POLITENESS FORMS AND HEDGING STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH AMONG IGBO BILINGUALS.

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PG/Ph.D/12/63868

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES

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A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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CERTIFICATION

Dozie, Chinomso Patricia, a Postgraduate Student of the Department of English and Literary Studies, with Registration Number PG/Ph.D/12/63868, has satisfactorily completed the requirements for research work for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language. The work embodied in this thesis is original and has not been submitted in parts or in full for any other Diploma or Degree of this or any other University.

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DEDICATION

This work is most affectionately dedicated

To my beloved Mum, Lady Patricia Obioma Ajaero of blessed memory, whose golden heart stopped beating on Wednesday 21st June, 2017.
For her labour of love.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to conduct a linguistic analysis of politeness and hedging strategies in the conversational English of Igbo bilinguals. Through a purposive sampling process, a total of 3000 copies of questionnaire in the form of a Discourse Completion Task ó DCT were distributed to undergraduates of Igbo extraction at seven Universities systematically selected from the South-east and South-south geopolitical zones in Nigeria. In addition, 30 key persons participated in the in-depth interview study. Pretested and validated questionnaire written in English was administered to each respondent for the questionnaire ó Discourse Completion Task DCT study. Questions were written to elicit any response on the guided options tagged A, B, C. In all, 2748 copies of questionnaire representing 92.00% were duly completed and returned. Results showed that Igbo bilinguals use politeness and hedging strategies very significantly in their English language conversation. Also, to fulfill a conversational demand, Igbo bilinguals adopt different politeness/hedging strategies given the discourse situation. Similarly, to satisfy the need for effective communication, these strategies adopted by this group of bilinguals in addition to enculturation and recourse to the nuances of the second language were clearly appropriate in discourse. Most importantly, Igbo bilinguals yielded to certain social factors such as hierarchy, power, age, rank, position, speaker-hearer relationships, and degree of impositions among others as they ultimately informed the use of a particular strategy or another. In general, females were found to be more linguistically polite than males. In conclusion, the findings of this study showed that politeness is a culture/context-bound phenomenon hence the theory of the universality of its expression or manifestation remains an illusion.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Conversation is a basic feature of face to face interaction in all human societies. As a way of life, conversation is manøs second nature. In all works of life and all spheres of human existence, there is need for effective conversation. Problems arise in human interaction partly because of conversation failure. Leadership problems, family misalignments may equally emanate from conversation breakdown. The need to maintain peace and order and the need to let the society and organizations run effectively have led to the search for effective conversation and appropriate strategies. Scholars have investigated conversation strategies.

The field of conversation analysis was started in the United States by Harvey Sacks, an American sociologist, in the 1960øs and since then it has grown into a sophisticated field of discourse in language studies and different scholars have postulated different hypotheses and theories about conversation analysis. They have also tried to highlight the discourse features of conversation to include turn-taking, politeness, hedging, adjacency principle, code switching, and code mixing among others as they interplay to make for effective communication. Turn-taking recognizes and explains how it is that in conversation, only one speaker speaks at a time after which another takes a turn in order to avoid the possibility of a lapse. Thus, according to Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (362), a turn is each occasion that a speaker speaks and a turn ends when another speaker takes a turn. They observed that speakers are permitted to take turns when they are chosen or nominated by the current speaker, or if no one is directly selected, they may speak of their own choices but if neither of these conditions applies, the current speaker can simply continue. Politeness on the other hand emphasizes the interactantsø ability to engage in conversation observing the acceptable, social norms that facilitate a hitch-free conversation. In the words of Akpan, õpoliteness is an aspect of social behaviour which makes individuals, within and outside any given society live

in harmony with other peopleö (201). Hedging entails the use of terms that make room for contributions from interactants and not necessarily the use of absolute terms. Holmes defines hedging as linguistic devices which may be used for reducing the force of an utterance and explains that they may be used to boost or intensify a propositionøs force (297).

On the other hand, Yvgne proposes that adjacency principle governs the most basic pattern in conversation analysis in which it is necessary to produce the ideal sequence of speech in the forms of adjacency pairs, solidarity routines, converging pairs, among others (454). This means that adjacency principle signals co-operation in conversations and is primarily manifested in adjacency pairs, solidarity routines, in which conversations can be segmented into pairs of exchange that are connected in some way even though spoken by different speakers. Code mixing is a term used in the literature to describe the alternate use of constituents from two languages within a sentence while code switching may describe the alternate use of sentences from two languages in a single discourse. As aptly defined by Nwoye (366), code mixing is an intra-sentential shift, while code-switching is the use of more than one language or variety of language in the course of a single discourse. All these strategies are geared towards effective and efficient communication. For the purpose of the present study, focus is on politeness and hedging as conversation strategies. An attempt is also made to highlight conversation analysis as a spectrum within which the concepts of politeness and hedging manifest.

Afolayan whose seminal study set the pace for more research in this discipline in Africa and beyond defined politeness as an aspect of social behaviour, generally, a sort of grace, the type of thing that classifies people along the dimension of refinement and courtesy (57). Politeness as a discourse strategy emphasizes the need to use words or make utterances that are not intended to offend or viewed as rude by the addressee. Politeness cuts across the speakerøs

intention and the hearer's interpretation of an utterance. Hence, the face work theory proposed in 1996 by Hudson which states that in every speech situation, interlocutors try to express themselves in ways that may not be offending to the other (113). In other words, interactants try to maintain a good self image by addressing others appropriately hoping to be treated alike in due course. Hudson explains that our face is a very fragile thing which other people can very easily damage and we lead our social lives according to the golden rule (Do to others as you would like them to do to you) by looking after other people's faces in the hope that they will look after ours. Hudson's theory further emphasizes that if our words and gestures express one kind of face but our clothes suggest a different one, the rest of us look for some way to reconcile the conflict rather than leaving us completely unclassified. The result of combining observable and unobservable characteristics in a prototype is that the way we speak tells the rest of us about our face, that is, about the kind of person you want us to think you are (231 - 232).

The politeness theory which was first formulated in 1978 by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson accounts for the redressing of the affronts to face posed by face-threatening acts to an addressee. In this regard, people who are engaged in conversation want to save ‑face' in order to preserve their individual self-esteem.

However, when speakers want to say something that may potentially impose on the hearer, they must attempt to avoid threatening the hearer's face while saving their own face. Brown and Levinson describe acts which threaten the speaker's or hearer's face as õface-threatening acts, (FTAs)ö. In other words, a speaker must adopt certain strategies to avoid or minimize the ‑face threat'. Dang (2011) stresses that to become an excellent conversationalist, besides being a natural phenomenon or human attribute, we should be able to understand and use strategies that will help us know how to open, maintain as well as close a conversation. Among them politeness strategies for conversational maintenance appear to be the most

important because they remain the key factors deciding the success of the entire conversational process. For a successful conversation, interactants must achieve a workable balance of contribution in every speech situation. That implies we should not be only active speakers but also active listeners as these roles are complimentary in conversation. The binary nature of the two skills mandates that a conversation will make no headway if it is just one-sided. It is only when all of the conversationalists participate enthusiastically do they really contribute to the sustenance of any conversational process, either in English, Igbo, or any other language as the case may be.

The pioneering work of these two has since enlarged the knowledge of politeness in the literature. Brown and Levinson (61) define face as õthe public self-image that every member wants to claim for himselfö. They also distinguish between positive face and negative face. Positive face is the desire to gain the approval of others: the positive consistence self-image or personality claimed by interactants. Negative face on the other hand is the desire to be unimpeded by others in oneøs action, ÷the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction, freedom of action and freedom of imposition. Mills states that politeness is the expression of the speakerøs intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts towards another. Being polite therefore consists of attempting to save face for another (4). Held notes that politeness may be understood as a specific type of linguistic structure which õexpresses the speakerøs attitude and are thus not explicable by semantic, but rather by pragmatic meansö (63). This goes to show that politeness as a sociolinguistic strategy is tied greatly to the use of language in a social context as opposed to its semantic implications which emphasize meaning. Thus, in this regard, Held reiterates that politeness is necessarily a social interaction as participants do not only convey meaning but also observe social rules and their utterances are informed by social factors/variables. Thus, according to Smith õPeople interacting with members of their own culture do not usually need to have a

verbalized awareness of their individual, values and styles of communication because they are shared within the culture. However, when one communicates across cultures, a clear sense of self is crucial in negotiating meaningö (3). A fact of basic importance in the statement above is that language and culture are inextricable. Similarly, Wardhaugh reiterates that positive politeness leads to moves to achieve solidarity through offers of friendship, the use of compliments and informal language: we treat others as friends and allies; we do not impose on them, and never threaten their face. While negative politeness leads to deference, apologizing, indirectness, and formality in language use: we adopt a variety of strategies so as to avoid any threats to the face others are presenting to us (277). The implication of the above assertion is that conversational discourse is structured in such a way that spoken interaction is connected to speakersø conversational contributions. More so, all these speech activities will be expected to be delivered with a degree of politeness that befits and sustains the situation or task in hand (Simpson 155-175). Oø Grady, Archibald and Katamba maintain that politeness involves among other things; avoiding speaking or behaving in a thoughtless and inconsiderate manner or being deliberately obnoxious to each other for no good reason. In their words, õpoliteness which in the context of pragmatics can be glossed roughly as tact is an important aspect of communicationö (256).

Hedging and hedging strategies as defined by Holmes (297) are linguistic devices which may be used for reducing the force of an utterance. Holmes also identifies that these are features which may be used to boost or intensify a propositions force. In other words, hedging strategies will be devices adopted in order to either down play the force of an utterance, that is, to lessen its effects on the addressee or to increase the force of an utterance, that is, to heighten its effects on the addressee. According to Lakoff, ─Hedging devices explicitly signal lack of confidence while boosting devices express the speakerøs anticipation that the addressee may remain unconvinced and therefore supply extra reassuranceø Lakoff opines that women use hedging

devices to persuade their addressees to take them seriously. Thus, according to Lakoff, both hedges and boosters express women's lack of confidence. Lakoff also notes that "a device in order to reduce friction in personal interaction" may be used in order to maintain a good relationship between speaker and hearer (cited in Holmes, 299). This sudden twist on who uses hedges more suggests that hedging and hedging strategies are features of women's language. However, many researchers agree that hedging is useful. Skelton (38) for instance, cannot see how language can function without hedging as "language without hedging is language without life".

Bilingualism according to Bhatia and Ritchie (2) is "the ability to use two languages effectively". Definitions of bilingualism abound and it is very important to state that these definitions express a single fact which revolves around the knowledge and use of two languages at varying degrees of proficiency. It is the ability and function of dual language acquisition. There is however, variation in the period in which learning must take place for bilingualism to be considered simultaneous or sequential as the case may be.

 Studies on bilingualism have shown that the emotional intensity of L1 is different from the emotional intensity of subsequent languages learned. These studies conclude that L1 has the highest emotional impact and is the language of personal involvement while L2 is the language that can create distance and detachment as it has lesser emotional impact as compared to L1 (Pavlenko, 163). The assertion above goes to say that the L1 is that language that bears much of an individual's maternal/reactional instincts and is natural to the bilingual. It is that language with which one expresses effortlessly one's desires, emotions and appeal without constraint. While L2 expresses a certain degree of disconnect and distance factor. In addition, cultural backgrounds play a role in the conversational discourse of bilinguals. Cultural values also affect the ways of conducting a conversation and the linguistic devices that are used to show politeness. This is to say that the bilingual's L1 may rub off on his/her L2 in a speech situation.

And in which case, if the individualøs cultural background pays attention to social status, age, power and degree of closeness between speaker and hearer; these social variables may determine both the level of politeness and the stylistic choice. Hence, the speaker is required to be sensitive to social context and norms.

However, as these strategies (Politeness and Hedging) characterize the speech of bilinguals across the globe, the study of appropriateness of language and communicativeness, especially as it concerns conversational language become necessary. As observed by Grice, all conversationalists are rational beings who are primarily interested in the efficient transmission of messages from a sender to a receiver (52). Again, this medium promises to be a very rich source of materials for corpus analysis of the features of the English of Igbo bilinguals, and, therefore, another avenue to understand the influence the Igbo-bilingual phenomenon has on English. The Igbo bilingual in this case is that individual whose L1 is the Igbo language and who enjoys a nativeólike competence in another language ó the English language.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The notion of conversational discourse is of linguistic interest. In a bilingual situation, as in Nigeria, although discourse seems more fluid than other linguistic levels this is not to say that it has no underlying structure. Ochs observes that speech can be planned or unplanned. This means that a lot of human conversation/dialogue has a certain amount of the planning in it. For Ochs, unplanned speech has certain characteristics: repetition, simple active sentences, speaker and listener combining to construct proposition, stringing of clauses together with ÷and or butø or the juxtaposition of clauses with no overt links at all, deletion of subjects and referents and use of deictic elements such as ÷thisø, ÷thatø, ÷hereø and ÷thereø. It may also be filled with equivocations/hedges and intercalary expressions (63) such as; ÷wellø, ÷likeø, ÷may beø, ÷butø, ÷sort ofø, ÷you knowø, ÷I guessø, ÷ehhø, ÷I mean to sayø, ÷uumø, ÷humø, ÷emø

These two seemingly contending issues of politeness and hedging form the nucleus of this work. In spite of the relatedness of these conversation strategies in the real sense of the word, there remains the need for understanding of the roles these strategies play in everyday conversational discourse of Nigerians in general and more specifically the Igbo bilinguals.

Research and experience have shown that conversational breakdown causes conflict and brings about misunderstanding in families, work places and in the wider society. Furthermore, lack of the use of politeness strategies as well as hedging appears to be at the epicenter of conversational breakdown. The crises among friends, inter-institutional conflicts, conflicts at all sectors of the national economy and among leaders could emanate from the failure to appropriate the resources of hedging and politeness in dialogues, official routines and in the conduct of the affairs of the nation. Hence this study is conducted to find out to what degree Igbo bilinguals use politeness and hedging strategies in conversational situations. Again, the study hopes to find out the specific politeness/hedging strategies this group of bilinguals adopt and determine to what degree such strategies are appropriate.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to conduct a linguistic analysis of politeness and hedging strategies in the conversational English of Igbo bilinguals. The specific objectives are:

1. To find out the degree to which Igbo bilinguals use politeness and hedging strategies in conversational situations.

2. To discover the specific politeness/hedging strategies this group adopt in conversations.

3. To determine the degree to which the strategies used by this group of bilinguals are appropriate.

4.	To find out if there are factors that necessitate politeness in the conversational English of Igbo bilinguals.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The outcome of this study will be of interest to linguists in the areas of sociolinguistics and pragmatics. This is because language in this instance will be viewed as a social phenomenon and will be applied more in the context of use. It would highlight how certain conversational principles apply within the Nigerian context and help identify the linguistic peculiarities and mannerisms of the Igbo bilinguals especially as this is an area not much research has been conducted. This study will further emphasize the basic requirements of conversational discourse and its impact on language users.

1.5 Scope of the Study:

This study focuses on the politeness and hedging strategies in English language as used by Igbo learners of English as a second language referred to in this study as Igbo bilinguals. It takes a sociolinguistic and pragmatic view of the conversational discourse of Nigerian bilinguals of Igbo extraction. The Igbo bilinguals are drawn from the five states that make up the south-east geo-political zone of Nigeria, namely; Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states and the Igbo speaking areas of Delta and Rivers states in the south-south geo-political zone.

1.6 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the politeness/hedging strategies in the English language conversation of Igbo bilinguals?

2. To what extent do the bilinguals in the study sample use politeness/hedging strategies?

3. What are the sociolinguistic variables that lead to the politeness/hedging forms in the conversational English of the Igbo bilinguals?

4. To what extent do sociolinguistic factors as well as gender interplay to account for the use of politeness/hedging in discourse?

1.7 Limitations of the Study:

a.   Considering that one of the data collection methods involved the Discourse Completion Task ó DCT with guided options, responses may differ from natural speech patterns.

b.   Individual personality differences may have influenced the subjectsø choice of politeness/hedging strategies in English language conversation.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, some attempt is made to review the literature on politeness and hedging strategies to enable us to situate the study in its right perspective and delineate the possible niche it will carve in the scholarship of the discipline. In doing so, the study highlights the importance and process of politeness and hedging in everyday discourse. Again, the chapter discusses the concepts, theories and empirical works related to politeness and hedging as well as conversation analysis.

The importance of politeness has been emphasized in the area of language use. Politeness involves not only linguistic realizations, but also õthe broad communicative spectrum including paralinguistic and Kinetic detailsö (Brown and Levinson, 58); therefore, the way a conversation is conducted, for instance, demonstrates in part politeness or impoliteness. Speaking at the wrong time, interrupting a speaker or keeping silent at the wrong time, are all regarded as impolite (Dabbagh, 1-12). In the light of the foregoing, the concept of politeness may be better described as multifaceted as it integrates various conversation strategies namely- adjacency principles, turn-taking among others in order to be fully appreciated. Dabbagh reiterates that õpoliteness is used to avoid clash or conflict between the persons involved in a speech act, that is, speaker/hearer, thus, we often find a tendency to exaggerate agreement and mitigate disagreement. However, it is an important part of social conventions since in all cultures, however different they may be, politeness in addressing others is a kind of observed code of behavior that one has to adhere toö. Suffice to say then that politeness is a way of life and emphasizes the interactantsø ability to engage in conversation observing the acceptable social and cultural norms that facilitate an unimpeded interaction. Demeter acknowledges that speech acts primarily reflect the fundamental cultural values and social

norms of a language. Lacking the cultural, social and pragmatic context in cross-cultural communication can lead to misunderstanding, both in producing the appropriate speech act and perceiving the intended meaning of one uttered by somebody else (1-153). The above assertion simply reaffirms that in every cross-cultural discourse; cultural peculiarities, social affiliations, pragmatic circumstances are some of the factors tied to the supposed meaning of an utterance. Politeness is indexed in such speech act as requests, offers, apology, greetings, appreciation, criticisms etc. For proper and more graphic description, it remains imperative to understand how bilinguals employ politeness in conversation in their native as well as the target language.

In the present study, everyday conversation is studied by examining previous research on politeness forms and investigated in terms of or in the context of use. Thus, in the following section, conceptual, theoretical and empirical work is reviewed in relation to the concept of politeness, hedging and conversation analysis. It therefore progresses in the following order: concept of politeness, hedging and conversation analysis, linguistic politeness, and a review of previous research studies on politeness, hedging and conversation analysis in general.

2.1 Concepts of Politeness, Hedging and Conversation Analysis:

Politeness, among other speech acts, has received a lot of attention in the field of sociolinguistics (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

Afolayan views politeness as an aspect of social behavior and generally a sort of grace, the type of thing that classified people along the dimension of refinement and courtesy. He reiterates that when politeness is applied as a measuring rod, it implies the existence of a person or a group of people at one end of the scale who may be referred to as being civilized, cultured, polished or courteous and at the other end of the scale, others who are regarded as barbaric-primitive, uncouth or rude (57). This is a literal interpretation of the term politeness

as it dwells particularly on civility and incivility but makes a good starting point of a logical deduction.

Lakoff provides a fairly elaborate explication of what she considers politeness to be: "To be polite is saying the socially correct thing". She goes further by indicating that there are many types of behavior that can be called 'polite', and indicates that some forms of politeness are linguistic and some are purely non-linguistic; some are mixed in nature, some are polite in some settings, neutral or rude in other settings (53). In Lakoff's view, there are three rules of politeness: (a) Formality: Keep aloof; (b) Deference: give options (Hesitations, hedges, euphemisms and lack of assertiveness are all considered to be applications of these rules); (c) Camaraderie: show sympathy, that is, a speaker should make the addressee feel that the speaker likes him and wants to be friendly with him, is interested in him, among others (67-68). Lakoff's opinion succinctly delineates the concept of politeness and offers an insight into different levels of its manifestation and various interpretations of politeness with regard to specific settings.

Fraser proposes an essentially hearer-centered definition of politeness and sees the phenomenon as 'a property associated with an utterance in which, according to the hearer, the speaker has neither exceeded any rights nor failed to fulfill any obligations' (13). This notion is not entirely true as the concept of politeness is a two-way process in which the speaker on the one hand tries to save his own face while making efforts not to hurt the feelings of the hearer by his use or choice of words.

Fraser and Nolen are of the view that politeness embodies the notion of the violation or non-violation of the contractual terms of conversation which are primarily established in interlocutors and brought to bear at the instance of conversation (96). This definition portrays

politeness as a tool brought forth during interaction and does not pay attention to the fact that the concept is a reflection of cultural values and social norms of a language.

Saville-Troike gives the definition of politeness as a show of competence in language use. He stresses that the end purpose of this type of knowledge is learning how to speak so as not to cause offence and to maintain good social relationships (112). This view goes to show that application of politeness is a show of mastery of a particular language as well as its nuances as it concerns everyday conversation. However, it is important to note that while good social relationship is important, expressing politeness differs from culture to culture and may be actuated by certain social considerations.

Adegbija defines politeness as a property associated with a communicative situation by virtue of which a person speaks or behaves in a way that is socially and culturally acceptable and pleasant to the hearer. Consequently, a polite speaker is normally expected to comport himself in a manner unobtrusive to the hearer(s); such a speaker does not in any way infringe on the interlocutorøs prerogatives or leave unsaid or undone what he ought or is expected to have said or done in a particular communicative context (58). This statement is true of the concept of politeness but the present study tends to disagree in part with the idea of overt expectancies on the part of the speaker. This is so because it reduces the concept to mere pretense.

Nwoye states that politeness is an on-going process. An expected socially required norm of behavior, and participants in conversation are generally aware that they are required to act within the dictates of this expected code of behavior. Being polite is not predicated on making a hearer feel good, or not feel bad, but rather on conforming to socially agreed codes of good conduct (310). The above definition by Nwoye contrasts finely with Fraserøs (13)

definition which depicted a hearer-centered approach. In line with the objectives of the present study, Nwoyeøs formulation aptly captures the essence of the concept of politeness.

Sell asserts that politeness may be defined as dexterous management of our words and actions whereby men make other people have a better opinion of us and them. For Sell, it õí probably the best thing most people would say about politeness is that it is a social lubricant less nocuous than alcohol, probably useful, like free alcohol, for the corps diplomatique. Or, still more likely, that it is a velvet glove within which to hide one or another kind of iron fistí ö (210). The model of politeness abounding in metaphors put forward by Sell does not offer a full-fledged comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon of politeness (Hernendez, 215).

Watts (1992:44) understands politeness as õa mask used to conceal egoøs true frame` of mind and which functions to avoid conflict, to tone down potential aggression and to ensure that the interaction will be accomplished smoothlyö (44). Quite like Sell (210), Watts also made use of metaphor to approach his subject which would not be capable of accounting for the general concept of politeness.

Hernandez postulates that politeness is mainly viewed as a way of smoothening social interaction and avoiding conflict between people. The fact that politeness can also be used as a means of achieving objective ó as when we praise someone in order to gain his favorsø ó if not completely ignored, is certainly relegated to a secondary position (215). This definition is not completely off the mark but it seems to be predicated on having a good relationship regardless of the goal of a conversation which is fundamental in every interaction. Again, the second function assigned to politeness according to Hernandez, puts the concept of politeness in the light of a means to an end.

Akpan puts it that: õPoliteness is an aspect of social behavior which makes individuals, within and outside any given society live in harmony with other peopleö (201). The above statement recognizes the peculiarity of every society and asserts that at each point of interaction between people, politeness phenomenon plays a vital role.

Enang, Eshiet and Udoka state that politeness is to be seen as a strategy adopted by language users in interaction and it serves the purpose of providing deference of the speaker to the hearer or vice versa. It has to do with mutual respect that maintains cordial social relationship (2). The above remark is visibly true of politeness as discourse strategy and underscores the importance of the concept of politeness in general.

Hedging has also received much attention in recent years in relation to conversational rules and social conventions as it is the main strategy used to facilitate turn-taking, show politeness and mitigate face threats (Boncea, 7).

Lakoff analyses hedges as õwords whose meaning implicitly involves fuzziness-words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzyö and he discusses words and phrases manifesting hedging power (like rather, very, in a manner of speaking) setting some boundaries in how to interpret linguistic items as hedges. Lakoff also discusses the fact that ئhedges interact with felicity conditions for utterances and with rules of conversationø (458). This broad definition provides a rich framework for the study of language as a social phenomenon which is in line with the objectives the present study seeks to address.

 Brown and Levinson posit that a hedge is õa particle, word or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or a noun phrase in a set; it says of that membership that it is

partial or true only in certain respects, or that it is more true and complete than perhaps might be expectedö(145). The above marks out various degrees expressed by different particles or words and will help the current study in identifying and assigning possible meanings to various hedge words.

House and Kasper are of the view that the dual functions of hedges i.e. - one defensive and ego-oriented reduces the force of an utterance, the other protective or alter-oriented, i.e. shields speakers from potential rejection are fulfilled by politenessö (157). House and Kasper have characterized hedges and their functions. They have also succeeded in linking the subject of hedging to the very concept which marks its use i.e. politeness and this is central in the present study.

Hubler asserts that hedges are used to increase the appeal of the utterance, to make it more acceptable to the interlocutor and thus increase the probability of acceptance and reduce the chances of negation. It is speakerøs attitude in trying to protect him/herself from potential rejection on the part of the interlocutor (16). This definition makes the subject matter a lot more explicit and denotes that speakersø utterances carry hedge items which subject them to different interpretations. This is insightful and will help in the general assessment of the objectives of the present study.

Namasaraev identifies four parameters that characterize hedging strategies: Indetermination ó adding a degree of fuzziness or uncertainty to a single word or chunk of language; Depersonalization ó avoiding direct reference by using ‑weø or õthe authorsö or some other impersonal subjects; Subjectivzation ó using + think/suppose, assume and other verbs of thinking with the purpose of signaling the subjectivity of what is said, as a personal view instead of the absolute truth; Limitation ó removing fuzziness or vagueness from a part of a

text by limiting category membership (67). Namasaraevøs characterization of hedging strategies is a pointer to the fact that the type of hedging device used in conversation is actuated by situations or tasks interactants are faced with.

Hyland states that õHedging refers to any linguistic means used to indicate either (a) a lack of complete commitment to the truth value of an accompanying proposition, or (b) a desire not to express that commitment categorically (1). From the above, we may say that the use of hedging devices determine the actual wording of our utterances hence our position on matters under discussion.

Holmes defines hedging as linguistic devices which may be used for reducing the force of an utterance. Holmes also identifies that these are features which may be used to boost or intensify a propositions force (297). Quite like Hyland (1) Holmes definition shows the speakerøs stance on any issue at any given time and this is not far from what the present study seeks to address.

Boncea states that the boundaries of hedging are extended to õnegative politeness which is used for avoiding threats to the face of the participants. This definition includes in hedges both detensifiers and intensifiers, which was how Lakoff also saw hedges. Boncea stresses that Hedging represents a crucial aspect of language as the appropriate use of hedges reflects a high degree of efficiency in social interaction by demonstrating the ability to express degrees of certainty and mastering rhetorical strategies required under conversational circumstances. The author further explains that by using hedging devices and displaying uncertainty and reservation, authors and speakers alike maybe attempting to suggest the absence of absoluteness or the varying amount of accuracy of their statements. At the same time, they may try to save face in case of any possible falsification of their judgments. By

using hedges and not attributing the ideas to oneself, writers can also invite readers to evaluate the truth value of the proposition as an independently thinking individual without the possibility of being biased by the absoluteness of a non-hedged statement. In addition, Boncea stresses that Hedges are roughly considered to be represented by lexical verbs (÷seemø, ÷tendø, ÷appearø), modals (÷mayø, ÷mightø) and some adverbs (÷probablyø, ÷perhapsø), although conditional clauses, passive voices and impersonal phrases can also be proven to have hedging powers (8-9).

Conversation analysis has been described as õa perfect instrument for linguists of any theoretical persuasion who are looking for a ÷stand-aloneø set of analytical tools in order to examine spoken interaction in relation to a clear model of the ÷rulesø of turn-takingö (Baxter,133).

Sacks views conversation analysis as an established model of investigation of utterances in human interaction. He reiterates that there is structure in every conversation and on the strength of this firm belief, Sacks developed conversation analysis. He took the liberty to highlight that human interactions are characterized by a sequence of conversational openings and closings, turn-taking, adjacency pairs, among others (13). Sacks therefore investigates conversation as social actions used to either get things done or to avoid getting things done (Baxter, 121). The above goes to show that there are patterns in everyday discourse and that human interaction naturally assumes a structure.

Schegloff asserts that conversation analysis provides a systematic form of discourse analysis which advocates that when the process of building conversation goes wrong, there is need for a repair rather than correction of the line of discourse (184). This idea stipulates that

utterance/meaning may ultimately be speaker oriented and not merely based on hearerøs interpretation of same.

Baxter defines conversation analysis as a microanalytical approach which offers a theoretical framework, a terminology and a systematic modus operandi for analysing spoken discourse in particular and which offers a clear and accessible ÷stand-aloneø approach (133). In line with specific objectives of the study, Baxterøs definition of conversation analysis places the approach as independent of any other system. In other words, conversation analysis may be referred to as an all-round mechanism in the analysis of human interactions.

Matthews explains that conversation analysis includes the examination of speech patterns, word usage and the impact of speech as part of social interaction. Furthermore, Matthews believes that conversation analysis examines the normal sequence or actions during social interaction, watching for how readily the participants recognize the proper next step, engage in orderly turn-taking and build upon or react to previous statements or shared contexts (70). This broad definition offered by Matthews shows that apart from utterances made, contexts play a vital role in interpretation and eventual meaning assigned to utterances.

Conversation analysis describes a group of methodologies that document interpersonal interactions at a fine level of detail and focuses on how all parties to an interaction speak and participate in an exchange (Douglas & John, 428). The above assertion supports the notion that conversation analysis is an all-round analytical strategy which examines every aspect of human interaction at the point of exchange. In other words, conversation analysis dwells and critically examines the entire scenario and not just an aspect of an entire situation.

The myriads of definition of politeness and hedging and its functions expressed by

various scholars show the conceptual views on the face-needs, social norms and function of everyday conversation. Although scholars have defined politeness and hedging in different ways, a recurring decimal in the definitions seems to be that politeness and hedging are often applied interchangeably in the act of conversation in spite of the distinctiveness in meanings provided by linguists. However, conversation analysis remains an approach to distinctly delineate one concept from another yet providing insight as to how politeness/hedging are actuated in everyday discourse. In order to deal with various indices of politeness and hedging, this study should adopt a combination or an admixture of definitions, or consider features of all the definitions given above as the interpretations of these strategies are manifold.

2.2 Linguistic Politeness

Thijitang advocates that since the words people use are mostly determined by relationship to other interlocutors, they need to make sure that theirs as well as othersø needs and identities are accepted, maintained and enhanced to the full. Linguistic politeness explains what informs interaction, how people interact and how they get on through language. It entails the use of strategies for keeping social interaction friction-free (22). Quite like the face theory of Hudson (1996), it stipulates the need to treat others just as one would love to be treated. There are several theories of linguistic politeness but most of them subsume similar explanatory tenets (Sifianou, 39). Among these, the face theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (65) serves as the most influential theory on politeness. It plays a leading role in the study of speech acts (Ji, 1059-1062).

