

**A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF COMPLIMENTS IN SELECTED NIGERIAN  
NEWSPAPERS**

**BY**

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## DECLARATIONS

This dissertation titled: **A Pragmatic Analysis of Compliments in Selected Nigerian Newspapers** has not been previously presented in any form to the university or any other body whether for the purposes of assessment, publication or for any other purpose. Except for any expressed acknowledgements and references cited in the work, I confirm that the intellectual content of the work is solely mine and no other person's.

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Date

## CERTIFICATION

This dissertation titled: **A Pragmatic Analysis of Compliments in Selected Nigerian Newspapers** by Sanni, OremeyiAbiola, meets the regulations governing the award of Masters' Degree of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge.

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Joseph Kehinde Ogedengbe (of blessed memory) and Mrs. Grace O. Ogedengbe; my loving and supportive husband, Mr. G. Ojo Sanni, and my darling children: Joanne, Joseph, Jonathan and Joshua.

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## ABSTRACT

This study is a pragmatic analysis of the use of compliments in selected Nigerian newspapers. Compliments sourced from the feature article sections of the selected newspapers form the data collected for analysis. The selected compliments are analysed highlighting the contexts in which they were used, while applying the Speech Act theory as propounded by Austin (1962) and the Gricean Maxims which are sub-principles of the Cooperative Principle. The analyses of the different types of compliments revealed that the social compliments are more recurrently employed by writers than the other types of compliments. It recorded a 36.20% use as against the gender compliments that have the least occurrence at 10.34%. It is significant to note that the achieved and ascribed compliments recorded 21.65% which was close to the political compliments that recorded 19.83% application. The expressive speech act performance is at 44.06% while the representative and assertive speech acts performed at the almost the same level with both occurring at 13.55% and 11.88% respectively. The compliments performed the declarative speech act at the least level as it occurred at 8.48%. In a related manner, the study revealed that maxims are sometimes flouted for a number of reasons. The analysis of the data shows that the maxim of quality had the highest incidence of violation at 21.51% while the maxim of relation was not violated at all. It is observed that the maxim of quality was violated more than the others due to the fact that some expressions are not truthful while in other cases the use of metaphors also contributed to the violation of quality. The use of ambiguous expressions is one of the reasons why the maxim of manner was violated. This can be attributed to the fact that some writers were too eager to portray their subjects in a positive light and are consequently inclined to be effusive in their choice of words. It is noteworthy that 69.62% of the compliments adhere to the maxims, although a few are flouted on some occasions. The study concludes that the use of compliments in Nigerian newspaper feature articles have pragmatic implications as they communicate more than what is said. This is largely due to the context within which the compliments are used. Some compliments are better interpreted when the context of their use are known. The compliment, 'Adekanye has to his credit a harvest of books' would have been vague without the context just as the compliment, 'referred to as the elegant stallion, Onyeka...' would have been ambiguous without context. The study recommends that writers of newspaper feature articles should consider the social and linguistic background of readers when writing in order to avoid controversies that may likely arise.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background to the Study

The act of complimenting is a social value that is found in almost every society. It has been described as a speech act which involves taking into account the feelings of others in order to make them feel comfortable. Complimenting is one of the ways of expressing politeness and takes into consideration factors like context or relationship between participants. Complimenting as a speech act falls into the categories of those that remark on appearance and the ones that comment on ability.

Finch (1998) asserts that language enables man to do many things thereby serving different functions. He describes these functions as micro and metafunctions. Jakobson in Sebeok (1960:350-377), however, distinguishes six communication functions which are: the referential, aesthetic/poetic, emotive, conative, phatic and the metalinguistic. He further suggests that of these functions, one is always dominant in any given text or context. The importance of language in any given speech community cannot be denied; thus language does not only communicate information but also serves as a means of establishing and maintaining relationships with other people. Humans are social beings who need to communicate and in order to communicate effectively, should of necessity rely on the Cooperative Principle of Grice (1975), who expounded how people ought to interact with one another. The study sets out to investigate how compliments are used in some of those settings; more specifically, how some newspapers employ these compliments and the effects compliments have on readers.

Holmes (1988:446) defines a compliment, which is the language feature this study focuses on, as “a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some good (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer.” Similarly, compliments can also be described as expressions that accord esteem, respect, affection, or respectful recognition to people. The analysis of compliments in this research is from the perspective of pragmatics as an approach in Discourse Analysis. Pragmatics studies the ways context contributes to meaning and how the transmission of meaning depends not only on the linguistic knowledge, but also on the context of the utterance. Pragmatics is the study of language from the viewpoint of users: the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in social interactions and the effect on the participants in communicative encounter. According to Cheyney (1992) cited in Babalola (2002):

A newspaper is the textbook that provides up-to-date information on local, state/provincial, national and world affairs; the most current analysis, the most criticism on executive and legislative decision; the latest in music, theatre, television, and the fine arts and even columns and comics to make people laugh.

Newspapers form the major vehicle of communication systems that have helped the society change for the better over the years and have, also, single-handedly defended the rights of citizens when under threat. Readers sometimes come across compliments when reading feature articles in newspapers and may consider it worthwhile to read about the subjects because the complimented people have been accorded honour, respect and recognition. It is accepted that compliments are given in order to make people feel good, but it is also observed that some compliments do not achieve this purpose mainly because some expressions are not appropriately used or are deliberately misused.

Since the medium of communication in these newspapers is the English language, which serves as the official language in Nigeria, it has become necessary to investigate the use of language in them, and this study is specifically investigating where and how compliments have been employed by the writers of feature articles.

### **1.1 Statement of the Research Problem**

In any given speech community where language is used as a means of communication, interactions are inevitable. The problem this research seeks to interrogate is based on the observation that the use and interpretation of compliments in newspaper feature articles create a lot of misinterpretations and controversy that may result in communication breakdown. The historic exchange between President Olusegun Obasanjo and General Ibrahim Babangida is an example of how the use and interpretation of compliments in newspaper feature articles can create misinterpretations and controversy that engender communication failure. The Nation of 19<sup>th</sup>, August 2011 page 22 reported that the Media Aide to Babangida, Kassim Afegbua, described Obasanjo in the following words: "Calling IBB a fool at 70 especially by a man reportedly and allegedly accused by his own son of incest is at best a compliment. The fact is that the statement is not a compliment even if the writer appears to consider it so because, according to him, being a fool is better than being accused of incest.

The issue in question is that most times, the compliments used by the writers of feature articles are not intended to compliment; as a result they could create a lot of controversies and misinterpretations. According to the Dictionary.com, a compliment is backhanded or left handed when an insult is disguised as a compliment. Backhanded compliments are sometimes used inadvertently or deliberately to deceive or hurt people. It is in this sense that a compliment may likely generate a lot of controversies. This is possible either because some

expressions conveying sarcasm, irony or innuendoes were used in the compliments paid or the compliments were deliberately misinterpreted. In addition, instead of accepting compliments in the spirit in which they have been paid, people focus on the choice of words and thereby make the compliments appear bad. These negative reactions are sometimes prompted by the presence of lexical items that may be considered offensive by the recipient. The problem this study therefore seeks to interrogate is the contention that the adherence to or violation of the Grice co-operative principle largely depends on the types of compliments used in the newspaper feature articles. This is in relation to their frequency of use and the speech acts they perform in the process of communication and social interaction.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

The researcher hopes to provide answers to the following questions:

- i. What types and at what frequency are compliments used in the selected Nigerian newspaper feature articles?
- ii. What speech acts are performed by the use of these compliments in these feature articles?
- iii. To what extent is the cooperative principle adhered to or violated in the compliments in these feature articles?

## **1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

This study aims at carrying out a pragmatic analysis of the use of compliments in feature articles in five selected Nigerian newspapers. The specific objectives the study hopes to achieve are to:

i. investigate the types and frequency of the use of compliments in the selected Nigerian newspapers.

ii. examine the speech acts performed by the compliments used in these newspaper feature articles.

iii. highlight the adherence to or violation of the cooperative principle in the use of compliments in the newspaper feature articles and their effects on the readers.

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This work is focused on the analysis of compliments in feature articles in selected newspapers in Nigeria. The selected newspapers include: *The Guardian, Daily Trust, The Sun, Thisday and The Nation* to cover publications spanning a two-year period starting from January 2011 to December 2012. The data are specifically taken from the 'feature sections' with particular attention to the compliments used in these articles. A total of 50 editions that is, ten editions from each of the selected publications comprise the data for analysis. The newspapers were selected because they are observed to enjoy a wide readership as a result of the geographical spread and are written in English language which is also the language of administration, commerce and instruction. A pragmatic framework was adopted with particular reference to the Speech Act Theory as proposed by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) and the Cooperative Principle as proposed by Grice (1975). The researcher categorised the data according to the different types of compliments (social, political, achieved and ascribed, gender and honorific compliments) for data analysis.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is designed basically to examine how the use of compliments affects social interactions and also to highlight the need to use appropriate compliments in the right context

by writers, most especially those of the journalistic slant. Various scholars have shown great concern on how language is employed; hence, a lot of studies ranging from the syntax, to the semantics of language have always engaged their attention. In the field of pragmatics, a number of studies have been carried out: Ibileye (2002) analysed the Pragmatic interpretation of modal verbs in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; Abaya (2008) carried out a pragmatic analysis of coup announcements in Nigeria; Akodu (2009) was on a pragmatic analysis of ambiguity in political discourse; Amodu (2011) which was also from a pragmatic perspective analysed the language of advertisement.

The major significance of this study, given its pragmatic approach, is that there could be more to compliments than their ordinary communication and significance, which this study sets out to reveal and analyse. Compliments employ metaphors which are literary devices that help to compare different realities and as a result perform different speech acts as well as indirect speech acts and, so, can adequately communicate more than is said. It is hoped that the study will assist readers of newspapers to better appreciate the linguistic embellishments offered by the use of compliments. The researcher hopes the research on the use of compliments and the findings from this work will enable writers to be circumspect in their use of compliments by adhering to the cooperative principle. It is also hoped that the findings of this study will be considered as the researcher's contribution to the field of Pragmatics.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.0 Preamble

This chapter presents reviews of previous researches and opinions in the use of compliments from a pragmatic viewpoint. The various concepts of Pragmatics that are relevant to the study are also reviewed. Consideration is also given to the related items that impact directly on the study such as definition of compliments, types and functions of compliments, language and context, language, culture and compliments mass media in Nigeria, language of the media and Pragmatics. In addition, theories/approaches to language and the theoretical framework adopted have been reviewed.

#### 2.1 Language and Context

Adeyanju (2002) asserts that language has been with man from creation. He observes that language cannot exist without society; neither can society exist without language. Language constitutes our world; it is used to express the innate desires of the individual in relation to his society. Hall (1968:158) describes language as “the institution whereby humans communicate through habitually used oral-auditory symbols.” Language is the human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication. In addition to its communicative uses, language has many social and cultural uses such as signifying group identity, social stratification, social grooming and entertainment. Language is viewed as a system of communication that enables humans to cooperate. This definition stresses the social functions of language since it also allows humans to express themselves and enables them to manipulate objects in their environment. Bloch and Trager (1942:5) view language as “a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates.”

Language can then be seen as a means of communication among the speakers of a language in any given community.

Crystal (1981:7) establishes that “Linguistics is the scientific study of human language” and it can be broadly broken into three sub-fields of study; language form, language meaning and language in context. Linguistics looks at the broader context in which language is influenced by social, cultural, historical and political factors. One of the areas of interest in linguistics is grammar which deals with the study of language structure while language meaning is the concern of Semantics and Pragmatics. Semantics is concerned with how meaning is inferred from words, while Pragmatics is the study of how meaning is inferred from context. The concept of context in language is used in various subfields of language: Discourse Analysis, Systemic Functional Grammar and Pragmatics. Context is a postulation of the functional linguists like: Firth (1962), Hymes (1964), Ellis (1966) and Halliday (1978) who averred that a word or an utterance has no meaning until it is situated in a context. Context, a word which is derived from “contextus” means woven together. It is the total social setting in which the speech events take place and this signifies that the meaning of an utterance is determined largely by how it responds and how it is responded to. Context reveals the identities of the participants, the temporal and spatial dimension of a speech event, the belief, knowledge and intention of the participants in a communicative encounter.

Mey (2001) posits that context is a dynamic and not a static concept in which the linguistic expressions of contexts become intelligible. Context is understood as the continually changing surroundings that enable participants in the communicative process to interact in an intelligible manner. Leech (1983:288) declares that: “when two people converse, they share all kinds of background knowledge; not just knowledge specific to the situation in which they find themselves, but general knowledge about the world. He views this shared knowledge as ‘context’ because according to him, “as the conversation progresses, its ‘context’ progresses

in the sense that new elements are added to the pool of knowledge that can be taken for granted". Marshall (1992) expresses a similar view when he declares that: "In common use almost every word has many shades of meaning, and therefore needs to be interpreted by the context". The various definitions of context throw more light on its importance in conversations and how they make interpretations of utterances clearer.

There are basically two types of context: the situational and verbal context'. The Verbal context refers to surrounding text of an expression (word, sentence, conversation turn, speech act etc) which takes place in discourse structure by taking note of the mutual relationship or coherence between sentences.

Linguists like Hymes (1964), Lawal (1997) and Adebija (1999) have also identified other types like: physical, socio-cultural, psychological and linguistic contexts.

Physical Context: Osisanwo (2008:79) posits that physical context in any speech act includes the participants, the activities, place and the time of the speech event. Participants include several factors especially sex, social status, occupation, age, etc. Physical context is also inclusive of the type of activity that occurs at the time of the speech event. Similarly, the location of a communicative interaction influences the interpretation given. The time a speech act takes place can determine the meaning given to the utterance. Time may be indicated as "now", "yesterday", "today", etc. and this helps to identify the time of speaking or writing.

Socio-cultural context: Adebija (1999) refers to certain factors like: state of mind, special relations, beliefs and nature of discourse as necessary in any discourse. In his opinion, the speaker depends largely on shared socio-cultural background, psychological disposition and what is presupposed in an exchange situation in order to enhance effective communication. Van Dijk (1983) declares that relevant properties of social situations can influence the

subjective use of language. Language is used in every communicative encounter and consequently spreads; it accommodates socio-cultural and religious beliefs of the various speakers. A speaker is therefore likely to interpret an utterance accurately based on the existence of these situations or based on his knowledge of the situations.

Psychological Context: The psychological context of a speech event is likely to be influenced by the state of mind. Lawal (1997) describes psychological context as that which covers the mood, attitudes and beliefs of the language user. It is therefore important that a listener knows the frame of mind of the addressee before attempting to get the correct meaning of the utterance.

Linguistic context: The Linguistic context has to do with the choice of words for example the syntax, the morphology and even the use of proverbs in a communicative encounter. Linguistic context is determined by collocation and selectional restrictions. Verschueren (1987) expresses the same opinion and asserts that “in daily life words are not understood in isolation but rather in discourse.” He reiterates that in some cases, linguistic context relies on background knowledge for appropriate interpretation.

Hymes (1964) identified a number of features considered to be context and these are: participants, topic, setting, channel, code and message form. According to him, the participants in a speech act are the speaker and the listener. The topic is the subject matter of the discussion and context becomes helpful in this regard if the subject matter of the conversation is known. He also notes that setting, which is the physical location of a speech event, influences what interpretation can be given to the exchange just as the channel also influences a speech event. Context is relevant to this study because it enables a reader to situate compliments properly and consequently allows for correct interpretation.

Communication takes place by means of language. As social beings, language use is controlled by the propriety given to language by the society. This implies that the society dictates how language is used. It is possible for a politician to slip in a word about his political ambition at a social function and one will still get to decode the remark as being politically motivated even though it was uttered at a social function. If the politician says, “We are proceeding to Otta from here”, listeners who are members of his party and know what may likely transpire at Otta are quick to discern that they are going for a political meeting.

From the above, it is palpable that we can characterise context as being important to achieving as close as possible the appropriate interpretation of an utterance especially when the various elements of context are highlighted. Context is valuable in Pragmatics because it tells what people mean in a particular context just as it also influences what is said. Context is constructive to our study because it enables us to understand the reason behind the choice of certain words over the others. It is obvious that we are better able to give a pragmatic explanation to an utterance when we know the context in which such utterance is made.

## **2.2 Language, Culture and Compliments**

The use of language has become entrenched in human culture. It satisfies a social and cultural need. According to Chandler (1994) The Sapir-Whorfian hypothesis (1940) holds that language and thought influence each other and the behaviourists also echo this view since they believe that language and thought are identical. There are two schools of thought with regard to this hypothesis. The first is ‘linguistic determinism’ which declares that our thinking is determined by our language and the second is ‘linguistic relativity’ which believes that people who speak different languages perceive and think about the world quite differently.

Sapir (1921) posits that “Language is a culturally determined system of patterns that creates the categories by which individuals not only communicate but also think.” He states that “Language and thought influence each other. The structure of a language has an influence on the way its speakers understand the environment.” Sapir (1929) argues that human beings do not live in the objective world alone or alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are influenced by the language that is their medium of communication. Whorf (1940:213-14) declares that: “we dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages...and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds.” The researcher is of the opinion that even though complimenting is one of the ways of expressing politeness, it cannot be directly associated with specific linguistic structures because of factors like context and relationship between participants. In addition, what is considered appropriate in one language might not be so in another due to the influence of culture on language.

Wolfson and Manes (1980) are of the opinion that certain linguistic patterns could be used in paying compliments. Their findings are quite useful and may enhance the ability of a user of English as second language to pay appropriate compliments even though they do not fit perfectly into the pattern used in the print media because of the journalistic style adopted. Journalistic writing involves the use of explicit and precise words in newspapers hence they may not adhere to the patterns suggested by Wolfson and Manes (1980).

According to Lin (1997) a compliment is believed to serve the basic function of expressing esteem or praise. Lin (op cit) also is of the opinion that society has a bearing on the frequency and style of compliments because every culture has its taboos and totems which are not always made known to foreigners. It is not surprising that in Africa people give names to children mainly to honour the giver of the child (who in this case is God), or in admiration of an ancestor or an animal like the lion which is associated with bravery. Thus children are given names like “Chukwudalu” which means “Thank You, God” in Ibo language and

“Oluwaseun” which has the same meaning in Yoruba language in appreciation of God’s goodness. Also “Tau” a Zulu name for lion or “Izem” a Berber name for lion are also given to children as names to confer bravery on the bearers of such names. This is also why praise-singing is also employed as a tool for complimenting by almost every tribe in Nigeria.

According to Rizk (2003) the giving and receiving of compliments is culture specific and can be confusing. The various reactions to compliments are oftentimes affected by our cultural background. As Rizk (2003) points out, what is considered complimentary in one culture might not be in another and posits that compliments regarding size are handled differently as a result of divergence in cultural settings. The researcher observes that in traditional Africa, probably because of the problem of food security, when someone is complimented on weight gained it is accepted as a compliment because it seems to reflect positively on the person’s status which in some circumstances may be taken to be a sign of affluence and prosperity. It has equally been observed that this same expression when directed to someone in the western world will elicit a negative response and may not be received as a compliment by the recipient.

Wolfson and Manes (1980) establish that compliments are used quite frequently in conversations in American culture to consolidate social relationships. The practice of paying profuse compliments is considered rather effusive and disingenuous by non-Americans who do not place much premium on such exchanges. Moore (1996:113-120) also reveal that Spanish speaking males tend to compliment women on physical beauty and attributes (Piropos). This practice is believed to be embedded in the Hispanic social culture; usually it is seen as a sign of failure on a woman’s part if she does not receive such compliments. This type of compliment (piropos) may not be viewed as a compliment in a society like Nigeria where women are believed to be more conservative. In reality, it may be regarded as being disrespectful especially by the elderly ones that are not susceptible to open admiration.

According to Lin (2008) Chinese speakers have a deflective attitude to compliments; this is because they view the act of complimenting as lacking in humility and modesty. In addition to this, the person paying the compliments is also viewed as being greedy since their culture dictates that anything (object) that is admired must be presented to the person admiring it. As a result of this attitude, most Chinese people avoid paying compliments so that they will not be considered greedy or immodest.

As observed by Schegloff and Sachs (1973) a compliment event consists of two parts: the compliment and the response. The compliment and response is a two-unit turn-adjacency pair operation linked by both a temporal and relevancy conditions. Pomerantz (1978) asserts that in receiving compliments the addressee is normally faced with two contradictory conditions that must be met simultaneously. The conditions according to her are that one must agree with the compliment and at the same time, avoid self-praise. She further categorizes American compliments responses into: acceptances, agreements, rejections and disagreements. Herbert and Straight (1986) aver that differences in social systems account for the response to compliments. According to Shotland and Craig (1988) men and women react to compliments differently because of the differences in the threshold level of their sexual intents. According to them women accept compliments as friendly compliments when men would rather interpret them as a sign of interest in them. In a similar manner, social system which is a mirror of culture, affects the way compliments are received. Studies have shown that the Americans have a healthy attitude to compliments while the Chinese, because of their culture find it difficult to pay or accept compliments. A recipient of compliments may accept compliments if he thinks they are sincere or that he is worthy of the compliments. It is also possible to discount or reject compliments if there is an element of doubt to its sincerity. Rodriguez et al (1998) observed that “compliments intended for solidarity can be interpreted as sarcasm or perfunctory compliments intended for requests.” These reactions which are



explained as failures may have been caused by “differences in cultures, value systems and or speech norms that the interlocutors harbour.” It is important to add that the individual paying a compliment should strive to be transparent so his motive or sincerity is not questioned or misinterpreted.

From the above instances, and using Sapir-Whorf cultural relativity hypothesis, we can assess the inseparability of language and culture and the influence of culture on compliments. According to Ayodabo (1997) a compliment is an important phenomenon which facilitates interpersonal discourse and asserts that in Nigeria, culture influences compliments. Ayodabo (op cit.) posits that as a consequence, compliments have been adopted and adapted in the expressions of our indigenous sensibilities. He reiterates that the expression: “well done” is in reality supposed to commend someone who has successfully accomplished a task but in Nigeria “well done” could also be used ironically as an indirect speech act to rebuke someone who has done something wrong or sarcastically to someone who is idling away depending on the tone used. Golato (2005) also echoes this view as she posits that compliments serve other functions apart from the face-saving function ascribed to them. Interpreting compliments depends on the linguistic experience, cultural background and disposition of the reader. Thus in Nigeria, readers are likely to interpret compliments based on their cultural and linguistic background. The writers of newspaper feature articles are expected to be mindful of the social, linguistic and cultural background of the readers and consider these factors in their choice of words.

### **2.3 Compliments: Types and Functions**

Brasdefer(2011)describes compliments as expressions that commonly occur in everyday conversational encounters among interlocutors of equal or higher status. Compliment as a speech act is defined as an utterance containing a positive evaluation by the speaker to the

addressee. In essence, complimenting is a social lubricant that is frequently applied in social communication to explicitly and implicitly attribute credit to the receiver for “some good”. The ability to compliment someone depends on the choice of words used and our ability to interpret these words accordingly. It is agreed that the giving and receiving of compliments serve to negotiate social relations and also help to establish solidarity and harmony between speakers. Searle (1976) describes compliments as expressive speech acts because their propositional contents specify a reaction of the speaker to a situation in which the hearer takes an active or passive part. According to Holmes (1986:446) a compliment is “a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed for some ‘good’ (possession, character, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer.” Similarly Kodama (1996) asserts that compliments are an intricate combination of positive evaluation, displayed good feelings, implicit friendliness, and half-admitted desire to please.” These explanations give an insight into some of the probable reasons why people pay compliments.

Wolfson (1983:38) describes compliments as social lubricants that create and maintain rapport. People tend to establish contact while seeking to achieve good social relationship between them through the use of compliments. She further points out that compliments fall into two major categories: The first type of compliments is the one that has to do with appearance: She states that the most typical kind of compliments on appearance has to do with apparel. It may also include many other aspects like: personal appearance, homes, furniture, cars and other material possessions. The second type of compliments is the one which comments on ability and she posits that this category is further classified into those that refer to a specific act which requires a compliment and those that refer to something produced through the addressee’s talent, personal qualities and taste.

