

## Politeness On Facebook: A Pragmatic Study of the Comments on President Buhari's 2016 Independence Day Speech

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### Abstract

Linguistic politeness deals with the public self-image of an individual. This is the emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize. This paper studied politeness strategies in the comments of the people on the speech of President Buhari on the occasion of 56th independence anniversary celebration, held on October 1st, 2016. Data were gathered on the Facebook timeline of the president. The data were analyzed using politeness as a pragmatic theory. We discovered some politeness strategies such as Face Saving Acts (FSA), Face Threatening Act (FTA), Deference, Off-record and Indirectness. We argued that this has been having positive impact on the politics of the country. We also recommend that people should observe and respect other people's face in their comments.

**Keywords:** *politeness, Facebook, pragmatics, independent*

### Introduction

Politics is known to be a competitive game from time immemorial. Participants tend to defend themselves based on their ideology. The defense can be extended through any platform; print or electronic media. Since the popularization of new media, it has become an avenue for various debates. In Nigeria, new media such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Nairaland etc have become avenues for political discussion. Political figures such as President, Ministers, Senators, even Governors have handle/page on these media. On their handle/page, they post their achievements, ideologies and agenda. This usually generates arguments between their loyalists and opponents. The responses often adopt politeness strategies. The thrust of this work is to examine politeness strategies used by commentators on President Buhari's speech to commemorate 2016 Nigeria's Independence Day celebration. President Buhari is the president of the federal republic on Nigeria.

Since the independence of Nigeria 56 years ago, several Presidents and Heads of State have come and gone and each traditionally addressed the nation on the occasion of Independence Day celebration. The year 2016 celebration marked the second celebration under President Buhari as a civilian president of the nation. This affords the president another opportunity to air his opinion about the current situation of the country. It also affords the citizenry the opportunity to respond to his speech. While some people believe the president is doing well, others believe he has failed abysmally in the past one year. After delivering the speech, it was posted on his Facebook page. People also took to his Facebook page to make their comments. These comments are what we intend to examine in this work using pragmatic approach.

As an individual, the use of language is our personal creativity hence we choose to use it to either save or threaten others' face. Consciously or otherwise, we adopt politeness strategy in our communication. It is observed that while some commentators manage to adopt face saving strategy, some did not shy away from face threatening strategy in their various comments on the speech of Mr. President. Some even use direct speech to threaten the face of the president in their comments. According to Bloomer, Griffith and Merrison (2005:108), we always have a choice of what we say or write and one of the linguist's tasks is to uncover what choice x does that choice y doesn't. The thrust of this research therefore is to examine pragmatically comments made on President Buhari's 2016 Independence Day speech, using politeness principle. This research sought to address the following questions; what are the politeness strategies adopted by the commentators? What are the effects of those strategies? Our objective include among others the following; to investigate the politeness strategies adopted by commentators and to examine the effects of those strategies.

Data were gathered on the Facebook timeline of the President. Politeness as a pragmatic theory was adopted for analysis in this work. We shall be looking at politeness strategies such as Face Saving Act (FSA), Deference, Off-Record Strategies, and Face Threatening Acts (FTA). The next two sections, examines briefly Facebook and who President Buhari is.

## Facebook

This is a social networking service launched in February 2004, owned and operated by Facebook, Inc. It was founded by Mark Zuckerberg with his college roommates and fellow Harvard University students Eduardo Saverin, Azel, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes. The website's membership was initially limited by the founders to Harvard students, but was expanded to other colleges in the Boston area, the Ivy League, and gradually most universities in Canada and the United States, corporations, and by September 2006, to everyone of age 13 and older with a valid email address (Ogedengbe, et al, 2012).

Within the first month, more than half the undergraduate population at Harvard was registered on the service. Zuckerberg was soon joined in the promotion of the site by Eduardo Saverin (business aspects), Dustin Moskovitz (programmer), Andrew McCollum (graphic artist), and Chris Hughes. Facebook was incorporated in the summer of 2004, and the entrepreneur Sean Parker, who had been informally advising Zuckerberg, became the company's president. In June 2004, Facebook moved its base of operations to Palo Alto, California. The company dropped 'The' from its name after purchasing the domain name *facebook.com* in 2005 (Wikipedia, 2016).

