

# CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

## IMPOLITENESS IN PRAGMATISM: FACE THREATENING ACTS IN ONLINE POSTS BY INTERNET NEWSPAPER READERS IN NIGERIA

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**Babatunde ONI and Bayo OLOYEDE**

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### NEWSPAPERS, ONLINE VERSIONS AND FACE-THREATENING ACTS

Leading newspapers in Nigeria have extended their reach through online versions, in which major stories from the hard copy or paper versions are published. These Internet or online versions however provide readers with the opportunity of sending comments in real time or instantly on the stories they have read. Such comments are usually a reflection of the sentiments nursed by citizens on political, social and economic issues that are keenly debated. Although there are no concrete data yet to affirm it, the observation is that most of those who post comments on online newspaper websites are factually anonymous in that they do not use their real names. A slight contrast to this, but not negating this fact, is a 2010 survey of 1,040 Americans conducted by Opinion Research in April (sponsored by the Chubb Group of Insurance Companies), which found that just over half of those surveyed always used their real names on social networking services like Facebook and Twitter. One-third of the respondents said they used a mixture of their real names and perhaps nicknames to identify themselves, and 18 percent always used nicknames and never real names to identify themselves (Digital Trends.com April 29, 2010). It would be safe to conclude however that the Internet still provides users the opportunity of remaining largely anonymous and therefore the tendency to be blunt in utterances is higher than in face-to-face conversation.

Most importantly for this discussion, the comments also reveal ethnic and religious sentiments that are often associated with political debates in Nigeria. Discussions often ensue and exchanges are between individuals who, sometimes do not adhere to the principles of politeness, which is aimed at avoiding face-threatening acts to the listener/reader. DeVito (2009) has observed that there are at least seven functions of politeness: (1) to avoid conflict, (2) to ensure cooperative interaction, (3) to manage impressions, (4) to establish power, (5) to ensure compliance, (6) to show deference, and (7) to be nice.

In online newspaper readers' comments, sometimes these functions that are normally the basis for being polite during conversations do not seem to be of much relevance.

Studies on politeness have drawn largely from Brown and Levinson's 1987 work on politeness theory. In Mills (2003), politeness is the expression of the speakers' intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face-threatening acts toward another. It can also be defined as a social skill aimed at ensuring that everyone in a social interaction, for instance in a conversation, feels affirmed. Attempts to understand politeness involve the use of the concept of face, which is the self-image that every adult tries to project in public. Brown and Levinson (1987) believe that face comes in two ways, positive and negative. While positive face is about wanting one's wants to be desirable to others, negative face is about the desire of every competent adult not to have his/her actions impeded by others. In other words, positive face is the desire to have one's self-image accepted and approved of by others, while negative face is the desire for freedom of action and freedom from imposition.

DeVito (2009b) points out that the concept of politeness features prominently in a conflict situation where conflict strategies can involve the adoption of face-threatening acts (FTAs) or face-attacking strategies that damage the opponent's positive or negative face.

In most of the comments posted to online newspaper sites in form of reactions to stories published online, exchanges are often very blunt as the individuals remain largely anonymous. It is easy to conclude that this feedback mechanism enables a kind of platform for dissipating feelings of anger and expressing disapproving views about policies and issues. These

exchanges often involve the use of flaming, which is defined by Haugh (2010), citing Johnson et al., (2008), as "the antinormative hostile communication of emotion that includes the use of profanity, insults, and other offensive or hurtful statements". In the literature, flaming received its theoretical background in studies of mental modeling by participants in a discussion. Forrester (1971) asserts that the human mind assembles a few relationships to fit the context of a discussion and because of its tendency to change within short periods of time, the mental models used by the mind to make sense of a discussion will change as the topics change, and even where only one topic is being discussed, each individual in the conversation employs a different mental model to interpret the subject and this leads to the creation of internal fundamental assumptions and goals that are not explicitly stated and as a result compromises take long to reach.

