

## ‘Please Advise Me’: Analysing the Appropriateness of Advice Given on *Sister Sister*, Facebook, Using Gricean Cooperative Principles

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### Abstract

Gricean cooperative principles (CP) have been used as a framework to analyze speeches, coherence in essays etc. However, in this current study, it is used to judge the appropriateness of advice given on *Sister, Sister*, a Facebook community. The study considers the issue of face in the advice provided to advice seekers since the request for advice in itself poses threat to face. A total of 110 advice comments were analyzed using CP. The study revealed that there was a varying degree of violation of the maxims. Quantity was the most (85.5%) infringed maxim followed by quality (76.4%) and manner (65.5%). The least violated maxim was relevance (41%). Also, a content analyses revealed that about 55% of the politeness strategy employed was bald-on-record. It was confirmed that, advice givers interlace advice with impoliteness giving little regard to face. It could be said that the major reason for the infringement of the maxim of quantity was advice givers need to point out to the advice seekers their mistakes in the stories presented. This act also contributed to the infringement of all the other maxims: quality, relevance, and manner.

**Keywords:** *Sister, Sister*, Advice, advice givers, advice seekers, Grice Cooperative Principle, face threatening acts.

### Introduction

Advice is believed to be a beneficial response in interpersonal relationships. It could be defined as the opinions considered as either recommended or worthy to be followed. Often through human interaction, when people come together to interact with acquaintances, friends, and family, when they are uncomfortable or show that they are upset about a situation or life experiences, others may offer pieces of information that are meant to provide some kind of support, and sooth the person (MacGeorge, Feng & Thompson, 2008). People who receive advice can gain relevant information that could be insightful, motivational and can cause a reduction in stress experienced about a situation (Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997). Advice can be viewed as a kind of interpersonal supportive communication that could cause persuasion in the receiver.

Locher and Limberg (2012) mention that the common activity of giving advice does not only occur in traditional situations of face to face or in writeups but even through computer mediated forms of which social media is inclusive. This explains why in recent times, with the advent of the multiple social media platforms, people have found it convenient to seek advice from people on cyber space who are usually online friends or not but are connected through a particular group they are members of. Such pieces of advice are requested for by people who are comfortable with the anonymity such platforms provide. The anonymity measure considerably provides a kind of assurance to safety for the consequences of disclosing sensitive information about oneself (Rain, 2014).

Facebook is one of the most popular global social media sites that have gained root in current social interactional activities. People have signed onto this platform for several reasons. Seeking advice from this platform has been proven by research to be an existing phenomenon and studies by Jiang, Osadchiy, Mills, & Eleswarapu, (2020); Yeo, & Chu, (2017); Kuhn, Galloway, & Collins-Williams, (2016) etc. confirm this assertion. The advice seekers often plead for the managers of such platforms to keep them anonymous. As reported by Decapua and Dunham (1993), the strategies the advice seekers use are among other forms, narration, or explanation of their situation that they need advice on while the advice-givers go about their advice by assisting the advice seekers to clarify their problems, helping them to explore their available options, and tell them to follow some directions they believe could help the advice seekers.

Herring (2004) has indicated that for over a decade research in the internet setting has boomed as people at rapid rates interact on a regular basis in chat rooms of social media sites, Web forums, listservs, email, instant messaging environments and a lot more similar platform. She reported that researchers, social scientists, and educators have had to monitor, study, and observe online behaviour of people in the quest to understand the nature of computer-mediated communication and how it can be optimized in specific contexts of use. People actively interact socially on this cyberspace and leave textual evidence that have cause for scrutiny in their accessibilities. Rooted in this is the purpose of this study. It seeks to investigate the appropriateness of the advice advice-seekers receive on such cyberspace using cooperative principles and judging the advice by advice-givers recognition of face. This somewhat mixed method of analyzing the advice given (data) is motivated by an argument that Simpson (2003) observed from Grice (1975), that as part of the other maxims Grice presented outside of cooperative principle, is for interlocutors to be polite and Fraser (2005) discussed same arguments by reporting on the status of politeness principle and stated that Brown and Levinson argue for politeness theory to be a maxim under cooperative principle. These arguments justify the appropriateness of considering the issues of im/politeness while analyzing texts using cooperative principles. While judging

conversations and social interactions by Gricean cooperative principles, studies abound in that regard but the number reduces considerably in the context of Facebook.

