THE PRAGMATICS OF POLITENESS IN POST OFFICE SERVICE IN IBADAN METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated Ebis who started it all way back in 1994 before he translated in July of that same year and to our son, Eke. Ebis, somehow, I have managed to finish the programme through the promptings of many people whose names appear in the acknowledgement page.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Counter attendant
Cust.	Customer
Dom prob	Domestic problem
EMS	Expedite mail service
Expt.	Excerpt
Job satis.	Job satisfaction
LGA	Local government area
MT	Mother Tongue
NIPOST	Nigerian Postal Service
RE	Rapport enhancement
RM	Rapport maintenance
RN	Rapport neglect
SE	Service encounter
SP	Service provider
Years of Exp.	Years of experience

ABSTRACT

Although politeness has been well researched in political, medical, media and commercial transactions, it has not been well considered in the area of service delivery in the post offices in Nigeria where it is perceived that the staff exhibit unfriendly attitude to customers. This study, therefore, explores politeness in service encounters in the post offices in Ibadan metropolis with the view to establishing the existence of politeness in the transactions in the establishment, identifying politeness strategies used and highlighting the contributions of job satisfaction, domestic problem, gender, educational status of staff, appearance of customers to the exhibition of politeness during transactions.

The study was carried out within a combined theoretical framework of genre classification propounded by Eija Ventola, Suzzane Eggins and Diana Slade, which focuses on the optional and obligatory stages during transaction, Lim's and Bowers' facework theory that locates nuance polite expression orientations and Spencer-Oatey's rapport managements which categorises rapport strategies. Five post offices from the five local government areas within Ibadan metropolis were randomly selected. Forty seven willing clients and 35 counter attendants were orally interviewed while questionnaires were administered to 35 willing clients and 35 counter attendants respectively. Post office service questionnaire, interviews and participant observation were used for data collection. Transactions in Yoruba were translated into English. Data were analysed using content analysis T-test, ANOVA and Pearson r correlation.

Contrary to the belief among many Nigerians that post office staff were generally impolite, a high degree of politeness was established in the staff's interactions with customers. Although some impoliteness existed, the degree did not affect the transactions. Both the staff and the customers made use of 'solidarity', 'approbation' and 'tact' politeness strategies. The staff frequently used covert 'solidarity' expressed by silent acceptance and readiness to offer service. 'Tact' came in the form of 'advice' and 'order' in answer to requests. 'Approbation' took the form of 'suggestion'. Both tact and approbation strategies are power implicated. Customers on the other hand, engaged overt solidarity strategies such as 'agreement', 'cooperation' and 'greeting'. 'Thanking' was the main approbation strategy; and 'please' and implied 'need' were used as 'tact' strategies when making requests and clarifications. There were relationship between appearance and politeness (r=0.39), job satisfaction and politeness (r=0.29). However, domestic problem, educational status and sex of did not influence the expression of politeness

There was a considerable degree of politeness in Ibadan post office service encounters, which facilitated interactions between the staff and the customers.

Key words: Counter attendants, Customers, Politeness, Post office, Service encounter.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) has had lots of turning points which have affected it in the course of rendering optimal services to the Nigerian public. There have been constant changes within the organisation since its inception. During the colonial era, working in the post office was satisfying. In the material sense, it accorded the individual a sense of class distinction. The working condition was patterned after what obtained in England. This made the workers to put on an attitude of "I have arrived", hence, the expression 'post office face', which is a segregative attitude on the part of the employees in their relationship with the public. Currently, the situation has changed and the segregative post office face borne out of contentment is now replaced with negative image arising out of anger, frustration and demotivation. Related to this change is the status of the workers which was affected as a result of the repositioning of the organisation.

Second is the need for autonomy, which the organisation has been clamouring for to make the workers more effective. Due to lack of autonomy and all that goes with it, the organisation finds it hard to take initiatives that would put it in an advantageous position. Just recently, autonomy was granted to it. However, this seems to have come too late to boost the morale of the workers especially with reference to the economic situation and the arrival of Internet services, which jointly have reduced the importance of the services rendered by the organisation and the status of its workers in the eyes of the public.

Third, NIPOST is owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria and is supervised by the Federal Ministry of Communication. This implies that it depends on the Federal Government for its capital funding requirements as well as its personnel cost, whether it is able to generate enough capital or not. The budgetary allocation has no bearing on its financial needs or recurrent ones. Government investment in NIPOST is therefore in terms of fixed assets and these have affected NIPOST performance.

One of the staff interviewed informed the researcher that there has been an improvement in the services rendered by NIPOST without equal attention geared towards improvement of staff welfare. For instance, several retrenchment exercises have been carried out which left the workers jittery, unsure and insecure. To add to this is the fact that for sometime, no promotion exercises have been done for the workers. The one carried out in 2007 affected a selected few. In relation to staff transfer, NIPOST transfers its workers from one territory to another. When this occurs, workers are supposed to be entitled to some money for inconveniences. This money is never paid to the affected workers.

Also, in providing traditional mail services particularly parcel post, NIPOST is faced with stiff competition by private outfits like DHL, UPS, Fedex, Redstar, Fenway, TNT and so on. Apart from these, NIPOST has many technical and operational problems that have hindered it from providing its core services. The operational structure is obsolete, which gives room for poor services leading to customer dissatisfaction. The operational structure problems are in the form of bureaucratic bottlenecks, complacency, and obsolete technological equipment. Hence, there is the need to explore the attitude that both the workers and their customers bring to the

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counter during service encounter. It is noteworthy that in almost all workplaces, the treatment meted out to people does not reflect the need for which these workplaces were established. The attitude of the workers, especially as exhibited in their impoliteness, sometimes makes one wonder if there is an upsurge in aggression that is related to frustration in the struggle for survival in the workplaces and the society. The study is therefore set to investigate language use in the interaction between the post office staff and their customers.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Work ethics is a fundamental part of every organisation. This includes a set of dos and don'ts. Some of these ethical issues are related to the appearance of public officers while others centre on interactional and transactional behaviour. This makes language or the use of polite language very important in the construction of public image. Politeness therefore is both an educated manner of behaviour and a practical way of behaving as well as an aspect of work ethics required in both the interactional and transactional aspects of workplace encounter.

In addition to the above observations, politeness has been a topical issue in Pragmatics. Some scholars believe that politeness in human interaction can be divided into positive and negative with mitigating acts (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Others like Mills (2002), Spencer-Oatey (2005), Locher and Watts (2005) believe that politeness is discursive and a part of relational work inherent in all human social interaction. To Locher and Watts, rudeness, impoliteness and banter are some of the examples of relational work depending on the situation. In relating politeness to the post office, it is assumed that the counter attendants may have been consistently impolite to their

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customers. They may not be aware of this tendency towards impoliteness, how it affects their customers and the image of their organisation. There is the need, therefore, to carry out a systematic and specialised investigation into the assumed problem of impoliteness believed to exist in Nigerian post offices and to offer suggestions on how it could be ameliorated given the condition under which the workers carry out their duties.

1.3 Aim and objectives of Study

The aim of this study is to examine politeness in the interaction between counter attendants of NIPOST and their customers. To realise this aim, the study will specifically:

i.   identify and analyse patterns of politeness used in post office service encounter

ii.   show the degree impoliteness and its repercussions

iii.   highlight factors that contribute to the expression of (im) politeness

1.4 Research Questions

The questions which the study attempts to address are:

i.   What politeness strategies do the counter attendants use while attending to their customers?

ii.   What are the factors that account for the expression of politeness by the counter attendants?

iii.   Is there any occurrence of impoliteness during transactions?

iv.   What are the repercussion(s) of the occurrence of impoliteness?

v.   Is there any difference between gender in the expression of politeness?

vi.   Do age and educational level have effect on the expression of politeness?

1.5 Significance of Present Study

Telecommunication is an important infrastructure in the growth and development of any economy. Due to this reason, there is every need to make it fit in within the information and communication technologies in developmental changes taking place within an economy. The Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) provides basically postal services. Until 1995, their performance record did not measure up to standard. The service quality is low and this affects their revenue generation capabilities (Yusuf, 2004). In rendering services to the public and for continued patronage, there is need to look into how the staff relate to the people they serve. This leads to the use of language during service encounters. Words are powerful tools in creating and sustaining or destroying who and what we stand for. In any organisation, the way language is used while interacting with the customers goes a long way to attract or scare away prospective customers and to keep the ones whose patronages have kept the organisation going. Again, language is a flexible phenomenon that people use to create a niche for themselves. Determining when to say something and when to keep quiet and the right thing to say is a knack developed by few. It therefore becomes pertinent to see how politeness in language is used in a workplace (NIPOST). As a result of this, the study seeks to carry out an in-depth investigation into the expression of politeness (verbal and non verbal linguistic behaviour) in the context of service delivery in NIPOST. Most in-depth service encounter studies have been carried out mostly from the production angle in relation to service management and marketing. From the customer angle, most studies have concentrated on consumer behaviour literature intertwined in service quality with

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focus on determinants of service quality in different service settings. These studies observe that politeness is just one of the factors that help businesses to maintain a steady growth (Oparah and Kikanme, 2006; Esu and Arrey, 2009; Sun, 2000; Winsted, 1997; Warden, Liu, Huang and Lee, 2003). However, this study is preoccupied specifically with politeness strategies adopted in the workplace like the NIPOST and the factors that contribute to its use or otherwise.

The study is therefore expected to offer real data related to language use in communication in an L2 context, NIPOST in Nigeria. It will also provide what constitutes politeness in the Nigerian context and consequently contribute to the available literature on politeness as a whole and in particular give insight on the social factors that account for the expression of politeness in such a public place as NIPOST.

1.6 Justification for Study

Language has been observed to perform numerous functions particularly its ability in constructing identity of speakers in a social context. Through language, participants in an open market engage in calculated and tactful management of one another's motives in order to achieve maximum benefit from the social encounter (Taiwo, 1998). Farinde (2007) complements this observation by adding that appropriate proxemic and language use are needed in such a situation and this to an extent determines the degree of sales. This is exemplified by wearing false smiles and using persuasive tones. Ogunsiji (2001) adds that language serves different purposes needed by users to bring about desired end result. In using language in the market, at times conflicts are noted due to the bargaining technique used. To resolve the conflict, courtesy, professional etiquette and experience of the sellers (and buyers) are needed to achieve maximum benefit from the encounter

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through recasting the sentences used by both to portray some sort of politeness, understanding and the spirit of give and take.

Politeness is one of the linguistic tools used to explain verbal and non-verbal behaviour. A lot of scholarly research has been done regarding what constitute politeness. Brown and Levinson (1987) believe that politeness is linked to Goffman's (1967) notion of face and face is composed of negative and positive sides corresponding to negative and positive politeness found in every language where available linguistic strategies and local cultural differences prompt their use. Matsumoto (1989) submits that the notion of face, which belongs to individual territory, is not indigenous to Japanese culture. What is paramount is the position of the individual in relation to others in the group and his/her acceptance by others. Loss of face is related to the perception by others that one has not understood and acknowledged the structure and hierarchy of the group. Therefore, the notions of face are qualitatively different from those defined as universal by Brown and Levinson. Similarly, the Chinese concept of face differs from that of Brown and Levinson (1987) on the bases that inviting, offering and promising under any condition will not be seen as threatening one's negative face. Rather, face is threatened when an individual has done anything that is likely to incur infamy. Again, during interaction, politeness is normative. It would be an oversight if the normative aspect is not seen (Gu, 1990).

In the same vein, Nwoye (1992) notes that in the Igbo culture, there is a duality to the notion of face (individual and group). Individual face relates to self-centredness of the individual while group face addresses one's need to act in conformity with socially accepted ways of behaving and not to act in ways that bring dishonour or shame on the

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group. This is supported by the wise saying "Mgbe onye ara n'agba egwu n'ahia, ihere na eme umunne ya" (when a madman is dancing in public, his relatives feel the shame). The group needs are considered over and above the needs of the individual. Actions or behaviours that lead to the loss of face of one individual are generally seen as minor and are fewer in number. Most other improper acts are interpreted as threatening group face because they are relatable to other members of society whose responsibility it is to socialise the erring member. In this way, deviant behaviour is seen as resulting from the failure of the group.

Politeness has also been related to social indexing which involves entitlements (both achieved and acquired) which individuals lay claim to in social interaction. Kochman (1984) includes such factors as rank, title and social position as achieved social properties and individual situated performance. Studies dealing with enactment of strategic politeness include for example, Leech (1983). This study provides politeness maxims, which are associated with different types of illocutionary acts with thematised value of cost, benefits, praise and so on. Each maxim comes in pairs and specifies if it is to be minimised or maximised with reference to the speaker, the addressee or both.

Politeness has been examined in various contexts. In service encounter situations, Rieger (2001) examine communications in German supermarkets to determine whether German customers use and appreciate small talk or interactional talk as a politeness strategy and what other roles this type of discourse plays in service encounter. She observes that small talk is rarely used in German service encounters. Using qualitative analysis, she identifies socialising, social and psychological factors as influencing a person's perception and usage of small talk. Correspondingly, Pan (2000) examining face

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work in Chinese service encounters, using both state-run and private-owned stores, argues that politeness is a dynamic process involving participants' perceptions of a social setting and the assumed inter-personal relationship in a given situation. Also, Pan shows through the study that social distance and type of social relationship play essential roles in Chinese politeness behaviour with the use of facework in service encounters signalling a change in discursive practice due to social and economic changes in China. Again, Chan, Bond, Spencer-Oatey and Rojo-Laurilla (2004) explore possible cultural effects on the perceived importance of interactional concerns in service encounters in addition to individual values. In this way, the group established an explanatory framework for any effect that might emerge. The study reveals that "rapport promotion" was the only consistent factor of interactional concern to emerge from the five scenarios in each of the two cultural groups used. Individual values labelled "conservation" and "self transcendence" significantly determine a respondent's level of rapport promotion across all scenarios used, with self-transcendence unpackaging the cultural differences that emerged in one of the service scenarios.

In the hospitality industry, especially in service failure and recovery, politeness plays an important role in determining service quality and customer satisfaction (Winsted, 1997; Smith, 1998; Servert, 2002). While Matsumoto (1989), Gu, (1990) and Nwoye (1992) base their studies on revising Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, Leech (1983) provides social maxims that help the enactment of politeness in interaction such as tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement and sympathy. Rieger (2001) and Pan (2000) similarly look at politeness in service encounter using

shops. Chan, Spencer-Oatey, Bond and Rojo-Laurilla (2004) apply politeness to determine its cultural effects on politeness.

This present study differs from the above mentioned works in terms of its focus and the specific context because it considers politeness in the post offices in Nigeria where majority of the people assume that the staff are generally impolite due to their unsociable attitude to the customers. The study tries to establish if during service delivery politeness expressions are used and to see if there are relationships between politeness and such social variables as appearance of customers, job satisfaction, domestic problem and years of experience of staff among other factors. The study therefore provides penetrating insights and dimensional understanding of politeness in L2 context.

1.7 Scope of Study

The study is limited to Ibadan metropolis. According to the 2006 population census, Ibadan has a population of two million, five hundred and fifty thousand, five hundred and ninety three (2,550,593) and eleven (11) local government areas. The population of central Ibadan is one million, three hundred and thirty eight thousand, six hundred and fifty nine (1,338,659). The study is therefore restricted to Ibadan metropolis where a conglomeration of cultures exists. It is believed then that a thorough and in-depth investigation will be worthwhile.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Human beings depend on each other to realise their life's goals or aspirations. As social beings they naturally lean towards others in pursuing and achieving these goals (Locher and Watts, 2005). Achieving these goals may sometimes be through formal or informal interaction. For this reason, conversation is seen as a piece of linguistic and social interaction, which generally contains systems and rituals. Interaction is regarded as a social process in which utterances are selected in accordance with socially recognised norms and expectations (Sterling, 2000). In other words, interaction is not just a mechanical process of taking turns at producing sounds and words. It is a semantic process of making meanings (Eggins and Slade, 1997). Systems in conversation or interaction refer to discourse markers such as adjacency pairs and so on, while rituals are references made to the hearer's face and the claim of good character. Both constraints are included in conversation used in service encounter. The way each communicative event is enacted depends on the culture as each event has its expectations in relation to participant's roles, purpose, sequence and outcomes. Therefore, communicative events are defined as well as performed differently in each culture

2.1.1 Service Encounter

Service encounter (henceforth SE) has been defined as the interpersonal relationship between a firm's employees and customers (Price, Arnold, and Tierney, 1998), a moment of truth satisfying or dissatisfying the customer (Albrecht and Zemke, 1985 cited by Servert), the moment of interaction between the customer and the staff of

the firm, a face to face interaction between a seller and a buyer in service setting (Solomon, Czepiel, Suprenaut and Gutman, 1985) and the customer interactions with the service business (Shostack, 1985). Servert (2002) gives an encompassing definition of service encounter as the totality of the entire exchange between customer and service provider from the initial contact through conclusion of the exchange. Other researches classify service encounter from the customer's point of view (Bitner, Booms and Tetreault, 1990; Hoffman, Kelly and Rotalsky, 1995; Hunt, Hunt and Hunt, 1988; Keaveney, 1995; Kelley, Hoffman and Davis, 1993). In addition, service encounter is seen as a social encounter (Hewitt, 2002) involving interaction between customers and a service-giver. The word "customer" comes from Latin 'consuetudo' meaning custom or habit. A customer therefore, is a person who is habituated in terms of spending money in a particular service-giving establishment. In the course of patronising the place, a customer/service provider relationship is established from which both the customer and the SP derive some kind of satisfaction and benefits. A customer then becomes an important person as far as the means of livelihood of the people in the establishment is concerned.

Service encounter consists of goal-oriented talks organised around the achievement of particular ends which include the satisfaction of the customer's presumed desire for some service and the server's obligation to provide that service. The speech activities involved must minimally include those required to achieve these ends, in this case the exchange of customer's money for the service provider's goods (Bailey, 2000).

As a communicative event and a task-based genre (Hewitt, 2002), service encounter varies from culture to culture and involves different experiences, approaches and

expectations as to the roles of participants, purposes of encounter, sequences that have to be followed and expected outcomes. In a service encounter, two parties are usually involved in a face-to-face interaction which may involve payment. It varies in length and contains different types of talk from a few words to many utterances and lasts just seconds or as long as seven minutes or even more, covering wide ranging topics (Bailey, 2000). The following observations consider the nature, structure, communicative acts, relationship between the participants, relationship between service encounter culture, discourse types and the interrelatedness of the discourse types which when not properly managed leads to transactional troubles and so on.

2.1.1.1 The Nature of Service Encounter

2.1.1.1.1 Service Encounter as a Dyadic Social Situation

Service encounter has some characteristics and these include first, its dyadic social feature which involves coming together of two persons in an interaction or negotiation. The interaction of the two persons in turn depends on the economic, social and personal characteristics of each of them. The interactional aspect emphasises or highlights the psychological phenomenon that exerts a vital impact upon outcomes. This is line with Lutz's and Kakkar's (1976) observation of the importance of psychological situation in service encounter. Due to the fact that service encounter involves the dynamics of face-to-face encounter and group activity, it stresses mutuality of behaviours and acknowledges service encounter as a form of social exchange in which individuals seek to maximise the rewards and minimise the costs of the transaction (Solomon, Surprenant, Czepiel, & Gutman, 1985).

As a dyadic interaction, it focuses on personal selling prowess as obtains in the market (Evans, 1963; Sheth, 1975; Wilson, 1977 cited by Solomon et al 1985). Sheth makes an important distinction between two interaction dimensions - the content and the style of communication. The style dimension which incorporates politeness recognises the centrality and importance of ritualistic behaviour patterns in shaping the outcome of the buyer/seller interaction.

2.1.1.1.2 Service Encounter as Human Interaction

Another characteristic is its purposive human interaction feature in which the outcomes depend on the coordinated effort of both participants in the situation. Communication between a service provider and a customer is interactive, a reciprocal process rather than a linear one. The service experience which differentiates one service organisation from another is as a result of the unique interaction between the person undergoing the experience and the contact person (Booms and Nyquist, 1981). Since the success of a particular service organisation depends on the quality of the subjective experience, the nature of the experience is a critical determinant of long run market success. If the customer leaves with a negative impression from the attitude of an employee, other efforts may be overlooked.

It is more in line to think of the service-provider as acting in union with the customer. Relating this with the emphasis by marketers on seller effectiveness, it becomes myopic in the service sector (Czepiel, 1980; Schneider, 1980) to believe that such indices as accuracy and sales are more important than the displayed courtesy, goodwill generated and establishing long-term interpersonal relationships. This is not to

say that accuracy and sales are not important. Rather, all these elements should be included in the evaluation of the service personnel.

2.1.1.1.3 Service Encounter as Role Performance

Another distinguishing characteristic of service encounter is the fact that it is a type of human interaction with a purposive, task-oriented nature and specific roles for both participants. Due to this, there evolved ritualised behaviour patterns which govern the processes in the encounter. Each party to the transaction process learns a set of behaviours that is relevant and appropriate for the situation which increases the possibility of goal attainment. The role each has to play and the script from which each learns is often strictly defined (Solomon, Surprenant, Czepiel & Gutman, 1985).

From the above theoretical approach, emphasis is on the nature of people as social actors who learn behaviours appropriate to the position they occupy in society. Though the actors in service settings may be different individuals in their leisure time, they must adopt a relatively standardised set of behaviours when they come to work or enter the market place. Both the service-provider and customer play roles that are composed of a set of learned behaviours, a repertoire of roles. This set of learned behaviours is referred to as script, which is a predetermined stereotyped sequence of actions that defines a well-known situation. The script in service encounters stipulates that after exchanging greetings with the service provider, in some cases, the customer must express his request (Rash, 2004). The script read depends on the particular service environment and other situational cues (Lutz and Kakkar, 1976). Most times when the scripts are not followed, impoliteness/rudeness may result. The script is realised as the generic feature of service encounter.

2.1.1.2 Generic Features of Service Encounter

Genre is a literary concept formalised in the work of systemic functional linguistics. It is defined as "a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture" (Martin, 1984:25 cited by Taboada, 2004:3). Service encounter genre is one of the different types of genre and it comes under a number of spoken genres: buying and selling things, telling stories, gossiping, making appointments, chatting with friends (Eggins, 1994). Genres are mainly defined through their social purpose and the stages necessary to fulfill that purpose. The stages are the steps interactants take in order to reach their goal(s) and they constitute the generic structure of the text. Different genres are different ways of using language to achieve different cultural established tasks or texts and texts of different genres are texts which achieve different purposes in the culture. Eggins and Slade (1997) propose six steps for a generic structure analysis which include (1) recognizing a chunk, (2) defining the social purpose of the chunk and labeling the genre, (3) identifying and differentiating stages within a genre, (4) specifying obligatory and optional stages, (5) devising a structural formula and (6) analysing the semantic and lexico-grammatical features of each stage of a genre. In other words, the basic communicative activities are (1) Opening (2) negotiation of business exchange and (3) closing of the encounter. These are related to Hasan's (1985) which comprise of sale request, sale compliance, sale, purchase and purchase closure. The first activity occurs while the customer approaches the counter. The second activity is related to asking for goods, naming the price in some cases, counting out change as it is handed back to the customer and the third and final activity often includes formulaic exchanges such as thanking and goodbyes. While the opening

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and closing may not be necessary, the transactional aspect contains verbal negotiation of exchange which may be long and full of adjacency pairs (Schegloff and Sack, 1973), involving request, questions, repairs or offers. All that has been mentioned contains the obligatory elements of the structure of a service encounter, that is, those elements that are regarded as defining features of the genre. While the opening and closing are important, the real or main issue lies in what happens during negotiation of services. It is during this part of the encounter that exchange of goods takes place. These exchanges may be related to trading of products, services or information. The most important part of the negotiation phase of the service encounter is, understanding the interaction and negotiation that occur between the client and service provider.

2.1.1.3 Communicative Acts in Service Encounter

Within the service encounter, two speech acts are primarily used. They are request and offer. These two illocutionary acts are subsumed under the transactional sequences which are negotiated while the interactional discourse helps during the negotiation in the encounter. The clients in making requests usually ask for what they need which can be a product to buy, an information or appointment. Ferrer and Sanchez-Lanza (2002) include assertions (where the clients state what they need); questions (where the clients ask what they need or inquire about an item); want statement (where clients state what they desire); conditional statement (where client state what they need, if it is possible) as strategies used in making requests.

The strategies for making offers are prevalent with merchants as they use them to suggest other equally good options for the clients if the service or item they desire is not available or to encourage the purchase of additional items. Offer strategies include: direct

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offer (where the merchant directly offers the service or product to the client); suggestion and negation (where the merchant makes a statement suggesting something as an offer); conditional statement (where the merchant uses a politeness strategy by not assuming that the client will want what he/she has to offer); the use of Nosotros (where the merchant refers to him/herself when offering something). Relating these acts of offering and acceptance, the study tries to see how the post office counter attendants use language while offering and accepting items during transaction with customers.

2.1.1.4 Relationship between the Customer and Service Provider

In service encounter, there is an established relationship between the service-provider and the customer involving a goal-means dimension. This means that there is always an intention for initiating a talk and a means used to achieve the goal. White (2000) believes that each party has certain rights and obligations within the relationship. These rights and obligations differ from culture to culture. In a culture where the customer is always right, the SP takes care to fulfil the requirements of the customer and in so doing, "displays deference and solicitude" (P.5). In a culture where elaboration is not needed, the customer may be treated without deference. The linguistic realisations of the rights and obligations may take any form from direct and unmitigated to indirect and mitigated illocutionary acts.

Apart from being a social encounter, service encounter is also regarded as a task-based genre characterised by interactional and transactional norms. Successful service encounter depends on the communicative competence of the interlocutors in terms of using language in a way that is socially appropriate to the situation (Ventola, 1990). In other words, the rights and obligations may take any form–direct and unmitigated or

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indirect and mitigated. The attitudes encoded linguistically by both the SP and the customer during the encounter are related to the self-image people lay claim to. It involves interactional language which functions to express and establish social relations and personal attitude that comes in the form of polite expressions and any other activity geared towards attending to face needs of others such as small talks, gossips and so on (Brown and Yule, 1983). Face in the interaction is emotionally invested and can be lost, maintained or enhanced. In general, people cooperate and assume others do the same in maintaining face in interaction. That is to say that, underlying the encounter is an implicated social indexing which both the customer and the SP bring to the situation. This goes together with the strategic politeness and both secure absence of confrontation and ensure relational management which Lakoff (1989) observes are prevalent in such situations. Hence, a strategic linguistic choice that matches addressee's notion of how they s/he be addressed. When inappropriate linguistic behaviour is experienced, both interactants may feel slighted and the tendency to show the other how they feel may lead to exchange of unpleasant words which are referred to as impoliteness and rudeness linguistically.

2.1.1.5 Culture and Service Encounter

Culture is a factor which plays a decisive role in service encounter. Within service delivery, service providers must attempt to understand the expectations of their customers if the customers are to be satisfied. A service failure may occur if the expectations of the customers are trifled with (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry, 1990). Such expectations are subjective judgements, on the part of the customer, which may depend on cultural background. Some studies confirm that certain commonality exists in expectations of

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customers from different cultures. However, the more distant any two cultures are, the more the expectations vary (Warden, Liu, Huang, and Lee, 2003).

During service encounter, linguistic behaviour running from civilised to rude and impolite may be expected. Variation of scripts is usually experienced during the encounter. Wener (1985) and Winsted (1997) note that recognition of cultural differences and values will help the SP to be in tune with the customers. The inability to pay attention to these cultural differences and values often leads to unruly behaviours of impoliteness and rudeness at the counter.

Certain concepts are fundamentally foregrounded in any interaction and White (2000) believes that these concepts help in analysing as well as understanding both shared and different cultural values. These concepts include face, face maintenance, solidarity, deference, weight of imposition, hierarchy, status and power, social distance, directness and indirectness, reciprocity and symmetry/asymmetry relations. White (2000) goes further to say that these concepts are weighted differently in different cultures. What people say and how they relate to each other is checkmated by the different values accorded to such variables as status and power, social distance and weight of imposition. Without making the connection in communication to a matrix of intercultural shared norms and differences, individuals can learn other languages without understanding why it is to be used in certain ways. In addition, participants will likely misunderstand each other when certain linguistic forms are used in ways which reflect their own cultural identity rather than that of the addressee. Therefore, making sense of the differences is crucial to business communication.

In the Nigerian, Ekerefe (2006) confirms that culture (language, religious beliefs and ethnic values) plays a valuable role in the offering, pricing, promotion and distribution efforts. Ekerefe goes on to advice the corporations to adapt their promotion and products to the environment (ways of life of the people) they are situated. Equally, Esu and Are (2009) confirm that service provider's promotional activities, facilities and friendliness guarantee customer's satisfaction while Oparah and Kikanme (2006) conclude in their study that customers' experience and expert advice of the service provider ensures moderate satisfaction of the customers.

2.1.1.6 Discourse Types in Service Encounter

Kasper (1990) asserts that in any interaction, there are two types of talk exchange, namely transactional and the interactional discourse. Both discourse types are used in communication for existential purposes. The use of each of the discourses depends on the appropriate circumstance that warrants their application especially in and out of service establishments or industries. Using both styles help interactants in negotiating discussion. This is because, through talk exchange, we create impressions of what and who we are and the image created becomes what people will remember and associate us with. In the workplace, individuals work together to achieve common and mutual goals as well as understand each other and the system in which their work takes place. Both discourse types afford the individuals means of relating with others within and outside the establishment as a whole. The transactional discourse incorporates the co-operative principles with its attendant maxims (content of interaction) while the interactional type complements the transactional as it incorporates politeness principles, which ensures that

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participants' face-needs are taken care of during interaction. The following conversation illustrates the features of both discourse types:

SP: Good morning ma, what can I do for you?

Customer: Good morning, I want Bournvita, how much is it?

SP: Bournvita? N450

Customer: Last or do I price?

SP: Last. If I wanted you to price, I would have hiked the price

Customer: Ok. Let me have a tin.