Flaming is likely to occur more in computer-mediated discussion because with a mental model unique to individual users who harbor their own assumptions and motives, the inherent lack of face-to-face proximity makes it even more difficult to know the intentions of the other participants. Johnson (2009) attributes the high probability of occurrence of flaming in online conversations to the reduction in the transfer of social cues in computer-mediated communication. As social cues decrease in a conversation, so do individuals' concern for social evaluation and fear of social sanctions or reprisals and hence more flaming. Where social identity and group status are salient, flaming reduces. Of importance here is the submission of Johnson (2009) that:

A lack of social context creates an element of anonymity, which allows users to feel insulated from the forms of punishment they might receive in a more conventional setting.

Johnson (2009) goes on to identify precursors to flaming between users in computer-mediated conversation, namely: perceived unfairness in the attitude of a party in considering the other party's vested interests and misunderstandings arising from the users' inability to convey "subtle indicators" such as non-verbal cues and facial expressions. Consequently, flaming has been established as acts suggesting impoliteness; the term impoliteness can easily be inferred to be any act that is face-threatening or involving inflammatory utterances considered offensive or socially

unacceptable in a conversation.

Citing Locher and Bousfield (2008), Haugh (2010) points out the role of intention in evaluation of impoliteness, saying one view in impoliteness study holds that an utterance is perceived to be of greater offence if it is seen as intended. An utterance is also however considered impolite even if offence is unintended but where the utterance shows a violation of certain rule of community practice. It holds therefore that impoliteness at times may be inferred through interpretations of intentions, a method which may not always be a reliable way of determining what is impolite, since intention is argumentative in that a recipient may incorrectly interpret a speaker's intention. It appears, therefore, that in evaluating a speaker's behavior as impolite or offensive, it is arguably not the speaker's intentions per se that are necessarily crucial, but rather the speaker's behavior with respect to how the recipient thinks others would (or should) evaluate such behavior (as impolite, offensive and so on).

Face-threatening acts (FTAs) are at times inevitable in social interaction depending on the terms of the conversation. A face-threatening act inherently damages the face of the addressee or the speaker by acting in opposition to either's wants and desires. Most of these acts are verbal but can also be conveyed in the characteristics of speech (such as tone, inflection, etc) or in non-verbal forms of communication. At minimum, there must be at least one of the face-threatening acts associated with an utterance. It is also possible to have multiple acts working within a single utterance (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

### **INSTANCES OF FACE-THREATENING ACTS**

Possible face-threatening acts in interactions could be either negative or positive and could cause damage to either the speaker or the hearer. Negative FTA causes damage by making one of the interlocutors submit his will to the other. Freedom of choice and action are impeded when negative face is threatened. Positive FTA on the other hand causes damage when an individual is forced to be separated from others so that his or her well-being is treated less importantly. Below is a tabulation of several instances where FTAs occur as damage to the hearer and the speaker.

Negative FTA	Damage to Hearer	Damage to Speaker
	An act that affirms or denies a future act of the hearer creates pressure on the hearer to either perform or not perform the act. <i>Examples: orders, requests, suggestions, advice, reminders, threats, or warnings.</i>	An act that shows that the speaker is succumbing to the power of the hearer. Expressing thanks Accepting a thank you or apology Excuses Acceptance of offers A response to the hearer's violation of social etiquette The speaker commits himself to something he or she does not want to do
	An act that expresses the speaker's sentiments of the hearer or the hearer's belongings. <i>Examples: compliments, expressions of envy or admiration, or expressions of strong negative emotion toward the hearer (e.g. hatred, anger, lust).</i>	
	An act that expresses some positive future act of the speaker toward the hearer. In doing so, pressure has been put on the hearer to accept or reject the act and possibly incur a debt. <i>Examples: offers, and promises.</i>	
Positive FTA	Damage to Hearer	Damage to Speaker
	a. An act that expresses the speaker's negative assessment of the hearer's positive face or an element of his/her positive face. The speaker can display this disapproval in two ways. 1. The speaker directly or indirectly indicates that he dislikes some aspects of the hearer's possessions, desires, or personal attributes. 2. The second approach is for the speaker to express disapproval by stating or implying that the hearer is wrong, irrational, or misguided. <i>Examples: expressions of disapproval (e.g. insults, accusations, complaints), contradictions, disagreements, or challenges.</i>	An act that shows that the speaker is in some sense wrong, and unable to control himself. Apologies: In this act, speaker is damaging his own face by admitting that he regrets one of his previous acts. Acceptance of a compliment Inability to control one's physical self Inability to control one's emotional self Self-humiliation Confessions
	b. An act that expresses the speaker's indifference toward the addressee's positive face.	
	c. The addressee might be embarrassed or fear the speaker. <i>Examples: excessively emotional expressions</i>	
	d. The speaker indicates that he doesn't have the same values or fears as the hearer <i>Examples: disrespect, mention of topics which are inappropriate in general or in the context.</i>	
	e. The speaker indicates that he is willing to disregard the emotional well being of the hearer. <i>Examples: belittling or boasting.</i>	
	f. The speaker increases the possibility that a face-threatening act will occur. This situation is created when a topic is brought up by the speaker that is a sensitive societal subject. <i>Examples: topics that relate to politics, race, religion</i>	
	g. The speaker indicates that he is indifferent to the positive face wants of the hearer. This is most often expressed in obvious non-cooperative behavior. <i>Examples: interrupting, non-sequiturs.</i>	
	h. The speaker misidentifies the hearer in an offensive or embarrassing way. This may occur either accidentally or intentionally. Generally, this refers to the misuse of address terms in relation to status, gender, or age. <i>Example: Addressing a young woman as "ma'am" instead of "miss."</i>	

