

## IMPOLITENESS IN POLICE-SUSPECT INTERACTION IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

Police-Suspect interaction, PSI, is a fact-finding activity undertaken by the police to seek confessions and develop details about crimes. During PSI, Investigating Police Officers, (IPOs), employ linguistic tools to manipulate suspects, especially low-profile suspects, LPSs, wield power over them, and often violate their fundamental human rights during the process. Existing works on PSI in Nigeria have concerned themselves with the identification of discourse acts as elicitation, accusation and reply in PSI. This work, therefore, examines the linguistic impoliteness strategies observed in PSI in Ibadan, Nigeria, within the theoretical purview of Culpeper's Impoliteness Theory. The data comprise eight cases involving LPSs including incest, attempted murder, threat to life and malicious damage, among others, gathered via participant and non participant observation methods in the State Criminal Investigation Department, Iyaganku Division, Ibadan, Nigeria between 2012 and 2014. The data are subjected to content and critical analysis. IPOs employ the withhold politeness impoliteness, the positive impoliteness, the negative impoliteness and the mock politeness strategies to threaten the faces of LPSs, and ultimately overwhelm them while seeking confessions from them. In PSI, while the IPOs assume a +power position, LPSs are relegated to the -power position.

**Keywords:** Police, low-profile suspects, impoliteness strategies, Nigeria

### 1.0 Introduction

Since the introduction of Politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) to scholarship, generally believed to have been predicated on the work of Goffman (1967) on face, several scholars have reacted to the phenomenon. These reactions have obviously given birth to hundreds of works on the concept of Politeness in Nigeria and elsewhere, all pointing to different directions on the concept. This position is in line with that of Meier (1995: 345) who opines "there is a disconcerting amount of divergence and lack of clarity concerning the meaning of politeness" among scholars. Held (1992:131) describes the concept as a linguistic phenomenon which is definitionally fuzzy and empirically difficult. The concept of politeness has been variously expressed and explained in the literature as formality, deference: indirectness, appropriateness, etiquette, and as tact (Fraser, 1990; Kasper, 1994, Meir, 1995 and Thomas, 1995). Lakoff (1975) views politeness as a means of saying the socially correct thing. Adebija (1989) links politeness with a situation that enables one to speak or behave in a way that is socially and culturally acceptable and pleasant to the hearer. Ide (1993) sees politeness as behaviour without friction. Brown (1980) adds that politeness is a way of saying and doing things in a manner that takes into consideration the feelings of other people. However, Fraser and Nolen (1981:1) opine "to be polite is to abide by rules of the relationship".

Some of the research works that have been carried out on the concept of politeness by African scholars include Adebija (1989), Ajibawo (1992), Adejumo (2010), Odebunmi (2010), Ambuyo et al (2011), to mention but a few. However, our observation, in agreement with that of Mills (2003: 121), shows there has not been much research done in the area of linguistic impoliteness than in politeness, especially

as it relates to police-suspect interaction in Nigeria. In particular, no linguistic work has attempted to look into how investigating police officers employ impoliteness strategies to overwhelm, repress and ultimately violate the constitutional rights of low-profile suspects<sup>1</sup> during investigations. Rather, the various existing works on police-suspect discourse such as Terebo (2012), Sadiq (2011), Adebowale (2010), Oyebade (2007), Ogunsiji (1989), Farinde (1997, 2011), Bamgbose (1971 and 1995), to mention but a few, have largely focused on the issues of stylistics and discourse acts (elicitation, accusation, reply, prompt, etc) in police-suspect discourse. Although Farinde (1997 and 2011) and Sadiq (2011) mention the concept of power in their works, they did not explain in concrete terms, how this power manifests. Also, Farinde (2011) sees questioning as the only weapon IPOs employ to exert power over suspects. However, he is silent about the fundamental phenomena of power abuse and violation of the constitutional rights of low-profile suspects by IPOs during investigations, with the use of linguistic and paralinguistic weapons other than questions.

## 2.0 Theoretical Framework: Culpeper's Impoliteness Theory

Mills (2003: 121) has pointed out that a lot of research has been carried out on politeness but not much has been done on impoliteness. In her opinion, the aforesaid might be as a result of the fact that in most studies, conversation is viewed as an harmonious interaction between or among speakers who do all possible, including saving the other's face, to ensure smooth interaction during conversation. However, there are occasions where speakers attack rather than save each other's face in conversations, hence the concept of impoliteness.

In the opinion of Locher and Bousfield (2008: 3), "Impoliteness is a behaviour that is face-aggravating in a particular context". This definition does not differentiate between impoliteness and rudeness. In reaction to this definition, therefore, Culpeper (2008) makes a distinction between impoliteness and rudeness. According to Culpeper, both impoliteness and rudeness are "inappropriate and negatively marked" behaviour. However, the difference between them is that, while impoliteness is intentional, rudeness is unintentional negative behaviour. Impoliteness, therefore, is something that is caused intentionally. This position of Culpeper is a sharp contrast to the one maintained by Terkourafi (2008: 61-62) who argues that while impoliteness is unintentional, rudeness is intentional. Terkourafi's argument is hearer-centred rather than speaker-centred.

However, Culpeper's view on impoliteness is adopted in this study given its appropriateness to analyzing the data gathered for the study. Culpeper (2011) sees impoliteness as a multi-disciplinary field of study that has a link with scientific fields such as psychology, sociology, conflict studies, and media. It is thus, a complex and multi-dimensional subject to study (Kuntsi 2012). Culpeper (1996, 2008) opines that impoliteness is a linguistic behaviour aimed at attacking the face of another. He further argues that impoliteness can be divided into two different categories: inherent impoliteness and mock politeness or banter. In his opinion, there are acts that innately threaten one's face regardless of the context of the act; this is called inherent impoliteness. Contrariwise, impoliteness that stays on the surface and is not intended to insult anyone is called mock impoliteness (Culpeper 1996: 4). He outlines five impoliteness super-strategies which are apparently opposites of Brown and Levinson's politeness super-strategies. Culpeper (1996: 8) says: "Instead of enhancing or supporting face, impoliteness super-strategies are a means of attacking face". He describes the five super-strategies as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> We see low-profile suspects in this work as individuals who by virtue of their job(s), level of education and position in society are referred to as being uninformed (see Ajayi 2016).

