

**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

**FACE-WORK IN TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTIONS IN ENGLISH AS A  
LINGUA FRANCA CONTEXT: THE CASE OF A NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY**

**Ph.D. Thesis**

**Longji Christopher Gonsum**

**NICOSIA**

**August, 2019**

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**August, 2019**



Approval of the Graduate School of Educational Sciences

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I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Teaching

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis submitted by Longji Christopher Gonsum titled “Face-Workin Teacher-Student Interactions in English as a Lingua Franca Context: The Case of a Nigerian University” and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with the academic rules and ethical guidelines of the Graduate School of Educational Sciences, Near East University. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this study.

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to the fond and loving memory of my mother, who was called to glory 30 years ago, and also to the cherished memories of my brothers; Kitchinme, Innocent, John-Paul and Joseph and I will not forget you my dearest cousins, Nbilamut, Willie and Tanimu. May your souls find eternal rest with God.

## ABSTRACT

### FACE-WORK IN TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTIONS IN ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA CONTEXT: THE CASE OF A NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY

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This study focused on face work in the interactions of teachers and students in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) context. The study viewed face work as a strategic interaction management strategy in teacher-student interactions where the burden of showing respect falls more on the student from a relational point of view. The study considered both verbal and non-verbal acts as crucial components of meaning that are weaved in interaction through various face negotiations. The research was designed as a linguistic ethnographic study, where the primary data collection tool was the recordings of naturally occurring interactions, supported by participant observations and stimulated recall interviews sessions. In total, interactions of 28 newly enrolled students with two registration officers (university lecturers) in a Nigerian university were recorded and analysed using micro-discourse analysis. Firstly, the analysis showed that face negotiation is the broader interaction architecture that various social variables are manifested and accounted for in interaction. Secondly, the study found that the students employed opting out, excuses and apologies as face threat response strategies of face threat acts of the lecturers. Thirdly, the study found honorification, indirectness, let it pass and empathy as discursive strategies of establishing and showing face support in the interactions. Finally, the analysed data showed that the social variables of gender and power have significant influence in the negotiation of both face threat and face support in interactions. The study concludes that face is a relational entity that helps in establishing social positions in interactions especially in a role given, power and gender sensitive context such as a Nigerian university.

*Key words:* Face-work; face threat; face support; linguistic ethnography; lingua franca; social positioning



## ÖZ

### İNGİLİZCE’NİN ORTAK DİL OLARAK KULLANILDIĞI BİR ORTAMDA ÖĞRETMEN-ÖĞRENCİ ETKİLEŞİMİNDE YÜZ: BİR NİJERYA ÜNİVERSİTESİ VAKA ÇALIŞMASI

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Bu çalışma, İngilizce’nin anadil farklı olan insanların konuştuğu ortak dil olarak kullanıldığı bir ortamda öğretmen ve öğrencilerin etkileşimindeki yüz müzakeresine odaklanmıştır. İlişkiel bir bakış açısıyla yüz müzakeresinin saygı gösterme sorumluluğunun daha çok öğrenciye ait olduğu öğretmen-öğrenci etkileşimindeki bir strateji olarak yönetimi olarak ele alınmıştır. Çalışma, hem sözlü hem de sözlü olmayan eylemleri çeşitli yüz müzakereleri aracılığıyla etkileşiminde örülmüş olan anlamın önemiyle ilişkileri olarak değerlendirmiştir. Araştırma, gözlemler ve uyarılmış anımsama mülakat seanslarıyla desteklenmiş doğaletki ilişkiler kayıtlarının başlıca veritoplama aracı olarak kullanıldığı dilbilimseletnoğrafik bir çalışma olarak dizayn edilmiştir. Bir Nijerya üniversitesinde bulunan toplam iki kayıtlı öğrenci (öğretim üyeleri) ile birlikte 28 yeni kayıttırtmış öğrencinin etkileşimleri kayıtlı alınmış ve mikrosöylemler analiz edilmiştir. Analiz sonuçları, yüz müzakeresinin çeşitli sosyal değişkenlerin sohbetesnasında açığa çıktığı ve dışavurulduğu da geniş kapsamlı bir etkileşim yapısı olduğunu göstermiştir. Çalışma aynı zamanda öğrencilerin, öğretim görevlilerinin yüzlehditeylemlerine karşılık vermeye stratejileri olarak vazgeçme, mazeret bildirme ve özür dileme gibi eylemlere başvurdıklarını saptamıştır. Çalışma saygı ifadeleri, dolaylılık, mazur görme ve empatinin etkileşimlerde yüz desteği kurma ve göstermenin dolambaçlı stratejileri olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Analiz edilmiş veriler, toplumsal cinsiyet ve güç değişkenlerinin, hem yüzlehdidi hem de yüz desteğinin müzakeresinde önemiyle ilgili birer hipotez olduğunu da göstermiştir. Çalışma, yüzün, özellikle bir Nijerya üniversitesi gibi verilen roller, güç ve toplumsal cinsiyet duyarlı bir bağlamdaki etkileşimlerdeki sosyal konumları kurmayayardımcı olan, kültürden kültüre değişebilen, ilişkiel bir varlık olduğunu savunmaktadır.

*Anahtar sözcükler:* Yüz müzakeresi; yüz tehdidi; yüz desteği;  
dilbilimsele tnoğrafya; ortak dil olarak İngilizce; sosyal konumlama.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**BA:** Bachelor of Arts

**CA:** Conversation Analysis

**CP:** Cooperative Principle

**DCT:** Discourse Completion Tasks

**DE:** Direct Entry

**DFT:** Direct Face Threat

**ELF:** English as a Lingua Franca

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**FAS:** Face Avoidance Strategy

**FSS:** Face Support Strategy

**IFT:** Indirect Face Threat

**FAS:** Face Avoidance Strategy

**FCT:** Face Constituting Theory

**FTS:** Face Threat Strategy

**FTRS:** Face Threat Response Strategy

**IFT:** Indirect Face Threat

**L2:** Second Language

**LE:** Linguistic Ethnography

**MDA:** Micro Discourse Analysis

**NE:** Nigerian English

**NECO:** National Examination Council

**NFT:** Nonverbal Face Threat

**PP:** Politeness Principle

**RO:** Registration Office

**SLA:** Second Language Acquisition

**SRI:** Stimulated Recall Interview

**TESOL:** Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

**WAEC:** West African Examination Council

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Having been involved in the teaching and learning of English language in Nigeria for over a decade and with my stay in Cyprus for my doctoral studies, I have come in contact with students and teachers of diverse nationalities and orientations. These teachers and students are mostly persons whose first language is not the English language but are driven by institutional requirements to interact and communicate in English as the acceptable medium of communication in interpersonal encounters within the school setting. As a result of these encounters, I have observed that face considerations and negotiations in face-to-face interaction in a school context areas a result of many indeterminate variables that are tied to the socio-cultural norms and values of the first language of the language users in any given episode of social interaction. Goffman (1967) has observed the centrality and variability of face in interaction across cultures and civilizations and established that face is constantly present in interpersonal face-to-face interaction. This to a large extent have motivated me to investigate the relevance and significance of face in the interactions of teachers and students in Nigeria where face negotiation is tied to other ephemeral factors such as power, age and status of the participants as they negotiate their positions in interaction.

Previous studies in pragmatics (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 1989; Leech, 1983; Yule, 1996) have examined face considerations as a subset of politeness that helps in mitigating and redressing impoliteness through its manifestation as negative or positive face in interaction. However, the rise and upsurge in interest in naturally occurring and

interpersonal interaction by many scholars of pragmatics (Arundale, 2006, 2010; Locher, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 2011) in the last decade and a half, has seen the emergence of face as a related but independent concept to politeness. These scholars all recognise the significance of certain mental models that are context variable to interaction. As such, Locher (2005) developed a relational face-work theory of face to account for the manifestation of face in interaction. On the other hand, Arundale (2006, 2010) advanced a compelling argument for a face-constituting theory of face by stating that face is dialectically constituted in interaction not in terms of negative face and or positive face but as face threat, face support and face stasis. Spencer-Oatey (2007) similarly, developed a rapport management theory of face in interaction where face negotiation is viewed as a deliberate interactional management strategy. These theories all examined face from an interpersonal perspective and emphasized the need for the investigation of context as a *sine qua non* to understanding the dynamic nature of face in the shaping of interaction since language and linguistic practices differ from context to context and people to people.

Face, therefore, emerged as the focus of this study because it relates to the showing of respect and social positions which seemed to be highly regarded especially in the interactions of socially unequal interactants in Nigeria and because the manifestation of face in interaction can be both linguistic and non-linguistic. Paralinguistic behaviours such as knocking on the door, bodily posture during interaction, gestures and gesticulations during interactions have been observed by Rampton (2017) and Badarneh and Migdadi (2018) to be intricately tied to verbalised acts such as greetings, apologies, requests and reprimands in interactions. The tone of



voice of the interactants is also laden with meaning and contributes in the framing of interactants' face in relation to his/her position relative to the position of others.

Achieving appropriate face in any interaction can be problematic, especially if the interlocutors are coming from socially and culturally distinct communities. In the Nigerian universities' context, this happens quite often as students and lecturers from diverse cultural backgrounds may unconsciously pose impolite, face threatening behaviours or fail to perform certain duties and obligations that have come to be seen and accepted as the social norms. Moreover, the teachers and students are more often than not users of English as a lingua franca (ELF), for whom enacting face in their culture may be different with the English language or that of the other interlocutor. Many ELF scholars (Canagarajah, 2014; House, 2009; Jenkins, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2004) agree that at both the lexicogrammatical and phonological levels, clarity and comprehensibility are features and requirements that the ELF variety must fulfil. These scholars see clarity (the absence of fuzziness in expressions) and comprehensibility (the presence of understandability in expressions) as crucial features that could help elevate ELF above the past arguments and views that have viewed ELF as mistakes in Standard English expressions.

In the light of these arguments with regard to the construction and maintenance of face in interactions, this study aims at investigating the manifestations, impact and significance of face negotiations in the shaping of the naturally occurring interactions of university students in the context of a registration office in a Nigerian university. The choice of this context is anchored on my belief that the Nigerian university context provides a discursive platform for naturally occurring interactions to occur with various

face negotiating strategies as well as social positioning. The registration office is a place that inevitably brings students in contact with their lecturers outside the classroom in an effort to service particular needs. In order to engage their lecturers in purposeful interaction, these students have to use the English language ‘politely’ to achieve their aims of registration, bearing in mind the fact that lecturers are respected authority figures in the context under study. However, the language use of the lecturers and students is not without its linguistic and pragmatic problems because both the lecturers and the students are users of ELF with both of them possibly coming from different first language communities.

The current study is designed as a pragmatic study of the ELF users’ realisation of face negotiations in real life interactions. The research has adopted a linguistic ethnographic approach. I have employed linguistic ethnography (LE) and stimulated recall interviews (SRIs) for the collection of data while micro-discourse analysis (MDA) approach was adopted for the simultaneous analysis of both the ethnographic and discourse data. The choice of LE as an approach was borne out of the fact that LE helps reveal face negotiation as a mundane but complex interactional occurrence that is practiced in everyday interaction. Firstly, it is hoped that LE will allow for the critical examination of linguistic patterns as they are used in everyday practice or interaction. Secondly, and crucially important too, is that the choice of LE is aimed at working with new concepts which will help in suggesting a new direction rather than holding onto and working with old definitive constructs (Rampton, Maybin & Roberts, 2014). Although face is a linguistic construct that have enjoyed significant attention in pragmatics as a subset of politeness, ethnographic tools enabled for the questioning of face negotiations

as a strategic and intentional positioning strategy in naturally occurring interactions that should be investigated independently as advocated by Arundale (2010). An exhaustive discussion on LE, SRI and MDA is presented in Chapter III (the chapter on methodology).

In order to adequately account for the various levels of the manifestation of face in the Registration Office, I have also employed Positioning Theory from social psychology to strengthen the discussion of face negotiation as a discursive and deliberate positioning strategy in interaction (Harre, 2004). This will also help to demonstrate face negotiation in a registration office as a fluid and changing but an adaptive component of interaction. The study aims at examining face and its subsets of face support and face threat and how discursive variables such as gender, power, interactants and context contribute in the shaping of the interaction of undergraduate students of English in a Nigerian university. In the following sections and chapters, further elaborations on these theoretical and methodological choices will be made and additional information will be provided.

## **Background of the Study**

**The English language in Nigeria.** The history and growth of the English language in Nigeria predates the Nigerian nation as the language was first taught by Christian missionaries many years before the Amalgamation of 1914 by Lord Lugard, a representative of the British Crown, who brought the Northern and Southern protectorates together to birth the nation Nigeria (Akere, 2009). Since then, the status of

an ‘official’ language was foisted on the English language while relegating the over 500 indigenous Nigerian languages to the status of ‘vernaculars’ (Bamiro, 1991). The English language has continued to play the significant role of fostering national unity and development of the Nigerian nation by serving as the common language (*lingua franca*) for human interaction across the country. Adegbite (2010) pointed out that “the language coexists with more than 500 indigenous languages which serve as a mother tongue to speakers of diverse ethnic groups” (p. 8). In their earlier assessments of the English language in Nigeria, Jowitt (2008) and Akere (2009) observed that despite the non-native context of English language in Nigeria, the English language is a crucial instrument in achieving the national developmental objectives of the Nigerian state because of its integrative, national and *lingua franca* outlook.

Graddol (1997) positioned Nigeria as one of the major blocs of English as a Second Language (ESL) countries with the fourth highest number of English speakers in the world. He identified 63 countries in the world where the English language has a substantial population of speakers of ESL. Of these 63 countries, Nigeria was estimated then to have about 43 million ESL speakers within a population of 120 million people. Projecting on from this estimation, which was done in 1997, the current statistical claim done in 2016 (Quora, 2016) claimed that this number has come up to 82, 942 000million speakers of the English language now in a population of about 200 million people at the current literacy levels and urbanisation. In the Nigerian context, English language is the official language of education, administration, politics, commerce, advertising and so on.

The English language occupies a pride of place in the life of every Nigerian who wants to make a meaning of his/her life. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of

Nigeria (1999) as amended has endorsed the English language as the language of education, government and governance. Indeed, the English language is the only language that is spoken across the various states of the federation and it is the language that bridges the gap between the various ethnic groups and languages that are indigenous to the Nigerian state (Adebigte, 2010). Thus, the English language serves as the lingua franca of Nigeria. Okoroma (2000) observed that the Nigerian national policy on education have made the passing of English language in national examinations with a credit pass (that is grades A, B or C) as the minimum entry requirement into all the degree programmes in the universities and colleges of education in the country. As a result of the aforementioned reasons, the number of English language users and reasons for its users to acquire and use the language has expanded in the country and will continue to expand geographically and increase in the number of its speakers in Nigeria. As a result of this spread, the English language in Nigeria has been reflecting the sociocultural aspects of the Nigerian people as well as reflecting also in the flora and fauna of the Nigeria state in the English use of most Nigerians.

**Nigeria as an ELF context.** Kilichaya (2009) provides a clearer view of the English language in various locations of the world where the English language has a lingua franca function and status. He observed that all Englishes are offshoots of a common core variety which he named as the “inner circle” where the norms of the language are given by this inner circle. The United Kingdom and the United States of America are countries that constitute the inner circle members. The next layer or circle is named the “outer circle” (Kilichaya, 2009, p. 35 citing Kachru, 1985). The characteristic features of the English within the outer circle according to Kachru (1997)

shows that the norm of the English language is developing and is indigenised in Nigeria. In other words, identity is being carved by those who belong to this category. Countries that are said to be in this group are Nigeria, India, Bangladesh and a host of other countries. Another feature of the countries in this circle is that they were colonized by Britain. The final circle is called the “expanding circle.” (Kilichaya, 2009, p. 35). Countries in this circle are norm-depending as English is more or less foreign to them even though it serves a function of a lingua franca in certain contexts. The root of the language in such places is not well established or entrenched. Using Kachru’s categorization, we can assume that a distinction can be inferred between ESL and English as foreign language (EFL) contexts. The Nigerian English language context is typically an ELF setting and this is seen in the use and function of English language across the Nigerian state.

Since English is non-native to Nigeria, its use will vary remarkably defer from the English use of native speakers. This distinguishing feature can be viewed as the common core features of all lingua franca English(es). Firth (1996) believed that English as a lingua franca talk is:

a type of spoken interaction which participants typically make unidiomatic and non-collocating lexical selections and where the talk throughout is commonly ‘marked’ by dysfluencies, and by syntactic, morphological, and phonological anomalies and infelicities- at least as such aspects are recognized by native-speaker assessment. (p. 239).

Firth (1996) cushioned the impact of these seeming generalization of the lingua franca typology by agreeing that not all non-native English users can be categorized using the above description. He agrees that some lingua franca English can hardly be distinguished from the native speaker English as the users have attained high and sufficient proficiency. I shall pursue this issue further in the literature review.

More contemporary ELF scholars (Mauranen, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011) have advocated for a shift in focus of ELF from wrong uses (grammatical and phonological) that have been accepted as part and parcel of the ELF lexicon and focus more on the relational and interpersonal use of the ELF and all its features in everyday interaction. Among Nigerian scholars (Adebigte, 2010; Jowitt, 2000; Odumuh, 1987), the English language is seen as a unique variety that is worthy of its own name; 'Nigerian English' (NE). For example, Adegbita (2010) pointed out that "ESL is a technical term that describes the existence of the English language in terms of ahistorical, politico-geographical, psychological and societal factor which determine and influence its usage and uses" (p. 4). He further stated that, Nigeria is a non-host ESL community because English is non-native to Nigeria, but that the language has enjoyed domestication in the various facets of the Nigerian nation and as such should not be treated as a foreign language but one of Nigeria's languages. Plausible as the arguments appear, the English language is in many ways, only a lingua franca to the Nigerian people.

**Face, politeness, language and culture.** The use and function of the English language in ELF settings have often posed a challenge to the communicative desires of interlocutors, especially where the language users are coming from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. These differences often constitute a problem to their intended

meaning and their perceived meaning. Yule (2010) emphasized that the importance of communication in any interactive endeavour is to negotiate meaning and gain or pass across information. In order to achieve this primary goal of communication, language users (native or non-native to a language) are expected to operate within certain established linguistic and non-linguistic etiquette of a given language.

In order to operate within the expected speech and language use etiquette of a language, second language (L2) learners must attain some degree of competences or what Ellis (1994) and Keshavarz (2015) referred to as pragmatic competence which manifests itself in their sociolinguistic and cultural awareness in their use of the language towards having developed context models (van Dijk, 2008). This concept shall be pursued further in the literature review chapter. Haynes (1989), following Halliday's functions of language, identifies what he terms as 'the macro functions' (what we generally seem to use language for) of language - the "interpersonal", the "textual" and the "ideational" functions of language. He claimed that these functions are often seen in our realisation of the "speech acts" (p. 18) of promising, persuading, objecting, requesting, and commanding, and that the interpersonal function accounts for the meaning in the interaction between language users. Haynes (1989) further stated that the textual function accounts for the rules and mechanics (punctuation, and other cohesive devices) that the language provides to give a thread of meaning to a text. These mechanics provide meaningful continuity in interpersonal interaction together with the organization of the language into blocks of information with suitable emphasis. The ideational function accounts for things, ideas and relations that are used in the language to create a visual image in the mind's eye of the interactants.



Face constituting, face as relational work , rapport management and face negotiation (Arundale, 2010; Culpeper, 2011; Locher, 2010; Ting-Toomey, 2005) are popular assumptions that seek to explain how decorum and tact are maintained, as well as help in interpreting face negotiations in meaningful human interaction. Face negotiations are realised differently from culture to culture, language to language and people to people. Face is seen as an important component of politeness as it helps interactants know their place or position in interaction. Face acts are demonstrations of politeness or impoliteness both of which are crucial “compasses” to the speech etiquette of a people (Ryabova, 2015). Ryabova (2015) further describes speech etiquette as:

an essential part of culture, behaviour and human communication. Social relationships and norms of behaviour are fixed in speech etiquette formulae. Etiquette norms are encoded in sayings, proverbs, and idioms, set phrases such as: welcome! How do you do! Farewell! Thank you! Etc. being an element of national culture, speech etiquette has a clear national colouring. (p. 91).

She pointed out that linguistic etiquette is a system of the rules and conventions that govern the social and professional behaviour of a people. Linguistic etiquette could vary from place to place. As universal as cooperative and politeness principles may seem to be, they are marked and observed differently depending on the overacting cultural norms and values of the speech community as the collective or individual nature of a given culture reflect on their face construction (the concepts of individualist and collectivist cultures are examined in more details in the literature review). Whether a culture is individualist or collectivist, speech has a cardinal role in furthering and

unearthing their peculiarities. Hudson (1996) succinctly captures the importance of speech to communities and pragmatics when he states that:

speech has a social function both as a means of communication and also as a way of identifying social groups, and speech without reference to the society which uses it is to exclude the possibility of finding social explanation for the structures that are used. It is this social explanation that is at the heart of meaning that pragmatics investigates. (p. 3).

Obviously, it is this social function that pragmatics offers great insights into and the understanding of a speaker's intended meaning. This can be done through scientific investigations using the pragmatic principles of the Cooperative Principle (CP) and the Politeness Principles (PP) and all the other sub-principles of communication as guides. The speakers' intended meaning are uttered according to the socio-cultural norms and expectations of given societies. As such, various levels of face (face threat and face support) with their relational positions can be derived from the way and manner something is said, who said what and where it is said. Leech (2014) and Widdowson (2004) underscored the importance of the context of language use with a detailed outline of the aspects of the speech event. They believe that a perfect understanding of interaction will require the knowledge and understanding of the following as they reveal the shared linguistic knowledge of the interactants:

- a. The purpose/goal of a conversation (why and for what the conversation is holding)

- b. The context of a conversation (where, what physical and socio-cultural properties can influence the understanding of participants in the conversation)
- c. Shared world view of the interactants (what shared knowledge do the interactants have)
- d. The time of an utterance (what time is the conversation holding)
- e. The place the utterance was made (where is the conversation holding?)
- f. The interactants (those having the conversation)

Corbett (2011) vividly captured the place of culture in language use and study when he pointed out that “Anthropologists discuss cultures in terms of everyday practices that arise from normative attitudes and beliefs negotiated by particular groups whose interactions are conditioned by particular forms of social organization”(p. 306). A study such as this, which tries to investigate the intricate way people use language and face work to negotiate meaning, will inevitably rely on the understanding of the operation of the language users’ culture and socio-cultural norms and values that are embedded in the interactions since what is said is a factor of many variables of the context of its occurrence.

### **Statement of the Problem**

ELF speakers are often caught in web of rationalising and performing acts in English which might be performed differently in their first languages. The impact of variables of contexts such culture, persons, the language, linguistic competence and

pragmatic competence are all brought to bear in face-to-face interaction. The ELF users are, therefore, caught in a web of constant balancing of what to say, where to say and how to say it and to whom to say it. Adegbite (2010) also observed that, apart from the constraints imposed on the language users by the language to conform to the language both at the conventional form- usage and the utilization of the language-use, the language user is expected to effectively communicate meaning.

As is to be expected, the forms and use of the English language by Nigerian English speakers is replete with various interferences from their mother tongues and their different socio-cultural background. These interferences can cause different types of face negotiations that are manifested differently by language users in conversations depending on the social context of the conversation as well as the people involved (Odebunmi, 2012). Nigerian ELF users are mostly bilingual or indeed multilingual. As such it is not surprising that the speech acts generated by these language users are suspected to be inappropriate for certain contexts. The lack of propriety of these face acts by some of these interactants is sometimes a result of incompetence and sometimes a product of style or sometimes because of both. Demonstrating face acts through the interpretation of utterances cannot be done based on the literal meaning of the words represented in the conversation, but on the meaning that the face acts contribute to the words used in particular episodes of interaction and these face acts serve as interactional strategies in interpersonal interactions. The interpersonal interactions in this educational setting is occurring between newly admitted university students in a registration office where the students are expected to use polite language behaviours with the registration officers. These polite behaviours are manifested in their employment of various face acts

strategies in order to achieve their aim of registration as well as present whatever problems they may be facing as new students. In order to adequately, achieve these aims, the students are faced with the difficulty satisfying the extra linguistic needs and pressures that serve as constraints in face-to-face interaction.

Constituting face in face-to-face and naturally occurring interactions of ELF speakers can be a complicated phenomenon. In online media interactions, as observed by Bardaneh and Migdadi (2018), interactants are not bound by the physical presence of other interactants and thus tend to be free and elaborate in what they say without the constraint of age, gender or power position that they occupy. In face-to-face interactions, these are considerations that shape the entire interaction and a failure to deliberately adhere to them can yield varying levels of implications to the interaction. Understanding interactants' face negotiations, therefore, requires the active presence of the researcher during its occurrence in order to capture and gather what Copland (2011) refers to as "contextual and situated detail" (p. 2) that shape the entire interaction. These contextual and situated details are easily laid bare using ethnographic resources which, in turn, opened up the linguistic data for my analysis. This onerous task appears simplistic but difficult because of the indeterminate layers of meanings that could be unearthed and unpacked in an episode of interaction.

### **Aim of the Study**

The study investigates how the phenomenon of face negotiation is significant in the shaping of the interactions of teachers and students, especially in power sensitive and

role routinized environments such as a Nigerian university where the practice and performance of acts of greetings, apologies, reprimands praise, hedging and various other interactional strategies are constantly employed by the interactants. This is in consonance with Rampton's (2018) view of face as "the sense of reciprocal respect and interactional wellbeing that participants in an encounter produce when they act broadly in line with what's expected" (p. 4). First, I intend to present face not as a human artefact but as an intentional, strategic strategy of interaction. Second, face consideration in general, and face negotiation in teacher-students' interactions in particular, are social practices between socially unequal interactants. The study therefore aims at investigating the use of face as a deliberate social positioning strategy in interactional situations between teachers and students in a registration office in an educational setting. These aims therefore extend the limited scope or view of ELF as a language of contact (Canagarajah, 2009) towards the perspective and view that we use language to actualize our needs and desires in interaction.

The study also aims at demonstrating how face negotiation and interactional strategies help in establishing the expected social solidarity or distance between interactants in interaction and how face negotiation impacts the taking up or giving of social roles among the interactants (Harre, 2004). Particularly, the study looks at how interactants' interactional behaviours create or generate face threat or face support negotiations by university students in their interactions with their lecturers, which then give rise to interactional problems. More specifically, the study aims to understand the ways in which ELFspeakers negotiate face strategies in their interactions in an educational setting in terms of saving face or face threatening acts to depict what

Badarneh and Migdadi (2018) refer to as strategic social positioning strategy in interaction. Since this is a pragmatic study of the naturally occurring utterances of competent ELF users of the English language in an academic setting, it is hoped that the individuality of the language users will be adequately accounted for to reveal the function and significance of face in the interactions.

### **Significance of the Study**

First, this study is significant because it seeks to contribute to the discursive perspective of pragmatics by presenting and analysing authentic and naturally occurring data from a practical and an ethnographic standpoint. By presenting face as a social phenomenon that manifests itself in the interaction of teachers and students, and as a social positioning strategy, the study offers a significant departure from the traditional view of face as a subset of politeness but as a social practice of interlocutors engaged in interpersonal interaction that contributes to the actualisation of their goals of communication. The use and function of these interaction strategies are to a large extent tied to the culture of the people almost as a ritual. In Nigeria, showing of respect or lack of it (face consideration) between interactants is seen as an important component of the entire interaction. Face negotiation in teacher-student interaction is therefore a very important strategy of maintaining and avoiding breakdown in communication, especially if it is happening in real time. Face negotiation in these teachers and students interactions is equally a rapport building strategy between the interlocutors since these students are new to the university environment which could help them settle in properly

into the university setting. Interlocutors are expected to recognize and perform or manage their respective expected expressive roles in the interpersonal encounters. Since the registration office is one of the first official places that these new students have to go to, it serves as an orientation site that the teachers use to help the students fit into the university system.

Secondly, by using linguistic ethnography, this study has given significant affordance to non-verbal acts as meaningful aspects of interaction. This way, elements of the context and their impact in the shaping of interactions were accounted for rather than relying on established but old theoretical constructs for the analysis. This approach shows the production of face acts as deliberate and wilful strategies of the interactants in response to existing variables of the context and the ongoing interaction. The dearth of research in naturally occurring interaction especially with regards to face negotiations further establishes the significance of this study especially in contexts where the showing of respect or face consideration has an elaborate sociolinguistic value and significance (Olaoye, 2013).

The findings of this study will be beneficial to both teachers and students and will enable them become more aware of their interactive moves by way of minimising impolite acts that create disaffiliation in interaction. The study will also contribute to learning materials in discursive and applied pragmatics especially in ELF contexts. This I believe would help in improving and engendering of rapport between people of unequal social standing in instances of interpersonal interactions. It is also hoped that the findings of this study would forge a new direction for the investigation of face as an independent aspect of study as a distinct field from politeness studies.



## **Research Questions**

This study is designed to address the following questions:

1. How do students and teachers employ face in interaction as a deliberate social positioning strategy in an educational setting?
2. How does face negotiation impact the linguistic choices that interactants make in naturally occurring talk in the Registration Office in a Nigerian university?
3. How do variables of power, gender and context influence face negotiation in teacher-students interactions?
4. How do bodily gestures, facial expression and tone of voice contribute to face negotiation and interactional meaning in interaction?

## **Scope of the Study**

The study is designed to cover the face negotiations of teachers and students in English as a lingua franca (ELF) context within a university setting. My focus is therefore on the various face negotiation strategies used in the face-to-face interactions of these teachers and students in the registration office. The study also focused on the influence and impact of the social variables of gender, context and power on the nature of particular face negotiation. The study is not directly concerned with correct language

forms as used by the interactants but recognises their existence as prevalent features of ELF when compared to Standard British or American English.

## Conclusion

So far, I have tried to rationalise my reason for the choice of the site, participants and the object of this study which has to do with face negotiations in the interactions of teachers and students. My choice of face for instance is based on the realisation that the social aspect of meaning is not always captured in linguistic terms. I have subscribed to the argument therefore, that social realities such as face negotiations in interpersonal interactions are not always adequately captured, represented and interpreted in ELF interaction in real time especially in an educational setting, hence this study. Fairclough (2016) construe social reality as a combination of events and practices that embody ideas, theories, indexical representations and their reflexive character. I have also justified the rationale behind the decision to situate this study within the ELF frame in order to account for the actual interactional practice of the participants, not in comparison to any American or British Standard English use or usage. I believe that by so doing, the social aspect of meaning will naturally emerged from the collected data and be easily and systematically accounted for.

In summary, my position is that socio-pragmatic performance of ELF interactants as seen in their face negotiations should be given the same level of interactional importance as is their linguistic competence. In the next Chapter on Literature Review, I shall present the trajectory of the various studies on face from the ground breaking work of Goffman (1956) on the “Presentation of Self in Interaction” and how face was subsequently viewed and developed as a politeness strategy by Brown and Levinson (1967, 1987). I shall also present the current thinking on face by postmodern scholars (for example, Arundale, 2006, 2010; Locher and Watts, 2005;

Spencer-Oatey, 2010; Ting-Toomey, 1999, 2005; Ting-Toomey & Korugi, 1998) who view face as a sociopragmatic reality in interpersonal interaction and I shall rationalise why I believe that an ethnomethodological approach to face offers a clearer understanding of both the micro and macro features that contribute in the making of meaning in interaction especially in ELF interactions of teachers and students.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

Pragmatics has been aptly defined by Leech (1983) as the branch of linguistics that investigates meaning in different interactional contexts. Unlike grammar and semantics that investigate the operation of language within coded systems, pragmatics emerged from semiotics and investigates how contexts and other variables that impact on contexts contribute to meaning in interaction (Leech, 2014). In order to achieve these objectives, many scholars have developed useful concepts such as speech acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), conversational implicature (Grice, 1975), politeness principles (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983), and face negotiation (Arundale, 2010; Locher & Watts, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 2011; Ting-Toomey, 2005) among many other important concepts, all aimed at proffering scientific explanation to contextualised language use in interactions.

The differences and sometimes similarities of opinions between these scholars' views and definition of pragmatics have given credence to the strong claim by Blum-Kulka and House (1989) that a universal theory of pragmatics is difficult to arrive at but can be looked at across cultures and people. The cardinal and rallying point of the various definitions of pragmatics has been their focus on meaning, context and the social relations between the interlocutors. Face negotiation and construction is one of the areas of interactional and cultural differences that are often noticed in the interactions of persons of different sociocultural orientation. Many contemporary theorists of politeness

and face (for example, Arundale, 2010; Grainger, 2011; Leech, 2014; Locher & Watts, 2005; Mills, 2011; Van Der Bom & Mills, 2015; Ting-Toomey, 1998, 2005) have since aligned their views by seeing face in terms of relational negotiation of meaning or simply as a relational practice.

These relational and/or discursive views do not hold the language user to certain Anglo-Saxon standards and expectations that might in many ways hinder or impact the emergence of certain local semantic issues and his/her actual or naturally occurring performance of face negotiation as a social practice. If Anglo-Saxon standards were imposed on, for example, Nigerian English language users, tendencies would be that approximating to such standards could and would effectively predispose the language user to several pragmatic failures which may discountenance his/her unique and actual practice of face negotiation in interaction because the standards would be inherently foreign to him/her. It is presumable, therefore, that the Nigerian English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF) context, where showing of respect to older people or people in authority is emphasized in interaction or interpersonal relationships, would require a wider focus on other significant contextual variables in order to understand the actual interactional practice and discursive moves. I have therefore adopted Crystal's (2011) definition of pragmatics as the study of "the interlocutors, the social relationship between them, the choices they make and the constraints they make in using a language for communicative acts" (p. 379) as a general pragmatic principle that underlies this study. This choice was, firstly, because of its focus on the language user and the context of language use. Secondly, Crystal's definition of pragmatics, positions interaction as an interactive social practice that is discursively relational in nature. The importance of such a

perspective is that it rightly moves, in my view, the unit and focus of analysis from just utterances (speech acts) to speech events as advocated by Leech (2014). A speech event is defined by Leech (2014) as complex occurrences of phenomena such as requests, apologies and the like, as well as requests and apology responses of interactants in the context of their occurrence. As such, a speech event is a consequence of a social situation. As can be assumed, situations that yield in speech events can vary extensively in their manifestations across cultures and contexts and this varied manifestation in the specific context of Nigeria is one of my foci in this study.

