as polite as one would have expected. However, the greater percentage claimed that the female students are more polite than the male students on a general term. Since 62% agreed that women are more polite,

34% disagreed and 4% hold that no gender is more polite than the other, the researcher concludes that the female students are more polite than the male students relatively. The position is in line with Brown and Levinson's claim that women are more polite than men (29). Equally, Brown holds the same position through the research she conducted using the Myan community that women are more polite than men. The position is also in line with Holmes' position that women are more polite than men *(Women* 29).

4.4.3. Question 3

Of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba) which of these ethnic groups produce students who are more polite?

4.4.3.1. Table III   Responses to Question 3

Igbo Students	Hausa Students	Yoruba Students	Students from all the ethnic groups
11(11%)	36(36%)	45(45%)	8(8%)

From the responses, 45% agreed that students who are from Yoruba ethnic group are more polite. 36% agreed that students who are from Hausa ethnic group are more polite whereas 11% agreed that students from Igbo ethnic group are more polite than students from Yoruba and Hausa ethnic groups. 8% claimed that ethnic groups have nothing to do with being polite. According to some of the respondents who hold the view, politeness has to do with the individual and not the ethnic group where such an individual comes from. Based on the fact that 45% affirmed that Yoruba students are more polite, 36% claimed that Hausa students are more

polite and 11% maintained that Igbo students are more polite than Yoruba and Hausa students, the work concludes that Yoruba students are more polite followed by Hausa students and, finally, Igbo students.

4.4.4. Question 4

Students whose parents are well educated (at least graduates and above) are more polite than students whose parents are not so well educated (Secondary school and below)

4.4.4.1.   Table IV Responses to Question 4

Yes	No	Both	Total
47(47%)	43(43%)	10(10%)	100%

47% of the respondents claimed that students whose parents are more educated are more polite than the students whose parents are not so educated. According to respondents in this group, parents who are educated know what it means to be polite and they try as much as possible to teach their children to be polite. Conversely, 43% hold that students whose parents are not so educated are more polite. According to some of the respondents, the parents who are more educated are always busy in the offices and never had time to stay with their children so as to teach them how to talk politely. On the other hand, some of the respondents claimed that the less educated parents in particular, are always at home to teach their children how to talk politely. In addition, 10% hold that being polite has nothing to do with parents' educational background. According to some of the respondents, students from less educated background can be polite as well as impolite in their language use. The same is applicable to students from more educated

backgrounds. The study holds that since there is a tiny gap between the two positions that family educational background affects polite or impolite language usage.

4.4.5. Question 5

Does a student's course of study influence his/her polite or impolite language use?

4.4.5.1.   Table V   Responses to Question 5

Yes	No	Undecided	Total
18 (18%)	51(51%	31(31%)	100%

From the table, 18% of the respondents claimed that a student's course of study influences his/her polite or impolite language use. For some respondents in this group, they claim that students in courses like Medicine and English are more polite than students in departments like Law, Political Science, Engineering, Sciences and Management courses.

On the contrary, 51% of the respondents maintained that a student's course of study has no influence on his or her polite or impolite language use. They further remark that politeness/impoliteness is an individual quality and has nothing to do with the course the student is studying. In addition, 31% of the respondents were of the opinion that a student's course of study may or may not influence his/her polite or impolite language use. The research therefore concludes that the course of study does not influence polite or impolite language use. In other words, anybody can be polite or impolite depending on the context of utterance, context of situation, number of the participants and the composition of the participants.

4.4.6. Question 6

Does a student's level of study influence his/her polite or impolite language use?

4.4.6.1. Table VI responses to Question 6

Yes	No	Both	Total
46 (46%)	32 (32%)	22 (22%)	100%

46% of the students agreed that a student's level of study influences his/her polite or impolite language use. According to this group of respondents, students in their 100 level tend to be more polite whereas students in other levels are not as polite as the new students. They pointed out that most final year students are mostly impolite and are not as polite as the 100 level students who are still new and tread with caution. Unlike the final year students who feel they have known everything about the institution and, as such, can say whatever they like.

On the contrary, 32% of the respondents rejected the position. According to them, the level of study does not in any way influence polite or impolite language use. In addition, 22% claimed that one's level of study may or may not influence one's polite or impolite language use. The study therefore concludes that level of study affects polite and impolite language use on campus.