- *Bald on record impoliteness* - the FTA is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is relevant. This strategy is different from Brown and Levinson's Bald on record in that, for Brown and Levinson, Bald on record is a *politeness* strategy in fairly specific circumstances. For example, when face concerns are suspended in an emergency, when the threat to the hearer's face is very small (e.g. "Come in" or "Do sit down"), or when the speaker is much more powerful than the hearer (e.g. "Stop complaining" said by a teacher to a student). In all these cases little face is at stake, and, more importantly, it is not the intention of the speaker to attack the face of the hearer.
- *Positive impoliteness* - the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants.
- *Negative impoliteness* - the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants.
- *Sarcasm or mock politeness* - the FTA is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remain surface realisations.
- *Withhold politeness* - the absence of politeness work where it would be expected. For example, failing to thank somebody for a present may be taken as deliberate impoliteness (Culpeper 1996: 8-9).

Culpeper (1996) goes ahead to spell out strategies for positive and negative impoliteness. These strategies are as follows:

### 2.1 Positive impoliteness output strategies:

- *Ignore, snub the other* - fail to acknowledge the other's presence.
- *Exclude the other from an activity*
- *Disassociate from the other* - for example, deny association or common ground with the other; avoid sitting together.
- *Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic*
- *Use inappropriate identity markers* - for example, use title and surname when a close relationship pertains, or a nickname when a distant relationship pertains.
- *Use obscure or secretive language* - for example, mystify the other with jargon, or use a code known to others in the group, but not the target.
- *Seek disagreement* - select a sensitive topic. Make the other feel uncomfortable - for example, do not avoid silence, joke, or use small talk.
- *Use taboo words* - swear, or use abusive or profane language.
- *Call the other names* - use derogatory nominations.

### 2.2 Negative impoliteness output strategies:

- *Frighten* - instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur.
- *Condescend, scorn or ridicule* - emphasize your relative power. Be contemptuous. Do not treat the other seriously. Belittle the other (e.g. use diminutives).
- *Invade the other's space* - literally (e.g. position yourself closer to the other than the relationship permits) or metaphorically (e.g. ask for or speak about information which is too intimate given the relationship).
- *Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect* - personalize, use the pronouns 'I' and 'you'.
- *Put the other's indebtedness on record*

### 2.3 Impoliteness and Power

Social power is defined in terms of the *control* exercised by one group or organisation (or its members) over the *actions* and/or the *minds* of (the members of) another group, thus limiting the freedom of action of the others, or influencing their knowledge, attitudes or ideologies (Clegg, 1989; Lukes, 1974; 1986; Wrong, 1979). Power distribution is determined by access to valued social resources, such as wealth, jobs, status, or indeed, a preferential access to public discourse and communication. As evident in the data collected, police power and dominance over and above suspects in police-suspect discourse has its basis in the institutional power of the institution. Some scholars have linked power with impoliteness. Some of these scholars are Bousfield and Locher (2008), Bousfield (2008), Culpeper (2011, 1996).

Bousfield and Locher (2008: 8) argue essentially that power is a crucial aspect in the study of impoliteness. In their opinion, power is a central part of human interactions and “impoliteness is an exercise and demonstration of power”. Furthermore, impoliteness causes restrictions in the ways one responds to impoliteness or face-attack, and the restriction of one’s options to act is of course the use of power.

In the same vein, Culpeper (1996: 354) connects power with the use of impoliteness. Culpeper explains that impoliteness is more likely to manifest when the addressor is more powerful than the addressee. In other words, when the addressor is in a higher position, he or she can use impoliteness more freely since he or she might have the means to reduce the ability of the less powerful participant to retaliate with impoliteness; and threaten more severe retaliation should the addressee (less powerful participant) attempt to retaliate. Therefore, one could argue that impoliteness is likely to occur in situations where the speaker has more power, for example in the interrogation room (as observed during data collection).

Echoing the position of the scholars mentioned above, Bousfield (2008: 150) argues that whenever a person manifests impoliteness, he or she is either “creating, activating, or re-activating some aspect of his/her relative power” or “challenging someone over their (assumption of) power” or even both (Kuntsi, 2012). However, Bousfield concludes it is not every time a person uses power that he or she is considered impolite in doing so. In fact, according to Culpeper (2011: 186-194), conventional directness, bald-on-record FTA, are not considered to be impolite when the speaker is of a higher social status than the addressee. We do not agree with this position of Culpeper, especially when we examine the practice of the IPOs in the observed cases in the context of the country’s constitutional provisions on the rights of suspects (see Salman, 2009).

What can be deduced from the arguments of these scholars however is that, power is an important part of interactions and “impoliteness is a demonstration of power”. Also, impoliteness brings about restrictions in the ways one can respond to the impoliteness or to the face-attack, and the restriction of one’s options to act is of course the use of power (Kuntsi, 2012).

### 3.0 Method of Data Collection and Procedure

The participant and non participants ethnographic methods of data collection were employed in gathering the data analysed in this work. Ethnographic research methods require the researcher being integrated in the culture or social field of interest (‘in the field’) and spending a sustained period of time with the subjects or participants of their research in order to observe and document their (language) behaviour as objectively as possible.

For data collection, the researcher was attached to the State Criminal Investigation Department (S C I D), Iyaganku Division of the Nigeria Police, Ibadan, which specialises in handling criminal cases and investigation. Some preliminary

interviews were conducted with some men of the force to gain insights into how the outfit operates. A higher education notebook was used for data collection and documentation. The data gathered were transcribed into texts, and those that took place in Yoruba were transcribed into English.

#### 4.0 Data Presentation and Analysis

##### 4.1 Impoliteness Strategies in Police-Suspect Interactions

The analysis in this work focuses on the examination and description of the impoliteness strategies employed by the police in police-suspect interaction. It brings to bear how certain face threatening acts are employed by the police officers to threaten the face of suspects, thereby exerting their institutional power and authority on them, and more often than not violating their fundamental human rights (see Sections 34 and 36 of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution). Discourse notations employed in the study are as compiled by the Department of Linguistics, University of California, Santa Barbara in 1992. However, notations such as (;) not accounted for in their compilation are invented in this study for hissing and banging of the table, respectively.

##### 4.1.1 Withhold Politeness Strategies

###### CASE 1: Threat to life ☺ ●

Background information: The suspect was reported to the police by a complainant who alleged that the suspect had threatened to kill him over a parcel of land, which the suspect claimed his late father gave the father of the complainant on a compassionate ground. The suspect is in his late 50's while the IPO is in his early 40's.

