

**POLITENESS AND FACE-WORK IN SELECTED NIGERIAN RED-CARPET
INTERVIEWS**

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

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**AN ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND
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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project entitled: POLITENESS AND FACEWORK IN SELECTED NIGERIAN RED CARPET INTERVIEWS was undertaken by Comfort Oghogho ONAIWU (Miss) of the Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City.

Prof. F. N. OGOANAH

(Supervisor)

Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God almighty for his grace and favour upon my life. He gave me strength Throughout this journey and the grace to finish what I started. I would also like to dedicate this work to my sweet mother for her unwavering love and support. To every young girl out there, never stop believing in the power of your dreams.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Politeness strategies and Facework mechanism employed by individuals on the Red Carpet. The objective is to identify the negative and positive politeness strategies in the Red Carpet interview and to describe how these strategies are used for image and impression management in this context. The study adopts a qualitative research approach involving data collected from the textual analysis of selected Red Carpet interview clips retrieved from YouTube and Instagram.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1: Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine Red-Carpet interviews of selected celebrities and high-profile individuals in order to show how language functions in that social context. The study aims to provide insight into language use in high stake and public media interactions by using politeness theory and facework.

1.2: Background to the Study

The Red-Carpet interview is typically a brief and straight-to-the-point media interaction conducted with a VIP or celebrity before the start of, or during a public event. These interviews are often televised, broadcast, or appear in social media outlets. Unlike scripted interviews, the Red-Carpet interview usually occurs in real-time, and those interviewed do not get the chance to prepare for the questions asked. Beyond this, the red carpet is often balanced with professionalism, often unpredictable, and fast-paced. This is where the theories of politeness and facework become particularly relevant. In such public and high-stakes settings, both interviewers and interviewees employ various linguistic and conversational strategies to navigate potentially sensitive or face-threatening questions, while maintaining respect, composure, and social harmony. These strategies help ensure that interaction remains friendly, engaging, and free from conflict, even when the conversation takes an unexpected turn.

Brown and Levinson's 1978 politeness theory provides a pragmatic framework to analyse how people use language to maintain social harmony and avoid face-threatening acts. Erving Goffman also examines the theory of "face" and "face work." He states that social interactions involve individuals striving to maintain a positive social image or "face" which is

the positive social value a person claims for himself (Goffman 5). So, improper application of communication strategies can lead to threats to a person's face.

Proper attention has not been given to how politeness and facework function in Red Carpet interviews. This study, therefore, seeks to fill that vacuum by analysing Red Carpet interviews through a pragmatic lens. According to Blitvich and Sifianou, the theory of pragmatics offers a valuable framework for understanding and analysing politeness (Blitvich and Sifianou). By focusing on the use of politeness and facework strategies, this research aims to examine how interviewers and interviewees navigate the complexities of public media interactions, maintain social balance, and project positive self-images in the highly visible and fast-paced environment of the Red-Carpet.

1.3: Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of this study:

1. To identify the negative and positive politeness strategies in the Red-Carpet interview.
2. To describe how these strategies are used for image and impression management in this context.

1.4: Statement of Problem

Although attention has been given to how language affects media interactions, little has been done on how the Red Carpet affects and shapes such interactions. The Red Carpet is an important aspect of journalism, yet not much attention has been paid to the struggle of both interviewers and interviewees to maintain a polite front and avoid face-threatening acts.

This study seeks to identify and fill the research gap by analysing politeness and facework strategies adopted in Red Carpet interviews. By adopting a pragmatic approach, the

research aims to describe the linguistic tools and conversational strategies that help in effective communication and image management in Nigeria Red Carpet Interviews.

1.5: Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the politeness strategies and face work mechanisms used in Red Carpet interviews and how do they maintain social harmony and avoid face threatening acts?
2. How does language used in high stake and public media interactions help image management?

1.6: Scope of Study

This study focuses on the pragmatic analysis of politeness and face work in selected Nigerian Red-Carpet interviews using Brown and Levinson politeness theory. The scope of this study is limited to the analysis of Red-Carpet interviews conducted at major entertainment and social events in Nigeria. They include events such as the AMVCA, On the Carpet with Bolinto, Headies Awards, and the DNBC 2025, and they were sourced from You Tube and Instagram.

1.7: Operational Definition of Terms

1. Politeness Strategies: Politeness strategies refer to the linguistic methods speakers use to reduce or soften face-threatening acts (FTAs). According to Brown and Levinson, these strategies help speakers avoid offending others and include four major types: positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on-record, and off-record strategies (Brown and Levinson 91–94).

2. Facework: Facework is the effort individuals make to maintain a desired social identity or avoid embarrassment during interaction. The term was introduced by Erving Goffman, who defines face as “the positive social value a person claims for himself” within a social encounter (Goffman 5). Facework therefore refers to the communicative acts used to protect or restore that social value.

3. Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs): Face-threatening acts are behaviours, words, or communicative moves that have the potential to damage a person’s public self-image or “face.” These acts may impose on the listener, express disapproval, or challenge their autonomy or social identity, and were described extensively by Brown and Levinson (Brown and Levinson 65).

4. Pragmatics: Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics that studies how meaning is shaped by context and how speakers and hearers interpret utterances in real-life situations. Morris originally defined pragmatics as the study of the relation between signs and their interpreters (Morris 6).

5. Red Carpet Interviews: Red Carpet interviews are brief, often informal conversations conducted with celebrities, public figures, or invited guests as they arrive at high-profile events. These interviews typically take place along a designated walkway, frequently decorated with a red carpet, and are characterized by spontaneity, minimal preparation, and real-time interaction from both interviewer and interviewee.

1.8: Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the pragmatic analysis of selected Nigerian Red-Carpet Interviews.

The study will not examine any other interviews other than the Red-Carpet interviews and only those conducted in the English language.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF RELATED SCHOLARSHIP

2.1 Theoretical Background

2.1.1 Pragmatics

This work adopts a pragmatic theoretical approach, which studies how context influences meaning in language, examining how utterances are used in social situations and how speakers and hearers interpret them. The word pragmatics was first coined when the American philosopher Charles William Morris released *Logical Positivism, Pragmatism and Scientific Empiricism* in 1938. In that work, he compiled five of his publications written after 1934 (Morris 22).

Morris distinguished three schools of semiotics (syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic) in his book *Foundations of the Theory of Signs* (1938). Since then, pragmatics had initially been studied within the discipline of philosophy. The publication of the *Journal of Pragmatics* later marked the beginning of pragmatics as a separate field. In its early years, pragmatics was

viewed as the “wastebasket of linguistics,” but it has since grown rapidly into one of the most important and expanding areas of modern linguistics.

Rudolf Carnap (1938) also dealt with pragmatics after Morris. Carnap retained Morris’ idea of pragmatics but introduced the notion of pure pragmatics to include concepts such as utterances, intentions, and beliefs, and to explain how these elements relate to one another. Both Morris and Carnap were interested in the study of semiotics (the science of signs) and in how the meanings associated with these signs could be described and analysed.

By the early 1980s, pragmatics had become widely recognized as one of the foundational fields of linguistics. It continues to be one of the fastest-growing areas of modern linguistic research.

