



Being Politically Impolite: A Community of Practice (CofP) Analysis of Invective Songs of Western Nigerian Politicians

Moses Adebayo Aremu^{1a}

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Abstract

Earlier linguistic studies of political discourse revealed that, not many works exist on pragmatic analysis of impoliteness in this genre. Apart from Mullany (2002), who employs relational and face works to analyses impoliteness in political discourse, Taiwo (2007), Adetunji (2009), and Ademilokun (2015), who employ discourse analytical tools in analyzing the political speeches, there exist very scanty works on invective songs of Western Nigerian Politicians. The present study, therefore, focused on filling the existing lacuna in pragmatic studies by exploring fourteen randomly selected invective songs of Western Nigerian Politicians (WNPs), utilizing the modified version of Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1992a) community of practice (CofP) as the pragmatic tool for data analysis. Our findings revealed that, invective songs of WNPs were characterized by impolite/belligerent utterances, indirect speech acts, politic confrontational behavior, lexical borrowing, code-mixing, direct speech acts, use of paralanguage, imagery, and symbolism. The paper concluded that, CofP clearly explicates the signification in invective songs of WNPs and shows the participants' intention in the discourse.

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¹ PhD Candidate, Email: aremu207@yahoo.co.uk

Tel: +23-480-69726240

^a University of Ilorin, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Several approaches have been used in carrying out linguistic studies on political discourse, gender, and media discourse. For instance, Lakoff (1975) employed the pragmatic tool of politeness theory to state that women are more linguistically polite than their male counterparts. Other works on politeness study include Brown and Levinson (1987), Holmes (1995), Watts (1992, 2003), Odebunmi (2002, 2003, 2006), and Thomas (1995) besides others. Apart from Watts (1992, 2003) and Mullany (2002), a body of literature that exists on politeness phenomenon has neglected a vital aspect of linguistic study, which is the concept of impoliteness and aggressive utterances in political discourse (Mullany, 2002, p. 1). Previous works on language, gender, and politeness centered on over-reliance on Brown and Levinson's (1978) model. For instance, Odebunmi (2009) examines the politeness in print media political interviews in Nigeria through the theory of relational work. Also, Mullany (2007) re-assessed the impoliteness, language, and gender in political broadcast interviews to examine the differences in male and female speeches; while, Taiwo (2007) studies how the political office holders in Nigeria are satirized in Nigerian newspapers. Moreover, Aremu (2014) employed the critical discourse analytical approach to analyze Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan's April, 21, 2011 national broadcast. However, the Locher and Watts (2005) theory of relational work has been employed to show that, there exist marked and unmarked behavior in human utterances. Marked behavior is an utterance which is seen to be politic. However, the weaknesses in both Brown and Levinson's model and Locher and Watts' (2005) theory make Odebunmi (2009) to postulate that the concepts of politeness and relational work lack real cross-cultural consistency.

In the same vein, studies on the language of politics have also focused on analyzing the speechless of political leaders (e.g., Ademilokun, 2015, Adetunji, 2009; Babatunde & Odepidan, 2009; Chilton & Schaffner, 1997; Odebunmi & Oni, 2012; Schaffner, 1996; Taiwo, 2007; Van Dijk, 2002; Yusuf, 2003; etc.) and the discourse of political interviews (e.g., Harris, 2011; Holmes, 1992; Odebunmi, 2009, etc.).

Apart from Ademilokun (2015), which examines the discursive strategies in selected political rally campaign in 2011 elections in Nigeria, our observation revealed that, not much work exists in literature on the pragmatic study of invective songs of politicians in Southwestern Nigeria. Hence, this study has focused on filling the existing lacuna/gap in linguistic analysis and extending research in pragmatics. Besides, the study is equally germane in examining the relations of language and power in political discourse and explaining the pragmatic use of language in Nigerian political discourse.

In this work, we employed a modified version of Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1992) community of practice (CofP) theory in analyzing 14 randomly selected invective songs of Western Nigerian politicians to gauge the speaker's intention and the force of these utterances. Hence, it is essential to briefly explicate the terrain of politics and political language in Southwestern Nigeria

2. Theoretical Framework

Politeness, as a pragmatic concept, has gained the linguists' scholarly attention within the last thirty years (Babatunde & Adedimeji, 2006). It was initially theorized by Goffman (1967) before Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) gave it a full-blown relevance in universal language. Brown and Levinson (1987) centralized and revolved around the concept of face, which refers to "the public self-image of a person" and the "emotional and social feeling of self which an individual has and expects others to recognize" (Odebunmi, 2003, p. 48). There are positive face and negative face. Adegbija (1989) explains that the positive face satisfies a speaker's need for approval and belonging, while negative face serves to minimize the imposition of face-threatening act. According to Odebunmi (2009, p. 8), positive face occurs "when an individual desires to be liked, approved of, respected, and appreciated", while negative face, according to him, is staged "when the individual desires freedom from imposition by others". Politeness lubricates the "wheel" towards making human relations smooth and avoids whatever can ruin another person's face (Odebunmi, 2009, p. 8).

