

## IMPOLITENESS IN STAFF–CLIENT INTERACTION: A STUDY OF NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTRE AWKA, NIGERIA

**Marcel Afam Ezechukwu**  
&  
**Professor Ephraim Chukwu**  
Email:ma.ezechukwuunizik.edu.ng  
Phone: 07037866888  
Department of English Language and Literature  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

We all have expectations of how we desire to be addressed or talked to by people we meet in our daily activities. This study of impoliteness therefore is the study of the way in which these expectations are not met. Being linguistically impolite involves breaking of free flow of communication especially in public offices like such under study. The study examines the level of impoliteness inherent in staff-client interaction at the personnel unit of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Medical Centre Awka, Nigeria. The study adopts qualitative method using tape recording, personal notes and observation as tools for data collection. The data collected were analysed to answer the study questions using Brown and Levinson's (1987) face-saving view and Culpeper's (1996) Impoliteness theories. The findings reveal that the staff interactions with their clients were characterized by Face Threatening Acts (FTA). Also, the treatment received by clients does not match with the need for establishing those units under study. The study concludes that there is need for orientation on language use among staff-clients in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Medical Centre, Awka.

Keywords: Politeness, impoliteness, face, rudeness, FTA, impoliteness strategy.

### **Introduction**

The subject of impoliteness is considered to be one of linguistic researcher's most desirable subjects. Several researches have been carried out to analyse the principles of impoliteness used in various ways by people. As a linguistic phenomenon with obvious social reflexes impoliteness has been approached from many and diverse perspectives within linguistic research with an interest in context and socio-cultural matters like socio-linguistics, pragmatics, ethnography of speaking, discourse and conversation analysis, social cognition, language acquisition etc.

Impoliteness varies across region. It has been discovered that notions of what is considered polite or impolite differ between communities where the same language is spoken.

Over the years, the definition of the notion of impoliteness has undergone numerous changes and additions. Culpeper (2011, p. 65) for instance, views impoliteness as 'the use of strategies designed to have the negative effect or social disruption' which the aim is to attack the face that is the concept of self that is emotionally sensitive.

Impoliteness, as many scholars believe is an independent phenomenon in its own terms, should really be treated so. In contrast, Leech (2014, p.25) says 'the best way to start theorizing about impoliteness is built on a theory of politeness, which is a closely related phenomenon or rather, the direct opposite of impoliteness'.

This study brought to light the repetition and predictabilities that social interactions entails as well as the communicative subtleties that are embedded within the genre. One such subtlety is the way in which sociability and efficiency are managed in the primary transactional exchanges as evidenced in the performance of repeated non-essential activities for the transaction to be affected, such as the presence of greetings is 'access ritual'. Goffman, (1971, p.79) asserts, 'in the openings, fare wells to coordinate interactional causation in closing and the conversationally realisation of essential ones. Indeed, it is the

formalised nature of such exchanges with rule-bound structures that has attracted impoliteness scholars to examine interaction in this type of institutional setting.

The understanding of this phenomenon-impoliteness or impolite behaviour is solely a matter of situation together with how a particular context is perceived by the interlocutor. However, to provide a clearer understanding of this field of study which continues to expand and which scholars and researchers have pointed out that need to be studied more out of many other areas, the impoliteness between staff and clients at personnel unit of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Medical Centre Awka, Nigeria.

Another important methodological step forward has been the inclusion of the non-verbal aspects of impoliteness, such as prosody, intonation, facial expression and body position. This has led to multi-model analysis which provides a more complete picture of the impoliteness phenomena, Culpeper et al, (2017, p.80,2011, p.145-152); Kadar and Haugh, (2013, p.129-133).

The bulk of research into impoliteness in public offices or service encounters revolves around dyadic, face-to-face interactions in a multitude of settings and adopts mainly second-order politeness perspectives, that is, they make use of theoretical expert notions and taxonomies of impoliteness which are applied to the data scrutiny as asserts Elene,(2001, p.20).