Different writers have given various definitions to pragmatics. Leech and Short define pragmatics as “the investigation into that aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal properties of words, but from the way in which utterances are used and how they relate to the context in which they are uttered” (Leech and Short 290). Pragmatics is the study of meaning in relation to speech situations (Leech 6). Levinson in his work sees pragmatics as “the study of those aspects of the relationship between language and context that are relevant” (Levinson 9). George Yule in his 1996 work sees pragmatics as “the study of intended speaker meaning, and in many ways ... the study of invisible meaning or how we recognise what is meant even when it isn’t actually said or written” (Yule 127).

Aspects of pragmatics includes:

a) Speech Acts: These are Pragmatics concepts that focus not only on conveying information but also on performing actions. Such actions include giving orders, requests, apologies or promises.

b) Implicature: Implicature typically involves suggested or implied meaning in discourse. It interprets sentences through what is implied rather than what is said.

c) Deixis: In deixis meaning is derived from the context of the utterance, precisely the speaker, listener, location and time. There are different types of deixis which includes person deixis, spatial deixis, temporal deixis, discourse deixis and social deixis. Deixis is important in understanding language use.

d) Conversational Maxims: Paul Grice proposed this term in 1975. Maxims contain important rules that govern efficient conversations in discourse. There are various types of maxims which include maxim of quantity, quality, relevance and manner. Leech in 1939 gave some types of maxim as it relates to the politeness principle and they consist of Tact, Generosity, Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy (Leech 132).

Pragmatics is a concept that is closely associated with the “politeness theory”. The politeness theory was developed by Brown and Levinson in 1978 but their work was built on Goffman’s earlier work on “face”.

2.1.2 Face-Work

The idea of “face” is one that is very important to many people but it is often complex and relatively hard to define. Generally, “face” can be seen as a positive social image serving as a person’s identity. Recently, lots of research and debate on the idea of “face” has grown extremely, so Richard Watts is right in saying that “it has become an area of research in its own right” (Watts xxvii). It is assumed that the concept of “face” originated in Chinese through the likes of Bargiela-Chiappini in 1454 but it was brought to light mainly through Goffman’s 1967 seminal essay on “face-work”.

Erving Goffman established the theory of “face” in the late 1960s. He defined it as an image of self which depends on both the rules and values of a particular society and the situation the social interaction is embedded in (Goffman 5). Therefore, it shows the way a person wants to be seen by others in his surrounding space. According to Goffman there are three levels which influences an individual’s behaviour in order to correspond to one’s face needs, they are: The needs to satisfy one’s own desires which is seen as pride, a person’s emotional and physical attitude in social interaction described as dignity, finally, an individual’s attitude in social interaction described as honour. The sense of “face” is mutual in social interactions, depending on how individuals send and receive messages. In communication it is very important to avoid committing a social act, which can be seen as posing threats to a person’s face. These acts which work against the face needs of both sender and receiver are known as face-threatening acts (FTA). Brown and Levinson identified two components of “face” which is the positive face and negative face. Positive face is defined as the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others... in particular, it includes the desire to be ratified, understood, approved of, liked or admired (Brown and Levinson 62), while negative face, is defined as the want of every "competent adult member" that his actions be unhindered by others (Brown and Levinson 62).

Face work is seen by Goffman, as the actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face (Goffman 12). It is necessary in order to avoid and rectify misleading of face. Face work is an important aspect of communication, because it shapes interactions and can either improve or reduce social relationships. According to Jonathan Culpeper the model of face work can be distinguished according to the type of face addressed and it is either positive or negative (Culpepper et. al.). Face work is an important aspect of communication, because it shapes interactions and can either improve or reduce social relationships. However various avoidance strategies were put in place by Goffman in order to

avoid “face” threats. These strategies include: Avoidance of potential face threatening situations and people, protecting strategies, defensive strategies, preventive acts and corrective processes. But according to Stephanie Levinson and Penelope Brown who later built their work on Goffman's theory, “politeness” is the universal tool to protect all aspects of faces in interaction.

2.1.3 Politeness Theory

The theory of politeness was developed by Brown and Levinson in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Their theory was developed from earlier research done by Goffman on “Face work”, they dug deep into Goffman’s idea and expanded on his theory, specifically focusing on “politeness”. Politeness is the way we communicate, understand, maintain and modify social interactions. Brown and Levinson 1978 model, explains that we all have Face, and we all have Face “wants and needs”, and sometimes this “face “faces threats. Politeness works by either increasing or reducing face threats which could come in the form of order, criticism, complaints and requests. Face threats in different face threatening acts, can apply either to the hearer or speaker. In order to minimize the degree of any face threatening act, the speaker can use either the positive politeness strategies or negative politeness strategies. A positive face involves maintaining a positive and consistent self-image, it reflects a person’s need for social approval, affiliation, appreciation, and respect from others in the society. While a negative face shows a person's need for freedom of action, autonomy, and the avoidance of intrusion or imposition from others.

While positive politeness seeks to improve a person's positive and consistent self-image, through acknowledging the person’s need for his or her wishes and desires to be appreciated socially, negative politeness buttresses the hearers need for freedom of action and freedom from imposition in making his or her own decisions. This theory is based on the

assumption that most speech acts inherently threaten either the speaker or hearer's face, so politeness is therefore necessary to effect good communication. According to Jonathan Culpeper, politeness strategies involve the study of polite behaviours, what those behaviours consist of (linguistic or non-linguistic), their differences in context, and why they are considered polite (Culpeper 524). For him there are two general approaches to politeness which includes: The social norm view of politeness and the pragmatic view of politeness.

a) **The Social Norm View of Politeness:** A social norm is an acceptable behaviour or shared values and standards of a group of people. This view of politeness is of two types, it is either prescriptive or descriptive. A prescriptive norm is a generally accepted norm, these norms involve behaviours that are considered desirable and are generally encouraged and accepted in society. They guide people's actions and behaviours because they are seen as the norms that are good and socially sanctioned. A prescriptive norm has a wider range of influences, and they generally influence people's actions and behaviours in society. While descriptive norm refers to people's thoughts, feelings and actions of people in a group. It influences behaviour particularly within the situation and group the norm operates. This norm is also known as experiential norm because it bases on individual's social experience. For example the same outcome will be expected from a recurring situation and this will allow people know other's expectations and how to meet them. Nancy Fraser stated that the social-norm view believes that each society has a particular set of social norms made up of more or less explicit rules that propose a certain behaviour, a state of affairs, or a way of thinking in context (Fraser 220).

b) **The Pragmatic View of Politeness:** According to Michael Grundy politeness is an exercise containing language choices in order to create a context that matches the addressee's notion of the way he/she should be addressed. The reason being that those communicating are

always conscious of their self-esteem known as “face”. Every single interaction puts our face at risk so politeness is the individual’s recognition of this face and the need to protect it through dialogue (Grundy 144-5). As far as it involves pragmatics, politeness deals with how we use linguistic strategies to maintain harmony and avoid face threatening acts. Politeness is more than giving compliments, it deals with the choice of language and how context is created to match the way a person should be addressed. According to Brown and Levinson there are four strategies for doing politeness and these selections are determined by the degree of the face threat. These strategies include: Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, Bald on Record Politeness, and Off Record Politeness Strategy.

i) **Positive Politeness:** Positive politeness is a strategy in communication that is focused on showing unity and friendliness during interaction in order to satisfy the hearer's positive face. They minimise the potential for conflict or offence and include strategies like expressing interest, approval, sympathy, seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, assuming common ground, using-in group identity markers e.g darling and so on (Culpeper 530). Brown and Levinson gave three broad mechanisms of positive politeness and they are

a) Claim Common ground

b) Convey that speaker (S) and hearer (H) are cooperative

b) Fulfil hearer’s (H) want

Each of these three broad mechanisms contains a total of fifteen positive politeness strategies. The first has eight positive politeness strategies, the second has six positive politeness strategies and the third has one positive politeness strategy.