###### Excerpt 1

1. IPO: **Kí lẹ sọ fun lórí phone?**

*What did you tell him on phone?*

2. SUS: **Mo ní báwo la ẹ fẹ ríra,** simple thing

*I simply asked how we were going to see each other*

3. IPO: **Kí lẹ fẹ ri fún? Ẹ fẹ pá?**

*What did you want to see him? You want to kill him?*

4. SUS: **Bàbàà mi ló...** [ ]

*My father was...*

5. IPO: [ ] **Kí ló ẹlẹ bàbá yìí tó o kàn ní rojọ, ẹ mo wá béré history níbí bayì ni? Kí lo wá dórí ilẹ wọn? Kí lo fẹ lẹ ta ilẹ wọn fún?**

*What exactly happened, you this old man that you are narrating stories; am I here to ask for history? What were you looking for on his land? Why did you want to sell his land?*

6. IPO: **Ọwọ tani bàbá yín ti ralẹ?**

*From whom did your father buy the land?*

7. SUS: **Bàbá mi ò ra ilẹ**

*My father did not buy the land*

8. IPO: **L'átòrun ni wọn ti gbé'lẹ lówó!**

*He brought the land from heaven!*

9. SUS: **Ibi tí wọn dé sí nìun**

*That was where they migrated to*

10. IPO: **Ẹ o ri pé òòtọ ti ní yojú nísín yìí...í wọn ò bá gbé ilẹ wọn kúrò lórí ilẹ, wà á pa wọn!**

*You can now see that truth is coming out now..... if he refuses to remove his building from the land, you will kill him!*

In line 1, the IPO who began his interaction with the suspect, who obviously, was quite older than him, with the use of honorific pronoun “*ẹ*” (*you*) used to show politeness in the Yoruba language resorted to the use of “*o*” “*non honorific you*” in addressing him when he felt his continued display of respect to the suspect would not allow him exert and wield his power over him. As soon as he saw the opportunity to go *bald* on the suspect, he capitalised on it to establish his power in the interaction. Perhaps the IPO could have continued relating to the suspect with the use of honorific pronouns, but for the notion he already had that the suspect was actually “guilty” of the allegation against him, and as a “criminal”, he did not deserve to be shown any form of respect or courtesy. And as the powerful participant here, the IPO likened the suspect to an unsolicited story-teller, who has not addressed the question put across to him. This, the IPO did, without giving deference to the age and status of the older man, who could not challenge the power of the IPO. This IPO deliberately employed this impoliteness strategy to put the suspect on the spot so as to seek confession from him.

11. IPO: **Kí ló dé tí ẹ fi ní kí wọn gbé ilè wọn kúrò lórí ilẹ?**

*Why did you ask him to remove his building from the land?*

12. SUS: **Ó ti wó léyìn**

*It had collapsed at the back*

13. IPO: **Kí ló kàn ẹ nǐbẹ? Ilé wọn wó; nńkan tó bá wu onílé ló lè se.**

What is your own interest? **Alára ní ara ò rò'ùn, ẹ ní ó kú àìsùn, ó kú àìwo** (●) look).

*What is your problem with that; the landlord has the prerogative to decide what he would do about that. A burden bearer claims he is not experiencing any pains, why then are you unnecessarily sympathetic?*

An examination of the IPO's statement in the bold part of the excerpt above reveals a serious “blow” on the face of the suspect, as a demonstration of his institutional power over the suspect. He questioned the interest of the suspect in the fact that a portion of the building on the disputed land had collapsed, using the *withhold politeness impoliteness strategy*. He further made his point with the Yoruba proverbial statement “*Alára ní ara ò rò'ùn, ẹ ní ó kú àìsùn, ó kú àìwo*” one with a body ache has refused to admit to feeling pain, yet you are busy expressing unnecessary empathy” banging the table at the suspect to demonstrate his anger at him. Proverb, according to Meider (1993:24), is a “short, generally known sentence (statement) of a folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional view in metaphorical, fixed and memorable form which is handed down from generation to generation”. Proverbs are used in the Yoruba language to admonish, explain hidden facts, give warnings, motivate, chastise or criticize unacceptable act or behaviour. For any individual who understands the Yoruba language deeply, this is a proverb that simply instructs someone to mind his/her business, as such a person is seen as a meddling interloper. Apparently, the IPO resorted to the use of this proverb to criticize and condemn the action of the suspect who, by the IPO's estimation, had trespassed, prying into the complainant's affairs. Contrary to the practice in the Yoruba culture where proverbs are not expected to be used by a younger person when addressing an older one without requesting the older person's permission or apologising afterwards, the IPO, demonstrating his power over the suspect, did not acknowledge the age of the older man (the suspect) before using the proverb.

In line 10, the IPO, as a demonstration of his power over the suspect, further accused the suspect of wanting to kill the complainant if the latter refused to heed his demand: *Şé o ri pé òdòtò tí n yojú nísín yìi...tí wọn ò bá gbé ilé wọn kúrò lórí ilẹ, wà á*

*pa won!* “If he refused to yield to your request, you will kill him”. This is an accusatory statement that portrays the suspect as a murderer. The IPO used the non honorific pronoun to address the suspect here; a *withhold politeness impoliteness strategy* deliberately employed by the IPO to reduce the suspect to nothing before him. This further attests to the fact that IPOs belittle and condemn suspects during interrogation.

#### 4.1.2 Positive Impoliteness Strategy

We identify instances of Positive impoliteness strategies at work during police-suspect interaction as follows:

##### CASE 2: Attempted murder

Background information: The suspect was accused of attempting to take the life of / a commercial motorcycle rider, whose motorcycle the suspect allegedly boarded to a particular destination (during which the incident took place).

##### Excerpt 1:

1. IPO 1: **Kí lo wá fẹ́ k’òlọpa ó ẹ̀se fún ẹ̀ báyíí?**  
*What do you now want the police to do for you?*
2. SUS: **Tí mo bá lè rí àánú gbà, tí wọn fímí síbi iṣẹ́ [     ]**  
*If I can receive the mercy of the police and be helped to learn a skilled job*
3. IPO 1: [     ] **Ọlọpá ni ó fi ọ̀ síbẹ̀!** scornful @@  
*It is the police that will put you there!*
4. IPO 2: **Is he not a mad man!**

In the excerpt above, precisely in line 3, the IPO made jest of the suspect when he said he would appreciate it if the police would be merciful enough to assist him with the wherewithal to learn a skilled work as someone who did not know what he was saying. This was done to mock the suspect and project him as a fool or as one not in full possession of his senses. This position was further reinforced by the question the next IPO asked shortly after this derisive comment and laughter of IPO1 in line 4 thus: *Is he not a mad man?* Technically speaking, IPO2 called the suspect a mad man in agreement with the view of IPO1. This was a serious threat to the positive face of the suspect. This threat continues in the excerpt below, where one of the IPOs referred to him as ‘Wèrè, “mad man”’.