Finally, worthy of note that in almost all the government or public offices, the treatment given out to people does not match the need of those establishments as researcher observed during this study. The impolite and or rude attitudes of some staff most at times leaves one to think that there is an overflow of aggression which trigger them to do more of impoliteness or rudeness during service encounter. Effective communication is vital in healthcare, where interpersonal interactions significantly influence patient outcomes. Despite politeness research, impoliteness remains understudied, particularly in Nigerian healthcare contexts. This study addresses this key knowledge gap.

This study is anchored on two theories: Brown and Levinson's (1978) and (1987): a politeness strategy which is a face saving view of politeness and Culpeper's (1996): Impoliteness super- strategies derived from Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies thus: Bald-on-record, positive, negative, sarcasm or mock and withheld impoliteness.

The concept of culture has a great level of variations. Even within the same big cultural boundaries, we can observe different values and language habits among sub-groups. Wierzbick (1985, p.236) argues that cultural norms reflected in speech acts differ not only among different language cultures but also among various regional and social subgroups. Eelen (2001, p.30) also notes that culture can be used to talk about any kind of group, from those within a very narrow area to those within a large boundary.

Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies which is a face-saving view of politeness and Culpeper's impoliteness super-strategies theories have been studied in various fields and languages but not at the personnel unit of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Medical Centre, Awka Nigeria. Initial problem of this study was derived from the observation across public offices, the nature of the interaction being conducted in a verbal interchange that is often evident in the manner in which it is done as in any overt performative acts. In other words, the researcher recognizes what people are doing in verbal exchanges not so much by what they overtly claim to be doing as in final linguistic detail of their utterances. This study therefore, stands to fill the lacuna by analysing the impoliteness encountered by clients in these government public offices under study.

The aim of this current research is to examine impoliteness in the interaction between staff-client of Personnel unit of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Medical Centre Awka, Nigeria.

The following research questions will aid this study to achieve its objectives:

1. What are the factors that trigger impoliteness during staff-client interactions?
2. Does the staff do more of impoliteness or rudeness?
3. What are the contextual factors that trigger each?

4. What is the issue of intentionality and unintentionality with respect to impoliteness and rudeness?

In rendering services to the public and for continuous patronage as well as projecting good image of the unit under study there is need to look into how staff relate with their clients which portrays organizational image. This leads to the use of language during service encounters because words are powerful tools in creating, sustaining or destroying who and what we stand for.

This study is of pertinent significance not only to the students and staff in the academic or public offices but also to all and sundry because it analyses the type of impoliteness strategies used during interaction in public offices. Academically, it enlightens the students on the proper use of language and brings to the reader the knowledge of face-saving view of politeness, impoliteness super-strategies theories which invariably prepare them to be good representation of any organization they may find themselves in the future.

This study is limited to Personnel unit of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria.

## **Literature Review**

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### **Politeness**

One of the phenomena in communication is politeness which can be found in daily interaction. It is one of the studies in linguistics which theory is pragmatics, where language is assigned the status of a sociocultural construct that is used strategically by rational language users in context, considering possible perlocutionary effects their utterances may trigger as regards negative and positive politeness. Politeness is a manner or etiquette in communication that is aimed to respect each other in communication. Politeness includes the socio-pragmatic study which is mapping the shape, meaning strength and contexts that are sometimes mandating and sometimes not, Rose and Kasper, (2001, p.51).

It is used to understand discourse in society. During interaction people need to know how to make their conversation run well and smoothly. Therefore, people need to use politeness strategy to get a good response from the hearers. This strategy is applied to minimize conflict as well as to sustain smooth and harmonious interpersonal relationship such as the use of appropriate social behaviour and refer to evaluative judgements about social conformity Spencer-Oatey,(2000,p.280).When politeness strategy is applied in communication or during communication, it means we respect each other and decrease misunderstanding.

Politeness describes a behaviour which is somewhat formal and distancing where intention is not intruded or imposed. Being polite means expressing respect towards the person that we are talking to and avoiding offending them or expresses positive concern for others, as well as imposing distancing behaviour, Holmes, (1995, p.5).