According to Wolfson (1983b) compliments are usually classified into four categories, depending on what they refer to: appearance, ability and performance, possessions and personality. In addition, Wolfson (1983b) declares that the most frequent type is the compliment that has to do with appearance; according to her, this is most common among people who know one another well. She noted that appearance-related compliments occur mainly when the male is much younger than the female. Wolfson (1983b) posits that the social status or relationship between the speaker and the addressee has a great influence on the type of compliment that is considered appropriate and also reveals that the great majority of compliments that occur in interactions between people of unequal status are work-related.

Using Wolfson's parameters of ability and possessions as things to compliment may sometimes prove difficult as it is occasionally impossible to differentiate between appearance-related compliment and possession compliment. For example if someone says to Aina: "What a nice head-gear you have on", maybe either be judged as appearance or possession related especially when one is not sure if it is the effect of the head-gear (appearance) or the possession of the head gear (possession) that is being praised. Looking at the two types of compliments as proffered by Wolfson, it is possible to infer that they deal with the observable. It is assumed that material acquisition or even qualities like ability or a smile which are manifest, are observable qualities hence, they can be complimented. That said, it becomes difficult to account for perceived or non-manifest abilities like compassion or integrity which are latent and can only be noticed when put into action. This may make it difficult for one to actually distinguish between the compliments on appearance or possession.

According Wolfson (1983b) status plays a huge role in the use of compliments and to a large extent dictates their use. Status refers to the rank that an individual holds and status is either achieved or ascribed. According to Manes and Wolfson (1983), Holmes (1986) and Yule

(1996) compliments are classified as: gender compliments, social compliments, honorific, politically motivated and status compliments (achieved and ascribed).

### Gender compliments

Compliments are given and received by the same gender: (male-male and female-female) and by opposite gender (male-female or female -male). Basically, there are inherent differences between the genders and Holmes (2003) reveal that while women pay each other compliments on appearance, most often, men pay complimentsto one another on possession. On same gender compliments, Tannen (1990) attributes female linguistic behaviour as a tool used for rapport building and it is mainly motivated for the purpose of strengthening affiliations. With respect to opposite gender compliments, Wogan (2006) makes the following observations:

- i. Males pay females almost twice as many compliments on physical appearance as females gave males.
- ii. Females are more wary of giving compliments especially those regarding physical appearance for fear of being considered forward or romantically assertive.
- iii. There is an expectation among both genders that females place greater significance on physical appearance than males do.

Compliments are described as formulaic speech acts in the sense that a very small number of lexical items and syntactic patterns account for a great majority of them. Brower, Gerri ten and De Haan (1979) while evaluating Lakoff's (1975) work on "Women's Speech" found that words that had been labelled as 'women's speech' were being used by both genders when addressing women especially in complimentary language. They observed that

adjectives like: “adorable, charming, sweet, lovely, divine” which had previously been used were replaced with neutral words like “terrific, cool, neat, etc.”

Gender differentiation compliments occur when expressions are used to distinguish the recipient as being male or female. As established by Lakoff (1975) some expressions like ‘lovely’, and ‘adorable’ were tagged “women speech”, but the researcher has observed that these speeches are absolutely not limited to female only. The observation is highlighted with this example; if for instance my Head of Department wears a good pair of leather shoes and I compliment him by saying “What lovely pair of shoes you have on” it will be almost impossible for someone to know that I was talking to a male, but if I say “The Head of Department, Mrs.Bako has a lovely pair of shoes” then the gender of the recipient becomes obvious.

Honorifics are also helpful in gender differentiation compliments as illustrated by the use of expressions like: “The Princess” and “The Queen” which automatically reveal that the recipient of the compliment is female as different from “The Prince” which immediately signifies a male recipient. Further studies by Lauzen and Dozier (2002) indicated that appearance related compliments in most cases; sexist compliments were bestowed more on women than on men. Holmes (1988) suggests that the discrepancies in male-male and female-female complimentary language may be due to differences in perception concerning the purpose of compliments. Wolfson and Manes (1980), Manes (1983), Wolfson (1981, 1983) established that the structures of compliments consist of three main syntactic patterns: two verbs “like” and “love”, which are freely evaluative and five adjectives (“adorable” “divine”, “charming”, “sweet”, “lovely”) which constitute two-thirds of the adjectives used as illustrated in these examples:

(a) NP is/ looks (really) adjective – “Your raincoat is/looks really nice.”

(b) I (really) like/love NP – “I really like/love your hair.”

In New Zealand, women tend to use the compliment patterns of (NP) “What a nice gown” and men, adjectives (NP) - “Nice car.” In American women like to use the emphasized form: “I love...” rather than “I like ....” And they also favour the use of intensifiers. The applications of these forms were mostly predominant in women-women compliment. Gender differentiation compliments is useful to this study since it makes it possible to differentiate the gender of the recipients.

### Politically motivated compliments

Politically motivated compliments are types of compliments that are mainly used in political settings. According to Harth (1992) politically motivated compliments are compliments that have political undertones. Abaya cited in Ayodabo and Butari (2013:184) reiterate that language and politics have a symbiotic relationship. It has been observed that in politics and politicking, men and women who vie for public offices and leadership positions are addressed in accordance with their positions so; some expressions which are considered politically appropriate are employed. In other words, language is used extensively to communicate at different levels by politicians. It is obvious that politically motivated compliments are designed primarily to aid the complimented person to achieve a higher political status as a result adjectives and intensifiers are often employed to accomplish this goal. The researcher has observed that over time expressions like “man of timber and calibre”, “political juggernaut”, “political bride” are adopted by writers of newspaper feature articles in the Nigerian political scene. These compliments apart from praising the beneficiaries also enhance the chances of the aspiring politicians.

Abaya (2008:40) observes that “political language is susceptible to manipulation”. This implies that expressions are sometimes manipulated for selfish reasons like getting a

candidate endorsed for a political office. Most expressions that are political in nature are used on the assumption that a reader in a given context has knowledge of such utterance based on mutual knowledge. This mutual knowledge is what informs the use of some lexical items especially in Nigerian political terrain where a politician may be referred to as a 'political bride' to signify that the subject is an asset to his party. This is contrary to real life where a bride is female and a wife-to-be. So, even though the phrase appears to be a misnomer, it is regarded as correct in political discourse because it accomplishes the purpose of portraying the person as an asset to his party. This partly explains why when a compliment is used for the purpose of achieving political gains; it may become contentious because some amount of objectivity might be lacking in its use. Politically motivated compliments is important to this study because it helps to highlight the virtues or vices in our politicians and as a result enables readers to make informed decisions with regard to our political figures.

### Social compliments

Manes (1983) and Holmes (1986) agree that compliments are affective and social in nature and proceed to describe a compliment as a social phenomenon which engenders better interactions among people in the society. Compliments are used mainly to convey affection, approval or social good. Thus, among family members some endearing words function as compliments. Words such as "honey", "sweet-heart", "darling" and even funny expressions like "the only mosquito in my net", "the sugar in my tea" which are used by people in intimate relationships, are expected to convey a feeling of appreciation to the recipient.

Compliments also foster solidarity and the use of compliments among friends is also noticeable by the use of expressions like "BFF" ("Best Friend Forever") which is used in addressing intimate friends. The researcher has observed some instances (especially at social gatherings like birthdays) where utterances like: "The lady of the day, the ever-green and

ever-young sweet sixteen”who is also be referred to as “the birthday girl” are used to compliment the celebrant who is probably celebrating her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. This mode of complimenting birthday celebrants appears to have become popular and is now generally accepted as appropriate at social settings. The social compliments are vital to the study as they expose the different categories of society and the likely compliments inherent in these classes. In addition the social compliments are relevant to our study because it constitutes the data for analysis.

### Honorific compliments

The Thesaurus defines honorifics as “an expression of respect”; “a word or expression that conveys esteem or respect when used in addressing or referring to a person.” It is also used as a title prefixing a person’s name for example, ‘Mr.’ before a man’s name and ‘Miss’, ‘Ms’ or ‘Mrs.’ before a woman’s name, depending on her marital status. Honorifics may also be used to denote a person’s occupation for example, the word ‘doctor’ (which is used to describe a medical practitioner or a holder of an academic doctorate degree) or the use of “Reverend” for the clergy and “Captain” which is used to address a pilot or sailor. Some honorifics act as complete replacements for a name, for example, “Sir”, “Your Excellency”, “Your Royal Highness”, or “Madam”.

Yule (1996:10) views honorifics as “expressions which indicate higher status.” By this observation one is able to decipher the status of an addressee by the compliments used in addressing him. Honorifics cover a wide use of politically correct and socially motivated forms of respect. This is a common feature in Nigeria where titles are accorded high prominence. In some cases there is some amount of embellishments in the use of these titles although this practice is sometimes taken to a ridiculous level especially when one person is addressed as: Chief, Sir, Dr. X. The appendage of Dr. may be used by someone who probably



had little or no education but because an honorary doctorate is conferred on him, takes it as a title and is addressed thus. Ziael (2012) observes that the use of multiple honorifics before a name is allowed in Iran and from experience in Nigeria as well but the same is not obtainable in Britain where one is allowed to adopt only one title. In social circles especially in America and even in Nigeria, honorific nicknames have been used to describe leading figures in various areas of endeavours like music, industry, sport, commerce and the media. 'Father' or 'Mother' have been used for innovations and royal titles like 'King' and 'Queen' for dominant figures in a field; thus, we have "The King of Rock 'n' Roll", a title that is associated with Elvis Presley and "The Queen of Soul" which is a title ascribed to Aretha Franklin. In Nigeria, we have Sunny Ade as 'The King of Fuji Music' and Atunyota Akporobomerere (Ali Baba) as 'King of Comedy'.

The T/V distinction which is the French form 'tu' (familiar) and 'vous' (non-familiar) of 'you' is also a visible element in honorifics as the nature of compliment paid enables one to place the social status of the addressee (especially where age and position are accorded great regard) as a result of these distinctions. Yule (1996:10) asserts that "the choice of one form will certainly communicate something (not directly said) about the speaker's view of his or her relation with the addressee." An example of this is the Yoruba expression: "Won ti de" which means "they have arrived". "Won" is the plural form of 'you' in Yoruba language but in this context it is used honorifically to acknowledge an elderly person whose arrival is being announced. "Won" is thus intended to distinguish the addressee as an elderly person and it is not meant to convey plurality which is the actual meaning of "won". The honorific compliments forms part of the data needed for analysis, and is therefore, important to the study. The classification of the honorific compliments makes it possible to place the recipient of the compliment correctly and this makes it easier for analysis.

### Achieved and ascribed compliments

According to Linton (1963) achieved status is a social position a person takes on voluntarily that reflects both personal ability and merit. An individual's occupation falls under the category of achieved status. Linton (1963) in a similar manner describes ascribed status as "the social status a person is assigned at birth or later assumed involuntarily in life. It is not earned nor chosen but assigned." Linton (op.cit) emphasizes that achieved status is determined by a person's performance or effort while the ascribed status is assigned to an individual without reference to their innate abilities. Ascribed status plays an important role in societies because it provides members with a defined and unified identity.

Compliments by nature are meant to make one have a positive feeling; therefore, these ascribed or achieved compliments which are expressed as formal and respectful compliments help to engender that feeling of appreciation. Linton (op.cit) equally noted that a person who is addressed as "Professor" or "Maestro" accepts such compliments because he is accomplished in that field such that when such forms of compliments are used in a written text, it is possible for the reader to decipher that these compliments have been earned as a result of the achievement associated with the title. In addition, the ascribed compliments also make the recipient feel respected and appreciated. Examples of ascribed compliments are titles bestowed on royalty. In the western world, titles such as the "Prince", "Duke", "Earl" and "Count" are common and are bestowed upon the recipients even without their participating in any endeavour or having any landmark achievement. The same practice is applicable in Nigeria, for example in Hausa language, the crown prince is referred to as "Yerima" while "Edaiken" is used in addressing the crown prince in Bini Kingdom. The use of such compliments bequeaths automatic recognition upon the holder of the title. An achieved or ascribed compliment plays an important role in our interactions and is particularly relevant to this study because it enables the reader to place the recipient's status.

Linton (1936) noted that it sometimes becomes difficult to delineate the ascribed compliments from the achieved because of some overlap in the functions of some lexical items. According to him a word like “Sir” could be regarded as both ascribed and achieved compliments depending on the context in which they have been utilized. For example in Christendom especially in the Catholic and Anglican churches, knights of the church are addressed as “Sir” and this is viewed as achieved compliment but if a young man greets an older person with this expression: “Good morning Sir” it will be regarded as ascribed because there is no element of achievement in that greeting except if some extra information conveys such. Ascribed and achieved compliments are significant to the study because they allow the reader to differentiate between the compliments.

As observed, compliments play various roles at different occasions thus, (Manes and Wolfson(1981), Holmes (1988), Herbert (1990) and Johnson and Roen (1992) agree that the main purpose of using compliments is to establish, negotiate, maintain or consolidate social solidarity. Holmes (1988) suggests that analysis of the pragmatic and sociolinguistic features of compliments reveal that in any speech event, compliments have a number of different functions especially when viewed from divergent cultural perspectives.

According to (Holmes 1988) compliments “increase and consolidate solidarity between interlocutors”. Compliments are generally treated as positively affective speech acts directed to addressees and they serve as powerful devices for mutual support and solidarity. Similarly, Good (1978) asserts that compliments make the hearer feel good and also aid in reducing the distance between people by making them feel more comfortable in interacting with each other. Wolfson(1981) asserts that compliments can replace some speech acts formulas like thanks, apologies, greetings and other speech acts and she supplied instances of how these acts can be replaced by compliments. An example of this is when a housewife is complimented instead of being thanked for a well-cooked meal; or instead of an apology a

compliment is offered. Having highlighted the positive functions of compliments we also realise that some compliments do not always consolidate solidarity nor do they make the hearer to feel good. Burbach(2015) asserts that sometimes, compliments are used politely to express disdain. She illustrates this with the expression: “I like you. You have the boldness of a much younger woman.” According to her this statement is a polite way of implying that the person being complimented is no longer young.

From the definitions of compliment, the types of compliments, the functions of compliments and the significance of their use, it is clear that compliments are not only common in daily discourse but are also used in companies, government agencies and universities as written recommendations to determine staff employment. In a similar manner, compliments are also employed by the media to present the subject that is being complimented in a positive or negative light. Compliments achieve relevance by informing the hearer of the speaker’s intention, thought and opinion. For a compliment to be accepted as one it must be manifest and must be seen as one. A compliment should reflect the real world and must be used interpretatively in order for it to be understood. This review is necessary to provide background knowledge of compliments and how they can be better interpreted and appreciated. The various types of compliments thus provide a veritable premise for the analysis of data.

#### **2.4 Mass Media in Nigeria**

Frank (2004:7) posits that “the media primarily serves the function of maintaining cultural, social, economic and political allegiance as well as informing, educating and persuading the public.” Thus the media is used as a term that covers a wide spectrum of communication like: magazines, radio, posters, maps or even little notes. The Webster’s Dictionary (2013) defines mass media as “those means of communication that reach and influence larger numbers of

people especially newspapers, popular magazines, radio, and television.”Salawu (2004:4) cited in Gusau (2009) affirms the same view by describing the media as “an institution developed by modern civilization to present the needs of the day, to foster commerce and industry, to inform and lead public opinion and to furnish that check upon government which no institution has been able to provide.” The mass media is the live wire of society, the social neural system on which the capabilities of science and technology rest. Gusau (2009:18) cited Sayed (2006:1) who asserts that the “media in general and the press in particular are among the most powerful institutions that disseminate and publicisepolicies and ideologies of the ruling group in a given society.” The media as a means of disseminating information, entertainment and education, is generally powerful because of the wide coverage it enjoys in terms of readership therefore whatever opinion or ideas are expressed are most often taken to be true. According to Coleman (2015), the mass media play a critical role in educating the general public. He subsequently proceeds to list the different media platforms as:

1. Print media which was the first platform to be introducedcovers numerous channels namely: the newspaper, books, pamphlet or comics. The print media which is a collection of sheets of paper or any work utilises a variety of channels like magazines, which are published periodically and contains an assortment of articles that are most times financed by adverts and or purchased by readers of the newspaper. The newspapers contain news and information, and advertisement on low cost paper.
2. The broadcast media which is made up of radio, film and television was the next to be introduced.
3. The digital media include the internet, mobile communication, e-mail, websites, blogs and internet radio and television and they are more relevant and accessible especially when compared with the scheduled programmes of the radio and television.

The different aspects of the mass media have been considered but the research is focused on newspapers and specifically, the feature articles which comprise the source of data analysis for the study.

Babalola (2002) reveals that before the advent of the electronic media, the print journalism had dominated the landscape for more than 500 years; this was consequent upon the invention of the printing press by Johann Gutenberg. Babalola (2002) reiterates that the newspaper is seen as the most prolific and authentic medium for the exchange of ideas and the spread of knowledge. The first recorded newspaper in the world was the “ActaDuirna” (59 B.C), owned by Julius Caesar and was used as a medium for informing the public about important social and political happenings in the Empire. Newspapers is a scheduled publication containing news of current events, informative articles, diverse features, editorials and advertising and have the characteristics of being accessible, regular and up to date and they cover a wide range of topics. Newspapers are particularly known to lead in the initiation of discourse on crucial issues and this is achieved by referring to statements and actions of prominent national figures, celebrities and events around the nation to inform the readership.

Tosanwumi and Ekuwuazi (1994) assert that the origin of the Nigerian Press or the press in Nigeria is a concept that predates the present day Nigeria. It goes as far back as the 1840s when the European missionaries established community newspapers to propagate Christianity. The idea of journalism in Nigeria began in Calabar in 1847 and in Abeokuta in 1859. It had its roots in the evangelical (church) journalism in Calabar. Henry Townsend’s *IweIrohin*, a bilingual publication in Abeokuta was the first newspaper to be published. The increase in the political and social activities led to a nationalistic consciousness which in turn necessitated the establishment of various newspapers like the Lagos *Daily News* by Herbert Macaulay, the *West African Pilot* by Nnamdi Azikiwe and the *Tribune* by Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Tosanwumi and Ekuwuazi (1994) observed that newspapers in Nigeria

which this study focuses on can be categorized into two broad groups. The first category comprises daily newspapers like, *The Punch*, *The Nigerian Tribune*, *This Day*, or even those that are devoted to weekends like *The Sunday Vanguard*, *The Sunday Punch* and *The Sunday Guardian* can be recognized while those that are interested in the evening news like the *PM News* or the early morning news like the *AM News* are also in this class.

The second category as established by Tosanwumi and Ekwuazi (1994) comprises magazines, which are published weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. Two groups can also be identified in this group: the class that is devoted to serious or investigative journalism like *Tell*, *The News*, *Newswatch* etc and the other class, called soft-sell magazine, which is interested essentially in gossips, entertainment and celebrities. Notable in this group are publications like *Ovation*, *National Encomium*, *Hints* and *Hearts* magazines. Complementing these groups are the few newspapers that are published in indigenous Nigerian languages. These newspapers are regionally based; they cater to the needs of the people within their regions. Example of such regional papers are *Alaroye* which caters to the Yoruba speaking region and *GaskiyaTafiKwabo* which caters to the needs of the Hausa speaking region of the country. It is established that newspapers cover a wide range of headings in any publication and are made up of various components namely: commentaries, editorials, news report, society and style, feature writing, politics and religion are part of what makes up a newspaper. It is significant to note that there are different components of the newspaper but the data sourced are from the newspaper feature articles thus making feature articles relevant to the study.

**News Reports:** White (1988:243) defines news report as “news grounded in communicative events such as speeches, interviews and press releases which act primarily to represent, not activity sequences but the points of view of various external resources.” A news report should

strive to remain objective and should use neutral language while presenting a diversity of opinions, voices, and perspectives of the event, incident or issue being discussed.

**Editorials:** Walbert (2008) describes an editorial or leading article as an opinion piece written by the senior editorial staff of a newspaper. An editorial reflects the opinion of the periodical and is sometimes classified as “opinion”. An editorial has a dedicated page which sometimes features “letters to the editor” from members of the public that want to share their views. The editorial board of the newspaper has the responsibility of evaluating the issues that are important enough to arouse the reader’s interest.

**Commentaries:** Van Dijk (1988) asserts that commentaries exert an important influence on political opinion formation, both on the everyday reader and on the institution and or the elite members of a society. A commentary is an explanatory treatise, a record of events usually written by a participant. “News commentaries are opinion articles with the important communicative function of distinctive and sometimes authoritative voice that speaks to the public directly about matters of public importance.”

**Adverts:** Bovee (1992:7) defines advertising as “the non-personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media.” Amodu (2003:88) observes that advertisement is “a form of communication through the media about products, services and ideas paid for by sponsors whose intentions are both to inform and persuade.”

**Feature writing:** This is a special human interest story or article that is not closely tied to a recent news event but is part of newspaper writing which allows the writers to express their opinions in such a way that the reader’s attention is captivated. John (1973) in Kure (2004) asserts that a feature is “all materials in a newspaper or magazine except news, adverts editorials, pictures and cartoons.” Kure (2004) affirms that feature writing is a form of



journalistic writing after news.” He reiterates that a feature story is longer than a standard news story, which focuses mainly on people, places and events with a personal slant that is written in an individual style and he also submits that feature articles are journalistic, researched, descriptive, thoughtful and thorough. Feature writing covers topics in depth by amplifying and explaining the important details of an occurrence. Feature writing is not news reporting, rather it is a type of writing that examines or penetrates deeper into a subject because the writer has more time and space to develop the theme. Feature writing which this study is focused on includes cover articles and the pieces that lead the inside sections of a newspaper and also involves interactions with interview subjects. According to Kamen (2017) feature articles contain a story line with entertainment value and are found in every section of the paper; from news, to business and sports. In other words ‘anything’ written in a feature-oriented way is a feature article. The feature style of writing involves employing a more leisurely pace than news, more length and more focus on human element. The different types of feature article writings are vital to this study because most categories of feature articles employ these compliments consequently; the feature articles provide a veritable source of material for data analysis.

### **Types of Feature Writing**

Kure (2004:219) and Jefferson (2012) list seven types of feature articles namely:

**Brighteners:** Brighteners are articles that are intended to make the reader cheerful because they sometimes appear funny.

**Human interest:** The human-interest story is the best known form of feature writing. In the main, it discusses issues through the experience of another.

**Profiles:** Another type of feature writing is the one that focuses on the profile of an individual. It seeks to reveal the individual's character and lifestyle. It is mainly preoccupied by exposing the various facets of the subject so readers may get to know the person more.

**News feature:** This type of articles brings a human-interest focus into breaking news by adding personal involvement to an otherwise distant and seemingly unimportant piece of news.

**How to:** These articles tell a reader how to do something. It achieves this by teaching the topic through education, research or interviews with experts who explain the steps of the process.

**Historical Features:** These features commemorate important dates in history or turning points in our social, political and cultural development. In most cases they allow the reader to revisit events and the issues surrounding them. They are largely tagged, "this date in history."

According to Jefferson (2012) the feature writer gives information in a pleasing and entertaining format that highlights an issue and how it is influenced. In order to hold the reader's attention, he uses colourful, descriptive and embellished language full of anecdotes to fascinate the reader. As with news reporting, the feature writer must be accurate, precise and fair in his writing. To be able to communicate effectively, the writer must have a good command and use of the language, which include the use of compliments (depending on context). Such use of compliments gives rise to varied interpretation being given to these expressions; consequently, adverse or positive reactions are possible. It is obvious that the act of complimenting in the media satisfies both a social and political purpose as writers use compliments to enhance their social position in order to achieve political ambitions or enhanced status.