First: Claim Common Ground

Strategy 1: Notice, attend to H (his interests, wants, needs and goods)

Strategy 2: Exaggerate (interest, approval, and sympathy with hearer)

Strategy 3: Intensify interest to the hearer

Strategy 4: Use in-group identify markers (in-group language or dialect, jargons or slangs, contraction and ellipses)

Strategy 5: Seek agreement

Strategy 6: Avoid disagreement (use token agreement, hedging)

Strategy 7: Presuppose/raise/assert common ground (small talks, gossips, assume shared knowledge)

Strategy 8: Joke

Second: Convey That the Speaker and Hearer Are Cooperative

Strategy 9: Assert and presuppose the speaker's knowledge of and concerns hearer's wants

Strategy 10: Offer promise

Strategy 11: Be optimistic

Strategy 12: Include both speaker and hearer in the activity (use "we")

Strategy 13: Give (or ask for) reasons

Strategy 14: Assume or assert reciprocity

Third: Fulfill Hearer's Wants

Strategy 15: Give gifts to hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)

ii) **Negative Politeness:** These are communication strategies that are avoidance based, as they aim to mitigate threats and try to minimise imposition and respect the hearer's freedom of action. It is politeness without intrusion and it involves the freedom to act without constraints or interference. They include strategies such as being pessimistic, giving deference, mollifying the force of an utterance with questions and hedges, apologising and so on (Culpeper 530).

Brown and Levinson 1987, outlined ten negative politeness strategies that aid communication and they are:

Strategy 1: Use of indirect language

Strategy 2: Use of question and hedges

Strategy 3: Being pessimistic

Strategy 4: Minimizing imposition

Strategy 5: Giving deference to the hearer

Strategy 6: Apologizing

Strategy 7: Impersonalise the speaker and hearer

Strategy 8: State the face threatening act (FTA) as a general rule

Strategy 9: Nominalise

Strategy 10: Go on record as incurring a debt.

iii) **Bald on Record Politeness:** The Bald on record politeness strategy is a communication strategy that is usually clearly stated and direct. With this strategy the speaker does not attempt to reduce the face threats to the hearer. This is a straight to the point strategy that often doesn't pose any threat to the hearer although it may sometimes come off as rude or probably impolite especially in important situations where the addressee would still like to maintain a polite face.

iv) **Off Record:** Off record politeness there are strategies in communication where the speaker relies on indirectness to convey a message rather than stating something explicitly or making a direct request. It minimises the potential for FTA's and allows the speaker to be polite in order to avoid imposition or conflict.

Pragmatics also examines how context influences meaning in communication. So this work provides a valuable framework for understanding the synergy of politeness and face work in Red Carpet Interviews. Celebrities and high profile individuals often find themselves in settings where they have to navigate complex social dynamics, and maintain a favourable public image when engaging with interviewers and audiences. By applying Brown and Levinson theory we will analyse politeness strategies being employed to effectively manage face.

2.2 The Review of Scholarship

Although little or no attention has been paid to Red-Carpet interviews, notable scholars have analysed the theory of politeness and the concept of "face," drawing from Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987) and Goffman's concept of Face (1967). These theories have been used to examine how the need for informative discourse is balanced with respectful communication, and how cultural context, audience expectations, and power relations influence interaction. Scholars such as Tahani Saleh Alabdali, Raza Pishghadam and

Safoori Navari, David Yau-Fai, Ji Ying Song, and several Nigerian researchers have contributed significantly to the development and application of politeness and facework theories across various communicative contexts.

2.2.1: Studies on Brown and Levinson Politeness Theory

Tahani Alabadali in his words *Revisiting Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory: A Middle Eastern Perspective*, states that Brown and Levinson's theory is one of the most widely tested and comprehensive theories in Pragmatic Politeness. The theory has covered many areas and has proven to be highly effective. Although one of Brown and Levinson's most obvious strengths is its effort to create a universal politeness theory, it is also the area it is criticized the most. They follow a generative linguistic approach that assumes the sameness of the internal social and linguistic capacities of language speakers across different backgrounds and cultures. Their assumption leads us to believe that speakers can control interactive obstacles arising from varying backgrounds (Alabdali 74). Alabdali's review states certain factors that should be taken into consideration such as the speaker's level of education, urbanity, social class, gender, age e.t.c, all factors relating to the idiosyncrasy of the speaker.

Bruce Fraser in his 1990 work *Perspectives on Politeness* reveals four approaches to the account of politeness which are; the social norms views, the conversational maxim view, the face-saving view and the conversational view (Fraser 219). For him each requires a characterisation followed by a discussion of certain important aspects of the approach. He stated that the face-saving view is the most clearly articulated and thoroughly worked out and so it provides the best frames for understanding politeness (Fraser 219).

For Jonathan Culpeper politeness involves “polite behaviours”, what those behaviours either linguistics or non-linguistic consists of, why they vary in context, and why they are considered polite (Culpeper 524). He gave two principles; the cooperative Principle and the

Politeness Principle. He stated that ultimately the key point is that the Cooperative Principle accounts for how people convey indirect meanings, and the Politeness Principle accounts for why people convey indirect meanings (Culpeper 527).

Raza Pishghadam and Safoori Navari in their work *A Study into Politeness Strategies and Politeness Markers in Advertising as Persuasive Tools*, sees politeness theory as a cornerstone that can analyse socially correct and appropriate behaviour because of its importance in specifying elements to polite discourse and behaviour. To maintain effective communication people exchange a large number of polite strategies every day. Raza and Navari state that as Johnstone observed, polite markers can be hired and used in any culture (Johnstone 145). Appropriate interpersonal relationships can be constructed by the types and levels of politeness strategies used by speakers and hearers (Pishghadam and Navari, 162). They see Brown and Levinson's theory as a reliable source for analysing politeness strategies as it contains super-strategies, ranging from strategies that increases the risk of losing face e.g. Bald on record strategy, resulting to FTA's to Factors that decreases risk e.g. Avoidance strategy (Pishghadam and Navari, 165). They concluded by stating that the difference in advertisers' politeness strategies is adequately representative of their existing cultural norms (Pishghadam and Navari, 170).

