

The Representations of Conflict-Related Pragmatic Impoliteness in selected Nollywood Films

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Abstract

Impoliteness is a major trigger of conflict that often results to violence in different sociological spaces, marking it to consistently attract research interests. This study examined the representations of impoliteness in Nollywood films, underscoring the pragmatic strategies of impoliteness. Qualitative design was used. Jonathan Culpeper's impoliteness and Mey's Pragmatic Acts served as the framework to purposively selected texts extracted from *Mr. and Mrs. (MMS)*, a Nollywood film portraying the South-Southern Nigerian context. Data were analysed qualitatively. Findings showed four forms of impoliteness in family conflicts, namely, bald on-record, positive, negative, and sarcasm and mocking, were found. Bald on record impoliteness was performed by the practs of attacking, threatening and hurting underlined. Positive impoliteness was achieved by practs of undermining, dismissing, and ignoring. Negative impoliteness was performed by the practs of patronising, mimicking and frustrating, while hyping, lampooning and deceiving were performed in sarcasm and mocking impoliteness. Linguistic resource such as nouns, verbs and adjectives, and pragmatic features like metaphor, inference, reference and relevance were used to mark impoliteness in Nollywood films. sarcasm and mocking impoliteness manifested the possibility of impoliteness to achieve positive rather than negative effects in the context of conflict-related impoliteness. the study concludes that Nollywood films are valuable resources for evaluating impoliteness in Nigerian sociological milieus.

Keywords: Impoliteness Discourse, Pragmatic Acts, Relevance Theory, Face Theory

Introduction

Culture is a parameter for determining what is polite or impolite. This is so because there are marked differences in the norms, values or precepts in different cultures. In other words, a people's communication engagement is not only determined by these norms, but they also reflect in every communicative encounter that they engage in. Language is a part of the culture system of a people. In the words of Kövecses (2010), the relationship between language and culture is symbiotic, as everything about them is tied to the expression of meaning. Kövecses (2010, p. 1) identifies the areas of relationship to include,

“Proverbs, politeness, linguistic relativity, cooperative principle, metaphor, metonymy, context, semantic change, discourse, and ideology”. The list is inexhaustible because both language and culture keep evolving and certain oral culture or significations are susceptible to change. One of the functions of literary scholars and actors who are concerned with the representations of oral culture(s) across different sociological spaces is to reflect how these cultures and traditions evolve in their creative – literary works. The manner that these representations focus on the culture system that generate (im)politeness, using the examples in Nollywood films, is the interest of this research. In other words, the main questions worthy of note are, what sociocultural contextual factors underscore the representations of impoliteness in Nollywood films, which are literary texts in their own rights; what are the resources marking them in such texts?

The basis for representations of impoliteness in any creative literature is language, which are signs or words that are used in a semiotic network. Semioticians like Danesi (1994) and Barthes (1977) put it that language is a sequence of narratives reflecting “value systems and etymologies”. These values are part of everyday life and the lived experiences of people in the society, including creative writers. In other words, creative writers are not too distant from the realities and contexts in which they write or choose to portray in their literary works. The basis for writing about these settings is validated because they have some forms of knowledge about the culture systems that produce the texts. Thus, creative writers consciously create scenes or speech events or experiences in literary texts that reveal their thoughts, feelings and perceived actions in sociocultural spaces. This study is focused on identifying and analysing those that are concentrated on politeness or impoliteness. The linguistic resources and pragmatic strategies marking them are prioritised in this research. The basis for determining what is polite or impolite lies strongly within the frame of culture. In other words, what is polite in one culture may be impolite in another culture because of practices that are either acceptable or unacceptable in the cultures. Thus, culture seems to affect impoliteness to a large extent. However, canonical scholars, who have worked on several aspects of the interface between culture and impoliteness have proposed or implied certain points. For instance, Mey (2001) says this is influenced by situations which are shared between participants. Since language is mutually shared by a group, it therefore means that the share certain understanding of what to say to be polite and what is said that will be regarded as impolite. Odeebunmi (2006) agrees with Mey but opines that in a local setting, interactions are moderated by

the understanding of culture rather than situations. In other words, culture emphasises politeness and attaches consequences to impoliteness. However, the fact still remains that culture traits are shared among people. Hence, the questions we should ask are, what are the traits that account for cultural impoliteness and how are they represented in the body of literary texts that have cultural undertones?

Impoliteness has featured as both concept and theory in various research in pragmatics and sociolinguistics. Khosravi and Babaii (2017) connects impoliteness to judgement, in the bid to uncover the connection between any face-related theory and appraisal theory. The implication is that there is some form of judgement in place when determining impoliteness (Bousfield, 2008). For instance, bald on-record and off-record impolite behaviours draw on appraisal, particularly judgment (Martin and Rose, 2003). Khosravi and Babaii (2017) identify the relationship between impoliteness and appraisal on the bases of capacity, veracity, propriety, normality and tenacity. They opine that these levels of judgements are used to code impolite behaviours, focusing more on bald on-record impoliteness. Limberg (2009) opines that what instigates impoliteness is a speaker resorting to intentionally cause social conflict and disharmony using communicative strategies, especially those that foreground impoliteness. Tajeddin and Rassaei-Moqadam (2023) posit that speakers make judgements concerning the choice or strategies that are employed to signify impoliteness. The choices made are affected by the three factors that, according to Archer et al. (2012), trigger impoliteness in discourses, namely, social distance, which may exist between the speaker and hearer, power relations, and the level of imposition based on the sociocultural context. This means that apart from impoliteness causing social distance, it can be triggered by social distance, especially distal relationships. In the words of Tajeddin and Rassaei-Moqadam (2023), impoliteness can be demonstrated by perception, performance, response or reactions of the speaker.

A review of the extant literature has signified gap in the representation and description of impoliteness in creative literatures portraying the culture traits of certain communities. This strengthens the need for a study of this nature to address the forms of impoliteness that Nollywood script writers and directors use to account for triggers of domestic violence. This study examines the pragmatic features of impoliteness, underscoring the relationship among culture, pragmatics and impoliteness in communication.