Ogedebe et al (2012) asserts that like most social network sites, Facebook provides a formatted web page into which each user can enter personal information, including gender, birthday, hometown, political and religious views, e-mail and physical addresses, relationship status, activities, interests, favorite music and movies, educational background and a main personal picture. After completing their profile, users are prompted to identify others with whom they have a relationship, either by searching for registered users of Facebook or by requesting their contacts to join Facebook (usually by e-mail). Once someone is accepted as a 'friend,' not only the two users' personal profiles but also their entire social networks are disclosed to each other. This allows each user to traverse networks by clicking through 'friends' profiles, so that one's social network snowballs (SNS) rapidly across people and institutions (Walther et al., 2008). This capability is the backbone of Facebook and other SNS and what attracts millions of users around the globe.

Facebook profiles also include two types of messaging services. A private system, which is very similar to a webmail service, and a public system called 'The Wall,' where 'friends' leave comments for the owner of the profile that can be viewed by other users. Usually, 'The Wall' contains short messages that reflect sentiments, common activities between 'friends,' or call attention to external websites or events. To keep users updated about their social circles, Facebook has two features: 'News Feed', which appears on the homepage of each user, and 'Mini-Feed', which appears in each individual's profile. 'News Feed' updates a personalized list of news stories throughout the day generated by the activity of 'friends'. Thus, each time users log in, they get the latest headlines in their social networks. 'Mini-Feed' is similar, except that it centers around one individual. Each person's 'Mini-Feed' shows what has changed recently in their profile and what content or modules ('applications') they have added. Because individuals can delete from their own 'Mini-Feed' stories they do not like, users retain control of who gets to read or see what about them. Among the most popular modules users can incorporate to their profiles is 'Facebook Groups,' which allows users to create and join groups based around common interests and activities. The 'Groups' application displays each individual's groups as well as groups their 'friends' have joined recently. Thus, an important share of the civic and political impact of Facebook should occur within groups developed by users and organizations.

According to Elebeke (2012), the number of Nigerians that have signed up to Facebook, as a means of communication and interactions, has increased from 400, 000 in the last four years crossing 4.3 million mark at the end of December, 2011. Available report from the global 2011 Facebook usage report of the World Internet Status, Nigeria ranked third position in terms of the number of Facebook users in the African continent. Coming ahead of Nigeria according to the report, were Egypt and South Africa with 9.4 million and 4.8 million users respectively. This social network has no doubt influenced the use of language of the user. This perceived influence motivates the researcher to investigate the influence that this social network has on the teaching and learning of English language in a second language situation like Nigeria (Elebeke, 2012).

Ogedebe et al (2012) reports that in 2009, a draft manuscript suggested that Facebook use might be related to lower academic achievement in college and graduate school. The report quickly became a media sensation and was picked up by hundreds of news outlets in a matter of days. However, the results were based on correlational data in a draft manuscript that had not been published, or even considered for publication. Researchers examining Facebook use from a media effects tradition have focused either on the social implications of the medium or on the potential risks that users of social networking sites may experience. For instance, a variety of studies have noted that the use of Facebook is positively related to social capital (Boyd

and Ellison, 2007; Valenzuela, *et al.*, 2008). On the other hand, some research suggests that Facebook users underestimate the potential privacy risks of sharing information on the site (Acquisiti and Gross, 2006; Dwyer, *et al.*, 2007). As with claims of dangers from older media, a recent study that (and corresponding press release) indicated that Facebook use and collegiate grade point averages (GPA) were negatively correlated generated a great deal of media hype (Karpinski, 2009).

It was reported by techcabal in June 2016 that more than 16 million Nigerians sign in to Facebook every month. 7.2 million log in daily. Techcabal is an online internet user researcher. This tells us that the rate at which Nigerians troop to Facebook is alarming. Little wonder every incident in the nation is discussed on this social media

### **Review of relevant literature**

Several scholars have worked on the notion of politeness and the new media in the field of linguistics. Some of these are reviewed in the following paragraphs.

May *et al* (2015) studied Gender and Politeness Strategies in Facebook's Conversations among Students in UiTM Kelantan. The study focuses on three main purposes which are to investigate the language features that are commonly deployed by UiTM Kelantan students for conveying politeness, to identify the similarities of politeness strategies in Facebook's wall posts written by male and female students and also to identify the differences of politeness strategies in Facebook's wall posts written by both female and male students. The study combines both the qualitative and quantitative designs. Samples for that study were 100 male and female students of various Diploma courses in UiTM Kelantan. 100 wall posts from the selected participants' Facebook were collected. The data were analysed by using triangulation technique. The result of this study revealed that gender is not the only factor which affects the application of politeness strategies. In computer mediated communication (CMC), people choose to apply different patterns of language and strategies of politeness based on the context of their conversations.