The studies found (Hanifah, 2013; Proyogo, 2020 etc.) were focused on a gender violation of the maxims while others (Apriyanti, 2019; Ayunon, 2018) focused on conversation posts. The most related study to the present study was conducted by Hampel, (2015) who explored (im)politeness and gender in a specific advice-giving practice of young Ghanaians online. While he analyzed data by looking at the form and content of the advice given and focusing on the directness of the content of the advice and the discursive moves advice givers employed, this current study focuses on how advice givers follow the cooperative principles while acknowledging face works.

### **Theoretical Underpinnings of the Study**

#### **Gricean Cooperative Principles**

Herbert Paul Grice's cooperative principle is a mode of interaction in conversations. He believes that human conversations and talks are often connected remarks and he developed a set of maxims that descriptively explain how conversations are carried out. Grice explained that the maxims are efforts that cooperatively undergird conversations. Conversants and interactants recognize the principles. As a set of rules, cooperative principles help in communication exchange. Grice (1991) posited that the participants in a conversation make cooperative effort to understand each other. The cooperative principles explain the assumption that interactants make attempts to communicate in an informative way, being accurate about their submissions, being intelligible and relevant in a particular social situation.

Grice propounds four maxims. For his principle on quantity, he outlines two maxims. This requires the interactants to be informative. The participants of a conversation are to make their submissions as informative as needed. They are to ensure that the provision of information required for the goal of current exchanges of information for the purpose of an interaction to be achieved without omitting significant details. Also, they are to ensure that their contributions are not overly informative as required for the purpose of the interaction. This suggests that insignificant details are to be left out. On the maxim of quality, conversant ensure that information provided are sincere and truthful. To violate the rule is to submit an untrue assertion or statements that do not correspond to reality. The maxim of relevance is very straight forward. The interactants are to make sure their talks are of relevance to the discussion. Finally, Grice maxim of manner has to do with the conversants being brief with their submission, not being ambiguous or obscure about the information they provide.

## **Violation of Cooperative Principles**

As indicated earlier in the preceding discussions, Cooperative principle regulates conversants in speech to make conversations clearer and intelligible. A violation of the cooperative principle would lead to unsmooth conversation Weldon, Rejeki and Taufik (2020). Weldon, et. al. emphasized that the violations could be categorized under the various maxims. The violation of the maxim of quantity may happen in a speech, if the interlocutor does not respond appropriately as regarding the contribution needed by the speaker. Grice's principles presuppose that when utterances or speech contain information not required from a speech partner, it amounts to a violation of the quantity principles. The principles of quality could be violated when an interlocutor imparts the conversation with figures of speech (Grice, 1991). The use of metaphor, irony, hyperbole etc. could make information not correspond to reality. Rhetorical questions and understatements could violate the maxim of quality (Grundy, 2000). The maxim of relevance could be infringed when an interlocutor does not bear in mind the communicative goal of a speaker (Leech, 1983) and when interlocutors are unclear, present obscurity in their submissions to the purpose of a conversation, the maxim of manner is infringed or violated.

Weldon et al. believe that a violation of the cooperative principles helps interlocutors to achieve a particular aim. For every maxim and principles that are violated by conversants, it is often to communicate purposeful intentions. It is important then for language analyst to consider the possible purposes of the possible infringement of the principles. The violation of maxim happens when an interlocutor blatantly disregards the sub principles of the maxims. Sometimes, interlocutors may consciously violate a maxim when the truth of the information shared will not be discovered by his/her partner in speech. This is a conscious misleading of speech partner into assuming an implicature not intended by an interlocutor (Thomas, 1995) by supplying inadequate information while the hearer innocently assumes the speaker is cooperating. Flouting a maxim could be a subtle way of making an addresser make inferences that are not cooperative of the maxims. Cutting (2002) also defines the 'flout of maxim' as the deliberate or unconscious attempt of overlooking the principles by a speaker but, in turn, expects the listener to generate an inferred or implied meaning. This violation of principles is often unknown to the listener who may be cooperating in the speech scenario and unaware of the expectations of the speaker.