Literature review: Language and identity

Identity is widely used in a wide range of academic disciplines, including psychoanalysis, psychology, political science, sociology, history, and linguistics. Its conceptual connotations and theoretical purpose, especially with respect to language use are not often taken for granted in disciplines where it is used. First, Calhoun (1994) describes identity as a people's culture, suggesting its interchangeability with ethnicity. Although this perspective on identity is comprehensive, it does not take into account identity in modern social and political contexts leading to a void in description, especially considering the focus of this study. Second it is linked to a common means of identification of a collective category of actors in a sociocultural space (Tajfel, 1982; Febrian et al., 2025). This description fills in the void in the first definition, giving the inference that identity can be in social, religious and political perspectives. According to Snow and Oliver (1995), social identity is branded as a "social movement" that aims to unite individuals. In other words, it is in description a means of identification of a people. The depiction of "self" is infused in the third definition of identity, which means that it links to specific people. This link, in communicative term, is what Blumer (1969) calls symbolic interactionism, and Bach and Harnish (1979) refer to as common grounds. This is crucial to the philosophical legacy of social agents recognising the complexity of contemporary societies (Mead, 1934; Kappeler et al., 2019). However, to Giddens (1991), the interpersonal reflection of identity is based on "lifestyle" of individuals. These conceptions still show significant gap in the area of interpersonal communication among domestic agents, using language.

According to Schifffrin (1994, p. 371), language is "deeply embedded within cultural frameworks by which we make sense out of experience" and is used "to organise and conduct our lives". This illustrates the relationship between language, social structure, and social life. Identity, according to Deaux (2000), operates by the same basic principles, which means that the representation and interpretation of identities in text are determined by the same rules. If culture functions according to the same principles, identities will consequently resound or generalise among participants, aligning with social actors' in-group and out-group phenomena groups. This suggests that the concepts of in-group and out-group are the frameworks through which identity representation is always evaluated. Identity is a notion that is exploited a lot, according to Cronin (2000, p.19). His goal is to restrict its use to a certain range so that the intended meaning is clear. Thus, "self" and "institutions," which are regarded as branches of the social identity paradigm, are the focal points of identity. Adding to this

perspective, Warner (2000, p. 64) contends that "it is rarely possible" to discern between "personal" and "collective" identity in the context of human experience, implying that identity is a social construct. According to Giddens (1991, pp. 53-55), this type of mutuality is a critical theory of modernity in which a "person" is an embodiment or model of identity linked to a "biographical" narrative in addition to being a reflexive actor of a group's identity.

Jenkins (2008, p. 2) defines identity as "the human capacity, rooted in language, to know 'who's who' and, consequently, 'what's what.'" Identity helps us understand not only who we are and what we know about others, but also who we are recognized as and what other people believe about us. Identity is a "multi-dimensional classification or mapping of the human world and our places in it, as individuals and as members of collectivities", according to Ashton et al. (2004). According to Martin (1995) and Malešević (2004), a person's culture or identity can influence their actions, and a person's actions can reveal something about their identity. Jenkins (2008) goes on to say that identity mapping and construction are complicated processes that go beyond "merely a matter of neutral classification." This is because categorisation requires extensive examination, which is generally boring to humans, particularly when it comes to classifying other people and vice versa. Identity and collectivity are negotiated by "individuals pursuing their own interests", according to Barthes (2000). Specific cleavages or linkages are indicated by the identity of a given class. The idea that what people do in relation to their cleavage projects their identities as belonging to a socio-political or religious group and culture, revealing their lineage, clan, tribe, nationality, and political class in the process, is brought to a point of convergence with identity by this. Social anthropologists have developed this theory. However, Tajfel (1982) believes that when a group channels its behavior in favor of its in-group and discriminates against the out-group, it is arbitrary to state that the group's actions are sufficient to determine its identity.

Nollywood in the Nigerian society

Nollywood, which has become the formal name of the Nigerian film industry, was coined by Matt Steinglass in 2002 in the New York Times (Onuzulike, 2007). But film production in Nigeria began long before then, precisely during the colonial era with foremost veteran actors like Hubert Ogunde and Ola Balogun. The cinema history in Nigeria can be divided into four periods according to Onuzulike (2007). These are the colonial (1903–1960), independent (1960–1972), indigenization (1972–1992), and Nollywood (1992–

present). According to him, the first film presentation at the Glover Memorial Hall in Lagos took place in August 1903, marking the beginning of the colonial era of Nigerian cinema. *Living in Bondage*, which became a hit in 1992, conceived by an Igbo businessman, by name Kenneth Nnebue, served as the catalyst for the Nollywood era. It is worthy of note that Nollywood now has its viewership extending beyond Nigeria to other nations, regions and continents of the world (Asogwa, et al. 2015). Its remarkable patronage and stellar reputation in Nigeria, the West Africa sub-region, Africa, and the world at large are connected to its educational, social and cultural relevance. It is rated as the second largest film producing industry, next to Bollywood (Indian film industry). The number of movies it churns out per year is more than Hollywood. Despite falling short in terms of revenue, it is not devoid of creativity and expressive contents that are indexical to contemporary realities.

Theoretical framework: Impoliteness and pract in interactions

The study is anchored on Culpeper's (2011) impoliteness and Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts, Culpeper's impoliteness theory is centred on conversation offence strategies, which makes it relevant for film data which have dialogic sequences. Culpeper (1996; 2011) describes impoliteness as the use of strategies that are aimed at attacking face, causing or instigating social conflict and disharmony (Bousfield 2008:131), and in the case of this study, marital conflict. Culpeper (1996) bases the entire theoretical argument on Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of negative politeness which is the purview of Face Threatening Act (FTA), but Culpeper (1996) uses the term Face Attacking Act (FAA) just to sound different. In Culpeper's view, impoliteness is "marginal" to determining politeness in interaction. This means that politeness cannot be determined if there is no act called impoliteness. In other words, before saying something is polite, it means that there is a way it could have been said that it would be impolite, which makes the theory of impoliteness fundamental. Locher and Bousfield (2008) opine that impoliteness is stronger when viewed along power relationships between and among individuals that are participants in a discourse. In other words, Locher and Bousfield (2008) are saying here that impoliteness is a way of showing off or asserting power, on the one hand, and resisting, challenging or undermining power, on the other hand. Bousfield (2008) asserts that when people use language impolitely, it means that there is a certain leverage to avert consequences, or they simply condescend to or are damning the consequences. However, there are instances of spontaneity in executing impoliteness that may arise due to differences in cultures. It has been

established that there are things that may be polite in one culture but impolite in another.