2.2.2: Studies on the Concept of 'Face'

The Canadian-American sociologist Erving Goffman came up with the theory of face in the late 1960s. It is from this theory that Brown and Levinson came up with the theory of politeness. He defines face as the positive social value a person claims for himself. Other scholars who have dealt with the concept of Face include David Yau-Fai Ho and Ji Ying Song.

David Yau-Fai distinguished and clarified the concept of face from other related constructs like status, authority, honour, personality, prestige etc. in his work *On the Concept of Face*. He states that the claim to face may be attributed to the group involved in the interaction or may rest on a person's status, either achieved or ascribed and on personal and non-personal factors (Ho 867). For him Face is lost when an individual or people's actions fail to meet certain standards placed on them owing to the social position they occupy. Ho mentions that reciprocity is important in Face behaviour (Ho 868). It is stated that the concept of face is Chinese in origin, and it is reflected in the Chinese word *lian* and *mien-tzu*. *Mien-tzu* is a reputation gained through ambition, success and outward display, whereas *Lien* is the society's trust in the integrity of the moral character of a person (Ho 868). *Yu mien-tzu* is a person of high standing in society while *Mie yu mien-tzu* describes a person of humble origin. So the amount of *Mie-tzu* a person has reflects his social standing (Ho 869). For him Face is tied to the social position of a person and can either be gained or lost.

Similarly, Ji Ying Song in his work *What is Face Anyway?* talks on different perspectives of Face from both Asia and the Western world. He tries to buttress the fact that Face is not just a unique cultural phenomenon only seen in China, but it is something that should apply to all cultures as it is distinctively human. Drawing from David Yau-Fai Ho's, *mien-tzu* and *lian* (Ho 868) he noted that China, as a collectivist society would pay more attention to the *mien-tzu* (social identity), while an individualist state such as America, would have people who pay more attention to the *lian* (self-identity). This leads to the conclusion that Face is seen as a social phenomenon with different expressions that vary from one culture to another.

2.2.3: Politeness and Facework in Nigeria Media Discourse

Grace O. Olutayo, in her work *Cooperation and Politeness in Television Discourse*, (Olutayo, 68) comprehensively examines how principles of conversation manifest in Nigerian talk shows. Using Brown and Levinson's principles as an analytical framework, she found that in Nigerian interviews, while cooperative and polite interactions are strived for, there are notable maxims (tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, sympathy) which are frequently being violated during conversations and both parties may be faced with face-threatening acts (FTAs). These violations usually occur as a means to assert dominance or navigate sensitive topics. Her work also noted that this communication process can be affected by factors such as the personalities involved, the type of show and cultural expectations which are highly relevant in analysing the red carpet interview.

Bridget Madu and Favour Okpala, in their work *Conversational Implicature in Political Interviews Selected from two Nigerian Newspapers (Vanguard and Punch)* gave an overview of the conversational implication of words, (Madu and Okpala 96). Although this research examines how politicians strategically employ language in media engagements it is relevant to this study because it deals with high profile individuals appearing on the Red Carpet. Their research showed how politicians use linguistic strategies to navigate intrusive questions and manage face threatening acts in order to maintain their "face". A good understanding of the pragmatic strategies used by Nigerian politicians which are flouting, infringing and violating Greece conversational maxims can produce insight into how politeness strategies are employed to escape face threatening situations, and still maintain "face" during media interactions.

Another notable review is Edenowo Enang, Cletus S. Eshiet, and Susanna T. Udoka who studied *Politeness in Language Use: A Case of Spoken Nigerian English*. Their work

gave insight into the manifestation of politeness in Nigeria English conversations. Their work showed that every language use is a reflection of the norms, rules and mores of the social cultural environment in which it functions”. (Edenowo et. al) states that polite utterances are either positive or negative depending on factors such as age, gender, social distance and social background. This work is relevant to the Red-Carpet Interview owing to the fact that it is necessary to understand the social cultural framework of politeness so as to properly see how social harmony is maintained and FTA’s are avoided.

Despite the fact that very limited focus has been placed on Nigeria Red Carpet Interviews these scholars have tried to help us understand how pragmatic, politeness theory and face work apply to Nigeria media.

2.3 Thesis Statement

Red Carpet Interviews are marked by positive and negative politeness strategies and face-work mechanisms, which shapes the identity of the participants and their image management.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1: Research Design

The research method applied in this study is the qualitative research method. This approach involves data that are not easily quantified, such as interviews, texts, audio, and images, allowing for a deeper understanding and exploration of concepts. Its main aim is to provide insight into real-life situations and how meaning is constructed within them. John W. Creswell defines qualitative research as “An approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Research Design 4). In this study, the qualitative method is adopted to analyse language use, politeness strategies,

and facework in selected Nigerian Red-Carpet interviews, focusing on how participants construct meaning and manage interpersonal relations within media interactions.

3.2: Sampling Techniques

Sampling techniques allow the researcher to select a representative subset of a larger population for analysis, study, or research. It is a method of investigating a population by collecting and assessing relevant data. There are various types of sampling techniques, including stratified, purposive, cluster, and systematic sampling techniques; however, this study adopts the purposive sampling technique because of its suitability for qualitative analysis.

Purposive Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling, involves the deliberate selection of data that best serve the objectives of a study (Palys 697). It allows the researcher to focus on information-rich cases that can provide deep insights into the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell 2007). In this study, purposive sampling was used to select a set of Nigerian Red-Carpet interviews that clearly demonstrate the use of politeness and facework strategies in public media interactions.

The selection was based on specific criteria such as:

1. Relevance – Interviews that contain clear examples of spontaneous language use between media hosts and public figures.
2. Popularity and accessibility – Interviews from well-known Nigerian events such as The Africa Magic Viewers Choice Awards (AMVCA), On the Carpet with Bolinto, and The Doing Business in Nigeria Conference (DNBC) were chosen because they are easily accessible and widely broadcast.

3. Diversity of participants – The study considered interviews featuring both male and female participants from diverse professional backgrounds (actors, businesspersons, entertainers, etc.) to ensure a balanced linguistic representation.

By using purposive sampling, the researcher ensured that the data collected were contextually rich and relevant to the study's focus on how interlocutors employ politeness and facework strategies in high-stakes, public media interactions.

The criteria for this research are as follows:

1. Only interviews conducted in English will be analysed
2. The interviews involve unscripted and spontaneous conversations
3. The interviews are from events involving Nigeria celebrities and high profile individuals.

3.3: Method of Data Collection

The data of this research were collected from selected Nigeria Red Carpet interviews. They include events such as the AMVCA, On the Carpet with Bolinto, Headies Awards, and the DNBC 2025. These interviews were sourced from YouTube and Instagram, not because they are unavailable on other social platforms but because Instagram is seen as a professional app and YouTube provides full clips and videos of interviews, which is essential for proper analysis.

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

As previously stated, this study will be adopting the qualitative research method. This means no numerical data will be involved in the analysis. Qualitative analysis will be used to

analyse the selected Nigerian Red-Carpet interviews. Face work patterns and politeness strategies will be examined based on Brown and Levinson politeness theory.