4.4.7. Question 7

Are students from poor socio-economic background more polite than students from rich socio-economic background?

4.3.7.1 Table VII Responses to Question 7

Yes	No	Both
43 (43%)	39 (39%)	18 (18%)

43% of the respondents affirmed that students from poor socio-economic background are more polite than students from rich socio-economic background. On the contrary, 39% claimed that students from rich socio-economic background are more polite than the students from poor socio-economic background. In addition, 18% were of the view that students from poor socio-economic background and students from rich socio-economic background could be polite or impolite depending on the situation. According to them being polite or impolite is not a function of the student's socio-economic background. However, given the tiny gap between those that agreed and those that disagreed, the work concludes that students from poor socio-economic background could be polite or impolite depending on the context of situation, likewise students from rich socio-economic background.

4.5. Research Question 4

Are there differences and similarities in the politeness strategies and face management tact deployed by students of the two universities in their interactions?

In the course of observing the undergraduates of both institutions, the researcher observed that there are more similarities than differences in their language use to show polite, impolite, face threats and face management tact. The similarities and differences were observed at the following stages:

4.5.1. Maxims

The students observed most of the principles, although, sometimes, unconsciously. Instances of such observance by undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University are shown in excerpts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. In addition, excerpts 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 show instances of observance of the maxim and principle by undergraduates of Madonna University. Similarly, excerpts 53, 54, 55, 81, 82, 83, 84 and 85 show instances of maxims violations by the undergraduates. There are more similarities in the observance and violations of the maxims by the undergraduates of the two universities.

4.5.2. Face Management Stage (Positive and Negative Politeness)

The work observes that undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University use strategies like banter, exaggeration, address forms, slang, jargons, white lies and in- group language/dialect to show positive politeness. In addition, the students employ strategies like indirectness, use of formulaic devices, apologies, honorifics, questioning and hedging to show negative politeness.

Similarly, the undergraduates of Madonna University employ strategies like the use of past tense forms, compliments, formulaics, use of vocatives, apologies, jokes, slang, jargons and euphemism to show positive politeness. Again, the students also employ strategies like hedging,

apologies, indirectness, questioning, use of honorifics and use of formulaics to show negative politeness.

Finally, the researcher observed that there is an overlap in the strategies that the undergraduates of both universities employ in terms of maxim observance and violations, positive and negative politeness, impoliteness and face threatening acts.

4.5.3. Impoliteness Strategies

The research shows how the undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University violate maxims of tact, modesty, approbation, quantity, interrupt turns, use taboo language, use animal metaphors, sarcasm, insults, and absolute refusal to engage in a conversation to show impoliteness. The strategies are similar to the impolite strategies that Madonna undergraduates employ. These impolite strategies include violation of maxims of generosity, tact, relation, approbation, agreement, modesty, sympathy, verbal aggression through the use of prosody, swear words and negative refusal.

4.5.4. Face Threatening Strategies

The researcher observed that through impositions, embarrassing remarks, disapproval, order, threat, mentioning of taboo topics, direct criticisms through the use of obligational modals, direct advice through the use of semi-modals 'had better', interruption and use of wrong address forms, Nnamdi Azikiwe undergraduates threaten the positive and negative faces of their hearers.

Similarly, the researcher noticed that students of Madonna University make use of disapproval, imposition, insults, direct request, accusations, wrong use of the present tense of verbs in request, intrusion and direct criticisms to threaten the positive and negative faces of their hearers.

4.5.5. Difference in Address forms

The major difference that exists in the politeness and impoliteness strategies of the undergraduates is mainly in the use of address forms. At Madonna University, whenever the address forms- 'father', 'sister' and 'brother' are used – it usually refers to the ordained priests, sisters and brothers who are working in the University. Whereas at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, address forms such as, 'father', 'sister' or 'brother' may be used freely for people who are not ordained. For example, the word 'father' may be used for generous and kind male students. It may equally be used to address a likeable male student, male executives of various associations on campus and, often times, fat male students. Again, a word like sister is used for female students who belong to the same religious group on campus. In the same way, the word, brother is used among male students who belong to the same Christian or any other group on campus.