According to Brown and Levinson, face is õsomething that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in interactionö. Face is a favorable public image consisting of two different kinds of face wants, the desire to be

unimpeded in one's action, and the desire to be approved of. Brown and Levinson's face theory contains three basic notions: face, face threatening acts (FTAs) and politeness strategies (66). They argue that everyone in the society has two kinds of face needs. One is negative face which is defined as one's desire that nobody impedes his or her actions. The other is the positive face which implies that people expect their needs to be desirable to others as well. Every utterance is potentially a face threatening act (FTA), either to the negative face or to the positive face. Brown and Levinson also claim that acts that threaten the hearer's positive face consist of expressions of disapproval or disagreement, criticism, and the mentioning of taboo topics. They further explain that, under normal circumstances, all individuals are motivated to avoid conveying FTAs and are more motivated to minimize the face threat of the acts they use. Consequently, individuals must often prioritize three wants, the want to communicate the content of a face-threatening act, the want to be efficient and the want to maintain the hearer's face. These three wants create five strategic choices that speakers must make (Brown and Levinson, 60).

Risk of face loss:
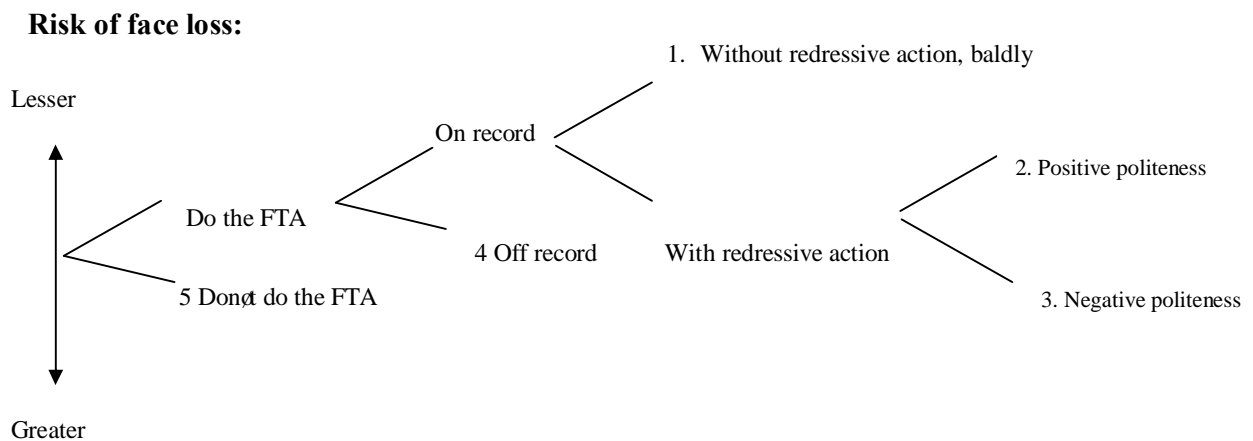
Figure 2.2.1: Possible strategies for doing FTAs after Brown and Levinson (1987:69).

The figure above shows that these five strategies are ordered in terms of the degree of politeness involved. The risk factor increases as one moves up the scale of strategies from 1-5

with 1 being the least polite and 5 being the most polite. In other words, the more an act threatens S's or H's face, the more S will want to choose a higher-numbered strategy. The first strategy is used when there is no risk of loss of 'face' involved; participants in that conversation have no doubts about whether the speaker is committed to what he/she has said. A promise, for example, if A says 'I'm coming to the party tomorrow', it can be assumed that he will more than probably be at the party and practically, he has committed himself to the condition of his utterance. Brown and Levinson (69) claim there is no need for redressive action since the interlocutors are either on intimate terms or because other demands for efficiency make ineffective their 'face' concerns. The second strategy is a redressive action. It is employed when the speaker attends to the hearer's positive face and to his/her want to be liked and treated with interest. The third strategy also involves redressive action, the speaker takes into account the hearer's want to be deferred to, not to be imposed upon and not to be treated unfairly. The fourth strategy is employed when the risk of loss of face is great so the speaker chooses being indirect by giving the hearer a hint to interpret. The fifth strategy involves saying nothing because something seems so obviously harmful to the hearer's face that the speaker finds it best to say nothing. In conjunction with these five strategies of redress, Brown and Levinson further suggest three factors which may affect how face-threatening an interaction might be. These are first, social distance (D), that is how well you know someone; second, relative power and status (P); and third, the absolute ranking of the imposition (R). These factors are taken into consideration when calculating the weightiness of the FTA. Moreover, Brown and Levinson contend that the concept of face itself is universal, though the specific manifestations of face-wants may vary across cultures with some acts being more face-threatening in one culture than in another. The implication therefore is that different cultures might choose different politeness strategies in everyday conversation considering divergence of cultures and distinctive human peculiarities. Like Brown and Levinson, other linguists, Roberts, Davies and Jupp (121) believe that although

the use of deference is a universal strategy, when to be deferential and how deferential to be will often be culture-specific (as cited in Thijittang, 22-25).

Also, Leech has contributed immensely to the explication of language universals. He offers the basic framework for the interpretation of politeness in conversation. He sees politeness as forms of behavior aimed at creating and maintaining harmonious interaction (126 as cited in Thijittang, 25). Leech looked at politeness in terms of the following:

(i) The cost-benefit scale (whether the action is of cost to S [speaker] and benefit to H [hearer];

(ii) The optionality scale (what is the amount of choice S allows H in declining doing the action requested);

(iii) The indirectness scale (what is the length of the path connecting the illocutionary act to its illocutionary goal using the means-ends analysis).

From these scales, Leech (132) formulates six maxims for the politeness principle (PP).

1. Tact maxim: Minimize cost to other. Maximize benefit to other.

2. Generosity maxim: Minimize benefit to self. Maximize cost to self

3. Approbation maxim: Minimize dispraise of other. Maximize dispraise of self

4. Modesty maxim: Minimize praise to self. Maximize praise of other

5. Agreement maxim: Minimize disagreement between self and other. Maximize agreement between self and others

6. Sympathy maxim: Minimize antipathy between self and other. Maximize sympathy between self and other.

According to Leech, each maxim is accompanied by a sub-maxim, not all of the maxims are equally important and speakers may adhere to more than one maxim of politeness at the same time. He also concedes that the maxims may vary in importance from culture to culture (134).

This further strengthens the notion that conversation in general and by extension meaning, is largely tied to culture.

Another contributor in this field is Paul Grice. In 1975, Grice advanced the view that the goal of a successful communication can be achieved by complying with the co-operative principles and the maxims of conversation in interaction. These conversational principles and maxims are assumptions which guide the speakers and hearers in the conduct of a conversation. Without observing these rules, a successful conversation is hardly achievable. Here are the principles and maxims cited in Leech (101-102). The co-operative principle:

Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the

accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

The maxim of Quality try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

(i)   Do not say what you believe to be false

(ii)   Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

The maxim of Quantity

(i)   Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange.

(ii)   Do not make your contribution more informative than is required

The maxims of Relevance

Make your contributions relevant

The maxim of manner

Be perspicuous, and specifically:

(i)   Avoid obscurity

(ii)   Avoid ambiguity

(iii)   Be brief

(iv)   Be orderly

However, in actual communication, these rules are often breached. For example, the maxim of Quality may be flouted to uphold the principle of politeness. A speaker may speak what he knows to be false to avoid expressing an opinion that is impolite to the hearer. This gives rise to white lies. However, sometimes an illocution may not directly uphold a maxim but does so indirectly.

The politeness systems theory advocated by Scollon and Scollon in 1995 (cited in (Thijittang, 26) is also noteworthy in this field. The notion of õfaceö has been defined in Scollon and Scollon (44-6) as the negotiated public image, mutually granted to each other by participants in a communicative eventö. They observe the three politeness systems; the deference politeness system, the solidarity politeness system and the hierarchical politeness system. The distinction of the three systems is mainly based on whether there exists a power differential (+P or óP) and on the social distance between the interlocutors (+D or óD). The deference politeness system is one in which participants are equals or near equals but they treat each other at a distance. Relationships among professional colleagues who do not know each other well is one example. In a solidarity politeness system, speakers may feel neither power difference (-P) nor social distance (-D) between them. Friendships among close colleagues are often solidarity systems. In the hierarchical politeness system, the speakers resort to different politeness strategies: the person in upper position uses involvement politeness strategies in speaking õdownö and the person in the lower position uses independence politeness strategies in speaking õupö. Speakers with different positions in companies or government organizations are examples of people in a hierarchical system.

Based on the existing theories of politeness by Brown and Levinson, Leech , Grice and Scollon and Scollon ,Thijitang infers that in a social interaction, whatever an interlocutor says is potentially a face-threatening act in that it may cause the addressee to lose his/her negative or positive faces. However, participants adopt strategies of politeness in order to avoid face-threatening activities (26). The certainty of this claim may still be subject to verification since the clause of cultural specificity still remains the albatross in this equation.

2.3 Previous research studies on politeness/hedging phenomena and conversation analysis:-

As conversational strategies, politeness/hedging have been the focus of numerous studies that attempted to find out how these devices are employed and how speakers in a language community apply them in various social contexts which comprise request, apology, offers, greetings, criticisms, appreciation etc. in general.

Afolayan investigated politeness in English among the native speakers of Yoruba in Nigeria. He found out that an important factor of the social and power stratification of the Yoruba society was age. He equally noted that at par with the age factor was hereditary titles. Similarly, ones social and economic achievements constituted another important factor as well as the degree of familiarity among people. Thus, the less familiar, the higher you are ranked. Afolayan noted that Nigerians express politeness through intonation in their various languages. He further stated that the Yoruba express politeness by the use of a particular word, a group of words and two phrases. The word is ÷please÷, the group of words is made up of a subset of verbs usually called auxiliaries: namely; ÷could÷, ÷would÷, ÷should÷ and ÷might÷, and the two phrases are ÷thank you÷ and ÷grateful for÷ He stressed that ÷please÷ has become an idiom on its own and that it carries the meaning of politeness as it can be added to questions, requests or commands to soften the force of any question, request or command. He found that the group of words could, should, would, and might are used to

express politeness. But he noted that these words have each of two of the items in English. That is to say that ‒couldø, ‒shouldø, ‒wouldø and ‒mightø are the past tense counterparts of ‒canø, ‒shallø, ‒willø and ‒mayø as well as their present non-past tense alternatives. He also noted that the use of the words ‒couldø, ‒wouldø, ‒shouldø and ‒mightø give the hearer/reader the impression that his own choice or convenience mattered. Hence, they provide a more courteous means of expression than their present form counterparts.

Afolayan equally observed that Nigerians employ the phrase õthank youö for expressing appreciation and the almost non-inclusion of õthank youö for expressing politeness. He stated that it was therefore necessary to note that õthank youö was used to express polite acknowledgement of any act of courtesy or any little kindness: for example, someone leaving the way for us, someone opening the door for us and a counter salesman or clerk offering us a ticket or any other article. Still on the subject matter of appreciation, the author made a brief comment on ‒gratefulø He pointed out that what is always heard in Nigeria, õI am gratefulö is unusual. The normal phrase is õgrateful forö and the occurrence of the second element is always obligatory. His study revealed that much as Nigerians are viewed as people with a large measure of the social grace of politeness, it is important to say that the inadequate mastery of English by Nigerians is a major handicap as they often bring to bear the nuances of their native language into the English language conversation (57-64). Afolayanøs study is an interesting piece because it is one of, if not the foremost work on politeness in Africa and beyond. He x-rayed the behavioural pattern and culture of the South-western part of Nigeria. His study is a pointer to the fact that the concept of politeness is in practice in Nigeria which is very fundamental to the present study. But, while his focus was the native speakers of Yourba in Nigeria, the present study focuses on the native speakers of Igbo in Nigeria.

Ide studied the notion of politeness in Japanese society and argued that the concept of politeness in the Japanese language was totally different from that proposed by Brown and

Levinson. She claimed that for Japanese people, linguistic politeness was mainly a matter of conforming to the social conventions for the choice of linguistic forms. She believed that the concept of discernment was fundamental to politeness in Japanese. According to Ide, discernment is one of two general strategies, the other being called volition. They are used in order to achieve effective communication. With regard to discernment, the speaker must consider certain factors (e.g. social status, power, age, closeness etc) that pertain to the addressee, in addition to the situation. These factors automatically determine the selection of an appropriate linguistic form and/or appropriate behavior. Ide claimed that the strategy of volition was observed in a large part of the framework of politeness in Western culture and is more closely related to the politeness strategy proposed by Brown and Levinson. Ideøs study emphasized that Japan was a group oriented and relatively homogenous society, where solidarity and conformity were very important aspects of saving face in order to maintain harmony. She equally noted that discernment did not conflict with the universal theory of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson. Rather discernment was complimentary in that it was a part of the strategy of negative politeness (eg, to õgive deferenceö). She added that deference in Japanese culture focuses on the ranking difference between the conversational participants, whereas this ranking difference is not as important in Western culture.

Finally, Ideøs study revealed that in expressing politeness, the most crucial factors in the Japanese culture was social context. Therefore, knowledge of the ways in which social norms operate in specific cultural contexts is required before the potential threat to oneøs face can be determined (223-248). Ideøs study took another dimension by arguing that the concept of politeness in the Japanese language was different from that proposed by Brown and Levinson. She stated that factors such as social status, power, age and closeness were used to achieve effective communication. This study is very relevant to the present study as it has stressed that ways of expressing politeness differed from culture to culture. Ideøs study focused on the Japanese society while the present study focuses on the Igbo society.

Garcia compared apologies performed by non-native speakers of English from Venezuela with those of native speakers of English in open-ended role-plays. She found that the Venezuelans used more positive politeness strategies by saying something nice so as to express their friendliness or good feelings, whereas the native speakers applied more negative styles such as self-effacing; which come with some degree of humility and modesty (3-20). Garcia dwelt much on apologies as a speech act which is indexed in the concept of politeness, this study considers the generality of politeness as a conversation strategy particularly among the Igbo speaking states of Nigeria.

Beebe and Takahachi (1989:311-348) studied disagreement and chastisement, refusal and correction by utilizing a discourse completion test. Their data showed that the level of directness and the way of expressing disagreements and corrections of Japanese learners of English are influenced by the interloculorøs social status and power, compared to native speakers of English (American). According to the authors, when higher-status Americans disagree with lower-status Americans, they start out with something positive before letting out that they disagree. Their strategy is to make a suggestion or a request to avoid directly expressing disagreement. In contrast, Japanese in the same situation expresses disagreement directly. They pointed out that when lower-status Japanese disagree with higher status Japanese, they try to avoid directly expressing disagreement. The different choice of speech style is clearly related to the hierarchical nature of Japanese society. Their study revealed that the use of unfinished sentences in particular situations (e.g., request, refusal and complaint) is related to reserve and politeness in Japanese language. However, when learners of Japanese fail to use unfinished sentences in situations where most native Japanese speakers use them, it might sound imposing. Thus expressing politeness is a bidirectional process (311-348). In line with Ideøs study, Beebeøs and Takahachiøs study confirmed that expression of politeness

was context-bound. Their study is not out of line with the focus of the present study as they addressed salient issues of disagreement/chastisement, refusal/correction where politeness is employed.

Adegbija did a comparative investigation of politeness phenomena in Nigerian English, Yoruba and Ogori, using the general perspective of Brown and Levinson's discussion of politeness. The data collected from the naturalistic situations and role-playing/informal/interview sessions were recorded and analysed with the principal objectives of highlighting the nature of politeness strategies in Nigerian English, Yoruba and Ogori in various interactional contexts. The author stated that there was tension between universal and language specific means of showing politeness. He pointed out that among the Yoruba and Ogori people, as well as among speakers who were bilingual in Ogori and English as well as Yoruba and English, elders, superiors, Obas and Chief's constituted the principle targets of politeness.

In addition, it was culturally demanded that a great deal of politeness be shown to in-laws. Adegbija's study revealed that a wife made a great deal of effort not to appear rude to her parents-in-law. Often, silence was a potent negative politeness strategy used by the wife in dealing with her in-laws. The results of the study equally showed that the culture-specific belief of the people led females to confer much respect on males, especially when the males are older. Similarly, results showed that many women never called their husbands by name. Rather, he was addressed typically as father, which was a mark of politeness. The study confirmed that on politeness phenomena, utterances were interpretable as polite or impolite within the framework of a particular context or situation. Adegbija emphasized the discovery that politenesss phenomena in the language systems studied constituted a microcosm of the spirit of the socio-cultural milieu that sired them. Furthermore, the study suggested that in Nigerian English, Yoruba and Ogori (but certainly moreso in the latter two), the greater the

age and the higher the cultural and social status attained by an addressee, the greater the need the speaker feels to employ politeness strategies. A central conclusion also indicated by the study was that: although there were many similarities across languages and cultures in ways of showing politeness, tension also existed between such universal politeness strategies and cultural and language specific means of marking politeness. Therefore, for effective and fruitful cross-cultural and inter-language communication to occur, such tension must not only be borne in mind and understood, but also diffused (57-80). Adegbijaøs investigation is central in the present study as both adopted the general perspective of Brown and Levinson. However, while Adegbijaøs study focused on politeness phenomenon in Nigerian English, Yoruba and Ogori, the present study is centered on the politeness phenomenon about the Igbo bilinguals of Nigeria.

Nwoye examined the concept of linguistic politeness and the various strategies the Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria adopt for its achievement, adopting a cross-cultural approach to highlight the specific occurrence of the phenomenon among the Igbo. Nwoye stated that the traditional Igbo society was largely egalitarian with leadership attained by achievement. Generally, respect depended on achievement. Secondly, the Igbo were known for their cultivation of the art of speaking and their use of proverbs to embellish speech. He noted that the Igbo society was to a very large extent socially unstratified.

Consequently, the language had statistically fewer linguistic forms for expressing social differentiation in the form of respect and address forms. The author highlighted that age took precedence over all other factors that governed normal patterns of address in Igbo (e.g. equality, rank, age and sex). He pointed out that unlike some languages that have clearly marked respect terms, Igbo does not possess many respect terms in the lexicon. he stressed that in the absence, therefore of clearly and overtly marked means of indicating politeness in speech, Igbo speakers resorted to forms of indirectness, euphemisms and proverbs among

other strategies to achieve linguistic politeness. The findings from the study showed that linguistic politeness in an egalitarian Igbo society had been shown to operate more non-lexically than lexically, more indirectly than directly. The resort to indirectness, through the use of proverb, euphemisms, avoidance of names and tonal devices among others, stemmed from a cultural perception of what constitutes being polite. Personal relationships were valued and were often primary rather than secondary. Warmth and closeness as opposed to coldness and detachment were predicated upon those social values, which were measures of the strength of the relationships. His study revealed that causing offence and therefore displeasure was antithetical to these demands of cordial relationships, and every effort is made to avoid any overt manifestation in speech that could be perceived as causing an offence which could lead to friction in interpersonal relationship. Hence the resort to such devices as proverbs, euphemisms and other linguistic forms of indirectness, which succeed in conveying the intended message without necessarily leaving the unwanted and inevitable bad after-taste. The study concluded that linguistic politeness was part of a speaker's competence in his language. Secondly, knowing what constituted linguistic politeness (and the strategies for its achievement) in a given language was in fact an essential part of knowing the language and also an integral component of the ethnography of communication (259-275). This study by Nwoye typified the true nature of the Igbo of South-eastern Nigeria which is the study group of the present work. The study equally addressed in detail the nuances of the native speakers of the Igbo language which is very essential in trying to analyze the speech of the study group. Nevertheless, while Nwoye's work was based on the analysis of the native Igbo language, the present study looks at the English language conversation of the native Igbo speaker. To this extent, the present study remains quite distinctive.

Matsumoto's study on politeness and conversational universals in Japanese argued that Brown and Levinson's treatment of honorifics as one of the strategies of negative politeness,

õGive deferenceö, did not explain the nature of Japanese honorifics. She asserted that it was not necessarily face that governed the interactantsø behavior but rather interactional aspects of the conversation and social and psychological attitudes towards the particular referent expressed by the subject. The author maintained that in Japanese, speakers may use honorifics for utterances that are not usually considered to be face threatening when required by social context, such as when the hearer is of a higher status, the situation is formal, and so on. She equally emphasized that õno utterance in Japanese can be neutral with respect to the social contextö in which it is uttered; õa Japanese speaker cannot avoid conveying the setting and the relationship among the addressee, the third person(s) or object(s) which I will call referent(s) in the utterance, and him/herselfö. She added that the Japanese culture was one where the individual was more concerned with conforming to norms of expected behavior than with maximizing benefits to self, face or acting according to strategies designed to accomplish specific objectives such as pleasing or not displeasing others. In other words, polite behavior was a response to oneøs awareness of social expectations appropriate to his/her place in society (207-221).

Quite like previous studies by Ide (223-248), Beebe and Takahachi (311-348), Matsumotoøs study stressed that utterances and politeness are governed by social context and that polite behavior was a response to oneøs awareness of social expectations appropriate to his/her place in society. The present study will benefit from the outcome of Matsumotoøs study because it has made very cardinal points that context as well as social norms necessitate the use of politeness strategies.

Gu examined politeness phenomena in modern Chinese and made a contrast between private versus public face view of politeness rather indirectly. Guøs approach represented a public face view that emphasized group rather than the individual. Gu found Brown and Levinsonøs model unsuitable for accounting for politeness phenomena in Chinese. õThe Chinese notion

of negative face seems to differ from that defined by Brown and Levinson and in interaction politeness is not just instrumental, It is normativeö (241-242). He emphasized the normative nature of politeness in Chinese society, noting that Brown and Levinsonøs failure to go beyond the instrumental and recognize the normative function of politeness in interaction was probably due to their construction of their theory ground the notion of two rational and face-caring model persons. That, he argued, may/will work in atomistic and individualistic societies like those in the West, but not in a non-Western society where group was stressed above the individual.

Consequently, social interaction becomes an activity of continuous mutual monitoring of potential threats to the faces of the interactants, and of devising strategies for maintaining the interactants faces-a view that if always true, could rob social interaction of all elements of pleasure (237-258). Guøs view on politeness as it applies to the Chinese society is worth consideration in the present study as it emphasized the fact that politeness is more of a norm or behavioural pattern which governs communication and which interactants must knuckle under to achieve the desired goal and not merely a means to an end.

Another study by Nwoye looked at linguistic politeness and socio-cultural variations of the notion of face. He asserted that although no consensus definition of linguistic politeness had emerged, there was general agreement that it involved verbal strategies for keeping social interaction friction-free. He stated that the actual operations of these strategies in specific social settings tend to differ to the extent that the cultures operational in those settings differed. Nwoye noted that among the Igbo, ÷faceø, as a body-based metaphor, had many folk interpretations, and made a distinction between the Igboøs greater concerns for the collective self-image of the group than for the self-image of the individual. He explained group to be any social unit larger than the individual; constituted concentrically by the nuclear family, the extended family, the clan, the village, the town and the ethnic group in expanding order

(315). Thus the respect shown to people's names is extended to groups, so that one is equally wary of behavior capable of casting one's group in a bad light. The desire to guard the public self-image of the group finds articulation in the concern for face and name. This duality, according to him represents the Igbo notion of group face. Nwoye's analyses showed that the Igbo disposition to care more for the collective image of the group than that of the individual accounted for why acts normally regarded as impositions in some other societies were not so regarded by the Igbo. He stressed that the Igbo culture, was one where gregariousness rather than atomistic individualism was the norm, where people are still to a large extent their ‑brother's keepers', where very few acts were considered as impositions. According to Nwoye, ɔlike notions of face, notions of imposition are culture specificö, (316). The author stressed that Igbo hospitality and regard for the collective good rather than for the self make such acts as requests, offers, thanking, and criticisms, which elsewhere might be regarded as imposing on either the speaker or the hearer, routine occurrences bereft of any imposition. In Igbo and other societies similar to it, acts that require the aid or cooperation of others are solicited, in fact demanded from others, as a social right-that is, as a right accruing to the person requesting or demanding the act as a member of that society. Nwoye's study highlighted that the satisfaction of one's needs, while primary, was not pursued in an ‑I versus others spirit, but rather in an ‑I and others' spirit. That group orientation accounted for the almost total absence of imposition in Igbo society. His study revealed the Igbo regarded very few matters as strictly personal, and therefore, there was a high degree of what in Western societies would be regarded as meddlesomeness or not minding one's business.

Consequently, very few actions were regarded as impositions. Requests, criticisms, thanks and offers had been found not to be generally considered as imposing. Speech acts, such as requests were not in themselves inherently polite or impolite; rather, they are appropriate performances and attributes of good behavior inherent in good upbringing. The study concluded that the examination of the operations of politeness in Igbo society showed that

Igbo politeness differed from politeness in Western societies. Nwoye's study is indispensable in the present study as it dwelt particularly on the notions of face and notions of imposition which in Igbo setting are offshoots of the politeness phenomenon and agreed they were culture specific.

 The study pointed out that the Igbo society was a gregarious and holistic one and that what obtained in the other societies may not necessarily be the norm in the Igbo society (309-328). Having mirrored the Igbo society to that extent and in the light of the present study, we make bold to say that Nwoye's study gives shape to the structure of the current study.

Mao's research on the notion of face and politeness made two major arguments. The first concerned Brown and Levinson's overall conceptualization of face as a "self-image". In his view, such a self-oriented characterization of face, which may be applicable in the west, could be problematic in Chinese culture where self was not valued nearly as much. He pointed out that the Chinese notion of face emphasized not the accommodation of individual desires but the harmony of individual conduct with the views and judgments of the community. Mao's second point of argument was that the Chinese concept of face did not contain a component of negative face. Rather a Chinese desire to secure public acknowledgement of one's prestige or reputation. Mao stressed that the Chinese culture was more positive-politeness oriented and concluded that Chinese face represented a public image rather than a self-image (451-486). Maos' study is very similar to Gu's (237-258) as both dwelt on the Chinese culture and emphasized that the normative nature of politeness in the Chinese culture. It equally portrayed more of a public image rather than a self-image which may not be totally different from the holistic and not individualistic nature of the study group of the present study.

Takezewa investigated politeness and the speech act of requesting in Japanese as a second language. The study looked at how Japanese native speakers and non-native speakers of Japanese attained their request goals while maintaining the face of both the requester and requestee. The data for the study were not collected in natural conversation; rather a DCT was used to elicit the needed information. The study showed that the Japanese subjects used sociolinguistic devices (e.g., nominalizers and unfinished sentences) as well as honorifics in order to show politeness and mitigate imposition. The Canadian subjects, on the other hand, used honorifics but did not use other, more subtle sociolinguistic devices. Differences were also found in the way that native Japanese and learners of Japanese reacted when the requestee indirectly refused their initial request. The author observed that the native Japanese made long pauses and waited for the requestee's suggestion or decision, while the learners of Japanese attempted to negotiate with the requestee immediately. He noted that differences in perception of social variables such as relative status might have led to these different reactions. The researcher concluded that while honorifics were used to show politeness in formal requesting situations, other more subtle linguistic devices such as nominalizers and unfinished sentences were also used to lessen the degree of imposition and create feelings of empathy and understanding between the requester and requestee. Thus, learners of Japanese must be made aware of those devices in order to communicate more effectively with native speakers of Japanese (52-103). Takezewa's research mirrored politeness in the act of request in the Japanese and observed the choice of linguistic devices that are employed to show politeness in requesting. The findings of this research will be of use in the present study as it will also consider the act of requesting in data collection addressing politeness as a phenomenon in the Igbo society.

Ambady, Koo, Lee & Rosenthal examined linguistic and non-linguistic politeness in two cultures (Koreans and Americans). The study investigated politeness strategies expressed

through different channels of communication (silent, videos, speech, full-channel video and audio and transcript of speech) and found that politeness strategies were communicated non-linguistically as well as linguistically. In their study, they drew from the similarities across cultures and expressed that across both linguistic and non-linguistic channels of communication, three main types of strategies were used in both Korean and American samples: affiliation, circumspection and other orientation. Where affiliation comprised purely positive strategies, circumspection comprised negative and off-the-record strategies and other-orientation comprised both positive and negative strategies. Result showed that across both cultures, participants used strategies of affiliation and circumspection in a similar manner. That is, both Americans and Koreans were more affiliative toward peers and more affiliative and less circumspect towards Superiors. Similarly, both were more affiliative and less circumspect when delivering good news. Again, they worked on differences across cultures and asserted that Americans were affected more by the content of the message than by their relationship with the target of the message. Their findings support the assertion that in low context culture (eg. American culture) the content of communication was extremely important: Directness and accuracy were valued, and relationships were based on equality rather than hierarchy. In high context cultures (e.g. Korean culture), however, the relational and hierarchical context rather than the content of the message per se conveyed meaning. In such cultures, individual identity is embedded in socially defined roles. Therefore context factors such as group membership and the roles of target and speaker were used in conveying and interpreting meaning. The authors concluded that their study was of the view that politeness strategies were used as a response to non-face-threatening acts and participants across cultures used more affiliative strategies in delivering good news to peers.

Furthermore, whereas some linguistic as well as non-verbal strategies seemed to be universal, others were culture specific. Ambady, Koo, Lee & Rosenthal's investigation showed that much as cultures differed from one society to the other, there where identifiable similarities.

Their study made a distinction between low context cultures (e.g. American culture) and the high context cultures (e.g. Korean culture). This distinction may be useful in the analysis of the present study as it may help show at what points different cultures may be adjudged similar and at what point they vary.

Sugimoto compared American and Japanese studentsø styles of apology drawing particularly into various strategies adopted to show politeness in the speech act. Her data were collected from 200 American and 181 Japanese college students which involved responding to a questionnaire in an average of 15-20 minutes during regularly scheduled classes. The questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions on situations warranting an apology. The result of her study indicated that more Japanese students stressed the importance of atonement. The four most used strategies denotative of politeness phenomena were statement of remorse, accounts, description of damage and reparation. Japanese students used these strategies more than Americans, except in the case of accounts. There were also cultural differences in the use of apologies. Japanese students used more magnified and elaborate types of remorse statements. They tend to repeat words whereas Americans use intensifiers. Unlike Americans, Japanese students described the negative side of the situation which they chose to mollify (349-370). Sugimotoøs study addressed styles of apology by looking into strategies adopted to show politeness. While this study focused on American and Japanese students, the present study is centered on Nigerian students of Igbo extraction but will equally analyze the conversation of the study group in apologizing vis a vis the politeness phenomenon.

Yahya and Azima examined the notion of polite request strategies as used by female speakers of Yemeni Arabic in the same gender and cross gender. They observed that there was a general trend in a hierarchical politeness in both female ó female interactions and female ó

male interactions. Female speakers of Yemeni Arabic in a hierarchical politeness system employed high levels of directness without the fear of losing ―face‖ That, they confirmed was not indicating the appropriateness of directness in ―close‖ social distance relationships, but probably the fact that it was the expected behavior in such situations. The findings showed that there was general preference by native speakers of Yemeni Arabic to use conventional indirectness strategies with high frequency and percentage in situations where the speakers (requester), whereas the requester had higher power and distance than the requestee if the preference strategies were directness.