### **Applied Pragmatics in English as a Lingua Franca Context: The Nigerian Case**

Nigeria is typically an ELF context that is positioned in the expanding, norm developing circle (Kachru, 1986). Many scholars (e.g. Adegbite, 2010; Jowitt, 1991; Odumoh, 1987) have investigated and outlined some of the distinctive features of the peculiar use and usage of the English language by Nigerians. These have contributed significantly in shaping the content of English language courses that are taught in departments of English of Nigerian universities. Worthy of mention is the course “Nigerian English” (NE) which is taught in the second and third years of studies of the four-year BA in English programmes of most Nigerian universities (PLASU, Academic Brief, 2016). This course’s description reflects the peculiarity of the use and function of the English language in Nigeria and I believe that the ELF nomenclature rather than ESL or EFL and academic arguments adequately represents the daily and contextual use of and function of English language in Nigeria.

Sharifian (2009) observed that ELF research is an additional voice to the more developed research fields of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) as they seek to offer solutions to language learning and teaching problems in non-native contexts. One of the problems that have been identified and have stood out is the use of native English language as the standard bearer in structure, form and use (Haugh, 2012) while teaching English to foreign or second language learners of the English language. The ELF position is that regardless of the circle that a given variety falls in, it should be treated with its merits and its own peculiarities. My choice of the ELF paradigm is premised on the fact that it enables me to examine the manifestation or enactment of face in the interactions of teachers and students devoid of standardisation subjectivity regarding their use of language.

The English language in Nigeria has its roots deeply entrenched into the fabric of the Nigerian society. Many scholars (Adegbite, 2010; Akere, 2009; Odumuh, 1987) agree that intrinsic and indigenized norms of the English language use and usage have developed in Nigeria. Many studies (e.g. Jowitt, 1991; Jowitt, 1994; Jowitt&Nnamonu, 1998) have been conducted in an effort to establish the peculiarities inherent in the spoken and written English language of Nigerians. Many of these scholars have acknowledged the unique use of the English language by Nigerians and they believe, therefore, that Nigerian English is remarkably different at both the syntactic and phonological levels from the Standard British English as well as in the socio-pragmatic use of the language. These views conform to House's (2009) definition of ELF as a language use with a "special form" (p. 141) that is operating in conditions and environments that are uniquely different from that which is native.



Interactional practices and the construction of face in the interactions of Nigerian teachers and students will presumably be distinct from those of other people in other contexts and should be investigated using methods and concepts that will help reveal the various social phenomena that constitute interactions. It seems therefore that both ‘third space’ (Bhabha, 1990) and ‘third place’ (Casmir, 1999) notions are genuine concerns regarding the much criticised universality in the presentation of face using the Griccean perspective presented by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983) in their theories of politeness. By presenting face as a manifestation of politeness within the Brown and Levinson (1987) frame and hypothesis of a face mitigating strategy, both face and politeness seemed to have been reduced to a cultural artefact and a static entity of only speech acts which is easily accounted for using the encoding and decoding model of analysis. This does not allow for the needed attention to be paid to the importance of turn taking for example, as an aspect of politeness or face negotiation, and the other unique sociolinguistic practice and topic control conventions in Nigeria that Goffman (1997) rightly referred to as the “mechanics of encounter” (p. 172). The point being made by Goffman (1997) and emphasized by Rampton et al., (2004) and Rampton (2017) is that no two encounters are the same and the mechanics that are required for the control of an encounter differ from context to context and interactants to interactants. I agree therefore with Haugh’s (2012) position that one of the problems of politeness investigation and by extension, face studies is the use of “English as a scientific metalanguage to describe concepts and practices in other languages and cultures” (p. 4). This is because it creates a platform for the comparison of target language face negotiation strategies against the face negotiation and practice of another/native language. This should not be the case as it creates the never ending controversy of

‘right’ or ‘wrong’ language practice. I believe that the underlying fact that should be vigorously pursued is the practice of interaction and interactional strategies in a given context or setting and that can best be done using ethnographic resources to adequately account for useful contextual cues.

### **Pragmatic Competence in ELF**

**Linguistic competence and performance.** The term competence was first used by Chomsky (1965) in one of his seminal works, “Aspects of the Theory of Syntax” to establish a distinction between “linguistic competence” and “linguistic performance.” While linguistic competence refers to the idealised belief that humans are born with the innate ability to acquire the structures of a language, linguistic performance refers to the ability of the language user to perform in the language by way of doing things such as answering a question or asking a question among other things. In developing her theory of politeness, Lakoff (1973) insisted that pragmatic competence lies between two scales: “be clear” and “be polite” (p. 298). Chomsky (1965) sees such distinction as crucial to the understanding of the workings of language in any human society, firstly because it enables language researchers to establish between an error in speech and an outright lack of knowledge of the operations of the language. Secondly, this distinction has been positively criticised by Hymes (1972) for not accommodating sociolinguistic variables that often impact the performance of a language user. As such, this criticism has helped to shift focus from competent knowledge of grammar and language pedagogy to aspects

of communicative competence as being pursued in other aspects of language studies such as pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis among others.

**Communicative competence.** Communicative competence seems to be a favourable ground for ELF's communicative practice to sprout unhindered given its permissiveness towards natural language use. Communicative competence focuses interest on the goal of a language, which is to communicate. In order to foreground communicative competence as an objective alternative to both linguistic competence and performance, Hymes (1966) did an ethnographic study of the phenomenon and developed his concept of communicative competence. This was a significant contribution towards understanding the mechanics of interaction in a way that integrates the form (structure) and function (what the language is used for). His approach to the issue of competence placed the language user at the heart of the investigation.

This direction by Hymes (1966; 1972) is praised for opening up frontiers for contemporary sociolinguistic investigations that reflect on society and the persons that use the language giving opportunity for group (social constructs such as masculinity and femininity) and specialized language use to emerge. This is what Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) refer to as “community of practice” (p. 85). Rampton (2017) pointed out that the direction advanced by Hymes (1966) “produced new maps for the relationship between linguistics and anthropology in programmatic manifestos that stressed practical and political relevance to contemporary social life” (p. 2). Communicative competence is, therefore, a significant level of contribution on linguistic competence and performance by redefining second language learning curriculum to be more communicative in nature. Schauer (2009) observed that one of the obvious and

significant contributions of Hymes' (1966) communicative competence is the emergence of the communicative language teaching method and approach that has recorded greater success in second language teaching and learning in the past three decades. Bachman (1990) insists that communicative competence should satisfy three useful conditions:

- a. Grammatical Competence (Knowledge of Grammar)
- b. Sociolinguistic Competence (Sociocultural Knowledge)
- c. Strategic Competence (Appropriate Usage)

According to Bachman, any curriculum that is designed to be communicative, must address these important competences in a consistent way.

**Pragmatic competence.** Chomsky's (1965) ideas regarding a speaker's linguistic competence and performance and Hymes' (1966, 1972) onward developments on the concept of communicative competence have all contributed in generating more interest and advancements in pragmatic studies. The term 'pragmatic competence' has been represented variously by language scholars. Taguchi (2008) prefers the term pragmatic awareness while Garcia (2004) used the term receptive pragmatic competence, all of which emphasized a language user's ability to adequately and correctly interpret the intended meaning of an illocution. In order to achieve a comprehensive interpretation of an illocution, van Dijk (1977) contend that the context of the occurrence of the illocution must be investigated. Citing Kasper, Schauer (2009) summarised five important aspects of context that require attention:

1. The identification of the general social context (formal/informal, public/private)
2. The identification of the specific social context (e.g. opening a formal meeting, introducing somebody at a party)
3. The identification of the relevant factors in the given context, for example, participants' social status, their positional and situational roles, and their role relationship
4. The identification of conventions (social norms) pertaining to the given context
5. The identification of the overall ongoing action and the sequence of acts preceding the speech act under comprehension. (p. 24)

Pragmatic competence, therefore, must account for illocutionary competence (language users, referents and signs knowledge) and sociolinguistic competence (knowledge of context of interaction) (Bachman, 1990). In other words, pragmatic competence is the ability of a language user to engage and consider all of these points when saying something or when interpreting another speaker's intended meaning. In order to achieve this, many scholars have advocated for an ethnographic investigation of context which would help to understand the underlying structure of the norms of interaction that are culturally specific to a linguistic code. Interactional practices are not uniform across cultures. As such, what appears appropriate in one culture might be grossly inappropriate in another culture as some cultures are intrinsically collectivist and

others individualist (Hofstede, 2004). This binary division impacts on how the mechanics of interaction operate in a given language and contexts.

***Individualism and Collectivism cultures.*** Hofstede and Geert (2004) proposed a model that aims at showing the degree and level of closeness between addresser and addressee from the perspective of societal expectations and norms. Some societies are observed to have closely knitted ties that incorporate and bind the society together. Such a society places group interest above individuals' interest. In such a society or culture, what you say and how you say it has larger implications to the other interactants (Hofstede, 2011). The metacognition behind the thinking in such societies is aptly captured in an African proverb: It takes the village to raise a child. This shows the supportive nature of such cultures. Most African cultures and Middle Eastern cultures are observed to fit the idea and description of a collectivist cultures (Ourfali, 2015). The interactional behaviour of people in such cultures is almost regulated. Collectivist cultures are likely to show more of face consideration in terms of face support in interaction. The interactional strategies in such a culture will typically be face threat averse as has been found to be among the Japanese (Ide, 1992).

Individualist cultures are typically opposite in nature to collectivist cultures. The social and interpersonal ties between people in an individualist culture are not as emphasized as it is in the collectivist cultures. People act and are mostly accountable to themselves and not the entire society. The individual's interest is placed above collective or group interest. Hofstede and Geert (2004) observed that European cultures are mostly described as being individual centred and this reflects on their interactional practice. For

example, requests are presented indirectly in individualist cultures because there is an implicit desire not to bother the other.

Hofstede (2011) believes that a broad categorization of cultures as either individualism or collectivism can be problematic. However, cultures can be located on a scale of how these defining features are emphasised from one context to the other. It is therefore difficult to say for example that a country is individualist or collectivist. The dimensions and scales of their differences and these differences reflect on their interactional management strategies. One of the strongest criticisms of the Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness by many scholars (Arundale, 2006; Eelen, 2001; Ide, 1992; Locher & Watts, 2005) is towards its attempt to universalise Europeans' practice of politeness on all cultures as the actual practice of politeness. The variable that seemed to have significant influence in the interactions of Africans is face consideration drawn from micro variable of power, gender and social contexts.

Gender is a social construct that tries to identify people on the basis of their sex. Holmes (2012) defines gender as the social and cultural identities that set a group apart with regard to their sex. Bern (2004), however, observed that gender tends to shape interactions in ways that reflect on the value of the society or existing culture. As a social construct, gender is manifested in two broad dimensions that tend to reflect on certain social and biological differences known as femininity and masculinity (Holmes, 2003). Femininity and masculinity are qualities that are complementary yet opposite to each other. These qualities are perceived differently from society to society and are more emphasised and elaborate in some cultures than in others.

***Femininity and masculinity.*** Femininity and masculinity, according to Hofstede (2011), are suggestive of roles that the society aligned to a certain gender. Often, masculinity is associated with toughness, material achievement, assertiveness while femininity is contrastively associated with, tenderness, kind-heartedness and being more incline towards beauty (Butler, 2008). This broad categorization is criticised for its stereotypical and labelling tendencies (Jinyu, 2014), which tend to assume simplistic positions that, because one is feminine or masculine, one is likely to behave in certain ways. A careful look at the categorization shows that a male can be both tender and tough and a female can be both assertive and kind. However, in some contexts the historicity of this categorization is by certain defined roles especially among Africans and Oriental cultures (Hofstede, 2011). In Nigeria, where such distinction is still sharp, gender places certain interactive duties on the interactants in terms of who speaks first in salutational events (Mathias & Oyinma, 2015). But this too is fast fading away with women and men going into occupations that were passed down as the exclusive preserve of the other (Shamir, 1986). Similarly, Hertzog and Lev (2019) believe that male dominance is under threat by female resurgence in various spheres of life.

In sociolinguistics, gender has remained a discussion and research point for many years because of its close relationship with cultural variations. Holmes (2003) does not agree with Lakoff's (1975) claim that males and females speak differently. Rather, she sees the distinction as a product of the personal talking styles of people with the male and female subcultures in a constant use over time. For example, the length of speech during turns in interactions has been proven to be a matter of style and not because of one's gender. Holmes' (2003) point is that biological differences should not



be a basis for such distinctions. The psychological effect of such a categorization over time is that people tend to act in accordance with the way they have been defined and this is often manifested in their speech and interactional habits. For instance, it was evident in Raman and Çavuşoğlu(2019) work, where female student-teachers feel that by assuming a male posture (tough looking and speaking loud) they would command the respect of their students.

Gender influences in interaction in gender sensitive contexts like Nigeria cannot be discountenance. The impact of the dominant role of male over female in social life is evident in Nigeria. For example, This Day (2018) reported that, in the Nigeria's bicameral legislative assembly, women constitute only 6% of the 438 members (seven Senators and 23 House of Representative members). This negative trend is reported in many States Houses of Assembly and in many work places in Nigeria. The irony of these startling statistics is that, according to the World Bank Report (2016), female population constitute 49.34 percent of the country's entire population. It seems evident that in such a male dominant context, the female gender is the dominated party. The negative influence of this is that most female students in the context of this study are coming from a context of domination while the male students are expected to be tough and strong. These tendencies are reflected in the naturally occurring interactions of these students and their teachers.

By investigating face acts in the naturally occurring interactions of teachers and students, I am examining the influence of that cultural variability on their interactions and their use of face to negotiate and demand for their space in their ELF interactions. The differences in the face negotiation could be due to the cultural influences already

highlighted. This, I believe, will reveal face as the element behind the execution of speech acts in interaction.

**Power and social status.** Power as a social construct is often associated with the social status of a person. Wodak and Meyer (2016) observed that in interaction, power seemed to be more significant and elaborately manifested than cognition. They also observed that, understanding of how a given interaction plays out requires a good knowledge of how the society is structured and its operation of the dynamics of power. Many studies have related power to social status of an interactant. For example, Wartenberg (1990), Watts (1991), Thornborrow (2002) and Locher (2004) show that people in positions of authority (power positions) are more disposed to making impolite utterances and face threatening acts. Similarly, Locher and Bousfield (2008) believe that what guarantees impoliteness in interaction is the power position that the indecorous person occupies. Situating and defining power in especially face-to-face interaction is believed to be a hydra-headed problem because it may consist of so many variables such as age, gender, social standing and a host of others.

The definition of power by Wartenberg (1990) as “social agent A has power over another social agent B if and only if A strategically constrains B’s action-environment” (p. 85) is apt in understanding the complex role of power in interaction. Power does not exist in a vacuum and does not exist if it does not influence or impact the course of an action.

In formal settings like the school environment, the asymmetric nature of the relationship in the interaction means that the teacher is in the visible position of power.

Both the teachers and the students are expected to operate with established codes of the institution. For example, to emphasize the level of formality, students of the department of English are required to dress in the departmental uniform of purple top and black trousers or skirts (for males and females respectively) on Mondays and Wednesdays, and be respectably attired for Tuesday and Thursday and be dressed in ‘natives’ on Friday (Students’ Handbook, 2013). Lecturers, on the other hand, are expected to ensure compliance of the students. The lecturers are therefore seen as custodians of the students and have the right to scold, reprimand and correct students. Thus, the power relation in a teacher-student interaction is an asymmetrical one with a dynamic dimension provided by gendered talk.

### **Theoretical Framework**

**The trajectory of face in the theories of politeness.** Over the years, face has emerged as a key concept in pragmatics and sociolinguistics and other related fields that investigate language use and meaning within the context of its use in human interaction. However, research on face is argued by Arundale (2010) to have been narrowly conducted along the part of linguistics leaving out its sociological aspect in the past. The reason for this narrow perspective according to Arundale (2010) is that the research on face has been conducted as a sub-field of research in politeness and this has been the trend for the past 50 years. There have equally been robust discussions that have emphasised the theoretical underpinning of the researchers in question in terms of appropriately situating face in a particular domain (linguistic or sociological) of

research. The research on face (politeness) since Goffman's (1967) seminal work has taken various and meandering paths which I intend to subsequently present.

***Goffman's notion of face.*** The concept of face was first used by Goffman (1967) to depict his theory of politeness that has been described as sociological in nature (Grainger, 2011). Similarly, Arundale (2010) explained that the term originally refers to traditional English folk concept of self-image and not losing face which were considered very important to the English culture and traditions. The term is therefore associated with embarrassment, humiliation and self-image. Goffman (1967) views face as the personal self-image of a person which he presents at a given interaction. In other words, as Tracy (1990) defines it, face is the social identities that people claim as well as give others.

Goffman (1967) posits that there is a strong link between face and ritualized community practices such as greeting norms, spatial distance between interactants among others. He believes that interactions are shaped by the moral codes of the community. The interactions of interactants are subconsciously guided by these moral orders which speakers or interactants are bound to uphold. Rampton (2018) seemed to echo the same sentiments, insisting that naturally, interactants aim at attaining a certain social equilibrium in episodes of interaction by considering others as well. Because of these moral considerations, Goffman divided face into two. The face that shows the current state of the speaker during an interaction is known as a "wrong face" while "out of face" depicts the state of an embarrassed or ashamed person in an interaction that fails to show the expected pattern of decorum. The emergence of a "face saving act" is to redress breakdown occasioned by out of face situations.

Goffman (1967) demonstrates how face saving act operates with two basic rules when there is a failure in the cooperative principles of social interaction. As a natural defensive strategy against failed cooperative principle, members of speech communities seemed to have what he called “defensive face” and “protective face.” The defensive face indicates the natural inclination that the interactants have to save their face in an embarrassing situation while the protective face is the desire to save other’s face by ensuring that others are redeemed from an embarrassing situation. These defensive face and protective face are what Goffman defines as “facework”: a mechanic for mitigating “face threats” to self and others in interaction. For example, facework during acts of apology is an instance of corrective or preventive facework. Apologies are normally products of offense, which could be intended offence (planned), unintended offence (unplanned) and anticipated offence (not planned but may occur).

In principle, Goffman’s notion of face operates through what he calls “the avoidance process” and the “remedial process” (1967, p. 48). By keeping away from receiving a negative face, face avoidance is involved. The remedial process is used to make up and correct interactional slips or unpleasant social occurrences. The process of apologising goes through the stages of accepting fault or mistake, taking responsibility for an act and the desire to make up. The remedial process contributes in keeping face as well as establishing the interactional ritual equilibrium. The remedial process could be presented using a defensive or protective face. Goffman argues that, when defensively presented, the presenter is reacting to a face threatening act that requires redressing, however, those who witness the face threatening act or the transgression may offer a protective face by apologising for others offence in order to save the loss of face. This

act may be in keeping with the interactional ritual of a culture where social solidarity or communality is practiced. The action of the bystanders in such an instance is indicative of a collective knowledge of the social practice that has been broken hence the need to empathise with the offended.

Goffman's (1967) notion of face has enjoyed robust criticisms. Scholars of Eastern cultures and extraction (Lee-Wong, 1994; Matsumoto 1989, Kadar & Haugh, 2013) have argued that Goffman's (1967, 1982) notion of face as a person's positive social value that he claims for himself in an interaction is too individualist and does not reflect their collectivist cultures. Matsumoto (1989), for example, argues that Goffman's notion of face is not universal as it is not applicable to the collectivism culture of the Japanese. Since most African cultures practice collectivism (Hofstede, 2011) similar to the Japanese and the Chinese, the notion of face that is relational is more likely to depict the complex nature of the social interaction that takes place. This is one of the research gaps that this study hopes to fill.

***Gricean theories of politeness and face.*** Following Goffman's (1967) work on face, Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), Lakoff (1973) and Leech (1983) have been recognised as classical and traditional strides in the study of politeness in interaction. Lakoff (1973) is reputed as the first research on politeness within the scope of pragmatics. In order to fashion out her theory of politeness, Lakoff (1973) relied on two rules that are similar to those in the cooperative principle of Grice (1975): be clear and be polite. The rule for clarity is expected to be applied when there is a message to be communicated while the rule to be polite should be applied to make social

difference smoother, and account for social distance and the like. As such, the rule is hinged on three principles;

- a. Don't impose, keep appropriate distance from addressee
- b. Give options, allow for response
- c. Make audience feel good, maintain equality

Like Goffman (1967), Lakoff (1973) expresses support for the perspective that social norms and customs differs from context to context in both manifestation and practice but, she retained the Gricean believe that the social dynamics of language are expressed in acts such as apology. She believes that apology is a way of acknowledging and redressing a committed offence and that, apology is expressed through speech acts. The social function of an apology is to make up for the face threatening acts that caused the offence (face threatening act) in the first instance. Lakoff (1990) noted that, at the heart of human interaction is the desire to avoid rude behaviours. However, because of cultural variability, some polite behaviour might be considered excessive and inappropriate in some contexts.

Lakoff's (1975) contribution focused on the impact of social constructs such as power and gender on language use. Her claim that women are predisposed to be more polite than men because of their use of honeyed words have enjoyed some positive and negative criticisms. Mills (2003) for example, agrees that gender and social power impacts interaction but she discountenance the claim of women being more polite than men. The fact that Lakoff (1975, 1990) tends to look at politeness as a linguistic phenomenon is probably the reason for the distinctions she tries to draw between the

language use of women and men. The use of flowery language is not an instance of politeness. Women's language use in Nigeria is likely to be impacted more by the social imbalance between men and women in the society created by the dominant male culture as shown in my background to this study.

Another of the criticisms of Lakoff's (1973) theory is her use of "rules" rather than the maxims that Grice (1962) used. By moving away from maxims, Lakoff, (1973) is argued has removed the non-constitutive components of language use in social interactions and replaced it with regulated and constitutive rules. Ting-Toomey (2005) observed that Lakoff (1990) had moved away from the concept of "rules" to "strategies" but her view is still criticized for leaving out the social aspect of language use since strategies are more orientated towards personal or individual attribute rather than a collective attribute. Holmes (2013) argues that gender, social power and distance of the interactants are not regulated by rules but by norms of appropriacy in any social engagement. Lakoff's (1975) theory is also criticised for using linguistic rules that are too regulative and might not hold for all contexts of interpersonal interaction (Leech, 1983).

Gricean perspectives have strongly influenced the work of Leech (1983). Leech's (1983) theory of politeness is also seen as very instructive in many regards. For example, following Gricean perspective, Leech (1983) was able to develop a Politeness Principle (PP) with a set of maxims that are regulative rather than constitutive. The non-constitutive or regulative nature of the PP and its maxims means that the maxims can be flouted or violated since no one is obligated to be polite. This means that language users may willingly or unwillingly fail to adhere to the expectations and requirements of the



maxims (Leech, 1983). These maxims that contribute to the operation of politeness are tact maxim, approbation maxim, generosity maxim, agreement maxim, modesty and sympathy maxim.

**Tact maxim** in impositives and commissives should achieve (a) minimize cost to other (b) maximize benefit to other. In observing polite etiquette in request, apologies and other speech acts, the language user is expected to avoid imposition by employing certain redressives (tact maxims) in order to serve his purpose to avoid offence.

**Generosity maxim** in impositives and commissives should achieve (a) minimize benefit to self (b) maximize cost to self. This means that in an instance of apology, the speaker is expected to take responsibility for the offense while apologizing. For example, *I am sorry I lost your pen but I got another for you*. The generosity maxim is seen in the taking of responsibility for the lost pen and the aim is for the pen owner to accept a new pen for the lost one.

**Approbation maxim** in expressives and assertives should (a) minimize dispraise of other (b) maximize praise of other. The aim of the approbation maxim is to show solidarity with an offended person in order to make him feel good. For example, *I totally understand your anger but it was really not my intention to make you angry*. Across many cultures, the feelings of interlocutors are of great importance in the shaping of utterance and that is achieved through the employment of the approbation maxim.

**Modesty maxim** in expressives and assertives are aimed at (a) minimizing praise of self (b) maximizing dispraise of self. The modesty maxim is expressed in such a manner that the speaker is seen as humble and modest. For example, *I am so stupid, I*

*forgot about your wedding date.* The use of self-demeaning words such as ‘stupid’ is aimed at achieving the goal of maximizing the modesty of the speaker.

**Agreement maxim** in assertives is aimed at (a) minimizing disagreement between self and other (b) maximizing agreement between self to other. This particular maxim seems to agree with the concept of positive politeness of Brown and Levinson (1987) since it seeks to establish a kind of equilibrium between the interactants without causing offense. For example, *Jane, You were right I interpreted the message completely wrong.* This maxim is used to achieve politeness by way of harmonizing points of disagreement.

**Sympathy maxim** in expressive aims at (a) minimizing antipathy between self and other (b) maximizing sympathy between self and other in interaction. This maxim emphasizes empathy in a courteous way that attends to the feelings of the hearer. For example in the expression of condolence such as, *I am sorry about your dad, he was a very good man.* Such an apology in a condolence is not a just an apology but the practice of politeness.

Leech (1983, 2014) made it clear that the maxims are not cast in stone; they can and are often flouted. The maxims, when they are flouted can also be redressed using certain strategies. Although Leech (1983) claimed that, politeness is more important than the cooperative principle, Leech (2014) argues that the maxims of politeness and the cooperative principle are complementary in operation. As such the principle serves as the basis and the superstructure for the performance of polite acts in interaction.

Leech (1983) use of “principles” as the underlying structure for the performance of politeness is praised as a worthy attempt towards accounting for the interpersonal use of language. Again, according to Grainger (2011) by designing the maxims as subsets of the principles, he elevates interpersonal interaction above the realm of constitutive descriptions and systematised the analysis of interpersonal interaction. Leech is however accused of proliferation of the terminologies in pragmatics. For example, Arundale (2006) believes that four of the maxims would have been adequate to address his concept of politeness.

Much like Leech’s (1983) politeness maxims, Brown and Levinson (1983, p. 74) conceived politeness as comprising of three important scales of social variables that contribute in the constituting of politeness. These are:

- a. The *relative power* [P]. This refers to the power position an interactant occupies relative to the other interactant. The recognition of relative power by the interactants is crucial to the employment of certain redressive use of language in order to avoid face threats. The utterance “give me the key” when used by friends will be socially acceptable but could signal rudeness when a student tells a teacher such, hence socially unacceptable.
- b. The *ranked imposition* [R] this is the presentation of the illocutionary act which might be inherently face threatening therefore requiring the employment of certain behaviours that could minimize the face threat. A request that will or might cause some discomfort to the addressee to fulfil, is inherently face threatening. For example, “can I borrow your car?” is such a request. The ranked

imposition of the act determines the politic behaviour that will be employed by the addressee in order to minimize the discomfort of the addressee.

- c. *The social distance* [D] is the level of social distance or familiarity between speaker (S) and hearer (H). The social distance can impact on the extent and level of politeness between interactants. The more familiar or the less the social distance the less the degree of politeness and the less familiar the greater the social distance and the greater the politeness that is required.

The scales of politeness introduced by Brown and Levinson (1983) have attracted many criticisms. Ide (1993) for example, presented a similar criticism of both Brown and Levinson (1978) and Leech (1983), stating that politeness is the employment of strategic strategies in interaction that will ultimately lead to the attainment of individual's goals. This however must be achieved within the established and expected norms of language use of the society and not within a constitutive scale that is largely western.

Ide (1993) believes that examining politeness within the prism of western culture is problematic to a wholesome understanding of politeness as a concept. She uses the Japanese understanding of politeness to identify two separate domains of politeness and termed them 'volition' and 'discernment.' Discernment is the kind of politeness that is associated with the Japanese culture of 'wakimae' while volition, on the other hand, is associated with the western politeness described by Brown and Levinson. Wakimae is defined by Leech (2014) as a concept that is indicative of the roles, obligation and duties of individuals and members of a hierarchical society while volition is a language user's

personal and free will to show politeness. Ide's (1993) differentiation of volition kind of politeness and discernment kind of politeness is that, while volition relates to individuals desire and willingness to show politeness, discernment is the expectation placed on the Japanese to use appropriate honorifics to establish, forge and achieve appropriate respect, humbleness and social solidarity. This view of politeness relates to face consideration and will resonate with Nigerians and many African's view of politeness on the grounds that hierarchy and roles are established by the society and these hierarchy and roles determine the marking of politeness by individuals (Akere, 2009). Many African societies are organised through the age grade system where tenets of socio-cultural interactions are taught through various means (Odebunmi, 2012). It can be claimed that within the age grade system, individuals are taught when to say something, where and how to say something and indeed, when to keep quite respectfully. Clearly, these scholars (Brown & Levinson, 1978; 1987; Leech, 198) have used Gricean approach to validly contribute to the field of language pragmatics by presenting us with their theories as well as their criticisms. However, despite these contributions to the theories of pragmatics, they are not without their shortcomings and criticisms.

The politeness theory developed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) has therefore enjoyed critical reviews and criticisms from scholars with many scholars agreeing that a new direction needed to be forged. These new directions are not without their areas of divergence. Many scholars (Eeelen, 2001, 2014; Culpeper, 2003; Locher&Bousfield, 2007; Bousfield, 2008) see the new direction to be forged as an investigation into the occurrence of conflictive illocutions or impoliteness. Bousfield (2008) argues that studies into impoliteness are required for a holistic view of interaction

as ‘negative face’ does not amount to impoliteness. The uncooperative illocutions that Leech (1983) claimed is a rare occurrence in normal circumstances have been proven to be actually a rampant occurrence in courtroom discourse, doctor-patient interaction (Grainger, 2014), peer interaction, and everyday interaction (Haugh, 2010) and politeness in work place (Holmes & Stubbe, 2015). The significant and distinctive point about conflictive illocutions in contrast to collaborative illocutions is emphasized by Eelen (2001). He claimed that there is a ‘conceptual bias’ in favour of politeness approaches over impoliteness approaches despite their distinctiveness. The consensus of these scholars is that a theory of impoliteness should be developed so that more studies of impoliteness will be engendered. The point of contention for me is whether the existing theories of politeness can adequately account for impoliteness as an occurring phenomenon and, I think that a relational theory of politeness is one that should and can account for the complexities that can or may emerge from any incidence of interaction. This is consistent with Leech’s (2014) advocacy on the need to “build on a theory of politeness” (p. 219) that can account for the entire incidence of politeness or impoliteness. The treatment of politeness should inevitably account for instances of conflictive illocutions and the treatment of conflictive illocution should equally account for instances of collaborative illocutions.

The strongest criticism of the Gricean scholars is by discourse analysts (Eelen, 2001; Grainger, 2004, 2014; Watts, 2005; Locher, 2006) who rightly insist that nonverbal cues, situational context and the sequential structure of talk in interaction and not just speech acts are crucial to any form of meaning interpretation. Indeed, the discourse analysts believe that meaning resides more in nonverbal cues, contextual and

sequential structure of any interaction. Another criticism of the Gricean approaches is by socio-pragmatist (Spencer-Oatey, 2008) who also, rightly pointed out that the Gricean theorists focused their concentration on speaker's intention in interaction. This seems to be a problem in the minds of speakers which constitutes a huge problem because it leads interpretation of interaction towards the world of guessing and permutations because the intention of a speaker can only be inferred without certainty. Many scholars (Arundale, 1999, 2010; Locher, 2006; Spencer-Oatey, 2008, 2011) believe that the overreliance on speaker's intention excludes other possibilities of meaning and renders the approach static and one-directional. By being static and one-directional, investigation into interaction becomes predictable and without the excitement that comes with the uncertainty and fluidity that accompanies meaning and the interpretation of meaning.

Similar criticisms of Brown and Levinson (1978) and Leech's (1983) theories of politeness is advanced by Gu (1990) and Ide (1989, 1993). Gu (1990) for example believes that both Brown and Levinson's (1978) and Leech's (1983) theories of politeness need modification to account for the Chinese and many other cultures and their practices of politeness that the theory in its present state cannot account for. Gu (1990) claimed that to the Chinese, the practice of politeness is constitutive because there is the general belief among the Chinese that "an individual's behaviour ought to live up to the expectations of respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth and refinement" (p. 245). This has underscored and emphasized the important point that both (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Leech, 1983) seemed to have presented theories that are focused on western culture. Among the Chinese the basic element that is given prominence in interaction is face and not the practice of politeness. Gu (1990) claimed

that face in interaction is constituted by the society and is not a product of an individual. This contrasts with the communal nature of the Chinese against the individualist nature of most European societies. Gu (1990), therefore, proposed a reduction in the number of maxims theorised by Leech from six maxims to only four which he named as self-denigration, address, tact and generosity. This he believes will create a 'balance principle' of politeness that can account for the reciprocity of favours done and favours received that is a common practice among the Chinese and other non-European cultures, which will effectively help in establishing social balance and equilibrium in social interaction.

**Contemporary theories of face (interpersonal pragmatics).** The contemporary theories are generally termed as discursive theories that try to investigate interpersonal communication. Arundale (2006) maintained that a discursive approach to politeness is indeed an investigation of "face constituting," a term he defines as the "relational and interactional phenomenon arising in everyday talk/conduct, as opposed to a person-centred attribute understood as determining the shape of an individual's utterance"(p. 2079). Most of these contemporary scholars (Arundale, 2006, 2010; Haugh, 2007; Locher, 2006; Spencer-Oatey, 2011) have taken this discursive approach to face in interaction as relational and interpersonal communication and they tend to rely and emphasised the significance of using authentic human interaction for their analysis. By so doing, they have moved away from the Gricean scholar's reliance on the encoding and decoding model of analysis.

