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A Pragmatics Perspective Of The Role Of Social Media In Security And Peace Building Discourse In Nigeria

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Abstract

The proliferation of social media has transformed communication dynamics globally with significant implications for security and peace-building in a developing nation such as Nigeria. This study investigates the pragmatics role of social media in shaping security narratives and peace-building discourse in Nigeria. It adopts the socio-pragmatics approach of Anglo-American view of Pragmatics as a theoretical framework using a descriptive mixed research approach. The data were collected with an instrument of questionnaire and excerpts from social media platforms: Facebook, WhatsApp and X purposely selected to unravel the role of social media in security and peace-building discourse in Nigeria. The findings reveal that socio-pragmatic strategies of politeness, speech acts, lexical choices and diplomacy in language use are veritable means of enhancing security and peace-building in Nigeria. The study engages critical issues on security and peace-building in Nigeria, at a time the country is grappling with security challenges. The study also reveals that there are correlations between language, social media and peace-building in Nigerian online discourses. Thus, social media is believed to play a key role in ensuring peace and harmony in the country. The study therefore concludes that security agencies and peace mediators should be strategic in information gathering and data management, especially with online information, to forestall security breaches and maintain peace in Nigeria.

Keywords: Pragmatics Perspective, Security, Peace-Building, Social Media, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Pragmatics is not just about meaning but meaning in relation to context. Levinson (1983, p.38) defines pragmatics as "the study of the relations between language and context, which are basic to an account of language understanding. Mey (2001, p. 46) defines Pragmatics as the use of language in human

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communication as determined by conditions of society while Stalnaker (1970) cited in Adegbite (2020) defines Pragmatics as the study of linguistic acts and the context in which they are performed. In all, context plays an important role in meaning generation. However, language is the fundamental instrument of human communication that serves as a powerful tool reflecting and shaping contextual and societal dynamics (Usman, 2023). Notably, in the past two decades, technology has contributed significantly to the roles language plays in human communication.

One aspect of technology that has become vibrant and indispensable in interpersonal and group communication is social media. Ogoshi & Ukwela (2022) posited that in today's world, mobile and social media technologies demonstrate how interactive dialogue is just as important, if not more important, in peace-building efforts within war-torn and crisis-ridden communities. Chomba (2017) defines social media as a collective online communication channel, dedicated to community-based inputs such as interaction, content creation and sharing of information. Chukwudum & Ibrahim (2022) averred that social media is an umbrella term for a wide range of interactive websites and applications which enable users to create and share contents and ideas within an online community. For the past two decades, the population of people online, generating and sharing content has increased. WSHD (2019, p. 5) report opined that 56% of the world's population is currently online while 45% use some social media platforms; a proportion that is likely to double over the next twenty (20) years. This statistics shows that social media is integral and has changed the dynamics of communication and networking, making almost everyone a potential online content creator, consumer and target of online contents.

In recent times, social media has become an important mobilising force for peace in the world and Nigeria in particular. Thus, one of the areas in which social media has played and continues to play a pivotal role in Nigeria and other parts of the world is in the area of security and peace building discourse. Therefore, this study chronicles the pragmatics perspective of the role of social media in security and peace-building discourse in Nigeria (Ogoshi & Ukwela, 2022). Thoms (2021) averreds that in time of peace negotiation, peace builders and mediators develop source tools, drawing data from social or online surveys to map conflict contexts, interact with the population living in conflict areas and create early warning systems. Social media platforms that can be used among others, for security and peace building, are *Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, X* and so forth. These platforms provide new tools for fostering dialogue, debate, data collection and conflict analysis (Buchanan, 2020). Due to growing dimensions of social change and technological expansion, social media has grown in popularity to become one of the vital means of interrogating security and peace-building discourse in Nigeria. Social media gives users numerous opportunities to create content, build community, resolve conflict and bring peace into local communities. The aim of this study therefore, is to examine a pragmatic perspective of the role of social media in shaping security narratives and peacebuilding discourse in Nigeria and the objectives are to analyse how language is used on social media platforms to discuss security and peacebuilding related-issues in Nigeria and to examine the pragmatics strategies such as speech acts and politeness strategies employed by language users in security-related discourse in Nigeria.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN SECURITY AND PEACEBUILDING DISCOURSE

The role of social media in security and peace-building remains a contentious argumentation among scholars and the argument revolves around whether social media lessen or heighten conflicts (Adam & Holyuin, 2003; Salawal 2009; Omenugha & Ukwueze, 2011; Vladisavljevic, 2014; Narula, 2016; Wasserman, Chuma & Bosch, 2018; Wasserman, Chuma & Bosh, 2018; Chikezie & Obinna, 2018; British Council, 2020; Thoms, 2021; Parveen, 2021). Rasaq M. A. (2024) investigates social media and peace information: a case for enhancing peace-building initiatives. The study explores incessant occurrences of security breach among Nigerians as a global concern that prompts peace advocacy groups to seek

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alternative means of promoting peace through social media. The study is anchored in norm activation model and connectivism theories. A descriptive survey was employed while questionnaires serve as the instrument for data collection. The data was analysed using SPSS version 23.0 and the findings reveal that the constant encounter with social media peace information enhances the level of awareness on the need to promote peace in Nigeria. The study concludes that policymakers should leverage the knowledge of social media to promote peace and security in the country.