The study concluded that polite request strategies differed from culture to culture. Native speakers of Yemeni Arabic used direct requests with softness (I think) in a high frequency to mitigate their requests. Also, the study proved that imperative form was not as impolite in Yemeni Arabic as it was in English or any other language. Thus, direct requests were classified in Yemeni Arabic as solidarity politeness strategies because they implied that the speaker assumed only a small social distance between her/himself and the interlocutor. Yahya and Azima‗s study of polite request strategies concentrated on the female speakers of Yemeni Arabic in the same and cross gender. Their investigation is worthy of note in the present study as it redirects the present study to the issue of gender. And will help address if there exists differences in women‗s and men‗s speech in line with the scope of the study.

Habwe investigated politeness Phenomena, a case of Kiswahili Honorifics. The author used observation as a means of obtaining data in Nairobi where standard Kiswahili was also spoken. Habwe pointed out that honorifics were a chief politeness strategy across many discourse domains, and were conspicuously used and seemed easy to learn, adding that honorifics complement other politeness strategies contents, as change of content for some honorific terms yielded different results. Habwe stressed that in some cases, the use of honorific only sounded comical. But usage of the same honorifics term with people who had

a status difference yielded honorific effect with attendant politeness results. Habwe's investigation specifically focused on employees and their employers, students with their educators, children with their parents, the ruled with their rulers, the young and the old. The author found out that there was recourse to honorific use that fostered politeness which was meant to establish good social bonding and politeness by their junior members of society showing respect for their senior members. Conversely, people in higher hierarchies occasionally needed honorific references to address their juniors to avoid face threatening acts that might ruin a good conversational encounter. The study found out that greater emphasis was laid on the use of honorifics in formal situations although the honorifics cut across both formal and informal settings. The study revealed that Kiswahili honorifics often complemented other politeness strategies in order to reinforce politeness values which were a major individual and social concern in Nairobi. The study concluded that the assumption by Brown and Levinson that interlocutors were potentially aggressive was not necessarily true in regard to standard Kiswahili society since honorific usage and politeness etiquette was expected in most encounters where interlocutors were socially defined (126-142). Habwe's analysis of politeness phenomenon as it concerns the use of Honorifics by Kiswahili speakers makes the valid point that the use of honorifics was a chief politeness strategy. It will be fair to note how this reflects in the Igbo society since the present study attempts to analyze social factors that actuate politeness and examine if the use of honorifics is dominant in the study group.

Alaoui did a comparative study of English and Moroccan Arabic Request, offers and thanks analyzing various formats that politeness formular can exhibit in such speech acts. The author made a salient point that those acts were rather complex, and involved potential threat to the speaker and/or hearer's face. She stated the data centered on only two parties, Speaker and Hearer, who interact in a social context and that it was note-worthy that politeness was more

around/on H rather than S in that S always tried to mitigate the effect of his/her utterance on H. Analysis of data showed that there were various linguistic realizations on the same propositional content but which reflected the various levels of politeness that a speaker may use. According to the study, requests delimit Hǿs freedom of choice since S, in some way imposed his/her will either directly or indirectly, may sound rude but achieved through the use of the imperative which expressed Sǿs belief that H will undoubtedly perform the action. Result of the study equally showed that unlike requests, offers put S in a higher position than H i.e. S becomes the performer of the action and H the beneficiary of it. The study concluded that politeness was essential in social interaction whether it was between people of the same culture, the same social status, age and level of education or not, and its significance came more to the fore considering that English had become an international language and therefore needs new concepts. More so, it is important and necessary to understand the overall phenomena of politeness to conquer the problems of its usage (7-15). Alaouiǿs study will play a role in the current research as it will investigate in considerable measure instances of request, offers and thanks as indices of politeness phenomenon. However while Alaouiǿs study focused on English and Morocan Arabic, the present study will focus on the Igbo native speakers in Nigeria.

Dang studied politeness strategies for maintaining English and Vietnamese conversations. The study was to help learners know deeply how English and Vietnamese conversations were politely maintained, the similarities and differences of the strategies used between the English speaking people and Vietnamese. Findings of the study showed that politeness strategies for making a conversation in the two languages were carried out mainly in the view of pragmatics. However, the choice of politeness strategies was also affected by cultural and social factors. The data illustrated some similarities and differences in English and Vietnamese. In terms of context both groups preferred positive politeness strategies in

speaking. In terms of difference, English and Vietnamese women tend to use more negative politeness strategies than men in speaking, but men showed more sympathy in listening than women. The result reflected the strong influence of the culture and social factors of each group on the way they employed politeness strategies. However, the result was expected to help people in two languages avoid embarrassment, misunderstanding and shock in communication as it concerned the application of politeness as conversational strategy (13-24). Dang's investigation showed that the choice of politeness strategies was affected by cultural and social factors. His study focused on politeness strategies for maintaining English and Vietnamese conversation and may not be far from part of what the present study seeks. But whereas Dang's concentration was on English and Vietnamese conversation, the current study will dwell on the English language conversation of Igbo native speakers.

Odebunmi investigated politeness in Doctor-client encounters in Southwestern Nigeria. The goal of the study was to unpack the discursive elements that characterize interactive confluence and divergence in selected consultative encounters in the hospitals. One hundred consultative sessions in 25 hospitals in six states of Southwestern Nigeria were tape-recorded and random interviews were conducted with 50 clients on their impressions about the dispositions of doctors to clients. Only 60 of those interactions involving clients of Yoruba extraction were purposively sampled. The author argued that the politeness cues preferred in doctor-client interactions in Southwestern Nigeria established interactive alignments and disalignments with the Yoruba cultural norms at the greeting stage of the meetings. Data showed that terms, honorific or otherwise were selected relative to age or status of incipient and recipient interactants. Thus, doctors, irrespective of their professional pedestal had to be subjected to the cultural precincts of the larger Yoruba society. The picture showed the level of accommodation and cultural compromise clients orient to in the hospital where greater age or status did not necessarily constitute an index of politeness from doctors. Much of the data

also revealed that doctorøs choice and interpretation of politeness cues in Southwestern Nigerian hospitals were constrained more by the medical institutional norms than by the Yoruba cultural values. Random unstructured interviews conducted with clients revealed that many doctors were considered arrogant, rude and clinical, but that clients had had to take whatever disalignments experienced in the consultative encounters in exchange, as appropriate, for effective medical interventions. Result showed that clientsø retention in hospitals was not based on social acceptability of the medical institution but rather on its professional competence. Odebunmi concluded that doctors must orient more to the cultural face needs of the people, especially at the greeting stage for more rewarding consultative encounters (101-117). Odebunmiøs study is of importance to the present study considering that both studies are in Nigeria. The point of divergence is that while Odebunmiøs study was specifically a doctor-client routine, the present study will consider various segments of the society.

Enang, Eshiet & Udoka examined politeness in language use, a case of spoken English. The study considered the multilingual posture of Nigeria a conglomeration of many ethnic nationalities. The authors expressed that verbal forms of address according to politeness and the response to speech act in the discourse was enhanced by the presence or absence of some cultural variables, which were often shown in the attitude of the interlocutors. Data were gathered by the tape-recording of speeches and responses from sixty (60) randomly selected Nigerians of Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo and Efik/Ibibio/Anaang origins. Analysis of data revealed that polite expressions in spoken Nigerian English were inextricable from the socio-cultural conventions of the various ethnic nationalities that constitute the country. The study showed that inherent in the discourse were such features as social, distance, sex, age, social background etc which served as determiners of polite utterances, whether positively or negatively.

The result of the study highlighted that there were socio-cultural manifestations of politeness in spoken Nigerian English and illustrated how politeness was expressed in greetings, thanks, apologies and requests etc. considering the multilingual nature of Nigeria. The authors further noted that every language use was a reflection of the norms, rules and mores of the socio-cultural environment in which it functioned. Thus for the Nigerian, the concept of politeness cannot be detached from social and cultural conventions (1-14). This study by Enang, Eshiet and Udoka which examined politeness in language use is very essential to the present study. The study did not only capture the spoken English in Nigeria but also focused on the responses of 60 Nigerians of Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo and Efik/Ibibio/Anaang origins. The result of the study will be very useful in the data analysis of the present study since they have a point of confluence.

Gillani and Mahmood explored the politeness strategies used in Pakistani business communication. The study investigated the differences between Pakistani and American way of using politeness strategies in business communication. The Brown and Levinson's model of politeness strategies was adapted in the research. The study described different features of politeness strategies of Pakistani business communication. The results of the present study showed that there was a great deal of differences in the use of politeness strategies in business communication between Pakistani and American English. The authors pointed out that there were differences and similarities between native and non-native varieties and their usage of politeness strategies. The study revealed that the Pakistanis used honorific instead of using specific names while Americans used the specific names instead of any other address forms. The authors asserted that differences spotted made a divergence between the cultures and social norms as Pakistanis were more polite than American in using address forms.

In addition, the study reported that Pakistanis maintained their social distance and power ranking with more polite attitude. Instances made it more clearly with the frequency that the

social norms of Pakistanis were more polite and the social distance had a little bit of intimacy between interactants. Pakistanis were observed to have used indirect attitude to try to mitigate the threat to the addressee's face and avoided doing the FTAs. The authors concluded that Pakistanis seemed to be more polite in their attitudes than American and that they used their own distinctive strategies which do not even exist in the model of politeness given by Brown and Levinson (23-44). The study by Gillani and Mahmood investigated politeness strategies in the business milieu. Its focus was Pakistani and American way of using politeness strategies. Like Habwe's (126-142) study, it considered the use of honorifics by the Pakistanis and observed that the Pakistanis seemed to be more polite than Americans. The study is similar to the present study in that Brown and Levinson's 1987 model of politeness strategies were adopted.

On hedging, Lakoff remains the brain behind the concept of hedges and hedging and its popularity in language study. Lakoff (195) described hedge/hedging "as lexical units whose job it is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy". The author was more interested in the properties of words such as *rather* or *sort of* and how they make things fuzzy or less fuzzy (vague or less vague). For Lakoff, hedging involved the gradual reduction of the membership of a particular expression. Lakoff suggested that any attempt to limit the truth conditions for natural language sentences to true, false, and "nonsense" would distort the natural language concepts by portraying them as having sharp rather than vaguely defined boundaries. Lakoff began with a semantic discussion of *sort of*, pointing out that this predicate modifier and others like it reveal different distinctions of category membership. In the sentences below,

a) A robin is *sort of* bird [false, no questions it's a bird]

b) A chicken is *sort of* a bird [true or very close true]

c) A penguin is *sort of* a bird [true or close to true]

d) A bat is *sort of* a bird [false or very close to false]

e) The cow is *sort of* a bird [false]

The degree of truth must be rejectedø for a real bird. Lakoff discussed other hedges such as par excellence, typically, strictly speaking, loosely speaking and in essence, showing that these hedges interact with the term they modify, but in different ways. Lakoff was primarily interested in hedges, not hedging. He offered the following as examples of hedges in English: real, regular, actually, almost, as it were basically, can be viewed as, crypto-, especially, essentially, exceptionally, for the most part, in a manner of speaking, in a real sense, in a sense, in a way, kind of, largely, literally, loosely speaking, more or less, mostly, often, on the tall side, par excellence, particularly, pretty much, principally, pseudo-, quintessentially, rather, really, relatively, roughly, so to say, somewhat, sort strictly speaking, technically, very, virtually. Lakoff also showed that the interpretation of hedges was dependent on context and that the effect of hedging was a pragmatic not a semantic phenomenon. Thus the interpretation of a hedged utterance depended largely on the hearerøs knowledge of the subject matter hence context of use.

Lakofføs pioneer work on hedges has remained a basis for a myriad of other studies on hedges and hedging. It has provided a rich framework on the study of language as a social phenomenon. It has equally expressed at length and in great detail a catena of words that exemplify the concept of hedging in everyday conversation. Therefore it is very important in the present study as it has broadened the scope of the concept which was initially limited to only a few words.

Hubler made a two-way distinction of hedging between what he called UNDERSTATEMENTS and HEDGES, although he used understatement as a cover term for both. For Hubler, understatement means that –emotional negotiability (of sentences) is restricted through the indetermination of the phrasticö, that is, they concern the propositional content of the sentence. For instance, õit is *a bit* cold in here, contains an understatement. The

author maintained that Hedging is restricted through the indetermination of the neusticö, that is, it concerns the speakerøs attitude to the hearer regarding the proposition, the claim to validity of the proposition the speaker makes. For instance, it is cold in Alaska, *I suppose*, contains a hedge (9). Hublerøs notion of understatement and hedging tries to mark them out as separate entities even though he claims to use understatement as a cover for both. His work does not make a sweeping generalization of the term hedging but goes ahead to distinguish particles that are considered as understatement and those considered as hedges which is key to the present study.

Hosman examined the separate and combined impact of hedges, hesitations and intensifiers on the perceptions of authoritativeness, sociability, character and similarity, and the extent to which messages containing one or more of these language variables differ from a õprototypicallyö powerless message in evaluative consequences. Hosman explained that a õprototypicallyö powerless message is one that contained not only hedges, hesitations, and intensifiers, but also contained polite forms and meaningless particles, such as õoh, wellö and õyou knowö.

The study found that messages with low levels of intensifiers, hedges, and hesitations were more powerful than the prototypically powerless messages. The study indicated that if speakers wished to be perceived as powerful and sociable, they should avoid using hesitations or hedges, while intensifiers were perceived as powerful, but only in the absence of hesitations or hedges. Hosman expressed that the use of hedges and hesitations in interaction may be some idiosyncratic characteristics of the messages or its content which led to the interaction. The results of the study claim that power of speech style was related to perceived lack of control or uncertainty in a situation. More so, language variables that indicate uncertainty, such as hedges or hesitations were perceived as relatively powerless.

From the analysis, the author explained that language variables may signal two types of uncertainties that are related differently to attributions of authoritativeness and sociability. He distinguished between the two types of uncertainties, where one type of uncertainty was lack of control in a context. He noted that speakers who were uncertain may hesitate or hedge, which in turn, caused them to be perceived as non-authoritative. The author claimed that the other type of uncertainty was due either to understanding that the world is probabilistic, requiring qualification of comments, or to planning of one¢s comments. That, he labeled ÷rhetorical uncertaintyø and would be a more positive form attributionally than the other type. The author summarized the impact of hedges, hesitations and intensifiers on evaluations of a speaker¢s authoritativeness, sociability, character and similarity. The study concluded that main effects for hedges and hesitations were similar and were not indicative of utter powerlessness in speech or interaction (383-406).

The above study has shed more light on the perception of the concept of hedging and has equally added the term hesitation to further ground the concept of hedging for better understanding. It is very relevant to the present study because it did not narrow its scope to particular language/languages but dwelt more on the authoritativeness factor in hedging and its impact in speech or interaction.

Dixon and Foster did a reanalysis of women¢s language, which Holmes had argued expressed inter-personal warmth and not as many researchers have maintained linguistic tentativeness. They defined the term hedge as ÷a class of devices that supposedly soften utterances by signaling imprecision and non-commitment e.g. about, sort of and you know for the pragmatic particles and possibly and perhaps as the modal termsø Drawing from Holmes, Dixon and Foster made a distinction between the affective and the epistemic functions or hedges. In their affective role, hedges express speaker¢s desire to create and maintain inter-personal solidarity. In their epistemic role, they express speakersø uncertainty about the

validity of particular statements. The study analyzed same-sex and mixed-sex conversations in a South African context and focused particularly on the use of just two hedging devices, *sort of* and *you know*. The study also examined the influence of two contextual variables upon language use, namely situational competitiveness and audience gender. Analysis of the study showed that the use of hedges was of course rarely clear-cut and that the epistemic and affective functions of hedges were usually not mutually exclusive but coexisted within particular utterances. Dixon and Foster pointed out that contrary to the evidence presented in previous research works, they did not find that women used supportive hedges (affected *sort of* and confident *you know*) more frequently than men. Nor did they find that men used modal hedges (tentative *sort of* and unconfident *you know*) more frequently than women.

The authors equally argued that unlike some previous work, there was little evidence of sex differences in the overall rate of usage of hedged speech and stressed that hedging was not gender differentiated in their experiment, at least on the language dimensions investigated. The result of the study showed that men employed more hedges than women but only when both sexes were talking to female addressees, which may reflect men's desire to win the approval of the female dyad partners, to proclaim common ground and shared experience. In their conclusion, the research confirmed that hedging was a flexible resource that men and women used in a varied, contextually sensitive manner. And although locating no overall gender differences in the frequency of hedging, the results have shown that men's and women's hedging behavior was influenced differently by social context (89-107)

The study by Dixon and Foster is important in the present study as it has revealed that hedges never express uncertainty, imprecision, warmth or any other social function in existence. Rather, they do so only when they become mobilized in the concrete arenas of everyday talk, as forms of situated practice. It is equally important to note that while Dixon's and Foster's

study focused on the use of just two hedging devices in a South African context, the present study seeks to unveil several hedging devices used in the English language conversation of Igbo bilinguals of Nigeria.

Caffi wrote about MITIGATION which she referred to as –the attenuation of unwelcome effects on the hearer and proposed a classification of mitigating mechanism (mostly hedging devices) based on her view of the three components of the utterance on which mitigation can operate: the proposition, the illocution, the utterance source. She called these BUSHES, HEDGES, and SHIELDS, respectively. According to Caffi, BUSHES are lexical expressions that reduce the commitment to the propositional content of the utterance and may introduce vagueness in the interpretation of the utterance and affect the truth value of the proposition. HEDGES are lexical expressions whose scope is the illocutionary force of the speech act that attenuates the strength of the force by reducing the speaker's commitment.

SHIELDS on the other hand are devices to avoid the self-ascription to the utterance and realize an overall shift of responsibility, for instance by introducing a different speaker or by deleting the deictic origin of the utterance. Caffi's mitigators covered the same concepts as propositional hedging as well as speech act hedging and was quite clear that mitigation was not the same as politeness. She wrote õfar from being limited to a matter of politeness, mitigation captures a rationally grounded behavior which is chiefly aimed at avoiding unnecessary risks, responsibilities and conflicts. At the same time, mitigation indexes the type of speaker we want to be taken for in a given encounter (881-901& 12). The author suggested that a mitigating speaker can be perceived as impolite, and conversely, a non-mitigating, direct speaker can be perceived as exquisitely polite. In Caffi's view, politeness is one of many possible effects of a mitigating operation, an effect that is both calculable and uncertain, that is, not guaranteed. Caffi's approach concluded that hedges have the overall effect of attenuating the force of the speech act. Caffi's concept of mitigation which has three

components namely bushes, hedges and shields offers insight to other terms which function in same manner as hedges, but did not spell out in clear terms these words and in what capacity they act.

Yu examined the pragmatic development of hedging by EFL Learners. She analyzed written questionnaire, simulated debates and oral interview of 211 Chinese learners from junior high school, high school and university-level English courses in China. She categorized hedges into quantification approximators, performative shields, modal shields, pragmatic-marker hedges, and other syntactic and discoursal hedging strategies. Results of her study indicated that learners progressed from a system in which learners used only performative *I think* to an intermediate stage with combinations of intensifiers and mitigators before they progressed to an advanced system at the university level in which they exhibit awareness of hedging clusters that draw on all categories of hedges. Moreover, Yu noted that the results of her study may have been affected by the tasks that learners were asked to perform; she pointed out that there were significant differences in the frequency and range of hedges between the oral interviews with the teacher and the debate task. She concluded that hedges in general contributed to communicative competence by allowing the speaker to express various conversational signals, and that at every level, hedges were formally and functionally very similar (89-107). Yuøs study is a good expose on the learnersø choice of hedge terms by analyzing that learners progressed from a system where they used only *I think* to a stage where they combined intensifiers and mitigators to advanced use of hedging clusters. While Yuøs study focused on Chinese learners of the English language, the present study focuses on the Igbo learners of the English language.

Fraser reviewed hedging ¬as an aspect of pragmatic competence, thus describing hedging as ¬a rhetorical strategy that attenuates either the full semantic value of a particular expression, as in *He's* sort of *nice*, or the full force of a speech act, as in *I must ask you to stop doing that*

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(15). Fraser explained that when non-native speakers fail to hedge appropriately, they may be perceived as impolite, offensive, arrogant, or simply inappropriate. Thus, failing to recognize a hedge utterance, they may misunderstand a native speakerøs meaning. According to Fraser, this is especially unfortunate when speakers are otherwise fluent, since people typically expect that someone who speaks their language well on the grammatical level has also mastered the pragmatic niceties. On the evolution of hedging, Fraser stressed that Weinreich 1966 was the first person to write about hedging in the linguistic research literature when he talked about õmetalinguistic operatorsö such as _true_, *real, so-called, strictly speaking,* and the most powerful extrapolator of all, *like* function as instructions for the loose or strict interpretation of designate. The author noted however, that it was Lakoff (458-508) who had the greatest initial impact, and it was his papers that popularized the concept. He remarked that for Lakoff, hedging involved the attenuation of the membership of a particular expression, e.g.

a. John is *sort of* smart

b. That is *technically* a bookcase. or the reinforcement of the class membership, eg.

a) John is *very, very* smart

b) I *really* love you

c) What I tell you is the *absolute* truth. Fraser expressed the general agreement that hedging was a rhetorical strategy, by which a speaker using a linguistic device, could signal a lack of commitment to either the full semantic membership of an expression (PROPOSITIONAL HEDGING) e.g.

(a) Heøs really like a geek or the full commitment of the force of the speech act being conveyed (SPEECH ACT HEDGING) e.g.

a. Come over here, can you? The author noted that the notion of REINFORCEMENT, initially considered a part of hedging, had pretty much been laid aside. Thus, sentences such as:

a) *I certainly do insist that you sit down*

b) *He is extremely* tall are not generally viewed today as instances of hedging but rather as reinforcement. Fraser posited that õthe fact that an expression may be used as a hedge is not part of its definition but that an expression is usually only recognize as a hedge when it is used in hedging. Thus, it should not be surprising that there is no grammatical class of hedges, since hedging devices are drawn from very syntactic category (23). He offers some examples of English hedges and their associated linguistic analysis:

a. Adverbs/adjective: approximately, roughly, about, often, occasionally

b. Impersonal pronouns: one, it

c. Concessive conjunctions: although, though, while, whereas, even if

d. Hedged performative verb): I *must ask you to sit down*

e. Indirect speech acts: could you speak a little louder?

f. Introductory phrases: I believe to our knowledge, we feel thatí .

g. Modal adverbs: perhaps, possible, practically, presumablyí .

h. Modal adjectives: possible, probable, likely, unlikelyí .

i. Modal noun: assumption, claim, possibility, estimate, suggestioní .

j. Modal verbs: might, can, would, couldí .

k. Epistemic verbs: to seem, to appear, to believe, to assume to suggestí .

l. Negative question convey positive hedged assertion: didnøt harry leave? [I think harry left]. I donøt think Iøm going vs. Iøm not going [former hedges the meaning of latter].

m. Reversal tag: Heøs coming, isnøt he? [I think heøs coming]

n. Agentless passive: many of the troops were injuredí

o. Conditional subordinators (as long as, so long as, assuming thatí .)

p. Progressive form: I am hoping you will come

q. Tentative inference: The mountains should be visible from here

r. Conditional clause refers to the condition under which the speaker makes the utterance: *if you're going my way,* I need a lift back.

s. Metalinguistic comment such as (strictly speaking, so to say, exactly, almost, about)

Fraser further explained that the effect of hedging was found in the interpretation of the utterance rather than in the semantic meaning of the sentence uttered as hedging gives an indication of the speakers intentions. The author outlined the relationship of hedging to other discourse effects and summarized that some instances of hedging gave rise to other discourse effects like: Vagueness - we reduce our requirement of precision to accommodate the hearer.

Evasion-when the information received from the speaker fails to meet your expectation.

Equivocation-the use of a word with more than one meaning, where the intention is to mislead the hearer.

Politeness-the want to have his/her freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded.

Fraser concluded that ―Hedging was all around us, with message being attenuated both on the propositional level and the speech act level. Not only does hedging appropriately help us achieve our communicative goals, but, failing to hedge where it is expected, as well as failing to understand the meaning of hedging, had great potential for miscommunication (15-34).

Fraserøs review of the concept of hedge and hedging is very comprehensive and touches on various aspects that were not given proper listing in some previous work. It will be very relevant in the classification of hedging in the present study.

Jalilifar and Alvai surveyed hedging devices in political interviews. Their study investigated hedges in relation to political power, face and politeness. They viewed hedging as one tactful strategy in political rhetoric which is associated with vagueness and innuendos. They had observed that politicians achieve their own political aim that is, constraining the mass action-environment through coercion. However, there is another means, which is more tactful, hence

strategic and that is: using political rhetoric to persuade people to act in the way they (politicians) want. The authors noted that since power can only be exercised in social relations and language has an indispensable role in maintaining these relations, politicians manipulate language to shape people's thoughts. They observed that political languages consisted õlargely of euphemisms and fuzziness which are designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable and to give an appearance of solidity of pure windö (2011:44). Their study focused on linguistic strategies adopted by politicians in political interviews to evade explicitly stating their ideas and to camouflage their identity in discourse and brought into view hedging as another linguistic strategy frequently and strategically exploited by politicians to cover up their ideas. They remarked that; (1) hedges were used to create vitality, facilitate discussion, indicate politeness and lubricate phatic communication. (2) Hedges were considered as positive or negative politeness strategies that serve the function of reducing threat to the addresses negative face by mitigating the claims and giving the addresses the freedom of judgment or showing solidarity with the community. (3) Hedges could be used as shields to protect the addresser, who anticipates possible negative consequences of being proved wrong from criticism. (4) Hedges not only fulfill the function of avoiding face-threatening-acts, but they may also be the result of a speech style, a product of social forces, or devices that give life to language.

The findings of this study provided evidence for the relationship between hedging and the degree of political power and equally shed some light on the relationship between hedging patters, politeness and face. The study concluded that the questions and the interviewer's behavior towards the interviewee could change the pattern of hedging on the part of the interviewee and that the degree of political power influenced both the quantity and the quality of the hedging devices (43-66). From the above, we may infer that communicative purposes, power, status as well as cultural impacts determine wording and choice of hedging patterns in

conversation. This is not totally off the way of the present study as instrument of data collection would require context specific criteria.

Huy and Nhung studied the similarities and difference in the use of hedges in English and Vietnamese conversations. Their focus was to help Vietnamese use English effectively as well as point out the implication for learning and using hedges. They defined conversation as discourse mutually constructed and negotiated in time between speakers; which is usually informal and unplanned. The authors insisted that Hedges are considered as a tool for people to protect themselves from the audience; using hedges make a sense of neutral for the statement; hence, outright negative impacts can be denied by the speaker. They equally highlighted two major importance of hedges in conversations. First, the existence of hedges in some cases gains confidence for speakers in terms of giving opinion in front of the crowd, or answering interviews since at every point, listeners are always ready to assess the exactness of what is said. Second, it both reveals speakersø modesty and protects speakersø self image from their unfriendly listeners. The study revealed that the two languages involved the same aims of using hedges in conversations and introduced hedges that often appeared in daily conversation to include: ÷as far as I knowø, ÷I guessø, ÷as you probably knowø, ÷to cut a long story shortø, ÷not to change the topicø, ÷I donøt know this is importantø, ÷Iøm not sure if this makes senseø among others.

The study equally showed that hedges exist as a word, a phrase, and a clause in English but only exist as a word in Vietnamese. The study confirmed that hedge expressions were very limited and boring in literature works of Vietnamese writers. In other words, the hedge is rarely applied by Vietnamese writers and in the aspect of vocabulary; hedge expressions had a repetition of words. The researchers called the hedge that served friendly relation among people a speech act hedge and that which maintained a good conversation, they called conversational hedge. They expressed that there were similarities in the use of hedges in both

Vietnamese and English and that the idea of protecting self-image which they served was universal. The study concluded that the form of hedges in both languages could be a word, a phrase and a sentence and stated that the distinguishing point between the two languagesø hedges was the behavior style. And that the Vietnamese hedges were not as various in vocabulary as English hedges were (27-39). This study by Hug and Nhung investigated the similarities and differences between the use of hedges in English and Vietnamese conversation and makes the valid point that the use of hedges was universal. But while the focus of the study was English and Vietnamese, the present study focuses on the hedging devices in the conversational English of Igbo bilinguals.

Neary-Sundquist investigated the use of hedges (mitigating expressions like I think or sort of) in the speech of learners of English at multiple proficiency levels as well as of native speakers. She posited that hedges were used to moderate the force of an utterance in interpersonal communication. The work analyzed data from native speakers of Chinese, Korean and English and compared a range of learners at four different proficiency levels. The result showed that ESL learners generally used hedges at lower rate than native speakers, except for the highest non-native proficiency group, level 6. Analysis also showed that there was a dramatic change in hedge use that took place between the level 5 and the level 6 group; as overall hedge use more than doubled between those two levels. Data showed that in terms of the range of hedges used, all learner groups and the native speaker group favoured the use of the hedges *I think* and *just* as they were the most frequently used by all groups. Again, quite like the native speakers, the level 6 group appeared to avoid the use of *like* in the data collected.

Neary-Sundquist stated in clear terms that some tasks generally elicit more hedging than others. According to her report, News task produced more than double of hedge items than that of the personal or telephone tasks. The researcher reported that hedge use increase with

proficiency level and that ESL learners do attain native-like rates of hedge use. Once more, the result showed that the highest ESL proficiency group used hedges at a rate higher than that of native speakers. Her analysis indicated that the range of hedges used by learners was generally similar to those of native speakers in the sense that *I think* and *just* were the two most frequently used hedges at all levels. The study concluded that use of hedges was a product of different tasks as their frequency either increased or decreased considering the tasks samples were subjected to (149-174). Neary-Sundquist's study has made a contribution to the understanding of the development of this aspect of pragmatic competence among learners of English by pointing out that at various proficiency levels in the learning of English language, there is always a progression in the use of hedging as a conversation strategy. That is to say that as a learner advances in proficiency, so does his/her use of hedges/hedging as a communication device. While data for her study came from native speakers' of Chinese, Korean and English, data for the present study will be generated from native speakers of Igbo language.

On conversation analysis, David and Tanya examined Squawk in interactions: a primer of conversation analysis for students of animal communication. Data for the study came from detailed transcriptions of video or audio recording of natural interactions. Transcribed data included words, details of pronunciation, silent intervals, non-verbal sounds produced by the participants. In the video data, body position and gestures by participants were analyzed. Their analysis began by identifying and describing some patterns of behaviour generated by the mechanisms of social interaction. The study revealed that conversation analysis has identified many points of convergence with animal communication, as well as many important differences between the two fields.

Also, the result of the study shows that students of Animal Communication could contribute to our understanding of social interaction by testing whether non-humans exhibit embedded

structures and other properties that are hypothesized to emerge from human interaction engine. Similarly, the study confirmed similarities between the Animal Communication and the Conversation Analytic approaches to the study of communication appear to have evolved as a consequence of convergence in response to similar subject matter. The study concluded that many the tenets of conversation analysis are applicable to communication in other species. Thus the authors stressed that certain fundamental rules underlie interactive communication in both human and non-human animals (1282-1298). The present review has shown that there is no limit to the application of conversation analysis. Conversation analysis operates even beyond the realms of human interaction as animal communication can be a focal point.

