

IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES IN THE FACEBOOK POSTS OF NIGERIANS OVER THE SUPREME COURT RULING ON THE 2019 IMO STATE GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION

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Abstract

Political discourse is about the way people use language to communicate, dialogue, resist power abuse and maintain social goal. Facebook users use language to create social relationship and instantiate their roles via recreation, networking, social activism, political participation and protests. Thus, during these processes language can be used to cause offense, attack face and damage other people's character especially authority figures. The recent Supreme Court (SC) ruling over March, 2019 Imo State governorship election has prompted so many comments on the social media, which have not enjoyed scholarly discourse because it is a recent development. Most research works on impoliteness in political discourse have majorly focused on inaugural speeches, campaign speeches and reactions of the electorates on election matters. As a result, this study investigates impoliteness strategies found in the posts and comments of Facebook users over the SC ruling and their goals based on Culpeper's (1996) theory. This study is a descriptive research based on impoliteness strategies phenomena in written language. The data for this research were purposively sampled posts and comments that contained impoliteness strategies found on Facebook, posted from January 14th to 26th, 2020. The results of analysis show that from 17 posts and 4 comments collected, four strategies are found, among which are bald on record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock politeness. The most used strategy is bald on record impoliteness, it is also noted that the male folk are more forceful and direct in their deployment of impoliteness.

Keywords: Language, Impoliteness, Facebook Posts, and Supreme Court ruling.

*This paper was erroneously published earlier in another journal.

Introduction

Nigeria as a country gained independence from their British colonialist in the year 1960, since then it has not had a steady democratic government until 1999 when President Olusegu Obasanjo took over power from a military regime after a general election was conducted and he emerged the president. So, since 1999 Nigeria has enjoyed uninterrupted democratic governance although not without some staggering challenges of which the issues of corruption and insecurity rank topmost. In 2019 February and March, Nigeria had a general election that birthed a new administration both at the state and federal levels. The outcome of that election generated several disagreements that resulted in the aggrieved parties going to the court demanding for justice, of which Imo state is not left out. The Imo state governorship election was done on March 9th, 2019 and according to the Independent National Electoral

Commission (INEC), Hon. Emeka Ihedioha of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) emerged the winner. This announcement by INEC did not go down well with other governorship candidates, among whom is Sen. Hope Uzodinma of the All Progressives Congress (APC) who went to the Tribunal and Court of Appeal contesting INEC's announcement alleging that the election that brought Hon. Emeka Ihedioha of PDP to power was marred with irregularities. Moreover, the Tribunal and Appeal Court have earlier upheld the announcement made by INEC which declared Hon. Emeka Ihedioha of PDP the winner of the poll. However, on January 14th, 2020 things took a strange turn at the Apex Court (Supreme Court) of Nigeria as Sen. Hope Uzodinma of APC was declared the winner, contrary to the expectation of the PDP candidate and most electorate. This recent ruling of the Supreme Court of Nigeria over the Imo State governorship election has generated mixed reactions from various quarters. Meanwhile, non-violent confrontational sentiments have been raised on the social media especially, Facebook over the Supreme Court ruling which annulled the judgment of both the Tribunal and Appeal Courts (that have upheld INEC's declaration of the PDP candidate as the winner). Most people are of the opinion that PDP won the election on a free and fair bases, alleging that the Supreme Court ruling is based on political sentiment sponsored by the ruling party (APC). These personal reactions on the social media have occasioned this present study. This study therefore, focuses on the impoliteness strategies deployed by Facebook users over the Supreme Court ruling of 14th January, 2020 on the 2019 Imo State governorship election.

Language and Choice

Language is related with all kinds of ethnic, political, regional, and class differences which manifest themselves through various linguistic as well as pragmatic variations. People often pay special attention to their word choices in order to communicate meaningfully, wisely and politely. In our daily conversation, a speaker makes several choices while speaking including the politeness level of his utterance (Coulmas, 2005). Verbal communication not only aims at exchange of information, but also shapes the interpersonal relationships. Politeness is an important pragmatic feature of languages and as such people tend to express politeness in a variety of ways. According to Brown and Levinson (1978), the development of politeness strategies is in order to save the hearer's "face" i.e. "self-esteem" in public or in private situations. Several factors such as the addressee's age, status, position, relationship, social constraints and gender often influence the linguistic choices that people make in conversation.