SP: [Hands over the item] thanks for your patronage

Customer: You are welcome…

From the conversation, the expressions involving price-haggling belong to the transactional aspect while those that deal with greeting, checking and thanking represent the interactional side of the discourse. Both complement each other and the interactional aspect specifically provides the means for sustaining the interaction, making sure that individual needs and feelings are taken care of. The use of both discourses in communication project the image as well as the product an individual or organisation has to offer. This is supported by the Igbo proverb that says "ahia oma na ere onwe ya" (A good commodity sells itself). This implies that socially and acceptably, both the interactional and transactional cues have been properly managed to ensure successful verbal exchange. Apart from the verbal discourse, non verbal discourse also adds to the success of an interaction. The non verbal exchange comes in the form of proxemics, kinesics and so on.

2.1.1.6.1 Transactional Aspect of Service Encounter

Hewitt (2002), in an eye-witness encounter of the payment routines involving receptionists and customers at a garage and veterinary surgery, using a corpus of approximately twelve thousand, five hundred words (12,500), demonstrates how participants simultaneously orient to both transactional and interactional goals. Coupling the ethnographic method with interviews, she notes that in service encounter, there are normative sequences of moves involved. She identifies the transactional sequences or structures to include (1) Payment (request, offer and acceptance), (2) checking for information (request, offer and acceptance/rejection) and (3) confirmation (offer receipt/change acceptance/rejection). Of these moves, pay request is enacted verbally. Other elements may be either absent or achieved non-verbally. It is noteworthy that most of these moves and stages during the encounter are non-obligatory and can be sequenced in many different ways. Again, some of the moves can be repeated especially the checking ones in the course of the encounter.

2.1.1.6.2 Interrelatedness of the Transactional and Interactional Sequences in SE

It is worthy of note that within the transactional and interactional aspects of service encounter, there is no clear dividing line between the sequences involved. Hewitt (2002) in her study recognises that they both intermingle and are interspersed in the course of interaction. Consequently, conversational troubles may arise where the maintains a transactional focus with only brief implicit formulaic attention to interpersonal concerns, while the customer is more oriented towards explicit interactional concerns such as expressing affection that is uncalled for. Indications of these are observed through the use of such pragmatic markers as "oh", "well", "right", "now", "then" and so on. These

introduce changes in the state of the talk. The mismatch of verbal behaviour/strategy can be interpreted in a number of ways. It could be a question of goal, genre model or a question of cultural background or gender. This mismatch of verbal exchange can lead to what Thomas (1997) refers to as "pragmatic failure" which is conceived in general terms as the inability to understand what is meant by what is said due to different scripts from which the service-giver and the customer are operating. Two basic types of "pragmatic failure'' across cultural communication have been identified by Thomas (1997) namely 'paralinguistic failures' caused by differences in the linguistic encoding and decoding of pragmatic force and 'socio-pragmatic failures' caused by cross-cultural differences in linguistic behaviour. The mixture of these two may lead to minor irritating conflict as discussed below.

2.1.1.6.3 Transactional and Interactional Trouble

Apart from the positive enhancing linguistic behaviours, there are situations that portray the other side of politeness. Different people bring different scripts to the service encounter. This presupposes that customer aggression is likely to be a common hassle of work life for employees in service delivery industry that requires a high frequency of interpersonal contact, a characteristic associated with the frequency of work aggression (LeBlanc and Kelloway, 2002).

Sometimes the anti-social behaviour of rudeness or aggression arises as a result of differing culturally specific communicative conventions expected in such an encounter. These conventions are connected to the values, which are regarded as markers of ethos of any given culture from which the interactants come from. Other times, troubles arise due to one speaker being more competent than the other. Competency in

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this regard involves knowledge of every aspect of communication in social contexts, including knowledge of and expectation of who may speak in certain settings, when to speak and when to remain silent, how one may talk to people of different statuses and roles, what appropriate non-verbal behaviours are in various contexts, what the routines for turn-taking are in conversation, how to ask for and give information, how to request, how to offer or decline assistance or cooperation, how to give command and so on (Sterling, 2000). Using anecdotal data from observations made in her daily life, Sterling explores issues of language and identity and how these issues play out/exist in the author's daily world for four months with a dialect journal kept where a record of communicative events encountered as a participant observer are entered. With everything from conversation to television and radio to unspoken communication, the journal entries recorded full range of communicative events. The journal served as a data source and was analysed using sociolinguistic model. The study shows data as comprising the values we assign to social variables that the society regards as significant and that incompetence, sometimes may lead to rudeness.

2.1.1.6.4 Interactional Discourse in Service Encounter

Within the interactional sequence are features such as formulaic relational language expressions exemplified by 'greeting', 'thank you', 'please', tag question and so on. These expressions are usually repeated in the course of conversation. In the linguistic enactment, tag question serves as both transactional as well as interactional cue. Tag question is seen to encode an element of doubt about content as well as protect the speaker's solidarity with the interlocutor. In addition, as an interactional cue, it mitigates the directness of the query and protects interlocutor's positive face (Brown and Levinson,

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1987). Tannen (1989) observes in her study that repetition serves as a bond that ties the participants to the discourse and each other as well as provides a resource to keep talk going where talk itself is a show of involvement of willingness to interact, to serve positive face. Considering 'thank you' Hewitt (2002) observes that it belongs to "small supportive rituals" which oil the wheel of communication and Aijmer (1996) adds that small talks are associated with politeness and good behaviour in society.

2.1.1.6.4.1 Small Talks as Polite Expressions in Service Encounter

Politeness as an interactional discourse has been examined in many ways. Interactional exchanges occur regularly and sometimes take place between or among those inside and those outside (customers/clients, the general public) a given group. These interactional activities include phatic communication exchanges as traditionally conceived, that is, conventionalised forms such as health inquiries, individualised exchanges in the form of conversational work around a range of topics. These activities describe as well as reflect participants' orientation to the maintenance of face and add to the transactional process by making it pleasant (Placencia, 2004). In the interactional activities, distinction is made according to the participants involved. The distinction affects significantly a speaker's language choices and reveals hierarchies and changing attitudes. Phatic tokens in interaction reflect ways of showing status by orienting oneself to the other, or to the general or prevailing situation. On the surface, there is an exchange of information, in reality; there is an offering and acceptance of a hierarchy of status.

In many situations, those of higher status will show their standing by other oriented tokens like:

I prefer the old one, thanks.

How are you getting on with your new job?

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Every situation has its own register that is specific to it, forms of common lexicon that are, however, used with meaning which are special to the situation. Lexis is one of the various language features that make up a register which is described as a socially defined variety of English. In service encounter, phatic tokens are important and they go a long way to smooth the real negotiation. In other words, phatic tokens are regarded as linguistic features of service encounter in view of their functions within social encounters. They come under interactional tokens and are forms of polite expressions used in interactions. Sun (2000) observes that phatic or small talk is a feature of our daily communication and interaction. It includes formulas of greeting and parting, personal anecdotes, evaluative episodes and has been defined as "language used in free, aimless, social intercourse" (Sun, 2000:1). In addition, Laver (1981) and McCarthy (2003) among others realise its usefulness in negotiation and control of social relationships. Laver (1981) and Sun (2000) argue that the choice of small talk indicates a speaker's perception of the interactional context including formality, acquaintance and existing social relationship with the addressee. McCarthy (2000) shows that phatic talk is an indispensable aspect of extended service encounter. McCarthy concludes that phaticity is something that participants work hard at and not something "tossed in for a good measure" (p.1).

Prominent interactional sequences are inquiries of health concerns, gossip and so on. Multiple goals have been known to characterise conversation and in service encounter, speakers are equally known to pursue multiple goals. Most of these goals are achieved through small talk which is considered as an 'extra' to the business at hand in any spoken interaction (Candlin, 2000; McCarthy, 2003) "existing in the pragmatic space

between and among transactional and relational functions of talk" needed to establish rapport and credibility (McCarthy, 2003:1 quoting Candlin, 2000: xv). As a handy tool, it is used to mitigate face threats, provide initial time interval during which interlocutors size each other up and establish interactional style which makes it easy for speakers concerned to carry on the conversation and achieve a degree of camaraderie (Bickmore and Cassel, 2005). As an efficient tool used for progressing transactional goals, small talk as observed by McCarthy (2000) functions as an indispensable aspect of two types of extended service encounter.

Other studies characterise small talk by describing the context, topics typically used and the grammars, which define its surface form in certain domains. The degree of paucity has been seen as a persistent goal which rules the degree of politeness in all utterances speakers make, including task-oriented ones (Coupland, Coupland and Robinson, 1992). Small talk can be used to navigate negative face threats by establishing the fact that the interlocutor is non-hostile (to break uneasy silence). Again, its ability to establish requisite level of interpersonal distance to the asking of a certain question or service is regarded as an indispensable aspect of two types of extended service encounter (McCarthy, 2000). To this end, small talk in service encounter is something that interlocutors work hard at and used purposefully for the construction and consolidation of on going commercial relationships with mutual assurance that the service will be delivered appropriately. In relation to this, Laver (1975) notes that small talk is not only an exchange that consolidates social relations but as a strategic mechanism for creating transactions into and out of transactional work. It is not only a gap that sits in between transactional episodes but facilitates and enhances their efficiency and threads them into

socially recognisable fabrics that constitute our everyday spoken genres in service encounter and job interview.

Laver (1981) emphasises the positive relational values of this kind of conversation and discusses how social relationships are negotiated and controlled through such means. Laver argues that a speaker's selection of small talk signals the perception of the interactional context including formality, acquaintance and social relationship with the addressee, a position that Sun (2000) supports with Chinese data. Sun agrees that small talk serves a useful purpose in discourse like defining relations, framing interactions and indexing multiple contextual factors.

Despite the usefulness of small talk in conversation, Reiger (2001), in her study, notes that small talk is rarely used in German service encounters. In conducting an ethnographic interview with sixty-four German customers, Reiger observes that only eight participants report having brief chats with supermarket personnel while fifty-six participants say that verbal communication does not take place. Thirty-two out of the fifty-six participants value small talk as polite and friendly behaviour and regret its absence, while the remaining 24 participants have no desire to partake of it. These participants see small talk as superficial, superfluous and insincere. To these participants, personnel relational verbal communication is not needed in service encounters. In other words, they do not regard service encounter as a social encounter but as a routine business transaction in which everybody knows their roles and relational verbal communication is not needed to make it work.

Contrasting Reiger (2001) and complementing Sun (2000), Pan (2000) emphasises the usefulness of facework in two types of service encounters (state-run versus private-

owned stores) in China. In the study, Pan argues that politeness is a dynamic process that involves the participants' perception of the social setting as well as the assumed interpersonal relationship in a given situation. Both social distance and the prevailing type of social relationship play a significant role in Chinese politeness behaviour with the use of facework in service encounters signaling a change in discursive practice due to social and economic changes in China.

2.1.1.6.4.2 Compliment and Respect in Interaction

Other interactional exchanges come in the form of compliment and respect paid to customer or service provider. Compliment has been examined under Speech Act and as a sociolinguistic phenomenon. In speech acts it is categorised under behabitives which deal with reactions "to other people's behaviour and fortunes" incorporating "expressions of attitudes to someone else's" (Austin, 1962:46) conduct or qualities. Compliment is seen as belonging together with congratulations, condolence and felicitations (cited by Ruhi, 2006). Ruhi (2006) further cites that Bach and Harnish (1979) classified compliment as a subcategory of congratulation with congratulation and felicitation subsumed under acknowledgements expressing some positive or negative attitude to others. Searle (1975) categorise compliment under expressives which communicate attitude to a certain state of affairs. Ruhi (2006) sees it as presenting a personal assessment of a situation, a state of affairs used to make the addressee feel good and is performed for maintaining "good personal/interpersonal relationships" (Wierzbicka,1991:87); as "social lubricants" (Wolfson,1983:89); a verbal social gift (Herbert,1990:219 citing Kerbat-Orechioni) used to negotiate social relationships (Henderson, 1996:195 cited by Ruhi, 2006:47).

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As a sociolinguistic phenomenon, compliment is seen as reflecting affective attitude to convey feelings and reflect relationships (Holmes, 1995). Holmes further notes that cultural and social variable such as gender and status may assign different functions to it. In addition, compliments may display solidarity or functions to showcase power play. In effect, compliment serves affective purposes that take care of interactants' needs to maintain or construct positive harmonious relationships in interaction even in service encounter with caution. This is because in service encounter, compliment as noted by Ruhi (2006) can be rejected, evaded, deflected or accepted.

Compliment requires a level of familiarity. Social encounter in the form of service encounter requires the expression of social aspect of language which reduces negative feeling of being delayed, enhances the self image of individuals and promotes rapport. Compliments are positive affective speech acts that can be used "as phatic communion from which ties of union are created by mere exchange of words" (Matsuoka, 2003:36 citing Mahnowski, 1935 and Holmes, 1988b). Compliment explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker for some good like possession, skill, characteristics and so on which is valued by the speaker or hearer (Holmes, 1988b). Kodama (1996) observes that 'the other' entails the person not present, and supporting this, Kodama adds that compliments are "intricate combination of positive evaluations, displayed good feelings, implicit friendliness and half admitted desire to please" (p.59). These explain the reasons for the use of compliment in addressing individuals and how it helps to reverse events during a particular interaction especially in service encounter.

Further, using relevance theory, Ruhi and Dogan (2001) realise that compliment aids both phatic and polite communication that occurs in equal status, friendly

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relationships in Turkey. They note that its use varies widely according to age and gender factors. More especially, men compliment women more, women compliment each other more than they do men and men compliment each other as much as women compliment men. In this study, it is assumed that the cultural perceptions of gender roles in Turkey explain this habit. Sifianou (2001) in "Oh! how appropriate! compliments and politeness", examines the extent to which compliments are formulaic in Greek. Sifianou concludes that giving compliments is closely related to giving gifts which function primarily as face enhancing positive politeness strategies and this observation is in consonant with Herbert (1996) citing Kerbrat–Orecchioni (1992). This portrays the Greek culture as being more of positive politeness-oriented with the people highly creative in the expression of compliment and adapting it to particular contexts. Another study that examines the place of culture and compliment is that by Spencer–Oatey, Ng and Dong (2000) in 'Responding to compliments: British and Chinese evaluative judgments' discuss compliments and their effect on interpersonal relations. Using British Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong Chinese speakers, the group investigates whether culture influences the speaker's interpretation of compliments. The group argues that the relationship between complimenter and complimentee varies in power and distance across cultures and concludes that what might be taken to be inappropriate strategy or compliment is subject to the culture and the interpretation of the content.

Associated with compliment is respect which is expected in service encounter. It can be displayed through or applied to the notion of human interaction in ways that are useful for understanding the opposing expressions of appropriate behaviour. Expressions of approval, solidarity and interest that are regarded as personable involvements can be

ways of paying respect to one's interlocutor(s) as well as displays of restraint that is not related to interfering or making undue demands on the other (Brown and Levinson 1987). Since both involvement and restraint can be used, depending on situation, to display respect, the relative lack of either can be perceived as inappropriate or insulting. Relative taciturnity and restraint can be seen as impolite or rude which boils down to lack of interpersonal engagement in some situations. This is so because specific forms of interpersonal engagements in service encounter involve being recognised and treated as a valued human being and in the process respect in accorded. This is particularly true in some cultures where specific forms of interpersonal engagement are enacted. In some other cultures, Bailey (2000) observes that respect is described as the reverent act of looking up to a superior in a hierarchical relationship, but not treating someone as a valued equal (Korea and other eastern societies). This brings in the notion of silence as a non linguistic aspect of human communication with its variant uses in different societies.

Silence in this respect has nothing to do with absence of speech but as a communicative mode laden with meaning. It can either indicate respect or lack of co-operation tending to impoliteness. In relating silence to respect, there is the acknowledgement of such variables as age, status, gender and so on in interaction. Respect can, therefore, be seen as an aspect of the broader relationship between power and language. All these positive interpersonal cues are observed through linguistic politeness. Individuals are known to vary their language use while observing these cues.

Respect and compliment sometimes come in form of affectionate expressions which are forms of supportive linguistic exchange between relational partners. Affectionate expression can be an "intentional display of intense positive regard for a

living target" for "human wellbeing" and animals and is generally regarded as "fundamental to human needs" (Erbert and Floyd, 2004:1). They are shown to be fundamental to human development (Harlow, 1974) and are used in therapeutic interventions (Frank, 1973, Kochman, 1959 cited by Erbert and Floyd, 2004) and in developing human relationships. Affectionate expressions often serve as the critical incident by which relational development can be gauged (Baxter & Bullis, 1996; Owen, 1987 cited by Erbert and Floyd, 2004). It is one of the speech acts used during service encounter which can either promote or destroy customer/SP relationship.

Sometimes, affectionate expressions like compliment can have undesirable effect on the hearer especially when seen as an inappropriate expression or lip service to get away with something (Floyd & Morman, 1997), when they are interpreted as sexual advances in unromantic relationships (Morman & Floyd, 1998), when they are regarded as negative expectancy violations (Floyd & Voloudakis, 1999a), when they go unreciprocated (Floyd & Burgon,1999) and when they invoke self threatening attributions (Floyd, 1999; Floyd & Voloudakis, 1999b).

From the above considerations, affectionate exchanges have the potentials to affect someone both negatively and positively within the same interaction. This has been accounted for by the Brown and Levinson (1987) politeness theory. Affectionate expression supports receiver's positive face needs leading to positive cognitive and behavioural outcomes as well as threatens receiver's negative face needs (Erbert & Floyd, 2004). This is sometimes the case in most public work places especially when appreciation is rendered with only thanks without any other supportive gesture. When the

expectations go unfulfilled, trouble in form of disgruntled and uncooperative front may be the outcome next time.

2.1.1.6.4.3. Impoliteness in Interaction

Impoliteness belongs to the other end of politeness and it includes rudeness, aggression and non verbal behaviours that threaten the face needs of individuals. Many scholars have the opinion that it is a communicative act which tends to attack face and cause social conflict and disharmony among people (Culpeper, Bousfield & Wichmann 2003; Kienpointer, 1997 and Beebe, 1995). A better description according to Culpeper (2005) is that proffered by Tracy and Tracy (1998:227) which sees impoliteness as "communicative acts perceived by members of a social community (and often intended by speakers) to be purposefully offensive". Culpeper unpacks this definition and points that impoliteness results when (1) a speaker communicates face attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behaviour as intentionally face attacking, or a combination (1) and (2). These are encoded through language and behaviour, which can be seen and heard. Spencer-Oatey (2005) supports this line of thinking as she perceives (im)politeness as judgement people make about the social appropriateness of verbal and non-verbal behaviour. In other words, it is not behaviour per se that is polite, politic (Watts, 2003) or impolite, rather (im)politeness is an evaluative label that people attach to behaviour as a result of their subjective judgements about social appropriateness. People's judgements are based primarily on their expectations, which in turn are derived from their belief about behaviour in terms of what is prescribed, permitted and proscribed. Prescribed behaviour is behaviour that is regarded as legally and/or socially obligatory. People are obliged to produce and others are expected to experience it.

Conversely, proscribed behaviour is behaviour that is legally and/or socially forbidden. People are obliged to avoid it and others have the right not to experience it. Behaviour that is perceived in this way has been labelled non-politic or impolite by Watts (2003) and "rude" by Kasper (1990). From the foregoing, it is noteworthy that troubles can arise as a result of many variables such as language choice, which encodes power, distance and imposition with specific reference to mood, status, age, gender, occupation and cultural peculiarities.

2.1.1.6.4.4 Nature of Rudeness

Kasper (1990) opines that rudeness, as opposed to politeness or politic behaviour, is constituted by deviation from whatever counts as politic in a given social context, an inherently confrontational and disruptive behavior to social equilibrium. Further, she notes that expected linguistic behaviour (politic behaviour) goes unnoticed, rudeness on the other hand is conspicuous and in most ordinary language calls for redress. Rudeness in service encounter is a dispreferred speech act which can sometimes prevail depending on the mood of both participants.

Kasper identifies two major types of rudeness–motivated and unmotivated rudeness. Motivated rudeness is further divided into three: rudeness due to lack of affect control, strategic rudeness and ironic rudeness. Of importance to this study is rudeness which arises due to lack of affect control and ironic rudeness that involves banter or mock politeness. Rudeness, like politeness, is the judgment we make about other's behaviour or the value we confer on others. The judgment of rudeness is intricately tied to our own variable needs and expectations in that moment. And our perception of what

is rude changes from moment to moment according to our state and the interpretation of the behaviours of others.

2.1.1.6.4.5 Rudeness/Impoliteness during Service Interaction

Rudeness is an act of impoliteness as it connotes incivility, discourtesy, conduct that conveys little regard for the feelings of others, and indifference to the generally accepted norms of behaviour. Impoliteness or rudeness is sometimes experienced during service encounters, which are the crossroads where SPs meet customers from different cultures with different values and customs. People from different cultures have different expectations of the service encounter. Inability to understand them leads to mismatch of expected experiences which are at variance with the ultimate goal of a service provider's wish to retain customers which are less costly than attracting new ones. The customers may take the service provider's attitude as impolite or rude when expectations are not fulfilled.

In business, retaining customers' goodwill entails avoiding uncivilised expressions that can quickly have a negative impact (Winsted, 1997) on customers. Impoliteness or rudeness may involve foul mouthed expressions and it is the inability to observe the expected linguistic behavioural styles of interaction during any occasion. Impoliteness or rudeness may be expressed in various ways depending on the characters involved. The expression of rudeness or impoliteness may be verbal or non-verbal such as being completely ignored, being made fun of, being short with someone, deliberate slow service, prank repetition (Harasymiak 2006), code-switching (Cashman, 2008) and so on.

Sometimes in some encounters, excessive politeness can be seen as rudeness. Other times an individual appears rude because he is confronted with a situation which

requires leaving his comfort zone, for instance, when he is asked about something he rather not share with anyone. In such a situation, the person becomes gruffly and blunt. Further, rudeness may be as a result of jealousy, a situation where one who is class-conscious sees the other as threatening his social status ("bad belle"). Another instance is when someone criticises the other's show of casualness and openness, characteristics that open the doors for the other's acceptance by the rich thus gaining more status in the eyes of the upper class.

In service encounter, when people are irritated, sometimes they become rude, may be as a result of burn-outs. This irritation may be coupled with silence, which indicates that the person concerned has reached his endurance limit. Other times, rudeness can be a call for someone's attention or a way of seeking for attention. All in all, polite manners hide some people's real disposition while rudeness shows people's real identity. Politeness and rudeness linked to social graces in that social status shows up in the attitude of those who are class-conscious especially when relating to others that are not from their class.

Humans articulate the intention of a communicative action differently in different situation and this is based on various factors, which include social relationship between the interactants, urgency of an action, their personality and so on. Politeness as an integral part of linguistic and non verbal interaction, directs humans' politeness strategies according to the dictates of some sociological norms mentioned earlier. When with friends we choose more informal language. However, in a situation where an elder or a senior or a stranger is involved, we talk in a formal way. Thus, politeness becomes a social requirement to base our choice of words and the people we are talking to. This

brings in the issue of language variation which is a fundamental characteristic of human to human communication. We remix our words every time we are expressing something. This will be treated more extensively under politeness and linguistic variation.

2.1.1.6.4.6 Aggression as Intensified Impoliteness

Aggression sometimes may be expected in a service encounter. It is an unruly behaviour that results in interpersonal conflict and it involves negative treatment that may be verbal or behavioural, for instance, being rude or 'nasty' (Spector and Jex, 1998). Sometimes it involves often escalating series of threats aimed at intimidating the other without resulting in potentially dangerous physical contact. Dupre, Jones and Taylor (2001) note that aggression can be caused by individual characteristics (behavioural pattern, mood and so on) in addition to situational factors such as service type, service encounter satisfaction and employee behaviour.

Dupre, Jones and Taylor (2001) go further to note that within service marketing domain, emphasis is placed on the importance and value of customer relationship. This is coupled with the importance of building and maintaining strong customer relationship (Berry, 1997; Crosby 1990; Patterson and Ward, 2000). However, at times, a customer can be so difficult that maintaining a cordial relationship may not be worth the effort and in such a situation, it becomes a tall order.

According to research, people are less able to treat each other in courteous and respectful way at work (Anderson and Pearson, 1999, Daw 2001; Grimsley, 1998). Work behaviours such as yelling, rudeness and threats have been studied under multiple labels like interactional injustice work aggression (Le-Blanc and Kelloway, 2002); work-place bullying relating to persistent and long term exposure to psychologically aggressive

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behaviour in which the targets have difficulty in defending themselves (Leyman, 1996; Rayner, Hoel and Cooper, 2002) typically referring to repeated interactions with the same people. Others include incivility, which refers to behaviours that violate interpersonal norms with ambiguous intentions such as rudeness or ignoring someone (Anderson and Pearson, 1999) interpersonal conflict (Spector and Jex, 1998) and verbal communication of anger that violate social norms or hostility (Glomb, 2002; Neuman and Baron, 1998). All these aggressive behaviours generally have been laid on the doorstep of intra-organisational members as the source and targets for these anti-social behaviours absolving the customers. This is further compounded by the mantra, 'the customer is always right". In general, these behaviours are related to deleterious work reactions such as stress and health problem. The stress may be as a result of economic hardship as we have in Nigeria. All the same, the customers should not be left out in sharing the blame. They also bring to the service encounter some unruly behaviour that may affect and ignite the feelings of the service giver (Barling, Rogers and Kelloway, 2001; Glomb, 2002). These feelings are at most not vented and are bottled up which ripple out later to affect the mood of the SPs, hence the non verbal expression associated with different body stances that have been studied by Sundaram and Webster (2000).

2.1.1.7 Questioning and Politeness in SE

Face work is connected to the desire to be liked, to have a desirable self image and not to be embarrassed or humiliated (Goffman, 1967). Lim and Bowers (1991) as well as Brown and Levinson (1987) agree that there are two sides to face - positive face (the desire to be included and the desire to be respected) and negative face (a desire to have

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freedom to act and not to be impeded) corresponding to fellowship, competence and autonomy face works.

People usually engage in a reciprocal communicative face work and as such, upholding face is a pervasive and rational practice of social life, a mundane part of interaction which leaves an imprint on language. Many linguistic cues indicate attention to face with examples such as acts of deference which convey regards for another, either through avoidance (giving a person a space) or presentation (being complimentary to another) (Tracy, 2002). Politeness strategies are conveyed tactically to reduce friction through the use of hedges, address forms and apologies (Brown and Levinson, 1987). These strategies often combine with three variables – power, distance and weightiness to determine the strategies to be employed. Therefore it is possible to have a situation where these strategies are intertwined in the same utterance to indicate both negative and positive politeness.

Face work is always background of all interactions but when face is threatened or lost, it suddenly becomes visible and salient (Tracy, 2002). Face work and politeness has been examined in relation to typologies of questions in all its ramifications. Such issues as questioning in relational to definition and dominance, questioning and politeness, questioning and conversation and so on have been undertaken by many scholars. Questions have been equated with their level of politeness. When a questioner believes that the addressee is low in willingness, the right formulation is resorted to. A question can be formulated to be more polite in many ways (Allwin, 1991) such as making it indirect or by adding pre-marks (I need to ask …). Direct questions are taken to be impolite especially when cast in the imperative form. However, when the addressee is

willing and the questioner has the legitimate right to ask the question, direct question is normal (Allwin, 1991). Again it has been suggested that close-answer questions which provide choice of answers can be more face-threatening than open-ended ones because they limit and constrain the way the person being questioned can respond (Penman, 1990).

2.1.1.8 Politeness in Communication

Several scholars have considered politeness phenomenon and have offered a variety of definitions. Each of the definitions sees politeness in relation to the study it prioritises. Lakoff (1973) sees it as encompassing a wide descriptive power in respect to language use. Leech (1983) affirms that it is a major determinant of linguistic behaviour while Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) feel that it has a universal status, that is, it can be found in all cultures. Fraser (1990:233) maintains that "politeness is a state that one expects to exist in every conversation; participants note not that someone is being polite (this is the norm) but rather that the speaker is violating the [conversational contract]". The breaches of norms here are mainly negative ones, that is, they underline the distinction between impolite/appropriate and appropriate/politic/polite behaviour, but do not shed light on whether there is distinction between polite and merely appropriate behaviour (Locher and Watts, 2005; Watts, 2003; Kasper, 1990; and Locher, 2004).

Underlining the above observations in relation to politeness is a common thread, that is, the redressive notion taken to counteract face-threatening acts (Kasper 1990). Due to the face threatening acts which most messages encode, participants in talk exchange rationally employ certain communicative strategies which involve a complex and delicate patterning of message constructions that constitute what is known as politeness (Turner, 1996). Turner goes further to say that the purpose of this delicate patterning of message

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or polite communication is the collective preservation of face, the self-esteem of the participants. Hence, the rationale behind indirectness approach which combines the traditional and pragmatic views of politeness.

Politeness creates an accommodating situation where participants achieve set-out objectives, thus preventing confrontations in relation to the theories of Brown and Levinson (1987). Again, through its use, an implicated context is created that matches addressees' notion of how they should be addressed (Grundy, 2000), ensuring that their ego is taken care of or soothed, which may not mean anything to the addressor. This view tallies with Thomas's (1997) observation, (citing Green, 1989) that speakers or participants only go through the motion of offering or showing respect for addressee's feelings. The offer may not be meant and the respect a sham, but the effort made to go through the motion is what makes the act an act of politeness.

Politeness affects us differently when we are at the receiving end. This is due, in fact, to the position we occupy during the interaction. Language, as a means of communication, has been observed to elicit different reactions in the listener (Kasper, 1990); hence, different communicative functions of talks in different settings. Kasper further observes that within language use are different dimensions of power, which are related to entitlements which individuals lay claim to in any social interaction. These entitlements are of two types: one is the macro social properties made up of both ascribed characteristics (age, sex, religion, physical strength and so on). The second is the achieved social properties (rank, title, social position and so on); and individual "situation performance" (Kochman, 1984: 202). For instance, many languages signal relative status through the use of certain forms of address, endearment, appropriate pronoun forms like *Tu/vous* in French. In Japanese, honorifics are

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used to show respect or deference and politeness and the forms used are not static. They may vary as relationships change or in different situation as shown by Duranti (1992) in his study of Samoan respect vocabulary. Moreover, most cited scholarly studies show that social indexing, a sociolinguistic factor, has an effect on politeness. It is an important and mandatory phenomenon across languages. In some languages, it predominates. For instance, in Japanese culture, it is prevalent (Matsumoto, 1989), while in some others, it does not really matter. In other words, in Japanese all sentences are socially marked (Sohn, 1999), whereas in Indo-European languages, the case is not the same.