Matthews choreographed embedded dialogue in biblical narratives using the stories of Amnon and Tamar (2 Sam 13:1-19) David and Shimei (2 Sam 16:5-10) and Jethro and Moses (Exodus 18:13-27) as well as the Positioning Theory as anchor. Matthews noted that conversation was a central aspect of social interaction and that conversation analysis can be applied to both live and narrated encounters. The study showed that story-telling is enriched by the inclusion of various types of social interaction, including dialogic exchange and rhetorical devices (patterns of speech, gestures and the use of irony, metaphor and tone). Findings showed that the story-teller enliven the charactersø function within the narrative by having them attempt to create new or expended identities for themselves. The study concluded that it is the success or failure of these efforts that drives the narrative to its climax and ultimate conclusion. The above study is evidence of the fact that conversation analysis can also be applied to written discourse. In other words, this approach as subsumed in critical discourse analysis provides a veritable tool for analysis of questionnaire and interview data which the present study seeks to address.

Yoon, et al. did a conversation analysis of communicative characteristics of interactions between surgeons and Chinese women with breast cancer in oncology consultation. The objective of the study was to provide insight into the talk-in-interaction in surgical-oncology consultations in the context of a Chinese medical setting. Through a videotape process, a total of thirty one consultations involving 31 patients with breast cancer and eight surgeons were recorded. The recordings were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using conversation analysis.

Results of the study showed that most surgeons gave diagnosis in a very straightforward and abrupt manner at the outset of the consultation with no mitigation or redressive action. The patients on the other hand, conformed to the traditional information giving and receiving rules. Findings of the study revealed that the manner of information presentation by surgeons shaped the subsequent sequential organization of surgeon-patient interaction and turn taking patterns. The study demonstrated the potential of conversation analysis as a context-sensitive method that enabled researchers to gain a more thorough understanding of dynamics of interaction in cancer consultations, thereby informing training interventions for surgeons. The findings of the study underscore the importance of discursive practices in shaping and encouraging (or discouraging) patient participation in oncology consultation (2825-2840).

The study above reveals that conversation analysis is a veritable tool for assessing utterances/feedbacks as the case may be. However, in-depth knowledge of the conversation analysis approach helps in the openings and closings of conversation.

Jenkins and Hepburn examined children's sensations as interactional phenomena: a conversation analysis of children's expressions of pain and discomfort. The aim of the study was to focus on the documentation of the features of children's expressions, noting where they occur and some of the ways in which they are responded to. Again, the study tried to

describe features of expressions of everyday pain communicated by children during mealtimes and explain the function of these reported experiences in interaction. Also, the study aimed to describe four distinct components of children's expressions of pain and physical experience and briefly consider the way these different elements also represent an interactional function in the management of children's food consumption. Data were obtained by means of video recordings of family mealtimes involving three British English-speaking families in the United Kingdom with children aged 15 months to 9 years.

A total of five families recorded 71 mealtimes, totaling 32 hours of data. The general focus of the study was on the way body and health issues become live in everyday family interaction. Results of the study showed a constellation of features of children's expressions of bodily sensation and pain during family mealtimes which the authors described as: 1. Lexical formulations relating to the nature and location of the sensation. 2. Prosodic features also found in episodes of crying and upset can be embedded in the delivery of these assertions. 3. Pain cries produced with recognizable utterances such as 'ouch' 'ah' 'ow' or more discrete moans. 4. Embodied actions such as grimacing, shifting the body and placing a hand to draw attention to a particular body part, particularly when lexical formulations are absent or partial. The authors concluded that by conducting an empirical exploration of how children's expressions of pain and discomfort appear naturalistically, they have added to the existing literature on how expressions of emotion constitute interactional achievements and can be employed to build actions in talk (472-491). Jenkins' and Hepburn's study has shed light on the fact that every human activity is subject to conversation analysis. The present study will therefore draw from various insights offered by Jenkins and Hepburn to achieve verifiable results.

Studies on politeness and hedging strategies have revealed that much as interactants enjoy routine conversation as native speakers or otherwise, their expression of politeness as a discourse strategy still differ from the supposed norm as implicated in most politeness studies. This discrepancy may have arisen due to the following reasons: observance of the principles of politeness, conformity to different strategy-orientations, culture specificity and in the overall context of verbal production. In the light of the above range of discrepancies observed in everyday discourse, conversation analysis has provided insights to contextually situate the study appropriately.

Summary

To summarize, the review of literature offers very insightful research background which emphasizes that politeness/hedging strategies adopted in the course of everyday conversation mirror the fundamental cultural values and norms of the language of the speech community. Again, failure to take into cognizance the nitty-gritty of the target language may result in miscommunication on the part of the speaker and eventual misinterpretation on the part of the hearer. Politeness is the state that one expects to exist in every conversation in order to produce and maintain a hitch-free communication. Thus expressing politeness appropriately is an integral part of being communicatively competent within a speech community. However, while the above reviews dealt with either politeness or hedging as a discourse strategy in various parts of the world, the present study will center on politeness and hedging as a dual concept observed in the conversational English of Igbo bilinguals in Nigeria. In addition, studies on politeness/hedging have shown that the expressive patterns of politeness vary from culture to culture. Also, they are   commonly influenced by socio-linguistic variations such as social distance and social status as the case may be hence the conversation analysis approach which addresses every underlying factor.

This chapter chronicles conceptual, theoretical and empirical studies with regard to the relationship between politeness, hedging and conversation analysis in the context of use. The concept of politeness, hedging, conversation analysis, issues of linguistic politeness, and previous research on politeness, hedging and conversation analysis have been discussed. As revealed earlier, politeness/hedging as discourse strategy is known to diverge according to social variables such as social distance, social status between the interlocutors as well as cultural variation. Therefore, the instrument used for data collection should be considered in terms of its advantages and possible limitations. The next chapter describes the research methodological issues and data collection procedure of the present study.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used in the study; it describes the research design and methodology, the theoretical framework, sample and sampling technique, research instrument, data collection, as well as method of data analysis for the present study.

3.1 Methodological Issues in Language and Speech Act studies:

According to Thijitang there are a variety of data collection methodologies available for pragmatics studies. In conducting speech act studies, the methodology used to collect data can greatly affect the reliability and validity of the result and therefore, it is important to discuss each data collection method, since each method has advantages and disadvantages. Several methods including observation, role plays, and Discourse Completion Task (DCT) are discussed (46-67)

The observation of authentic discourse is considered the best way of collecting data on the production of speech acts. The methods used to collect verbal interaction data through observation are of an ethnographic or naturalistic approach and often involve field-notes or tape-recording. In the authentic observation data collection method, researchers immediately record the natural speech when a certain speech act occurs. Researchers also document utterances with detailed records of the event, the situation, and the non-verbal reactions. Thus, the authentic observation data collecting method has a high internal validity since the speech acts that occurred are described in detail. Wolfson (155-186) advocates this method and argues that it is the only reliable method of collecting data about the way speech acts function in interaction. However, this does not mean that using naturally occurring data precludes disadvantages. Cohen (62) points out that researchers have great difficulty in observing speakersø interactions, jotting down what they heard and that collecting a certain

speech act that rarely occurs in a real situation is extremely time consuming. There also might be an observer effect, as the participants may be more or less consciously influenced by the simple fact that somebody is observing them. In addition, it is more difficult to control variables in this kind of data, and therefore it is more difficult to establish the exact causes that lead to the particular results of the study. In DCT, if researchers want to examine a social variable, they can easily include the social factors such as social distance and social status in the given situations. This is not easily done in authentic observation. Finally, it is almost impossible to collect sufficient examples for analysis in authentic observation.

The most popular and widespread method used in speech act studies is the Discourse Completion Task. A DCT is a form of production questionnaire, which is essentially õa series of short written role-plays on everyday situations which are designed to elicit a specific speech act by requiring informants to complete a turn of dialogue for each itemö (Barron, 83). For example, a DCT scenario is as follows: You altered a grade report sheet kept in your care and your teacher found out, what would you say to your teacher?

DCT was originally introduced by Blum-Kulka in 1982 and then adapted into the first large scale speech act study, the Cross-cultural speech Act Realization Patterns Project (CCSARP) in 1984. It has been observed that a DCT has many advantages as a method of data collection. Wolfson, Marmor and Jones (174-240) described the use of DCT as an effective means of gathering a large number of data in a relatively short period. A Large number of participants can be surveyed with the DCT more easily than role-plays, thus making statistical analysis more feasible. For Rose (53), DCTs have the advantage over natural data in that they provide a controlled context for speech acts and can be used to collect large amounts of data quite quickly as well as help to classify the formulas and strategies that may occur in natural speech.

According to Beebe and Cummings, DCTs can be considered an effective research instrument as a means of:

1. Gathering a large amount of data quickly:

2. Creating an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that will occur in natural speech.

3. Studying the stereotypical, perceived requirements for socially appropriate responses

4. Gaining insight into social and psychological factors that are likely to affect speech and performance and

5. Ascertaining the canonical shape of speech acts in the minds of speakers of that language (80)

Many researchers such as Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (47-61) Iwai and Rinner (157-181), Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (303-325), Rintell and Mitchell (248-272), Takezewa (52-103), Beebe and Takahashi (131-155), Sugimoto (349-370), Thijittang (46-67) have relied on the use of data obtained by using a Discourse Completion Task. According to these researches, the written responses from the participants are valid due to participantsø intuitions about what they would say corresponding closely to what other participants did say in the same situation. Moreover, it is believed that data analysis from this method is more consistent and reliable since all participants respond to the same situations in the same written form.

Although the DCT has been chosen as the data gathering method by many researchers, there are some disadvantages in using this type of data collecting method. It is not natural speech. It is more precisely described as what participants think they would say, or perhaps what they want the researcher to think they would say, rather than a record of real behavior. This might lead to responses that differ from natural speech patterns.

It has been argued that DCTs do not represent what the speaker would say in natural occurring situations because of:

1. Actual wording used in real interaction

2. The range of formulas and strategies used (some, like avoidance tend to be left out).

3. The length of response or the number of turns it takes to fulfill the functions;

4. The depth of emotion that in turn qualitatively affects the tone, content and form of linguistic performance;

5. The number of repetitions and elaborations that occur;

6. The actual rate of occurrence of a speech act ó e.g. whether or not someone would refuse at all in a given situation (Beebe & Cummings, 80 cited in Thijittang 46-67).

Another type of elicitation method that has been widely used in recent years is role-play (Kasper & Dahl, 215-247). This method is an attempt to collect more naturalistic data since observation data is significantly hard to obtain. Participants in the role-play method are asked to imagine themselves in a given situation and then act out what they might say under that circumstance. The role-play method offers many advantages. The role-play method is real, and the pragmatic interactions are contextualized (Kasper & Dahl, 240). Role-Play interview also provide a wider range of speech act production strategies than discourse completion tests do (Sasaki, 457-484). Yuanøs study revealed that some linguistic features such as exclamation particles, repetitions and omissions which stood out as prominent features in natural data as in field notes and interviews did show up in role-play but were missing in written DCTøs (271-292).

It has been reported that although role-play has many advantages, it has obvious disadvantages too. First, although participants may not be interested in the item, they have to produce it since the researcher is interested in it. Second role-plays can sometimes result in unnatural behavior on the part of the subject (Jung, 93). The subjects may exaggerate the interaction in order to make a dramatic effect. Third, while open role plays provide a wider context, they are more difficult to transcribe and code (Kasper & Dahl, 230). Finally, according to Hoza (2001), the role-play method has a weak point in differences in the

subjectsø ability to imagine the task situations which are presented to them, or õdifference in subjectsö construal of the experimental situations that may affect their responses to role-play tasks. However, from Rintell and Mitchelløs (248-272) work, data collected with DCT and role-play yielded very similar results. Also, no significant differences in results have been found when comparing the two methods of DCT and role-play (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989).

As examined so far, the study of speech act production is complex and needs much care in designing data collection instrument. Cohen and Olshtain (143-156) suggested the use of a combination of instrument. There are several speech act studies which used a combined method for data collection. Thus, the conclusion that one can consider from study of the different types of instruments and close consideration of their advantages and disadvantages is that one should choose the method or methods most appropriate to the specific purpose of the study (Thijittang, 50-53). To this end therefore, the present study adopted the perception and the production methods. And in which case, the Discourse Completion Task DCT was used as a technique for production data and in depth interview was employed as a perception data method.

3.2 Study Design:

The present study is a cross-sectional questionnaire and interview-based survey study. In order to meet the research objective of investigating politeness forms and hedging strategies in relation to the use of English among Igbo bilinguals, these conversation strategies were investigated using the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews.

3.3 Theoretical Framework:

Every research work must have a theoretical standpoint. The theory forms the basic principle and approach on which the study is based. The present study is anchored on two theoretical models and they are: The Politeness theory and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

The politeness theory provided by Brown and Levinson in 1987 plays a crucial role in maintaining inter personal relationship. It has been used as a framework to categorize politeness strategies of different speakers of several native languages across the globe in previous research studies and it can also be used to compare data in the conversational English of Igbo bilinguals of Nigeria.

Brown and Levinson's work consists of two parts. The first is their fundamental theory concerning the nature of 'politeness' and how it functions in interaction. In the theoretical part of their work, Brown and Levinson introduced the notion of 'face' in order to illustrate 'politeness' in the broad sense (60).

Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness comprises three basic tenets: face, face threatening acts (FTAs) and politeness strategies. The notion of face as proposed by the authors means that all interactions have an interest in maintaining two types of 'face' during interaction: 'positive face' and 'negative face' Brown and Levinson define 'positive face' as the positive and consistent image people have of themselves, and their desire for approval. On the other hand, 'negative face' is the basic claim to territories, personal preserves and rights to non-distraction (p.61). Starting from the belief that people all over the world are endowed with 'face', that is to say, with a public self image which needs to be preserved, they go ahead to point out that certain actions that are performed in our everyday interaction may threaten our interlocutor's face (i.e they are FTAs). Consequently, in order to hinder the undesirable effects of FTAs, humans have advanced politeness strategies which are ways of performing such acts in a redressive or mitigated manner so that the threat to the hearer's face

is minimized. Brown and Levinson's theory suggest that in interaction, individuals must prioritize three wants, the want to communicate the content of a face-threatening act, the want to be efficient, and the want to maintain the hearer's face. These three wants create five strategic choices that speakers must make;

1) Without redressive action, baldly

2) Positive politeness

3) Negative politeness

4) Off record

5) Don't do the FTA. In conjunction with these five strategies of redress, Brown and Levinson further suggested three factors which may affect how face threatening an interaction might be. They are:

1. Social distance (D), that is how well you know someone

2. Relative power and status of the participants (P) and

3. Sensitivity to the degree of imposition (R) that is how a particular imposition is ranked in a specific culture.

This means that the value of these three factors is culture-specific, thus the assessment of weightiness differs from culture to culture and different cultures might choose different politeness strategies. Moreover, Brown and Levinson argue that the concept of face itself is universal, though the specific manifestations of face-wants may vary across cultures with some acts being more face-threatening in one culture than in another (as cited in Thijittang, 23-25).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is yet another approach to the study of language in the context of use. According to Baxter (117-137) critical discourse analysis is useful to linguistic scholars because it analyses real, and often extended, samples of spoken and

written discourse as it adopts a macro-analytical view of the world in that it takes the notion of discourse in its widest sense as social and ideological practice. Thus CDA research specifically considers how language works within institutional and political discourses (e.g. in education, organization, media, government), as well as specific discourses (around gender and class) in order to uncover overt or more often, covert inequalities in social relationships. CDA was first developed by the Lancaster school of linguists of which Norman Fair-Clough was the most prominent figure. Critical discourse analysis is concerned with the relationship between language, ideology and power and the relationship between discourse and socio-cultural change (as cited in Tenorio, 185). It has been argued that CDA was developed because sociolinguistics was paying little attention to social hierarchy and power. Tenorio states that analysis in CDA can be top-down, where analysts begin with their understanding of the content; or bottom-up where the starting point is the linguistic detail. In practice, however, some combination of both is in play. The analyst looks for what is encoded in sentences (that is, signification) and its interaction with context (that is, significance). In this respect, the analyst is merely doing what an ordinary reader would normally do, but with more conscious attention to processes of comprehension, their possible effect, and their relationship to a wider background knowledge than the ordinary reader may assume to be relevant (198). Understandably therefore critical discourse analysis looks not just between the lines but beyond the lines of every discourse (spoken or written). Interactants or participantsø background (age, status, gender, cultural affiliations) play a vital role in meaning interpretations of utterances.

Critical discourse analysis approach will no doubt integrate systematically all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text.

The theoretical models adopted for the present study are considered appropriate because of their focus on language in context of situation. These models emphasize the study of language from the perspective of use. They also recognize that features of language are reflective of their functions in various contexts. Above all, they offer insights into the factors that influence choice of utterance and meaning in the various socio-cultural contexts of Igbo bilingual individuals.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

As the present study involves the investigation of politeness and hedging as conversation strategies among Igbo bilinguals studying in the Igbo speaking states in Nigeria, it is necessary to have university students as a cohort for studying. The population of the study consists of undergraduate students who are working towards a bachelor degree in various universities in Nigeria. In addition, a few teaching and senior non-teaching staff of these institutions were selected as key persons for in-depth interview. The samples were drawn from the various federal and state universities in the five states that make up the South-East geo-political zone of Nigeria, namely Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo State and the Igbo speaking areas of Delta and River States in the South-South geo-political zone. The study targeted only the federal and state universities in the South-East geo-political zone as well as the two Igbo speaking states of the South-South geo-political zone in Nigeria. The Systematic Sampling Process (SSP) was applied to select the institutions of study and that gave rise to five federal and two state universities respectively. As this study centers on the English language conversation of Igbo native speakers particularly as they employ politeness and hedging strategies which are influenced by sociolinguistic variables as social status, social distance and cultural variations, variables such as gender, age, and English proficiency level are also considered. Again, in the choice of faculties to be represented for all institutions, the Systematic Sampling Process was also applied. Using a self-designed balloting strategy, the

participants were students of various disciplines in the Faculties such as Agriculture, Business Sciences, Education, Health Technology, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Social Sciences and Sciences. The samples were purposively picked from schools: Michael Okpara Federal University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUAU) Abia State represented by Faculty of Agriculture, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, (NAU) Anambra State represented by Faculty of Social Sciences, Ebonyi State University (EBSU) Ebonyi State represented by Faculty of Sciences, University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) Enugu State represented by Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO) Imo State represented by School of Health Technology, Delta State University (DELSU) Delta State represented by Faculty of Education and University of Port-Harcourt (UNIPORT) River State represented by Faculty of Business Sciences.

For the questionnaire design, a total of Three Thousand (3000) respondents were sampled from the chosen population. Five Hundred (500) participants were drawn from each of the five institutions that make up the core Igbo speaking states of the South-East geo-political zone namely MOUAU, NAU, EBSU, UNN, and FUTO. And Two Hundred and Fifty (250) were also drawn from each of the other institutions in the two noncore Igbo speaking states of the South-South geo-political zone namely DELSU and UNIPORT. The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the students who agreed to be part of the study in their classes. Willing members of staff were also enlisted to assist in the administration of the questionnaire. In all, Two Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty Eight (2748) copies of questionnaire were duly completed and returned for analysis. For the in-depth interview design, participants comprised teaching and senior non-teaching staff in the various faculties of same institutions selected for the study. The interview design was not for the participants in the questionnaire study rather it targeted only a select few. Statistical evaluation provided by Ebiringa (2014) showed that any figure between 0.8% - 1.0% of the proposed

questionnaire sample population was significant and representative for key person interview and the analysis gave rise to between 24 ớ 30 persons. As such, 30 members of staff were selected from the pool that agreed to be part of the study. Five key persons were drawn from each of the institutions of study in the South-East geo-political zone and the other five key persons were selected from the other institutions in the South-South geo-political zone. Thus 30 key persons participated willingly in the interview. Having meticulously considered gender parity in this phase of the study, the 30 key persons who participated in the interviews were 15 males and 15 females.

3.5 Research Instrument:

The data for this study were collected by means of two instruments: a self- constructed and validated questionnaire - (DCT) (APPENDIX A) and structured Interview questions (APPENDIX B). These instruments were vetted by the supervisor and pretested in Imo State University, Owerri. They were further vetted by three Language and Communication Arts Specialists and approved by the supervisor for use. (APPENDIX C)

Discourse completion task (DCT) Design:

In this study, fifty politeness and hedging scenarios, titled discourse completion task (DCT) were used as a research instrument for production of data. Following a brief introductory part explaining the purpose of the study, the questionnaire was in two parts. The first part contains information on demographic characteristics that is, gender, area of study, and level of proficiency in English of the participants. The second consists of fifty situations designed to provoke politeness and hedging strategies in the form of responses by modifying those situations used in previous politeness speech studies: Takezawa, (52-103) Beebe and Takahashi (311-348) Sugimoto (349-370) Thijitang (46-67). In addition, these situations were also designed to be categorized by social status and social distance. Furthermore, the situations were posited to project various indices of politeness that is, Apology, Request,

Appreciation, Reprimand, Greeting/Offer/Excuses/Breaking Bad News. Consequently, situations 1-10 portray apology discourse, situations 11-20 portray request discourse, situations 21-30 portray appreciation discourse, situations 31-40 portray reprimand discourse and situations 41-50 portray greeting/offer/excuse/breaking bad news discourse. (APPENDIX D) Every item on the questionnaire is followed by three guided options marked alphabetically from A ó C. These options were structured to show that every possible option is polite but at varying degrees. Hence all option A is polite, all option B is more polite and all option C is most polite. Again, these options are written with particular attention being paid to hedges and hedging where necessary. The participants were required to choose options which best typify their own in similar situations. Thus, the DCT represents various contexts of situations assuming the imagined role-play between interlocutors. In order to examine politeness and hedging strategies of Igbo learners of the English language, the study posited sociolinguistic variations, such as social status and social distance for each situation in the DCT and more specifically posited in addition severity of offence consideration in the apology and reprimand discourse.

To delineate the social status, social distance and severity of offence categorizations in the DCT, all situations are considered. Consequently, social status was determined by interactantsø roles in the society. Understandably therefore social status was based on societal hierarchy and the position one occupied in the society given the scenarios projected in the DCT. It is therefore safe to say that a Chief Executive of a company automatically ranks higher and exercises more power than an employee (company secretary). In the DCT, social status is speaker-hearer oriented. In any case, speakers in the following situations; a head of department/organization (situations 8 & 28), a teacher/lecturer in a school (situations 9, 11, 12 & 34), a parent in a home (situation 15), a customer (situations 17, 21 & 22), a parishioner (situation 26), and a boss at work (situations 35 & 43) were in higher position than the hearers. However, speakers in the situations; a student (situation 6, 7, 10, 20), a

nephew/son/daughter (situations 24 & 50), a junior staff (situations 27, 33 & 47), a patient (situation 40), a concerned passerby (situation 46) were in lower position than the hearers. Social status between classmates, roommates, colleagues, spouses, friends (situations 1, 2, 3, 4, 13, 14, 19, 29, 32, 36, 45, 48 & 49) was considered equal. Finally, social status between speakers who engaged in conversation with random partners (situations 5, 16, 18, 23, 25, 30, 31, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, & 44) was tagged not established. Ultimately, social status which is somewhat a social boundary is unsystematic and there is no deciding to which side it swings in the business of conversation.

Social distance on the other hand indicated how well interactants know each other. It shows the extent of familiarity between speakers. Thus incidents involving Head of Department and a subordinate and vice versa (situations 8, 33, 35 & 43), Spouses (situations 14, 32 & 36), a Parent and the Nanny/Housekeeper (situation 15), Nephew and an Aunt/ a Father and a daughter/son (situations 24 & 50), Speaker and a friend (situations 29, 45 & 49) have been described as people who know each other well and who share a certain bond of friendship. Therefore it is a close social distance. Occasions involving speaker and a classmate/roommate (situations 1, 2, 3 & 4), student and a teacher/supervisor and vice versa (situations 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 34), work colleagues (situations 13, 19, 27, 28, 47 & 48) have been marked out as people who know each other but not acquainted and no camaraderie hence adjudged as having neutral social distance. Lastly, circumstances involving speaker and a random partner (situation 5, 16, 18, 23, 25, 26, 30, 31, 37, 38, 39, 44 & 46), speaker and a certain lecturer/professor (situation 6 & 20), customer and an attendant/staff (situations 17, 21, 22, 41 & 42) and a speaker and a doctor (situation 40) have been depicted as people who do not know each other and may be better described as strangers to each other. Therefore, they are deemed as portraying a distant social distance.

The other variable which centers on severity of offence only applies to apology and reprimand discourses. Severity of offence is used to classify the weightiness of a purported imposition and that literally means the gravity of the offence to the addressee. It is worthy to note that it is only an offence that can trigger an apology or a reprimand discourse as the case may be. Severity of offence for apology as well as reprimand varies in terms of severe and not severe. Thus, stepping on a classmate's foot (situation 1), failing to return a classmate's book (situation 2), spilling a drink on an attendee (situation 5), bumping into a lecturer (situation 6) and mistaken telephone call identity (situation 31) have been considered mild and as such labeled not severe situations. While tearing a classmate's book (situation 3), not replacing a roommate's bucket of water (situation 4), copying an essay (situation 7), not informing a subordinate about a meeting (situation 9), being late for an appointment with supervisor (situation 10), reneging on an agreement (situation 32), defamation of character (situation 33), rowdiness in class (situation 34), subordinate's incorrigibility (situation 35), scolding a partner in public (situation 36), denting someone's car (situation 37), contravening a rule (situation 38), incessant harassment (situation 39) and near-molestation (situation 40) have been considered grave and as such labeled severe situations. (APPENDIX E)

Interview Questions Design:

The interviews aimed to elicit in-depth data about participant's general knowledge of the concept of politeness, the different strategies employed by Igbo bilinguals in their everyday conversation considering different factors as well as the effects of politeness in conversation. Creswell (51) and Merriam (28) stated that an interview is necessary when invisible data such as behaviors, feeling, thoughts, and intentions cannot be observed directly. Previous studies have adopted the interview methods to elicit concrete information for the authenticity of results: Adegbija (57-80), Thijittang (46-67), Odebunmi (101-117). The interview was structured. The participants were key stake holders namely: teaching and senior non-teaching staff of the institutions of study. Questions were written to reflect the purpose of the study

and by extension related to the situations in the DCT. The interview consists of two segments. The first segment i.e. Part A focused on participantøs background information such as gender, level of education, occupational status and self evaluation of English proficiency level. The second segment i.e. Part B was divided into three areas that dwelt on the significance of politeness in conversation, politeness and hedging strategies used by Igbo bilinguals and ultimately, the effects of politeness in conversation. The interview sessions was conducted in English language.

3.6 Data Collection:

As the respondents are the researcherøs partners, it was only proper to get consent before commencement. The researcher sought the permission of the heads in the various departments of the several institutions selected for the study in Nigeria. Although, the researcher is a lecturer in the Federal University of Technology Owerri, one of the institutions selected for the study, it was imperative for the researcher to ensure that the she was not taking undue advantage of the students at her disposal at the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria. To this end therefore, a letter of introduction and invitation of participation in the study was sent to the Heads of Departments of the various institutions requesting for approval. (APPENDIX F) Armed with the approval, the researcher started conducting the study.

Questionnaire and Interview-based data were collected at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUAU), Nnamdi Azikiwe University (NAU), Ebonyi State University (EBSU), University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO), Delta State University (DELSU) and University of Port-Harcourt (UNIPORT), Nigeria in the second semester of 2015/2016 academic session. Two instruments were used for data collection: (1) a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and (2) Structured Interview questions. As this study is centered on human subjects, ethical concerns

were taken into account in collecting data. The methods of data collection selected for the present study are questionnaire in the form of DCT and an in depth interview and they are discussed with ethics consideration.

Approach to Questionnaire

The study used a self-constructed, pretested and validated questionnaire in the form of Discourse Completion Task (DCT) by modifying those situations used in previous politeness and hedging studies. Takezewa (1995), Beebe and Takahashi (1989), Sugimoto (1997) Thijitang (2008).

In each of the faculties selected for the study, students were invited to participate in the study in person by the researcher. As the researcher is aware of the ethics behind the research activity, participants were clearly informed about the aims of the study, its procedure and confidentiality of the findings. The questionnaire was anonymous. The researcher made the respondents realize that they were not participating in the study under duress but could withdraw at will. Having obtained verbal consent from the participants, they were asked to complete the DCT taking approximately 1 hour 20 minutes. The researcher acknowledged the need to not interfere in any way in the course of completion of the task or even influence participantsø view, thus she left the class and only got back to collect them when they were duly completed at the expiration of the stipulated time.

Approach to Interview

The researcher obtained verbal consent from participants who agreed to participate in the interview. At a mutually agreed upon time, the interviews were conducted individually in the offices of the participants in the university. The structured interview had two segments. The first part was on respondentsøbackground information while the second part addressed salient issues of politeness among Igbo bilinguals. The researcher took into account every ethical concern in the study of this nature and so avoided remarks, the use of words or terms or even questions that could provoke the participants. Each interview session lasted approximately 8

minutes. For confidentiality, there were no name records of participants. Also, with the kind permission of the interviewees, these interview sessions were audio taped for accuracy of responses and transcription.

3.7 Data Analysis:

To get the better of this study, a combination of methods was adopted. The questionnaire and interviews were used as data collection methods. In order to investigate the politeness and hedging data, two types of analysis were carried out on the data collection; the quantitative analysis was used to analyse production data from the DCT and the qualitative analysis was used to get in depth perception data from interviews. The expressed opinions of respondents were presented in frequency tables, simple percentage calculations were used to represent the opinion of the respondents on various items. The tables and tabled percentages as well as excerpts from the interviews are presented in the next chapter.

Quantitative Analysis

A quantitative analysis in this study was used to analyze the politeness and hedging strategies speakers employed in everyday conversation. In contrast to most of the previous research studies that focused on a particular index of politeness, the present analysis focused on five key indices of politeness and an attempt at finding the frequency as well the manifestations of different politeness/hedging strategies in the English language conversation of Igbo bilinguals with recourse to various sociolinguistic factors. Thus the tables are presented following the discourse situations projected in the DCT. It proceeds in the following order: assessment of success in questionnaire administration, gender distribution of respondents, respondentsø English proficiency and summary/assessment of respondentsø opinions on various items on the questionnaire study.

Qualitative Analysis

This type of analysis took into account the various learnersø opinions about the significance, strategies and effects of politeness/hedging in English language conversation of bilinguals. The data gathering mechanism was structured interview which consist of text documents that were audio taped, duly transcribed verbatim and analyzed. The presentation on the interview study is in four parts. It proceeds in the following order: demographic characteristics of interview participants, excerpts from significance of politeness in conversation, excerpts from factors that necessitate politeness/hedging in the speech of Igbo bilinguals and excerpts from effects of politeness in conversation.