##### Excerpt 2

1. IPO 1: **Níbo ni ilé ẹ̀?**  
*Where is your house/where do you live?*
2. SUS: **Sángo ni mò ń gbé**  
*I live in Sango*
3. IPO 2: **Area ibo ni Sángo?**  
*Which area in Sango?*
4. SUS: **Ibi ègbẹ́ ilé epo, lábẹ́ búkà yẹ̀n**  
*Very close to that petrol station, beneath the shed*
5. IPO 2: **Wèrè, o wá nílé!**  
*Mad man, So you don’t have a home*

In the excerpt above, the IPOs displayed their power over the suspect in their deployment of the positive impoliteness sub-strategies: *use of taboo or profane language on the other and call the other names (derogatory nominations)* to attack the positive face of the suspect, as if he was already guilty of the crime he was accused of. While the IPOs were at ‘liberty’ to christen the suspect with derogatory

names; the suspect dared not react in the same manner considering his less-powerful status in the interaction.

### CASE 3: Fraud

Background Information: This case involved a man, a stockbroker, in his early 50's, alleged to have mismanaged the stock of a client, which was worth 3.5 million naira.

#### Excerpt 1

1. IPO: **Ẹyin gan sẹ ẹ mò pé ẹ jẹbi ọrọ yìí, tàbí ẹ ẹ jẹbi?**  
*Even you, do you not know that you are guilty in this matter; or aren't you guilty?*
2. SUS: **E jẹ n explain sir [ ]**
3. IPO: [ ] **Question mo bí yín! Tí ó bá jẹ court, báwo lẹ sẹ ma dáhùn?**  
*I only asked you a question! If it were in court, how would respond?*
4. SUS: **Mà á sọ pé under the law of stock exchange [ ]**
5. IPO: [ ] **E ní sùúrù! Kì n sẹyin lẹ ba ra shares ni? Sẹbí ẹyin lẹgba 3.5 million lówó Y?**  
*Hold on! were you not the one who assisted him in procuring the shares? Were you not the one that collected 3.5 million from Y?*
6. SUS: **Cheque ni mo gbà [ ]**  
*I only collected a cheque*
7. IPO: [ ] **Ọun nàà ni mo mean now.**  
*That is what I mean*
8. SUS: **Mi ò sọ pé mà á báwọn rà á, mo ní Y pè mí pé [ ]**  
*I never said I would help him buy it, I said Y Called me that..*
9. IPO: [ ] **Statement wà ní bí now; mi ì like òkan tí ẹ n bámi sọ. Taló introduce ẹ si? //**  
*The statement is here . I don't like what you are telling me. Who introduced X to Y?*
10. SUS: **Ẹmi ni**  
*I did*
11. IPO: **E dẹ wá ní ẹ ẹ jẹbi! sẹ tó bá jòkó ti ẹ jẹjẹ, sẹ irú òkan bẹyẹn á sẹlẹ? //**  
*And you said you are not at fault, if the business had not been introduced to him, would all that happened have happened?*

In the introductory part of this excerpt, the IPO, demonstrating his power to query the suspect, put an indicting question across to him, pointing to him that he did not perform his responsibilities as a qualified stockbroker. This position was further affirmed at the concluding part of the excerpt where the IPO countered the argument of the suspect in defense of himself, threatening his face without redress with the statement “Statement wà ní bí now; mi ì like òkan tí ẹ n bámi sọ” “The statement is here now. I don't like what you are telling me. Who introduced X to Y”, with a raised voice. This is an obvious and unmitigated *disagreement* with the explanation of the suspect by the powerful IPO.

#### Excerpt 2

1. IPO: **Mo ma n nà'yàn gan o! Mà la orí yín mọ pákó ibí nìsínì!**  
**Torí ẹ n fún mi ní headache bí mo sẹ wáyí. Tóbá jẹ ẹ lọ sí ibẹ yẹn láti confirm ni, gbogbo òkan yìí ò ní sẹlẹ**  
*I do beat people a lot. I will hit your head against this plank here. Because you are giving me headache as I am. If you had confirmed the transaction details, all*

*this would have been averted.*SUS: That is true

2. IPO: **Kò jù béyẹn lọ. Ẹ ti wọ inú 18 bẹ ẹ wàyí! Ẹ ti wọ 18, kò sí bọyá kiní.**

*In short, you have got yourself into the penalty box without mincing words.*

3. SUS: **Now ẹ ti sàlàyé fún mi, ó ẹ ní yé mi ní**

*Now that you have explained everything to me, I am beginning to understand.*

Here, the IPO employed the *make the other feel uncomfortable* positive impoliteness sub-strategy to intimidate the suspect. The IPO went further to threaten him (the suspect) that he (the IPO) beats people a lot, and that he would hit the head of the suspect against the wall panel if he provoked him “by saying what he did not want to hear”. The IPO made this assertion to send a warning signal to the suspect that his explanations to exonerate himself were not tenable, and he had better mind what he would say so that he would not incur his wrath. Further heightening the tension of the interaction, the IPO declared to the suspect he was in serious trouble, likening him to a footballer who has committed a foul in the box 18; such a player runs the risk of being given a red-card in addition to a penalty kick in favour of the opponent. All these are indications of power inequality between the powerful IPO and the less-powerful suspect.

### Excerpt 3

1. IPO: **Tí mi ò bá rí i, mà á detain yín. Mo ti stamp ẹ nìyẹn! Tí mi ò bá rí i,** I will detain you right now. Because you are the architect of this problem.

*I will have you detained if I don't see the money.*

2. SUS: <@SM>

3. IPO: **Wọ̀n àn tí ì pàyàn lójú yín rí le ẹ ní rẹ̀rìn-ín. E má jẹ kí n réyín yín níta. Ó wù mí kí n fún yín ní ẹ̀jẹ̀ díẹ̀ kí ẹ̀ tó kúrò níbí.**

*You are laughing because you have not witnessed a scene where people are killed before. Don't let me see your set of teeth outside. I feel like giving you a bloody injury before you leave here today.*

4. SUS: ...

In this excerpt, the IPO made it known to the suspect, without mincing words, that if he did not see the other suspect (his accomplice), he was going to detain him. In fact, he concluded by accusing the suspect of being the cause of all the problems investigated here. When the suspect tried to feign a smile in order to gather momentum to refute the claim of the IPO, the IPO commanded him to shut out his teeth and threatened that he felt like inflicting wounds on him as the interaction continued. All these were to make the suspect *uncomfortable* by the IPO so as to secure his ‘cooperation’. The positive impoliteness sub-strategy employed by the IPO here is “*make the other feel uncomfortable*”. By doing this, the IPO had succeeded in overwhelming the suspect, thereby exerting his institutional authority and power over him. This goes further to show how power is unequally distributed between IPOs and suspects in police-suspect interaction. In this excerpt, the powerful participant was the IPO who controlled the action, including the utterances of the suspect in the course of their interaction.