A lot of reasons may be responsible for the use of compliments in newspapers. We are aware that newspapers are published for a number of reasons: to inform, to educate and to influence. The researcher is of the view that compliments form part of what writers of feature articles employ to convey spite or goodwill so it may equally be used to achieve political or social gains. For instance, a paper that promotes or compliments a particular section of the country may enjoy wider readership while the one that uses uncomplimentary language may find its patronage low in that particular area. The use of compliments in feature sections of newspapers also indicates the papers' sectional or even regional bias. Appropriate application of compliments therefore enables readers to conscientiously decide the objectivity of the newspapers. It also enables the reader to assess the factuality, precision and even the patriotism of the newspaper. There is, therefore, a need to investigate how writers employ compliments in selected newspapers to establish what speech acts are employed and also to determine if these compliments flout or adhere to the Gricean maxims. The different types of feature article writings are vital to this study particularly because most of the compliment types are reflected in the feature article and are therefore considered a veritable source of material for data analysis.

#### **2.4.1 Language of Newspaper Writing**

Writing in newspapers is not much different from other types of writing but it seems that newspaper writing has a unique style. It is obvious that any piece of writing must be coherent, easy to read and clear enough to engage the reader's attention. Consequently, a newspaper writer tries to observe these requirements in his writing. Richardson (2012:154) declares that journalism creates pictures in our minds and often uses hyperbolic, abbreviated and archaic words in order to use less space. *The News Manual* declares that the news style employs vocabulary and sentence structure to inform its intended audience. The language is explicit, precise, crisp, brief and economical and does not rely on jargon. Writers often prefer to use

shorter words and also try to avoid using the same word more than once in a paragraph. The writer has the responsibility of making the reader understand what is happening around him; therefore he must adopt short, sharp and clear sentences that are lively. He must avoid using paired negatives and must also avoid using subordinate clauses to start a sentence.

Richardson (2012) affirms that the newspaper writer employs subjective and emotive language in order to stir up readers' emotions. Potter cited in Knoll (2013) asserts that basic journalism requires that the "5Ws" which stand for "Who", "What", "When", "Why" and "How" must be applied to whole stories because according to him, "they are a key factor to checking." The "5Ws" curiously seem to echo the four Gricean maxims which equally guide users of language on: quantity (how much to say), quality (what to say), manner (how to say) and relation (to whom to say). The similarities of the Gricean Maxims and the "5Ws" observed in newspaper writings make it apparent that the language of the newspaper is relevant to the study as it provides an insight into how language is employed by newspaper writers.

## **2.5 Functional Approach to the Study of Language**

Language has been studied for many years and from different perspectives. Language is viewed as a social phenomenon and a natural behaviour. Chomsky (1957) defines language from a grammatical point of view as "a finite set of rules which would enable users to make an unlimited number of expressions." Osisanwo (2008:1) defines language from a phonological point of view as "human vocal noise or the arbitrary graphic representation of this noise, used systematically and conventionally by members of a speech community for purposes of communication." Halliday (1994:106) defines language thus: "Language enables humans to build a mental picture of reality to make sense of what goes on around them and inside them."

Various approaches and theories abound and each of them has its foundation which distinguishes it from the others. It is important to point out that these approaches were occasioned by the need to bring the study of language into better perspective. Analysis of language may be done by using different approaches: Traditional, Generative, Structural, Pedagogic and Functional. All of these approaches have made great impact in linguistics.

Jacobson defines six functions of verbal communications among which are the referential function of language which takes into consideration, the context of the communicative exchange as well as deictic words to make expressions clearer. The emotive or “affective” function of language does not necessarily take cognisance of the speaker’s feelings but rather relies more on interjections to communicate effectively. In addition to the emotive function is the phatic which is associated with the contact / channel because it is used for interactions. The phatic function helps to open and maintain casual conversations. Having observed the functions of language and bearing in mind that Jacobson considers that of the six functions, one is always dominant in any given text or context, the researcher finds some of the functions of language discussed in this chapter relevant to the study.

Richards (1929) distinguishes between the two uses of language and describes them as referential and emotive. He lists four kinds of functions as: sense, feeling, tone and intention. According to him, we speak to say something which is referred to as ‘sense’. In addition to making sense, we convey our attitude to the subject which is referred to as ‘feeling’. The ‘tone’ is speaker’s attitude to his listener which implies that his tone changes with listeners. The ‘intention’ is the speaker’s purpose or aim to achieve an effect. The speaker’s intention operates through and satisfies itself in a combination of other functions. Thus the influence of his intention upon the language he uses is additional to the other three influences. Richards (op cit.) concludes that in our use of language, one of the functions is always dominant because the subject and intention determines the priority given to the other functions. The

functions as stated by Richards have a close similarity to the speech act theory which is a pragmatic concept that considers a speaker's intention and is therefore relevant to the research. Consequent upon the review of the functions of language, the study then adopts Pragmatics, a branch of linguistics which studies the functional nature of language while relying on context.

### **2.5.1 Pragmatics**

Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics that deals with language in use and the context in which it has been used. The term is attributed to Morris (1938) whose major concern was to outline the nature of a science of signs. Morris (1938:6) posits that while pragmatics studies "the relation of signs to interpreters", semantics studies the relation of sign to objects and syntax studies the formal relation of signs to one another. Various views of Pragmatics have been expressed by linguists. Crystal (1991:32) defines Pragmatics as "a term traditionally used to label one of the three major divisions of semiotics along with semantics and syntactics." Yule (1996:3) posits that "Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader)." Yule (1996:3) summarizes Pragmatics as "the study of speaker-meaning and the study of the expression of relative distance."

The definitions of Pragmatics enable one to relate pragmatics as a vehicle for making meaning realisable from language. Pragmatics makes it possible to fathom the speaker's intended meaning (which may probably be used outside the realm of vocabulary, grammar or even the semantics of the language) because of the extra-linguistic characteristics involved. It should be pointed out that pragmatics examines our use and understanding of the language we speak and hear, read and write in language studies; it also takes into account our knowledge of the world which basically has to do with our shared knowledge. Pragmatics as

a subfield of linguistics makes it possible for us to investigate how “meaning beyond words” can be understood without ambiguity. Thus, the hearer is able to interpret a message based on previously established common grounds like context, shared experience and other forms of extra-linguistic experience that are vital in arriving at the right interpretations from received messages, speech events or written texts.

Pragmatics as the study of how language relates to context or use is defined by Yule (2008:4) as the “study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of those forms.” According to him, Pragmatics allows for the interpretation of people’s intended meaning. This view reiterates the definition of Pragmatics by Leech (1983) as “the study of speaker meaning” and highlights the fact that the ability to know of people’s intended meaning is possible because a lot of factors like context, implicature and deixis come into prominence.

Leech (1983) defines Pragmatics as “the waste basket of linguistics”; a view that takes into consideration the various aspects of language that has not been catered for by the other sub-fields of linguistics. Pragmatics depends on syntax and semantics for a better understanding, and it implies that focusing solely on structure is detrimental to meaning. It is in this respect that context, therefore, proves useful in interpreting meaning. These definitions by Yule and Leech (1983) underscore the importance of Pragmatics in linguistics. As a sub-field of linguistics, Pragmatics encompasses speech act theory, conversational implicature, presupposition, deixis and other aspects that account for Pragmatics as “the waste-basket of linguistics.” Pragmatics is important to linguistics because it makes it possible for a listener to go beyond the sentential level and apply context into any form of discourse for a better interpretation. Pragmatics is important to this research most especially because Pragmatics makes it possible for a speaker or writer to convey his intended meaning by employing Pragmatic concepts like context, speech acts and cooperative principle in our interpretation. Doing a pragmatic study may therefore involve using numerous approaches such as Speech

Acts as proposed by Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975), the Cooperative Principle, Context, Deixis and Presupposition. Speech Acts approach is based on Austin's (1962) performative utterances and his theory of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts which are commonly taken to include acts like promising, ordering, greeting, warning, inviting and congratulating. Bearing in mind the various functions of compliments and how compliments engender better social interactions, the study is therefore directed at investigating how the various pragmatic orientations are applied in the use of compliments. The speech act as classified by Searle (1975) in the Speech Act Theory and the maxims as proposed by Grice (1975) in his Cooperative Principle form the theoretical foundation upon which the analyses are based.

It has been noticed that newspapers writers sometimes do not adhere to the maxims. Newspaper is meant for public consumption hence must be governed by rules in its approach. The maxims which are pre-determined and strictly guided by rules become valuable in the analyses of data. Since this study is anchored on compliments in the feature articles then the researcher assumes that in order to avoid some unpleasant situations it is essential for the writer to know when to say, where to say, how to say, what to say and to whom to say what they intend to. The speech act has a wider spectrum than the maxims in its detail as a result, the study considers Searle (1975) taxonomy of speech act a veritable tool in data analysis because it takes into consideration the world knowledge, experience and contexts of an utterance thus making it important to the understanding of compliments which employ metaphoric use of language. The speech act theory is believed to be comprehensive in its approach as it goes beyond the maxims in its coverage. By taking the two approaches simultaneously, a comprehensive analysis becomes more feasible.

In addition, it provides a virile alternative in the course of the analysis of the data collected because of the different types of compliments. The study focuses on compliments in selected



newspapers and although a lot of research has been done in Pragmatics and even on newspapers, there are some differences between this and previous researches. Ibileye (2002) was primarily on modal verbs with a syntactic/pragmatic approach. That is, the framework used in the analysis of the constitution is contextual hence pragmatic and also syntactic but this study is on compliment which is a speech act therefore is purely pragmatic and has adopted a pragmatic element within the confines of pragmatics in the data analyses. Also, Abaya (2008) researched on the language of the military in coup announcements focusing on the role (use) of language in Pragmatics. This study, however, is a Pragmatics component that has complied with a tool within the framework of Pragmatics in the data analysis.

### **2.5.2 Speech Act Theory**

The speech act theory is attributed to the work of Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Akmajian et al (1980). Austin (1962) asserts that “saying something will often or even normally produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons and it may be done with the design, intention or purpose of proclaiming them.” Austin thus established that in every utterance a person performs an act. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) and Bach and Harnish (1979) hold the view that all utterances are to be understood as instances of purposeful human action which merely require language for their performance. Searle (op.cit) stresses that propositional acts do not occur alone. The theory of speech acts aims to do justice to the fact that even though words (phrases, sentences) encode information, people do more things with words than merely conveying information. It is also interesting to note that when people convey information, they often convey more than their words encode. These acts could be stating a fact, an opinion, confirming or denying something. Wolfson (1981) affirms that “speech acts differ cross-culturally not only in the way they are realised but also in their distribution and their frequency of occurrence and in the function they serve”. Yule (1996: 47) describes speech

acts as “actions performed via utterance.” Bach (2014) asserts that “almost any speech act is really the performance of several acts at once, distinguished by different aspects of the speaker’s intention: there is the act of saying something, what one does in saying it and how one is trying to affect one’s audience.”

Gazdar (1979:90) echoes Austin (1962) by stating that utterances are equivalent to actions. Examples of words that can be considered to be actions are: “I name this ship” or “I pronounce you man and wife”, these utterances tend to create a new reality. It is evident that each of these expressions performs a speech act. From the foregoing it is obvious that an utterance is not only verbal communication but also an utterance that performs different acts which Austin (1962) refers to as performatives.

The speech act theory was propounded by Austin (1962) who established that utterances are performative thus his theory of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Gadzar (1979) also classifies the speech acts into:

Locutionary acts: It is speech act that has taken place and Austin (1962) describes the locutionary act as the actual utterance and the ostensible meaning that can possibly be attributed to utterances from linguistic perspectives like phonetic, syntactic and semantic implications. Yule (2008:49) expresses the same opinion by declaring that a locutionary act is a meaningful linguistic expression.

Illocutionary acts: According to Austin (1962) the illocutionary act is the real actions which are performed by the utterance. This is to say that an illocutionary act refers to the type of function a speaker intends to accomplish in the course of producing an utterance. According to Bach and Harnish (1979:4) the illocutionary force is an utterance that is made with the intention to perform an illocutionary act; and for the act to take place, the hearer must have heard and understood the speaker’s intention. In a similar manner Bach and Harnish cited in

Lawal et al. (1996) propose that the Mutual Contextual Beliefs (MCBs) is used to capture the concept of the speaker's intention as well as the "pragmatics of the particular situation of social interaction." In their opinion the (MCBs) are important because they are made of variables which place a high premium on using language text to present a distinctive shade of meaning in the midst of limitless possibilities offered by the grammar of a language. That is to say, it takes into consideration what the hearer is expected to think in order to ascertain the speaker's intention. Alabi (2002:157) notes that the choices made by a language user not only convey a meaning but also reveal his state of mind or world view.

According to Strawson (1964) most illocutionary acts are performed not with an intention to conform to a convention but with an audience-directed communicative intention. The various insights into illocutionary acts agree on the fact that "the speaker's intention" is vital in the speech act such that an expression as simple as: "Give me the money" has the possibility of performing the illocutionary act of request or ordering. An appraisal of the utterance reveals that an illocutionary act was performed by the expression. The illocutionary act which was performed by that utterance is what is referred to as the speaker's intention.

Over the years, the three acts were subsumed and narrowed down to illocutionary acts. Thomas (1995:51) observed that "you will find the terms speech act, illocutionary act, illocutionary force, pragmatic force or just force all used to mean the same thing. This is because the communicative purpose of utterances is the focal point in the performance of a speech act.

Various linguists; Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Bach and Harnish (1979) have classified illocutionary acts into several categories. Austin (1962) originally classified the speech acts into five types according to the functions which specific verbs perform namely:

Verdictives: Verdictives are speech acts that are used to assert something or give a verdict

Exercitives: Exercitives are used to urge you to do something or exercise power.

Commissives: The commissives are speech acts which are used to promise or commit one to do something.

Behabitives: The behabitives express attitude and social behaviour or social agreements.

Expositives:The expositives are used to express emotions and fit utterances into argument or conversation.

This classification has been found to be deficient because most of the demarcations do not correspond accurately and completely with English verbs and their uses in the language.

Searle (1969) modified Austin's categorisation and came up with his own taxonomy as follows:

Directives: Directives are speech acts that direct the hearer to take a particular action for example requests and commands.

Commissives: Commissives are utterances that commit a speaker to something especially future actions like promises and oaths.

Expressives:Expressives are speech acts that express the speaker's attitudes and emotions like appreciation apologies, congratulations, etc.

Declaratives: These are speech acts that have declarative implications in other words they bring about change. Declaratives enable the speaker to perform acts like baptism, blessing or pronouncing a verdict pronouncing someone husband and wife which automatically changes the reality of the affected people.

Representatives: These are utterances that describe situations orstate what the speaker believes to be the truth.

Assertives: These are acts that commit a speaker to the truth of the utterance for instance, reciting a creed, stating, telling or asserting the truth.

Bach and Harnish (1979) have the taxonomy of speech act as follows:

Constantives: The constantives express a speaker's belief and can be used for assertives, predictives, descriptive, suppositives, suggestives, etc.

Directives: Directives express some attitude about a possible future action and the utterance can be taken as reason for the hearer's action. It is useful in requestives, prohibitive, permissives, etc.

Commissives: Commissives express the speaker's intention to do something; that is, a commitment to perform promises and offers.

Acknowledgements: These help to express feelings like congratulations, apologies, thanks, acceptance or rejection to the hearer.

In addition to the communicative acts, they also have the conventional illocutionary acts which are expressed as:

Effectives: The effectives are utterances that are capable of producing a change especially in an institutional context. Expressive are believed to overlap with Searle's declarative and even their own commissives and acknowledgement.

Verdictives: The verdictives do not produce facts but determine facts and they commit acts that cast verdicts, declaring decisions, judging and vetoing or voting.

Having reviewed the illocutionary acts and observed that some of the illocutionary acts overlap, the researcher considers the Searle (1975) taxonomy because it is comprehensive and adequately communicates the writer's intentions.

The perlocutionary act: This is the actual effect of the utterance on the listener. This effect could be inspiring, enlightening, persuading or other such actions. Austin (1962) states that perlocutionary acts are sometimes unintended and as a result, perlocutionary acts emphasise the effects on the hearer or reader. Austin (1962) noted that some ordinary language declaratives are used with an intention. He asserts that such sentences are not used to “say” things but rather to “do” things. For example to say “I name this child Mary” bestows the name on the child and elicits the perlocutionary act of Mary responding whenever the word “Mary” is uttered.

Osisanwo (2008:62) believes that scholars appear to disagree on the number of speech act types but however agree on the locutionary, illocutionary and the perlocutionary acts. Kempson (1975:51) expresses it succinctly thus: “...speaker utters sentences with a particular meaning (locutionary act) and with a particular force (illocutionary act) in order to achieve a certain effect (perlocutionary act) on the hearer.” Austin (1962) prompted people to pay more attention to the non-declarative use of language thus, the speech act theory not only provides illuminating explanation into sociolinguistic conduct, but also makes it possible for the reader to carry out some perlocutionary acts merely from reading a text. Perlocutionary acts which are the responses prompted by the illocutionary acts, are sometimes evident in some texts when people reading texts are made to exhibit emotions (like anger, pity or even fear) which in this study are termed perlocutionary acts. The responses exhibited when reading texts can be described as speech acts performed via written discourse. Amodu (2001:91) observes that it is possible for written language to elicit perlocutionary effects on readers. He demonstrates this by noting that people react to newspaper adverts and get lured into making purchases they ordinarily would not have made but ended up making because they responded to the messages encoded in the

advertisements. The speech act is important to this study because it forms part of the instrument for data analysis.

### **2.5.2 1. Indirect Speech Act, Compliments and Metaphors**

The study has previously established that a compliment is a speech act which is influenced by language and culture. Metaphor is a literary concept that is used to indicate transfers based on some resemblance between what is designated by the word and the inherent similarity in the concept it describes. A metaphor makes an implicit or hidden comparison between two things which are unrelated but share common characteristics. A metaphor has two sides namely: the figurative and the literal sides. The literal sense conveys the ordinary meaning of the word while the figurative side is the experiential or conceptual meaning of the word. The experientialists and the objectivists have different opinions on what metaphors are. The objectivists believe that metaphors can contribute to understanding because they make us see the similarities between two entities that share inherent properties. The experientialists on the other hand believe that metaphors signify imaginative reality. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) declare that metaphors are pervasive in everyday life, and not just in language but also in thought and action. Metaphor is an aspect of speech which serves as a device for persuading the listener or reader of the speaker or writer's argument. Writers, especially those that resort to compliments employ figurative language like metonymy, simile, metaphors, hyperboles or humour in conveying their impressions.

Grice believes metaphors deliberately flout a few maxims in order to arrive at a conversational implicature. He asserts that metaphors by their very nature involve categorical falsity. Consequently, metaphors violate the first maxim of quality which is, "Do not say what you believe to be false." Searle (1979) asserts that we are able to derive meaning out of indirect speech by means of a cooperative process from which we are able to derive multiple

illocutions. According to Yule (2008) there are three structural forms in the English language namely: declarative, imperative and interrogative which perform the communicative functions of statements, questions and commands or requests. Searle in Thomas (1995) asserts that, "An indirect speech act is one that is performed by means of another." This implies that an utterance apart from performing certain speech act goes beyond that by performing another act which in this sense is referred to as an indirect speech act. Consequently, when there is no direct relationship between a structure and a form, we have an indirect speech act which could be used to reject proposals or to make requests. This can be illustrated with the utterance, "It is cold outside" which is a declarative statement that functions as an indirect speech act because it conveys a warning, advice or request. Omole (1998) declares that Bach and Harnish (1979) tried to solve the problem of metaphors by expanding the scope of speech act beyond the predicate of the sentence to the entire sentence. It is interesting to note that metaphors just like compliments appeal directly to the senses of listeners or readers. Bach and Harnish (1979) believe that metaphors fall into the category of the indirect speech act because metaphors perform a number of functions that are beyond their ordinary meaning. Compliments and by extension metaphors, sharpen and satisfy the interest and imagination of readers. Writers often employ metaphors in the giving of compliments because they offer the reader or listener fresh ways of examining ideas and world views. In the expression, "her mouth was a fountain of delight", the writer expressed his thoughts metaphorically. The sentence is a compliment which has employed a metaphor to convey the poet's impression. The implication is that the subject was an intelligent and lively person who was quite witty. Having examined the relationship between compliments and the preponderant use of metaphors embedded in compliments, one can surmise that metaphors convey more than is stated. A metaphor, therefore, does not only perform literal



functions but also performs speech acts and indirect speech acts and consequently quite useful to the study.

### **2.5.3 Cooperative Principle**

Grice (1975) expresses the cooperative principle by making this declaration: “make your contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.” The cooperative principle assumes that people are guided by the four maxims which are called the “The Gricean Maxims” when they communicate. According to Grice (1975) participants in any communicative event speak cooperatively and accept one another in order to be understood in a particular way. The cooperative principle provides rational considerations which serve as guidelines for the efficient and effective use of language in conversation to ensure further cooperative ends. According to Levinson (1986:102) The Cooperative Principle and its maxims help to specify what participants have to do in order to converse in a maximally efficient, relational and cooperative way. Widdowson (2007:130) captures the maxims in these words: “these are the tenets of the Cooperative Principle. The quantity maxim relates to amount of information provided, the quality maxim to its truth, the relation maxim to its relevance, and the manner maxim to how it is expressed.” In effect, these maxims specify what participants have to do in order to communicate in a maximally efficient, rational and cooperative manner. This suggests that people should speak sincerely, relevantly and clearly while providing sufficient information. The Maxims are enumerated herein:

- a. **Maxim of quality:**
  - i Be truthful
  - ii. Make your contribution one that is true
  - iii. Do not say what you believe to be false
  - iv. Do not say that for which you lack evidence

b. **Maxim of quantity:** Quantity of information

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

ii Do not make your contribution more informative than is required

c. **Maxim of relation:** Relevance; Make your contribution relevant.

With respect to this maxim, Grice (1989:27) in a later work seemed to have discovered some flaws when he declared thus: "Though the maxim, itself is terse, its formulation conceals a number of problems that exercise me a good deal..." He attempted to indicate some shortcomings in this maxim, especially as regards the kind of relevance that is required. Although there may have been some shortcomings, his maxims are still very important in any type of discourse.

d. **Maxim of manner:** Be perspicuous

i. Avoid obscurity of expression

ii. Avoid ambiguity

iii. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)

iv. Be orderly

These maxims enable effective communication to take place and they shall be used in analysing our data.

The rationales for using the Gricean Maxims are:

- a. They examine how messages between interlocutors (writer and readers) are managed.
- b. The maxims are comprehensive in their nature because they show the connection between language users, messages and the psychologies of the interlocutors involved.

- c. They give room for various interpretations to an utterance or expression: either spoken or written.
- d. The Gricean maxims are intended to guide our communicative activities even though there are some inherent limitations. A study of previous works by scholars that have considered the various types of compliments, the forms, meanings, functions and appropriateness of such compliments employed shall be undertaken. Socio-culturally, Nigeria is portrayed as a country that respects its illustrious citizens and in an attempt to praise some of these citizens; a writer may sometimes become profuse in the compliments applied and so may not obey these maxims.

Some people flout (overtly break a maxim) or violate (covertly break a maxim) mainly to achieve something in the course of the discourse. According to Clark and Clark (1977: 124) and Levinson (1983) a speaker could breach or flout the maxims by being deliberately ambiguous or by the use of sarcasm in an utterance. They illustrate this with the example of a speaker who says something is 'terrific' when he knows that the listener knows it is 'terrible'. According to them sometimes when we speak we do mean something other than what our utterances suggest. One of the major limitations of the maxims is that they are not applicable to every culture; consequently, some newspapers writers/reporters sometimes disregard these principles because of some misplaced loyalty to "certain interests". Another reason why these maxims may be disregarded can be attributed to the ideological, financial, ethical and even religious biases of the writer/reporter. The Gricean maxims serve as an important guide for meaning in social communication thus applying it for data analysis makes it crucial to this study because it makes it possible for the researcher to analyse how some writers flout or adhere to the maxims.