A tabulation of Brown and Levinson's (1987) Instances of FTA, As Adapted by Oni and Oloyede (2011)

## NEGATIVE FACE-THREATENING ACTS

Going by the examples provided in the table, negative face-threatening acts tend to occur more in conversations engaging interlocutors over a

longer period of time. Since the focus here is on online comments and posts, analysis of negative face-threatening acts will require observing other media of communication for identification.

### **POSITIVE FACE-THREATENING ACTS IN ONLINE COMMENT STRING**

The computer-mediated communication analyzed in this article is from online comments by newspaper readers in reaction to stories read on online versions of the respective newspapers. Stories were picked from three newspapers. The stories were selected based on the presence in them of at least one of the stated positive FTAs, where the speaker increases the possibility that a face-threatening act will occur in a discussion of a topic on a sensitive societal subject such as topics relating to politics, race and religion (positive FTA no. f in the table). Other forms of FTAs were not unrepresented in the string of comments however.

In the story entitled Making Obasanjo President in 1999 was a Big Mistake (The Nation, Feb., 20, 2011), Professor Ango Abdullahi, former special adviser to ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo on food security, was quoted as saying that the decision to make Olusegun Obasanjo contest the presidential election in 1999 was a big mistake. Professor Ango Abdullahi who originates from the northern part of the country was interpreted by many who read the story as implying that the decision on who becomes the president in Nigeria is taken by the northerners. The following comments reflect such thinking:

#### **Glasgow on 22/02/2011 12:34:18**

You think you made a mistake? hmm! You Northerners did not mean well for the entire nation. You misused the privilege given to you by the colonial masters. Now God brought OBJ to put a stop to your misdeed, you are crying foul and regretting your action. You remember what OBJ said when he took over in 1999..."This seat (presidential seat) you see here today (29th May,1999), by the time I(OBJ) will be leaving it tomorrow, there is nobody(Nigerian) that cannot sit on it". He(OBJ) is keeping his promise!

#### **Babaluku on 22/02/2011 16:48:42**

Obasanjo was forced on the Yoruba by the NORTH, someone who could not win in his Ward/Local Government/State. But he repaid them back in their own

coin when he forced Yar' Adua on them when the 3rd Term BID failed

**OGA MISAH ON 21/02/2011 18:45:10**

The mistake Ango made was to imagine himself a kingmaker. A fool is always wisest in his own mind. For those however who think Obj (not God) "liberated" the middle-belt or south, just wait and watch till Obj's time on earth is done. There is absolutely nothing the South has with which to stop a splintered North from undoing everything Obj is credited with under two years, and from subsequently giving us another Abacha or IBB in no distant time! Keep condoning injustice, and unfairness, and sheer evil, and you will see for yourself.

