

**POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN SELECTED NIGERIAN  
NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS**

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**JUNE, 2016**

**TITLE PAGE**

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**A PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE  
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THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS DEGREE IN ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE**

**SUPERVISOR: PROF. (BARR). FLORENCE O. ORABUEZE**

**JUNE, 2016**

**APPROVAL PAGE**

This research Project has been read and approved as having met the standard required for the award of Master of Arts (MA) degree in the Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

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**CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this Research Project entitled **Politeness Strategies in Selected Nigerian Newspaper Editorials** is an independent study carried out by Mgbeoji Bede Ngoka with the registration number PG/MA/14/67587, a postgraduate student of the department of English and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. This work is original and has not been presented in part or full for the award of any diploma or degree in this or any other University.

**SUPERVISOR: Prof. (Barr). F.O. Orabueze**

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## **DEDICATION**

This Research is dedicated to Almighty God ó my Guide, Strength and Teacher.

And

to my mother and siblings.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My immense gratitude goes to my project Supervisor, Prof. (Barr). F.O. Orabueze, whose suggestions, corrections and guidelines, at the various stages of this work were germane to its completion. Her outstanding contributions to my academic achievement will remain evergreen.

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I am forever indebted to them.

## Abstract

This work examines the politeness features in selected Nigerian newspaper editorials of *The Daily Sun*, *The Nation*, and *ThisDay* newspapers. The study assesses how the various politeness maxims are exploited and violated in the selected editorials. The researcher adopted Geoffrey Leech's Politeness Principle (1983) model for the study. A text-based descriptive methodology was used to analyze the twelve editorials purposively selected from the three national newspapers, which formed the data for the study. The issues on the selected editorials border basically on politics, democracy, and other national issues in relation to 2015 general elections. Drawing examples from language use in the editorials, the findings reveal that the editors' language use violated the politeness maxims such as the approbation maxim, tact maxim, agreement maxim, modesty maxim, and Pollyanna or consideration maxim, although there are instances where the editors' utterances obeyed the politeness maxims. The study concludes that there were more violations of the maxims than their exploitation; hence, there is a great world of difference between the exploitation and violation of the identified maxims as the language use in the editorials deviated from the principles of politeness maxims. This is consequent upon the editors' bid to report events the way they are. In the light of the foregoing, the study, therefore, recommends that language users and editorial writers should be encouraged to learn, imbibe, and incorporate polite expressions in disseminating information to society. By so doing, they will be able to uphold the maxims of politeness appropriately, irrespective of the situations confronting them.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Whether at creation or during evolution, language has been associated with human beings. It is undoubtedly one of the human traits; and its dynamism as an instrument of communication among human beings cannot be over-emphasized. The creativity of language makes it possible to have novel words and structures. Its being species-specific gives humans the exclusive right to use it according to their wishes. Language as a human phenomenon makes communication possible within the context of social activities like journalism, law, advertising et cetera. A lot of differences exist in the language use of these varieties, though they are all variants of the same language. Each variety is distinct based on the social activities and context of use. In every information flow, language plays a vital role. Information is transmitted by Nigerian print-media chiefly by means of the English language. Although the print-media deals with divergent issues, one of their main tasks under a democratic rule is to monitor the political life of the people and draw the attention of the public through effective use of language on how politicians are fulfilling their responsibilities to the [sic] society (Duyile Dayo 110). The public, therefore, need to be kept abreast with events and happenings within and outside their immediate environments.

An editorial is a corporate voice or position of a media organization on any given issue of public interest. The editorial is associated with the leader. Duyile reports that an editorial is the opinion of the newspaper simply written for the understanding of readers in order to guide them in taking decisions on the issues being discussed (120). Moreover, Duyile defines an editorial as a comment or an argument for supporting the information such as a particular policy, an action, or an idea (122). It may refer to an argument in a newspaper used to show the logical reasoning with the purpose of persuading the readers to oppose or support an idea, policy or an action based on facts available. Stella Okunna considers an editorial as a critical interpretation or an

evaluation of significant issues, usually contemporary events in such a way as to inform, educate, influence and entertain the reader (221). Kulmar Bhatia points out that views and opinions of a newspaper are presented in the editorial page; accordingly, the newspaper's analysis, discussion, opinion or verdict on the issues of the day are commonly considered as the editorial (113). As a newspaper's contribution to communication process, it can comment in support of a particular policy or argue against an idea, policy or an action based on the available facts. To the researcher, an editorial is an opinion piece, a critical evaluation, interpretation and analysis of issues, mostly topical issues by a newspaper. Readers turn to editorial (pages) to see the opinion of a newspaper on an issue, either to get information or guidance on the issue. Research indicates that readership of editorials or search for editorial comments on burning issues are highest during the period of election, crisis, and other important developments in the nation (Micheal Ukonu 15). Editorials cannot be written in a vacuum; there must be probing issues of public significance and such issues must be intimated to the target audience.

Therefore, the editorial writers, whether analyzing, criticizing, attacking, providing information or reporting news, find themselves communicating with different classes of individuals in society, who can read but may or may not understand properly the language being used. This is because language is so subtle that news-writers' or editors' language use can be misconstrued, or can confuse and/or confound the readers. It is expected that the purpose of news writing is to convey news to the public (readers) in a vivid and explicit style and not to confuse or confound them. Therefore, there is the need for a balanced interpretation and understanding of the language use of editorial writers since the relevance of communication can only be achieved or appreciated when the transfer of meaning from one human mind to another is understood (William O'Grady 11). To this end, it is worth to note that the ability to interpret the intention of the speaker's message or understand the underlying meaning of an individual's language use or utterance lies within the ambit of pragmatics.

George Yule in Wale Osisanwo sees pragmatics as concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by the listener (55). Pragmatics seeks to explain aspects of meaning which find their way in the plain sense of words and structures as explained in semantics. Another point to note is Jacob Mey's definition of pragmatics in relation to the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society (6). This position receives tacit confirmation from Stephen Levinson's affirmation that pragmatics is the study of the relations between language and context that are grammaticalized or encoded in the structure of a language (9). It is against this backdrop that the researcher sees pragmatics as the study of the analysis of utterance that does not follow straightforward reference from the formal semantic import of utterance. It could come in form of presupposition or contextual variables that constitute meaning. In addition, it is the study of rules and principles, which govern language use as against the abstract idealized rules of grammar (Uchenna Agbedo 354). However, a thorough examination of these definitions above suggests that the fulcrum of pragmatics is the study of language use in communication.

The word pragmatics is derived from a Greek word Pragma meaning deed or action. According to Sam Onuigbo quoted by Agbedo, pragmatics was formulated by Charles S. Peirce to represent that doctrine, which tests truth by practical consequences (18). Gerald Gazdar states that pragmatics means truth conditions (79). This means that what we need in addition is some tools that can interpret the meaning of utterances.

As a field of language study, pragmatics is relatively new. Its origin lies in the philosophy of language and the American philosophical school of pragmatism. As a discipline within language science, its development has been traced back to early 20th century scholars like Charles Morris, Rudolph Carnap and Charles S. Peirce (Akmajian et al 363). These scholars made a distinction within syntax (relation of signs), semantics (relation of signs and what they denote) and

pragmatics (the relation of signs to users and interpreters). The concern of Morris was to outline the general shape of semiotics (science of signs).

Taking off from Charles Morris, John L. Austin, a British philosopher who through his posthumous publication *How to do Things with Words* proposed the speech act theory. Then we have Jerrold J. Katz and Jerry A. Fodor who attempted to incorporate meaning into formal linguistic theory. Other linguists such as Row Rose and Robin Lakoff also attempted to incorporate most of their works on performatives, felicity conditions and presuppositions into the framework of linguistic study. However, the contributions of John L. Austin, John R. Searle and Herbert P. Grice turned out to be the actual foundation for modern pragmatics. These three eminent scholars were concerned with utterance meaning rather than sentence or word meaning. They were interested in the unique language use of actual speakers to perform linguistic acts in actual situational contexts in order to accomplish specific goals. Some other scholars like Robin Lakoff, Geoffrey Leech, Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson later were concerned with politeness in utterance. Marina Terkourafi in Akin Odebunmi classified research on politeness into two groups: traditional view and postmodern view (399). The classification is a representative of the nature, scope and trends of research in politeness study. The traditional view, advanced by scholars such as Lakoff, Leech, Brown and Levinson, and so on, work within the Gricean maxims and speech acts. On the other hand, the postmodern view, advanced by scholars such as Gino Eelen, Sara Mills, Richard J. Watts, and so on, work within the social theory, taking insights from the notion of *habitus*. It was further divided into: theory-driven view, and data-driven view (Akin Odebunmi 399).

However, Leech notes that the concept of politeness can be dated back to the eighteenth century, when it became an instrument of power in the hands of the middle-to-upper classes (284). Its full-fledged development and/or study from a pragmatic point of view, which began to appear in the mid-1970s, is attributed to the pioneering works of the traditional theorists such as

Lakoff and others, who treated politeness as a concept that is based on social maxims. Susan Fitzmaurice in Leech sees politeness as a dexterous management of our words and actions whereby we make other people have better opinion about us and themselves (285). Although politeness is ubiquitous in language use, it could be viewed as the practice of organizing linguistic actions in such a way that it is perceived as inoffensive, being in conformity with the existing social expectations that produce cooperative communication, and the concern a speaker has for his listener when speaking, bearing in mind the convention of maintaining social equilibrium, and friendly relations in communication (Judith Okoro 2). Another way of viewing it is that Politeness involves taking account of the feelings of others. Being linguistically polite therefore involves speaking to people appropriately in the light of their relationship with the speaker (Janet Holmes 280). Obviously, the growth of technology and mass communication in recent years has attracted the attention of scholars to this area of study – politeness in print media.

Therefore, drawing upon a pragmatic politeness approach, this research will largely use language of journalism (editorials) which borders on politics/ government, cultural events, and other burning issues in society. This will help to examine how editors in their editorials consciously or unconsciously manipulate forms, structures and/or employ politeness strategies in conveying information to the public, and to make the readers understand the language being used by the application of pragmatic principles.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

According to Emmanuel Akpan, language and style are personal to editorial writers (70). Each has his/her language and style. Despite each editor's uniqueness in an editorial, his/her purpose to convince or persuade is still retained. Editorials can argue, praise, satirize, persuade/ influence or project a course. Editorials also are written from different perspectives to achieve a target. It could be an explanatory/interpretative text, persuasive text,

constructive/critique text and so on. The angle an editor chooses determines his language use. Consequently, the editor in presenting or approaching any issue employs effective use of language to reach the audience. Hence, the need for a balanced interpretation and understanding of language use for the day's happenings is necessary.

However, the majority of the studies carried out on newspaper editorials were done using the framework of discourse analysis, syntax, vocabulary approach and so on. Few if not fewer works on newspaper editorials were done using pragmatic and/or politeness strategies. This means that the pragmatic politeness of newspaper editorials deserves more scholarly attention. Thus, this study sets out to investigate the politeness of Nigerian newspaper editorials with a view to identifying the politeness features reflected in the language use of editorial writers, providing the interpretation of the selected editorial texts and the effect of the information on the readers. In addition, editors use the English language in several ways to approach or present issues; it becomes necessary that the study of intended meaning and how to unravel what is said and what is actually meant be extensively explored. Thereafter, the research examines the use of honorifics by editors.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The predominant use of the English language in the Nigerian print media informs the main interest of this research, which examines the extent to which editorial writers' use of language in disseminating information can be interpreted using the politeness strategies of pragmatics. The objective is to find out how newspaper editorials can be analyzed, understood more effectively and how encoded meaning in utterance or written texts can be decoded by readers with insights from pragmatic politeness. The specific objectives of this work include the following:

- i. To identify the politeness maxims exploited in the selected newspaper editorials.
- ii. To examine the politeness maxims violated in these newspaper editorials and

iii. To assess honorifics in use in the selected newspaper editorials.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study will be guided by the following questions:

1. Do editors of newspaper editorials exploit politeness maxims in the selected newspaper editorials?
2. How far do editors of newspaper editorials violate peculiar politeness maxims in the selected editorial texts?
3. To what extent do they use honorifics as politeness markers in these selected editorials?

#### **1.5 Relevance of the Study**

An editorial is an unsigned article expressing a newspaper's opinion on a matter of public interest. Therefore, understanding the message, which the editor is passing across to his audience, is paramount. It is expected that the findings of this study will be of benefit to students in English language, and curriculum planners who may wish to incorporate the study of pragmatics into the English learning curriculum. In addition, it will be useful to researchers in mass communication, political science and linguistics who may wish to work in the area of pragmatics. Also, it will contribute meaningfully to the learning of the English language in Nigeria.

#### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study is embarked on to account for written utterances which convey meaning in context. However, this study is limited to three national dailies: *The Daily Sun*, *The Nation* and *ThisDay* newspapers published between October, 2014 and March, 2015. The issues in the editorials are confined to politics, democracy and national issues. The research is to account for how pragmatic principles assist in understanding the message and certain forms of language use of these editorial writers. It is not an attempt to criticize any newspaper and/or the Nigerian government.



## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The preoccupation of this chapter is to review works that are relevant to this study. The chapter begins by reviewing related works on politeness, pragmatics, and newspaper publication with special focus on editorials. It also reviews related works on language as a context-based phenomenon. Although the review is not constrained by any geographical delimitation, attempts would be made to narrow it down to the Nigerian situation. It is noted that some scholars have carried out large chunks of works— theoretical, empirical books and articles related to this concept. In most of the studies, politeness has been conceptualized especially as strategic conflict-avoidance or as strategic construction of cooperative social interaction (Gino Eelen 21, Richard Watts 47). The review of their works will show us the way forward to the understanding of this present study. However, it is beyond the limits of this study to give an exhaustive review of politeness-related research. Some critical, and/or thorough works, as well as some analyses of politeness studies are presented here.

Akin Odebunmi carried out a study on politeness and face management in the conversational interaction between doctors and patients in Southwestern Nigeria (16). The study was motivated by the paucity of work on medical discourse, and the need to identify the tact engaged in the interaction for a better understanding of medical communication. Information was collected through tape recordings, interviews and observation of interactions between doctors and patients in selected teaching, state-owned and private hospitals. The data collected were analyzed, using insights from the concepts of politeness. It was observed that the conversational interactions were characterized by the observance/employment of the tact maxim, the generosity maxim, the sympathy maxim, the pollyana principle, face-threatening acts without redress and face-threatening acts with redress (positive politeness). Odebunmi concluded that politeness and effective face management exert positive influence on medical procedures and determine the extent to which orthodox medicine can be acceptable in southwestern Nigeria. The study has

bearing with this present work because editors convey information to larger society through positive or negative language use.

In another study, Odebunmi also examined politeness and relational work in print media political interviews in Nigeria (339-53). He offered a modified model of relational work for better workability with reference to political interviews in Nigeria. Thirty editions of each of *TELL* and *The News* were collected and studied for politeness features. The editions studied were those published between January 2000 and December 2004. The researcher used only the interviews conducted with renowned politicians and old-serving government functionaries to delineate the study. Odebunmi identified three aspects of relational work, which are anchored to context, in print media political interviews in Nigeria. These are politic verbal behaviour, polite verbal behaviour and impolite verbal behaviour. He contended that the theory of relational work is sufficiently broad to absorb relevant principles and data-driven postmodern theories. Odebunmi's study is relevant to the present work because newspaper editorial text is a monologic discourse, hence it can be explored using any politeness theoretical perspective to examine how the communicator (editor) exploits some politeness strategies in disseminating information to the public.

Another scholar Moses A. Aremu investigated the pragmatics of impoliteness in invective songs of southwestern Nigerian politicians (18). His study focused on filling the existing lacuna in pragmatic studies by exploring fourteen randomly selected invective songs of southwestern Nigerian politicians. The researcher utilized the modified version of Eckert and McConnell Ginet's (1992) community of pragmatics (CofP) as a pragmatic tool for data analysis. Moses's findings revealed that invective songs of southwestern Nigerian politicians were characterized by polite and belligerent utterance, indirect speech acts, polite confrontational behaviour, imagery, symbolism et cetera. The researcher concluded that community of practice clearly explicates the signification in invective songs of southwestern Nigeria politicians, and

shows the participants' intention in the discourse. However, the study did not focus on pragmatics of politeness strategies in selected Nigerian newspaper editorials; it aimed at analyzing the speeches of political leaders and discourse of political interviews in southwestern Nigeria. Thus, the study is relevant to this present work because it strives to ascertain polite and impolite expressions that characterize speeches of politicians. Similarly, the present work is geared towards examining written utterances of editors particularly on political issues surrounding the 2015 elections.

Penelope Brown and Steven Levinson's work, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. The researchers made use of data gathered from Tamil speakers from Southern India, Tzeltal speakers in Mexico, America and British speakers of English to provide systematic description of cross-linguistic politeness phenomena (1977-98). In classification, Bruce Fraser says that "Brown and Levinson's theory represents the face-saving view, as it builds on Erving Goffman's notion of face and on an English folk term, which ties face up with notions of being embarrassed or humiliated, or 'losing face' (Bruce Fraser 109). The face is understood as something that is emotionally invested, and that can be not only lost, but also maintained or enhanced. Brown and Levinson state that every individual has two types of face, positive and negative. They define positive face as the individual's desire that one wants to be appreciated in social interaction, and negative face as the individual's desire for freedom of action, and freedom from imposition. The theory assumes that most speech acts, for example, requests, offers and compliments, inherently threaten either the hearer's or the speaker's face-wants, and that politeness is involved in redressing those face-threatening acts (FTA). Based on these assumptions, three main strategies for performing speech acts are distinguished: positive politeness, negative politeness and off-record politeness. Positive politeness aims at supporting or enhancing the addressee's positive face, whereas negative politeness aims at softening the encroachment on the addressee's freedom of action or freedom from imposition. The third

strategy, off-record politeness, means flouting one of the Gricean maxims on the assumption that the addressee is able to infer the intended meaning. Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness has been the most influential framework of politeness so far, and it provides an important basis for the discussion of the notions of politeness and face-wants. However, Brown and Levinson's study dwells on politeness of face-wants, which participants desire and perform during communication. Its relevance to the present study is that readership of editorials and/or those addressees in editorials deserve to be addressed in a polite or civilized way. Editors also protect the image of their addressees by resorting to pragmatic and/or politeness strategies that denote reverence, deference and respect.

In addition, Tae-Seop Lim and John Bowers in their study "Face works, solidarity, approbation and tact, extended Brown and Levinson's theory to include face-wants and works which they believe that interlocutors desire, and perform in communicative situation" (23-26). They summarized that humans have three distinct face wants: the want to be included or fellowship face, the want that their abilities be respected, or competence face and the want not to be imposed on or autonomy face. The thrust of their study is that it strives to show some consideration to addressees particularly in oral discourse situation. Lim and Bowers' study shares similar view with this present study, which is politeness strategies in newspaper editorials. That commonality is that editors present information in a tactful manner in order to accommodate or take cognizance of the readers/listeners interest, noting that they should not impose constraints on the readers (listeners).

In another study by Sylvester Mutunda on sociolinguistic study of politeness strategies in the Lunda culture. Mutundu examined a descriptive analysis of politeness strategies in Lunda, a Bantu language of the Central African Plateau in the northwestern corner of Zambia (21-22). Drawing on the works of Roger Brown and Albert Gilman, Brown and Levinson, the study described how and when address forms such as pronouns, kinship terms, teknonyms, personal

names, and other strategies like taboos and euphemisms are used by the Lunda in their verbal interactions in order to convey aspects of politeness. The researcher used data from live and recorded conversations, short telephone interviews, letters, and introspection. It was discovered that the choices of linguistic strategies by interlocutors are guided by the social relationship that exists among them. Mutundu further revealed that relationship between the Lunda is based on age, social status, and kinship. However, the researcher noted that age (*nyaka*) is not the only dominant index for expressing relationships between people. Certain peculiarities should be noticed (For example, treating a wealthy youth with the same respect as an older person, as long as he uses his wealth to the benefit of others). He also pointed out that another common feature of the Lunda concept of relationship is the extension of kinship terms to non-kins. Finally the researcher concluded by arguing that with urbanization caused by exodus from cities to rural areas and vice versa, modernization and adoption of Western way of life have gradually affected the polite linguistic and cultural behaviour of Lunda culture. Though the study deviates from this present study, it emphasizes the fact that certain situations or factors can influence and/or determine one's polite linguistic strategy.

Being extremely aware that pragmatics is centrally concerned with analysis of language use in any discourse situation, whether spoken or written, language forms the basis for human interaction, and as a result, features in every sphere of human life. Pragmaticists are interested not only in the actual use of grammar, but also in the usage principles, in trying to find a grammar that accounts for the way language is put to use, on the assumption that language would not be as it is if it was not used for communication (Peter Grundy 225). However, some scholars have advanced large number of studies on editor's language use in print media especially on newspaper editorials.

In the study carried out by Bonyadi Alireza and Samuel Malek they examined a contrastive textual analysis of selected headlines culled from the editorials of the English

newspaper— *The New York Times*, and the Persian newspaper, *The Tehran Times*. The study investigated the textual and rhetoric strategies employed by the newspapers for propagating their preferred ideologies. The outcome of the study shows that headlines in the two newspapers presented a subjective attitude of the writers towards the topic. However, the analysis of the data made it clear that differences exist between the two sets of headlines in terms of presupposition. The presupposition employed in *New York Times* headlines include lexical, existential and nominalization. While in *Tehran Times*, the frequent use of presupposition as a textual strategy is for persuasive purposes. The researchers noted that there is a similarity in the use of rhetorical device, ÷parallelismö. The *New York Times* uses same patterns of words and structures, while the *Tehran Times* uses same class of words, repetition and metonymy (22).

In a similar study, Rita Onyeka studied audience perception of editorial pages in Nigerian newspapers, using New Haven, Enugu as her area of study. The researcher's aim was to find out the information appeal of the editorial pages on the readers and the level of importance readers attach to the pages. The researcher used selective perceptive theory, employed survey method and used questionnaire as a tool to elicit information. The researcher observed that editorial pages of the newspapers are educating, entertaining, exciting, and influence the readers to a great extent, despite the different perceptions they have towards editorials (40). Though the study did not focus on the present study, its relevant to the present work is that editorial pages as well as editorial texts are educating, entertaining, and influence the readers.

In the study of concepts and emerging theories, Moses Ani and Osondu Anyadike investigated the relatedness in the concepts that make up the contents of editorials in *The Guardian*, *Vanguard* and *Daily Sun Newspapers* using Grounded Theory (38). Christina Goulding opined that ÷Researchers adopt Grounded Theory when the topic of interest has been relatively ignored in literature or has been given superficial attentionö(8). In the study, Ani and Anyadike used recent dates of the editorials on the issues, nature or pattern of presentation,

language use, and persuasive tone. The researchers grouped the data according to subject matter or theme, which includes politics/government, personalities, education, environment, agriculture and so on. It was found that on the slant of the editorials, the newspapers were unfavourable in their position to issues relating to government and the masses. The research revealed that all the words used to portray ground on which a theoretical constant can emerge on how unfavourable slants convey contempt as seen in the newspaper editorials; hence, this informs the newspapers' view on government approach to issues of national interest. More so, the study shows that the style of presentation given to various issues differ from one newspaper to the other – some were historical, others analytical, descriptive and so on. From the study, it was observed that almost all the editorials canvass for change from wrong behaviour to right behaviour.

In a similar study, Tongsibsong Jinatta examined genre analysis of English editorials, regarding hard news in *broadsheet* and *tabloid* newspapers with focus on move analysis. The study investigated structural organization of the editorials through examination of common move structures, the similar and different attributes in the move structures of the genre, and communicating intentions of the genre. The data consist of thirty English editorial texts of broadsheet newspaper and thirty texts of tabloid newspaper. The analysis of the moves revealed that there is one common move structure in the broadsheet newspaper's editorials, which consists of four moves. On the other hand, editorials of the tabloid newspaper have two common move structures. The first is similar to the structure of the broadsheet newspaper's editorials. However, the other common move structure is different (42). Jinatta discovered that six similar features were found in genre analysis of the editorials in broadsheet and tabloid newspapers: (1) The total number of moves found in texts of both *The Washington Post* and *New York Post*; (2) the number of common moves; (3) the number of optional moves; (4) the communicative purposes of common moves; (5) the communicative purposes of an optional move, and (6) the writing style of the text. On the other hand, there are three different features in those texts: (1) the

number of common moves, (2) the number of common move structures, and (3) the consistence of a common move structure. In addition, the study discovered that the main communicating intentions of the English editorials genre is to motivate and persuade readers to consider ideas or to give opinions that oppose or support the information provided in those editorials as well as to express strong opinions in order to stimulate some reaction from readers. Jinatta's study is very central to the present work because it focused on analysis of newspaper editorials; hence, inference could be drawn from the study to buttress or elucidate the terrain of language use in Nigerian newspaper editorials.

In another study, Febisola Olowolayemo examined the verisimilitude in editorial cartoons (texts) from a pragmatic perspective in which nine selected editorial cartoons from *The Punch Newspaper* were used for data analysis (52). Grice's conversational implicature was adopted in the analysis. The cartoons (texts) were analyzed within the prevailing social ills in society ó corruption, abuse of public office, violence, scarcity of basic commodities and other social vices. The researcher found out that the stories or incidents reported in some Nigerian newspapers are the major content surrounding these cartoons; hence, readers find it easier to deduce different meanings from them. This means that cartoons are proofs that the media do not present socio-political issues in a vacuum but rely on prevalent issues in society to pass their messages across to readers.