2.1.1.8.1 Usefulness of Politeness in Communication

Politeness **a**s a linguistic phenomenon is linked with social behaviour carried out into all domains of life. When employed, it reduces difference of opinion which would have resulted in argument and quarrelling in personal interaction (Lakoff, 1975). It allows individuals to take part in conflict-free communication (Fraser and Nolen, 1981) or establishes and maintains comity among interactants (Leech, 1983). Brown and Levinson (1987) believe that it helps interlocutors to minimise the imposition caused by a face threatening act. Watts (1992) asserts that it is a form of social behaviour used to maintain the equilibrium of interpersonal relationships within the social group which he refers to as politic verbal behaviour (1989). In China, it is geared towards achieving social harmony and order (Yeung, 1997, Yu, 2003) and constitutes a social index indicating interactant's relative positions (Ide, 1989). In the Igbo egalitarian context, politeness is seen as a social contract among individual members of the group, in that they behave in the way expected of them and in turn expect similar behaviour from others (Nwoye, 1992). In addition, Thomas (1997) points out that politeness helps to smooth out

relationships. This is in harmony with politeness as a rapport management strategy (Spencer-Oatey, 2005). In Spencer-Oatey's view, rapport refers to the relative harmony and smoothness of relations between people and in this instance between the SP and the customer. Lakoff (2005) identifies other covert functions performed by politeness and they include:

a) "The appropriate use of politeness defines an individual as competent

   benevolent and worthy of trust,

b) Politeness is used to decide whether others are in or out socially; a

   basis on which to reward the good (the polite), and punish the bad

   and

c) Politeness is a tool by which societies maximise and legitimise

   gender distinction and define appropriate gender rules and roles" (p.178).

Politeness behaviour may either converge or diverge. When the roles converge, men and women may be judged on similar bases and when the roles are seen to be distinct, the polite behaviours from men and women may diverge both in the amount of politeness and form expected. Lakoff points out that recently, the polite expectations for both genders have shifted towards a unisex standard because more women are now working outside the home, some occupying key decision making position. Therefore expectations of how should act and be treated in the workplace are under continual scrutiny. The concept of politeness has been examined multifariously and in different contexts. The following are instances where politeness has been examined in relation to different contexts.

2.1.1.8.2 Politeness in Different Contexts

This segment of the review considers politeness in relation to several aspects of both contexts and different social factors. Context and social factors affect politeness in various ways because words only have meaning when seen in context. Context refers to external world features (social factors) which combine with the utterances to yield sundry interpretations.

2.1.1.8.2.1 Politeness in Hospital Context

Politeness has been considered in relation to hospital environments in many scholarly works. Grainger (2004) in "Verbal play on the hospital ward: solidarity or power" analyses interactions between nurses and geriatric patients in a geriatric ward. She realises that there was an extensive use of positive politeness strategies despite the fact that both interlocutors barely know one another while engaged in intrusive care task. These positive politeness strategies mingle with the negative ones within the same interaction necessitating a construction of both deferential and solidarity relationship. She argues that with her results, Brown and Levinson would predict a preponderance of negative politeness strategies (deference) between the clients and the nurses due to the degree of social distance between the interlocutors and the often weighty FTAs involved. However, her results show that role and relationship are negotiable and therefore politeness strategies are not easily predictable as Brown and Levinson model suggests. Togher and Hand (1998) investigate the use of politeness markers with different communicative partners using five traumatic brain injury patients and a matched control group during telephone conversation. The patients were found to assess a variety of politeness strategies but their ability to manipulate these across four different tenor

relationships is hindered when contrasted with the control group among other findings. Iragilliati (2006) in her study claims that proper utterances and politeness strategies expressed through the use of address forms enacted during doctor/patients interaction are therapeutic keys to patients' quick recovery. Lambert (1999) looks at pharmacist/ physician interaction using the Brown and Levinson model for a clearer understanding of the factors that influence pharmacist's message to physician. The study specifically tries to see if the perceived differences in power and social distance between the two influence the amount of politeness in the pharmacist messages along with the effect of age, gender and practice context. The study use 210 messages from community pharmacists and 112 hospitals with regard to hypothetical drug allergy scenario. The messages were segmented into independent clauses which were classified according to the politeness strategies used. It was revealed that age and practice context affect significantly all levels of politeness of alternative drug recommendations but not with over all politeness of allergy reports. Adegbite and Odebunmi (2006) describe the tact strategy doctors' use during diagnoses in the Nigerian scene. Using recorded interactions, they analyse the contextual beliefs of the participants, their speech act patterns and other pragmatic features pragmatically. The study notes that the doctors dominate the interaction through the use of elicitation and confirmation techniques, give directives while the patients offer information and manage to respond to the doctors' moves. Conversational maxims were flouted and politeness maxims were exploited to ensure successful diagnosis. Odebunmi (2005) assesses politeness and face management in the interaction between doctors and their patients in Southwestern Nigeria. Using information from tape recordings, interviews and observation of the interactions between the participants in both private and

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teaching hospitals, he analyses the data applying insights from Leech's (1983) politeness principles. In his analysis, he realises that the interactions pay attention to observance of tact, generosity, sympathy maxims as well as Pollyanna principle and face threatening acts with redress (positive politeness). He concludes that politeness in form of effective positive face management influences medical procedures and determines the degree to which orthodox medicine can be acceptable in Southwestern Nigeria.

2.1.1.8.2.2 Politeness in Political Settings

In the field of politics, the following scholarly works among others have paid attention to politeness in political settings. Christie (2004) explores gender realisation in parliamentary debate drawing from politeness scholarship in gender and language use in addition to adopting Eckert's and McConnell-Ginet's (1994) community of practice (CofP). This study reveals in general that using CofP usefully shows politeness behaviour in specific practice such as parliamentary debate as opposed to making a general statement about men and women discourse. Secondly, it shows that in isolating practice specific norms using CofP, a distinction can be drawn between politic and politeness behaviour. Thirdly, the framework helps to portray a structure and agency dynamics that explains differential uses of politeness resources by both male and female MPs. Specifically, the study realises that the patterns of discourse suggest that female MPs display relatively stronger orientation to transactional norms which is indicated in their limited use of apologies compared to male MPs. Again, front bench female MPs express concern for all male MPs to make their views known through open debate. Mullany (2002) in another study using CofP assesses (im)politeness, language and gender in political broadcast interview. She expresses the concern that due to the dominance of

Brown's and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness universals, impoliteness has been a neglected area of scholarly research. Adopting a modified framework of CofP, she analyses impoliteness, language and gender in political broadcast. Mullany argues that there is a need to acknowledge that gender is not the only variable affecting language behaviour and she suggests CofP as a way forward to the complex relationship. Papacharissi (2004) explores the potential for civil discourse in cyber space through examining the level of civility in 287 discussion threads in political news groups. Results reveal that most messages posted on political news groups were civil due to the absence of face-to-face communication which could foster more heated discussion. The study supports the use of internet to revive the public sphere, provide greater diversity and volume of discussion. Focusing on the content of verbal remarks made by parliamentarians in Malaysia, in casting aspersions in a recorded session of parliamentary debates Meng, Hei and David (2009) note that this kind of exercise is related to power struggle using conflicting verbal utterances as strategies which in part portray impoliteness as a result of character assassination involved in the process.

Li (2008) investigates how politicians in political interviews rely on linguistic strategies to come to terms with the conflicts between being uncooperative and polite. Three pairs of questions-answer with respect to North Korea nuclear crises between China's spokesman and the reporters were used. Analysing the data, Li observes that the spokesman did not answer the anticipated questions but flouted frequently the Grice's (1975) maxims drawing on the information already raised by the reporters. The study argues that to better understand how opinions and attitudes are expressed by politicians when replying to question, it is noteworthy to examine their verbal acts. Garcia (2006)

examines candidates' discourses in U.S political campaign debates of the 2000 election from socio-cognitive approach to social relation that accounts for cognitive, linguistic, relational and socio-cultural aspects in communicative encounter using Brown's and Levinson's (1987) and Sperber's and Wilson's (1995) relevance theory. Garcia conceives politeness to be context-sensitive cognitive based linguistic instances of social bonds. Using 89 North America electoral debates, the study reveals that face mitigation is predominant and it is characterised by mitigating sequences based on the strategies of presupposed/raise/assert common ground; assert/presuppose offer and promise. The results confirm the claim that political campaign debates are essentially persuasive besides being antagonistic.

2.1.1.8.2.3 Politeness and Media

The media context has also been related to politeness in analysing its discourse. Odebunmi (2009) takes a look at the use of politeness in print media (magazines) interviews employing a modified version of Locher's and Watts' (2005) Relational theory and incorporating relevant aspects of face work and specific parts of contextual theories. Sampling political interviews that appeared in both *Tell* and *The News* magazines published between 2000 and 2004, the study shows that in order to be polite, participants in print media engage three contextual beliefs of shared knowledge of subjects, political gimmicks and ideological expectations. In this way the interlocutors employ politic, polite and impolite utterances characterised by confrontation and criticism, veils and condemnations. These are respectively achieved with context-based understanding of discourse and activity types, face-threatening acts with redress, and face threatening acts without redress. Odebunmi concludes that the revised relational work

theory enhances a clearer understanding of media political interviews and explains more clearly the beliefs and tendencies that participants appeal to in the interactions. Mullany (1999) assesses the difference between male and female speech patterns to authenticate the belief that men orient towards competitive discourse strategies while women tilt to cooperative strategies. She analysed the amount of attention male and female interviewers and interviewees pay to norms and social conventions of linguistic politeness in BBC Radio 4 broadcast interviews. Some of the data support the cooperation competitiveness. However, there were some exceptions which cast doubt on the adequacy of previous findings that claim to explain why men and women speeches were different.

Biesenbach-Lucas (2007) looks at requests sent to the faculty by native and non-native English speaking graduate students through e-mail at a major American university over a period of several semesters. Applying the framework of Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper's (1989) speech act analysis framework, the study quantitatively distinguishes the levels of directness in relation to pragmatic clarity; and quantitatively to compare syntactic and lexicon politeness devices, the request perspectives, and the specific linguistic request realisation patterns preferred by native and non-native speakers. Results indicate that more requests are realised through direct strategies as well as hints than conventionally indirect strategies normally found in comparative speech acts studies. Norms of politeness in e-mail comprising of a text medium with little guidance in academic institutional hierarchy, though a work in progress, the native speakers demonstrate greater resources in creating e-polite messages to their professors than non-native speakers.

In *Impoliteness and entertainment in the television quiz show: the weakest link,* Culpepper (2005) examines the structure of the television entertainment quiz show and how it maximises the potential for face-damage. Building on Culpepper (1996) and Culpepper, Bousfield and Wichmann (2003), he integrates Spencer-Oatey's (2002) revision of Brown's and Levinson's (1987) concepts of negative and positive face. He also referred to Levinson's (1992) "activity types" to see if the context of the quiz show neutralises the impoliteness. In the analysis, Culpeper shows the formulaic and creative nature of aspects of the discourse and how prosody is important to the understanding of impolte utterances. Paying attention to the off-record impoliteness, sarcasm and mimicry, he argues that impoliteness signals engulf the context to the extent that targets are often offended when actually they are not supposed to.

2.1.1.8.2.4 Politeness and Commercial Transaction

Politeness has also been examined in commercial transactions. Nikolich (1995) considers communication in the service encounter interaction between hotel service staff and the customers. Using 579 hotel SPs and 326 customers, he provides empirical data on roles of SPs, topics of conversation, perceived control, forms of address and gender differences. Factor analysis and MANOVA were applied to identify dimensionality and compare SPs and customers. The results show that communication comprises two roles within the service encounter: task and process. Further, conversation within the service encounter was found to comprise role related, personal and small talk topics. Significant effects were found for SPs and customers on most items with SPs consistently rating items more highly than customers. In addition, sex of subject was significant with females rating the items more highly than their male counterparts. The study assists in

understanding the dynamics of the service encounter, especially the communicative role. Generally, it is noted that customers want efficient service delivered with a minimum of fuss. Ayoola (2006) concentrates on the social activities surrounding haggling during service encounter. He identifies the stages and describes the discourse strategies. He discovers that the participants used code mixing (English, pidgin and Yoruba) while the discourse strategies comprising of humour, dysphemism and euphemism, cajoling, flattery and flirting were used to achieve the goals of maximising profit/bargaining during the encounters. Arua (2008) applies the modified version of Brown's and Levinson's (1987) politeness model by Lim and Bowers (1991) to analyse market discourses collected from Ile-Ife main market. She notes that although politeness is used in managing social relations, there are some strategies which ordinarily cannot earn the participants their set out objectives yet these goals were achieved. In this way, disagreements are ritualised and cannot be seen as dispreferred actions.

2.1.1.9 Politeness and Encoding of Social Variables

Every society is structured and the social structures exert an input in how language is used and the interpretations we give utterances. This is in line with the view of Odebunmi (2003) who opines that social structures determine how communication is made. Social constructs like age, gender, rank, economic achievement etcetera have various imprints on how language is used in interactions. These will be discussed below.

2.1.1.9.1 Politeness and Social Status

Language users are social beings that bring to any verbal interaction a variety of social beliefs, motives and goals, which affect the nature of the conversation (Holtsgrave, 2005). Relating to Holtgrave's observation is the fact that speaking in a certain way,

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individuals are busy constructing their identity and relationship with others through their conversational styles together with a particular accent, dialect or language (Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert and Leap, 2003). Over time, these play a significant role in the development of language.

Psychologically, these variables co-work with face and are conceptualised through polite talks with its corresponding face work. Politeness as a social indexing refers to the encoding of social status into the linguistic expression in an exchange (Kasper, 1990). Social indexing has been described or labeled differently in many studies. Kasper (1990) citing Hill, Ide, Shoko Kawasaki, and Ogino (1986) and Ide (1989) label it "discernment". Kasper goes further to note that social indexing operates independent of the current objective a speaker intends to achieve. It represents the linguistic expression of social warrants which Kochman (1984) defines as the "entitlements" to which individuals lay claim to in social interaction. In the Yoruba culture where this study is carried out, age, economic achievement and title are parts of the entitlement participants lay claim to and they influence the expression of politeness in interaction.

2.1.1.9.2 Gender and Politeness

Historically, the notion of gendering starts with the socialisation process where a child is required to acquire and identify with the social grace of his people. Consequently, the identity comes through transactions within the socio-cultural and historical contexts, which are the sum total of the person's experiences within the culture, community, school, family and so on. All these work together to teach children the workings of the society and the roles they are expected to play. Through language, children learn to be male or female and align themselves to any other social roles or status available. Thus the

learning of language becomes a way of sorting out social identity in varying social environment. This gives room to gender as a cultural expression of sex used to categorise language users in order to explain the social determinant of variation in language use (Christie, 2004). Lakoff (1975) agrees with this view while characterising women's language as powerless, insecure and trivial, a register that portrays an indexing of the feminine gender as displaying a subordinate status to which women in patriarchal societies are subjected. Therefore, gender as a social identity has been noted to be important in relation to language use (Brown, 1994, Tannen, 1986).

In consonance with Lakoff (1975) is the orthodox view which sees performance of public speech as a masculine practice. Christie (2004) further cites the contribution of Phillips (1987) where the researcher argues that more often than not, women realise roles and attendant speech genres that are connected with exercise of legitimised political authority. In support of this is the fact that since men primarily carry out this public speech genre, the style is masculine. Still along this line, Tannen (1992) confirms that men use "report" talk while women use "rapport" talk. Coates (1988), proposing relationship between gender, style and private/public distinction, notes that exchange of information is an important goal and men are socialised into public talk while women, private discourse.

The dichotomy between male and female speech styles has been supported by studies of politeness behaviour (Brown, 1994; Christie, 2000 and Talbot, 1998). The most widely cited work is that by Holmes (1995) whose survey of men and women's use of politeness has been extensive. She argues that in comparison to men, women express positive politeness and use mitigating strategies in order to avoid or weaken threats to an

interlocutor's face. This is linked with the differences in the use of linguistic politeness to men's tendency to orient towards the 'referential' functions of language (conveying information, facts or content) and women's leaning towards affective functions (the use of language to convey feelings and reflect social relationship). Holmes also linked this tendency to men's value of "public talk", "referentially oriented talk" and women's tendency to value "intimate affectively oriented talk".

While this line of thinking still persists, there is a growing body of researchers that propose that identities are formed in relation to others through shared practices as useful bases for approaching gender. For instance, Eckert's and McConnell-Ginet's (1994) essay 'Think practically and look locally: language and gender as community based practice." argues for adopting an approach to language use that examines the specific social practices within which individuals engage with one another rather than according to a *priori* categories of membership of a given speech community.

These scholars argue against the conceptualisation of gender identity as a set of intrinsic attributes that in some way generate the linguistic choices individuals make. In other words, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet are saying that language choices are better seen as part of the process by which individuals become gendered. Their model therefore sees gender as an achieved property through language use rather than an attribute that precedes and in some way determines language use. They also point out that the context in which gender identity is achieved is highly significant. Hence, it is necessary to focus on localised, shared practice, communities of practice, in order to understand the way in which gender identity is realised through language use. Community of Practice is characterised as follows:

A community of practice is an aggregate of people who, united by a common enterprise, develop and share ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, and values-in shared practices. The development of shared practices emerges as the participants make meaning of their joint enterprise, and of themselves in relation to this enterprise. Individuals make sense of themselves and others through their forms of participation in and contributions to the community (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1999:186).

Taking the subject of the study to be a particular group or profession and politeness being discursive, it would then be seen that it is not just a set of linguistic strategies used by individuals in a particular interaction but also a judgement made about an individuals linguistic habits (Mills, 2004). In this way, politeness can be viewed as a set of strategies or verbal habit which someone sets for themselves or which others judge as the norm for them as well as being socially constructed norm within a particular practice. The important thing is whether an utterance is appropriate or not either in relation to the perceived norm of the situation, the community of practice or the perceived norms of the society at large.

Antonopoulou (2001) in examining gender and politeness in brief service encounter observes that males and females appear to have a different perception of the service encounter. Men perceive the encounter as purely transactional with no requirement for 'unnecessary' politeness strategies and women perceived it as a tri-partite event with an initial greeting phase, a medial transactional phase and a final thanking or leave taking phase. These results as have been pointed out may explain the differences between male and female in linguistic politeness in current Western literature as opposed to what is obtained in areas outside of Western culture. However, from this study, one cannot rule out the fact that mood plays a vital role in appropriating politeness in service encounter. From all indications, gender seems to be a relevant factor to understanding conflict talks

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to the extent that it affects the context specific assumption that the man and the woman bring to bear on the interpretation of one another's utterances.

2.1.1.9.3 Age and Social Status in Interaction

Age in many languages is accorded respect or deference and it conditions the type of utterances required in an interaction. Many languages have been known to observe social indexing of age but the extent it influences expressions varies across culture. In examining politeness in the speech of Korean students, Bell (2003) evidences sensitivity to status with a particular emphasis on age difference as a major explanatory factor for the differences in politeness strategies in their interaction with each other. Paoletti (1998) observes that age identification in an interaction is not to be seen as an intrinsic property of an individual rather it is an interaction accomplishment negotiated and achieved by people in the course of everyday interaction. This is on the basis of relevant category associated with certain characteristics and features into which they are cast (Antaki and Widdowcombe, 1998). Age, therefore, is a cultural resource exploited by interlocutors in everyday conversation. For Poulios (2004), age identity entails a series of actions or category bound activities, as well as rights, responsibilities, expectations and rules that govern age-appropriate behaviour. These structure interaction and show not only how culture is used to direct events but how it is constituted in, and only exist in action (Hester and Eglin, 1997). To this end utterances have then been used to indicate among other things seniority, the Igbo not exempted. Ugorji (2009) examines polite strategies in Igbo focusing on address forms which are used in negotiating politeness within the family. The study reveals that interactions are governed by social relationships dominated by age. Examining the concept of "deede", which is a respect formula, kinship term,

honorific appellation, personal name and so on, concludes that age is the determinant social factor not power or status. In addition, age extends to the wider society as a means of socio-political order and as a cultural grounding for gerontocracy as practiced by the Igbos. In the Greek context, Spyridoula (2009) examining invitation and politeness argues that age is a determinant variable when it comes to offering and refusing invitation. The study shows that the younger group sees invitation as face threatening and they insist more in refusal while they prefer positive politeness strategies when extending invitation to them. By contrast the older group sees invitation as a face threatening act, so they hardly insist and appear to favour negative politeness strategies. These observations seem to contradict earlier findings on positive politeness in Greek but a closer look at the data shows that negative politeness used are interwoven with positive strategies.

2.1.1.10 Linguistic Variation and Context

In SE, there are expectations that customers like to enjoy. Some are satisfied with how they are served while others consider their expectation(s) unsatisfied. Dissatisfaction can be determined by a lack of understanding of entitlement, variability and inconsistency in customer's expectation of the service. Variations are found in the way a staff deals with customers, their attitude, knowledge and competence.

People have been known to adjust their use of language to different contexts. This is the accommodation theory, which suggests that speakers adjust their speech towards their audience when they desire approval or wish to accommodate their audience for other reasons (Giles and Powesland, 1975) or diverge in order to establish or affirm belongingness (Yang and Bond, 1980). Variation in style results from the fact that different people express themselves in different ways and that the same person may

express the same idea quite differently when addressing different audiences, using different modalities or tackling different tasks (Bell, 1997). This presupposes that language use is dynamic, flexible and can be manipulated. In manipulating language, politeness can be accorded.

Variation in language use can vary according to context. Variety then can be seen as a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution, which is not a full-fledged language with a large vocabulary and grammar. Variety in this sense may be as a result of social factors, which reflect the social organisation of the society. Every society is structured and each society belongs to either the rank or the class divide and the structure of the society influences language use. Rank is determined by family background and social status, while the class of an individual can be altered as a result of change in the individual's social status due to education or other achievement(s). All these culminate in a change on the social leaning of the individual leading to a change in the use of language expected of people within that social bracket. The language used is considered a variety within the individual. This is connected with the way we vary our language from contexts to context.

Related to language and context is the basic function of language, which is essentially dual, involving the transmission of information and knowledge (transactional) and the establishment and maintenance of human relationships (relational) (Sohn, 1999). In the establishment and maintenance of human relation is the relevance of linguistic politeness. Many societies have linguistic markers that are used to show or indicate politeness (politeness markers). No language has been shown to lack forms of social indexing where social marking is observed (Kasper, 1990). However, the extent to which

social indexing is obligatory varies from culture to culture. Within each culture the rules of language choice fluctuate according to many variables. The role each of these variables plays depends on the space accorded it by the society. This is in line with the observation of Sterling (2000), who complements Gumperz's (1972) notion of interaction as a process where utterances are selected to reflect recognised norms and expectation with the rules guiding the selection as fluctuating between speakers, time, place and so on. The rules guiding the selection are influenced by social variables such as age, status, gender, ethnicity or culture and so on. Each of these variables embeds some sort of power, which is being exercised during interaction. The following are variables that are related to linguistic variation.

2.1.1.10.1 Mood and Language Variation

Mood is an important variable in speech that determines to an extent the quality of service. Forgas (1999a; 1999b) demonstrates how a person's mood can have an impact on the politeness remarks. Using a temporary mood induction procedure, participants in the study rated the politeness of a set of requests. The general finding was that people in sad moods preferred greater politeness than people in happy moods. Sad moods generally result in reduced confidence and hence less perceived power. And lower perceived power increases the speaker's level of politeness. This framework provides an overarching scheme for explaining how a variety of variables like emotional tendencies might impact a speaker's level of politeness.

Higher speaker power has been found to be associated with less politeness. This has been exemplified in criticisms (Lim and Bowers, 1991); remindings and complaints (Leitchy and Applegate, 1991), and questions (Holtgraves, 1986; Allwin, 1990). In

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relation to the imposition variable, there is an association with increasing politeness in the expression of gratitude (Okamoto and Robinson, 1997); recommendations and reports (Lambert, 1996) and finally, on the distance variable, greater politeness has been seen as a function of increasing distance between interlocutors (Holtgraves and Yang 1992). Distance as a multifaceted variable has been measured and manipulated variously. Thus, higher level of politeness has been found to be related to greater interpersonal distance - interactants being more polite with whom they are less familiar but with greater liking and more polite to those they like (Holtgraves, 2005). This stands to reason that power and dominance are not located in particular individuals or social class in interactions, rather in the social institutions and the negotiation between participants in specific contexts in those institutions (Foucault, 1978). This can be witnessed in an emergency situation when the face threat is small and the speaker has great power.

Speakers use language not only to express themselves, but also to create representation in relation to others to whom they are interacting. To this end, power is then the extent to which an interlocutor or interactant can control the behaviour of the other. There are many bases of power in interpersonal relationships: physical strength, age, sex, wealth, profession or institutionalised role in the Church, government or family. These attributes of power index are non-reciprocal, asymmetrical relationships. They are non-reciprocal in the sense that both interactants cannot have power to control the same type of behaviour and asymmetrical because they reflect relations such as older than, nobler than, parent of, employer of (Sterling, 2000). Therefore the expected linguistic forms used in such situations where these are prevalent are non-reciprocal and asymmetrical. In SE, the mood of both participants in the encounter can determine the out

come of the entire process, hence satisfaction and dissatisfaction on both sides which are encoded by language choice and expressions. Mood together with other variables plays a vital role in appropriating politeness in service encounter.

2.1.1.10.2 Culture, Linguistic Variation and Politeness

No language has been shown to entirely lack forms of social indexing (Kasper, 1990) or fall short of contexts where social indexing is observed. The extent to which social marking is obligatory depends on the particular culture in question. In other words, politeness of some sort or the other exists in every language/culture. Brown and Levinson (1987) feel that there is a culturally universal principle underpinning politeness, which causes variation in language use. Politeness in turn is one of the important aspects of language use in human society. There are different politeness strategies in different languages. Through comparing and contrasting with different languages, one can have a wider scope of its important context in human society.

There are variables in each culture that inform what constitute politeness, how it is conveyed, to whom and so on. The role each of these variables plays depends on the space accorded it by the culture. This follows that culture is a major determinant factor under which other variables such as age, language use, status and power among others take their forms.

Many studies have been carried out in relation to how different cultures view the world, the values that are important which have shaped their life according to shared experiences. The British tend to encourage tact among other things. One of the striking social behaviours from the point of politeness is the ability to avoid direct imposition. In other words, the British are very sophisticated in expressing request in the most polite

way. Due to politeness in their verbal communication, most British officials are likely to make their notices and announcements sound less imperative. This strategy of disguised imperatives is extremely popular in public places like schools, cafes, movies and museums. Also, the use of euphemistic periphrastic expression or gloss also reveals this social attitude.

In the American culture, Beebe and Takahashi (1989) observe that regardless of status differences, people employ the strategy of indirectness to express disagreement. Using naturally occurring speeches as well as discourse completion test, the Americans were found to price prefacing a face threatening statement with an expression that implies agreement, a form Brown and Levinson (1987) term 'token agreement'. Again, regardless of status differences, Americans tend to soften the force of disagreement with positive remarks, which they try to personalise for the hearer, rather than employing formulaic positive statements. Garcia (1989) complementing Beebe and Takahashi observes that Americans seek to avoid conflict when disagreement arises, employing predominantly non-confrontational impersonal devices.

Bell (2003) using a group of Korean learners of English who enrolled in a voluntary grammar elective class in a university ESL programme, investigates the production of three speech acts. The subjects were all level two students and could be classified as "high beginners" within the system. The class consists of eleven students with eight attending regularly. All are predominantly Koreans in their mid-twenties. Five out of the total number were females. There was cordial relationship among the group. Bell realises that the Koreans use both direct and indirect strategies during argument. Such strategies as repetition, questioning and code-switching and non-confrontational

strategies of disagreeing playfully, giving opinions relating to personal experiences and remaining silent are used during disagreement. The most direct type of argument expression was noticed to be a formulaic bald-on-record oppositional expression. Less direct expressions were hedges and the most mitigated expression of disagreement was silence. In line with Bell (2003), Sohn (1999) notes that some societies have explicit linguistic items used to indicate politeness. In Korean, there are six levels of pronouns and verbal inflexions. When these are not used, social acceptance may be denied and when used, social acceptance may be granted. The levels include plain, intimate, familiar, blunt, polite and deferential levels. It is expected that these linguistic behaviours are carried over to service encounter situation unless the situation decrees otherwise.

In Nigeria, greeting is part of the interactional convention or etiquette. Greeting is mostly used for phatic purposes by the English while in Yoruba (Nigeria), greeting performs both phatic and transactional function of giving information (Akindele, 1990). There are sociological factors that determine the type and structuring of greeting. They include age, sex and occupation. In relation to age, the younger person initiates greeting and this gesture is seen as a sign of good upbringing as well as a mark of deference. Older persons can initiate greeting only if the elder ones are the first to see the younger ones or by virtue of the younger one's achievement as in boss/subordinate relationship in the office.

Odebunmi (2005:3) informs us that the Yorubas "are largely reserved and essentially euphemistic in language use in relation to social, psychological and emotional issues". Politeness in Yoruba resembles the first order politeness, a mutually cooperative behaviour where consideration is given to others by the use of indirectness due to their

greater age, higher status in terms of their title or socio-economic achievement and degree of familiarity among people (Afolanyan, 1974). This is exemplified with the use of honorific and non-honorific terms. Adegbija (1989) adds that the use of mother tongue in social interaction indicates or shows polite consideration in some circumstances depending on the interlocutors.

2.1.1.11 Language and Power in Interaction

Kress (1985a) among others admits with conviction that language and power stand in a peculiar relationship. Language indexes and expresses power. It is always there whenever there is contention over power and challenge to power. The relationship is such that language "may be used to challenge power, to subvert it" (p. 52) and to alter its distributions in the short or longer time. And to understand the social distribution of power, one needs to look at how language is used to delineate power in societal hierarchical structures showing differences in relations.