The discursive approach to face and politeness has contributed significantly in opening up the field for interpersonal research. The emergence of many studies;



politeness at work place (Holmes & Schnurr, 2005; Mullany, 2004), impoliteness (Culpeper, Bousfield & Wichmann, 2003), Jocular mockery, (dis)affiliation and face (Haugh, 2010) and gender and politeness (2003) among many other related studies on face and politeness have further accentuated the discussion on interpersonal interaction in diverse contexts. These scholars' view of face theory is that there is no central universal theory as the manifestation of face in interaction is tied to sociocultural practice of a people or group. Discursive approach to face and politeness is also criticized for attempting to move away from the linguistic choices that are made during interaction (Haugh, 2007) and as such runs the risk of minimizing the scope of linguistic theory by relaying on how people use language without paying due recognition to how language mediates and regulates human interaction. These discursive scholars (Arudale, 2006, 2010; Grainger, 2011; Haugh, 2007; Locher, 2006; Spencer-Oatey, 2011) have been identified as either being discursive relational or discursive interactional in their approaches.

***Discursive relational approach.*** Watts and Locher (2005) for example are known as relational scholars who believe that the study of face and theory of politeness should focus on what being polite means to the interactants. That way, we can uncover what Watts (2003) refer to as the “disruptive dispute” in an episode of interaction. Firstly, the argument of these discursive relational scholars is that interactants are constantly using various strategies of resolving issues in interactions. The stand point of Watts and Locher (2005) is that there is no way of knowing a speaker's intention (the focus of old analysis in pragmatics) but we can unpack participants' acts and interactional practice using discursive methods that are participant centred rather than a

discourse centred approach. Locher and Watts (2008) however observed that the contention of relational scholars is that “interactants’ judgement about relational status of a message is based on norms of appropriateness in a given instance of social practice” (p. 1). A discursive relational frame is a body of expectations (socio-cultural norms and values) that is directly or indirectly imposed on the language user depending on the context. These expectations are the indexical socio-cultural knowledge of individuals and groups about the rules of appropriacy in interaction. A relational dimension to pragmatic investigation is one that is also deeply concerned with the interpersonal rhetorical use of language. This is what enables speakers and hearers to work out meaning relationally within established frames of expectations.

Because of the participant’s interpretations-centred nature of the approach, Watts (2003) and Locher (2004) and Locher and Watts (2005, p. 14) made a distinction between “first order” and “second order” politeness. First order refers to the actual practice of politeness or impoliteness and how participants and observers evaluate the performance and practice of politeness or impoliteness in interaction. Second order politeness on the other hand refers to the various conceptualisations and theories of politeness by scientists. Their argument is that it is not the scientists or theorist that should determine what politeness or impoliteness is but the interactants. In fact, Locher and Watts (2005) contend that it is fruitless to search for a universal face or politeness theory as social practices vary from context to context. They, therefore, advocate for the use of a naturally occurring interaction for the investigation of face acts and the practice of politeness. They contend that a discursive approach that is bottom-up and is data-driven will reveal more about interactional practice of a people over and above what the

scientists will claim. This view is consistent with Rampton's (2018) position that when examining discourse data, "the whole situation, the whole surround, must always be considered taking into account gaze, gesture, posture, spatial positioning, orientation to objects etc as well as speech" (p. 2). The major advantage of such an approach to face and politeness according to Grainger (2011) is that situated and naturally occurring interaction will allow for the discursive turns to emerge without any form of codification.

Locher and Watts (2005) views have equally been criticised by Arundale (2006) and Haugh (2007). Haugh (2007) believes that Locher and Watts (2005) view of second order politeness reduces the analyst's role in his own field and they claim that there cannot be a universal theory of face and politeness because of the variability of contexts is too sweeping a generalisation to be made. Haugh (2007) believes that by asking the interactants post-hoc questions in order to access interactants language use, the interactants have been made the analyst of their own interactional practices and this may skew the genuineness of the data to what the interactants want you to believe. By so doing, face and politeness research is completely taken away from the purview of linguists to the language users who may not even understand why and how they use the language. My position is that post hoc interviews are valid as they enable the analyst to validate or refute his analysis. Arundale (2006), on the other hand, believes that Locher and Watts (2005) are guilty of using the decoding and encoding model which was the pitfall that Gricean scholars are accused of. Secondly, Arundale (2006) believes that, by seeking to evaluate speakers' intention or perception of their practice of interaction, they

are not too different from the models proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983).

***Discursive interactional approach.*** The discursive interactional scholars are known for the view of interaction as a social ritual of a people that is shaped by context and the interactants. Most scholars (Arundale, 2010; Grainger, 2011; Haugh, 2007; Spencer-Oatey, 2011) that have favoured this discursive interactional approach (also referred to as a sociological approach to politeness and face acts) have a penchant for relating meaning to social context. Current studies by contemporary scholars (Spencer-Oatey, 2005; Holmes & Schnurr, 2005; Enfield, 2009; Arundale, 2010; Chang & Haugh, 2011) have used the term “interactional approach” to underscore the peculiarity of their approach to interactional data. This approach holds firm to Austin’s (1962) view of speech as a social action of some sorts and believes that there is a link between linguistic form and the functional or social meaning.

Enfield (2009) claims that, the discursive interactional scholars, view interaction as the locus of social organizations as embedded in relationships. They insist that both the language and the society that uses the language must be the focus of any pragmatic investigation. These scholars (Arundale, 2006, 2010; Bargiela-Chiappini, 2009; Grainger, 2011; Haugh, 2007) believe that Goffman’s (1967) original perspective is to integrate social context regarding the sociological, philosophical and linguistic analysis of how language is used in a given culture. Language is believed to have binding and integrating force that binds the people together and integrates them within a linguistic community. This, according to Grainger (2011) is the core value of these discursive interactional scholars and their approach to interactional practice. Grainger (2011)

observed that this approach pays attention to crucial conversation styles of a people such as the initiation of topics, turn taking styles and topic management strategies among others. This makes it possible for the analyst to present an analysis of negotiated meaning based on the observation of the analyst on a particular speech interaction or event. The advantage of this perspective is that the analyst is given operational license of focusing on observable, vital and relevant contextual cues from the interaction as well as on the discourse data as well as on the interactants.

The approach also believes in the use of ethno-methodological resources and perspectives in trapping linguistic data to explain particular episodes of language use. The analyst is expected to justify his analysis and interpretations of what he considers as relevant aspects of the talk that is worthy of note by critically looking at what emerges from the data and not what theories say about such a data and also by examining what is made relevant in the interactive session by the interactants. The deconstruction of the data by the analyst is a path that will lead to the construction of interpretations that are centred on the data (Arundale, 2010). It appears that the discursive interactional approach or study of interaction also shifts away from the Gricean approach and tries to marry the relational approach with their interactional approach through the employment of ethnomethodology in the gathering and treatment of data. The approach has also placed the analyst at the centre of both socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic analysis of naturally occurring data. While the point of emphasis of the relational scholars is on the participants who are viewed as co-constructors of meaning in their daily relationships, the interactionalist emphasis the data, context and the interactants as the focus of their analysis.

For interactionalists like Enfield (2009) and Spencer-Oatey (2005, 2011), politeness and face negotiations are subtle acts of “rapport management,” skills for which members of a community are endowed with. Spencer-Oatey (2005) proposed and develop a rapport management theory and defines it as “the harmonious and smoothness of relations between people,” (p. 96). Both Enfield (2009) and Spencer-Oatey (2005, 2011) believe that the focus of scholars of pragmatics should be on how these harmonious and smooth relationships are forged and maintained as manifested in the interaction of the interactants.

Discursive interactional scholars approach pragmatics primarily by placing emphasis on naturally occurring data (Arundale, 2010; Grainger, 2011; Spencer-Oatey, 2011). This is also a major shift from the kinds of data that were analysed by the Gricean pragmatic scholars. These interactional scholars (Enfield, 2009; Arundale, 2010; Chang & Haugh, 2011) have also conceived and developed workable and insightful perspectives and theories of face and politeness research that is distinct from both the Gricean and relational approaches. Terkourafi, (2005) for example, believes that a frame for face theory is needed while the relational scholars (Locher & Watts, 2005) maintain that such a frame or theory is not needed. The frame according to Terkourafi (2005) should be able to capture the individuality, group or a people nuances and the peculiarity of the individual or group interactional and conversational strategies. This particular perspective has seen researches in areas of gender and power (Mills, 2003; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003). For example, Grainger’s (2011) observation of the incidence of indirect use of language by the Zimbabwean English language user is a wide spread practice

among the Nigerian English language users as a way of achieving positive face in interaction.

Similar to Spencer-Oatey's theory of rapport management, Arundale, (2006, 2010) has developed the "face constituting theory" (FCT) as a useful, creative, accommodating and very elaborate approach to interaction and claims that the theory of facework should not be conflated with the theory of politeness. Arundale (2010) claims that, FCT conceptualized "face as a social phenomenon arising in the conjoint co-constituting of human relationships, rather than as an individual phenomenon involving person centred attributes" (p. 2076). Arundale (2010) argues for a constitutive view of interaction in terms of the interactants 'connectedness' and 'separation.' Both separation and connection are viewed as two sides of the same coin, a kind of dialectic that are reflective of the co-constituting nature of face in interaction unlike the negative and positive face espouse in Brown and Levinson (1987) components of politeness.

Another of the cardinal shifts established by the interactional scholars is on face and politeness. The discursive and interactional scholars have advocated that politeness and face should not be treated together as a single entity (Arundale, 2006, 2010). They claimed that face and politeness are distinct but related concepts and should not be seen in the duality that is manifested in the treatment of politeness as positive or negative politeness and face as negative or positive face (Arundale, 2010). Arundale (2006) contends that politeness is indeed a subset of face and should be treated within a larger theory of face negotiation, a concept originated and expounded by Ting-Toomey (1985) and Ting-Toomey and Kurogi (1998).

### **The Theoretical Stance.**

Face-work in this study is anchored in face negotiation theory where face negotiation is seen as interactants' ability to manage interactional disagreements and establish rapport in interaction across cultures (Ting-Toomey, 2005; 1999 and Ting-Toomey & Kurogi, 1998). The universal perspective of the theory regarding interpersonal interactions and the possible fall outs there of makes it a theory that is adopted for this study. Again the fact that face negotiation theory recognises and accommodates cultural differences as cardinal to how disagreements and rapport are managed through facework that are enacted differently from culture to culture also makes this choice inevitable. Spencer-Oatey's (2011) rapport management theory is a build-up on Ting-Toomey (2005) face negotiation theory that presents both face and politeness as complementary concepts that could be researched collectively or separately. In other words, my choice of face negotiation theory is because it will help me project what I believe is significant and prominent in context of my study. For instance, as pointed out by Gu (1990) and Ide (1992), to the Chinese and Japanese, face is the significant concept that is manifested in interaction. This claim resonates with the Nigerian educational context.

I also find the foundational grounding of the face negotiation theory regarding the management of conflict in interaction very useful to my study. For instance, Ting-Toomey (1999) laid out what could create conflict in interaction and how the conflicts could be resolved to include: '*dominating*' a situation when the goal of one interactant is



place over and above the goal of the other. '*Avoiding*' is a situation where interactants use interactional strategies to avoid a conflictive situation. '*Obliging*', is the instance of the use of interactional strategies to place the interest of the other over a one's own interest. '*Compromising*' relates to the natural human desire to make concession for the sake of the interaction or the person concerned. '*Integrating*' on the other hand refers to the display of concern for self and other in interaction. The focus of this theory on actual interactional situations and interactants has also informed my reliance on the face negotiation theory. This theoretical stance has equally informed my choice of linguistic ethnography (LE) as the suitable methodology, a bottom up approach to discourse data that will enable me to investigate face negotiation as a unique sociolinguistic practice within the Nigerian cultural and educational context. My use of Arundale's (2010) 'face support' and 'face threat' terminologies is purely for the purpose of description and not in the co-constituting and dialectic sense that he proposes.

## Conclusion

So far, I have presented and situated the English language within the Nigerian context. I have done this by looking at the place of pragmatics in the English as a Lingua Franca (EFL) context in Nigeria by examining the works of scholars (Adebigte, 2010; Akere, 2009; Jowitt, 1991; Odumoh, 1987) in the English language learning and teaching context in Nigeria. I have argued that these works were landmark developments within the broader and more developed research areas of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) while recognising the dearth of research in ELF pragmatics in the Nigerian English landscape.

The driving force of TESOL, SLA and ELF is the attainment of required skills in language use of a learner or speaker of the English language. I have therefore presented the arguments of scholars (Chomsky, 1965; Hymes, 1962, 1972) regarding pragmatic competence which is viewed from the angles of linguistic competence and communicative competence. These arguments agree that an effective level of communicative competence should satisfy the various levels of grammatical, sociolinguistics and strategic competences. I have also found Hofstede (2004) postulations about cultural differences existing between individualist and collectivist cultures crucial to understanding why pragmatic competence will vary from culture to culture.

I have also traced the origin of face to Goffman (1967) and how it came to be a cardinal part of the theories of politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Lakoff, 1973; Leech, 1983) by relating on the speech act developed by Grice (1975). The development

of interpersonal theories of politeness (Arundale, 2006, 2010; Gu, 1990; Haugh, 2007; Locher, 2006; Spencer-Oatey, 2011) that seek to present politeness in actual practice have given birth new directions regarding what should be considered as a wholesome inquiry. Many of these scholars saw the need to investigate face as an aspect of interpersonal interaction and developed different but related theories of face. Ting-Toomey (1998) Face negotiation theory, Locher (2006) Relational face theory and Arundale (2006) face constituting theory. These theories try to account for the other aspects of interaction such as gestures among others.

Therefore, these interpersonal directions in the study of human interaction have informed my choice of linguistic ethnography (LE) as my data collecting method. This choice has become necessary bearing in mind LE's inclination towards naturally occurring interaction as the bedrock for the manifestation of the various aspects of talk in interaction. The rationale for the choice of LE and its theoretical underpinnings are presented in details in the next chapter (Chapter III) as would be seen shortly.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

**The Case for Ethnomethodology.** As seen in Chapter II, there have been many studies on face in politeness and the practice of politeness across cultures and people (see Brown & Levinson, 1978; Goffman, 1968; Grainger, 2011; Lee-Wong, 1994). These studies have shown that a single theory that will account for the different enactment of face in interaction is difficult to arrive at. The theory of face work in Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) theory of politeness (as seen in the literature review) is criticised for its westernization of Goffman's (1968) concept of face as a component of politeness. Many scholars (for example Arundale, 2010; Eeelen, 2001; Grainger, 2011; Locher & Watts, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 2010; Ting-Toomey, 2005) therefore believe that in order to investigate face in interaction as a social practice, an ethno-methodological approach to data is required for a deep and wholesome analysis, hence, the use of linguistic ethnography as the approach to data in the current study. This decision is aimed at establishing face as a social practice that is manifested in interaction by interactants through their use of varying language strategies and face work or face acts strategies. These strategies are viewed by Eeelen (2001) as "politeness-as-practice" in their myriad and everyday occurrences.

Face in interactional or interpersonal interaction is manifested in and seen in the negotiations of expressives, reprimands, impositions and hedges, requests and internal modifiers and direct or indirect polite expressions with their attendant body language,

gestures and other significant contextual details that impact on meaning in interaction. This view of face equally and importantly returned the concept of ‘implicature’ (Leech, 2014) to the heart of pragmatics and language-in-practice investigation since an utterance is always a product of an implicature which inherently constitutes a further implicature.

**Linguistic Ethnography: Rationale for the selection.** The manifestation and occurrence of face and face acts differ from culture to culture and person to person, especially in a setting where English is a lingua franca (ELF) serving as the language of common expression, such as that of Nigeria. In such settings, the practice or negotiation of face in interaction through various face strategies is a reflection of the ‘pragmatic competence’ as well as the socio-linguistic competence of the interactants in the English language. The use of hedges, internal modifiers, impositives, direct politeness, indirect politeness and so on differs from person to person and situation to situation. The use of these linguistic strategies and other non-linguistic strategies in interactions and their attendant reactions or the implicatures that they can generate also differs from interactant to interactant and context to context and require an up close investigation, which LE provides and a discursive approach to data permits.

Again, although English is the official language in Nigeria’s educational system, students and lecturers are drawn from the many ethnic groups that make up the Nigerian state. The use of English of these students and lecturers is not without their linguistic and cultural influences, which as pointed out by Keshaverz (2015), plays crucial roles in their pragmatic competence in their use of English, and their negotiation of face to achieve their expressive and interactional goals. The interaction from such a setting is

rightly expected to be complex at many fronts and thus requires an approach to data that can adequately capture the various episodes of the unfolding interactions. The pragmatic competence of both the lecturers and the students is reflected in their ability to successfully negotiate and engage in meaningful social interaction within the acceptable norms of the setting and the nature of the interaction and this includes their practice of politeness. Pragmatic competence is used here in the sense of the ability to adequately and meaningfully negotiate interactions linguistically and para-linguistically. Again language users are equally constrained to use the English language in a way that their interactional goals are achieved. Because of the many sociolinguistic dimensions and considerations that the language user makes regarding his/her use of the language, many relational scholars of pragmatics have advocated for an ethno-methodological approach to the investigation of face as an important aspect of meaning (Arundale, 2010; Grainger, 2011; Locher & Watts, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 2010). This is not far from Rampton's (2005) belief that both language and culture are closely related and are mutually shaping in many respects.

This study adopts a linguistic ethnographic approach to data by doing a vigorous investigation into the social actions of the interactants. Creese (2008) echoes the rationale for the employment of linguistic ethnography (LE) in this study for data collection when she stated that "ethnography can benefit from the analytical frameworks provided by linguistics, while linguistics can benefit from the processes of reflexive sensitivity required in ethnography" (p. 232). The employment of LE as a method is aimed at adequately trapping and gathering linguistic, paralinguistic and ethnographic data that are significant to the interpretation of face negotiation in naturally occurring

interactions. There were several reasons for this choice. First, the significance of collecting and using naturally occurring interaction for such a study is also emphasized by Eelen (2001) over the use of open-ended or multiple-choice questionnaires and Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) that have been used in many inter cultural and cross cultural pragmatic studies. The DCTs and the questionnaires are designed to elicit specific and structured kind of responses from respondents thereby making it possible for the researcher to have predictable responses to his questions. The methods are said to be particularly suitable for the view of and interpretation of pragmatics from the stand point of speaker's intention rather than speaker's actual pragmatic practice (Lee-Wong, 1994). Although these (DCT and questionnaire) data collection methods have contributed in many significant ways to pragmatics, they are opened to the manipulation of the researcher as the questions can be structured to elicit the response s/he wants. LE, on the other hand, encourages the documentation and analysis of spontaneous data that are not predictable and are the enactment of participants' actual (and not predicted or predictable) performances during interaction, thus making the research data driven and emerging from participants' actions and face acts or face negotiations. Another point to note is that the restricted responses designed or proposed by the researcher using the questionnaire might not be the actual way a given respondent may respond in real life speech event. As such, the data gotten from the questionnaire can hardly represent the true practice of participants' interactive practice and language use.

The response elicitation technique cannot account for the various incidences of some forms of speech acts realization strategies, such as 'opting out' and non-verbal interaction and other paralinguistic elements that play out during real life interaction and

that are a crucial part of meaning making and meaning interpretation in a conversation especially regarding the management of sociality or face management or rapport management in the interaction. Haugh (2010) sees rapport management as the management of the sociality of the interactants. Marti (2006) emphasized that the “unsaid” as well as contextual cues form a significant part of pragmatic meaning and interpretation (p. 1838) but are usually not captured in the DCT or questionnaires. Arundale (2005) pointed out that the DCTs and questionnaires might be sufficient techniques in examining speech acts but they do not account for the socio-pragmatic factors (face acts) that are responsible for the performance of these speech acts. As opposed to the other possible alternatives, LE helps to adequately account for the social aspects of language that Marti (2006) talked about by presenting authentic data that will demonstrate why certain linguistic and paralinguistic choices were made by the interactants. In order to test the working hypothesis of this study, i.e. that face acts are performed and enacted within the general frame of face negotiation where interactive turns are negotiated; LE provides a valid avenue for the collection of data with respect to the socio-pragmatic interactions.

***LE as a Method and an Approach.*** Linguistic ethnography (LE) is a research direction that places significance and importance on contextual cues as important ingredients that contribute in the unbundling of embedded meaning. Rampton (2004) posits that LE holds as its belief that “language and the social world are mutually shaping” (p. 2) and a distinctive understanding of the employment of language resources can best be achieved through an up-close analysis of ‘situated language’. Snell, Shaw and Copland, (2015) construe LE as the unambiguous combination of “linguistic and



ethnographic approaches in order to understand how the world and communicative processes operate in a range of settings and contexts” (p. 1). The general thinking of LE is aptly captured by Rampton (2007a) in the following words:

The assumption is that persons, encounters and institutions are profoundly interlinked, and a great deal of research is concerned with the nature and dynamics of these linkages – with varying degrees of friction and slippage, repertoires get used and developed in encounters, encounters enact institutions, and institutions produce and regulate persons and their repertoires through the regimentation of encounters (p.2)

The connectedness of social events and the unfolding of social interaction are such that they require an up-close investigation for an understanding of situated language and meaning. The employment of ethnographic resources to execute a linguistic endeavour is what Rampton (2006) alludes to, as to “tie ethnography down” (p. 295) and allow linguistics to thrive or emerge. If there are differences between linguistic and ethnography, they should be viewed as complementing to each other. Rampton (2007b) believes that “ethnography can be seen as *humanizing* language study, preventing linguistics from being reductive or shallow by embedding it in rich descriptions of how the users of a given variety adapt their language to different situational purposes and contexts” (p. 13, author’s emphasis). In other words, both linguistics and ethnography should be used to strengthen each other.

LE draws from Hymes' (1996) 'interactional sociolinguistics' where discursive practice is amplified because of the illumination that can be got as we attempt to unbundle and analyse the effects of context, participants, culture and discourse in any social situation (Crease, 2008; Hymes, 1996; Rampton et al, 2004; Rampton, 2017). Hymes (1996) believed that an important component of ethnography is the twin requirements of "participation and observation" (p.4) with a view to inquiring about a specific subject. This is what will enable the researcher to immerse him/herself in the subject and produce an endogenous interpretation of an unfolding social practice interpretively from an emic perspective.

The conception by Rampton et al (2004) that language and the social world contribute in shaping each is synonymous to Arundale (2010) view that interactants' 'meaning' and 'action' are mutually constituting, thus, making it clear to us that we require a method that explains how this mutual shaping takes place. The multifarious nature of the research data requires a fitting method to capture and present such a data. In line with relational turn practice in pragmatics, fieldnote is used to record non-linguistic data that will supplement the discourse data. Haugh (2010) and Chang and Haugh (2011) emphasized that paralinguistic data and non-verbal cues can offer a significant insight into an interactive event. The use of field notes to record contextual observations, paralinguistic and non-verbal cues is a tradition that is associated with LE. Arundale (2010) and Chang and Haugh (2011) also elaborated on the significance of doing a deep ethnographic study and having a fuller understanding of the interactive context or situated context as being crucial to doing an in-depth analysis of the entire discourse data. Finally, a stimulated recall interview (SRI) session is equally crucial to

having a fuller understanding of situated data. A post-event session such as the SRI session has contributed in supplementing discourse data by ironing out misconceptions and making blurry data clearer to the researcher where language in use is seen as “social actions that are interactionally constructed, negotiated and transformed by social actors in situated encounters” (Perez-Milan, 2015, p. 13).

Presenting data from an emic perspective is equally an important requirement of LE. Atkinson, Okada and Talmy (2011) pointed out that “the emic structure of talk can only be determined from within the linguistic context of interaction, as reflected in interlocutors’ responses to talk” (p. 88). Since I was present during the entire interaction, the emic perspective that LE talks about was adequately covered by paying close attention to contextual details of pre interactional events, the interaction and post interactional events. My familiarity with the culture (as in, community of practice) of the setting has also helped in the interpretation of the various face negotiations in the interactions.

There have been many studies that have investigated face in politeness in interaction but there appears to be a lack of studies that investigate the actual practice of face negotiation in naturally occurring interaction in an ELF setting such as Nigeria. It is my belief that the task of investigating face negotiations in naturally occurring interaction is achievable if one employs the proper methodology. This study investigates how face acts are socially practiced or performed in an educational setting. This study shall therefore adopt LE as the method that will help in situating and investigating face negotiation within the frame of relational and interpersonal interactional management by answering the following research questions:

1. How do students and teachers employ face in interaction as a deliberate social positioning strategy in an educational setting?
2. How does face negotiation impact the linguistic choices that interactants make in naturally occurring talk in the Registration Office in a Nigerian university?
3. How do variables of power, gender and context influence face negotiation in teacher-students interactions?
4. How do bodily gestures, facial expression and tone of voice contribute to face negotiation and interactional meaning in interaction?

The above research questions were answered by investigating teacher-students interaction in the registration office by employing various ethnographic research instruments and tools. These included a mini Sony recorder for the purposes of recording participants' interactions that would account for the linguistic data, while field notes and a diary were employed for the recording of significant ethnographic and language related occurrences to help account for the ethnographic data. This chapter shall provide a rationale for why and how I have used these research tools in line with the investigation of face negotiation in this setting. The following sections shall also provide, in the term used by Geertz (1973), a 'thick description' of the research site and context of the study in order to explicitly present patterns of social relations that have impacted on and shaped the daily face negotiation of the participants in their interactions.

**Data collection procedure and tools.** The data for this study was collected using an audio-recorder, field notes and a diary. The results of the analysis will be

presented exhaustively in the following chapters. Rampton (2007) succinctly captures the rationale for combining methods in his description of LE: “it is more accurately described as a site of encounter where a number of established lines of research interact, pushed together by circumstance, open to the recognition of new affinities, and sufficiently familiar with one another to treat differences with equanimity” (p. 585).

*Audio recordings of naturally occurring talk.* In line with ethical consideration for the recording of the interactional data, a participant’s consent form (see Appendix E and F) was designed and administered to the participants (lecturers and students). The consent forms were given to the participants in a different registration site from that of the selected site for recordings in order to conceal the actual moment of recording. This is done with the aim of eventually recording ‘authentic’ naturally occurring interaction at the actual recording site. Authentic data as viewed by Gumperz and Hymes (1972), and expounded by Rampton (2007; 2017) is crucial to the understanding of real world experiences of interactants as well as providing a better understanding of the discursive space that the interactants exploit.

The recording of the interactions was done over a period of three weeks with 30 participants: two lecturers and 28 students. The interactions lasted for varying durations as the interactional exchanges were driven by the interactional goal of achieving registration by the students, with the lengthiest interaction lasting for 10 minutes 15 seconds. The accumulated duration of the recordings was two hours eight minutes of actual talk time. The choice of audio recording rather than video recording was primarily aimed at preserving the anonymous identity of the participants in line with ethical consideration in such studies. The mini recorder was normally turned on before a

participant came into the registration office and switched off after s/he had left the office. The recorder was concealed from the view of the interactants which helped in contributing to the authenticity of the interactional and discourse data.

The significance of using naturally occurring data that is recorded for the study of human interaction is emphasized by Hymes(1996) as being sacrosanct to the interpretation of the world of the interactants because it gives the ethnographer the opportunity to witness the episodic realities of the interactions. Although the use of video recording is preferred in ethnographic studies, the choice of audio recording over video recording in this case owes to the fact that the interactants could recline from fully interacting or could artificially interact if they became aware that they were being recorded on a video and many would not want their videos recorded, impacting not only the authenticity but also the quality and amount of the data.

The use of a recorder to collect data to investigate face negotiations makes it possible for us to see face acts in interactions as social practice rather than as mere linguistic artefact. Rampton (2017) agrees with Gumperz and Dell (1972) that the recording of social practice makes it possible for researchers to look at a given speech event independent of other speech events as the unit of analysis rather than as cultural norms. Recording presented situated talk that is integrated with cultural practice thereby making it possible for the researcher to retrieve and re-examine it at any time.

***Fieldnotes.*** The ethnographic data for this research was collected through the participant observations. The use of fieldnotes was aimed at augmenting and supplementing the audio-recorded linguistic data. This is in line with the belief that the

systematic recording of participant's observation in a fieldnote can provide a wholesome interpreting of a given phenomenon. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011) contended that both the social practice (face negotiations and polite expressions) and the fieldnotes (that explains how this happens) must be interpreted as one rather than as separate data and this can be achieved by getting close to the social activities that we seek to describe and understand.

Simultaneous recording of the fieldnotes was adopted rather than relying on memory for the recording of the ethnographic data. This is in line with Hymes (1996) belief that spontaneous taking of field notes helps in collecting reliable data. In order to achieve this, I made jottings of notable occurrences that I saw and heard in a jotter, which I later developed into fully developed fieldnotes in my fieldnote diary. That was aimed at collecting the data unobtrusively since the observations in the fieldnotes were gathered while the interactions were ongoing in the registration office. This also helped me in saving time without losing any critical and important episode in talk that is worth capturing.

Gestures and facial expressions were recorded to supplement what was said and how it was said during the interaction. By being in the registration office myself, the required 'social proximity' talked about by Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011) made it possible for the notation of the tone of voice of the interactants to be made especially of their realisation of expressives, reprimands, requests, apologies classificatory and other meta-pragmatic expressions and the face negotiations that were made in the interactional exchanges. This was aimed at achieving better understanding and explaining the manifestation and interpretation of both convivial and conflictive expressions and face

negotiations. Being in the registration office also afforded me the opportunity of doing a critique of the system that I belong to or in Salo (2017) borrowed words from Bourdieusian principle, an ‘epistemic reflexivity.’ Epistemic reflexivity is used here in the broad Bourdieusian sense of an inroad into the social world of discourse participants that is constructed in a collective, objective and epistemological way. This meant therefore that as the researcher, I viewed the interactions of the participants as a discursive construction of their world view through various face strategies as well as the constant negotiations of their social positions within an established chain of power relations that are clearly constituted by the school systems and the larger society to favour the teacher.

In order to make the recording of the field notes as authentic as possible, I used the seat and table of one of the lecturers in the registration as my permanent spot. Since all the students were new students, the assumption they generally had was that I was a member of staff in that office. The rapport that was gained made it possible for the participant observation to take place while spontaneously taking notes without interfering with the ongoing interaction. Using the critical incidence technique as a guide for what to note was very beneficial to the entire data collection process. Hughes (2007) defined critical incidence as, human activities (interactions) that have consequences on the people that are involved. Therefore, the effect of conflictive illocution on interactants, the adoption of appropriate or inappropriate face and discourse strategies by the interactants, the incidence of direct face threat and indirect face threat or other face acts by the interactants in their realisation of reprimands, requests, apologies, advice, offerings, appreciations, commands and directives were recorded in the fieldnotes diary



as they constitute critical incidents that were consequential to the interaction. It should be pointed out here that the words in the double bracket were from the fieldnotes while expressives like questions and commands emerged from the recorded interaction. A snippet of the extract below will serve as example.

1 ((a student Knocks and enters))

2 Mr. Jude: **Enhən** (.) Good morning↓ How are you↓ ((Sounding in high spirits, and  
3 looking straight at the student))

4 Kay: Good morning **sir** ((standing straight and deliberately avoiding the stare of Mr.  
5 Jude))

6 Mr. Jude: Yes↓ You were here with your file↑ ((Sounding surprise))

7 Kay: Yes, we were having issues I kept them outside ((turning looking towards the  
door 8 to get his file))

9 Mr. Jude: Can you bring them here? Bring them, **fast!** ((Sounding a bit irritated and  
10 moving his pen from left hand to right hand interchangeably as he waits for the  
student 11 to return)) (.5) yes↑ why did you leave the file outside↓

***Stimulated recall interviews (SRI).*** Stimulated recall interviews were conducted with 15 of the participants. These stimulated recall interviews (SRI) took place four weeks after the recording of the interactions. The SRI is an integral component of LE studies. This is because it affords the researcher the opportunity to confront the participants with documented evidence of their linguistic and social interactional

performance or social practice and to seek their explanation regarding how and why certain linguistic choices were made and certain non-verbal acts were performed. The four-week lapse was given to allow for the transcription of the data to be completed and to also do a preliminary interpretation of the discourse data while paying attention to certain noteworthy locution. The four-week lapse also helped in establishing the element of authenticity of the data when the SRIs were performed as all the interactants were surprised that they spoke and acted the way they did on the recordings.

As pointed out by Ryan and Gass (2012), the SRI contributes to discourse data because it is targeted at particular aspects of the interactant's locution, perlocution and illocution. Questions were asked with the aim of eliciting responses from the participants regarding their interactional strategies that are crucial to the qualitative data and that would help in validating or refuting certain temporary positions taken by the researcher. Again, the SRIs help in stimulating the thought process of the interactants regarding a lived experience and why certain actions or interactions took place. Some of the respondents actually refuted certain claims about the practice of face negotiations as will be seen in the findings chapters later.

The SRI was equally a great opportunity of accounting for the reasons behind the interactive strategies of opting out, face threat, face support and face stasis and other interactional strategies that have been pervasively employed in talk. It also offered me the opportunity of investigating discursive attitudes that accompany interaction by presenting them to the participants. In this case, participants are led to do an introspection of their actual practice of face acts and negotiations and come up with instructive and constructive explanation of such a practice and the influence that

propelled them into doing it. Rampton (2007) sheds more light by stating the indivisibility of discourse data from any discursive practice. Crucially important is the fact that the SRI helped in establishing the operational frames of the interactants' transaction in the talk session. Goffman (1974) defined frame as "one or more frameworks or schemata of interpretation" (p. 21) that guides and suggests the performance and interpretation of interactants verbal and none verbal acts much like van Dijk (2008) conception of a context model that I discussed in chapter II. In this respect, the SRI session offered an explanation to the role that this frame played in the interaction of the participants. Below is an example of the type of questions that I asked during the SRIs.

1 Kay: Good morning sir

2 Longji: Good Morning↓ Thank you for participating in my research (0.2) I will play a recording of your interaction with Mr. Jude at the registration and then I will ask you some few questions (.) okay.