On the other hand, there are some people who do not consider their word choices for various reasons thereby, commit impolite language. Some of the reasons may be ignorance or to cause offence, retaliate and/or resist dominance from a powerful group. Impoliteness is seen as language or behaviours which are negatively evaluated in a particular context because they attack somebody's face (identity or rights) and cause specific emotional reactions (e.g. hurt, anger). Authors have varied view concerning the term linguistic impoliteness. Even the term that is used for the notion, they see as controversial (why not use "rudeness" instead of "impoliteness"?) (Locher and Bousfield, 2008:3). (See the arguments between Culpeper, 2007 and Terkourafi, 2007 on this dichotomy). Culpeper (2011) views impoliteness as a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts. He maintains

that it is sustained by expectations, desires and /or beliefs about social organization, including, in particular, how one person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviours are viewed negatively – considered “impolite” – when they conflict with how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be. Such behaviours always have or are presumed to have emotional consequences, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence. Various factors can exacerbate how offensive an impolite behaviour is taken to be, including for example whether one understands a behaviour to be strongly intentional or not.

In Nigeria, Facebook is viewed as the most popular social media site where several young Nigerians meet for recreation, networking, social activism and political participation (Asoto, 2011). Among other things, Facebook has become a valuable resource for observing and commenting on the political mood in the country, especially because it provides people the forum to make their voices heard (Cleveland, 2010). Thus, the internet has enabled a networked population to gain greater access to information and more opportunities for collective action and increased freedom to demand change (Chiluwa, 2015). The social media not only provide a platform for civil protests but also enable participants from the Nigerian multicultural backgrounds to express their objections in their own language, carefully constructed to communicate their feelings not minding who is involved. Consequently, this freedom of communication on Facebook has warranted unbridled posts and comments that most times are coated in intentional impoliteness, not considering the social and emotional effects it may have on the targets.

Previous Studies

Impoliteness study and political discourse via the social media have gained the attention of quite many researchers in Nigeria and elsewhere. Some works in existence include Alo (2012) who did a rhetorical analysis of Selected Political Speeches of Prominent African Leaders. Chiluwa (2012b) carried out a Sociolinguistic Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Biafra online discourses, investigating the Social media networks and the discourse of resistance. Akinrinlola (2015) delved into a rhetorical analysis of President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speech. Chiluwa's (2015) 'Occupy Nigeria 2012' was a critical analysis of Facebook posts in the fuel subsidy removal protests. Akinrinlola (2017) investigated the (im)politeness and pragmatic strategies in Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari's 2015 campaign speeches. Shinta, Hamzah and Wahyuni (2017) examined the impoliteness strategies used by supporters and detractors of ahok in their on line comments by gender. Osisanwo (2017) applied pragmatic acts in analysing President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speech. Ajayi (2018) investigated the impoliteness strategies in the Facebook posts of Nigerian electorate in 2019 presidential election in Nigeria from a pragmatic point of view. Cahyono (2018) explored impoliteness strategies and power performed by President Donald Trump on Twitter.

Problem Description

Within the Nigerian space, as evident in the above review, scholars have studied language use in the country's political domain from different linguistic lenses. However, these studies have largely focused on rhetorical and other discourse strategies deployed by politicians in