**SALAKO D.A. ON 21/02/2011 20:59:54**

If only the North would learn from the South West. In 1999, we rejected Obasanjo but the north insisted. Now that he is dealing with them, they are now regretting it. It serves them right! Now we are telling them that it is only fair to let Jonathan rule coming from a section of the country that feeds the entire nation, they are saying no. By the time this one too boomerang, I hope they will live to regret it. Foolish so-called leaders...

**TOBECHUKWU ON 20/02/2011 10:29:47**

So why did they make OBJ president when his people said no?

**AYODELE ON 22/02/2011 07:10:30**

Tobechukwu, you hit the nail on the head. They accepted vampire IBB stabbed Yorubas from behind when he played God and annulled the most credible election ever in Nigeria. We said ok we'll give a credible Yoruba, no they said. They know Osho's mother much more than Osho himself. Amongst the credentials the vampire is brandishing is that he conducted the most credible election in Nigeria. Paradoxical.

**OMO OLUPE ON 22/02/2011 10:49:50**

@MAX: If Yoruba people had no principle, they would have voted en masse for OBJ in 1999, but he was totally rejected by the Yoruba. But people like you in order to spite the Yoruba voted compulsively for him. We refused to vote for him because we know him more than you, but you refused to listen to us, why the regret now?

Tony on 22/02/2011 12:18:50 Appointing Obasanjo was a mistake? Because he did not dance to the tune of the north? Well, he is the best leader Nigeria has ever produced. It is only some section of the north and robbers and thieves, looters and criminals whom he dealt with who do not see any good thing in him. They tried to use the power probe, but nothing came out of it. Halliburton has not helped either, neither other accusations. Nobody has been able to pinpoint the actual money he stole till date. He left billions of dollars and Nairas in both foreign and local reserves. By the way, what is happening to the NNPC probe?

This string of comments shows elements of face threats or impoliteness. They have been highlighted here to show examples of positive FTA with damage to the hearer where the topic is a sensitive societal issue such as religion, race/ethnicity or politics.

Looking at the positive FTAs in general, an attempt will now be made to search the string of comments for examples of each positive FTA with damage to the hearer. The objective is to establish that online comments have a lot of FTAs with damage to hearers. Positive face-threatening acts with damage to the hearer will be abbreviated as PFTADH.

From the table, PFTADH No. A could have as its example the following comment:

**ALEXCO ON 23/02/2011 17:05:34**

How come you helped to form PDP with Ekwueme and decided with the help of your Northern idiots to shove him out. What qualifications did Obasanjo bring to the table that Ekwueme had not attained or possessed. The only thing that I can subscribe to on why Ekwueme lost out is because he is an Ibo man. So please, Alhaji, do not regret, you knew what you did.

**EXAMPLE OF PFTADH NO B:**

**Omonla on 23/02/2011 18:18:15**

What is the mistake? Is he an alien? Although OBJ is one step forward, two steps backward.

**EXAMPLE OF PFTADH NO C:**

**Tola West on 22/02/2011 12:19:42**

HYPOCRITE!!! you have forgotten so soon the decades of northern rule



with little results. So OBJ is now the superhuman that will do magic to decades of corruption, poverty, marginalisation, insincerity, etc that has ravaged this nation since independence. Pls let us think!

**EXAMPLES OF PFTADH NO D:**

**Bola zino on 22/02/2011 19:19:32**

Ango Abdullahi or what do you call yourself?, you are a shameless animal, GOD brought obasanjo in 1999 to keep the country together, baba try his best, northerners expect baba to dance to their tune but he dissappoint those criminals that kill abiola, rewane and ken sarowiwa, una never see anything o still dey laugh....

**True Nigerian on 23/02/2011 04:35:48**

I believe you are saying this shit becuz you have something under your sleeve, you Islamist terrorizing the north, cultism promoter and a criminal. Keep your stupid opinion to yourself and dont try influence our thoughts. All of you deserve to be killed, stoned to death or hanged. If Nigeria wants to be good it will be good and to achieve this we need to start killing people like you.