Theodoropoulou (2015) also made a brilliant contribution to the study of politeness on Facebook. The study focuses on Politeness on Facebook: the case of Greek Birthday wishes. The paper investigates the ways politeness is constructed in a context, in which it is not very typical to find politeness in the Western world: The reception of birthday wishes. Its focus was on the (para) linguistic reception of birthday wishes on behalf of 400 native Greek users of Facebook, aged between 25–35 years old, as evidenced in the ways they respond to birthday wishes posted on their walls. The author uses a combination of interactional sociolinguistics, discourse-centered online ethnography and offline ethnographic interviews, and argue that native speakers of Greek do not just stick to the politic behaviour found in other languages, like English, of personally thanking their friends for their birthday wishes; rather, they employ contextualization cues, such as shifts in spelling, emoticons and punctuation markers, in order to construct frames and footings of politeness by actually reciprocating the wishes they received from their friends. The value of this study to the present work lies in the understanding of politeness in online environments, such as Facebook, which in turn is used for establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Maha (2014) reviews the most important theoretical and analytical frameworks which attempt to conceptualize politeness within and across cultures with the aim to uncover the universality of linguistic politeness.

Onaipe and Odebode (2011) researched on Politeness Phenomenon in *Abiku* Names among the Yoruba Africans. They did a pragmatic study of *Abiku* names from the face act theory's perspective. The authors established that certain politeness acts are either violated or obeyed in the Yoruba naming systems of *Abiku* children; thereby proving the economy of words in names and that more is communicated than said within the little strands of letters. Ten *Abiku* names are selected and analyzed using the pragmatic principle of face act. The study indicates that names, (in particular, *Abiku* names) in the traditional African Yoruba setting, transcend ordinary labeling to historicize, socialize, spiritualize and influence people psychologically. Odebunmi (2013) studied Greetings and Politeness in Doctor-Client Encounters in Southwestern Nigeria. The paper unpack the discursive elements that characterize interactive confluence and divergence in selected consultative encounters in the hospitals. The findings indicate that institutional and cultural (dis)alignments occur in respect of adjacency and non-adjacency pair greetings. In both greeting types, face support, threat and stasis are conjointly co-constituted by doctors and Yoruba clients within the affordances of the cultural, institutional and situational context of the Southwestern Nigerian hospital setting. Adjacency pair greetings attract mutual interpreting between the parties; interactive (dis)alignments are differentially pragmatically accommodated by doctors and clients. In non-adjacency pair greeting, doctors'

threats are co-constituted as appropriate by both parties, the institutional power of doctor and shared Western cultural orientation playing significant roles.

Mauney and Jeon (2014) explore the possibility of new politeness paradigms in computer-mediated discourse on Facebook. Specifically, they examine the discourser expectations, linguistic catalysts for 'face-threatening acts', and mitigations of opinions to maintain 'face' in discourse about politics. The work analyze 10 Facebook wall posts containing discourse about politics for norms of linguistic appropriateness, concepts of 'face', and other sociopragmatic aspects. An analysis of these data suggests that the concept of 'face' is especially important for Facebook, where real names are typically preserved and relationships between interlocutors can be altered based on the conversation at hand. This study, according to Mauney and Jeon (2014), is a first step towards analyzing the relationship between politeness theory, discourse about politics, and computer-mediated discourse.

These works provide an academic insight for the present research; however, they have not had their focus on the comments made on President Muhammodu Buhari's speech.

### **Politeness**

The theory of 'politeness' was originally developed and published by Brown and Levinson in 1978. This consists of two parts: a fundamental theory concerning the nature of politeness and how it functions in interaction, and a list of politeness strategies following Kitamura (2000:61) in the theoretical part of their work. Brown and Levinson introduce the notion of 'face' in order to illustrate politeness in the broad sense. That is to say, all commentators have an interest in maintaining two types of 'face' during interaction: 'positive face' and 'negative face'. Brown and Levinson define 'positive face' as the positive and consistent image people have of themselves, and their desire for approval. On the other hand, 'negative face' is 'the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, and rights to non-distraction'. Yule (1996) also asserts that in the study of linguistic politeness, the most relevant concept is 'face.' He further explains that, your face, in pragmatics, is your public self-image. This is the emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize.