Also, Steve Opara investigated the grammar of selected editorials in five Nigerian newspapers. It specifically addressed grammatical categories such as noun phrase, nominalization, transitivity and modality in relation to their functions in editorials in the Nigerian context. The researcher employed a descriptive approach of stylistic analysis as a framework within Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (47-8). From the study, it was observed that editorial writers use complex sentences, that is, many clauses in sentences to express critical opinions or give more detailed information to draw attention, and when these sentences are



looked at closely, they seem ambiguous. In the study, the extensive use of  $\neg we\emptyset$  is a feature in all the newspaper editorials analyzed.  $\neg We\emptyset$  represents the body of the papers, which stands for the view of the whole organization and not the editor, that is, the newspaper's standpoint on an issue. Grammatical items and features help the editorial writers to realize the ideational, interpersonal and textual functions reflecting meaning in the editorial. The researchers concluded that although these editorials share some common grammatical features, there are still distinct features peculiar to each newspaper. The relevance of their study to the present study is the need for a balanced interpretation and understanding of language use despite each editor's uniqueness or peculiarity in an editorial, hence the present study is on pragmatic analysis of selected newspaper editorials.

Investigating the pragmatics of selected editorial cartoons in *Vanguard Newspaper*, Hanafi Afeez examined how pragmatic elements could be employed to account for the ways in which texts in cartoons and/or their utterances depict and satirize socio-cultural realities in Nigeria (9). The sixteen pocket cartoons data selected from *Vanguard* were analyzed, using pragmatic elements such as context, inference, speech acts, and so on. The conclusion was that utterances can have more than one illocutionary act and perlocution, and that these vary with regard to the addressee and context. World knowledge was also noted to be an essential index in understanding and interpreting cartoons. The researcher gathered that utterances used in these cartoons were mainly assertive and directive which signify the state of political affairs in the country.

Chioma Osuji conducted a study on the morpho-syntactic structure of Nigerian newspaper editorials (36). It was observed that from the four Nigerian newspapers (*The Sun*, *Punch*, *Vanguard* and *ThisDay*) used for the analysis, the editor's use of language or words pose problems to readers, and this hampers effective communication. It was also observed that editorials are dominated by compound and complex words which end up making the editorials uninteresting to readers as they cannot decode the meaning of most words used. This defeats the

major function of journalism, which is to convey accurate information efficiently to readers, whether literate or semi-literate. An editorial is primarily intended to persuade, and its language, though persuasive in nature, should be understood by all and sundry. Thus, there is the need for accurate interpretation of editors' use of language.

In another study, Joseph Anim posited that 'you persuade a man only insofar as you can talk to him in his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, ideas, attitude and identifying your ways with his' (20). This suggests that one does not have to tell his or her readers (audience) only what they want to hear rather than telling them what one wants them to hear, but in polite terms, so they can accept. Anim concluded that loose and periodic sentences are not used in the same proportion in the selected newspapers.

Uchenna Agbedo carried out a speech act analysis of political discourse in Nigerian print media. He analyzed discourse in the Nigerian print media using the speech of Bayo Onanuga and Yakubu Mohammed of *The News* and *Newswatch* magazines respectively. Considering the background of their professional antecedents as editors of these magazines, he analyzed their speech during the reception of the 2005 winner of Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting, Mr. Dele Olojede, to determine the status as felicitous or infelicitous and its implication for journalism as a profession in Nigeria. Agbedo examined the illocutionary force of speech acts in the light of their peculiar type of journalism practice as evident in the *Newswatch* and *The News* magazines, where they hold sway as Deputy Editor-in-Chief and Editor-in-Chief respectively. He concluded that their individual speech act failed to observe Austin's felicitous conditions and also did not meet with Grice's cooperative principles (35).

In a similar study, Rotimi Taiwo in Agbedo examined how Nigerian writers employ their creative potentials in manipulating words through morphological and lexico-semantic processes in order to ridicule the vices in society (30). The president of the nation, politicians and the police are the major targets of the satirists. He identified some linguistic processes used to

convey satirical expressions in Nigerian newspapers, such as blending, metaphor, pun, allusion and so on. Taiwo looked at how writers use newspapers to manipulate linguistic skills to achieve their goals as the watch-dog of the Nigerian society. Specifically, it looked at the various linguistic devices used in the Nigerian newspaper discourse to attack and ridicule corrupt criminal and scandalous acts in the Nigerian society. Extracts of the forms considered satirical in the context of their use were elicited from three major Nigerian newspapers ó *The Punch*, *Daily Sun* and *The Guardian*. The social, political, historical and pragmatic contexts in which such forms situate play prominent roles in interpreting them, and determining their forms as satires.

Also, Lekan Oyeleye and Oluremi Ayodele cited in Sam Onuigbo who undertook a semantic pragmatic analysis of some aspects of discourse structure of cartoons in selected Nigerian newspapers. In the analysis, the authors' attention was particularly on how the discourse structure enhances propositional and illocutionary developments. The picture which emerged from their analysis tends to suggest that interpretation of linguistic codes in cartoons and utterances, generally, is not only based on the knowledge of the dictionary meaning of lexical items, but more significantly on our knowledge of the values, which these expressions acquire in their given contexts. Equally inferable from their analysis is the benefit of our knowledge of the role-relationships of the participants and their shared experiences. As Onuigbo surmised, the authors have ab initio pursued the points that words and expressions have meaning only when they interact with situations (100). In other words, it is only when they impose necessary situation in each cartoon that the humour and message are fully realized. The relevance of the study is that explication of speaker's utterance is hinged on context; hence, the present study dwells on pragmatic analysis of newspaper editorials.

Anita Fetzer investigated political interviews from a socio-pragmatic angle. He defines political interviews as 'negotiating validity claims with regard to first-frame interaction of interviewer and interviewee, and with regard to the second or media-frame interaction consisting

of the first-frame (interviewer and interviewee) interacting with the media frame (25). The article examined the political interview's dual status as a communicative genre and as a media event by counting for interfacing frames, constitutive multi-frame interactions and multiple discourse identities. The linguistic representation of media references such as TV programme, institutional roles of interviewer, interviewee and audience, and investigation on *when*, *where* and *how* the references are realized and which communicate functions they would fulfill follow next. In unmarked interview, explicit references to the media frame are restricted to the opening and closing sections. If employed in the topical sequence, they either function as securing the common ground between the first-frame and the second-frame interactants or they may be exploited in order to communicate conversationally implicated meaning such as boosting the pragmatic force of a challenge or expressing criticism. In conclusion, Fetzer averred that media references have the communicative function such as: (1) initiating the opening and closing sections of the political interview, and (2) intensifying the pragmatic force of a communicative contribution, thus, indirectly guiding the audience in the process.

Randy Harris examined the pragmatics of political apologies as a *generic* type of discourse by identifying their salient characteristics: they are in the public domain and highly mediated, they are generated by conflict and controversy (23). The article attempted to illustrate different types of political apology. Harris's conclusion was that political apology is tendered especially during election campaign with the intention to persuade voters to vote for a particular political party. Harris's study is relevant to the present work because editorial texts may be persuasive, confrontational, and/or apologetic depending on the burning issue in society.

In a similar study, Greg Watson (24) examined pragmatic acts of love. The study paid attention to the manner in which female blues artist talk to their audience about love, an intangible, metaphysical and/ or in a healthier sense (24). It is an extension of the preliminary work of Buhler Kuhn (1999) who briefly examined lyrics of male blues singers. Watson applied

an amended version of Tyrmiø (2004) model. A corpus of female blues artists totaling 111 songs by 39 different artists were used to investigate the expression of love and sexuality in the lyrics of 1950s female blues singers. The results show that these women were as forward as men in stating their needs, often in a most direct and colourful manner. Watson concluded that 'women had no qualms in stating their needs, either for love or sexual gratification' (Watson 24). Though the study did not focus on editorials, yet, the application of pragmatic tools help the listeners of these blues to arrive at a fuller understanding of how they feel as these lyrics talk to them. Similarly, the application of pragmatic elements to editorial texts helps readers to decode the encoded meaning in the editor's language use or utterances.

Within the purview of language and context, Raymond Firth paid attention to context of situation. In his study, *Personality and Language*, Firth explained that language is essentially functional and could be best realized when used in appropriate context (240-48). He sees context as a social phenomenon and a connection between language and social setting, context, participants, medium and so on. The general idea is that human beings live in a socially built world of events which shape and are shaded by language. In furtherance of his exposition on context, Firth reveals that, 'situationally, human beings take into consideration everything they know about the environment: the activities, the function language performs and the participants involved' (248). This means that every language has the potential to create and sustain meaning in any discourse circumstance. Firth's study on context and situation has bearing with this present study because the meaning attached to language is dependent on the prevalent social activities. However, his concern was on the general application of language in context, while present study dwells on pragmatic analysis of selected newspaper editorials.

Ozo-Mekuri Ndimele studied the semiotic system and its implication on meaning. He noted that 'ideal communicative situation demands the understanding of the speaker's language use and the context of utterance' (152). This implies that interpreting utterances in both written

and spoken sentences is not just to name an isolated representation but to read off the speaker's message depending on the contextual carriers/situational context. Ndimele's work on context is relevant to this study because communication cannot occur outside a given context. Editorial texts convey information to society, especially issues of utmost importance. Usually, there is a connection or shared knowledge between the editor and readers of these news items. Ndimele did not focus on editorial texts of newspapers; yet, this study strives to fill the gap in knowledge through the pragmatics of selected newspaper editorials.

Another scholar, David Crystal also examined the context of situation between discourse and participants. According to him, the primary function of language is to convey ideas, rules or codes to members of a speech community. He said that actual usage of language varies according to context, its users, location and the audience (115-177). Crystal went on to say that "meaning is conveyed by complex exchanges in which participants' knowledge, expectations, beliefs and the situation in which they interact play an important role" (117). Bronislaw Malinowski supports his position when he (Malinowski) said that meaning is provided only in the context in which the word, phrase, or clause is uttered (274).

Clement Emezue cited in Abajo Eunice posits that "meaning can be elicited through exchange of interaction between the writer, their experiences, and their readers" (11). Emezue went further to say that language varies not only according to the social characteristics of its speakers such as social class, ethnic group, age and sex, but also according to the social context in which they find themselves. He revealed that context cannot be divorced from language. This shows that context is very essential in explaining how language users effectively and flexibly manipulate language to their choice in order to convey meaning that suits their addressees and interactions. Emezue's generalized exposition is revealing, but it lacks specific details for specialized field. Every academic research must have focus. It must be geared towards the achievement of its objectives; hence, the current study centres on pragmatics of editorials.

Aside these studies above, Wale Oni and Niyi Osunbade discussed the issue of Pragmatic Force in utterances (107). Their essay exposes language users to context-driven forces that facilitate interpersonal synchronous computer-mediated communication. They maintain that the determination of the pragmatic force of an utterance hinges on the performance of illocutionary acts. Furthermore, they establish that performing a speech act requires, in particular, illocutionary acts. They summarize their study by submitting that pragmatic engagement of speech acts in conveying communicative intention portrays the speaker's use of language in computer-mediated context. Though their study did not focus on pragmatic analysis of newspaper editorials, it underscores the fact that contextual features such as background, time and place help to elucidate the speaker's message in a given communicative circumstance.

Adeolu Adeniji investigated the pragmatic voices in African literary texts. In the study, he identified items such as voice, point of view, reference, deixis and anaphora as pivotal to the understanding and interpretation of literary texts. He reveals that Voice gives expression to the inner thoughts and feelings of authors as expressed by characters in literary texts (408). This justifies Jacob Mey's submission that Voice is central to the understanding of literary texts (162). Indeed, Voice projects the perspectives of author's feelings. Its significance to context in locating the pragmatic values of a speaker's voice in literary texts cannot be ignored. Context is the totality of the environment in which a word is used. Adeolu's study is relevant to this research because newspaper editorial texts reveal not only the views of the editor but also the context of utterance, hence it enhances the pragmatic interpretation of the editorial texts.

Writing under the opening chapter of *Universal Pragmatics of Nigerian Proverbs*, Mahfouz Adedemeji aptly submits that the central goal of pragmatics is the explanation of how utterances convey meanings in context (122-143). On the other hand, the principal goal of universal pragmatics is to study meaning of utterances that has to do with claims about truth or rightness. He identified the notion of communicative action and communicative competence.

Communicative action is any action oriented towards understanding the speaker's message. Communicative competence, on the other hand, is concerned with the validity of communication. He concludes that for validity to be achieved, the linguistic participants must have uttered something intelligible and must have used words that participants can agree upon. One lesson to be drawn from Adedemiji's study is that pragmatic knowledge is required for the interpretation, understanding and retrieval of information in any discourse situation, and it is relevant to this present study which dwells on pragmatics of newspaper editorials because pragmatic knowledge is required to analyze, and/or understand the subtle use of language by editors.

Stephen Levinson, while assessing the various definitions of pragmatics, is of the view that pragmatics covers both dependent aspects of language structure and principles of language usage (117). He is of the view that the scope of pragmatics should include the study of honorifics, deixis and so on. He points out that deixis belongs to the domain of pragmatics because it directly concerns the relationship between the structure of languages and the context in which it is used. The relevance of this to the present study is that editors' language and editorials are anchored directly to suitable context.