Culpeper set up five super strategies that are used to underscore impoliteness. These are bald on record, negative, positive, sarcasm and mocking and withholding impoliteness. These impoliteness types and their underlying features are categorically defined by Thielemann and Kosta (2013, p. 238) in patterns that align with this study. The first, Bald on Record Impoliteness (BRI), is the act of delivering face-threatening or attacking act (FT/AA) in a straightforward, understandable, and unequivocal manner, without making an effort to lessen its impact on the hearer. The second, which is Positive Impoliteness (PI), can be achieved by excluding, dismissing, or displaying a lack of interest in the recipient's personality, opinion or wellbeing, thereby undermining the good face of the hearer. The third, Negative Impoliteness (NI) features as being patronising, mocking, or menacing for the purpose of infuriating the recipient's negative face wants. The fourth, which is Sarcasm and Mocking Impoliteness (SMI), is marked by being courteous or modest but with implicit impoliteness, employing modesty maxims in a way that seems fake and significantly impolite to make fun of the hearer. The fifth, which is Withholding Politeness (WP), is demonstrated by purposive suspension of expected civility, thereby causing embarrassment, disgrace, and sometimes unrecognition of the self-worth and position of the affected persons. This study is focused on identifying the representations of BRI, PI, NI and SMI in Nollywood films.

Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts theory is a speech act theory that is built around the contexts of utterances. The theory analyses context in two dimensions, which Mey (2001) refers to as 'part'. There is the 'activity part' on the left and there is the textual part on the right. Every utterance is negotiated in a broad context that can be categorised under any of the activity types – part variables. These are limited speech act at the individual speech process. However, every utterance's meaning is negotiated directly, indirectly, in a conversation, psychologically, and using prosody, body moves, facial or body expression and emotional stunt. However, the performance of meaning is negotiated between any of these features and co(n)textual resources (John, 2024; John, Akano & Oyinlola, 2022). Mey (2001) lumps three things that define contexts here, the co-text, that is the linguistic context, the context, that is physical, or sociocultural, and the textual, which extensively focuses on the situational context of the discourse. More than one of these features can be found in an utterance at the same time, which is another reason for the catenation of the word as 'co(n)text' (Mey 2001, p. 222). The combination of both parts in

a conversation achieves what Mey calls ‘pragmeme’, which sequences to the performance of a ‘pract’, that is, the performed act, such as deceiving, insulting, etc. that can feature in impolite conversations. The framework of pragmatic acts is represented in Figure 1.

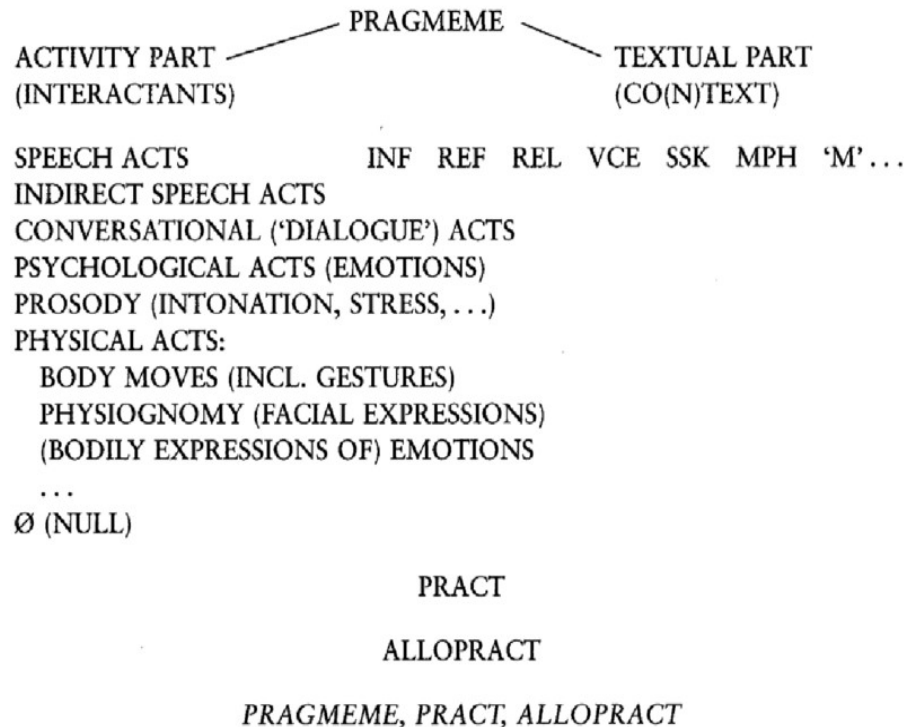


Figure1. Mey’s pragmatic acts theory (Mey, 2001, p. 222)

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive design. Data for this study entailed a purposively selected Nollywood movie, which was filmed to reflect the Nigerian context. The data selected was the movie titled *Mr and Mrs*, directed by Ikechukwu Onyeka. It featured main characters such as Susan (NseIkpe Etim), Kenneth (Benjamin Joseph), Mrs Abbah (Barbara Sokey), Linda (Thelma Okodua), Charles (Paul Apel), Mrs Brown (Chioma Nwosu), Monica (MpieMapetla), and Kate (Nonye Ike), among others. The film was selected for its density of themes relating to conflict and impoliteness. movie was purchased from a vendor. The transcript of the film, from which excerpts were purposively sampled was obtained from the subtitle, samples selected for analysis were from the above main characters. Only excerpts reflecting impoliteness were

purposely analysed qualitatively, using Culpeper(2011) impoliteness and Mey's (2001) Pragmatic Acts as the framework. The analytical procedure involved thematisation and mining of the text to the forms of impoliteness, bald on record (BRI), negative (NI), positive (PI) and sarcasm and mocking impoliteness (SMI). Subsequently, the practs for each impoliteness strategy were analysed. Figure 2 shows the analytical model used to engage the data