#### 2.5.4 Deixis

Deixis means “pointing” via verbal communication. The more two speakers have in common, the less language they may need to use to identify familiar things. Levinson (2003:54) is of the view that “the single most obvious way in which the relationship between language and context is reflected in the structure of languages themselves is through the phenomenon of deixis.” The linguistic form that is used in carrying out the task of pointing is referred to as deictic expressions or indexicals. Finch (2000:214) argues that deixis refers to “those features of language which orientate our utterances in time, space, and the speaker’s standpoint.” Deixis relies on contextual information to convey meaning. This contextual information must be shared by the speaker and addressee in order for correct interpretation to be made. Mey (2001:55) asserts that “indexical expressions are a particular kind of referential expression, which in addition to the semantic of their ‘meaning’, their sense must include a reference to the particular context in which that sense is put to work.” .

Deixis is the phenomenon of certain words and phrases in an utterance which requires contextual information. There are various types of deixis: person, place and time. In a narrow sense, deixis is used to refer to pronouns. Deictic expressions refer to: ‘who’, ‘where’ and ‘when’. While the ‘who’ deixis is also known as person deixis, the ‘when’ deixis refers to time and the ‘where’ deixis refers to the place. For the actual context of person, place and time deixis to be understood, a two- way referential distinction of proximal and distal deixis have to be made. Fullmore (1971) describes these pronouns as the major grammaticalized types of deixis.

Person deixis: This concerns itself with the grammatical persons in an utterance. It is the encoding of the role of participants in a speech event. Yule (2003:131) describes the person deixis as expression that points to persons involved in a communication event. The speaker is

the first person singular (I) or the plural (We), the addressee which is (You) refers to the singular and plural second person, can be reversed in a speech act when the addressee becomes the speaker. The third person (He, She, It and They) encodes a non-participant role. They are the ones being spoken about.

Place deixis: Place deixis is concerned with the spatial locations relevant to an utterance and this can be viewed as distal or proximal. The locations may either be that of the speaker, the addressee or those of objects or persons being referred to. “Here” and “This” are used for proximal and “that” and “there”, used for distal referents. Place deixis are generally understood to be relative to the location of the speaker.

Time deixis: Time deixis on the other hand is temporal and it takes into account the various times involved in and referred to in an utterance. Fillmore (1971b) in Levinson (2003:62) refers to it as “Coding time” and “Receiving time”. In order for proper interpretation to be made the deictic centre has to be determined in any speech event.

Discourse deixis: Lyons, (1968), (1977) and Fillmore (1971b) (1975) in Levinson (2003: 62) agree that “Discourse deixis has to do with the encoding of reference to portions of the unfolding discourse in which the utterance is located. Discourse deixis which is also referred to as text deixis, is the use of expressions within an utterance that refers to parts of the discourse which contains the utterance including the utterance itself. Discourse deixis is an instance of language use whose type can be classified on the basis of factors as grammatical and lexical choices.

Social deixis: It is concerned with the social information that is encoded in various expressions. Levinson (2003:6) declares that “social deixis concerns the encoding of social distinctions that are relative to participant roles”. These roles manifest as formality, familiarity and or solidarity between the interactants. Social discourse has two major forms:

“T./V.” distinction and honorifics. The “T./V.” distinction (Latin for ‘Tu’ and ‘Vos’) is an acronym for the singular and plural versions of “You” respectively. This is a common phenomenon in some Nigerian languages especially in the Yoruba language where “Eyin” and “Awon” represent the singular and plural “You”. “Awon” is also regarded as a formal expression of “You”. It is equally used to show respect to the recipient.

Deictic expressions are universal in nature and they depend on context. Deictic expressions always communicate more than is said (Yule 2008:16). The various definitions of deixis can lead us to infer that words can be regarded as being deictic if their semantic meaning is fixed. In addition, we may deduce that the denotational meaning of words varies depending on person, time and place. Deixis is also applicable in written language, gestures and the communication media as well. It is also important in the teaching of reading. This makes deixis important to our study as compliments can be analysed from a deictic perspective using the concept of time, place and person in relation to context.

### **2.5.5 Presupposition and Implicature**

Implicature is credited to Grice (1975) and it refers to what is suggested in an utterance although it has not been implicitly or explicitly expressed. Implicature can be described as the extra meaning attached to an utterance which does not necessarily follow from what is said. Grice differentiates three types of implicature namely: what is said, what is conventionally implicated and what is non-conventionally implicated. Thus according to Grice, implicature is seen as a type of inference which is distinctly different from presupposition and entailment. Yule in a related manner views implicature as an additional conveyed meaning, that is an example of ‘more being communicated than is said’. Readers or hearers are able to pragmatically work out a writer or speaker’s meaning by relying on inferential rules either explicitly or by inferring (implicature).

Presupposition is something a speaker assumes to be the case prior to making an utterance. Speakers in any language sometimes make their utterances on the assumptions of what their hearers already know. These assumptions may sometimes be wrongly interpreted by the hearer. Presupposition therefore can be said to be what a speaker assumes a hearer knows or thinks is true. If speaker 'A' says to speaker 'B', "why did you finish the food?" at least two presuppositions may be derived from the utterance: there was food, and B ate the food.

Presupposition is an implicit assumption. These assumptions are made on assumed common ground. It could also refer to the logical means of a sentence. The presuppositions can be made based on presupposition triggers. Levinson(1983:181-184) states that factive verbs, that is, verbs such as 'know', 'learn', 'remember' and 'realize' which help to presuppose the factual truth of their object are responsible for the presuppositions. Implicative verbs, change of status verbs, iteratives and even questions are also possible presupposition triggers. In the sentence: "Has Musa stopped stealing?" has the presupposition that Musa exists and also, that he used to steal in the past. In the same vein, 'negation under constancy test' helps to establish if there is a presupposition. For example, the utterance, 'his house is not beautiful' passes the negation test because it presupposes that there is a house even though its beauty is negated.

Levinson(1983-204) is of the view that presupposition revolves round the concept of "appropriateness", "felicity" and "mutual knowledge", "common ground" or "joint assumption." Akmajian et al(1980) are of the view that the presupposition of a sentence is the set of conditions that have to be satisfied in order for the intended speech to be appropriate in those circumstances. Akmajian et al aver that sentences require that certain culturally defined conditions should be satisfied in order for the utterance of a sentence to be understood.

Implicatures and presuppositions are some of the most significant inference generating mechanisms involved in generating meaning. As a result of this, the notion of pragmatic presupposition and implicature are useful to our study especially as we realise that compliments sometimes get discounted or deflected as a result of certain presuppositions that are made (even in harmless conversations).

## **2.6 Review of Previous Studies**

Researchers are concerned about the effects of language use by writers on the reader. This has therefore necessitated the study of the language of the media.

Ibileye (2002) investigated the use of modal verbs in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. His study focused on the linguistic interpretation of the constitution with emphasis on making the modal verbs used in constitution plain since these verbs are central to the interpretation of constitutional directives. He revealed that in spite of the difficulty in understanding the meaning of these modal verbs, certain linguistic signals are important and could be relied upon to arrive at a veritable interpretation. The syntactic/pragmatic framework was adopted in the research. It involved in-depth and meticulous analyses of the modal verbs, the frequencies of use of these verbs and the reasons for them. His findings revealed that each of the modal verbs had certain import behind their usage and he concluded that 'shall' was the most widely used modal verb in the constitution. This, according to him, is probably because it conveys force, compulsion and obligation. This study has enriched the linguistic field and even the society at large because his exhaustive handling of the modal verbs has made the understanding of the constitution more appreciable.

Amodu (2003) centred his work on the pragmatic analysis of the language of commercial adverts in print media. The study endeavoured to establish the reason for these adverts, the problems associated with adverts and even the deception behind some adverts. In his opinion



these deceptive adverts could be misleading thus giving false information to the consumers. He adopted a blend of the Cooperative Principle and Deixis as his theoretical framework. After a thorough analysis, his findings revealed that the language of commerce failed the morality test arguing that this happened because of the use of vague or ambiguous terms; incomplete information and biased selection of words which was often used in misleading readers. His conclusion was that the writers of adverts relied heavily on verdictives in convincing readers, which could probably lead to the flouting of some maxims. His incisive research is of great importance to the readers/consumers because it makes them to be aware of the deception in some of the bogus claims made by advertisers thus cautioning the consumers to exercise restraint in making their choices.

Abaya (2008) conducted a research titled: “A Pragmatic Analysis of Nigerian Military Coup Announcements”. The study was designed primarily to investigate the Nigeria military coup speeches which he termed a subset of political language. His research set out primarily to reveal the nuances and the hidden undertones in the coup speeches. He discussed the features of political discourse that are manifested in Nigeria military coup and the attributes of the military that are reflected in the speeches. He also expatiated on the various types of political language stating that the language of politics is sometimes tinged with some amount of deception. He revealed the various ways in which the military manipulates language to achieve their desired goal which is mainly, a complete take-over. He gave copious examples of how language is used to deceive like: ‘newspeak’- an Orwellian concept, language of diplomacy, rhetoric and other modes of deceptive use. He approached this study by using the speech acts theory in analysing his data. His findings revealed the means by which the military manipulate language to achieve their goal. He observed that speech acts derived from the coup speeches are functions of the social relation between the interlocutors and the context of the discourse. He asserts that the coup speeches start as expressives which proffer

reasons for the coup, and then graduate to assertives along with commissives and subsequently, they use directives which come with warnings. It is obvious at this stage that their mission has been accomplished. This study is relevant because it unveiled the nuances and deception which is inherent in political language and the way the military is able to use “persuasive power” to entrench and ingratiate itself to the society.

Gusau (2009) also carried out a research in the use of sensational headlines in newspapers. His work was primed to investigate the various types of headlines and the reason behind the use of these sensational headlines. According to him, newspapers are established not only to inform but also for commercial purposes. Thus news headlines are designed primarily to attract the readers’ attention and in his opinion some journalists tend to exaggerate and in some cases, use ambiguous words to sensationalise the headlines thus stating more than is required; or as observed in some circumstances, the headlines are not relevant. He relied on the cooperative principle as adopted by Grice (1975) as his theoretical framework. He was able to establish that some of these maxims were flouted at various times in these headlines. His study is relevant to this one because it has attempted to make readers conscious of the strategies some newspapers adopt in writing headlines in order to ensure that their newspapers are read.

Mohammed in Gusau (2009:14) is of the opinion that language is manipulated for political gains; to acquire and retain power. Gusau (2009) believes this is probably the reason why newspapers are full of paid advertisements and advertorials. In his opinion, huge sums of money are expended on these adverts in order to praise and defend the success of the ‘so-called dynamic, visionary and God-fearing politician’. He declares that a number of over-used metaphors, euphemisms and even compliments are employed purposely to misdirect, misinform or to hide the truth from the reader.

The writers of newspapers are often known to manoeuvre language for various advantages: it is used mainly to polish the image of one's candidate on one hand and to besmirch their opponents on the other hand. The writer strives to inform the reader and he does this by sometimes using the passive voice in order to make the writing more formal or impartial. It is interesting to note that to some extent the style employed by the writers in newspapers vary according to the type of writing intended thus, the language used in writing headlines is quite different from that used in commentaries, editorials or even news reporting. Writers are therefore expected to structure their sentences or expressions accordingly.

Adetunji (2009) in his work, "The Speech Acts and Rhetoric in the Second Inaugural Addresses of Nigeria's President, Olusegun Obasanjo and America's President George W. Bush", attempts a combination of the study of speech acts and the rhetorical strengths of the presidential inaugural speech of the two presidents. The study was prompted by the need to compare and contrast the speeches of two presidents who are products of two clearly demarcated social-political realities. The study consequently seeks to investigate the notion that even when located within the same discourse genre, two contextually similar speeches may not reveal synonymous illocutionary and rhetorical forces.

The study is based on the transcribed texts of the second presidential inaugural addresses of the two presidents: Olusegun Obasanjo (2003) and George W. Bush (2005). The study adopts the speech acts theory in order to establish how the speech acts have been implicitly and explicitly communicated. In addition to the speech act, the researcher also adopted the three fundamental categories of Aristotle's political speech which are; the 'deliberative rhetoric', the 'forensic rhetoric' and the 'epideictic rhetoric'. The researcher analysed the data using five speech act types namely: the assertive, commissives, expressives, verdictives and directives and the rhetoric models. The analyses revealed that the speech acts were more encoded by Obasanjo than Bush mainly because of the audience who are non-native speakers

that would only comprehend language when it is explicitly stated. At the rhetorical level, each speech was found to contain elements of the three parts of Aristotle's rhetoric even though they relied more on the 'deliberative'. The study concluded that language is useful for some political leader who intends to achieve some political goals. It is also significant to add that the president or any political leader needs to encourage, admonish or persuade his audience on certain actions through the use of appropriate expressions. In conclusion, language is adjudged a tool of aptness and effectiveness that is capable of mobilising the people towards a desired cause or inhibiting them from taking particular actions.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework serves not only as base but also as a veritable working guide to the researcher. The researcher deems it fit to use the Speech Act Theory with a bias for the illocutionary act and the Gricean maxims, an aspect of the Cooperative Principle which is a theory of conversational implicature as the framework for study. Various scholars such as Katz and Fodor (1963) and Frank (2004:32) agree that Pragmatics is an offshoot of Systemic Functional Linguistics which is a theory that focuses on analysis of text to discover the social context in which it is created. The major thrust of SGF is that it reveals the instrumentality of language along with its use in social interaction. In the opinion of systemic linguists communicative competence is part of the natural language.

The definition of the term pragmatics has been traced earlier in section 2.5 from Morris (1938) to scholars like Katz and Fodor (1963) who tried to incorporate meaning into a formal linguistic theory. Leech (1983) and Butler (1988a, 1988b) and Siewerska (1991) argue that the concerns of both the SFL and pragmatics are in many ways similar.

It is obvious that Pragmatics is largely concerned with the relationships between different ways of saying things; and between these different ways, there are factors that condition the

choices made. Butler (1988:24) declares that “it is obvious that a model that treats paradigmatic relations is better suited as a basis for pragmatic interpretations than one which gives priority to structures”. The link between Systemic Grammar and Pragmatics is succinctly explained by Butler who sees systemic functional grammar as being closely linked with pragmatics because of its dependence on context.

The assumption is that a functional theory must show how context works in language and in social interaction; this study is therefore centred on how context affects the interpretation of compliments in our newspapers by applying for analysis, the Speech Act Theory as elucidated by Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and the Gricean maxims (1975). The choice of the Speech Act Theory and the Cooperative Principle as the analytical framework for this study is based on the fact that the two are helpful in describing how effective communication is achieved in social situations. The maxims and the illocutionary acts explain the link between utterances, the speaker’s intentions and what is understood from them. The maxims help to illustrate the assumptions listeners make about what they hear or read. Austin (1962) and Bach and Harnish (1979) provide a guide on how people can do things with words and in the same vein Grice (1975) presented the cooperative principles as guidelines for successful communication.

Among the criticisms of the Gricean Maxims is that of Keenan (1976) who observed that some people are reluctant to share information because it is seen as prestige in their background so they withhold information; this consequently, does not conform to the maxim of quantity. It also appears that the maxims can easily be interpreted as guidelines for etiquette because they seem to recommend how people behave during a communicative encounter. This therefore gives the impression that the maxims are prescriptive which should not be the case. Austin’s (1962) speech acts were equally criticized for having some overlaps of functions thus resulting in the different classifications as exemplified by Searle (1969) and Bach and Harnish (1979). The criticisms appear cogent but they do not in any way diminish

the relevance of the Speech Act Theory and the Gricean Maxims. It is on these premises that the approaches are adopted for this study. The choice is borne out of the fact that the speech act theory will facilitate a better interpretation of the compliments when the intentions behind the compliments are understood, especially under the various classifications made by Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Bach and Harnish (1979). Correspondingly, the Cooperative Principle will make it possible to know if writers flout or adhere to the maxims since a number of feature writers in the Nigerian dailies occasionally violate these maxims.

Various concepts and previous researches that are related to the study were reviewed. Concept like compliments, which is where our data is hinged, mass media and the different types with emphasis on the newspaper were reviewed. The newspapers and particularly the feature articles and types of feature articles were reviewed as well. Pragmatic concepts like Speech Act Theory, Cooperative Principle and Context which are relevant to the study were discussed. The literature review exposed the researcher to different theories which consequently informed the choice of a theoretical framework.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.0 Preamble

This chapter describes the methodology used in the study. It comprises four sections: the source of data, the sampling technique, method of data collection and the method of data analysis.

### 3.1 Sources of Data

This study is focused on the written discourse specifically data sourced from selected Nigerian newspapers, namely: *The Guardian*, *Daily Trust*, *The Sun*, *Thisday* and *The Nation*. Newspapers are vital as source of data for this study because the use of language in newspapers, particularly in feature articles is tailored to suit the academic writing because most researchers rely on newspapers as primary source of data. Newspapers are useful for education, recreation, entertainment, relaxation; they play vital roles in the academic environment because they are useful in academic researches. Today, most of these newspapers, in Nigeria, especially the dailies like *The Guardian*, *The Nation*, *The Sun*, *Thisday*, etc., which have been selected for this study have gained some coverage and are believed to be reliable and effective sources of information, education and entertainment. *The Guardian* which is published in Lagos is described as an independent daily newspaper and in its profile states that it is “Nigeria’s most respected newspaper.” *The Daily Trust* newspaper which is described as a general interest newspaper is situated in Abuja but is affiliated to Kaduna consequently the content focuses more on news in Northern Nigeria. Its mission statement is: “To practice journalism in the classical tabloid newspaper tradition of presenting the news and features in an exciting style...” Similarly, *The Daily Sun* although based in Lagos, and refers to itself as the “Voice of the Nation” shows a bias for the South East. *The Nation* is located in Lagos and it describes itself as “a daily newspaper that covers general

interest like business, public policies and the democratic process". It stands for freedom, justice and the market economy. *Thisday* is located in Lagos and enjoys some degree of circulation. It is portrayed as a national newspaper that shows no ethnic affiliation and covers a wide scope in its reportage. The ideological perspectives of these newspapers dictate the material content, style and even language used.

The papers were also selected because they are among those that employ the use of Standard English as medium of communication as well as possess a high quality of reportage. In addition to the reasons already given, another consideration is the ideological inclinations of these newspapers which dictate the material, content, style and even the language used. The decision to select the five newspapers is based on the fact that it is almost impossible to undertake a study of all the newspapers in Nigeria in a realistic manner. The named newspapers were selected because of the readership they enjoy and also because they are readily available in specific regions of the country.

The focal point of this study which is on data from the feature articles includes profiles, news feature, historical features which commemorate important date in history and the human interest stories. The analysis is focused on the compliments selected from feature articles which cover personalities, human interest angle, etc. A total of ten editions of each of the five selected newspaper were used, bringing the total samples to fifty.

### **3.2 Sampling Technique**

The data are mainly compliments from feature articles in selected newspapers. The random sampling technique was used in selecting the newspapers from the archives. Over two hundred newspapers were sampled before the fifty for analysis were finally selected. The researcher identified and grouped the selected compliments into the different types of compliments for the purpose of analysis.



### **3.3 Method of Data Collection**

Having identified the newspapers to be used for analysis, the compliments were extracted from the feature articles of the selected newspapers. The compliments were selected from the feature articles and identified as they occurred in the different newspapers. The selection was done to reflect the different types of compliments. The extracted compliments were grouped according to the different newspapers. A total of fifty (50) compliments were extracted from the selected newspapers that is, ten compliments were sourced from each of the five selected newspapers.

### **3.4 Method of Data Analysis**

The selected compliments were labelled Compliments 1- 76 for easy identification and subsequent analysis. The researcher analysed the compliments by employing the Speech Act Theory by Austin (1962) and Searle (1975) and the maxims as propounded by Grice (1975) in his Cooperative Principle as the analytical framework. The speech act theory and the Gricean maxims were adopted in analysing the compliments used in the selected newspapers. The compliments were grouped and analysed according to the different headings to determine the frequency of use. In addition to this, the compliments were analysed using the speech act theory and the Gricean maxims. The simple percentage was employed to ascertain the level of adherence to or violation of the Gricean maxims.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF DATA, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Preamble

This chapter presents the data, analysis of data and the discussion of the various compliments. In this chapter, the different types of compliments from the feature sections of the selected newspapers were extracted for analysis.

#### 4.1 Presentation of Data

The data were sourced from five selected newspapers namely: *The Nation*, *The Guardian*, *The Sun*, *Daily Trust* and *Thisday*. The selected newspapers spanned two years beginning from January 2011 to December 2012 and the compliments were sourced from fifty feature articles that is, ten from each of the selected newspapers. The compliments to be analysed in the selected newspapers were identified, underlined and listed (see appendix 1 and 2)

#### 4.2 Analysis of Data

The analyses were done in two parts: the first analysis was based on the types, number and frequency of the compliments. The compliments were grouped according to the different newspapers in order to ascertain which types of compliments were favoured by the newspapers. The second aspect of the analysis involved analysing the speech acts performed by the compliments and the cooperative maxims.

#### 4.2.1 Analysis of Types, Number and Frequency of Compliments in the Selected Feature Articles

**Table 1: Types, Number and Frequency of Compliments**

| S/N. | Newspaper                                     | Types of compliments  | Number of compliments               | Frequency |
|------|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1.   | <i>The Nation</i><br>10 feature<br>articles   | Social                | 1,2,6,7,8,10 11,12,13,14&15         | 11        |
|      |   | Politically motivated | 3,4, 5&9                            | 4         |
|      |   | Achieved and ascribed | 10,12,13,14&15                      | 5         |
|      |   | Gender                | 5&10                                | 2         |
|      |   | Honorific compliment  | 7&8                                 | 2         |
| 2    | <i>Daily Sun</i><br>10 feature<br>articles    | Social                | 23&27                               | 2         |
|      |   | Politically motivated | 18,19,20,21,22 and 25               | 6         |
|      |   | Achieved and ascribed | 16,24,26&27                         | 4         |
|      |   | Gender                | 16&18                               | 2         |
|      |   | Honorific compliment  | 26                                  | 1         |
| 3    | <i>The Guardian</i><br>10 feature<br>articles | Social                | 31,33,34,35,36,39,40,41,42,43,46&47 | 12        |
|      |   | Politically motivated | 43,44&45                            | 3         |
|      |   | Achieved and ascribed | 28,29,30,31,33,34,35,36,38&42       | 10        |
|      |   | Gender                | 41 and 42                           | 2         |
|      |   | Honorific compliment  | 32,37,46&47                         | 4         |
| 4    | <i>Daily Trust</i><br>10 feature<br>articles  | Social                | 51,52,54,55,56,57&58                | 7         |
|      |   | Politically motivated | 49&50                               | 2         |
|      |   | Achieved and ascribed | 48,57&58                            | 3         |
|      |   | Gender                | 49,52&53                            | 3         |
|      |   | Honorific compliment  | 48,56&58                            | 3         |
| 5    | <i>Thisday</i><br>10 feature<br>articles      | Social                | 59,60,61,62,64,67,68,73,74&75       | 10        |
|      |   | Politically motivated | 63,70,71,72,73,74,75&76             | 8         |
|      |   | Achieved and ascribed | 59,60&65                            | 3         |
|      |   | Gender                | 65,67&68                            | 3         |
|      |   | Honorific compliment  | 64,65,66 & 69                       | 4         |

The above table highlights the types of compliments, the number and the frequency. Having selected the compliments, they were then grouped according to types. The types of compliments are listed as: ascribed and achieved, gender differentiation, politically motivated, socially motivated and honorific compliments. The grouping is to make it easy to ascertain the frequencies of the compliments. Fifty feature articles were selected but it was observed that some articles had more than one compliment thus bringing the total number of compliments to 76. Each compliment is assigned a number (from 1-76) for easy identification and subsequent analysis. Ten feature articles were selected from each of the papers and it was observed that *The Guardian* recorded a total of 20 compliments from the identified ten feature articles. This implies that the on the average, an article had about 2 compliments identified. *Thisday* recorded 18 compliments from the 10 feature articles selected while *The Nation* recorded 15 compliments from 10 feature articles selected. The *Daily Trust* and the *Daily Sun* showed that the 10 feature articles recorded 12 and 11 compliments respectively.