The pragmatics theory will be applied in this research to help us understand how language is used in this social context and how these interviews are constructed and interpreted beyond the literal words spoken.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to identify the negative and positive politeness strategies and face work mechanisms in the Red Carpet, and how they shape communication and language use. The following are the selected interviews for this study: The AMVCA (African Magic Viewers Choice Awards), On the Carpet with Bolinto, and DNBC 2025 (Doing Business in Nigeria). Following the objectives of this study, this chapter will identify the politeness strategies in the Red-Carpet and try to describe language use in high stakes and public media interaction.

4.1.2 Analysing Politeness (Positive and Negative) and Facework in the Red Carpet

1. The AMVCA (Africa Magic Viewers Choice Awards)

The AMVCA is a ceremony that celebrates excellence in African movies and television, it is a highly rated Pan-Africa award ceremony. It recognises the achievements of both actors and directors who are in front of and behind the camera. It is a bridge that connects African film makers with the viewer, and where deserving individuals are awarded and acknowledged in the movie industry. We will be examining different AMVCA Red Carpet Interviews as it relates to this work.

In this first Excerpt, Sika Osei, the Red Carpet Host will be interviewing a Nollywood star Kunle Remi on the Red Carpet before the official start of the 9th edition of the AMVCA taking place on Saturday, May 20, 2023, at the Eko Hotel and Suites in Lagos Nigeria.

EXCERPT 1

Turn 1 (Speaker A – Sika): It's the most anticipated night of the movie industry! What do you expect today?

Turn 2 (Speaker B – Kunle): What do I expect? Hmm... I expect the best, I expect... to have a good time.

Turn 3 (Speaker A – Sika): Who are you rooting for?

Turn 4 (Speaker B – Kunle): I'm rooting for a couple of my guys, no, all of them actually. I'm rooting for all of them. Don't set me up. (laughs)

This conversation between Sika and Kunle, reveals how both positive politeness, negative politeness and facework are combined together to aid communication in the Red Carpet. Positive politeness strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1987) are used in order to satisfy the speaker's positive face, which is his wish to be approved of and liked, and his Negative face which is his desire to avoid imposition. The most important thing is saving face, an individual's social image and his personal identity. In the first turn Sika's opening statement ("it is the most anticipated night of the movie industry!") sets the tone for the whole conversation to flow. She opened with a positive politeness strategy in order to establish common grounds and make and make conversation run smoothly. More often than not in the Red-Carpet, interviewers often try to sound very excited in order to ease tension, and then they add inclusive questions to make the listener a part of the conversation. In the first Turn, Sika immediately follows up with a question ("what do you expect today?") This question draws Kunle into the conversation and makes the discussion not appear interrogative but interactive.

Kunle upholds Sika's Positive face when he responded to her question by saying ("I expect the best.... to have a good time"), although he doesn't sound as enthusiastic as she is, he doesn't try to kill her enthusiasm or answer negatively, he instead goes with the established tone of the host and smoothly flows with the conversation. This signals cooperative facework as he shows positive politeness by being optimistic and agreeing with the host which protects both their positive faces. In turn 3 the interview had almost become face threatening when Sika asks ("who are you rooting for"), this is a tricky question because Kunle is also an actor in the movie industry so picking one out of all his nominated colleagues could do damage to his public face and cause issues between him and his peers, as it will make some feel alienated. He almost flopped when he said ("a couple of my guys") but he quickly recovered and said (no, all of them actually"). His action is a negative politeness

strategy as he minimises imposition and avoids being specific in order to show respect and consideration for his colleagues. He protects his own face and also preserves the face of the host by trying to laugh out his response (“don't set me up” (laughs)).

This excerpt reflects what Spencer Oatey says in her book *Culturally Speaking: Managing Rapport through Talk across Cultures*. According to Spencer-Oatey rapport management involves both face management and the management of sociality rights (Spencer-Oatey 2000). It shows how the Red-Carpet blends both positive politeness, negative politeness and face work mechanisms to make conversations run smoothly, mitigate threats and protect an individual's public image.

EXCERPT 2

Turn 1 (Speaker A – Toke): You look very dapper, what colour is this?

Turn 2 (Speaker B – Guest): Well I'm going to try and sound intelligent, but this is salmon with a hue of pink in it yeah (smiles and shakes head) I have no idea honestly.

The second excerpt opens with the first positive politeness strategy stated by Brown and Levinson in 1987 (Notice, attend to the hearers wants, interest and needs). By using this positive politeness strategy, the Host (“you look very dapper”) acknowledges the guests need to be seen and liked and creates a groundwork for the next question (“what colour is this”). Imagine a host simply walking up to a guest to ask “what colour is this?” It might sound rude or demanding, but because the guest had already been complimented and acknowledged, the compliment set the tone for the flow of the conversation, without making anyone feel like they are being imposed on. One of the most important and effective ways of softening potential face-threatening acts is through praise, or words of affirmation.

Brown and Levinson still consider questions like “what colour is this?” a minor face threatening acts because the guest is still obligated to give an answer, as the guest is put in a spot where he must respond to the question, so that is why the compliment is very important as it drastically reduces the threats to a person’s face and creates a smooth conversation flow.

The guest uses Brown and Levinson’s 8th politeness strategy (joke) to evade what might have been a threat to his face. In response to the question, he starts by giving a funny description of the colour (“this is salmon with hue of pink in it”), then he follows that immediately by saying (“I have no idea honestly”). Instead of pretending to know the answer or sounding offended by the question the guest opted to use a joke which is a very good politeness strategy that can protect both their public images. A situation that would have been embarrassing and tense has been made light hearted and funny, as the vulnerability of the guest has been made to look witty. This is how much politeness strategies hold importance in the Red-Carpet interview.

4.1.3 On the Carpet with Bolinto

On the Carpet with Bolinto is a Red-Carpet Interview for high profile social events, featuring celebrities exclusively on the Red Carpet. Bolanle Olukoni popularly known as “Bolinto” is the Red-Carpet host.

EXCERPT 3

Bolinto interviewing celebrities at Asa’s Live in Lagos Concert. (Bolinto and Ebuka on the Carpet)

Speaker A (Bolinto): The person I’m here with is a former bachelor, used to be single, but he still looks good sha. Ebuka, how are you?

Speaker B (Ebuka): (laughs) Why are you making it sound like I'm a convicted criminal?

Speaker A (Bolinto): No, you're not convicted (smiles) you are just married.

Speaker B (Ebuka): Now it's over (laughs).

This exchange shows that the Red-Carpet interviews can also be fun and interesting, while still maintaining facework and applying politeness strategies. It shows that even while maintaining one's social image, the hearer's need can still be satisfied without imposition.

The second turn shows how politeness strategies can be used to avoid real conflict in face threatening situations. Ebuka turns a conversation that might have posed a threat to his face into something humorous, by saying ("why are you making it sound like I'm a convicted criminal?" (laughs) lightens up expected tension. This politeness move helped him maintain a positive face while avoiding a response that might have posed a threat to the host positive face.