CHECKLIST OF POLITENESS MARKERS IN IGBO

Bíkó[a]
`Ndó[b]
Ímé lá[c]
Ígbálìálá[c]
Gbághàrà[b]
`Ndéèwó[d]
Dàálú[c]
Éwélá íwé[b]
Jìsíké[d]
Ìbíálá[d]
Ìnúlá[*]
Yá gàzíé[d]
Kà émésíá[d]
Déèdè,[e]
Dáádá[e]
Màmá,[e]
Pàpá[e]
Ògá,[e]
Ónyéís[e]
    nàmúkwú,   némúkwú[e]
Nwá m,[e]
Nwá né m[e]
Úmù m[e]
Nú m, Tú m, Túnú m[*]
Ì bùólachi[d]
Ì sàlàchi[d]
Kèdú[d]
Kàchíbùó[d]
É [f]
Òólò, Mbà[g]
    sògbú ádìghì[f]

Àmághí m ama[b]
Ésògbùlà[f]
Ìnú[*]
`Nnóò[c]
Ébé ór [c]
Bìá ríé[h]
Ózùólá[i]
Gàá `nkè ómá[c]
Íjèómá[d]
Chái!́[j]
Éw ó!́[j]
Eèyá !́[j]
Òó[f]
Káà[a]
Káá k [c]
Á nwù nòó[c]
Á nwùchùlè[c]
Ì márá lá[*]
Òkwà ímà[*]
Ìghótá lá[*]
Ékèlé m gí[d]
Ás m kàm júó[a]
Máàzí,[e]
Òríàkù,[e]
Òdózíàkù[e]
Ézè,[e]
Ìchíè,[e]
`Nzè,[e]
Lóòlò[e]
Ìnwèrè íké[a]
Òwú gíní[d]

Chúkwú gòzíé gí[c]
Òkùkù ákp lá gí[c]
Úmù mèékwárá gí[c]
Kwá[*]
Ó hápùlá[j]
Mm mm [d]
`Ndáà,[d]
Òlíà[d]
Dàálú nú[c]
Kwénù[d]
Íhúómá[c]
Gbákéé[d]
dgz.

Key
[a] =politeness markers for Request discourse in Igbo
[b] = politeness markers for Apology discourse in Igbo
[c] = politeness markers for Appreciation discourse in Igbo
[d] = politeness markers for Greeting discourse in Igbo
[e] = politeness markers for Terms of Address in Igbo
[f] = politeness markers for Terms of Agreement in Igbo
[g] = politeness markers for Term of Disagreement in Igbo
[h] = politeness markers for Offer discourse in Igbo
[I] = politeness markers for Reprimand discourse in Igbo
[j] = politeness markers for Sympathy/Empathy discourse in Igbo
[*] = elements used in conjunction with other politeness markers for emphasis as the case maybe.

CONCLUSION:

Having sampled the population, administered the questionnaire and conducted the interviews as developed and ratified, data were aggregated and analyzed and the results are duly presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT

4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Assessment of Success in Questionnaire Administration

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of questionnaire according to the institutions of respondents and level of returns recorded. The highest percentage of returns was FUTO (95.6%). This was followed by EBSU and UNIPORT that had 92.8% returns, while the least return of questionnaire was 88.0% by MOUAU.

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaire and Response Rate

Institutions	No of Questionnaire distributed	No (%) of Questionnaire returned
MOUAU	500	440 (88.0)
NAU	500	461 (92.2)
EBSU	500	464 (92.8)
UNN	500	446 (89.2)
FUTO	500	478 (95.6)
DELSU	250	227 (90.8)
UNIPORT	250	232 (92.8)
Total	3000	2748 (92)

Key:

MOUAU = Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike

NAU = Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka

EBSU = Ebonyi State University

UNN = University of Nigeria Nsukka

FUTO = Federal University of Technology Owerri

DELSU = Delta State University

UNIPORT = University of Port Harcourt.

Gender Distribution of Respondents

Table 2 shows the gender binary of respondents according to institutions of the study. In general, there is a preponderance of females (58.0%) in the population of the study. While FUTO and DELSU recorded the highest percentage of females (69.0%), UNN recorded the highest percentage of males (58.0%).

Table 2: Respondents according to Gender per Institution (n=2748)

Institutions	Males		Females	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
MOUAU	200	45.5	240	54.5
NAU	198	43.0	263	57.0
EBSU	204	44.0	260	56.0
UNN	257	58.0	189	42.0
FUTO	148	31.0	330	69.0
DELSU	70	31.0	157	69.0
UNIPORT	76	32.8	156	67.2
Total	1153	42.0	1595	58.0

Key:

MOUAU = Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike

NAU = Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka

EBSU = Ebonyi State University

UNN = University of Nigeria Nsukka

FUTO = Federal University of Technology Owerri

DELSU = Delta State University

UNIPORT = University of Port Harcourt.

Respondentsø English Proficiency level

Table 3 indicates respondentsø self-assessment of proficiency level in English Language. Results show that the highest percentage (48.0%) was of the Good proficiency level while the least percentage (0.8%) was of the Weak proficiency level.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents according to level of Proficiency in English

Level of Proficiency in English	Frequency	Percentage
Weak	23	0.8
Fair	700	25.0
Good	1320	48.0
Very good	604	22.1
Excellent	101	4.1
Total	2748	100

RESPONSES ON APOLOGY DISCOURSE

Table 4 Indicates the frequency of respondentsø Responses on apology discourse considering the situations projected by different scenarios and taking into account the guided options provided.

Table 4: Summary of Respondentsø Reponses on Apology Discourse

Situation	OPTION A POLITE							OPTION B MORE POLITE							OPTION C MOST POLITE						
	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT
1	90	92	95	93	100	44	45	321	337	339	326	349	166	169	27	28	28	27	29	14	14
2	2	4	1	5	0	3	4	385	403	406	390	418	199	203	55	58	58	56	60	28	29
3	19	20	20	17	21	10	10	388	406	409	393	421	200	204	33	35	35	34	36	17	17
4	3	1	2	3	0	6	3	49	51	51	49	53	25	26	391	410	413	397	425	202	206
5	142	151	152	142	158	69	74	26	27	27	26	28	13	14	269	282	283	272	292	139	142
6	31	33	33	28	34	16	17	42	44	45	43	46	22	22	366	384	386	371	398	189	193
7	30	32	32	31	33	16	16	10	11	11	10	11	5	5	400	420	422	406	435	207	211
10	1	2	0	4	0	0	5	49	51	51	49	53	25	26	391	410	413	397	425	202	206
8	9	9	11	10	11	5	5	15	15	16	15	16	8	8	415	435	438	421	451	214	219
9	148	155	156	150	161	76	73	214	224	225	216	232	110	113	78	82	83	79	85	40	41
Total	475	499	502	483	518	245	252	1499	1569	1580	1517	1627	773	790	2425	2544	2559	2460	2636	1252	1278

Key:	MOUAU	=	440
	NAU	=	461
	EBSU	=	464
	UNN	=	446
	FUTO	=	478
	DELSU	=	227
	UNIPORT	=	232
	TOTAL	**=**	**2748**

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Assessment of Overall Respondentsø Discourse on Apology

Table 5 Shows that 61.33% of the males chose option A which is the polite option, 55.23% of the males also selected option B which is the more polite option and 30.98 chose the most polite option C. On the other hand 37.96% of the females chose option A, 44.77% chose option B while 69.02% selected the most polite option C.

Table 5: Assessment of Respondentsø Reponses on Apology Discourse (n=2748)

Situation	Social Status	Social Distance	Severity of Offence	OPTION A POLITE						OPTION B MORE POLITE						OPTION C MOST POLITE					
				Freq	%	Male Freq	%	Female Freq	%	Freq	%	Male Freq	%	Female Freq	%	Freq	%	Male Freq	%	Female Freq	%
1	S = H	0SD	-	559	18.80	347	11.67	212	7.13	2007	21.45	1101	11.77	906	9.68	167	1.10	51	0.34	116	0.77
2	S = H	0SD	-	19	0.64	9	0.30	7	0.24	2404	25.70	1312	14.02	1092	11.67	344	2.27	92	0.61	252	1.66
3	S = H	0SD	+	117	3.93	65	2.19	44	1.48	2421	25.88	1262	13.49	1159	12.39	207	1.37	53	0.35	154	1.02
4	S = H	0SD	+	18	0.61	15	0.50	7	0.24	304	3.25	169	1.81	135	1.44	2444	16.13	710	4.69	1734	11.44
5	S θ H	-SD	-	888	29.86	505	16.98	337	11.33	161	1.72	91	0.97	70	0.75	1679	11.08	467	3.08	1212	8.00
6	S < H	-SD	-	192	6.46	123	4.14	73	2.45	264	2.82	145	1.55	119	1.27	2287	15.09	673	4.44	1614	10.65
7	S < H	0SD	+	190	6.39	114	3.83	72	2.42	63	0.67	45	0.48	18	0.19	2501	16.50	825	5.44	1676	11.06
10	S < H	0SD	+	12	0.40	6	0.20	5	0.17	304	3.25	187	2.00	117	1.25	2444	16.13	789	5.21	1655	10.92
8	S > H	+SD	+	60	2.02	39	1.31	23	0.77	93	0.99	71	0.76	22	0.24	2593	17.11	792	5.23	1801	11.88
9	S > H	0SD	+	919	30.90	601	20.21	349	11.74	1334	14.26	784	8.38	550	5.88	488	3.22	242	1.60	246	1.62
Total				2974	100.00	1824	61.33	1129	37.96	9355	100.00	5167	55.23	4188	44.77	15154	100.00	4694	30.98	10460	69.02

S = Speaker; H = Hearer, SD = Social Distance
< = Lower; = equal; > higher; θ = not established
+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral
Severity of offence (+ = severe - = not severe)

RESPONSES ON REQUEST DISCOURSE

Table 6 shows the frequency of Respondentsø responses on Request Discourse observing the situations projected by different scenarios and working with the guided option provided.

Table 6: Summary of Respondentsø Reponses on Request Discourse

Situation	OPTION A POLITE							OPTION B MORE POLITE							OPTION C MOST POLITE						
	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT
11	175	183	184	177	190	90	92	192	202	203	195	209	99	101	73	76	77	74	79	38	38
12	131	137	138	132	142	67	69	250	262	264	254	272	129	132	59	62	62	60	64	30	31
15	104	109	110	105	113	54	55	273	286	288	277	297	141	144	63	66	66	63	68	32	33
17	69	72	73	70	75	36	36	280	293	295	284	304	144	148	91	95	96	92	99	47	48
13	79	83	83	80	86	41	42	84	88	88	85	91	43	44	277	290	292	281	301	143	146
14	20	21	21	21	22	10	11	60	63	63	61	65	31	32	360	377	380	365	391	186	190
19	41	42	43	41	44	21	21	95	99	100	96	103	49	50	305	319	321	309	331	157	161
16	235	246	248	238	255	121	124	74	77	78	75	80	38	39	132	138	139	133	143	68	69
18	227	238	240	230	247	117	120	41	42	43	41	44	21	21	172	180	182	174	187	89	91
20	48	50	50	49	52	25	25	51	53	53	51	55	26	27	342	358	360	346	371	176	180
Total	1129	1181	1190	1143	1226	582	595	1400	1465	1475	1419	1520	721	738	1874	1961	1975	1897	2034	966	987

Key: MOUAU   =   440
    NAU   =   461
    EBSU   =   464
    UNN   =   446
    FUTO   =   478
    DELSU   =   227
    UNIPORT   =   232
    TOTAL   =   **2748**

Assessment of Overall Respondentsø Discourse on Request

Table 7 shows that 55.44% of the polite responses were by the males and 44.56% were by the females. Also 51.12% of the more polite responses were by the males and 48.88% were by the females. However, 44.42% of the most polite responses came from the males and 55.58% were recorded by the females

Table 7: Assessment of Respondentsø Reponses on Request Discourse (n=2748)

Situation	Social Status	Social Distance	OPTION A POLITE						OPTION B MORE POLITE						OPTION C MOST POLITE					
			Freq	%	Male Freq	%	Female Freq	%	Freq	%	Male Freq	%	Female Freq	%	Freq	%	Male Freq	%	Female Freq	%
11	S > H	0SD	1091	15.48	601	8.53	490	6.95	1201	13.74	561	6.42	640	7.32	455	3.89	215	1.84	240	2.05
12	S > H	0SD	816	11.58	404	5.73	412	5.85	1563	17.89	760	8.70	803	9.19	368	3.15	196	1.68	172	1.47
15	S > H	+SD	650	9.23	311	4.41	339	4.81	1706	19.52	778	8.90	928	10.62	391	3.34	216	1.85	175	1.50
17	S > H	-SD	431	6.12	234	3.32	197	2.80	1748	20.00	901	10.31	847	9.69	568	4.86	206	1.76	362	3.10
13	S = H	0SD	494	7.01	253	3.59	241	3.42	523	5.99	338	3.87	185	2.12	1730	14.79	719	6.15	1011	8.65
14	S = H	+SD	126	1.79	68	0.97	58	0.82	375	4.29	186	2.13	189	2.16	2249	19.23	912	7.80	1337	11.43
19	S = H	0SD	253	3.59	175	2.48	78	1.11	592	6.78	296	3.39	296	3.39	1903	16.27	896	7.66	1007	8.61
16	S θ H	+SD	1467	20.82	792	11.24	675	9.58	461	5.28	284	3.25	177	2.03	822	7.03	470	4.02	352	3.01
18	S θ H	0SD	1419	20.14	875	12.42	544	7.72	253	2.90	179	2.05	74	0.85	1075	9.19	474	4.05	601	5.14
20	S < H	-SD	299	4.24	193	2.74	106	1.50	316	3.62	184	2.11	132	1.51	2133	18.24	890	7.61	1243	10.63
Total			7046	100.00	3906	55.44	3140	44.56	8738	100.00	4467	51.12	4271	48.88	11694	100.00	5194	44.42	6500	55.58

S = Speaker; H = Hearer, SD = Social Distance
< = Lower; = equal; > higher; θ = not established
+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral

RESPONSES ON APPRECIATION DISCOURSE

Table 8 indicates the frequency of respondentsø Responses on Appreciation Discourse taking into account the situations projected by different scenarios and working with the guided options provided.

Table 8: Summary of Respondentsø Reponses on Appreciation Discourse

Situation	OPTION A POLITE							OPTION B MORE POLITE							OPTION C MOST POLITE						
	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT
21	26	27	27	26	28	13	14	11	12	12	11	12	6	6	403	422	425	409	438	208	213
22	33	35	35	34	36	17	17	10	11	11	10	11	5	5	397	416	418	402	431	205	209
26	156	164	165	159	170	81	83	111	117	117	113	121	57	59	172	180	182	174	187	89	91
28	148	155	156	150	161	76	78	156	164	165	159	170	81	83	135	142	143	137	147	70	71
23	59	62	62	60	64	30	31	285	299	301	289	310	147	150	96	100	101	97	104	49	50
25	20	21	21	21	22	10	11	75	78	79	76	81	38	39	345	362	364	350	375	178	182
30	30	32	32	31	33	16	16	65	68	69	66	71	34	34	344	361	363	349	374	178	182
24	83	87	87	84	90	43	44	86	90	90	87	93	44	45	272	285	286	275	295	140	143
27	109	114	115	110	118	56	57	170	178	180	173	185	88	90	161	169	170	163	175	83	85
29	48	50	50	49	52	25	25	51	53	53	51	55	26	27	342	358	360	346	371	176	180
Total	712	747	750	724	774	367	376	1020	1070	1077	1035	1109	526	538	2667	2795	2812	2702	2897	1376	1406

Key: MOUAU   =   440
         NAU   =   461
         EBSU   =   464
         UNN   =   446
         FUTO   =   478
         DELSU   =   227
         UNIPORT   =   232
         TOTAL   =   **2748**

Assessment of Overall Respondentsø Discourse on Appreciation

Table 9 demonstrates that 71.65% of males chose the polite option A on appreciation discourse as against 28.35% of the females who selected the same option. Again 47.48% of the males selected the more polite option B responses as against 52.52% of females who chose same option B. Although 36.09% of the most polite option C was recorded by the males, the females recorded 63.91%.

Table 9: Assessment of Respondentsø Reponses on Appreciation Discourse (n=2748)

Situation	Social Status	Social Distance	OPTION A POLITE						OPTION B MORE POLITE						OPTION C MOST POLITE					
			Freq	%	Male Freq	%	Female Freq	%	Freq	%	Male Freq	%	Female Freq	%	Freq	%	Male Freq	%	Female Freq	%
11	S > H	0SD	161	3.62	115	2.58	46	1.03	70	1.10	34	0.53	36	0.56	2518	15.12	861	5.17	1657	9.95
12	S > H	0SD	207	4.65	148	3.33	59	1.33	63	0.99	38	0.60	25	0.39	2478	14.88	897	5.39	1581	9.49
15	S > H	+SD	978	21.98	701	15.75	277	6.22	695	10.90	319	5.00	376	5.90	1075	6.45	356	2.14	719	4.32
17	S > H	-SD	924	20.76	662	14.88	262	5.89	978	15.34	430	6.75	548	8.60	845	5.07	296	1.78	549	3.30
13	S = H	0SD	368	8.27	264	5.93	104	2.34	1781	27.94	821	12.88	960	15.06	597	3.58	309	1.86	288	1.73
14	S = H	+SD	126	2.83	90	2.02	36	0.81	466	7.31	250	3.92	216	3.39	2156	12.95	775	4.65	1381	8.29
19	S = H	0SD	190	4.27	136	3.06	54	1.21	407	6.38	173	2.71	234	3.67	2151	12.92	853	5.12	1298	7.79
16	S θ H	+SD	518	11.64	371	8.34	147	3.30	535	8.39	261	4.09	274	4.30	1696	10.18	564	3.39	1132	6.80
18	S θ H	0SD	679	15.26	487	10.94	192	4.31	1064	16.69	459	7.20	605	9.49	1006	6.04	312	1.87	694	4.17
20	S < H	-SD	299	6.72	214	4.81	85	1.91	316	4.96	242	3.80	74	1.16	2133	12.81	787	4.73	1346	8.08
			4450	100.00	3188	71.64	1262	28.36	6375	100.00	3027	47.48	3348	52.52	16655	100.00	6010	36.09	10645	63.91

S = Speaker; H = Hearer, SD = Social Distance
< = Lower; = equal; > higher; θ = not established
+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral

RESPONSES ON REPRIMAND DISCOURSE

Table 10 shows the frequency of respondentsø Responses on Reprimand Discourse considering the situations projected by different scenarios and taking into account the guided options provided.

Table 10: Summary of Respondentsø Reponses on Reprimand Discourse

Situation	OPTION A POLITE							OPTION B MORE POLITE							OPTION C MOST POLITE						
	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT
31	10	11	15	10	14	5	9	248	259	261	251	269	128	131	182	191	192	185	198	94	96
37	3	5	7	3	3	4	1	131	137	138	132	142	67	69	307	321	323	311	333	158	162
38	64	67	67	64	66	30	33	76	80	81	77	83	39	40	300	314	316	304	326	155	158
39	34	36	36	35	37	18	18	350	366	369	355	380	180	184	56	59	59	57	61	29	30
32	73	76	77	74	79	38	36	167	175	176	169	181	86	88	201	210	212	203	218	104	106
36	165	176	171	170	178	86	88	97	101	102	98	105	50	51	176	184	185	178	191	91	93
33	5	2	8	2	6	1	3	10	11	11	10	11	5	5	428	448	451	434	465	221	226
40	15	15	16	15	16	12	8	80	84	84	81	87	41	42	345	362	364	350	375	178	182
34	364	381	375	369	395	184	188	39	41	41	39	42	20	20	38	40	40	38	41	19	20
35	320	334	338	325	348	165	169	100	105	106	102	109	52	53	19	20	20	20	21	10	10
Total	1053	1103	1110	1067	1142	543	553	1298	1359	1369	1314	1409	668	683	2052	2149	2162	2080	2229	1059	1083

Key:
MOUAU = 440
NAU = 461
EBSU = 464
UNN = 446
FUTO = 478
DELSU = 227
UNIPORT = 232
TOTAL = 2748

Assessment of Overall Respondents' Discourse on Reprimand

Table 11 reveals that 60.36% of the male respondents picked the polite option A while 39.64% of their female counterparts picked same option A. On the other hand, 44.90% of the males chose the more polite option B as against 55.10% females who chose same option B. Furthermore, 33.60% of the males selected the most polite option C whereas 66.40% of option C responses were recorded by the females

Table 11: Assessment of Respondents' Reponses on Reprimand Discourse (n=2748)

Situation	Social Status	Social Distance	Severity of Offence	OPTION A POLITE						OPTION B MORE POLITE						OPTION C MOST POLITE					
				Freq	%	Male Freq	Male %	Female Freq	Female %	Freq	%	Male Freq	Male %	Female Freq	Female %	Freq	%	Male Freq	Male %	Female Freq	Female %
31	S θ H	-SD	-	74	1.13	45	0.68	29	0.44	1547	19.10	698	8.62	849	10.48	1138	8.88	398	3.11	740	5.77
37	S θ H	-SD	+	26	0.40	18	0.27	8	0.12	816	10.07	377	4.65	439	5.42	1915	14.94	570	4.45	1345	10.50
38	S θ H	-SD	+	391	5.95	238	3.62	153	2.33	476	5.88	204	2.52	272	3.36	1873	14.62	696	5.43	1177	9.19
39	S θ H	-SD	+	214	3.26	129	1.96	85	1.29	2184	26.96	973	12.01	1211	14.95	351	2.74	143	1.12	208	1.62
32	S = H	+SD	+	453	6.89	275	4.19	178	2.71	1042	12.86	479	5.91	563	6.95	1254	9.79	419	3.27	835	6.52
36	S = H	+SD	+	1034	15.74	625	9.51	409	6.22	604	7.46	262	3.23	342	4.22	1098	8.57	364	2.84	734	5.73
33	S <H	+SD	+	27	0.41	18	0.27	9	0.14	63	0.78	28	0.35	35	0.43	2673	20.86	916	7.15	1757	13.71
40	S <H	-SD	+	97	1.48	62	0.94	35	0.53	499	6.16	235	2.90	264	3.26	2156	16.83	725	5.66	1431	11.17
34	S > H	0SD	+	2256	34.33	1359	20.68	897	13.65	242	2.99	119	1.47	123	1.52	236	1.84	53	0.41	183	1.43
35	S > H	+SD	+	1999	30.42	1197	18.22	802	12.21	627	7.74	262	3.23	365	4.51	120	0.94	22	0.17	98	0.76
Total				6571	100.00		60.36		39.64	8100	100.00	3637	44.90	4463	55.10	12814	100.00	4306	33.60	8508	66.40

S = Speaker; H = Hearer, SD = Social Distance
< = Lower; = equal; > higher; θ = not established
+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral
Severity of offence (+ = severe - = not severe)

RESPONSES ON GREETINGS/OFFERS/EXCUSES/BREAKING BAD NEWS DISCOURSE

Table 12 shows the frequency of respondentsø Responses on Greeting/Offer/Excuses/ Breaking Bad News discourse observing the situations projected by different scenarios and working with the guided options provided.

Table 12: Summary of Respondentsø Reponses on Greetings/Offers/Excuses/Breaking Bad News Discourse

Situation	OPTION A POLITE							OPTION B MORE POLITE							OPTION C MOST POLITE						
	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT	MOUAU	NAU	EBSU	UNN	FUTO	DELSU	UNIPORT
41	64	68	68	65	70	33	34	98	102	103	99	106	50	51	278	291	293	282	302	143	147
42	9	10	10	9	10	5	5	86	90	90	87	93	44	45	345	362	364	350	375	178	182
44	168	176	178	171	183	87	89	101	106	107	103	110	52	53	170	178	180	173	185	88	90
43	137	144	145	139	149	71	72	260	272	274	263	282	134	137	43	45	46	44	47	22	23
45	100	105	106	102	109	52	53	233	244	246	236	253	120	123	107	112	113	108	116	55	56
48	219	230	231	222	238	113	116	121	126	127	122	131	62	64	100	105	106	102	109	52	53
49	140	147	148	142	152	72	74	31	33	33	32	34	16	17	269	282	283	272	292	139	142
46	71	74	75	72	77	37	37	27	28	28	27	29	14	14	342	359	361	347	372	177	181
47	138	145	146	140	150	71	73	138	145	146	140	150	71	73	164	172	173	166	178	85	86
50	87	92	92	89	95	45	46	17	18	18	18	19	9	9	335	351	353	340	364	173	177
Total	1133	1191	1199	1151	1233	586	599	1112	1164	1172	1127	1207	572	586	2153	2257	2272	2184	2340	1112	1137

Key: MOUAU   =   440
       NAU   =   461
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       FUTO   =   478
       DELSU   =   227
       UNIPORT   =   232
       TOTAL   =   2748

Assessment of Overall Respondents' Discourse on Greetings/Offers/Excuses/Breaking Bad News.

Table 13 demonstrates that 60.00% of the option A responses were recorded by the male respondents while 40.00% of the option A responses were by the female respondents. However, of the option B responses, 30.00% were by the males and 70.00% were recorded by the female respondents. Similarly, the most polite option C had 75.00% female responses as against 25.00% of male responses

Table 13: Assessment of Respondents' Reponses on Greetings/Offers/Excuses/Breaking Bad News Discourse (n=2748)

Situation	Social Status	Social Distance	OPTION A POLITE						OPTION B MORE POLITE						OPTION C MOST POLITE					
			Freq	%	Male Freq	%	Female Freq	%	Freq	%	Male Freq	%	Female Freq	%	Freq	%	Male Freq	%	Female Freq	%
41	S θ H	-SD	402	5.67	241	3.40	161	2.27	609	8.78	183	2.63	426	6.14	1736	12.90	434	3.23	1302	9.68
42	S θ H	-SD	58	0.82	35	0.49	23	0.33	535	7.71	161	2.31	375	5.40	2156	16.02	539	4.01	1617	12.02
44	Sθ H	-SD	1052	14.83	631	8.90	421	5.93	632	9.11	190	2.73	442	6.37	1064	7.91	266	1.98	798	5.93
43	S > H	-SD	857	12.08	514	7.25	343	4.83	1622	23.37	487	7.01	1135	16.36	270	2.01	68	0.50	203	1.51
45	S = H	0SD	627	8.84	376	5.30	251	3.54	1455	20.97	437	6.29	1019	14.68	667	4.96	167	1.24	500	3.72
48	S = H	+SD	1369	19.30	821	11.58	548	7.72	753	10.85	226	3.26	527	7.60	627	4.66	157	1.16	470	3.49
49	S = H	0SD	875	12.34	525	7.40	350	4.94	196	2.82	59	0.85	137	1.98	1679	12.48	420	3.12	1259	9.36
46	S < H	-SD	443	6.25	266	3.75	177	2.50	167	2.41	50	0.72	117	1.68	2139	15.90	535	3.97	1604	11.92
47	S <H	0SD	863	12.17	518	7.30	345	4.87	863	12.44	259	3.73	604	8.70	1024	7.61	256	1.90	768	5.71
50	S < H	+SD	546	7.70	328	4.62	218	3.08	108	1.56	32	0.47	76	1.09	2093	15.56	523	3.89	1570	11.67
			7092	100.00	4255	60.00	2837	40.00	6940	100.0	2082	30.0	4858	70.00	13455	100.0	3364	25.00	10091	75.00

S = Speaker; H = Hearer, SD = Social Distance
< = Lower; = equal; > higher; θ = not established
+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral

4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Table 14: Demographic Characteristics of Interview Participants

PARTICIPANTS	GENDER	LEVEL OF EDUCATION	OCCUPATIONAL STATUS	LEVEL OF ENG. PROFICIENT
B1.	F	PhD ANIMAL SCIENCE	LECTURER I	EXCELLENT
B2.	M	PhD AGRIC EXTENSION	SENOIR LECTURER	GOOD
B3.	M	B.Sc Ed. ECONOMICS	ADMIN OFFICER	GOOD
B4	M	B Sc. MGT & POLICY	ADMIN ASSISTANT	GOOD
B5	M	MBA HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	SENOIR ASSIST. REGISTRAR	VERY GOOD
B6.	F	M Sc. POLITICAL SCIENCE	LECTURER II	VERY GOOD
B7.	F	PhD SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY	SENOIR LECTURER	VERY GOOD
B8.	M	B Sc POL.SCIENCE/PUBLIC ADMIN.	PRIN. ASSIST. REGISTRAR	EXCELLENT
B9.	F	M Sc. LIBRARY/INFORMATION SCIENCE	ASSIST. CHIEF EXEC. OFFICER	VERY GOOD
B10.	M	MA. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.	ADMIN ASSISTANT	EXCELLENT
B11.	M	PhD STATISTICS	LECTURER I	VERY GOOD
B12.	M	M Sc. CHEMISTRY	CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST	GOOD
B13.	F	M Sc MICROBIOLOGY	TECHNOLOGIST I	VERY GOOD
B14.	F	B Sc. MICROBIOLOGY	TECHNOLOGIST II	GOOD
B15.	M	BA FINE AND APPLIED ARTS	ASSISTANT REGISTRAR	VERY GOOD
B16.	F	M Sc PHARMACOLOGY	LECTURER II	VERY GOOD
B17.	F	PhD PHARMACOLOGY ANDTOXICOLOGY	SENOIR LECTURER	VERY GOOD
B18.	F	PhD PHARMACOLOGY	SENOIR LECTURER	VERY GOOD
B19.	M	HND, PGD SEC. ADMIN	CHIEF PERSONAL SECRETARY	GOOD
B20.	M	B Sc. BOTANY	TECHNOLOGIST	GOOD
B21.	M	PhD MEDICAL PARASITOLOGY	SENOIR LECTURER	VERY GOOD
B22.	M	M Sc. ENVIRONMENTAL CHEMISTRY	TECHNOLOGIST I	VERY GOOD
B23.	F	M Sc. PUBLIC HEALTH	LECTURER II	VERY GOOD
B24.	F	O.D DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY	ASSISTANT LECTURER	VERY GOOD
B25.	M	PhD MEDICAL PARASITOLOTY	PROFESSOR & DEAN OF SCHOOL	VERY GOOD
B26.	F	B Sc. Ed. ECONOMICS	ASSISTANT REGISTRAR	EXCELLENT
B27.	F	PhD EDUCATION AND COUNCELING	SENIOR LECTURER	VERY GOOD
B28.	F	M.Ed. EDUCATION/EVALUATION	LECTURER II	GOOD
B29.	F	B Sc ACCOUNTANCY	ASSISTANT REGISTRAR	EXCELLENT
B30.	M	HND BANKING/FINANCE	SNR. EXEC. OFFICER. ACCOUNTS	VERY GOOD

Demographic Characteristics of Participants:

Table 14 shows background information of interview participants. A total of 30 participants comprising teaching and senior non-teaching staff of the institutions of study were interviewed in the study. The participants were coded as B1 to B30. Out of these 30 participants, nine (30.00%) had a PhD, Eight (26.67%) had a Masters degree, One (3.33%) had an OD, Ten (33.33%) had a Bachelors degree and two (6.67%) had a Higher National Diploma in various fields in Agriculture, Social Sciences, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Health Technology, Education and Business Sciences. 14 (46.67%) out of the 30 interviewees were lecturers at various levels. The other 16 (53.33%) were senior non-teaching staff who worked in various capacities. In terms of the level of English Language proficiency, Five (16.67%) of the participants assessed their English proficiency level as Excellent, 17 (56.67%) evaluated theirs as Very good while Eight (26.66%) judged theirs as Good.