3 Kay: okay sir

4 do you recognise this voice? (after playing the recorded interaction between Kay and Mr Jude)

5 Kay: That's my voice

6 Longji: was it necessary for you to tell Mr. Jude that you were bereaved?

7 Kay: ((silence))

8 Longji: Did you want him (Mr. Jude) to sympathise with you?

9 Kay: no sir, he was staring at me

10 Longji: so it was a lie then

11 Kay: No sir, he said I am not organised and I just tell [sic] him that

The decision on the choice of interactants and interactions that were used for the SRI session were arrived at after a preliminary analysis of the discourse and ethnographic data. For example, I felt that losing someone is a personal thing and I wanted know why this particular student mentioned it at the material time he did and from my interview with him, it was mentioned as an excuse and a face saving strategy almost like a diversionary tactics. At the discourse level, attention was paid to the use of face negotiating strategies that were used in the expression of requests, apologies, directives, offering, thanking and commands during talk while at the ethnographic level, paralinguistic features of language use such as, facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures, opting out and other meaningful non-verbal acts (such as face staring exemplified above) that contributed to the interaction were given desired attention to and they informed the choice of the extracts and participants to use for the SRI session.

In order to achieve the aim of the SRI, semi-structured-open-ended questions informed by identified critical incidents that occurred during the interaction were developed. The questions were asked to the participants vary depending on the critical incidence that warranted the questionsat (see Appendix B). The questions served as a guide towards the understanding of the face negotiations and social interactional practice of the interactants. Salo (2017) pointed out that as it is common with interviews, questions should be put forward in order to satisfy the interest of the research, not the

participant's. Thus, the participants' practice of face negotiations in interaction was scrutinized by asking questions regarding their successful use or failure of face acts strategies. Questions regarding their attitude toward face negotiations and constructions and what they felt about the interaction were also asked. In a nutshell, the SRIs sessions have tried to account for the linguistic performance as well as the attitude of the interactants in the talk event, thereby accounting for both the 'first order' and 'second order' theory of face and politeness. Opting out strategies were equally queried by asking interactants for their reasons of keeping quiet when directly addressed by a fellow interactant. The responses of the interactants to the questions at the SRI formed a kind of verbal report to me for further analysis. Woodfield (2008) contend that "verbal report data may provide researchers with added insights into language learners' pragmatic knowledge and their choice and formulation of speech act strategies" (p. 44). This point highlights the importance of engaging in the SRI as it has multiple advantages of properly situating the discourse data in its proper situated context. The SRIs were conducted in the registration office and the responses were manually recorded into my diary. The responses I got from the interactants were added up to the discourse data to supplement my analyses of the entire interactional data.

***Transcription convention.*** As is typical with interactional data, the interactions of the interactants have to be reduced into interactional fragments of turns between the interactants. I have adopted the Jeffersonian Transcription Convention (Jefferson, 1984) I have adopted the double closed bracket (( )) to enclose ethnographic details such as noticeable facial expressions and other bodily gestures that are not produced in words. I have also tried to account for incidences of overlap during interaction as well as pauses

within brackets (0.2) to indicate the lengthiness of the pause and other interaction impacting styles such as questions, statements and requests with the up and downward pointing arrow to indicate tone of voice that were made manifest by the interactants (see Appendix A for transcription keys). Below is a snippet of how the transcriptions keys were applied on the data:

1 Kay: Excuse sir, it's just today that I collect (sic) everything ((sounding apologetic))

2 because the other day I came, they told me the people in charge were not around so they

3       said I [should

3 Mr. Jude: yes]

4 Kay: come back on Monday ((handing over a file to Mr. Jude with a slight courtesy))

5 Mr. Jude: Yes↓ (0.2) ((putting on his glasses, flipping through the file)) so where are

6 your originals? ((Looking at Jay directly))

7 Kay: Originals↓

8 Mr. Jude: Yes

9 Kay: I don't have them here, it's only the photocopy

10 Mr. Jude: ((Perusing the documents)) And it's one set ((looking at Kay))

11 Kay: No. ((looking and sounding surprised)) (0.1) yes

**The research site.** The research was conducted in a Nigerian university during the registration of newly admitted students. The registration of newly admitted students into a given department in Nigerian university is usually an opportunity for the departments to confirm if the admitted candidates have the required background qualification to study in that department. Newly admitted students are normally expected to come along with their credentials to the screening venues. It is also an opportunity for the department to interface with the students regarding any teething problems they may be encountering in their new environment.

As is consistent with linguistic ethnographic stance, the context of the interaction was investigated not assumed (Rampton, 2007), the site of this research is presented from this ethnographic stand point. The permission to conduct this research in the departmental Registration Office was gotten from the Head of the Department of English Language Studies of the university. The departmental Registration Office is set up to screen the entry qualification of the students and open student's files for the newly admitted students of the Department of English Studies. However, the language used in this setting was assumed to be the English as a lingua franca.

This site was chosen for a variety of reasons. The first and the most obvious reason is that it is a site where definite and transactional interaction takes place. Transactional interactions are goal directed and goal motivated. The achievement or realization of these goals relies too on the ability of the interactants to effectively employ the right interactional strategies. The interactional strategy that is central to this study is politeness strategies. The practice of these strategies is viewed from the discursive stance of negotiations between the interactants. The official domain of an

office setting is a space that constrains interactants to employ tact in the realisation of expressives, commissives and various other speech acts without causing offence or indeed redressing offence in the course of the interaction.

Secondly, the asymmetrical power relations in the Registration Office between the lecturers and the students make it an exciting zone where discursive interaction patterns are negotiated and constructed by the interactants. The employment of politeness strategies as well as face work dynamics in such a site where power relations and cultural expectations are skewed in terms of lecturer-student relations are brought to the fore by the interactants as both the lecturers and the students aim to satisfy the need of the interaction in the first instance. This site also presents an authentic and practical avenue where interactants display their pragmatic awareness and pragmatic competence of context and topic in negotiating and understanding meaning in interaction. This is because most of the participants do not have a prior knowledge of each other as they are newly admitted students. This was important to me because it made the interaction formal and official (not a personal one) and this aligns with my research interest of investigating face negotiations between interactants of unequal social standing in an educational setting.

***Participants.*** Twenty-eight students (21 females and 7 males) and two lecturers (both are males) participated in the first part of the data collection, which was the recording of naturally occurring interactions. The choice of these two male lecturers was purely accident but it also represents the gender imbalance in the department. The faculty members in this department are mostly men. It was not surprising therefore that the two middle-aged (38-45 years old) male lecturers were the registration officers. The SRIs



were performed with 15 of these interactants; 13 students (nine females and four males), and the two lecturers. The rationale for their selection was the emergence of certain critical incidents which I considered as significant events that affected their face negotiations. For examples, instances of lack of salutation by the students generated certain face negotiations from the teachers and were termed as critical incidents. A fair knowledge of the participants of this study is important because as Rampton (2017) puts it: “When someone formulates an utterance, it is more than just the semantic proposition that they construct. They also produce a whole host of small vocal signs that evoke, for example, a certain level of formality” (p. 4). These signs and the meaning they evoke reflect on the goal or essence of what they set out to achieve.

All the students participants are newly admitted students of the English language Studies in the Department of English, in the Nigerian university. Although ethno-demography of the participants was not a factor of focus in my research, the interaction sessions revealed that the participants came from different parts of Nigeria and had different mother tongues. They all, however, have gone through the secondary school system where the English language is the medium of instruction and communication. Therefore, all of the participants had English as their second language and they use English as a *lingua franca*.

The age of the students’ participants ranged from 18 to 25 for the students. The participating students had enrolled for the four years Bachelor of Arts (BA) English language studies of the university. Although no test of English proficiency was administered, the participants appeared proficient users of the English language. This was evident in the fact that the participants had been admitted to study English language

and the minimum entry requirement is a strong credit pass (such as an A, B or C grades) in English language and Literature in English at the West African Examination Council (WAEC) examinations or the National Examination Council (NECO) examination. Again, as seen in the literature review, English language in Nigeria has a lingua franca status and it is the most widely spoken language in the country (Jowitt, 2008).

A student who was declined registration into the department because of a deficiency (D grade) in Literature in English withdrew her participation from the research. As a result, the data from her interactions at the registration office was not included in the final analysis of the data and were erased from the database.

**Data analysis.** The data collected from audio recordings were transcribed using the Jeffersonian Transcription Notation (Jefferson, 1984) as indicated earlier (see Appendix D for the Transcription Notations). The choice of this transcription system is based on its ease of use and the fact that it catered for all the details of the interaction data that required transcription and it was also able to account for the text, action and performance of the interactants in the conversations. Secondly, the transcription notation is suitable for the transcription of conversational data and this proof is seen in its adoption and use by many scholars (Atkinson, 1992; Grainger, 2011; Heritage, 2005; Macagno&Bigi, 2017) to capture the essence of interaction in their various researches. The transcribed data accounted for the primary linguistic data in this research while the ethnographic data were gotten from participant's observation. An evaluation of these data (linguistic and ethnographic) was achieved through the SRIs.

*Micro discourse analysis.* The methods used for the analysis of the data were mainly the Micro Discourse Analysis (MDA) and LE. These are both qualitative methods of analysis that believe in the layer by layer analysis of data. MDA is a discourse analysis method that incorporates and marries ethnographic details with discourse and has been found to be suitable for the analysis of interactional data. Discourse has been defined by Rao, Reddy and Narayanan (2017) as “a sequence of natural language expressions representing a piece of conceptual knowledge that a speaker or writer wants to communicate to a listener or reader” (p.198). MDA is the investigation into the fine-grained implicit pragmatic rules and narrative elements of interaction such as face negotiations, interactional strategies and the various elements that constitutively bind or tie an interaction as a cohesive unit (Blommart, 2007; van Dijk, 2008). I believe that MDA differs from conversational analysis (CA) in the sense that while CA investigates meanings that are generated in talk and the structure of such conversations (Shegloff & Sacks, 1973). MDA on the other hand, is concerned with the subliminal levels (the cohesive elements such power, context and the language use of the participants) that influenced the generated meanings in specific contexts of talk (Rao, Reddy & Narayanan, 2017).

My choice of MDA is anchored on the belief that ideas and meaning are constructed in several layers that are interrelated such that the understanding of the first layer can lead to a deeper and better understanding of the meaning of the subsequent layer(s). MDA availed me with the opportunity of looking closely at linguistic forms as they relate to practices or as captured by Gee (2011): “language and practices ‘boot

strap' each other into existence in a reciprocal process through time" (p. 18). Both language and practice are mutually shaping each as well as depending on each other.

Secondly, my choice of MDA as the linguistic analytical approach is based on its lineage towards the various possibilities of meanings that can be generated from an utterance. This has become necessary because linguistic ethnography, which was the primary methodology used in this study, is viewed as an approach that "combine linguistic and ethnography approaches in order to understand how social and communicative processes operate in a range of context" (Copland, 2015, p. 1). This is consistent with the view of Ramton et al. (2004) where language is seen as intricately related to the context of the protection. This ideologically makes MDA intersect easily with linguistic ethnography. Since it is largely a qualitative research, description of the linguistic interaction that shows the employment of politeness strategy shall be carefully highlighted and where variations are spotted from what is considered the usual practice in English, explanations obtained from SRI will be duly offered.

The classification of the utterance in terms of the speech acts strategies in speech events relied on Leech (2014) concept of a speech event which draws heavily from Austin (1962) Speech Acts Theory expounded by Trasborg (1995) and was used in establishing the face negotiating and interactional strategies that were deployed by the interactants during the communicative practice in the registration office. However, in keeping with postmodern and constructivist approaches to face negotiation in interactional practice that this study adopts, I did not attach meaning to these face strategies in terms of negative or positive face as Brown and Levinson (1987) did but I see face as co-constituted in a relational and interpersonal way (Locher& Watts, 2005;

Ting-Toomey, 1999) and emergent in different speech events. This was aimed at avoiding the restriction that linguistic categorization can have on the interpretation of the discourse data. Rather, I have allowed the interactants' interpreting of their utterances to guide my interpretation of the data by engaging in interpreting as I moved on. This position is consistent with Eeleen (2001), Watts (2003), Locher and Watts (2005) and Ting-Toomey (1999) views that face negotiation in interaction is a relational and a discursive practice that cannot be reduced to old linguistic definitive and constitutive categorization and constructs since meaning is not a stagnant or a fixed reality but is fluid, objective and is actively being constructed as a practice in talk and interaction.

***Participant observation.*** The participant observation data constituted the core of the ethnographic data which complemented the linguistic data. The ethnographic data contributed in making the discourse data more authentic as it captured the non-verbal acts of the interactants such as the accompanying actions of the interactants during talk which further supplemented and complemented the linguistic data. Rampton (2007) captured the essence of using ethnography when he stated that "ethnography can be seen as *humanizing* language study, preventing linguistics from being reductive or shallow by embedding it in rich descriptions of how the users of a given variety adapt their language to different situational purposes and contexts"(p. 13). In other words, both linguistic and ethnography should be used to strengthen each other in a complementary way.

In the light of the above, my observation of interactants' actions, behaviours, manners, attitudes, reactions, gesticulations and other noticeable body language were recorded and added to the recorded transcribed data in order to flesh up and authenticate the discourse data. This allowed for the simultaneous interpretation of the linguistic as

well ethnographic data as well as provided a plausible explanation of interactants politeness in practice. This allowed me to examine the interplay between ‘first position’ utterances and their responses as well as participants, reactions which combined to form the entire talk structure. This also meant that the interpretation of a given extract depended largely on the relevant aspects of the entire context since they constitute a meaningful part of the talk itself.

*Stimulated recall interviews (SRI).* Although interview data are perceived as pre-emptive and presumptive, and not representing true and objective reality since the interviewer tend to ask questions about what he wants to know about, the SRI in this study on the other hand was a product of what speakers did with language in the course of their interaction. This partly differs and satisfies Arundale(2010) and Locher and Watts (2005) fears that the construction of face in talk is the construction of social reality and the representation of face in interaction cannot be found or constructed in interviews without the subjective or objective reflection of the interviewer. Clearly, the SRI session I had was not a usual interview session of question and answer only. It was a session that afforded the interactants the opportunity to explain and substantiate on their use and choice of certain face negotiation strategies during the recorded interaction. For example, the reaction of students to the lecturers reprimand or the lecturers’ reaction to a student failure perform certain expected social practice during the interaction also constituted the construction of their world view and their discursive practice of face negotiation.

The background to the SRI session was built first on the transcription of the data and second on preliminary interpretation of the data. A form of interpretation as I

transcribed the data was adopted in order to identify and isolate the transcripts of the data that were used for the SRI. The criteria of selection for SRI was simply the identification of transcripts supported by fieldnotes that have at least a ‘critical incidence’ that relates to face negotiation in the text. The answers obtained from the questions that were put forward contributed immensely to the interpretation of the data as it provided a solid ground for certain claims to be made regarding the practice of politeness, face constitution and an inside into the construction of identities in the university environment. This is because the response gotten from the SRIs that were added to the interpreted data affirmed or refuted what interactants think or believe was their use of language.

### **Trustworthiness and the Research Position**

The hallmark of scientific research is the test of validity and reliability of the data and the data analysis (Copland & Creese, 2015). Qualitative researches are often viewed with a lot of suspicion regarding issues of trustworthiness of the data and the interpretation of the data since there is no standardised and established metrics for the measuring of the data to ensure its credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability which are cardinal in establishing the twin and important requirements of validity and reliability. Although I did not secure the approval of the Ethics and Scientific Committee of Near East University because the data for the study was already collected before the constituting of the committee, I have taken various steps in order to

account for the trustworthiness of this research. The following steps were therefore taken to ensure that the data and analysis is credible, confirmable, transferable and dependable.

**Credibility.** The site of the study is a legally established Nigerian university and the participants are teachers and students of the university. The data for the research was gotten from their interactional practice with their consent (see Appendix F for a sample of the Consent Form). The SRIs I had with the participants also further accentuated the credibility and authenticity of the research participants since they were able to confirm their voices and clarify and validate certain initial assumptions reached by me. The SRIs I had with the lecturers helped improved on the quality of the interpretation of the discourse data since the two lecturers are teachers of English that are very familiar with pragmatic studies. Again, some extracts of my data were presented at a micro-discourse analysis session of postgraduate students of English Language Teaching in a private university in North Cyprus. This also contributed in improving the credibility of my interpretation as I got valuable contributions from these postgraduate students especially on my tone marking of the transcripts. Their contributions and that of my supervisor helped in putting my interpretation of the discourse and ethnographic data on a firm foot.

**Transferability.** The findings from some of the data that were presented at the micro-discourse analysis sessions with the post graduate students were criticised and a wider view of the data was gotten. Such a broad interpretation and thick description meant that the data can be interpreted by other experts and have very similar results and findings. Many of the findings on the phenomenon of the effect of power position on face negotiations are actually transferable in contexts where power position is emphasised over social interactional norms and practices.



**Confirmability.** The actual interactional practice is that of the participants and not mine. In keeping with the relational background detailed in Chapter II, I have taken a neutral position in presenting the interactional practice of the participants. By making the recorded data the primary data source, I have simplified the need for confirmability since that can be listened to at any time. Again, the interview questions emerged from the recorded data thereby making my interpretations and findings, data and participants' driven. Such level of neutrality is important according to Copland and Creese (2015) in dealing with researchers' bias in order to avoid interfering with the data analysis. The step by step taken can be retraced to reconfirm what has been found and presented as accurately as was presented by the participants.

**Dependability.** So far I have argued that to a very large extent, I have tried to account for the requirements of validity and reliability of both the data and the data analysis by showing the systematic way the entire research has been designed. The traceable steps of how the research site and participants were accessed, how the discourse and ethnographic data were gotten and how the analysis was done meant that this particular research can be replicated on similar power sensitive contexts like the Nigerian university system and generate similar results. I believe these data trails have made the data and the data analysis dependable and replicable. These processes according to Erickson (2004) are important to the constructing and analysing the data that are tied importantly into each other. Erickson (2004) describes the data construction and data analysis stage as a "process of progressive problem-solving" (p.486). In this sense, he argues that the data and patterns or themes must be 'found' and that they do not only naturally appear or 'emerge' to the researcher. The researcher has an active role

in the process of finding the data as s/he looks for meanings which are significant in the mundane practices of the participant.

**Ethical considerations.** As described earlier, approval for the recording of students' interactions was sought from the relevant authorities (see Appendix H). Participants were duly informed of the purpose of the recording. In keeping with the promise and trust gained from the participants, their identity has been kept in confidence by giving them pseudonyms in order to enhance the participants' anonymity. In keeping with ethnographic practice, I have generated pseudo names for the participants so as to humanise the research study, and in order to foreclose on any form of disclosure of the participants' identities, the name of the university where the department of English is located will not be mentioned.

Importantly too, I have taken precaution to avoid plagiarism as an ethical practice. I have therefore complied with APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition guideline by listing all cited sources in the reference. I have also used the plagiarism detection software 'Turnitin' to ensure that the thesis meets the required originality level. The plagiarism report shows 11% similarities, 5% of the 11% comes from data extracts we used in a published article with my supervisor. See Appendix G for a detailed similarity report.

## **Conclusion**

I have presented the systematic process that the data for this study was collected. I have equally presented a rationale for my choice of Linguistic Ethnography as the overarching method for this study. I have also elaborated on why I have employed Micro Discourse Analysis as the approach for my analysis of both the discourse and ethnographic data and this has proven very resourceful in unearthing the subliminal elements and levels that are involved in face negotiation in the naturally occurring interaction.

I have tried to present a thick description of the participants as well as present their interactions in real time by incorporating evidence from the participant observation with discourse data. In order to validate my interpretation of the interaction, some aspects of the data were present at micro discourse analysis sessions with post-graduate students of English Language Teaching. In keeping with ethical considerations and best practices, I have sought and got the consent and anonymised all the participants in this study.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **THE NEGOTIATION OF FACE THREAT IN TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION**

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will provide evidence of face threat as a form of social distancing in the interactions of students and teachers. I selected four extracts from the data that will demonstrate and show the negotiation and construction of various forms of face threat strategies and how they are discursively achieved in different speech events. The four extracts were purposefully selected because of the various face threatening acts that occurred in the various speech events. The speech events were chosen using the critical incidents technique highlighted in Chapter III. I intend to also demonstrate through the selected extracts why face threat should be seen not only as a form of social distancing (Badaneh&Migdadi, 2018) but also as a social practice that unbundles the emic and etic social structure of the society, which impacts their relational and interpersonal discursive practice of communication. This is done by relying on ethnographic resources. As highlighted in my rationale for adopting linguistic ethnography (LE) as a data collecting method (in Chapter III), I will demonstrate how ethnographic details will help show how face acts of interactants could reveal the relevant social positioning of the interactants relating to interactional impacting variables such as their social statuses (teachers and students) in given episodes of interactions.

Face threat is a manifestation of face attack that is presented in the form of reprimands, warning, negative evaluating comments, improper conduct, indirectness, blaming and expressing of emotions of displeasure (Badaneh&Migdadi, 2018). Achieving face threat in interaction is therefore a product of many factors which rely to a large extent on the employment of sociality strategies. The use of the term ‘strategy’ here is akin to Hoebe’s (2001) definition of strategy as “the means to reach an immediate goal” (p. 182). In this case, the goal of the utterance is achieved in the employment of diverse face threatening strategies. This definition is crucial at this point because my view of face threat negotiation in this study is from the point of view of a strategic sociality means to achieving solidarity, distance, indirectness, salutation, request, apology, reprimand, praise, offer, among other speech acts occurring in speech events in the interactions of the teachers and the students.

My treatment of face threat, therefore, echoes Rampton et al.’s (2004) position on the validity of using LE to understand the subliminal but crucial aspects of interaction, and Mey’s (2001) claim that “the restricted co-text of utterance is insufficient for our understanding of the words that are spoken, unless it includes an understanding of the actions that take place as part of, and as a result of those words” (p. 135) such and such happened. My analysis of face threat in this chapter will incorporate both first and second order theory of face and politeness (see Chapter II for a detailed discussion of these) in order to account for “the entirety of socially relevant circumstances that surround the production of language” (Mey, 2001, p. 135) as a deliberate strategy of understanding the face threats that are performed and negotiated in the selected interactional speech events. As evident from my data, face acts are presented

in speech acts with their accompanying extra linguistic components. I have identified from the data four socially significant speech events identified as critical incidents (CIs) that yielded face threatening acts. These are; lack of salutation, lack of organisation, improper dressing and failure to attend lectures. These speech events relate to what van Dijk (2008) refers to as a 'situation.' A situation according to van Dijk has sociolinguistic implications to the interactants that reflects on their interactional strategies. Face threat especially from the teacher seemed to be triggered by the teachers' interpretation of perceived sociolinguistic failures of the students.

It is obvious from my data that achieving face threat and its goals is not strictly captured in linguistic systems alone. Facial expressions, gestures, tone of the voice, appearance and other sociocultural factors all contribute to the constituting of the face threat in the different speech events that have been isolated for analysis. A face act is equally tied to the actualization of sociality management. The linguistic and non-linguistic meanings are not gotten separately, they are simultaneously gotten and as such their interpretation and analyses are taken as a whole as will be seen from the analysis of the selected extracts.

### **Why Lack of Salutation, Organisation, Improper Dressing and Failure to Attend Lectures?**

Firstly, the preponderance of the incidents of salutation in 21 of the 28 interactional extracts showed that salutation has an important social function that is routinely expected at the beginning of interactional encounters and has become a norm

in the mental models of the interactants. Five out of the seven instances of the failure to salute the teachers by the students seemed to have triggered series of face threatening acts as evidenced from the data. It seems proper that a nuanced practice such as salutation is paid due attention to in this chapter as the lack of it seemed to evidently shape and construct the mood and flow of the interactions. The various face threatening acts that were negotiated by the interactants also brings to the fore the valid argument of the significance of pragmatic competence in the negotiation of interactive goals. This claim is supported by my observation and interview data as would be seen shortly.

Secondly, the data showed that there is a tacit expectation for the students of the department to be dressed formally as prescribed in the students' handbook in given days of the week. The data extracts showed that students who failed to comply with this extant provision were viewed as rebellious and face threatening to teachers, hence positioning them in direct confrontation with them. I find this equally significant to this study as it seems to indicate the levels of duties and responsibilities that interactants are placed with as well as impacting on the face threatening strategies employed by the interactants which seemed to reflect also on the pragmatic awareness of the students in the examined context.

Thirdly, the lack of organisation of some of the students during the registration process was also a significant trigger of face threatening acts. From the data set of 28 interactions, six students were asked to arrange their documents properly before giving them again to the teachers for verification. In fact, on the door of the registration office is a check list of the documents that the students are expected to present for their registration. This I find equally significant as the lack of organisation of the students and

the need of teachers to quickly attend to the students seemed to impact on the nature of the interaction as well as the face threatening strategies used by the teachers.

Finally, the main reason of being in school to the student is to attend lectures as scheduled and designed by the academic unit and the students' department. The failure of some of the students to attend their lectures regularly were frowned at by the lecturers, especially when they noticed students that they have not seen in their classes before. Although these were newly admitted students, the registration and lectures were going on simultaneously and students were expected to attend to their lectures. In keeping with the custodian posturing of these lecturers, students were reprimanded for not attending their lectures.

### **Extract 1: Lack of Salutation by Kim**

The failure of the students to salute their lecturers at the beginning of their interactional exchange constituted a serious lapse on the part of the students. This lapse was interpreted as face threatening to their teachers as well as a lack of respect by the students. Extract 1 was chosen out of seven other extracts with incidents of lack of salutation with varying perlocutionary and illocutionary repercussions were observed during the interactional exchanges as will be seen in the extract below.

1 ((a student knocks and enters the office and stands quietly))

2 Mr. John: Yes (0.2) Yes↑ (.) good morning sir↑ ((looking sternly at the student))

3 Kim: good morning sir↑ ((looking rattled and sounding very apologetic))



4 Mr. John: **eh**↑, you've not greeted me so I am greeting you ((looking at the student  
5 with a wry smile on his face))

6 Kim: I said good morning sir↓ ((sounding very subdued while clutching his school bag  
7 to his chest))

8 Mr. John: so why didn't you greet me in the first instance↓ ((still looking at the student  
9 while stretching out his hand to collect the student's credentials))

10 Kim: I am sorry sir ((drops his bag on the floor, picks out his credentials and hands  
11 them to Mr. John with his two hands))

12 Mr. John: (0.2) ((perusing the student's file)) Your admission letter is not here↓

13 Kim: here↓ ((pointing at his credentials))

The act of knocking at the door in all the interactional extracts is a proof that it is a sociopragmatic marker of courtesy and politeness in the context of our study. The silent pauses in Mr. John's utterance in line 2 are evidence of his anticipation of salutation from Kim. The apparent failure of Kim to satisfy this sociocultural demand of greeting Mr. John implicates impoliteness by Kim, leading to the mock salutation by Mr. John in line 2. An impolite implicature is defined by Haugh (2014) as "an instance where through implicating rather than saying, an impolite stance on the part of the speaker is occasioned" (p. 290). In this case, Kim's silence has an impolite implicature and is interpreted as face threat by Mr. John, hence his mock salutation of Kim. The salutation is not only an irony towards Kim "good morning **sir**↑" (line 2) with a rising

tone but it has the value and social pragmatic force of an indirect reprimand. A reprimand is a cautionary act (Leech, 2014) and can serve as a face preserving strategy.

In line 3, Kim quickly addressed his pragmatic failure of not greeting Mr. John apologetically by stating his salutation immediately after Mr John's mock salutation and the use of the down-grading honorific "sir". It seems, therefore, that Kim's silence in line 1 was an oversight and not an intentional impoliteness and face threat to Mr. John. This proposition is confirmed by Kim during the SRI session, where he claimed that he did not realize that he had not greeted Mr. John by saying "I forget [sic], I was nervous." However, despite Kim's redress, Mr. John continued with his reprimand in line 4 by asking explicitly why he had to greet Kim. The 'wry smile' on his face while talking to Kim also has a communicative effect as it led Kim to put up a weak defence, almost a white lie by claiming "I said good morning" in line 5. In line 6, it seems Mr. John is still not satisfied with Kim's redress by asking why Kim did not first greet him as seen in line 6 followed by his nonverbal act of stretching out his hands to collect Kim's credentials which is suggestive of his desire to quickly get done with Kim. It was not until line 7, where Kim apologized, that Mr. John dropped the topic of salutation and moved onto his screening business.

In line 7, Kim's offer of apology "I am sorry **sir**↓" with a falling tone is indicative of his understanding that Mr. John is not pleased with his behaviour. It should be pointed out that the discursive negotiation of this apology started in line 2 and the interaction leading to the apology showed how relational an apology can be achieved. The colloquial use of '**eh**' in line 4 is not as a discourse filler but aimed at reinforcing the threat issued in line 2 in the mock salutation. In fact, in line 8, the 0.2 seconds pause

followed by Mr. John's utterance "Your admission letter is not here" is presented as another failure on the part of Kim as a student – he had not saluted his lecturer properly and now he has a missing document in his file.

### **Extract 2: Improper Dressing by Kan**

This extract is representative of three other extracts from our data set that presented evidence of students' failure to dress properly constituting a problem during the interaction. My observational data showed that proper dressing as reflected in the students' Handbook was taken serious. Students who were properly dressed created a better first impression as well as positively positioning them to be treated and spoken to kindly by the lecturers. This particular extract was chosen as it reflected on the face threatening interaction that occurred between the teacher and the student because of the student dressing style. This extract also validates the truism that "ignorance of the law is not an excuse". This extract was also chosen as it presents different face threat strategies (FTS) and face threat response strategies (FTRS) as can be seen in the ensuing interaction.

1 Kan: ((Knock on the door)) Good morning **Sir ((wearing a t-shirt and shorts with a**  
 2 **nab shag on his back))**

3 Mr. John: **are you a student**↑? ((Looking sternly at the student))

4 Kan: yes sir. ((Courteously))

5 Mr. John: **Will you go** and dress up properly before coming here↑?

6 Kan: Sir↓? ((Sounding lost and confused))

7 Mr. John: hmmm (0.5) ((**looking into the eyes of the confused students**))

8 ((**the student quietly opened the door and left almost without any sound**))

9 ((30 -35 Minutes later. Knocks on the door))

10 Mr. John: **Come in here. Sit down, sit down.** (..)You were here with your short.

11 Kan: yes sir

12 Mr. John: and what did I say? ((folding his hands while staring at Kan)

13 Kan: you said I should go back and change ((faintly))

15 Mr. John: **eh?**((sounding surprised and appearing not to have clearly heard Kan))

16 Kan: you said I should go back and change ((sounding remorseful and dejected))

17 Mr. John: and change? ((looking intently at Kan while flipping his hands to emphasis

18 the word '**change**'))

19 Kan: yes sir

20 Mr. John: so what did (...) how did you feel coming here with, in your short↓

21 ((Removing his glasses, drops them on the table and folded his hands across each

22 other as if to say 'explain yourself'))

23 Kan: I was just coming back from a journey and the time for my lecture is, was

24 already upand I now just (...) ((sounding apologetic with his face looking  
25 downward))

The interpretations that we can make of this interactional episode, as supplemented with ethnographic data in Extract 1 regarding face threat are numerous. Although the door of the office was open, Kan knocked the door before his first utterance (salutation) but is met or interpreted by Mr. John with a curious question “**are you a student?**” (line 3). The utterance of Mr. John is found strange by Kan because rather than answering his salutation as the norm in this context requires, Mr. John’s response in line 3 is a demand for the clarification of who Kan is. This critical incident was birthed because of the instantly recognised improper dressing of Kan (**wearing shorts on a Monday**). This proposition was also confirmed by Mr. John during the SRI session when he was asked; “What was the relevance of asking if this candidate is a student?” His response was “I was surprised. I don’t expect any student to come to my office wearing a short [sic].” As can be seen, Mr. John’s utterance deviates from the salutation in line 1, not on the basis of what was said or how it was said but because of the extra-linguistic feature that he (Mr. John) views as anomalous to the acceptable dress code of students in the existing context. This validates Emerson’s (2009) and Rampton’s (2018) call for the analysis of both observational and interactional data to be taken together for a deeper understanding of meaning in interaction. Although Kan demonstrated decorum and respect by knocking on the door, Mr. John’s explicit response “**Are you a student?**” in line 3 has a hint of a reprimand and not necessarily desire to know if Kan is a student. His question is both rhetorical and a reprimand of some sort and it also serves as the basis for the next turn based on his interpretation of

the appearance of Kan, (wearing shorts and a t-shirt). Mr. John seemed aghast by Kan for not knowing his place or the context he is stepping in as a student. Once Mr. John established that Kan is a student, he assumes his full authority as the lecturer to address Kan.

The stern look of Mr. John and his raised tone while making the utterance “**Are you a student?**” in line 3 laid bare the face threat. The interpretation of the face threat is seen in the courteous response of Kan in line 4 “**Yes sir,**” which also seems to emphasize their relational positions in the existing context considering Kan’s use of the honorific “**sir.**” Kan’s interpretation of Mr. John’s utterance in line 4 with the honorifics “**Sir↓?**” with a low condescending tone is equally indicative of his position as a student and shows that he has appropriately interpreted Mr. John’s utterance in line 3 as a threat and is surprised at it. This is because up to that point in the conversation, Kan does not seem to know why he has been asked to ‘go and dress up properly’. Knowing where he stands (younger vs older or student vs teacher) as a student constrains Kan from demanding for an explanation on why he is being sent to go and dress up properly by the lecturer. This position is confirmed by Kan during the SRI. As Kan states, “I thought my dressing was okay.” Yet, he could not directly demand for the reason he was being sent away. The lexical properties used by Mr. John to execute the threatening command “**will you...**” in line 4 is a variation from the anticipated outcome of a response from salutation. It is through the ethnographic resources that the reason for such unpredictable response is known. This confirms Emerson’s (2009) contention that it is only by paying close attention to interaction that we have a deepened “appreciation of variation and

unpredictability, highlighting agency and contingencies” (p. 536) that play out in interaction.

The position that Mr. John occupies in this episode of interaction puts him in a favourable position to use such distancing strategies without regard to the feelings of the interactant. Line 6 presents us with an even more curious interaction. Mr. John’s interpretation of Kan’s innocuous and surprised response to his utterance in line 5 “sir↓?” is with a humming sound ((hhmmmm)) followed by a prolonged silence (0.5) forcing Kan to make the necessary assumption that made him to quietly leave the office. Line 6 typifies his apparent lack of interest regarding the interactional goal of Kan. It seems then that both lines 4 and 6 are interpreted as face threats and distancing strategies because Kan understands them to mean, he was not welcomed for whatever reason and therefore he leaves. Kan’s act of leaving the office is typical of face negotiations among Africans (being confrontation averse with older ones) especially because of age and social standing of the interactants (Olaoye, 2013). This proposition was also confirmed by Kan during the SRI session when asked why he left the office without inquiring why he was being asked to leave. Kan said “he doesn’t want to talk to me”. The prolonged silence is equally a non-verbal act that threatens Kan. Clearly this opting out strategy by the lecturer was not for want of what to say but another way of forcing Kan to make his own interpretation of his silence that is directly connected to his earlier command.