#### **Face**

In the word of Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61)'the reason why people choose to be polite is that they are concerned about maintaining two different faces, thus;

Positive face: the want of every member is that his /her want be desirable to at least some others.

Negative face: the want of every 'competent adult member' that his /her actions be unimpeded by others.

Face is something that is emotionally invested, and can be lost, maintained and must be constantly attended to during interaction. Generally, people cooperate as well as assume each other's corporation in maintaining face during communication, such corporation is based on the mutual vulnerability of face.

Negative face, with its derivative politeness of non-imposition is familiar as the formal politeness that the notion 'politeness' immediately conjures up. But positive face and its derivative forms of positive politeness are less obvious. Therefore, the reduction of a person's public self-image or personality to a

want that is one's wanted to be desirable to at least and some others can be justified in this way. The most salient aspect of a person's personality in interaction is what that personality requires of other interactants in particular, it includes the desire to be understood, approved of, liked or admired. The next step is to represent this desire as the want to have one's goals as desirable.

In the special sense of 'wanting' that we develop, we can then arrive at positive face as here defined. The definition of positive face is adequate only if certain interpretations are born e in mind. Firstly, the wants that a member wants others to find desirable may actually have been satisfied, that is, they may now be for past wants represented by present achievements or possessions. Again, the wants may be for non-material as well as material things: for values-love, liberty, piety or for actions like going to sports or playing tennis, Brown and Levinson, (1987, p.62).

### **Impoliteness:**

Impoliteness belongs to the other end of politeness and it includes rudeness, aggression and non-verbal behaviours that threaten the face need of individuals. In different opinion of many scholars, 'it is a communicative act which tends to attack face and cause social conflict and disharmony among people' as opined by Culpeper, Bousfield and Wichman (2003, p.45); Kienpointer (1997, p.60) and Beeds (1995, p.35). A better description according to Cupper is that proffered by Tracy and Tracy according to them, 'impoliteness are communicative acts perceived by members of a social community which is often intended by speaker to be purposefully offensive' (p.20). 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 of 1 and 2.

According to Bucholtz (1999) 'It is linguistic indexes that individuals employ to distance themselves from a rejected identity' (p.211). It is an attempt to exercise power over one's interlocutors whilst simultaneously ensuring that one's interlocutors are overtly offended in the process, Bousfield (p.141). Impoliteness is linguistic expressions encoded through language and accorded behaviour that can be heard or seen. Impoliteness therefore according to Spencer Oatey is people's judgement about the social appropriateness of verbal and non-verbal behaviour (p.95). It is not per se behaviour that is impolite but impoliteness is an estimated identity of people's behaviour as it concerns their unobjective inference about social appropriateness. Primarily, inferences from people are based on their credence about behaviour in terms of imposition of what is given and accepted. Lay down attitude is a behaviour that is considered as legally or socially mandatory which people are mandated to produce and others are expected to accept it. People are compelled to avoid it while others do not have right to experience it at all. Any behaviour that appears in this form is considered impolite according to Kasper (1990, p.193-218). It is noteworthy from the preceding that troubles can emanate as a result of many variables like choice of language that incorporate power, imposition with particular reference to mood, status, gender, occupation age etc.

### **Rudeness and Impoliteness**

The concept has lots of definitions but this study has selected a few out of them that are pertinent and mostly adopted by scholars. Rondina and Workman (2005,p.3) avert that 'Rudeness is basically anything you say or do or don't say or do that offends someone else, making them feel uncomfortable or inconvenienced'. It is also defined by Bubrin, (2011,p.87) as 'insensitive or disrespectful behaviour engaged in by a person that displays a lack of regards for others'. The most common definition is introduced by Beebe (1995); who sees rudeness as a face threatening act (FTA) or feature of an FTA such as intonation- which violates a socially sanctioned norm of interaction of the social context in which it occurs' cited in Culpeper, (2001, p.19). The special thing in Beebe's definition is that he deals with rudeness not only as a violation of the norms followed in the society. In other words, he views it from both personal and social perspectives.