Significance of Politeness in Conversation:

The excerpts of the responses of the 30 participants in respect of the Significance of Politeness in Conversation are presented below.

õYes, politeness can never be removed from our everyday conversation, because it gives room for effective communicationö. (B1, excerpt 1.1)

õYes, a rude person can never sustain a conversation because his/her impoliteness is a turn off, thus the need for politenessö. (B1, excerpt 1.2)

õWell, Yes. It encourages your audience to be sincere and objectiveö. (B2. excerpt 1.1).

õI would say yes as well because people tend to open up to a polite person in any conversationö. (B2, excerpt 1.2)

õYes, Politeness makes the partners in conversation relaxed and comfortable with one anotherö (B3, excerpt 1.1).

õYes, because it establishes positive relationship between parties, respects a personøs need to be liked and understoodö. (B3, excerpt 1.2)

õYes, it is. It makes one feel respected and glad with the other partyö. (B4, excerpt 1.1)

õYes. When you are polite, the other person feels appreciated and valued and that opens up the channel of communication unhinderedö. (B4, excerpt 1.2)

õYes, Politeness helps you to avoid conflict, to ensure cooperative interaction, to manage impression, to ensure compliance, to show deference and to be niceö. (B5, excerpt 1.1)

õYes, politeness shortens distance between two people, makes one feel valued, and shows respectö. (B5, excerpt 1.2)

õOh! Yes, politeness is important in conversation because it helps in the free flow of conversation between interactionsö. (B6, excerpt 1.1)

õOh! Why not? It does. Because bonds are established and friendships cultivated in situations as thisö. (B6, excerpt 1.2)

õCertainly, politeness facilitates effective communication as well as spurs oneøs interest to participate in conversationö. (B7, excerpt 1.2)

õAbsolutely, it helps to create friction-free dialogue among speakersö. (B7 excerpt 1.3)

"Yes, politeness is important because it relaxes the discussion and brings out clarity and openness". (B8, excerpt 1.1)

"Yes, it does because emm.. emm.. when you are polite in any conversation, It will remove the element of unfriendliness in the conversation between the discussants". (B8, excerpt 1.2)

"Yes in think so because it brings about mutual understanding and feedback and when you discuss, you tend to be polite in order to the attention you need. So I believe it does bring about good conversation, understanding and friendliness". (B9. excerpt 1.1)

"Of course yes. This is because it is courteous manner that respect one's opinion you know, I believe you get whatever you want from others when you are courteous". (B9 excerpt 1.2)

"Yes, it is. This is because politeness is the oil that lubricates conversation". (B10, excerpts 1.1)

"Yes, it does, because no reasonable person would want to engage a rude person". (B10, excerpt 1.2)

"Yes, it is very very important for mutual understanding in communication". (B11, excerpt 1.1)

"Yes, it does. It facilitates conversation because people prefer to engage polite persons in conversations". (B11, excerpt 1.2)

"Uum..,yes. When you are polite people are likely to pay attention to you". (B12, excerpt 1.1)

"Yes, it does. Because when you are polite, people are more likely to take you seriously and deal with you in a good way". (B12, excerpt 1.2)

"Yes, it is important to create understanding and flow of conversation". (B13, excerpt 1.1)

"Yes, it does in the sense that it creates the enablement which makes the speaker feel involved". (B13, excerpt 1.2)

"Well, I think yes. It promotes trust among people". (B14, excerpt 1.1)

"Well, yes. It quantifies who the person is". (B14, excerpt 1.2)

"Yes, it creates the atmosphere for more comprehension". (B15, excerpt 1.1)

"Yes, it gives room for more attention in the course of conversation". (B15, excerpt 1.2)

ôYes, I think politeness is important in conversation because it gives room for easy communication and friendliness which promotes love and trustö. (B16. excerpt 1.1)

ôYes of course. It provides for courtesy and decorum in conversation with people, you donøt need to be rude, or unkind with your words, so it makes for a very friendly environmentö. (B16, excerpt 1.2)

ôHmm.. yes. It creates an enabling environment and makes one more receptive to informationö. (B17, excerpt 1.2)

ôYes it does, ehh.. It puts one at ease to receive and express oneself emm.. more openlyö. (B17, excerpt 1.2)

ôYes. People are willing to help when you are politeö. (B18, excerpt 1.1)

ôYes. It creates a comfortable and conducive environment in conservation. You are at easeö. (B18, excerpt 1.2)

ôI think it is important because it elicits and creates the right atmosphere for sincere, frank and objective communicationö. (B19, excerpt 1.1)

ôYes, I think so because it will help to remove the risk intimidation, adverse implication will derive from a rude communication and fear between communicatorsö. (B19, excerpt 1.2)

ôWell, yes. I believe politeness which is the exhibition of good manners is important in conversation because it ensures the smooth flow of a conversation to a meaningful endö. (B20, excerpt 1.1)

ôWell, well, I believe politeness to some degree facilitates conversation once it is initiated but ultimately conversation is facilitated by mutual interestö. (B20, excerpt 1.2)

ôYes. I think so because it makes for better communicationö. (B21, excerpt 1.1)

ôYes, ehh.., it enhances the flow of conversationö. (B21, excerpt 1.2)

ôOkay, anyway ehh.., I think yes. Because emm.., both parties involved in the conversation would feel respected and honoured. I think politeness is very very importantö. (B22, excerpt 1.1)

ôYes, ehh.. Actually, the feeling of sense of protection in being polite provokes unending discussions among the parties involvedö. (B22, excerpt 1.2)

õYes. Politeness is really important in conversation because it helps speakers communicate more effectivelyö. (B23, excerpt 1.1)

õOf course, politeness surely facilitates conversation in the sense that is creates an atmosphere of openness which makes the speakers feel wanted in the course of discussionö. (B23, excerpt 1.2)

õCertainly, it is. Because it creates room for better communicationö. (B24, excerpt 1.1)

õOf course, it does. It makes for appropriateness in dialogueö. (B24, excerpt 1.2)

õWell, I believe that ehh.. politeness is important in conversation because it helps to create better understanding and appreciation of exchange as well as enhancing smooth flow of conservationö. (B25, excerpt 1.1)

õYes, it does facilitate ehh.. conversation by deepening the quality of emm.. communication aimed at achieving the objective of conservationö. (B25, excerpt 1.2)

õHmm.., Yes. It helps both feel relaxedö. (B26, excerpt 1.1)

õYes. It draws both parties close and leads to opennessö. (B26, excerpt 1.2)

õYes, because it aids conversation. Without politeness, there will not be effective communicationö. (B27, excerpt 1.1)

õYes. I think so because it helps to reduce friction in conversationö. (B27, excerpt 1.2)

õYes, of course. I do think so. First of all to save face and to project some sort of façade and for etiquette purposes and also make people like youö. (B28, excerpt 1.1)

õYes it does. Going by the bible you catch more flies with honey than vinegar. Politeness makes for an easy flow in conversation. Being polite facilitates the speed with which people respond to you in the society and also influences their reaction on any topic you would bring upö. (B28, excerpt 1.2)

õYes, it is and ehh.. emm.. the reasons are obvious. It makes room for very relaxed atmosphere, for a very cordial conversationö. (B29, excerpt 1.1)

õYes, yes it does. It makes room for cordiality and seamless conversation void of anger even when the parties involved are not in agreementö.(B29, excerpt 1.2)

õYes, ehh.., politeness is very very important in conversation as it is the livewire that leads to easy and smooth conversationö. (B30, excerpt 1.1)

õOf course, Yes. It is all about care and respect. When the parties are polite to each other, invariably you find out that the conversation will be very smooth and the discussion on board will be well understoodö. (B30,s excerpt 1.2)

Factors that necessitate Politeness/Hedging in the speech of Igbo Bilinguals:

The excerpts of the responses of the 30 participants in respect of the factors that necessitate Politeness/Hedging in the speech of Igbo Bilinguals are presented below.

õYes, there are factors such as; family upbringing, another is educational background, cultural background is also a factorö. (B1 excerpt 2.1)

õWords like; ⌐I am very gratefulø, ⌐I appreciate all your effortsø, ⌐youøve done very very wellø ö. (B1, excerpt 2.2)

õYes, like emm..; exposure, educational background, upbringing and religionö. (B2, excerpt 2.1)

õWell, we have so many of them like; thank you, sorry, please, sir, ma, mummy and Daddyö. (B2, excerpt 2.2)

õYes such factors are; grooming, age, cultural differences educational status and so onö. (B3, excerpt 2.1)

õThank you, God bless you, I appreciate, please dear, you have done well, and so onö. (B3, excerpt 2.2)

õEm ehh yes, I think background, religion, environment and education as wellö. (B4, excerpt 2.1)

õLike; thank you, welcome, God Bless you etcö. (B4, excerpt 2.2)

õYes, yes there are factors that necessitate politeness; rank, position in the society, age difference, power, class stratification all dictate politeness. There are others I call non-verbal factors: Mood, countenance, these also tend to influence the show of politenessö. (B5, excerpt 2.1)

õOkay. The words we usually use are: Please, thank you, if you donøt mindö. (B5 excerpt 2.2)

õWhy not, emm.. factors such as age, occupation, situation, societal attainment. I believe these factors necessitate politeness because interactants want to be treated and spoken to in the right mannerö. (B6, excerpt 2.1)

õOkay. Words such as; sir, ma, I believe tone too, May I, please, could you, thank you, sorry, do me a favour, excuse me, pardon me, welcomeö. (B6 excerpt 2.2)

õIn my opinion, I would say yes; factors such as social status, age, career attainment necessitate politeness in the conversational English of Igbo bilingualsö. (B7, excerpt 2.1)

õWords such as thank you, please, I am sorry, may I, should I, I beg your pardon, could I, well doneö. (B7, excerpt 2.2)

õYes, I do em.. we have such factors as; age, social status, educational background. These are the factors that necessitate politenessö. (B8, excerpt 2.1)

õWell em.. such ehh.. words as please, sir or excuse me. These are the words that are used to show politenessö. (B8, excerpt 2.2)

õYes. The factors are hierarchy: which addresses the issue of rank, age which deals with seniority and manner which is same as approach. So I believe these three and others are the factorsö. (B9, excerpt 2.1)

õNomso please can you help me bring this food: please, may-may I use your biro, excuse me, can I ask you a question? Thank you so much for your attention, those are polite wordsö. (B9, excerpt 2.2)

õYes. I believe that Age and training could be factors that necessitate politeness in conversationö. (B10, excerpt 2.1)

õWell, I have seen so many people use words like; may, please, can, sorry, thank you etceteraö. (B10, excerpt 2.2)

õYes, factors such as age, environment, upbringing and level of education enable politenessö. (B11 excerpt 2.1)

õPersonally I use words like; thank you, God bless you, I am sorry, may I, can I, sir as the case may beö. (B11, excerpt 2.2)

õEhh.. em.., yes. There are factors. Those factors are say; position, age, ethnicity/culture. I think those necessitate politenessö. (B12m excerpt 2.1)

õI think we use words like; please, may I, should I, can 1, thank you, sir, madam, aunty, brother etceteraö. (B12, excerpt 2.2)

õYes, they include; age, position, need to show respect, mood and upbringingö. (B13, excerpt 2.1)

"I would like to say that I use words like please, I'm sorry, thank you, may I, can I". (B13, excerpt 2.2)

"Well I believe there are factors. Yes, factors like age, education, social rank and religion". (B14, excerpt 2.1)

"Like; thank you, sorry, please, ladies and gentlemen, sir, madam". (B14 excerpt 2.2)

"Yes ehh.. cultural, religious ehh.. background, age, approach and attitude". (B15, excerpt 2.1)

"Please, thank you, very sorry, excuse me etc". (B15 excerpt 2.2)

"Yes, there are very many factors that necessitate politeness in the conversational English of Igbo bilingual. The age, factor, it also depends on your grooming, background, upbringing, societal culture, courtesy, work ethics and so many others to name but a few". (B16, excerpt 2.1)

"Ehh.. okay, I think words such as uum..; please, thank you, God bless you, you're most kind, you're welcome, sir, madam, mummy as the case may be. You even say mpa in Igbo language when it is a very elderly man". (B16, excerpt 2.2)

"Yes, Yes. Factors like; age, social status, upbringing, environment, educational background, I believe the person's mood are some of the factors that necessitate politeness in conversation". (B17, excerpt 2.1)

"Well uum.., I personally use words like; please, sorry, pity, thank you, ehh.., appellations like sir, ma". (B17, excerpt 2.2)

"Yes, there are factors. Age is there, level of education, social status and environment. They are some of the vital factors that necessitate politeness in conversation". (B18, excerpt 2.1)

"Being an Igbo and a second language user of English, I use words like; thank you, ma, pity, please, sorry, my apologies to express politeness in discussions". (B18, excerpt 2.2)

"Yes, there are some salient factors; courtesy and respect for one another, age bracket plays a role also and can influence politeness". (B19, excerpt 2.1)

"I think in our own part of this world Igbo, the application of courteous and respectful intonation, the use of please, I am sorry, can create the right atmosphere for healthy conversation". (B19, excerpt 2.2)

"Of course of course, there are factors that necessitate politeness in the English conversation of Igbo bilinguals. The factors include, but are not limited to; background, age, official rank, education etc. (B20, excerpt 2.1)

"Okay, words like; please, sorry, thank you, excuse me, I hope, may be, do you mind? etc" (B20, excerpt 2.2)

"Yes such factors exist and may include; interpretation, age, position and so on" (B21, excerpt 2.1)

"Such words used by Igbo bilinguals in showing politeness in conversation may include; sorry, please, sir, ma, thanks, can I, may I and so on" (B21 excerpt 2.2)

"Yes, yes I think factors like uum.. good upbringing, age and I think social ranking all necessitate politeness during discussion" (B22 excerpt 2.1)

"Like ehh..; thank you, God bless you and em.. I'm sorry, you can say I'm sorry or may I, you can say may I have this, may I know your name?" (B22 excerpt 2.2)

"Yes, I think age, position, seniority, title, cultural background necessitate politeness" (B23, excerpt 2.1)

"I would like to say that I use words like; please, sorry, thank you, can I, may I, if you don't mind" (B23 excerpt 2.2)

"Yes, things like; upbringing, cultural/educational backgrounds, age, position etcetera are some of the factors that necessitate politeness" (B24, excerpt 2.1)

"The rhyme - please, excuse me, sorry, thank you and pardon me says it all" (B24, excerpt 2.2)

"Yes, there are factors that necessitate politeness in English and some of these factors includes; age, ehhí social status or position, the need to show respect, mood ie the person's mood and upbringing. I believe that all these things necessitate politeness in conversation" (B25, excerpt 2.1)

"Well, a few of them include, words like ehhí ; please, I'm sorry, thank you, I beg your pardon, it is important to note that greeting customarily is an Igbo way of life and the Igbo cannot start any exchange without greetings such as Good morning, Good afternoon, Good night, or asking questions like; How are you? Did you sleep well etc" (B25, excerpt 2.2)

"Well, yes, environmental factors and age, yes age" (B26, excerpt 2.1)

"Sorry, please, thank you, may I, can I and the use of papa, mama for elderly people" (B26, excerpt 2.2)

õYes, there are so many among which are position, age, social ranking, academic qualification and so many others. All these necessitate politenessö. (B27, excerpt 2.1)

õThere are so many words but personally I use words like; I am sorry, excuse me, please, may I, Pardon me, Sir, ma and so many others to show politenessö. (B27, excerpt 2.2)

õYes, the need of the speaker, the age of the speaker and whoever is being addressed, the sex of the speaker and religious affiliations of the speakerö. (B28, excerpt 2.1)

õMost importantly, tone, and then the use of please, sorry, excuse me, thank you, may I, pardon meö. (B28, excerpt 2.2)

õYes, very many factors as a matter of fact but letøs look at age, cultural background, religious background, personal approach and attitude, they play a lot of roles in necessitating politeness in conversationsö. (B29, excerpt 2.1)

õWell uumí, words like emí, Igbo bilinguals use words like; please, excuse me, thank you, sorry, I beg to differ, I beg your pardon and so many othersö. (B29, excerpt 2.2)

õYes, of course. Factors like age, position, level of exposure, culture and so many other thingsö. (B30, excerpt 2.1)

õWell, there are such words and self expressions like; please, Iøm sorry, thank you, donøt be offended, bear with me and othersö. (B30, excerpt 2.2)

Effects of Politeness in Conversation:

The excerpts of the responses of the 30 participants in respect of the Effects of Politeness in Conversation as well as the notion of who appears to be more polite of the males/females are presented below.

õYes, politeness impacts positively on conversation because the level of politeness determines the effectiveness of communicationö. (B1, excerpt 3.1)

õYes, I would say females, because females emí tend to be more patient and they tend to be good listeners. They will give you their time, they are not always in a hurry and I think, I would say femalesö. (B1, excerpt 3.2)

õI would say yes because people want to have another chance with a polite personö. (B2, excerpt 3.1)

"Well, I would say males. They are naturally more loving and caring, always apologetic and kind hearted". (B2, excerpt 3.2)

"Yes, because politeness makes conversation effective". (B3, excerpt 3.1)

"Females, naturally females are more polite in conversations". (B3, excerpt 3.2)

"Yes, I think because it makes it more open, yes more open". (B4, excerpt 3.1)

"Males are, because males are not shy and are more sociable, not secretive like the females". (B4, excerpt 32)

"Yes, politeness impacts on conversation positively because like we said, it will help reduce the distance between speakers and enhances relationships (B5, excerpt 3.1)

"Definitely females, because of the natural structure of their brain. Elementary biology tells us females are brought up to be soft, the soft voice, they avoid threatening situations. Gender and culture make them polite too as they bowl and kneel. They don't appear confrontational even when they know they are right". (B5, excerpt 3.2)

"I do believe politeness impacts positively on conversation because individuals tend to connect better with people who show politeness". (B6, excerpt 3.1)

"Oh! I do believe strongly that females are because they are more approachable and subtle in their utterances. I would add that females are more polite because it's in us, it's in our nature to show politeness to get what are want. We have a way of talking to people so that things go our way". (B6, excerpt 3.2)

"Politeness impacts positively on conversation because it aids free flow of communication; it shows speakers knowledge of politeness and helps speakers to interact respectfully". (B7, excerpt 3.1)

"I would say females are more polite than males because it comes naturally to them, that is politeness and they employ this strategy to get what they want. And of course, that's our secret weapon". (B7, excerpt 3.2)

"Yes it does because, it calms the environment when you are polite and it makes it easy for people to discuss issues that matter". (B8, excerpt 3.1)

õWell males are more polite in conversation because they are calm and a man carries greater responsibility in the society and they show leadershipö. (B8, excerpt 3.2)

õYes it does, as good conversation grounded on politeness yields feedbackö. (B9, excerpt3.1)

õBoth genders because any of them could need information at any point in time. Whoever initiates a conversation knows what he or she wants to achieve at the end of the conversation. They are both in the same race of politenessö. (B9, Excerpt 3.2)

õYes it does because politeness is a trait that great people possess, so such trait may attract unmerited favour in conversationö. (B10, excerpt 3.1)

õWell, I think both males and females are polite. Politeness is not gender relatedö. (B10, excerpt 3.2)

õYes, it does. It eases tension and enables speakers to learn moreö. (B11, excerpt 3.1)

õWell, I believe the females because they appear to be more polite because of their exposure to education and approach to issuesö. (B11, excerpt 3.2)

õWell, yes it does, it does, because friendships are improved in polite conversationsö. (B12, excerpt 3.1)

õUumí I think females are more polite than males. Generally nature made the females what they are and it reflects even in their conversation that they are more polite. All in all, females are politeness personifiedö. (B12, excerpt 3.2)

õYes it does help establish and build friendshipsö. (B13, excerpt 3.1)

õThe females are more polite because they are naturally softer and more understanding in handling issuesö. (B13, excerpt 3.2)

õI would say yes because civilization, trustworthiness is promoted through politenessö. (B14, excerpt 3.1)

õFemales, because men are not straight forwardö. (B14, excerpt 3.2)

õYes, it creates good and positive understanding between the parties involvedö. (B15, excerpt 3.1)

õThe males, the males do not rush their conversation; they take their time to make their points one after the otherö. (B15, excerpt 3.2)

õOh, very well, it surely does impact positively on conversation in our society at large because it creates an environment for peace, for harmony for trust, for determination and focus and emm.., you know togetherness to thriveö. (B16, excerpt 3.1)

õMales, females, alright permit me to sit on the fence in this case because just about anybody can be polite in conversation. It could be a male; it could be a female like we said earlier it depends on your grooming and your backgroundö. (B16, excerpt 3.2)

õYes I think it does impact positively on conversation, ehhí well, it helps one to communicate more effectively as the second party would be more receptive to informationö. (B17, excerpt 3.1)

õUumí , does it have anything to do with gender? I donøt think it does. I believe both are, depending largely on the factors earlier mentioned, that is age, background, environment, possibly the person being addressed in the conversationö. (B17, excerpt 3.2)

õYes it helps one receive the necessary and important information sought for because the second party will be at easeö. (B18, excerpt 3.1)

õBoth are, being polite depends on a lot of factors and circumstances. It is basically an individual thingö. (B18, excerpt 3.2)

õYes, I think so. With a polite tone, one is sure to extract the best in conversation and discussionsö. (B19, excerpt 3.1)

õI think women. They call them the weaker vessel and they try to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony even in a home. Women seem to be more polite as they use it to attract good dispositions and favourable terms to themselves and even to their familiesö. (B19, excerpt 3.2)

õWell, politeness most definitely impacts positively on conversation because it sets a warm and cordial tone in a conversation. The warm tone directly improves the mood and enthusiasm of participantsö. (B20, excerpts 3.1)

õYes, I think females tend to be polite in conversation. This is as a result of their nature, soft tone and warm facial expressions in conversationsö. (B20, excerpts 3.2)

õYes, it does because it helps to build better understanding and trust among speakersö. B21, excerpt 3.1)

õEhhí , I would say females are more polite, because natural as well as cultural influences structured them soö. (B21, excerpt 3.2)

"Yes. I think it can impact positively on conversation because ehhí results are definitely achieved if both parties are polite and interpersonal relationships are established". (B22, excerpt 3.1)

"I think ehhí, it should be the females, yes, the females, because the female folks are naturally afraid of being turned down, yes they are always afraid. Yes, I think it is the females". (B22, excerpt 32)

"Yes, it does help establish and build friendships". (B23, excerpt 31)

"The males are more polite because they are usually patient and tend to handle issues with much respect". (B23, excerpt 3.2)

"Definitely, it creates lasting impressions in the minds of speakers". (B24, excerpt 3.1)

"The males are more polite, because they have naturally calmer and friendlier disposition than females. The females on the other hand have greater tendencies to be easily agitated and irritable which may be attributed to the hormones estrogen". (B24, excerpt 3.2)

"It does impact positively on conversation, ehhí often times ehhí, politeness leaves lasting impression that helps in cultivation of relationships and friendships". (B25, excerpt 3.1)

"Well, I don't think politeness is a gender issue. I rather think it has more to do with the person, such as the person's upbringing, the person's natural disposition, the person's mood or state of mind, etc. I think these are the things that can actually determine how polite one can be". (B25, excerpt 3.2)

"Well, it helps one to speak freely" (B26, excerpt 3.1)

"I would say both are. It depends on a lot of reasons". (B26, excerpt 3.2)

"Yes, it gives room for effective communication". (B 27, excerpt 3.1)

"I say females because judging by our culture females tends to be more polite in conversations". (B27, excerpt 3.2)

"It influences reactions positively. You tend to get more favourable uumí responses if you're polite than when you are harsh and brusque". (B28, excerpt 3.1)

"Females of course, because it is in us as well-bred females. You would thank our upbringing for this. The Igbo society trains females to be respectful nay subservient, because it is believed that women being the weaker sex have to kowtow to the males. Aside from that,

Igbo youths not just the women are trained in politeness strategies by respecting their elders totally. The females exhibit this trait naturallyö. (B28, excerpt 3.2)

õYes it does. It makes agreement on any subject easier, it makes understanding easier too, creates to a large extent camaraderie that makes the parties understand themselves betterö. (B29, excerpt 3.1)

õThereøs no bias in this answer ó female. First and foremost, there is this age long belief that we are the weaker sex. I am a woman you know and then the religious connotation of submissiveness makes women more polite generally in conversationö. (B29, excerpt, 3.2)

õYes it shows that one cares and has respect for one another. Moving further, it leads to better understandingö. (B30, excerpt 3.1)

õTo my own best opinion based on ideas and experiences Iøve had so far I would say females because they have better approach to issues. For instance, a male might come in and Iøm sorry to say this could be arrogant but in terms of females, they will come in humbly and askí   Please can I have this from you? Please can you do this for me? You know and so on and so forthö. (B30 excerpt 3.2)

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1 Quantitative Data

Analysis of Data from the questionnaire ó Discourse Completion Task (DCT) took a holistic dimension of each of the five discourse situations portrayed in the various social contexts i.e. Apology, Request, Appreciation, Reprimand and Greetings/Offers/Excuses/Breaking Bad news discourses as the case may be. In other words, analysis of data was based on the frequencies /percentages of responses given to the fifty situations by 2,748 respondents on various indices of politeness as discourse strategy using the guided options provided.

On Apology Discourse, data show that 61.33% of responses based on option A (Polite) was males while their female counterparts recorded 37.96% responses on the same option A. Similarly, based on Options B (more polite), 55.23% of responses was males whereas the female responses   gave rise to 44.77%. However, results from option C (most polite) show that 30.98% of the responses were generated   by males as against 69.02% responses generated by the females.

Apology discourse presupposes that in the course of human interaction, there may be instances of affront, anger, or even displeasure which may be either speaker or hearer-generated and which will in turn call for an apology. The act of apologizing is equally dependent on the severity of offence that is to say that some offence may be considered mild or not severe while others may be judged grave or severe. According to Leech (1983) apology is an attempt to recreate an imbalance between the speaker and the hearer created by the fact that the speaker committed an offence against the hearer. The result above shows that apologies are conversational habits of Igbo bilinguals more so in their English language conversation. It is interesting though to note that in spite of the guided options, some social

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variables were also taken into consideration that is, social status and social distance. These social variables posed instances where (a) the interactants are equals (situation 1, 2, 3, and 4) (b) the interactantsø statuses are not established (situation 5) (c) the speaker is lower than the hearer (situation 6, 7 and 10) and (d) the speaker is higher than the hearer (situation 8 and 9). Again the severity of offence was a significant variable which informed the depth of apology expressed in every situation. It is therefore indicated that the offences of situations (1, 2, 5 and 6) were not severe while the offences of situations (3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10) were severe. Data from the study also indicate a certain level of variance in the act of apologizing in the English language conversation of the Igbo bilingual considering the social status/social distance factors and most importantly the severity of offence criterion which is used to measure the contriteness or obduracy of an apology. This fact is corroborated in earlier studies by Butler (44) that for second language learners, the act of apologizing is very complex and hazardous since an apologizer who fails to communicate the proper apology for the given situation may seem unapologetic, or even worse. In order for an apology to have an effect, it should reflect true feelings. In any case, result of the study shows that the Igbo bilinguals in these situations regardless of social difference admit to violation of standards of behaviour and apologize irrespective of social disparity. This finding is a confirmation of previous studies by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (199) that apologies are generally post-event acts and they signal the fact that a certain type of event has already taken place or the speaker might be aware of the fact that it is about to take place. By apologizing, the speaker recognizes the fact that a violation of social norm has been committed and admits to the fact that he/she is at least partially involved in its cause. Hence apologies involve loss of face for the speaker and support for the hearer. Again, the severity of offence posed in the situations projected by different scenarios show that the grave offences of situations (3, 4, 7, 8, 9 and 10) generated predominantly the most polite option C responses. However, result arising from situation 9 indicates that in spite

of the severity of the offence as presented, the speaker (university lecturer) avoided overt expression of apology ostensibly for social status and threat to his/her face. These findings support earlier studies by Thijittang that when apologizing, a speaker is sensitive to a hearerøs social status. Thus, those with lower status are inclined to avoid offending those with higher status and thus show more respect to them. Also, speakers of equal status preferred accepting the blame in severe offences because of the increased chance that they will meet each other again, they would like to restore the relationship. While apologizing to people of lower status could be a serious threat to people of higher statusø face, they tend to avoid the explicit expression of apology strategy in the apology situation (203). Conversely, in situation 5 where the social variables between interlocutors were not established, results show that responses tilted towards the most polite option C which is a clear indication that expressing politeness in apology discourse among Igbo bilinguals is not limited to familiar faces but cuts across the unfamiliar margins. This result further confirms prior studies by Nwoye that the traditional Igbo society is highly egalitarian and as such everyone stands a chance to be treated fairly. Unlike several other societies of the world where atomistic individualism is the norm, the Igbo society upholds a group orientation with its concern for collective other, which accounts for the Igbo solidarity spirit and the need to look out for the next person (265). Like other social variables, gender binary statistics indicate that male respondents (61.33%)were more inclined to option A (polite) responses unlike the   female respondents(69.02%)   who showed preference to option C (most polite) responses. Granted that all options show a degree of politeness but they are graduated to imply that while option A is polite, option B is more polite and option C is the most polite of the responses. This finding is corroborated by previous studies by Holmes (1995) and Subon (67-79) that females are more linguistically polite than their male counterparts.

On Request Discourse, results show that 55.44% of the polite responses (option A) were of the male respondents while 44.56% of were of the female respondents. Again, 51.12% of the more polite responses (option B) were recorded by the male respondents as 48.88% were of their female counterparts. Conversely, out of the most polite (Option C) responses, the male respondents recorded 44.42% while the female respondents recorded 55.58%.

Request discourse entails the act of asking politely or formally for something. Data on request discourse establishes the fact that Igbo bilinguals perform the act in various contexts as determined by different circumstances. Previous studies indicated that to attain request goals while maintaining the face of both the requester and requestee, subtle linguistic devises and unfinished sentences were used to lessen the degree of imposition and create feelings of empathy and understanding between the requester and requestee (Takezewa, 52-103 and Alaoui, 7-15) . Result of this study shows that in line with Takezewa and Alaouiøs claim, in the act of requesting, the requester is drawn between either a positive or a negative response and with that in mind, h/she tries to construct his sentence in a manner that will yield a positive response regardless of the situation. This, the requester achieves by selecting the option A, B or C that best conveys his message and that accounts for the choice of options considering that the study focuses on the English language conversation of Igbo bilinguals. The above view had been debunked in previous studies by Nwoye who observed that the Igbo disposition to care for the collective image of the group than for that of the individual accounted for why acts normally regarded as impositions in some other societies are not so regarded by the Igbo. Nwoye reiterated that the Igbo culture was one where gregariousness rather than atomistic individualism was the norm and where people were still to a large extent their õbrotherøs keepersö. He pointed out that Igbo hospitality and regard for the collective good rather than for the self make such acts as request, which elsewhere might be regarded as imposing on either the speaker or the hearer, routine occurrences bereft of any imposition.