Brown and Levinson (1987) also explicate the face-saving and face-threatening acts. A person's face is saved, when the person's face wants are met. That is, when a speaker tries to make her or his audience happy by praising them, when they are supposed to be scolded. On the other hand, the person's face is threatened, when the opposite of this occurs. Also, face threatening acts are illocutionary acts that can damage or threaten an individual's positive or negative face (Odebunmi, 2009). Brown and Levinson (1987) continued by explicating the off-record strategy. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), "the off-record strategy enables a speaker to avoid responsibility for performing an FTA either by inviting conversational implicatures or by being deliberately vague or ambiguous" (as cited in Mullany 2002, p. 3). On the other hand, if an on-record strategy is chosen, a speaker can either perform FTA without redressive action, known as "going baldly on-record," or he can perform the Face Threatening Acts (FTA) with redressive action. That is, speaker "s" pays attention to hearer "H's" face needs when he performs an FTA with redressive action (Mullany, 2000; Odebunmi, 2002).

However, as relevant as Brown and Levinson (1987) are in pragmatic analysis of communicative utterances, they have been extensively criticized by linguists. According to Harris (2001), Brown and Levinson (1987) concentrate only on short stretches of talk. Also, Mills (in press, cf. Mullany, 2002) states that "politeness needs to be viewed as something that emerges at discourse level over stretches of talk instead of something that is grafted on to individual speech acts" (p. 3). In the same vein, Mullany (2002) states that, Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory focuses on interaction in formal contexts while politeness in institutional contexts has been neglected. According to Odebunmi (2009, p. 15), Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory:

...does not give consideration to the fact that cultures and situations vary; does not consider the time and the way to use rules and maxim of politeness proposed; assumes that particular expressions have politeness and impoliteness inherent in them; concentrates on utterances rather than

connected discourse, and cannot handle aggressive situations.

Despite these criticisms, politeness principle has been successfully used in myriads of natural languages. Yet, this theory could not be sufficient for our present study as a result of the neglect of the concept of impoliteness and confrontational discourse.

Brown and Levinson's negligence of linguistic impoliteness has also been condemned by Eelen (2001): "politeness and impoliteness are two sides of a coin, and therefore any theory that pretends to say something valuable about one side, automatically needs to deal with the other side as well" (p. 92). Also, Culpeper (1996, p. 350, cf. Mullany, 2002, p. 3) states that "in order for a theory of politeness to be comprehensive, it is integral that the topic of linguistic impoliteness is addressed". In the words of Thomas (1995, p. 171), Brown and Levinson have neglected the fact that there are occasions where speakers perform utterances that are "deliberately to be maximally offensive".

In the light of this, efforts need to be made to provide a theoretical approach to politeness that incorporates both politeness and impoliteness. Watts (1989, 1992, 2003), Kasper (1990), Locker (2004), and Locker and Watts (2005) have carried out linguistic research to fill the vacuum or existing holes in Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory. According to Locker and Watts (2005) cited from Odebunmi, (2009, p. 8), relational work refers to work individuals invest in negotiating relationship with others. Relational work is broader in scope than face-work. This concept, as stated earlier, has marked and unmarked behavior. Odebunmi (2009) employed a modified version of relational work to examine politic, polite and impolite utterances in print media political interviews in selected Nigerian news magazines.

Also, Harris (2001) explains that Brown and Levinson's theory has a vast amount of criticism since they erroneously aimed at generalizing politeness principles to cover different cultures. Politeness research needs to confine itself to certain, specific contexts which have some well defined commonalities (Kasper, 1990, Mullany, 2002). Harris (2001)

utilizes the communities of practice (C of P) approach to analyze impoliteness in the discourse strategies of British politicians in the specific context of Prime Minister's Question Time.

C of P approach has been employed to negate dichotomizing male and female speech patterns. For instance, Culpeper (1996) applies impoliteness framework to the discourse of army officers in a documentary on female recruits. Culpeper (1996, p. 359) states that impoliteness characterizes the army life. Mills (in press, cf Mullany, 2002, p. 5) argues that Holmes' (1995) definition of "polite people", that is female speakers' cannot be generated. He argues that not all female speakers could be polite. Hence, we need to often relate our concept of polite and impoliteness to specific context or a specific speech community.