**EXAMPLES OF PFTADH NO E:**

**joe on 21/02/2011 21:56:47**

Had Ango ever be[en] a professor? i doubt it, you know why? as at the time he was an adviser to the presidency on food security, Nigeria had 1,456,300 graduates from universities of agricultural science and departments of agricultural science and crop production roaming about, no job, what was he telling the president, this may shock you, all he was telling the president was how to share national cake. Ango thought that nigeria as a nation was like ABU zaria, Ango was the first person that has failed nigerians; he was the person nigerians regretted allowing to advise the president at that time.

**Examples of PFTADH NO. F:**

**THE TRIGGER:**

**Max on 20/02/2011 09:20:40**

Me too, I regret making OBJ the president. He should have been allowed to rot in yola prison. But all the same, I dey laugh oooooooo! When will Yoruba man ever stop betrayal? People without principle.

### **THE RESPONSE:**

**Seyi on 21/02/2011 16:17:10**

max who comment on this news by 09:20:40 u are crazy for tagging YORUBA people without principle. if you want to abuse OBJ abuse him directly. and listen who among your family can rule better than OBJ. if it's easy why can't you ask your father to contest for your area councillor. crazy boy/man..... lol

### **EXAMPLES OF PFTADH NO. G:**

**musa jibrin on 21/02/2011 22:56:44**

prof, this is a right decision at the wrong time. So please keep your mouth shut if you don't have anything to say.

### **EXAMPLES OF PFTADH NO H:**

**Atta chi du on 20/02/2011 10:17:56**

This man is nothing but a senior toady. He is one of the useless men from so-called North. He was picked from "almajiri" the street and today is saying this rubbish after he contributed to the failure of the then government. The Lord will definitely judge all your actions mr Ango Abdullahi.

The story entitled Rioters lock in 50 NYSC members, Set Building on Fire (*The Nation*, April 20, 2011) was about how angry young people in Minna, the capital of Niger State in the northern part of the country, went on rampage following the announcement of the results of the presidential election, locked up Youth Corps members in a building and set it on fire. About 66 comments were posted in relation to the news report. Below are some of the comments that show examples of positive FTAs with damage to the hearer.

### **EXAMPLE OF PFTADH NO. A:**

**ekema abara 18 hours 20 minutes ago**

The only solution to this madness is the immediate arrest of Mallam Muhammadu Buhari. Nigeria is bigger than any individual. His unguarded statement provoked this senseless actions and I think he is enjoying the outcome. This arrogance must stop. Jonathan should not be intimidated

### **EXAMPLE OF PFTADH NO. B:**

**Ena Mike 10 hours 20 minutes ago**

Was there any riot by these Buhari supporters? Thank God, I did not vote Buhari. An Islamic Fundamentalist remain the same any time even if he said he has changed. If he had won the election, he probably would have commenced his fundamentalis[m] with Bakare.

**EXAMPLE OF PFTADH NO. C:**

**wale 16 hours 41 minutes ago**

This in fact is highly irresponsible editorial. How can the editor allow this? Why are you people trying to heat up the system? What exactly are you trying to achieve? A civil [war] predicated on religion or what? The presidency should ban this paper and charge them to court if this is finally found to be untrue.

**EXAMPLE OF PFTADH NO. D:**

**Mark 7 hours 58 minutes ago**

You are a liar. They are not banning anything. You can't sheath these facts. These people were slaughtered like malu [cow] in Northern states. Didn't you see the corpse of the innocent woman that was sawn into two[?]. . . E no go beta for una.

**EXAMPLE OF PFTADH NO. E:**

**achama 11 hours 57 minutes ago**

the so called northern leaders like;IBB,BUHARI,ATIKU,CIROMA should be arrested now 4 their inciting words to this AL\_QAIDA supporters. Every single thing is riot in the north, their leaders should be held responsible 4 the illiterate ALMAJERIS action, no wonder why they can never be wise with all their stolen wealth, mumu\* 4ever.

**EXAMPLE OF PFTADH NO. F:**

**The Triggers**

**wale 16 hours 41 minutes ago**

This in fact is highly irresponsible editorial. How can the editor allow this? Why are you people trying to heat up the system? What exactly are you trying to achieve? A civil [war] predicated on religion or what? The presidency should ban this paper and charge them to court if this is finally found to be untrue.