According to Segarra rudeness is always intentional' The message behind rudeness is more of ignorance and indifference of good social manners and intentional discourtesy' (2007, p.141). While impoliteness on the other hand is either intentional or accidental and this is what Culpeper implies in his second definition of impoliteness as what comes when:

- a. The speaker communicates face- attack intentionally or
- b. The hearer perceives and or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-attacking or a combination of the two as cited in Bousfield and Locher, (2008, p.131). Although according to Culpeper, impoliteness is linked to intentionality in the first place of his definition, the rest of it refers to the opposite and especially the word or by which he means that a speaker may not have the intention to attack the hearer's face, but his behaviour is perceived as impolite by the hearer. Terkourafi, (2008) concerns with this assertion in his definition of impoliteness and rudeness by viewing impoliteness as intentional and sometimes accidental due to the hearer's linguistic incompetence unlike rudeness which is constantly intentional cited in Arendholez, (2003,p.95). The minor difference between them is that impoliteness is more used in academic than rudeness. Again, rudeness is related to humanities and especially history while impoliteness is associated with linguistics and communication, Culpeper,(2011,p.79).

### Types of Rudeness

1. Rudeness of Word: This type of rudeness stakes place when someone curses; uses street language; keep interrupting others while they are talking; say very dirty jokes or asks people he does not have an intimate relation with personal questions.
2. Rudeness of Action: In this type of rudeness those actions (verbal or non-verbal) are used to disdain and be little people like disregarding others 'feelings and opinion; being uncivil with others or neglecting the basic rules of etiquette.
3. In action Rudeness: This type of rudeness is about what a person does not do rather than what he/she do. It includes the omission of necessary behaviours such as neglecting people while they are talking; not responding to help requests from others; or being in different and careless.

### Impoliteness Strategies

Culpeper distinguishes five super strategies by which impoliteness can be created and received. They are:

1. Bald on Record Impoliteness: This strategy is employed when there is much face at risk and when a speaker intends to damage the hearer's face and thus the impolite utterance will be performed directly and clearly, Bousfield, (2008, p.92). Culpeper uses here the concept of face-attack-act (FAA), in opposition to FTA, in order to identify face attack where there is a deliberate intention on the part of the speaker Mullany and Stockwell, (2010, p.71). Wiczorek (2013, p.46) elucidates the difference between Brown and Levinson's bald on record politeness and Culpeper's bald on record impoliteness. While the former is applied in particular situations where the risk to face is minimal without any attention to attack the hearer's face, the latter is used when there is much risk to the speaker and the speaker intends to damage the other's face.
2. Positive Impoliteness: This strategy is used to damage the hearer's positive face want (his desire to be acceptable) Bousfield and Locher, (2008, p.34). In the incarnation of his model (2005), Culpeper adds a range of sub strategies impoliteness including;
  - Ignoring or snubbing the other
  - denying common ground with the hearer
  - selecting a sensitive or understandable topic to talk about
  - using inappropriate identity markers
  - being disinterested and unsympathetic with the hearer
  - looking for disagreements
  - using obscure language and inserting secretive words with the discourse
  - using taboo words, cited in Mullany and Stockwell, (2010, p.72).
3. Negative Impoliteness: This strategy is designed to attack the hearer's negative face want (his/her desire to be free from imposition) Thieleman and Kosta (2013, p.239).

Negative impoliteness, in accordance with Culpeper's (2015) involves the following sub-strategies as cited in Mullany and Stockwell (2010,p.72)

- scorn
- frighten
- ridicule

And invade the hearer's space literally or metaphorically.

4. Mock Impoliteness: In this strategy the speaker performs the FTA using politeness strategies which are clearly insincere, Thielemann and Kosta, (2013,p.239). In other words, sarcasm means the use of one or more sub-strategies which are superficially suitable and acceptable but deeply they have the opposite meaning, Bousfield,(2008,p.95).

5. Withhold Politeness: This strategy occurs when the speaker does not perform politeness where it is expected as in keeping silent when the speaker is supposed to thank the hearer, Thielemann and Kosta, (2013, p.239).