According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992), "researchers should stop seeing differences between male and female speech patterns and linguistic research should focus on "a more serious investigation of the relations among language, gender and other components of social identity" (p. 91). Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992b, p. 464) defines C of P as an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. It also refers to ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations and practices that emerge in the course of this mutual endeavor. Communities of practice (CofP), according to Mullany (2002), develop out of formal or informal enterprises and they range in size and quality. They also can survive the changes or migration in membership. Also, individuals' access to communities of practice is often linked or related to social identities like age, class, status, race etc.

Ehrlich (1999) applied C of P approach to the constructed setting of courtroom discourse in a language and gender study examining sexual harassment. Mullany (2002) has also employed C of P approach to analyze impoliteness interview on BBC between John Humphreys and Hilary Armstrong. In this research, it could be deduced that it is the female interviewee, Hilary, who accuses her male interviewer of impolite behavior towards her. In this study, a modified version of CofP

model was employed in analyzing the invective songs of Western Nigerian politicians.

2.1. Political Invective Songs as Community of Practice (CofP)

In Southwestern Nigeria, invective songs are often used by politicians in their rallies and campaigns against their opposition party members. Invective songs, in Southwestern Nigerian social context, refer to songs, common in local communities, which are employed to reprimand, condemn, and ridicule people. In Yoruba oral poetry, invective songs are employed in specific occasions such as songs employed by wives in polygamous homes, songs used to lampoon a tyrannical kings, and songs utilized to condemn disgruntled elements in the society (Lamidi, 2002). In Western Nigerian political campaigns and rallies, invective songs are employed by members of different political parties not only to hurt but also to ridicule and condemn their opponents. In these songs, singers observe turn-taking signal in order to respond to offensive and impolite songs directed against them by their political opponents. There also exists a shared knowledge among participants in these invective songs. Such shared knowledge may be cultural, traditional, communal, personal (i.e., involving individuals), or social. This enables the singers of Western Nigerian Political Invective Songs (WNPIS) to always use pragmatic implicatures and presuppositions in their songs. The singers of WNPIS often make an assumption that songs will easily be understood by their opponents, without challenge, as a result of their shared social, cultural, and communal backgrounds.

Besides, participants in political invective songs use imagery, symbolism, paralanguage, and indirect speech acts to attack their butt or political opponents. In some other occasions, participants in political invective songs employ direct speech acts to butt their opponents. Mullany (2002), in re-assessing impoliteness, language and gender in BBC political broadcast interviews, explains that disagreement, impoliteness, verbal confrontations, challenges, and competition should incorporate the communities of practice (CofP) model to oppose Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's (1992) view that only

peaceful co-existence, mutual support, and harmonious relation should be the properties of CofP. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), CofP should incorporate confrontational discourse. He argues that, the process of mutual engagement can be either harmonious or conflictual and the word 'community' in CofP can have both 'positive' and 'negative' connotations. Mullany (2002) then proposed to redefine CofP as a Synthetic Community of Practice in order to account for discourse that occurs in constructed contexts.

In the present study, communities of practice shall be utilized to explain Wenger's (1998) joint negotiated enterprise in the verbal confrontations and adjacency pair which exist in the invective songs of Western Nigeria. The participants in political invective songs occasionally confront one another in their

rallies and campaign and not only clash but render impolite chants of which they all have joint resources for negotiating meaning. The concept of communities of practice (CofP) is modified in this study. Context is central in this proposed modification of C of P. Contexts or situations of employment of C of P in Western Nigerian Political Invective Songs (WNPIS) are controlled by Socio-cultural Beliefs (SB), Power Relations (PR), and Communal Values (CV). It has been discovered from our data that, the invectives songs of the western Nigerian politicians are characterized by impoliteness, politic confrontational behavior (PBC) (Odeunmi, 2009), imagery and symbolism (ImaS), paralinguistic cues, turn-taking, and lexical borrowing among others. These are presented in the following modified model of community of practice (CofP):