## **Politeness Theory and Face Threatening Act**

Politeness is seen as a function of interactants' need to maintain "face" or public esteem in interactions. Politeness refers to the chance that an interlocutor allows the other to maintain face during the face threatening act (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Advice seekers require help but the advice become desirable when the self-image of an advice seeker does not come under attack. Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987) theory, also known as face saving theory, is anchored on three fundamental assumptions. These are the assumption that human beings are rational, Grice's

Cooperative Principles, and Goffman's notion of "face (Kamalu & Fasasi, 2018). This idea was also observed and reported by Mao (1994) and he has explained that Brown and Levinson's face-saving theory is well rooted in Grice's original model of conversation (1975, 1989) and, therefore, in analysing the appropriateness of advice given on social media using the maxims of Grice, it serves a complementary purpose of looking at the issue of face in the advice givers comments. Perusal of the data provided evidence of some face threatening scenarios. Face is considered the public self-image possessed by people, protected and taken into consideration and respected when people communicate.

Brown and Levinson (1987) discussed that face can be lost, kept, or heightened in interactions as it is an issue to contend with in every form of social interactions. Consequently, anything that can cause the face of one to be lost or abjured is a face threatening act. Brown and Levinson identify two kinds of face: positive face and negative face. Negative Face is the desire for autonomy, a desire from imposition, the want to be free and not to be impeded by others while positive face is the desire to maintain self-image of being accepted, approved, and appreciated in interactions. Face works may be present in every instance of communication either verbal or nonverbal. The face types identified by Brown and Levinson can both be threatened. For instance, in a communication scenario, an interlocutor's positive face may be threatened with either an insult or criticisms indicating a disapproval of behavior of the receiver while a sender's request for favour could threaten the receivers negative face by imposing constraint on their willingness. Often, conversants could threaten their own positive face when the sender accepts and acknowledges to a wrongdoing which could induce a disapproval from others. In the same vein, a sender could threaten his negative face by giving out promises which manifest as a self-imposition.

### **Politeness and Facework Strategies**

In everyday interactions, interlocutors strive to constantly develop, preserve, and affirm their face especially in face threatening encounters like giving advice, being ordered to do something, or requesting a favour (Wilson & Kunkel, 2000). Conversants may employ indemnifying actions to lighten threats to face that could be inherent in their communication. In employing such redressive approaches to face threatening acts, are adequate options which researchers have categorized under five major headings.

These five strategies are categorized hierarchically to indicate the extent they help alleviate threat to face. The *bald-on-record* is the least on the hierarchy. There is no attempt on the speakers' part to minimize threat pose to the hearer's face. The information is often direct and makes no consideration to the hearers want to be free from imposition or maintenance of self-worth/image. Also, *positive politeness* which comes after bald-on-record has to do with employing redressive strategies that make the hearer feel a great sense of self-worth by feeling good about themselves.

Here, the information is crafted to reduce positive face threat. The speaker may use words to express solidarity, give compliments and even hedge before an utterance. The goal is to alleviate a possible positive face threat that may come with an utterance. Closely related is the next strategy, *negative politeness*. It involves crafting the information such that it cancels any threat to the hearer's negative face. Here, the message may be an imposition, but the speaker employs strategies of either posing the imposition as a question or by using hedges or making indirect allusions. The closest to the highest politeness strategy is *off-the record*. When speakers protect the face of hearers by making implied utterances instead of explicit ones. This strategy decreases or eliminates the imposition that could be made by the speaker. Often the hearer is made to infer from the implied utterance its interpretation (Ogiermann, 2015). Finally, on the list is the *forgoing* of the face threatening act completely and it is the highest form of showing politeness. Often, a speaker may consider the face threat of a message and completely choose not to utter the information with recourse to the consequences of the message.