Power has been identified as an important factor in many interactions in relation to how language may be utilised to negotiate a highly unequal relationship between interlocutors (Mesthrie, Swann, Deutmert and Leap, 2003). The power embedded in language is a strong weapon used to express the way individuals or groups present themselves in relation to others, the powers they claim and the powers they allow others to claim for themselves (Bickmore and Cassel, 2005). It is the powers embedded in each of the variables that enable individuals to walk away with some domineering attitudes. This power is sustained by the society and communicated through language. That is to say that, language is used to create and maintain role relationships between individuals and groups such that the linguistic varieties showcase the structure of the society.

Some pronouns have been found to indicate the co-variation between the pronouns used and the objective relationship existing between speakers and their addressees. Bayyurt and Bayraktaroglu (2001), using a questionnaire, ask 70 persons to fill in utterances they would naturally use in 6 situations involving service encounters, from an open market place to a fashion shop of high reputation. The most important factors determining the use of T/V pronouns and other forms of address are power and solidarity. Both scholars note that, in a society with a relatively high level of 'masculinity', it is no wonder that women were found to use more formal terms of address while men tended to use informal terms. Furthermore, the relative economic strength or weakness of commercial settings was decisive for the (in) formality of the address terms. This implies that speakers' specific linguistic forms reveal social information with their status in the society. This represents the linguistic expression of social warrants, which is referred to as "the entitlements to which individuals lay claim in social interaction" (Kochman, 1984:202). Holtgraves (2005) notes that this power plus imposition and distance are high-level variables that subsume more specific variables like gender, ethnicity, occupation, mood differences, which builds into them (power, distance and imposition). Other specific variables are education, friendship, employment, government and administration.

2.1.1.12 Politeness and Cross-Cultural Communication

Most researchers agree that politeness of some sort or another exists in all cultures. Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that there are culturally universal principles underlying the expressions of politeness. Others for example Katriel (1986); Rosaldo (1982), argued against the position of Brown and Levinson. Obviously, there is tremendous cultural variability in terms of what constitutes politeness, how politeness is

conveyed, who is polite to whom, and so on. A major issue is that this variability represents fundamental cultural differences in what politeness is and what motivates it. In other words, variability is a result of cultural differences in interpersonal variables that may influence levels of politeness.

Cultures differ in terms of the importance ascribed to power and distance. These differences result in cultural variability in politeness (Holtgraves, 2005). For example, Scollon and Scollon (1981) in their study examined misunderstandings between native Athabascans and English-speaking North Americans. Generally, the Athabascans tend to assume greater distance between unacquainted others than do English-speaking North Americans. As a result, Athabascans tend to prefer the use of negatively polite strategies in such interactions. In contrast, English-speaking North Americans assume a relatively high degree of familiarity and hence prefer positively polite strategies. It is to be noted that positive polite strategies are less polite than negatively polite strategies. Thus, this can imply either low distance or high speaker power simultaneously. Therefore while the English-speaking North Americans may assume politeness to imply closeness, the Athabascans assume it to be power.

Holtgraves and Yang (1992) believe that cross-cultural differences in politeness might be due to differences in the weighting of power, distance, and imposition variables. In their research, South Koreans weighted power and distance more heavily than did North Koreans, even though North Koreans were more polite overall. As a result, politeness varied more as a function of power and the difference is consistent with differences between individualistic and collectivist cultures. Within collectivist cultures

(Triandis 1994) asserts that strong ingroup-outgroup distinctions are made which results in greater overall variability in social interactions (Wheeler, Reis and Bond, 1989).

It is possible that many other cultural (and sub-cultural) differences may be explained at this high level of abstraction, in terms of variability of power and distance. For example, African-Americans may tend to perceive (truthful) bragging less negatively than the European-Americans, and this may reflect the former's tendency to prefer positively polite strategies in certain contexts (Holtgraves and Dulin 1994). So, African-Americans may assume bragging affects solidarity. However, their European-American interlocutors may not see it that way. Again, multiple politeness determinants can result in interethnic misunderstandings.

2.1.1.13 Politeness and Sequences of Utterance

The major unit of analysis in Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is a single turn and talk. However, this seems not to be so as many scholars have noted that politeness often is accomplished over the course of an interaction, through a series of moves and counter-moves. Although sequential patterning is not well-captured in Brown and Levinson's model, many of the conversations regularities that have been uncovered by conversation analytic researchers may be interpreted in terms of face-work/politeness and hence politeness (Holtgraves, 2005).

Holtgraves further agrees with Pomerantz (1984) that a consistent regularity is a strong preference for agreement that is associated with adjacency pairs such as question-answer and assessment-agreement pairs. Holtsgraves explains that a disagreement or dispreferred turn in response to an assessment is produced in a manner different from their preferred counterparts (for example, an agreement). Dispreferred turns are delayed,

prefaced and indirect while agreements are quick, simple and direct. The origin of this pattern seems to be the mutual preservation of one another's face (Holtgraves 1992; 1997). By patterning dispreferred assessment like that, speakers display some attention to the recipient's face. To disagree directly, quickly and without prefacing or apology will often threaten the recipient face. Delaying agreement, prefacing even with apology indicate that attention is still been paid to the speaker's face. To agree with another's self-deprecation threatens that person's positive face needs. This dispreferred/preferred reversal is consistent with face-work/politeness as a motive for preference organisation (Holtsgraves, 2005).

2.1.1.14 Repairs or Correction in Conversation

People are usually inclined to allow speakers to correct or repair their own words during conversation (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977). Jefferson (1974) suggests that repairs play other significant roles as interactional resources apart from correctional ones. Self repair is economical and face need reasons account for the situation where it is observed. Economically, few resources are needed for self repairs. To repair another's mistake sometimes causes indignation, a threat to the person's face. This is an example of negative politeness; therefore, people generally allow others involved in the conversation to correct themselves. In relation to Jefferson, self repair can be used to define roles and identification of interlocutors. Self repair is related to politeness in that a speaker may repair his/her utterances in order to be polite. This makes repair an interactional repertoire available for the fluent speaker of any language. Crystal (1998) adds that repairs can be self-initiated/self-repaired (made by speaker without prompting) or other-initiated/other-repaired (prompted and made by the listener).

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2.1.1.15 Self Identification in Conversation Opening

In terms of how people identify themselves in the beginning of a conversation or telephone conversation, there appears to be a strong preference for people to avoid self-identification. Rather, people feel happier if the other person is the one that undertakes the identifying process. People feel that it is ideal to be identified by the other, with little attention being paid to the identification process (Schegloff 1979). According to Holtsgraves (2005) the process of other-recognition is an approached-based affiliative move. To recognise another without an explicit recognition process indicates a relatively high degree of familiarity that is appreciated, a marker of positive politeness.

The manner in which conversation topics are managed is worth looking into in conversation. Self identification in conversation opening and changing of conversation topics midway in conversation are related in that politeness comes in to cover any breach of protocols with respect to interlocutors' face needs though changing topics midway is rare in conversation. Rather interlocutors negotiate introduction of new topics together with moves that indicate agreement to the change. Holtsgraves believes that power and distance affect the ways we disagree, change topics, and how we handle repairs in conversation. A person of lower status will likely agree more readily with a person of higher status in an encounter. Equally, the frequency and intensity of dispreferred indicators is higher for lower status person than for higher status person. The same applies to change of topics in conversation. Topic changes are relatively rare.

2.1.1.16 Politeness, Self Image and Impression Management

Face-work and perception of the interpersonal have influence on politeness. Observers of interpersonal situation can determine the speaker's view or perceptions of

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the social situation. In this way, one's politeness levels indicate one's status and relationship with others. A person who uses high level politeness cues and is deferential tends to be regarded as being low in status.

There are few empirical studies to support this claim. Holtsgraves and Yang (1990) in their experiments (making requests) ask United States and South Korean participants to read vignettes describing interactions between two people. These vignettes were deliberately kept brief and no information about the interactants' status or relationship was provided. Following each vignette was a list of ten different ways in which one of the interactants could make a request of the other interactant. These requests were varied in terms of politeness; one was bald on record (the imperative), two exemplified positive politeness strategies, two were off-record and five were negative politeness strategies. Therefore, the politeness of the requests varied on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness continuum. In addition, the five negative politeness forms were ordered in terms of their face-threats implications (Clark and Schunk, 1980).

For each request the participants were asked to indicate their perceptions of the speaker's power relative to the other person, and the closeness of the relationship between the speaker and the other person. The results of the perceptions of the former were quite clear. Perceptions of the speaker's power varied perfectly and inversely with the politeness of the request; perceptions of the speaker were highest for the bald-on-record requests and lowest for the off-record request, and the negatively and polite forms fell between the two extremes. This ordering occurred for both the United States and South Korean participants. More impressively, perceptions of power varied perfectly and inversely with the politeness of the five negatively polite forms, and this ordering held for both the United States and South Korean participants. So the "I want you to X" form resulted in perceptions of higher speaker power than the "I'd like you to X" form, which

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in turn resulted in perceptions of higher speaker power than the "Would you X?" form. These forms involve rather subtle changes in the wording, and so they provide relatively strong support for the idea that power is implicated or recoverable from a speaker's politeness which complements similar results with English-speaking participants reported earlier (Holtgraves, 1986).

2.1.1.17 Politeness and Implicature

Politeness and implicature are two key concepts in Pragmatic study which have been studied in depth by various scholars. Politeness is essentially a strategy used to maintain smooth interaction in an atmosphere of relative harmony while implicatures are what speakers convey and hearers interpret through inferring non–literal means. Politeness can be communicated through implicature. The mechanisms used for generating politeness are similar to the mechanisms proposed by Grice (1975) for Cooperative principle.

A number of approaches have been used to study both concepts respectively and there is a consensus that there is an intersection where both meet resulting into what is referred to as politeness implicature. This intersection was first noticed by Grice (1989) and Searle (1975) in their works respectively (Haugh 2007). Drawing from especially Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983), Haugh (2007) notes that politeness implicature can be introduced to refer to instances where by virtue of implying something, rather than simply stating it directly, politeness arises. This statement is hoped to shed light on the nature of politeness implicature and the intersection. The manner in which politeness implicatures arise in conversation indicates that they are not simply indirect meanings that hearers recognise through different means as 'intended' by speakers, a view that follows from Gricean pragmatics (Grice, 1989; Horn, 2004; Levinson, 1983, 2000), Speech Act Theory (Searle, 1969, 1979) or Relevance Theory

(Sperber and Wilson, 1995), but rather arise form joint collaborative interaction between speakers and hearers (Haugh, 2007). Haugh opts for another approach, the Conjoint co–constituting model of communication of Arundale (1999, 2004, 2005) and Arundale and Good (2002) to explain how politeness implicatures arise in conversation. Consequently, politeness implicature is defined broadly as something implied in an addition to what is literally said (Haugh, 2002), which having been communicated in this way shows what the speaker thinks of the hearer or the speaker, relative to their expectations about what the speaker should show he/she thinks of the hearer or the speaker (Haugh and Hinze, 2003; Haugh, 2003, 2004).

2.1.1.17.1 Different Types of Politeness Implicature

There are different types of politeness implicature depending on the different situations. Haugh (2007) identified three types of politeness that are given rise to as a result of implicatures in conversation namely compensatory politeness, demeanour politeness and enhancement politeness. Compensatory politeness is a type of politeness foreshadowed in the work of Brown and Levinson (1987), which arises when one shows that one does not think badly of someone else in spite of some utterances or behaviour that could be interpreted as implying that one thinks badly of them (Haugh and Hinze, 2003; Leech, 2005). Demeanour politeness is another type of politeness that arises when for example a host plays down the worth of a gift. Haugh (2007) gives the example of a host that humbly offers her guest food by saying that it is not much, implying that the guest should take the food anyway. The implicature shows that the host is not overly forceful in making the offer, thus showing respect for the place of the guest and at the same time showing that the offering is too trivial to be taken seriously in terms of feeling grateful or an obligation to reciprocate. In doing this, the host shows that she does not think too highly of her place and therefore the implication can give rise to demeanour

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politeness alluded to in Leech's (1983) modesty maxim, where one shows that one does not think too highly of oneself (Haugh and Hinze, 2003).

The guest's response expression of surprise and delight at the food being offered in the example above, leaves the praise unsaid which appears to imply that the food is too good to describe in words. By implying praise, the guest offers the highest praise possible–the unsaid praise, and so shows that she thinks more highly of the host's 'place' than she might expect, which gives rise to enhancement politeness alluded to by Leech (1983, 2005). This kind of politeness arises when one shows that she thinks well of someone in a situation where not doing so could be interpreted as implying one thinks badly of them or when one shows one thinks more highly of someone than they might expect in that situation (Haugh and Hinze,2003).

2.1.1.17.2 Politeness as Implicature

This deals with whether politeness constitutes an implicature itself. This has been advanced in Brown and Levinson's theory where they claim that politeness arises from addressee's attributing a 'polite intention' to the speaker in the form of particularised implicature (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Brown, 1995; Brown, 2001). This view has been developed by other scholars in a number of different ways (Leech, 1983, 2003, 2005; Kallia, 2004; Terkourafi, 2003, 2005).

Leech (1983, 2003 and 2005) proposes that politeness arises in the form of implicature from utterances that are consistent with the 'Principle of politeness' or the 'Grand strategy of politeness' and more specifically, the politeness maxims. The politeness principle itself holds that in general 'constraint on observed human communicative behaviour influences us to avoid discord of offence, and to maintain communicative concord' (Leech, 2005), where concord is acting as if participants are pursuing the same goals through communication. This leads to the definition of the

'Grand strategy of politeness' as 'In order to be polite', self communicates meanings which places a high value on what pertains to other, and a low value on what pertains to self (speaker) (Leech, 2005). Leech also adds to the politeness maxims (generosity/tact, approbation/modesty, agreement, sympathy and obligation) opinion–reticence and feeling–reticence. An example of a common statement used in offering a guest a drink 'what would you like?' gives rise to politeness as it is in accordance with "generosity constraints". This claim by Leech may not be so in other cultures, for instance in Japanese where an indirect question:

Teacher what is good to drink (Haugh's example)

may be in order as oppose to the first statement where the 'generosity constraint' clashes with 'Tact constraint'. It thus follows that an indirect offer makes it easier to accept the offer (Japanese) making someone of a higher status to feel constrained by 'tact constraint' as defined by Leech (2005) (Haugh, 2007).

Kallia (2004) contrasts Leech's (2005) and expands the 'politeness as implicature' view in proposing that politeness arises in the same way as particularised conversational implicature from the interaction of a 'maxim of politeness' with the conversational maxims and the cooperative principle. Kallia politeness principle is formulated as follows:

`Be appropriately polite in form (choice of how) and content (Choice of

what).

- Submaxim 1: Do not be more polite than expected

- Submaxim 2: Do not be less polite than expected'

Kallia differentiates between politeness arising in the form of a standard particularised implicature through the observance of the maxim of politeness, which is generally unnoticed, and politeness that arises in the form of a non-standard particularised

implicature (clashes between the maxim of politeness and other conversational maxims or flouting of the maxims of politeness), which is presumably generally noticed.

Another approach that builds on the 'implicatures of politeness' view is Terkourafi's (2003, 2005) frame-based theory of politeness. She believes that politeness generally arises in the form of perlocutionary effect, the assumption that the speaker is polite, which relies on generalised implicature (2005). This generalised implicature is not dependent on recognising the speaker's intentions, a view from Levinson's (2000) generalised conversational implicature as constituting a level of utterance-type meaning that lies between sentence and speaker meaning, which arises by drawing on previous experience with the utterance in question in similar circumstances (Haugh, 2007). Terkourafi claims that politeness can arise from inferences about speaker intentions in the form of particularised implicature in other situations (2003, 2005).

The difference between the two approaches is that the generation of politeness always depends on recognising the intentions of the speaker (Kallia, 2004) while Terkourafi (2003, 2005) claims that the generation of implicatures of politeness is only dependent on recognising speaker intentions in particular contexts. There is similarity in these views to the distinction proposed by Haugh (2003) between politeness that is anticipated as opposed to being inferred, depending on the expectations of the interactants about what they think is likely to occur as opposed to what they think should occur. Politeness is anticipated when the addressee expects the speaker to show he/she thinks highly of the addressee or does not think too highly of him/herself and so on. Politeness is inferred on the other hand when the addressee does not necessarily expect the speaker will show he/she thinks highly of the addressee or not too highly of him/herself and so on (Haugh, 2003).

From the examination of the literatures in service encounter and politeness, a lot has been done in both areas but none has combined both in detail to examine the nuanced expression of politeness in service encounter. In addition, none has examined the influence of job satisfaction, years of experience and appearance per se in relation to politeness and service encounter. The study therefore combines hospitality management and linguistics. This is the gap this study is determined to fill.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks

Politeness is a concept employed to explain language use and behaviour and has been conceptualised in different ways. As a verbal behaviour, it is used to maintain harmonious relation (Leech, 1983) and face (Brown and Levinson, 1987). It is also a social practice consisting of rights and obligations that imparts on people's interactional strategies (Fraser, 1990). This study draws from Lim's and Bowers' (1991) facework, solidarity, approbation and tact and Spencer-Oatey's (2000) Rapport management: a framework for analysis. While the former framework is used to locate nuance polite expressions, the latter helps to categorise rapport strategies. As an extension of Brown and Levinson (1987) theory, Lim's and Bowers' modification include various face wants and faceworks which participants use while communicating. In their own model, humans have three distinct face wants: the want to be included or fellowship face; the want that their abilities be respected or competence face and the want not to be imposed on or autonomy face. Interactants in communication often perform acts that threaten one or more of the face wants. Thus socially, interactants take heed to mitigate these threats to face, hence the concept of facework. Face work refers "to the ways in which people mitigate or address face threats" (Lim and Bowers, 1991:2). Lim and Bowers posit that fellowship face is addressed by solidarity which expresses to some extent that one

accepts the other as a member of an in-group through the use of in-group identity markers, expression of empathic understanding, demonstration of personal knowledge and emphasis on commonalities and cooperation. Competence face is addressed by "approbation" which shows that one appreciates the other's general abilities and particular possessions or performances as the reflections of those abilities. Approbation is characterised by the effort to minimise blame and maximise praise of the other person by voicing compliments or abilities or particular accomplishments of the other and understatements of abilities or unsuccessful performances. Finally, autonomy face is addressed by "tact" which expresses that to some extent a speaker respects the other's freedom of action or autonomy. With the explanation on the different face wants and face works, the study used them to show the major communicative strategies employed by the subjects to explain the strategies of politeness used at the workplace (NIPOST) during service delivery.

Spencer-Oatey (2000) draws our attention to the fact that individuals can hold four different kinds of rapport orientations towards each other. These rapport orientations include rapport enhancement orientation, which is a desire to strengthen or enhance harmonious relations between interlocutors; a rapport maintenance orientation, which is a desire to maintain or protect harmonious relation; a rapport neglect orientation (a lack of concern or interest in the quality of relations, perhaps due to focus on self) or a rapport challenge orientation which is a desire to challenge or impair harmonious relations. To her (im) politeness is a subjective judgement people make based on what they believe to be socially appropriate verbally and non-verbally. Spencer-Oatey (2005) notes that behaviour per se does not indicate whether linguistic or non linguistic behaviour is polite or politic (Watts, 2003) or impolite, but (im) politeness is an evaluative label used to

describe other people's behaviour based on subjective judgments about appropriate social behaviour. In other words, (im)politeness covers a range of evaluative meaning stemming from verbal and non-verbal behaviour which can have positive, negative or neutral meanings/connotations. The judgment so derived can impact on people's understanding of their social relations and the rapport or disharmony that exists between them. From the above considerations, this study aimed to see if in the service encounter at NIPOST, politeness is observed, the strategies of the observed politeness/rapport orientations and the factors that determine its expression.

In addition to the above theoretical constructs, the study also benefitted from the generic structure analysis of Ventola (1987), Eggins' and Slade's (1997) analysis of casual conversation which can be applied to any study and to describe any genre in addition to Hewitt's (2002) classification of transactional and interactional features of payment sequences in service encounter. Six steps proposed by Eggins and Slade are (1) recognising a chunk as a part of a text that has macro structure (2) defining the social purpose of the chunk and labelling the genre (3) identifying and differentiating stages within the genre (4) specifying obligating and optional stages (5) devising a structural formula which includes writing the stages in a linear sequence together with some notations (6) analysing the semantic and lexico-grammatical features for each stage of the genre. The study benefitted from stages one, two, three and four. These stages helped in identifying the type of politeness and the social function involved. Hewitt's classification is an expanded generic structure of Ventola's (1987). This helped to tease out nuanced transactional and interactional features that are intertwined in the service encounter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND MODEL OF ANALYSIS

This chapter deals with the situation of the post office in Nigeria as a whole and the setting of Ibadan, where the study is carried out. The chapter also includes details of the research instruments comprising of interviews, questionnaire and observation of interaction of the counter attendants and the customers and a model of analysis of the data collected for the study. These are expatiated below starting with setting.

3.1 Setting

The location for the study is Ibadan, the capital of Oyo state, Nigeria. The choice of Ibadan is connected with the fact that Ibadan is one of the oldest places where the colonial masters established a postal unit fashioned after the British Postal System in London in 1898. Being the largest city in the Sahara sub-region, it is envisaged that it would be divided into five zones following some of the local government areas delimited by the Federal government. It is believed that the five post offices selected fairly share some of the characteristics found in other post offices within Ibadan. The post offices used include General Post Office Dugbe, Nigerian Postal Service, Eleyele Post Office, Eleyele - Ido LGA, Ibadan; Nigerian Postal Service, Agodi (Gate)-Ibadan; Nigerian Postal Service, Secretariat Office, Ibadan North LGA and Nigerian Postal Service, University of Ibadan, Agbowo.

Ibadan is a very large city and is densely populated. Located in western Nigeria, Ibadan is 115.86 km inland from Lagos and a prominent transit point between coastal region and the north. According to the 2006 population census, Ibadan has a population

of two million, five hundred and fifty thousand, five hundred and ninety three (2,550,593) and eleven (11) local government areas. The population of central Ibadan is one million, three hundred and thirty eight thousand, six hundred and fifty nine (1,338,659). It is also the centre of administration of the old Western Region.

3.2 The History and Situation of the Post Office in Nigeria

The history of the Nigeria postal service dates back to the middle of the 19th century when the British colonial administration established the first post office in 1857 in Ejinrin, a coastal community in Epe LGA (local government area), Lagos State. The post office was considered a branch of London General Post office. This was the situation till 1874 when the Royal Niger Company (RNC) as part of its economic activities in the country, set up its own postal service in Akassa in 1887 and Calabar in 1891. In 1892, the RNC became a member of the Universal Postal Union. Burutu was set up next in 1897. Mails moved from these traditional stations to and from Lagos by a weekly mail boat. In 1898, the British post office established post offices at Badagry, Epe, Ikorodu, Ijebu-ode, Ibadan, Abeokuta and Lokoja in 1899 thus, bringing the postal services closer to the people. From January 1, 1900, the Southern Nigeria government took over the responsibility of running the postal system in the entire country. Due to lack of good roads, canoes, launchers and runners were used at intervals. By 1906, 27 post offices were already in operation. British postal orders were sold and cashed as from 1907 in post offices located at headquarters of all District commissioners. By 1908, money orders and mail were directly exchanged with the German West African Colonies instead of via London, as had been the practice. In 1925, the Royal Air Force planes flew from Kano to Cairo carrying mail for the first time outside the country. Internal airmail flights started in

1931 and at the time of independence, in 1960, 176 post offices, 10 sub-post offices and 1,000 postal agencies were in the country.

At independence, the post office was administered jointly with Telecommunications as a government department. Later, postal establishments and services expanded. The Federal government by Decree number 22 of 1966 made the department a quasi-commercial organisation, a step towards making it more efficient and responsive to public needs. The Nigeria postal service (NIPOST) came into being with the establishment of Nigeria Telecommunications Limited on January 1, 1985. Through the promulgation of Decree number 18 of 1987, NIPOST became an extra-ministerial department. The decree in summary states among other functions that NIPOST provide and operate facilities for collection, dispatch and distribute inland and overseas mail at reasonable cost; provide and operate facilities for the remittance of money through the money or postal order systems; provide and operate philatelic services in Nigeria; print and provide postage stamps for payment of postage tariff and stamp duties; represent Nigeria in its interactional and transactional business with other postal administrations and other bodies concerned with post services.

In response to the call to grant NIPOST some measure of autonomy, the federal Government promulgated Decree 41 of 1992 and classified NIPOST as a government parastatal with the same functions. Recently, in order to boost and recover some of its lost glory, Expidite Mail Service (EMS) was introduced in 1985 and Post Cash in 2006. For some time the EMS was not successful until 1995. It was also around this period that an unprecedented effort was made to improve the delivery of mail. This came in the form of National Mail Route System (NMRS). In the past, delivery vans were used but this

seemed to be an avenue to make money by the managers in charge of the various post units, where materials in respect of the van would be bought but hardly would any one see the things bought being used by the vans. Credibility of NIPOST to deliver mails proved to be an arduous task. Then mail delivery seems to last forever and tampering of mails became the reality. To improve mail delivery and safety of mails, NMRS was introduced in 1999, a venture where the Post Master General in conjunction with the Federal Government enters into a private partnership with contractors (ABC, Allied Lane Motors and so on) and established inter-state mail movement. Under this outfit, Nigeria was divided into nine units. Every morning vans leave from various destinations (Lagos, Port Harcourt, Sokoto and so on) collecting, discharging mails at the same time and converging at Abuja. In November 2000, tariff increases were introduced for letter mail in the lowest weight class from five to twenty naira. In April 2004, tariff increases were introduced again from twenty to fifty naira. Also, the number of postal establishments increased to four thousand, two hundred and twenty one (4,221). It is hoped that with the increase in tariff, there will be equal efficiency and effectiveness in services rendered.

There have been remarkable changes in the services rendered by the establishment without equal attention given to the conditions of service of the workers that make sure that the innovations are implemented. With respect to this, there are no motivations or incentives that galvanise the workers to go beyond expectations. For instance, NIPOST has carried out several retrenchment exercises in 1996, 1997, 2005 and 2007. These have left the workers jittery, unsure and insecure. To add to the situation is the fact that no promotion exercise has been done for some time. The one carried out recently affected only a selected few. One finds that some of the workers have been on a post for up to

thirteen years. In relation to transfer of workers, NIPOST transfers its workers from one territory to another. When this occurs, the workers are supposed to be entitled to some money to cover inconveniences. This money is never paid to the affected workers.

3.3 Research Hypotheses

The following were the predicted relationships the researcher expected would be found in the study in relation to the counter attendants:

Ho1. There is no relationship between appearance of customers and politeness.

Ho2. There is no relationship between job satisfaction and politeness.

Ho3. There is no relationship between years or work experience and politeness

Ho4. There is no relationship between domestic problem and politeness.

Ho5. There is no relationship between age and politeness.

Ho6. There is no difference in the expression of politeness between male and female staff.

Ho7. There is no difference in politeness by educational status.

3.4 Instrumentations

Three instruments which include oral/written interviews, observations of service encounter and questionnaires were used in the study. These instruments were complementarily used in providing information needed for the study.

3.4.1 Interview

The interview questions covered the objectives of communication in the post office between the customers and the post office counter staff. Oral interview was used, but

where it was not convenient to the subject, written interview was used as an alternative to gaining responses from the subjects.

The interview (written/oral) sought to highlight the customers' interaction during service encounter. The questions were considered to be crucial in locating if polite expressions were used by the staff and the customer during service delivery. Accordingly, the interview questions generally sought information on the kinds of customer interaction. Specifically, the technique provided information on whether pleasantries were exchanged, who normally opened the conversation, the treatment meted out to them (that is, whether the counter attendants accorded the customers respect or not), the reactions of the customers to the attitude of the SP, the gender, age, level of education and cultural leaning, the kinds of expressions used and questions relating to the dos and don'ts were also included for the staff. It is hoped that the information collected would enable the researcher to ascertain the politeness strategies, the factors that contribute to the expression of politeness and the rapport orientations of the polite messages, that is if actually politeness was expressed or not.

3.4.2 Observation of Interaction

Observation of both the customer and SP interaction during service delivery was also used as data collecting technique. The interactions occurred in both English and Yoruba. Interactions in Yoruba were translated into English. The major moves observed were particularly the opening, transactional exchange, and closing moves identified by Hewitt (2002), Eggins and Slade (1997) and Ventola (1987) as the main moves in service encounter.

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3.4.3 Customers' and Counter Attendants' Questionnaires

Two broad-based questionnaires - one for the customers and one for the counter attendants were administered to the subjects respectively. The questionnaire was designed to eliminate some of the problems associated with observation schedules that do not clearly state information such as number of years in service, age, socio-economic factors and so on that affect expressions of politeness.

The questionnaire highlighted factors that predominate during the service encounter which also allow for good interaction between the customers and the counter staff. The questions were considered to be crucial in locating the study within the socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio linguistic milieux. Questions about how the staff relate (attitude) with the customers in terms of their behavior to them, whether the staff accord them respect or not, the reactions to customers' appearance during the encounter, level of education, religious leaning and so on were part of the questions asked to solicit information from the clients. It is hoped that the information collected would enable the researcher to know the politeness strategies, factors that contribute to the expression of politeness, the semantic interpretation of the polite messages (rapport orientations). The questionnaire for the SP (counter attendants) also attempts to find out whether they (the counter staff) engage in recreational activities, if they are exposed to language skill training in relation to language competence skills, whether they have job satisfaction, how they handle aggressive/rude clients, the factor they consider as crucial for successful service delivery and so on. Information regarding these (the interviews and questionnaires) is necessary because the researcher believes that the questions asked are

related to the counter attendants performance in the workplace and the image the public associate with them.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

In this section, 32 observed interactions were analysed, 16 out of the 32 interactions were examined first for the linguistic functions and styles of the expression the staff and the customers used during the interactions. Second, the semantic implications of the different linguistic expressions were then indicated. Thereafter, Spencer-Oatey Rapport Management strategies and Lim and Bowers (1991) politeness framework were used respectively to categorise the different rapport orientations and to locate nuanced politeness strategies used by both the staff/CA and customers to decide the commonly used strategy.