### CASE 4: Defilement

Background Information: This is a case of a 21-year old man who was alleged to have forcefully slept with a six-year old girl in his neighbourhood.

### Excerpt 1

1. IPO1: **Wò ó, wojú mi dáada. O ti s'exam sílè, o ò need screening, admission ti dúró fún ẹ ní Agodi; direct entry ni. Şé o ti ready láti sòrò?**

*Hey! Look at me very well. You have written an examination, you don't need any screening. You have already secured admission into Agodi (prison); it is direct entry. Are you ready to talk now?*

2. SUS: (Nods)

3. IPO1: **Okay, sòrò báyií**

*All right, speak now!*

4. SUS: Begins to explain[ ]

5. IPO1: [ ] **On the 20th to rán omọ yẹn lẹwà àti bread, kí ló şelè?**

*On the 20th when you sent the girl to buy bread and beans, what happened?*

6. SUS: **ehm** [ ]

7. IPO1: [ ] **Okay, o basùn àbí o ò basùn?**

*Okay, you slept with her or not?*

8. SUS: **Daddy, mi ò basùn**

*Sir, I did not sleep with her.*

9. IPO1: **O şì tún deny**

*You are still denying*

10. SUS: **Daddy, daddy, mi ò basùn, mi ò kí n je bread ati ewà** [ ]

*I did not sleep with her sir, in fact I don't eat bread and beans*

11. IPO1: [ ] **È dá idiot yi padà sínú cell jòó**

*Please take this idiot back into the cell*

12. SUS: **Daddy, ẹ jòó, Olóun ò ní ba ti yín jé**

*Please sir, the Lord will not destroy what belongs to you*

13. IPO1: **Mo mò pé hardened criminal ni ẹ**

*I know you are a hardened criminal*

14. SUS: **Daddy, ẹ jòó** [ ]

*Sir, please*

15. IPO1: [ ] **Olòşì, dá a padà sínú cell**

*Useless person, return him to the cell*

16. IPO2: **Wà á jẹrà s'Agodi**

*You will rot in Agodi*

IPO1 was obviously not interested in the “cock and bull story” the suspect was narrating to exonerate himself, hence his interrupting him and calling him a useless fellow, who should be taken back to the cell. He then concluded in strong terms that the suspect was a hardened criminal (who would not own up easily to having committed the crime he was accused of), *Olòşì*, a useless fellow who would rot in prison (*Agodi*). These are *call the other names(derogatory nominations)* positive impoliteness strategies intentionally employed by the IPO to demonstrate his power over the suspect and as such coerce him into confessing to having committed the crime. While the IPO employed a positive impoliteness strategy to attack the face of the suspect, the suspect resorted to the use of positive politeness strategy *make the hearer feel good* to appeal to the positive face of the IPO, showing his minus power status before him. He did this by constantly referring to the IPO as “*Daddy*”. Apparently, the suspect was acting in conformity to the Yoruba socio-cultural belief that anyone old enough to be one's father is usually referred to as *bàbá* or father. This points to the fact that culture plays a vital role in police-suspect interaction, particularly in Nigeria.

### CASE 5: Incest

*Background Information:* The suspect is a 48-year old man, a surveyor by profession, who was reported by his daughter to have been sleeping with her without her consent.

**Excerpt 1**

IPO1: **Bàbá! è mèlòó lẹti bá ọmọ yí sùn? //**  
*Baba, how many times have you slept with this girl?*

SUS: **Mi ò kà á**  
*I did not count it*

IPO2: **Okay, kí ló mú ẹ dé bè to ní basùn?**  
*Okay, what came over you that you are sleeping with your daughter?*

...

IPO1: **Bàbá, ẹ wá ní ẹbí èyàn dáada, ẹ ní ẹbí èyàn Ọlọun**  
*Old man, you are now pretending to be a godly man, you are pretending to be a good man*

IPO2: **Ọmọ àlè! ☺)**  
*Bastard!*

Barr: **Bóyá torí wọn ò ní stature**  
*Perhaps because he has a small stature*

IPO 1: **Olórí burúkú. Tí ní bá ti ma prepare charge ẹ, màá tún fi rape☺) ( )**  
*Misfortune bearer. When I prepare your case, I will include rape therein*

In the excerpt above, the IPO threatened the face of the suspect with the deployment of the positive impoliteness strategy *call the other names (derogatory nominations)*. He called him: **Ọmọ àlè** “*bastard*”; **Olórí burúkú** “*Misfortune bearer*”. These are not good names any rational human being wants to bear, but which the IPO has given to the suspect. The IPO further threatened to include rape as part of the charges against the suspect by the time he finished preparing the papers of the case: **Tí n bá ti ma prepare charge ẹ, màá tún fi rape si (hissed)** “*When I am preparing your case, I will include rape therein*”. In this excerpt, the IPO showed his power in terms of the extent he could go to dress down the suspect; disrobing him of his dignity. That was why he called him all sorts of names, and even hissed at him. The suspect on the other hand showed his helplessness by not objecting or reacting to this abusive name-calling by the IPO.

#### 4.1.3 Negative Impoliteness Strategies

A critical observation of our data reveals the use of some of these sub-strategies by the IPOs to demonstrate their power over suspects in police-suspect interaction. These are discussed below:

##### CASE 1: Threat to life

Background information: The suspect was reported to the police by a complainant who alleged that the suspect had threatened to kill him over a parcel of land, which the suspect claimed his late father gave the father of the complainant on a compassionate ground.