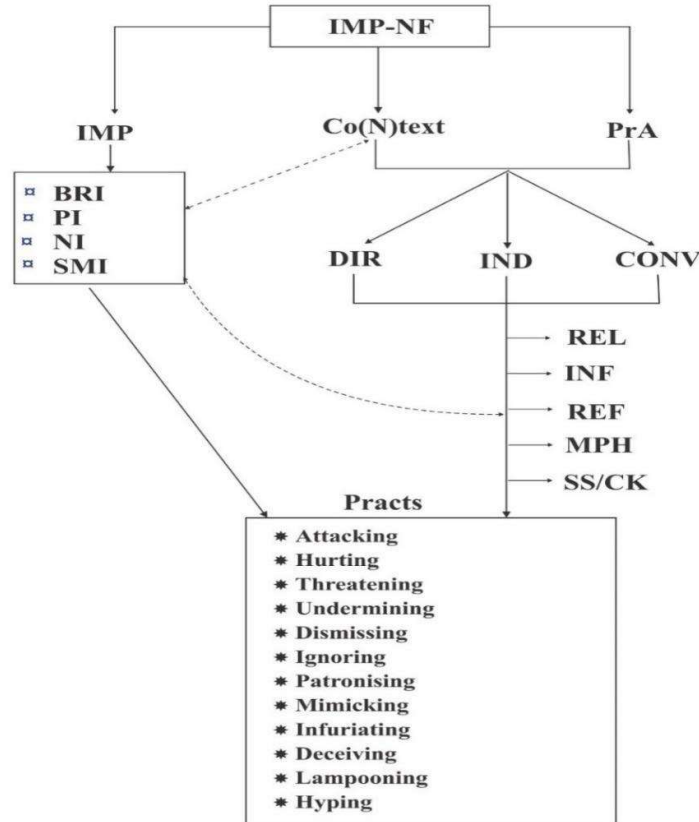


Figure 2: Impoliteness in Nollywood films

Co(N)text and PrA were treated as factors that determined impoliteness. There were two macro contextual variables here, the Co-text and context; hence, the term co(N)text as represented in Figure 3. The activity part shows significations such as direct (DIR), indirect (IND) and conversational (CONV). At the micro level, which was the textual part, the analysis focused on identifying and discussing textual principles in PrA such as Relevance (REL), Inference (INF), Reference (REF), Metaphor (MPH) and Shared Situational/Cultural Knowledge (SS/CK). The use of these principles foregrounded levels of impoliteness, Bald

on-Record Impoliteness (BRI), Positive Impoliteness (PI), Negative Impoliteness (NI) and Sarcasm and mocking Impoliteness (SMI).

Analysis and findings

This section focuses mainly on the representations of impoliteness in the two Nollywood films, *Mr. and Mrs.* The four forms of impoliteness, namely, bald on-record, Positive, negative and Sarcasm and mocking impoliteness, are discussed.

Bald on-record IMP-NF

Thielemann and Kosta (2013) describes bald on-record impoliteness as the delivery of threatening and attacking acts, with a conscious intention to provoke the hearer. Three *practs* are used to mark bald on-record impoliteness in the data. These are attacking, hurting, and threatening. They are underscored by direct, indirect and conversational acts, manifesting textual resources of pragmatic acts.

Pract of attacking

Characters in the text deploy the *pract* of attacking when they think they have certain advantage over the hearers, that is, the person(s) they are attacking. This is performed both explicitly and implicitly, because the hearers are able to identify and feel attacking tendencies on their personality or livelihood. Sometimes, they even respond to such attacks by defending their rights and personality. Excerpts showing instances where the *pract* of attacking is achieved are analysed below.

Excerpts

- i. MRS ABBAH: Shut up! How dare you, you this thing! ...
God only knows what you did to him. A pig will always be a pig. (*To Ken*) I warned you didn't I this is the thing you end up with, wretched daughter of a wretched washman!
- ii. KEN: What would they have done if you didn't graduate?
Your bloody wash man of a father...
- iii. KEN: ...Meet Kenneth Abbah, and his wife, daughter of who, wash man!

There is the *pract* of attacking in excerpt (i), where the speaker (Mrs Abbah) attacks Susan's personality, calling her derogatory names that are culturally dehumanising and stigmatising. These names are also metaphorical such as,

thing and *pig*, giving the inference that she has been reduced in status. For instance, *thing* implies a worthless object, while the latter signifies being classless. These acts also amount to condemning and relegating the hearer's social status; the speaker uses the terms repetitively as a direct act to achieve the *practs* of attacking repeated lexical items include *wretched* and *washman*, which resonates in the entire excerpts (i) to (iii). Mrs. Abbah creates a disparity between her family's background and Susan's, to show her disapproval of her marriage to her son, and to verbally attack her personality.

Pract of hurting

The *pract* of hurting is demonstrated by actions that have some forms of negative effect on the hearer. These are used as bald on-record impoliteness, that is, a conscious attempt to injure the hearer's feelings, causing or resulting to some kinds of victimisation.

Excerpt

- iv. SUSAN: I amaze you! Kenneth, you are the one who has a woman in this house. So go back to her and concentrate...
- v. MONICA: (*To Susan*) You know I'm travelling today. Now, is it too hard for you to cook for me, your husband and the father of your children? ... too bad you are starving Ken, but for me you wouldn't do that. We call it HOSPITALITY!
- vi. SUSAN: Listen to me Monica, I will try as humanly possible for you and I to remain friends... if you push me, I will make sure that this man here (*pulls Ken's ear*) ... chooses between you and his kids... (*Mr. and Mrs.*).

There are different representations of bald on-record impoliteness, using the *pract* of hurting in excerpts (iv), (v) and (vi). This is implicitly represented, using a performative act in excerpt (iv). After the agents' divorce, the couple begin to play the game of hurting each other, attacking their feelings to implicitly cause jealousy. For instance, Ken bringing *another woman* into the house is an emotional act aimed to hurt Susan's feeling, and possibly torture her emotionally and make her jealous. The verb *amaze*, is an indirect act, and is pragmatically relevant to generating the effect of hurting. This, ironically, is to hurt and instigate jealousy that the culture system of marrying another wife allows. However, she euphemistically performs, implicitly, the *pract* of hurting, which is to return the guilt to his mind that he is the one doing the wrong thing going after another *woman*; she thus encourages him to *concentrate*. The *pract*

of hurting is verbally performed in the bidirectional verbal exchange – dialogical acts between Monica (the lady Ken brings to the house) and Susan. The argument is initiated by Monica with the direct and explicit intention to hurt, that is, anger Susan, to make her begin to show the jealousy that Ken wants to see. Reference is used in form of the pronouns *you*, *your* and *we* to show proper indexation, that she (Susan) still recognises the role she played as Ken's *wife*. This is represented using inference in *husband* and as *mother*, as represented in *father* and *children*. Monica performs the *pract* of hurting, using prosody features like shouting and indirect command. This achieves an indirect effect because Susan initially demonstrates positive politeness, accepting to cook for her rival. However, she (Susan) performs her own *pract* of attacking, taking her own pound of flesh, marking her own bald on-record impoliteness in excerpt (vi). She climaxes her utterance with a threatening act. Susan's intention in this excerpt is to hurt Ken and Monica, both verbally and performatively. Thus, she verbally assaults Monica to hurt her feelings and by extension, Ken's ear to hurt him physically.