Besides, at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, the ordained priests are often times not addressed as 'fathers' except for students who know them already. The reason is that the priests working at Nnamdi Azikiwe University do not always dress in their cassocks that could suggest to a new student or a visitor that they are ordained priests. Therefore, they are mainly addressed as Professors and Doctors by the students. Most times, they are greeted with the honorific, 'sir', as in '*good morning, sir*' except for students who know them. This is unlike in Madonna University where the priests are always dressed in cassocks and are always noticed by new students and visitors alike and are greeted with the honorific, 'father', as in *'good morning, father'* and may even bow as a mark of honour to them. Although a disparity exists in the use of address forms in the universities in this regard, the position is acceptable by the various universities given their peculiar nature.

Chapter Five

Discussion of Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings, recommendations and also concludes the work. In addition, the findings will be discussed by way of addressing the research questions raised at the beginning of the research.

5.2. Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: What are the dominant politeness, impoliteness, face management and face threatening strategies in the conversations of undergraduates?

The study reflects how the students have observed and flouted the Principle of Cooperation and Principle of Politeness at the stage of maxims. At the stage of face management, the study reveals that the students employ strategies like banter, exaggeration, address forms, slang, jargons, white lies, in-group language/dialect, compliments, giving of gifts, use of past tense forms of modals, vocatives, apologies, jokes and euphemism to show positive politeness. From the analysis, it shows that students employ more of positive politeness to show solidarity and friendliness among one another. Conversely, they employ less negative politeness strategies in avoiding impositions and infringements. The negative strategies observed are indirectness, formulaic devices, apologies, honorifics, questioning and hedging.

Again, it is observed that the social gap between the lecturers and the students accounts for the use of negative politeness by the students, to an extent, to reflect the social distance. Although, they are somewhat polite to their lecturers, there are also occasions of impoliteness and face

threatening acts which are analysed in chapter 4. The use of negative politeness is not always applied as expected in conversations with fellow students, non academic staff, bus drivers, tricycle drivers, food vendors, small business operators and other people who deal directly with the students on campus. Several instances of violation of politeness principle, verbal aggression through prosody, negative refusal, interruption of someone's turn, sarcasm, insults, use of taboo words, use of animal metaphors and use of swear words to demonstrate impoliteness by undergraduates of both institutions are shown in the analysis. The study identifies disapproval, imposition, insults, direct requests, accusations, intrusion as the face threatening strategies they employ. The work also reveals that students most times, do not know their utterances, sometimes, threaten their hearers' faces. Such face threats in turn, lead to impolite responses from their hearers in the university setting. Finally, the research discovers that although some students are polite and try to use politeness strategies, the majority of the students are not as polite as the lecturers and other people who work in the selected universities had expected them to be.

Research Question 2: What are the sociolinguistic phenomena and functions of the strategies in realizing the overall pragmatic functions of maintaining harmony (or otherwise) in their interactions?

The study discovers that the students use the strategies to reflect some sociolinguistic phenomena such as phatic communication, code mixing, code switching, Pidgin, slang, taboo words, swear words, euphemisms and jargons. These features are reflected in the students' language use in a bid to reflect politeness, impoliteness, face management and face threatening strategies. These have been demonstrated in chapter 4.

Research Question 3: Are there socio-cultural features that influence polite or impolite behaviour in students' interactions?

From the responses, the study claims that the female students are more polite than the male students. The position is also in line with Brown and Levinson's claim that women are more polite than men (29). So, gender is identified as one of the factors that influences polite or impolite language use. In addition, the study holds that students from Yoruba ethnic group are the most polite, followed by students from Hausa ethnic group and lastly, students from Igbo ethnic group. From their responses, ethnicity is seen as one of the factors that influences polite or impolite behaviour.

Furthermore, from the selected universities, the study discovers that family educational background is not a function of polite or impolite language use. Again, it discovers that a student's course of study has no influence on his or her polite or impolite language use as everybody could be polite or impolite depending on the context of utterance and situation. It also reveals that a student's level of study has an influence on his/her polite or impolite language use. Finally, the study establishes that students from rich or poor socio-economic background can be polite or impolite depending on who are speaking to, the context of situation, composition of the group and other variables.

Research Question 4: Are there differences and similarities in the strategies employed by students of the two universities in their interactions?

There is no significant difference in the language use of the students in terms of their polite, impolite, face threatening acts and face management tact employed by students of the two

universities in their interactions. The only difference noticed is in the address forms of the ordained Catholic priests, sisters and brothers.