inaugural speeches, political campaigns and sociopolitical protests on the social media among others. In particular, there is scarcely a linguistic work that has attempted to look into how Facebook users react to and resist political injustice especially, with regard to judicial inconsistency in Nigeria. The recent Supreme Court ruling over March, 2019 Imo State governorship election therefore, brings focus to this study and thus, an intervention in this regard. The study is significant as it adds to the existing studies on political discourse in Nigeria and elsewhere, specifically as it exposes how the Nigerian electorate utilize the Facebook to articulate their sentiments on the Nigerian political affairs especially, as regards the recent Supreme Court ruling over March, 2019 Imo State governorship election.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Culpeper's Impoliteness Theory, complemented with his Control System. These theoretical approaches take care of the different aspects of the study. Culpeper (1996) was specifically designed to answer Craig, Karen and Frances's (1986) call for a comprehensive treatment of face-attack strategies. The impoliteness super-strategies and examples of output strategies proposed in Culpeper (1996:356-7) are as follows (incorporating one revision proposed in Culpeper 2005): Impoliteness super-strategies (in bold) and output strategies (in italics).

- **Bald-on-record impoliteness:** the Face Threatening Act (FTA) is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimized.
- **Positive impoliteness:** the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants. E.g.
 - a) *Ignore, snub the other* - fail to acknowledge the other's presence.
 - b) *Exclude the other from an activity.*
 - c) *Disassociate from the other* - deny association or common ground with the other; avoid sitting together.
 - d) *Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic.*
 - e) *Use inappropriate identity markers* - for example, use title and surname when a close relationship pertains, or a nickname when a distant relationship pertains.
 - f) *Use obscure or secretive language* - for example, mystify the other with jargon, or use a code known to others in the group, but not the target.
 - g) *Seek disagreement* - select a sensitive topic. Make the other feel uncomfortable. E.g. do not avoid silence, joke, or use small talk.
 - h) *Use taboo words* - swear, or use abusive or profane language.
 - i) *Call the other names* - use derogatory nominations.
- **Negative impoliteness:** the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants, e.g.
 - a) *Frighten* - instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur.

- b) *Condescend, scorn or ridicule* - emphasize your relative power. Be contemptuous. Do not treat the other seriously. Belittle the other (e.g. use diminutives).
 - c) *Invade the other's space*
 - d) *Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect* .
 - e) *Put the other's indebtedness on record* - Violate the structure of conversation – interrupt.
- **Sarcasm or mock politeness:** the FTA is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remain surface realizations.
 - **Withhold politeness:** the absence of politeness work where it would be expected. For example, failing to thank somebody for a present may be taken as deliberate impoliteness (Culpeper, 1996:8-9).

Furthermore, according to Culpeper's Control System which complements his impoliteness theory in this study, readers/audience embark on a process which can be data-driven (i.e. evidence that adds to, confirms, or fine-tunes our understanding of a specific character, or challenges it) or inference about/understanding characters based on *prior knowledge* (pre-existing expectations, information, socially or culturally held view of certain character or character-type, such individuals have shared characteristics by which they are 'understood' in society) and the *Textbase* (what the character says at any given point) and *Surface Structures* (how the character says what they say) to stylistically 'read', 'interpret' and understand character types and motivations (Culpeper, 2001).

Research Method

This research is a descriptive research with a qualitative approach as it describes the types of impoliteness strategies deployed by concerned electorate on Facebook posts and comments and also interprets the data. To limit the data, the researcher purposively collected about 23 posts, but only 17 posts and 4 comments were carefully selected for this study. Thus, the researcher analyzed about 21 posts in all. In collecting the data, the researcher would login to Facebook with laptop, then screenshot the posts and comments whose content relates to the focus of this study and they served as the useful data. The posts were captured between 14th and 26th January, 2020. The period marked the peak of discussions on the Supreme Court ruling on the Imo State governorship election. Data are subjected to descriptive and pragmatic analysis within the purview of Culpeper's impoliteness theory and Control System.

Data Analysis and Discussion

This section focuses on the critical descriptive analysis of the data gathered for the study. The presentation and discussion of data is done following the instances of impoliteness observed in the data. The data are presented on the basis of their featuring impoliteness strategies. The data are presented as publicly shared by the authors on their Facebook walls, with particular focus on their linguistic contents. Their identities were deliberately avoided for ethical reasons.

