

POLITENESS IN STAFF-CLIENTS INTERACTION: A STUDY OF NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY SERVICE ENCOUNTER

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Abstract:

This study focuses on the analysis of politeness strategies in some government public offices using Nnamdi Azikiwe University ASUU(teaching staff) members and College of Post Graduate Studies as study samples. The aim is to identify and describe politeness strategies applied by the officers in their daily encounters with their clients, paying attention to the politeness strategies effects and effectiveness in achieving their job objectives. We all have expectations as to how we desire to be addressed or talked to by people we meet in our day to day activities. The study of politeness therefore is the study of the ways in which these expectations are met or otherwise. Being polite linguistically involves speaking to people appropriately especially in public offices like such under study. Hence politeness is regarded as the linguistic expression of social relationships. The qualitative descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The study data were carefully collected using personal notes and observations. Politeness strategies were identified using Brown and Levinson (1987) as theoretical framework. The findings revealed that the most frequently used strategy is the positive politeness strategy of greeting between client and staff. For negative politeness, different strategies constitute the most used strategies while apologies are the least used. This study contributes to our understanding of politeness in institutional settings and provides insights for training staff in effective communication strategies to improve service quality. The study concludes that although the staff show semblance of politeness, it is conditional because it depends on their mood as well as the clients.

Key words:

Politeness, politeness Strategies; Face; Face-threatening acts; Service Encounter.

Introduction

Effective communication is the bedrock of successful service encounters, and politeness plays a vital role in shading clients' perceptions and experiences. In today's competitive service industry, organisations recognize the importance of delivering exceptional customer service to foster satisfaction, and retention. Nnamdi Azikiwe, a prominent institution is no exception. As a hub of specific service, its staff-client interactions significantly impact client satisfaction and overall reputation.

This study investigates the manifestation of politeness in staff-client interactions at Nnamdi Azikiwe, exploring the linguistic and non-linguistic strategies employed by staff to create a positive and respectful service environment. Drawing on theories of politeness of Brown and Levinson, (1987).

Language has been observed to perform numerous roles especially 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' as opined by Taiwo (1998:49). This opinion was complemented by Favinde (2007), when he noted that approximate proxemic and language use are needed in such a situation and this, to a large extent, determines the degree of sales. This is exemplified by wearing false smiles and using persuasive tones which serve different purposes needed by users to bring about desired end result. In using language in the public offices, at times conflicts are noted because of the exchange technique applied. Therefore to resolve it, courtesy or professional etiquette and experience of the staff are needed to achieve maximum benefit from the encounter through recasting the sentences used to portray some sort of politeness, understanding as well as the spirit of give and take.

Politeness is one of the linguistic tools used to explain verbal and non-verbal behaviors. So many scholars have carried out research regarding what constitute politeness.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987) in complementing Goffman's (1967) notion of face, they stated that face is comprised of positive and negative sides corresponding to positive and negative politeness found in every language where available linguistic strategies and local cultural differences prompt their use. In addition, Matsumoto (1989) avers 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 its acceptance by others.

Furthermore, Nwoye (1992) notes that in Igbo culture, there is a duality to the notion of face: individual and group. Individual face relates to itself-centeredness of the individual while group faces address ones need to act in conformity with socially accepted ways of behaving and not to act in ways that bring dishonor or shame on the group. The group needs are considered over and above the need of the individual. Therefore, it plays the role of maintaining social equilibrium and a friendly relation that enable users assume that their interlocutors are being cooperative, Leech (1983:82).

Politeness has been examined in various contexts. For instance in service encounter situation, Rieger (2001) examined communications in German supermarkets to determine whether German customers use and appreciate small 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. In the hospital industry, politeness plays important roles in determining service quality and customer satisfaction according to Winsted (1997); Smith (1998) and Sevarnt (2002).