## **2.2 Summary of Literature Review**

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to review some of the works related to politeness, editorials, context and other works on pragmatics. It is discovered that these works vary from the present study. The literature review is by no means exhaustive, but it provides useful insights into a number of works that have been undertaken by scholars in this area. The reviewed literature ranges from face-wants, impoliteness, textual and rhetorical analysis in print media, editorial headlines, to grammar of selected editorials which addresses grammatical categories such as noun phrases, transitional and models in relation to their functions in newspaper editorials. Verisimilitude in editorial cartoon from *The Punch* newspaper using



Grice's conversational implicature was also reviewed. Also, the researcher reviewed works on context as a phenomenon in which interpretation of utterances (written texts) depends. It is believed that human beings use language to pass information with regard to what we want to say, how we want to say it and the underlying meaning of what is said. It is therefore necessary that a speaker identify his audience/readers and the social relation between him and his readers.

However, for this present study, Leech's *General Strategy of Politeness* will be adopted in studying the selected newspaper editorials in order to arrive at and/or enhance the interpretation of the selected newspaper editorials. A descriptive analysis of the text (editorials) will reveal how the politeness maxims are employed, observed and/or flouted by editors of newspapers.

## CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH

### METHODOLOGY

In every research, there is usually a theory and a method, which would best serve as guide to the realization of its purposes and give it an objective focus. This chapter deals with the theoretical framework to this research. A discussion on politeness is provided in relation to its emergence. It is followed by research methodology. This study anchors on Geoffrey Leech's (2014) *General Strategy of Politeness*, a modified version or model of *Politeness Principle* (1983).

#### 3.1 Theoretical Framework

Politeness as a pragmatic concept has gained the attention of linguists within the last three decades. It is one of the theories of human communication that can be used to explicate meaning of utterances in any linguistic study. In fact, pragmatic approaches to the study of politeness began to appear in the early/mid-1970s. Erving Goffman initially theorized it in 1967, before Robin Lakoff provided a pioneering work by linking politeness with its three conditions or rules: Do not impose, give options, and make the other person feel good or be friendly to Herbert Grice's Cooperative Principle, to explain why speakers do not conform to maxims such as clarity (Lakoff 297). Since then, there have been a number of politeness models. Among the proponents of these models are Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson's Face Threatening Act (1987), Geoffrey Leech's *Politeness Principle*, Richard J. Watts and so forth. It is obvious from the foregoing that there are overarching frameworks for the study of linguistic politeness phenomena in communication, but over all, the researcher has decided to work specifically with Geoffrey Leech's *General Strategy of Politeness* (GSP). General Strategy of Politeness (GSP) is an extension of the Politeness Principle model which was initially proposed by Leech in 1983, updated in 2005, 2007, and later reworked recently in a book titled *The Pragmatics of Politeness* (2014). It is worthy to note that the emergence of Leech's General Strategy of Politeness is

attributed to the criticisms levelled against its precursor—the *Politeness Principle* (PP). Scholars like Brown and Levinson, Eelen Gino, and so on, accused Leech's (1983) *Politeness Principle* of dwelling almost entirely on English data, and builds theory in the light of that data (Jonathan Culpeper 848). Another common criticism is that Leech's framework is unconstrained, involving a proliferation of maxims, and that some of the maxims are of moral imperative, rather than a pragmatic constraint (Jenney Thomas 158 in Geoffrey Leech 12). This informs one of the important reasons why Leech reformulated the maxims of politeness principle by adopting a single super strategy—the *General Strategy of Politeness* (GSP), which comprehends all the former maxims. Leech is of the view that the framework, in somewhat revised form, works perfectly well as it identifies politeness by assigning a high value to the other person's concerns and low value to one's own. It is believed that *General Strategy of Politeness* bolsters the domain of its precursor, provides a larger and more elaborate basis for description and analysis of communicative politeness phenomena.

The *General Strategy of Politeness* states simply: in order to be polite, S expresses or implies meanings that associate a favourable value with what pertains to O (O- other person(s) mainly, the addressee or associate an unfavourable value with what pertains to S (S-self, speaker) (Geoffrey Leech 90). Although, the O typically refers to the addressee, there is also third person politeness. That is, being polite to a person or a group of people distinct from speaker or hearer. By employing the *General Strategy of Politeness* (GSP), Leech attempts to ensure the avoidance of strategic conflict or discord that does arise in communicative situations. Leech further explained that people often feel the need to be indirect in conveying what they mean because they want to avoid discord, disagreement and/or set back in communication (Geoffrey Leech 90). Thus, Leech enjoins interlocutors to be tactful, civil and courteous in their social communication since the concern is not just the information in a conversation, but the effect of what is said on the addressee (hearer). It is worthy of note that pragmatics is interested only in communicative

behaviour, and politeness, in a pragmatic sense, is a matter of conveying meaning in accordance with the *General Strategy of Politeness* (Leech 91). In addition, Leech increased the number of the maxims from the initial six to ten, and subsumes the maxims as supermaxims of *General Strategy of Politeness*. They include the following: Generosity Maxim, Tact Maxim, Approbation Maxim, Modesty Maxim, Obligation Maxim (of S to O), Obligation Maxim (of O to S), Agreement Maxim, Opinion Reticent Maxim, Sympathy Maxim, and Feeling reticence Maxim (91). Leech says that the ten superstrategy maxims are of different degrees of importance, and have variable constraining power (92). A maxim is a succinct formulation of a fundamental principle, statement of a general truth or rule of conduct. As one of the elements of pragmatic materials, the supermaxims of General Strategy of Politeness seek to maintain smooth social equilibrium or friendly relation which enables one to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative (Geoffrey Leech 82). It is therefore believed that the thrust of Leech's current model of politeness is to assign high values to polite expressions, and avoid the attribution of low values of impolite expressions at all times (Leech 148).

In this study, the researcher intends to classify the selected editorial texts according to the identified politeness maxims, analyze or show how these maxims are used, and provide their interpretations or the possible effect of the language use on the reader. According to Odebunmi, people relate to the maxims in terms of observance or non-observance (209). A speaker or writer is said to exploit or orient to the maxims when such speaker's utterances observe the norms of the maxims. On the other hand, a speaker is said to violate the maxims when the speaker's utterances breach the norms of the maxims. Therefore, the preponderant use of language in communication makes it possible for editorial writers' language use to contain instances of these maxims as they communicate with the public. A discussion of the maxims and instances of expressions where they occur (exploited and violated) are presented below.

### **(M1) Generosity Maxim**

This maxim is related to the tact maxim, but unlike the tact maxim, generosity maxim focuses on the speaker and says that others should be put first instead of self (Geoffrey Leech 132). Its typical speech act is commissives which speaker's use to commit themselves to some future actions. The maxim states thus, "give a high value to other's wants" (Leech 93). This means that the interest of the speaker should be sacrificed to serve the assumed want of the addressee. That is, they express the concern and intention of the speaker for the addressee. The intentions are seen as promises, pledges, threats and so on. The expressions place constraints or cost on the speaker. For instance,

"The incumbent president and candidate of the ruling party í has assured the nation that the handover date of May 29, remains sacrosanct" (The *Daily Sun*, February 13, 2015). The information above denotes assurance and promise of the president with regard to the handover date. This insistent assurance of the speaker is a constraint on the speaker, while on the hand, it brings comfort and relief to the listener. Thus, the speaker has observed the demands of the maxim as well as being polite for putting the interest of the addressee first in the expression above. On the other hand, the generosity politeness maxims can be flouted by a speaker purposefully or unintentionally, yet achieve a desirable goal by implying some other hidden meanings. When this happens, it may cause some problems or set the listeners (hearers) on their nerves. For example,

"Let me relax while you do the laundry" This expression violates the norm of our generosity maxim, as it fails to consider first the interest, and comfort of the addressee. The word cost is used by Leech to denote duty, constraints and/or imposition (Leech 93).

### **(M2) Tact Maxim**

The tact maxim has application to John Searle's commissives and directives, which speakers (writers) use to get someone else comply or do something that expresses what the

speaker wants. It requires that an action X is to be performed respectively either by the speaker or the listener. Thus, the maxim states, ‘give a low value to speaker’s wants’. This implies that a speaker should deploy expressions that express benefit to the hearer (addressee) than expressions that will imply cost or constraint on the hearer (Leech 93). Here the speaker can weaken or soften an imposition by giving the addressee the opportunity to refuse it. Tact maxim can be observed when the speaker does not impose cost on the hearer, and this is illustrated in the example below,

‘We appeal to all those fanning the embers of disunity to desist from it’ (The *Daily Sun*, 5, 2015). The imposition, command or directive in the expression above has been softened or downgraded to a mere request by using the verb ‘appeal’. The verb has therefore reduced the cost of the desired act on the addressee. It is good to note that interlocutors can violate tact maxim in a communicative situation. For instance,

‘The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should as a matter of urgency, spell out the code of conduct’ to ensure compliance’ (The *Daily Sun*, January 5, 2015). The editor’s language use imposes cost on Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). This manifests through the modal verb ‘should’ that is always used to issue order, command or give instructions. The word ‘urgency’ denotes immediate attention, and so imposes some constraints on Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Therefore, cost is implied and this violates politeness tact maxim.

### **(M3) Approbation Maxim**

The approbation maxim exist in expressives and assertives which express what the speaker feels. In this maxim, the psychological state of the speaker is revealed such as satisfaction, likes, pain, et cetera. Geoffrey Leech presents the maxim thus, ‘give a high value to other’s qualities’ (93). In other words, Leech is of the view that interlocutors should maximize the expression that shows compliments, approval, and/or praise of other (addressee). In some

activity types, complimentary language is a virtual necessity as it is preferred to praise others to oneself. This maxim is realized in the example below:

‘Following last Saturday’s successful test-run of the card readers I recorded over 90 percent success’ (*The Nation*, March 5, 2015). The editor’s utterance or expression above is a show of commendation, and approval for the card readers’ successful exercise. However, ‘Breaches of Politeness maxims are salient and has attracted more attention than it has’ (Richard Watts 5). The approbation maxim is said to be violated when the speaker shows feelings of disapproval or dispraise of other. For example:

‘Brow-beating presidential aspirants out of their legitimate rights is unfair’ (*The Nation*, September 30, 2014). The editor’s expression here shows disapproval and condemnation against the way presidential aspirants are treated.

#### **(M4) Modesty Maxim**

The modesty maxim is related to approbation maxim. The maxim states thus, ‘give a low value to speaker’s qualities’ (Leech 94). This modesty maxim requires self-depreciation, dispraise of oneself, and the absence of the feeling of being better than the other. Hence, the maxim requires the speaker to reduce expression of self-praise (speaker). The speaker’s opinion offers benefit to that of the addressee. According to Leech, speaker’s value of opinion should not be placed above the value of the addressee (94). Modesty maxim manifests in this way:

‘Only yesterday, I had a closed door meeting with a respected American writer and Journalist in Manhattan, New York city, I the writer is absolutely right’ (*ThisDay*, March 25, 2015). The editor’s language use above esteems the person and views of a fellow American colleague. (2) ‘Please accept this small gift as a token of our esteem’ The speaker’s expression is void of self-praise. The speaker attributed low value to oneself by using the phrase ‘small gift’ and ‘token’ in the example above. On the other hand, the modesty maxim can be breached as seen in the example below. ‘Now that the two most popular presidential candidates I have finished singing

their respective praises in the media and on roadside postersø (*ThisDay*, March 25, 2015). The expression informs the reader that presidential candidates were singing their praises. This attitude of praise singing, psychopancy, and pride should be jettisoned. Therefore, it violates modesty maxim which advocates that one maximize dispraise of oneself.

**(M5) Obligation Maxim** (of speaker to other)

The maxim states ‘give a high value to speakerø obligation to otherø (Leech 96). This can be seen in the apologies for some offences tendered by a speaker to the addressee. Leech enjoins interlocutors to exploit politeness in tendering apologies as such polite speech acts, give high prominence to speakerø fault and obligation to addressee (Leech 96). For examples,

‘I am terribly sorry’, ‘please excuse me’, and so on. Another similar way is the expression of gratitude for some favour hearer (addressee) has done to speaker. For instance,

‘Thank you very much’, ‘thanks’, and so forth. The above expressions show the speakerø polite responses to the addressee as the communicative situation or context demands it. On the other hand, the norm of this maxim can be breached. For example, must I say sorry before you let go.

**(M6) Obligation Maxim** (of other to speaker).

The maxim states ‘give a low value to otherø obligation to speakerø (Leech 96). This maxim is found in the expression of offender and/or addresseeø response to speakerø apologies to often minimize the fault. For example:

‘It is Ok, do not worry’. Similarly, responses to thanks often minimize the debt. For example, ‘I am glad to be of help’, ‘it was a pleasure’, and so forth. On the other hand, this maxim can be violated as seen in the sentence that follow: ‘your action surprised me, it was unbearable’.

**(M7) Agreement Maxim**

The agreement maxim goes thus, ‘give a high value to otherø opinionø (Leech 96). In responding to otherø opinion or judgement, agreement expression is the preferred response,



while expression that shows disagreement is not preferred. This avoidance of disagreement with an addressee is in line with Brown and Levinson's positive politeness strategy of "seek agreement and avoid disagreement" (Leech 138). However, it has not been claimed that interlocutors totally avoid disagreement, rather they tend to be more direct in expressing agreement. It is worth to note that the use of intensification in a more stereotypically answers like "absolutely" which are used almost routinely in TV interviews enhances the polite effect of an agreement. For instance:

"the writer is absolutely right" (*ThisDay*, March 25, 2015). The editor uses the adjective "absolutely" to enhance the effect of the agreement. On the other hand, the agreement maxim can be breached by the speaker, and this is realized in the example that follows:

"While the argument may sound right, we are constrained to reject it outright" (*The Nation*, February 2, 2015). The expression above depicts the editor's defiant disagreement to the Federal Government pressure for polls postponement.