5.3. Recommendations

From the study, it has been discovered that most students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Madonna University, Okija are occasionally polite to fellow students depending on the degree of unfamiliarity and, sometimes, familiarity. Again, it was also discovered that most of the students are less polite to non-academic staff, tricycle riders, bus drivers, small scale business operators and food vendors. However, they are more polite to their lecturers. Besides, occasions of impoliteness and face threatening even to lecturers were observed and also analysed.

Based on the findings of research question 1, the study recommends that the body in charge of university education in Nigeria (National Universities Commission) should incorporate topics in politeness in the curriculum of General Studies courses like Communication in English, Nigeria Peoples and Culture and Peace and Conflict Resolution. In addition, lecturers should also talk to students politely despite the social gap between them and the students. This is sequel to the fact that the lecturers are role models to these students. This, no doubt, will help to inculcate in them the sense of being polite in their language use.

Furthermore, students who are noticed to be polite in their language use should always be encouraged. Such students could be rewarded during-award giving ceremonies. Finally, the university management, especially the Department of English, should from time to time organize workshops, symposiums and conferences where experts would deliver papers and further highlight the importance of being polite in interactions.

With regard to research question 3, where the study shows that some ethnic groups are more polite than others in their linguistic use, the study recommends that parents especially of Igbo ethnic group should teach their young children the basics of politeness at home before school age. Basic politeness strategies like 'please', 'thank you', 'I am sorry', 'excuse me', greetings and talking gently should be taught to children. This, no doubt, will set the children on the right path to polite language use in interactions even in later years in life.

5.4. Conclusion

The work considered politeness, impoliteness, face management and face threatening strategies and the way they occur in students' interactions among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Madonna University, Nigeria Okija campus. The work studied these features in terms of their relationship between language use and social behaviour. This explains why the study is sociolinguistic in nature. The study concludes that if politeness is introduced into the university curriculum, it will enable students to learn about others' face wants and avoid face threatening acts in everyday language use in the university system.

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Appendix One
List of   Slang/ Swear Words

1. Watangwan   How are you doing?

2. Wida   How far?

3. Aje butter   Fragile kid

4. Butty   A person from a rich home

5. Mother Theresa   A generous person

6. Prodosco   A proud person

7. Import   To have a boy/girlfriend from another school

8. Injury Period   Financially down

9. Ground no levels   Being financially handicapped

10. Sosolisa   To jump fence

11. P.D.P   A person of affluence

12. Colour black & white   Sleep

13. Papa Emi   Toilet

14. Chaw   Food

15. Alarm de blow   No money

16. I dey H   The state of being hungry

17. Kpot   Thief

18. Gbab   Steal

19. Ginger   To encourage

20. Woz/ cover face   To slap

21. Pack well   Behave properly

22. To bone   To ignore

23. To fashi	To overlook
24. Oyo student	Mind- your- business student
25. Lock up	Students who do not relate with others
26. Jambito	Newly admitted student
27. Flexers	Party attendees
28. Otondo	Dull person
29. Gbedu	Parties
30. Groove	Social activities
31. Choko	Smoke
32. One nation	Wearing a particular thing all the time
33. Shine nose	The act of smoking
34. Shot put	To use the toilet
35. Ahead	Forward
36. Kpai	To die
37. Runs	Prostitution
38. Misyarn	Talk carelessly
39. Manga	Drunk
40. Shekpe	Drinking alcohol
41. MTN	Somebody who is everywhere
42. Paddy	Friend
43. P.P.	Personal person
44. Homie/PP	Best friend/ Personal person
45. Correct person	A Good person