**victor 11 hours 51 minutes ago**

Whoever u are, I doubt u have any brain in ur head, cos ur so-called NYSC DG denied the death of any serving corps member after the Suleja bomb blast and u're here speaking for him. I doubt u know ur job sef. mschewww.

### **THE RESPONSE**

**shola 11 hours 24 minutes ago**

@wale and victor I don't think you have lived in the north before, I have witnessed violence in the north, are you trying to intimidate journalists? I served in Gombe state I was part of the bi-election that took place there and i know what they did to corps members even while I was in DUKKU IN GOMBE ABBA a small settlement in Gombe state, we had just a little argument and before we knew it almost turned into religious crisis, in fact we were told face to face that if they want them to turn this our little argument to a religious crisis they would, what do you expect the DG of NYSC to do? Say that corps members were killed, are u not a NIGERIAN? Or is this your first time of hearing of violence in the north? Why was BUHARI crying on national TV? Is it a do or die affair? Hasn't he ruled before? Out of the 50 years of independence the north has ruled for over 30yrs, let me remind you to if you have forgotten that they have brought us into this economic mess? They TAGGED crisis a political crisis, but why are they burning down churches? Why did BUHARI not say a word or caution his supporters in the first day of the unrest? They are all stupid people this so called jobless youths.

### **EXAMPLE OF PFTADH NO G:**

**Thoni 9 hours 12 minutes ago**

For those who feel/think the headline is bizarre and intended to cause more reactionary sentiments in the minds of Nigerians especially Southerners are very stupid. What happens to the Freedom of Information? So we should no longer be informed about the brashness going on in the North? What if the Corps members had died in that building? What would you have told their parents, communities and persons who contributed to their education to see that they come out as educated citizens? Do you know how many members have died since the election processes began all in the name to Serve Their Fatherland and their deaths are un-reported? I feel that Southerners should refuse postings to the Northern region until these

savages are put in the place where they rightly belong. These acts of violence against southerners are unnecessary and totally despicable.

#### EXAMPLE OF PFTADH NO H:

##### Esther 1 hour ago

U guys should stop adding salt n pepper together what d northerner's are doing is Bad. A state of emergency should be declared in all d states. I don't like d way d govt is keeping quiet abt all dis. People are losing their lives n pple are losing their loved ones. No war, just peace. pls. May God help us.

These examples were selected on the basis of having as their content statements that could be regarded as threatening, damaging or impolite to the hearer's positive face, that is the public image of the hearer and their need to be accepted and have their wants accepted by others as being legitimate desires. It is obvious that the statements/utterances were exchanged between strangers who had no interest in saving their interlocutors' positive face.

Going by the observation that impolite statements and expressions in the address of others are most likely to occur during discussions on volatile topics bordering on ethnic and religious issues - which have remained a sore point in social relations among the Nigerian people - it is expected that where the topic is not on ethnic or religious issues but on other matters, posted comments would show little or no element of flaming. Put differently, the question could be asked whether there still will be elements of positive face-threatening acts when readers post comments after reading news stories on topics that have national appeal but which do not border on ethnic, religious and political but merely administrative issues? In an attempt to find an answer to this question, it was discovered that positive face-threatening acts do occur even when the topic of discussion is not one of the traditionally volatile ones.

*The Punch* newspaper of July 31, 2012 in its online version published a report entitled Planned Demolition of 19 Abuja Towns Creates Panic. The report has it that planned demolition of houses in 19 satellite towns in the Federal Capital Territory has created panic among Abuja residents, after houses were marked for demolition by the Abuja Metropolitan Council. Sixty four comments were posted by readers in response to the content of the report. Selected comments are highlighted below to show examples of

face-threatening acts.