The interpretations we get from lines 1-8 of Extract 2 show that the discursively negotiated face (of Kan and Mr. John) indicates a progressive decrease in their relational connectedness while their difference is also discursively emphasised as the interaction progressed. This emphasised difference (high vs low, lecturer vs student) in the evolving

interaction developed into a more serious situation-dismissal. In addition, the extract shows that face threat interpreting can equally emerge from non-verbal cues or actions. The reaction of Mr. John to the non-verbal act of wearing a short as evinced in lines 1-8 is given more light in lines 20-21. This extract, among others also shows too that silence is also a form of face threat that can emerge from on-going interaction and the interpretation of such nonverbal cues are crucial to the understanding of the emergence of meaning and action in interaction. Kan also confirmed this position at the SRI session by saying because “he was silent and looked angry, so I left.” This suggests that Mr. John’s silence and his disposition are discursive components of the interaction as they contributed significantly to the execution of the face threat and the establishing of social distance between him and the student.

### **Extract 3: Lack of Organisation by Kay**

This extract is chosen from among five other extracts from my data set of 28 recorded interactions that presented evidence of overt apology as an interactional response and positive positioning strategy. This particular extract is unique in the sense that it presents critical incidences of the student leaving his credentials outside, not having the original of his credentials and not arranging the credentials in an orderly manner which attracted reprimand from Mr Jude and positioned Kay negatively before the teacher. We have chosen one of the critical incidences (not arranging his credentials) in order to account for the negotiation of direct positioning in the course of the interaction as seen in the extract below.



1 Mr. Jude: **Please** can you share them equally ((Handing Kay his file to sort them out))

2 Kay: ((collects his file and begins to sort out the credentials frantically))

3 Mr. Jude: (0.2) let me see them (0.2) and your passport↓?

4 Kay: Here are they [sic] ((handing over two copies of passport size photos))

5 Mr. Jude: It's only a copy ((returning a copy of passport to Kay))

6 Kay: They said two? (0.2) two ((sorting out his credentials as he fidgets with papers))

7 Mr. Jude: Please do that fast (0.2) ((irritably)) (0.5) just look at what you are doing↓

8 Kay: Sir↓ It's just today that I collected them ((still trying to arrange the documents

9 while sounding apologetic))

10 Mr. Jude: But it doesn't matter; it doesn't matter ((putting his hands across his

11 chest)). You should have organized yourself before coming in here↓ ((looking sternly

12 at Kay while talking slower and picking his words)) [eh

13 Kay: I am] so so sorry we are bereaved

14 that's why ((sounding very low while handing out the documents with both hands))

15 Mr. Jude: ((stretching his hands and collecting the documents while looking at kay))

16 Kay: I said I am sorry↓ we are bereaved that's why **sir** ((looking to the ground))

17 Mr. Jude: You are bereaved↑ ((looking at Kay curiously))

18 Kay: Yes sir

The utterance in line 1 is a directive and a command that shows Mr. Jude returning a set of credentials to Kay to put them in order. This particular act is equally an expression of his displeasure with Kay for his lack of organization as well as socially positioning them (lecturer vs student). The act has a perlocutionary force of stating “you need to be better organised” or “I can’t do this for you.” The act of quietly collecting the credentials to sort them out further emphasizes Kay’s position as the student. In lines 3 and 4 the utterance by Mr. Jude indicates his growing impatience with the student; “**(0.2)** let me see them **(0.2)** and your passport↓”. This relates to what Badarneh and Migdadi (2018) refers to as face attack. A face attack is a direct positioning strategy that threatens the face of another interlocutor. Face threats by their nature are disconcerting and this is seen in the fidgeting manner that Kay’s goes about arranging his credential. In line 4, Kay had not finished sorting the documents but in order to minimize the offense and save his face, he quickly gave two passport photos instead of just one to Mr. Jude.

The display of negative emotion by the authority figure is also a show of power position (Mondada, 2017). In line 7, Mr. Jude’s impatience is brought to the fore: “**Please do that fast (0.2)** ((almost irritably)) **(0.5) just look at what you are doing↓**” which also represents another incident of face attack aimed at establishing a direct position. The utterance in line 8 “**Sir↓** It’s just today that I collected them” is an example of an excuse serving as an apology. Moreover, since positioning and face are discursively achieved, Kay’s excuse is seen as an effort to present a positive face and a positive position before Mr. Jude. Kay’s use of the honorific “**Sir**” is equally instructive

because it is serving the function of a discourse softener as well as an apology (Leech, 2014) that helps Kay to negotiate a positive position in the interaction which echoes what Tan and Moghaddam (2007) refers to as reflexive positioning.

Lines 10 to 12 is another example of direct face threat by Mr. Jude through the use of a direct reprimand on Kay for not being organized: “You **should have organized yourself before coming in here**↓ ((looking sternly at Kay while talking)).” This statement passes a negative judgement on the organizational ability of Kay, hence a face attack. Badarneh and Migdadi (2018) contend that face attack as a direct positioning strategy can be insulting on an individual’s face. Mondada (2017) noted that non-native speakers of a language tend to be less indirect in their use of taboo words and reprimands. Although English language is non-native to Nigeria, as it was discussed earlier in Chapter II, it is the lingua franca and official language of the Nigerian state. The face attack witnessed here could therefore be seen as a deliberate positioning strategy by Mr. Jude rather than an inability to effectively use the language. The ethnographic data showed that Mr. Jude was visibly angry with Kay (giving him back his credentials to properly arrange them and then demanding for the credentials while the student was still sorting them out) and thus needs to reprimand Kay thereby emphasising his power position in the context.

The use of reprimands in lines 7 and lines 10 to 12 confirms Leech (2014) and Efe and Forchtner (2015) view of reprimands as redressives of some sorts. Kay’s act of apology in line 13: “I am] **so so sorry, we are bereaved that’s why**” showed that Kay’s desire to save his face and make redress for his inaptitude by presenting himself as someone who is mourning the demise of his aunt. The success of Kay’s excuse can be

best understood from what Harré and van Langenhove (1999) refer to as relevant cultural background drawn from their context models to the positioning of the interactants: In Nigeria death is a serious matter that is never taken with levity or lied about. In order to gain a positive positioning Kay used a low voice and a humbling body posture while giving his credentials to Mr. Jude. Both the linguistic and paralinguistic elements in Kay's act of apology contribute in making his act of apology successful while positioning him favourably as someone who has a genuine reason to be unorganised at this particular episode. His direct apology is also attached with an excuse that is aimed at saving his face before Mr. Jude so that he will not be viewed as a careless student. Again, the nonverbal act of Mr. Jude in line 15 “((stretching his hands and collecting the documents while looking at Kay))” showed that his apology strategy worked. In Line 16: “I said **I am sorry**↓ **we are bereaved that's why sir**” suggests Kay's deliberate use of indirect positioning strategy as someone who is respectful and organised. The repeat of the apology with the added honorific is aimed at silencing his wrong as well as socially positioning him in a positive light.

#### **Extract 4: Failure to Attend Lectures**

Three other extracts that indicated the failure of the students to perform their statutory duties and were consequential in the manifestation and emergence of face threat in the interactional data set. This particular extract was chosen because it exemplifies how students react when they are confronted by their lecturers about their failure to perform expected duties and responsibilities such as attending lectures. This

extract is also instructive as it sheds light on the reluctance of many teachers to embrace neoliberal educational setting where certain level of freedom is guaranteed by all those that are involved in various forms of training (West, 2019). In other words, this extract emphasised the fact that teachers in the Nigerian school environment position themselves as standard bearers of the school setting as can be seen in the extract below.

1 ((A student knocks on the door))

2 Mr. John: Come in come in (0.2) where are your credentials **bring them bring them**

3 (0.2) yes↑((stretching out his to collect the credentials)) what did you say↓ that you

4 are a 100 level student↓

5 Hana: Yes sir

6 Mr. John: **And you've never attended my class**↓ ((looking directly at Hana))

7 Hana: (0.2) ((looking at a card in her hands))

8 Mr. John: **Where have you been all this while**↓ ((perusing Hana's documents))

9 Hana: I have been around ((still looking at the card in her hands))

10 Mr. John: **You've been around**↓ ((looking intently at Hana))

11 Hana (0.5)

12 Mr. John: ehcn ((looking up at the student))

13 Hana: Yes↑ I use to go but @@@ on Monday (0.2)

14 Mr. John: I have called your class severally and all of them came for every call I

15 made and I have not noticed your face at all. What happened↓

16 Hana: Sir I don't know I use to go to lectures

From lines 1-3, Mr. John appeared to be in a hurry to attend to the student. For the first time in the entire data set, he did not offer a seat to this student rather, he effectively used repetition to emphasize this sense of urgency as seen in line 2: “**bring them bring them**” while stretching his hands to collect the credentials. In line 3-4, Mr. John appeared to ask a simple question: “what did you say↓ that you are a 100 level student↓”. The affirmative response from the student seemed to have prepared the ground for Mr. John’s negative evaluation of Hana as seen in line 6: “**And you’ve never attended my class↓**”. Much as this appears to be an innocuous question, my observation data in line 6 ((looking directly at Hana)) suggest that the question carries a negative evaluation of the student: failure to attend lectures.

In line 7, Hana adopts an opting out strategy by keeping quiet and pretending to be looking at a card in her hand. In line 8, Mr. John continued with his negative evaluative questioning: “**Where have you been all this while↓**” while perusing her documents. Mr. John’s question seemed to demand an answer from Hana. The implication of the question appeared to be wide ranging. It seems to suggest that Hana have not been coming to school and also that she lacks the required level of seriousness deserving of a university student.

This interpretation appears to be in harmony with Hana’s interpretation too as can be seen in her face saving response in line 9: “I have been around” while pretending to be looking at the card in her hands as represented in my observational data in line 9:

((still looking at the card in her hands)). It should be pointed out that being around is not the same as being in class. As such, Hana's response is interpreted as an excuse, a strategy that has been used by various students once they feel that they have been attacked by the lecturers. In line 10, Mr. John's echoic statement: **"You've been around↓"** seemed to also index the ridiculous and his lack of satisfaction to the claim or response of Hana regarding his earlier query about not being in class.

Hana's response in line 1, a long pulse or silence (05) is another opting out strategy as a face preserving act. Mr. John is then forced to use a colloquial expression in line 12 "ehen" to compel Hana to respond to his earlier queries. Colloquial expressions are known for their ability to establish social solidarity, but "ehen" as used by Mr. John is another form of face attack or threat. He indicated the fact that she had not told him why she had not been attending her classes. Mr. John's attitude seems to confirm the claim by West (2019) that most teachers like to claim some level of morality and stewardship. The guttural sound is adequately interpreted by Hana as can be seen in her response in line 13: "Yes↑ I use to go but @@@ on Monday" (0.2). What appeared apparent in this extract is the desire of the student to keep a positive self-image before Mr. John. Hana appeared to deliberately blur some part of her expression as well as keeping quiet in order to wade off the pressure from Mr. John. Equally significant is the fact that throughout the interaction, Hana did not employ the remarkably used strategy of apology as many of her peers did.

When asked during the SRI why she seemed to always keep quiet whenever a question was asked by Mr. John, Hana said "it is the way he is looking at me" and claimed that "I think he is angry with me that I did not come for my screening on time".

I also asked if she felt that she was rude by keeping quiet but Hana said “no↓, I just want him to leave me alone”. This particular interview confirmed to me also that actually, the long silence and pulses by Hana were indeed used as opting out strategies and not as some form of rude behaviours.

### **Emerging Themes and Face Threat Strategies (FTS) in Interactions**

The data analysed so far have shown that face threat have emerged and have been negotiated variously in the interactions of these teachers and students as a direct response to the failure of the students to meet up with certain expected forms of behaviours. The data showed that in face-to-face interactions, many factors that are not evident in written discourse are brought to the fore through various verbal and non-verbal acts and the illocutionary force (meaning) of an act can be achieved using various strategies as have emerged from the data that have been presented above. The following are themes and strategies that have emerged from the analysed data.

**Direct face threat (DFT).** Direct face threat strategies in the analysed data included the use of direct reprimands by the teachers as seen in extract 3 lines 1-3. Reprimands are discursive show of disapproval as well as a response and positioning strategy to a given offense in an interaction. Leech (2014) states that reprimands have the metapragmatics function of scolding, disapproving and showing a lack of harmony with an interlocutor as a result of a failure or an offense by the interlocutor. The construction of reprimands in interaction differs from context to context and person to person (Gable, Hester, Rock & Hughes, 2009). A discursive perspective of reprimands



reveals that reprimands could be directly or indirectly given to the perceived offender depending on the goal of the other interactant. Direct reprimands are often accompanied by direct modals such as ‘should’ and ‘will’ as seen in extracts 1, lines 8-9 and extract 3, lines 10-12.

**Indirect face threat (IFT).** Indirect face threats have been presented in the interactional extracts as indirect reprimands with hedging tactics by the teachers so that the students are left to make implicatures or factor out the meaning of what has been said. Indirect reprimands and their implicit nature embody some form of polite considerations by not being explicitly aggressive towards the students. The polite use of reprimand is a deliberate social positioning strategy that shows disapproval yet a concern for the face of other in interaction (van Der Bom & Mills, 2015).

Indirect reprimand seemed to be a form of self-correction opportunity given to the student by the teachers as seen in Extract 1, line 2, and extract 2 lines 3 and lines 20-21 and also in extract 3 line 1. Indirectness by its nature implicates indeterminate illocutionary force and in naturally occurring interaction, socio-pragmatic awareness of the interactants is very important in fully understanding the goal of indirectness in interaction (Decock&Depraetere, 2018; Haugh, 2015). The findings of Grainger (2011) that Africans are generally indirect as imposition avoidance strategies have been vividly displayed by the interactants in this study. This also appears to be true of the EFL speakers in Nigeria as seen in the interactional data.

Again, by their nature whimperatives are not known to cause offense but aimed at grabbing attention. However, from my data set, the use of whimperatives by the

teachers was aimed at both grabbing the attention of the students as well as threaten them. For instance, in Extract 2 line 12, the use of whimperative by Mr. John: **“and what did I say↓”** is aimed at emphasising and reminding the student about why her was asked to go and dress properly. And although, Kan response was audible enough, as seen in line 13: **“you said I should go back and change”**, in line 15, Mr. John still used the colloquial expression **“eh”** in a falling tone to compel Kan to repeat what he was told earlier in the day as seen in line 16: **“you said I should go back and change”**.

Again the use of down-grading honorific is another face threat strategy. This is seen in line 3 Extract 1 in the use of “Sir” by Mr. John. Downgrading or patronizing honorifics as the name suggest are employed to lampoon the image of the hearer. Often, such use of honorifics is seen from an older speaker towards a younger speaker and serves the function of reprimanding and bringing the younger person to order by operating in an indirect form or way. This reprimanding style is very common in the Nigerian ELF context as claimed by Adebigte (2009). This form of honorification is also observed by Shibamoto-Smith(2011) in indecorous interactions between politicians who are trying to get at each other.

**Negative evaluation of other.** Negative evaluation of the students by the lecturers in the form of complaints for one failure or the other in my interactional data has been interpreted as another form of face threatening act since as observed by Decock and Depraetere (2018), face threat is often and mainly a matter of speaker intention of using a particular linguistic form. In Extract 3, lines 7 and lines 10-12 for example, the negative evaluation of the student in terms of his organisational abilities is immediately interpreted by the student as a face threat thus, drawing out an apology to mitigate this

evaluation. Complaints about students' behaviours, in terms of how they are dressed, how they have failed to organised their credentials or indeed in their failure to perform a nuance social practice such as salutation, in the interactional data have emerged as being explicitly negative on the face needs of the students with the students making obvious efforts to make redress as seen in the analysis.

**Non-verbal face threat (NFT).** This appears to be a unique form of face threat that is manifested in naturally occurring interaction. While instances of being silent were observed on the part of both the teachers and the students, the silence of the students was observed to serve the function of opting out strategies as can be seen in Extract 4 lines 7 and 12. These opting out strategies were employed by the students the moment they felt threatened by the negative evaluating comments of the lecturers as seen in Extract 4 lines 6 and 11. On the other hand, the silence of the teachers was used as deliberate face threatening strategies. For instance, in Extract 2 lines 7, the long pulse (0.5) and the nonverbal act of looking directly at the student and the decision of the student to leave the office, meant that the nonverbal threat was successful as the student also interpreted it as such.

Secondly, it seems that the gazing eyes of the teachers have significantly contributed in delivering the various face threatening acts that were presented to them. This is equally captured in my observational data: while the lecturers look directly into the eyes of the students, the students have constantly avoided any form of eye contact with the lecturers especially when trying to negotiate their way away from a face threatening act of their lecturers. These strategies can be seen in my observational data as can be seen in Extract 2 lines 7 and 8 and extract 4 lines 5-11.

### Face Threat Response Strategies (FTRS).

Three prominent FTRSs have emerged from these teacher students interactions. These are; apologies (felicitous and infelicitous apologies), opting out and excuses.

**Apologies.** An apology is a strategic means of making amend and achieving redress in interaction. As “behavatives” (see Austin, 1978), apologies have locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary force or meaning inherent in them when uttered in interaction. Efe and Forchtner (2015) recognise that apologies are valid means of achieving “reconciliation, redressing past mistakes...” (p. 236). For example, in Extracts 1 and 3, apology is employed as a redressive for the failure of the student to greet the lecturer and be properly organised respectively. For instance, in Extract 1 line 10, the apology by Kim: **“I am sorry sir”** is used as a response strategy to the direct face threatening query in line 11: **“so why didn’t you greet me in the first instance↓”**. Similarly, the apologies in Extract, 3 lines 13-14 and 16 are employed after the failure of Kay to explain away his manner of dressing through excuses. The overt use of apology and an excuse in line 16 : **“I said I am sorry↓ we are bereaved that’s why sir”** seemed to reinforce Leech’s (2014) position that treating apologies as just a unit of utterance without paying attention to the preceding or following up units of utterances or indeed the entire speech event is problematic. As can be seen from the sampled extract, this particular instance of apology was discursively achieved from the preceding lines of the interaction.

These instances of apologies seemed to satisfy the felicity conditions of speech acts (Searle, 1969) since their goal is to achieve redress and restore normalcy in the interaction as stated by Haugh (2014) that apologies are complex interactive moves and acts that have redressive force of minimizing offence in interaction. It seems a plausible claim to make, that apology has been used as a face threat response strategy (FTRS) to reclaim the loss of face whenever such occurred partly because of the social distance between the lecturers and the students and partly as an acknowledgement of the lapses they have been accused of or have been directly attacked about.

Badarneh and Migdadi (2018) identified face attack as a form direct positioning. The acts of direct positioning are evident in conflictive interactions where interactants try to impose or assert their views. In face-to-face interaction, reprimands are often representation of direct positions with apology responses serving as redressives or face saving acts. An apology is therefore a strategic means of making amend, achieving redress in interaction and gaining positive face. As “behavatives” (see Austin, 1962), when apologies are uttered, they convey meanings that are aimed at achieving specific goals such as, appeasing, misleading, convincing or redressing some unintended wrongs. This point is emphasized by Efe and Forchtner (2015) by recognizing that apologies are valid means of achieving “reconciliation, redressing past mistakes...” (p. 236). Leech (2014) believes that treating apologies as just a unit of utterance without paying attention to the preceding or following up units of utterances or indeed the entire speech event is problematic, hence the need to view apology within the frame of acts of social positioning. The actualization of an effective apology in naturally occurring interaction is reinforced by a lot of contextual and extra-linguistic variables such as tone of the

voice, facial expressions and other meaning attributing and deriving gestures. In most instances, apologies are produced as counter moves resulting from an initial failure using various strategies of either saying “sorry” or providing an excuse or rationalising the failure or committal of an unintended act (Leech, 2014).

**Excuses.** Excuses have also been used by the students in the interactional data as FTRS. Excuses as FTRS have been employed as face redemption and face saving strategies. In extract 1 for instance, the negative evaluative comment by Mr. John in lines 4-5: **“eh↑, you’ve not greeted me so I am greeting you”** is responded to with an untruth statement by Kim in lines: 6-7: **“I said good morning sir↓”** ((sounding very subdued while clutching his school bag to his chest)). During the SRI, Kim was asked why he claimed to have greeted the lecturer even though the recorded interaction does not have that as evidence. Kim submitted that he **“was confused”**. In another instance, using excuse as a face threat response strategy is performed by Kan as seen in Extract 2 lines 23-24: **I was just coming back from a journey and the time for my lecture is, was already up and I now just (0.2)** in response to Mr. John’s direct face threatening question in lines 20-21: **so what did .... how did you feel coming here with, in your short↓**

The use of excuses by the students as FTRS seemed to emphasise the classical position by Goffman (1969) that interactants are genuinely concerned with how they are seen and perceived by the other interactants. These excuses seemed to have been presented or offered as some face repairing strategies apart from serving as FTRS in order to present themselves in positive light before their lecturers. This position has confirmed Adebijaja (1993) position, and has strengthened my claim that face

consideration among Nigerians seem to have and serve more importance in interaction than politeness.

**Opting out.** Opting out has been variously used by both the lecturers and the students in my data set. However, the point to note is the variability of how this opting out strategy has been employed. It is in evidence as presented in the sampled data that while the lecturers used that opting out strategy as direct face threat as seen in extracts 1 and 2, the students' use of the opting out strategy is as FTRS to save their face, or as face repair strategy. For instance, in extract 4, as a deliberate response strategy to Mr. John's utterance in line 10: **You've been around**↓, a deliberate repetition of Hana's statement in line 9. Hana's silence in line 11 **(0.5)** is very instructive. It was an acceptance of guilt as well as a desire to skip the ongoing line of interaction.

Keeping quiet in the face of a face threat by the younger or subordinate in the Nigerian context is seen by many (Adegbija, 1989; Adegbite, 2005; Okoro & Day, 2013) as a mark of showing respect to the superior as well as the acceptance of an individual's failing. Opting out is therefore a face negotiating strategy that reflects on the respect-showing norm in Nigeria that impacts on the structure of talk in interaction. As stated in the literature review, this valued strategy in face-to-face interaction is actually better represented when ethnomethodology is used in the collection of discourse data. My data showed that when students opt out in an interactional session, they do so as a form of unspoken apology.

## **Conclusion.**

In this chapter, I have presented face negotiation as a strategy of social distancing from the position of face threat negotiation. I have equally outlined the various strategies that were used to effectively execute or negotiate face threat in interaction of lecturers and students. Face threat is therefore presented as the direct and indirect show of disaffiliation by an interactant to the other. I have therefore focused on the interactional strategies that these interactants have used in achieving various levels of interactional social distancing as have been seen in the analysed data. The following are themes and strategies that have been discussed:

- a. Direct and indirect face threat have been identified as face attack strategies that have been elaborately used by the lecturers. As seen in extract 1, direct face threats were presented in the form of direct commands with little regard to the face of the students. Indirect face threats on the other hand are presented deviously by the lecturers in such a way that the students are left to factor out the meaning of the threatening face act.
- b. The use of expressions that negatively evaluates the students often presented in the form of downgrading honorifics, complaints, direct or indirectly about the students' failure at some social duties is equally face threatening. Face has been various viewed as the positive self-image of a person and once that is attacked, a form of lack of harmony is achieved.
- c. Nonverbal acts have also been used by especially the lecturers as a direct way of showing disaffiliation with the students. Deliberate acts of keeping quiet



or unpleasantly looking at the students have been observed as effective ways of negotiating face threat face by the lecturers.

- d. I have also presented the various face threat response strategies (FTRSs) used by these interactants to include but not limited to apologies, excuses and opting out. These strategies were used variously by the students to redeem their face as well as present themselves as positively as possible.

Face threat negotiation is therefore an important aspect of social positioning in interaction. In Chapter V, I shall present face support, not as the opposite of face threat but as an integral constant in face negotiation. I shall examine face negotiation acts performed by both lecturers and students that create a good ambiance for convivial interactions.

## CHAPTER V

### NEGOTIATING FACE SUPPORT IN TEACHER-STUDENTS INTERACTION

#### **Introduction**

The selected extracts in this Chapter will demonstrate how these interactants manifest relational solidarity despite the highlighted social disequilibrium between the lecturers and the students that was discussed as the platform that enables the face threatening acts of the teachers. The selected extracts will demonstrate that among many other social variables (age, social position, among others), interactants are still concerned with the face needs of others and not of themselves alone and they employ various strategies to achieve convivial interaction. The extracts on face support will present speech events during the registration process as being connected with linguistic choices made by the interactants.

The use of linguistic ethnography (LE) enabled me to do an up-close investigation of situated language and interactants' meaning in the ongoing interaction. This up-close investigation has led to a meaningful examination of face support strategies along with ethnographic details while simultaneously allowing linguistic meaning to emerge from the interactions' spoken and unspoken acts. By doing this, I have hearkened to Rampton's (2007) admonishment to scholars to allow ethnography to humanise language use and study. I will, therefore, present mundane social solidarity moves as performed by the interactants. To achieve this, I have selected four extracts from my data pool to demonstrate how face support contributes in the general flow of interaction as well as the management of the interaction itself.

Face support, very much like face threat, can reveal the social status and power position of the interactants. In other words, through acts of face support, the social position of the interactants is revealed or made known. The four extracts that were purposefully selected as representative of face support will demonstrate the occurrence of positive face and supportive face acts in particular speech events during the interaction. These four extracts that embody what I believe are positive sociality moves and behaviours, significantly impacted positive on supportive face negotiation in the interaction in one way or the other.

My aim of selecting these extracts is to also demonstrate that polite behaviour in interactions is also a precursor to face support acts in naturally occurring interactions. This, I hope to do by examining the strategies that interactants employ to make the other interactants feel at home and supported when their interactional practices fall short of what are the expected norm in particular episodes of talk and interaction. My focus is therefore on supportive face acts negotiated by the teachers since they occupy the power position. This I will do by examining why those acts were actually negotiated as a strategic face supporting strategies in the interactions with their students. Simultaneously I shall investigate various acts performed by the students in order to engender face support negotiations. These acts include positive social behaviours on the part of the lecturers and the students such as indirectness, excessive use of honorification by the students, knocking on the door, salutation, waiting to be offered a seat in particular speech events, the use of placative, the use of irony and indirect reprimands, polite requests, non-verbal acts and solidarizing interrogatives.

### **Significant Face Support Strategies: Excessive Honorification, Indirectness, Let it Pass and Empathy**

Imposition in interaction in the Nigerian English as a lingua franca (ELF) context is easily viewed as haughtiness, pride and a lack of humility (Odebunmi, 2009).

Interactants, therefore, employ various strategies aimed at avoiding possible imposition in interactions. Honorification is an interactional strategy that helps interactants to achieve the avoidance of self-imposition in interactional contexts or speech situations (Shibamoto-Smith, 2011). The use of honorifics by the students on their lecturers has been aimed at establishing and maintaining the expected social distance while maintaining the expected face or position of the students which invariably help them achieve some level of social solidarity in the interaction. The wide-spread use of honorifics has also made them linguistic items that deserve this nature of inquiry. It would seem then, that power position and age are also factors that affect or contribute to the use of these honorifics in interaction since the showing of respect is the cardinal idea behind their use (Shibamoto-Smith, 2011) as will be seen shortly.

Indirectness is another face support and face consideration strategy that is often employed to present one's self as humble and culturally aware of the necessary features of the context of interaction. Grainger (2011) established in her research with Zimbabwean English language users that indirectness is used by Africans to avoid imposition as well as to mark politeness in interaction. My interactional data also have evidence of elaborate use and utilization of indirectness, not as a mark of politeness but as a face awareness and consideration strategy. Indirectness, very much like honorifics, helps interactants to avoid appearing rude, immodest and haughty: negative attributes of

interactants that are considered as proud. As will be seen from the data, the lecturers have used indirectness to achieve face support with their students.

As was already highlighted in Chapter IV, salutation is a valued social practice in any social encounter and it has a routinized pattern: younger to older as evinced in the 21 of the 28 interactional data. Instances of first position salutation by the teachers were seen as remarkable shift from the norm. As a result, such instances were identified and examined to uncover the strategic significance of their use. The rarity of first position salutation by the lecturers (on three out of the 21 instances of salutation) also makes it noteworthy when it did occur at certain instances. The instances of first position salutation by the lecturers are observed to have engendered cordial and supportive interactional exchanges. This, I find significant because it positions face within the frame of Goffman's (1955) view and perception as interactants desire to be seen as civil in given or particular interactional episodes. Hence, where such occurred, I have tagged it as 'a let it pass incidence' aimed at encouraging the students to carry on with their interaction.

Finally, empathy has been seen as the ability to put one's self in the shoes of the other person. Such ability, according to Chen (2013), creates a feel at home atmosphere and a higher emotional connection between the interactants. Despite the asymmetric relational dimension in the teacher-students scale, I find it interesting that the lecturers were deliberate in their overlooking of what I thought would attract a form of face attack or face threat but interestingly, the lecturers yielded face support to the students. This shift in behaviour contrasts with what was presented in Chapter IV as face threat strategies. As mentioned before, four selected extracts representing each of these

strategies shall be analysed in order to shed light on the negotiation and construction of face support in interaction.

### **Extract 5: Excessive Honorification by Ken**

This extract is chosen among fifteen other extracts that showed elaborate use of the honorific ‘sir’ as a strategic and discursive imposition avoidance strategy in interactions of the lecturers and the students. These honorifics were employed with the aim of presenting a positive self-image of the students before their lecturers. This particular extract was chosen because of the casual nature of the initiation of the interaction and yet it showed evidence of the use of honorific as a face support strategy. It will show how power positions seem to affect the discursive negotiation face support in interaction. I intend to also demonstrate through the selected extract why honorifics are strategies of establishing social support as well as serving as a linguistic item that reveals the social structure of the society which impacts on use. The extract will also show the relational significant of honorifics in establishing the social positions of the interactants in discursive practice in communication. The extract runs thus:

1 Mr. John: ((perusing the student’s credentials)) **You were a teacher**↓ What courses

2 were you teaching↑ ((looking up at the student))

3 Ken: During my Teaching Practice I taught English to SS1 students and ah (0.2) social

4 studies to JSS2 students so [also

5       okay] I was a case [sic] a class teacher for one academic ah

6 (.) [session

7 Mr. John               okay]

8 Ken: I taught in primary school ((looking away from Mr. John with a slight smile))

9 Mr. John: okay ((nodding his head))

10 Ken: **yes sir**

11 Mr. John: do you stay off campus [or ((still perusing the student documents))

12 Ken:                               **Yes sir]**

13 Mr. John: **Oh** you stay **off Campus**↓((looking up at the student))

14 Ken: **Yes sir**

15 Mr. John: Why are you not on campus↓ ((stands up, picks a folder from a shelf and

16 sits down again))

17 Ken: I like the very quiet environment where I am living (0.1) looking at the hostel it

18 is too congested ((sitting in an upright position))

19 Mr. John: Why! Have you been there before or someone told↓

20 Ken: Yes I am made to understand that four people will be in the inner chalet and

21 four people will be in the outer chalet ((speaking cautiously, counting his words))

22 Mr. John: Yes↓ and↓

22 Ken: and that alone the number is too much [and

23 Mr. John: okay] and you now decided to stay off

24 campus (0.2) so, any other question for now↓ **You don't have any question**↓

25 ((putting the student's documents into the folder with care))

26 Ken: **but** for me, there is a clash on our time table ((looking into a piece of paper))

27 Mr. John: What exactly is the clash↓

28 Ken: I think Introduction to Phonetics and phonology and that of Use of English

29 ((reading directly from a piece of paper))

30 Mr. John: Phonetics and Phonology?↓ ((looking at Ken directly))

31 Ken: **Yes sir** (0.1), and I think that Use of English and Library is a year one course

32 and compulsory for DE students (direct entry students are newly admitted university

33 students that start from Year two)

34 Mr. John: Yes↓

35 Ken: There was a day we were receiving the lecture while the other lecture was going

36 [on

37 Mr. John: Was] going on ((looking into his drawer and picking out a bunch of paper))

38 Ken: **Yes sir** ((Looking at Mr. John))



39 Mr. John: Okay (0.2) I think we will find a way of resolving that ((using his pen on  
40 the a page of the bunch of paper))

41 Ken: **Okay sir** ((putting the paper back into his folder))

42 Mr. John: very soon you will not experience that again (0.2) ((flipping through a page  
43 or two)) any other question? ((Rising his head to look at Ken))

44 Ken: For now no **sir**

45 Mr. John: Okay. Alright you are welcome ((stands up and keeps the folder back in  
46 the shelve))

47 Ken: ((stands up to leave))

The investigation of Ken's credentials by Mr. Jude showed that he has had some teaching experience in the past hence some level of symmetry at the professional level. The use of the honorific "**yes sir**" in line 10 is typically an upgrading and respect-giving honorific aimed at elevating Mr. John above Ken's level, especially if we consider their opening interactions from line 1 to line 9 where Ken was given the opportunity to introduce himself. From lines 9 to lines 14, all the questions put forward to Ken were answered with a "**yes sir**". The first point to note here is that in power sensitive contexts such as a Nigerian university setting, honorifics are crucial linguistic resource of interaction for establishing politeness by way of showing respect and due regard to the person of higher social standing. The use of the honorific "sir" in this extract and other similar extracts confirms Brown's (2011) position that honorifics are valid social

positioning devices. The apparent rampant use of the honorific is equally suggestive of the need for Ken to establish the social distance between him and Mr. John. Compared to extracts where the interactants were much younger, this extract has a higher occurrence of the honorific “sir (14 times in the entire interaction) compared to Extract 2 (it was used three times as apology strategy) and Extract 6 (where it was used two times in the entire interaction) where the students are much younger. This suggests a cross-cutting of age and experience and background in teaching/education in social positioning terms and the need for Ken to position himself as a student in this particular case.