46. Badoski   Bad friend

47. Aproko   Rumour monger

48. Ukpalaka   Gossip (Amibo)

49. Block me   Meet me some where

50. Igbudu   Fat person

51. Matter   Overweight person

52. Morrocation   To be with the opposite sex

53. Vamp   An exposer/Snitch

54. Kponkpi   Relax

55. Lekpa   A slim person

56. Spaghetti   A thin person

57. Songololo   A tall person

58. Pole   A person with height

59. Maltina Bottle   A short fat person

60. 2.2   A short person

61. Sweet sixteen   A decently dressed girl

62. Nice set-up   Nice figured girl

63. Local cham   Shabbily dressed

64. Urgy /Wor wor   An ugly person

65. H.O.D /boss   Someone who deliberately misses classes

66. N.A.S.   (Non- academic students) Unserious students

67. Joroh   Poor result

68. Gbaskified   Good result

69. Otumokpo   Charm

70. Jackometer/ Jackie Appiah   Students who read too much (Book worms)

71. Jakobiance   Students who are studious

72. Aristo   Students who date lecturers

73. Oriyo   Courses often passed

74. Dubbing   Copying during exams

75. Mkpo/ chukuli   (Expo) Already prepared material for malpractice

76. Spirikoko   Spiritually inclined

77. Spiro   A male religious leader

78. Sis   A female religious leader

79. Pale/Old man/ pop c   Father

80. Old girl/maale/mum c   Mother

81. Give me location   Tell me where we are going

82. Run her matter   To continuously persuade a girl to be your friend

83. Hunter   Bachelor

84. Awaiting   Spinster

85. Americana   A Nigerian forming American

86. Brandy   Dettol

87. Shele   What's happening?

88. Jass out   To leave

89. Chikala   A young beautiful lady

90. Congo   Army

91. Anumpama   Goat

92. Ode   A foolish person

93. Itiboribo   Brainless

94. Kala   Gun

95. Atiku   Getting rich in an unusual way

96. Green   Twenty Naira

97. Bunkie   Bunkmate

98. Barny   Girlfriend

99. Creek   Bush

100. Chrisco   Christian disco

101. Gbege   It has happened.

102. klint   To ease oneself

103. Tori   News

104. Okpolo   Big eyes

105. Pincho   A small person

106. Sharp   Good looking

107. Fall hand   Disappointment

108. Run street   To beg

109. Use kafa   Use your head

110.	Alakada	A liar
111.	Cover Face	Slap
112.	Monkey tail	Alcohol drink
113.	Suarez	To bite
114.	Two aside	Wooing a girl
115.	Scope	To ask a girl out
116.	Scuro	Double dater (female)
117.	Cassanova	Double dater (male)
118.	Fibre	Five hundred Naira
119.	Kpokish	Sharp girl
120.	Woski	A young handsome man
121.	Kolo	Crazy
122.	Kpekedere	Hold on
123.	Okpoyemi	A local girl
124.	Chinko	China products
125.	Gobe	Trouble
126.	Whoski	An ugly girl
127.	Onye nzuzu	Stupid person
128.	Onyeime-ezi	Bush person
129.	Onyeara	Mad man
130.	Jounce	A silly person

131.	Ass kisser	Someone says nice things to someone in order to get something from them
132.	Bimbo	A pretty, but empty headed girl
133.	Chicken	A coward
134.	Mgbekes	An unfashionable students
135.	Dickhead	An annoying person
136.	Pam	To hide something
137.	Position me	To take someone out and have a nice time
138.	Duck	To hide something
139.	Flake	An unreliable person who says they'll do something, but then doesn't do it
140.	Butterfly/ kezaya	A girl with a reputation for sleeping with many boys
141.	Gasbag	A person who talks too much
142.	Gee	A computer expert
143.	Geezer	An old person
144.	Koko	Main point of a story
145.	Isiefi	A stupid person
146.	Old bat	An unpleasant old woman

147.	Prat	A fool
148.	Rat	A horrible person
149.	Pig	An unpleasant person
150.	Pyscho	A deranged person
151.	Fag	A gay man
152.	Kpuff	A wealthy person
153.	J.J.C.	An Immature person
154.	Wimp	A weak person
155.	Yahoo	Internet fraud
156.	Step	To move away
157.	Push	To go away
158.	Relax	To calm down
159.	Homeboy	Daddy (Father)
160.	Step brother	Boyfriend
161.	Bros	My brother
162.	Lekke	Fuck up
163.	Narb	To steal

164.	Aboby	My guy
165.	Show	Come here/just come
166.	Weed	To smoke
167.	Gee	Fraud
168.	Gaga	Crazy
169.	Kpako	A poor person
170.	Kpai	A dead person
171.	Shoody	Babe
172.	Legedis/footwagon	Without a means of transportation
173.	Pepper	Money
174.	Pepper-rest	There is enough money.
175.	Sort	Bribe
176.	Olokpa/Eke/kpoti	Police
177.	Jand	Oversea
178.	Borris	Bullet
179.	Aproko	A gossip
180.	Yarn	Talking to someone