The conversation between Bolinto (host) and Ebuka (guest), shows that the Red Carpet can be a fun and playful space for both the interviewers and interviewees. The conversation ended in a jovial tone ("now it's all over").

This excerpt portrays that even while trying to protect face and maintain social image, the Red Carpet can be a fun and interesting space. Positive politeness devices such as jokes, and playful teasing allows communication to flow seamlessly, while still respecting boundaries.

EXCERPT 4

Still in Asa's Live in Lagos Concert (Bolinto and Linda Osifo)

Speaker A: Today is May Day! Happy workers day!...we all work (to Linda Osifo) so what was the very first job you ever had?

Speaker B: ummm I worked in the movie theatre, in the popcorn section, in high school back then.

To keep the conversation interesting, light and inclusive this short interaction between Bolinto and Linda Osifo blends both positive politeness strategy, negative politeness and facework. Bolinto starts the conversation by “seeking agreement” and using in-group identify markers” (Brown and Levinson 103) which is a positive politeness strategy (“Today is May Day!, Happy Workers Day”), and then she draws on common ground by acknowledging everyone (“We all work “). The enthusiasm of the host signals friendliness and eliminates the feeling of imposition from the guest (Linda) in this conversation. Bolinto’s statement (“we all work“) portrays a polite face to Linda by acknowledging the fact that even though she might be a celebrity she still put in as much work as the ordinary individual.

In response to Bolinto’s question in turn 1; (so was the very first job you ever had?“), Linda started by carefully thinking through her response (ummmm”) this is done in order to avoid controversy and mitigate any question that might pose a threat to her face. She satisfies viewers' wants for connection by revealing how small she started (“I worked in the movie theatre, in the popcorn section), her response to Bolinto, protects her positive face by presenting herself as humble and relatable.

This analysis reflects how different strategies are used in the Red Carpet to achieve a seamless and smooth conversation. Bolinto starts this with her enthusiasm and inclusivity, while Linda smoothly continues the conversation with her humble and relatable response, while also being careful enough to mitigate any potential face threats because celebrities are deeply concerned about how people see and perceive them.

EXCERPT 5

Bolinto at the Ali Baba Comedy Concert at EKO hotel (Bolinto interviewing Kate Henshaw)

Speaker A (Bolinto): (to Kate) Now we are at the Ali Baba show, but I want to find out from you, you have to be honest, inside of Nigeria and outside Nigeria who would you say is your favourite comedian?

Speaker B (Kate Henshaw): It's Ali Baba, I'm sorry I'm biased already.

The first turn of this excerpt, (you have to be honest, inside of Nigeria and outside Nigeria who would you say is your favourite comedian?) is a slightly challenging question, because the guest (Kate Henshaw) was put in a face threatening situation. Imagine going for a comedy show and then you are asked to name your favourite comedian without being biased, choosing Ali Baba might be seen as partial while picking a different comedian might be considered as betraying the organiser of the show. Although the way Bolinto frames the question (“but I want to find out from you”, “you have to be honest”) is a positive politeness strategy because it urges Kate to share her experience without explicitly demanding it.

Kate's answer (“it's Ali Baba, I'm sorry I'm biased already”) is a combination of both positive and negative politeness. She answers by first flattering the event's organiser (“it's Ali Baba”) this response establishes cohesion between Kate and the audience because “Ali Baba” is the common stage name for the comedian, then she goes on to apologise (“I'm sorry”) and then she describes her response as biased (“I am biased already”). This is an important facework mechanism proposed by Goffman in 1967. By agreeing that she is biased she nullifies others criticism and protects her own face, the apology also shows that she recognises other comedians.

This conversation shows how risk can be managed in the Red Carpet especially as it involves high stakes public settings and high-profile individuals. Kate honestly answers in a way that would mitigate face threats thereby protecting her face, while Bolinto frames her questions in a friendly manner although the content of the question is risky in itself. Red Carpet interviews involve adequately balancing a participant's image with respect while still protecting their societal rights.

EXCERPT 6

Bolinto interviews Alex Okubor for the "History 101" session, where different celebrities are asked a particular history question.

Speaker A (Bolinto): History 101 on the carpet with Bolinto! I'll ask you one question, and you will respond, This is really easy (smiles)

Speaker B (Alex): ohh my God!

Speaker A (Bolinto): When was democracy restored in Nigeria?

Speaker B (Alex): Well 1960 was the independence hmmm I'm not quite sure.

In turn 1, Bolinto starts by using positive politeness to soften imposition. The segment is a question-and-answer segment that can be considered a test of intelligence in some way so the host tries to create a playful atmosphere and frame the question in a way that the guest's positive face would not be affected ("I'll ask one question and you will respond, this is really easy"). This exchange shows that Red Carpet hosts think of different ideas to make the carpet interesting and questions are not just limited to asking about the lives of these high-profile individuals. The "quiz like" questions are framed in ways that would not pose a threat to the face of the guests on the carpet.

In turn 2 Alex's reaction to the question ("oh my God!") is a facework in itself that prepares the audience to understand that the question might have caught him off guard, and it might be a question that he would not be able to answer. His actions make the audience see reaction as humorous rather than ignorant. This move is seen by Goffman as defensive practices (Goffman 15).

In response to Bolinto's question in turn 3 ("when was democracy restored in Nigeria") Alex uses hedging just after beginning to answer ("well... hmmm...I'm not quite sure"). This negative politeness strategy protects Alex's positive face by portraying the fact that he was humble enough to admit the fact that he has no answer to the question asked. This strategy is used to mitigate threats and it draws the audience to commend Alex rather than condemn him.

Balancing entertainment with mutual respect is very crucial on the Red Carpet. This whole exchange draws us to see how the host applies politeness strategy to keep the conversation respectful and entertaining, and how the guest protects his positive face by applying a negative politeness strategy in order to protect his social identity.

EXCERPT 7

(Bolinto interviewing Kemi (a Nigerian actress))

Turn 1 (Speaker A): when was democracy restored in Nigeria?

Turn 2 (Speaker B): 1999

Turn 3 (Speaker A): The way you're saying it like pure water, you're the first person that got it. (to the camera) "she's a genius".

Excerpt 7 is a contrast to excerpt 6 as Kemi instantly smartly answer's ("1999") unlike Alex who took out time to think and later admitted that he has no answer to the questions, this greatly enhances Kemi's positive face and positioned her in the eye of the audience as a competent person.

In turn 3, Bolinto uses a positive face move of praising her guest immensely to boost her positive face ("the way you are saying it like pure water, you're the first person that got it) she directly praises her to the audience by saying ("she's a genius ") this elevated Kemi's positive face in the eye of the audience and it presented her as a smart and intelligent person.

Kemi's response heavily contrasts with the hedged responses from previous excerpts. Her confident response bolstered her positive face, and amplified her social image. This excerpt also shows that the Red Carpet also celebrates knowledge, and makes interviews interesting for the viewers, not to threaten the face of the individuals, although that sometimes happens too.

The Red Carpet is a very impactful platform for building a positive social image in the eye of the world, because people basically judge from what they see and the Red Carpet is a good and interesting place for meeting high profile individuals. The conversation between Bolinto and Kemi is a continuous face work which protects not just Kemi's (guest) face but Bolinto (host) face as well.