Impoliteness Strategies in the Facebook Posts and Comments

Mock politeness

Excerpt 1



Jan 16 at 9:05 AM • 🌐

Nigeria's Supreme Court should declare any candidate that scored only one vote the winner of the 2019 Imo governorship election. Is Nigeria not a comedian?



24

10 Comments • 1 Share

Be the first to like this



With the contradiction, I would love to see our learned Supreme Court Judges reverse itself. After all no one is above mistake. Who shall I send? They need courage to make U-Turn.

3d Like Reply

The first author mocks the Supreme Court and indirectly insults their sense of credibility. By saying that they should declare anyone with one vote as the winner, the author insinuates that Sen. Hope Uzodinma did not get enough votes to be declared the winner, yet the Supreme Court declared him the winner, he ended with a rhetorical question that further ridicules and personifies Nigeria as a comedian (meaning that Nigeria should not be seen as a serious minded country; comedian is one who makes joke out of anything including serious issues). This question expresses less, but reveals more of what is in the mind of the author. He wittily coined it this way to hide the fury, hate and frustration in his tone, thus withholding further impoliteness.

The second author deploys mock politeness to attack the face of the Supreme Court Judges (SCJs). He started by saying that the ruling they gave was a contradiction and sarcastically though, indirectly calls for its reversal in what seem like a softer tone yet, embedded with underlying impoliteness. By stating that the ruling was a contradiction, one could infer that the author presupposes that the SCJs are not grounded in their field hence, such contradiction and incoherence. Instead of making it obvious, he goes on (“I would have to see our ‘learned’ supreme court judges reverse itself”), to remind them that the electorates see them as learned and as such should decide matters with fairness after weighing it on the scale of justice. Moreover, he sees the reversal of the ruling as a simple task as one could always correct himself when he makes mistake. So even as ‘learned’ as they seem, they still make mistakes which is not strange to Nigerians therefore, they need not delay the reversal because of the thought of what and how people will see them. The author wants to hasten the matter by seeking for someone to send to the SCJs as he cannot go himself because of the seemingly implication. He concludes by urging them to muster enough courage and do the needful.

Excerpt 3

 Jan 25 at 1:01 PM • 

Initially, I wanted to be a lawyer, but it didn't work out. Destiny played a fast one on me! I ended up being a pocket lawyer, arguing and winning arguments in the real world and on social media, installing Uzodimmas without minding what the electorate or INEC thinks! I hope to be a lawyer without studying law!

   41

1 Comment

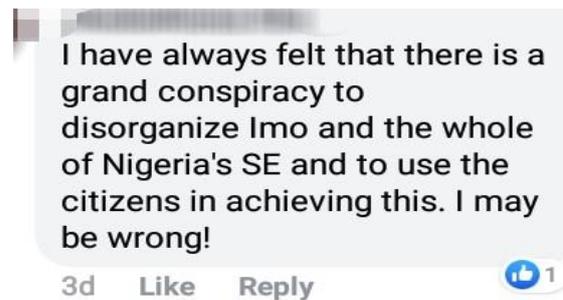
Excerpt 3 contains traces of Mock Politeness or Sarcasm. The author indirectly mocks the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) and other SCJs that ruled the case, he implies although they are lawyers and even judges, they are not qualified for such profession. Even though they studied law, they are only but “pocket lawyers” who win cases by crook. There is this shared common knowledge about the term “pocket lawyer”, it means one whose arguments are based on lies, and who does so in order to cheat an innocent person. In so doing the author launches an unmitigated face attack “pocket lawyer” on the SCJs involved in the controversial ruling. He further reveals that “pocket lawyer” ends up installing the “Uzodimmas” (wrong candidates/cheats) without thinking about the implications or the feelings and reactions of the electorates and INEC. A closer examination of the post, reveals that it is a subtle way to inform the public that the SC ruling was based on purported figures and concocted lies by the APC government, just to rob the PDP candidate of his legitimate right.