### **Types of Impoliteness**

Culpeper proposes three types of impoliteness in his up-to-date books, impoliteness (2011). They share the function of contradicting interpersonal relationships, identities and social norm, thus;

1. Affective Impoliteness: This type of impoliteness is where the speaker expresses his anger towards the hearer and his consequently generates a negative emotional atmosphere between the speaker and the hearer, Huang, (2014, p.150)
2. Coercive Impoliteness: This variant of impoliteness raises realignment between the speaker and the hearer so that the speaker can gain profits at the expense of the hearer. Culpeper believes that his impoliteness type takes place to a greater extent in situations where the speaker belongs to a higher and or more powerful social level than the hearer's level. In a nutshell, coercive impoliteness is a means of getting power via language, (2011, p.252).
3. Entertaining Impoliteness: This type of impoliteness is generated when the speaker pokes fun at the hearer and utilizes the target feelings to obtain amusement.

### **Face Threatening Acts - 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 a 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:

1. 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.
2. Those that show that S doesn't care about H's positive face:
  - a. Expression of violent
  - 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:

1. **Those that offend S's negative face**
  - a. Expressing thanks
  - b. Acceptance of H's thanks or H's apology
  - c. Excuses
2. **Those that directly damage S's positive face:**
  - a. Apologies
  - b. Acceptance of a compliment
  - c. Break down of physical control over body, bodily leakage, stumbling or falling down.
  - d. Self-humiliation, covering, acting stupid, self-contradiction.

### **Impoliteness or Rudeness in Service Encounter**

People from different cultural background 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 attaining new ones. Impoliteness or rudeness is sometimes experienced during service encounters which are the cross roads where service provider meets clients from different cultures with varying cultures, values and customs. The customer may take the service provider's attitude as impolite or rude when expectations are not met.

Rudeness is an act of impoliteness as, discourtesy, conduct which often convey little regard for the feelings of others and indifference to the generally accepted norms of behaviour. Sometimes in some encounters, excessive politeness can be seen as rudeness. Other times an individual appears rude because the person is confronted with a situation which requires leaving one's comfort zone, example; when one is asked about something, he/she would rather not share with any one in such a situation, the person becomes abrupt and blunt. Further, rudeness may be as a result of jealousy, a situation where one that is class-conscious sees the other as threatening his social status. Again, when someone criticizes the other's show of casualness and openness, characteristic that open the doors for the other's acceptance by the rich thus gaining more status in the eyes of the upper class.

Negative attitudes involve impoliteness activated by in-context behaviours which are associated with the person that gave rise to them. Anger is one of the most frequent emotional reactions associated with impoliteness, particularly when a social code or norm is perceived to have been tempered.

### **Underpoliteness**

This refers to aspects of verbal aggression or other linguistic behaviours that do not necessarily involve the kind of social disharmony or disequilibrium in societal relationships which are conditions for impolite or rude behaviours. As such, features like spite and malice are not crucial conditions for the interpretation of underpoliteness. It means that underpoliteness occurs only in contexts of situation

when some participants fail to achieve the required politeness in the given interactive exchange, Mathias ,(2011,p.12) .‘Underpoliteness could therefore be defined as communicative acts which may cause offense though not triggered by malice’ (Ibid).

In the light of this, it seems that some speakers are compelled to be under polite to achieve another aim as self or other-correction. Some conversational analysts and pragmaticians Gumperz (1982, p.32); Grundy (1995, p.3-56) suggest that speakers can use different ways or strategies to repair such incidental acts or interpretations as in the use of apology, agreement and self-repair.

Furthermore, under- politeness can be seen as an instance of Watts, (2003, p.20-23)’ politic verbal and non-verbal behaviour that is viewed to be expectable as well as socio-pragmatically and culturally acceptable in terms of the acceptable conventional norms in the given speech community. This is so since underpoliteness is not a departure from the acceptable norms of communication and is not a marked linguistic behaviour that harms or threat the other participant’s face or social right, Mathias, (2011, p.13-14).