### **(M8) Opinion-Reticence Maxim**

Leech presents the maxim thus, "give a low value to speaker's opinion" (97). The maxim demands that speaker maximize expressions that appear to consult the addressee's opinion due to and/or depending on the addressee's supposed greater understanding, wisdom or experience. In contrast, there is a low tolerance of opinionated behavior where interlocutors express themselves forcefully, as if their opinions matter more than others. For instance, in Western countries, it is felt positively helpful to ask questions and express opinions in a discussion period following a lecture. If there are no questions and contributions, such lecture may be considered a failure (Leech 97).

### **(M9) Sympathy Maxim**

The maxim of sympathy explains why congratulations, good wishes and condolences are all intrinsically courteous speech acts, though condolences express opinions which are negative

with regard to the addressee (hearer). The maxim states thus, ‘give a high value on other’s feelings’ (Leech 97). The maxim demands that interlocutors minimize antipathy, that is, avoid the expression of negative feelings towards the addressee. It also encourages the maximization of positive expressions towards the addressee/hearer, showing that one shares in their feelings, when they suffer misfortune, and such expressions need no mitigation (98, 138). For example:

‘I was sorry to hear about your father’ The expression above shows that the speaker understands the addressee’s feelings, hence empathizes with the addressee’s grief by deliberately avoiding words that would hurt the addressee’s feelings. However, the violation of this maxim can occur in an expression like this,

‘I learnt your father died a drunkard last Wednesday’ This expression does not show sympathy to a sorrowful girl whose father just died suddenly. There is no feeling of empathy in the speaker’s utterance for the addressee (hearer).

### **(M10) Feeling-Reticence Maxim**

The maxim states, ‘give a low value to speaker’s feelings’ (Leech 98). The maxim corresponds with negative politeness, which places a low value on one’s own feelings. Brown and Levinson say that ‘it appears in English, one should not admit that one is feeling too bad’ (240). For instance,

A: How are you?

B: Fine, actually though

The first response to the question above is likely to suppress any bad news, even though the addressee may be tempted to share the trouble.

However, it behooves the researcher to incorporate the Pollyanna or Consideration Maxim of Leech’s 1983 Politeness Principle. This maxim will lend credence to investigating the language use of editors in the selected editorials.

### **Pollyanna Principle or Consideration Maxim**

The maxim states that the speaker should use expressions that will maximize the hearer's (addressee) comfort or pleasure. The speaker's utterance should be couched in such a manner that will minimize the addressee's discomfort or displeasure. The Pollyanna Principle states that, "people will prefer to look on the bright side of life to the gloomy side of life, thus, resembling the heroine of Eleanor Porter's 1913 novel *Pollyanna*" (Leech 147). This simply means that people often choose to discuss pleasant issues rather than unpleasant ones. The Pollyanna Principle can be achieved through euphemisms or lexicalizations, and through the use of minimizers such as "a bit", "a little", "a little bit" et cetera, to reduce the negative effect of something. For example,

"Wait a minute, I need to use the convenience"

From the discussion and examples above, we can see how politeness maxims provide ways of extrapolating meaning from editor's language use or utterances. Leech is of the view that interlocutors should choose to be polite and not just whether to be polite (92).

Apart from being an extension and a good complement to Politeness Principle, the *General Strategy of Politeness* governs most of human interactions. It is based on the idea of avoiding discord and fostering concord, only insofar as these maxims are manifested through communication, especially what meanings are expressed or implicated. This (GSP) therefore looks closely at the linguistic expression of social distance right as far as your addressee is concerned, and avoiding inappropriate linguistic choices which may be considered offensive or rude. A prominent scholar, Geoffrey Finch, defines politeness as a "type of behavior that allows participants to engage in a social interaction in an atmosphere of relative harmony" (121). This finds support in the views of Manfred Kienpointner and Richard Watts who submit that politeness is understood as "a set of verbal routines and strategies which are used to enhance cooperative interaction by establishing and maintaining a state of equilibrium or harmony within or between the individuals of a social group during the on-going process of interaction" (50). It is

good to note that politeness is rooted in everyday interaction, and it is expressed or invoked in judgements of interactional behaviour as a polite or impolite behaviour. Crystal David sees politeness phenomena as such features of language that intercede norms of social behaviour, especially in the aspects that relate to notions like courtesy, rapport, deference and distance, using appropriate tones of voice, appropriate terms of address as well as special sentence markers like *Please*, the choice of intimate and distant pronouns, first or last names (307-358). Lakoff and Sachiko Ide (4) state the same view, saying that politeness implies consideration for others and adherence to conventional standards expected of as a well-bred person. They also confirm that politeness itself is of twofold: it involves both regarding and consideration for others: face, not to impose and not to threaten them, that is, adherence to the rules that ensure keeping face, and the adherence to social norms which are conventional standards, following the expected and standard rules of a given society.

In characterizing polite language usage, Watts resorts to several expressions like:

--the language a person uses to avoid being too direct

--a language which displays respect towards or consideration for others

--a language which contains respectful forms of address like Sir or Madam (Watts 1).

--Language that displays certain, polite formulaic utterances like, please, thank you, excuse me, sorry, or even elegantly expressed languages. These all reveal that Watts' politeness is a broad concept having a very deep root in our everyday interaction, and much relation to respecting others. Janet Holmes takes politeness to be the consideration of the feelings of others, make others feel comfortable, and that being linguistically polite involves speaking to people appropriately in the light of their relation to you (281). Holmes points out that politeness is a very complicated notion and relates to many aspects of language use. Holmes further remarks that "[W]e often don't appreciate just how complicated politeness is, because we tend to think of politeness simply as a matter of saying please and thank you in the right place (281). Thus,

one can conclude that Politeness is a principle in using language and is always an integral part of our everyday interaction in any given culture according to which feelings of others would be respected at its best.

In this study, it can be noted that editorial writers can use language in a persuasive, confrontational or interpretative way to communicate their intentions to the readers, and assume that the readers/addressees work out the implication of the utterance. The adoption of this analytical tool will help to identify the *General Strategy of Politeness* elements exploited in the selected editorials, and account for the effect of an utterance on the addressee. It is important to realize that GSP are not rules, like phonological or morphological rules, which people have to follow to speak a language, nor are they moral principles. They are rather strategies interlocutors use to achieve conflict avoidance as well as to maintain social equilibrium in written or spoken discourse situation. It is a common belief that polite language usage is culturally bound, and involves speaking to people appropriately in the light of their relationship to you. Therefore, using expressions like the language one uses to avoid being too direct, language which displays respect, deference or consideration for others to sustain friendly relation becomes necessary.

Leech also establishes scales, which are used for determining how the maxims should be used and balanced. Politeness is itself a matter of degree and determining the appropriate degree of politeness depends on other scales of value. Among the most important scales are:

- (i) **Vertical distance between S and O** (in terms of status, power, role, age, and so on). This weighs the right of the speaker to impose his ideas on the hearers.
- (ii) **Horizontal distance between S and O** (intimate, familiar, acquaintance, and stranger). This weighs the degree of familiarity between the speaker and the hearer
- (iii) **Cost/benefit**- how large is the benefit, the cost, the favour, the obligation, the very socially defined value of what is being transacted. This weighs how much choice the goals of the speaker allow audience.

(iv) **Strength** of socially defined rights and obligations; for example, a teacher's obligations to a student, a host's obligations to a guest, service providers' obligations to their clients or customers

(v) **'Self-territory' and 'other-territory'** (in-group membership versus out-group). There are degrees of membership of 'self-territory' and 'other-territory'

This last factor determines who belongs to the domain of *S* and who belongs to the domain of *O* for the purposes of the GSP. Leech's central model of GSP is cost-benefit scale of politeness related to both the speaker and hearer.

According to Leech, politeness can be obtained using indirect illocution; thus, he uses his own terms for two kinds of illocutionary acts. He calls representatives 'assertive' and directives 'impositives' (38). Leech says that some illocutions such as 'orders' are inherently impolite while others such as 'offers' are inherently polite. This view assumes politeness to be an abstract quality residing in individual expressions, lexical items or morphemes, without regard for particular circumstances that govern their use. Being 'inherently' polite implies being always polite without regard for contextual factors that define what is polite in a given situation.

Following Lakoff's distinction between imposition, avoidance and friendliness, Leech distinguishes two types of politeness: negative politeness in impolite utterances and positive politeness, consisting in maximizing politeness in polite utterances. Positive politeness means being complimentary and gracious to the addressee. It requires the speaker to appeal to a common goal or address the hearer with kind expressions, while negative politeness presumes that the speaker impresses the listener or hearer. Gino Eelen observes that 'there are varieties of ways to express linguistic politeness and that the same linguistic devices can express different meanings in different contexts' (10).

Deference is also relevant to politeness. It is shown when respect is given to others as a result of their higher status, age and so on. Languages of the world have deference incorporated into them. The English language, for example, is filled with honorifics which are used as markers

of respect to people with age, status and sometimes for peers. Words such as 'sir' and 'madam' are used to mark deference. Also, address forms such as 'Professor', 'Barrister', 'Chief' and so on are used to indicate status differences.

Jacob Mey argues that Leech's submission that some illocutions such as 'orders' are inherently impolite, and others such as 'offers' are inherently polite is wrong on two accounts: First, the social position of the speaker may suggest different politeness values for individual cases (80). The existence of social hierarchy (as in institutionalized context such as the school, the military, the religious communities and so on) often preempts the use of politeness altogether. Rather than claim that an order in the military is polite whenever the command structure is right, it must be admitted to say that an 'order' is vindicated in its own right if it conforms to the demands of the military hierarchy. Commands are neither polite nor impolite. Second, 'politeness of the order also depends on the positive or negative effects it has on the person who is giving the order' (Jacob Mey 80). Indeed, commands are neither polite nor impolite because a teacher issuing the order, 'clean the blackboard' to her students is neither polite nor impolite. Another scholar, Kunst Olga has shown that this 'cost-benefit scale' is decisive in assigning politeness values even to 'bald' imperatives (58). Her opinion is that the evaluation of the politeness of a request expressed in the imperative form depends on the evaluation on cost and benefit scale stemming from the required act. In other words, a speaker can use a 'bald' imperative if the order is beneficial to the addressee (have another drink), as opposed to an order which imposes hardship on the hearer (cook the food). In Kunst Olga's words, 'request to the hearer may be expressed directly in the imperative form without being considered impolite' (62).

Finally, there seems to be no limitation as to the number and type of maxims that could be formulated, yet, 'these maxims which appear to be functional in human communication are

more or less universal, and their relative weights vary from one culture, social or linguistic milieu to another (Leech 150).

### **3.2 Research Methodology**

This section dwells on the sources of data for the study, sample for the study and method of data analysis.

#### **3.2.1 Sources of Data**

This study is based on the corpus of twelve (12) editorials derived from three popular newspapers in Nigeria, *The Nation*, *The Daily Sun* and *ThisDay*. The newspapers were purposively chosen because they have national coverage on national issues and news events. Four (4) editorial texts were selected as samples from each newspaper for the purpose of this study. The editorials were selected from a period of six months ranging from September 2014 to March 2015, the period marking the transition of political power from one democratic government to another. The editorials were those that border on national issues like democracy, politics and economy.

#### **3.2.2 Data Collection**

It is a great task to study and analyze all news issues in Nigerian dailies. In this study, twelve editorials were used, four from each of the three newspapers were purposively selected. The selected editorials cover issues on government/politics, democracy and society at large, especially the 2015 general election. The newspapers chosen are widely read by the public. From the *Daily Sun* newspaper, we have editorials of:

- a. Monday, January 5, 2015 entitled "Presidential Candidates and the Proposed Peace Pact"
- b. On Wednesday, January 7, 2015 entitled "FG MoU with European Union on 2015 Polls"
- c. Monday, January 19, 2015 entitled "Resolving INEC's challenges with PVCs" and
- d. February 13, 2015 entitled "Shifted Polls: Democracy on trial"



From *The Nation newspaper*, the editorials used include:

- a. Tuesday, December 20, 2014: "Slap on democracy"
- b. Tuesday, November 25, 2014: "Security agencies and 2015 Election"
- c. Monday, February 2, 2015: "Again, "No to poll shift" and
- d. Wednesday, March 11, 2015: "card readers won"

Finally, from *ThisDay newspaper*,

- a. Tuesday, October 21, 2014: "Emasculating the Ekiti State Judiciary"
- b. Thursday, October 30, 2014: "The Lesson from Ebola Containment"
- c. Sunday, March 1, 2015: "The Campaigns against Jega and the Military," and
- d. Wednesday, March 25, 2015: "The Presidential Election"

### 3.2.3 Method of Data Analysis

The newspaper editorials were analyzed using Leech's *politeness maxims*. A descriptive analysis of pragmatic politeness principles was carried out on the three selected newspapers so as to portray the distinct politeness maxims exploited or violated. Honorifics predominant in all the selected newspaper editorials were also analyzed. For effective and in-depth analysis, the observable maxims are highlighted thus:

- a. Politeness Maxims
  - i. The Generosity maxim
  - ii. The Tact maxim
  - iii. The Approbation maxim
  - iv. The Modesty maxim
  - v. The Obligation maxim (S to O)
  - vi. The Obligation maxim (O to S)
  - vii. The Agreement maxim
  - viii. The Opinion-Reticent maxim
  - ix. The Sympathy maxim
  - x. The Feeling-Reticent maxim and
  - xi. The Pollyanna principle or Consideration maxim

### a. Honorifics

Honorifics are grammatical forms usually words or affixes, which express social status of the speaker to the addressee (Kristin Denham and Anne Lobeck 347). An Honorific can be defined as a grammatical form, usually a word or phrase, used to show respect to somebody of a higher status. All languages have ways of expressing respect and politeness. Language forms are used to encode the high social status of the addressee in a high-power distance culture and the values of respect for elders can be seen in the use of honorifics and titles to acknowledge them. Honorifics as a concept of politeness uses address forms to show respect, especially in direct address. Honorific titles or expressions have connotations of esteem, regard or respect when used in referring to a person. The most common honorifics in the English language are usually before a person's name, example, 'Mr.' in the case of a male is used irrespective of the marital status. So this study also investigates how such honorifics have been used in the editorials as further evidence to observance or violation of the politeness principle/maxims.