This study is different from other studies carried out already such as research on the examiner-candidate viva voice discourse: A study of face threatening acts and politeness theory in a bilingual situation, Eruchalu,(2009); Face threatening and impoliteness strategies in post-graduate students and administrative staff, Oboko and Ikechukwu (2020), politeness in language use: a study of undergraduate of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (2014). It is novel in terms of its focus and the specific context which considers politeness in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, with particular reference to the ASUU unit and College of Post- graduate Studies.(cooperative workers) This study therefore tries to establish that during service delivery, polite expressions are used and also to see if there are relationship between politeness and some social variables.

However, the fact remains that there has not been to the best of the researcher's knowledge any study on politeness in staff-client interaction: with particular reference to ASUU unit and the College of Post-Graduate studies Nnamdi Azikiwe University cooperative staff service encounter where majority of people believe that the staff of the public offices such as those under study are overtly impolite. It is therefore on this background that this study seeks to identify that generally conceived impression.

This study therefore stands to fill the gap by identifying and analysing the politeness strategies encountered by clients in these public offices under study.

This study will be anchored on the following questions:

1. What are the types of politeness strategies found in conversations of staff-client in Nnamdi Azikiwe University service encounter under study?
2. How are those types of politeness strategies realised in staff- client conversations in those offices?

This study is pertinent not only to students and staff in public offices but also to all because it addresses an important aspect of social life. In rendering services to members of the public, there is need to look into how public servants relate to the people they serve. Academically, it enlightens the students on the proper use and application of language during interaction. Appropriate application of politeness strategies by staff-client interaction will facilitate growth of the institution and restore confidence of clients. It will equally help boost research on politeness strategies in public offices and enrich the study of it as appropriate in social life. Knowledge of when to say something, what to say and how to say it,

together with when to keep quiet are skills developed by few. This study will also enhance and enrich the study about politeness as appropriate in social life and also educate students and staff on how best to use language to communicate with others in social relationship or public setting. Therefore, it becomes important to see how politeness in language is used in these public offices under study as against general belief of existence of impoliteness in government public offices.

Research Methodology:

A total of twenty students and staff were purposely selected from the twonits. The students selected include doctoral and masters students (10) and non-teaching staff (10). The study is only limited to students' and administrative staff encounters who interact directly with the postgraduate students and members of ASUU in the selected institution. The researcher made use of a survey research design where a group of people is taken to be a representative of the entire group that is studied as Akuezuilo and Agu (2007:53) aver. The design suits this study because it studied a group and not the whole post-graduate students, members of ASUU and administrative staff of the selected units of the institution. The data were systematically collected through face-to-face observation, notes and recordings. The researchers employed interactional textual analysis of the excerpts to extract politeness strategies in language use. Twenty excerpts which was considered relevant to this study were selected. After a careful scrutunisation only fifteen excerpts that are considered representative of the whole were randomly selected for analysis. The selected data were viewed through the lens of Brown and Levinson's (1987) Face-saving theory. Both qualitative and descriptive methods of analysis were used in the study.

Theoretical Framework:

This research is anchored on Brown and Levinson's Face-Saving Theory which is regarded as the most well known theory of politeness. Brown and Levinson view politeness phenomena as a 'universal principle of human interaction', Malmakjar, (2004:425). Their theory of politeness has two main assumptions, thus:

1. It is related to the idea of model person (MP). Brown and Levinson see conversationalist as rational agents who think in a strategic way to select the available language choices of which they are conscious.
2. It is related to Goffman's (1967) notion of face upon which Brown and Levinson based their theory and later on they developed it to be the central part of their theory, Locher, (2004:66).