Pract of threatening

Threatening is the most widely represented *pract* in bald on-record impoliteness. It is represented also by violent verbal and demonstrable acts. But in this case, physical action may not be performed. Verbal threats may also be empty of real action; it may just be for the purpose of intimidating, causing fear or even forcing the hearer to perform an act. Examples are analysed in this section.

Excerpts

- vii. SEWA: Damola, if you lay your hands on me, I will not hesitate to use this knife... (*Unforgiveable*).
- viii. KEN: ... Since you are no longer happy; you are unhappy with my family's progress, I will speak to my lawyer tomorrow so I can give you the liberty to find your beautiful world in your bloody memory lane...
- ix. KEN: When I asked for the divorce, it was in a bid to humble you. I expected you to beg... (*Mr. and Mrs.*).

Excerpts (vii), (viii) and (ix) show clear indications of bald on-record impoliteness with the performance of the *pract* of threatening. In excerpt (xxx), the speaker makes empty threat, using physical act, marked by the image of a knife in hand. She uses indirect act, in form of irony to show her inability

or constraint to actually perform the act. The verb, “*hesitate*” directly marks her inability to perform the actual act of harming Ken, who is the hearer. In excerpt (vii), the speaker performs the *pract* of threatening by taunting the hearer with divorce, which he using the euphemisms, *liberty* and *beautiful world*, which in the context of the excerpt is also a metaphor representing the freedom to live as she pleases. On one side of the coin, some people consider divorce to be freedom, especially when a marriage is sequenced with conflict, violence and has consistently become grounds for different shades of impoliteness and, sometime, violence. In the linguistic context, which is marked in excerpt (ix), the speaker does not plan to activate his threat; he is forced to do so because of family influence, and his attempt to gamble with Susan, which is the inference in the adjective ‘humble’.

Excerpt

- x. SUSAN: ... I swear to God, I will kill you; I will kill you next time you touch me like that again...
- xi. CHARLES: Kate is not going anywhere and if any of you touches her, you'll see the other side of me... (*Mr. and Mrs.*).

Excerpt (x) signifies the performance of the *pract* of threatening, using repetition, reinforcement and a direct act that is hinged on the context of religiosity. She uses the *pract* of swearing to show her determination as well as to reinforce her verbal threat, that is; to pretend to the hearer and make him think she is able to perform the act. However, in the indirect act, this is just an empty threat, considering the legal and social context. There is reference in the use of pronouns to mark participants, and inference in the violent illocutionary verb *kill*. This is a direct act as against the indirect representation of threat in excerpt (xi) with the mental cognitive verb ‘see’. the *pract* of swearing is used indirectly because in the cultural norm, ‘swearing’ reinforces a determination to do something but in the case of the excerpt, the speaker shows that she is unable to perform the act. She marks it using the adverb, ‘next time’

Positive IMP-NF

Positive impoliteness, in the description of Thielemann and Kosta (2013) are milder forms of impoliteness used as dismissing strategies. In the Nollywood film selected for this study, three *practs* marking positive impoliteness are recurrent. These are undermining, dismissing and ignoring as represented in the excerpts presented in this section.

Pract of undermining

The *pract* of undermining is dominantly used in instances involving class and issues of great importance, which the actor tries to trivialise. In this case, the person devalues the importance of an issue just to trigger or push back annoyance.

Excerpts

- xii. SUSAN: ... look at this nonentity, where do I start from, Are you even a woman? You can't cook you can't keep a home; you don't even have manners.
- xiii. KEN: Look who is talking, daughter of a washman, no no dry cleaner... see my father is the honorable minister of petroleum...
(*Mr. and Mrs.*)

The utterance in (xii) shows the performance of the *pract* of undermining, using direct abuse, picking on the deficiencies of the character (Monica), who was brought by her husband to replace her. The points she expresses as deficiencies in her are weighed on the basis of her own strengths, which her husband did not initially appreciate before filing in the divorce. The inference is that she is not only undermining Monica's personality as a woman, but also her husband's deficiency in making the right choice of a competitor. Ken shows understanding of positive impoliteness in the utterance and initiates a bald on-record, performing the *pract* of attacking Susan's social class, from the perspective of her heritage. She is from a humble background, her father is a drycleaner, which is a sophisticated name for the term wash man, which Ken and his mother often use to indirectly undermine the profession.

Pract of dismissing

The *pract* of dismissing is another subtle impoliteness that is used to reject opinions, suggestions or contributions. In the scale of things, the effect of dismissing is not on the hearer. One of these is the disappointment of having one's view rejected.

Excerpt

- xiv. SUSAN: First thing first, I think kate has to leave this house.
- xv. CHARLES: Which house! Says who? You don't seem to understand what is going on here... Kate is the reason I'm a

good husband; Kate is the reason that I'm still with her; Kate is the reason that I'm still in this marriage...

- xvi. LINDA: You're stealing from me too? ... He bought this for me on Valentine's Day...
- xvii. CHARLES: She did not steal from you; I bought two of that (*Mr. and Mrs.*).

It is important to comment on the underlining situational context of excerpts (xiv) to (xvii) before analysing. Linda catches her husband committing adultery with her maid, an act he has adapted to as a result of inability to endure sexual starvation. Thus, in excerpt (xiv), we see him dismissing the suggestion of Susan to send the maid away because of the act. In both instances, the direct conversational act is used. Charles dismisses the suggestion directly, and subsequently employs repetition to reinforce his stance that she will not be sent away. The conversational act is used in (xiv) and (xv) to signify the *pract* of dismissing, as Charles dismisses the claim that Kate stole from Linda. The direct act of buying two similar clothes for his wife and made is to signify that he is viewing Kate as a replacement for his wife who is always busy with her secular job and ignoring her husband.