It is no doubt that the findings, observations and comments in the selected newspaper editorials will depict the *politeness maxims* inherent in Nigerian newspapers.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN SELECTED NIGERIAN NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS**

This chapter engages twelve editorials in order to lay bare the politeness strategies that Nigerian newspaper editorials employ to impress upon their readers the events in the political scene, and how their use of language either demeans or promotes the integrity of some personalities or bodies mentioned in these editorials. The analysis also involves honorifics in the language use of these editorials.

The analysis aims at proving how these strategies adopted in newspaper editorials validate and enhance the plausibility of the editorials as well as enabling readers to understand very well the message of the editors. These pragmatic politeness strategies are expatiated subsequently under two sections— the first section deals with exploitation of the identified maxims, and the second section concerns the violation of the identified politeness maxims. Thereafter, honorifics used in the editorials were also identified, and analyzed. These sections can be summarized thus:

- Exploiting the politeness maxims
- Violating the politeness maxims
- Honorifics

### **Exploitation of the Maxims**

This section is concerned with identifying the maxims exploited in the selected editorial texts. The maxims are: the Approbation maxim, Pollyanna maxim, Tact maxim, Agreement maxim, and Modesty maxim.

#### 4:1 Exploiting Approbation Maxim

The language use of the editors expresses commendation as can be seen in the data below

##### Text 1:

Paragraph 2: Following last Saturday's successful test-run of the card readers in selected parts of the country, the leadership of the PDP has swung to action, bent on scuttling its use in the forthcoming elections. The party has been strident in canvassing against the use of the card readers for some time up until eventual test-run. Apart from minor hitches, the test carried out in 12 states across the six zones of the country recorded over 90 percent success.

Paragraph 4: What this means is that the card reader will eliminate multiple voting to almost zero level, thus cutting off a major source of election rigging. It is a simple technology that has been used in Ghana and Kenya and its most significant advantage is that it allows people's votes to count (*The Nation*, March 11, 2015 page 19).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Approbation maxim	Expressives and assertives	The editor's use of the phrase, "recorded over 90 percent success," registers a highly commendatory and positive attitude towards the success of the card reader. The belief that the card reader worked in Ghana and Kenya leads to the conclusion that the editor is ascribing a high positive evaluation to the card reader. This together with the demands of approbation maxim shows that the editor is being polite by maximizing polite expression in complimenting the exercise. Thus, approbation maxim is observed.

The excerpt is an expository editorial which explains the attempt by the ruling party (PDP) to hinder the use of card readers, despite the success recorded during its test running exercise in twelve states across the six geopolitical zones in the country. However, the benefits of the card reader in countries where it has been used were highlighted, but in a euphemical tone, shows the editor's feeling of approval and acceptance of the card reader as satisfactory. The information further reveals that PDP's quest to disallow the card reader is a ploy to encourage multiple voting (rigging), and this is captured in the expression "the party has been strident in canvassing against the use the card readers for some time" .

### Text 2:

Paragraph 1: News that the Federal Government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the European Union (EU) to ensure that the coming elections are free, fair and credible is heartening indeed.

Paragraph 3: It is particularly gladdening that the EU has sent a delegation to the country to help in preparing the ground work for a smooth and effective monitoring of the elections (*The Daily Sun*, January 7, 2015 page 19).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Approbation maxim	Expressives and assertives	The column approves the action of the Federal government, which is geared towards having free, fair and credible election. The use of these adjectives -heartening, gladdening and the expression "to help in preparing" for a smooth and effective "reveal the editor's psychological state of mind (satisfaction) with regard to the news. Therefore, the use of these polite words shows that the action of the Federal government is acceptable. The expressions agree with approbation maxim of politeness principle.

The text exemplifies commendatory editorial which attempts to extol efforts in the right direction taken by the government as policy decisions for the good of the citizenry. The commendation or praise features in this editorial are captured in the use of the words *-hearteningø* and *-gladdeningø* as descriptive words explaining the excitement that follows the signing of memorandum of understanding (MOU) for peaceful elections. This news leaves the reader (listener) to equally express appreciation to federal government for initiating an action towards having successful elections.

#### **4:2 Exploiting Pollyanna or Consideration Maxim**

Pollyanna maxim is observed when an utterance/writing brings comfort, pleasure and/or inspires hope on the listeners or readers. It is mostly realized through the use of euphemism, words or phrases such as *-gladdeningø* *-hearteningø* *-freeø* and *-fairø* and so on. This could be seen in the following texts.

##### **Text 3:**

Paragraph 4: What this means is that the card reader will eliminate multiple voting to almost zero level, thus cutting off a major source of election rigging. It is a simple technology that has been used in Ghana and Kenya and its most significant advantage is that it allows peopleø votes to count. For those apprehensive about stable power to recharge it, being a hand-held, its power requirement is almost insignificant and it works both on and off line. After all, the card reader is neither partial nor partisan (*The Nation*, March 11, 2015 page 19).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Pollyanna or consideration maxim	In Euphemism	<p>The information affords some comfort and a feeling of wholeness to the addressee or reader.</p> <p>The expression 'It will eliminate multiple voting to almost zero level' 'cutting off election rigging' shows the significance of the card reader and how effective it is. This together with the tremendous success of the card readers in the neighbouring countries informs the optimistic expression of the editor. These expressions inspire hope in the mind of readers, thus, Pollyanna maxim is therefore complied with.</p>

The editor takes into cognizance the consideration maxim as the optimistic temper of the editor is felt in the expression 'It is a simple technology that has been used in Ghana and Kenya'. While Ghana is a West African sister country, Kenya is an Eastern African nation. So, since the socio-cultural milieu of Nigeria is similar to that of Ghana, the possibility of the card reader working in Nigeria is very high. Similarly, the expression 'it allows people's vote to count' and 'after all, the card reader is neither partial nor partisan' instils confidence in the citizenry or the public to take part in the voting exercise since the process cannot be manipulated. Therefore, the news is really approved as it foregrounds the reader's/listener's belief about the card reader's effectiveness. On the other hand, it divorces the apprehension as regards the election, especially on how to curb rigging.

**Text 4:**

Paragraph 1: News that the Federal Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the European Union (UN) to ensure that the coming elections are free, fair and credible is heartening indeed. Speaking on this development in Abuja on December 29, 2014, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Danjuma Shen, said the step was taken as part of Government's commitment to the conduct of credible elections this year (*Daily Sun*, January 7, 2015 page 19).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Pollyanna or consideration maxim	In Euphemism	The editor affords some measure of hope, comfort, and assurance to the public or the reader by commenting on the Federal government's commitment to conducting credible elections. By maximizing expressions that bring benefit to the readers through the word "heartening" shows that the editor is being hopeful.

The editorial commends the efforts of the Federal government towards ensuring a peaceful electoral process through the signing of memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the European Union (EU). The expressed feeling of joy is captured through the deployment of "heartening". The use of this lexeme brings pleasure to the reader, knowing the laudable steps taken by federal government to ensure credible elections.



**Text 5**

Paragraph 1: In three days, Nigerian voters shall be trooping out to elect the next president of Nigeria in a re-scheduled election which has been the subject of popular discourse across the world.

Paragraph 5: Therefore, Saturday's presidential election affords the Nigerian voters another opportunity of exercising their sovereignty freely and willingly by making an intelligent choice (*ThisDay*, March 25, 2015 page 14).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Pollyanna or consideration maxim	In Euphemism	The expression "freely and willingly by making an intelligent choice" expresses the nature and manner of the election. This awakens the interest and readiness of readers towards the election. The pollyanna maxim is realized in the fact that the voting will be done freely and willingly.

This excerpt begins with a narrative lead. It is however not compelling the electorates to vote, but demands wisdom from the people in making an intelligent choice willingly. Consequently, voters become well disposed to exercise their franchise, especially after the tension that followed the postponement of the election originally scheduled on February 14, 2015. The editor's information serves as a strategy intended to persuade the electorate to exercise their civic responsibility by voting a candidate of their choice. Hence, this opportunity accorded to the electorate to vote freely and willingly invokes some measure of hope and pleasure to the people, who are now obliged to believe that the election is not by coercion.

### 4:3 Exploiting Tact Maxim

Tact maxim is employed when we use expressions that do not impose cost on others (listeners). This is seen in the text below:

#### Text 6:

Paragraph 9: We appeal to all those fanning the embers of disunity to desist from it. Nigeria will do much better in a -live and let live environment. We appeal to religious zealots to remind themselves that this is a multi-religious country with provisions for freedom of religion in our constitutions (*The Daily Sun*, January 5, 2015 page 19).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Tact maxim	Impositives and commissives	The editor employed politeness tact maxim to mitigate the threat. The imposition has been downplayed or downtoned by the use of the verb -appeal. The editor avoided the more blatant imposition of a direct request by minimizing the cost of the desired act on the addressees. There is no imposition in the statement, therefore, tact maxim is adhere to.

In paragraph 9 of this excerpt, the verb -appeal is deployed politely by the editor demanding peaceful co-existence in a multi-religious country like Nigeria from embers of disunity and religious zealots. The editor employed a softening device to make a command become more like a request. The editor's use of the verb -appeal reduces the force of the imposition, and helped to avoid the more direct request by minimizing cost to the addressees. The utterance therefore shows that the editor has the ability to deal with others in a touchy

situation without offending them. There is therefore no imposition in the statement as the utterance adheres to norms of tact maxim.

**Text 7:**

Sponsors of OPC, MASSOB, Niger Delta militants and other ethnic militia groups should please instruct them to desist from resorting to any form of violence (*ThisDay*, March 25, 2015 page 14).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Tact maxim	Impositives and commissives	The editor minimized the cost of the desired directive by the use of the phrase "should please". The use of the adverb "please" makes the instruction appear more polite, and acceptable to the addressee who will no longer feel the constrain of the instruction. Since the imposition has been reduced, it therefore means that the editor is considerate and sensitive to the addressee. The utterance agrees with tact maxim.

The editor has designed the language to mellow down the flavor of a directive by making the addressee feel better in performing the requested act. The deployment of the adverb "please" in the text has reduced the force the imposition that would have been placed by the verb "desist". Therefore, there is no imposition in the excerpt.

**4:4 Exploiting Agreement Maxim**

The agreement maxim holds that the speaker maximizes agreement with the listener(s) and minimizes disagreement with the listener.

**Text 8:**

Paragraph 6: We are bothered by the dire consequences of a shift. We agree that the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended) allows an election to be conducted within the band of 150 to 30 days before the expiration of the incumbent's tenure, but, having freely come up with the February 14 and 28 days, INEC should keep faith with them (*The Nation*, February 2, 2015 page 19).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Agreement maxim	In assertivess	The editor is politely imploring INEC to bear the arrangement on the new fixed date of the election. The speaker's agreement is hedged in the phrase "should keep faith with them". The expression above shows that the speaker is seeking INEC's compliance.

The first sentence in this excerpt presents the position of an argumentative editorial before reaching a compromise. However before reaching an agreement and the tendering of appeal to INEC, the editor in a subtle manner indicted the commission for taking a unilateral decision. This is captured thus "having freely come up with the February 14 and 28 days, INEC should keep faith with them". Agreement maxim is observed or maximized in the last expression using "should keep faith with them". Having presented the reality of the new date, the editor appears to suggest that readers and/or the electorate should adhere to the new date proposed by the federal government.

**Text 9:**

Paragraph 7: Security of lives and property remains a key concern. While we all appear agreed that everything must be done to ensure the security of the coming elections, we must not go overboard and undermine its integrity. We must, however, be seen to be improving and correcting our previous mistakes (*The Daily Sun*, January 7, 2015 page 19).