4.1.4 DNBC (Doing Business in Nigeria Conference) 2025

DNBC is a business initiative that was established to create a platform for business professionals to share their experiences in their various business sectors. A Red Carpet session is always held for high profile individuals in business to share their thoughts and experiences.

EXCERPT 8

Vivian Nado (Red Carpet Host) with Paul Owanibe (CEO of Landmark)

Turn 1 (Speaker A): ... We are in the 2025 edition of Doing Business in Nigeria, and I have here with me the CEO of Landmark Mr.?

Turn 2 (Speaker B): Paul Onwuanibe

Turn 3 (Speaker A): I want to ask you just one question (she ended up asking three) what is the brain behind this concept?...what motivated you to build this beautiful structure?

Turn 4 (Speaker B): Hmmm (laughs) It's a question a lot of people ask me... the whole idea is to simplify things, put everything in one place and build out a business leisure lifestyle platform, and that's how we did it.

In turn 1, the host respectful and friendly interaction with a high-profile individual in a business setting contains a blend of positive politeness with light facework. The introduction ("we are in the 2025 edition of doing business in Nigeria") introduces the formal setting of the interview. The guest is also formally introduced ("the CEO of Landmark"), one of the reasons for the inclusion of this excerpt is to show that the Red Carpet is not limited to the entertainment industry. The host applies Brown and Levinson's first politeness strategy (notice, attend to the hearer's wants, needs and goods), her recognition of his position, strengthens his positive face and social identity.

The host tries to show restraint and minimise imposition by stating that ("I want to ask you just one question") which ended by becoming three questions, this shows how unpredictable and unplanned the Red Carpet can be, as one question can lead to another, and a person's response might call for another question. The guest used a classic facework

mechanism (“hmmm”) to think through the multiple questions asked at once, this reduces any awkwardness that might have occurred in the conversation and it shows that the guest is simply thinking through.

His response in turn 4 (the whole idea is to simplify things... build out a business leisure lifestyle platform... that’s how we did it“) shows cooperation and acknowledgment from the guest to other members of his team, this also serves to promote his positive face and social connections. This conversation shows how solidarity is used to keep conversation friendly and smooth as well as promote the face of both interviewer and guest.

EXCERPT 9

Vivian with Stella Duru at the DNBC Conference

Speaker A: My name is Vivian Nado, and I have here with me?

Speaker B: Stella Duru

Speaker A: Okay ma’am please can you tell us about businesses in Nigeria?

Speaker B: Okay, I would say my day job first and foremost is, I’m a lawyer and I’ve been practicing for over 24 years, and so I think your question is actually very apposite giving that I actually provide legal advice to companies looking to come to Nigeria, as well as home grown companies looking to scale up.

In turn 1, The host introduces herself (“My name is Vivian Nado “) and invites the guest to do the same (“and I have here with me?”). This is a negative politeness strategy, it allows Stella to supply her own name without feeling like she is being imposed on.

In the third turn (“ok ma’am, please can you tell us about businesses in Nigeria?”) and the host uses polite markers like, “ma’am” and “please” to satisfy the guest’s face and show respect. This also urges her to participate in the interaction.

Stella’s response to the question enhances her face by portraying herself as a professional (“I have been in this business for over 24 years”) and by referring to the interviewer’s question as “apposite” she returns the politeness of the host and legitimises the interviewer’s role to keep a smooth conversation flow. Respecting each other’s faces is something that individuals on the Red Carpet always try to do so as to protect the social image of each other.

This conversation method combines different politeness strategies to keep conversation respectful and polite. This interview keeps the viewers engaged and shows the integrity of the guest and the capability of the interviewer.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The analysed interviews in this work show that conversations on the Red Carpet are largely influenced by the combination of politeness strategies (positive and negative) and facework mechanisms. These interviews merge all these strategies together to help conversation flow smoothly and maintain a harmonious and friendly atmosphere on the Carpet.

Positive politeness strategies greatly characterize the conversation flow on the Red Carpet. Excerpts from the interviews (AMVCA, DBNC, and Bolinto) all start by giving a warm, humorous, informative, welcoming and enthusiastic speech in order to satisfy the guests' public face. E.g. words like “you look very dapper”, we mean to satisfy the individual's need to be approved of, and compliments are a good foundation for building rapport in the Red Carpet. Humour is also one very important method of running a smooth

conversation. This builds excitement and reduces tension on the carpet, e.g. “former bachelor”. Another method interviews use is group identity markers “Happy workers Day, we all work”. This creates shared identity and relatability, a good way to build conversation on the Red Carpet.

Negative politeness strategies are strategies that highly influence conversations on the Red Carpet. We see examples such as “Don’t set me up”. Here the speaker tries to mitigate face threat by using jokes, so that he appears playful instead of ignorant or biased. Hedging is another politeness strategy that protects an individual’s face. For example, “I’m not quite sure”. This strategy is used to avoid being specific in order to mitigate face threats. These politeness devices are not limited to celebrity lifestyles but are also reflected in business settings. In the interview between Stella and Vivian (8th excerpt) we see how the interviewer attends to Stella's negative face by giving deference to the hearer (“please ma'am”).

Goffman’s facework is reflected in the way both the interviewer and interviewees communicate in order to diffuse tension and show respect to individuals' faces. Framing responses as playful rather than an attack. In the interview between Ebuka and Bolinto (“why are you making me sound like a convicted criminal?”(laughs)) the host preserves the face of the interviewer and mitigates any threat that might have occurred from reacting differently. Hosts often face threatening situations or questions by using humour, showing respect, apologizing, etc., which preserves the guests’ social identity.

In conclusion, this research shows that Red Carpet interviews go beyond merely asking questions; it is an organised interaction where hosts and guests carefully manage face and public image. It is a tool for securing a solid positive social identity in the eye of the audience. The Red Carpet uses positive and negative politeness strategies to build connection, inclusion and create a lasting social identity. These interviews show how hosts and guests

cleverly use language as a tool to create solidarity, manage face needs, and maintain a balance between entertainment and diplomacy in high-stakes and public interactions.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1: Summary

This work has pragmatically examined Politeness and Facework in Selected Nigerian Red Carpet Interviews. The study aimed to identify the positive and negative politeness strategies and face-work mechanisms, which shapes the identity of the participants and their image management. The qualitative research method was used in this research and the purposive sampling method was used to select data from Instagram and YouTube. The interviews include the African Magic Viewers Choice Awards (AMVCA), Doing Business in Nigeria (DNBC), and On the Carpet with Bolinto. The data was analysed using Brown and Levinson Politeness theory, and Goffman's theory on face.

The analysis revealed that positive and negative politeness strategies are very important strategies in the Red Carpet, in order to carefully navigate the delicate language of public media, and balance professionalism and sociability. They not only serve communicative functions but help in sustaining a warm and entertaining atmosphere suitable for media presentation.

The study also shows that facework is also important in managing and maintaining self-image and mutual respect between people. So, the Red-Carpet setting is a place where language, appearance, and performance come together, showing how respect, social status, and friendliness are expressed in Nigerian media.