Finally, information from the data (questionnaire) was analysed in the first instance using SPSS (statistical pack for Social Sciences). This package allows for testing significant independent variables. The data were first analysed using variable description or distribution. Secondly, the hypotheses were tested and to do these, correlation technique which measures the relationships between the variables such as politeness and appearance, work experience, job satisfaction, domestic problems and age was used. Thirdly, both T-Test and ANOVA (analysis of variance) which employ means or averages were used to measure the difference between politeness and gender/educational status. Through these techniques, we quantify politeness using Likert scale by attaching values such as strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree in that order. The questions were then "pulled" together to have a quantified variable (politeness). The result was described and then related to what was obtained from the

interview conducted which was further used either to refute or corroborate/support the findings. Using these methods ensure an all-round treatment of information gathered in relation to whether politeness was observed and if observed, what factors contribute to its use. With reference to impoliteness, the study also tried to see if it was observed, to what extent and the repercussions. Finally, it is hoped that the results from the analysis would contribute to the body of literature on interaction in public places as both the workers and the customers meet to transact business.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected for the study. The data include those from the questionnaires, interviews and observation of interaction at the counter between the counter attendants and their clients/customers. It is worthy of note that the customers who were interviewed indicated that they patronise the post office regularly.

4.1 The Linguistic and Style of Expression by both the CAs and the Customers.

This part of the chapter examines the verbal communicative acts such as request/offer, acceptance/rejection, checking moves/non-verbal expressions that are very important in service encounter and indicating their varied semantic implications. The following deals with the analysis of the expressions used by both participants while engaged in the business transactions at the counter. For convenience, CA means counter attendants while Cust. means customer.

4.1.1 The Linguistic Expressions and their functions

1. CA: Daddy, *ibo ni* letter *yẹn ń lọ?* (Daddy, where is the letter going?)

   Cust.: Within, *ní ìtòsí ni,* I mean Ọyọ state and I want to register it.

   (Within. I mean within Oyo state and I want to register it).

   CA: [weighs it] N180

   Cust.: For how long *ló máa fi débè*? (For how long will it take to get there?)

   CA: Before Friday

   Cust.: Ẹ *joo ṣé ẹ ní* calculator so that *màá lè fi* multiply *e nítorí kì í ṣe ẹyọ kan.*

   (Please, do you have a calculator so that I can multiply it because the

   parcel is more than one).

   CA: *Ẹ gbà* (Take)

   Cust.: [collects and calculates] *Ẹ gba owó*, thank you

CA: Okay.

The interaction is between an elderly man and the CA. The CA starts the interaction with an inquiry as to the destination of the letter earlier shown to him. The customer gives the information while the CA weighs and tells the customer the cost for posting the letter. The customer in turn, inquires about the time it will take the letter to get to its destination and also requests for the use of the CA's calculator to enable him know how much he needs to spend for all the letters he intends to post. After using the calculator the customer pays and expresses his thanks to the CA.

The conversation opens with an interrogative sentence which serves to request for information needed by the CA to do a proper calculation of the cost of postage. *Daddy* in the statement performs multiple roles of greeting, a sign of deference, an informal address and a call for attention that the customer has been seen and he (CA) is ready to serve him. The other interrogatives also serve to request for information and a favour. The interrogatives serve to elicit information missing in the previous utterance. The last interrogative used by the customer is prefaced with *please*. *Please* is a tact strategy that consolidates autonomy which serves to make the CA to agree to part with his calculator for a brief period. The explanation by the customer is again needed so that the CA will agree to lend his calculator. Apart from the first utterance, the rest of the utterances are short expressions. The CA in this way economises time and words while the customer remains verbose. The imbalance in the quantity of expression indicates the power relation in the interaction. The customer uses longer expressions and explanations in order to sound more polite. Implicit in the interaction is agreement and cooperation which are aspects of solidarity that addresses fellowship face.

2. Cust: I want to buy stamp [bringing out N500 note] (a Youth Corp member)

   CA .: How much? [Looking surprisingly at the sum of money the customer brought]

   Cust: N50

   CA .: No change o. You can buy from the next counter.

   Cust: Alright.

Here, the interaction starts with stating the need, which is, buying of stamps. The CA asks to know how much stamp is required where upon the customer offers him the information. Seeing the amount of money the customer has, the CA quickly informs the man that he has no change. He advises and suggests that the customer should buy the stamps from the next counter. The advice and suggestion are polite strategies used to soften the rejection which the customer might have felt coming from the CA's rejection to fulfill his expectation. Advice and suggestion are power-implicated politeness strategies; however, the tone used to deliver the advice and suggestion reduces the effect of the CA's rejection.

Apart from the declaratives used in stating the need, that is, the object for negotiation, the elliptical interrogatives probe for more information not included in the declarative sentence. The customer states the amount elliptically. The CA comparing the amount the customer intends to use to buy the stamps and the amount brought out immediately implied indirectly (politeness) that the amount the customer intends to use to buy the stamps is rather too much for just a N50 stamp. In other words, giving change will not make it possible for the CA to give service to others suppose they come with equally huge amounts of money. And for effectiveness and efficiency, smaller denominations should always be with the CA for giving change to customers. In order to raise the hope of the customer, the CA advises and suggests that the customer should try the next counter. The customer accepts the CA's suggestion and advice. Elliptical

utterances are used to hasten the encounter and to save time probably so that other customers can be attended to.

Through the use of solidarity, cooperation and specifically agreement which come at the end of the interaction, the customer ends the interaction without any hard feelings. Again, the CA employs focused disapproval to squash the intention of the customer of using N500 to buy only a N50 stamp. The reaction of the customer seems to anticipate the refusal of the CA and accepts his subtle disapproval. However, the suggestion and advice from the CA help to counteract the effect of the disappointment.

3. Cust: Please, can I use your pen?
   CA .: Take.
   Cust: Thank you and I want N100 stamp.
   CA .: Take.
   Cust: Thank you. Here is your pen.

The opening expression starts with a request for the use of the CA's pen by the customer (a lady). The CA agrees to the request to lend his pen to the customer. Next, the customer states the object for negotiation. Promptly, the CA obliges and the interaction ends with a thank you and a return of the borrowed pen.

The interaction starts with an interrogative sentence which indirectly serves to request for a favour, that is, the use of the CA's pen. The CA offers the requested item with an imperative "take". The CA expresses the offer with a falling tone which is taken by the customer to be kind. The customer uses this style to start the interaction because with the pen she will be able to address the envelop before posting it. If the envelop is not addressed, there will be no way of posting the letter. This actually determines whether the letter will be posted or not. The imperative by the CA sets up expectation that the request will be granted. This signals to the customer to go ahead to state the main purpose for

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coming to the post office. Granting the request also creates harmony and cooperation implicated in the CA's gesture and pervades the entire interaction. Again, the initial expression constructs the customer as dependent on the response of the CA which determines whether the transaction will go on or not. Further, in relation to the style, there is economy of words where an imperative is used to accomplish different tasks of cooperation and agreement simultaneously.

The act of thanking is a solidarity strategy extended to the CA by the customer for making it possible to accomplish the mission of posting the letter. The first expression of thanks maintains the CA's cordial disposition towards the customer. This is particularly so because, CAs do not normally give out their materials such as gum, pen and so on to customers. The final thanks is for the general performance of the CA. Notwithstanding that the implied cooperation is delivered as an imperative, the use of "please" and "thank you" create rapport and cooperation which pervade the entire exchange culminating in the final posting of the letter.

4. Cust.: *Mo fé ra* stamp (I want to buy stamps) (a boy)

   CA: *Èló*? (How much?).

   Cust.: N150

   CA: *Gbà* (Take).

   Cust.:   [Takes and pays for the stamps]

       Here the exchange starts with stating of need. Thereupon the CA asks for the quantity needed. The information is given and the CA sells the required item to the customer. In the exchange, the customer starts by stating the need using a declarative expression. Through this the customer initiates the object for negotiation. The CA in order to probe for more information not included in the declarative, requests to know the

quantity required. The customer promptly supplies the information. With an imperative, the CA exchanges the goods with money. Elliptical expressions prevail and are used by both so as to save time.

In this interaction, both the customer and CA employ few sentences and moderately too probably because they know and understand what is needed in the situation. Both minimise time and the encounter ends promptly. The relationship enacted in the encounter is unequal giving the linguistic expressions used by each which implicate different kinds of honorific/deferential linguistic items. While the customer, a boy, employs his verbal expression because he is a customer, the CA acknowledges that fact and at the same time uses expressions to show that he is older than the customer.

In terms of politeness, due to economy of words, cooperation (an aspect of solidarity) is expressed as an imperative "Take". This cooperation is covert, because it is implied throughout the whole transaction leading to achieving the separate goals of buying and selling. Another strategy used is "Need" an expression which is extremely low in tact with implicated power. The request is stated blandly without making any effort to sound a little bit polite although the customer is there as a patron of the establishment. In the post office it is probably expected of the customers to express their needs that way in order to save time.

5. Cust.:   Please I want to use the EMS speed post.
   CA: Let me see what you want to send.
   Cust.:   Take
   CA: It is N300 [after weighing]
   Cust.:   Okay.
   CA.:   Fill this form.
   Cust.:   Okay [collects, fills the form and returns it]

CA: Alright, you can go.

Cust.:   Thank you.

The interaction starts with the customer expressing his need. Then the CA requests to know what the customer wants to send so as give the correct amount of money required to post the letter. Further, the CA informs the customer that he has to fill a form which will indicate the destination, the sender and so on. The customer complies and the encounter ended with a thank you.

In the interaction, the customer starts with a declarative sentence initiating the object for negotiation, that is, the use of EMS (Expedite Mail Service). In an attempt to probe for further information in order to make a correct assessment of the amount of money needed to post the letter, the CA demands with an imperative to see what the customer intends to send. The customer following the CA, reciprocates equally with an imperative sentence. Overall, both the CA and the customer employ more of imperatives than any other sentence type. This implies that both possess the same amount of power in the interaction. Imperatives in this interaction encode an advice and set up expectations of a compliant response which is non-verbal.

The subject in the interaction and in all interactions is stated as "I" or its equivalent and it is highly egocentric as well as the nub of the negotiation. The complement "EMS speed post" in this interaction which "it" anaphorically refers to in the utterance of the CA expands the field of negotiation by the customer. In the interaction, "it" by the CA is used to save time and words instead of stating the complement again.

The polite strategies used are tact and solidarity. While tact in the form of conventional polite marker "please" helps to put the CA in a better state of mind to attend to the customer as he expected, solidarity which addresses fellowship face is implied

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throughout the entire encounter culminating in the achievement of the goal of both the customer and the staff.

6. Cust:. I want to send a letter to Ilorin and I want to know how much it will cost.

    CA: We have to see what you want to send first so that we can know how
         much it will cost you.
    Cust: Ok. [Shows letter].
    CA: Ordinary posting.
    Cust: Yes.
    CA: N50.
    Cust: Thank you.

The opening expressions are full declarative sentences explicitly expressing needs as well as indirectly asking if the CA is available for business. The utterances expect as answers compliance and the giving of necessary information. The customer uses the compound sentence to initiate the object for negotiation. The CA replies with an inclusive we, a polite expression showing consideration on the part of the CA and in effect, inviting the customer into sharing the imposition implied in the customer's first utterance. In addition, the CA explains further that his request is needed for full detailed information which depends on whether he would like to register the letter or not, options that will require other considerations. The CA uses the style of withholding information which indicates the power relation within the interaction. The CA uses these strategies – invitation to share in the imposition and piecemeal offer of information to enact authority which he retained till the end of the interaction.

As a dual functioning expression, *Ok* signals agreement and cooperation and with the aid of a proxemic cue of showing the letter, the information the customer wants in the opening expression was eventually given. *Yes* in the interaction is used indirectly to query

what ordinary posting means. *Yes* serves a dual purpose of encoding some doubts about the content as well as protect the customer's solidarity with the CA. In addition, as an interactional cue, it mitigates the directness of the query and protects interlocutor's positive face. The confirmation comes with the reply *N50* and a *thank you* which acknowledges the performance of the CA.

The CA in this interaction uses elaborate explanatory utterance, a complex sentence meant to intimate the customer on what will be needed for detailed information on the subject of negotiation. Through the use of this lengthy expression, politeness is encoded and again with the use of *we*, the customer is invited to play two roles, both as part of the negotiating team (customer/counter staff) in the on-going interaction.

There is a trade off between suspense and economy of expression by the CA. The initial part of the encounter is a bit loaded with compound and complex sentences. This may be due to wanting to put all negotiable information in one move. As the conversation progresses, the expressions used tapers to a close. This makes the structure of the interaction top heavy and bottom light.

Again, suspense is used as a means of controlling the interaction. This overrides the need for the economy of words in order to save time. By applying suspense in giving the needed information, time is wasted. This shows that the CAs can afford to go out to be more accommodating if they really want to. The style of withholding information and giving it in piecemeal shows that the CA is trying to exercise his control over the customer and this counteracts the politeness expressed in the inclusive *we* in the CA's answers to the customer's questions. The CA went back to using elliptic expressions

probably to show that playing time is over and he is again conscious of the time. This is indicated by the way the conversation tapers to a close.

7. Cust: Give me four N50 stamps.

    CA: Ok sir.

    Cust: Thank you.

        This interaction is between an older man and the CA and it is the briefest encounter between the customer and the CA. The opening utterance is an imperative meant to probably imprint both authority and invite respect as a result of age/seniority difference. In this way, the status of the customer is encoded thereby defining the relationship enacted in the encounter between the two participants. The CA's reply *Ok sir,* signals agreement, implicated compliance and cooperation. The interaction ends with a *thank you*. The *thank you* is used probably because the performance of the CA is as expected. On both sides, there is the minimisation of time through the use of words economically which may be because the customer is in a hurry and has no time to waste. There is also an indication that the encounter is between two people of unequal status going by the use of the CA's *ok sir*. However, there is a match of style with reference to the use of words. This interaction shows a good observance of the use of cooperation implied in transaction.

8. Cust: I want to register a parcel but was directed to the next counter [showing
          annoyance]

  CA: It is not you that I said should go there.

  Cust. *Ẹ má da ènìyàn káàkiri* now (Stop misdirecting people up and down).

  CA: *Ó dáa*, N100 *ni owó yín* (Okay, your money is N100).

  Cust: Okay.

    In this interaction, the customer through his utterances shows that he is not happy with the way the CA in question handled his needs. He came to the post office willing to

do business but is directed to another counter. This attitude of the CA has implication as far as the customer is concerned.

The conversation starts with a complaint used to introduce or initiate the information for negotiation. Here, the information helps us to understand how the customer has been treated unfairly through the inattentiveness of the CA. Implicit in the CA's utterance is an apology and explanation of the situation which the CA maintains is a mistake on the part of the customer for not verifying who the instruction was meant for. Not convinced with the explanation probably not believing it was a mistake, the customer continues by advising the CA not to form the habit of misdirecting customers and making them look stupid and uncoordinated with an imperative. The CA accepts the advice with *Ok* probably for peace. The situation not withstanding, the CA still goes on ahead to name the price for registering the mails. The customer accepts the CA's implied apology and acknowledges as well as accepts the price for posting the parcel.

The customer uses declaratives instead of imperatives to lodge his complaint. This shows self-discipline and control on his part. Imperative fits the occasion because it carries authority that would have served the purpose of expressing the customer's annoyance. However the customer shows consideration thereby averting the trouble of causing a scene through shouting at the CA. In spite of the way the customer feels, he still shows good manners by adding *Please* and an emphatic *Don't* suggesting that trying such with the customer again will be considered unacceptable. It is probably the maturity used in handling the situation and the emphatic *don't* that the CA reacted to with *ok*. The use of imperative functioning as an advice which the customer resorts to in his next rejoinder intimates us about his feelings probably that the remorse by the CA is a sham.

Through the utterances of the customer in showing his displeasure and annoyance, he assumes power over the CA; hence the advice given by the customer which the CA accepts with the use of *ok* which seems to be accepted by the customer. At the end the interaction continues with compliance and cooperation.

9. Cust.: *Ẹ jòó mo fé ra* stamp N200 (Please, I want to buy N200 stamps).

   CA: *Ẹ gbà* (Take).

   Cust.: *Ẹ jòó ibo la máa sọ ó sí* (Please, where can I drop it?)

   CA: *Ẹ lọ sọ ó sí òhún yẹn* (Go and drop it in that corner) [pointing to the box]

   The customer uses imperative prefaced with *please* to open and offer information for negotiation and the latter question by the customer serves to probe for further information with respect to where to drop the letter for posting. These utterances show willingness to cooperate. The CA on the other hand uses imperatives as replies. The imperatives position the CA as having power over the customer because he has all the information needed by the customer to achieve the objective of coming to the post office. The questions asked by the customer further consolidate the CA's power within the interaction. This is emphasised by *please* which points to the objective the customer has to accomplish thus showing an implied dependence on the CA's answer, that comes as a directive further indicating who calls the shots/has the upper hand in the interaction.

   The declarative with *please* which opens the interaction and offers information for negotiation also functions as a request for information which expects a compliance. The compliance serves as an indication for agreement and cooperation, solidarity strategies which address fellowship face in the interaction. It is the solidarity established by the customer that prompted further the use of *please* in asking for direction in relation to

where to drop the letter. These two speech forms function to intimate us on the relationship enacted during the encounter. Both forms make the customer dependent on the replies of the CA for his next moves. The imperatives used by the CA on the two occasions as replies position him as having the power over the customer. This is as it should be because the CA is conversant with the workings of the post office.

10. Cust.: *Ẹ bá mi* weigh *è mo fé* register *è* (Help me weigh this, I want to register it).
    CA: [weighs] N300 *ni* (N300 is your money).
    Cust.: *Kí ló dé*? (Why?)
    CA: *Oye è nìyẹn* (That's the price).
    Cust.: Okay, no problem.

The interaction opens with the customer (male) stating the actual needs which are weighing and registering a parcel. The CA cooperates and complies by weighing and informing the customer the price for the postage. The customer's utterance conditions the interaction.

Not happy with the outcome of the price required to register and subsequently post the parcel, the customer in his next utterance challenges the result and invariably the price. The challenge is a dispreferred move which does not address the positive face of the CA. Hence, the CA emphatically says *that's the price* indicating that if he (customer) wants it, fine. If he does not, then he had better move away so that the CA can attend to others. The declarative expression leaves no space for argument. The customer realises that he has to make up his mind to either continue with the transaction or leave the counter for other customers to do their transaction too. Finally the customer agrees with *ok, no problem*.

Both participants use elliptical declaratives which are needed in such situations to save time so that other customers can also be attended to. The interrogative used in the

interaction serves to query and at the same time challenge price given and not actually used to seek for information due to ignorance on how the prices are charged. It also encodes surprise that the parcel could cost so much. This challenges the CA and puts him in a situation to save his face by insisting that the price is not negotiable through *that's the price*. The customer agrees so as not to attract undue attention because the question, that is, his challenge of the postage price has already put him at a disadvantage with the CA and probably with fellow customers. To redeem himself, the customer agrees to the CA's pricing. The expressions used in the interaction implicitly indicate solidarity (agreement and cooperation) which addresses fellowship face.

11. CA: Sir, I will not accept this letter.
    Cust: What?! What do you mean?
    CA: The whole envelope has been smeared by red gum and its untidy.
    Cust: Ok, what do you what me to do?
    CA: Maybe you can get another envelope.
    Cust: But you saw me doing fixing the stamp and you did not say a thing.
    CA: (Silence)

In this interaction, the customer has just finished putting the stamp on the envelop and about to hand the letter to the CA when the CA informs the customer that the letter is unacceptable. This interaction opens with a conflict, a refusal to accept the letter the customer has for posting. This initiates the materials to be negotiated. The first utterance draws a surprised *What*?! *What do you mean*? from the customer, an elliptical interrogative expressing annoyance, querying as well as rejecting the CA's information. This utterance shows the intensity of the emotion the customer is battling with. In the next utterance of the customer, he manages to state in full and coherently what he meant in his earlier utterance so that the CA could help. The CA gives the reason which answers

both the query and the refusal to accept the parcel. Agreeing that her reasons may be genuine the customer then asks for suggestions which the CA proffers. Still, the customer accuses the CA for keeping quiet all along while he battles with fixing the stamp, just waiting for him to finish before dropping the bomb shell. The implication is that she should have told him earlier so that he would not have wasted his time. The customer's annoyance is that she allowed him to complete the process before her rejection of the letter which is not good. The attitude of the CA and the way she handled the situation may be due to the power relation existing during the interaction. The CA may feel that the only way she can assume control will be to sound confrontational. Arrogating this power to herself in this manner may be what the customer may also be fighting with because somehow, he accepted the fact that the envelop was actually soiled.

While the customer uses interrogative expressions, the CA uses declarative sentences because interrogative indicates incomplete information which the declarative supplies. The exclamation indicates the surprise of the customer in reaction of a bruised ego in addition to amplifying the interrogative which queries the CA's authority. The interrogative, *ok, what do you want me to do*? encodes frustration as to what to do in the situation and this is actually directed at the CA who seemed to have allowed the customer to waste his time before informing him that she would not accept the letter.

In terms of the roles played by each, the CA seems to have the upper hand as her utterances seem to infuriate the customer which puts him at the receiving end and in the position of defending himself through the use of interrogative sentences in eliciting information instead of being the one to say what he wants done in relation to the situation. *Okay* in the utterance of the customer encodes a modicum of forced agreement

(solidarity addressing fellowship face) and it serves to accommodate the CA in order for her to make her suggestion as the customer really wanted to post the letter. It functions as a strategy used to control potential aggression toward the CA.

12. Cust.: I want to post a parcel (male).

    CA: Where?

    Cust.: London

    CA: Do you want to register it?

    Cust.: No

    CA: Let me weigh it [weighs it] N500

    Cust.: No problem

The customer opens the interaction by expressing the need and the material for negotiation through a declarative. This is followed by an interrogative meant to request for more information. Then a suggestion is made when all the information needed to assess the situation has been given through an interrogative by the CA. The customer accepts the price.

The customer uses declaratives throughout while the CA uses interrogatives. The declaratives by the customer are used first to introduce the object for negotiation, to give more information, and to give consent to the CA to continue with the transaction. The CA's interrogatives serve to first request for more information and to offer indirect suggestion and seek customer's preference. While the interrogatives elicit more information for correct assessment and initiate further the object for negotiation, they also encode incomplete information. This constructs the CA as dependent on the response of the customer to make proper assessments and to probe for additional information not

given in the customer's first utterance while initiating the object for negotiation. Both participants use elliptical utterances to save time and economise words. For instance, *it* in the utterance of both is used anaphorically as part of the strategy to save time and economise words.

The declaratives used by the customer constructs him as taking on an active, initiating role in the talk and encodes his roles in the encounter. The customer has the upper hand as the CA depends on him for information to enable him act. The elliptic declaratives are used to react to the questions by the customer which still cast him as having the power over the CA in the interaction.

The CA in the exchange uses both indirect suggestions and request to ascertain the customer's preference for him to serve him better. The second utterance of the CA encodes politeness through giving options to the customer. In this way, the ultimate decision lies with the customer and his decision will determine the CA's assessment. The third utterance seeks the customer's permission to proceed in the interaction, conceding authority enacted in the exchange to the customer. On the part of the customer, cooperation and agreement (solidarity) pervade his entire utterance leading to the conclusion of the exchange.

13. Cust.: Good morning. I want to buy stamps (male customer).
    CA: How much?
    Cust.: How much is it to Lagos?
    CA: Just N50.
    Cust: Eh,oh okay bring it.

The exchange opens with a greeting before stating the need for visiting the post office. The CA (male) in reply uses elliptical interrogative to inquire the quantity of stamp the customer wants. Instead of giving the answer expected directly, he decides to

ask a question as a reply. The question-reply belies apprehension as to the amount of money it will require for posting the letter. The customer's bold front implicates an expectation in the question hoping that the cost will equal what he has on him. The reply by the customer encodes the destination of the letter or the parcel. This interrogative answer answers the CA's question *how much*? The CA thereafter informs the customer how much stamp is needed to post the letter to Lagos. The amount required surprised the customer. The surprise may be as a result of the fact that the customer expected the letter to cost more than he has on him to post the letter. In other words it is cheap.

Apart from the usual elliptical utterances to save time and so on, there is the use of question to answer question. This strategy is used in order not to appear uncertain, a bold front which does not display apprehension. This in effect makes him to be in charge of the interaction. This strategy is used to hold on to the power enacted during the exchange by the customer thereby disguising the dependency relation by the way the need is stated. In this way the customer is able to enact authority and sustains it in the interaction. Using this strategy, the customer is able to show the CA that he is not ignorant of what goes on in the postal sector, although his *eh oh!* betrays this front. The CA appreciates this front hence the cooperation which is expressed in a playful banter-*just N50*.

The full declarative and interrogative used by the customer help to retain the power and status conferred on him as the initiator of the interaction. The imperative *bring it* functions to retain authority through asserting his confidence of being able to post the letter with the amount of money he has on him.

In initiating the object for negotiation, the customer uses two clauses, a formulaic one and a need-expressing one. Both put him in the position of one who depends on the CA for fulfilling his needs. Through the strategy of using interrogative as answer to the CA's question, the customer subtly assumes, sustains and reclaims the power enacted in the interaction back to himself. *Just* in the utterance of the CA makes the interaction less formal, thus injecting camaraderie in the interaction. This is in addition to the usual covert cooperation and agreement that are implied in the interaction.

14. Cust.: *Ẹ káàárò mo fé* send *letter si* Germany.

        Good morning, I want to send a letter to Germany.

  CA: *Sé ẹ fé* register *è*? (Do you want to register it?).

  Cust.: *Bèé ni* (Yes).

  CA: *Ẹ mú un wá kí n* weigh *è* (Bring, let me weigh it).

  Cust.: *Ẹ gbà*. And *ẹ jòó kí ẹ* register *è dáadáa*

      [Hands over the item] Take. Please, help me do it properly.

  CA: *Ẹ ma* worry *tí ẹ bá ti* register *è, ó* sure *pé ó máa débe*

      Don't worry, once you register it, it will surely get to its destination

  Cust.: *Ẹni tí mo fẹ* send *è sí náà ló ní kí n* register *è*

      The person that said I should send it said I should register it.

  CA: No problem.

  Cust.: *Ẹ ṣe é* (Thank you).

This interaction opens with a formulaic greeting *good morning* and the stating of need for the visit to the post office. The customer uses two clauses to accomplish this task of establishing the object for negotiation. The first clause attracts the attention of the CA and the second one consolidates the effort by stating the need. Both clauses help accomplish the goal of the customer.

In other to probe for the missing element in the opening speech, the CA asks if the customer wants to register the letter. The customer answers in the affirmative *yes*. Using

imperative, the CA asks for the letter in order to weigh it and ascertain the cost of posting. The customer in her utterances continues to plead for proper handling of the letter to ensure that it gets to its destination without problem. The CA continues to assure her (customer) that once the letter is registered there will be no problem. The customer in order to involve the CA employs the strategy of using small talk divulging the reason why she resorted to the option of registering the letter in the first place. The customer shows her appreciation at the end of the interaction through thanking. The thanking performs two functions, one is appreciating the fact that the CA will take care in registering the letter and for assuring her that the letter will reach its destination as expected. The small talk functions to emphasise the customer's dependency on the CA and at the same time expresses her doubt about the efficiency of the postal services. The customer's pleadings indicate that she has no confidence that the letter will get to its destination probably unaware that NIPOST has improved its delivery system. In other words, the customer probably does not believe that registering the letter will ensure its reaching its destination.

In the interaction, apart from the interrogative and the imperative by the CA, all other expression is declarative in nature. The declaratives by the customer are used to put forward information for negotiation, present factual and attitudinal opinion indirectly. Running through the whole exchange is overt and implied agreement and cooperation (solidarity moves) by the participants. Cooperation is expressed by *yes*, *no problem* and the proxemic cue of handing over the letter to be registered while agreement is implied.

15. Cust: I want to buy some stamps.
    CA: How much?
    Cust: N150

CA: Take.

Cust: Pays and collects the stamps.

Here, the exchange starts with stating the need (buying of stamps). The CA (male) asks how much it will be needed. The information is offered while the CA gives the item requested. In the exchange, the customer starts by stating the need without any preambles using a declarative expression which introduces the information for negotiation. The CA in order to probe for more information not included in the first expression demands to know the amount of stamps needed. The customer offers the information, N150. With an imperative, the CA offers the item while the customer collects and pays for it. In this encounter both the customer and CA speak little after the customer had finished stating the need in full. Both are brief and straight to the point without wasting each others time. Through this strategy, clarity and promptness which are required in such situations are achieved. In terms of politeness, due to the economy of words, cooperation which appears in the form of *take* though an imperative is used as well as that which is implied in the interaction. The implied politeness in the form of cooperation is covert and leads to the conclusion of the interaction with both achieving their separate goals of selling and buying.

16. Cust.: *Ẹ jòó mo fẹ́* weigh *kini yìí* [showing the parcel]

Please, I want to weigh this parcel [showing the parcel].

CA: *Ẹ mú un wá* [weighs it] N700 (Bring it)

Cust.: Ah ah, *kíló dé*? *Ó ti pò jù* now (Ah ah, what is it? It is too much now).

CA: *Ṣé èmi ni* weigh *àbí ẹ kò rí wí pé nnkan tó tóbi lẹ gbé wá*?

Am I the weigh or can't you see that it is a big parcel that you brought?

Cust.: Eh eh so what?

CA: *Ẹ wò ó, tí ẹ bá fẹ́ ra* stamp, ẹ *dáhùn nítorí* other people

Look here, if you want to buy stamp do quick because others are waiting

Cust.: Okay, okay *ẹ mú un wa* (Okay, okay bring it).

CA: *Ṣe ẹ fẹ* register *è* now? (Do you want to register it now?)

Cust.: No *mo ò* register *è*

The customer opens the interaction by expressing the need and material for negotiation through a declarative. This is followed by an imperative, a request for the item. After weighing, the price is given which does not go down well with the customer. Eventually the parcel was posted without using other means.