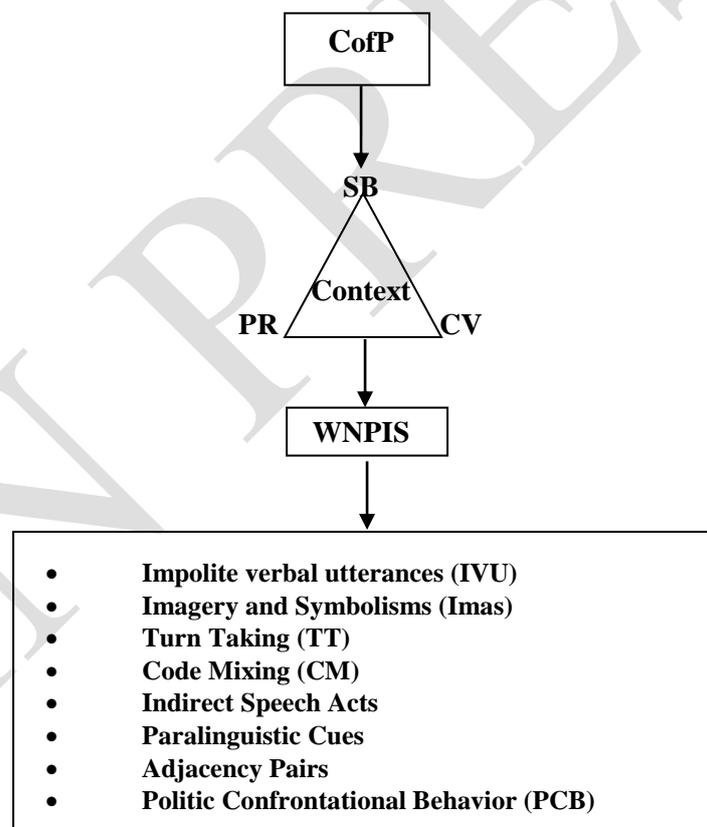


Figure 1

CofP in Western Nigerian Political Invective Songs (WNPIS)

Figure 1 above shows participants' shared contexts of interactions. This includes shared

social and cultural beliefs, shared knowledge of power-relations, political ideologies, and

shared communal values. These contextual backgrounds enable the interactants in the discourse to produce impolite verbal utterances, politic confrontational behavior, indirect and direct speech acts, etc. The participants in invective songs of Western Nigerian politicians employ imagery, symbolism, paralinguistic cues, and also turn taking in their confrontational discourse and communicative utterances.

Meanwhile, it is expedient to explain our methodology. Data were gathered through participant's information. The songs were tape-recorded, transcribed, and translated. Out of the recorded 20 invective songs, fourteen were randomly selected for our analysis. The geographical spread of the songs covered the south-western Nigeria: Oyo, Lagos, Ekiti, Ondo, Osun, and Ogun States. The following analysis illustrates the features of modified version of CofP in Figure 1 above and discusses their pragmatic implications and perlocutionary forces.

3. Terrain of Political Language in Southwestern Nigeria

Nigerian political campaign is often characterized by violence, killings, rivalries, etc. According to Yusuf (2007), "in politics, peace is relative, since politics is unacceptably competitive or contentious, any action which has a lower potential to result in acrimony or conflict would be regarded as 'peaceful'". The above statement shows that, politics in Nigerian Southwest is violently competitive. Hence, Southwestern Nigeria has been given a damning epithet "wild, wild, west" in Nigerian politics. According to Fairclough (1989, p. 4), "politics is concerned with power, the power to make decisions, to control resources, to control people's behavior, and often to control their values". Politics is inevitably concerned with power while power could be attained through the employment of language to persuade or to coerce the audience. In political language, implicature is often used to convince or persuade the audience. Implicature allows the audience to make assumptions about the existence of information not made explicit in what is actually said (Thomas & Shan, 1999).

In Southwestern part of Nigeria, language is used in political context as slogans (Yusuf,

2007) e.g., (i) "PDP, power to the people!" (ii) "Labour Party! Forward ever!!" (iii) "AC! Democracy for Ever!!" (iv) "ANPP! ANPP!! One Nigeria!!!" Also, language is as well used as symbols e.g., "umbrella" for PDP, Maize Cob represents ANPP, etc. (Yusuf, 2007). In Southwestern political terrain, songs are employed to praise the political leaders. For instance, when Ex-Governor Ladoja of Oyo state won the controversial case over his illegal impeachment and was paying "thank you" visit to the house of Late Chief Alayande at Ibadan, it was relayed on Nigerian Television Authority (N.T.A) news on how his supporters were singing the following song to praise him:

"Ladoja maa juru, ibo re ti poju"
meaning "Ladoja, keep on dancing, you have got large crowd of supporters".