Having grouped the compliments according to the different types, it is evident that the social compliments have the highest frequency of use. It occurred 42 times out 116 and recorded 36.20 % use. The *Guardian* appeared to give more prominence to the social compliments as it was used 12 times out of 42. This was closely followed by *The Nation* which occurred 11 times out of 42. *The Sun* barely used the social compliments as it only occurred 2 times out of 42 and as a result recorded 4.76%. Next to the social compliments were the achieved and ascribed compliments which appeared 25 out of the 116 occurrences of the types identified. The achieved and ascribed compliments were more preponderant in *The Guardian* like the social compliments. *The Daily Trust* and *Thisday* occurred 3 times respectively and so were the least used by the papers. The political compliments were next to the social compliments and it appeared 8 times in *Thisday* out of the total occurrence of 23 applications. This implies that the feature articles in *Thisday* are more inclined to politically motivated compliments

than the other types. The honorific compliments and the gender compliments recorded almost the same frequency of use with both occurring 14 and 12 times in that order. The honorific and gender compliments had the least occurrence and this can be attributed to the fact that most of the persons complimented are not complimented based on their gender but on their social position or achievements. Having observed earlier that the *Guardian* had more compliments, it is also implied that it had more types and this is exemplified by the high occurrences it recorded of the social compliments and the achieved and ascribed compliments. Based on the observation, it will not be out of place to deduce that the writers prefer to acknowledge the other aspects of life like the social aspect that makes people 'feel good' about themselves, their achievements or social status than their gender.

#### **4.2.2 Analysis of Speech Acts and Cooperative Maxims in the Selected Feature Articles**

The selected compliments are analysed using the Speech Act Theory to ascertain the speech acts performed by the compliments namely the illocutionary acts and the perlocutionary effects. The compliments are also analysed using the Cooperative Principle to determine the extent of adherence or violation of the maxims. In addition to the Speech Act and the Gricean maxims, Context is useful in analysing the data in order to properly situate the compliments especially as different contexts surround the compliments examined.

##### **4.2.2.1 Analysis of Speech Acts and Maxims in selected compliments in the *Nation***

###### **Text 1: A sage and his wisdom**

**Compliment:1** "His cherished legacies in all spheres of life can be felt in the country especially in the former Western region of Nigeria where he stood admirably like a colossus of incomparable stature.

**Compliment 2:** Awo was peerless among his peers, profound in his thoughts, prolific in his writings and controversial in politics.

### **Discussion**

The context in compliments 1 and 2 is about Awolowo and the setting is a book launch with family, friends and associates present at the event organised in his honour. The compliment, 'he stood admirably like a colossus of incomparable stature' appropriately describes his achievements.

The expressive and verdictive speech acts are performed by compliment 1 they in turn elicit admiration as the perlocutionary effect. The expression, 'he stood admirably like a colossus of incomparable stature' is considered contextually appropriate but it is hyperbolic and therefore flouts the maxim of quality because his qualities have been exaggerated. The intention behind the compliment is to acknowledge Awo as a man of great stature.

In compliment 2, Awo was described in the following words: 'Awo was peerless among his peers, profound in his thoughts'. The compliment is assertive because the writer seems to restate his earlier observations about Awo. The perlocutionary effect elicited is admiration of Awo. The compliment is appropriate but the statement flouts the maxim of manner because it is contradictory. To describe him as peerless among his peers because it suggests that he is not in the class of people that have peers, yet again, he is among them.

### **Text 2: Liberia's crucial presidential race**

**Compliment 3:** "Sirleaf-Johnson a symbol of Liberia as a whole"

### **Discussion**

The context in compliment 3 is used during the election period in Liberia and it involved the two major contenders for the president. It was a time of great anticipation and almost tense

but the writer still complimented Johnson-Sirleaf as ‘a symbol of Liberia as a whole.’ The writer probably employs the compliment to communicate his opinion to the reader and as a result, he employs the assertive speech act and the perlocutionary effect is that readers are assured of her reliability and admire her because she is truly a symbol for her country. Situating the compliment in the proper context makes it clear that no maxim was flouted.

### **Text 3: How amazons rev political engine in Anambra**

**Compliment 4:** “How amazons rev the political engine in Anambra...

**Compliment 5:** The iron ladies of Anambra politics have set a promising tone for the future of women in the political development of the country.”

### **Discussion**

Compliments 4 and 5 were articulated at a political setting and the participants are women in politics which explains why the writer praised them in the words he chose. He compares them to ‘amazons’ and the analogy is appropriate mainly because the women have actually taken giant strides in Anambra state where they ‘rev the political engine’.

The speech act performed in compliment 4 is expressive since the writer believes that the women actually run the affairs in Anambra State. The perlocutionary consequence is that the women are recognised and admired as people in control. The women are believed to have revved the political engine in Anambra state which is referred to as an “engine”. The compliment is appropriate and does not flout any of the maxims.

Compliment 5 performs the expressive and verdictive acts which elicit the perlocutionary effect of admiration and respect for the women because of the antecedents of the women especially as they have been described as women who have already set a promising tone. The women are referred to as “iron ladies” and this flouts the maxim of quality because the

metaphoric expression ‘iron ladies’ even though it is considered appropriate, is not true since we know they are humans.

#### **Text 4: Enoch Adeboye: Preacher as power house**

**Compliment 6:** Thirty years after the Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye took over as General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church (RCCG) the once little known Pentecostal church has transformed into a global power house. The preacher has also become one of the most influential leaders on earth”

#### **Discussion**

The physical setting is at the venue of the Global Power Elite award which was bestowed on Pastor E.A. Adeboye in recognition of his contribution to the society. In a society like Nigeria where spiritual and temporal leaders are accorded great respect, it is appropriate that he is complimented on his success and meteoric rise to prominence.

The church is equated to “a global power house” and the compliment performs the verdictive act which afterwards elicits great esteem and respect for Pastor Adeboye. The compliment exaggerates the influence of the church especially when the various religions in the world and even the various denominations in the Christendom are considered. The writer consequently flouted the maxim of quality because of the obvious exaggeration.

#### **Text 5: Honour for the ‘prince’ of saxophone, Oyewole**

**Compliment 7:** “Honour for the ‘prince’ of saxophone.

**Compliment 8:** He is a beautiful saxophone and flute player.”



## Discussion

Compliments 7 and 8 were pronounced at a social function with the family, friends and associates of Oyewole in attendance. The occasion was his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and the atmosphere is one of conviviality. The choice of words is apt particularly in the light of his wonderful performance.

Oyewole, a saxophone player is described as a ‘prince’ of saxophone in compliment 7. The compliment is honorific and the expressive and verdictive speech acts are used to impress readers about the player. The perlocutionary effect of the compliment is that it is informative and also arouses respect for the saxophone player. The compliment is precise, it is truthful and are well articulated therefore, it does not flout any of the maxims.

Compliment 8 performs the expressive and verdictive speech acts. The perlocutionary effect of the compliment is that it elicits respect for the saxophone player. The compliment does not breach any of the maxims.

### **Text 6: Jega has set a new record**

**Compliment 9:** “For the nation, political parties and indeed candidates the cost of the postponement is enormous, considering billions of Naira that have gone down the drain in the preparation for the election. People are of the opinion that Jega’s INEC has been over-pampered and, therefore, does not have any excuse to fail, but one thing is instructive: Jega has set a new record in Nigeria as the first umpire to postpone, cancel or annul an election that was in progress!”

The compliment was articulated during the election period in Nigeria and it reports the cancellation of the electoral process that had commenced. The compliment appears to be back-handed because of the element of sarcasm infused into it. Psychologically, it was a

trying period as an electoral process in progress was truncated and this informed the tone of the compliment. The compliment is expressive as the writer is intent on conveying the reality of the election as well as his feelings about the electoral process. The perlocutionary effect elicited is resentment especially when the cost of the annulled election is considered. The compliment demonstrates that the expression 'new record' sets off the compliment on a positive tone but contrary to expectations turns out to be a negative record. The 'first umpire' implies uniqueness and suggests some accomplishment but close scrutiny reveals the opposite. The sequence of events makes it impossible to unravel the actual objective of the writer. He mentions that Jega, the INEC commissioner was the first to 'postpone, cancel or annul an election that was in progress!' The writer seems to have described Jega in ironic terms that convey the fact that the election was annulled after so much had been expended on it. None of the maxims was violated as the writer adequately conveyed his intention which was to appraise the electoral process.

### **Text 7: Atsenuwa: An advocate of legal feminism**

**Compliment 10:** "The chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it's my pleasure to present to you, a woman of substance, an excellent scholar, human rights advocate, women right's defender, protector of children, Professor Ayodele Victoria Atsenuwa, to deliver the maiden address."

The compliment in this statement was uttered at an annual lecture so, it is an academic discourse. Atsenuwa's accomplishments are unrivalled thus she is presented as a woman of substance which reinforces the purpose of the lecture which was to honour another female trail-blazer, Prof. Jadesola Akande. The compliment performs the verdictive and expressive speech acts and these unequivocally elicit admiration for her. The expressions are clear and unambiguous and so do not flout any of the maxims.

### **Text 8: BayoAdekanye at 70: A tribute**

**Compliment 11:** “Adekanye has to his credit a harvest of books, monographs journal articles which compete favourably in their quality with any that could be found in the English speaking world. It is just possible that Adekanye’s seminal output especially in the area of the military problematic in Africa was facilitated by a conducive domestic environment...”

### **Discussion**

Compliment 11 was uttered at a social function with friends and family members in attendance. The people present are lively and in an expansive mood so compliments are used effusively. The writer describes Adekanye as having to his credit ‘a harvest of books’. The expressive and verdictive acts are performed by the compliments which in turn elicit appreciation of Mr. Adekanye’s books. Harvest means to have an ‘accumulated store’. This therefore suggests that Adekanye has several books which could either have been written or were bought by him. The compliment elicits respect for Adekanye and admiration for his rich collection of books. The reader is able to infer that he has a lot of books in his collection because he is able to write freely in a favourable atmosphere. The compliments convey the desired intention and so adhere to the maxims.

### **Text 9: Man of many firsts turns 80**

**Compliment 12:** “Baike has been an integral part of the university as early as the 1960s...he had stint as VC of several universities, one of the few who served not only in the part of the country where they come from. He was at the University of Benin and travelled to the Southern Africa region.

**Compliment 13:** I believe that when the history of education in this country will be written, the name of Prof. Baike will be written in gold.”

## Discussion

Compliments 12 and 13 were given at a friendly social setting. It is at the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations of Prof. Adamu Baike and the ambience is one of merriment with his family members and associates attending the function so the compliments appropriately capture the mood of the occasion.

The ‘Man of many firsts’, ‘Baike has been an integral part of the university as early as the 1960s’ is the compliment the writer used to describe Adamu Baike, a former vice-chancellor in the University of Benin in compliment 12. The writer describes him as ‘an integral part of the university.’ The compliment performs the assertive and representative speech act and it elicits respect and admiration as the perlocutionary effect. There is no obvious breach of any of the maxims in the compliment.

In compliment 13, the speech act performed by the compliment is expressive as the writer feels that Prof. Baike’s name will be written in gold because of his contribution to the growth of education in Nigeria. The compliment elicits admiration and respect for the professor. The writer asserts that when the history of education will be mentioned his name will be written in gold. It is acknowledged that gold has been used figuratively in this context but there is no way to determine if Professor Adamu Baike’s name will be written in gold. It can be deduced that the writer is only speculating and by this flouts the maxim of quality.

### **Text 10: Why I’m gradually returning home**

**Compliment 14:** “Although he downplays his inspiring grass-to-grace story, Chris Aire’s reputation as an international jeweller reverberates throughout the world’s fashion capital.”

**Compliment 15:** The celebrated Nigerian popularly called the ‘Ice man’ speaks about his compelling urge to touch lives in Nigeria.”

Compliments 14 and 15 were declared at an interview session. The participants are Chris Aire and the interviewer and it is a serious session which seeks to enlighten readers of his career progression. The choice of words adequately reflects the writer's success in doing so. Aire's reputation as a jeweller of international reverberates...is representative and verdictive. The perlocutionary effect elicited by compliment 15 is recognition and admiration. The compliment is truthful and unequivocal and consequently adheres to the maxims.

The writer describes Chris Aire as the 'ice man' in compliment 15 mainly to imply that he is a calm and composed person. The representative illocutionary act is performed and the perlocutionary effects elicited are recognition and possibly commendation. The expression is rightly applied in describing Chris but because it is metaphoric it therefore does not exactly conform to the maxim of quality.

A summary of the analyses of the compliments in *The Nation* established that the social compliments were more frequently used in the feature articles. The analysis showed that of the 24 types recorded, the social compliments appeared 11 times, that is, 45.83% of the total compliments while the gender and the honorific compliments both recorded 8.33% use. In the compliments employed by the writers of feature articles in *The Nation* use mainly verbs and adjectives and this affirms the claims of Wolfson and Manes (1980). The expressive speech acts were more frequent because in most cases the writers already know much about the subjects and so, are able to convey their impressions adequately. It was discovered that the writers adhered to the maxims and significantly too because of the 15 compliments, the writers adhered to the maxims 66.67% and while the violation recorded 33.33%. The compliments flouted the maxim of quality more than the other maxims most probably because the writers employed metaphors and hyperbolic expressions which are known to flout the maxim of quality as a result of the fact that they are not always truthful.

#### 4.2.2.2 Analysis of Speech Acts and Maxims in selected compliments in *Daily Sun*

##### **Text 16: Men are afraid of women like me**

**Compliment 16:** “Referred to as the Elegant Stallion, Onyeka lost her father at the age of four and half...”

**Compliment 17:** “She is a compendium, broadcaster, activist, composer and singer. Her career spans over three decades. Call her a woman of many parts and you won’t be faulted, because now, she has turned a politician and a vibrant one at that.”

##### **Discussion**

The compliment was paid at an interview session and the participants are the journalist and Onyeka who was described as the ‘elegant stallion’.

In compliment 16, the word ‘elegant’ does not collocate with stallion but the choice of words can be attributed to the fact that Onyeka has excelled in an erstwhile male dominated profession so can be described as a stallion. But when viewed contextually then it becomes possible to derive the information that the writer is probably praising her prowess on stage which in this case is likened to that of a stallion. The compliment performs the expressive speech act and elicits the perlocutionary effect of admiration. The writer adhered to the maxims because the word stallion when put in a contextual perspective makes it appropriate..

The speech acts performed by compliment 17 are expressive and verdictive because it is the writer’s desire to draw attention to Onyeka’s abilities as a broadcaster, composer and singer. The perlocutionary act elicited is respect for Onyeka. The compliment does not flout any of the maxims.

### **Text 12: All the female governorship candidates and deputies**

**Compliment 18:** “First in the list is Mrs. Pauline Tallen, Deputy to Gov. Jonah Jang of Plateau State. She is considered a woman of many parts who knows her onions too well especially in politics. This is evident in the number of achievements that are recorded in her favour.”

#### **Discussion**

This compliment which is meant to eulogise the female deputy governors is an article on all of them. The setting is a political one as it was a forum for all the female deputy governors. The appropriate expressions have been deployed in complimenting Pauline Tallen, most especially as the writer compares her to an onion that has several layers just like her career which cuts across different fields.

Pauline Tallen who was one time deputy governor of Plateau State, is described as “a woman of many parts who knows her onions.” This description is apt considering the many layers an onion has and considering her multi-faceted role in politics and education. The compliments perform the expressive and verdictive speech acts which elicit admiration as the perlocutionary effect. The compliment does not flout any of the maxims as the expressions are suitable.

### **Text 13: Tears as Shema’s war against poverty begins**

**Compliment 19:** “The rector noted that Ekweme remains a huge asset in national reconciliation and peace. According to him, Ekweme’s intervention at crucial moments had, in time past saved the country from the brink of collapse.”

#### **Discussion**

The setting of this encounter was at a church service in honour of Dr. Ekweme, the former vice-president of Nigeria and the participants are family members, friends and associates of

Ekweme the former vice president of Nigeria. The discourse is on peace and reconciliation and so the words echo concepts like ‘peace’, ‘reconciliation’ and ‘saved’ to buttress the topic of conversation. The compliment employed in describing Ekweme is declarative and expressive. This is because the writer declares his opinion of Ekweme and at the same time expresses what he feels Ekweme has achieved for the nation. There is no apparent violation of the maxims because the statements are unambiguous, there are no false claims and they are equally relevant so there is no question of infringement.

**Text 14: Akpabio: The seal of victory**

**Compliment 20:** “A man in high demand, the oracle of transformation evidently represents God’s hands stretched to salvage his people.”

**Compliment 21:** Akpabio has given transformation life, and made it to walk on four legs across the 31 local government areas of Akwa-Ibom State.”

**Discussion**

The physical context for compliments 20 and 21 is the celebration of Akpabio’s electoral victory after it was upheld. It is a time for celebration so the people are in a jubilant mood. It is a political gathering therefore the writer’s words are selected to mirror the mood.

Compliment 20 indicates that Akpabio, the Governor of Akwa-Ibom State has effected much transformation in the state, consequently, the writer portrayed him as a person to be greatly admired. He is described as ‘A man in high demand’, the ‘oracle of transformation’. This compliment is politically motivated in view of the fact that the writer wants Akpabio to be seen in a positive way, he employs the representative and expressive speech acts to make his intentions clear. The compliment draws out great admiration for Akpabio.



The compliment, 'he has given transformation life and made it to walk on four legs' is used by the writer in compliment 21 to applaud Akpabio. The speech acts performed by the compliment are assertive and expressive. 'Akpabio has given transformation life, and made it to walk on four legs' is a hyperbolic expression that is designed to exaggerate his political clout and as a result, flouts the maxim of quality.

**Text 15: Be magnanimous in victory, Iloмуanya tells Rochas**

**Compliment 22:** "Chairman, South East Council of Traditional Rulers, Eze, Cletus Iloмуanya has described the election of Rochas Okorochoa as 'an eloquent testimony of the resolve of the People of Imo State to effect a positive and dynamic change.' He noted however, that the governor should be magnanimous in victory by regarding all sections of Imo State as his constituency irrespective of who voted for him or not."

**Discussion**

The exchange here took place at a social function with the traditional rulers in Imo State present at the meeting. The participants are the traditional rulers with the governor in attendance. The aim of the meeting is placatory and reconciliatory so there is the need to reach out and the expressions employed give credence to the writer's intention and are therefore considered appropriate.

Compliment 22 shows that the election of Rochas Okorochoa as governor of Imo state was described as "an eloquent testimony of the people of Imo state..." the expressive speech act is used to express the writer's intention; he only expressed his opinion of Rochas Okorochoa. The perlocutionary act performed in the compliment is the information derived because readers are informed about Okorochoa's dynamism and may likely admire him. The writer adheres to the cooperative principles in his compliments.

### **Text 16: Osuntokun: A professor and gentleman at 70**

**Compliment 23:** “What more can I say, he is an example of the believer. Christianity looks good on him. This is just to say how much I appreciate the fact that Prof. Osuntokun has made me look good as the Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology in Ekiti State and I truly appreciate him. Under his watch, I can almost say that EKSU is working on auto-pilot now.”

#### **Discussion**

The compliment was used at a social function precisely, at the birthday of Professor Osuntokun, the Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, Ekiti State University, who is portrayed as ‘an example of the believer’. In the context of the Nigerian society where Christianity and especially men of God are accorded so much respect it is not surprising that Professor Osuntokun is described as an example of the believer.

The sentence, ‘Christianity looks good on him’ when viewed from the background of ‘backsliding’ in the Christian religion gives room for one to conclude that Christianity looks good on him because he is consistent in his faith. The illocutionary acts performed in these compliments are representative and expressive which also induce admiration and respect for the subject. The compliment does not flout any of the maxims as the assertions about the professor are true.

### **Text 17: Omoigui-Okuaru: One good story out of Nigeria**

**Compliment 24:** “Omoigui-Okauru is indeed, an outstanding Nigerian woman. She deserves all the accolades coming her way. There is no arguing the fact that Nigeria is in dire need of people like her. I believe she can replicate the FIRS transformation success story in other sectors of the economy.”

## **Discussion**

This is an article on Omoigui-Okauru's tenure as the Director-General of the Federal Inland Revenue Service. The writer tries to draw attention to the fact that she served meritoriously and because of this her tenure can only be described as one good story especially because she made a positive impact during her tenure.

In compliment 24, Omoigui-Okauru is described as an outstanding woman and the writer further puts it as 'one good story'. The act type is verdictive and representative as it is the writer's conviction that Omoigui-Okauru is an outstanding woman he therefore seeks to communicate same to the readers. The language is simple and communicates the writer's intentions clearly to the extent that even though she is described as one good story, it is possible to situate her achievements as the first female to successfully head the Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS). No maxim was flouted by the writer.

## **Text 18: PDP convention: Why Oyinlola held the ace**

**Compliment 25:** "Oyinlola is a completely detribalized Nigerian, an achiever, a highly cerebral personality and a cultured man with a sense of respect, modesty and humility. His motivating force is the network of friends he has globally, right from his elementary school at Okuku, through his military career and now political career."

## **Discussion**

This compliment was given at the People's Democratic Party (PDP) convention and Oyinlola was the recipient. The convention was an avenue to elect new officials for the (PDP) governing body. Oyinlola was victorious having been voted in as the National Secretary of the party. His victory therefore necessitated the accolades bestowed on him. The choice of words is apt because the office is a national one which requires a detribalised

person. Compliment 25 presents Oyinlola, a former state governor as ‘a completely detribalised Nigeria’. The compliment sufficiently captures the qualities of Oyinlola, who is a detribalised Nigerian because that is the kind of person the office requires. The verdictive act clearly conveys the writer’s intention and this in turn elicits the perlocutionary act of deference and respect. The writer does not violate any maxim.

### **Text 19: Justice Mustapha Akanbi**

**Compliment 26:** “Still that does not capture the full essence of the quintessential jurist called Muhammed Mustapha Akanbi. A former President of the Court of Appeal, Ghana-born Justice Akanbi is fearless as a lion and shoots straight and dead on target on all issues, no matter whose ox is gored. All these are qualities that naturally recommended him to then President Olusegun Obasanjo...”

### **Discussion**

The compliment above describes Akanbi in these words: ‘as a fearless as a lion’ at an interview session. He is known as someone who is ready to stand by the truth and as a consequence the description is considered appropriate especially because he can stand firm in the midst of corrupt people. It is rare to see a man that does not care ‘whose ox is gored’ while performing his duty. It is for this reason that the compliment is considered correct.

Akanbi has been compared to a lion. In the writer’s words, he is as fearless as a lion. The speech act in this compliment is representative because it represents the writer’s impression about the subject. The perlocutionary act is respect and admiration for Justice Akanbi. The simile is used to convey Akanbi’s bravery. ‘Shoots straight and dead on targets’ is metaphorically used to portray his honesty and boldness. The compliment violates the maxim of quality because he is compared to a lion even though he is not one.