<b>Identified maxim</b>	<b>Where found</b>	<b>Meaning/analysis</b>
Agreement maxim	assertives	<p>The editor does not want to be seen as condemning the electoral body, instead he presents the issue as a collective responsibility of all Nigerians to bring about the expected and acceptable attitude towards a credible election.</p> <p>The communicator utilizes polite expressions in seeking agreement with the audience through the expression, “we all appear agreed to ensure the security of the coming elections”</p>

The editor here identifies the primary essence of governance, which is the security of lives and property. While the agreement is adopted, the cardinal principle of integrity is considered as an imperative for the improvement and correction of previous electoral mistakes. Thus, the editor appeals politely to human reasoning to avoid any act that would ruin the accepted conduct of the elections.

**Text 10:**

Paragraph 6: We understand that we are in a season of perhaps the most competitive presidential election in our nation's history and for that reason, supporters and agents of the two leading parties have become desperate. However, what should not be lost on the campaigners is that when the integrity of the leadership of the electoral umpire and the institution of the Nigerian armed forces are needlessly called to question on the eve of a crucial national election, then a foundation is being laid to render the outcome of such a process illegitimate with all the attendant consequences on the polity (*ThisDay*, March 1, 2015 page 7).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Agreement maxim	Assertives	The editor, though agreeing to the fact that there is desperation by supporters and agents of the two leading parties, makes it clear that it portends danger to the country if the integrity of the electoral umpire and the security agencies is flawed or tarnished by these party supporters. Therefore agreement maxim is exploited.

Using  $\text{we}$  the editor assertively cautioned the major electoral actors in the presidential elections (INEC and the Nigerian armed forces) against undermining their integrity, thereby compromising the outcome of the entire process which is capable of rendering results illegitimate. Therefore, agreement maxim is realized in the expression  $\text{we understand that we are in a season...}$  The agreement in the utterance is not explicitly stated, yet, it gives insight to the listener into the present phenomenon.

#### 4:5 Exploitation of Modesty Maxim

When one's expression maximizes praise of other and minimizes praise of self, the modesty maxim is exploited.

##### Text 11:

Paragraph 1: Only yesterday, I had a closed door meeting with a respected American writer and journalist in Manhattan, New York City. Throughout our conversation, the writer kept on harping on the need for Nigerian voters to ensure that the democratic principles prevail during the election and that the candidate with the popular votes cast in his favour should emerge as a winner in the election.

Paragraph 2: The writer is absolutely right. Now that the two most popular presidential candidates— Goodluck Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressive Congress (APC)— have finished singing their respective praises in the media and on roadside posters (*ThisDay*, March 25, 2015 page 14).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
modesty maxim	Expressives and assertives	In paragraph 1, the editor exploits the modesty maxim by using the expression- 'respected American writer and journalist'. This expression attributes high regard of affection, praise and admiration to a colleague. In addition, the phrase, 'absolutely right' intensifies the editor's zestful compliments of a colleague's remarks.

The modesty maxim, no doubt, is used by the writer to esteem the views of a fellow American journalist about the 2015 general elections. This was later re-echoed in paragraph 2, where the writer affirmed that his colleague's opinion is 'absolutely right'.

The implication is the reader would be obliged to hold dear the views of the American journalist.

**Text 12:**

Paragraph 2: 'Nigeria is now free of Ebola virus transmission, WHO said 'this is a spectacular success story that Ebola can be contained.

Paragraph 7: No doubt, Nigeria has scored a major victory against Ebola virus for which the world is rightly hailing her, but vigilance must be eternal (*ThisDay*, October 21, 2014 page 15).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
modesty maxim	Expressives and assertives	The editorial extols the effort of the federal government and other stakeholders in the fight against Ebola virus. The phrase, 'Nigeria has scored a major victory against the Ebola virus' denotes the feeling of appreciation of the effort exerted by medical personnel which culminated in the victory over the virus. The polite expressions in the entire excerpt <i>appeal</i> to the reader's emotion as well as esteeming the joint effort of the Nigerian government.

From the editorial, it is noticed that Nigerian government was not praising itself in the fight against Ebola virus, rather, it was WHO and other countries who were praising it. This absence of superiority complex not exhibited by the Nigerian government and other relevant bodies on eradicating the virus is a demonstration of the modesty maxim.



## Violation of the Maxims

This section is concerned with violations of the identified maxims in the selected editorial texts.

### 4:6 Violation of Approbation Maxim

The editors used languages that express dispraise, disapproval of other in the following editorials.

#### Text 13:

Paragraph 6: In contrast, Nigeria is a new democracy, only in the 15th year of its fourth attempt at democracy, given that its earlier attempts crashed, Nigeria needs every reason to imbibe best global practices to deepen its delicate democracy. Brow-beating presidential aspirants out of their legitimate rights are certainly not one of those.

Paragraph 7: Even more grievous and condemnable is the sheer impunity of it all. As at the time of the adoption, PDP has not really started the presidential nomination process, aside from the charade of the Jonathan Trojan horse named the Transformation Ambassadors of Nigeria (TAN) (*The Nation*, September 30, 2014 page 14).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Approbation maxim	Expressives and assertive	The editor disapproves of the Nigerian democratic type of government and its practices. The lexeme, 'brow-beating' expresses intense displeasure, disgust or resentment of the editor towards the manner in which presidential aspirants were treated. This repulsive remark fails to uphold the requirements of approbation maxim of our model.

This information goes against the principle of the approbation maxim of our model, which is to praise or express approval. The editor's disapproval of the wrong practice of democracy in Nigerian is realized with the use of these words, "brow-beating" and "sheer impunity". Consequently, the reader is vividly presented with no better option than to see the government of the day in its practice of democracy in a bad light, and as one that lacks the democratic tenets required for true democracy.

**Text 14:**

Paragraph 3: In the last six months, we have seen presidential candidates playing God as if they were the creators and owners of our lives. We have seen political despots behaving as if they have a permanent lien on the people's votes. We have seen presidential candidates hurling insults at each other. We have seen presidential candidates treating the voters with contempt as if the voters were their slaves who must inevitably vote for them.

Paragraph 4: But the truth of the matter is that the voters are not the slaves of any arrogant despot (*ThisDay*, March 25, 2015 page 14).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Approbation maxim	Expressives and assertives	The editor frowns at the arrogance displayed by presidential candidates. The phrases, "Playing God", "political despots" and so on, are not polite expressions as they do not commend the presidential aspirants. They are expressions of displeasure against the way the presidential candidates were hurling insults at each other. Thus, the editor maximizes impolite expressions while disapproving the attitude or demeaning the personality of the presidential candidates. The approbation maxim is violated.

Here the editor identifies four levels of arrogance displayed by the major presidential aspirants and their political parties in the course of the electioneering exercise. This is well explicated as such, leaving the reader again with no better option than to agree with the editor in disapproving the actions and dispositions of the presidential candidates and their parties. The editor's statements appear to suggest to the electorate that they should not be cowed by the utterances of the candidates. This reminds voters that the candidates are humans like them, not Gods to be feared. Such statements help to instill confidence in voters and, in addition, would make the electoral process more transparent.

**Test 15:**

Paragraph 4: Reactions to Akinyemi's suggestions by the PDP and the APC have been mixed. We are disappointed that the presidency dismissed the suggestions with a wave of the hand. Even if President Goodluck Jonathan has not been adjudged guilty of inflammatory statements thus far, we would have thought that the presidency would have jumped at Akinyemi's suggestions and try to get his opponents to do the same.

Paragraph 6: Take, for instance, the threat for a parallel government by some opposition figures. The idea that anyone could even think of a parallel government much less speaking of it publicly is astonishing because such a proposition can only lead to anarchy, if not war (*The Daily Sun*, January 5, 2015 page 19).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Approbation maxim	Expressives and assertives	The expression, "…dismissed the suggestion with a wave of hand" expresses disapproval of the president's inability and nonchalant attitude in handling Professor Akinyemi's suggestion. Discrediting the President as seen above amounts to the violation of approbation maxim since the information does not approve or commend the action of the president.

The information under this text appears inconsistent with the approbation maxim, following the misconception and mixed reaction that greeted Akinyemi's suggestions even from the presidency. Prof. Akinyemi had suggested that the presidential candidates of the two leading political parties can publicly come together to profess their commitment to peaceful campaigns and elections as well as proper management of the reactions to the results of the polls to achieve a peaceful outcome. They should also urge their supporters to do the same. The information of the editor seems to suggest that if Prof. Akinyemi's opinion is taken, it would have helped to normalize the political situation and the prevalent tension in the country. Thus, the editor disapproves of the inability of the president to accept the suggestion and, in addition, to deal decisively with the inflammatory statement made by the opposition party in the build-up to the presidential elections, stating that such comment is capable of plunging the nation into a state of anarchy. The phrase "wave of the hand" in paragraph four shows lack of seriousness and carelessness on the part of the president. The threat for a parallel government by some opposition party members is condemned by the editor as any well-meaning Nigerian would not want a state of anarchy. The statement discredits the crop of leaders vying for political offices in Nigeria.

#### 4:7 Violating Pollyanna maxim

When language use maximizes the reader's/listener's discomfort or displeasure, pollyanna or consideration maxim is violated.

#### Text 16:

Paragraph 1: It started as rumour. It was too dangerous a thought to be entertained why anyone would want to shift (sic) the dates of elections fixed about one year ago.

Paragraph 4: While the argument may sound somehow logical, we are constrained to reject it outright in the country's interest. A shift of the polls could set the entire country on fire (*The Nation*, Monday, February 2, 2015 page 15).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/ analysis
Pollyanna or consideration maxim	In Euphemism	The editor here maximizes impolite expression by using the phrase "could set the entire country on fire". This utterance portends danger, and sends shivers down the spine of the listener or reader. The discomfort brought by this information contradicts the demands of pollyanna maxim.

The excerpt above shows that the editor, while expressing his views for postponement of the date of the polls did not take into consideration the effect of the information on the readers' (listeners). The listeners' psychological state of mind is disturbed as the public imagine violence that may arise if the elections are put off to a later date. The last statement of the editor in the excerpt is a source of discomfort to the listener, hence, pollyanna maxim is not observed.

**Text 17:**

Paragraph 1: The reality of the postponement of the general elections dawned on Nigerians last Saturday when the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) chairman, Prof. Attahiru Jega announced new dates for the exercise.

Paragraph 3: The shock that followed the announcement was palpable across the country especially in the camps of some of the opposition parties which saw the move as a ploy to buy more time for the President Goodluck Jonathan Campaign (*The Daily Sun*, February 13, 2015 page 19).

<b>Identified maxim</b>	<b>Where found</b>	<b>Meaning/ analysis</b>
Pollyanna or consideration maxim	In Euphemism	The news on the postponed election throws the listeners into a state of emotional disorder. The noun, 'shock' shows the violent disturbance of the mind or feelings of the opposition party. The effect of the news makes the public and the opposition party feel uncomfortable, as they dreaded the reality of such postponement based on speculations that there could be war should the election be deferred. This discomfort violates Pollyanna maxim.

The editor's use of the word, 'shock' reveals the overwhelming grief and bewilderment of the people on hearing the new dates on the postponement of the elections. The listener becomes worried by the sudden unexplained change of the election date, thus, fear grips the electorate as they dreaded the possible reaction of the opposition party (APC). From the ongoing,

this situation maximizes the discomfort of Nigerians therefore, pollyanna maxim of our model is violated.

**Text 18:**

Paragraph 4: If in the process of the coming elections, we allow INEC and its leadership to also be discredited, then the possibility of credible democratic transitions either now or in the near future will also evaporate. The larger implication of such a situation is that Nigerians will inhabit a Hobbesian Nightmare republic, the land of every man to himself and the devil for us all (*ThisDay*, March 1, 2015 page 7).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Pollyanna or consideration maxim	In Euphemism	The use of these phrases, "I will inhabit a Hobbesian Nightmare republic" "the land of every man to himself and the devil for us all" are considered to be impolite and threatening expressions since they intend to harm the reader's/listener's hope or confidence reposed in INEC for credible elections. This violates Pollyanna maxim.

From the excerpt above, the writer presents a situation of uncertainty, the discrediting of vital institutions like the police, military, judiciary and INEC in the elections that were forthcoming by some persons builds fear in the minds of Nigerians as regards the credibility of the forthcoming elections. His words speak of doom and chaos should these bodies be discredited. The "land of every man to himself and the devil for us all" signifies bad omen for the country, and makes the reader feel uncomfortable.

**4:8 Violating Agreement maxim**

Modesty maxim is violated when a person's expression maximizes praise of self, and this is evident in the following texts.

**Text 19:**

Paragraph 1: It started as rumour. It was too dangerous a thought to be entertained why anyone would want to shift the dates of elections fixed about one year ago.

Paragraph 4: While the argument may sound somehow logical, we are constrained to reject it outright in the country's interest. A shift of the polls could set the entire country on fire (*The Nation*, Monday, February 2, 2015 page 15).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Agreement maxim	Assertives	The excerpt shows the editor's defiant position for the postponement. This refutation is aptly captured in the expression 'we are constrained to reject it outright'. Since the editor extols disagreement, therefore, agreement maxim is not adhered to.