There has however been criticism against this theory by several scholars. One of criticisms of politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1978) is that of politeness as universal. Haugh (2004) took issue with politeness and social norms. Haugh argued that in different cultures, politeness means different things. For example in Japanese culture being polite involves showing that one respects the social position of others (or one does not respect one's own social position too much). In American culture, however, being polite involves showing that one respects the right of others to be free from imposition (or that one does not think too highly of one's own right to be free from imposition). Haugh argued that if different cultures have different reasons for engaging in politeness (and perhaps different definitions of what politeness is) then they will utilize different strategies or perhaps no strategy at all (if they do not see information as face threatening) when expressing face-threatening messages.

### **Politeness Strategies**

Following Babatunde and Adedimeji (2008), politeness strategies are the methods employed by speakers to show awareness of other people's faces. The following strategies shall be explained briefly here; Face Saving Act (FSA), Deference, Off-Record Strategies, and Face Threatening Acts (FTA).

#### **Face saving act (FSA)**

According to Babatunde and Adedimeji (2008) FSAs are utterances and acts which avoid a potential threat to the other person's face. Using this strategy, the speaker recognizes the public self-image of the addressee. The addresser respect the face of the addressee and do not wish to trample on it. This is done by using some words that do not threat the public self-image of the other person.

#### **Deference**

It refers to the respect shown to other people by virtue of their higher status, greater age, and upper influence. This is reflected in some languages naturally such as the use of honorific pronoun in Yoruba language. For example,

*Mummy, good morning ma.* The combination of *mummy* and *ma* in the same utterance is a politeness strategy refers to as deference.

### **Off-record Strategies**

Off-record utterances are those that are not directly addressed to the other (Yule, 1996b: 132). According to Maginnis (2011), when you present a message off record you present face threatening information. However, Brown & Levinson (1978) assert that you do so in a way that says that you cannot be held accountable. Maginnis (2011) explains further that ways of doing this are by hinting or sarcastic joking. That is one may put a 'tone' in the comment, but if confronted the comment is defensible. According to Babatunde and Adedimeji (2008), this notion of tone is directly from Searle's (1965) and Austin's (1962) work on word meaning. Since face is public, one may use this strategy to avoid a direct confrontation which allows for a future retract of the statement if necessary.

### **Face Threatening Acts (FTA)**

Brown and Levinson (1978) states that FTA's are illocutionary acts liable to damage or threaten another person's face. Babatunde and Adedimeji (2008) explain that performing an FTA is a matter of choice, and people often opt for it in a crisis situation. The concomitant effect of this is deepening the crisis. This is usually adopted when there is quarrel between two parties or when one is dissatisfied with others action or inaction. Whenever one person adopts this and the other party reciprocates, it usually deepens the crisis. Babatunde and Adedimeji (2008) state that there are four possibilities of performing FTA's. These are made up of three sets of 'on-record' super-strategies (perform the FTA on-record without redressive action) (bald-on-record); perform the FTA on-record using positive politeness and perform the FTA on-record using negative politeness) and one set of 'off record' strategies (say nothing). All these super-strategies are geared towards extenuating the effect of the FTA's (Thomas, 1995:169).

### **Indirectness**

Indirectness is a universal phenomenon in all natural languages (Thomas, 1995: 119) and it functions 'as a form of politeness' (Lakoff, 1990: 34) cited in Babatunde and Adedimeji (2008). Indirectness occurs when there is a difference between what is said and what is meant or there is 'a mismatch between the expressed meaning and the implied meaning' (Thomas, 1995: 119). It is often concerned with politeness as a result of the difference between the structure and the communicative function of utterances. For instance, the gas of the AC is wasting. Telling the incoming person to close the door. According to Thomas (1995: 124-133) indirectness includes 'power', 'social distance', 'size of imposition', 'rights and obligations' and 'the negotiation of pragmatic parameters'.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

In this work, we attempted a pragmatic analysis of comments of people on the speech of President Muhammadu Buhari on the occasion of Nigeria's 56th independence anniversary. The analysis is based on politeness strategies as a pragmatic theory. The speech was shared by 868 people. It was liked by over one thousand people. As at the time we are doing this research, there were 576 comments on the speech. This shows the interest people have on the speech.

In the comments, we identified the following politeness strategies. The Face Saving Act, Face Threatening Act, indirectness, deference and off-record.

### **Face Saving Act (FSA)**

Face saving acts, as earlier defined, are statements which avoid threat to the addressee's face. They are polite ways of using language to make requests or make declarations without showing superiority, authority and/or power relation. One of such comments is presented in 1-5;

1. Mr. President, your speech is reassuring but what are you doing about the Jubrin case, the house of representative saga. Until you step into it and people are made to pay for any act that is unjustifiable, Nigerians will see your fight on corruption as lips service....