Bald on record impoliteness

Excerpt 4



Excerpt 5



Excerpt 4 is a frontal attack on the person of Sen. Hope Uzodinma; as he is portrayed as the enemy of the Imolites. The author alleges that the APC candidate, Sen. Hope made himself an available channel to be used against his people. The author's frustration and disappointment become glaring by the use of capitalization for deliberate emphasis, such that triggers the interpretation of impoliteness towards the target. The author further expresses his disgust thus, “God forbid” that I should make myself available tool in the hands of the enemy to attack my community. It should be mentioned that excerpt 5 expresses the pre-existing socially held view among the South Eastern Nigeria that the APC government is not in their favour. In fact they allege that the APC government will want to wipe them off if it were

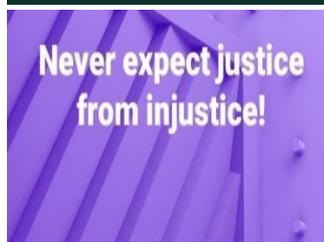
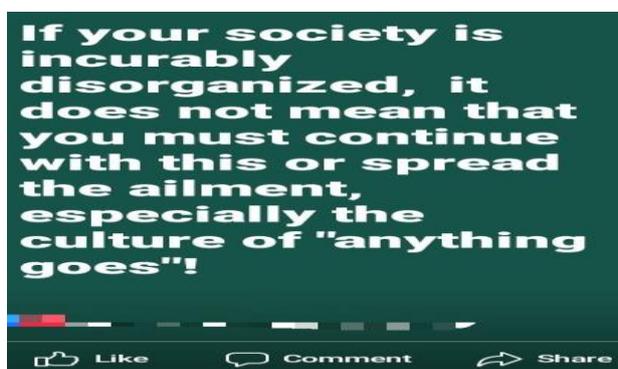
possible for them. And so, for anyone to form alliance with this party and their evil conspiracy, that fellow is seen as an enemy (as saboteur). These claims as seen in the above excerpts are sustained by the negative image portrayed by APC and its candidate. This is deliberate attempt to destroy the positive face of the APC and its candidate in order to sensitize and persuade the electorate to see the deceit, wickedness of Sen. Uzodinma and evil ideology of APC especially, towards the South Easterners. The author tacitly tried to soften the blow at the end of excerpt 5 thus “I may be wrong!”

Excerpt 6



The author in Excerpt 6 repeats the headline news of most newspapers, radio stations and television stations and then poses the question “which way Nigeria??” the question maligns the personality of the SCJs and Nigeria as a whole. If after 59 years of Independence, 20 years of uninterrupted democracy, Nigeria cannot deliver justice, the author doubts if Nigeria knows the way he is headed for. This bald on record impoliteness strategy leaves the electorate to decide for themselves if they can trust the judiciary as the last hope of the common man. This face threatening question that concludes the statement heightens the degree of disappointment in the tone of the author hence, a boost in the interpretation of the impoliteness.

Excerpt 7



31 1 Comment • 2 Shares

Like Comment Share

Excerpt 8



Excerpt 9

There is a conscious attack on Sen. Uzodinma of the APC as foreground in excerpt 7 above. The author presents him in a negative light as one who is propagating bribery and corruption

in the society, as there is the inference that he must have bribed his way to enjoy the favour of the SCJs. The excerpt portrays Nigeria as a society that is submerged (sick of) in illegality and depravity and at the verge of decay. However, the author preaches that one should not go on scraping the affected area or even circulating the disease- “anything goes”. This is a thoughtful threat to Uzodinma’s face, as this is a strategy to alert the electorate especially Imolites that he is a dubious fellow; one without conscience, principle and any form of morality. The goal is to discredit and tarnish his self-worth and burst his ego before the people. The 8th and 9th excerpts foreground the pre-existing general information, socially held by Nigerians that the incumbent president ascended the office through cheating and fraud. He is also accused of forcefully removing the formal CJN and replacing him with the present one whom Nigerians believe lacks the demeanor and does not have a grasp of the law but acts according to the dictates of the president. “This is Nigeria” implies in the present administration, everything is possible in Nigeria, including injustice. The 9th excerpt suggests that one should not expect anything different from an administration that was birthed by injustice thus, the people are reminded of the fact that the APC government is one that is characterized by injustice and they should not expect something more. The three excerpts are all instances of Bald on Record impoliteness, ridiculing the ideologies of the ruling party, APC.