The customer uses declarative, interrogatives and imperative throughout the interaction while the CA (male) employs mostly imperatives and declaratives. The declarative of the customer is used to introduce the object for negotiation, the imperatives are used to complain and challenge the price given while the declarative is used to concur to the CA's price. The CA, on the other hand, employs imperative to request for the parcel to be weighed. The interrogatives by the CA serve to question the customer's reluctance to accept the price given to him. The CA finally applies imperative that embedded an advice to help the customer decide what he intends to do. Apart from the use of the imperatives, interrogatives and the declaratives in the interaction (indicated in the other excerpts), there is the use of reduplicative adverb by the customer for emphasis, surprise and fear simultaneously in terms of the amount of money required for postage.

4.1.2 Other Observations from the Analysed Data

From the analysis of the linguistic and style of expression by the participants (the CA and customer) in the various encounters, the following are other observations which are salient points noticed in the use of language by the participants in their request/offer, acceptance/rejection and compliance, verbal and non-verbal expressions.

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4.1.2.1 Politeness and Implicature.

In all the excerpts used as data, implicature plays a major role in conveying covert agreements and compliances (cooperation) embedded in the answers given. Customers in the opening move in the course of the interaction request that a certain parcel be weighed for registration or that they want to buy stamps or that they want to use EMS option, the implication for such requests is compliance to be given a price as a result of the weight calculated or the destination of the item. This is why after requesting for a particular parcel or letter to be weighed, the next move is the price of the parcel or letter for posting. Therefore implicature helps to reduce and economise words needed for explanation due to the fact that the customers and the CAs realise that the next move is to be given the price for postage. Politeness in the interactions is therefore accomplished through a series of moves and counter moves. It is mostly implied especially solidarity moves of cooperation and agreement.

4.1.2.2 Power in the Interaction

Apart from the use of implicature employed by the participants in expressing their respective requests and offer of information in the interactions, the customers' opening moves are always indications of willingness to do business through greeting (which signifies an acceptance and eagerness to relate) the CAs. The greetings are both signs of good upbringing and dependency on the CA. This dependency confers power on the counter staff and indicates the kind of relationship existing between the counter staff and the customers. The power enacted during the interaction is again conveyed through the prevalent use of suspense by the staff while the customers are willing to supply the information. Also, the CAs make more use of elliptical clauses than the customers while

the customers use more of full clauses to make themselves clear and to portray politeness in their utterances to the CAs. These elliptical clauses perform multiple functions of saving time, energy and encoding the power of the CAs during the interactions. Power is sometimes expressed through selection of language choice which establishes who controls the interaction. With respect to politeness it is mostly expressed through the use of command/order, advice and suggestions in the interactions which are accomplished through a series of moves and counter moves. Sometimes it is implied and sometimes expressions such as *Let me see what you want to send, Let me weigh it, Bring it*, *You can try the next counter* and so on. Expressions encoding these messages are regarded as power implicated politeness strategies. This will be explained more when we analyse the nuanced expressions used during the encounters in section 4.2 below. Other observations from the above expressions used during the encounters include the following:

4.1.2.3 Code Switching and Politeness

In the interactions observed, not all the expressions are delivered in English. Sometimes, there is a mixing of codes where Yoruba, the dominant language is used to initiate and sometimes used throughout the interaction. Sometimes it is used intra-sententially. Since conversation openings mark the outward boundary episodes which are very important to the success of the interaction, some participants in the opening moves use Yoruba. This language choice is probably based on the preference of both participants to the encounter depending on who initiates the interaction and the intended goal. In relation to the customer, it is used as a sizing up strategy and construction of identity. If the CA takes the bait of using the language the customer starts with, the customer in this way conditions the interaction from the outset in terms of language

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choice. In this way the customer enacts his authority over the CA in the interaction. Usually, in all the encounters, the CAs relate to the customers using the code they start with. Code switching therefore occurs in the interaction depending on the disposition of both participants. In excerpts 1, 4 8, 9, 10, 14, 16, 23, 26, 27 and 28, the customers initiate the interactions in Yoruba. Adegbija (1989) notes that sometimes the mother tongue (MT) is an alternative that participants employ in interpersonal interaction to show politeness because the alternative English, has no honorific terms to be used. He also notes that it is easier to sound rude to an elder or a customer using English than the MT in opening an interaction. Therefore, it is sensible to choose the MT which can be easily understood. This supports the result from the questionnaire where the CAs (97.7% using simple percentages) are convinced that they address their clients using Yoruba. From this result, Yoruba is the most widely used language by the staff in addressing their clients as it is the language of the immediate environment. Sometimes English, the formal language of interaction in public places such as the post office is used in the interaction especially when the customer/client is not a Yoruba. The reason behind the use of the language of the immediate environment, Yoruba, as the CAs responded, is because it helps build rapport, friendliness and courteousness just as Adegbija has observed. Another probable reason why some of the staff use the local language is that it may be the only language they are competent in and which the clients probably appreciate.

In excerpts 1 and 4, age and perceived linguistic resources of the different languages condition the language choice. The implication is that using Yoruba is more meaningful and serves the purpose of identity construction (Bailey, 2000), group membership (Cashman, 2005; Bani-Shoraka, 2005) and power wielding (Jorgensen,

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1998). This results in proper attention being given to the speaker. In excerpt 1, both participants enjoy good cordial relationship leading to the lending of a calculator and a rounding off with a "thank you". The prevalent linguistic form of the MT that both participants use is the "ẹ", a plural honorific used to show respect or deference with implicated politeness. In English its counterpart is demonstrated with the use of forms of address. In excerpt 1, the customer uses it to reciprocate the respect given to him by the CA probably as a result of the CA's position, that is, as the counter staff whom he depends on. This plural honorific form appears in many of the excerpts such as 1, 8, 9, 10, 14, 16 and so on. In translating the various appearances for instance its occurrence in excerpt 8:

Ẹ má da ènìyàn káàkiri now.

the honorific form becomes obliterated as in:

Stop misdirecting someone up and down now.

the translated equivalent, and the implicated politeness neutralised.

In all, it is noticed that the code selected determines the code to be used throughout. And if some way along the line, a switch occurs, the next turn also follows suit. In excerpt 8 the customer switched to Yoruba when he got angry and in excerpt 10 another customer switched to English when challenging the price he was given. Yoruba is used in excerpt 8 to explicitly tell the CA in no uncertain terms that he is not happy with the way he has been treated while English is used in excerpt 10 probably as an ego booster and for extra force. In reprimanding, as in excerpt 8, the customer uses Yoruba to express anger, authority and for communicative effect in order to give "extra force" to the expression without maintaining rapport. This empowers the customer with certain rights

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and obligation implicated in what is referred to as "this is business" frame. In responding, the CA applies "this is a challenge" frame and at this time admitting his fault in a "this is acceptance" frame (Garcia, 1996).

English as a code of expression in a non-native context generally, portrays the user as being distant and aloof in terms of the relationship that should exist between the participants. In excerpts 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 30, 31 and 32, English features predominantly as the code for interaction due to low level competence in the use of Yoruba as in 2, 5 (both clients are Igbos) and 11 (an Hausa staff and a Yoruba client). In the other excerpts, English is used by the customers probably as a "status symbol" thereby creating a distance between them and the CA as in excerpts 7, 11, 12, 24, 28 and so on. The implication is that it reduces the ego of the CA due to the fact that it confers the power to control the interaction to the customer in each of the encounters as well as disassociates the speaker from the ethnicity of the CA as in 2 and 5.

In addition to the above observation, most of the CAs (83.7%) in the questionnaire indicate that they are not happy when they are put down in relation to the language of interaction especially when there is no implicit agreement in terms of responding to the language of the initiator of the interaction. That is why in all the interactions, the customer is usually the one that starts the transaction. The CAs allow that probably because it is safer that way. Only a few of them, 2.0%, the CAs, who merely agree that they feel alright in a situation where the customers use English while they use the local language. For the majority of the CAs, it seems that when such an occasion arises, either silence where short replies to questions by customers are the order of the day or there will be a token of signs that may indicate that the CAs understand them. Also, the clients' use

of English may amount to showing off of status to the CAs and this may have the effect of making them (CAs) feel inferior which may manifest in their linguistic behaviour to the clients. With respect to being courteous to clients, 75.5% of the CAs from the questionnaire strongly agree that they are courteous to customers. The attitude of being courteous may be as a result of using Yoruba to interact with the customers. If not, there seems to be something else which the CAs regard as courteousness. This observation is made because, the CAs agree that they do not take special notice of their clients' behaviour. From the responses gathered from the interview conducted, it is probable that their responding to customers' greetings is regarded as part of their being courteous since the CAs indicate that the clients greet first and that they only start the interaction with greeting when the clients forget to do so.

4.1.2.4 Apology as a Form of Politeness

From the interview conducted, the CAs indicate that they do apologise to customers when there are mistakes or when the customers are about to be delayed during service with the following expressions:

     a) Sorry ma/sir I am coming.

     b) Please wait.

     c) Please, excuse me for a minute.

     d) Just a moment please.

     e) Excuse me sir/madam.

The CAs admit that some of the customers do not respond favourably to either the excuse or apology on the basis that they are in a hurry. Some of the customers use abusive words to address them, complain, get annoyed, while some will say "Put more effort in your

services". Some of the customers sometimes respond favourably with "Don't worry/ No problem", and some will smile in acknowledgement. The way the CAs react to the negative attitudes determines a lot of things. Usually the CAs greet such attitude with silence probably because they do not trust themselves not to retaliate with abusive words. This is where language competence and tolerance is very important. When one does not have the linguistic competence, adequate control over emotions, that is, the ability to communicate, interact, express, interpret and negotiate meaning and to create discourse in a variety of social contexts and situations, even an ordinary simple apology may not have the desired effect. Smith (1998) notes the importance of apology in service failure recovery, especially when done in a sincere manner. Sincerity in apologising, according to Servert (2002), should be delivered in low, soft, kind, gentle, polite and considerate voice as against that delivered in high loud, inconsiderate, hostile and rude voice. However, there are cases where a CA finds it difficult to directly apologise properly for misdirecting a customer (excerpt 8), though he employs low pitched voice that is devoid of emotion which serves to annoy the customer even more. In excerpt 11, silence replaces the apology that should have alleviated the whole situation. Through this means, the CA contests the implicated power in the verbal and non-verbal stance within the interaction.

Again, usually, participants in a business work together to achieve successful service delivery. There should be reciprocity in the relationship established by both participants. Coppock (2005) acknowledges that when a person engages a mediated or an immediate encounter, he stands in some kind of social relationship with the other individual concerned till the end of the encounter. The situation at the post office therefore becomes a case of the left hand washing the right hand and the right hand not

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reciprocating. If the apology is not accepted, then there may have been inappropriate delivery of the apology for the customer not to reciprocate or that the customers may be too absorbed to reciprocate or they may not be too well disposed to the excuse/apology due to time constraints. Apologising, which is a sign of politeness in this situation, becomes a one-sided affair to the extent that while the CAs convey solidarity and rapport maintenance, the customers engage in rapport-neglect orientation.

4.1.2.5 Non – Verbal Behaviour

Service encounters with all its elements are critical service delivery processes that impact customers' evaluation of consumption experience (Sundaram and Webster, 2000). Apart from verbal behaviour, there are certain non-verbal behaviours observed from the interaction between the CAs and their clients. These non-verbal behaviours are as important as the verbal ones in gauging the outcome of what customers perceive as good interaction. Barnum and Wolniansky (1989) suggest that non-verbal communication in the form of thoughts and emotions account for about 70% of all communication. This happens to be the case in all the interactions. Especially, most of the cooperation and agreement moves are non verbal. Non-verbal expression has been observed to perform different functions in different situations in shaping receivers' perception of communicator's credibility (Burgon, Birk and Pfau, 1990), showing persuasive power of the service provider (Mehrabian & Williams, 1969), portraying courtesy (Ford,1995) and conveying interpersonal warmth (Bayes, 1972). Sundaram and Webster (2000) note that a sender's emotional status and other traits are externalised or expressed in distal indicator cues, that is, the characteristics of the sender's non-verbal behaviours which are taken up by the receiver and in turn elicit attributions during the interaction.

4.1.2.5.1 Kinesics: Smile and Eye Contact

In the post office, most often the body stance betrays the regard the staff have for their clients. The stance conveys emotional distance, sometimes staring, sometimes connecting through eye contact or avoiding it and a few occasional smiles. For participants in business transaction to work together to achieve a successful encounter, there should be reciprocity in the relationship established by both. Coppock (2005) as expressed earlier acknowledges that when a person engages a mediated or an immediate encounter, he stands in some kind of social relationship with the other individual concerned till the end of the encounter. The stance of the staff may be one of the reasons why sometimes their apologies are not welcomed by the customers. For instance, eye contact is seen as an important kinesics due to its effect on perception of interpersonal relations. Absence of eye contact signals that there is no interpersonal relationship. Beebe (1980) links eye contact to increase likeability and Ketro and Perkins (1986) to believability and satisfaction. Eye contact maintenance is almost not in existence during the encounter in spite of its importance in the post office.

Again, the display of warmth, that is, a show of interest, acceptance and approval help build satisfying relationship (Sundaram & Webster, 2000). This can be conveyed by both verbal and non-verbal means. Non-verbally, it can be conveyed through smiles (Bayes, 1972). Bayes notes that those who smile often radiate more warmth than those who do not. A lack of this together with eye contact indicates negative affect. Eye contact, nodding and smile can be used at various junctures to build rapport. This can be employed at the initial and at the end of the business. Sundaram and Webster reiterate that when smile is accompanied by eye contact, the effect is greater. While smile creates

perception of warmth and friendliness, eye contact conveys sincerity of interest in the customer. In a situation where these are used, participants reciprocate. Some situation calls for different non-verbal behaviour. Sometimes, nodding and eye contact are enough to indicate trust and courtesy. Smiles and eye contact in the post office are rare treats during the encounters observed. This may be due to their concentrating more on accuracy rather than building relationship with the customers. From the questionnaire, 87.7% of the CAs actually indicate that they do not pay attention to their clients and are not aware of their clients' response(s) to them. This seems to suggest that the CAs do not care about the behaviour of their clients. This attitude may be as a result of indifference on both sides leading to difficulty that is encountered during interaction which may be a sign of job dissatisfaction. In a dyadic encounter, there is the need for reciprocity which can be achieved if both participants want to minimise and maximise transaction. It also reflects the kind of relationship enacted during the encounter which is all business except probably when tips are involved. In other words, there is no use of smiles, nods and eye contact which are used to convey politeness, warmth and to build rapport.

In the interview, the CAs and customers agree that they like to relate with each other through the use of praise, informal language, sharing pleasantries–small talks that make service encounter experience to pass without the customers experiencing delay. In most cases, these strategies are never realised. This may be connected to the way the customers react to the CAs and how the CAs react to customers' attitude to them taking the preceding discussion into consideration. Again, due to the nature of the job, accuracy and sales may be priced over developing a long lasting relationship which can be extended outside the workplace. In addition, on both sides, it may be that not every

customer and staff believes in exchanging pleasantries just like Reiger (2001) observes in German service encounter that not everybody shared the viewpoint that personal verbal communication is needed in service encounter. In other words, both the customers and the CAs do not recognise that service encounter is a form of social encounter but view it as a routine business transaction in which everybody knows their roles and verbal communication is not needed to make it work. Apart from Reiger's (2001) observation, it is probable that the situation is as a result of the perception of the non-verbal stance of the CAs by the customers which they make attributions to.

This also affects the type of relationship enacted during the encounter (whether formal or informal). It is noted that when it comes to certain issues that the staff insist on being formal, sometimes neutral and most often do not invite the customers in their talks. The CAs agree that different occasions and the mood of the customers determine the strategy to adopt whether formal or informal. This issue again relates to customers' involvement in staff discussions and display of emotion by the staff. There is little or no apparent display of emotion (smiles). This may be due to the gap in the social status between the staff and the customers. The CAs see the customers as having the right and power over them which validates the slogan which says that the customer is always right. This may be the premise under which transaction takes place at the post office. Again, there is non-involvement of the customers in staff discussions, age, status, appearance of the customers notwithstanding. This attitude is what Solomon, Suprenaut, Czepiel and Gutman (1985) refer to as low involvement where the staff enact casual role followed by ritual acting which operates at the peripheral level of involvement within the interaction. This is significantly not part of the behaviour of the CAs portrayed at the counter because

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they do not normally greet their customers. They only greet if the customers forget to do so.

4.1.2.5.2 Paralinguistic: Tone of Voice

Paralinguistic means, especially tone of voice, can be used to convey the well being of someone. In citing Kimble and Seidel (1991), Sundaram and Webster (2000) mention the drive theory of social facilitation which links non-verbal cues with state of being. The theory suggests that people with higher levels of confidence tend to express increase clime and arousal which result in faster and louder tone of voice than their less confident counterparts. Less pauses, hesitations and repetitions convey credibility. However, in the study, according to the observed interaction, such cues as firm voice, less hesitations and repetitions are employed by the staff as a defiance front and a means to contest power with the customers. This happens to be the case going by the CAs' preponderant use of "order" than any other polite strategy (see section 4.2 below). Relating the non-verbal behaviours to the encounters observed seem to give reasons for the customers' attitude to the CAs which may be as a result of the use of task oriented strategy instead of people oriented speaking style interspersed with nodding, eye contact and smiles. This is conveyed with a faster speech rate and higher inflection which indicate competence as against friendliness. To tackle this, the customers employ direct request expressions such as "I want…" which sometimes is accompanied by please, greeting and informal address.

Questions function to elicit information and create one's identity, threatening or supporting that of another. At the counter, the types of question that are mostly used are those that indirectly function as requests for information and the CAs mostly employ this

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strategy. The way the questions are framed make them sound confrontational, sometimes they threaten the face of the addressee. This creates problem especially when the questioner and addressee vary in the estimation of the urgency of the situation. Sometimes at the counter, the CAs use "Yes, what can I do for you?" "Yes?" "What can I do for you?" "Can I help you?" and so on. Tracy (2002) explains that for questions to be framed to be more polite, there is need to cast them indirectly and by adding pre-mark, hence the use of "Please, what can I do for you?" However, there are situations where direct questions are expected and usually accepted as valid under conditions of high willingness of the addressee and legitimacy of the questioner. For instance this applies during transaction when the CAs request to know how much stamps the customer wants or the destination of the letter or parcel in order to determine the accurate amount of stamp required for each case respectively. Also, close-answer questions which provide a choice of answers can be more face threatening than open-ended ones because they constrain the way a person being questioned can respond. Close-answer questions convey the impression that the questioner knows more than the person responding (Penman, 1990). This also applies to when the CAs ask the customers if they want to register the parcel/letter or not. The CAs also employ the use of indirect expressions that subtly suggest and sometimes imply a request.

4.2 The Most Prevalent Pattern(s) of Politeness Strategy during the Encounters

Below are thirty-two (32) interactions analysed to highlight the most prevalent politeness strategies used by both participants to build different rapport orientations in the interactions observed. The first to be discussed is solidarity strategies addressing fellowship face.

4.2.1 Solidarity Politeness Strategies Addressing Fellowship Face

Table 1: Summary of Solidarity Politeness Strategies

	Agreement %	Cooperation %	Greeting %	Small talk %	Empathy %	Inform. address %	Apprec. of perform. %
Staff	(5) 19.2%	(12) 50%	-	(3) 50%	(7) 100%	(2) 50%	(1) 7.7%
Cust.	(21) 80.8%	(12) 50%	(4) 100%	(3) 50%	-	(2) 50%	(12) 92.3%
Total	(26) 100%	(24) 100%	(4) 100%	(6) 100%	(7) 100%	(4) 100%	(13) 100%

4.2.1.1 Agreement

This is politeness strategy occurs overtly in excerpts 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29. Agreement is a preferred strategy which smoothens relationship while disagreement is a dispreferred one which even in the interaction would have developed into an open conflict but is checked by empathy (solidarity) in excerpt 17, personable proxemic cue–smiling accompanied by a minimiser *just* in excerpt 19 which encourages the customer to give in by waiting for the CA to come. Agreement in excerpt 5 comes as a result of the customer realising that following the laid down rules and regulations allows the staff in question to do his job properly. The same applies to excerpt 21 and the argument in excerpt 22. In excerpt 16, the customer has to agree to the CA's weighing result of the parcel so that others will be attended to.

Agreement in excerpt 5 seeks harmony of opinion and acknowledges customer's performance; accepts suggestions in 6; concurs to customer's request in 7; accepts blame

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in 8; staff's weighing result in 10; suggestions in 14; offer of payment in 15; agrees to requests and allows a smooth process in 17; hastens the conclusion of the service in 18; seeks harmony so that service process will go smoothly and acknowledges a lapse in service process and suggestion in 22; allows for the inspection of a parcel, accepts suggestion in 24; allows for the delivery of service in 27, 28; accepts suggestions in 29 and to seal the negotiation in 31. In all the excerpts, it signals what McCarthy (2003) refers to as good listernership and cooperation. It is to be noted that all of these are implied agreement except that which occurs in excerpt 24. Again, in all the instances, they are used to maintain rapport except in excerpt 7 where it is used for rapport enhancement orientation.

4.2.1.2 Cooperation

This strategy occurs in excerpts 1, 3, 5, 9, 14, 16, 22, 23, 24, 28 and 30. In excerpts 14, 16, 22 and 30 it appears as *okay*, in excerpts 1, 3, 5, 9, 14, 23 and 28 it is indicated as *take* while sentences are used in excerpts 22 and 24. These expressions signal cooperation on the part of both the staff and the customers. Cooperation is covertly used by the staff more than the customers though the difference is not much. All the instances indicate that both are willing to work together to make the social interaction a successful one. It is noteworthy that the linguistic expressions realising *agreement* and *cooperation*, occur as politeness implicature which Haugh (2007) agrees that they are generated just like conversational implicature. Again, in all the instances, they are used for rapport maintenance. Both are preferred strategies mostly used in the interaction between the staff and their customers because at the end of everything the customers go with their needs met though they may not like the way the staff treat them.

4.2.1.3 Appreciation of Performance

Thanks, a relational token appeared in 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 14, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28 and 32. It comes under appreciation of performance according to Lim and Bowers (1991). In all the interactions where it appears, the customers are credited with it except where a staff acknowledges the performance of a customer through cooperating with him (excerpt 23). According to Hewitt (2002) and in consonance with its use in the interactions, it is a 'small supportive ritual' which oils the wheels of communication and is associated with good behaviour (Aijmar, 1996) or good upbringing (Fadipe, 1970), correct socialisation and a face enhancing act (Koutlaki, 2002) showing generosity and sincerity on the part of the customer. It also suggests that the interaction ends in a worthwhile, enjoyable and satisfactory way (Coopock, 2005). It is only its appearance in excerpt 23 that signals appreciation for cooperation. It is used by customers 14 times while staff used it only once. This is a solidarity strategy which maintains rapport between the participants. Thus in Yoruba, it is said that 'a child who gives thanks for a gift or favour paves way for more of such'. This polite strategy is used for rapport enhancement except in excerpt 32 where it is used as a rapport maintenance strategy.

4.2.1.4 Informal Address

Informal address is another token that appears in the data under solidarity. In excerpt 1 it appears as *daddy*; *uncle* in 19; *sisTER* (staff) in excerpt 24 and *ma* in excerpt 29 (customer). *Daddy* in excerpt 1 has multiple functions. It is used to show respect/deference, greeting and a call by the staff to indicate his readiness to serve the old man. This is a rapport enhancement strategy by the staff. It initiates the beginning of the cooperation which pervades the entire interaction. The customer reciprocates by adding *please* in his expression to address the young CA. Both strategies unite to make the

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encounter a hitch-free one. In excerpt 19, *Unkul* is used to enhance rapport because the older person who used it is not in any way happy with the state of affairs. In excerpt 24, *sisTER* was used to repair negative evaluation of the staff by the customer. The expression *being funny* which is used in conjunction with *sisTER*, suggests that the CA has no ulterior motives in requesting the customer to reveal the content of the letter. This expression is also used by the CA to hide his discomfiture arising from the nonverbal behaviour of the customer as she appeared to be uncomfortable juxtaposing the content of the letter. The request by the CA and the nonverbal behavior of the customer are examples of rapport neglect strategies by both participants. To cover her embarrassment, the customer explains why she would not allow the staff to inspect the item because it was yet to be enveloped. Finally in excerpt 29, *ma* together with *please* works to expedite service and everything was concluded within seconds. The expression *ma* helps to maintain rapport and to show respect.

All these expressions are filial in nature though there is no relationship whatsoever between the users and the person addressed in each of the encounters. These are in-group identity makers and function to express a common ground as members of the same family.

4.2.1.5 Empathy

This comes up in excerpts 14, 19, 20, 21, 24 and 32. In except 20, the staff applies it to help the customer realise his goal of coming to the post office (collection money sent from abroad). The CA shows an understanding of the situation as he explains in an undertone, just for the ears of the customer alone, of the difficulty involved that prevents a prompt and easy collection of the item. Just about to give up hope towards the end of

the interaction, the CA offers a light at the end of the tunnel to the customer by asking

him to wait for him to see what he can do to help him. In excerpt 21 the staff uses it

(empathy) to satisfy a request; in 14 and 24 the expressions are used to show

understanding of the doubts of the customers, assuring them that once their respective

letters are registered, everything will be alright. In 19, it is used to accept a lapse in the

service and in 32 to offer help. The empathy encoded in 32 starts as a question and ends

by offering help which is the anticipation set up by the opening question. Empathy is

used in the various interactions where it appears for rapport enhancement in 20 and 32

while it is used for rapport maintenance in 14, 19, 20, 21, 24 and 32.

4.2.1.6 Greeting

The socio-cultural factors that account for greeting and its structure in Yoruba

culture are observed in excerpts 13, 14 and 31 where it appears. These factors include

age, title, status, sex, occupation and so on. Normally, the younger ones typically initiate

greeting whenever the occasion demands for such. It is considered a mark of respect. The

old ones can start the greeting out of respect for the achievement of the other. Greeting

people at work is regarded as a matter of respect in ones occupation (Akindele, 1990). In

the instances where it appears, the customers are the ones that greet and this sets the tone

for the interaction that followed. Even in the interview conducted, the CAs acknowledge

that the customers usually open the interaction through greeting whenever they approach

the counter. The CAs greet only when the customers forget or fail to do so. This situation

is probably due to the convention that expects those at work to be greeted as a sign of

deference to their occupation. Inability to do so in such circumstances gives rise to bad

feelings. In service encounter as exemplified in the post office, the customers use it to

gain the attentions of the CAs and for enhancement orientation. In the interview, greeting

is seen as a form of politeness observed during the encounter. It is an act used to convey politeness through the way the staff at the counter welcomes the customer. In business, the way a customer is welcomed usually predicts the outcome of the encounter. Greeting normally signifies an acceptance and eagerness to relate and interact as well as clarifies and fixes the roles that participants will take during the occasion of talk. It commits participants to these roles. Most of the CAs observe that the customers are often pleasant and have this friendly aura about them. Greeting is a basic politeness requirement that acknowledges the existence of the other while silence on the other hand is considered extremely embarrassing or downright unfriendly (Coppock, 2005). In Yoruba culture where the post offices used for the study are situated, greeting in such an institutional context serves a prefactory purpose. Greeting here has no content information as far as the business of the talk is concerned, but provides opportunity to make the participants available for more talk. It helps to establish social contacts before the transactional talk is initiated (Akindele, 1988). It is a face flattering formula used to fan the ego of the hearer signaling that he/she has been seen and that he/she will be served (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1992). In the encounter, greetings sometimes come as smiles, smiling eyes that capture the attention of the staff and these set the actual interaction on the right note. This greeting can be perceived with varying degree of politeness depending on the person and the context as observed by Dumas and Ferragne (2003). Sometimes when the greetings come as the opening expressions such as:

(i) Please, what can I do for you?   (ii) Yes what can I do for you?

(iii) Yes please, can I help you?   (iv) What can I do for you?

(v) Please can I help you?   (vi) How can I help you?

(vii) Can I help you?   (viii) Yes can I help you?

the CAs think that they portray fellowship face addressed by solidarity as well as rapport enhancement and maintenance orientation. However, the customers reveal that some of the expressions are rather too forward and do not serve the purpose they are meant for. This is especially true of expressions ii, iv and vii that are a little confrontational due to their renditions which depend on the tone of voice used by the speaker. This is similar to Servert's (2002) observation in relation to apology. When these well meaning expressions are rendered with high rising tone, they tend to suggest "please do not disturb". Again, the customer may see the greetings as an eye service, and this probably puts the CA at a disadvantage. This attitude of not taking the greetings serious may be due to the fact that the customers feel that the CAs want a tip from them. Again, it is important to note that most of the CAs indicate that the customers usually start the interaction by greeting them. If that has been the norm, then the customers may be suspicious of the motive behind the CAs' trying to reverse the order of things.

Sometimes, greeting comes not in the form of formulaic expression like the opening move in excerpt 1 where the CA used *daddy*, an informal address as the opening expression conveying and indicating recognition, greeting and deference. This also applies to *sir* by the CA in excerpt 11 and *uncle* by a customer in excerpt 19.

4.2.1.7 Small Talk

This appears in excerpts 14, 22 and 24. The first instance is where a customer delves into the reason why she has to register the parcel in the first place to which the CA assures her that registering the letter will help it to get to its destination at the expected time. The second appearance is where a customer in order to engage the CA in a talk

while attending to him brings up the issue of dishonesty which is assumed not detected by the post office staff. However, the CA informs the customer that though the customer in question may not use the correct amount of stamp to post a letter, the letter usually never gets to its destination. In the long run, the customer has cheated himself/herself. In a way, he agrees with the customer that the postal services are not hundred percent efficient but the staff members are trying. The small talk helps to create humour in this instance because almost everyone within earshot of the conversation laughed. The humour arises as a result of the other side of the coin where humour indirectly is used to ridicule and castigate the organisation. From the talk, the staff distances himself and agrees with the observation of the customer. The third instance is where a customer delves into the reason why she has to put a letter into an envelop before she can allow the CA to inspect it.

From the analysis, seven strategies which come under *solidarity* are used by both the customers and the counter staff. They include a*greement, character appreciation*, *informal address, cooperation, empathy, greeting* and *small talk.* Explicit *agreement* receives the greatest number of usage, twenty–two interactions, and this is followed by *appreciation of performance* and *cooperation*. The last four strategies are *empathy, informal address*, *greeting* and *small talk*. Situation such as time and space have effects on the type of politeness strategy used.