In the same vein, invective songs are employed to cause acrimony, conflict, and confusion (Yusuf, 2007). For instance, when the late sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo lost his legal battle to ex-president Shehu Shagari in the notorious twelve-two-third judgment in September 1979, where Chief Richard Akinjide acted as Shagari's advocate, supporters of the defunct National Party of Nigeria (N.P.N) took to the streets of Ibadan singing the following invective song:

"Akinjide b'omi pa /2x
Awolowo tan'na esu ka'le
Akinjide b'omi pa"

Meaning:

"Akinjide used water to quench /2x
The evil light kindled by Awolowo
Akinjide quenched it."

The singing of this song by the N.P.N loyalists in Ibadan led to mayhem, violence, and killings in the city. Apart from the foregoing, in Southwestern Nigerian politics, vague and ambiguous language is often employed by politicians to create semantic escape route (Yusuf, 2007). When Southwestern Nigerian politicians employ ambiguous expressions, they are doing what Garrett Hardin (1968) cited from Yusuf (2007, p. 9) described as "pre-emptively contending with the possible misunderstanding utterance". Face-threatening acts with redress are often utilized by

Southwestern Nigerian politicians so as not to upset their audience (Yusuf, 2007) For instance, The African Guardian reporter who interviewed Late Chief M.K.O. Abiola in July 11, 1998 issue of this magazine described Abiola that Abiola has “a very healthy appetite towards women” (Yusuf, 2007, p. 12). The above euphemism was employed by this journalist not to offend Late Chief Abiola who was tactfully described as being promiscuous because of his polygamous life.

4. Impoliteness and Political Invective Songs

Harris (2001), in her expression of being adversarial or impolite in political language, explains that political discourse is often garnished with belligerent and confrontational utterances. In the same token, political invective songs in western Nigeria are characterized with the following features:

4.1. Politic Confrontational Behavior

In politic verbal behavior (Odebunmi, 2009), confrontations occur. Our findings reveal that, in the discourse of political invective songs in Western Nigeria, participants always flout the rule of face saving (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and physically confront their butt, their political opponents, and others who criticized them without minding whose ox is gored. For instance, the following song was rendered by members of People’s Democratic Party (PDP) in Ogbomoso, Nigeria, in February 2006 against the King of this ancient town.

Example 1:

“Bi won bayo Ladoja ewo l’ejo yin /2x
Agba ofofo aamebo,
Bi won bay o Ladoja, ewo l’ejo yin”

Meaning:

“If they’ve impeached Ladoja
What concerns you /2x
An elderly talebearer
If they impeached Ladoja
What concerns you?”

Background: Senator Ladoja was a former Governor of Oyo State of Nigeria who was unconstitutionally impeached by his deputy, Otunba Alao-Akala, a native of Ogbomoso. The above song was then directed against

Shoun, the king of this town who was then reluctant in supporting an unconstitutional removal of Ladoja. The PDP youths who were on rampage bombarded Shoun of Ogbomoso’s palace chanting the above invective song.

4.2. Indirect Speech Act

In the above song, indirect speech act was employed since the name of the butt, Shoun of Ogbomoso, was not stated. Despite this, the butt was able to deduce the locution of the politic verbal utterance. The force of this utterance made the butt, Shoun, to order his palace guard and police to disperse the participants in this political invective song.

Besides, politic confrontational behavior in invective songs permits the interactants to flout the norms by being aberrant in their confrontational utterances against Shoun, a highly respected and honored king not only in his town but in Nigeria. The diction employed in the song shows the interactants’ deviant and belligerent acts not only to their butt, Shoun, but also against the norms and values. The shared background between the participants in this song and the intended audience (Shoun) permits the commoners to employ politic context to use invectives like *an Agba ofofo aamebo* (i.e., *elderly tale bearer*) to butt and condemn their king without any negative effects.

Example 2:

“Alagbara ma mero baba ole
A o gbo’do gbo pawa, lenu yin mo”

Meaning:

“You who are powerful, but lack discretion
Let’s never hear you say ‘power!’ again.”