Excerpt 10



In excerpt 10, the author boldly withholds politeness and condescends the priest by posing a question which is intentionally directed at him; the author calls him by his last name not even adding any form of deference. By so doing the author has seriously attacked the face of the priest without mitigation moreover, on a normal day the priest cannot be disrespected by anyone not even the author. The double question mark at the end of the statement emphasizes the degree of impoliteness thus, a severe damage to the face of the priest. He alludes to the bible where God described unjust politicians and priests and likens it to the present situation in Nigeria. He intentionally damages the face of the target by saying that that portion of the scripture was just written for him, he asks an attacking question “Mbaka why??” and ends with Bald on record impoliteness as he pours out his disgust in a more indicting manner “your lies stink” thus, maligning the personality of the priest. By implication, the electorates are warned to have nothing to do with such a man of God who could deceive the people just to gain popularity and rapport with the ruling party - APC.

Negative Impoliteness Strategy: Be contemptuous

Excerpt 11



The author paints Uzodinma as a disgusting and immoral man who could stoop as low as trying to buy the Church over by donating a certain amount of money during the Church annual harvest in 2019, claiming that he was sent by the Nigerian president. This is a serious indictment hence, a face threat. The author implicitly warns the electorate to be careful lest, they would be confused and bought over by a degenerated man. The presupposition is that he went ahead of time to bribe the Church to accept him by the time he steals another man's mandate.

Negative Impoliteness Strategy: Condescend, scorn or ridicule

Excerpt 12



The first author code-switches from Nigerian Pidgin to mother tongue and then to English in a bid to gain common ground with other activists and also express her deepest thoughts. The first statement is an indirect unmitigated face attack on Uzodinma and the lawyer that was seen supporting him and the SC ruling. The author sarcastically accepts to take up the shame meant for Uzodinma and the so called senior advocate on their behalf since, it seems they are not even ashamed of the fact that he lost the election and is declared winner. To further aggravate her annoyance, a so called senior advocate is in support of the SC ruling by spiritualizing the whole matter. The author condescends the SAN by “inukwa” which means “did I just hear senior advocate”. She finds it difficult to believe that a senior advocate from

Igbo extraction would support such perversion of justice based on denominational sentiments. The SAN quotes a famous Catholic priest, Mbaka who has earlier said “Sen. Hope Uzodinma will be declared the winner of the 2019 Imo State governorship election”. He further stated that he believes in the prophecy of the famous priest and his own prayers which he made with the chaplet. The author draws the attention of the readers to the fact that people now compromise justice when it has to do with people from their denomination and ends by bewailing the Church “church ntoo”. This is because the Church ought to be the one that people resort to for truth and justice but here the reverse is the case and this is a serious unmitigated face threat to Uzodinma, the senior lawyer, the priest and the Church at large. The second author who is actually the one that made the post that the first author commented on, launches a direct attack (insult) on the senior lawyer. His statement is a condescending one and demeans the person of the lawyer as he does not hide his anger and disappointment at such mockery of the judiciary (justice system). He concludes with a purposeful insult by referring to the lawyer’s speech as rubbish and by implication, the Supreme Court’s ruling, to him, is rubbish; this is also an instance of *Bald on record impoliteness*. One could infer the warning behind the opinion of the authors; the electorate should beware of anyone hiding in the guise of Church denomination to confuse them into accepting that Hope Uzodinma won the election as declared by the Supreme Court and crusaded by this lawyer and his likes.