### **Research Methodology**

The focus of this study is to examine and analyse impoliteness strategies in the interaction of the staff in their daily interactions with their clients paying attention on their effect and effectiveness on their job objectives. The study adopted qualitative method and the researcher will be using tape recording, personal notes and observation as tools for data collection. The researcher made use of fifteen excerpts that are considered being relevant to this study, after careful scrutunisation only ten excerpts that are considered to be representative of the whole were randomly selected for analysis.

### **Data Presentation and Discussion**

The analysis of the data collected for the study is from recorded interaction at the encounter between staff and client, which the encounter seems to be constant on their different appointment or visit. As a human, language is used as a personal skill, that is human beings choose to use it to either save or threaten others face.

#### **The linguistic and style of expression:**

The verbal communicative acts such as requests, acceptance / rejection, checking moves / non-verbal expressions that are very important in service encounters are indicating their varied semantic implications. The following deals with the analysis of the expressions used by both participants while engaged in interaction.

#### **Research question 1:**

What are the factors that trigger impoliteness during staff-client interactions?

Excerpt 1:

Client: Madam is this sub-dean’s office?

Staff: Oga, good morning sir.

In the above excerpt, greeting is a conversational routine which is considered a repertoire of linguistic politeness. When the client fails to greet the staff before initiating a communication, it is viewed as an impolite act and as such can trigger impoliteness on the side of the staff.

Excerpt 2:

Client: Madam, good morning.

Staff: Morning

Client: Please I want to go to lab test.

Staff: Do I look like a doctor?

By using the utterance ‘Do I look like a doctor’ the staff has communicated impoliteness in a direct, clear or unambiguous manner given the fact that both are within the same age bracket. Culpeper (1996, p.356) asserts that bald on record impoliteness attacks the face of the hearer and the hearer does not have the power to utter an impolite utterance.



### Research Question 2:

Does the Staff do more of impoliteness or rudeness?

Excerpt 1:

Staff: Hey! Listen to your names and seat accordingly in order to see the doctor.

Client: Are you addressing us that way, madam?

Staff: Who are you?

Client: Is this how you talk to people here?

Staff: If you are a big man it is in your house.

Client: Hmmmmm! OK, I see you don't have training.

Staff: Oga! Don't insult yourself ooo.

Client: Silently and angrily kept silent.

Here the staff became non-charllant and insulting to the clients addressing them without any atom of respect and even proofs incorrecible with a great deal of rudeness, showing rudeness of action and positive impoliteness that is both rudeness impoliteness are in use. Going further, the staff exhibited rudeness of words in another data presented above by applying curses, use street language on the clients 'I see you don't have home training' and application of positive impoliteness to intentionally damage the client's face. In another, the staff's response showcased rudeness of action- verbal or non-verbal words used to belittle client. ....'I'll slap you'.

Excerpt 2:

Client: Good morning ma.

Staff: Morning.

Client: Ma, please is doctor in the office?

Staff: Silence.... Nonsense!

Here the client enquired if the doctor is in the office the staff does not take the client's question seriously and replies her using the first type of rudeness "rudeness of word" in reply 'Nonsense'.

### Research Question 3:

What are the contextual factors that trigger each?

Excerpt 1:

A client whose name was wrongly spelt came in for correction, here's their interaction;

Client: Good day ma

Staff: Good day.

Client: My name was wrongly spelt I...

Staff: I told you to go back to the bank.

Client: Yes, but I went .....

Staff: Interrupted and takes over the floor.

By this act of interruption and not allowing the client to explain, impoliteness has taken place. Brown and Levinson (1987, p.232) opine that turn taking violation, interruption, ignoring, selection of other speakers not responding to prior turns are all FTAs in themselves as are violation of opening and closing procedures. Further, Leech, (2014, p.228) also asserts that interruption of someone's turn is a violation of politeness. Therefore, by interrupting and taking over the floor in turn of the client is a negative impoliteness strategy as captured by Culpeper, (1996, p.358).

Excerpt 2:

Client: Good afternoon ma.

Staff: (said something in Igbo language)

Client: Ma, I don't understand Igbo.