### **Advice, a Face Threatening Act?**

Receiving advice, according to Brown and Levinson, can threaten the face of the receiver as it may present an imposition to the listener about their lives. This suggests that when a speaker seeks for advice, they set themselves up for interlocutors to threaten their negative or positive face or both. Therefore, the advice seekers who may be aware of the possible face threats often request for the problems to be posted anonymously. However, in as much as the quest to seek advice is a face threatening act, people through appropriate speech acts could lessen the degree of threat to the advice seeker's face (Wilson and Kunkel, 2000).

The anonymity enjoyed by the senders closes the social distance between the sender and advice givers and could influence their choice of politeness strategies. As indicated by Brown and Levinson (1987), power, social distance, rank of imposition can influence interlocutors' choice of politeness strategy in the face of face threatening acts. As regards the issue of power, advice seekers relinquish their power in the context of putting themselves in a situation that could cause a threat to their face while the rank of imposition can only be determined by the advice givers who as members of the social group have had their quest of being free from imposition denied.

### **Data and Methods**

*Sister Sister* is a sub-online community on Facebook, a worldwide social media site. It is an online community that allows members to submit issues and problems for advice or direction from members of the community. The managers receive and publish members' problems anonymously and then the community comments with various responses in light of the problem shared. The page has over 40,000 followers and some review comments applauding the manager of the page for the help the page is providing to the general public. Often, senders of message

require the manger to post them anonymously. This is believed to be so because the anonymity provides advice seekers the opportunity to have good control of the personalness of the information they post out there and not to be embarrassed by others finding out about their issues (Kang, Brown & Kiesler, 2013). The platform serves the communicative needs of advice seekers by offering them the platform for people of diverse social, cultural and ethnolinguistic background and experiences to offer help in forms of opinion or advice to the advice seekers.

### **Data Collection Procedure and Sampling**

*Sister Sister* receives an average of ten ‘advise me’ entries in a month. When an advice entry is of interest to members of the community, it receives a lot of comments, or the opposite happen when the community don’t find it interesting. As the time of data collection, the page had published 9 entries in October 2021. The choice of month was conveniently decided on because I wanted the data for the study to be very current. The issues presented on the page are often relationships and love related. For the purpose of this study, I went through all the entries that were submitted and selected two most current ‘advise me’ entries. These stories had received considerable number of comments. The first story had 128 comments and the second most recent story had 68 comments. Out of the 128 comments, only 58 and 52 respectively were accessible as some comments were believed to have been spammed. In all, a total of 110 comments were analyzed.

Though the authors of ‘advise me’ entries are often anonymous, or they sometimes use pseudo names, the identities of the advice givers were not anonymous. To ensure anonymity, names of advice givers were removed, and comments were coded as C1-C<sub>n</sub>. The first story or ‘advise me’ entry was coded story one (S1) and the second story was coded story two (S2). Comments of S1 were coded S1c1-s1c58 while comments of story two were coded s2c1-s2c52. Also, in categorizing the face threatening strategy used by the advice givers, the various strategies were coded for analyses. Bald-on-record was coded BOR, positive politeness (PP), negative politeness (NP), off-the- record (OTR) and avoidance strategy as (F).

### **Findings and Discussions**

#### **The Observance and the Infringement -- the Maxim of Quantity**

The maxim of quantity requires the interactants to be informative. The participants of a conversation are to make their submissions as informative as needed. That there is no less or too much information. Below is a discussion of the maxim of quantity on story one. It should be noted that both contexts apply to all the discussion on the various maxims.

**Context 1:** The writer has been married for 7 years to a beautiful woman but has lost interest in her. He has however fallen in love with an acquaintance of him and his wife. He doesn’t want to

hurt the wife, but he is finding it a struggle to dump the new woman because he has fallen deeply in love with her. He asked the platform to advise him on what he should do immediately.