Barasa & Inviolata (2016) examined the role of language in achieving peace. They averred that social media helps in achieving mechanisms such as mediation, negotiation and peacekeeping, which were employed to restore peace in conflicting states in Africa. The study employed Fairclough's (1992) approach to critical discourse analysis. The textual analysis reveals lexical choices that were highly restrained, personalised and mitigated. They concluded that lexical choices play important roles in conflict resolution and peace-building. Ogoshi & Ukwela (2022) interrogate the use of social media as a tool for peace-building in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study is premised on public sphere theory and found that social media is a catalyst for peace-building, building relationships, improving wider communication, documenting peace building efforts and sharing information in real time. The study called for an integrated approach to peace-building, leveraging the new media technologies (social media) to promote peace education and bridge the conflict gap in Nasarawa State. Similarly, Thoms (2021) investigates social media as a new ally for peace-building. The study used 'peacetech' (a digital technology for data analysis) and the findings reveal that peace mediators use different social media tools and applications to support conflict analysis, strengthen channels for engaging warring parties and promote overall peace dynamics to ensure security and peace. The study concludes that social media offers wonderful opportunities to make peacebuilding not only more dynamic, engaging and innovative but possibly also more enjoyable for all participants.

International Alert in conjunction with the British Council (2020) issued a policy paper on the roles of social media in the context of peace and conflict resolution. The paper asserts that social media can be an enabler and a positive social conductor for peace but it can also be a driver of polarisation, hate speech and violence when used negatively. It suggests some roles in building peace by offering new perspectives in understanding conflict in context. The paper concluded that social media helps in gathering data about conflict dynamics, amplifying peaceful voices, creating new space for people to connect, coordinate and mobilise around peace. Baytiyeh (2019) interrogated social media's role in peace-building and post-conflict recovery. The study states that restoration of social capital represents a major challenge in achieving sustainable peace in the vast majority of pluralistic societies that have suffered from past conflict. It highlights the influence of social media in the restoration of peace. The findings revealed that regardless of the occurrence of incidents where the use of social media has fuelled hatred, division or violence, one cannot ignore the potential influence of social media use in protesting against socio-economic and political injustices, promoting intergroup relations, as well as mobilising and empowering people for peace. She concludes that social media is useful in building peace and security in a nation.

Ayuwo & Mandan (2021) examined English as a second language learner's interaction on social media by looking at the relationship between social media posts and comments as they relate to context. The data for the study were gathered randomly from twenty-eight (28) Facebook users of English as second language (L2) learners. The study adopts a descriptive qualitative method. The findings show that contexts and inferences were tools for effective communication strategies in online media interaction. The study concludes that implicature is highly useful in context as one of the tools available to online interactants for communication purposes. Mahmud (2020) investigates the role of the media in peacebuilding and conflict

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prevention in Nigeria. The study argues that the media can play an important role in promoting peace and preventing conflict by embracing the principle of peaceful coexistence as against the policy of disseminating divisive information. The paper concludes that social media has the capacity to impact positively in conflict areas hence, it is important to empower people and communities that are affected with social media to enable them to manage and resolve conflicts. Finally, studies have also shown the investigation of social media and its role as the means of communication in building peaceful environment from sociological point of view (Ogoshi & Ukwela, 2022) and media discourse perspective (Uzuegunan & Omenugha, 2018) but it seems likely that there have been few studies that investigate the role of social media in security and peacebuilding discourse in Nigeria using Pragmatics strategies to interrogate how social media can help to abate insecurity and promote peace-building in a seemingly divided society such as Nigeria. This study therefore, fills the gap in knowledge by investigating the pragmatics perspective of the role of social media in security and peace-building discourse in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is situated within socio-pragmatics. Holmes & King (2017) defines socio-pragmatics as an approach to linguistic analysis which examines the relationship between social context and discourse. Socio-pragmatics refers to the way conditions of language use derive from the social norms and situations (Buluan, 2023). It is concerned with the study of the abstract linguistic forms and the social functions of language i.e. the role language plays in the context of society (Mey 2001). As an aspect of socio-linguistic competence, socio-pragmatics competence borders on the ability to use language appropriately and politely to convey messages while observing the social and cultural conventions guiding such use in a particular speech community (Hauwa, 2020). Mamaridou (2011) states that socio-pragmatics relates pragmatic meaning to an assessment of participants' social distance, the language community's social rules, appropriateness of norms, encouraged practices and accepted behaviours. She opines that socio-pragmatics is the theory of the ways in which the non-linguistic environment affects language use. It encompasses the study of social, interactional and normative dimensions of language use.