When having FTAs, Brown and Levinson propose five types of politeness strategies so as to redress face thus:

a. **Bald on Record:** In the light of this strategy, the speaker sticks to Gricean maxims of the cooperative principle as Brown and Levinson posit (1987:94): 'For our study, we can treat the bald on-record strategy as speaking in conformity with Grice's maxims'. This strategy does not minimize the threat to the hearer's face; it is used when the speaker's desire to do the FTA with maximum efficiency is more than his desire to satisfy the hearer's face, Ibid (95).

b. **Positive Politeness:** This strategy minimizes the threat to the hearer's face thus, the speaker, when applying this strategy, focuses on the hearer's satisfaction and conviction rather than on his desire to do the FTA. This strategy is not only used to redress the FTA, but also to create a kind of social and intimate relation between the hearers Friess, (2008:115).

c. **Negative Politeness:** This strategy is the most common in use among other strategies. It is characterized by Brown and Levinson (1987:70) as 'self-efficient, formality and restraint, with attention to H's- the hearer or redressed self-image centering on his want to be unimpeded'. This strategy minimizes the threat to the hearer's face and attempts to satisfy his negative face.

d. **Off-Record:** It is considered the most face- repressive strategy. In compliance with this strategy, there is more than one possible intention so that the speaker is not able to stick himself to particular intent, Friess, (2008:116). This strategy is regarded the most indirect form of speech acts. In other words, it is practiced to perform unconventionally indirect speech acts such as hint, metaphors and ironies, Cheng and Kong, (2009:95).

Literature Review:

Politeness:

As Thomas (1995:149) points out, there has been a great deal of interest in politeness in pragmatics and just as definitions of pragmatics vary, so too do definitions of politeness. Not only is the term used in different ways, but the term itself is not defined. Indeed, as Watts, Ide and Ehlich (1992:3) observe:

....one of the oddest things about politeness research is that the term ‘politeness’ itself is either not explicitly defined at all or else taken to be a consequence of rational social goals such as maximizing the benefit to self and other, maximizing the face-threatening nature of a social act, displaying adequate proficiency in the accepted standards of social etiquette, avoiding conflict, making sure that the social interaction runs smoothly, etc.

Another difficulty is pointed out by Kasper (1990:3206) noting the different meaning of the term in ordinary parlance and pragmatics. In the former,

‘politeness’ refers to proper social conduct and tactful consideration for others. LoCastro (1990:252) points out that the term ‘politeness’ is frequently confused with related folk terms like ‘etiquette’ and ‘manners’ and it has folk meanings that are not clearly distinguishable from its more technical or formal meanings. Indeed, the definition of ‘polite’ in Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary (1987) is in line with the folk meaning of the term, in the sense of referring to good manners and social correctness.

Someone who is polite has good manners and behaves in a way that is socially correct and considerate of other people’s feelings. Politeness describes things that you say or do simply because it is socially correct to do or say them, rather than because you mean them sincerely, (1987:1109).

In Britain ‘politeness’ is typically used to describe negative politeness which is presumed to be ‘a good thing’ Lang, (2003:27). In this respect, I believe that the Japanese translation of ‘politeness’, ‘teinei’ also has a similar connotation. According to Hori(1986) quoted in Lang, (2003:27), the Japanese concept of being polite includes only negative politeness.

These views of politeness coincide with what Watts et al (1992a) have termed ‘first-order’ politeness in their scheme in which they distinguish between the folk and pragmatic definitions of the term, the latter being ‘second-order’ politeness in their classification. Second-order politeness is located within a theory of social behavior and language use and is not equated with any moral or psychological disposition towards being nice to one’s interlocutor.

Politeness refers to the use of communication strategies intended to maintain mutual face and to achieve smooth communication taking into account human relationships, Lang, (2003:28).

Being polite is one of the ways of conducting speech quality. It is not simply as a matter of saying ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ Holmes (1995: 296). Meyerhoff (2006:82) is of the opinion that ‘it is the actions taken by competent speakers in a community in order to attend a possible social or interpersonal disturbance’. Being polite generally is taking other peoples feeling which make them feel comfortable and using appropriate choices of linguistic resources to create relationship with others. Politeness is a system of interpersonal relationship used to facilitate interaction by minimizing conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interaction.

Different scholars present distinct definitions for the pragmatic term-politeness. Some of the definitions are purely linguistic, while others are of social or socio-cognitive roots and some others have been discursive in nature, Haugh, (2003:12).

Lakoff (1975:64) defines politeness as a notion developed by societies in order to reduce friction in personal communication.