1. Sample advice: *you're not lost but rather greedy n selfish. You think u can just cheat any how. What if u have infected ur (your) wife with some STIs. Y r u men like this. Would you be happy if ur wife did same? SIC11*
2. *Eiii men!!! Oh no!!! you think our grandfather's and mother's who were married for like 40 years were all lovy dovy in their entire marriage?? Do you know the sacrifices they have to make?? Try and look at the good side that attracted you to her and...SIC4*
3. *Sit down and think deep into why you have stopped loving your wife and why you are falling for another lady you claim your wife is most beautiful than her...lastly sit down and think deep into why you are falling for this, and the solution will come... SIC35*
4. *Relocate and focus on rebuilding your home. Build friendship because the love thing is actually a temporary thing. SIC49*

**Context 2:** He met and impregnated a lady. According to him, his mother and the lady schemed to get them married. He confessed that he was not in love with his wife and therefore took the marriage for granted and that caused the lady to move out of her marital home. It was upon her departure that he realized his mistakes and has been begging his wife for four years to come back home but his wife has refused. However, he has met another lady who has been of help to his domestic needs and desires to marry her. Her wife has refused to grant him a divorce and still unwilling to return home. He said all he wants is for his wife to return and wants advice on what he should do.

1. Sample comments: *Waa see matter ooo, you are (a) very very confused gentleman. You want to divorce your wife for no reason and marry another woman and leave her too after marriage and follow another huh?... S2C3*
2. *Ah bra... u have fallen deeply for some other woman and u want to marry her and you still want ur (your) wife and kids back...wonnim neaa wop3 wahu (You don't know what you want?) ... so if ur wife decides to come back now what happens to the lady u claim u have deeply fallen for???? .... S2C5*
3. *Go to where she is now and have a heart-to-heart talk with her. I hope she will listen and come back S2C7*
4. *Go and talk to your mother, your wife will come back and forget about the other woman asap S2C34*

From the above, the first two excerpts for both contexts (*SIC11, SIC4, S2C3, S2C5*) have the maxim of quantity infringed. The maxim of quantity is about the interlocutor making his



submission or contribution not more than required and being informative as needed for the communication exchange (Sulton, 2014). In excerpts *S1C11* and *S2C4*, the advice givers fail to fulfill the maxim of quantity. While the advice seeker asked for advice on what he should do immediately, the advice givers resorted to name calling and judging the author of his wrong decisions in the past (overly informative). In most of the advice that infringed quantity, the advice givers were either overly informative or not as informative as required and the information provided did not fulfil the requirement of the advice seeker's need of wanting advice. From all the 110 comments gathered from the two stories, 85.5% of the comments infringed the maxim of quantity while only 14.5% efficiently fulfilled the maxim on quality. Samples of the 14.5% comments are *S1C5*, *S1C49*, *S2C7* and *S2C34*. The advice givers of 14.5% comments were on point with their advice telling what the advice seeker should do.

### **The Observance and Flouting of the Maxim of Quality**

From both stories from advice seekers, there were 23.6% advice that followed the maxim of quality and the remaining 76.4% infringed the maxim of quality. Comments from the first story that did not infringe the principle of quality included:

1. *Immediately he said in the first paragraph that he no longer loves his wife, I said to myself, you have given another lady your heart simple. Remove that strange lady from your heart n u will love your wife. You need to be discipline, stop sleeping around... S1C7*
2. *If you are religious, I would advise you seek God first and open up to that beautiful wife and together you can both save your marriage, and peacefully. S1C17*

From the except (*S1C7*) above, it is true the advice seeker has given his heart to the new lady which is true of the story presented (Grice, 1991). *S1C17* is direct about what the advice seeker should do. Also, from story two, below are sample comments that followed the principles of maxim of quality.

1. *U weren't interested in the marriage meanwhile u got her pregnant and made her a mum of two. After all the emotional abuse u expect her to forget and come back after only 4 years. The worst part is you trying to get another woman you think u love ... S2C11*
2. *It appears u don't even know what you want. Take time to decide and bear in min (mind) that every choice comes with a cost. It can either be heavy or light. S2C14*

From the excerpts above, the comments are true of the story. Advice givers do not utter what is believed to be false. However, a lot of the advice givers paid no heed to the maxim of quality. Below are excerpts comments from both stories.