The above invective songs were rendered at the launching of Action Congress Gubernatorial Campaign in Ibadan in February 24, 2007. The song was directed to deride PDP whose political slogan is “Power to the People” and is often shortened as ‘Power!’ The song was employed to accuse members of PDP of their irrationality, indiscretion, and hooliganism. After the launching of this campaign, this invective song became widespread not only in Ibadan but throughout Southwestern Nigeria. The force of this utterance also led to violent clashes of the

Action Congress (AC) and PDP supporters. Another example of politic confrontational behaviour were songs rendered at Ikoyi-Ile, Oyo State, by supporters of Honourable Sunday A., Alalade who is a grassroots political leader in that zone at the launching of his electioneering campaign for the post of Federal House of Representative thus:

Example 3:

*“Alalade yoo wo’le asofin
E se woo
Ke ma baa ku sori ejo
E se woo”*

Meaning:

*“Alalade shall be victorious in Reprs election
Kindly be warned
So as not to die over election petition
Kindly be warned”*

In the above politic verbal utterance, invective song was used to warn and scold Alalade’s opponents. The perlocutionary force of this utterance made the opposition party against Alalade who represented the Labor Party (LP) to flee since the participants in this invective song outnumbered their butt.

4.3. Paralinguistic Cues

According to Abercrombie (1973), paralanguage refers to the way a message is disseminated without a spoken apparatus. Overall meaning of written or spoken discourse cannot be inferred from the linguistic channel alone, the extra-verbal elements (e.g., use of emblems, signs, body movement, posters) are essential tools in human communication. These paralinguistic cues can be in form of proxemics or kinesics (Abercrombie, 1974).

In invective songs of Western Nigerian politicians, paralanguage in form of emblems symbols, body gesture are often employed. Each political party has a symbol. Umbrella represents the symbol of PDP, broom is that of AC while maize cob is the symbol of All Nigeria People’s Party (ANPP). Whenever they are on political campaign or rally, Western Nigerian politicians raise-up flags and emblems of their party and sing invective songs to accuse their political opponents. For instance, PDP, whose logo is umbrella, is often proud of their invective song thus:

Example 4:

*“Alaburada l’egbe wa /2x
PDP l’egbe wa
Awa ki maa, awa ki mai segbe akoyan rin
Alaburada l’egbe wa.”*

Meaning:

*“Our party’s logo is umbrella /2x
PDP is our party
We are not party of labourers
Our party’s logo is Umbrella.”*

The above song was rendered when Governor Agagu launched his gubernatorial campaign in Akure, Ondo State. The song was directed against Dr. Olusegun Mimiko who joined the LP as a gubernatorial candidate. The pragmatic implicature and indirect speech act in this song is that ‘Labor Party’ was given the damning epithet ‘the party of laborers’. The song was also rendered at the gubernatorial campaigns of Otunba Alao Akala of PDP Ibadan, Shaki, and Ogbomoso to deride Senator Rasheed Ladoja who they believed had lost PDP gubernatorial ticket. The emblem ‘umbrella’ served as ‘immunity’, which they got since they had the support of the presidency.

Example 5:

*“Olosi, otori owo w’egbe buruku, olosi
Awon enikan bayii! bayii! bayii!”*

Meaning:

*“Wretched person!
He deflected to bad party for money’s sake
Wretched person!
That person! That person! That person!
Wretched person!”*

The above invective song was rendered against those who left PDP to join other political parties in Ogun State of Nigeria when Gbena Daniel got PDP Gubernatorial Ticket. These people include Dipo Dina and Senator Amosun. In the same token, the song was rendered against those who left AC for other political parties such as LP and Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA) in Lagos State. The song is always rendered with an accompaniment of music and body gesture (pointing). For instance, during the gubernatorial campaign rally of Akala in Ogbomoso, PDP youths in town rendered the song against Hon. Peter Odetomi (of ANPP) at Ayegun Street, a stone throw to the butt’s family house. The same

song was also directed against Hon Fatai Buhari who contested for the Senate post under LP. The perlocutionary force of this utterance led to bloody-clashes of party loyalists of Senator Amosun and those of Gbenga Daniel in Abeokuta, and bloody political clash between Akala (PDP) and Ajimobi (ANPP) supporters in Ogbomoso. For instance, Odetomi (a Deputy-Governor contestant under ANPP) had to relocate to Ibadan as a result of the perlocutionary force of this political invective song for fear of being attacked.

Example 6:

*“E wi f’alejo ko lo
E fi sasara b’agbo”
(Raising up the broom, “AC” logo)*

Meaning:

*“Tell the stranger to go
Put your broom inside the charm”
(Raising up the broom, “AC” logo)*

The above song was rendered against the PDP at the launching of AC campaign in Lagos by Senator Bola Tinubu, ex-governor of Lagos State. The logo of ‘AC’ symbolizes cleansing in Yoruba cosmology. The AC party loyalists at their Lagos Rally in March 2007 called PDP the following damning epithets: (i) ‘People’s Destruction Party’ (ii) ‘Papa Deceiving Peter’ referring to ex-governor Peter Odili who contested in PDP presidential Primary Election (Yusuf, 2007).