Staff: You should go and learn the language.

By using a language which the client could not understand to exclude him, the staff contextually has communicated impoliteness. Culpeper, (1996, p.357) defines such use as an obscure language as appositive impoliteness strategy.

Excerpt 3:

Client: I am a Staff, good madam.

Staff: Looked at her but without a word.

Client: Please can I make use of the convenience?

Staff: There is no water (with a hash voice).

In the above excerpt, such language or bragging tends to receive impolite expression from the staff in reaction to the comments of the client.

Culpeper, (1996,p.357) classifies the use of inappropriate identity marker as appositive impoliteness strategy. Brown and Levinson, (1987,p.67) assert that the use of address terms in an offensive way intentionally or otherwise is a strategy that threatens the positive face of the hearer. The client addressing unmarried lady with a honorific of 'madam'. Such use of honorific may not be intentional as the client do not know the marital status of the staff, yet the staff views it as an impolite act.

#### **Research Question 4:**

What is the issue of intentionality and unintentionality with respect to impoliteness and rudeness?

Excerpt 1:

Client: Sir I couldn't see the result of my last laboratory test in the box.

Staff: How does it concern me, please leave my office.

In the above excerpt, it shows an instance of intentional unconcerned attitude of the staff where face threats are conveyed in a direct manner without efforts to manage or consider the face of the hearer: 'How does it concern me, please leave my office'. Such an utterance is captured within the positive impoliteness strategy of being intentionally uninterested, unconcerned and unsympathetic, Culpeper, (1996, p.357).

Excerpt 2:

Client: Good afternoon ma.

Staff:(Speak some words in Igbo and keep pressing phone)

Client: Ma, please attend to me.

Staff: (Shouted) shut up.

Shouting is usually louder than is necessary for efficient communication to take place. Culpeper, (1996,p.358) is of the view that "...shouting and avoiding eye contact could be means of conveying impoliteness" supporting this assertion, Leech, (2014,p.231) says, it is a sign of anger while snarling or growling is a sign of disgust. It is clear that a person who is shouting in anger wants the hearer to be aware that she is not happy rather angry. Also, by shouting, the person also invades the space of the hearer which can be used as a mechanism for conveying impoliteness and anger.

Excerpt 3:

Staff: Hey! Listen to your names and seat accordingly in order to see the doctor.

Client: Are you addressing us that way, madam?

Staff: Who are you?

Client: Is this how you talk to people here?

Staff: If you are big man it is in your house.

Client: Hmmm! Ok, I see you don't have training.

Staff: Oga don't insult yourself ooo. Nonsense!

Client: Silently and angrily kept mute.

Here the staff became non-challant and insulting to the client addressing them without respect and even prove incorrigible with a great deal of impoliteness. Also, intentionally positive impoliteness was used to damage the client's positive face want and also rudeness of action and word were discovered.

Looking at data presented for this study there are somany consequences of impoliteness and rudeness in staff-client relationship which ranges from giving a bad image about the institution represented by the staff to the staff himself or herself.

#### **Findings and Conclusion:**

The researchers of this work has employed Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies which is face saving view of politeness and Culpeper's impoliteness super strategies in analysing the data collected to ascertain impoliteness in the interactions of staff-client of public office under study. It was discovered

that rudeness is always intentional while impoliteness on the other hand is either intentional or unintentional.

From the observation of both the linguistic and the style employed by the participants in the interaction, clients opening moves expressed through greetings are always indications of willingness to be attended to and there is a prevalent use of suspense by the staff while the client supply the information. There are recorded intentional impolite and rude attitude by the staff which gives different picture of the organisation or the aim of the institution.

The study concludes that the staff show a semblance of intentional impoliteness and rudeness which depended on their mood that resulted on clients unsatisfaction and unattended to their need. The researchers therefore recommend that staff should as matter of compulsion go for training before assuming public offices and also remove any other emotional attachment from the work in other to give their best during service encounters and governments on the other hand should provide a good working condition to staff as well as have plans for staff welfare during and after active service.

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