1. *What you felt/feel for both your wife and the lady aint love, its infatuation. Their beauty is what you are in love with. Masa better mature up na gyae saa p6 love nu. SIC15*
2. *What does the other lady have that your wife hasn't got?? Wat (what) has she stopped doing that has made you claim u don't love her anymore?? There should be sometin (something)so sit down and use a nyc (nice) way to discuss that with her... SIC20*
3. *You are under a spell waiiii...you better pray about it and ask God to forgive you. SIC37*
4. *Such full grown babies with diapers in 2021...this gender never cease to amaze me. S2C30*
5. *Hmmmmmm I think you pushed too much to the wall. S2C51*
6. *Master you are a confused soul\*\*\* you love ur (your) new lady deeply and you still want ur (your) wife back too\*\*\*(?). S2C37*

On the principle of quality, Grice (1991) mentioned that the use of figures of speech in communication infringe the maxim of quality. In *S2C30* and *S2C51*, the advice givers used figures of speech to communicate their advice to the advice seeker causing an infringement of the rule. This is because figures of speech could blur the actual intention of communication. Also, there isn't enough evidence from the stories to judge comments *SIC15* and *SIC37* as truthful which in another way to infringe the maxim of quality. Finally, comments *SIC20* and *S2C37* have rhetorical questions and that is a violation of the maxim of quality (Grundy, 2000). All these ways of violation of the maxim of quality were present in the data.

### **The Observance and Flouting of the Maxim of Relevance**

From the data, 41% infringed the maxim of relevance and 59% fulfilled the maxim. It was observed from comments (41%) for both stories that the advice givers' contribution were not appropriate to the immediate needs of the communication goal of the speaker (Leech, 1983). Below are samples of such comments from both stories.

1. *So out of the 7yrs you have loved someone else for 4yrs, meaning you love/loved your wife for only 3yrs. Bl3da b)k) de? (Brother, are you mentally sound?) SIC19*
2. *Hmmm, matters of the heart. SIC28*
3. *Some of these things scare the single ones like myself. SIC32*
4. *You don't know what you want in a woman, keep messing up very soon you will come here and say that you have fallen (for) your side chick house help. I am waiting for that part of the story. SIC41*
5. *Is this a Nollywood movie? S2C49*
6. *You are just irresponsible and confuse (d) boy...sia (stupid). S2C33*
7. *You're just an unfaithful person...falling in love left right centre...you've not changed biaaa. S2C32*

Considering the goals of the communication in both contexts, these advice are not relevant for the immediate needs of the communication transaction as indicated by Leech and therefore the comments violate the maxim of relevance. However, in 59% of both stories' comments, some advice givers had in mind the communicative goal of the advice seekers. Such comments include the following:

1. *It's just a season you are going. The love will come back again. Don't destroy that beautiful marriage you have. SIC26*
2. *It is jux lust. Men (some) hmmm nothing is good for u people. You vowed to love her till death do u part so what happened? Masa try and seek counselling and spice your marriage... SIC44*
3. *You started it gentleman...so talk to ur (your) mum to talk to her...or better still go n join her to save ur family...some of u men kraa. S2C17*
4. *Brothers you need to put your ego aside and make that move sometimes, you made your wife suffer and unhappy so she left you only realized what you had only after she had left... S2C18*

The communicative goals of the stories were 'what should I do immediately' and 'All I want is for my wife and kids to return, what should I do?'. The excerpts above (underlined structures) have relevance for the communicative goals of the advice seekers.

### **The Observance and the Flouting of the Maxim of Manner**

The maxim of manner is observed when the interlocutors are brief, not communicating in obscure terms and are not ambiguous about the information they present (Grice, 1975). 65.5% of the comments on both stories infringed on the maxim of manner. Below are samples.