The direct question of Mr. **“Why are you not on campus↓”** opens up the interaction in an interesting direction. The employment of indirect responses by Ken is of significant interest. First, rather than saying that the hostels are too crowded, he used the conventional indirect strategy, by saying; “I like the very quiet environment where I am leaving” in line 17, before stating that “looking at the hostel it is too congested” in line 18. It seems a deliberate ploy by Ken to first present his love for the **“very quiet environment”** he is leaving before stating his reason. His choice of the conventional indirect strategy here is to avoid being seen by Mr. John as a haughty person.

In response to Mr. John’s query; **“You don’t have any question↓”** in line 24, Ken deliberately employed the indirect strategy to present his complaint: **“but for me, there is a clash on our time table.”** Mr. John’s response **“What exactly is the clash↓”** is indicative of the effectiveness of Ken’s strategy. It showed his willingness to attain to Ken’s problem. Ken’s response to Mr. John’s question revealed his familiarity with the indirect strategy. This time, he used the self-referent or honorific **“I”** but he discursively used a down grader “think” as seen in line 28: **“I think Introduction to Phonetics and**

**Phonology and that of Use of English.”** To buttress his complaint, Ken employed another indirect strategy as seen in line 35: **“There was a day we were receiving the lecture while the other lecture was going.”** This time, Ken employed the use of a collective referent **“we,”** is also a strategic means of avoiding imposition. This seems strange especially as the field notes record showed that Ken was reading directly from a piece of paper. Hence, the discursive negotiation of both the use of the honorifics and indirectness by Ken are aimed at redressing the unpalatability that may accompany the imposition that is often associated with the referent **“I”** in interaction. From line 37 to line 47, Ken responded **“yes sir”** to the assurances given by Mr. John to address the problems with time table. As a result, the interpretation of the discourse data showed that older candidates seemed to employ the honorific **“sir”** more than the younger candidates.

#### **Extract 6: Can You Come In↑**

The extract below is chosen from 28 other extracts with the aim of elaborating on the significance of greetings on positioning in interaction. This particular Extract is chosen because of the use of various face support strategy used by Mr. John in attracting first position salutation from Garos and how this salutation and face support strategies affected the entire interaction. This particular student was unable to get registered previously because she did not come along with her credentials. The recording took place a few minutes after another student was sent out by the lecturer to go and dress up properly. In order to gain the positive face of the teacher, the student used different

indirect positioning strategies such as hesitating to step into the office while Mr. John used indirectness as face support strategy. This particular extract was found to be representative of six other extracts that demonstrate the use of indirectness by Mr. John as a positive social positioning strategy that helps the students to feel at home despite the evident lack of assurance on the part of the student which stems from the sending out incident that occurred before her coming in. In a way, the extract also emphasises the impact of sociolinguistic variables such as power, context and nonverbal actions as impacting on the negotiation of face support:

1 ((knock on the office door, a student peeps through the open door))

2 Mr. John: Yes↓ **can you come in**↑ (0.2) **Come in**↓ ((Beckoning the student with his  
3 hands to come in))

4 Garos: Good morning sir ((stepping into the office with a bag in her hand))

5 Mr. John: Yes, you said what happened↓ ((looking directly at Garos while using his  
6 pen and hand to point at the empty seat for her to sit))

7 Garos: On Monday@@@ ((sounding a bit distraught))

8 Mr. John: you were not around↓((looking up at the student))

9 Garos: I was around but some of my credentials were not (0.2) was [sic] not complete

10 Mr. John: Why↓ You left some of them [at home

11 Garos: I] left some at home ((handing Mr. John a set

12 of credentials while still standing))

13 Mr. John: Why did you leave some of them at home↓ ((stretching out his hands to

14 collect her credentials))

15 Garos: ((**looking for something in her bag**))

16 Mr. John: **Uhhmm**↓ ((perusing the student's documents))

17 Garos: **(0.2) ((still looking into her bag))**

18 Mr. John: sit down sit down ((pointing to the chair in front of his table while calling

19 out the student's name as written on a paper he is holding)) **Garos John Sunday**

20 **(0.2) is that the name**↓ ((looking up at the student))

21 Garos: Yes sir

The first act of positioning in the interaction is the positive face and nonverbal act of knocking at the door in line 1. This polite act is equally an announcement of presence (Mondada, 2017). The act of knocking on the door is interpreted as a nonverbal polite request of “may I come in?” as well as being an indirect positive positioning strategy. In lines 2 and 3, we see a combination of both a verbal and nonverbal act of face support and indirect positioning by Mr. John. He used the conventional indirect strategy and the mild command, “Yes↓ **can you come in**↑ **(0.2)** Come in↓” as well as using hand gestures to urge her to step into the office. The nonverbal act by Mr. John ((beckoning the student with his hands to come in)) is a vital face support and positioning strategy if Mr. John's repetition of the command “Come in↓” is taken into

account. Although, I sense some level of uneasiness building up on the part of Mr. John, he seemed to deliberately keep his cool. Since he dismissed my assumption of a lack of patience during the Stimulated Recall Interview (SRI), I took it to signify the conscious or unconscious show of authority by of Mr. John in the context.

The (0.2) hesitation by Garos to step into the office is also a significant indirect positioning strategy. She seemed to deliberately wait to be assigned a position by Mr. John. Her cautiousness resulted from the sending out of an earlier registrant by Mr. John as confirmed in the SRI. She believes that Mr. John is very strict. Presenting herself as being timid or scared seemed to also contribute in making Mr. John to negotiate a face support strategy. This tends to confirm the claim that in face-to-face interactions, Africans are general confrontation averse (Akere, 2009) when they interact with people of higher social standing. The use of the conventional indirect strategy “**can you come in↑**” while using his hand gestures to beckon her to come in, clearly establishes the dichotomy of the social roles that socially positioned them even before the actual registration starts. By placing some doubt on her ability to come in, is a form of face threat that jolts Garos into action.

Although the knock on the door in line 1 is a nonverbal greeting, the actual verbalised act of salutation is seen in line 4 by Garos: “**Good morning sir**” in line 4 as her first utterance that overtly expresses her greetings as well as her social positioning and positive face strategy which draws a face support strategy from Mr. John. Apart from serving as an observation of the expected norm, her act of being the first to express greetings is an indirect positioning strategy that shows that Garos recognized her position as the student and the younger person as well as recognising the power position

that Mr. John occupied as the lecturer in the setting. The salutation by Garos also confirms what Olaoye (2013) claims; gestures of greetings are expected to be offered first by the younger interactant as discourse softeners in most Nigerian contexts. This proposition is confirmed by Mr. John's nonverbal action of offering a seat to Garos in lines 5 and 6. The act of pointing at a seat for Garos is interpreted as a face support strategy and a polite act and a positive response to her observation of the expected practice of salutation. The interaction between Garos and Mr. John shows face support as social positioning and discursive practice of give and take. The observation of duties and obligations on the part of the younger interactant begets face support and positive face from the older interactant and the offering of certain rights and privileges as well.

Although Garos appeared a bit clumsy regarding her level of preparedness for the purpose of the registration, Mr. John was very tolerant of the student by proffering a negotiating face support to the student. For instance, although he had asked in line 13-15: **"Why did you leave some of them at home↓"** Garos opted not answer his query instead she pretends to be looking for something in her bag as recorded in my fieldnotes. In line 16, while perusing the student's credentials, Mr. John makes a muffled sound "Uhhmm↓" to remind the student his unanswered question but as seen in line 17, Garos continued looking into her bag for whatever she was looking for. Yet, in lines 18-20 Mr. John offered her a seat and used a profound face support strategy: calling out the name of the student: **Garos John Sunday (0.2) is that the name↓ ((looking up at the student))**. This seemed to be aimed at catching the attention of the student who from my observation was pretending to be busy. This proposition was confirmed by Garos at the SRI. I asked her what she was searching for in her bag and she simply could not

remember. This confirms my initial claim that Garos appeared to be pretending as deliberate face avoidance strategy. I believe too that this nonverbal act is a common strategy used by students when they want to avert questions even in classroom situations.

### **Extract 7: Please be orderly↓**

This extract demonstrates relationality of face support as the interplay of mutual respect, power and social position between interactants. This extract and 15 other extracts show significant evidence of interactants showing solidarity with other interactants. Mr. Jude had just come into the office and greeted me as I was already stationed and seated in my position. He had just finished a two-hour class and looked a bit tired. He sat down with his water-bottle in his hand and reclined backwards into his swivel armchair as he sipped water from the bottle. It seems rational, therefore, that he would expect the students to make the registration process easier for him. I chose this extract for this analysis because although Mr. Jude looked tired and exhausted, there are students to be attended to and I find his interactional and face support strategies remarkable as will be seen in the extract below.

1 Nandi: ((or other students knock on the door))

2 Mr. Jude: (.) Come in (.) yes, ((seeing about three students entering his office)) **please,**

3 **please**((waving his hands dismissively)) let me attend to you **one after another**↑ yes?

4 Students: (.) Okay ((other students went out leaving only a student in the office))



5 Mr. Jude: ((looking directly at the student in anticipation)) (0.2) **can I hear you**↓

6 Nandi: (...) ((looking into her bag))

7 Mr. Jude: **Your credentials**↓ ((sounding a bit impatient and irritably))

8 Nandi: **yes sir** ((bringing out a file from her bag))

9 Mr. Jude: why are they in a file↓ ((surprised at the sight of the departmental file))

10 Nandi: I just want to open the file.

11 Mr. Jude: Eh? ((Expressing surprise at the student's response to his question))

12 Nandi: I want to open the file **sir**.

13 Mr. Jude: **you want to open the file or you have opened it already**↓

14 Nandi: (0.5)

15 Mr. Jude: Sit down, sit down (0.2) ((Hurriedly changing the direction of the

16 interaction)) do you have your originals with you?

17 Nandi: **yes sir** ((quickly sits and looking a bit tense))

The act of knocking at the door by Nandi (or the other students who were with her at the time of the interaction) in line 1 is a non-verbal utterance that has the pragmatic force of a request to come in and is also in consonance with the cultural expectation of the setting which requires that you do not barge into people's offices without seeking their permission. The act of knocking on the door is equally a polite request as well and it is also recognition of the face needs of Mr. Jude. The general

expectation by Nandi is that her desire to be asked to come in will be granted. This interpreting is satisfied by the response or utterance of Mr. Jude as seen in lines 2 and 3. Mr. Jude's response in these lines is indicative of a supportive face by satisfying Nandi's desire. The first three lines in this extract signals the emergence of face support between the interactants. The use of "**please, please**" with a falling tone and waving his hands is Mr. Jude's deliberate attempt at cushioning the effects of his subsequent utterance which is correctly interpreted by the other students indicated by their act of leaving the office in line 4. Mr. Jude seemed to be deliberately polite, partly because he was aware that the students had been waiting for him to attend to them while he was in the classroom. This, I find as significant in understanding the interactional discourse as it confirms the important effect of observation on the structure of interaction and the analysis of emotions especially to the analysts (Emerson, 2009; Rampton, 2017). In line 5, I witnessed an unusual situation that was tolerated by Mr Jude. This particular student stepped into the office and stood quiet. Both participants have acted unconventionally as they appear to be hesitant on who should say what first. As have been seen in Extract 1 and 3 when there was a missing salutation, face threat was provided. Yet in this extract, salutation didn't seem to matter to Mr. Jude. I observed that Mr. Jude anticipated something (greetings in the form of salutation or the reason for her coming) from Nandi but she stood in front of his table clutching her student's file to her chest while she seemed to be quiet in anticipation of Mr. Jude saying something (sit down, what can I do for you? and so on for example). This was awkward since it did not qualify for an opting out strategy but Mr. Jude let it pass, a trend that is associated closely with English as a lingua franca (ELF) feature (Firth, 1996).

The utterance in line 5 is almost a solicitation for salutation from Mr. Jude. He could easily have interpreted her silence as a rude behaviour but he overlooked it for the sake of achieving progressivity (or maybe he was making up for the time the students waited for him) in the interaction it seems. My initial interpretation of this interaction within the context of the other recordings as well indicated that Mr. Jude was very temperate towards the various stated interactional lapses of this student by constantly presenting a supportive face to the student. Mr. Jude's choice of overlooking what I thought was a "rude" behaviour of a student, i.e. not greeting him, was a significant shift from his reaction to the student in Extract 1. When asked at the SRI if the student being female could be a reason for his tolerance, Mr. Jude has refuted the proposition that he seemed very patient with Nandi by simply saying "I don't think so."

The utterance in line 5 is almost an indirect way of saying 'greet me, why are you here?' Yet in line 6, there appear to be a complete lack of processing of Mr. Jude's utterance by Nandi, thus constituting a 'trouble.' A trouble in talk is said to be ubiquitous (Arundale, 2010) much as the needed repair to the trouble. A repair is warranted if the trouble is consequential to the progress of talk-in-interaction. The silence in line 6 is allowed to pass since it is adjudged as inconsequential by Mr. Jude to the interactive goal. It is clear that Mr. Jude did not want to halt the progressivity of the ongoing talk or rather he wanted to get the registration process done with as soon as possible knowing too that there are other students waiting outside the office to be attended to. As such, Mr. Jude is seen as giving a face support by being supportive throughout the interaction. Although this behaviour seemed to be in tandem with the 'let it pass' feature of ELF (Firth, 1996), it seems that the underlying reason for the overtly

convivial interaction is tied to the historicity of the construction of femininity in most African contexts, where females are believed to be more in need of being talked kindly (Seidlhofer, 2009; Uchendu, 2009). This issue shall be pursued further in Chapter VI. Three critical incidents in this extract were observed; the lack of salutation in line 5; being in possession of the departmental file in line 9; and her keeping mute to a question in line 14. All of these, which should have resulted in some form of reprimand, resulted in face support instead. Despite these acts that show a lack of courtesy on the part of Nandi, line 11 is a weak accusative and a reprimand of her obvious failings by Mr. Jude to which another lack of response from Nandi is observed. Rather than receiving a reprimand from Mr. Jude, he offers her a seat. In addressing this practice during the SRI, Mr. Jude claimed that “yes, I don’t like students standing on [*sic*] my head.” This was in contrast with four other incidents that have been observed in other transcripts, where the lecturers made a big deal of the students’ failure to salute them.

The negotiation of face in teacher-student interaction seems to depend more on the interpreting that the teacher makes of the student attitudes towards him and other expected social duties since he is the one with the higher authority. In culture-sensitive environments such as my research context, where students’ behaviours can be viewed by the lecturer as proper or improper, such judgements have been seen to affect the negotiation of both face threat and face support, especially as adjudged by the teacher which in turn forms the crucial bases of their social positions in the first place. Despite the obvious lapses on the part of Nandi, this extract shows a progressive supportive behaviour from Mr. Jude because of his disposition towards the student. He seemed to

be more tolerant of this student than he was of the students in Extract 1, where face threat was presented for certain interactional and or behavioural lapses were observed.

### **Extract 8: When all is well**

The natural flow of interaction is optimized when interactants show adequate cognitive awareness of the context, subject and their interpersonal roles. This particular extract is representative of 21 other extracts, where the social distance and interactional goals of the interactants seem to take the centre stage. The following extract is gotten just after Mr. John dismissed a student from his office to go out and put his credentials in a proper order. This particular extract shows that certain lapses in interactions can occur and be redressed without losing the focus of the interaction. The selection of this extract for analysis is hinged on the belief that cognitive awareness of the interactants is equally a factor in their construction of discourse. This is a position that is favoured by many scholars who have argued and claimed that the sociolinguistic awareness of appropriacy of context and prevailing situation of an interaction significantly affects the construction of face by the interactants (Ide, 1992; Watts, Ide & Ehrich, 2005). The components that contribute to the meaning and action are mutually complementing each other, as they collectively create meaning in talk. Face negotiation in the extract below provides evidence that face maintenance is not a form of face threat maintenance strategy but is a face support strategy that contributes to establishing relationships and social positions between the participants and maintaining the focus of a given episode of talk.

1 Mr John: ((with opened hands at me to suggest his exasperation with a student))

2 **The next person**↑ ((almost on top of his voice))

3 Doris: ((knocks faintly on the door)) good morning sir↓

4 Mr. John: Yes↓

5 Doris: you said I sho[uld ...

6 Mr John:               No] I mean (0.2) you can tell I am coming to attend to you after

7 (0.5) ... tell the student there to come in ((speaking faintly, while searching for a

8 particular file from a stack of files on the book shelve)) Yes↓ please be fast↑

9 Doris: **Sir**↑ ((moves further into the office and stood, looking lost and a bit confused))

10 Mr. John: ((looking into a file)) **sit down sit down sit down** ((stretching out his

11 hands while looking at the student))

12 Doris: ((**stands up and hands her credentials to Mr. John**))

13 Mr. John: are these credentials (0.2) are these originals enough↓

13 Doris: Yes sir

15 Mr John: ((perusing the student's file)) **How many results are you using**↓

16 Doris: Two

17 Mr. John: Two results↓

18 Doris: Yes Sir

19 Mr. John: okay (0.2) ((looking directly at the student)) **Are you facing any**

**20 challenges with your lectures**↓

21Doris: No sir

After attending to three students earlier in the day, Mr. John looked a bit nervy and exhausted. The evidence of this is that he had just sent a student out for not arranging his documents properly before coming to him. Mr. John's utterance "**The next person**↑" ((almost on top of his voice)) in line 2 is also suggestive of the nerviness. Although I recorded 17 instances of students knocking on the door, this was the only extract that Mr. John responded with a "**yes**↓" for both the act of knocking on the door as well as Doris' salutation in line 3. Her incomplete statement in line 5 "**you said I sho|uld ...**" confirms the proposition that face in interaction is relationally constituted (Haugh, 2012). She seemed to have interpreted the edginess in his voice in line 3 "**Yes**↓." Although she tried to tell him she was in the office because he asked for her to be there, the underlying implicature of his response in lines 6 to 8 seemed to suggest that he wanted Doris to be more patient. This, I found surprising because my observation suggests the contrary. Mr. John seemed very distracted by what he was looking for from the file cabinet.

In line 8, Mr. John tries to bring the interaction back to track with emotive expression: **Yes**↓ **please be fast**↑. This particular utterance has multiple implications among which was 'come in and be fast about it or let me have your credentials.' These propositions seem to result from the power position that Mr. John is speaking from or Mr. John's utterance is laden with certain unpredictable "emotional currents" (Emerson 2009, p. 536) that precede Doris' coming into the office. When asked why he seemed eager to dismiss Doris initially, Mr. John contended that the fact that he could not find what he was looking for made him "very uncomfortable." Since he was the person that would determine how the interaction would pan out, the student seemed to seek some

form of support from Mr. John as she moved further into the office and he seemed to quickly realise that.

In line 10, Mr. John looked up and looked at the student for the first time and offered her a seat while simultaneously demanding for her credentials. This act seems to implicate his desire to refocus on Doris' goal of being in the office. His act of stretching out his hands to demand for the credentials without verbalisation seems to also emphasise the micro level of the interaction, especially regarding the importance of their relational positioning in this particular context. Again in line 13, the act of standing up as a mark of respect by Doris in order to give Mr. John her credentials is also in recognition of the relational position they both occupy in the interaction. From that moment on, the interaction took a convivial direction. It seemed that when interactants with lower social power display cognitive awareness of the social context, the interactant with the higher social power empathises with them. In line 19, Mr. John wanted to know if as a new student, she had any problems with her lectures. This validates Haugh (2007) position that politeness is co-constituted. This is particularly significant because in Extracts 1, 2 and 3 where different forms of reprimands were given to the students, none of such emotive acts were recorded. When this proposition was put forward to the two lecturers in our study during the SRIs, they both agreed that it was just a natural reaction towards students that behave in respectable way.



### **Emerging Themes and Face Support Strategies (FSS) in Interactions**

The four extracts that have I have analysed have shown that face support is a valuable face negotiation strategy especially because it enables and enhances the convivial flow of interpersonal interactions. These extracts provide evidence that even when there are evident interactional lapses, interactants could still manage their interactional needs without necessarily engaging in face threat or face attack strategies. The analysed data show that interactants employ tact and certain face support strategies to help their fellow interactants avoid incidents of face loss even when their interactional behaviours fall short of the expected or anticipated norm. Some of the prominent themes and face support strategies that have emerged from the analysed data are discussed below.

**Honorification.** Honorification has emerged as one of the most prominent face support strategy employed, especially by the students in order to seek and negotiate for themselves a favourable face and socially position themselves as being humble, respectful and socially adept to the expectation of the context of interaction. Honorifics are referent items (Hudson, 2011) that the students have used to show respect, honour and reverence towards their lecturers (referents) in interaction in ways that enabled them to avoid acts of self-imposition in interaction. Brown and Levinson (1987) define honorifics as “direct grammatical encodings of relative social status between participants, or between participants and persons or things referred to in the communicative event” (p. 276). Interpersonal studies (for instance, Kasper, 2006; Mutsuko, 2011) have shown that these encodings have imbedded relational values that are largely impacted by the context of a speech event. For example, in Extract 5, the

student elaborately used the honorific “sir” at almost every instance of his interactional response. The student, Ken is a Direct Entry (DE) student (DE students are admitted to the second year BA English programme because they have a certificate higher than secondary school certificate) with prior teaching experience and he was much older than most of the newly admitted students. Ken, therefore, appeared to be very strategic in his imposition avoidance strategies to gain face support from the lecturer. This confirms Odebunmi’s (2009) claim that imposition in interaction in the Nigerian English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) context is viewed as rudeness but power and social distance are given significance and the failure of a speaker to observe this social position in his/her speech is easily viewed as haughtiness, pride and a lack of humility. Overall, two types of honorifics emerged from the analysed data. They are elevating and downgrading honorifics.

***Elevating honorifics.*** Many of the students have used the elevating honorific as a strategy to gain face support. For example, in Extracts 1, 2 and 3 the elevating honorifics were deliberately employed by the students to gain the attention, empathy and favourable evaluation from the lecturers. Honorifics are also used as social positioning strategies by the conscious recognition of a superior position of an interactant. These students seemed to consciously elevate their lecturers while negotiating a lower position for themselves as seen in Extract 7 line 16 when Nandi was asked to sit and also in extract 8 lines 18 and 21, when Doris was asked questions about her results and well-being in school. They seemed to demonstrate a good knowledge of their place in the interactional encounter. Knowing a person’s place is a crucial requirement of maintaining established social distance, balance and equilibrium in interactions.

The elaborate use of the honorific ‘sir’ among Nigerian English language users is identified by many scholars (Adegbeja, 1989; Akere, 2009; Olaoye, 2013) as a strategic tool of negotiating politeness, avoiding imposition and showing of respect. Among people of Far Eastern cultures, Brown (2011), Cook (2011) and Shibamoto-Smith (2011) revealed that honorifics are ingrained into the performance of politeness which is manifested largely in face negotiation of both Japanese and Korean people respectively. For example, Shibamoto-Smith (2011) posited that among the Koreans, “honorifics encode in the language status asymmetries between speaker and referent and also social distance between speaker and interlocutor” (p. 3710) to such an extent that honorifics are not rigid norms of a language but the manifestation of speakers’ volition which is often a product of conscious and unconscious acculturation.

In Nigeria, much like Korean and Japanese vertical hierarchical social structure, Odebunmi (2013) and Olaniyi (2017) observe that honorifics are known to have the socio-pragmatic function of establishing deference and social solidarity. This can be seen in the interaction between Ken and Mr. John in Extract 5 and the interaction between Mr. Jude and Nandi in Extract 6. While Ken variously used the honorific “sir” to establish and affirm their social distance and deference as seen in Extract 5 lines 10, 12, 14, 31, 38, 41 and 44, while Nandi’s use of the honorific was aimed at gaining social solidarity and attention of Mr Jude as seen in Extract 7 lines 8, 12 and 17. The use and function of these honorifics give credence to Geyer’s (2008) view of honorific as “resources of action accomplishment” (p. 3) serving diverse interactional ends rather than just static strategies of politeness that serve a single purpose. Evidently, these

honorifics have been employed as strategies of gaining face support by the participants of the current study.

**Indirectness.** Indirectness is another significant FSS that has been employed especially by lecturers as a deliberate strategy to negotiate face support and mitigate the face loss of their students. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) contend that an indirect speech act can best be measured based on “the degree to which the speaker’s illocutionary intent is apparent from the locution” (p. 278). For instance, Mr. John’s use of the indirect structure before using the direct command in Extract 6, lines 2-3: “Yes↓ **can you come in**↑ (0.2) **Come in**↓” is significant. Clearly, he was not comfortable with students standing by door and the leaving the door open. The use of ‘can’ rather than ‘could’ has often been highlighted as a feature of LFE resulting from language transfer since most Nigerian languages do not have dual modals. The use of ‘can’ therefore is not a lack of politeness (Odebunmi, 2009).

Again, in Extract 5, line 1, the propositional content “**You were a teacher**↓” seems to imply, ‘you have some teaching experience? Or you are an older student.’ This seemed to confirm Marti’s (2006) observation that the propositional content in an indirect speech are often not the same with their semantic representation. Indirectness like honorifics is a strategic means of achieving interactional goals in ways and manner that humility and respect are not lost. This seemed to justify why past researches (Blum-Kulka, 1987; Blum-Kulka& House, 1989; Marti, 2005; Terkourafi, 2011) treated indirectness as a strategy of politely executing request, apology and other similar speech acts invariably. Indirectness is, therefore, a positive face support strategy in interpersonal face-to-face interaction. In Nigerian languages, Odebunmi (2009) observed

that indirectness has a relational value in interaction that is often transferred into Nigerians' use of the English language. Within the frame of ELF, politeness strategies draw greatly from the first languages of the language users (Cogo, 2012; Cogo & Dewey, 2012). This also elaborates on Grainger (2011) research that Zimbabwean English language users use indirectness primarily to avoid imposition as well as to mark politeness in interaction. The need to avoid imposition is equally observed by Brown and Levinson (1987) as the reason for the employment of hedges, indirectness and honorifics in interactions. The interactants in this study have employed what Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) categorized as indirectness (conventional and nonconventional indirectness).

***Conventional indirectness.*** The conventional indirectness seemed to have been used more by the lecturers. For instance in Extract 7 line 7, “**Your credentials↓**” as used by Mr. Jude is an instance of ellipted indirect sentence which could have been presented as ‘can I see your credentials.’ It seems that the shortening became necessary knowing that other students are waiting outside for him. Giving that background, indirectness has been used as a face support strategy as well as a time saving act. Again, in Extract 8 line 2, Mr. John’s use of the indirect structure “**The next person↑**” to indicate he was ready to attend to the next student is equally note-worthy. The correct interpretation of this command by Doris who immediately knocked and came into the office confirms the claim that context and language are tied together and the interpretation indirect acts is dependent on the hearer’s pragmatic ability in the language (Akere, 2009).

***Nonconventional indirectness.*** The nonconventional indirectness has also been used as a face support strategy by the lecturers. What is crucial to the interpretation of

the meaning of nonconventional indirect utterances is that it is often relying significant on the shared background knowledge of the context of its occurrence. Often the hearer is presented with hints of what the utterance is actually meant to satisfy through contextual clues. For example, in Extract 7 lines 2-3 “**let me attend to you one after another**” was used to ask the three other students to wait outside or it was used to create orderliness by Mr. John and was correctly interpreted by the students to mean they should go outside. Indirectness according to Odebunmi (2009) and Olaoye (2013) is tied to the desire to be polite and is a face negotiation strategy of showing of ‘respect’ and regard for others. It would seem then, that power position and age are factors that affect and contribute to the use of or the level of indirectness in interaction since being humble, being polite and showing respect remains the cardinal idea behind their use among Africans.

**Let it pass as a face support strategy.** The ‘let it pass’ has been identified as a feature of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) where interactants tend to allow what is not clear to them hoping that they will gain a better understanding as the interaction progresses (Firth, 1996). I have found that the let it pass has been used variously as a face support strategy. For instance, in Extract 7 lines 5 and 6, Mr. Jude’s indirect sentence: “**can I hear you↓**” after the (0.2) micro minutes silence that I interpret as Mr. Jude’s wait for salutation from the student which never came is an example of the let it pass as a face support strategy. Rather, from my observation, the student was only pretending to be looking for something in her bag. This lapse was passed over by Mr. Jude as seen in his next indirect positioning as seen in line 7: “**Your credentials↓**”. This I interpret as a strategic face support move, away from the anticipated salutation without any repercussion. Again in line 13, Mr. Jude’s query: “**you want to open the file or you**

**have opened it already↓**” is met with a long pause from Nandi as seen in line 14 and then he offers her a seat. This I see as the actual validation of the let is pass feature of the LFE interaction that Firth (1996) talked about but in this instance, it was manifested as a face support strategy by the lecturer who occupies the power position in the existing context.

**Empathy as a face support strategy.** This face support strategy and interpersonal phenomenon seemed to have been employed by the two lecturers that the study was conducted with by their direct and indirect acts of showing concern about the needs of the students. For instance in Mr John’s statement in Extract 5 line 24: **“You don’t have any question↓**” is a face support strategy that probes and encourages the student to speak up if there are problems regarding his courses. This strategy worked because the student actually spoke up in line 25-26 about a ‘clash’ on the lecture time table. In Extract 8 lines 19 and 20, this empathizing face support strategy is also offered to Doris in the sentence, **“Are you facing any challenges with your lectures↓**”. This particular utterance implicates ‘I can solve your problems, just tell me’. The empathizing language use is known to create an emotional impact by connecting the speaker to the hearer with positive emotions while engendering social solidarity and cross-cultural communicative competence in interaction (Chen, 2013). Showing concern to the needs of others is therefore a face support strategy especially in face-to-face interaction and is often demonstrated by the older to the younger or teachers to their students and achieved through putting oneself into the shoes of the other. From the analysed extracts, the lecturers seemed to empathise with the students knowing that they are new to the

environment and some of them are still timid and unsure about a lot of things. As such, the lecturers' willingness to offer face support sprout from these concerns.



## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have built on the discussion and results on face threat and face threat strategies by presenting data and results on face support and face support strategy. I have presented face support from the analysed data as the use of positive interactional strategies that help mitigate face loss of the other in face-to-face interaction. I have outlined the face support themes and strategies that have emerged from these teacher-student interactions to include but not limited to the following:

- e. Honorification: A phenomenon where the students elevate the status of their lecturers in order to be favourably thought of by the lecturers. This strategy have been shown to be very effective in establishing and maintaining the social distance between the lecturers and the students in such a way that negative evaluation of the students by the lecturers is avoided.
- f. Indirectness (conventional and nonconventional): this has also emerged from the analysed data as a useful face support strategy that have been employed more by the lecturers. By being indirect in their utterances the lecturers have been able to avert what would have appeared as a face attack in the interaction. By avoiding instances of face attack, my observations showed that the students felt more relaxed before these lecturers. I have also highlighted the fact that indirectness to Africans is a tool of showing respect, humility and temperate behaviour.
- g. Let it pass: This is a phenomenon that has been employed by the lecturers in order to engender progressivity in their interactions. This lingua franca

feature of the English language emerged as the overlooking of certain interactional failing of the students. Rather than presenting the failing of these students with reprimands as was presented in Chapter IV, the students were presented with face support and I find this significant in the interactional data.

- h. Empathy as face support strategy: Empathy as a face support strategy has been employed by lecturers as discursive moves that are aimed at engendering trust between the students and the lecturers. Empathy as has been seen from the data creates a strong emotional connection in such a way that the students open up to discuss their problems with the lecturers because they feel that the lecturers understand what they feel or cared about their problems.

So far, I have presented my discussion on face support as an interactional strategy in interpersonal interactions. In the next chapter, I shall examine face as it relates to the gendered acts by lecturers and students as they negotiate face, especially cross-cutting gender as a significant social variable that impacts these interactions. This is necessary because the concept of self within the various theories of face negotiations intersects in many ways with the construction of personalities and the like in everyday interaction.

## CHAPTER VI

### INTERACTIONAL SLIPS: GENDERED ACTS OF FACE NEGOTIATION

#### Introduction

Gender issues in the Nigerian society have often been presented relative to work place imbalances, social roles inequality and the vulnerability of women in times of societal uprising (British Council Nigeria, 2012). For instance, work place imbalance is seen in the composition of the academic staff of the department that this research was conducted. At the time of data collection for example, there were 10 academic staff in this department and only one staff was a woman (see Chapter III for the participants' description). Gender related issues are often related to how power is distributed in the society (Jinyu, 2014). Sunderland (2006) and Foucault (2012) believe that language is an instrument that helps in constructing gender differences while Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) see language use as a reflection of the society that uses it. Holmes (2009) found that gender identities are constructed in talk and this aligns with Spencer-Oatey (2006) who argued that both face and identity are socio-psychological aspects that significantly impact on how face is negotiated in talk.

The selected extracts in this chapter will demonstrate how the interactants of the current study constructed differences in talk on the basis of their perceived gender (male vs. female) and social status (teacher vs. students) in different episodes of the interaction. I will therefore examine gendered acts of face negotiations in the interaction of these lecturers and students. Both gender and social status differences are presented as

complementary yet as significantly influencing and impacting on the construction and shaping of the various episodes of the interactions.

I have selected the most practiced and mundane interactional phenomenon: salutation, especially the absence of it in interactional episodes involving male and female students, to demonstrate the nature of face negotiation that was manifested in the various episodes of the interaction. These extracts also demonstrate how students are perceived differently on the basis of their gender by their lecturers since the responses of the lecturers to students of different genders were significantly different. My aim is to account for Holmes' (2012) description of gender as the collective social and cultural identities of a group with regard to their sex, which appears to have emerged from my data. Like Bern (2004), I believe that interactions significantly take form/are shaped based on gender differences. In other words, interactions in the selected extracts will demonstrate the relational gendered talk that is seen in the different instances of face negotiations. I hope that these extracts will also reveal gender as a social construct that impacts the process of human socialization and interactive endeavours of the lecturers and the students.