##### Excerpt 1

1. IPO: Bàbá, is it true that you are after his life?

2. SUS: It is not true

3. IPO: **Kí lẹ ní jà fún?**  
*What were you fighting for?*

4. SUS: **Èmi rẹ ò jà [ ]**  
*We are not fighting/quarrelling*

5. IPO: **[ ] ẹ pè é lórí phone tàbí ẹ è pè é lórí phone?**  
*You called him on phone or you did not call him on phone?*

6. SUS: **Èmi ò pè é lóri phone o**

*I did not call him on phone*

7. IPO: **Bàbá, ẹ pè é níjẹta tàbí ẹ ẹ pè é níjẹta ?**

**A má a kọ letter sí àwọn network láti find out o;  
tẹ bá parọ a má a get, a dẹ ma charge yín sí court.  
A máa gbé yín lọ sílé ejọ.**

*Old man, you called him two days ago or not? We are going to contact the network providers to find out if you are telling a lie or not, and if we find out you are lying we will charge you to court*

8. IPO: **Mo pè é níjẹta**

*I called him two days ago*

In the bold part of the excerpt, the IPO *frightened* the suspect with the statement that the police would contact the network providers to find out if he actually called the complainant on phone or not and, if found to be lying, he would be charged to court and eventually prosecuted. Not being able to withstand this *frightening* threat the IPO meted out to him with the *frighten the hearer* negative impoliteness strategy, the suspect quickly owned up to having called the complainant. The officer must have employed this strategy in view of of the disposition of the ordinary Yoruba man to litigation or court-related issues. Arguably, an average Yoruba, especially the lower class and non-elite ones who do not really understand how the justice system of the country operates, is not such that likes having anything to do with the court(litigation); the mention of which sends cold water down their spine. The IPO capitalised on this situation to manipulate the suspect who confessed that he actually called the complainant. With this strategy, the IPO was able to overwhelm the suspect, thereby securing from him the information (the truth) he needed. The threat was a serious damage to the suspect's negative face and a demonstration of the institutional power of the IPO over him.

**Excerpt 2**

1. IPO: **Kí lẹ sọ fun lóri phone?**

*What did you tell him on phone?*

2. SUS: **Mo ní báwo la ẹ ẹ ríra,** simple thing

*I simply asked how we were going to see each other*

3. IPO: **Kí lẹ fẹ ri fún? Ẹ fẹ pá?**

*What did you want to see him for? You want to kill him?*

4. SUS: (Trying to explain the relationship that exists between him and the complainant; how his (suspect) father gave out the controversial parcel of land)[ ]

5. IPO: [ ] **Kí ló ẹlẹ bàbá yìí tó o kàn ní rojọ,  
sé mo wá béré history níbí bayì ni?**

**Kí lo wá dórí ilẹ wọn? Kí lo fẹ lọ ta ilẹ wọn fún?....**

*What happened you this old man that you are narrating story; am I here to ask for history? What are you looking for on his land? Why did you want to sell his land?*

6. SUS: **Ilẹ bàbá mi ni**

*It is my father's land*

7. IPO: **Owó tani bàbá yín ti ralẹ?**

8. IPO: **Şé o ri pé òdòtọ ti ní yojú nísín yìí;**

**tí wọn ò bá gbé ilẹ wọn kúrò lóri ilẹ, wà á pa wọn!**

*You can now see that truth is coming out now; if he refuses to remove his building from the land, you will kill him!*

In the bold part of the excerpt above, the IPO employed the *explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect* to associate the suspect with murderous acts or tendencies, claiming the suspect might have gone ahead to carry out his ‘threat to take the life’ of the complainant if the fellow did not dance to his tune to remove his building from the land. The question “**È fẹ pá?**” *You want to kill him* in the excerpt is more of an accusatory question than a fact-finding one, aimed at manipulating the suspect into explaining the brains behind his purported threat to the suspect. As a follow-up to this accusatory question asked by the IPO, he further depicted the suspect as one who was already guilty of attempted murder where he concluded the suspect was going to kill the complainant if he failed to heed his warning to remove his building from the disputed piece of land. All these were statements that indicted the suspect as someone capable of taking another fellow’s life. They are a deliberate attempt, on the part of the ‘powerful’ IPO, to put the suspect on the spot and coerce him into confessing to the allegation levelled against him. The IPO freely accused the suspect of wrong-doing, while the suspect tried to defend himself; a development that portayed the IPO as the powerful participant in the exchange, and the suspect the less powerful one.

### CASE 3: Fraud

Background information: The suspect was said to have attempted taking the life of the complainant (a commercial motorcycle rider) whose vehicle the suspect allegedly boarded to a particular destination (during which the incident took place)

#### Excerpt 2

1. IPO 1: **Ènikèjì ẹ dà?**  
*Where is your accomplice?*
2. SUS: **Èmi nìkan náà ni**  
*I am the only one*
3. IPO 1: **Àní tejo ma n sẹrú isẹ yẹn**  
*I mean your accomplice in this criminal act*
4. SUS: **Mi ò sẹrú isẹ yìí rí**  
*I had never been involved in the act before*
5. IPO 2: **Àbáyé fẹ se ẹ ni? Mò n bọ jẹ kí n se nìkan tí mò n se tán; mà á fún ẹ ní mark tí o mà ma fi han ọmọ ẹ...ìyẹn tó ò bá kú sẹwòn //**  
*Do you want to incur the wrath of the evil forces of the world? I am coming; let me finish what I am doing; I will give you an indellible mark which you will show to your children, ... that is if you don't eventually die in prison.*
6. IPO 1: **O jẹ sòótó**  
*You had better say the truth*

In the excerpt above, particularly in line 5, IPO2 raised his voice at the suspect with the rhetorical question: **Àbáyé fẹ se ẹ ni? “Do you want to incur the wrath of the evil forces of the world?”** Though a question in structure, the pragmatic import of the question/expression is deep for anyone that has communicative competence in the Yoruba language. It is not just an ordinary question but an abuse deployed to frighten the suspect. In the Yoruba world-view, the word “Ayé” is polysemous. It could mean the world in which we live as human beings; and also, it could mean the powers that control the affairs of man and oftentimes are responsible for the misfortunes that befall people who incur their wrath. As such, when misfortunes befall an individual, it is commonly believed that such a person is under the spell of “Ayé”, hence the expressions, “ayé n se ẹ” meaning “the evil forces of the world are working against you”; ayé n tẹ le” meaning the evil forces of the world are pursuing him, among others.

IPO2 asked this question to signal his rejection of the suspect's claim that he had never been involved before in the act of criminality he was alleged to have committed. Following this was the threat the IPO issued to the suspect in the latter part of the excerpt that he was going to inflict an indelible injury on him with which he would narrate his ordeal to his children for having committed a criminal act. The IPO was assertive as to his position that the suspect was going to be jailed as evident in his concluding remarks thus: "*iyen tó ò bá kú sẹ̀wọ̀n*" "*that is if you don't eventually die in prison*". The IPO had already concluded the suspect was due for imprisonment, an expression which he frightened the suspect with. This ultimately constituted a threat to the negative face of the suspect who, at the hearing of this, began to shiver, demonstrating his helplessness in the hands of the powerful IPO that had made the proclamation.