181.	Gbedu	Music
182.	Obtain	Stealing something
183.	Lekpa/Shandy	Someone who is thin
184.	Crash	To sleep
185.	I no send you	I don't care about you.
186.	Shuo	What?
187.	Chaw	To eat something
188.	Mumu	Fool
189.	Just dey show	Just coming
190.	Badoo	419
191.	Shayoo	Drink alchohol
192.	Jack	To read
193.	Headmaster	Big head
194.	You dey kolo	You are crazy.
195.	Small-small	Slowly
196.	Collabo	To join in cooking
197.	All join	All included

198. Follow — Make sense

199. Kak — To sit

200. Dope — To smoke

201. Denge — To pose

202. Ojoro — Trickster

203. Jeje — Easy

204. To buy market — To destroy something and you are asked to pay

205. Yawa don gas — There is trouble.

206. Jegede — Walker about

207. Flexy — Living large

208. A beg — Please

209. Rag — To beg

210. Bust my brain — Blow my mind

211. Jones — To slack (Miscoordinate)

212. Too much — Good

213. Bunk — House

214. Para — To get angry easily

215.	Carry talk	Poke noser
216.	Waka	Pass
217.	White	N50
218.	Cala	Money
219.	Kpam	On drugs
220.	Sogi	A correct person
221.	Tfare	Transport money
222.	Tey-tey	Long time
223.	Senior man	A cultist
224.	Agidi	Obesity
225.	To blend	To mix up
226.	Bone-face	To snub somebody
227.	Blush	To Smile shyly
228.	Butty (butter)	An over pampered child
229.	To burn cable	To leak a secret
230.	Confra	Confraternity
231.	Jonser	Failure

232.	Potti	Tasteless food
233.	Pako	A local person
234.	Kawai	To leave
235.	Smally	A small girl
236.	Tush	A fine person
237.	No dulling	Don't prolong things
238.	Bounce	When a lecturer asks a student to leave his office
239.	Fling	Unserious boyfriend
240.	Church member	Fellow cultist
241.	Sorry o!	Sympathizing
242.	How body?	How are you?
243.	Am on/ I dey leak	Menstruating
244.	Kwor/ Gbagam	Mistake in English
245.	Runs	A play girl
246.	Toast	To ask a girl out
247.	Number six (6)	Your brain
248.	Monkey tail	Alcohol drink

249.	Bad belly	A jealous person
250.	Jam	Music
251.	Run show	To prepare food
252.	Blab	Talking nonsense
253.	Twelle twelle	Gently

Appendix Two
List of Taboo Words

1. Bang   Sex

2. Bamboo   The act of love making

3. Kpansh   To make love

4. Lamboshua   Love making

5. Raincoat   Condom

6. Balloon   Condom

7. Okpoh   Prostitute that is not too cheap

8. Otu ocha   White virgina

9. Clint   To go to toilet

10. Kpekus   Virgina

11. Oranges   Breast

12. Booby   Breast

13. Toto   Virgina

14. Dumebi   Dirty girl

15. Dickson   Big penis

16. Third-leg   Penis

17. Toli-toli   Penis

18. Ekporo   A man's testicle

19. Town bike   Prostitute

20. Ashana(Ash)   Harlot

21. Obote   Virgin

22. Suwegbe   A virgin

23. Tokunbo   Non-virgin

24. Express   A person who is not a virgin

25. Roughrider   Condom

26. Strafe   Urge for sex

27. Wank   Masturbating

28. Ikebe   Big buttocks

29. Ukwu   Buttocks

30. Pionyopionyo Sweet babe

31. Sweet orange Sweet virgina

32. Shokoto   Pants

33. Tutu gege   Bad girl

34. Aristo   Prostitute

35. Sis   Gay

36. Lele   Lesbian

37. Dig   To have sex

38. Pinopino   Sex worker

39. Dogoyaro   Long penis

40. Twerk   Shaking buttocks

41. Okoso   Hip dance

42. Milk industry A busty person

43. To Change oil To ejaculate

44. Tangerine/udara A small breast

45. Cowbel   Large breast

46. Side mirror	Hips
47. Hips don't lie	Figure eight (8)
48. Blocos	Scrotum
49. Block	To excrete
50. Hand glove	Condom
51. Otule	Ass

Appendix Three

Questions Used in Unstructured Interview

1. Do you think that the students have been polite in their language use to you as it should be?

2. Of the male and female students, who do you think are more polite?

3. Of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba) which of these ethnic

   groups produce students who are more polite?