5.2: Conclusion

In conclusion, Red Carpet interviews are pragmatic events where politeness and face work strategies are used to maintain social interaction, protect public image, and maintain

good rapport. This work demonstrates that politeness strategies in this context functions as a communicative strategy for navigating power dynamics, maintaining professionalism and engaging the audience.

This research acknowledges Brown and Levinson's claim that speakers always try to navigate between their positive and negative face needs. With positive politeness strategies focused on building solidarity between speakers and negative politeness strategies focused on avoiding imposition on an individual's face.

In essence, this study shows that the language used on the Red Carpet is not just for show but is carefully and strategically used. The success of each conversation depends on how well the speakers balance entertainment with respect, quick responses with politeness, and professionalism with friendliness. This balance makes the Red Carpet a valuable setting for studying how people use language in real-life public situations.

5.3: Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. For Media Practitioners:

Journalists, presenters, and media hosts should be trained in pragmatic competence and politeness theory to enhance their interviewing skills. Understanding how to balance face needs can help them manage interviews more effectively, especially in live, unscripted contexts.

2. For Public Figures and Celebrities:

Guests should be aware of the linguistic expectations of media interaction and employ politeness strategies to maintain their public image and avoid controversy. Developing pragmatic awareness can help them navigate sensitive or face-threatening questions gracefully.

3. For Linguistic Scholars:

More empirical studies should be conducted on language use in Nigerian media discourse, particularly focusing on how gender, power, and cultural norms influence politeness and facework in interviews, talk shows, and press conferences.

4. For Media Institutions:

Red Carpet programs should incorporate guidelines that encourage respectful and engaging communication, promoting positive representation of both the media and the entertainment industry.

5. For Further Research:

Future studies can extend this work by comparing Nigerian Red Carpet interviews with those from other cultural contexts to explore cross-cultural similarities and differences in politeness and face negotiation.

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APPENDIX 1**TRANSCRIBED SCENES (WITH SOURCE DETAILS)****Transcript 1: AMVCA 9th Edition – Sika Osei & Kunle****Remi**

Source: YouTube, Africa Magic Channel — “AMVCA 9 Red Carpet Live Stream”

Date Posted: 20 May 2023

Date Accessed: April 2025

Format: Video

EXCERPT 1

Turn 1 (Speaker A – Sika): It’s the most anticipated night of the movie industry! What do you expect today?

Turn 2 (Speaker B – Kunle): What do I expect? Hmm... I expect the best, I expect... to have a good time.

Turn 3 (Speaker A – Sika): Who are you rooting for?

Turn 4 (Speaker B – Kunle): I’m rooting for a couple of my guys, no, all of them actually. I’m rooting for all of them. Don’t set me up. (laughs)

Transcript 2: AMVCA 8th Edition – Toke Makinwa

Interview

Source: YouTube, Africa Magic (AMVCA) 8 Red Carpet Highlights”

Posted: 14 May 2022

Accessed: April 2025

EXCERPT 2

Turn 1 (Speaker A – Toke): You look very dapper, what colour is this?

Turn 2 (Speaker B – Guest): Well I’m going to try and sound intelligent, but this is salmon with a hue of pink in it yeah (smiles and shakes head). I have no idea honestly.

Transcript 3: Asa’s Live in Lagos – Bolinto & Ebuka

Source: Instagram, @bolanleolukanni

Post Title: “On the Carpet with Bolinto — Asa Live in Lagos Concert”

Posted: 2021

Accessed: April 2025

EXCERPT 3

Speaker A (Bolinto): The person I'm here with is a former bachelor, used to be single, but he still looks good sha. Ebuka, how are you?

Speaker B (Ebuka): (laughs) Why are you making it sound like I'm a convicted criminal?

Speaker A (Bolinto): No, you're not convicted (smiles) you are just married.

Speaker B (Ebuka): Now it's over (laughs).

Transcript 4: Asa's Live in Lagos – Bolinto & Linda Osifo

Source: Instagram, @bolanleolukanni

Post Title: "On the Carpet with Bolinto — Asa Live in Lagos Concert"

Posted: 2021

Accessed: April 2025

EXCERPT 4

Speaker A: Today is May Day! Happy workers' day!... we all work. So what was the very first job you ever had?

Speaker B: Ummm... I worked in the movie theatre, in the popcorn section, in high school back then.

Transcript 5: Ali Baba Comedy Concert – Bolinto & Kate Henshaw

Source: YouTube, HipTV — “Ali Baba Comedy Concert Red Carpet 2022”

Posted: January 2022

Accessed: April 2025

EXCERPT 5

Speaker A (Bolinto): You have to be honest, inside Nigeria and outside Nigeria, who would you say is your favourite comedian?

Speaker B (Kate Henshaw): It’s Ali Baba. I’m sorry, I’m biased already.

Transcript 6: History 101 – Bolinto & Alex Okubor

Source: Instagram Reel, @bolanleolukanni

Title: “History 101 on the Carpet with Bolinto”

Posted: 2021

Accessed: April 2025

EXCERPT 6

Speaker A: History 101 on the carpet with Bolinto! I'll ask you one question, and you will respond. This is really easy. (smiles)

Speaker B (Alex): Ohh my God!

Speaker A: When was democracy restored in Nigeria?

Speaker B: Well 1960 was the independence... hmmm... I'm not quite sure.

Transcript 7: History 101 – Bolinto & Kemi

Source: Instagram Reel, @bolanleolukanni

Posted: 2021

Accessed: April 2025

EXCERPT 7

Turn 1 (Speaker A): When was democracy restored in Nigeria?

Turn 2 (Speaker B – Kemi): 1999

Speaker A: The way you're saying it like pure water, you're the first person that got it. (to the camera) "She's a genius.

Transcript 8: DNBC Conference – Vivian Nado & Paul

Onwuanibe

Source: YouTube, DNBC Official Channel — “Doing Business in Nigeria Conference 2025: Red Carpet Session”

Posted: 2025

Accessed: April 2025

EXCERPT 8

Turn 1 (Speaker A – Vivian): We are in the 2025 edition of Doing Business in Nigeria, and I have here with me the CEO of Landmark, Mr...?

Turn 2 (Speaker B – Paul): Paul Onwuanibe.

Turn 3 (Speaker A – Vivian): I want to ask you just one question (she ended up asking three): What is the brain behind this concept? What motivated you to build this beautiful structure?

Turn 4 (Speaker B – Paul): Hmmm (laughs) It’s a question a lot of people ask me... the idea is to simplify things, put everything in one place, and build a business–leisure lifestyle platform.

Transcript 9: DNBC Conference – Vivian & Stella Duru

Source: YouTube, DNBC Official Channel

Posted: 2025

Accessed: April 2025

EXCERPT 9

Speaker A (Vivian): My name is Vivian Nado, and I have here with me...?

Speaker B: Stella Duru.

Speaker A: Okay ma'am, please can you tell us about business in Nigeria?

Speaker B: I'm a lawyer... I've been practicing for over 24 years... I provide legal advice to companies entering Nigeria.