This is a FSA politeness. The statement simply asks question to show that the president has been mute about an important national issue which is taking to mean that he is not genuine in his claim of fighting against corruption. The commentator makes Mr. President feel good even when indicting him by using a positive politeness strategy.

2. Nice speech and good plans...however...he should look into the political and social restructure of the country...

This is another FSA politeness strategy. This is simply saying that Mr. President is doing nothing about the restructure of the nation. While to the president, he is doing everything to ensure a better life for the citizenry, the person asserts that the president is doing nothing in that direction. However, he does that by making the president feel good by using a positive politeness strategy.

3. U spoke well Mr. President! And may God Almighty be ur strength. Pls try to fight also tribalism by maintaining equity in Nigeria.... Thnks!

The statement is interpreted to mean that the president encourages sectionalism. This is premised on the allegation that President Buhari is silent on the issue of the Fulani herdsmen that are on rampage. This is seen to be bias because the president is a Fulani man. This commentator does not hit this directly but used FSA strategy to buttress this assertion.

4. We are no longer asking President Buhari to develop Nigeria. At this point, we are only asking him to return Nigeria to the state it was before he (Buhari) became president on May 29, 2015....

Saying that the president should return the country to the state he met it is simply saying that the president has not added any value to the situation of the country but rather has worsen the situation. FSA is adopted by the person in order to make Mr. President feel good on the surface. However, he is saying that Mr. President is doing nothing to move the country forward. He therefore requests that he should move the nation back as what used to be is better than the President's change agenda.

5. Mr President ur media aide is sure good with the biro. I don't really believe u know what we are going through. How depressed we are starving. How depressed we are that we can't go to school...

While the president is claiming to care about his citizens and feel concern about their plight, this commentator is simply contradicting the claim. He/she is saying that the president is careless about the welfare of the people. He uses FSA to assert that the president does not care about the hardship people are going through in the country. The use of FSA is to make the addressee feel good even when he/she is being insulted. Instead of using harsh words that may threaten the public image of addressee which can invariably lead to public embarrassment or create chaos, FSA is adopted.

#### **Face Threatening Act (FTA)**

Brown and Levinson (1978) states that FTA's are illocutionary acts liable to damage or threaten another person's face. Instances of this from the comments made on President's speech are as follows:

6. Mr. President, will you have to destroy the good others build in the name of your so-called rebuilding? A good manager can only improve on the good and stop the bad but you not only destroyed the good but also make things worse than the way you met them

This person notices the face of the president but does not care. The person does not bother about his personal public image. This is a face threatening act. The comment is simply saying that the president, despite his self-acclaimed effort, has destroyed the country, even beyond the way he met it. The person makes use of words that trample on the public image of the president without respect.

7. It will take a competent leader four years to right the wrong of the economical backwardness you have brought in just one year. Pls, wish us happy independence by resigning today.

This comment is saying that the president is not competent. The person even wants the president to resign immediately. He also does not take note of the president's face. The person feels the president has destroyed the nation and so, he/she is publicly destroying the public image of the president. The comment also threatens the president's face.

8. Anybody who is supporting PresIDIOT Buhari to keep ruining Nigeria every day, God will punish you and Buhari and your entire future generation.

Another face threatening act is this. This is not even limited to the president, it is extended to the lovers of the president. The person is even invoking God's wrath on the president and his supporters. This is giving no

respect of any sort to the public image of the president. This is born out of anger. The fellow does not care about the face of the president.

9. Two year into your government and we are moving backwards instead of advancing. I hope this is another set of speech (deceit) as we have heard before?

This person believes the president is driving the nation backward instead of moving it forward. The person did not mind to publicly threaten the face of the President. The person has seen nothing good in what the President is doing. He even believes the president's speech is another bunch of lies as usual. He/she therefore, does not care about president's face. This comment threatens the face of the president.

10. It just seems as if President Buhari came to destroy everything he met on ground....

To this commentator, the objective of the President at the helms of affairs is to destroy the nation. He believes that the nation is better than this before the arrival of the president. This fellow also damages the face of the president. Those words are strong words that threaten the public image of the president.

11. Stupid presidential speech. People are dying of hunger and you're there talking rubbish. Mtchewwwwww

Calling President's speech stupid is an insult to the President. This also damages his face. This fellow believes that the president does not care about the citizenry at all.

In all the examples above, FTA's are performed with reckless abandon. The President's face is damaged. They almost constitute the worst form of FTA (FTA without redress or 'bald-on-record').