Example 7:

*“E ma de’na de wa o
Igba esin, kii dena dowo
Owo baba esinsin”.*

Meaning:

*“Don’t try to waylay us
Two hundred flies cannot waylay the broom
The broom is the father of flies”.*

Also, the above invective song was rendered by AC loyalists at the launching of their gubernatorial campaign at Ibadan in March 2007. The indirect speech act in the song is that PDP symbolizes ‘flies’ while AC symbolizes ‘brooms’. AC violently attacked PDP of their alleged plan to rig Oyo Gubernatorial Election. The utilization of gesture with the song brought about the

pragmatic force of violence and clashes between PDP and AC at Ibadan, Ogbomoso, and Oke-Ogun.

4.4. Imagery and Symbolism

Invective songs of politicians in Nigerian South-west are also filled with imagery and symbolism. For instance, in example 7 above, PDP is referred to as ‘flies’ which symbolizes filth and dirt, in our society, while AC symbolizes ‘the broom’ which will be used to sanitize Nigerian society from social, moral, and economic decadence. The shared beliefs which exist between the participants in the songs (see Example 7) and their intended audience (PDP) led to pragmatic force of political squabble.

Apart from this, political slogans can be used as symbolism. For instance, Governor Oyinlola’s slogan is “Oyin ni o! Iyo!” meaning: “He is the honey! He is the salt!” The slogan was coined from Governor Oyinlola’s surname which starts with ‘Oyin’, that is ‘honey’. This makes the PDP supporters of Oyinlola to often employ politeness principle in the category of deference to praise Governor Oyinlola as “Oyin ni o!”

In his bid to capture Osun State, AC Gubernatorial Candidate, Engineer Rauf Aregbesola came out with a more symbolic slogan and invective song thus:

Example 8:

*“Mo r’ohun to dun j’oyin lo /2x
Aregbesola dun j’oyin lo
Oranmiyan dun j’oyin lo
Mo r’ohun to dun j’oyin lo.”*

Meaning:

*“I have got something sweeter than honey
Aregbesola is sweeter than honey
Oranmiyan is sweeter than honey
I have got something sweeter than honey.”*

In the above invective song, imagery and symbolism is employed. In this song, ‘Oyinlola’ as a ‘honey’ is sweet while Aregbesola which symbolizes ‘Oranmiyan’ is sweeter. The song was rendered to state that, reformatory work which Aregbesola would do in Osun would be greater than that of Oyinlola, if given, the mandate.

4.5. Indirect Speech Act

Indirectness in utterances is often employed in the invective songs of politicians in Nigerian southwest. Examples of such could be found in Examples 5, and 6 above. The indirectness in speech employed could also be called FTA with redress. The indirect speech act employed in Examples 5 and 6 above makes these invectives to be elastic and evasive in interpretation.

4.6. Impoliteness

Impoliteness used in invective songs of western Nigerian politicians is comparable to Brown and Levinson's (1987) FTA without redress (or bald on record politeness). The participants in these invective songs directly attack their butt as in the following examples:

Example 9:

*"E mo fi pawa pa wa
E mo fi pawa pa wa o
Ko si pawa, ko si pawa ilu awa
Emo fi pawa pa wa".*

Meaning:

*"Don't kill us with power /2x
There is no power in our town
Don't kill us with power."*

The above song was coined by those who 'carpet-crossed' from PDP to LP and AC in Ondo and Oyo States of Nigeria. The one cited above was rendered by supporters of Honorable Adeleke ex-Chairman of Iseyin Local Government Area of Oyo State who deflected to LP after Senator Ladoja could not get PDP ticket. At the launching of LP and AC at Iseyin, this song was directed against PDP whose slogan is 'Power'. Besides, they directly derided PDP of carnage, through the song. In the same token, the following invective song was used to ridicule Senator Bola Tinubu by PDP supporters at the launching of PDP campaign in Lagos State in March 6, 2007:

Example 10:

*"O l'arun opolo, o l'arun opolo
Gomina to d'agbale oja
O l'arun opolo."*

Meaning:

"He is out of his mind /2x

*A governor who becomes a street sweeper
He is mentally deranged".*

The AC logo is broom. Governor Tinubu was indirectly derided as a street sweeper for often moved out to campaign with broom. The perlocutionary force in this song led to political clashes in Lagos.