Pract of ignoring

The *pract* of ignoring is evident in *Mr and Mrs*. This is evident in the conscious rejection of warning or predictions. It can be an act of pretense or unconcern, especially when it seems that one's attention is needed. This is conscious deviation from topic of attention or discussion.

Excerpts

- xviii. MRS ABBAH: ... you left this home yesterday at 6pm, and you returned today at 2pm and you say that's fun? It's unacceptable, at least, show some respect.
- xix. SUSAN: To who? (*Pretending to be on a phone call*) Hello honey. Uhh... yes! I miss you. Yes, I'm home already... it was fun... Yes darling!

The *pract* of ignoring is represented using the indirect and conversational acts in excerpt (xix). Two underlining strategies are used in performing ignoring as *pract*, namely, pretense and deviation of attention. Mrs. Abbah, deviating from the legal arrangement that the hearer, Susan, is not answerable to her by reason of divorce from her son, accuses her indirectly of infidelity causing

impoliteness. Her demand for accountability is in the direct act, using relevance, which is marked by the noun *respect*. She also uses emotional act, trying to blackmail her emotionally about her children, who look up to her. Susan's response in excerpt (xix) deploys rhetorical question and the prosody act, *who*, to show the *pract* of ignoring. She pretends that she does not acknowledge Mrs. Abbah's status, and demand for 'respect'. In the same manner, the *pract* of ignoring used creates a diversion of her attention from Mrs. Abbah; using the psychological act, she pretends to be on a call with a man, who is presumed to be a new lover. This is done consciously to trigger two shades of impoliteness; to annoy Mrs Abbah and to make her husband, who is also present in the room, jealous. In the context of the utterance, impoliteness is performed in marital situation by the participants while playing a game of jealousy, which is not normative in the cultural contexts. When a marriage couple have divorced, they are not supposed to be living under the same roof, which both participants can simply take advantage of.

Negative IMP-NF

Negative impoliteness, dominantly, manifests as an indirect act. On the one hand, it reflects the conscious or unconscious use of the *practs* of patronising, mimicking and infuriating. This section analyses excerpts exemplifying these.

Pract of patronising

The negative politeness *pract* of patronising is realised in two recurrent ways. The first is aligning interaction to what the hearer/speaker wants. In other words, the speaker, at that time, says what he or she thinks the participant want. Examples are analysed below.

Excerpts

- xx. SUSAN: Ah! Mrs. Brown! Please, this is the best time of my life. I am so very excited. I can't wait for this to...
- xxi. KEN: ... I expected her to be depressed, she has not lived without me for the past ten years... the Susan I know would not be in a hurry to give me up...
- xxii. SUSAN: Mrs. Brown, we do not have any set rules, do we? We just live as normal flat mates!
- xxiii. MRS ABBAH: Shut up, you rat! Kenneth does not live in a flat; in case you don't know, that house is a mansion.
- xxiv. SUSAN: oh... I'm so sorry... we get to live like normal mansion mates(*Laughs*).

There are two *practs* of patronising marked in excerpts (xx), (xxi) and (xxiii). The other excerpts reflect the reaction to the generated impoliteness. The *pract* of patronising in (xx) reinforces Ken's desire to threaten Susan with the nominal, divorce. His thought is that initiating divorce would make Susan *depressed* as explicitly referenced in (xxi). Thus, Susan's excitement in (xx), reinforcing her urgency of securing divorce, is an ironic – indirect act aimed at patronising Ken's initial divorce motion. It achieves her intention; inadvertently, this makes him unsettled, apparently making his own plans to backfire. The *pract* of patronising is marked here by indirectness, using irony *The best time of my life*. Divorce is not supposed to be sweet or happy, as implied by Ken in excerpt (xix), it is meant to be depressing. Ken becomes confused and worried, reflecting the original feeling that comes from divorce in the culture system that produced the excerpt. The *pract* of patronising in (xxii) and (xxiv), which is also reflective of the *pract* of satirising, is directed to Mrs. Abbah, who apparently does not catch the sarcasm, and thus, reacts to the impoliteness in a way that generates reinforcement of the *pract* of patronising. Susan hinges the act of patronising on the generic – shared situational knowledge *flat-mates*, which is a description for people living under the same roof. But Mrs. Abbah coins the nominal term, *mansion mates* to represent this to show superiority.

Pract of mimicking

Mimicking signifies copying. It is the act of replicating one's action and manner of speaking. It is a deliberate act to cause negative impoliteness. Both positive and negative actions could be mimicked or copied to offend the hearer as observed in the following excerpts.

Excerpts

- xxv. KEN: Look who's talking, daughter of a wash man... dry cleaner... My father is the honourable Minister of Petroleum...
- xxvi. SUSAN: Stealing resources. And because your father is a thief, you expect me to run around like headless chicken. Misappropriation and diversion of funds expert... (*Mr. and Mrs.*)

In excerpt (xxv), Ken performs the *pract* of insulting, which he has used all through the earlier period to make Susan depressed. In excerpt (xxvi) Susan mimics Ken's tone and coins an insulting act from it. For instance, copying Ken's insult of her father, she also directs her insult to Ken's father. While Ken

insults her, using her father's humble profession, Susan humbles Ken, accusing his father of benefiting from political influence and not competence. On the one hand, Ken contrasts between a modest, *wash man*, which he uses as a derogatory term, and *hourable* as an indirect act. She points to the difference between her father who has a honourable job and Ken's father who bears the title *honourable* but thrives by dishonourable means (politics), This is portrayed by relevance in, *misappropriation and diversion of funds*.

Pract of infuriating

Infuriating also implies the *pract* of annoying, intentionally targeting characters. In some cases, the *pract* of infuriating is tied to any particular reason. It can be an intentional act as demonstrated in this section.