Leech (1983:19) views politeness as simply strategic conflict avoidance that can be measured in terms of the degree of effort put into the avoidance of a conflict situation.

According to Arndt and Janney (1985:282), it is interpersonal supportiveness. This definition is based on the strategic function of some speech acts that may precede the main speech act.

Brown and Levinson (1987:1) see politeness as a complex system for softening face threats. They base their definition of politeness on face theory which is originally seeded by Goffman (1967).

In the same vein, Ide (1989:22) sees politeness as language associated with smooth communication.

Kasper (1990:194) in her definition of politeness is of the view that politeness is a part of human efforts to make their communication more successful and courteous. That is, referring to the strategies available to conversational interlocutors to eliminate the danger and minimise the antagonism.

Sifanou (1992:86) says that politeness is the set of social values which instructs interactants to consider each other by satisfying shared expectation.

Eelen (2001:128) states that to be polite is always to act appropriately...according to the hearer's expectation.

Face

Brown and Levinson in Wardhaugh (2006: 276) developed a face theory based on the principles of our desire to be liked and to not be imposed upon. Yule (1996:60) states that 'politeness in interaction can be defined as the way to show awareness to others face'.

Face is defined as the public self-image every adult projects, which must be attended to in interaction. It involves taking into consideration the feeling of others when we speak to them.

The self-esteem which our personality attracts is what is referred to as face. Face is very fragile in nature. However, certain level of mutual cooperation is required for people to have a successful interaction that will be free from posing threats to one another's face. They engage in face works to save their face according to Goffman, (1967:12). Further, he notes that to study face saving is to study the multiple rules of social interaction.

Face Threaten Act: FTA

Intrinsic FTA: The assumption of the universality of face and rationality is intuitively the case that certain kind of acts intrinsically threatens face, namely: those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and or of the speaker. By 'act' we have in mind what is intended to be done by a verbal or non- verbal communication, just one or more 'speech acts' can be assigned to an utterance.

First Distinction: Kinds of Face Threatened: We may make a first distinction between acts that threaten negative face and those that threaten positive face. Those acts that primarily threaten the addressee's negative face want, by indicating that the speaker does not intend to avoid impeding another's freedom of action include:

1. Those acts that predicate some future act A of H, and in so doing put some pressure on H to do the act A:
 - a. Orders and requests
 - b. Suggestions, advice
 - c. reminding
 - d. threats, warning, dares
2. Those acts that predicate some positive future act of S towards H, and in so doing put some pressure on H to accept or reject them and possibly to incur a debt:
 - a. offers
 - b. promises
3. Those acts that predicate some desire of S towards H or H's goods, giving H reason to think that he may have to take action to protect the object of S's desire or give it to S:
 - a. Compliments, expression of envy or admiration
 - b. Expressions of strong emotions towards H.

Those acts that threaten the positive- face want, by indicating that the speaker does not care about the addressee's feelings, wants etc – that some important respect he doesn't want H's wants include:

- Those that show that S has a negative evaluation of some aspect of H's positive face:
 - a. Expression of disapproval, criticism, contempt or ridicule, complaints and reprimands, accusations, insults (that he doesn't like/ want one or more of H's wants, acts, personal characteristics, goods , belief)

- b. Contradictions or disagreement, challenges.
- Those that show that S doesn't care about H's positive face:
 - a. Expression of violence
 - b. Irrelevance, mention of taboo topics including those that are inappropriate in the context
 - c. Bringing of bad news about H or good news about S.

Second Distinction: Threats to H's face versus threats to S's secondly:

We may distinguish between acts that primarily threaten H's face and those that threaten primarily S's face. To the extent that S and H are cooperating to maintain face, the later FTA's also potentially threaten H's face. FTAs that are threatening to S include:

a. **Those that offend S's negative face**

- Expressing thanks
- Acceptance of H's thanks or H's apology
- Excuses

a. **Those that directly damage S's positive face:**

- Apologies
- Acceptance of a compliment
- Breakdown of physical control over body, bodily leakage, stumbling or falling down.
- Self-humiliation, covering, acting stupid, self-contradiction

Politeness Strategies

In dealing with politeness strategies, people should also be aware of the context itself, Politeness does not involve the form and the words themselves but the function and intended social meaning. Being polite seems like to be dealt with an indirectness in which the language form may differ from the language function. People may say in question form to get an indirect function.