This editorial reveals the editor's unwillingness to grant or consider the postponement of the forthcoming elections. To the editor, it is undesirable, unacceptable to postpone the elections, and therefore any attempt towards that should be resisted. The implication is that the reader would be obliged to align forces with the editor to oppose any move for postponement.

**4:9 Violating the Modesty Maxim****Text 20:**

Paragraph 2: Now that the two most popular presidential candidates – Goodluck Jonathan of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressive Congress (APC) – have finished singing their respective praises in the media and on roadside posters.



Paragraph 5: ¶In the last six months, we have seen presidential candidates playing God as if they were the creator or owners of their lives. We have seen political arrogance at its best (*ThisDay*, March 25, 2015 page 14).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Modesty maxim	Expressives and assertives	The excerpt informs the reader that presidential candidates were proclaiming glories to themselves. This is vividly captured in the expression ¶ singing their respective praises in the media and on roadside posters¶ This attitude is a breach of modesty maxim, which advocates that one maximize dispraise of oneself.

In this excerpt, presidential candidates¶ attitude of eulogizing themselves depicts pride and arrogance. Therefore, it fails to keep the norms of modesty maxim which requires that the eaker/writer should minimize praise of oneself and maximize the dispraise of self.

#### **4:10 Violating the Tact Maxim**

The tact maxim is violated when one maximizes the expression which implies cost (inconvenience) or imposition to the addressee (other). This could be seen in the data below.

#### **Text 21:**

Paragraph 5: Therefore, we call on the president to ask those who are running a scorched earth media campaign in his name against INEC Chairman to desist from such action.

Paragraph 6: We also call on General Muhammadu Buhari and the leadership of APC to cease and desist from undermining the leadership of the armed forces in the run up to this election. Prof. Attahiru Jega should be allowed to conduct a

free and fair election for the greater good of the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (*ThisDay*, March 1, 2015 page 7).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Tact maxim	Impositives and commissives	Although the imposition is diminished or toned down by using the phrasal verb, ‘call on’ the editor makes the order seem more acceptable to the addressee. Anyone who complies with the order may find that the cost is greater than that stated. Again, the use of these phrases ‘desist from such action’, ‘cease and desist from’ to this election in paragraphs 5 and 6 imposes heavily on the presidential candidates and their supporters. This goes against the principle of tact maxim, which seeks to avoid impositions on your addressee.

In this editorial, the editor couched the information as a mere advice or mild imposition as expressed in the phrase ‘call on the president to ask’ to desist from such action. Later it progressed to a more direct request, command and/or caution to the presidential aspirants, and their supporters to steer clear of any act capable of frustrating the efforts of the INEC Chairman and the leadership of the armed forces in the forthcoming elections.

**Text 22:**

Paragraph 9: We therefore call on the Federal and state governments to provide all the support needed by INEC to get all willing voters to obtain their cards within the 11 days left before the first set of elections (*The Nation*, February 2, 2015 page 15).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Tact maxim	Impositives and commissives	In paragraph 9 of the excerpt, there is a directive of what to do by those concerned the Federal and state governments. The instruction is intended to garner support for INEC in the forthcoming elections. The imposition seems to be hedged in the phrase ‘call on’ yet, by making this demand, duty is implied on the addressees as they have no choice than to comply. Therefore, tact maxim is not adhered to.

The text above started as an appeal to the federal government to provide all the facilities needed for the elections. The editor, however, compels his addressees to comply in ensuring that card readers are made available to the voters within the stipulated time frame of 11 days before the elections. Therefore, the editorial is an imposition, though, structured in an appeal form.

**Text 23:**

Paragraph 10: We urge all candidates to prepare for the coming elections with the spirit of sportsmanship. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should, as a matter of urgency, spell out the code of conduct for contestants and set up functional monitoring units to ensure compliance (*The Daily Sun*, January 5, 2015 page 19).

Identified maxim	Where found	Meaning/analysis
Tact maxim	Impositives and commissives	The editor's language use imposes duty on Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The modal verb 'should' is always used to issue order, command or give instructions. It does not offer choice to Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC); rather, it mandates them to comply urgently. The word 'urgency' denotes immediate attention, and so imposes some constraints on INEC. Therefore, duty is implied and this violates politeness tact maxim.

Using the phrase 'as a matter of urgency' the editor bluntly demands that Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should expedite actions in pronouncing the expected general conduct of the contestants vying for different positions. To the editor, this proposition is something that must be done by the Commission without hesitation.

#### 4:11 Honorifics

Being linguistically polite involves speaking to people appropriately in the light of their relationship to you. It means getting the linguistic expression of social distance right as far as your addressee is concerned. The use of honorifics is observed in the editorials below:

#### Text 24:

Paragraph 8: No sooner was the postponement secured than the PDP started a vicious campaign of paranoia to sack Professor Attahiru Jega, chairman of INEC.

Paragraph 10: It is the bulk of this team that conducted elections four years ago in which President Goodluck Jonathan and all the elected officers of state were ushered to power (*The Nation*, March 11, 2015pa).

The use of the address forms ‘Professor’ for Jega and ‘President’ for Goodluck Jonathan shows mutual respect. By virtue of their offices as INEC chairman and president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, they should be accorded some respect, irrespective of their age.

**Text 25:**

Paragraph 2: Prof. Akinyemi’s logic is that if the leaders of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress can publicly come together –

Paragraph 8: President Jonathan and Major Gen. Buhari are clearly the leading candidates but they are by no means the only actors capable of creating disorder in the polity (*TheDaily Sun*, January 5, 2015 page 15).

The honorific ‘Prof.’ shows that Bolaji Akinyemi is an academic. By virtue of his position as a professor, it is socially wrong to address him without adding the title. There is a social distance between him and a first degree holder. Prof. Akinyemi is also a former minister of External Affairs, and so deserves to be accorded some respect.

In Paragraph 8 of the same text, we have Gen. Buhari. The address form ‘General’ signifies a high rank officer in the Army; therefore, as a retired General of the Nigerian Army, Buhari deserves to be accorded respect. The use of this honorific shows the gap in rank between him and a civilian President Jonathan.

**Text 26:**

Paragraph 1: For several weeks, the Ekiti State judiciary has been under siege that started following a case challenging the eligibility of the current Governor, Mr. Ayodele Fayose, to contest the June 21 gubernatorial election in the state.

Paragraph 2: The whole drama started with a ruling delivered on September 22, 2014, wherein Justice Olusegun Ogunremi of the Ekiti High Court dismissed an objection filed by Governor Ayo Fayose challenging the jurisdiction of the court to hear the case against him (*ThisDay*, October 21, 2014 page 15).

The use of the address form, -Mr.ø for Ayo Fayose in Paragraph 1, shows that he is an adult male and not a boy or an infant, while in Paragraph two he is addressed as Governor Ayo Fayose. -Governorø gives him the respect as the number one citizen and Chief Executive of Ekiti State. Therefore, socially, he deserves some respect. -Justiceø as an address form shows that Olusegun Ogunremi is not only a member of the bar, but also a high-ranking one. By virtue of his office, he deserves respect and should be addressed as such.

A detailed analysis of the politeness maxims found in the given or selected editorials is presented in the table below.

<b>Politeness maxims</b>	<b>Number of texts exploited</b>	<b>Number of texts violated</b>	<b>Total</b>
Approbation maxim	2	3	5
Pollyanna or Consideration maxim	3	3	6
Tact maxim	2	3	5
Agreement maxim	3	1	4
Modesty maxim	2	1	3
<b>Total Honorifics</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23 +3 =26</b>

Table showing the summary and frequency of the exploited and violated five peculiar politeness maxims in the various editorial texts.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5:1 Summary of Findings

In this study, the researcher explored politeness features in selected Nigerian newspaper editorials. The goal of the research was to show how language use of editors observe and/or violate politeness maxims. The existing literature in the field of study was examined to provide insight into the different approaches adopted by researchers in the area. The researcher investigated newspaper editorials of three Nigerian dailies using Leech's *Politeness Principle* (maxims). A text-based descriptive approach was used as the method in analyzing the texts, and to ascertain how editors consciously or unconsciously incorporate the maxims in their expressions as they address issues of societal importance especially on politics. The data used were categorized into two sections – the first section is the exploitation of the maxims and the second section dwells on violation of the maxims in the selected editorials on politics, democracy, and other national issues.

Having examined the selected editorials, it was gathered that there were features of approbation maxim, tact maxim, agreement maxim, modesty maxim, and pollyanna or consideration maxim. Specifically, the selected editorials helped to elicit information on how the language use of the editors observed, breached or violated the regulatory principle of politeness with respect to the identified maxims. The data gotten, collated, and analyzed show that the editors observe these maxims of politeness in varying degrees while handling issues of public importance. On the other hand, the second section reveals that there were more violations of the maxims by the editors than their observance of them. The editors were not sensitive and considerate on the effects of their language use on the addressees (readers). It is believed that politeness concerns itself with not just the information in the conversation, but the effect of what is said on the listeners. Thus, their deviations from the maxims are considered impolite, since the

more a maxim is flouted, the more impolite the person becomes (Leech 88). Another reason for their impoliteness could be accredited to little or inadequate knowledge of the concept of politeness. This shows that more efforts should be geared towards orienting (or re-orienting) editorial/news writers on the need to imbibe the concept of politeness in their language use. This becomes necessary as the tenet of linguistic politeness, according to Peter Grundy (189), plays a very important function in speaker/addressee relationship.

## **5:2 Conclusion**

From the study, we discovered that editorial texts are instances of language use, which are organized according to the functions which they intend to fulfill in society; hence, the language of these editorials on politics, governance or democracy are informative. It is worthy to note that communicative success, which is the expected outcome of linguistic politeness, can only be achieved when the speaker or writer chooses his words in such a way that listeners (readers) will understand the circumstance of the utterance or the communicative intention. This receives tacit support from William O'Grady who says that, "the relevance of communication can only be achieved when the transfer of meaning from one human mind to another is understood" (11). There is, therefore, the need for a balanced interpretation and understanding of the prevailing events in society. However, the editorials examined, whether polite or impolite, in their expressions were keeping Nigerians (electorate) abreast of the activities of political aspirants, and the political parties involved in the general elections, especially the two major parties - Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives Congress (APC).

It was observed from the study that the language use of editors were characterized with confrontations, impositions, aggressiveness, and criticisms. Naturally, this stems from the nature of politics, which relies heavily on wit, propaganda, and aggressiveness of the contestants to gain support of the electorate. The frequent use of obligatory verb such as "must" and the modal verb "should" in their statements are considered impolite, and it maximizes imposition on the



personality or the institution referred to. The use of  $\text{we}\emptyset$  shows agreement or solidarity with the electorate which they represent. It was discovered that their language use on issues about the presidential aspirants failed to adhere to the principle of politeness maxims. Again, the manner in which the editors address issues lack linguistic politeness. It is true that some issues may require spontaneous impolite reactions which may be expressed in language; yet, the principle enjoins that one should be tactful, civil, and courteous in his social communication, even when challenging or refuting an ideology (Leech 48). The editors, however, often make sarcastic utterances while expressing their dissatisfaction over an issue, and in some cases, they make inciting remarks which bring discomfort to the reader. The editorials lack the ability to deal with embarrassing situations as they do not avoid giving offences while x-raying prevalent situations in the country, and this attitude, to Leech, is a violation of the *Politeness Principles* (121). Therefore, the study is of the view that editorials are more often devoid of appropriate and courteous expressions with regard to political issues, especially during the period of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

### **5:3 Recommendations**

Considering the use of the English language in Nigerian print media, it becomes necessary that editors of newspaper editorials should imbibe the culture of using polite expressions in the bid to approach issues more decently. Editorials have a wide range of audience; therefore, the use of polite expressions in their day-to-day communication will not only assist, but also encourage, the readers to cultivate polite manners as they interact with other members of society, thereby, reducing impolite and/or offensive words and expressions in communicative situations. Furthermore, Nigerian newspapers should, as a part of its recruitment process, train or expose the prospective employees to courses, seminars and tests that have forms of politeness. Curriculum planners should endeavour to incorporate the teaching of politeness, pragmatics and other forms of language use in tertiary institutions, so as to achieve a just and egalitarian society.

Again, the use of communicative competence can be taught with the use of newspaper editorials in relation to the social contexts. This is because the effectiveness of a particular choice of any linguistic form can be employed to teach either communicative or strategic competence. The knowledge of how to organize language in an effective manner to suit a particular language situation termed strategic competence is necessary for every language user so as to accomplish one's communicative purpose. Also, materials on various models of *Politeness* in print and electronic media should be made available in various libraries of our tertiary institutions and other libraries. This will facilitate readers' access to the norms of politeness usage. Further research can explore newspaper editorials, using the current Locher Miriam and Richard Watts (2005) *Politeness Theory and Relational Work* that justifies violations based on causes of agitation.

For further studies, a replica of this treatise is suggested using another theoretical framework, instrument, and/or analytical tool. Researchers can explore issues on politics and honorifics in editorials of other newspapers using other models of Leech's Politeness theory. It is also possible to compare politeness features of print media with those of the electronic media. Such other researches can also cross-culturally examine media political discourse in Africa and other parts of the world. In fact, genres other than political issues (for example, issues on education, sports, religion, and so on) can be explored, using Leech's theoretical perspective.

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