Socio-pragmatics is a complementary part of pragmatics that places a greater emphasis on the social use of language and has been traced to the Anglo-American view of pragmatics (Horn & Ward, 2004). The term 'socio-pragmatics' was coined by Leech (1983, p. 10) to describe (the study of) the ways in which pragmatic meanings reflect 'specific' or 'local' conditions on language. It is a complementary field of pragmatics distinguished from the study of more 'general' Pragmatic meaning (Leech, 1983). Leech (1983, p. 11) therefore posited that socio-pragmatics concerns itself more specifically with local conditions of language use; that is, conditions specific to the pragmatic meaning of a particular language use. According to Hauwa (2020) the best way to understand the concept of socio-pragmatics is to see it as the interface of sociology and pragmatics, underlying participants, interpretation and performance of communicative action. Socio-pragmatics seeks to determine the function which language serves in the expression of 'content' or what Brown & Yule (1983) refer to as transactional use and the functions which languages serve in expressing social relations and personal attitudes, which they also term 'interactional'.

Finally, socio-pragmatics as an analytical approach is connected to speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Austin (1962) in his paper "How to Do Things with Words" posited that words are meant to perform some actions and the actions are performed by making utterances that are classified into: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. This study employs socio-pragmatics strategies to analyse discourses related to security and peace-building and the role social media plays in the overall discourses. It must be noted here however, that Nigerians understand one another within the variegated multilingual socio-cultural society in which they live, co-exist and interact, despite the various cultures and

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languages that exist in Nigeria. The study is therefore situated against this knowledge and background that language performs a pivotal role in making Nigeria a functional society.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive mixed approach. It investigates the roles of social media in security and peace-building discourse in Nigeria, from a pragmatics perspective. The data were collected using two instruments: questionnaire and excerpts from Facebook, X (twitter) and Whatsapp. Fifty (50) questionnaires were distributed using purposive sampling and retrieved from the respondents, and twelve (12) excerpts were sampled across three social media platforms (Facebook, X (twitter) and Whatsapp). To check the data's trustworthiness, triangulation was applied (Ndanu et al., 2015). The need for the use of two different data sources was to enhance the accuracy and validity of the study (Creswell, 2007).

The quantitative data analysis was done using the Pearson correlation coefficient with 3. 0 SPSS to ascertain the correlation between social media, security and peace-building while excerpts retrieved from online platforms were qualitatively analysed to unravel the pragmatics import of the study. Thus, analysis of the data was done in two stages: The first stage discusses the correlation between social media and language use, social media and security and social media and peace-building. This stage involves the presentation of respondents' views on the role of social media in security and peace-building discourse in Nigeria. The second stage discusses the socio-pragmatics strategies of politeness and speech acts employed in the discourses. The reason for deploying both qualitative and quantitative methods is to give in-depth analytical views on the roles of social media in security and peace-building discourse in Nigeria. Finally, ethical conduct was observed in data collection, since information gathered was in the public domain.

FINDINGS

Subjecting data collected from the questionnaire to some statistical analyses, results are provided below. The tables and analyses are therefore discussed and explained in terms of 'pragmatics' which is the focus of the research. The data was examined for missing values and underlying assumptions of multivariate techniques as well as unidimensionality of the measures for each construct. The results of the Missing value Analysis (MVA) indicated that the missing data for all cases and variables were zero. As such, since there was no data missing, the data became normal and free from all forms of outliers. The normality and linearity of the data were found acceptable.

Profile of Respondents

The profile of the respondents presented in Table 1 indicates that the majority are females-30, representing (60.0%) and males - 20, representing (40.0%). With regards to their frequency of social media usage, majority were mostly Facebook and WhatsApp users (21: 42.0%), followed by Facebook, X and WhatsApp users at (20: 40.0%), Facebook and X have 5 users (10.0%) while X and WhatsApp users are the least (4:8.00%). This shows that respondents are active online users and are credibly aware of the roles of social media.