Excerpts

- xxvii. MONICA: ... Any time I pick up a fight with her she makes me look stupid...
- xxviii. KEN: before you leave tomorrow, make sure you leave a venom in her. Make her bitter...
- xxix. MONICA (*The following day*) ... can what Susan! Too bad you're starving Ken. But for me you wouldn't do that. We call it hospitality! Hospitality Susan! (*Mr. and Mrs.*)

In excerpt (xxvii), it can be inferred that there is a continuous performance of the *pract* of infuriating. This is portrayed by relevance, using the verb phrase, *pick up a fight*. This is a physical act demonstrated metapragmatically. for instance, picking a fight in the context of the utterance does not mean physical exchanges but to just an attempt to instill anger in one's mind, in this case, Susan. The speaker uses reference pronoun for proper indexing of roles, and to mark the initiator of the annoyance. The pronoun 'I' marks Monica, while 'her' marks Susan, who is knowledgeable enough to identify ever conscious, direct or indirect attempt to annoy her. The speaker also reports the consequence of fruitless performance of the *pract* of infuriating, which is leading to *stupidity*. The inference is that an attempt to infuriate makes the initiator stupid and reverses the effect of their own impoliteness, if it does not succeed in infuriating the target subject, as represented in excerpt (xxix). Monica in the text picks up a flimsy condition to background her proposition or performance of the *pract* of infuriating. She uses relevance, in form of antonym, *hospitality*, to foreground the context and give a contrasting effect of annoyance. Susan's behaves hospitably to turn around the consequence.

Sarcasm and mocking IMP-NF

Sarcasm and Mocking are interfacing impoliteness in Nollywood films, despite being separate in the framework by Culpeper (2009, 2011). This is because both are used for achieving humour to ease tension. However, three *practs* were used to achieve sarcasm and mocking impoliteness, namely, deceiving, lampooning and hyping. These are analysed in this section.

Pract of deceiving

The *pract* of deceiving is an ironic behaviour or verbal commissive and (or) expressive acts. It is vastly represented in instances of relationship when actors are trying to cover up their true behaviour or feelings. Sub-text to deceiving include lying, which is generic in pretensive marital relationships.

Excerpts

- xxx. SUSAN: (*to Monica*) ... so it's you all this while. You've been sleeping with my husband; you even dare to bring into my home; you even try to break my home... (*to Ken*) O now, Yes! I have finally seen the woman that supplies you honey in your office...
- xxxi. LINDA: I've got Charles in my palm... he has never, and will never cheat on me
- xxxii. SUSAN: My friend Linda, I've told you this, many times. When a man is not getting his due, he's definitely tapping it somewhere else.
- xxxiii. BARRISTER: Why are you so sure he is not cheating on you?
- xxxiv. LINDA: Because he is always at home...
- xxxv. BARRISTER: ... show up on Thursday, just come when he's having a nap... call him from the office that you're very busy. Then, you just show up 5 minutes later... (*Mr. and Mrs.*)

Two instances of deception can be inferred and referenced in excerpts (xxx) to (xxxv). First, most cases of deception in relationships can be traced to adultery. For instance, in excerpt (xxx), Susan eventually realises that her husband has been in a relationship with Monica, even before their divorce. This is portrayed in the perfective, *you've been sleeping*, which is euphemistic of having sexual relationship. Her husband brings her boldly into their house after their divorce. Significantly, it can be seen that the culture system does not make room for infidelity. But after divorce, the couple are not accountable to each other, so the cultural norm does not favour that separate individuals should stay committed to each other. However, the fact that they have been having the affair before the

divorce triggered impoliteness, which is performed by *pract* of annoyance. In the same statement, the speaker represents certainty or confirmation of the acts of deception, using the adverb *finally*, and infidelity using *supply of honey*, which metaphorises sexual relationship. Her husband had lied to her that Monica was supplying honey to his *office*, which she had literally believed. In excerpts (xxxvi) to (xxxviii) the conversational sequence shows another case of deception in the case of Linda and Charles' relationship. The latter who is always at home with the house maid, an adult, commits adultery with her, when he is being deprived of sexual intercourse by his wife. Deception is portrayed in excerpt (xxxviii). Linda is deceived to believe that her husband is faithful to her, using the modality of certainty *will never*. This is relevance in the context of swearing. This is also marked by inference that is, *cheat on*. Susan's experience with her own husband, lying about his own infidelity, makes her doubtful and suspicious of Charles. Linda eventually applies Barrister's suggestion in excerpt (xxxviii), which is also a deceptive act. Barrister's statement deploys both shared situational knowledge and inference, sharing Susan's perspective that her husband is not honest, and must be covering it up. Linda eventually catches her husband in the act of adultery with her maid, revealing her husband's deceptive act.

Pract of lampooning

The *pract* of lampooning is used to generate insult and resentment in Nollywood films. It is used to directly or indirectly mock an actor or agent.

Excerpts

- xxxvi. SUSAN: Why don't you get someone in your own class to make you classical meals? My cooking is for my type. Oh! Monica...
- xxxvii. KEN: In my wildest dream Susan, I never imagined you could turn out to be heartless and...
- xxxviii. SUSAN: Enough... Enough, I'm not in the mood for any insult or name calling... (*Mr. and Mrs.*)

Excerpts (xxxvi) to (xxxviii) show a dialogical sequence. In excerpt (xxxviii), Susan performs the *pract* of lampooning, using satire, which she hinges on Ken's initial class stratification – attack against her and father. After condemning and sidelining her on the basis of status, he finds himself needing her assistance. This gives her the opportunity to lampoon him. She represents this by creating an inference. Ken's orientation about class, is implied by the nominal, *type*,

which is used to create the feeling of inequality. Ken, understanding satire in excerpt (xxxvii) employs emotional blackmail to get her to change her mind to do what he is asking her to do. Susan's satire causes blackmail and *name-calling*, which is also impoliteness, in excerpt (xxxviii).

Pract of hyping

Hyping is synonymous to praising or psyching. It can be from self or others, for the purpose of mitigating effects or justifying actions resulting into impoliteness. Examples are presented in this section.

Excerpts

- xxxix. CHARLES: You don't seem to understand... who is going to cook, wash and iron for me and my children... who is going to take care of me and the children? ... kate is the reason you had a good husband. Kate is the reason that I'm still with her. Kate is the reason I'm a good father. Kate is the reason that I'm still in this marriage. Kate is the reason I've not lost it...
- xl. LINDA: My friend, I've always known you to be an angel.
- xli. SUSAN: Angel! Angel you say my darling but you forget that angels also draw swords when it's time to fight a war (*Mr. and Mrs.*).