1. *Hmm... I don't think she would have opted for a transfer if you had treated her well. You are partly to blame for how things have turned out to be in your relationship. Getting another tranfer back won't be that easy since she was the one.... SIC4 (Not brief)*
2. *U weren't interested in the marriage meanwhiles u got her pregnant and made her a mum of two. After all the emotional abuse u expect her to forget and come back after only 4 years. The worse part is u trying to get another woman u think you love... SIC11 (Not brief)*
3. *Marriage issues. S2c31 (Obscure)*
4. *Love is a decision. All the best. S2C25 (Ambiguity)*

About 34.5% of the comments followed the maxim of manner. The advice givers were brief, unambiguous, and not obscure with their information. Samples include:

1. *Such selfish man. S2C36*
2. *Your mum is aware of what your wife is doing so if you think you have changed, let your mum know about it then your wife and kids will return. S2C13*
3. *Get serious with your family and stop that. S1C24*
4. *It's just a season you are going (through). The love will come back again. Don't destroy that beautiful marriage you have. S1C26*

### **Politeness Strategies and Face Threatening Acts Present in the Advice Given**

A careful content analyses at the data revealed that about 17.3% advice givers employed positive politeness, (Eg. *You see that thing you are experiencing with your wife that's marriage, marriage goes beyond love, you will soon be experiencing same with your newly found love... please learn to control yourself...S1C38*); 27.5 employed off-the-record politeness (Eg. *I don't know what at all men want in this life... you take us for granted and later regret it... S2C15*) while a significant 52% of the comments were bald-on-record politeness strategy. The 52% of the advice givers unapologetically threatened the face of the advice seekers. In many of the comments that were given, advice givers resorted to some comments that divagated into accusation, insult, warning, interrogation, etc. the advice givers made no attempt to adorn threat to face expressions.

In both stories which were love issues, many of the advice givers delegated politeness to the background and used derogatory comments in their advice. Most of the comments contained face threatening acts (FTA) that affected either the positive face (the need to maintain one's self-image or self-worth) or the negative face (the advice seekers quest to avoid any imposition from the advice givers through their comments). These acts were put under thematic headings for discussion. Broadly, some of the face threatening acts (FTA's) contained in the advice given included admonishing, blatant insults, instruction, accusation and interrogation.

### **Accusations**

Advice givers charged advice seekers for taking wrong steps or decisions. The following are samples from the comments that were accusative.

1. *Master you are possessed and need deliverance. What you are feeling for the other lady is not love but infatuation and lust. This lady has just show up to destroy your beautiful marriage... (S1C2)*
2. *The other lady is using FOR BOYS is a charm. Becareful...(s1c9)*
3. *What you feel/felt for both your wife and the lady ain't (is not) love Its infatuation. Their beauty is what you are in love with... (S1C15)*
4. *Lust lust lust. U(you) r (are) lusting over the other lady not that you Love her. Please you can relocate with your family in Other to save your marriage. (S1C23)*

5. Womanising spirit Don enter you. All of a sudden you don't love your wife of 7 years... (S1C43)

From the above excerpts, advice givers accused advice seekers for being responsible for what has come upon them. They accused the advice seekers for being infatuated, possessed by a *womanising spirit*. One advice giver even went ahead to accuse a character in the story for using *for boys*, a love potion, on the man. These acts threatened the positive face of the advice seeker.

### Admonishing

This is where the advisors reprimanded the advice seekers. Below are instances from the data analyzed proving how advice givers reprimanded advice seekers.

1. It appears u (you) don't even know what u (you) want. Take time to decide and bear in mind that every choice come with cost. It can either be heavy or light. S2C14
2. Brothers you need to put your ego aside and make that move sometimes, you made your wife suffer and unhappy.... What prevented you from going to her and making right what you made wrong... S2 C18
3. You're the head of your home. Your wife and kids need you, so keep it as such and remember your vows at the altar bro, just remember this the one you have with the other lady is not love but "lust". S1c10
4. Gentleman, it's your mindset. If you twist your mind towards your wife, love and respect her, you would enjoy your marriage ... S1C5

From the instances above it can be realized that reprimands (underlined structures) threaten the positive face of the advice seekers. It greatly affects the positive face of the advice seeker that is the advice seekers quest to be appreciated by other.