## **Text 20: WandeAbimbola, one man's battle to protect our cultural heritage**

**Compliment 27:** “Although widely travelled and well schooled in English, European and Caribbean languages, Abimbola's love and preference for speaking in his native Yoruba language at fora especially where his audience is composed chiefly of his kinsmen is legendary. It is only at close range that you begin to discover an uncommon savvy, intellectual depth and mine of information which this iconoclast culture promoter epitomizes”

### **Discussion**

The feature article is on culture which seems to be tethering on the brink of collapse. The compliment is relevant especially as Prof. Wande, a former vice-chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University; Ile-Ife is described as a cultural iconoclast. His former students used to call him 'Babalawo' a title which recognises him as 'the father of the mysteries'. An iconoclast is someone who is not easily led to believe what is not certain. Situating the compliment in the right context makes the compliment appropriate. The compliment is verdictive and elicits respect as the perlocutionary effect. The writer employed various adjectives like “savvy” and “culture promoter” in his description. In a related manner the use of hyperbolic terms and metaphors like: “mine of information” and “universe of subjects”, violates the first maxim of quality.

A cursory look at the compliments in *The Daily Sun* shows that the politically motivated compliments had a higher frequency than the other types of compliments. Ten feature articles were selected for analysis and only 12 compliments were identified and out of these, 15 compliment types were identified. It was observed that political compliments occurred more than the others at 40% against the social and gender compliments which both occurred 2 times at 13.33% in *The Daily Sun*. The expressive speech act ranked the highest in conveying

the writers' intentions. The maxim of quality was the only maxim that was not adhered to and this was primarily because some of the expressions were either hyperbolic or untruthful.

#### **4.2.2.3 Analysis of Speech Acts and maxims in selected compliments in *The Guardian* Newspapers**

##### **Text 21: How to sustain EkpoEyo's legacy in museum management**

**Compliment 28:** “He was an outstanding archaeologist and anthropologist. He left a legacy of efficient management system of the Nigerian museums.

**Compliment 29:** He is indeed a cultural colossus whose foot prints will remain indelible in the annals of Nigerian cultural administration.”

#### **Discussion**

The setting of compliments 28 and 29 is the funeral service in honour of Prof. Ekpo Eyo, the Director-General of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments. In attendance are family members, friends and associates of the late D-G. The writer employs a lot of accolades to capture the mood of the occasion. Since the service is meant to honour him, a review of his achievement is necessary and the writer succeeds in presenting him in good stead by the use of the right selection of words.

In compliment 28, EkpoEyo was portrayed as “an outstanding archaeologist and anthropologist” with “outstanding” status. The writer seeks to compliment Ekpo and he does this by the use of declarative and expressive speech acts and this generates the perlocutionary effect of admiration and respect for Ekpo Eyo. The compliment does not violate any of the maxims because the expressions are clear and truthful.

Compliment 29 has the compliment ‘a cultural colossus whose foot print will remain indelible in the annals of Nigerian cultural heritage’ which is ascribed to Ekpo Eyo. The compliment is assertive and expressive with the consequent perlocutionary effect of admiration and high esteem for Ekpo Eyo. We know that ordinarily, a colossus is a mythical figure of gargantuan proportions. The writer has used a metaphoric compliment for the subject and this subsequently flouts the maxim of quality.

### **Text 22: Abati can make a difference**

**Compliment 30:** “Of course Reuben Abati is an accomplished intellectual. His journalistic essays have been of great quality, his views on what is good for our state and society have been fearlessly documented. There is no doubt he will be in the public eye from the very first day of his assignment.”

### **Discussion**

The article is about Reuben Abati, who was appointed as President Goodluck’s spokesman. The discourse is centred on Abati’s antecedents which people expect will change because of the new appointment. The writer therefore feels there is a need to assure the populace of Abati’s uncompromising stance and as result employs these compliments to present him to the public as a principled man.

In the compliment above, Reuben Abati is described as “an accomplished writer”, “a great intellectual...his views on what is good for our state have been fearlessly documented”. These expressions in the compliment perform the assertive and expressive speech act because the writer seems to have drawn the conclusion that his essays are of great quality just as his views have been fearlessly documented. The compliments elicit the perlocutionary effect of great esteem for the subject. The writer has not only described the intellectual competence of

Abati but also his fearlessness in presenting his ideas. These compliments convey the writer's feeling about Abati and in doing so the writer adheres to the maxims.

**Text 23: Norman Foster: Architecture icon, his many conquests**

**Compliment 31:** “Foster has come a long way from those zinc-bath-in-front of the fire days. The boy who left school at 16 to do his national service with the RAF is now as his astronomical career shows and as Deyan Sudjic writes in his new biography- a phenomenon. But the lad from Levenshulme never forgot what he saw and learned as a working class child brought up in an industrial town.”

**Discussion**

In compliment 31, Norman Foster a British citizen, was interviewed on his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday to commemorate the day. Norman talks about how he beat cancer of the bowel alongside his many conquests. The words employed in describing him are suitable particularly when his background is compared with his accomplishments, then one can relate with his ‘astronomical career’ which labels him ‘a phenomenon.’ The writer describes the achievement of Norman Foster, an architect who from a humble background was able to achieve so much in his field. His career was described as “astronomical” and he was also portrayed as “a phenomenon.” The expressive and declarative speech acts convey the writer's intention. The compliments produce the perlocutionary act of drawing out respect for Norman Foster. The writer did not flout any of the maxims.

**Text 24: Igbinedion: The Anointedat 77**

**Compliment 32:** “Chief Igbinedion is a living legend,

**Compliment 33:** a tireless pathfinder, a statesman and patriot,



**Compliment 34:** a quintessential businessman, a consummate philanthropist, a mentor and benefactor

**Compliment 35:** a missionary extra-ordinaire, a visionary diplomat, a bridge- builder,

**Compliment 36:** a phoenix, a Titan, an ageless oracle and avatar. The writer who finds himself writing about Chief Igbinedion will first have to confront the awesome challenge of choosing from his legion of attributes he/she would like to dwell on.”

### **Discussion**

The article on Igbinedion which is meant to celebrate his 77<sup>th</sup> birthday is intended to praise him. Compliments 32-36 show that the writer resorts to profuse use of adjectives, metaphors and imageries to chronicle Igbinedion’s achievements. The compliments are broken into segments as they co-refer. The choice of words is suitable and adequately achieves his set goals of eulogising Chief Igbinedion particularly on an auspicious occasion like his birthday.

The living legend is how the writer compliments Chief Igbinedion in compliment 32. The compliment performs the expressive speech act because the writer see Chief Igbinedion as somebody whose achievements speak for them. The perlocutionary act derived is great respect and admiration for the chief. The compliment is true and so does not flout the Gricean maxims.

In compliment 33, Chief Igbinedion is presented as ‘a tireless pathfinder’ and this suggests that Igbinedion is immortal to the extent that age is not a hindrance to him because he has been described as tireless. The writer appears to have used the verdictive and expressive speech acts in complimenting Chief Igbinedion. These compliments produce great respect as the perlocutionary act. There is no obvious breach of the maxims in the compliment; the choice of words communicates adequately.

Compliment 34 describes him as ‘a consummate philanthropist’ and this is indicative of the writer’s intention to portray Chief Igbinedion as a complete philanthropist who is always available for everyone. The compliment consequently performs the expressive speech act which generates admiration as the perlocutionary effect. The Gricean maxims have been adhered to since the words are satisfactorily convey the writer’s intention.

‘Missionary extra-ordinaire, a visionary diplomat, a bridge-builder,’ highlights Chief Igbinedion’s Christian life-style in compliment 35. The compliment expresses the writer’s thought about Chief Igbinedion’s life style as a Christian, who is a bridge builder as a result of this fact. The expressive and assertive speech acts are performed in these compliments. The consequence of it is that the compliment elicits admiration and respect for Chief Igbinedion.

Compliment 36 describes Chief Igbinedion in these words: ‘a phoenix, a Titan, an ageless oracle and avatar’. The compliment performs the expressive and assertive speech acts and the compliment elicit respect and admiration. The imageries used are based on mythological figures which are both metaphoric and hyperbolic and to that extent, are not always truthful so consequently flout the maxim of quality.

**Text 25: Ayoola: A jurist of distinction ingrained on marble**

**Compliment 37:** “His remarkable achievements saw his career journey move to the island of Seychelles that same year that he left the Gambian in 1992 as well as also appointed a Justice of Seychelles Court of Appeal. Ayoola: A jurist of distinction ingrained on marble.

**Compliment 38:** As a shining star, Ayoola was subsequently elevated to the position of the president of that court.”

## Discussion

Compliments 37 and 38 in the article are on the personality of the week who in this case is Ayoola, a jurist. Since he is the personality of the week, it is expected that the right words are used to describe him. The writer is able to achieve this because he extols him, his career progression as well as his appointments in different countries.

Compliment 37 shows that the writer used the honorific term “jurist” to describe Ayoola, an international legal practitioner. The compliment performs the expressive speech act and it elicits the perlocutionary effect of admiration for the jurist. The description of Ayoola as “a jurist of distinction ingrained on marble” suggests that Ayoola certainly deserves the compliments paid to him and so does not flout any of the maxims.

In compliment 38, the writer described him as “a shining star” which is a figurative expression. The compliment performs the expressive speech act as it shows that Ayoola is deserving of the praise bestowed on him. In the context of his profession and his achievement, the description will be considered apt but the expression shining star is certainly a metaphor and so breaches the maxim of quality.

### **Text 26: Kukah: Day Sokoto stood still for The People’s Bishop**

**Compliment 39:** “Clearly, this elevation in God’s vineyard is a divine act that lends credence to your long and dedicated service to God almighty. Kukah is a man of inimitable ability and a quintessential servant of God indeed.”

**Compliment 40:** As a patriot, he is a strong and consistent advocate of a better Nigeria over decades, even beginning from the 1970s.”

## **Discussion**

The setting for compliment 39 and 40 is the Episcopal installation of Rt. Rev. Msgr. Matthew Hassan Kukah, an ‘activist-priest’, as the fourth Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese. The participants are family members and friends like Anyim, Pius Anyim who was the secretary to the Federal Government. The bishop is described as the People’s Bishop an appellation that befits his status as an advocate of a better Nigeria.

In compliment 39, Hassan Kukah, a Catholic priest is described as a “man of inimitable ability and a quintessential servant of God”. The compliment is appropriate and communicates the writer’s impression of Hassan Kukah especially when situated in the context of his spiritual calling. The compliment is governed by the expressive illocutionary act. The perlocutionary effect of the compliment is that people have great respect for him. The writer believes that Hassan Kukah is a servant of God in his own class.

Compliment 40 depicts Hassan Kukah as a patriot who is a strong and consistent advocate of a better Nigeria. The compliment emphasises his qualities as a patriot who is consistent in defending his fatherland. The compliment performs the verdictive illocutionary act which enhances the perlocutionary effect of drawing respect for the patriot and advocate. The compliment is unequivocal in its presentation of Hassan Kukah and so, adheres to the Gricean maxims.

### **Text 27: Serena: Goddess of the Courts**

**Compliment 41:** “Serena: Goddess of the Courts. If you want to see the woman who, like French wine, is getting better with age, in flesh, she (Serena), along with her sister will be in Lagos, the nation’s commercial capital from today till Friday, November 2,

**Compliment 42:** when Venus credited with the fastest-ever serve by a woman, takes on her sister, Serena, who has served more aces than any other woman, dead or alive.”

## **Discussion**

The setting of compliments 41 and 42 is Istanbul after Serena's victory at the WTA Championship for the Billie Jean King trophy. Even though Venus describes herself as a 'dangerous loafer', her many victories prove contrary to the sobriquet. She is described as a goddess which is intended to show her control of the tennis court and the description is considered quite correct because her antecedents confirm the compliment.

Serena Williams is described as 'the goddess of the courts' in compliment 41. This description could be attributed to her prowess in the table tennis courts, where the writer believes she reigns as the goddess. The statement performs the verdictive act and consequently can cause the reader to admire her. The description falls short of the truth because in reality she is not a goddess so the writer contravenes the maxim of quality.

Compliment 42 shows Serena as someone who has served more aces than anyone alive. Serena is compared to her sister Venus but her skill and prowess in the tennis court out-matches her sister's who is equally a great player. The compliment performs the verdictive and assertive speech acts because the writer has the strong conviction which is equally validated by records that Serena has indeed served more aces than anyone dead or alive. The consequence of this is that it generates great admiration for her. The compliment is truthful and adequately communicates to the reader.

## **Text 28: Anthony George-Ikoli: Feat of the GbatieFatie of Twon Brass Kingdom**

**Compliment 43:** "Like his late grandfather, George-Ikoli has an unusually peculiar gene flowing in his veins. His uncanny concern for the plight of the masses coupled with exploration of ways of ameliorating the sufferings clearly stands him out from the crowd. Yet, George-Ikoli was born into a fairly affluent family. He undoubtedly inherited this special

attribute from his fore-bears who were renowned for being at the vanguard of anything that is novel and geared towards the common good.”

### **Discussion**

The occasion is the installation of Anthony George-Ikoli as the ‘Gbatie Fatie’ a position that was left vacant for fifty-two years. People from all walks of life particularly traditional rulers in Rivers State attended the occasion most probably because of the long interval before his installation which made the occasion a unique one. It was considered a momentous occasion and consequently attracted a lot of dignitaries which in turn reflected the mood of the writer who was apparently overwhelmed by George-Ikoli’s new status.

In the compliment, George-Ikoli is presented as having “an unusually peculiar gene...” There is no way the writer can know about George-Ikoli’s grandfather’s gene but still, the writer goes as far as comparing his ‘unusual’ gene to that of his grandfather. The compliment performs the representative and declarative speech acts which elicit a perlocutionary effect that is misleading because the reader is left confused as to the significance of the sentence. Since it is not possible to know the genes of somebody by mere appearance, the claim may be termed mere speculation because it lacks merit and so flouts the maxim of quality. In addition, commenting on his genes when it is not a medical issue is a contribution that is more than necessary so, it flouts the maxims as well.

### **Text 29: Alamieyeseigha at 60: Not yet political Cul-de-sac for the people’s Governor-General**

**Compliment 44:** “Alamieyeseigha is a man of strong will and character. And in the words of a renowned writer who says, ‘from the ashes of a fire shall be woken, from the shadows of a light spring: renewed shall be the blade that was broken, the crownless shall be king...the Governor-General’s life has awoken from the effects of his recent travails.

**Compliment 45:** He is renewed, and his light is shining bright, impacting lives as usual, even as he ages gracefully.”

### **Discussion**

The setting of the compliments: 44 and 45 was the venue of the party that was organised to mark Alamiyeseigha’s 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. The people in attendance are his family members and his political associates in the national and international circles who had gathered to honour him. The occasion is a lively one with some elements of political discourse which is mainly attributed to his political clout.

Compliment 44 depicts Alamiyeseigha as a man of strong will and character. These character traits have obviously helped him to achieve so much to the extent that he is known as the people’s Governor-General. The compliment performs the representative and declarative illocutionary acts and these elicit respect for the Alamiyeseigha. The compliment is clear, unambiguous and adequate in conveying the writer’s impression; therefore, no maxim was flouted.

In compliment 45, Alamiyeseigha, the former governor of Bayelsa State is labelled “The Governor-General of the Ijaws”. The writer mentions that “his light is shining bright, impacting lives as usual” and this seems to imply that Alamiyeseigha is always impacting lives. The words used to convey the writer’s claim are assertive and representative. The perlocutionary effect derived from the statement is respect for Alamiyeseigha. The claim of him impacting lives as usual may be true especially in the light of his political career. There is no violation of any of the maxims.

**Text 30: Onaiyekan: Something good has come for troubled Nigeria**

**Compliment 46:** “Cardinal Onaiyekan ...something good has come for troubled Nigeria.”

He is interested in the living together of Nigerians as one nation. He has done a lot on inter-religious work in Nigeria which is very vital.

**Compliment 47:** He is a good face in Christianity and one cannot emphasise his commitment in that direction”.

**Discussion**

The incident in compliments 46 and 47 took place on the occasion of the appointment of Cardinal Onaiyekan as a Cardinal. The people at the occasion are mainly clergymen and because of the importance of the occasion, it is a joyous occasion which culminated in the flow of compliments as a form of verbal communication.

Compliment 46 presents Onaiyekan as something good that has come to rescue Nigeria from its troubles. Onaiyekan has been known to speak the truth and calm difficult situations especially in critical times in the country. The compliment is representative and expressive and the perlocutionary effect derived from the compliment is great respect and the anticipation that Cardinal Onaiyekan will calm troubled Nigeria. The compliment is lucid and truthful without ambiguities and so do not flout any of the maxims.

Compliment 47 refers to Cardinal Onaiyekan as ‘a good face in Christianity’. The writer portrayed Onaiyekan, the Catholic Cardinal as a good face to imply that he is good in all ramifications because the adjective ‘good’ reverberates in the description of Onaiyekan. This actually goes to show that he is a great man. The illocutionary acts performed are the expressive and representative acts. The writer did not flout any of the maxims as his expressions are appropriate, sufficient and truthful.



A summary of the compliments in *The Guardian* reveals that the writers applied the social compliments more although the ascribed and achieved compliments ranked next. The other types of compliments were not prominently used. The compliments are more probably because it covers a wide range of activities and events. In order to accomplish this, the writers relied more on the expressive speech acts most probably because they knew their subjects closely and want the readers to share the same experience. Different perlocutionary effects were observed but they elicited mainly positive reactions like admiration and respect for the people complimented. The writers adhered to the maxims at 71.34% and only flouted the maxims at the rate of 29.66% and the violation was mainly the maxim of quality. It appeared as if the writers use words profusely to praise their subjects and as a result employ hyperbolic and metaphoric expressions which resulted in the violation of the maxim of quality.

#### **4.2.2.4 Analysis of Speech Acts and Maxims in selected compliments in *The Daily Trust***

##### **Text 31: I remember Bala Yusuf**

**Compliment 48:** “Even among his peers in the university, Bala was a monarch, an academic prince who was never sloppy in his work.”He worked very hard and researched extensively. He enjoyed tremendous respect from his colleagues. Today, there are a number of people who tag themselves as ‘BBU’ Bala Brought Ups. This crop of people taught by Bala is doing well.”

##### **Discussion**

The major reason for this article is to commemorate the person and ideologies of Yusufu Bala Usman, an academician and a Pan-Africanist. The writer eulogises him by situating the compliments in the confines of the academic circles. His choice of words also reflects the academic environment as he refers to Bala Usman as an ‘academic prince’. The honorific reference suggests that Bala Usman was an authority in the academia.

Compliment 48 describes Dr. Bala Usman, as ‘a monarch’ an academic prince who was never sloppy in his work. The illocutionary acts in this statement are declarative and verdictive as it is obvious that the writer has arrived at the conclusion that ‘he was never sloppy in his work’. The declarative and expressive acts are performed by the compliments and they elicit admiration on the reader’s part. None of the Gricean maxims was violated.

**Text 32: Na’abba, Tambuwaleulogise Ume-Ezeoke**

**Compliment 49:** “On his part, Speaker Aminu Waziri Tambuwal described Ume-Ezeoke as ‘a statesman due to his tremendous ability to bring people of diverse background together, his relentless passion and patriotic zeal, his ability to inspire others and his-self-possessed personality.’”

**Discussion**

This compliment was paid at a valedictory service in honour of Ume-Ezeoke who was a politician of great esteem. Since it is an occasion in his honour, it is therefore proper that the selection of words actually honours him and the writer does this by describing him as a statesman with a relentless passion.

Compliment 49 shows Ume-Ezeoke, a renowned politician, who has been described as a “statesman”. The expression ‘statesman’ differentiates the recipient of the compliment; it implies that the recipient is a man. He has been described as a statesman because of the glowing qualities ascribed to him (qualities that enabled him to unite people of diverse interest and ideologies.) Correspondingly, a lot of adjectives like “tremendous”, “self-possessed”, “patriotic” and “relentless” were used to compliment him. The declarative and expressive speech acts present the intention of the writer since his motive is to show Ume-Ezeoke in a positive manner. The compliment adheres to the maxims.

### **Text 33: Jonathan as last man standing**

**Compliment 50:** “President Jonathan is today, practically the last man standing for the sovereignty of Nigeria which has never been under so much internal attacks since the unfortunate civil war....In an exemplary display of patriotic statesmanship, Goodluck Jonathan absorbed the aftershocks of these traumatic events without succumbing to the temptations of the moment that could have disoriented others in similar situations.”

### **Discussion**

The event is a political one and it is intended to recognize President Goodluck Jonathan on his elevation as the president after the demise of President Umaru Yar’adua, the former head of state. The sobriquet: ‘last man’ is a description which was probably suggested by the title of a 1996 American movie written and directed by Walter Hill and starring Bruce Willis et al. There, Bruce styled himself ‘the last man standing’ after playing a series of gangs against one another leading to their mutual annihilation. When placed in the context of the Nigerian political setting where Jonathan emerged the president then the compliment can be considered appropriate.

The compliment, “Last man standing” is assertive because the writer is only communicating the glaring fact that Jonathan emerged as the last man after the series of unsuccessful attempts made to prevent him from taking over the reins of authority. The perlocutionary effect elicited is admiration for ‘the last man standing’. The cooperative maxims were not violated as the compliment is truthful and unambiguous.

### **Text 34: Ezekiel Gomos–President of Jos Business School, technocrat, intellectual, golfer and humanist**

**Compliment 51:** “Ezekiel Gomos is a man after my heart; logical, outspoken and kind. As president of the Jos Business School, he brings to the table his many years of leadership and

policy making skills. A former secretary to the Plateau State Government, Zee as his friends call him has a deep knowledge about Plateau, its beauty and its crises. A loyal friend and a special brother, we share a passion in books. His books are as enhancing as the man himself.”

### **Discussion**

Ezekiel Gomos is a technocrat, banker, and a co-founder of the Jos Business School. The interview took place in his office so it is possible that there were several books in the shelf and this coupled with her discussion with him may have caused her to realise that he is an avid reader and for this reason describes his books as being as enhancing as the man himself. Mr. Gomos is a technocrat who enjoys reading and is described in compliment 51 as ‘logical, outspoken and kind.’ All of these descriptions are the writer’s opinion of the man and may likely be a correct impression of the man. The compliments perform expressive and verdictive illocutionary acts. “His books are as enhancing as the man himself”, is a simile which attempts to compare the man to a book and as a result of that flouts the maxim of quality. In addition the phrase, ‘its beauty and its crises’ which is supposed to read ‘its beauty and its crises’ give the wrong message because it is not clear what the writer intends and because of this fails the maxim of manner.

### **Text 35: Tribute to Mrs Sylvia Shinaba**

**Compliment 5:** “Our sparrow, a woman of high character, an amiable and outstanding lawyer, a mother and humanist – Mrs Sylvia Shinaba – Senior Advocate of Nigeria, has fallen not to the ground, but into the arms of her Father.

### **Discussion**

The setting is the burial ceremony of Mrs Shinaba who was a Senior Advocate of Nigeria and had a special passion for the underprivileged people in the society. The compliments succinctly bear witness to her humanist nature and high character and as it is a final farewell to her, the compliment is considered to be genuine and relevant.

Compliment 52 describes MrsShinaba as a‘sparrow’, a woman of high character...’ A sparrow is used symbolically in various ways by different people of diverse cultures to illustrate different things. In one culture it symbolizes creativity and protection and in another, freedom and good luck. In other cultures it symbolizes the mother goddess, birth and eternal life.The expressive illocutionary act is performed because it sums up the writer’s notion.The perlocutionary effect drawn is respect and admiration. Contextually, the expression is appropriate because she fits into the mould of a sparrow but in ordinary usage, the comparison flouts the maxim of quality because in reality, Mrs Shinaba, is not a sparrow.

### **Text 36: Blessing will jump to Silver and Gold**

**Compliment 5:** “I tell you this. Blessing is a tall girl. She is beautiful. She has great running style and elegant strides. She is well built and her muscles, nicely toned. I watched her that evening in Beijing. I observed her total concentration and elegant run up to the launching board.”