In excerpt (xxxix), the *pract* of hyping is deployed to embarrass or insult, and make light the consequence of marital infidelity. Charles hypes Kate and authority, rather than express weakness or condescension after being caught in the act of infidelity. The inference here is that his wife does not possess the qualities that he is hyping in Kate, meaning that she lacks the ability to be a good wife. This also suggests the factors that motivated infidelity. He uses reference, to foreground the features and qualities which include the ability to *cook, wash, iron* and *take care of* that make up a good wife. While these features are not in his wife, they are linked to *the reasons* why Charles continues to ignore his wife and prefer their maid. He uses anaphora as reference – repetition strategy to achieve the *pract* of hyping. The conversation – dialogic act is employed in (xl) and (xli) to achieve the *pract* of hyping. The metaphor *angel* is used to compare the qualities Susan possesses, performing the job of reconciliation. However, Susan does not like to be hyped as an *angel* that cannot harm when she is supposed to. This is also reference to the fact that there are different angels, those that are used to fight battles and those that are used to achieve peace.

Discussion

Findings show that all the variables of impoliteness formalised by Culpeper (2011) and explained by Thielemann and Kosta (2013) are evidently deployed in Nollywood texts, which give conspicuous representations of domestic conflicts in Nigerian sociological spaces. Dominantly, these forms of impoliteness are bald on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness and sarcasm and mocking impoliteness. Sarcasm and mocking impoliteness, in the Thielemann and Kosta (2013) framework, were merged in this study due to similar and interlocking features marking them in Nollywood films, especially from the dimension of humour *practs*. The pragmatic strategies and *practs* marking impoliteness were analysed based on Mey's (2001) framework. The activity part, using direct, indirect and conversational or dialogic acts, and the textual part, reference, inference, reference, Metaphor and SS/CK featured dominantly in identifying the *practs*. For each impoliteness form, three *practs* were recurrent in the text. For positive impoliteness, the *practs* of undermining, dismissing and ignoring were found following Thielemann and Kosta (2013). The *pract* of undermining occurred in two ways; the first was to make light situations of grave consequences like warning and prediction. The second was to belittle characters or under-represent their importance; for instance, Susan, before the transition, was made to feel undermined, because her importance was not appreciated. Monica was also undermined in status as a 'woman', which is impolite. The *practs* of undermining, dismissing and ignoring were achieved by inference, Metaphor and reference and repetition.

Culpeper's (2011) categorisation of negative impoliteness in Nollywood films is underscored by *practs* of patronising, mimicking and infuriating, using mostly indirect acts, and in sometimes, direct and conversational acts (Mey, 2001). This justifies Odebunmi's (2016) assertion that context is inherently what underlines meaning, in this case, impoliteness. Impoliteness *pract* of mimicking occurs in conversational encounters because in instances of use, characters repeat in a mocking manner what other characters' say, as seen in the case of Susan mimicking Mrs. Abbah's 'mansion' versus 'flat' utterance, leading to the coinage of 'mansion-mates. This is novel to the concept of impoliteness formalised by Culpeper (2011) or even Brown and Levenson's (1987) FTA framework. The *pract* of infuriating was underscored by direct and indirect acts. Three forms were found, namely, intentional infuriating acts, mediated infuriating acts, which occurred as a result of negative inference, and unintentional and attitudinal infuriating acts. For example, Ken in *Mr. and Mrs.*

sees Susan as a nagging wife, even when she is saying what is right or obvious. Sarcasm and mocking impoliteness were achieved by *practs* of deceiving, lampooning and hyping. These were marked by obvious use of indirect verbal commissive or expressive act; for instance, Susan saying, indirectly, she wants to remarry, when her intention is to make her husband jealous as a strategy to get him back. This gives a positive implication for impoliteness against the generic notion in Culpeper (1996; 2011) and Brown and Levinson (1987) that impoliteness breeds conflicts. The implication is that in some cultures, some forms of impoliteness such as sarcasm and mocking may yield positive results. For instance, in marital relationship, which dominates this study, Susan goes to the level of claiming to be in a fake relationship, which is an act of deceit and lampoon to make Ken jealous enough to renew their marital vow.

Sarcasm as impoliteness in Nollywood manifests as deceiving, that is lying, which is an indirect act of misrepresentation. It is metaphorically underpinned against the maxim of relation the is the basis for Thielemann and Kosta (2013:238) conception of sarcastic impoliteness. The *pract* of deceiving underscores false belief, which has effect on impoliteness. The *pract* of lampooning mostly reflected in dialogic sequences, and had pragmatic features like inference relevance and metaphor, mainly used as relevant markers of satire or mockery in cultural utterances. Finally, the *pract* of hyping was signified as indirect acts for ridicule; but presented as praising and complimenting. For instance, Charles' praised the qualities of his wife's maid to ridicule his wife because those qualities were absent in her.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that Nollywood films are mediated significations that show the culture systems that underline impoliteness in sociological spaces in Nigeria. Impoliteness is bi directionally linked to conflict-related discourses. For impoliteness to thrive in marital spaces, it must not manifest all the features that produce conflicts. In other words, as long as conflicts continues to occur between couple, there will always be impoliteness forms performed directly, that is consciously or spontaneously, indirectly or accidentally, depending on the participants, who are the couple (husband and wife) and external agents. This also indicates that conflicts that leads to impoliteness could be triggered internally or externally. It can be concluded thus that the factors that induce impoliteness in family settings are both generic (normative) and interpersonal. Generic issues may include infidelity, violence and arguments, while interpersonal factors are moderated by the situational contexts and may achieve positive or negative effects.

The study concludes that emerging conflicts and impoliteness are changing family dynamics and landscapes in Nigeria as represented in Nollywood films such as *Mr and Mrs*. the director, Ikechukwu Onyeka, portrays that family ties are consistently befuddled by conditions like divorce, infidelity, dishonesty and all manner of maladies that cause loss of value systems. These factors are increasing face threats in domestic settings. On the other hand, factors that preserve human face in communicative encounters are narrowing in family environments. Language remains the tool that is used to trigger, bidirectionally, impoliteness that often results in domestic conflicts or conflicts that produce impoliteness. The study concludes that violence erupts from impolite communication in the same way that conflicts impoliteness leads to conflicts. To manage conflicts in families, communication has to be managed properly. Even if all other factors that cause conflict exist, if communication is properly guided and impoliteness and conflicts are effectively managed, domestic violence in in communities will drastically reduce. Therefore, there is need for social and community campaigns on communication managements; social groups or agencies that responsible for managing domestic violence should pay more attention to the role of impoliteness as advocated by Ikechukwu Onyeka in *Mr and Mrs*.

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