The selected extracts will also demonstrate how power position also contributes in the construction of both the students and the teachers' identities in the episodes of talk and interaction. This is in keeping with Wodak and Meyer's (2016) observation of power as the crucial part of discursive achievement that seems to be more prominent and significant than cognition. Wodak and Meyer (2016) further pointed out that the success of any critical study in interaction depends on our understanding of the language use of those in power. The selected extracts in my view will show how those in position of

power use language to their advantage as would be seen in the various ways that they negotiate face and meaning in the interactions. The extracts will show the actions of these interactants as related to Locher and Bousfield's (2008) claim that there can be no interaction without power and that power is what guarantees the expression of impoliteness in interaction. My contention therefore is that both power and gender are key components in relational construction of face and identity in interaction.

### **The “Lack of Salutation” and “Is that What You Call Your Lecturers?”**

As has been discussed in Chapter IV, the lack of salutation especially by the students is viewed as a nonverbal face threat, lack of respect or lack of courtesy by the lecturers. Therefore, the interaction is structured based on these perceptions thereon. Since it is the most observed social practice in the interactional extracts, I believe it provides a premise under which genuine investigation of how gendered acts were conducted. Again, since a face threat is a demonstration of disaffiliation (Arundale, 2010) and the imposition of self over other (Culpeper, 2011), face support is the deliberate avoidance of imposition and a demonstration of affiliation and solidarity with other. I have presented two extracts of a male and a female students' failure to observe the first position act of salutation to see the levels of disaffiliation or affiliation that is established on the basis of gender differences in those episodes of interaction.

Secondly, the extracts also show that the use of words of these authority figures in the office context towards the male students indicates a higher lack of tolerance for the interactional slips of the male students. This seems to suggest the subconscious

masculinity construction among Africans where boys are expected to be up and doing and be emotionally stronger (Uchendu, 2009). The choice of the transcript below is based on my observation that the failure to observe this nuanced sociocultural practice by the male students in the data pool resulted in face threat negotiations by teachers. In other words, when the students who failed to salute the teachers were males, it was taken up as a face threat and a lack of respect by the lecturers. The extracts below exemplify this gendered proposition.

### **Extract 9: Lack of Salutation by Abel**

This extract was chosen in order to present the relative gendered face threatening act that played out between Mr. Jude and a male student because of the student's failure to salute him. Mr. Jude had just returned from his lunch break and I informed him that some students had come to do their registration but he was not in. Apparently, he had passed some of the students on the hallway leading to his office:

1 ((a gentle knock on the door))

2 Mr. Jude: Yes come in↓ ((about three students lined up to enter the office)) Please **one**

**3 one** at a time ((using his hands, signal's others to stay out)) yes **sit down sit down**

4 (0.2) **Did we see today**↓ ((**looking intently at Abel**))

5 Abel: Sir↓ ((sounding and looking a bit confused at Mr. John))

6 Mr. Jude: **hmmm** ((shaking his head in disapproval)) Let me look at your file '**ko**'

7 and your credentials ((**@@@@** mumuring))

8 Abel: Sir↓

9 Mr. Jude: Your**credentials**↓ your **originals**↓ ((sounding upset))

10 Abel ((opened his bag to bring out his credentials))

11 Mr. Jude (02) let me have them ((stretching his hands and sounding impatient)) what

12 about your classes↓ how many classes so far have you attended↓ ((perusing Abel's

13 credentials))

14 Abel: My (02) you mean in **this school**↓

15 Mr. Jude: **Yes**↓ I mean your departmental courses

16 Abel: okay ((looking at a piece of paper in his hands: a timetable))

17 Mr. Jude: **eh**↓

18 Abel: I have lesson with my class since last upper week ((sounding very confused))

19 Mr. Jude: Last week↓

20 Abel: **Yeah**

21 Mr. Jude: **what**↓

22 Abel: Yes sir

23 Mr. Jude: You mean all the lecturers have shown up↓

24 Abel: **Yes sir**↓ **yes sir** there's ((looking at his timetable)) we have a lecture (0.2)

25 English 211 Introduction to Syntax is today but we didn't see the man yet

26 Mr. Jude: You didn't see him (.) is it **the man** or **the lecturer** ((looking at Abel))

27 Abel: **The lecturer**

28 Mr. Jude: Do you call your **lecturer a man**↑ eh without regard to his title↓ is that

29 supposed to be so

30 Abel: I **am** sorry sir

Mr. Jude's response to the knock on the door and his follow up response in lines 2 and 3: "Please **one one** at a time" places him in clear position of control. His short pause (0.2) from my observation was deliberate and was aimed at accommodating the student's anticipated response: Salutation. Mr. Jude's utterance in line 4; "**Did we see today↓**" while ((**looking intently at Abel**)) was meant to serve as a corrective feedback to Abel. Corrective feedbacks in talk are often used as face avoidance strategies (FAS)(Ting-Toomey, 2005). Unfortunately, as seen in Line 5: "Sir↓", Abel did not adequately interpret Mr. Jude's indirect face act of "did we see today↓". The actual propositional content of the statement can only be gotten from the context of its occurrence. It implicates: if they met earlier, they probably have greeted each other but if not, Mr. Jude is simply asking Abel to do the needful by greeting him. This interpretation was also confirmed by Mr. Jude during the Stimulated Recall Interview (SRI) session. Abel, on the hand, said "I did not realise that I did not greet him".

In lines 6 and 7, Mr. Jude: "**hmmm** ((shaking his head in disapproval)) Let me look at you file '**ko**' and your credentials (((@@@@ murmuring)))", Mr. Jude openly demonstrated his dissatisfaction with Abel's behaviour by shaking his head and humming incoherently, implicating that he wanted to get done with the registration process as quickly as possible. Although in line 8 Abel used the honorific "Sir↓" with a falling tone, it was in my view used to pacify Mr. Jude. Clearly the student at this point does not know why Mr. Jude is being edgy towards him. In line 9, Mr. Jude's utterance



is interpreted as a command and a demonstration of the social distance between them: “Your **credentials**↓ your **originals**↓”. It seems clear that the impolite implicature of Abel’s lack of salutation is responsible for the impolite stance taken by Mr. Jude. My interpretation of Mr. Jude’s utterance as impolite is because of the sudden abrasiveness of his verbal acts: “Your **credentials**↓ your **originals**↓” which were delivered as distancing strategies. Haugh (2014) also contends that often impolite acts are used as counter strategies. Impolite acts were also found by Gonsum and Çavuşoğlu (2019) as viable social positioning strategies in the interactions of teachers and students. The ellipted part of the language structure (which could have been ‘let me have/see your credentials and your originals...’) also implicates to a large extent Mr. Jude’s anger with the student. From my observation, Mr. Jude was visibly upset with this student and he sounded upset.

Again, in lines 11 and 13 while perusing the student’s documents, Mr. Jude asked the Abel two curious questions; “what about your classes↓ how many classes so far have you attended↓”. I find these questions curious and lacking in empathy since he seemed to want to find out if Abel attends lectures like he should. This is because I deduced from the indirect propositional content of the second question a negative evaluation of Abel: ‘Do you even attend lectures?’ This too is another form of face attack and a demonstration of disaffiliation by the lecturer that seems a preparation for a reprimand. In line 21, Mr. Jude’s use of “**What**↓” as a reprimand for Abel’s use of the informal “**Yeah**↓” for ‘yes’ is also another form of showing disaffiliation and this is perhaps the first time that Abel was able to overtly correct himself with an honorific as a discourse softener “Yes sir” in line 22.

The use of the discourse softener above seems to have worked as seen in Mr. Jude's next question in line 23: "You mean all the lecturers have shown up↓". However, in line 25, Abel's use of the referent "man": "Introduction to Syntax is today but we didn't see **the man** yet" is immediately taken up by Mr. Jude as seen in line 26: "You didn't see him (.) Is it **the man** or **the lecturer**↓" From my observation Mr. Jude seemed very deliberate with his eyes ((looking directly at Abel)) aimed at making the student uncomfortable. During the SRI session with Abel, he did confirm that he did not like the way Mr. Jude was looking at him because it made him feel nervous. Even when Abel used the appropriate, as seen in line 27: "**The lecturer**," Mr. Jude would not let him off as seen in next face attack in lines 28-29: "Do you call your lecturer **a man** eh without regard to **his title**↓ is that supposed to be so." This threat was properly interpreted by Abel as seen in his over use of the apology and the honorific "sir" in line 30. The positioning of Mr. Jude regarding the formal use of words "**yes**" and not "**yeah**" and "**lecturer**" and not "**man**" confirms Acheola and Olaleye's (2019) arguments that the Nigerian educational setting still retains such levels of formalities and most lecturers clinch onto their titles.

The extracts that have evidence of the occurrence of the lack of salutation where a female student is the person involved in the interaction seemed to suggest a higher level of tolerance for their interactional slips by the authority figures. Face support is the evidence of solidarity in interaction (Arundale, 2010). These extracts seemed to suggest that female students were given greater face support even when they failed or forgot to present a first position salutation. The face support discursively expressed by the teachers seems to also suggest the underlying masculine desire to be protective of the

female kind as well as the subconscious construction of femininity. For instance, Mkandawire (2005) attributes the exclusion of African women in politics to the protective tendencies of the African men over their women. Similarly, the British Council Nigeria (2012) reports that such attitudes is what creates a culture of dependency on the part of the female gender in Nigeria. The extract below is an interaction between Hafsat and Mr. John:

**Extract 10: Lack of Salutation by Hafsat**

1 ((a student knocks, peeps and partly enters the office, standing by the door))

2 Mr. John: Yes↑ (0.1) come in (.) yes, come in! **Why are you standing there**↓

3 ((dropping his pen on the table and looking puzzled by the student))

4 Hafsat: **Sorry sir** ((stepping into the office with a file in one hand and a bag on the

5 other and gently closing the door))

6 Mr. John: **Ah ah!** sorry for what↓ For standing there↓ **eh**↓ (0.1) Yes (.) sit down, sit

7 down **(0.2)** yes (.) let me see your credentials (.) meanwhile, **what is your name?**

8 ((looking intently at Hafsat while stretching out his hands to collect her credentials))

9 Hafsat: Hafsat Peter ((stands and hands Mr. John the credentials and sits again))

10 Mr. John: Hafsat Peter Bala ((calling out the name while perusing the file))

11 Hafsat: It's Hafsat Peter I cut it short ((looking downward and clasping her hands))

12 Mr. John: **Okay**, but why putting it short? Supposing you ask me to write it and I  
 13 write it short as Hafsat Peter instead of Hafsat Peter Bala ((still flipping through the  
 14 credentials while intermittently looking at the student))

15Hafsat: No, in school it's HafsatPeter Bala I am using. I cut it short when I was in  
 16 school ((**adjusting her sitting position and relaxing somewhat**))

17 Mr. John: Okay you changed it. You are no longer Peter you are Peter Bala

18Hafsat: No it's one name

The act of knocking at the door by Hafsat in line 1 is a polite non-verbal act of a request which equates to “may I come in.” This request is ascended to by Mr. John with a “Yes↑” in line 2 followed by a momentary pause. The pause seemed to be aimed at giving enough room to accommodate Hafsat’s next anticipated utterance: salutation. The pause is followed by a support strategy on the part of Mr. John for Hafsat to come in as seen in line 2. This is interpreted as the first face support in the extract. Between lines 2 and 3 there are three pauses which seemed to have been aimed at allowing Hafsat to slot in her salutation. Hafsat’s standing by the door waiting to be asked in (as noted in the field notes) seems to affirm the feminine posture of being cautious and risk averse, which is largely associated with the female gender (Bock, 2017). In line 2, Mr. John’s desire of a supportive face is emphasized by his direct question of “why are you **standing there↓**”. Unlike in Extract 1, this student’s lack of salutation did not attract any form of reprimand (direct or indirect) or indeed a counter face threat. On the contrary, she is offered a place to sit.

Hafsat's apology as seen in line 3: "sorry sir" while stepping into the office ((stepping into the office...))" as a response to Mr. John's query in line 2 is interpreted as a hedging strategy. This apology is not meant as a redressive of her lack of salutation but for waiting or standing by the door. In line 4, the effect of relational face support of Hafsat's apology is seen in Mr. John's utterance. It seems that Mr. John is surprised at Hafsat's act of apology as he uses a colloquial expression '**ah ah**' and '**eh**' in the beginning of his utterance in line 4. Colloquial expressions are known for their pragmatic function of establishing rapport and social solidarity (Leech 2014). The use of these colloquial expressions also seemed to suggest a willing and deliberate face support on the part of Mr. John regarding Hafsat's act of apology. Efe and Forchtner (2015) observe that apologies are used to silence wrongs. It seems that Hafsat is aware that her standing by the door is not taken well by Mr. John but she is completely oblivious of her lack of salutation. Thus, her sorry was aimed at amending the wrong of standing by the door. However, the pauses in line 4 suggests that Mr. John was still anticipating Hafsat's greetings, salutation or the reason for her coming. This proposition is confirmed by Mr. John when asked about the reason for the seeming deliberate pauses during the SRI session, he said "Yes, I think the proper thing for her to do is to greet". When I said my observation and the discourse data showed he seemed okay with the student's lack of salutation, Mr. John said "She was a bit distracted." This I find interesting as he did not feel disrespected or threatened by her lack of salutation as was the case in Extract 1.

The ethnographic data showed that Mr. John's patient wait for Hafsat's salutation was exhausted as he stretched out his hands to collect her credentials as seen towards the end of line 4. The anticipated act in my view was a reprimand or a face

threat for failing to exercise salutation as was the case in Extracts 1 and 10 but instead, he delved into the main reason of her being in his office (registration). This action in contrast to the face negotiations that took place when the failure of salutation involved male students, seemed to suggest that the fact that Hafsat is a female student mattered to Mr. John. He seemed to avoid openly reprimanding female students in other extracts as well in their failure to observe salutation at the beginning of their interaction.

Adegbiya's (1993) position in this regard is emphasized by Akere (2009) that salutation in Nigeria is a significant linguistic move that is employed to show deference and respect as well as establish rapport and solidarity. Thus, its absence may attract different levels of face threatening acts but in the case of the Extract under analysis, the authority figure appears to spare the female student from the anticipated reprimand or face threat.

Two significant incidents that should have attracted reprimands or could have been perceived as face threatening acts are the failure of Hafsat to observe salutation and her peeping into the office and standing by the door even when she was asked to come in. Yet in line 7, Mr. John calls out her name from her student's file. This too is another indication of face support. This appears to be a deliberate act aimed at helping the student to feel relaxed. This particular tendency to empathise with the female students is also observed in the remaining three extracts that showed a failure of salutation by female students where no direct reprimand or face threat was presented to the student. Line 9 presented the wilful desire of Mr. John to negotiate a face support by clearly concentrating the whole discussion on Hafsat's name. The relational interpretation of the interaction shows that face support negotiation is equally better fostered by the person

with the greater power (lecturers) and female students enjoy more empathy in interaction than male students enjoy.

**Gendered acts of face threat and masculine construction.** The analysed extracts have shown significant levels the confrontational attitude of these male lecturers towards the interactional slips of the male students, which also seemed to be aimed at testing their resilience, toughness and other masculine expectations. Most collectivist cultures (such as that of Nigeria) tend to emphasise acts that reflect on their masculine orientation (Hofstede, 2011). Some of the direct face attacks towards the male students from the university lecturers that were recorded in the various episodes of the interactions align in several ways with Hofstede's (2001) category of 'high masculinity' contexts, especially within the school environment or educational settings. These have been reflected in the expectations of the lecturers' in their interactions with the male students.

***Be tough.*** There seems to be a general expectation that talking harshly to the male students for certain interactional slips is way of making them respectful and well trained. The use of language by these lecturers with their students confirms Hofstede's (2001, 2005) and Butler's (2008) claims that in cultures that emphasise masculinity, being tough and resilient is almost a natural expectation and these students seemed to have taken these direct threats and face attacks in their strides without seeking for explanation. In Extract 9 line 4 for instance, Mr. John's use of the utterance "**What↓**" to directly and immediately reprimand Abel for his "**Yeah**" rather than 'yes' carries dual implicatures. Firstly, it suggests that Abel should know better than use informal forms before his lecturers. Secondly, it carries some form of strategic positioning by the lecture

by way of asserting his superiority. It is instructive that in line 22, Abel's utterance "Yes sir" is a face saving strategy by using the correct form followed by the honorific 'sir'.

This use of the direct and overt face attack by Mr. John as seen in Line 26: "is it **the man or the lecturer**" as a response to Able's use of "the man" for the lecturer that did not make it to class for his lectures. This form of direct face attack was used by Mr. John in Extract 2 line 5 "**Will you go** and dress up properly before coming here↑" to caution the student who wore shorts to come to the registration office.

*You should know better.* The expectation bar seemed to be raised higher for the male students in this particular context. The lecturers appeared to expect that the male students knew what is expected of them at given instances of the interactions. For instance, in Extract 9, line 4, the utterance "**Did we see today**↓" and the utterance: "**Are you a student**↓" in Extract 2 line 3 by Mr. John are emblematic of the suggested masculine construction as it appears to imply that if he is a student, then he should know better than come to the registration office the way he is dressed, since, the expectation bar for proper behaviour is set higher for the male students. These were indirect questions whose meaning can only be deduced from the context of their occurrence. While "did we meet today" is more than a solicitation for salutation, i.e. it places a demand for the student to make conjectures and know that if they have not met before then, it is only proper for them to start with salutation and the salutation routine places the burden on the younger interactant. Similarly, the direct question "**Are you a student**↓" implicates 'if you are student then you shouldn't be here wearing shorts'. These revelations are similar to Mathias and Oyinma's (2015) positions that in Nigeria, male dominance over the female gender is enhanced in various contexts and ways. Most



of the face attack and overt face threat that were directed at the male students are suggestive of the ingrained cultural orientation of the lecturers to be tough and stricter with the male students. The normalisation of the various face attacks by these students confirms the claim by Hofstede's (2001, 2005) and Butler's (2008) that being tough and resilient is a feature of masculinity.

**Gendered acts of face support and feminine construction.** The interactions of these teachers and students also seemed to suggest the society's femininity tendencies and seemed to align with Hofstede's (2001) understanding of femininity where "Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life" (p. 297). Thus, the concerns, modesty, tenderness and civility shown towards the female students by the male lecturers in the interactional episodes appear to present the ideal in terms of the expected level of the face needs of the interactants in given interactional encounters. The lecturers are seen to have normalised the interactional slips, lapses and unintended face threatening acts of the female students.

***It is normal.*** In Extract 10 for instance, despite the Hafsat's lack of salutation, the interaction appeared to have carried on without the various face threatening acts that is seen in Extracts 2 and 9 where the students were all male. In Extract 10 line 6, Mr. John's response and other nonverbal face support moves such as "**Ah ah**↓ sorry for what↓ For standing there↓ **eh**↓ (0.1) Yes (.) sit down, sit down (**0.2**)" to Hafsat's apology in line 4 for standing by the door are deliberate face support strategies. As interpreted, the micro pauses were deliberate strategies of waiting for the student to offer the first position salutation. Although Hafsat did not greet Mr. John, he offered her a seat. This is

a significant shift from what is observed in Extract 9 line 4 where he used the indirect strategy to remind Abel to greet him by saying “**Did we see today**↓”. Again, his moving quickly to the next focus of the interaction is a change in footing and it is instructive. This is seen in line 7: “yes (.) let me see your credentials (.) meanwhile, **what is your name?**” A change in footing can be used to achieve a change in focus in interaction (Goffman, 1981). Mr. John’s desire to know the student’s name directly from the student is another face support strategy especially as her name is clearly written on her student’s file. Hofstede (2001) believes that such ‘normal’ and felicitous behaviours reduce the level of masculinity from being high to low, increasing femininity in the interaction.

***We can be modest.*** The evidence from the interactions lecturers and the female students showed the interactants can be modest during the interactional exchanges. Modesty is a valuable resource in face negotiations as it positions the interactants in ways that self-imposition is avoided (Ting-Toomey, 2011). In Extract 10 line 6 “**Ah ah!** sorry for what↓”, Mr. John used a self-lowering strategy “ah ah” to tell Hafsat that his query in line 2 about her standing by the door was not as a reprimand but to simply ask her to come in as such there was no need for the apology in line : “**Sorry sir**”. Colloquial expressions according to Olaoye (2013) are strategies of showing and establishing solidarity in interactions among Nigerians. Hofstede (2011) observed that collectivist cultures use such strategies to establish the expected cohesion in the society as the roles of the interactants are performed without much friction. A comparison of the ‘immodest’ face threat and attack that is seen in Extract 2 line 5: “**Will you go and dress up properly before coming here**↑” seemed very harsh yet it seems to be normal practice especially when the other interactant is a male student. By being tough towards the male students,

these lecturers and the students have emphasised their masculinity and by being tender, soft and protective towards the face needs of the female students, these lecturers have emphasised the students' femininity.

**Power as a factor in gendered face negotiation.** Power position seemed to be at the heart of the gendered face negotiation that played out in the analysed extracts. These lecturers have positioned them or have been positioned by fate and social roles and expectation to shape the sociocultural attitudes as well as the student's behaviour that are directly under their tutelage. The gendered acts of these lecturers in using their power positions confirm Holmes's (2012) position that gender is a socio-cultural identity that sets a group apart. The actual group partitioning as seen in the interactional data were done by the lecturers and not the students. Indeed Jowitt (1991) claims that lecturers in Nigeria are hardly called by their first names because of the power position they occupy. This is evidently true as seen from the analysed data and this among others is the reason why some of the participants in this research appeared timid in the presence of the lecturers.

As observed, all the students behave in similar ways with similar interactional slips such as, failure to salute, lack of salutation, lack of orderliness and so on and so forth, but it is the lecturers who act differently in relating with the students. This finding confirms Jinyu's (2014) claim that it would be simplistic to assume that because one is feminine or masculine, one is likely to behave in particular ways. These lecturers as have been examined are protective of the emotional needs of the female students more than they are of the male students. As have been demonstrated from the interactional data, these lecturers showed more concerns regarding the face needs of the female students

than they appear to demonstrate for the male students and this particular attitude and behaviour was engendered by the power position that they occupy in the interactional context.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, using evidence from the interactional and ethnographic data, I have argued that femininity and masculinity are actively being constructed in the interactions of lecturers and students. I have shown that although in Nigeria, gendered roles are emphasised, in the educational setting, there seems to be a deliberate desire by male university lecturers to overlook and accommodate the interactional slips of the female students within what Ting-Toomey (1999) and Ting-Toomey and Korugi (1998) describe as the expected face negotiation, where face needs and consideration of the other interactant is given prominence in the act of face negotiations. The gendered face negotiations were viewed from the binary divisions of:

- a. Gendered acts of face threat and masculinity construction showed that the ingrained perceptions of the lecturers about their male students were reflected in their tough stands towards the interactional slips of the male students. The analyses showed that these tough and sometimes inconsiderate stands (in my view) were borne out of the belief that the male students have the emotional strength to handle what is thrown at them.
- b. From the analysed data, there seems to be a higher expectation on the male students in terms of the performance of simple and nuanced interactional practices and when the male students failed to perform these interactional practices, the lecturers directly and promptly reprimand them and in many cases forced apologies out of the students.
- c. In the analysed data, gendered acts of face support and feminine construction is belief to have emerged from especially the lecturers' willingness to engage with the female students interactions irrespective of their failure to observe

what their male counterparts were reprimanded for with various face threat and direct or indirect face attack strategies. It seems therefore that these lecturers normalised the interactional slips of the female students using various face support strategies as seen in Extracts 5, 6 and 10.

- d. The analysed data also showed that the male lecturers deliberately established better rapport female students thereby helping them to be more relaxed during the registration process. This is not unconnected to the careful and confrontation adverse self-presentation of the female students exhibited in their hesitation to engage and state what they wanted from the lecturers. The establishment of good rapport with the female students showed that indeed teachers and students can engage in civilised interactional exchanges by servicing the face needs of each other.
- e. The evidence from the discourse data also showed that power position is an important factor in the negotiation and construction of gendered acts of face threat and face support. As have been stated, there was no difference in the way these students behaved as there is evidence of interactional slips from both the male and female students. However, there is a marked difference between how the lecturers reacted to the interactional slips of these students based on their gender differences.

Therefore, gendering is not restricted to ascribed roles especially in high masculinity contexts such as Nigeria. Face negotiations of these lecturers and students have shown that certain perceptions about gender differences are often manifested subconsciously in talk and interactions and tend to become institutionalised over a

period of time. In the next chapter, I shall present a closing argument about the overall implication of face negotiations in the interactions of lecturers and students, the pedagogical implication of this study, the limitation of this study and the suggestions for further study.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

#### Introduction

This study investigated face-to-face interactions of teachers and students in a university's Registration Office (RO) in Nigeria. The study is conducted within the English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) paradigm in order to account for the actual ELF use of English devoid of the standardisation judgements associated with Standard British or American English. The study focused on face negotiations: a research area that has recently enjoyed a lot of attention in inter- and cross-cultural pragmatics and applied pragmatics. The body of literature examined in Chapter II showed that the shift of focus by scholars from politeness to face (examined as an aspect of politeness in the past. See Chapter II for a detailed discussion) has shown that there is a marked variation in how interactions play out based on cultural orientation (collectivist or individualist) of the interactants.

The national language policy of the Nigerian state has positioned the English language as the official language of the country despite its L2 status in order to accommodate the linguistic interests of the over 350 indigenous Nigerian languages (Acheoah&Olaleye, 2019). As such, as seen in the interactional data collected for this study, the interactants have attained appreciable levels of competences (grammatical, communicative and pragmatic) in their English language use. Communicative competence and pragmatic competence in this study is viewed, therefore, with the lens of ELF as a flexible, hybrid and dynamic language (Canagarajah, 2006) that guarantees



multilingual L2 English speaking communities to interact and achieve their interactional goals in the RO context of a Nigerian university. Face negotiation in this context have reflected the different face needs of the interactants in a variety of the English language that Canagarajah (2006) and House (2003) believe accommodates the diversities of the language users. Communicative competence of the interactants is therefore seen in the ability of the interactants to negotiate their ways through and out of naturally occurring situations that affect the face needs of the other interactant. ‘Situation’ has been used here in the sense defined by van Dijk (2009) as an occurrence in talk that has interactional consequence on the ongoing interaction and the behaviour of the interactants.

Most contemporary theories of face favour an interpersonal approach to discourse data. Locher and Watts (2008) for example, proposed relational theory of face while Haugh (2007) advocated for an interactional theory. Similarly, Arundale (2006, 2010) developed a face constituting theory, while Spencer-Oatey (2007, 2011) developed a rapport management theory. The applicability of Ting-Toomey’s (1999) face negotiation theory in different interactional contexts has informed my choice and adoption of face negotiation in this study (see Chapter II for a detailed review). The dearth of empirical studies on face in the African contexts especially in a school or educational has made such as investigation a worthy venture. This study was, therefore, an attempt to unbundle the various layers that are integrated in naturally occurring interactions of ELF teachers and students.

In order to adequately answer the outlined research questions and properly situate the relevance and significance of this study as stated in my Chapter I, I relied on

Linguistic Ethnography (LE) techniques for the purpose of data collection. This is because in my judgement, LE as a methodology would enable the various strategies of face negotiations to emerge from the interactional episodes of the talk/interaction. Again, as expounded in Chapter III, LE believes that language and cultural practices are mutually shaping and the two should be pursued together for a wholesome analysis of naturally occurring interaction (Rampton, 2007, 2010). The employment of LE has enabled me to account for the significance of nonverbal acts (through my observations), and ethnographic details of context in arriving at the intended meaning of the interactional exchanges. LE has also enabled me to present the various face considerations and face negotiations strategies used by interactants in ongoing interactions within the well-developed frame of face negotiations advanced by Ting-Toomey (1999) and to also question the interactants regarding their interactional acts by using Stimulated Recall Interview (SRI). Through the use of SRI I have been able to present some of the initial interpretations of the interactional data to the interactants and this amounted to a kind of triangulation of my interpretation of the discourse data. I subsequently employed micro-discourse analysis (MDA) for the analysis of the discourse data.

### **Summary of the Findings**

The answers to the research questions have resulted in some interesting findings. Drawing from the notion of ‘third place’ in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) where a distinction is made between native lingua culture and target lingua culture and seen as

being in constant negotiation and renegotiation in intercultural and cross-cultural interaction (Lo Bianco et al., 1999), the data in this study showed that face negotiation is a constant occurrence in the interaction of teachers and students in ways that are manifestly non-native to the English language. The results to a large extent revealed the hybrid nature of English language use and manifested through various face negotiating strategies. The linguistic performance of the participants in this study showed to a large extent the influence of their first lingua culture on their English language use. The previous school engagements of these participants with English language (at primary and secondary schools levels) and round and about the Nigerian society have also contributed in the hybrid ELF that played out in this formal school setting and university registration office. This hybridity has contributed in the face negotiations of the interactants as well as their pragmatic awareness and face interpretation. The various levels of face negotiations have been discussed as face threat, face support and gendered acts of face negotiations.

The analysis of the data showed that face threat negotiation can result from both linguistic and non-linguistics reasons. Direct face threats have been observed as presented by the interactants in the form of reprimands. The negative evaluation that accompanies a reprimand inherently requires some form of redress by the reprimanded interactant (Leech, 2014). Indirect face threat, on the other hand, has been observed to be presented with some hedging tactics as a form of face recognition strategy (Grainger, 2011; van Der Bom & Mills, 2015). Face threat have also been observed to be nonverbal, leaving the other interactant to work out the meaning or why he is being

looked at in a certain or why he is being ignored. This is perhaps the negotiation of 'third place' in a language that they have brought in the lingua culture to embellish.

Most of the examined face threats were presented by the lecturers. The analyses of the data showed that the students found the need to employ various face restoration strategies. Excuses were used as responsibility deflecting strategy. This was found to be a recurrent face maintenance strategy. Good self-image in interaction is seen as a precursor to polite interactional exchange (Adegbite, 2011). The students have also employed apology as a face negotiation strategy to restore their self-image. Apologies have been rampantly used by these students even where no offence occurred. They have been used as face maintenance strategy as well as a show of respect to their lecturers who were clearly older. This attitude is observed by House (2002, 2009) as a feature of first lingua culture transfer into the ELF repertoire of most L2 speakers of a language. Another important strategy employed by both the lecturers and the students is the opting out strategy. By opting out, the lecturers appear to negotiate unfriendly and face threatening acts. On the other hand, the students have resorted to opting out as a form acceptance of the lecturers' position over an issue and as a mark of respect to the lecturers. Adegbite (2011) observed this to be a feature of the feature of ELF in Nigeria where opting out is used as a positioning strategy.

Face support has been examined as a deliberate face negotiation that tends to establish social solidarity and polite language use in interaction. One outstanding features of the students' face support strategy (FSS) is the excessive use of honorification in reference to their teachers. These students have been found to strategically employ the elevating honorific thereby positioning their teachers at higher

level thus establishing a social distance and status that are encoded within the honorific thereby representing themselves as respectful (Kasper, 2006; Mutsuko, 2011). The employment of honorific as FSS has proven to be very effective especially because the interactants have used it to negotiate and wriggle out of some unpleasant situations. Honorification in ELE is also an imposition avoidance strategy (Odebunmi, 2009).

Indirectness has also emerged as a FSS. The interactants have also used this strategy to avoid appearing confrontational. Indirectness is equally a feature of first lingua culture transfer in the ELF expression of the interactants since most collectivist cultures are observed as being more indirect than individualist cultures (Hofstede, 2011). The beauty of indirectness in language use is that it can serve the purpose of assessing a person's pragmatic and communicative competence in a particular language. From the analysed data, the relational and social status of the interactants is easily seen and identified in interaction. Conventional indirectness has been analysed as used by lecturers to impress a sense of urgency on the students, while nonconventional indirectness has been used as mild commands that shows some level of face consideration for the students. In order to achieve face support and interactional flow, the interactants have also used 'let it pass' as a face support strategy (FSS). As a feature of ELF, 'let it pass' is known as acts off overlooking what is not understood now hoping it would be made clearer as the interaction progresses (Firth, 1996). Similarly, the analysed data showed that empathy is a valuable FSS in interaction. This was seen mostly on the part of the lecturers in their imploring the students to state what their problems are. This strategy has helped to establish some level of emotional connection hence face support.

Cultural transfer has been recognised in SLA theories (Lo Bianco et al., 1999) especially regarding its influence on the pragmatic performance of the language users. The analysed data showed a marked difference in terms of the nature of the face negotiations that played out on the basis of gender differences. As a high masculinity context, the data showed that there seems to be an innate belief that the male students are tough, should know better and behave more appropriately in the RO. On the other hand, the female students were treated with care and caution and the interactional slips were seen as normal occurrence in the interaction. These beliefs are shown in the analysed data to greatly affect the nature of the face negotiation that played out between the lecturers and the male and female students in the RO. The power position of the lecturers is believed to be at centre of the gendered act of face negotiation as witnessed in the analysed data

Generally, the observational data and interviews used in this research have helped to account for the nonverbal and unsaid aspect of the episodes of interaction. Opting out strategy in particular was accounted for because of the use of the observational data. Direct eye contact and other nonverbal face acts were usefully accounted for because of the observational data. The Stimulated Recall Interview was equally useful to this study as it enable me to also account for participants' views regarding my interpretation of the face negotiations and clarify where necessary in order to adequately present their actual performance in the language.

The findings of this study showed that face negotiation in the Nigerian ELF context is impacted at both the micro and macro levels of linguistic analysis. At the micro level, the significance of context, nonverbal acts, pauses, opting out, gestures and

gesticulations were accounted for as significant components of meaning. At the macro level, the recorded and transcript of linguistic data showed that words are more meaningful when they are captured and presented with their accompanying nonverbal acts.

## **Implications**

**Educational implications.** The analysed data have shown that there is a marked difference between the face negotiations of these participants and those of other cultures as seen in other empirical studies on face-work in other cultures especially in native English and Chinese cultures (see Chapter II for details). The data showed that many of the interactants have built and developed communicative competence and language skills in English language that is laced with their sociolinguistics background. The evidence of this is seen in the distinctive face negotiation of these interactants as well as the use of certain distinctive language features that are diverse from the so called native and Standard English.