Example 11:

*"Ajimobi ma mikan koro loo w'ole /2x
Ko d'igba te ba nfa poster ya /2x
Ajimobi ma mikan koro loo wole".*

Meaning:

*"Ajimobi don't worry
You will surely win/2x
(Pointing) Why are you destroying the
posters?
Ajimobi don't worry
You will surely win".*

Senator Ajimobi, ANPP candidate for Oyo State Governor while Honourable Remi Odetomi was his deputy. PDP supporters of Akala felt that Ajimobi must not launch his campaign in Akala's hometown, Ogbomoso. Hence, Ajimobi's loyalists rendered this song to deride those who were destroying Ajimobi's billboards and posters in Ogbomoso.

The perlocutionary force of this song made Akala supporters to take the streets chanting the following songs to deride the ANPP members:

Example 12:

*"O ko wo lo ko won de o
Oko wo lo ko won de
Ara oko w'olu o, o ntele l'ogido, oko wo lo ko
won de?"*

Meaning:

*"Which vehicle carried them here /2x
The rustic villagers are here walking
disorderly
Which vehicle carried them here?"*

In the above invectives, ANPP supporters were called "rustic villagers" by the PDP since they felt that they were in the base of their gubernatorial candidate. The force of this song led to bloody political feud.

4.7. Adjacency Pairs and Turn Takings

Adjacency pairs and turn takings often occur when participants in invective songs of Western Nigerian politicians confront one another in their political rallies. The adjacency pairs are exchange structures that are reciprocal and complimentary (Osisanwo 2003, p. 14). The adjacency pairs which exist in invective songs of western Nigerian politicians are in form of question versus answer. For instance, Example 12 is the invective song rendered by PDP supporters against those of ANPP in Example 11. Also, in Eruwa, Oyo state, the AC and the PDP members sang the following invective songs against each other when they met during their March 2007 political rally at Sango Area, Eruwa, Oyo State.

Example 13:

PDP: *“Ibo ote yi di power to power
Power! Power!! Power!!!”*

Meaning:

*“This year’s election will be force to force!
(with body gesture) Power! Power! Power!”*

AC: *Alagbara ma mero baba ole
A o gbodo gbo pawa lenu yin mo*

Meaning:

*“You who have power but lack discretion
never we hear you say power again”*

The PDP in the above Example 13 was trying to demonstrate their physical and political power since they not only control the Federal Government of Nigeria but also had the resources needed to ‘win’ the elections. AC supporters who met them responded thus: “Those of you who have power but lack discretion. Let us not hear you say ‘power’ again.”

From the above adjacency pair, it could be deduced that AC members reacted to deride the PDP that they lacked discretion. The perlocutionary force of the confrontational utterances between PDP and AC explained above led to violence, carnage, and destruction of properties.

4.8. Use of Code-Mixing

Code-mixing also occurs in invective songs of western Nigerian politicians. This could be deduced from Example 13:

*“Ibo ote yi di power to power
Power! Power!! Power!!!”*

The participants in this utterance and their intended audience shared the belief that PDP that controls Federal Government could use the federal might to rig the election. The pragmatic force in the above utterance led AC supporters to respond as explained before by singing to accuse the PDP that “they are powerful but lack discretion”. Also, in the following example code-mixing is employed.

Example 14:

*“Egbe alagbado l’egbe wa o
ANPP l’egbe wa
A ki maa, a ki mai segbe jaguda. ANPP legbe
wa”.*

Meaning:

*The maize cob is our symbol
ANPP is our party
We are not party of thieves
ANPP is our party.”*

From the above Example 14, the word ANPP was used borrowed from L₂ into L₁. The word “ANPP” is an acronym from “All Nigerian People’s Party”

5. Concluding Remarks

By and large, our findings have shown that participants in political invective songs and their butts often share common backgrounds which make the audience to easily decode the pragmatic implicature in the songs. Also, we have discovered that invective songs of politicians in Southwestern Nigeria are characterized by impolite verbal behaviors, politic verbal utterances, imagery, symbolism, direct speech acts, adjacency pairs, code-mixing, indirect speech acts, and employment of paralinguistic cues. The study opens the way for more studies into politeness and impoliteness in invective songs of politicians in Southwestern Nigeria.

The limitation of this study is that it only covers the South-western part of Nigeria, which includes Oyo, Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, and Ondo states of the country. Future research on the topic can be carried out in the Northern and South-eastern part of Nigeria. Besides, future enquiries can explore the campaign speeches of Nigerian politicians to examine politeness and impoliteness in those speeches. A cross-cultural examination of politeness and impoliteness in campaign speeches and songs of Caribbean, South-African, Tanzanian, Ghanaian, American, and European politicians can also be carried out in such future research.

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