### CASE 7: Malicious Damage

Background Information: This case involved two male suspects and a male complainant. The suspects were alleged to have set the room of the complainant ablaze, hence their arrest. The IPOs were reacting to the written statements of one of the suspects, who claimed to be a graduate of Economics from a university. The IPOs made spiteful and malicious comments on the "terrible write-up" of the suspect. These are presented below:

1. IPO: ***I was "banded"*** (burst into laughter). Óyá, spell the "born" you meant.
2. SUS: B-O-N-E-D
3. IPO: ***"Boned" lò ñ sọ yẹn.*** A graduate of Economics, University of X.  
***"You were boned"!***  
You have wasted these papers. I will look for another paper, but you won't be the one to write it. ***A graduate for that matter!***
4. IPO2: Eléyíì ò graduate; irọ̀ ló ñ pa  
*This one did not graduate; he is only telling lies.*
5. IPO1: Ó ní "***I lives at Bólórundúró,*** Awotan area, I *when* to, W-H-E-N.  
Went yẹn gan bad. Ó ní I *when* to Temitope "N-U-S-T-R-Y".  
"1999 I was finished" *scornful @@*  
*He said I lives at Bólórundúró, Awotan area, I when to... even that "went" is very badly written. He said I went to Temitope "N-U-S-T-R-Y", and was finished in 1999.*
6. IPO 3: ***Ọgá, if you see their youth corper uniform, na in dey neat pass (Nigerian Pidgin).***  
*If you see the NYSC uniform of people like this, it is usually very neat, even neater than that of every other corps member.*
7. IPO: ***Ó ní I attended "nustry" in 2005, and I was finished in 1999***  
*scornful @@ alongside other IPOs, numbering about 5)*  
*He said I attended nustry in 2005, and I was finished in 1999.*
8. IPO: ***Then I gained my "hardmission" in the year 2008; I pased out, P-A-S-E-D, in the year 2012. About the "isident".***  
***Kì ñ sẹ̀ incident lo kọ yù, ah! Mọ̀ tí fẹ̀ kú o.*** *scornful @@*  
*This is not the spelling of "incident". I am dying oo"*
9. IPO4: ***Owó ti jóná***  
*Money has been wasted (over you)*
10. IPO: ***Sé suspect le lé yù? I "suput" Drugbu and Baba D. E***  
***ti waste iwé mi. E ẹ̀ mọ̀ nńkan kọ. O ò graduate. No!***  
***You are not a graduate.***

*Is this the spelling of suspect? I suput (suspect) Drugbu and Baba D. You have wasted my paper. You don't know how to write.*

11. SUS: ...

12. IPO: **My first born is a 7-year old boy.**

**Wọn ọ̀n bí i da kó kọ̀ ǹnkan tẹ́ ń kọ̀ yíí.**

**He can even take your statement.**

*I have a 7-year old boy who dares not write the rubbish you are writing; he can even take your statement*

13. IPO5: **And if you see this people when they see police for road, den go say see these idiots, àwọn tí ò mọ̀ ǹnkan,**

**and den no know say they are the anti-idiots, tí ò lè kọ̀ anything** 😊

( )

*And these are individuals who would refer to police as ignoramus and idiots, whereas they are actually the idiots themselves.*

14. IPO6: (Trying to read the statement of the suspect) **Ah! o ò lọ school rárá**

*Obviously, you did not attend any school at all.*

15. IPO: **Kí n tí ẹ̀ kọ̀kọ̀ lọ dàwọ̀n sínú cell ná tí n bá ti rẹ̀ni bámi attend sí wọ̀n**

*Let me first of all throw them in the cell, after I have got somebody to help attend to them*

16. IPO6: **Ibo lo ti lọ secondary school?**

*Where did you attend secondary school?*

17. SUS: **Ìbàdàn**

18. IPO6: **Kí ni discipline ẹ?**

*What is your discipline?*

19. SUS: Economics

20. IPO: Economics! **O ò wá lè kọ̀wé.**

*Economics! And you cannot write.*

21. IPO7 : **Criminal ni bọ̀bọ̀ yíí**

*This guy is a criminal*

22. IPO6: **Sà̀ngó ni ó pa ó. O lọ fi owó jóná ni.**

**Omo primary 2 gan-an lè kọ̀ Ọ̀yìbó jù ẹ̀ lọ.**

*May the god of thunder strike you to death. Even a primary 2 pupil can write better English than you.*

Essentially, the whole of this excerpt is presented above because of its peculiarity, as it is replete with the use of *Condescend, scorn or ridicule the other negative impoliteness strategies (emphasize your relative power)*. The IPOs here commented with scorn on the incompetence of the suspects and the complainant in their written English. In particular, the IPOs made jest of the suspect who claimed to be a university graduate, whose written statement was adjudged to be grammatically bad, being fraught with many errors. He then got such face-threatening comments as: **A graduate for that matter!; About the “isident”. Kì ń ẹ̀ incident lo kọ̀ yíí. ah! Mo tí fẹ́ kú o “This is not the spelling of “incident”. I am dying oo”, Ẹ̀ ti waste ìwé mi. Ẹ̀ ẹ̀ mọ̀ ǹnkan kọ̀ “You have wasted my paper. You don't know how to write”. O ò graduate, No! You are not a graduate, Owó ti jóná “You have wasted your parents' resources”.** And to cap it all, one of the IPOs expressly called the suspect a criminal: **Criminal ni bọ̀bọ̀ yíí “this guy is a criminal”,** and as if this was not enough, another one commented thus: **Sà̀ngó ni ó pa ó. O lọ fi owó jóná ni. Omo primary 2 gan-an lè kọ̀ Ọ̀yìbó jù ẹ̀ lọ “May the god of thunder strike you to death. Even a primary 2 pupil can write better English than you”.** The IPO here rated the linguistic performance of the suspect who claimed to be a university graduate far

below a primary two (2) pupil. None of these instances of the use of bald on record politeness strategy was redressed by the IPOs.

The way the IPOs here derided the suspects and complainant is a clear demonstration of unequal access to power in police-suspect interaction in Nigeria. The IPOs called the suspects names, laughed them to scorn and ridiculed them in public. Even when the suspects were not comfortable with this, they did not protest nor do anything about it. They were just looking helpless before the IPOs as the rants went on. If this practice of the IPOs, as painted above, is viewed from the view point of Section 34 of Nigeria's Constitution, as explained by Salman (2009) thus: Every individual is entitled to respect and (therefore) "*No person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment*", it would not be out of place to conclude that police officers' conducts during police-suspect interactions, particularly in their language use, are characterised by elements of power abuse.