The use of English of these ELF interactants is quite fluid as they move and shuttle between standard and non-standard forms, a feature Canagarajah, (2006) associates with LFE. Yet, these interactants' expressions are clear and comprehensible to a large extent. In some instances, the interactions of these participants appeared impolite and rancorous while in some instances, they were very convivial and civil. This lack of predictability is what makes the case for studying the underlining reasons for their seeming lack of politeness or presence of politeness a compelling one within an

expanded face-work frame that reflects the interactants' face competence. The underlining reason in this case is the fact that within the Nigerian ELF community, face needs and recognition is given greater recognition than the need to be polite. These findings validate Gu's (1990) criticism of Brown and Levinson (1987) theory of politeness as being representative of western and individualist cultures. Recognising the influence and impact of L1 culture is a *sine qua non* in developing an all-round English language teaching content and curricula.

This finding brings to the fore the need to teach English language in language classrooms while paying due attention to cross-cultural and inter-cultural peculiarities. That way, the use of English and English culture as target language and culture respectively should be avoided in order to account to the inter-relatedness between language and culture (Baird, Baker & Kitazawa, 2014). In contexts where face needs contribute to how expressions and interactions play out, a pedagogical framework for cross-cultural and intercultural communicative competence developed by Byram (1997) will be useful in accommodating the constant movement from first lingua culture to second lingua culture by interlocutors *vis visa*, a phenomenon that is common to all ELF forms. Byram (1997) therefore recommends critical language pedagogy: taking into account the entire make up of a particular utterance.

Recognising the difficulty of teaching English in contexts where ELF roots are deep, Canagarajah (2006) advocates for the teaching of language competence rather than teaching English as a target language. By doing this, the peculiarity of a particular language form will naturally emerged and be recognised for its strength regardless of certain pejorative judgements of inferiority and superiority. If this is done, subconscious



and significant linguistic acts like face negotiation in different speech situations will be easily taught and understood. Such an approach, I believe, will allow for a creative use of the language with less or no encumbrance from a so called standard form where language use is seen a combination of many factors and not just as a product.

The analysed data showed that in negotiating a favourable face, the participants have properly employed the linguistic amplifiers “I am so so sorry.” However, a feature of a good apology that is missing in the interaction of these ELF interactants is the use of grammatical hedges and stance marking. Stance marking is a good strategy of establishing the requisite social distance between interactants (Cheng, 2017). Expressions such as ‘I was wondering if...’ are very good accompaniments of requests and apologies in face-to-face interaction. These interactants seemed to use the honorific ‘sir’ and ‘opting out’ strategies as their stance markers. These are aspects of language use that I believe language teachers should incorporate in teaching the communicative aspects of the English language. These are aspects of language learning that would enable students to interact with other interactants of other cultures and backgrounds through a better understanding and management of communicative elements and face competence.

Based on the reported findings of the current analysis, therefore, in language teaching, certain shifts are desirous:

- a. Face-work analysis in language classrooms would offer significant inroads to teachers and a better understanding of students’ needs and help accelerate

their appreciation of language use in different contexts with different participants.

- b. Adequate grounding in communicative strategies of apology and request such as hedging and stance marking should be focused in language classes. In this way, L2 learners would be adequately equipped to navigate and find their ways in different interactional contexts while engaging in face work.
- c. Natural interactional contexts should be created in English language classes using role play activities and the like. Role play analysis sessions would be of great benefit to the learners by helping them account for the subliminal levels of meaning that could be central to the understanding of speakers' interactional behaviours.
- d. There should be a conscious effort to raise the mindfulness of the students. Simon (2004) refers to mindfulness as internal awareness of the five senses that helps one's emotions, cognitions and assumptions in interaction. This will enable them interpret intercultural facework regardless of contexts.
- e. By focusing on the cognitive and social aspects of language, language teachers would help students construct themselves relative to others in interaction.
- f. The explicit teaching of pragmatics and sociolinguistics would, in my opinion, raise the social context awareness of the students and their understanding of how language is shaped will be enhanced.

- g. I believe too that aspects of sociolinguistics and pragmatics should be taught to teachers of other courses in order to help them appreciate and communicate with the diverse students they encounter and help them avoid conflict in interactions with their students.

In summary, this study has shown that students' pragmatic competence is in many ways tied to their cultural orientation and their awareness of self and other. This study proposes a pedagogical approach that would reflect the situational differences are crucial to meaning. To do this, teachers and instructors in second language contexts should incorporate class discussions in their lessons on how different contexts could make or mar the success of their performatives such requests and apologies among others. As have seen in the analysed data, some of the interactional slips and face acts that occurred in the RO were due largely to the students ability to manage themselves and meaningful engage with the lecturers because they find the RO and the registration process stressful. Attention should be paid to interpersonal relationships, context of the situation and indeed the social distance between the students and the lecturers, a younger person and an older person and indeed interactions between peers. For instance, apologies that appeared to have succeeded as seen in the interactional succeeded because the students were able to serve the face needs of the lecturers by using a form of self-lowering.

**Theoretical implications.** This study advocates for an expanded face-work theory that would yield and result in a developed "face competence" of the language learners. This study, therefore, proposes a face competence dimension to interaction as an aspect of communicative competence that can be achieved if the interactants have a

good knowledge of the context (Hofstede, 2011), if the interactants are mindful of the face needs of others (Ting-Toomey, 2005) and if the interactants have the required level of communication skills to execute their interactional needs in given episodes of interactional exchanges (Cheng, 2017). Achieving these competences will enable the interactants to operate in diverse intercultural and cross-cultural contexts regardless of the cultural orientation by applying the needed face support and face threat strategies in their interactions.

Ostensibly, a well-developed face competence of language users will require a deliberate rising of the mindfulness of the language users to appreciate the implicit variability of interactional episodes. By focusing on the emotional and cognitive aspects of face-work through interactional practice, a better understanding of the speech event (all the meaningful elements that directly or indirectly influence interaction) will be forged and attained. The increasing multicultural nature of the language classes necessitates such a theoretical shift in order to adequate the actual and natural language of the interactants. This, I believe, is a path that offers a lot of promises as the needs of the learners and language users will emerge naturally in discourse and be adequately tackled through informed feedback.

**Methodological implications.** This study advocates for the use of Linguistic Ethnography (LE) in studies on face-work and face competence. The use of LE in this study has revealed the importance of non-linguistic elements in the fashioning out meaning and understanding the actual practice of face-work in interaction. For instance, interactional strategies of opting out and let it pass were adequately accounted for because of the employment of LE. The use of such a method has shed light on the actual

use and function of these interactional strategies that hitherto would have been lost or left unaccounted for.

The use of stimulated recall interview (SRI) technique was equally very resourceful at many levels. By playing back the interactions of the interactants to them, and allowing the interview questions to emerge from episodes of their interactions, my personal beliefs and assumptions were kept at check. Again, the SRIs sessions served as a form of triangulation of the discourse data by ensuring near-accurate interpretation. The SRIs also made it possible for wider understanding of the face-work strategies and negotiations used by the interactants. Like most ethno-methodologies, SRI was important in this study because it provided the possibility for me to question certain interactional occurrences as well as enriching the quality of my interpretation of both the linguistic and non-linguistic data. Thus, this study highlighted once more the important work SRIs do in understanding the emic perspectives of the participants as well as increasing the trustworthiness of the analysis done by the researchers.

### **Limitation of the Study and Recommendation for Further Studies**

Although this study has provided useful and valuable directions in understanding ELF interactions and communicative competence in interpersonal and applied pragmatics, it is limited in a number of ways. First, the data were collected using audio recordings, observations and interviews to account for the entire interactional data. Video recordings would have presented verifiable face acts with their multimodal co-occurring aspects of the talk. I believe, however, that video recording would have

impacted negatively on the authentic nature of the naturally occurring interaction which is cardinal to this study. I believe, therefore, that a combination of both audio and video recording supported by both interviews and ethnographic resources could present richer data sets than my present data set in this study.

Second, the 30 participants that the study focused on is not a number that is sufficiently large to warrant generalisations of my findings and results. The study's methodological focus and scope necessitated such a deep and limited analysis. For a deeper theoretical framework to be developed on face competence, comparable data from other contexts need to be collected over a longer period of time. A grounded theory approach will be necessary to further develop and advance the concepts presented here. It must be emphasized too that these participants' face acts may differ significantly in other contexts. This assumption echoes what Eelen (2001) terms as the 'variability' of face. Thus, further investigations into the face strategies of the participants in similar cultural but different interactional contexts would provide a more comprehensive account of how these strategies are used in the Nigerian ELF context. In any case, my overarching aim is not on the generalisability of the data but to account for the social reality of face consideration as a dynamic interactional constant (Arundale, 2010).

Third, the significance that have been attached to certain sociocultural practices such as salutation, for example, might have less social significance in furthering and structuring interactions in other contexts. Therefore, the criteria of identifying the critical incidents or the identified speech events could vary significant in other contexts. In addressing this variability of socially significant social practices, Rampton (2015) posited that the object of analysis in any social event should be what the interactants

make significant and relevant in talk and not what the analyst feels is important or significant. Thus, methodological studies on developing selection strategies for key extracts may be carried out.

In addition, while the investigation of naturally occurring interaction is seen as a valid postmodern approach to a deeper understanding the pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatic competences of the interactants with regard to their face negotiation strategies in interaction, the evaluation of face negotiation as a strategic tool of social positioning in this study may differ significantly from what may be obtained in online teacher-student's interaction. The variegated nature of face in online platforms in contrast to face-to-face interaction as observed by Badarneh and Migdadi (2018) suggests that this study does not represent face negotiation in its entirety, especially in online platforms where the interactants appear to be freer and less constraint at using face threatening acts.

This study also investigated face-work as a form of negotiation within an ELF context of multilingual Nigerians. Other contexts with participants drawn from native English environments may present different face negotiation dynamics since the pragmatic use of their English may vary significantly. Interactional strategies of opting out with its socio-pragmatic import that appeared as significant face negotiation strategy in this ELF context might be different in native English context. Opting out has been used by the participants in this study as a deliberate face saving strategy in interactions but Marti (2006) seemed to suggest that the unsaid is often a reflection of the language user's linguistic and pragmatic competence. I believe that a study that focuses on opting out as an interactional strategy in different contexts could deepen the present knowledge

presented in this study as well as improve the syllabus content of applied pragmatics in understanding the linguistic behaviour of ELF users.

Finally, the observed limitations of this study are actually the new directions for subsequent researches. For instance, the teachers that participated in this study were all male teachers who seemed to offer direct face threats to the male students. A research on face negotiations where the teachers are females, or a mixture of both males and females may offer different interactional and face negotiations strategies. Face negotiation in online chats, for example, is a research direction that should be pursued especially given the fact that it could offer a globalised forum for social engagement and a verifiable platform for varied face negotiations across people and cultures. Another direction that is worthy of investigation is the use of video evidence to account for the multimodal effect of context on face negotiation (which is not covered in this study) and interactional management. Face negotiation as a new frontier in the investigation of interpersonal interaction is gaining a lot of attention especially in intercultural, cross-cultural pragmatics and applied pragmatics. Cheng (2013, 2017) has used face negotiation theory to investigate the differences in students' apologies in emails to their professors in a classroom discussion format. I believe that face negotiations during student to student feedback sessions has a lot of insight to offer regarding what constitutes face negotiation among peers and its impact in the wording of such feedback. The landscape of face-work as interactional negotiation could be expanded into lecturers' and other professional conferences' feedback sessions in order to arrive at the actual face-work and face competence of authority figures' face consideration when they meet with each other. Interdisciplinary work with psychological constructs and personal



traits of the interactants could yield in interesting results on face-work strategies of the interactants across disciplines as well.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has presented in summary the findings of my data chapter within three broad thematic concerns of face threat, face support and gendered acts of face negotiation. Following these findings, I have equally presented in summary, the implications of these findings on language pedagogy especially on the twin areas of sociolinguistics and applied pragmatics. I have also presented the limitation of this study not as weakness of the study but, as useful insight on further studies on face negotiation in interaction in different contexts.

It is my hope that this thesis would provoke further inquiry into naturally occurring interactions in the contexts of their occurrence. I believe that if this happens, applied linguistic and other areas of language study will be humanised as Rampton (2015) advocates and the static and sometimes pejorative description of linguistic form based purely on the representative signs would be rightly deemphasised.

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## APPENDIX A

### Extracts of Recorded and Transcribed Interactions

#### Extract 1: Lack of Salutation by Kim

1 ((a student knocks and enters the office and stands quietly))

2 Mr. John: Yes (0.2) Yes↑ (.) good morning sir↑ ((looking sternly at the student))

3 Kim: good morning sir↑ ((looking rattled and sounding very apologetic))

4 Mr. John: eh↑, you've not greeted me so I am greeting you ((looking at the student

5 with a wry smile on his face))

6 Kim: I said good morning sir↓ ((sounding very subdued while clutching his school bag

7 to his chest))

8 Mr. John: so why didn't you greet me in the first instance↓ ((still looking at the student

9 while stretching out his hand to collect the student's credentials))

10 Kim: I am sorry sir ((drops his bag on the floor, picks out his credentials and hands

11 them to Mr. John with his two hands))

12 Mr. John: (0.2) ((perusing the student's file)) Your admission letter is not here↓

13 Kim: here↓ ((pointing at his credentials))



### Extract 2: Improper Dressing by Kan

1 Kan: ((Knock on the door)) Good morning **Sir** **((wearing a t-shirt and shorts with a**  
 2 **nab shag on his back))**

3 Mr. John: **are you a student**↑? ((Looking sternly at the student))

4 Kan: yes sir. ((Courteously))

5 Mr. John: **Will you go** and dress up properly before coming here↑?

6 Kan: Sir↓? ((Sounding lost and confused))

7 Mr. John: hmmm (0.5) **((looking into the eyes of the confused students))**

8 **((the student quietly opened the door and left almost without any sound))**

9 ((30 -35 Minutes later. Knocks on the door))

10 Mr. John: **Come in here. Sit down, sit down.** (..)You were here with your short.

11 Kan: yes sir

12 Mr. John: and what did I say? ((folding his hands while staring at Kan)

13 Kan: you said I should go back and change ((faintly))

15 Mr. John: **eh?**((sounding surprised and appearing not to have clearly heard Kan))

16 Kan: you said I should go back and change ((sounding remorseful and dejected))

17 Mr. John: and change? ((looking intently at Kan while flipping his hands to emphasis

18 the word '**change**'))

19 Kan: yes sir

20 Mr. John: so what did (...) how did you feel coming here with, in your short↓

21 ((Removing his glasses, drops them on the table and folded his hands across each

22 other as if to say 'explain yourself'))

23 Kan: I was just coming back from a journey and the time for my lecture is, was

24 already up and I now just (...) ((sounding apologetic with his face looking

25 downward))

### Extract 3: Lack of Organisation by Kay

1 Mr. Jude: **Please** can you share them equally ((Handing Kay his file to sort them out))

2 Kay: ((collects his file and begins to sort out the credentials frantically))

3 Mr. Jude: (0.2) let me see them (0.2) and your passport↓?

4 Kay: Here are they [sic] ((handing over two copies of passport size photos))

5 Mr. Jude: It's only a copy ((returning a copy of passport to Kay))

6 Kay: They said two? (0.2) two ((sorting out his credentials as he fidgets with papers))

7 Mr. Jude: Please do that fast (0.2) ((irritably)) (0.5) just look at what you are doing↓

8 Kay: Sir↓ It's just today that I collected them ((still trying to arrange the documents  
9 while sounding apologetic))

10 Mr. Jude: But it doesn't matter; it doesn't matter ((putting his hands across his  
11 chest)). You should have organized yourself before coming in here↓ ((looking sternly  
12 at Kay while talking slower and picking his words)) [eh

13 Kay: I am] so so sorry we are bereaved  
14 that's why ((sounding very low while handing out the documents with both hands))

15 Mr. Jude: ((stretching his hands and collecting the documents while looking at kay))

16 Kay: I said I am sorry↓ we are bereaved that's why **sir** ((looking to the ground))

17 Mr. Jude: You are bereaved↑ ((looking at Kay curiously))

18 Kay: Yes sir

#### Extract 4: Failure to Attend Lectures

1 ((A student knocks on the door))

2 Mr. John: Come in come in (0.2) where are your credentials **bring them bring them**

3 (0.2) yes↑ ((stretching out his to collect the credentials)) what did you say↓ that you

4 are a 100 level student↓

5 Hana: Yes sir

6 Mr. John: **And you've never attended my class**↓ ((looking directly at Hana))

7 Hana: (02) ((looking at a card in her hands))

8 Mr. John: **Where have you been all this while**↓ ((perusing Hana's documents))

9 Hana: I have been around ((still looking at the card in her hands))

10 Mr. John: **You've been around**↓ ((looking intently at Hana))

11 Hana (0.5)

12 Mr. John: ehcn ((looking up at the student))

13 Hana: Yes↑ I use to go but @@@ on Monday (0.2)

14 Mr. John: I have called your class severally and all of them came for every call I

15 made and I have not noticed your face at all. What happened↓

16 Hana: Sir I don't know I use to go to lectures

**Extract 5: Excessive Honorification by Ken**

1 Mr. John: ((perusing the student's credentials)) **You were a teacher**↓ What courses

2 were you teaching↑ ((looking up at the student))

3 Ken: During my Teaching Practice I taught English to SS1 students and ah (0.2) social

4 studies to JSS2 students so [also

5 okay] I was a case [sic] a class teacher for one academic ah

6 (.) [session

7 Mr. John okay]

8 Ken: I taught in primary school ((looking away from Mr. John with a slight smile))

9 Mr. John: okay ((nodding his head))

10 Ken: **yes sir**

11 Mr. John: do you stay off campus [or ((still perusing the student documents))

12 Ken: **Yes sir]**

13 Mr. John: **Oh** you stay **off Campus**↓((looking up at the student))

14 Ken: **Yes sir**

15 Mr. John: Why are you not on campus↓ ((stands up, picks a folder from a shelf and

16 sits down again))

17 Ken: I like the very quiet environment where I am living (0.1) looking at the hostel it

18 is too congested ((sitting in an upright position))

19 Mr. John: Why! Have you been there before or someone told↓

20 Ken: Yes I am made to understand that four people will be in the inner chalet and

21 four people will be in the outer chalet ((speaking cautiously, counting his words))

22 Mr. John: Yes↓ and↓

22 Ken: and that alone the number is too much [and

23 Mr. John: okay] and you now decided to stay off

24 campus (0.2) so, any other question for now↓ **You don't have any question**↓

25 ((putting the student's documents into the folder with care))

26 Ken: **but** for me, there is a clash on our time table ((looking into a piece of paper))

27 Mr. John: What exactly is the clash↓

28 Ken: I think Introduction to Phonetics and phonology and that of Use of English

29 ((reading directly from a piece of paper))

30 Mr. John: Phonetics and Phonology?↓ ((looking at Ken directly))

31 Ken: **Yes sir** (0.1), and I think that Use of English and Library is a year one course

32 and compulsory for DE students (direct entry students are newly admitted university

33 students that start from Year two)

34 Mr. John: Yes↓

35 Ken: There was a day we were receiving the lecture while the other lecture was going

36 [on

37 Mr. John: Was] going on ((looking into his drawer and picking out a bunch of paper))

38 Ken: **Yes sir** ((Looking at Mr. John))

39 Mr. John: Okay (0.2) I think we will find a way of resolving that ((using his pen on

40 the a page of the bunch of paper))

41 Ken: **Okay sir** ((putting the paper back into his folder))

42 Mr. John: very soon you will not experience that again (0.2) ((flipping through a page

43 or two)) any other question? ((Rising his head to look at Ken))

44 Ken: For now no **sir**

45 Mr. John: Okay. Alright you are welcome ((stands up and keeps the folder back in

46 the shelve))

47 Ken: ((stands up to leave))

**Extract 6: Can You Come In↑**

1 ((knock on the office door, a student peeps through the open door))

2 Mr. John: Yes↓ **can you come in↑** (0.2) **Come in↓** ((Beckoning the student with his  
3 hands to come in))

4 Garos: Good morning sir ((stepping into the office with a bag in her hand))

5 Mr. John: Yes, you said what happened↓ ((looking directly at Garos while using his  
6 pen and hand to point at the empty seat for her to sit))

7 Garos: On Monday@@@ ((sounding a bit distraught))

8 Mr. John: you were not around↓((looking up at the student))

9 Garos: I was around but some of my credentials were not (0.2) was [sic] not complete

10 Mr. John: Why↓ You left some of them [at home

11 Garos: I] left some at home ((handing Mr. John a set  
12 of credentials while still standing))

13 Mr. John: Why did you leave some of them at home↓ ((stretching out his hands to  
14 collect her credentials))

15 Garos: ((**looking for something in her bag**))

16 Mr. John: **Uhhmm**↓ ((perusing the student's documents))

17 Garos: **(0.2) ((still looking into her bag))**

18 Mr. John: sit down sit down ((pointing to the chair in front of his table while calling  
19 out the student's name as written on a paper he is holding)) **Garos John Sunday**

20 **(0.2) is that the name↓** ((looking up at the student))

21 Garos: Yes sir

**Extract 7: Please be orderly↓**

1 Nandi: ((or other students knock on the door))

2 Mr. Jude: (.) Come in (.) yes, ((seeing about three students entering his office)) **please,**

3 **please** ((waving his hands dismissively)) let me attend to you **one after another↑** yes?

4 Students: (.) Okay ((other students went out leaving only a student in the office))

5 Mr. Jude: ((looking directly at the student in anticipation)) (0.2) **can I hear you↓**

6 Nandi: (...) ((looking into her bag))

7 Mr. Jude: **Your credentials↓** ((sounding a bit impatient and irritably))

8 Nandi: **yes sir** ((bringing out a file from her bag))

9 Mr. Jude: why are they in a file↓ ((surprised at the sight of the departmental file))

10 Nandi: I just want to open the file.

11 Mr. Jude: Eh? ((Expressing surprise at the student's response to his question))

12 Nandi: I want to open the file **sir**.

13 Mr. Jude: **you want to open the file or you have opened it already↓**

14 Nandi: (0.5)

15 Mr. Jude: Sit down, sit down (0.2) ((Hurriedly changing the direction of the

16 interaction)) do you have your originals with you?

17 Nandi: **yes sir** ((quickly sits and looking a bit tense))

**Extract 8: When all is well**

1 Mr John: ((with opened hands at me to suggest his exasperation with a student))

2 **The next person**↑ ((almost on top of his voice))

3 Doris: ((knocks faintly on the door)) good morning sir↓

4 Mr. John: Yes↓

5 Doris: you said I sho[uld ...

6 Mr John:               No] I mean (0.2) you can tell I am coming to attend to you after

7 (0.5) ... tell the student there to come in ((speaking faintly, while searching for a

8 particular file from a stack of files on the book shelve)) Yes↓ please be fast↑

9 Doris: **Sir**↑ ((moves further into the office and stood, looking lost and a bit confused))

10 Mr. John: ((looking into a file)) **sit down sit down sit down** ((stretching out his

11 hands while looking at the student))

12 Doris: ((**stands up and hands her credentials to Mr. John**))

13 Mr. John: are these credentials (0.2) are these originals enough↓

13 Doris: Yes sir

15 Mr John: ((perusing the student's file)) **How many results are you using**↓

16 Doris: Two

17 Mr. John: Two results↓

18 Doris: Yes Sir

19 Mr. John: okay (0.2) ((looking directly at the student)) **Are you facing any**

**20 challenges with your lectures**↓

21Doris: No sir



**Extract 9: Lack of Salutation by Abel**

1 ((a gentle knock on the door))

2 Mr. Jude: Yes come in↓ ((about three students lined up to enter the office))Please**one**

**3 one** at a time ((using his hands, signal's others to stay out)) yes **sit down sit down**

4 (0.2) **Did we see today**↓ ((**looking intently at Abel**))

5 Abel: Sir↓ ((sounding and looking a bit confused at Mr. John))

6 Mr. Jude: **hmmm** ((shaking his head in disapproval)) Let me look at your file '**ko**'

7 and your credentials ((**@@@@** mumuring))

8 Abel: Sir↓

9 Mr. Jude: Your **credentials**↓ your **originals**↓ ((sounding upset))

10 Abel ((opened his bag to bring out his credentials))

11 Mr. Jude (02) let me have them ((stretching his hands and sounding impatient)) what

12 about your classes↓ how many classes so far have you attended↓ ((perusing Abel's

13 credentials))

14 Abel: My (02) you mean in **this school**↓

15 Mr. Jude: **Yes**↓ I mean your departmental courses

16 Abel: okay ((looking at a piece of paper in his hands: a timetable))

17 Mr. Jude: **ehen**↓

18 Abel: I have lesson with my class since last upper week ((sounding very confused))

19 Mr. Jude: Last week↓

20 Abel: **Yeah**

21 Mr. Jude: **what**↓

22 Abel: Yes sir

23 Mr. Jude: You mean all the lecturers have shown up↓

24 Abel: **Yes sir**↓ **yes sir** there's ((looking at his timetable)) we have a lecture (0.2)

25 English 211 Introduction to Syntax is today but we didn't see the man yet

26 Mr. Jude: You didn't see him (.) is it **the man** or **the lecturer** ((looking at Abel))

27 Abel: **The lecturer**

28 Mr. Jude: Do you call your **lecturer a man**↑ ehn without regard to his title↓ is that

29 supposed to be so

30 Abel: I **am sorry sir**

#### **Extract 10 – Lack of Salutation by Hafsāt**

1 ((a student knocks, peeps and partly enters the office, standing by the door))

2 Mr. John: Yes↑ (0.1) come in (.) yes, come in! **Why are you standing there**↓

3 ((dropping his pen on the table and looking puzzled by the student))

4 Hafsāt: **Sorry sir** ((stepping into the office with a file in one hand and a bag on the

5 other and gently closing the door))

6 Mr. John: **Ah ah!** sorry for what↓ For standing there↓ **eh**↓ (0.1) Yes (.) sit down, sit

7 down (**0.2**) yes (.) let me see your credentials (.) meanwhile, **what is your name?**

8 ((looking intently at Hafsāt while stretching out his hands to collect her credentials))

9 Hafsar: Hafsar Peter ((stands and hands Mr. John the credentials and sits again))

10 Mr. John: Hafsar Peter Bala ((calling out the name while perusing the file))

11 Hafsar: It's Hafsar Peter I cut it short ((looking downward and clasping her hands))

12 Mr. John: **Okay**, but why putting it short? Supposing you ask me to write it and I

13 write it short as Hafsar Peter instead of Hafsar Peter Bala ((still flipping through the

14 credentials while intermittently looking at the student))

15 Hafsar: No, in school it's Hafsar Peter Bala I am using. I cut it short when I was in

16 school ((**adjusting her sitting position and relaxing somewhat**))

17 Mr. John: Okay you changed it. You are no longer Peter you are Peter Bala

18 Hafsar: No it's one name

## APPENDIX B

### Field Notes: Sample Observation Sheet

<b>Date</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> February, 2017</b>
<b>Day</b>	<b>3rd week of data collection</b>
<b>Context</b>	Mr. Jude had just returned from his lunch break and sits on his chair in the registration office and I informed him that some students had come to do their registration but he was not in.
<b>Participants</b>	<b>Mr. Jude and Abel</b>
<b>Record No</b>	<b>15</b>

<b>Observations</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<p>There was a gentle knock on the door and about three students lined up to enter the office. Mr. Jude looks up while using his hands, signal's others to stay out. He also states clearly that he would attend to them one after the other. Abel came in and stood. There was a lengthy pause (0.2). They seemed to be waiting for who will speak first. Looking intently at Abel, Mr Jude asked "have we met today?" at which Abel was confused at the import of the</p>	<p>Mr. Jude's response to the knock on the door and his follow up response places him in clear position of control. His short pause (0.2) from my observation was deliberate and was aimed at accommodating the student's anticipated response: Salutation. Mr. Jude's intent looks and utterance "have we met today" was meant to serve as a corrective feedback to Abel. Unfortunately, the utterance seemed to confuse Abel the more. The fact that Abel failed to interpret properly the implication</p>

<p>question.</p> <p>Mr Jude shakes his head in disapproval/disappointment and murmurs incoherently. From this point, Mr Jude appeared angry towards Abel. Abel opened his bag to fish his credentials and this seemed to heighten Mr Jude's impatience too as sounds upset while asking for Abel's credentials as stretched his hands for the credentials. While perusing Abel's credentials Mr Jude was simultaneously inquiring about Abel's lectures. Abel looked at a piece of paper in his hands: a timetable while looking confused and used "Yeah" for "Yes" to which Mr Jude sounding surprised at. While responding to Mr Jude's questions about Abel's lectures, Abel used the term "man" to refer to a lecturer. Mr Jude was clearly not happy with that too by looking disapprovingly at Abel.</p>	<p>of the utterance disappoints Mr. Jude. His murmuring, disapprovingly shaking his head and incoherent utterance are all indicative of that. His subsequent comments too "your credentials" "your originals" "let me have them" "be fast" and "is that what you call your lecturers?" are all indicative of the social distancing between Abel and Mr Jude as fallout of Abel's failure to observe salutation.</p> <p>Again perusing the student's documents, Mr. Jude seemed to evaluate Abel by asking him about his lectures and classes: "what about your classes?" "How many classes so far have you attended?" Mr Jude also picks on Abel's use of the informal form "Yeah" for "Yes" and all these face threatening acts are not unconnected to the first position salutation that the Abel failed to observe.</p>
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## APPENDIX C

### Sample Stimulated Recall Interview (SRI) Transcript

**SRI with Kay:** this interview was conducted on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, 2017 in one of the school's lecture rooms. My choice of the lecture room was to make the student relax a bit. I chose this participant because his interaction with lecture provided several critical incidences that yielded face threat and his various face saving strategies such as excuses and overt apologies. The interview transcript is as seen below:

1 Kay: Good morning sir

2 Longji: Good Morning↓ Thank you for participating in my research (0.2) I will play a  
3 recording of your interaction with Mr. Jude at the registration and then I will ask you  
4 some few questions (.) okay.

5 Kay: okay sir

6 do you recognise this voice? (After playing the recorded interaction between Kay and  
7 Mr Jude)

8 Kay: That's my voice

9 Longji: was it necessary for you to tell Mr. Jude that you were bereaved?

10 Kay: ((silence))

11 Longji: Did you want him (Mr. Jude) to sympathise with you?

12 Kay: no sir, he was staring at me

13 Longji: so it was a lie then

14 Kay: No sir, he said I am not organised and I just tell [sic] him that

15 Longji: What's your impression of the university?

16 Kay: I like it.

## APPENDIX D

### Transcription Keys

<b>Key</b>	<b>interpretation</b>
(.)	A micropause- a pause of significant length
(0.5)	A timed pause-long enough to indicate a time
[ ]	Square brackets to show where speech overlaps
(( ))	Double parenthesis to show entry of ethnographic data
<b>Bold</b>	Bold denotes noteworthy emphasis on an act
↑	Rise in intonation
↓	Drop in intonation
“ ”	To enclose direct quoted speech
‘ ’	To enclose projected interpretation

**Transcription Keys Adapted from Gail Jefferson (1984)**



**APPENDIX E**  
**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**



**INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS**

Dear Participant,

You are asked to participate in a research study as part of my PhD study. The focus of the study is on how specific linguistic strategies are being utilized by students and school personnel while interacting with each other. To this end, I am asking for your permission to participate in my study and allow for the recording of your interactions that may take place during the registration process. You would also be expected to participate in a play-back session after the recordings where you would be asked to clarify/comment on your language use during specific parts of the interaction. Once the recordings are obtained, they will remain confidential, clandestine, and will be kept anonymous. The recordings will take place between 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2017 and 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2017. Data collected through these recordings will solely be used for academic research and your name and university will not be disclosed at any time. Please note that participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time by contacting via phone or e-mail addresses below.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your cooperation.

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 e-mail: [cise.cavusoglu@neu.edu.tr](mailto:cise.cavusoglu@neu.edu.tr)

I have read this form and understood the procedures involved in my participation. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in the study.

Participant's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





**APPENDIX F**  
**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**



**INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR LECTURERS**

Dear Participant,

You are asked to participate in a research study as part of my PhD study. The focus of the study is on how specific linguistic strategies are being utilized by students and school personnel while interacting with each other. To this end, I am asking for your permission to participate in my study and allow for the recording of your interactions that may take place during the registration process. You would also be expected to participate in a play-back session after the recordings where you would be asked to clarify/comment on your language use during specific parts of the interaction. Once the recordings are obtained, they will remain confidential, clandestine, and will be kept anonymous. The recordings will take place between 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2017 and 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2017. Data collected through these recordings will solely be used for academic research and your name and university will not be disclosed at any time. Please note that participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time by contacting via phone or e-mail addresses below.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your cooperation.

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I have read this form and understood the procedures involved in my participation. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in the study.

Participant's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G: Originality Report

### ORIGINALITY REPORT

11%

SIMILARITY INDEX

5%

INTERNET SOURCES

6%

PUBLICATIONS

4%

STUDENT PAPERS

### PRIMARY SOURCES

1

Longji Christopher Gonsum, Cise Cavusoglu.  
"Social Positioning in Teacher-Student  
Interactions: A Linguistic Ethnographic  
Investigation", International Journal of English  
Linguistics, 2019

Publication

5%

2

Submitted to Yakın Doğu Üniversitesi

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6

Gabriele Kasper. "PRAGMATIC  
COMPREHENSION IN LEARNER-NATIVE  
SPEAKER DISCOURSE", Language Learning,  
12/1984

Publication

<1%

**APPENDIX H: AUTHORISATION**  
**PLATEAU STATE UNIVERSITY, BOKKOS**

PLASU, PMB 2012, Jos. Plateau State

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR



P.M.B. 2012 Jos (93001)

LGC, Plateau State

PF/SS/PLASU/42/Vol. 1 Date: 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2017

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Our Ref:

**MR. Longji Christopher Gonsum**

Department of English

Plateau State University

**AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I write to convey management's approval of your request to conduct your research within the registration offices of the university.

Accept the esteemed goodwill of management as you go about your research investigation.

Good luck.

Yakubu F. Ayuba

For Registrar.

Cc Dean, Faculty of Arts

Head, Department of English