### **Discussion**

Compliment 53 is an article on Blessing by Segun Odegbami who confessed that he had never watched Blessing participate in any sporting activities until he watched her at an athletic event. It is difficult to know what the writer means without context because the expression, ‘Blessing will jump to silver...’ does not state what she is jumping to but in the context of her sporting activities, one can decipher that she may be jumping to a silver or gold medal. The writer greatly admires her ability and skill so he is able to genuinely praise her performance by the profuse use of adjectives.“Blessing will jump to silver or gold” is how BlessingOkagbare is described in compliment 53 by the writer. Blessing Okagbare is a track and field athlete who specialises in high jump. The compliments employed are mainly expressive and verdictive. The perlocutionary effect elicited is admiration. The

compliment does not violate any of the maxims because Blessing has actually performed the feats attributed to her.

**Text 37: Mandela at 94- Ode to a Living Saint**

**Compliment 54:** “An ode to a Living Saint: Frail as he may be today,

**Compliment 55:** his place in the pantheon of immortals is definitely assured. As we share in the joy of the Mandela Day celebration, I cannot help wondering; ‘whence cometh our own Mandela?’”

The article is in honour of people that have had great impact on people in society and Mandela is one those profiled for the week. Consequently, the writer uses words that portray Nelson Mandela in a positive manner in compliments 54 and 55. The expression reflects the psychological reality of who and what Mandela was to his people during the Apartheid era in South Africa.

Compliment 54 shows that Nelson Mandela, a former South African president is described as a living saint. The expressive and representative speech acts are performed by the compliments. The perlocutionary effect elicited is admiration for the subject. The compliment describing Mandela as a living saint does not flout any of the Gricean maxims.

In compliment 55, the writer declares that Mandela’s ‘place is assured in the pantheon of immortals’. The compliment performs the assertive and expressive illocutionary acts and it elicits admiration and reverence as the perlocutionary act. The compliment does not represent what is true because there is no way the writer will if Mandela will be given a place in the pantheon; consequently, the compliment flouts the maxim of quality.

**Text 38: Abuja: Where landlords are kings**

**Compliment 56:** “Here in Abuja the landlord is a king unto himself and can do whatever he or she wishes. Go to any part of the suburbs and you will see how people are being fleeced through payment of yearly rent.”

**Discussion**

The landlord is a king in Abuja because it is the Federal Capital Territory and because of this fact things are very expensive. To be a landlord implies that one has tenants who pay enormous sums of money in order to secure accommodation. It is therefore not surprising that the landlord in Abuja is referred to as a king. Compliment 56 underscores the fact that ‘in Abuja the landlord is a king unto himself and can do whatever he or she wishes’. The landlord is ‘a king’ because he apparently controls his property and this makes him influential in his immediate environment. The statement is expressive as it is the writer’s opinion and the perlocutionary effect generated is that readers are informed about the influence the Abuja landlords have. None of the maxims was flouted because the statement is true, there is no ambiguity just as it is obvious that the maxim of quantity was not violated because the writer did not state more than was required.

**Text 39: IMF and naira valuation: in praise of CBN**

**Compliment 57:** “It is to the eternal credit of CBN under Sanusi Lamido governorship that it independently refuses to be counted on the side of (unhelpful) policy dogma of the IMF.” A developing country like ours, begging for industrialisation, electrification, job creation and poverty alleviation cannot crudely separate central banking from developmental and democratic acquisition of the people.”

## **Discussion**

The statement is in recognition of Sanusi Lamido, the former governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). The writer is of the opinion that Sanusi Lamido was firm in his resolution to ensure that the Central Bank was allowed to operate independently.

In compliment 57, the writer emphasises that “it is to the eternal credit of CBN under Sanusi Lamido governorship...” The compliment is verdictive and it generates admiration as the perlocutionary act. The statement is meant to compliment the Central Bank of Nigeria on its commitment to eradicating poverty in Nigeria and the linguistic expression adequately conveys it. The writer communicated appropriately and so none of the maxims was flouted.

### **Text 40: Day Adamawa community honoured its professors and surgeons**

**Compliment 58:** “As a mark of unity in diversity, the community recognized and honoured Dr. Theresa Ize Otu, Ebira by tribe but who was born and educated in Jada. Dr. Otu hails from Kogi State. Theresa was described as standing out and a meticulous and dependable champion of excellence.”

## **Discussion**

The setting is Jada, a community in Adamawa State that honours its citizens annually and this occasion is no different as a few of the citizens are honoured in that year. Among those honoured is Dr. Theresa Ize Otu, who was born in Adamawa State where she was also educated. A lot of people, especially the indigenes of Jada community were in attendance which made it a social gathering and therefore, a lively occasion. The compliment describes Dr. Theresa Ize Otu as ‘a meticulous and dependable champion of excellence’ performs the representative illocutionary speech act. The description also indicates that she is a woman that is accomplished and by portraying her as ‘a meticulous’ and ‘dependable champion of excellence’, the writer’s high regard for Dr. Theresa Ize Otu is made manifest particularly



with his choice of words which sufficiently convey his admiration. The compliment performs the representative illocutionary act and the perlocutionary effect produced is respect. The writer does not flout any of the maxims as the expressions conveying the facts are clear enough.

The *Daily Trust* had more socially motivated compliments than the other types of compliments. It emerged 7 out of the 18 times thus recorded 38.89% occurrence. It is interesting to note that the achieved and ascribed, the gender and the honorific compliments appeared 3 times at 16.66% respectively. The compliments performed mainly the expressive illocutionary acts because out of the 17 illocutionary acts performed, 7 were expressive that is 41.17% while the representative, the assertive and declarative acts occurred 2 times respectively at 11.76%. Most of the compliments produced several perlocutionary effects like respect, esteem and admiration. It was also observed that the writers adhered to the maxim in most cases. The maxim of quality witnessed a higher frequency of violation than the other maxims mainly because of the recourse to figurative language which in most cases is exaggerated and as a result does not present a true picture of the people being complimented.

#### **4.2.2.5 Analysis of Speech Acts and Maxims in selected compliments in *Thisday***

**Text 41: Gani: A flame that glows eternally**

**Compliment 59:** "Today, in many homes, schools, institutions, law offices and courts across the country, the name of Gani is a daily sacrament,

**Compliment 60:** and a reminder of a flame destined to glow eternally."

**Discussion**

The article in compliments 59 and 60 is written in memory of Gani Fawehinmi, a legal luminary, who was the beacon of hope to many Nigerians. Since the article is in his honour, a lot of metaphors were employed in order to draw attention to Gani's accomplishment both as a legal practitioner and a human-rights activist.

Compliment 59 describes Gani Fawehinmi who was a Nigerian author, publisher, social critic and a human and civil rights lawyer. He was portrayed as 'a daily sacrament' and was believed to have been 'received' in many homes, schools institutions, law offices and courts across the country. The declarative and expressive speech acts convey the writer's feelings about Gani. The perlocutionary effect of the compliment is adoration of Gani. The compliment violates the maxim of quality and quantity because the statement, he is a daily sacrament is an exaggeration and so, flouts the maxim of quality and by mentioning so many places where he has been received, flouts the maxim of quantity.

In compliment 60, the writer also describes Gani as "a flame destined to glow eternally." The compliment performs the expressive speech act because it tells the reader what the writer feels about Gani. The compliment elicits admiration as the perlocutionary effect. The compliment is metaphoric because Gani is likened to a flame that glows eternally it does not represent what is real or true in reality because Gani is not a flame that can glow eternally and as a result flouts the maxims of quality.

**Text 42: Mimiko stands tall at all times**

**Compliment 61:** "At 57, the story of Mimiko is a story of a man of courage, a man determined to serve humanity, a man redefining true governance amid leadership rot, a man of the people."

**Compliment 62:** No wonder he is likened to Iroko, the most valued tree."



## Discussion

The occasion where compliments 61 and 62 were paid is Mimiko's birthday and a service was conducted to commemorate his 57<sup>th</sup> birthday. The theme of the service was: 'Count Your Blessings'. Several people like family members, political associates and Christian brethren attended the occasion where his blessings were actually counted in the form of compliments. The atmosphere is conducive and very suitable for the compliments paid.

The compliment paid to Olusegun Mimiko, the governor of Ondo State in compliment 61 performs the expressive speech act and it is used by the writer to convey his perception of Mimiko. The perlocutionary effect generated by the compliment is high esteem for Mimiko. The writer may possibly have borrowed this description of Mimiko from Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People*, though the message differs from what was portrayed in the novel because Mimiko is seen as a genuine man of the people unlike Chief Nanga in the novel. The compliment is sincere and appropriately communicated so does not flout any of the maxims.

In order to show the faith his people have in him, they likened him to an "Iroko tree" in compliment 62. The Iroko tree is considered valuable because it is resilient and is seen as a symbol of strength and so is considered a very appropriate description of Mimiko. The compliment performs the expressive speech act which eminently to elicits the perlocutionary effect of respect. An observation of the compliment reveals that the choice of words does not breach any of the maxims.

### **Text 43: Imoke: A profile in service**

**Compliment 63:** "He parades rich political credentials. He was elected senator in 1992 at the age of 30, becoming the youngest legislature in the history of The Senate. That experience was however was, however, short-lived following the abortion of the country's third Republic."

## Discussion

The assertion that he parades rich credentials is against the background of his foray in the political scene. He was a senator in 1992, a special adviser to Obasanjo in 1999 and Rivers State governor in 2007. His background is what informs the writer's choice of words which boldly assert that he 'parades rich political credentials'. Compliment 63 reveals Liye Imoke, the governor of Cross River State, as someone who 'parades rich political credentials'. The information contained in the compliment seeks to praise Imoke as a great politician with rich political credentials and from his antecedents it is obvious that he has such qualifications especially when it is recalled that he was a governor for two terms in Rivers State. The illocutionary act performed is expressive and elicits admiration as the perlocutionary effect. The compliment is apt and breaches none of the maxims.

## Text 44: Chukwuemeka Ike at 80

**Compliment 64:** "At 80, we can only wish the intellectual monarch more grace, strength and wisdom, not only to lead his subjects, but to indeed continue to remain a solid nationalist and statesman."

## Discussion

It is at Chukwuemeka Ike's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party which is graced by his family members and friends. The atmosphere is a pleasant one and everyone is in a vivacious mood. The nature of the occasion equally makes it possible that compliments are used generously. The careful selection of words makes the compliments appropriate and interesting.

"At 80, we can only wish the intellectual monarch..." in compliment 64 obviously refers to Chukwuemeka Ike. Chukwuemeka Ike is a Nigerian writer who currently holds the title of Ikeliwu XI in his hometown in Anambra State. The writer adopts the expressive speech acts to state his intention about the monarch whom he expects the reader to felicitate with as the perlocutionary effect of the compliment. These accomplishments may have been the basis

on which the writer paid the compliment. The phrase “the intellectual monarch” is appropriate as it reflects his academic achievement as well as his current position as the ruler of his community. The expression appears ambiguous without context but when situated in the context that it is the monarch that is celebrating his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday then the ambiguity disappears. Consequently, one can assume that the writer did not flout any of the maxims.

#### **Text 45: Francis Ogboro Polo and All That**

**Compliment 65:** “There are many reasons why Alhaji Francis Ogboro, President of Nigeria Polo Federation has remained an integral member of quintessential role models.

**Compliment 66:** Good-looking, stylish, genial and connected in the right places, the Polo buff is as sociable and selfless as they come.”

#### **Discussion**

Compliments 65 and 66 in the article are in honour of Ogboro who is described as a quintessential role model principally because he was able to overcome challenges to get to the top of his profession. He deserves the compliment paid to him because he led the polo team to Malaysia where they excelled. He is called ‘Alhaji’ mainly because he grew up in Zaria and has the mannerisms of an Hausa man.

Compliment 65 shows that the word “Alhaji” is used to compliment Francis Agboro. In reality the word Alhaji is used honorifically in Nigeria to describe a Muslim who has been to Mecca on pilgrimage. Thus describing Francis as ‘Alhaji’ bestows upon him the honorary title of somebody who has gone on holy pilgrimage and so should be held in high esteem. The phrase ‘an integral member of role models’ is a declarative and representative speech act that adequately conveys the writer’s intention which in turn elicits admiration for the person in question. The writer adhered to the maxims in the compliments used.

In compliment 66, Francis Ogboro is described as someone who is ‘good-looking, stylish, genial and connected in the right places. The compliment is apt because his accomplishments are acknowledged. The declarative and verdictive speech acts are performed by the compliment. The compliment elicits the perlocutionary effect of great admiration for the sociable polo buff. None of the maxims was breached since the compliment is accurate and the expressions are clear.

**Text 46: Cardinal Okogie: A prodigy at 75**

**Compliment 67:** ‘His Eminence, Cardinal Okogie has been a major blessing to Nigeria. As a crusader for social justice, he has fought fearlessly and courageously...

**Compliment 68:** Okogie is a soft-spoken man of power and influence, a friend of the rich and powerful, a companion of the poor, an apostle of God speaks to the soul and spirit in us.

**Compliment 69:** He is indeed a prized prince of the church.’

**Discussion**

The occasion is Cardinal Okogie’s 75<sup>th</sup> birthday which is marked by nine catholic archbishops, twenty- seven bishops and several priests and reverend sisters. The compliments: 67, 68 and 69 capture the essence of Cardinal Okogie. The atmosphere is one of celebration because the cardinal is greatly appreciated by his congregation, he is eulogised by the writer who describes him as a prized prince of the church.

In 67, Bishop Okogie is depicted as being ‘a major blessing to Nigeria’. The writer enthusiastically conveys his intention by using various speech acts: verdictive, expressive and assertive to compliment Okogie most probably because he holds him in high esteem so he equally wants the reader to feel the same way about the subject matter and he achieves this because the bishop is accorded respect. No maxims were flouted because the compliment is true of Cardinal Okogie.

In compliment 68, Cardinal Okogie is portrayed as a soft-spoken man of power and influence, a friend of the rich and powerful. The compliment is honorific and socially motivated. The compliment performs the expressive and assertive speech acts. The writer adhered to the maxims because the compliment does not say more or less than it should and it is also clearly stated.

Compliment 69 presents Cardinal Okogie as a prized prince of the church. The compliment is suitable especially in the context of his calling as a priest so, referring to him honorifically as ‘a prized prince of the church’ only reinforces his achievements. The compliment performs the expressive and verdictive speech act. The perlocutionary effect is respect and honour for the cardinal. The compliment does not violate any of the maxims.

**Text 47: Bala Mohammed: A Bridge Across the Niger**

**Compliment 70:** There is no doubt the incumbent FCT minister is a leader gifted with considerable intelligence and courage.”

**Compliment 71:** Those close to him attest to his strength of character as a leader who does not vacillate.”

**Discussion**

In compliments 70 and 71, Bala Mohammed, the former minister of the Federal Capital Territory was honoured by the Niger Delta Youths who conferred 2012 Leadership and Friend of the Niger award on him. The occasion is attended by the Niger Delta youths, friends and supporters of Bala Mohammed. The minister is described as a leader who is gifted with intelligence and courage: a trait which was noticed in the days preceding President Jonathan’s formally taking over the reins of power. In the light of this revelation, the compliment is considered appropriate.



In the words of the writer in compliment 70, ‘there is no doubt that the incumbent FCT minister is a leader’. The writer communicated his intention through the verdictive and expressive speech acts which are meant to draw the readers’ attention to Bala Mohammed as someone who deserves to be respected for his principles. Bala Mohammed, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory is referred to as ‘the incumbent’. The word ‘incumbent’ is ambiguous from the deitic perspective of time since it could mean incumbent at any time but when situated in context, the ambiguity disappears with the consequent result that the maxims were not violated..

“Those close to him attest to his strength of character as a leader who does not vacillate”, are the words that describe Bala Mohammed in compliment 71. The compliment performs the expressive and verdictive speech act and these produce respect and dereference as the perlocutionary effect. Bala is seen as someone who is resolute and ready to stand for what is right as a result, the words applied are adequate, relevant, unambiguous and truthful therefore do not flout any maxim.

**Text 48: Harassed, Bruised, Undeterred Oshiomole Still Soars High**

**Compliment 72:** “Comrade Oshiomole has a formidable reputation. He has made his name as charismatic and cerebral trade union leader.”I first had contact with him when we both served together on a national committee on Nigeria’s bid for the permanent seat in UN Security Council. A national committee on which General Abdulsalam was the chairman and I was deputy chairman, Comrade Oshiomhole was a fellow member and from that time on, I was able to confirm that he has made his name as charismatic and cerebral trade union leader.”

## Discussion

The setting is at a dinner organised for the re-election of Adams Oshiomole as a governor in Edo State. The ambience is lively and of a political nature. It is therefore proper that Adams Oshiomole, the gubernatorial candidate is extolled in order to improve his political chances particularly as he is praised as a charismatic leader.

Compliment 72 demonstrates that Comrade Oshiomole, the Governor of Edo State is described as someone who ‘has made his name as charismatic and cerebral trade union leader’. The verdictive speech act is what the writer employs in communicating his opinion. The compliment conveys admiration for the governor but it is not clear if it if the writer’s intention is to praise Oshiomole or his name. The omission of the indefinite article “a” in the expression: ‘he has made his name as charismatic as cerebral trade union leader’ could have been written as: “he has made his name as a charismatic cerebral and trade union leader” which would have communicated the writer’s idea better. This omission could have been an error but it has consequently misrepresented the writer’s intention and as a result the writer does not adhere to the maxim of manner.

### **Text 49: Ekweremadu: Birthday Boy rocks at 50**

**Compliment 73:** “Ekweremadu has the credentials of a grassroots man, a democracy archetype, and a transformational innovative visionary whose quality representation is a responsibility.

**Compliment 74:** Perhaps the most remarkable credential in Ekweremadu is his matchless charisma for winning the hearts of his fellow men and women.

**Compliment 75:** The life of Senator Ike Ekweremadu is a catchy advertisement in discipline, humility, hard work, courage godliness, empathy and sacrifice.”

## **Discussion**

The article is written in honour of Ike Ekweremadu, the former Deputy Senate President on his birthday and he is described as the birthday boy who is celebrating his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. The compliment is both social and political because the writer strives to score some political goals even though it is a social occasion that has family members and associates in attendance and as a result, the mood is a convivial one. It is therefore possible that compliments are enthusiastically used.

Compliment 73 reveals Ekweremadu's pedigree as someone who has the interest of his people at heart. The writer asserts that he is charismatic and capable of winning over his fellow men and women. The compliment performs the assertive and expressive speech acts and the consequence of this is that Ekweremadu is greatly respected. The compliment does not breach any of the maxims because the writer's choice of words adequately communicates his intention.

In compliment 74, Ekweremadu is described as winning the hearts of men and women with his matchless charisma. The expressive act is performed in the compliments and it elicits admiration for Ike Ekweremadu because the writer is able to establish that it is Ekweremadu's matchless charisma that makes it possible for him to win the hearts of people. The compliment does not flout any of the maxims.

According to the writer in compliment 75, Ekweremadu is 'a catchy advertisement in discipline, humility...' and this depicts a person who is dedicated. The compliment performs the expressive speech act and elicits respect and admiration for Ekeremadu. Referring to Ekweremadu as a catchy advertisement is tautological because advertisements are designed to catch attention so 'catchy advertisement' could equally be interpreted as 'catchy, catchy

advertisement'. The phrase could then be described as superfluous and therefore, flouted the maxim of quantity.

**Text 50: There is no doubt that anybody assessing him would know that he is a silent achiever.**

**Compliment 76:** “For many students of politics and experts in the field, Jonathan as a politician is an enigma. His persona is as confounding as his meteoric rise to power. In 12 years, he has climbed the power ladder reaching its zenith. Many of his compatriots have been scheming for the nation’s prized position all their political life, yet the farthest many have gone is the corridors of power.”

### **Discussion**

The article was written on President Jonathan’s inaugural speech. The article chronicles his life by going through his years as a student, to his career up till the time he became the president of the country. It is this context that makes the compliment suitable especially because his rise to power was essentially meteoric.

The writer in compliment 76 affirms that ‘Jonathan as a politician is an enigma’. The compliment is expressive and representative and elicits admiration and respect for Jonathan. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines the word “persona” as ‘a role played by an actor’ or from the psychological perspective: ‘a mask or appearance one presents to the world’. By this description we are led to infer from the writer’s admission that Jonathan presents different personalities. Since the writer portrays the person of Jonathan as an enigma, it then implies that the writer’s intention is as at variance with what was written, because he proceeds to describe his “persona” and this suggests that the writer was describing two entities: ‘Jonathan’ and ‘Jonathan’s persona’. The effect of this is that the compliment is obscure and therefore flouts the maxim of manner.

The social and the politically motivated compliments reflected more occurrences in *Thisday*. The social compliment recorded 10 occurrences out of 28 while the politically motivated compliment occurred 8 out of 28 times. The honorific compliment occurred 4 times out of 28 while the achieved and ascribed compliment as well as the gender compliment occurred 3 times. The speech acts performed by the compliments were mostly expressive. The occurrence of expressive speech act almost doubled the others at 48.14%. This was a result of the fact that the writers intended to acknowledge and praise the subjects that were complimented. It was observed that the writers adhered to the cooperative maxims at the rate of 68.32% although some were not adhered to in some events. Specifically the maxim of quality recorded the highest incidence of breaches in feature articles in *Thisday*.

### 4.3 General Discussions

Tables 2 and 3 below summarize the occurrences and frequencies of types of speech acts and cooperative maxims violated by the selected compliments.

**Table 2: Summary of the Speech Acts**

| <b>Speech Act type</b> | <b>No of Acts Performed</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Expressives            | 52                          | 44.08      |
| Verdictives            | 26                          | 22.03      |
| Representatives        | 16                          | 13.55      |
| Assertives             | 14                          | 11.88      |
| Declaratives           | 10                          | 08.48      |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>118</b>                  | <b>100</b> |

**Table 3: Summary of the Cooperative Maxims and the Occurrence of Violation**

| <b>Maxims</b> | <b>Violations of maxims</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|---------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Quality       | 17                          | 21.51      |
| Manner        | 05                          | 06.33      |
| Quantity      | 02                          | 02.53      |
| Relation      | -                           | 0          |
| Adherence     | 55                          | 69.63      |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>79</b>                   | <b>100</b> |

An analysis of the types, number and frequency of compliments in table 1 reveals that the social compliments outnumbered the other types with respect to the frequency of use. The social compliment recorded 36.20% utilisation by the writers. The reason for this may not be unconnected to the fact that man generally thrives in social environment especially among close relations or friends. It is inevitable that in such company, compliments, specifically the social, type will be profusely employed. Another consideration may be that the social compliments comprise a broad spectrum of activities like birthdays, church services, weddings, dedications and a lot more. Examples of the social compliments are the compliments on Prof. Adamu Baike in compliments 12 and 13, Hassan Kukah in compliments 39 and 40 and Cardinal Okogie in compliment 68. The writers may equally be aware of this fact and consequently employ the social compliments more.

The achieved and ascribed compliments and the political compliments ranked next to the social compliments appearing 25 and 23 times respectively. This may be attributed to the electoral period when most writers tried to present people especially their political candidates

in terms that made them acceptable to the electorates. They did this by presenting the perceived achievement and the political credentials of the people complimented as is evident in the case of Rochas Okorochoa in compliment 22, Oyinlola in compliment 27 and Alameyeseigha in compliment 44. It is similarly observed that the honorific and gender compliments were not given much prominence probably because the writers did were more interested in their social lives or achievements than their gender. It is however quite surprising that in spite of the fact that Nigerians love multiple titles, the writers did not accord the people that were complimented this privilege as the honorific compliments were utilised at only 12.06%.