#### 4.1.4 Mock Politeness Strategies

As explained by Culpeper (1996), face-threatening acts can be performed with the use of obviously insincere strategies. In other words, the speaker can make insincere statements which superficially appear polite and pleasant to attack the face of the hearer. Instances of this are found in our data and are presented below:

##### CASE 1: Threat to life

###### Excerpt 3

IPO: *O lè lọ agbo ilé, but kí lo wá lọ ilè tí wọn kò ilé sí tí o tún fẹ gbé e tà?*

*You can go to the family house but what are you looking for on the land he (the complainant) has built his house that you want to sell it?*

SUS: **Mi ò gbe e tà**

*I don't intend to sell it*

IPO: **Meeting kí lo wá fẹ ba ẹ?.....**

*What meeting did you want to hold with him?*

SUS: **Ñkan tó fa gbogbo èyí ni wípé èmi ni Mògàjí ilé wa [ ]**

*What actually caused all this is the fact that I am the family head*

IPO: **[ ] Ilè náà ni mógàjí máa n tà kiri (sounding derisive)?**

*A family head sells land Indiscriminately*

SUS: **Èmi ò talẹ kiri**

*I am not involved in indiscriminate selling of land*

In the excerpt above, the IPO intentionally flouted the norm of the use of the language (Yoruba) on the use of honorific pronouns in addressing the elderly ones during interactions. This, he did, to be able to dress down the suspect whom he felt had done something hideous and as such did not deserve to be respected or regarded in any way. This is really a threat to the face of the suspect who had had his respect and honour disrobed of him by the IPO's failure to accord him respect with the use of appropriate honorific pronouns. Furthermore, in one of his comments to the suspect's responses, the IPO taunted the suspect with a derisive and derogatory comment that portrayed him as an "irresponsible" family head who does not know his role as the "Mògàjí" (Head) of his family. To the IPO, a responsible family head will not be involved in the act of indiscriminate selling of land as the suspect had been alleged to be doing. If the IPO were sincerely commending the suspect as superficially projected in his mockery statement, one would be compelled to classify the utterance as one employed by the IPO to save the suspect's positive face in line with Brown and Levinson's (1987) "give approval" positive politeness substrategy. However, in this

context, the IPO used this statement to depict the suspect, who claimed to be the head of his extended family, as an irresponsible one. The suspect, being a Yoruba man who has communicative competence in the language, understood this to be an insult and not commendation, but could not restrain the IPO nor retaliate because of his less powerful status in the interaction.

### **CASE 5: Incest**

#### **Excerpt 2**

1. IPO: **Şèbí o ní mutí?**

*Of course you drink (alcohol)?*

2. SUS: **Muslim ni mí, mi ò ní mutí**

*I am a muslim; I don't drink (alcohol)*

3. IPO: **È káre o** (with a tone of mockery)

*Well done*

The comment of the IPO here in reaction to the response of the suspect that he does not take alcohol in view of his religious belief, if taken at the face value, would be interpreted as a praise or a commendation, hence positive politeness strategy. However, both the suspect and the IPO understood this not to be so, considering the context of discourse. In fact, what the IPO meant was that, if the suspect was indeed a good muslim who would not take alcohol, how come he could not control his emotion and libido, even to the point of sleeping with his daughter. In the Yoruba language, the expression *káre o* “well done or bravo” is normally a positive politeness statement that connotes commendation when an individual has done something worth commending. However, it could also be used to ridicule or rebuke somebody when the individual has done something that is considered unacceptable. Such is the case as observed above. The suspect understood this, being one that has communicative competence in the language, who knows when this statement could mean praise and condemnation or ridicule, to be a derisive comment passed on him by the IPO. However, he could not react back because he considered the IPO more powerful than he was, given the institutional position of the IPO and the circumstance surrounding their interaction.

### **CASE 8: Murder**

Background Information: This case involved a commercial driver, who is a little above forty, alleged to have sent another commercial driver to his death.

#### **Excerpt 1**

1. IPO: **Óyá ẹ wọlé**

*Now come in*

2. SUS: (Enters in hand-cuffs )

3. IPO: **È jókò**

*Sit down*

4. SUS: ( On his knees )

5. IPO: **Ah! mi ò ní kẹẹ kúnlẹ; mo ní kẹẹ jókò ni**

*I did not ask you to kneel down; I only asked you to sit*

6. SUS: **È jẹ n wà báyí**

*Let me remain like this*

7. IPO: **È ẹ need láti worry, wọn án yanjú gbogbo ẹ**

*(winking at another IPO with a smile, a gesture noticed by the suspect)*

*You don't need to be worried, everything will be resolved.*

8. SUS: (Remains on his knees) He was subsequently taken to another interrogation room, where the researcher could not access.

In the excerpt presented above, the IPO offered the suspect a seat as soon as he was ushered in to the interrogation room; a gesture that ordinarily could be interpreted as a positive politeness strategy (offer the other gifts, exaggerate interest to the other). However, it became glaring that the IPO was not sincere about this later in the conversation where he told the suspect not to worry and that everything would be resolved, winking at his colleague. The suspect requested to remain on his knees knowing the IPO did not mean what he said. In other words, he would not interpret the statement of the IPO to mean that the problem would indeed be resolved, as he saw him (the IPO) winking at the other IPO with him. Whereas, if these statements were to be taken at the face value, they would be classified under positive politeness strategies: “*be optimistic, give gifts to H, and offer a promise*” as proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The manner the IPO made these seemingly polite statements revealed that he did not mean to make a promise to the suspect that everything would be resolved, neither was he optimistic about the whole situation.

## 5.0 Conclusion

Police-Suspect interaction in Nigeria manifests the use of impoliteness strategies. In particular, investigating police officers, IPOs, employ the withhold politeness impoliteness, the positive impoliteness, the negative impoliteness and the mock politeness strategies to threaten the faces of low-profile suspects, LPSs, and ultimately overwhelm them while seeking confessions from them. Suspects, particularly LPSs, on the other hand, employ positive politeness strategies to appeal to the faces of IPOs. In PSI, while the IPOs assume a +power position, LPSs are relegated to the -power position. If the practice of the Nigeria Police is viewed within the context of Section 34 of Nigeria’s 1999 Constitution that spells out the rights of suspects during interrogations, it could be concluded in this study that police officers sometimes violate the rights of suspects, especially low-profile ones, with the way they are addressed verbally during interrogation.

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