Brown and Levinson in Wardhaugh (2006: 276) determine politeness on how to treat others' face. They add that there are four categories of a politeness strategy. First, it is characterized as a direct order or bald on-record strategy. "The bald on-record strategy does nothing to minimize threats to the hearer's face, Yule, (1996: 50); Cutting (2002: 45). This kind of strategy is indicated by the speaker's act in which the utterance indicates a direct speech act which may cover an inoperative device, such as suggestion, request, invitation, offer or order.

The second type of politeness strategy is Positive Politeness. This kind of politeness is oriented towards the positive "face" of the listener. The speaker treats the listener as a member of an in-group, a friend or a person whose wants and personality traits are known and liked. The positive politeness strategy shows the speakers recognize that the hearer has a face to be respected (Cutting 2002: 48). The aim of saving positive face is to demonstrate solidarity and closeness, appealing to friendship, making other people feel good and emphasizing that both speaker and listener have the same goal. A Common way of doing positive politeness strategies are seeking agreement and avoiding disagreement, Yule, (1996: 62), Cutting (2002: 48); Wardhaugh, (2006: 277). Doing positive politeness has also a relationship with the cooperative principles in which doing positive politeness sometimes the speaker needs to violate the cooperative principles (Cutting 2002: 48).

The third characterization of politeness strategy according to Brown and Levinson's theory is Negative Politeness. It is oriented toward satisfying the listener's negative face. An action, phrase or utterance that indicates attention is being paid to the negative face wants of an interlocutor Meyethoff, (2006: 86). It is, often, achieved through showing deference. Furthermore, it is the kernel of respect behaviour. Negative politeness enjoys both on-record delivery and redress of a Face Threatening Act (FTA). An FTA is an act which threatens the positive or negative face of the addressee Yule, (1996: 61). The negative politeness strategy recognises the hearers face, but it also admits that the speakers are in some way imposing on the listeners. Negative politeness strategies deal with the speaker avoidance to impose others by emphasizing the importance of the other time and concerns. It can be done by using apology and hesitation or a question to give the listener opportunity to say no.

The last characterization of politeness strategy is an Off-record Politeness. A communicative act which is done by off-record in such a way is not possible to attribute only one clear communicative intention to that act. Off-record utterances are essentially indirect uses of language Cutting, (2002- 45). Being indirect in communication strategy will give the hearer retreat and option behind the literal meaning of the words. Off-record indirect strategies take some of the pressure off as people avoid the direct FTA of asking for something. To construct an off-record utterance, one says something that is either more general or actually different from what one means.

Presentation of Data and Analysis

Research Question one:

What are the types of politeness strategies found in interaction of ASUU and College of post graduate studies staff- client service encounter?

Excerpt One:

Client: Please feel free to correct any mistake found out or will it be much for you?.

Staff: Ok, I will do that but you will pay for this extra service (smiling).

Client: No problem, I will.

Excerpt Two:

Client: So is it ok if I submit the form now?

Staff: No it's no longer acceptable.

Client: But I came yesterday and you weren't on seat.

Staff: It's ok, write your name in that (pointing at) register.

Excerpt Three:

Client: Please, can I get your audience now?

Staff: (frowning) for what?

Client: Please don't be offended.

Staff: It's ok, go ahead.

Analysis:

In excerpt one the client adopted the use of polite marker 'please' which helps to put the staff in a better state of mind to attend to him as he expected. He applied solidarity in addressing the staff and created fellowship face through the interaction, resulting to the satisfaction of both.

In excerpt two, the client putting the request this way not only recognizes the hearer's need to respond to the client but also expresses solidarity and friendship, positive strategy was realized.