Table 1 shows that the different strategies are not reciprocal. The interaction is driven by *agreement*, *greeting* and *appreciation of performance* by the customers while the counter staff show more of *empathy* than the customers. However, both are almost at par in the use of *cooperation*, *small talk* and *informal address*. This analysis gives

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important evidence of non-reciprocal demands of the social role of customers and the counter staff. The customers' use of *agreement* shows that it is likely that the CAs hold the trump card. This seems to be so because the customers go there either to get information on one thing or the other. For the customers to be able to get the information and so on, they need to make requests or ask questions which show that they depend on the response of the counter staff. The use of questions in the encounter also encode information imbalance which the staff will have to balance. Hence, *greeting* is used to put the staff in a better frame of mind for the transaction to proceed as expected. And for the transaction to proceed as expected there must be cooperation on both sides. *Small talk* is there to oil the transactional process. It complements g*reeting* in that both are used to put the staff in a better frame of mind. *Informal address* is used by both staff and customers. In its application, the staff uses it to show respect in excerpt 1 and a level of involvement used to counteract negative effect caused by refusal to comply by a customer in excerpt 24 while the customers use it to call for the attention of the staff for assistance in excerpt 29. *Empathy* is one-sided as it is used only by the staff. It shows the humaneness of the staff when the mood is right and an implicated power to favour or not favour any if so chosen by projecting one into the feelings of the other. This shows the level of involvement of the staff with the customers in some situations when the need arises and when they are in the mood for such. The last of the *solidarity* strategies is *thanking (appreciation of performance)*. This strategy is used mostly by the customers to show appreciation. While it serves to show appreciation, it is also used to imply that the staff has the upper hand in the whole transaction. The staff should be the ones thanking the customers for patronising them. Apart from c*ooperation* and a*greement* which are

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strategies required by both staff and the customers, the other strategies should be chiefly used by the staff but we see a situation where the reverse is the case. This situation may be as a result of the fact that the salary of the staff is not dependent on the sales realised by the staff every month (See Appendix I for the interactions used for this analysis). All the expressions used on this strategy encode rapport enhancement and maintenance.

4.2.2 Approbation Politeness Strategies Addressing Competence Face

Table 2: Summary of Approbation Strategies

	Resent-Ment	Blunt Disappro-val	Focused Disappro-Val	Sugges-tion	Hedge	Ridicule	Support
CA	(4) 33.3%	(3) 33.3%	(3) 60%	(8) 80%	(1)100%		(1) 100%
Cust.	(8) 67.7%	(6) 67.7%	(2) 40%	(2) 20%		(1) 100%	
Total	(12) 100%	(9) 100%	(5) 100%	(10) 100%	(1)100%	(1) 100%	(1) 100%

4.2.2.1 Resentment

This appears in excerpts 8, 11, 16, 17 and 19. In excerpt 8, a customer resents the treatment metted to him when he asks for a simple question and was misdirected by the CA. In excerpt 16, the CA challenges the customer when the customer tries to argue the outrageous price given for posting his parcel. In excerpt 17, a customer wants to collect money sent from abroad. After standing and waiting to be attended to and nothing seemed to be happening, the customer goes up to one of the counter attendants to ask after the CA who should be attending to them. The CA points to the man and subsequently, the customer accosts the CA and utters with displeasure *it's you we are waiting for* while the CA in question continues to chat with a colleague. In all the expressions in this category, full sentences are used in order for the party being addressed

to fully understand how the other feels. The utterances challenge the face needs and do not build on any positive rapport orientation. In excerpt 19, the CA in an answer to the customer's question with respect to allocation of post office box, asks the customer to wait longer and subsequently a bit longer and to have patience. After the customer has waited for quite awhile, his patience runs out. Hence, in trying to show his displeasure, he challenges the meaning of *just be patient* when nothing is actually happening. In all the expressions in this category, full sentences are used in order for the party being addressed to fully understand how the other feels. The utterances challenge the face needs and do not build on any positive rapport orientation. They therefore encode rapport neglect and increase the distance between the participants

4.2.2.2 Blunt Disapproval

This sub-category makes blanket disapproval and does not pay attention to the face needs of the people concerned. It is not used to build any sort of positive rapport because the expressions are used to challenge the respective interlocutors either directly or indirectly. In 16, the customer uses the expression to reject an indirect suggestion of the CA. In excerpt 19, the customer expresses frustration, in 20 the CA uses it to refuse the possibility suggested by the customer, in 22 it is used to query the CA for the inability of a letter to reach its destination and to refuse/reject the possibility of carrying out the suggestion of the CA. In 30 it is used to challenge the outcome of the CA's assessment and in 31 to intimidate the CA's costing of the postage. All the expressions realising this sub-category are judgemental and are used to build rapport neglect.

4.2.2.3 Focused Disapproval

In this category, the focus of disapproval has been narrowed to include only an aspect of the information given. In 12, the elliptic *No* and the expression in 18 - *No, I don't want to register it* are used to reject the information given. In excerpt 20, the CA informs the customer of what they expect a customer to bring for the kind of business he wants to transact. In 22, the CA offers the reason why a particular letter did not get to its destination. The CA further explains that the fact that a customer cheats with respect to the amount of money needed to post a letter may contribute to why the letter will not get to its destination. All the expressions build on rapport neglect with the exception of that by the CA in 22. This strategy tries to isolate the aspect that is not alright and employs a mellowed down disapproval. In the event, it tries to attend a little to the face need of the addressee. In this way, the responsibility of the fault falls not so squarely on the addressee. This gives room for leniency on the part of the CA.

4.2.2.4 Suggestion

Some of the expressions realizing this strategy are not stated explicitly. For instance, *but this is not my first time of using this card* in 20; *do you want to register it?* in 12, 16, 23; *let me weigh it* in 12 and 25, *because it was not registered* in 22. While 12, 20 and 25 come as declaratives which serve to initiate object for negotiation, 12, 16 and 23 come as polar interrogatives whose sole purpose is to probe for missing information not supplied in the utterances before each of them respectively. The expression *let me weigh it* is an imperative that sets up expectation, probably compliance by the customer for the process to be carried out. The expression *but this is not my first time of using this card* is a textual adjunct that serves as a link to previous talk by expressing a logical relation of contrast to the previous contribution by the CA. Again, *because it was not*

registered serves as a circumstantial adjunct which encodes the reason why the parcel did not get to its destination.

The rest of the remaining expressions *maybe I should call the person…* in 20, *you can buy from me* in 2 and *maybe you can buy another envelop* in 11 are used to state degrees of probability and certainty (11, 20) and capability of the speakers (2). In 3, *maybe* combines with *should* to suggest that he (customer) owes it (as an obligation) to the CA to make things right since the person who sent the money did not specify the document(s) that will be required for collecting the money. In this way, the customer takes the responsibility of the lapse on the part of the sender. The suggestion is believed to help the customer collect his money. In 11, *can* combines with *maybe* to express the suggestion which takes the form of a tentative opinion of the CA in relation to the customer's capability of replacing the envelop soiled with red gum. *You can buy from me* is a suggestion that encodes the customer's capability of buying the stamp from the CA in question. This is a self conscious suggestion coming from the CA reminding the customer that he (CA) sells stamps and will sell to him if he (customer) wants. All the suggestions help to maintain rapport with the exception of that made by the CA in 11. This particular suggestion comes after the customer had already accused the CA of keeping quiet while he was busy sealing the envelop. And just at the point of concluding the business of posting the parcel, the CA decides that the envelop is soiled. Therefore the suggestion came at the wrong time which did not help the way the customer was feeling. Again, the modal auxiliary *can* seems less polite than *should*. In other words, both express degree of politeness though they function to encode indirect advice.

4.2.2.5 Ridicule, Hedge and Support

Ridicule – how many months will this parcel take now?...; *Hedge – i am not the one who will take it there but i …*; support – *Nigeria is not efficient*. These expressions are taken from excerpt 22, from an instance of a *small talk* by a customer who in his contributions to the enacted conversation indirectly criticises and ridicules the post office in terms of their supposed efficiency and effectiveness. Though the CA agrees with the observation of the customer, he hedges from saying exactly when the letter/parcel will get to its destination which is the basis for the *criticism* and *ridicule* by the customer. The success of the utterance in driving home the feelings of the customer is achieved through the use of an interrogative which makes it impossible for the CA to feel free to object. In addition, the *criticism* and *ridicule* was made within the hearing of the other customers who were within earshot causing discomfiture to the CA, hence the CA's grudging *agreement* and subsequent *hedge*.

The mostly used strategies under *approbation* by the staff are *suggestion* followed by *resentment* while *blunt* and *focused disapproval* come next with *hedge* and *support* coming last. The customers apply *resentment*, followed by *blunt disapproval* with *suggestion* and *focused disapproval* coming last. The various strategies have their own implication in the service encounter and this will come up later in the analysis. *Suggestion* encodes *advice* in some cases and *advice* implies that the addressor has the power to do that. Therefore, the staff using more of *suggestion* implies that they control the interaction. This may be the reason why the customers express more of *resentment* and *blunt disapproval* than the staff. The CAs' use of *suggestion* and f*ocus disapproval* than the other strategies probably show that they sometimes pay attention to their

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customers' face needs by not being too forward with their expressions. The sub-categories under *approbation* are used mostly for rapport neglect except *suggestion* which is often offered as assistance to implied direct request.

4.2.3 Tact Politeness Strategies Addressing Autonomy Face

Table 3: Summary of Tact Strategies

	Need	Please	Order	Advice	Hedge
CA	(1) 5.9%	(3) 15%	(15) 83.3%	(7) 77.8%	(1) 100%
Cust	(16) 94.1%	(17) 85%	(3) 16.7%	(2) 22.2%	-
Total	(17) 100%	(20) 100%	(18) 100%	(9) 100%	(1) 100%

4.2.3.1 Please: Conventional Polite Marker

The first *tact* strategy is *please*, a conventional polite marker used to address the CAs as a rapport enhancement move by the customers. *Please* appears in excerpts 1, 3, 5, 9, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 31. Generally, it is used to put the CAs in the best possible frame of mind and to gain their attention. In some cases the customers use it to preface the expression for request of information/inquiry in 1 and 28; before stating need in 5, 9, 16, 17, 24, 29 and 30 and to request for assistance in 1, 3, 21 and 28. In some other instances, the customers use it to beg the CAs to take care in handling the postage as in 14, and in asking to be put on the right track in 27. In the few instances where the CAs use it, it functions to make the customers concerned to be patient in 19. In 26 and 28 it came as directives. The difference is the role played by each of the participant in the different situations. While the customer has the upper hand in 1; the CA in 26 controls the situation. In the excerpts where it is used, the CAs and the customers take care to make sure that the outcome of the social encounter leads to the achievement of the ultimate goal of both the customer and the staff. And the goal is a

successful conduct of the business at hand which does not lead to a neglect of interpersonal concern which acknowledges the existential status and right to personal recognition of the other. Thus Hewitt (2002:3) citing House (1989) remarks that it is a relational language which, "seems to be licensed when the situation implies a standardised allocation of roles, rights and obligations for the participants" In all the instances, it is used as rapport maintenance and enhancement strategies in addition to pleading with a customer to exercise patience in excerpt 19.

There is a power relation which affects the way *please* is used in all the situations where it appears. *Please* in excerpts 18 and 27 is used with an interrogative sentence. In 18, the customer's linguistic choices construct dependency, while the utterance of the customer in 27 helps to retain authority. In 19, power shifts from the CA to the customer. The customer in this situation has the legitimate right to be upset because the post office box he requested for has not been allocated to him. Out of frustration, annoyance seems to rule and this gives the customer some leverage in terms of enacting authority over the CA in the situation. Here, the CA is seen begging the customer to please exercise patience. In 14, 17 and 28, the customers construct themselves as being under the mercy of the CA through the expressions/linguistic choices each selects. The selected linguistic choices enact the power accorded to the CAs while the customers in turn depend on them for their various needs to be met.

A look at the way both participants frame their requests reveals that some of the requests consists of low level politeness especially in relation to the ways they are delivered on both sides. Just like apology, the expressions are polite but the tone of voice affect the way they are perceived. Again, this borders on language skill and

understanding of utterances which include what to say; how to say it; to whom; in what situation and for what purpose. Studies have revealed that when request is couched in an indirect manner, using minimisers such as *a bit*, *just* or with the addition of *please* (conventional polite marker), it minimises the effect of imposition on the hearer and suggests that the hearer's choice or reaction matters. *Please* as used in the context of the post office embeds politeness which softens the force of the imposition which is actually the job of the CAs. It is actually funny how we have to be apologetic for requesting someone to do his/her work. But this is expected in the context of Nigerian culture where individuals have to be put in a better frame of mind for them to act appropriately. *Please* is used by both participants but especially the customers in making requests from the CAs. It is used to portray *tact* and rapport maintenance.

4.2.3.2 Need

This strategy is used in stating the material for negotiation. It occurs in the interactions with no preface in most cases except in excerpts 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 13, 14, 17, 25, 26, 29 and 30 where we have *please* and *good morning* coming before the expression that encodes need. *Please* is probably used because the customers feel that stating the request blandly deprives the CAs their power and freedom of action even though they are there to serve the public. Using *please* makes the information that follows and the embedded request to sound less threatening which has the effect of making the CAs well disposed to the customers. Apart from expressing needs the expressions are used to make known intention and to pass information to the CAs. It seems that inability to use *please* in in the opening expressions is deliberate on the part of the customers to retain control of the interaction. The elliptic *please* is what makes the expression a rapport-maintenance

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strategy. This strategy of going straight to expressing needs conveys higher speaker power than prefacing the statement (Holtsgraves, 1986). It is this power that the CAs in their ways try to contest with the customers.

4.2.3.3 Order

This sub-category comes as commands which set up expectation of a compliance response that may not be verbal in 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 14, 16, 24, 27, and 28. This kind of expression is expected in this situation because such verbal and non-verbal cues are needed for a successful transaction. This also positions the speaker as having power over the other participant as it sometimes encodes advice. Apart from its function of economising words, it also has the added function of enacting authority. Rapport maintenance strategy is enacted due to how the expression is couched while remaining neutral at the same time leaning to none of the rapport maintenance strategies. This strategy is probably employed mostly by the CAs in a bid to cull back some of their eroded power due to the various changes which the establishment has gone through over the years.

4.2.3.4 Advice

This category sets up expectation of a compliant response which sometimes is non-verbal. In the various interactions where it appears, it is used to negotiate action indirectly. Giving of advice implies that the addressor has the power over the addressee and he assumes a dominant position. In some of the expressions in this category, there is the implied option which the addressee can make use of or not just like Lakoff (1973) suggests. The expressions, for instance in excerpts 16 and 28 imply suggestions while those in excerpts 8, 9, 11, 17 and 19 are explicit and encode *advice*. In 8, the use of *don't* makes it sound authoritative and broods no argument. In the context of its use, the

customer expresses displeasure and annoyance. Both this category and that of *order* above have as their illocutionary function as command, which indirectly encodes *suggestion* and *advice*. Rapport-wise, only the *advice* in excerpt 24 encodes rapport neglect, the rest is used for rapport maintenance.

From the analysis, the most widely used strategy by the staff is *order* followed by *advice* with *please* and *need* coming last. The customers on the other hand, use mostly *please* and *need* while the staff employ *order* and *advice*. In the context of the transaction, after greeting where it is applicable, the next move is usually the expression of the *need* for visiting the place. Sometimes *need* is expressed blandly and sometimes with *please* by the customers. However, the CAs use less of this polite marker which implicates or show politeness on their part during the encounter while relating to the customer since sharing small talk is not feasible. Instead, they use more of *order* which may be related to their attempt at redeeming their depleting or diminishing status. *Order* or command assumes that the addressor is in a position to dish out instructions to be followed or complied with by the addressee. *Please* is used for rapport enhancement while *need* and *order* are not.

Summary of the Patterns of Politeness and their Frequency and Percentage

Table 4

Pattern	Cust.	% of moves	CA	% of moves
Agreement	21	80.76	5	19.23
Cooperation	12	50	12	50
Appreciation of performance	12	92.31	1	7.70
Greeting	4	100	-	
Small talk	3	50	3	50
Empathy	-	-	7	100
Informal Address	2	50	2	50
Resentment	8	66.67	4	33.33
Blunt Disapproval	6	66.67	3	33.33

Focus Disapproval	2	40	3	60
Suggestion	2	20	8	80
Hedge	-		1	100
Ridicule	1	100	-	-
Support	-		1	100
Need	16	94.12	1	5.88
Please	17	85	3	15
Advice	2	18.18	9	81.81
Order	3	16.67	15	83.33

From the table, the staff *empathise*, *suggest*, *advice*, *order* and employ *focus disapproval* more than the customers. These strategies have power implicated in them whenever and wherever they are used. The customers on the other hand *agree, appreciate, greet, resent, bluntly disapprove*, express their *needs* and employ the use of *please* more than the staff. Sometimes there may not be any need of using *please* when eye contact has been made. These strategies portray the customers as being at the receiving end of the encounters. The staff and the customers are at par in relation to using *cooperation*, *small talk* and *informal address*. The rest of the strategies are minimally used in the encounters.

4.3 Factors that Contribute to the Expression of Politeness

Table 5: Testing of Relationships between Variables and Politeness

		App.	Impolite	polite	Job Satis	Yrs Exp.	Dom Prob	Age
Appearance	Pearson correlation	1	-.292*	.373*				
	p-value		.042	.008				
	N	49	49	49				
Job Satis.	Pearson Correlation		.108	.295*	1			
	p-value		.460	.039				
	N		49	49	49			
Years of Exp.	Pearson Correlation		.170	.144		1		
	p-value		.242	.325				
	N		49	49		49		
Dom. Probl	Pearson Correlation		.128	.263			1	
	p-value		.381	.068				
	N		49	49			49	
Age	Pearson Correlation		.263	.240				1
	p-value		.068	.097				
	N		49	49				49
impolite	Pearson Correlation	-.292*	1		.108	.170	.128	263
	p-value	.042			.460	.242	.381	.068
	N	49	49		49	49	49	49
Politeness	Pearson Correlation	373*		1	.295*	.144	263	.240
	p-value	.008			.039	.325	.068	.097
	N	49		49	49	49	49	49

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 or 0.01 level

4.3.1 Appearance and Politeness

Appearance is one of the factors that account for the expression of politeness at the counter. The result of the analysis refutes hypothesis number 1 which states that there is no relationship between appearance and politeness. Using the Pearson correlation technique, the relationship $r= 0.37$ and direction is positive with the strength of 0.008 level of significance. The implication is that the shabbier the appearance the more the impoliteness and the better well dressed clients are, the more the expression of politeness.

The reason for this is that appearance is a non-verbal semiotic variable which plays a major role in the evaluation of individuals. Some people portray their personality by their mere presence while others enhance their appearance through their dressing. This sometimes creates an impression in the mind of the CAs leading to categorisation of the clients. Through appearance, recognition is either given or withdrawn. Appearance has influence on portrayal of behaviour through categorisation and stereotyping of individuals with a preconceived notion of what an individual is like based on what the perceiver sees. This judgement is at best intuitive. This is consistently applied in most or all cases by the perceiver and colours the judgement of the perceiver (Blair, Judd, Sadler and Jerkins, 2004; Sczesny and Kuhnen, 2004). Appearance portrays class and level of achievement of customers and so deference is either accorded or withdrawn. Appearance has an implicit power control that can change the circumstances during service encounter. Power sometimes is the capacity of either party to produce effect on the other. Well dressed and gorgeously looking people are accorded with power of possessing the financial muscle to pay and give therefore they are addressed more courteously. This observation has been linked with material well being or hardships (Ayoola, 2006).

Many of the CAs (79.6%) using simple percentages indicate that they base the service they render on the appearance of the customer. The position of the CAs is made clearer in response to what determines the specific basis for treatment of customers during service encounter. Age, an aspect of appearance and a determinant factor, plays a significant role in measurement of power. It is one of the factors that affect politeness according to the CAs (excerpt 1, 7). This is followed by courteousness and dressing of the clients. Meanwhile, the customers feel that dressing comes first, followed by age and courteousness. All these still reflect the culture of the post office as portraying the culture of the larger community which reveres age, economic well being and accord them respect (Afolanya, 1974).

4.3.2 Job Satisfaction and Politeness

Another factor that has an effect on the expression of politeness is job satisfaction. From the correlation analysis, we refute Ho 2 which states that there exits no relationship between job satisfaction and politeness. The relationship is r= 0.29 and the direction is positive with a significant p-value of 0.039 which is less than 0.05. This means that if the staff are satisfied, they will be polite and if they are not, they become impolite. This is related to the responses gathered during the interview where the staff indicate that the customers or clients tip them to show appreciation or gratitude for job well done

Job satisfaction can be derived from many things including realisation of expectation, company support, attitude, relationship with others and pay (DeVaney and Chen, 2003). Individuals that are satisfied with respect to their needs, develop a sense of inner reward and happiness. These individuals consequently have higher self esteem, which is a psychological feeling of success as a result of performance (Hall & Forster, 1977). When one is satisfied with one's job, one will have an increased self

esteem. Other sources of job satisfaction include engaging in recreational activities, staff retraining which is part of realisation of expectations, promotion as and when due and so on. From the history of NIPOST given in chapter three, for some years there has not been any real promotional exercise carried out and this has affected the morale of the staff. Fahruddin (2008) observe that promotion among other things lead to morals that result in happiness, greater self esteem and self realisation.

4.3.2.1 Recreational Activities

Recreational activity impacts on job satisfaction. It is important for the simple reason that all work and no play produce dull and irritating CAs. Majority of the CAs, the boundary spanners (Grandey, Dickter and Sin, 2004) who are the intermediaries between the NIPOST and the public that patronise them have no avenue for burn-outs. The recreational avenues include places where one visits to play indoor or outdoor games; amusement parks and so on, where one visits to refresh the body and mind. In other words, recreational avenues are places of interest or something that pleasantly occupies one's time after work is done. While engaging in recreational activities may not be part of our culture, there is still need for such recreational facility where the CAs who engage in these face to face service interactions go to loosen and brighten up. It is necessary because of the high frequency of interpersonal contacts which sometimes result in aggressiveness towards the CAs. Bottling up of emotions is dangerous because it may lead to frequent illness and depression. Though this is partially taken care of by the rotatory shift schedules by the management, however, this may not be enough to address the morale of the CAs. This may be one of the reasons behind the use of silence or the ignoring strategy (in excerpt 9) together with lack of eye contact and rare smiles to contend with their lack of satisfaction.

4.3.2.2 Staff Training

Staff retraining is a way of building staff strength which has an effect on job satisfaction. Most of the CAs indicate that they have not had the opportunity of undergoing language skill training programme that helps them to relate with the customers. It is likely that the only form of training comes from on the job orientation. This seems to be inadequate to handle the public that patronise them. With the high incidence of rude/aggressive customer behaviour, there seems to be undue risk taken by the management in terms of staff welfare. This in more ways than one can affect the image of the organisation due to their language incompetence in handling customer aggressiveness. This can again undermine the effectiveness and efficiency of the staff in giving service to their customers. Inferiority complex which is camouflaged with short expressions seem to be one of the ways the staff try to address and accommodate their inability and inadequacies in the presence of more learned customers.

Job satisfaction is sometimes affected by staff training and psychological feeling of success and self realisation. Staff retraining has a way of impacting on the effectiveness and efficiency of the staff which invariably culminate in job satisfaction. Without staff retraining, the staff will feel inferior and will not be able to measure up to a certain standard that will at least make them to be relevant not only in the NIPOST but elsewhere. This makes it impossible for them to look elsewhere for jobs and become stagnant profession-wise. Consequently the vibrancy the staff feel at the time of initial employment begins to ebb and before long gradual decay sets in leading to dissatisfaction. The staff begin to feel trapped, stuck and feel that their life is in a rut. Subsequently, they start counting the days until they retire from service with no enthusiasm. This probably may be the reason why majority of the staff from 43 years

and up indicate that they prefer working at the NIPOST while the remaining sizeable few (36.7%) seem to actually prefer working elsewhere than in the post office. None of the CAs strongly agrees to like working at the counter. While the older staff are stuck, the younger ones are not trained to take up jobs elsewhere. This may also be one of the reasons why they like tips which are fast gaining grounds. Alavi and Askaripur (2003) suggest that the best way to increase self esteem is to attend to job satisfaction in its entire dimension because job dissatisfaction leads to decrease in self esteem.

4.3.2.3 Tipping as a Fast Gaining Cultural Norm

Sometimes not being satisfied can lead to accepting tips. The CAs in the interview indicate that they usually help customers when they come to them with a problem within their power to solve by giving them the necessary assistance. Again, in rendering services, the CAs indicate that the customers express their appreciation by thanking and sometimes tipping them. It is probable that avoiding tipping the CAs may lead to negative attitude towards some customers who are unable to give tips. It is also possible that accepting tips shows the level of job satisfaction and the effect of the prevailing socio-economic condition under which these workers perform their duty. Tips become one of the means through which the CAs deal with their economic problems. Thus tips have effects on workers who accept them and those who do not. Tipping is a prevalent cultural phenomenon of giving money to SPs for their services. Some countries like America, China and Taiwan welcome it while others such as New Zealand, Singapore are against it. Britons and the Dutch are regarded as being stingy with tips. To these countries, tipping is either a sign of civilisation (those who support it) or a sign of bribery (those against it) showing moral decadence in the attitude to work respectively (BBC News online: Talking Point, 2000). Lynn (2000) notes that

tipping is a characteristic of countries that put high value on achievement and power and these countries value its roles as an incentive and reward. He also opines that it has become an institutionalised means used to reduce service workers' envy of their customers (2008) which increases with the perceived quality of service (1994). In Nigeria, tipping is still a voluntary gesture that is fast becoming a birthright by some workers. It is gaining ground to the extent that if one wants prompt service and to be treated like royalty, one needs to tip, especially in government establishments and some private outfits too. In the meantime, Nigerians have not yet taken to tipping as a compulsory custom. Therefore, some people see it as downgrading while others who like it see it as a sign of power where they can have a say in the type of service they expect. In a way, tipping can be associated with job satisfaction in the sense that the tips can help subsidise the income of the workers and so add extra push to buoyancy expressed in service effectiveness. As a result, some workers who receive tips look forward to it and it conditions the service they give. It can increase job satisfaction if work is well done. It can also help sustain good marital relationship and help workers understand their filial responsibility and solve some domestic problems especially when members of the family look forward to their daddy's coming home with a gift each day. Further, tipping the workers can help raise job satisfaction and maintain industrial harmony by preventing aggressiveness to customers and employers considering the state of the workers and the condition under which they carry out their duty (going by the history of the establishment). With the help of tips, unfavourable customer relationships and negative post office face borne out of anger and frustrations can probably be mitigated to an extent and reduce the effect of job dissatisfaction.

In relation to being satisfied at the end of each encounter, a few of the CAs (2.0%) strongly agree that the encounter ends well. This may be as a result of what some of the customers do to show appreciation. This may relate to the tips they get at the end of attending to some customers, especially money which some of the CAs agree or acknowledge during the interview conducted. Again, 93.9% merely agree that they are satisfied at the end of each encounter. This may be that they have no choice than to like their job and all that it involves.

4.3.2.4 Mood and Job Satisfaction

Lack of staff retraining and recreational activities can lead to discontentment of staff which culminates into the development of accepting bribes and tipping as normal work routine. From the analysis of the questionnaire, majority of the CAs do not actually engage in recreational activities. It is likely that most of the negative attitudes that come as a result of handling aggressive and rude customers are bottled up within them. This is likely to account for poor attitudes to customers that show up in the staff not paying attention to the way the customers address them and their inability to maintain eye contact which is one of the ways the staff can politely relate to the customers. Again, there is lack of language training programme which has a direct bearing on the use of language leading to competence in verbal attitude and aptitude. The CAs are not convincing in terms of having attended any programme pertaining to such. These deficiencies may affect services positively or negatively depending on the mood of the CAs. This is because the CAs in the interview admit that the mood of the customers and their own determine the kind of service they render. The CAs also disclose that they come to work even when they have domestic problems at home. Foul mood as a result of domestic problems at home has its own

implications on the type of service rendered as the mood of the CAs is bound to affect performance.

From the choices they make in relation to how they handle aggressive and rude customers, it is probable that they employ all the different strategies like distracting themselves, talking to a co-worker, not taking it personally and losing their temper to react to customers' behaviours depending on the situation and their mood. This seems to be the case going by the condition of service recorded in the history of the establishment under study. This is exemplified in excerpt 17 where a CA leaves his post to converse with his colleague while customers lined up waiting for him to attend to them.

4.3.3 Years of Experience and Politeness

The findings also support Ho 3 which states that there is no relationship between work or years of experience and politeness. Using the Pearson correlation technique, the relationship is r= 0.14 and the direction is positive with p-value of 0.325 which is greater than 0.05. This result applies also to what was obtained between age of the CAs and politeness where it was expected that experience should impact on the use of language.

4.3.4 Domestic Problems and Politeness

The findings uphold Ho 4 which states that there is no relationship between domestic problems and politeness. Using Pearson correlation analysis, the relationship is r=0.26 with p-value of 0.068 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Though there is no relationship between the two variables, domestic problems affect the state mind and performance of an individual in the workplace. When there are problems at home, there is no coherent thinking and presence of mind. Most of the workers are of the opinion that they would prefer to be at work than to be at home

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nursing problems. This may be due to the traditional view of men's role as providers and disciplinarians who are not normally involved in family intricacies. However, domestic problems (economical and psychological) whichever forms they take have an effect on the worker(s) concerned. Among other effects, it results in depression, lack of confidence and self esteem, tardiness, lateness to work, unexplained absences, frequent time off, borrowing of money from colleagues, lack of concentration and so on. Any one with any of these symptoms cannot be effective in the work place. In the developed world, efforts are made to help such individuals through the granting of one leave or the other. In Nigeria, there are no funds or resources to help workers in that manner. This may be one of the reasons why workers still go to work while facing challenging situations at home. The tendency to be irritated and short with customers with the least provocation cannot be ruled out. This probably may be why some CAs do not share pleasantries with the customers. Another reason may be that the employees are aware of the customers' aggression as part of job hazard, though it is stressful, their occurrences do not result in withdrawal because it matches expectations. If that is the case, then, there is no point staying at home nursing problems. Coming to work while there is a problem may be a question of making a preference between the available options. Choosing to go to work may not mean that the CAs love it; there may be other factors involved.