Positive impoliteness: Call the other names

Excerpt 13



Excerpt 14

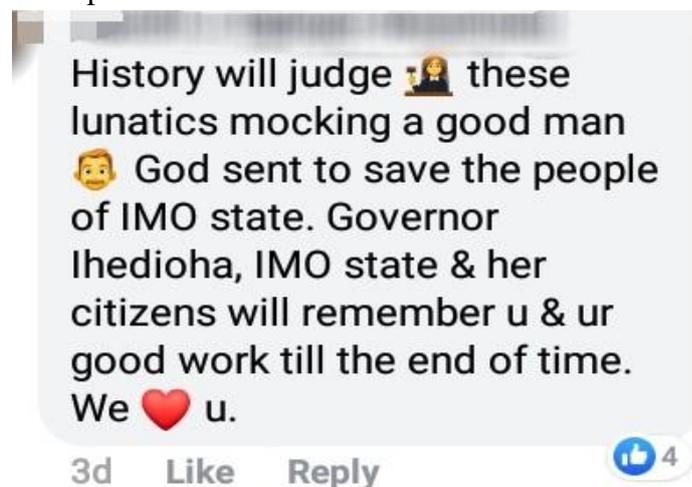


Excerpt 13 author’s comments are based on excerpt 10, he gives the priest a derogatory name “plan prophet”, which means that he has planned and executed the evil deed with the ruling party - APC as he is alleged to be a close pal to the president. This elucidation is as a result of the pre-existing situational knowledge shared by the electorate; the priest, Mbaka had earlier declared that Uzodinma will be declared the winner of the election by the Supreme Court. He concludes by reminding the man of God that God is watching him. This direct attack calls the attention of the electorates to be careful with such man of God.

In Excerpt 14, Nigerians pour out their bitterness and disappointment by the careful choice of words used to describe the SCJs. The use of derogatory words like “thieves” and “pestilences” manifests positive impoliteness intentionally deployed by the authors to vividly

paint the picture and present to the world the type of judiciary existing in Nigeria. The first part of the excerpt contains an unmitigated threat to some of the APC members as seen in the picture above, the author regrets why such humans came into existence and asserts that Nigeria and the entire world would have been at peace if they were flushed out of the womb as fetus and not allowed to have been born hence, become “PESTILENCES”. In other words, they are pernicious and as such capable of causing virulent and devastating effect not only to Nigeria but the entire world at large. Although Culpepper sees impoliteness in the light of diction, tone, facial expression and gesticulation however, in written discourse, capitalization has been identified as a strategy that triggers interpretation of impoliteness. This is because one may not clearly state the tone of a speaker in written discourse, but this feature strongly strengthens the degree of emotion of the author to emphasize the essence of the words to strengthen the tone of the statement (Cahyono 2018). The second part of the excerpt describes the SC ruling as “rape”, this x-rays the forceful and hurtful imposition of injustice on Imolites thus, a humiliation on the PDP Candidate, Hon. Emeka Ihedioha and the entire people of Imo who gave him their mandate. The author implies that this could only be possible because of the activities of “these thieves”- some of the APC members (Rochas Okorochoa, Adams Oshiemole, Hope Uzodinma etc) as can be seen in the picture above. This is a serious threat to the SCJs, CJN and the Nigeria’s judiciary system at large.

Excerpt 15



The author in excerpt 15 indirectly launches a face attack on the SCJs (and perhaps every other person happy with the SC ruling) without any form of redress by saying that history will judge them. She calls them “lunatics” (people without sound mind), she believes that somehow the law of Karma will catch up with them, as they have dealt with Ihedioha whom God sent to Imolites via their votes. She further snubs APC and her candidate by establishing that Imo State and her citizens will remember Ihedioha and his good work till the end of time. She also added “we love you”. The implication is that although, Uzodinma has been declared the governor of Imo state, he cannot delete the good works of Ihedioha and their love for him from their hearts, no matter how hard he would try to impress them. This is because she is quite convinced that Imolites will not be deceived by him or the SCJs into disowning the man they trusted and voted into power.