### Derogatives

Some of the comments were blatant insult or derogatory remarks by the advice givers and do not meet the purpose of the advice seeker. Some of the advisors find the actions of the advice seeker offensive and resorted to passing derogatory comments about the advice seeker instead of offering some advice. Below are samples.

1. I don't know why women choose to marry BOYS. Certainly you don't understand what love is as well as marriage! S1C33
2. Obaa na obua wo ma wo nyaa sika siesie wonp3 no biom (you don't love the woman who helped you to become rich) but u dey chop ein (but you are sleeping with her friend) friend

- to the extent of falling in love with her? Wagyimee paa... kwasia berma (you are very foolish...stupid man) God will deal with u (you)... S1C54*
3. *You're a very selfish guy. You acted irresponsibly and neglected your duties. You don't miss your wife and kid. You just miss having someone around. S2 C20*
  4. *Take care of you. Wo ye kwata???(are you a leper?) You're spoilt. From partying to finding someone and divorce. When your parents are no more reality will dawn on you. S2C24*
  5. *You are just irresponsible and confuse boy... sia (stupid). S2C33*

The comments above are rude and have no regard for face. Instead of giving advice, the advice givers rather resorted to blatant insults that affect the positive face of the advice seeker. These are part of significant percentage of the bald-on-record politeness strategy.

### **Interrogation**

Advice givers had further questions that appeared as sarcasm to threaten the negative or positive face of the advice seeker. Such instances are provided in the illustrations below:

1. *Eii men! Oh no! You think our grandfathers and mothers who were married for like 40 years were all lovy dovy in their entire marriage? Do you know the sacrifices they have to make? S1C4*
2. *Let know what's actually breaking the love you have for your own wife you have been praising? S1C13*
3. *What does the other lady have that your wife hasn't got? What has she stopped doing that has made you claim you don't love her anymore? S1 C20*
4. *Now that you've been intimate with her. If it's vice versa, will you cry or let go easily? Do unto others what you want other to do unto you S1 C39*
5. *So if your wife decides to comeback now what happens to the lady you claim you have deeply fallen for? S2C5*
6. *In your write up I haven't seen anything of visiting her and the kids its just words of mouth eeh are you sure you into her? S2C21*

The above comments are sarcastic interrogatives and some of which are meant to prick the consciences of the advice seekers while others are to caution the advice seekers to consider the myriad options available to him. It is worth mentioning that such questions are threat to both the negative and positive face of the advice seeker.

### **Conclusion**

This study was purposed to investigate the appropriateness of the advice advice-seekers receive on a cyberspace, Facebook, using cooperative principles and by considering the recognition of face in the content of the advice given. The method of analyzing the advice given (data) and face works stemmed from an argument that Simpson (2003) observed from Grice (1975). He submitted that as part of the maxims Grice presented outside of cooperative principle, is for interlocutors to be polite. This is further discussed by Fraser (2005). From the findings and discussions, it is worth concluding that considering the Gricean maxims, most advisors on *Sister-Sister* Facebook page breached the maxim of quantity as they were either overly verbose or less expressive in their submission and was represented by 85.5% of the data. Also, only 23.6% offered advise paying attention to truth and being explicit and not resorting to figurative language in their submissions. Meanwhile only 34.5% were brief and concise in their submission fulfilling the maxim of manner. Also, 41% of the comments analyzed were related to the subject under discussion and addressed immediate request of the advice seeker. Considering the politeness strategies adopted, it was observed that a significant figure of the comments constituting 52% of the total comments were bald-on-record, threatening the face of the advice seekers with no consideration to politeness. Almost all advice that were bald-on-record which did not consider any mitigative or redressive measure to the face needs of the advice seeker were divagations of accusations, insults, warnings, interrogations, etc. This emphasizes the need for advice givers to offer quality yet brief and concise advice that will come in handy to be implemented by the advice seeker while paying attention to mitigative or redressive measures to meet the face needs of the advice seekers since advice is generally considered to be a beneficial response in interpersonal interactions.

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