#### **Indirectness**

Indirectness occurs when there is a difference between what is said and what is meant or there is 'a mismatch between the expressed meaning and the implied meaning' (Thomas, 1995: 119).

12. And how many APC members have you probed and jailed for corruption? What have u been able to achieve for past one year in office if not poverty and you spoiled Nigeria Economy.....

The commentator actually believes that the president is protecting his party member from being tried for corruption. He does not say this directly but using indirectness inform of a question in order to be polite to the president. This is actually the general believe that the moment you are a member of the ruling party, you have become a 'saint'. This commentator is hanging on this believe to make his comment. He expects the president to have known what he really meant by asking such a question.

13. Is it not corruption when electoral umpire is not independent, court orders and rulings are not obeyed?

This is another example of indirectness. While some people believe the president is fighting corruption with sincerity, some believe he is bias in his fight against corruption. This commentator seems to belong to the camp of those that believe that the president is not fighting corruption with all sincerity, hence the question.

14. Mr. President, will you have to destroy the good others build in the name of your so-called rebuilding?

This is not a real question per se. this is an indirect way of saying the president is destroying the country through his actions. The commentator does not say this directly in order to be polite to the president. He expects the president to understand that, to him, the president is not moving the country forward but rather destroying it.

15. This is the first speech that has input and was supervised by Mr. President... I could actually feel him talking without the manuscript. Well done Mr. President but a little observation...why use Niger delta militants and not Fulani herdsmen (the bold is mine).....

This question also is to assert the rumour that the president is sectional. The commentator also belongs to the side of the people that believe that the president is supporting his tribal men (the Fulanis), that is the reason behind the question. He does not want to come straight to tell the president that he is supporting his people. The above examples shows politeness in indirect speech. The commentators try to be polite without hitting the nail on the head but rather use indirectness.

### Deference

As said earlier, deference refers to the respect shown to other people by virtue of their higher status, greater age, and upper influence.

16. Thank you so much sir, for your patriotism and kind gesture toward bringing back our lost glory....
17. As you hv the love of Nigeria at heart, it is only God dat can reward you. God bless you sir.
18. I believe in the administration of president buhari. God bless Your Excellency.
19. Well done Mr. President....
20. Well done sir....
21. Well said Mr. President....

The continuous use of sir in the examples above is a form of respect for the President. This makes him feel good while reading the comments. Even when the comment is going to be harsh and threaten the public image of the president at the end, the initial 'Sir' makes him feel good and less threatened.

### Off-Record

Off-record utterances are those that are not directly addressed to the other

22. If someone die is there any speech to bring the person to life again? Nigeria is dead.
23. We are not in any independent, we are subjugated. We need freedom of ourselves, period.
24. God has bless us with everything yet we still have problem, no one cares for the masses, d rich gets rich every day, d poor gets poor every day, cost of living is high....
25. Only god can solve our problems not human promises and government. On Christ solid rock I stand.
26. Oh lord of host, I trust u are watching....cum and rescue dis nation of urs.

The above statements are not directed at anybody and therefore the commentators cannot be held accountable as threatening anybody's face. The commentators are actually talking to the president in respect of the current situation in the country but not directly to him. They are actually doing this in a mild way of saying the President and his team does not care about the masses. They are selfish, but in a way that can be denied at the end of the day, if need be.

### Conclusion

We have been able to identify five politeness strategies; Face Saving Act (FSA), Face Threatening Act (FTA) indirectness, deference and off- record. They all show how loyal or disloyal people are to the President. The examples under FSA and deference show that some people are still loyal and respect the president. They do not want to threaten his public image. We also discovered those that threaten the public image of Mr. President. The FTA and Indirectness are examples of negative politeness that threaten the public image of the President despite his position in the country. Those that used off-record strategy are pretending to be indifferent, yet they also threaten President's face.

The Freedom of Information Bill (FOIB) and social media have greatly influenced politics as it is being practiced today in Nigeria. Gone are the days when citizens cannot freely comment on the on-goings in the nation. This has been having a positive effect on the politics of Nigeria. The effect of this participation is seen through new media and has reflected during the electioneering processes leading up to voting. It has also been helpful in shaping the way our politicians act and behave. The activities of the political gladiators are monitored and exposed through Facebook. Consequently, the politicians are conscious of their doings for the fear of social network attack. We can therefore say that this is having a positive effect on the politics of the nation. However, we recommend that people should uphold modesty and to respect other people's public image in their comments.

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