Positive impoliteness: Use taboo words

Excerpt 16



**May Injustice Never
Depart From D Household
of Doz Supreme Court
Judges Who Murdered
Justice Yesterday**

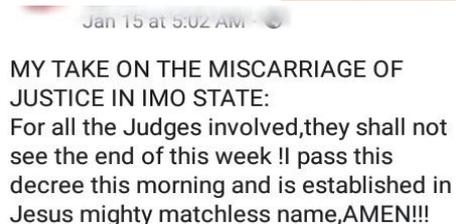
Excerpt 17



Jan 16 at 10:40 PM · 🌐

**D Supreme Court Judges
Are a Disgrace 2Dia
Children & Dia Families.
Indescribable Disgrace
Will Follow Dem 2Dia
Graves.**

Excerpt 18



Jan 15 at 5:02 AM · 🌐

MY TAKE ON THE MISCARRIAGE OF
JUSTICE IN IMO STATE:
For all the Judges involved,they shall not
see the end of this week !! pass this
decree this morning and is established in
Jesus mighty matchless name,AMEN!!!

👍👎 6

12 Comments

One can perceive the tone of bitterness, hatred, reprisal and disappointment in the above posts. The authors intentionally deploy direct attack to maximally cause offense and destroy the face of these SCJs before the electorate. It is interesting to note that excerpts 16 and 17 are posted by one person and all the two authors of the above posts are men; one could notice the forceful, aggressive and severe impolite words in a vindictive tone. These are clear examples of Use taboo words sub-strategy of positive politeness. In the 16th excerpt, the author wishes the SCJs everlasting injustice which will be inherited by their generations since they deliberately killed justice, it means that they do not like forthrightness therefore, they are not to enjoy it not even posterity will justify them. In the 17th excerpt, the author explicitly insults the SCJs and calls them “disgrace” to their families. As if this is not enough, he describes the type of “indescribable” disgrace that will follow the targets even to their graves. This type of social media language tries to represent the voice of the different classes of the aggrieved masses. The 18th author personalizes his words perhaps because of the level of aggression in his heart, he launches an unmitigated attack on the positive face of the SCJs. He uses taboo words as he takes the place of a judge and passes his own judgment which he expects Jesus (the son of God in Heaven) to establish here on earth. He wants to replicate what the SCJs did, as no one can reverse their ruling. He ends his own decree in the name of Jesus and adds amen (it is so). This is informed by the Christian believe as it is written in the scripture “if ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it” John 14:14 (KJV).

Negative Impoliteness Strategy: Frighten the other

Excerpt 19



This is a direct face threat on the Equity/Negative Face of Uzodinma as the author frightens him by inciting Imolites to resist him as governor. The author implies that the SCJs have done the wrong thing by declaring Uzodinma the governor and that Imolites can correct this misnomer Excerpt 19 by neglecting the SC ruling, resist Uzodinma and reinstate Ihedioha. This is a severe impoliteness act as a form of resistance strategy. He ends with the statement “what nonsense!!!” The exclamation marks here indicate emphasis and a strong feeling of disgust, in fact it boosts the interpretation and degree of impoliteness intended. By implication Imolites are hereby directed by the author not to accept Uzodinma as their governor and rather wait until Ihedioha who is the man they elected is reinstated.

Conclusion

This study is a descriptive analysis of impoliteness strategies in the Facebook posts of Nigerians over the Supreme Court ruling on the 2019 Imo State governorship election. The analysis reveals that the electorate demonstrated and expressed wrath and disappointment via the use of impolite and offensive remarks within particular contexts, this is further supported by the use of some linguistic features such as capitalization, punctuation marks and indirectness. It is noted that electorates engage *Bald on record*, *Mock politeness/Sarcasm*, *Positive and Negative Impoliteness* strategies to attack the faces of their target; SCJs, the APC governorship candidate and other key party figures and their supporters, in order to discredit them and expose their selfish ideologies to Nigerians and the world at large. This is as a result of the preexisting sociopolitical knowledge and belief of the electorates about APC (people who lack political expertise and forthrightness to rule Nigeria) which have been sustained by their actions and speeches over time. Another important observation from the analysis is that people react and tend to speak more impolitely when they communicate on the social media than when they are on face to face contact with the target especially, authority figures, this is more on the part of the male authors.

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