4. Students whose parents are well educated (at least graduates and above) are more polite

   than students whose parents are not so well educated. (secondary school and below)

5. Does a student's course of study influence his/her polite or impolite language use?

6. Does a student's level of study influence his/her polite or impolite language use?

7. Are students from poor socio-economic background more polite than students from rich
   socio-economic background?

Appendix Four

School of Postgraduate Studies
Department of English
Nnamdi Azikiwe University
Awka
Anambra State

18 August 2014

The Registrar
Nnamdi Azikiwe University
Awka

Through

Joy Eyisi
Professor of English
Department of English
Nnamdi Azikiwe University
Awka

Dear Sir

Request for Information

I am a doctoral student in the Department of English Language and Literature, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. I am carrying out a research on the topic: 'Sociolinguistic Study of Polite Language among Undergraduates in Selected Universities in Nigeria' and Nnamdi Azikiwe University is among the selected universities.

In order to carry out the research efficiently, I humbly request that the total number of regular undergraduates admitted into the university during the 2013/2014 academic year and the total number of full time academic staff in the university within the same academic year be given to me. This is to enable me to carry out the research effectively.
I look forward to your kind consideration and approval.
Thank you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

Uche Oboko

The Registrar, Sir
Please assist us.

It copy of this mail was received
...
DATED 26/09/14

Appendix Five

School of Postgraduate Studies
Department of English
Nnamdi Azikiwe University
Awka
Anambra State

18 August 2014

The Registrar
Madonna University
Okija

Through

Joy Eyisi
Professor of English
Department of English
Nnamdi Azikiwe University
Awka
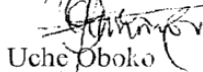
Dear Sir

Request for Information

I am a doctoral student in the Department of English Language and Literature, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. I am carrying out a research on the topic: 'Sociolinguistic Study of Polite Language among Undergraduates in Selected Universities in Nigeria' and Madonna University, Okija is among the selected universities.
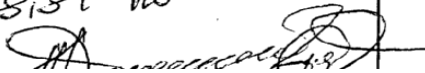
In order to carry out the research efficiently, I humbly request that the total number of regular undergraduates admitted into the university during the 2013/2014 academic year and the total number of full time academic staff in the university within the same academic year be given to me. This is to enable me to carry out the research effectively.
I look forward to your kind consideration and approval.
Thank you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

Uche Oboko

The Registrar, Madonna University
Okija

Please assist us.

Received by omu Han)
30/9/14

Appendix Six (A)

NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA
NUMBER OF REGISTERED 1ST YEAR UNDERGRADUATE REGULAR DEGREE STUDENTS, 2013/2014 ACADEMIC SESSION
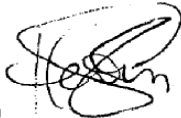
Serial No.	Faculty/Department	No. on roll Male	Female	Total
A.	**Agricultural Sciences**	**107**	**184**	**291**
1.	Agric Economics & Extension	19	22	41
2.	Animal Science	22	41	63
3.	Crop Science & Horticulture	10	18	28
4.	Fisheries	24	17	41
5.	Food Science & Technology	15	53	68
6.	Forestry & Wildlife	10	13	23
7.	Soil Science	07	20	27
B.	**Arts**	**190**	**291**	**481**
8.	English	23	59	82
9.	History	41	40	81
10.	Igbo, African & Asian Studies	07	20	27
11.	Linguistics	16	49	65
12.	Modern European Languages	11	22	33
13.	Music	18	10	28
14.	Philosophy	32	20	52
15.	Religion & Human Relations	19	29	48
16.	Theatre Arts	23	42	65
C.	**Basic Medical Sciences**	**73**	**95**	**168**
17.	Anatomy	42	49	91
18.	Human Physiology	31	46	77
D.	**Biosciences**	**298**	**424**	**722**
19.	Applied Biochemistry	66	85	151
20.	Applied Michrobiology & Brewing	91	157	248
21.	Botany	52	57	109
22.	Parasitology & Entomology	38	67	105
23.	Zoology	51	58	108
E.	**Education**	**334**	**594**	**928**
24.	Adult Education	16	46	62
25.	Business Education	49	80	129