The analysis in table 2 shows that the expressives have the highest frequency at 44.06% occurrence. This is because the writers know their subjects and want to communicate same to the readers. Since expressives are intended to communicate the speaker's attitude and emotions, it is little wonder then that it ranked the highest in terms of communicating the writer's intentions. Next to the expressives were the verdictives which recorded 22.03% performance probably because the writers already have appraised and arrived at a verdict on the people that they intend to compliment. In presenting these people to the public via newspaper feature articles the writers use glowing terms with expressives in order to attract the reader to have a positive impression of the subject. In other words, they want the readers to arrive at the same verdict as they have. It is observed that most of the compliments performed the expressive and verdictive speech acts. The reason for this is because the expressives and the verdictives are adequate in pointing the reader in the direction of the desired goal. The assertives and declaratives have low rates of performance mainly because the writers do not necessarily have to be truthful when they pay compliments especially as compliments do not require absolute sincerity. The writer's intention is to praise a person so complete truthfulness may not be required when writing compliments. An example of this is

the compliment on Mandela which claims that Mandela's 'place is in the pantheon of immortals is definitely assured.' This cannot be verified because even the writer does not know for sure if there is a place for the immortals. Another example is the compliment which describes Gani as a daily sacrament. This is certainly not true but because the writer wants to communicate his admiration Gani, chooses to use words that are not exactly truthful.

The analysis of the cooperative principle shows that the writers significantly adhered to the maxims. It is observed that the level of adherence to the maxims is as high as 69.62%. In essence more than half of the compliments do not violate the maxims. This tells us that the writers are mindful of their choice of words as well as the cultural and social background of the readers. An example is the compliment on Prof. Akin Osuntokun which describes him as 'an example of the believer'. The compliment emphasises the fact that the right words were selected particularly in the context of his Christian calling which the writer acknowledges.

In spite of the fact that the writers adhere to the maxims, the maxim of quality is violated more than the other maxims at 21.51% and it is observed that the writers had the tendency of using hyperbolic terms in ascribing qualities to the subjects that were complimented as is observed in the compliment on Chief Igbinedion in which describes him as 'a phoenix, a titan, an ageless oracle'. The compliment is not true because even the writer knows it is Chief Igbinedion's 77<sup>th</sup> birthday so he cannot be described as ageless. It is also observed that in a few instances the writers sometimes represented what was false to the readers or in other cases, claims for which they had no evidence. This is observed in the compliment on Ayoola, who is described as 'a jurist of distinction ingrained on marble'. The driving force for this infringement was basically the need to present the characters as heroes and consequently the writers devised the means of using propositions that may not be true. For example the statement 'the name of Gani is a daily sacrament' is certainly not true under any condition so also the expression 'our sparrow' which referred to Mrs Shinaba is not true but is only used



figuratively since she is a woman and not a sparrow. The compliment, 'His place is assured in the pantheon of mortals' contravenes the maxim of quality because the truth of the statement cannot be verified.

It was also observed that the maxim of manner recorded a low degree of violation at 6.33% as shown in table 3. It appears that in a few cases the writers used contradictory or ambiguous terms and in some cases obscure expressions in complimenting their subjects. An example is the compliment, 'he has made his name as charismatic and cerebral trade union leader' the expression is not clear and consequently disregards the maxim of manner.

The maxim of quantity recorded 2.53% occurrence and ranked next to the maxim of manner in terms of violation. Analyses revealed that the information provided was not sufficient in some cases and at other times too much. Example of the violation is the compliment which describes Mrs Ayo Atsenuwa as "an erudite scholar, Ayo is a woman of many parts, a woman of substance, an excellent scholar" suggests that the writer is basically echoing the same point repeatedly and so flouts the maxim of quantity. The maxim of relation is not even breached since it appears that the compliments are relevant because the very nature of compliments is to foster social acceptance. Thus, compliments paid are relevant consequently the writers adhere to the maxim of relation as a result of this. It is observed that the maxim of quality is flouted more than the others because the writers' had cause to resort to metaphors, hyperboles and statements that could not be verified. A few of these instances have been illustrated in the observation on the maxim of quality.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Preamble

This chapter comprises of summary and conclusion of the study. The various chapters of the study were summarized.

#### 5.1 Summary

This study examined compliments in selected newspapers. The research is undertaken primarily to investigate the factors that trigger the misinterpretation, controversy and negative reactions to compliments in feature articles of newspapers. The focus of this study is to examine the types and frequency of compliments used and the study also sought to ascertain the speech acts performed via these compliments as well as the extent of adherence or violation of the cooperative maxims.

The research problem seeks to interrogate the contention that the adherence to or violation of the cooperative maxims depends on the context of use and the types of compliments used in the newspaper feature articles. The aim of the study is to carry out a pragmatic analysis of the use of compliments in selected Nigerian newspapers. The objectives of the study are to investigate the types and frequency of compliments as well as examine the speech acts performed in addition to ascertaining the compliance to the cooperative principle. The scope of the study is explained and the different newspapers used for analysis are listed. The study is limited to 5 selected newspapers namely: *The Nation*, *The Sun*, *The Gaurdian*, *DailyTrust* and *Thisday* from which data is collected for analysis. Literature relevant to the study are reviewed for insights on language and culture, compliments and their functions, the mass media in Nigeria, its origin and significance is examined. Also reviewed isthe style of

newspaper writing and various theories, approaches to language study, and some aspects in pragmatics especially the ones crucial to our study are enunciated. The theoretical framework adopted for the study includes a synthesis of the Speech Act Theory as elucidated by Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and the Gricean maxims (1975). The data are sourced from five newspapers as stated in 3.1 and the random sampling technique is used in selecting the newspapers. The identified compliments are extracted and grouped according to the types of compliments for the purpose of analysis. The data analysed are presented in two parts. The first part comprises the analysis of data based on types and frequency of the selected compliments. The second involves the examination of the context surrounding the compliments, the analysis of the speech acts executed and the extent to which the Gricean maxims are adhered to or flouted.

## **5.2 Findings**

Context, world knowledge, shared beliefs and speech acts are constant features of any communicative event since every encounter starts with context. This study observes that compliments actually rely on these features to communicate the speaker or writer's intention. Since man is a product of his society and compliments deal with people, then it becomes inevitable that writers resort to compliments in their writings in order to foster solidarity and in doing this use language that shows the positive side of the people they compliment. An example is the compliment on Omoigui-Okauru where the writer describes her as 'an outstanding Nigerian woman' which is intended to extol her tenure as the Director-General of the Federal Inland Revenue Service. Similarly, Dr Theresa Ize Otu is described as 'standing out and a meticulous and dependable champion of excellence' in a community that honours its citizens yearly. These compliments actually foster solidarity especially when the contexts surrounding the use are known.

Manes (1983) and Wolfson (1983) are of the opinion that most compliments are designed to make the recipients 'feel good about themselves' while Withbourn (2015) is of the view that "people react negatively to compliments that fail". These observations are pointers to the importance of compliments in our everyday life. This study reveals that writers use copious adjectives like 'consummate' philanthropist, 'quintessential' role model, 'high' character, etc to compliment people in order to engender familiarity. This can be seen in compliments like 'amazons rev political engine' and 'man of many firsts' build solidarity among the various groups and also eulogise the people mentioned.

Some questions which may likely occur to the writer are: what types of compliments and at what frequency are these compliments used in the selected Nigerian newspapers? This question has been answered by our findings in table 1 which shows that the social compliments have the highest occurrence of 42 or 36.20% as against the achieved and ascribed compliments which occurred 25 times or 21.55%. The social compliments are more probably as a result of the value people (society) attach to compliments such that compliments are used at homes and social gatherings. Examples of social compliments are: 'Honour for the prince of saxophone', 'Chris Aire, the ice man...reverberates throughout the fashion world', Onyeka (The lady of songs) is 'an elegant stallion' and for Professor Osuntokun, 'Christianity looks good on him'. These compliments reflect the different aspects of social life.

Another concern is what speech acts are performed by these compliments? The following observations are made concerning the speech acts: The analysis shows that although there are 75 compliments, 118 illocutionary acts are however, performed. This shows that an utterance is capable of performing more than one illocutionary act even though it is observed that some illocutionary acts however appear stronger than others. The compliment: "Pauline Tallen is considered a woman of many parts who knows her onions in politics" illustrates this claim as

it is both expressive and verdictive. It is similarly observed that the expressives constitute the major illocutionary act in most of the compliments occurring at 44.06% this is probably because the expressives articulate the psychological state of the people and so was sufficient in conveying their impressions. The verdictives occur at 22.03% which is significantly close to the expressive. This is not unexpected as writers must have observed the people and arrived at some conclusions about them and so could adequately convey their impression in the compliments paid.

To the question, to what extent do the writers adhere to or flout the cooperative maxims? The following findings were made: The research establishes that the writers did not flout the maxims significantly although there were a few instances when the maxims were violated. It is significant to note that the maxim of quality has the highest level of violation. The maxim of quality and specifically the first part which requires that we should be truthful was violated mainly because the compliments are exaggerated as a result of the hyperbolic and metaphoric use of language. A few examples illustrate the instances where some expressions are not true and as a result give the wrong signals: 'Gani is described as 'a flame that glows eternally'. '...Gani is a daily sacrament' these expressions are certainly not true in any context.

Do these compliments achieve the desired goal? In order to answer these questions, the reader needs to have a clear and concise appreciation of what the intentions of the writers of compliments in feature articles are. To some extent compliments elicit positive response especially if the right words or expressions are deployed in paying compliments. Having previously established the fact that some writers of feature articles use compliments to praise their subjects then, there is no doubt that they strive to use the appropriate words to convey their intentions and so achieve the desired goal as is evident in the level of adherence to the cooperative maxims.

Another point to note and which was emphasised earlier in the Background to the Study and also in the Literature Review is that irony plays a role in compliments especially the back-handed compliments. The statement “Jega has set a new record. The first umpire to postpone, cancel and annul an election that is already in progress”, sets the compliment on a positive note but a closer appraisal reveals it is an irony because it actually was not complimentary considering the sequence of events which implies some amount of ‘confusion’ on the part of the ‘umpire’.

It is important to note that the writers made copious use of adjectives. These findings affirm the observation of Manes (1983), Manes and Wolfson (1980) who believed that in addition to the use of verbs, the range of adjectives used in compliments is quite vast as is manifested in the analysis of data in this study by the use of adjectives like: “savvy”, “eloquent”, “accomplished”, “and outstanding” which are used to modify the subjects. Figurative expressions like metaphors, similes, personification and hyperboles were employed in the compliments. Expressions like “a heart that wants to see every living soul...”, “he is likened to Iroko...” and “a flame destined to glow eternally” which are figurative in nature were similarly used as tools for complimenting. Another common feature was the re-occurrence of certain lexical items like, “Colossus” which was used to describe Awo and Ekpo. Similarly, the word, “Nationalist” was used by different writers to qualify both Chukwuemeka Ike and Rueben Abati. The writers of compliments paint the persons concerned in larger than-life fashion. The overall effect of the use of these words is that it tends to misguide readers when they try to analyse the people that have been complimented. They may likely see them as prodigious, great achievers or even as people beyond their reach thus creating an unrealistic impression.

The writers of feature articles sometimes mislead readers and as affirmed by Amodu (2003), and Abaya (2008), writers deliberately use obscure expressions sometimes with the intention

to deceive. It was also observed that in some instances the writers do not provide adequate information and in other cases they fail to justify the parameters used in establishing the truth of the compliments or substantiate these compliments. For example, the statement “his place in the pantheon of immortals is definitely assured” is difficult to substantiate by any parameter. It is obvious that feature writers apply the maxims in writing compliments but in a few cases violate the maxims.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study, having examined the use of compliments from a pragmatic perspective concludes that illocutionary acts are usually performed by compliments. The expressives performed more than the others and it is believed that writers try to communicate their feelings and so communicate this with the expressive speech act. Another observation is that the cooperative maxims were breached in some cases as is evident in the maxim of quality which had the highest frequency of contravention. An instance of the violation of quality is the compliment which describes Wande Abimbola as a ‘mine of information, and universe of subjects’. Even though it is meant to appreciate his contribution to the propagation of culture in Nigeria, the compliment is an exaggeration and so flouts the maxim of quality. Also, the compliment which describes Ekpo Eyo as a cultural colossus is also metaphoric and also flouts the maxim of quality. We have seen the work of compliments in newspaper feature articles and how they enhance communication and get readers involved. Another conclusion is that though different newspapers have different orientations or genres, they all use the different types of compliments although this is at varying frequencies. This is observed in the analysis on number, types and frequency of compliments which revealed that the social compliments are used more than the other types.

Additionally the study surmises that compliments foster social solidarity which is why writers use them to capture the interest of the readers. It has been deduced that reader's interest is heightened by the vivid descriptions and images deployed and by this token readers are intrigued. It is important to note that the compliments sourced from the feature articles of newspapers have pragmatic implications especially when viewed along perspective of the Speech Act Theory which is used to perform different acts as is seen in the analysis which reveals that the expressive perform more than the other acts and the Gricean maxims which reveal some degree of violation or adherence. The level of adherence to the maxims is 69.62% and this is quite significant as it shows that the writers actually consider their choice of words.

Finally, the study concludes that compliments have pragmatic implications because writers are able to effectively convey intended illocutionary force to generate the desired perlocutionary effects. They achieve this by skilfully manipulating linguistic elements of communication. The pragmatic use of language machinery in the compliments makes it worthwhile for the readers to appreciate. The compliments on Chief Igbiniedion succinctly illustrate this as a lot of adjectives and imageries are applied in order to elicit admiration, esteem and respect as perlocutionary effects.

An observation worth noting is that each linguistic sub-field has its specific preferences and general underlying standards or rules which ought to be strictly adhered to and pragmatics being functional by orientation is not exempt from the rules especially as it is obvious that compliments which is a pragmatics concept has obeyed these rules and this is made manifest by the high level of adherence to the Cooperative Principle.



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## Appendix 1

### List of Compliments in *The Nation*

Text 1: A sage and his wisdom

Compliment 1: “He stood admirably like a colossus of incomparable stature.”

Compliment 2: “Awo was peerless among his peers, profound in his thoughts, prolific in his writings.”

Text 2: Liberia’s crucial presidential race

Compliment 3: “Sirleaf is a symbol of Liberia as a whole.”

Text 3: How amazons rev the political engine in Anambra

Compliment 4: How amazons rev the political engine in Anambra

Compliment 5: “The iron ladies of Anambra have set a promising tone for the future of women.”

Text 4: Enoch Adeboye: Preacher as power house

Compliment 6: “The Preacher has also become one of the most influential leaders on earth.”

Text 5: Honour for the ‘prince’ of saxophone, Oyewole

Compliment 6: “Honour for the ‘prince’ of the saxophone.”

Compliment 8: “He is a beautiful saxophone and flute player.”

Text 6: Jega has set a new record

Compliment 9: “Jega has a new record in Nigeria as the first umpire to postpone, cancel or annul an election that was in progress.”

Text 7: Atsenuwa: An advocate of legal feminism

Compliment 10: “I present to you a woman of substance, an erudite scholar, human rights advocate, women rights defender, protector of children, Professor Victoria Atsenuwa.”

Text 8: Bayo Adekanye at 70: A tribute

Compliment 11: “Adekanye has to his credit a harvest of books, monographs, journal and articles that compete favourably in their quality with any that could be found in the English speaking world.”

Text 9: A man of many firsts turns 80

Compliment 12: “Baikie has been an integral part of the university as early as the 80s”

Compliment 13: “I believe that when the history of education in this country will be written, the name of Prof. Baikie will be written in gold.”

Text 10: Why I am gradually returning home

Compliment 14: “Chris Aire’s reputation as an international jeweller reverberates throughout the world’s fashion capital.”

Compliment 15: “The celebrated Nigerian popularly called ‘Ice man’ speaks about his compelling urge to touch lives in Nigeria.”

### **List of Compliments in *Daily Sun***

Text 11: Men are afraid of women like me

Compliment 16: “Referred to as the Elegant Stallion, Onyeka lost her dad....”

Compliment 17: She is a compendium, broadcaster, activist, composer and singer.”

Text 12: All the female governorship candidates and deputies

Compliment 18: “She is considered a woman of many parts who knows her onions too well especially in politics.”

Text 13: Tears as Shema’s war against poverty begins

Compliment 19: “Ekweme remains a huge asset in national reconciliation and peace.”

Text 14: Akpabio: The seal of victory

Compliment 20: “A man in high demand, the oracle of transformation evidently represents God’s hands...”

Compliment 21: “Akpabio has given transformation life.”

Text 15: Be magnanimous in victory, Iloмуanya tells Rochas Okorochoa

Compliment 22: “Cletus Iloмуanya has described the victory of Rochas Okorochoa as an eloquent testimony of the resolve of the people of Imo State.”

Text 16: Osuntokun: a professor and a gentleman

Compliment 23: “He is an example of the believer... Christianity looks good on him.”

Text 17: Omoigui-Okauru: One good story out of Nigeria

Compliment 24: “Omoigui-Okauru is indeed, an outstanding Nigerian woman. She deserves all the accolades coming her way.”

Text 18: PDP convention: Why Oyinlola held the ace

Compliment 25: “Oyinlola is a completely detribalized Nigerian, an achiever, a highly cerebral personality, a cultured man with a sense of respect, modesty and humility.”

Text 19: Justice Mustapha Akanbi

Compliment 26: “Justice Akanbi is as fearless as a lion and shoots straight and dead on all issues, no matter whose horse is gored.”

Text 20: Wande Abimbola, one man’s battle to protect our cultural heritage

Compliment 27: “It is only at closer range that you begin to discover an uncommon savvy, intellectual depth and mine of information which this iconoclast cultural promoter epitomizes.”

### **List of Compliments in *The Guardian***

Text 21: How to sustain Ekpo’s legacy in museum management.

Compliment 28: “He is an outstanding archaeologist and anthropologist”

Compliment 29: “He is indeed a cultural colossus whose foot prints will remain indelible in the annals of Nigerian cultural administration.”

Text 22: Abati can make a difference

Compliment 30: ‘Of course Reuben Abati is an accomplished intellectual.’”

Text 23:Norman Foster: An architecture icon, his many conquests.

Compliment 31: The boy who left school at age 16 to do his national service with the RAF is now as his astronomical career shows and as Deyan Sudjic writes in his new biography – a phenomenon.



Text 24: Igbinedion: The anointed at 77

Compliment 32: “Chief Igbinedion is a living legend,

Compliment 33: a tireless pathfinder, a statesman and patriot,

Compliment 34: a quintessential business man, a consummate philanthropist,

Compliment 35: a mentor and benefactor, a missionary extra-ordinaire, a visionary diplomat,  
a bridge-builder,

Compliment 36: a phoenix, a Titan, an ageless oracle and avatar.”

Text 25: Ayoola: A jurist of distinction ingrained in marble

Compliment 37: Ayoola: “A jurist of distinction ingrained in marble”

Compliment 38: “As a shining star, Ayoola was subsequently elevated to the position of the  
president of that court.”

Text 26: Kukah: Day Sokoto stood still for the People’s Bishop

Compliment 39: “Kukah is a man of inimitable ability and a quintessential servant of God.”

Compliment 40: As a patriot, he is a strong and consistent advocate of a better Nigeria.”

Text 27: Serena: Goddess of the courts

Compliment 41: “Serena: Goddess of the courts.”

Compliment 42: “...Serena, who has served more aces than any other woman, dead or alive.”

Text 28: Anthony George-Ikoli: Feat of the Gbatie Fatie of Twon Brass Kingdom

Compliment 43: Like his grandfather, George-Ikoli has an unusually peculiar gene flowing in his veins.

Text 29: Alamiyeseigha at 60: Not yet political cul-de-sac for the people's Governor-General

Compliment 44: "Alamiyeseigha is a man of strong will and character."

Compliment 45: "He is renewed, and his light is shining bright, impacting lives as usual, even as he ages gracefully."

Text 30: Onaiyekan: Something good has come for troubled Nigeria

Compliment 46: "Cardinal Onaiyekan...something good has come for troubled Nigeria."

Compliment 47: He is a good face in Christianity and one cannot emphasise his commitment in that direction."

### **List of Compliments in *The Daily Trust***

Text 31: I remember Bala Yusuf

Compliment 48: Even among his peers in the university, Bala was a monarch, an academic prince who was never sloppy in his work.

Text 32: Na'abba, Tambuwal eulogise Ume-Ezeoke

Compliment 49: "... a statesman due to tremendous ability to bring people of diverse background together, his relentless passion and patriotic zeal, his ability to inspire others and his self-possessed personality."

Text 33: Jonathan as last man standing

Compliment 50: “President Jonathan is today, practically the last man standing for the sovereignty of Nigeria.”

Text 34: Ezekiel Gomos – President of Jos Business School, technocrat, intellectual, golfer and humanist

Compliment 51: “Ezekiel-Gomos is a man after my heart; logical outspoken and kind.”

Text 35: Tribute to Mrs Sylvia Shinaba

Compliment 52: “Our sparrow, a woman of high character, an amiable and outstanding lawyer, a mother and a humanist.”

Text 36: Blessing will jump to medal

Compliment 53: “Blessing is a tall girl. She is beautiful. She has great running style and elegant strides.”

Text 37: Mandela at 94 – ode to a Living Saint

Compliment 54: “An ode to a living Saint.”

Compliment 55: “Frail as he may seem today, his place in the pantheon of immortals is definitely assured.”

Text 38: Abuja: Where the landlords are kings

Compliment 56: “Here in Abuja the landlord is a king unto himself and can do whatever he or she wishes.”

Text 39: IMF and the Naira valuation: in praise of CBN

Compliment 57: “It is to the eternal of CBN under Sanusi Lamido governorship that it independently refuses to be counted on the side of unhelpful dogma of the IMF.”

Text 40: Day Adamawa community honoured its professors and surgeons

Compliment 58: “Dr. Theresa was described as standing out and a meticulous and dependable champion of excellence.”

### **List of Compliments in *Thisday***

Text 41: Gani: A flame that glows eternally

Compliment 59: “Today, in many homes, schools, institutions, law offices and courts across the country, the name of Gani is a daily sacrament

Compliment 60: and a reminder of a flame destined to glow eternally.”

Text 42: Mimiko stands tall at all times

Compliment 61: “At 57, the story of Mimiko is a story of a man of courage, a man determined to serve humanity, a man redefining true governance amid leadership rot, a man of the people”

Compliment 62: “No wonder, he is likened to Iroko, the most valued tree.”

Text 43: Imoke: A profile in service

Compliment 63: “He parades rich political credentials.”

Text 44: Chukwuemeka Ike at 80

Compliment 64: “At 80, we can only wish the intellectual monarch more grace.”

Text 45: Francis Ogboro Polo and All That

Compliment 65: There are many reasons why Alhaji Francis Ogboro, President of Nigerian Polo Federation has remained an integral member of quintessential role models.

Compliment 66: “Good-looking, stylish, genial, and connected in the right places, the polo buff is as sociable as they come,”

Text 46: Cardinal Okogie: A prodigy at 75

Compliment 67: “His Eminence, Cardinal Okogie, has been a major blessing to Nigeria.”

Compliment 68: “Okogie is a soft spoken man of power and influence.”

Compliment 69: “He is indeed, a prized prince of the church.”

Text 47: Bala Mohammed: A bridge across the Niger

Compliment 70: “There is no doubt that the incumbent minister is a leader gifted with considerable intelligence and courage.”

Compliment 71: “Those close to him attest to his strength of character as a leader who does not vacillate.”

Text 48: Harrassed, Bruised, Undeterred, Oshiomole Still Soars High

Compliment72: Oshiomole has a formidable reputation. He has made his name as charismatic and cerebral trade union leader.

Text 49: Ekweremadu: Birthday boy rocks at 50

Compliment 73: Ekweremadu has the credentials of a grassroots man, a democracy archetype, and a transformational innovative visionary...

Compliment 74: Perhaps the remarkable credential in Ekweremadu is his matchless charisma for winning the hearts of his fellow men and women.

Compliment 75: The life of Senator Ike Ekweremadu is a catchy advertisement in discipline, humility, hard work, courage, godliness, empathy and sacrifice.

Text 50: There is no doubt anyone assessing him would know that he is a silent achiever

Compliment 76: “Jonathan as a politician is an enigma. His persona is as confounding as his meteoric rise to power.”

## **Appendix 2: Newspapersnumbered 1-50**