Excerpt three, the client applied negative politeness by using the strategy to minimize the hearer's threat that may have occurred on his face by winning the attention desired and got satisfaction.

Excerpt Four:

Client: Are you free sir?

Staff: Not really but what do you want? Good morning sir.

Excerpt Five:

Client: Good morning ma.

Staff: Good morning to you. How may I help you?

Client: Ooh, I want to collect my transcript.

Staff: Sorry I can't attend to you now.

Client: Ma'am, please I'm using it for admission purposes.

Staff: And you are coming now?

Client: Please ma, it is due to the nature of my work.

Staff: ok.

Excerpt Six:

Client: I'm sorry to bother you but I just wanted to ask if I can use one of your pens?

Staff: I don't share my pen.

Client: I know, just a second here please.

Staff: Looked at him to deduce his facial expressions.

Client: Please ma.

Staff: Ok take (gave out the pen).

Excerpt Seven:

Client: Good morning sir.

Staff: Good morning too.

Client: Please I was not here when numbers were given.

Staff: What is my business?

Client: Sir, please don't be offended.

Staff: But you know that such is not allowed here.

Client: Sir, please I'm sorry

Staff: Ok.

Analysis:

From the excerpt four the client employed off-record strategy to remove the possibility of imposing himself on the addressee. The client needed to give hint of what is being requested for the hearer to decipher the meaning and possibly oblige.

In excerpt five the conversation started with exchange of pleasantries, then the client put up request applying bald-record strategy because the client is in close (friend) relationship with the staff as a colleague.

In excerpt six the client applied negative politeness to avoid imposition to the staff and to maintain social distance.

In excerpt seven the exchange starts with greetings and an honorific, 'sir', to signal the power distance between him and the staff before stating his reason for coming to see the staff. It is discovered that the client in this conversation was able to make linguistic choices to indicate that social relationship. The client achieves this through the use of polite form like 'sir, please' and the use of apology- 'I'm sorry' in an attempt to make up for the previous action that interfered with the addressee's face wants.

Research Question Two:

How are those types of politeness strategy realized in staff-client conversation in those offices?

Excerpt Eight:

Client: Please, I want to convert my teller to receipt.

Staff: Teller for what fee?

Client: School fee.

Staff: (Mtchew) sighed and muted some words.

Client: Please ma'am.

Staff: Take this register (handed him a register) and find your name and number.

Excerpt Nine:

Client: Good morning madam.

Staff: Same to you with a smile.

Client: I want to know my cooperative status.

Staff: Are you sure I can do that now?

Client: I can wait for you because I can't afford to come back.

Staff: Ok, (suspended what she is doing) what is your pin number?

Excerpt Ten:

Client: Good day ma I want to buy a form.

Staff: Which form? (without attention rather pressing her phone)

Client: PGDE.

Staff: Silent without a word.

Client: Excuse me ma!

Staff: Check online, see the link (pointing to a pasted document on the wall).

Client: Ok, thanks.

Excerpt Eleven:

Client: Good day!

Staff: Good day to you. What do you want cheerfully?

Client: I want to know about ASUU cooperatives land.

Staff: Are you a staff, what department?

Client: English department.

Staff: Do you have any proof? (Jokingly)

Staff: Just give me a minute.

Excerpt Twelve:

Staff: Sir, what do you want?

Client: I want to submit my file.

Staff: What file?

Client: Admission file.

Staff: Hmm... you will pay for late submission.

Client: Please something happened to me.

Staff: How does it concern me?.

Client: Please!.

Staff: Bring it sir.

Client: I don't know if I arranged if properly oo.

Staff: Its ok, I will take care of it.

Client: Thank you.

Excerpt Thirteen:

Client: Excuse me, ma'am.

Staff: Yes, what can I do for you?.

Client: Please, I want to collect my result.

Staff: I don't have the time now (turned and continued discussing with a colleague).

Client: (After a while), ma'am I'm waiting ooo.