Nwoye concluded that the act of requests, even when performed in the most bald-on-record manner were not imposing after all (316-320). It is important to note that while Nwoye's conception of the request act focused on the use of Igbo language among the Igbo, data from the present study focuses on English language conversation of the Igbo bilinguals. It is therefore not entirely out of place that the results have presented in that order.

Again, considering various social factors, results from the study show that request acts among interlocutors where speaker is higher than hearer (situations 11, 12, 15 and 17) respondents were more inclined to the more polite (option B) responses which indicates a positive politeness strategy as the requester attempts to minimize the threat to the hearer's positive face. Also, data from the study show that in request acts among interactants who are equals (situations 13,14 and 19) the majority of the responses were anchored on the most polite (option C) choice which signals a negative politeness strategy as there is a potential for awkwardness and speaker might be imposing on the hearer. On the other hand, results from the study show that in request acts among speakers whose statuses are not established (situations 16 and 18), respondents showed tendency to the polite (option A) responses which reflects a bald-on-record strategy as the speaker in these situations do not attempt to mitigate the threat to the addressee's face but aware that the request must be made.

 In addition, findings from the study equally show that in request acts among interlocutors where speaker is lower than hearer (situation 20), respondents were largely drawn to the most polite (option C) response which depicts negative politeness and the need to mitigate threat to the hearer's face. The above results on social factors as it concerns request discourse with their attendant politeness strategies strengthens Brown and Levinson's concept of -face as õsomething that is emotionally invested and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in interaction (66).ö Lastly, results show that given the different scenarios projected in the Request Discourse situations, relationships among

speakers were vertical, horizontal or diagonal/seesaw. Male respondents therefore in the request discourse showed greater proclivity to the polite (option A) responses unlike their female counterparts who showed preference to the most polite (Option C) responses. This finding supports previous studies that reported that females are more linguistically polite than their male counterparts. (Lakoff, 1975 and Fishman, 1978, 1980)

On Appreciation Discourse, results demonstrate that 71.65% of the male respondents chose the polite (Option A) responses as against 28.35% of the female respondents who chose same option. Again, 47.48% of the males selected the more polite (Option B) responses as opposed to 52.525% of the female respondents who chose same Option B. However, while 36.9% of the most polite (Option C) responses were recorded by the males, the female respondents recorded 63.91% of the most polite responses.

Appreciation discourse is a show of gratitude or an expression of grateful feelings or thoughts. Results of the study are a manifestation that appreciation is a characteristic feature of the language of Igbo bilinguals particularly in their conversational English. Data on appreciation discourse proves that Igbo bilinguals accomplish the act of appreciation in various contexts by the choice of different linguistic terms to fulfill the need to express gratitude. This result supports earlier studies by Nwoye that in Igbo, single word utterances are often sufficient to accomplish the act of thanking, thus the word ‖thank youø is normally sufficient as a verbal manifestation of appreciation. Again, Nwoye noted that there may be cases of elaborated forms of appreciation which are used to show appreciation for some favour received and this assertion is evident in some of the choice options in the questionnaire where speaker, in trying to show appreciation, praises the hearer/offers a short prayer instead (situation 21a, 22a, 23c, 26a, c, 27b, c, 28b, c.) Nwoye concludes that the show

of appreciation or solidarity is in conformity with the group-centered orientation of the Igbo society (323-324). The above notion is very true of the Igbo bilingual judging by the trend of the respondentsø responses that at each point a person is helped or receives a favour, what ensues by way of utterance is always an expression of gratitude.

Furthermore, in line with the social variables projected by different scenarios, results show that in expressing gratitude between interactants where the speaker is higher than the hearer (situation 21, 22, 26, & 28) responses were inclined to the most polite (option c) which is an indication that showing gratitude by Igbo bilingual is hardly a status symbol. Again, results from the study depict that in appreciation acts among speakers whose statuses are not established (situation 23, 25 and 30), responses tilted towards the most polite (option c). This attests to the fact that beyond the margins of familiarity, Igbo bilinguals show appreciation by means of utterances for every act of kindness. Also findings from the study show that in appreciation acts among interlocutors where speaker is lower than hearer (situations 24 and 27), the majority of the responses was the most polite (option c). This shows in clear terms that expressing gratitude is common among Igbo bilinguals. In addition, Appreciation discourse among interactants who are equals (situation 29) shows that respondents were still drawn to the most polite (option c). This shows that even among equals, or mates, expressing gratitude is a routine among Igbo bilinguals. The above significant observation typifies that showing gratitude is an attribute of the Igbo bilingual. Moreover, the fact that the greater percentage of the responses on appreciation across vertical, horizontal, diagonal/seesaw relationships attests to the fact that the show of appreciation is a way of life for the Igbo as stressed by Nwoye.

However, while data from the study on appreciation discourse reveal that the vast majority of the responses tilted towards (option c) the most polite, it is important to state that the female respondents were responsible for 63.91% of those responses while the males recorded

36.09% of the most polite (option c) responses. From the above, we may infer that females are more subtle in their choice of words and are thus inclined to employ more linguistically polite terms than their male counterparts as earlier reported in studies by Adegbija (57-80) and Tannen (1991).

On Reprimand Discourse, results reveal that 60.36% of the male respondents yielded to the polite (option A) responses while 39.64% of their female counterparts picked same option A. On the other hand, 44.90% of the male responses were on the polite (option B) as against 55.10% of the female responses still on the same option B. Furthermore, 33.60% of the males selected the most polite (option C) whereas 66.40% of the option C responses were recorded by the females.

Reprimand discourse acknowledges that in human interaction there is always the tendency for an out of line behavior and in the event of any impropriety, the defaulter is always censured, criticized or even condemned for such acts. Reprimand signals disagreement which expresses or shows tension arising from a discord. The implication therefore is that there exists an offence. In trying to censure an offender, the severity of the offence is taken into account. This means that a mild offence will attract light criticism while a grave offence would attract weighty criticism. The result of the study shows that reprimands are conversational routines of Igbo bilinguals and is also evident in their English language conversation. It is also clear from data obtained on Reprimand discourse that apart from the social variables of status and distance, so much attention in paid to severity of offence as that would ultimately determine the wording of the utterance ό Reprimand. Thus, act of criticisms among interlocutors where speaker is higher than hearer (situations 31, 37, 38, and 39) swings between the more polite and the most polite responses with particular attention to the weightiness of the supposed

offence. For example (situation 31) projects a scenario of mistaken caller identity and the majority of the responses were inclined to the more polite option B as the offence was not in any way severe. Again, in acts of reprimand among equals (situations 32 and 36) considering the weightiness of the offence, responses were more on the most polite option C but partially on the more polite option B and the polite option A.

The spread of these responses may be tied to individual differences, perception and of course reaction to a supposed imposition. Also reprimand acts between interactants where speaker is lower than hearer and due consideration of the weightiness of the offence as severe in (situations 33 and 40), reactions yielded the most polite option C and this is attributable to the variables of social status and social distance at play in those scenarios, thus the offended is subjected to forms of negative politeness strategy as opposed to bald-on-record or directness strategy advanced in previous studies by Nwoye (309-328).

Furthermore, in acts of reprimand among interactants where speaker is higher than hearer and in consideration of the severity of offence as in (situations 34 & 35), responses were predominantly the polite option A and this result agrees with Nwoye's previous study which advocated the bald-on-record or directness strategy regardless of other variables at play. Nwoye's study advanced that the Igbo culture can be described as gregarious and as such, very few things are regarded as strictly personal. Also, there is a great degree of group involvement in many areas that western societies would routinely classify as personal or private. According to Nwoye's previous study, the Igbo feel obligated to criticize, reprimand or admonish when people's behaviour falls short of what the group expects. From the spread of the general result on reprimand discourse across polite, more polite and most polite responses as the case may be and given the prevailing circumstances, we may therefore infer that responses that yielded to the negative politeness strategy as in (situations 33 and 40) confirms earlier studies by Beebe and Takahashi that the English do not show disagreement

or criticism directly, rather, they tend to make suggestions or a request to avoid directly expressing disagreement (311-348). The above is a reflection of enculturation and influence of the nuances of the English language in the conversational English of Igbo bilinguals as reported by Nwoye that knowing what constitutes linguistic politeness and the strategies for its achievement in a given language is in fact an essential part of knowing the language and is also an integral component of the ethnography of communication (274). However, the bald-on-record or the directness strategy of the responses in situations (34 and 35) mirrors into the life, culture and routines of the Igbo bilinguals as exemplified by Nwoye's study. By and large, since all the responses have a certain degree of politeness, it is important to state that 66.40% of the most polite responses were recorded by the female respondents while the male respondents recorded only 33.60%. Suffice to say that this significant gap is a further confirmation of earlier studies that females are more linguistically polite than males. (Brown, 1980:111-136 and Adegbija 1989:57-80)

On Greetings/Offers/Excuses/Breaking Bad News Discourse, results depict that 60 .00% of the option A responses were recorded by the male respondents while 40.00% of the option A responses were by the female respondents. However, of the option B responses, 30% were by the males and 70.00% were recorded by the female respondents. Similarly, the most polite option C had 75.00% of female responses as against 25.00% of male responses.

The above addresses a mixed discourse of greetings, offers, excuses and breaking bad news. Greeting discourse generally plays a vital role in the lives of a people particularly the lives of Igbo bilinguals. Greeting signals presence, attention and often suggests a cordial relationship. The results above show that situations (41, 42, 43 and 44) address greetings and in any case, greetings between interactants whose statuses are not established as in (situations 41, 42 and

44) are inclined to the most polite option C. Similarly, when greeting act is between interlocutors where the speaker is higher than the hearer, results show that the responses were majorly on the more polite option B. The above result is a clear indication that greetings are conversational habits of Igbo bilinguals. Note that the results reveal that even among strangers, greetings are done in the most polite manner. In addition, between a boss and his subordinate, the boss initiates the greeting in the more polite option B. It is therefore safe to say that the result is a manifestation of the routineness of the greeting discourse. This result corroborates previous studies by Nwoye who noted that greetings and leave-takings among the Igbo are elaborate and asking after the health of relations of the other party is not only evidence of the cordiality of the relationship but also part of one∅s competence in greeting as speech acts (263).

Offer discourse typifies a proposal, overture or expression of one∅s willingness to do something. In situations (45, 46 and 47), the scenarios depict that offers abound in the culture of the Igbo bilinguals and suggest in more ways; warm welcome, good upbringing and hospitality. Results also show that the acts of offering across relationships in vertical, horizontal or even diagonal/seesaw are basically done in the most polite option C and the more polite option B. The result is clear evidence that offers are habits of Igbo bilinguals and are hardly an imposition as they are always well-intentioned. The above result validates earlier studies by Nwoye that in societies where mutual cooperation is seen as the norm in social interaction, offers are not only expected but are frequently made with little or no imposition on both sides. He noted that eating and drinking together are other forms of hospitality expected among neighbours and extended to visitors. Nwoye reiterates that visitors and neighbours are formally invited to share meals with their host and that for the Igbo, this is not mere courtesy; it is sincere and to refuse such hospitality was considered a grave insult. Nwoye∅s study also noted that an offer for help made to somebody seen

struggling with many bags as in (situation 46) was expected of any well-behaved member of the society who encounters another member in a situation requiring help (320). Succinctly put by Nwoye, õit is normal practice to make an offer; in fact, it is a social obligationö (321) as opposed to Brown and Levinsonøs 1987 theory of politeness where an offer is regarded as an imposition because the hearer may be constrained in some way by such an utterance.

Excuse discourse is employed to avoid a threat to the hearerøs face. It is usually a polite explanation for not living up to the expectations placed upon oneself. Results show that Igbo bilinguals resort to excuses as an alternative explanation for reneging on a promise which is potentially a face-threatening act or behaviour as in situations 48 and 49. The excuse discourse in the study happened between interlocutors who are equals. Results show that the prevailing scenario in situation 48 was more of a decision even before the invitation gesture. And as a result, the greater percentage 19.30% of the responses was on the polite (option A) choice which reflects a bald-on-record /directness strategy prefaced by a hedge word õwellö which is still intended to paint a picture of the possibility of being at the event. This observation supports earlier studies by Holmes that hedging and hedging strategies are linguistic devices that may be used to either reduce or intensify the force of an utterance (297). Again, results show that respondents were more inclined to the most polite option C in situation 49 as the scenario portrayed initial willingness to be of help but could not eventually. In that case, the response is a mixture of an apology and an excuse. The above supports findings in earlier studies by Eze that excuse discourse is a motivation or explanation to avoid impeding the face of the others (49).

Breaking bad news discourse is normal with communal living as circumstances that necessitate such discourse is hardly avoidable. Among the Igbo, such discourse is always a delicate issue and the speaker is often burdened with such a task. The feeling of empathy towards the hearer is paramount in such situations, thus the speaker tries to find a subtle way

or to lace his utterance to cushion or mitigate the effect a direct mention would pose. Result of the study shows that Igbo bilinguals accomplish the act of breaking bad news by a careful choice of words to convey the sore message while mitigating threat to the hearer's face. The scenario in situation 50 therefore recorded almost all responses on the most polite option C. This is obviously attributable to the delicateness of the issue regardless of the other social variables. This significant finding buttresses Nwoye's view that indirectness subsumes all strategies of avoidance, i.e. a means by which an item or an expression is not directly mentioned or referred to but is indirectly alluded to. Nwoye states that both proverbs and euphemisms could be used to achieve indirectness (273). In other words the option C of situation 50 is a typical example of forms of indirectness. Again, as established in previous studies by Lakoff (65), the overriding response to situation 50 agrees with Lakoff's third rule for politeness in English ó Camaraderie which stipulates the show of sympathy. This is part of Igbo communal living as one shows concern for the welfare of others. Also, based on the prevailing response (option c) to situation 50, the study reveal some degree of inclusiveness by the use of the word õweö to show that the spirit of one is the spirit of all. As reported earlier by Eze, this is referred to as Impersonalizing: a strategy which involves the use of inclusive õweö for the avoidance of exclusive õIö and õYouö. This strategy, Eze reiterates actually functions to bridge the disconnect or distance between the speaker and the hearer (51).

Lastly, it is undeniably important to state that statistics from the mixed discourse of Greetings/Offers/Excuses/Breaking Bad News show that while the female respondents constituted 75.00% of the most polite option C responses, the male respondents represented only 25.00% of the same option. It is therefore hardly a hasty or sweeping generalization to assert that the females have been found to be more linguistically polite than the males.

All in all, expressing politeness is analogous to playing the game of chess and the need to always look on the other side of the board.

5.2 Qualitative Data

The interview data on significance of politeness in conservation show that every participant agrees that politeness is very important in conversation. Among other things, participants stress the virtue in being polite and the unimaginable accord which it creates between interactants regardless of the subject matter. The participants agree that apart from conveying the message with ease, politeness gives room for reciprocal concessions.

Studies (Afolayan, 1974, Lakoff, 1975, Fraser and Nolen 1981, Adegbija 1989, Nwoye 1992, Hernandez 1999, Akpan 2003) agree that politeness is an expected socially required norm of behavior which makes individuals within and outside any given society live in harmony with other people. These scholars reiterate that at each point of interaction between people, politeness plays a vital role. It can therefore be inferred that politeness is that great integral part that completes the cycle of communication. To this extent, the interview results on the significance of politeness supports in no mean measure the importance of politeness as a routine in conversation. The interview result also shows how politeness generates impressive positive ripple effects on the addressees ranging from sincerity, respect, value, appreciation, mutual understanding, involvement, friendship, love, trust, to a friction free/seamless dialogue, warm atmosphere and most importantly influences peopleøs reactions to any issue as opposed to impoliteness. The litany of advantages which the interview participants expressed about politeness reveals that politeness is a way of life for the Igbo and in showing politeness in conversation, one gets politeness in return. Politeness therefore is an indispensable tool in everyday talk. Like authors (Sell, 210 and Watts, 44) made use of such metaphors as õvelvet glove within which to hide one or another kind of iron firstí ö and õa

mask used to conceal ego∅s true frameí ö to describe politeness, a participant said that politeness is the oil that lubricates conversationö. (B10, excerpt 1.1) and another describes it as the livewire of easy and smooth conversationö. (B30, excerpt 1.1) Suffice to say that with politeness as a tool, there is no awkwardness in conversation, the views of the interviews on the importance of politeness from the Igbo standpoint is that politeness is an anticipated code of conduct in conversational situations and that any attempt to consciously front impoliteness as a conversational strategy comes with a grim sense of foreboding. The above view corroborates Nwoye∅s assertion that politeness is an ongoing process. An expected socially required norm and participants in conservation are generally aware that they are required to act within the dictates of this expected code of behavior. Being polite according to Nwoye is not predicated on making a hearer feel good, or not feel bad, but rather on conforming to socially agreed codes of good conduct. In this regard one is wary of behavior capable of casting one∅s group in a bad light (310).

Data on factors that necessitate politeness/hedging in the speech of   Igbo bilinguals showed that all participants strongly believe that there are factors that necessitate politeness in the conversational English of the Igbo bilinguals. This finding is consistent with the questionnaire data which show that socio-cultural perceptions underlie linguistic politeness. In no particular order, the interviewees listed family upbringing, educational background, cultural background, religion, age difference, power, class stratification, mood, grooming, countenance, environment, culture, occupation, societal attainment, social status, rank, position, career attainment, hierarchy, need to show respect, attitude, work ethics, official rank, title, the need of the speaker, the sex of the speaker, level of exposure as some of the factors that necessitate politeness.

 It is important to note that much as the participants have listed these factors, some of them are reflective of some common ideals and on the strength of such commonness, the related

factors are married to a distinct concept. Thus they are discussed under: Age, Cultural background, Hierarchy, Disposition and Religion.

Age: The age factor got the highest mention among the participants. In fact 27 out of the 30 participants which represent 90.0% of the sample agree that age is one of the factors that necessitate politeness. In this context age is likened to eldership in the Igbo society and beyond. This result supports the views earlier reported by Afolayan (57-64), Ide (223-248) Adegbija (57-80) Nwoye (259-275), Enang, Eshiet and Udoka (1-14), that age took precedence over all other factors that governed the selection of an appropriate linguistic form and or appropriate behavior.

Cultural background: Considering the factors mentioned by the interviewees, at par with cultural background are: family upbringing, grooming, environment and culture. 20 out of the 30 participants representing 60.67% of the sample population in the interview study mentioned cultural background or any of the other related concepts as a factor that necessitates politeness among the Igbo. Culture reflects the way of life of a people and by extension irrevocably yoked with language. In other words, every act or expression of an act is tied to the culture of the person/persons involved. The result recognizes that attention must be paid to culture in particular since differences may exist in ways various cultures view, express or even interpret concepts or phenomena. This fact is corroborated by earlier studies by Brown & Levinson (67), Leech (134), Afolayan (57) Ide (223-248), Nwoye (309-328), Demeter (1-153), Roberts, Davies and Jupp (121) that speech acts primarily reflect the fundamental cultural values and social norms of a language therefore expressions/utterances and interpretations/meanings are culture specific.

Hierarchy: This encompasses such terms as; power, class stratification, educational background, occupation, societal attainment, social status, career attainment, title, level of

exposure, rank, position. Out of the 30 participants 23 representing 76.67% of the samples express their belief that hierarchy remains one of many factors that bring about politeness in conversation. In the Igbo culture, hierarchy is a status symbol marked by social and economic achievements, power, titles etc. Thus in every interaction, speakers tend to unconsciously classify one another to accord the due politeness to one another. This finding supports previous studies by Ambady, Koo, Lee and Rosenthal (996-1011), Habwe (126-142), Matsumoto 207-221), Nwoye (259-275), Afolayan (57-64) Brown and Levinson (1987), Holmes (1995), Leech (1983) that hierarchy in communication involves the ability to recognize each other's social position.

Disposition: This regulates other terms like, mood, manner, countenance, need to show respect, the need of the speaker, attitude etc. 11 participants representing 36:67% of the interviewees acknowledge that disposition as well as other behavioural patterns is some of the factors that call for politeness. In this context, the addressees' dispositions matter a lot since interaction deals with the need to communicate effectively. This result is a further confirmation that politeness is more of a behavioural pattern, a code of behaviour which governs communication and which interactants must knuckle under to achieve the desired goal (Matsumoto 207-221; GU 237- 258; Nwoye 310; Afolayan 57).

Religion: This entails belief or faithfulness to a given principle. While culture may be based on shared values of humans, religion is associated with God. Six out of the 30 participants which is 20.00% consent that religious affiliation is one of the factors that impels politeness. This significant finding corroborates the studies by Abdelaziz (71-98) that the inclusion of religion as a factor that prompts politeness strategy appear to function as a way of protecting the self-image of both the speaker and the hearer and a reflection of their firm belief and the importance they attach to the holy book.

Secondly, in trying to find out some of the English words/phrases used by Igbo bilinguals to show politeness, the participants unanimously agree that words /phrases used to show politeness in English abound and they include: very grateful, appreciate all the efforts, done very well, sorry, please, sir, ma, mummy, daddy, thank you , if you don∅t mind , welcome ,you are most kind, God bless you, dear, tone, may I, could you do me a favor , excuse me, pardon me, well done, should I, aunty, brother, ladies and gentle men, madam, papa, pity, my apologies, do you mind, may be, greetings, mama, I beg to differ, I beg your pardon, don∅t be offended, bear with me etc. In line with the objectives of the present study the above listed words are grouped and discussed according to the various discourse situations which they exemplify. Thus these words are discussed under; Appreciation, Apology, Request, Terms of Address, Greeting, Disagreement, Tone.

Appreciation: This marks a show of gratitude or an expression of grateful feelings or thoughts. The finding of this study in this regard shows that the participants understand and agree that in expressing politeness, certain terms go with certain discourse situations or speech act. In trying to show the depth of their understanding of the concept of politeness as well as its application in their English language conversation, the participants used words/phrases like; ‑very grateful∅, ‑appreciate all the effort∅, ‑done very well∅, ‑thank you∅, ‑God bless you∅, ‑well done∅, ‑you are most kind∅, to highlight their terms of appreciation. This result supports earlier studies by Afolayan (57-64) that Nigerians in general used phrases like ‑thank you∅, ‑grateful for∅, to express polite acknowledgment of any act of courtesy or any little kindness. It is important to state that these choice of words/phrases used in the English language conversation of the bilinguals to show appreciation are reflected on their politeness markers in Igbo as shown on the checklist of Igbo politeness markers (see page 84)

Apology: According to Leech is an attempt to recreate an imbalance between the speaker and the hearer created by the fact that the speaker committed an offence against the hearer. Holmes further states that an apology is addressed to the person offended¢s face-needs and intended to remedy an offence for which the apologizer takes responsibility, and thus to restore equilibrium between the apologizer and the person offended (156). This means that when we do something wrong, there is always a need to express regret and take responsibility for the offense in the form of an apology. The finding from this interview data supports the acknowledgment that in the course of interaction there may be instances of affront, anger or displeasure which may be speaker or hearer-generated and which in turn call for an apology. It is therefore in the wake of this realization that the interview participants listed such words/phrases as; sorry, pardon me, my apologies, excuses me, I¢m sorry, bear with me, don¢t be offended etc. to express politeness in apology discourse. Also, the terms used in apology discourse in the English language conversation of the bilinguals have their equivalent terms in Igbo. The implication therefore is that much as these terms may vary in structure, they are reflective of the principle of politeness as shown in the speech act of apology (see checklist: page 84)

Request: This is an act of asking politely or formally for something. Previous studies showed that to attain request goals while maintaining the face-needs of both the requester and requestee, subtle linguistics devices and unfinished sentences were used to lessen the degree of imposition and create feelings of empathy and understanding between the requester and requestee (Takezewa, 52-103 and Alaoui 7-15). Takezewa¢s study focused on request in Japanese as a second language. The relationship of Takezewa¢s study with the present study is that they both are focused on second language learners. It is therefore possible to infer that in trying to make a request in the second language, the interview participants may have been influenced by the nuances of the second language use by native speakers thus, the

interviewees listed words/phrases like ‡please‡, ‡if you don¢t mind‡, ‡may I‡, ‡could you‡, ‡do me a favour‡, ‡should I‡, ‡do you mind‡, ‡excuse me‡, ‡I beg your pardon‡, all in bid to communicate more effectively. However, Nwoye stressed that speech acts of requests were not in themselves inherently polite or impolite; rather, they are appropriate performances and attributes of good behaviours inherent in good upbringing. The conclusion therefore is that request act in Igbo among the Igbo is viewed as a social right and is in fact demanded from others (316-320). While request act in English among the Igbo is often viewed as an imposition that will require technical terms to communicate same effectively hence the choice of the above listed words/phrases. In making a request in English, the Igbo bilinguals listed words/phrases adopted to communicate their intentions effectively. These choices bear so much in common with the choice of words used to communicate same in Igbo (see checklist: page 84).

Terms of address: these primarily enhance expression of politeness in terms of showing respect with regard to age, hierarchy, context etc. The result of this study shows that the participants listed terms of address to include; sir, ma, mummy, daddy, aunty, brother, madam, papa, mama, dear, ladies and gentlemen to show respect and establish good relationship. The use of these appellations and endearments indicate that the participants engage in conversations with various known and unknown persons but that politeness remains a guiding principle in all cases. In the Igbo culture, effort is made to accord due respect to elderly ones in the society and the need to show respect gave rise to such terms as mama, papa as listed by the participants, even though the addressees may not be the addresser¢s biological parents. The choice of these terms of respectful language by the interviewees confirm previous studies by Takezewa (52-103), Habwe (126-142), Gillani and Mahmood (23-44) who referred to these terms as honorifics that they are used to foster politeness which was meant to establish good social bonding and avoid acts that might ruin a

good conversational encounter. Terms of address are common in Igbo just like they appear in English. They often signify respect, relationship, acceptance, trust, loyalty, solidarity, among others as expressive forms of politeness (see checklist: 84).

Greeting: This is an act of communication which signals presence, attention and often suggests a cordial relationship. Nwoye suggests that greetings and leave-takings among the Igbo are elaborate and asking after the health of relations of the other party is not only evidence of the cordiality of the relationship but also part of one⌀s competence in greetings as speech acts (263). It is important to note that greeting is a custom of the Igbo. It is so common that one gets to salute a passer-by without engaging in any further conversation. The act of greeting is thus interred in the bones of the Igbo so much so that it has been entrenched in a particular proverb õekelee ekele, ihu asaaö. The importance attached to greetings is brought to bear when the act is not performed or neglected. Among the Igbo, greeting is a habit. In the light of the above, it is imperative to point out that the finding of this study shows that only 3 out of the 30 participants representing 10.00% recognized and mentioned greeting in the forms of welcome (B4 excerpt 2.2) you⌀re welcome (B16, except 2.2), greetings such as good morning, good afternoon, good night, how are you, did you sleep well (B25, except 2.2) in the interview sessions. The mere mention of greeting as politeness marker by only 10.00% of the sample may be adduced to the routineness of the act that it is not exactly thought of as a politeness marker. However, this study has highlighted this fact and asserted that greeting is not just the Igbo habit but also an expression and manifestation of politeness as exemplified by the questionnaire study. Politeness markers used in the speech act of greeting in Igbo equally abound on the checklist (see page 84).

Disagreement: this expresses or shows tension arising from a discord. Studies by Beebe and Takahashi indicated that disagreement was often followed by chastisement. They posit that Americans do not show disagreement directly but try to make suggestions or a request to

avoid directly expressing disagreement while Japanese in the same situation expresses disagreement directly (311-348). On the other hand, Nwoyeøs studies shed light on the concept of disagreement and criticism in the Igbo context. He pointed out that direct criticism has the effect of directly pointing out the perceived shortcoming, thus paving the way for correction and avoidance of a future occurrence. Criticism made directly and in good faith has a corrective, socializing effect, and is usually received with gratitude; while indirect criticism made with the intention of redressing the threat to the Hearerøs individual face, is often taken as ill-intention and not having the best interest of the criticized at that heart (325-326). On disagreement, the result of the interview showed that only one phrase was mentioned- I beg to differ (B29, excerpt 2.2) and that would be a humble and indirect way to register disagreement as opposed to the Igbo culture that would advocate a more direct approach. Similarly, there are a few politeness markers used to show disagreement in Igbo (see page 84).

Tone: this refers to the pitch of a word or the loudness or softness of a voice that makes a difference in meaning. Previous studies by Afolayan (57) and Nwoye (261) indicated that tone and tonal devices stemmed from a cultural perception of what constitutes being polite. Interview result shows that 3 out of the 30 participants pointed out that the tone of the voice matters a lot in expressing politeness. In other words, meanings can be inferred by virtue of tonal devices. These mentions came in these forms tone (B6, excerpt 2.2) and (B28, excerpt 2.2) and respectful intonation (B19, excerpt 2.2) Therefore the present result supports earlier studies by Afolayan and Nwoye respectively.

Data on the effects of politeness in conversation show that all the 30 participants agree that politeness impacts positively on conversation. The catena of the effects of politeness in conversation enumerated by the interview participants are as follows: politeness endears people to the polite, politeness marks one out as the perfect conversationalist, politeness gives

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rise to effective communication which yields feedback, bonds of new friendships are established, with politeness as a tool the chances of making enemies are very slim, politeness is harmony, politeness creates lasting impressions in the minds of speakers, politeness influences reactions positively, and politeness shows that there is respect for one another. All these positive effects of politeness are encapsulated in the assertion derived from the interview study that politeness transcends the moment of discourse and ultimately resonates with the interactants.

Furthermore, the participants reacted very enthusiastically to the final interview question which was on who appeared to be more polite in conversations male, female and why. Data arising from this study show that 17 out of the 30 participants representing 56.67% agree that females tend to be more polite in conversation. The reasons for this claim are many but are strongly corroborated by previous studies by Holmes (1995), Adegbija (1989), Lakoff (1975), Tannen (1991), Fishman (1978, 1980), Subon (2013), Brown (1980) that females are more linguistically polite than their male counterparts. Again Six (6) out of the 30 participants representing 20.00% of the samples are of the opinion that the males are more polite than the females. This finding is supported by earlier studies by Dang (13-24) that men showed more sympathy in listening than women in the Vietnamese culture and by extension, men appeared to be more polite than females. However, seven (7) out of the 30 participants representing 23.33% believe that politeness is not a gender-based issue. This view is confirmed in studies by Mills that politeness is not exactly a gender-based phenomenon but that context equally plays a major role in the notion of politeness and impoliteness (1-16).

On a general note, it is not entirely out of place that politeness and hedging are often confused primarily because their goals tend to overlap, but the distinction still remains that for linguists, politeness is a major discourse strategy which leans or relies on or employs hedge terms to fulfill or achieve its goal. The interview session projects many instances of the

use of hedge words or devices to give impetus to an utterance and to show politeness among other things. The transcript of the interviews showed the use of such hedge words as: certainly, absolutely, I think, well, actually, of course, in my opinion, I would like to say, personally, may, can, should etc. (see excerpts B2; 1.1; B7; 1.2; B7, 2.1; B11, 2.2; B2, 3.1; B5, 3.2 etc). These lexical terms perform different functions depending on the context of use. Previous studies by Caffi (881-909), Lakoff (195) have shown that hedging devices either serve as intensifiers/boosters or mitigators/attenuators to utterances and that is to say that they either heighten or soften the force of a given utterance on the addressee.