Nick July 31, 2012 at 12:25 am

**JONATHAN'S FRESH AIR FOR NIGERIANS**

CHRIS July 31, 2012 at 10:55 am

**YES HE PROMISE TO GIVE US FRESH AIR BUT WHAT WE ARE RECEIVING IS MUCH MORE THAN CARBON MONOXIDE. GOD ALMIGHTY WILL PUNISH HIM**

daniel July 31, 2012 at 12:52 am

**Jonathan everything. Please let this man be**

Michael Adedeji July 31, 2012 at 1:43 am

**So, who should be blamed? Barak Obama? Or your father? Who controls [the] AMAC? or who gave the directive for the demolition? To me, I'll call this another "Dividend" of "Democracy" from GEJ to the affected people. Posterity will judge.**

effizy July 31, 2012 at 4:07 pm

**@ Michael you are obviously a fool. Blame the FCT minister if you don't know who to blame ...OK!!! Mumu\***

**\*(colloquial word for stupid)**

Femi olu July 31, 2012 at 1:34 am

Nick why calling Jonathan in this issue, perhaps you will blame him if your wife[s] period ceases when indeed you are expecting it, the problem of this country is caused by our former leaders who refuse[d] to pave way for the oncoming generation, and these accumulated problems cannot be resolved in this much expected period Jonathan rules, pls leave him alone.

Eyez July 31, 2012 at 3:41 am

Then its in Gej's administration you came to realize the govt had failed u? See, believe it or [not], Gej has no fault in his administration. You are only faulting Gej anyhow out of your [ignorance] that radical sanitation for a country like Nigeria does not need violent approach. Jonathan is wise enough He has gone far transforming this nation from de rite point. Keep

babbling, fools

Peter Dabara Gbagyi voice July 31, 2012 at 5:38 am

Behold, the repeat of what happen[ed] in N/delta is about to happen in Abuja. Verily verily I [say] unto this bad government, stop taking ancestral lands from original indigenes (GBAGYIs) without compensation, and giving it to your girlfriends and relatives. This is just like oil in N/Delta. It is high time we acted violently since the govt can not address the issue peacefully. He who [have] ears should listen. I the GBAGYI VOICE [has] spoken.

eyez July 31, 2012 at 6:05 am

@peter dabara, pls go to school study development administration then come back and talk

Peter Dabara Gbagyi voice July 31, 2012 at 6:13 am

It is only an incompetent and clueless president like GEJ, that every DICK and HARRY can harass like this. Note: except a human being walks like monkey no dog will chase him and also note that the way you dress so you'll be addressed. His supporters should watch him closely and call him to order.

Enejo July 31, 2012 at 7:09 pm

Dabara or what's your Gbagi name? Where were you when El-Rufai was pulling down buildings built on your so-called God-[given] land? Why didn't you revolt against OBJ and El-Rufai, why not blame the past governments who saw no reason to protect the future generation? or do you want us watch things continue to deteriorate?

Fudeme umoh July 31, 2012 at 9:05 am

Small thing Jonathan, small thing Jonathan. [For your] information Goodluck Jonathan is a president of [this] country so nothing u people can do about it. And [come] 2015 Jonathan is still there OK

Honbreezer July 31, 2012 at 9:28 am

@fudeme or what u called [yourself], you are highly senseless!!

It is obvious from the highlighted comments that the topic does not have to

be about ethnic, religious or political differences between interlocutors for there to be positive face-threatening acts with damage to the hearer. Positive FTAs do occur in circumstances where one would not expect any flaming because individuals have a way of bringing into discussion of other topics their various ethnic, religious and political sentiments. Moreover, they use these sentiments to judge the comments of others.

## **CONCLUSION**

As Nigerian newspapers grow in readership and circulation, and extend their reach with the aid of new and increasingly ergonomic technologies, they become more accessible to readers of different social, political, economic, religious, ethnic and other backgrounds. This provides citizens from these diverse backgrounds access to the public sphere to participate more actively in discussions. In doing so, because the medium of interaction permits anonymity as well as complicates the task of stringently enforcing the rules of politeness, there is the tendency for these individuals to be more pragmatic in expressing their feelings. When these discussions touch on topics relating to politics, religion, ethnic and other sensitive issues and communication about them is computer mediated, instances of impolite utterances may tend to become more rampant when compared to communication on other conventional platforms. Observations have established that insults, abuses and profane words are used in online comments posted by readers and rather than be edited are left to be read, a situation that rarely occurs in other non-computer mediated communication between strangers.



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