Appendix Six (B)

No.	Department			
26.	Educational Foundations	51	149	200
27.	Educational Management & Policy	24	61	85
28.	Early Childhood & Primary Education	08	27	35
29.	Guidance & Counselling	11	34	45
30.	Human Kinetics & Health Education	11	25	36
31.	Library & Information Science	27	38	65
32.	Science Education	95	125	220
33.	Technical Education	42	09	51
F.	**Engineering**	**495**	**66**	**561**
34.	Agricultural & Bioresources Engineering	20	05	25
35.	Chemical Engineering	51	25	76
36.	Civil Engineering	60	01	61
37.	Electrical Engineering	99	05	104
38.	Electronics & Computer Engineering	89	17	106
39.	Industrial Production Engineering	38	05	43
40.	Mechanical Engineering	82	04	86
41.	Metalurgical & Material Engineering	28	01	29
42.	Polymer & Textile Technology	28	03	31
G.	**Environmental Sciences**	**243**	**60**	**303**
43.	Architecture	61	10	71
44.	Building	34	01	35
45.	Environmental Management	14	11	25
46.	Estate Management	36	13	49
47.	Fine & Applied Arts	16	06	22
48.	Geography & Metalurgy	23	11	34
49.	Quantity Surveying	21	03	24
50.	Surveying & Geoinformatics	38	05	43
H.	**Health Sciences & Technology**	**154**	**310**	**464**
51.	Medical Laboratory Sciences	44	65	109
52.	Nursing Sciences	05	144	149
53.	Physiotherapy & Medical Rehabilitation	41	41	82
54.	Radiography	64	60	124
I.	**Law**	**92**	**102**	**194**
55.	Law	92	102	194
J.	**Management Sciences**	**322**	**469**	**791**
56.	Accountancy	67	112	179
57.	Banking & Finance	44	70	114
58.	Business Administration	64	69	133

Appendix Six (C)

59.	Cooperative Economics & Management	46	87	133
60.	Enterpreneural Studies	29	19	48
61.	Marketing	22	53	75
62.	Public Administration	50	59	109
K.	**Medicine**	**62**	**36**	**98**
63.	Medicine	62	36	98
L.	**Pharmaceutical Sciences**	**52**	**67**	**119**
64.	Pharmacy	52	67	119
M.	**Physical Sciences**	**369**	**191**	**560**
65.	Computer Science	96	48	144
66.	Geological Sciences	80	41	121
67.	Geophysics	05	06	11
68.	Mathematics	34	09	43
69.	Physics & Industrial Physics	54	17	71
70.	Pure & Industrial Chemistry	66	49	115
71.	Statistics	34	21	55
N.	**Social Sciences**	**288**	**333**	**621**
72.	Economics	55	39	94
73.	Mass Communication	32	118	150
74.	Political Science	81	57	138
75.	Psychology	63	56	119
76.	Sociology	57	63	120
Total number registered		**3079**	**3222**	**6301**

Omenkeche I.C.

DR (Admissions)

FOR : REGISTRAR

Appendix Seven

MADONNA UNIVERSITY NIGERIA OKIJA CAMPUS
Number of Registered 1st Year Undergraduates
Regular Degree Students, 2013/2014 Academic Session

STUDENT ENROLLMENT 2013/2014

S/N	DEPARTMENT	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1	**Management**			
i.	Accountancy	50	78	128
ii.	Banking & Finance	11	16	27
iii.	Business Administration	65	68	133
iv.	Marketing	5	10	15
2.	**Social Science**			
i.	Public Administration	44	44	88
ii.	Economics	44	52	96
iii.	Mass Communication	30	125	155
iv.	Political Science	72	34	106
v.	Sociology	5	23	28
vi.	Philosophy	2	-	2
vii.	Psychology	13	18	31
viii.	Library Sci. & Information Science	4	5	9
3.	**Education and Arts**			
i.	Business Education	5	6	11
ii.	English Language	8	15	23
iii.	Computer Science Education	6	3	9
	Total	364	497	861

Nwabueze, Ekwutosi V

For: Registrar