Similarly, Fraser reaffirmed that not only does hedging appropriately help us achieve our communicative goals, but failing to hedge where it is expected, as well as failing to understand the meaning of hedging had a great potential for miscommunication (15-34). In the same vein, Boncea reiterates that hedging represents a crucial aspect in the study of language as the appropriate use of hedges reflects a high degree of efficiency in social interaction by demonstrating the ability to express degrees of certainty and mastering rhetorical strategies required in conversational circumstances (7). Also, previous studies by Jalilifar and Alvai confirmed that hedges were used to create vitality, facilitate discussion, indicate politeness and lubricate phatic communication (43-66).

The use of these terms in the interview sessions by the participants without knowing the intricacies depict the various functions assigned to hedges/hedging. The study by Dixon and Foster summarizes that hedges never express uncertainty, imprecision, warmth or any other social function in existence. Rather, they do so only when they become mobilized in the concrete arenas of everyday talk, as forms of situated practice (87-107). The above assertion is typical of the interview session aimed at finding out the politeness and hedging strategies among Igbo bilinguals. The synthesis is such that politeness relies on hedge words or devices to achieve its full meaning while hedging does not arise in any utterance until they are

actuated in the context of everyday discourse ó politeness. The finding of the interview shows that hedges/hedging devices appear more in spoken than written discourse. Again, the interview session is fraught with intercalary expressions like; ‗emm‘, ‗ehh‘, ‗um‘, ‗erm‘ (see excerpts B2, 2.1: B4, 2.1: B8, 2.2; B25, 1.1; B12, 2.1; B16, 3.1, B17, 3.2). There were also cases of repetition of words or phrases like; ‗more open‘, ‗it does‘, ‗of course‘, ‗the females‘ (see excerpts B4, 3.1; B12, 3.1; B20, 2.1; B22, 3.2 etc) and even words like; ‗oh‘, ‗you know‘, ‗like‘ (see excerpts B6, 1.1; B30, 3.2, B22, 2.2 etc). The above observation from our interview sessions agrees with previous findings by Ochs who noted that unplanned speech has certain characteristics such as repetition, stringing of clauses and may also be filled with equivocations/hedges and intercalary expressions (63).

5.3 Summary

This study has investigated politeness and hedging in the conversational English of the Igbo bilinguals in South-east and South-south geopolitical zones in Nigeria. There is a clear indication from data obtained and results arrived at that expressing politeness is a culture/context-bound process, a finding which reechoes the view already reported earlier that the concept of politeness, linguistic and non-linguistic, is of course, culture specific (Nwoye 261; Ambady, Koo, Lee & Rosenthal 996). Again, the study has established that the ability to communicate is one thing and the ability to communicate effectively factoring the nuances of the second language in a cross-cultural setting is yet another. To the casual observer politeness is only a natural trend in language use or more specifically an unseen and a must in everyday communication. But to the linguist, politeness is associated with the interactants ability to engage in conversation observing the acceptable social and cultural norms that facilitate a hitch-free interaction. Understandably therefore, social and cultural differences influence the expression of politeness in discourse hence the incongruities in the politeness strategies adopted by different cultures and languages.

The Igbo bilinguals are a unique race marked by a common heritage and characteristics. The ideals of the Igbo of South-eastern/South-southern Nigeria are largely reflected in their speech forms under which linguistic politeness is investigated. However, the study dwelt on the politeness and hedging strategies in the English language conversation of the study group. Findings of the questionnaire data are consistent with the results of the interview data and summarizes thus:

That Igbo bilinguals use politeness and hedging strategies very significantly in their English language conversation. A background on the study group as previously reported by Nwoye (316) corroborates that the language has statistically fewer linguistic forms for expressing

social differentiation in the form of respect nevertheless the study group relies on some of the linguistic forms of their second language to express and communicate effectively and politely, too. Again, to fulfill or accomplish a conversational demand, Igbo bilinguals adopt different politeness/ hedging strategies given the discourse situation. In some cases, the bald-on-record or directness strategy plays out, the positive politeness also is manifested in their choice of language, the negative politeness strategy is also obvious and the indirectness strategy is equally appreciable in the English language conversation of Igbo bilinguals with particular attention to other social variables such as social status, social distance and severity of offence as the case may be. Also, in order to satisfy the need for efficient communication, these strategies adopted by this group of bilinguals in addition to enculturation and recourse to the nuances of the second language, have proven beyond doubt that these strategies are clearly appropriate in discourse.

Finally, Igbo bilinguals are known to observe certain variables or factors in conversation. These factors among others include: social status- Hierarchy, Power Rank, Position, Age; Social distance- speaker-hearer relationships and Severity of offence- mild or grave offence as the case may be. A consideration of these factors at the instance of a conversation underlies the use of a particular strategy or another. In totality, females in the study sample have been found to adhere more to linguistic politeness principles than their male counterparts.

5.4 Conclusion

From the foregoing discussions, the study has helped to establish that as language is unique to its people, so are all the language-related concepts. Politeness therefore is a culture/context-bound phenomenon. Consequently, the theory of the universality of its expression or manifestation is only a mirage. Linguistic politeness in Igbo is anchored on socio-cultural

perceptions of the appropriateness of language in use. Linguistic politeness in English among Igbo bilinguals is an interaction between languages and cultures. It is often very interesting to watch the Igbo bilingual tender an apology, make a request, show appreciation, give a reprimand, greet, offer, make excuses and even break bad news in English language interactions. There is an obvious interplay between the L1 and L2. This interplay is such that while the L1 innateness plays out seamlessly, appreciation of the nuances of the L2 as language of expression under investigation enables the Igbo bilingual attain linguistic competence in his target language.

5.5 Recommendations

When people communicate, they need to be aware of the culture of the language in use. Language use with recourse to socio-cultural dimension continues to help language users and learners attain linguistic competence needed to communicate particularly across cultures. It is against this backdrop that the study on politeness forms and hedging strategies among Igbo bilinguals was conducted. It has offered remarkable insight into what informs politeness in discourse and has provided instances of speakerøs competence in the language when correctly expressed. It is therefore recommended that:

a. Expressing politeness in the second language be incorporated in the teaching of English at various educational levels.

b. The Igbo bilinguals hold onto their politeness strategies in Igbo while making efforts to learn, appreciate and put into use some of the politeness strategies in English as their second language and language of integration.

c. The different strategies learnt are applied appropriately.

d. To improve interpersonal relationship, politeness must be inculcated from the cradle.

e. For peaceful and harmonious relationships, politeness should be the watchword.

f. To attain linguistic competence in the intercultural context, awareness and use of appropriate politeness/hedging strategies are indispensable.

5.6 Contribution to Scholarship

From the literature reviewed in the study, the analysis of the study sample and the findings, this study has been able to carve a niche for itself by establishing the following as its contributions to the scholarship of the discipline:

a. The study establishes that politeness and hedging are indispensable sociolinguistic elements in the conversational English of Igbo bilinguals in the South-east and South-south geopolitical zones in Nigeria.

b. Politeness and hedging interplay to bring about effective interaction in the conversational English of Igbo bilinguals.

c. Females adhere more to linguistic politeness principles than males in conversations.

d. The study found evidence to dispute the universality of politeness and argued that politeness is culture-specific.

5.7 Suggestions for further Research

a. As this study focuses on politeness forms and hedging strategies in English among Igbo bilinguals, it would be important to carry out a similar study using other major languages in Nigeria as anchor.

b. It would also be interesting to know if the results of similar studies would be same using students at the other arms of the tertiary institutions as well as students in the secondary schools as study population.

c. It would also be fascinating to know the feedback of the discourse situation since communication is a two-way process. That is to say that beyond the speaker's utterance, the hearer is expected to say something in return.

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Students' Questionnaire on Politeness Forms and Hedging Strategies in English among Igbo Bilinguals

Dear student,

 Kindly give your frank responses to the questions in this questionnaire. The questionnaire is in two parts ó A and B. Begin by completing the first part on your personal details.

Part A: Background Information

Directions: Please circle the choice which indicates your information

1. Gender

    a. Male   b. female

2. Student status

    a. 100 level   b. 200 level   c. 300 level   d. 400 level   e. 500 level

    f. Othersí í í í ... (Please specify)

3. Area of Specialization

    a. Agriculture   b. Business & Management Science   c. Social Science

    d. Pharmaceutical Science e. Health Technology f. Sciences g. Education h. Othersí í .(please specify)

4. Level of Proficiency in English

    a. Weak

    b. Fair

    c. Good

    d. Very good

    e. Excellent

Part B: Discourse Completion Task (DCT) Questionnaire items.
There are 50 items in this section.
You should please circle as appropriate your responses for each item provided below.

Imagine if you are in the following situations:

1. In a classroom setting, you mistakenly stepped on a classmate's foot and he/she complained. What would you say/do?
   a. It was a mistake
   b. Sorry, please
   c. I'm sorry

2. You promised to return a textbook to your classmate within one week. But you had it for over 3 weeks. Then, your classmate asked you to return it. What would you say to your classmate?
   a. Okay, I will return it when I'm done
   b. Oh! I'm sorry, I forgot
   c. I'm sorry, I will return it soonest

3. You borrowed a book from your classmate and unfortunately in the course of using it, it was torn. What would you say to him/her?
   a. Sorry, would you like me to replace it?
   b. I'm sorry, it was a mistake
   c. Sorry, I should have bound it.

4. You used your roommate's bucket of water and did not replace it before he/she got back. What would say to him/her?
   a. What are roommates for?
   b. Sorry, I forgot to replace it
   c. Sorry, I will replace it immediately

5. In a party, you mistakenly spilled a drink on an attendee and he/she frowned.
   What would you say to him/her?
   a. Sorry, please.
   b. Let me help you clean up.
   c. I'm awfully sorry.

6. You were rushing to get to an examination hall on time and bumped into a lecturer. What would you say?
   a. I'm sorry sir, I was rushing for an exam.
   b. Oh! Sorry, please.
   c. Sorry, I didn't mean to.

7. You copied an essay from a website for an assignment, and your teacher found out. What would you say?
   a. I'm awfully sorry, I didn't consider it an offence.
   b. I'm sorry, would I get a chance to redo it?
   c. I'm truly sorry, it was wrong of me.

8. You are the head of a department in a school but you forgot to inform your subordinate about a meeting. So he/she missed it on account of your negligence and he/she complained to you about your fault. What would you say to him/her?
   a. Try to keep abreast of developments in the department.
   b. You should keep in touch with colleagues.

c. Sorry, it was an oversight

9. As a university teacher, you promised your students to return their corrected assignments, but you hadn't yet graded them when they came and you couldn't return them that way. What would you say to them?
a. I'm not through, come back next week, please.
b. I will call when I am done with them.
c. Oh! Sorry, check later today.

10. As a student, you were supposed to meet with your supervisor at an appointed time, but you were a few minutes late. What would you say to your supervisor?
a. Sorry, please I was held up in traffic.
b. Sorry to have kept you, sir.
c. I'm very sorry for the delay, sir.

11. As a lecturer, you need to ask your students for a change in the teaching schedule in order to meet up with an appointment. What would you say to them?
a. I won't be available today, let's meet same time tomorrow.
b. I'm engaged, let's meet in our next class
c. I have an appointment, let's fix another day.

12. You are a lecturer in a particular department and you haven't been able to cover your course outline for the semester and exams are at hand. You need to request your students to read up the outstanding chapters. What would you say to your students?
a. Read and prepare for your exams.
b. Write down the outstanding topics and read up.
c. There's no time for more lectures, read the rest.

13. In your workplace, you are entitled to a day off monthly, but you are not due yet. How would you request your colleague to allow you have her/his place in exchange for yours in time?
a. May I have your day off?
b. Please I need to use your day off, don't say no.
c. Please may I use your day off, it's really expedient.

14. As a spouse, you couldn't make a hospital appointment with your partner and you are requesting for a change in time. What would you say to your partner?
a. Let's book another day, dear.
b. Let's choose another day to see the doctor, please.
c. I'm sorry, can we reschedule.

15. As a parent, you wish to request your nanny/house keeper to work an extra hour on a particular day because of a prior engagement. What would you say to her?
a. Please don't leave till I return.
b. Please I need you to stay on till I get back.
c. It's unfortunate, you may have to stay longer.

16. You suddenly had a flat tyre on the highway. How would you request a passer-by for help?
   a. Please, could you help me fix my tyre?
   b. I have a challenge, please help me out.
   c. Sorry to bother you, could you help me fix my tyre?

17. You are trudging along with two heavy shopping bags and you obviously need help. How would you request the shop attendant for assistance?
   a. Help me with my bags, if you don't mind, please.
   b. Please I need your assistance.
   c. Please can you lend me a hand?

18. As a novice, you just couldn't use the Automated Teller Machine (ATM). How would you request for assistance?
   a. Could you please help me operate this machine?
   b. I don't know what to do with this, help me out.
   c. Please kindly assist me with this machine.

19. You are cash strapped and you require some money immediately. How would you request a colleague to loan you some money?
   a. Please lend me some money.
   b. I'm broke, could you lend me some money urgently?
   c. I need money urgently, could you be of help?

20. You are in need of a particular textbook to help with an assignment and you found out that the only person who owned such a textbook was a certain professor in your department. How would you ask for the book?
   a. Please sir, can you loan me your textbook?
   b. Is it possible to make use of your textbook for my assignment, sir?
   c. Please sir, I was wondering if you could loan me your book for an assignment

21. You walked into a bank to have your biometric capture so that you can obtain your Bank Verification Number (BVN) and the staff assigned to do the job attended to you. What would you say to him/her?
   a. God bless you.
   b. I appreciate your assistance.
   c. Thank you.

22. You went to a bus park to make a journey to Abuja. You paid your fare and the ticketer issued you a ticket for the trip. What would you say to him/her?
   a. God bless you.
   b. I appreciate your assistance.
   c. Thank you.

23. You were walking along the road on a sunny day and a good spirited driver offers you a lift and you obviously didn't need that help and wouldn't accept the gesture. What would you say to the driver?
   a. Never mind.
   b. No, thank you.
   c. You are very kind, thanks for the offer.

24. At a family reunion or get together with much to eat and drink, an aunt asked if you needed a second helping of ice cream and sincerely you needed it. What would you say to her?
    a. Yes, please.
    b. I wouldn't mind, ma.
    c. Very thoughtful of you, thank you ma.

25. On a very cold rainy day, you were drenched and needed some warmth, someone walked up to you and asked: ‒A cup of tea for you? What would your response be?
    a. Sure, please.
    b. Yes, please.
    c. Yes, thank you.

26. You walked into the church slightly late and the seats in the church were all taken. A child was gracious enough to make a space for you to sit by asking other occupants to adjust their positions. What would you say to that child?
    a. God bless you.
    b. Thank you very much.
    c. You are well bred, thank you.

27. You are preparing for a promotion interview at your work place and you have been searching for some information contained in a document that had been missing for years. A senior colleague suddenly made that available to you when all hope was almost lost. What would you say to him/her?
    a. Thank you very much.
    b. This means the world to me, God bless you.
    c. You're a life saver, I owe you one.

28. As the head of a non-governmental organization, you are preparing for a landmark event that would put your establishment in the limelight. It has been time consuming, capital intensive and frustrating trying to put things in place for this event. Suddenly, a junior officer rendered an unsolicited service in that regard. What would you say to him or her?
    a. I appreciate this, thank you very much.
    b. You are very kind, thank you.
    c. Thank you so much for the effort, you deserve a raise.

29. A friend of yours came to you with a malicious gossip making the rounds about you. What would you say to her/him?
    a. Are you sure?
    b. Really! Thanks.
    c. Thanks for the information.

30. At a mall, someone offered to pay for your shopping. What would you say?
    a. I appreciate the gesture.
    b. Okay, thanks a lot.
    c. Very kind of you.

31. Some unknown person called you and in the course of your discussion, you realized you were not the intended receiver. What would you say to the caller?

a. Wrong number.
b. Wrong number, please.
c. Sorry, it's a wrong number.

32. You had an agreement with your partner to always issue a check as a wedding present but your partner, in this case, got a gift item instead. What would be your spoken reaction to the situation?
    a. This is totally unacceptable to me.
    b. Why did you do this instead?
    c. No, that wasn't the plan.

33. You were told that your boss had been peddling nasty rumors about you. In that rage, what would you say when you confront him?
    a. Please stop this nonsense you say about me.
    b. Sir, enough is enough.
    c. Sir, please I don't appreciate what you're saying about me.

34. As a teacher, you walked into your class and the class was rowdy. What would you say to the students?
    a. Keep quiet, all of you.
    b. Silent everybody.
    c. Please be quiet.

35. As a boss, what would you say to a subordinate who consistently makes the same mistakes in typing your mail?
    a. You're in educable
    b. You're redeployed
    c. Don't get close to my mail anymore.

36. Your partner scolds you in public. What would you say?
    a. Stop that.
    b. Enough of the embarrassment!
    c. What do you mean?

37. As a road user, another driver hits your car from behind. What would you say to that driver on getting down?
    a. Are you crazy?
    b. Have you no eyes?
    c. What is wrong with you?

38. In a banking hall, the teller attended to a customer who rushed in not minding the long queue awaiting service. What would you say to the teller and the defaulting customer?
    a. Don't try that rubbish again.
    b. Can't you see the line?
    c. Excuse me. First come first served.

39. As a bride/groom to be, you suddenly find yourself being pestered for a fresh relationship. What would you say to the person?
    a. Better luck in your next world.
    b. I am engaged, please.

c. I am spoken for, sorry.

40. On a hospital visit, the doctor began to touch you inappropriately. What would you say to the doctor?
    a. You must be out of your mind.
    b. What was that for?
       Stop it, please.

41. You picked up a wallet in front of a general office as you got to work in the morning. When you walked into the office, you found everyone busy with work but you must announce the lost-but-found article. What would you say?
    a. Excuse me all, please pay attention to this.
    b. May I have your attention, people.
    c. Good morning everyone, may I have your attention.

42. You walked into an office at 10:00am to deliver mail to an unknown staff, what would you say upon entering?
    a. Hello!
    b. Excuse me, please.
    c. Good morning.

43. As a boss, you walked into your subordinatesø office to pass information. What would you say upon entering?
    a. Howøs work?
    b. How do you do?
    c. Good morning.

44. You missed your way to a certain place and you sought for the right direction. What would you say to a passer-by?
    a. Please I need to find my way.
    b. Hi, could you point me to the right direction.
    c. Hello, I missed my way.
45. A visitor walks into your home while you are at a table with your family. What would you say to him/her having met you at that point?
    a. Come and help yourself.
    b. You met us well.
    c. Please join us at table.

46. You saw an elderly woman carrying along two heavy bags and you felt the need to help her with the load. What would you say to her?
    a. Give me your bags.
    b. Can I help you, ma?
    c. Let me help you, ma.

47. What would you say to a senior colleague who walks into your home and meets you eating?
    a. Would you like some?
    b. Please come and eat.
    c. Please join me.

48. A colleague of yours has just invited you for his wedding and wants to know if you would be at the occasion, but you are aware that you will not be there for no obvious reason. What would you say to him in response?
    a. Well, I am already engaged for that day.
    b. Well, let's see how it goes.
    c. I'm not promising anything but I will try.

49. You promised to give a friend some money on a particular day but realized the said money wouldn't be available. What would you say to him/her?
    a. The money is not available, sorry please.
    b. I'm sorry to disappoint you.
    c. I didn't mean to disappoint you, I'm sorry.

50. You witnessed the passing away of a dear uncle of yours. Now being the only relative present at the time of death, you are required to break the news to your father. What would you say to him?
    a. It is really sad, he passed on.
    b. Very sorry, he didn't make it.
    c. It is unfortunate, we lost him

Thank you for your time.

Respondents' Structured Interview on Politeness Forms and Hedging Strategies in English among Igbo Bilinguals

Dear Respondent,

Kindly give your frank opinions to the questions in this structured interview. The interview is in two parts ó A and B. Begin by completing the first part on your personal details.

Part A: Background Information:

Gender:

Level of education:

Occupational status:

Please evaluate your own level of English proficiency (such as weak, fair, good, very good, and excellent.)

Part B. The Structured Interview. There are 6 questions in this section grouped into 3. You should please give your opinions on each question.

Your responses should be clear and correctly stated.

1. Significance of politeness in conversation

1.1   Do you think politeness is important in conversation? Why?

1.2   Do you think politeness necessarily facilitates conversation? Why?

2. Factors that necessitate Politeness/hedging in the speech of Igbo bilinguals

2.1   Do you think there are factors that necessitate politeness in the conversational English of Igbo bilinguals?

2.2   What words/phrases do you think Igbo bilinguals use to show politeness in conversation?

3.   Effects of politeness in Conversation

3.1   Do you think politeness impacts positively on conversation? Why?

3.2   In your opinion, who do you think tends to be more polite in conversations, males/females? Why?

Thank you for your time.

Department of English &
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University of Nigeria
Nsukka.
March 11, 2016.
Phone: 08035062187
Email: cpdozie@yahoo.com

Professor S.M. Onuigbo
Department of English & Literary Studies
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Dear Sir,

VALIDATION OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENT - QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

I am a postgraduate student of the Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka under the supervision of Professor E.J Otagburuagu. My PhD research topic is õ*Politeness Forms and Hedging Strategies in English among Igbo Bilinguals".* The questionnaire is one of the instruments I intend to use for data collection for the study.

I will be grateful if you could critically examine the question items to confirm their validity/suitability for the study. I will appreciate any correction or modifications you may make in the items as an authority in the discipline, which in your opinion will enhance the study.

I will be forwarding two parallel versions of the questionnaire to enable you decide which option is best suited for the study.

Thank you in anticipation of your prompt attention.

Yours faithfully,

Chinomso Patricia Dozie
PG/Ph.D/12/63868

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March 11, 2016.
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Professor S.M. Onuigbo
Department of English & Literary Studies
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Dear Sir,

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March 11, 2016.
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Dr. P. A. Ezema
Department of English & Literary Studies
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

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Dr. R. C. Ihejirika
Directorate of English Language Studies
Federal University of Technology, Owerri
Imo State.

Dear Sir,

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Chinomso Patricia Dozie
PG/Ph.D/12/63868

APPENDIX D

Classification of Each Situation in DCT According to Discourse and Sociolinguistic Variations

Table 15: Discourse on Apology and Sociolinguistic Variations

	Situation (Apology 1-10)	Social Status	Social Distance	Severity of Offence
1	Speaker stepped on a classmate's foot	0	0	-
2	Speaker promised to return a classmate's book but didn't	0	0	-
3	Speaker borrowed a book from a classmate and tore it in the process	0	0	+
4	Speaker did not replace a roommate's bucket of water	0	0	+
5	Speaker spilled a drink on a party attendee	θ	-	-
6	Speaker (student) bumped into a lecturer while rushing for an exam	-	-	-
7	Speaker (student) copied an essay for an assignment and teacher found out	-	0	+
8	Head of department forgot to inform a subordinate for a meeting	+	+	+
9	Teacher promised to return students' graded assignment but couldn't	+	0	+
10	Student was late for an appointment with his/her supervisor	-	0	+

Social Status (+ = high; - = low; 0 = neutral; θ = not established)
Social Distance (+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral)
Severity of Offence (+ = severe; - = not severe)

Table 16: Discourse on Request and Sociolinguistic Variations

	Situation (Request 11-20)	Social Status	Social Distance
11	Lecturer needed to ask his students to reschedule a class to meet an appointment	+	0
12	Lecturer needed to ask his students to read up outstanding chapters he hadn¢t taught for exams	+	0
13	A staff asked a colleague for a swap in their monthly day off	0	0
14	A spouse couldn¢t make a n appointment and needed to ask his/her partner to reschedule	0	+
15	A parent needed to ask his/her nanny/house keeper to stay an hour longer than usual	+	+
16	Speaker experienced a flat tyre and needed to ask a passer-by for help	θ	-
17	Speaker (customer) needed to ask a shop attendant to help with his/her heavy shopping bags	+	-
18	Speaker (customer) needed to ask a fellow customer for assistance with the Automated Teller Machine (ATM)	θ	-
19	Speaker needed to ask a colleague for money urgently	0	0
20	Student needed to ask a certain professor for a textbook	-	-

Social Status (+ = high; - = low; 0 = neutral; θ = not established)
Social Distance (+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral)

Table 17: Discourse on Appreciation and Sociolinguistic Variations

	Situation (Appreciation 21-30)	Social Status	Social Distance
21	Speaker (customer) was attended to by a bank staff for his/her Biometric capture	+	-
22	Speaker (customer) paid a fare for a Journey and was issued a ticket by a ticketer	+	-
23	Speaker was offered a lift on a sunny day by a good-spirited driver, but he/she wouldnøt accept the gesture	θ	-
24	Speaker was offered a much needed second helping by an aunt at a family reunion	-	+
25	Speaker was drenched on a cold rainy day and someone offered him/her a cup of tea for a much needed warmth	θ	-
26	Speaker was accommodated in pew in Church by a child in the same pew	+	-
27	A staff in dire need was assisted by a senior colleague	-	0
28	The head of an organization was assisted beyond words by a junior officer	+	0
29	Speaker was made aware by a friend of some character assassination on him/her	0	+
30	Speaker was approached to have his/her bill taken care of at a mall	θ	-

Social Status (+ = high; - = low; 0 = neutral; θ = not established)
Social Distance (+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral)

Table 18: Discourse on Reprimand and Sociolinguistic Variations

	Situation (Reprimand 31-40)	Social Status	Social Distance	Severity of Offence
31	Speaker realized he/she was not the intended receiver of a certain call to his/her phone	θ	-	-
32	Speaker's partner reneged on an agreement	0	+	+
33	Speaker angrily confronted his boss about nasty rumours he had been peddling	-	+	+
34	Teacher walked into his/her class and the class was rowdy	+	0	+
35	Boss lashed at a subordinate who is incorrigible	+	+	+
36	Speaker was scolded by his/her partner in public	0	+	+
37	Speaker's car was hit from behind by another driver	θ	-	+
38	Speaker (customer) cautioned another customer who broke a rule regardless of the long queue awaiting service in the bank	θ	-	+
39	Bride/Groom-to-be was being pestered for a fresh relationship	θ	-	+
40	Speaker was being touch inappropriately by a doctor on a hospital visit	-	-	+

Social Status (+ = high; - = low; 0 = neutral; θ = not established)
Social Distance (+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral)
Severity of Offence (+ = severe; - = not severe)

Table 19: Discourse on Greetings/Offers/Excuses/Breaking Bad News and Sociolinguistic Variations

	Situation (Greeting/Offer/Making excuses/Breaking Bad news 41-50)	Social Status	Social Distance
41	Speaker walked into an office in the morning and saw everyone was busy but he/she must talk to them	θ	-
42	Speaker walked into an office at 10.00am to deliver mail to unknown staff	θ	-
43	A boss walked into his/her subordinates' office to pass information	+	+
44	Speaker was lost and sought direction from a passer-by	θ	-
45	Speaker had a visitor (friend) while having a meal with his/her family	0	+
46	Speaker felt the need to help an elderly woman trudging along two heavy bags	-	-
47	Speaker was visited by a senior colleague while eating	-	0
48	Speaker wouldn't be at a colleague's wedding for no obvious reason	0	0
49	Speaker couldn't deliver on a promise to a friend	0	+
50	Speaker had a task of breaking the news of an uncle's passing to his/her father	-	+

Social Status (+ = high; - = low; 0 = neutral; θ = not established)
Social Distance (+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral)

Combination of Explanatory Variables

Table 20: Explanatory Variables on Apology Discourse

Situation	Social Status	Social Distance	Severity of Offense
1	S = H	0SD	Not severe
2	S = H	0SD	Not severe
3	S = H	0SD	Severe
4	S = H	0SD	Severe
5	S θ H	-SD	Not severe
6	S < H	-SD	Not Severe
7	S < H	0SD	Severe
10	S < H	0SD	Severe
8	S > H	+SD	Severe
9	S > H	0SD	Severe

S = Speaker; H = Hearer, SD = Social Distance
< = lower; = equal; > higher; θ = not established
+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral

Table 21: Explanatory Variables on Request Discourse

Situation	Social Status	Social Distance
11	S > H	0SD
12	S> H	0Sd
15	S > H	+SD
17	S> H	-SD
13	S = H	0Sd
13	S = H	+SD
19	S = H	0Sd
16	S θ H	-SD
18	S θ H	-SD
20	S < H	-SD

S = Speaker; H = Hearer, SD = Social Distance
< = lower; = equal; > higher; θ = not established
+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral

Table 22: Explanatory Variables on Appreciation Discourse

Situation	Social Status	Social Distance
21	S > H	-SD
22	S > H	-SD
26	S > H	-SD
28	S > H	0SD
23	S θ H	-SD
25	S θ H	-SD
30	S θ H	-SD
24	S < H	+SD
27	S < H	0SD
29	S = H	+SD

S = Speaker; H = Hearer, SD = Social Distance

< = lower; = equal; > higher; θ = not established

+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral

Table 23: Explanatory Variables on Reprimand Discourse

Situation	Social Status	Social Distance	Severity of Offense
31	S θ H	-SD	Not Severe
37	S θ H	-SD	Severe
38	S θ H	-SD	Severe
39	S θ H	-SD	Severe
32	S = H	+SD	Severe
36	S = H	+SD	Severe
33	S < H	+SD	Severe
40	S < H	-SD	Severe
34	S > H	0SD	Severe
35	S > H	+SD	Severe

S = Speaker; H = Hearer, SD = Social Distance
< = lower; = equal; > higher; θ = not established
+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral

Table 24: Explanatory Variables on Greetings/Offers/ Excuses /Breaking Bad News Discourse

Situation	Social Status	Social Distance
41	S θ H	-SD
42	S θ H	-SD
44	S θ H	-SD
43	S > H	+SD
45	S = H	+SD
48	S = H	0SD
49	S = H	+SD
46	S < H	-SD
47	S < H	0SD
50	S < H	+SD

S = Speaker; H = Hearer, SD = Social Distance

< = lower; = equal; > higher; θ = not established

+ = close; - = distant; 0 = neutral

APPENDIX F

Department of English & Literary Studies
Faculty of Arts
University of Nigeria
Nsukka.
August 1, 2016.
Phone: 08035062187
Email: cpdozie@yahoo.com

The Head
Department of Animal Science
Faculty of Agriculture
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike.

Dear Sir,

A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND INVITATION OF PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY ó REQUEST FOR APPROVAL

I am a Postgraduate student of the Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka under the supervision of Professor E.J Otagburuagu. My PhD research topic is *"Politeness forms and Hedging Strategies in English among Igbo Bilinguals".* The study entails the use of questionnaire in the form of a DCT- Discourse Completion Task as well as in depth interview as Research instruments for data collection for the study. In addition, the population of the study based on the research objectives will be undergraduate students for the questionnaire design and a few stakeholders ó teaching and senior non-teaching staff for the in depth interview study.

I therefore humbly seek your permission and respectfully request for the approval of your willing students and staff respectively for participation in the study.

Thank you in anticipation of your kind permission and approval.

Yours faithfully,

Chinomso Patricia Dozie
PG/Ph.D/12/63868