Staff: Looked at him (Frowned), what is your name?

Client: John Ekpo.

Staff: Here is it.(Handed over a copy of his result after signing his name).

Client: Thank you very much.

Excerpt Fourteen:

Client: Good morning ma'am.

Staff: How may I help you?.

Client: Can I use the staple machine?

Staff: Yes, take (giving him the machine reluctantly and the client collected with a smile)

Client: Thank you.

Excerpt Fifteen:

Client: Good morning, I want to submit my form.

Staff: Looked at the client without a word.

Client: Ma'am please help me.

Staff: Bring it!

Client: Take (handed over the form) please help me do the needful.

Staff: Why didn't you read the instructions?

Client: Stood speechless.

Staff: Don't worry, I will.

Client: Thank you.

Analysis:

In excerpt eight the client used imperative prefaced with 'please' to open and offer information for negotiation. The utterances from the staff showed the willingness to cooperate as he also made use of imperatives in replying which gave him the staff position as having power over the client because he has all the information needed by the client to achieve the objective. The declarative with 'please' that opens the interaction and other information for negotiation also functions as a request for information which expects compliance. The compliance plays the role as an indication for agreement and cooperation. Solidarity strategy was at play.

Excerpt nine: The interaction started with exchange of pleasantries. The client stated the need (knowing NUPEMCO status). The staff asked what the pin number is and offered the desired information to the client through positive politeness strategy which made the staff feel good and suggested friendship.

In excerpt ten, the interaction opened with a greeting before stating the need for coming. The utterances showed willingness to cooperate. These two discourses form or function to intimate as on the

relationship enacted during the encounter. Both forms made the client dependent on the replies of the staff for his next moves.

In excerpt eleven, the interaction started with greetings to create friendly interaction. The client then stated the need which is 'ASUU cooperative land'. The staff asked the client to ascertain if he is a staff as it is only meant for staff of the unit/ institution. On getting the needed clarification, the staff responded using negative politeness of face saving.

In excerpt twelve the interaction started with honorific, 'sir', to the client and interrogation of what he wanted, acts as a face saving approach from the staff which gave the client a good atmosphere to state his need and finally left satisfied.

In excerpt thirteen, the interaction started with an apology from the client as a means of saving staff's face and create friendship which the staff accepted and reciprocated cheerfully and inquired 'what can I do for you'. The client apologetically made his intention known to the staff based on the friendship, relationship the staff attended to the client's need and he left with thanks for her attention.

In excerpt fourteen, the opening expression started with greetings, then request for the use of the staff's staple machine by the client. The staff agreed to the request to lend her the staple machine. The staff offered the requested item with an impressive 'take', with a fallen tone which is taken by the client as a sign of kindness. The act of thanking by the client is a solidarity strategy extended to the staff. Solidarity politeness strategy was discovered.

In excerpt fifteen, greeting in relation to the opening of the interaction was credited to the client which the staff supplied the second part. The client then made a declarative statement and initiated the discussion 'submission of forms'. Tact and solidarity politeness strategies were discovered. Tact in the form of conversational politeness marker 'please' help me do the needful, as well as small talks put the staff in a better state of mind to attend to the client as he expected.

Findings and Conclusion:

The information gathered from the analysis above established that staff and client used polite expressions that build different rapport orientations in the interactions observed and these are determined mostly by the mood of both parties. The results point to the fact that the staff made more use of empathy, advice and order. These strategies portray the staff as having the power over the client whenever and wherever they are used. The client, on the other hand, made greeting, express their needs directly, appreciation and employ the use of 'please' more than the staff. These strategies portray the client as being at the receiving end in the encounters and have a curry for the favour of the staff.

The study concludes that the staff of the units studied disproved the generally conceived opinion of impoliteness during service delivery while attending to their clients with adequate politeness and small talks more often which gave them (clients) full satisfaction most times. Though, it is conditional because it depends on their mood and that of the clients. The politeness strategies employed are power implicated and are probably employed to their already undermined image.

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