4.3.5 Age and Politeness

We also accept Ho 5 which states that there is no significant relationship between age of the CAs and expression of politeness at the counter. Using the Pearson correlation analysis, the relationship r=0.24 and the direction is positive with p-value of 0.097 which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that age has no influence on the expression of politeness. The result contradicts what we obtained in the observed

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interactions. The reason for the discrepancy may be that though traditionally, age is linked with wisdom and accorded respect, the circumstance under which both parties meet overrides the need for respect and ultimate expression of politeness. This is particularly so in excerpt 17 where a customer had to address the CA with *it's you we've been waiting for* and the CA reacted with *what exactly do you need*, an expression which is a little bit too forward and confrontational going by the fact that the customers had been on the line for quite some time. One expects that the age of the customer would have an impact on the CA's expression which in turn affects the behaviour of the CA. However, the situation turns out not as expected which may be as a result of the fact that the CAs are no longer bothered with such trivial issues as age because they have had enough of the experiences to last them for a lifetime. The bottled up emotions associated with negative experiences rebound resulting in a negative attitude causing disillusionment and negative disposition towards the customers. Relating to excerpts 1, 7 and 8 it is apparent that the mood of the CAs determines their linguistic selection and behaviour to the respective customers. In excerpts 1 and 7, the CAs accord deference to the customers, in 8 and 17 the linguistic selections do not encode respect and politeness. Yet, in work places, especially service giving ones, SPs are expected to accord respect to their customers in order to maintain cordiality/rapport.

Table 6: Politeness by Educational Status

	N	Mean	SD	P-value	Decision	Reason
SS	4	8.50	1.291			
SC	11	6.64	1.748			
NCE/OND	17	7.00	2.424	0.258	NS	p-value
GRAD/PROF	17	7.71	1.404			>0.05

4.3.6 Educational Status and Politeness

The difference in politeness given the respondents' demographic characteristic in terms of their educational status was analysed. To do this, one way ANOVA (analysis of variance) which employs means or averages was used to test Ho 6 which states that there exists no significant difference between educational status and politeness. The findings sustain this hypothesis as the table indicates. This may be because the CAs share the same experience of work hazards, job dissatisfaction and so on which in turn shape the way they see and react to situations associated with their work. However, it is to be noted that refined manners have been associated with politeness due to the influence of education and expanded experience within the four walls of the institution. This implies that the level of education should impact on the expression of politeness.

Table 7: Politeness and Gender

	N	Mean	SD	P-value	Decision	Reason
Male	26	7.08	2.314			P-value
Female	23	7.52	1.344	.423	NS	>0.05

4.3.7 Gender and Politeness

For Ho 7, the study employs T-test to determine the level of difference between gender and politeness. Results show that there exists no significant difference between male and female CAs in the expression of politeness. The mean difference and the p-value are as indicated in the table above. This observation negates Holmes' (1995) view which states that females are more polite than their male counterparts. This situation may be as a result of the shift in the judgement of gender according to their roles in the society which has converged to the extent that women now occupy

prominent public places working as bread winners of their respective families. In assuming responsibilities like men, they tend to think, feel, behave and measure up to men and even surpass them in order to survive in the changing world around them. This result supports Lakoff's (2005) observation that the stepping out of women outside the home as bread winners tend to make them more gender neutral in their verbal behaviour which makes the public to judge them like men.

4.4 Impoliteness From observed Encounter at the Counter

Impoliteness, the other end of politeness was also observed during transaction at the counter. The interactions below are considered impolite due to the linguistic expressions the participants in the encounters used for opening the conversation or as replies to the utterances used during the occasion. This is presented below as follows:

4.4.1 The Degree of the Impoliteness and Repercussion(s)

17. Cust.: Please, I want to collect money sent from abroad.
    CA 1: Be patient, the person who will attend to you will be with you any moment from now [pointing to another counter attendant having a discussion].
    Cust.: It is you we've been waiting for.
    CA 2: What exactly do you want?
    Cust.: I want to collect money sent from London.
    CA 2: You will a form.
    Cust.: Where is the form? I am tired of the queue and this one by one filling of forms. Can't you tear it apart and look at it on the system?
    CA: We can't tear it.
    Cust.: Alright.

The impoliteness in the interaction comes from the second CA's response to the customer's *it is you we've been waiting for*. The CA's reply *what exactly do you want* further instantiates the interaction as an example of impoliteness in the circumstance. The tone of voice from the outset indicates that the CA in question seems not to see it

fit to attend to the customers that lined up waiting for him to attend to them. When one of the customers now accosted him, he seems to have taken offence at being called upon to do his duty. From his reply one would take it that he was not ready for the day. Again, instead of trying to redress the negative attitude of keeping the customers waiting, he insists on filling forms, though he employed the use of inclusive *we* to sound neutral. The use of unmitigated utterance helps to put the customer in question in his place while the CA flexes his muscles in the process. Even the customer's suggestion *can't you tear it apart and look at it on the system* seems to aggravate matters for the next utterance of the CA w*e can't tear it* indicates so though he employs the inclusive *we*, a token of politeness which tries to negate the implicated impoliteness in his utterances. The customer gives in not because he was particularly happy at the way the CA treats him but he just wanted to conclude the business. In the interaction while the second CA employs "this is a challenge" frame asserting his power over the customer, the customer uses in the first instance, "this is a challenge" frame and later piped down to "this is acceptance" frame (Garcia, 1996) in order to conclude his business.

In the second instance of the occurrence of impoliteness, a man in his bid to register a mail inadvertently smeared the envelop with red gum in more places than required. Seeing the envelope, the CA reacted in the following way:

CA   : Sir, I will not accept that letter.

Cust.: What! What do you mean.

CA   : The whole envelope is soiled by the red gum you have used.

Cust.: Okay, what do you want me to do?

CA   : Maybe you will get another envelope.

Cust.: But you saw me doing it and you didn't say anything.

CA   : [Silence].

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The interaction starts with the CA emphatically saying that she will not accept the letter. The annoyance the customer expresses comes from the tone of voice and the non verbal facial expression of the CA. The CA employs Garcia's (1996) "this is a challenge" frame in addressing the customer. The customer feels that the CA's rudeness and vehemence in the way she addressed him is not called for. The CA's tone of voice seems to suggest that she was looking for a fight. The CA is not supposed to address the customer in that manner because she is there to serve him and sometimes offer help in terms of advice. In this instance the CA was just watching and waiting to see if the customer would actually bring the letter to her. By rejecting the letter, the customer was surprised and confused. The surprise caused by the CA's reaction annoyed the customer more than being asked to buy another envelop. The customer eventually has to take the suggestion of the CA in order to conclude the transaction albeit with annoyance. Apart from the rude tone of voice, the silence at the end of the interaction is also insulting and impolite. It is as if the CA wants to see if the customer will insist on posting the letter anyway. It is a non verbal expression of impolite attitude which heightens the impoliteness of the preceding linguistic selections of the CA. Silence can be used in a variety of ways. In this instance, it conveys neither disinterestedness nor concentration. The silence of the CA is interpretable as rudeness bordering on indifference and discourtesy, conducts that convey little regard for the feelings of the customer.

8. Cust.: I want to register a parcel but was directed to the next counter (showing annoyance).

    CA   : It is not you that I said to go there.

    Cust.: *Ẹ má da ènìyàn káàkiri* now (Stop misdirecting people up and down) .

    CA   : *Ó dáa*, N100 *ni owó yín* (Okay, N100 is your money).

    Cust.: Okay.

From the third example, the impoliteness comes from the exchange starting from the second turn of the customer and that of the CA. The customer in annoyance expresses his feeling at being misdirected. Instead of accepting the fact that his utterance was a mistake because it was given at the same time that the customer asks his question, the CA replies with *ó dáa, N100 ni owó yín* which functions to express "this is a challenge" frame. The expression o *daa* is as if to say let there be peace. However, the first turn of the CA's utterance seems to help the situation or that the customer sees no reason to pursue that line of discussion. Any of the reasons may be why the customer ended the interaction with okay.

Greeting in relation to the opening of the interaction is credited to the customers. The CAs (in the observed interactions) fail to produce the second part to the greeting and so are unable to reciprocate the gesture. It is probable that they assume the customers understand this implicit non-verbal communication. However, failing to complete the adjacency pair verbally is normally regarded as a face threatening act and is considered socially inappropriate as far as the larger society in which the post offices are situated is concerned. This is impolite because greeting is a basic requirement that acknowledges the existence of the other while silence is considered rude and unfriendly (Coppock, 2005). In addition, when one engages in an interaction, one contracts a relation that should last until the end of the interaction. It is also worthy of note that from the interactions cited, the customers still conclude their transaction before leaving the post office. In other words, they still have the presence of mind to complete what they came to do in the post office.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The responses obtained from the interview conducted demonstrate that the customers are the ones that usually open the interaction through greetings. The CAs greet only when the customers forget to do so. Greetings are basic politeness requirements that acknowledge the existence of the other person. The flattering function they serve as well as their prefatory purposes signal that the customer has been seen and will be served. They also signal acceptance and eagerness to relate and interact as well as clarify and fix the role of the participants in the encounter. Greeting therefore signals the readiness of the customers to do business with the CAs. Again, the staff and customers admit that the staff apologise to customers or excuse themselves when services are delayed or when there are mistakes in the course of transaction. However, the customers often times do not appreciate and reciprocate these polite gestures. Also, both the CAs and customers indicate that they like to share pleasantries but this is not realised because transaction is based on formality and the mood of both participants. The non-involvement of the customers in staff discussions does not take cognisance of age, status, appearance and so on of the customers. Furthermore, there is absence of non-verbal behaviours (eye contact, smiles) which probably account for the attitude of the customers towards the staff. Moreover, the CAs agree that they usually help the customers when what is required is within their power and in the event, the customers sometimes tip them in appreciation for a job well done.

The analysis of the CA's questionnaires reveals that only few of the CAs actually engage in recreational activities. There is the likelihood that most of the negative attitudes are bottled up inside due to lack of avenues for burn-outs which

may account for poor attitudes towards customers. In relation to the language training programme which has a direct bearing on the use of language leading to competence in verbal attitude and aptitude, the CAs have no training because majority of the staff merely agrees that they undergo such programme. It is probable that the only training they have is-on-the-job training involving watching those that are already doing the job. This type of training does not include the intricacies of handling abnormal situations. The effect of this is likely to impact on the way the CAs address their customers, which invariably affects the attitude of the customers towards them.

The analysis also indicates that there is no job satisfaction. This is supported by the fact that some of the CAs admit to been tipped (gathered from the interview) by the customers. This exposes how economically low the CAs are and the conditions under which they carry out their duties. Again the educational status of the CAs does not have any effect on the expression of politeness. Though it is noted that exposure and experience are likely to affect expression of politeness during service delivery. The effect may be positive or negative depending on the mood of the CAs because they indicate in the interview that the mood of the customers and their own determine the kind of services they render. Domestic problems in the analysis have no relationship with politeness because many of the CAs reveal that problems at home do not affect their handling of customers. However, this is bound to affect the mood of the CAs with respect to handling rude customers. By implication it is possible that though they do not employ all the different strategies mentioned in handling rude customers, silence which may be rude at times prevails in addition to the mood of the CAs. Furthermore, the CAs accept that they are satisfied at the end of the interaction and that they are courteous to the customers. The nature of the courteousness may be as a result of interacting with the clients in the local language, Yoruba. On the other

hand, the customers agree that sometimes the CAs are courteous but mostly, they are formal or neutral in their attitude. Satisfaction as indicated by the CAs may be due to the tipping they get, that is, those that are fortunate to get it. In order words, it is likely that the CAs get satisfaction from knowing that someone appreciates them. This seems to be the case going by the condition of service recorded in the history of NIPOST. Moreover, the CAs indicate that they are polite to customers depending on their appearance which in turn is based on age followed by courteousness and lastly dressing of the customers. However the customers rate the order as age, dressing and courteousness last. Finally, both the statistical findings and the customers agree that gender has no effect on the expression of politeness.

From the examination of both the linguistic and the style employed by the participants in the interaction, some of the customers' opening moves expressed through greetings are always indications of willingness to do business. Again, there is a prevalent use of suspense by the staff while the customers supply the information. This indicates that the CAs have control over the interaction as they possess the various information needed at every juncture as well as the right to question while the customer have the obligation to answer and know what they are up against. Also, the CAs make use of more elliptical clauses than the customers while the customers use more of full clauses. These elliptical clauses perform multiple functions. The CAs use them in order to save both time and energy as they attend to numerous customers daily. Politeness in the interactions is accomplished through a series of moves and counter moves. It is mostly implied and sometimes expressed explicitly.

Information gathered from the analysis establish that both participants use polite expressions that build different rapport orientations in the interactions observed and these are determined mostly by the mood of both parties. The result points to the

fact that the staff make more use of *empathy*, *suggestion*, *advice, order* and employ *focus disapproval* than the customers. These strategies portray the CAs as having the power over the customers whenever and wherever they are used. The customers on the other hand, make use of *agreement, thanking, greeting, resentment, blunt disapprove*, express their *needs* directly and employ the use of *please* more than the staff. Whenever the customers do not employ the use *please*, probably eye contacts may have been made. These strategies again portray the customers as being at the receiving end in the encounters and have to curry for the favours of the CAs. The staff and the customers are at par in relation to *cooperation*, using *small talk* and *informal address*. The rest of the strategies are minimally used in the encounters.

The study concludes that though the CAs show a semblance of politeness, it is conditional because it depends on their mood and that of the customers. The politeness strategies employed are power implicated and are probably employed to redeem their already undermined status and image which have been eroded as a result of changes over the years within the establishment. It is believed that the staff use these styles to covertly enact their control of the encounter in order to re-establish some of the honour and prestige that working at the post office used to confer on the workers in those days. This is achieved through the preponderant use of *order* in their interaction with their customers which consolidates their identity construction revealed through preference to the use of Yoruba instead of English in conversation/interaction.

The study has opened up other avenues whereby a detailed examination of the various other variables or factors that can contribute to the expression of politeness can be carried out. It also suggests further studies that can take a closer look at the way prosodic features affect the linguistic expressions used in the interaction.

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1. CA : Daddy, *ibo ni* letter *yẹn lọ*.

(Daddy where is the letter going?)

Cust.: Within, *ní ìtòsí ni*, I mean Òyó state and I want to register it.

(Within, I mean within Oyo state and I want to register it.)

CA : [weighs the letter] N180

Cust.: For how long *ló máa fì débè*. (For how long will it take to get there?)

CA : Before Friday.

Cust.: *E jòó ṣé ẹ ní* calculator so that *màá lè fì* multiply *è nítorí kì í ṣe ẹyọ kan*.

(Please, do you have a calculator so that I can multiply because the letter is

more than one.)

CA : *Ẹ gbà* (Take)

Cust.: *Ẹ gba owó*, thank you.

CA : Okay.

2. Cust.: I want to buy stamp (Bringing out N500).

CA : How much? [Looking surprised]

Cust.: N50

CA : No change o, you can buy from the next counter.

Cust.: Alright.

3. Cust.: Please, can I use your pen?

CA : Take.

Cust.: Thank you and I want N100 stamp.

CA : Take.

Cust.: Thank you. Here is your pen.

4. Cust.: *Mo fé ra* stamp. (I want to buy stamps (a boy))

CA : *Èló*. (How much?)

Cust.: N150.

CA : *Gbà*. (Take)

5. Cust.: Please I want to use EMS speeedpost.

CA : let me see what you want to send.

Cust.: Take. [The customer a lady gives the parcel to the CA]

CA   : [Weighs it] It is N3000.

Cust.: Okay.

CA   : Fill this form.

Cust.: Okay. [Collects the form, fills it and gives it back to the CA]

CA   : Alright you can go.

Cust.: Thank you.

6. Cust.: I want to send a letter to Ilorin and I want to know how much it is going to
          Cost me.

    CA   : We have to see what you want to send first, so that we can know how much
           It is going to cost you depending on whether you want to register it or not.

    Cust.: Okay.

    CA   : Ordinary posting.

    Cust.: Yes.

    CA   : N50.

    Cust.: thank you.

7. Cust.: Give me four N50 stamps.

    CA   : Okay sir.

    Cust.: Thank you.

8. Cust.: I want to register and was directed to the other place (Angry).

    CA   : It is not you that I said to go there.

    Cust.: *Ẹ má da ènìyàn káàkiri* now.(Stop misdirecting people up and down.)

    CA   : *Ó dáa,* N100 *ni owó yin*. (Okay, your money is N100.)

    Cust.: Okay.

9. Cust.: *Ẹ jòó mo fé ra* stamp N200. (Please, I want to buy stamps, N200.)

    CA   : *Ẹ gbà*. (Take.)

    Cust.: *Ẹ jòó ibo la máa sọ ó sí*. (Please, where can I drop the letter?)

    CA   : *Ẹ lọ ó sí òhún yẹn*. (Go and drop it in that corner. [Pointing to a box])

10. Cust.: *Ẹ bá mi* weigh *è mo fé* register *è*. (Help me weigh this, I want to register it)

CA   : N300 *ni*. (Your money is N300)

Cust.: *Kí ló dé*? (Why?)

CA   : *Oye è nìyẹn*. (That's the price)

Cust.: Okay, no problem.

11. CA   : Sir, please I will not accept that letter.

Cust.: What! What do you mean?

CA   : The whole envelope is soiled by the red gum you have used.

Cust.: Okay, what do you want me to do?

CA   : Maybe you will get another envelope.

Cust.: But you saw me doing it and you didn't say anything.

CA   : [Silence].

12. Cust.: I want to post a parcel.

CA   : Where?

Cust.: London.

CA   : Do you want to register it.

Cust.: No.

CA   : Let me weigh it. N500.

Cust.: No Problem.

13. Cust.: Good morning, I want to buy a stamp.

CA   : How much?

Cust.: How much is it to Lagos?

CA   : Just N50.

Cust.: Eh eh okay bring it.

14. Cust.: *Ẹ káàáro, mo fẹ̀* send letter *sí* Germany.

   Good morning, I want to send a letter to Germany.

CA   : *Ṣé ẹ fẹ́* register *è*. (Do you want to register it?)

Cust.: *Bẹ́ẹ̀ ni*. (Yes)

CA   : *Ẹ mú un wá kí n* weigh *è*. (Bring let me weigh it.)

Cust.: *Ẹ gbà*. And *ẹ jòó kí ẹ* register *è dáadáa*.

   [Hands over the parcel] Take. Please help me do it properly.

CA : *Ẹ ma* worry *tí ẹ bá ti* register *è, ó* sure *pé ó máa débè.*

Don't worry, once you register it, it will get to its destination.

Cust.: *Ẹni tí mo fẹ* send *è sí náà ló ní kí n* register *è.*

The person that I am sending it to, suggested that I should register it.

CA : No problem.

Cust.: *Ẹ ṣe é.* (Thank you.)

15. Cust.: I want to buy stamps

CA: How much?

Cust.: N150

CA: Take

Cust.: [Pays and collects the stamps].

16. Cust.: *Ẹ jòó mo fè* weigh *kinní yìí.*

(Please I want to weigh this.) [Showing an envelope].

CA : *Ẹ mú un wá* (Bring it [Weighs it]) N700.

Cust.: Ah ah, *kí ló dé*? *Ó ti pò jù* now. (Ah what is it? It is too much now.)

CA : *Ṣé èmi ni* weigh, *àbí ẹ kò rí i wí pé nnkan tó tóbi lẹ gbé wá*?

(Am I the weigh or is it the big parcel that you brought.)

Cust.: Eh he, so what.

CA : *Ẹ wò ó, tí ẹ bá fé ra* stamp *ẹ dáhùn nítorí* other people.

(Look here, if you want to but stamp be fast because others are waiting.)

Cust.: Okay, okay *ẹ mú un wa.* (okay, okay bring it.)

CA : *Ṣé ẹ fẹ* register *è* now. (Do you want to register it now?)

Cust.: No, *mo ò* register *è.* (No, I don't want to register it.)

17. Cust.: Please, I want to collect some money sent to me from abroad.

CA 1: Be patient, the person who will attend to you will be with you any

moment from now [pointing to another counter attendant].

Cust.: It is you we are waiting for.

CA 2: What exactly do you want?

Cust.: I want to collect money sent from London.

CA 2: You will a form.

Cust.: Where is the form? I am tired of the queue and this one by one filling

of forms. Can't you tear it apart and look at it on the system?

CA: We can't tear it.

Cust.:   Alright.

18. Cust.: Please, how much stamp will it take to post a letter to Lagos?

CA: Fifty naira is required.

Cust.: Okay. Do you have gum?

CA: Not at all, there is no gum.

Cust.: Please where can I see gum to buy?

CA: Go outside, you will see it there.

Cust.: Thank you.

19. Cust.: Uncle, how long are we going to wait?

CA: Please be patient, we will soon be through.

Cust.: Please expedite action or how long are we supposed to wait before we
        can be allocated a post office box?

CA: Please be patient.

Cust.: Patient, patient, time is going and it will soon be dark.

CA: [smiling] Just be patient.

20. CA: The person who sent the money did not indicate what you are going to
        use to collect the money.

Cust.: But this is not my first time of using this card that I am showing you now.

CA: We only recognise three things: Driver's license, National identity card
        and Government identity card.

Cust.: May be I should call the person who sent the money so that you can talk to
        him.

CA: That is not possible because I can't out give another person's money.

Cust.: Please now, this is the ID card I normally use.

CA: Wait, let me see what I can do for you.

Cust.: Thank you.

21. Cust 1.: Please do you have gum?

CA   : No I don't have.

Cust 1.: [Silence] Saw one beside the countermen.

CA   : No don't want to … okay, see it. It is very little.

Cust 1.: [Silence , still looking at the countermen].

CA   : Okay. Use some, just a little.

Cust 1.: Thank you.

22. Cust.: Why is it that up till now the parcel I sent last month has not reached its destination?

CA: Because it was not registered.

Cust.:   I am not ready to register anything.

CA: Alright. What do you want from me now?

Cust.:   I want to send another one and I want you to weigh it and tell me the cost.

CA: Okay. It is N210.

Cust.:   Alright. You can see that I am a faithful customer. If it were another person, he will just buy N50 stamp and send it like that.

CA: The person can buy N50 stamp but it may not get to its destination.

Cust.:   Do not say that again. If one cannot move forward; one would definitely go back.

CA: N50 cannot take it abroad.

Cust.:   You know that postal services in Nigeria is not hundred percent efficient.

CA: Nigeria is not efficient.

Cust.:   How many months will this parcel take now?

CA: I am not the one who will take it there but I know that it will leave today.

Cust.:   Thank you.

23. Cust.: *Mo fé* post *nnkan*. (I want to post something)

CA   : *Ṣé ẹ fé* register *è*. (Do you want to register it)

Cust.: No *mi ò* register *è*. (I do not want to register it)

CA   : *Kí ló dé, kí ló wà ńbè*. (What do you have there?)

Cust.: Application karkar. (Just application)

CA   : *Ẹ ṣe*, normal posting. (Thanks, normal posting)

24. Cust.: Please I want to send a letter.

    CA : Where.

    Cust.: Lagos, and how much stamp am I going to buy?

    CA : It depends, we have N50, N100, N200 and so on, let me see what you want
    to send.

    Cust.: Don't worry.

    CA : You are funny o sister, do you think I want to check what is in your letter,
    at least the letter will come to us.

    Cust.: I know but let me put it in the envelope

    CA : Okay.

    Cust.: Take.

    CA : N100 stamp.

    Cust.: Alright.

25. Cust.: I want to register. (Showing a parcel)

    CA : Let me weigh it (Putting it on the weigh). N900 stamp.

    Cust.: Where am I going to buy the stamp.

    CA : You can buy from (Showing him stamps).

    Cust.: Thank you (Collecting the stamps and pasting them on the envelope). Take.

    CA : You didn't put the address.

    Cust.: Sorry, let me put it (Addresses the envelope).

    CA : Alright you can go.

    Cusi.: Thank you.

26. Cust.: *Ẹ jòó a fé* send cheque *yìí*. (Please, I want to send this cheque)

    CA : *Ẹ ka nnkan tó wà ní* glass *yẹn*

         (Read what is on the glass [Pointing to the glass partition]).

    Cust.: *Ṣé kò sí nnkan tí ẹ lè ṣe fún mi nípa è*.

         (Is there anything you can do for me?)

    CA : I am sorry o, there is nothing, cheque is prohibited here.

27. Cust.: Ẹ jòó ṣe N50 stamp *máa dé Èkó*?

         (Please, will N50 stamp take a letter to Lagos?)

    CA : *Ẹ jé kí n wò ó*. (Let have a look at what you want to send.)

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Cust.: *Ẹ gbà*. (Take.)

CA   : *Ó máa tó*. (It will be enough.)

Cust.: *Ẹ ṣe é*. (Thank you)

28. Cust.: *Ẹ jòó ẹ bá mi* weigh *é*. (Please, help me to weigh this)

    CA   : N120

    Cust.: *Ẹ jòó, ìgbà wo ló máa dé ibè*. (When will it get there?)

    CA   : Next week.

    Cust.: Okay, *ẹ ṣe é*. (Okay, thank you.)

29. Cust.: Please ma, I want to send this parcel and I want to register it.

    CA   : Where?

    Cust.: Lagos.

    CA   : [weighs the parcel] N250

    Cust.: Okay

30. Cust.: Help me to weigh this, I want to register it.

    CA: [weighs it] Your money is N300

    Cust.: Why is it so?

    CA: [Looks at customer in silence]

    Cust.: Okay no problem.

31. Cust.: Good afternoon, please I want to use EMS.

    CA: To where?

    Cust.: East

    CA: It's N1,365.

    Cust.; Ah! It is too much. What of registered mail?

    CA: It is N250

    Cust.: I will use registered mail.

    CA: Ok [Customer seals the envelop and writes the address]

    Cust.: Ok.

32. CA: What are you waiting for?

    Cust.: I'm waiting for the man in that counter [pointing to one].

CA: He is on break.

Cust.: How long is he going to stay?

CA: 1 hour

Cust.; I'm waiting so that we can finish what he was doing for me.

CA: Ok, come let me help you.

Cust.: Thanks.

APPENDIX II

Interview Questions for staff

1. How do you start your interaction with customers at the counter?
2. What kind of verbal expression do you notice about the customers when they approach the counter?
3. Do you find it difficult relating to them?
4. What do they say if services are not rendered on time?
5. Do you apologise to them if they are delayed?
6. Do you excuse yourself if you want to do something before attending to them?
7. What do you say to excuse yourself from the customers?
8. What are their responses to you?
9. Do customers elicit or seek for your help in doing certain things?
10. How do you help them?
11. When customers come for information, do you feel the need to offer them the information they need?
12. Are customers satisfied with the services you render?
13. In what ways do they express their satisfaction?
14. Are you always satisfied with customers' expressions when you have rendered all services to them?
15. Are there dos and don'ts in your organization?

Interview Questions for the Customers

1. Do the staff greet you when you approach the counter? Yes/No
2. Can you mention some of the expressions used by the staff?
3. Why do you think they use such expressions?
4. Do they include you in their talk when you are with them? Yes/No
5. Do you find it difficult to relate with them? Yes/No
6. If No, why?
7. Do they excuse themselves if they have to delay you? Yes/No
8. What do they say to excuse themselves?
9. Are you satisfied with their services? Yes/No
10. If Yes, how do you express your satisfaction?

11. If No, what do you think they can do to improve?

12. Have you had to quarrel with the staff because of their impoliteness?

13. Do you like the way the post office staff talk to you when you come to patronise them?

APPENDIX III

Questionnaire for Staff

A. Personal Data

1. Sex: Female _____ Male_____

2. Marital status: Married_____ Single_____ Widow_____ Divorced _____

3. Age _____

4. Qualification: Primary school ____ Standard six ____ School Cert.____

   NCE/OND _____ Professional/Graduate _____

5. Religion: Christianity _____ Islam _____ Others _____

6. State of origin: _____

7. Nationality: _____

8. How long have you been working here? _____

Section B

S/N		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I engage in recreational activities					
2.	I am exposed to language skill training					
3.	I prefer working here than any other Place					
4.	I feel alright coming to work when there is problem at home					
5.	I frequently handle aggressive/rude Customers					
6.	I sometimes handle rude/aggressive customers					
7.	I feel fine when a customer shows his/her status/superiority through language choice					
8.	I handle aggressive/rude customers by					
	Distracting myself with something					
	Talking to a co-worker					
	Not taking it personally					

	Losing my temper					
9.	I used to address customers in					
	a. Yoruba					
	b. Pidgin					
10.	My choice of language is due to politeness/ friendliness					
11.	I am satisfied with the customers' behaviour and attitude.					
12.	I am conscious of my customer' address to me					
13.	I make sure to be polite to the customers					
14.	Appearance determines my attitude to them.					
15.	I am polite to the customers according:					
	i. Their age					
	ii. Their friendliness					
	iii. Dressing					

Questionnaire for Customers

A. Personal Data

1. Sex: Female _____ Male_____

2. Marital status: Married_____ Single_____ Widow_____ Divorced _____

3. Age _____

4. Qualification: Primary school ___ Standard six ___ School Cert.___

                    NCE/OND _____ Professional/Graduate _____

5. Religion: Christianity _____ Islam _____ Others _____

6. State of origin: _____

7. Nationality: _____

8. How long have you been working here? _____

Section B

S/N		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I greet the staff as soon as I approach					
2.	I exchange pleasantries with the staff					
3.	The staff are sometimes emotional when there is a misunderstanding					
4.	The staff are courteous to me					
5.	My dealings with them are negative					
6.	I am not always happy when they delay me unnecessarily					
7.	The staff are satisfied with their job					
8.	The transactions are handled as expected					
9.	My appearance in terms of a. Age					
	b. Dressing					
	c. Friendliness affect their services					
10.	The female staff treat me better than the staff					
11.	My status does not affect their services					
12.	The staff make sure that they are as polite as possible					