Table 1: Profile of respondents and social media users

Variable	Option	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	20	40.0
	Female	30	60.0
	Total	50	100

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Frequency of Social Media Used	Facebook, X and WhatsApp	20	40.0
	Facebook and X	5	10.0
	Facebook and WhatsApp X and WhatsApp	21 4	42.0 8.0
	Total	50	100

Source: survey data (2024)

Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the variables was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha which measures the internal consistency of the scales. The value of the alpha coefficient ranges from 0-1, and a higher value shows a more reliable generated scale. Cooper and Schindler (2005) indicated that reliability coefficient greater than 0.60 is accepted. Table 2 shows that social media and security had the highest reliability (α=0.764) followed by social media and language use (α=0.708), while social media and peace building (a=0.628). However, social media and peace building had (α=0.597). This illustrates that all the four scales were reliable including social media and peace building. The other three constructs such as social media and language use, social media and security, and social media and peace building reliability values exceeded the prescribed threshold of 0.60 which paved the way for data analysis through results of Cronbach's Alpha statistics. In addition, Cronbach Alpha below the threshold of 0.60 does not necessarily invalidate the findings, it does signal potential reliability issues that need to be addressed. Thus, additional validation studies may be necessary to assess the reliability and validity of the scale in different contexts or with different population sizes.

Table 2: Reliability Coefficients

	Scale	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Social Media and language use	5	0.708
2	Social Media and Security	5	0.764
3	Social Media and Peace-building	5	0.597

Source: survey data (2024)

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation

The mean scores of the constructs in Table 3 are all satisfactory and above the mid value of 3.0 for 5-point Likert-scale. The corresponding standard deviations also spread sufficiently. The correlation coefficients indicate that all the constructs have significant relationship with one another at .01 (2-tailed). The strongest correlation is between social media and peace building (0.528), followed by social media and language use

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(0.361) while the lowest is social media and security (0.300). There was no correlation above 0.85. As such, there is no issue of correlating several independent variables and discriminant validity.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Product Moment correlations (N=50)

Construct	Mean	Std. Dev.	Correlation
Social Media and language use	6.6200	2.11785	0.361**
Social Media and Security	7.2600	2.64042	0.300**
Social Media and Peace building	8.2600	2.65584	0.528**
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The depicted Pearson product moment correlation coefficient of the relationship between Social Media discourse (social media and security, social media and peace building and social media and language use) on peace building and security in Nigeria from a pragmatics perspective reveals the following results. The results indicated that there were positive and significant correlation between social media and language use ($r = .361$, $n=50$, $p< 0.05$), social media and security ($r = .300$, $n =50$, $p< 0.05$) then social media and peace building ($r = .528$, $n = 50$, $p < 0.05$) in Nigeria.

Politeness Strategies in Security and Peace-Building Discourse

Politeness is a strategy that examines the way speakers in discourse navigate social interaction to avoid threatening the face of their interlocutors. It is a conversational etiquette that enables language users to maintain and save face in social interaction. Brown & Levinson (1978) propose four politeness strategies which are deployed in this study to explore the role of social media in security and peace-building discourse in Nigeria, they include: positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on-record and off-record. These strategies are discussed to unravel the pragmatic import of the study.

Positive Politeness

Positive politeness is a strategy employed by a speaker to make hearers 'feel good' and minimise the threat to the hearer's face. It is a super strategy of redress directed at the addressee's positive face. It is a strategy speaker S employs to make hearer H 'feel good' as they tend to identify with one another (Jiboku, 2020). In discourse such as the one under investigation (security and peace-building), speakers desire that the wants of the hearer are their own wants thereby expressing in-group identity markers. This means that both speakers and hearers are members of a group and they share the same ideas, values, interests and common ground. This strategy conveys the idea that both the speakers and hearers seek agreement, are cooperatively involved in the same activity and the speaker seeks redress to what the hearer's face wants.

This is explicated below with the following texts:

Text 1: Peace would be guaranteed in our country if the parties involved could stop blame game and come to negotiation table (Whatsapp,2024)

Text 2: No, please, what we need now is action, negotiation could come afterward. Nigerians are tired of bloodbath every day. We need peace in this country (Whatsapp, 2024)

Text 3: My take on 'sirs' and 'mas' is that we must ensure peace and security in our country. It's a task for us …. (Whatsapp, 2024)

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This super strategy is evident in texts 1, 2 and 3. There are views or comments of group members concerning peace and security in Nigeria. The texts attest that the speakers are country men and women (in-group members) who deliberate on the security situation in the country. The speaker of text 2 used polite markers such as **'please'** and modal auxiliary '**could**' which are also markers of politeness while speaking, to mitigate the potential threat his rejection of speaker 1's suggestion could bring. He tries to maintain the positive face of the speaker. The reason for protecting the face wants of the hearer is because of the intricate nature of security discourse which requires diplomacy in lexical choices rather than bald-on record. Speaker 3 on the other hand, understands the use of 'sir', and 'ma' as respect markers in a socio-cultural context such as Nigeria. Worthy to note too is the use of inclusive forms such as '**our', 'we', 'us'** which features in texts I, 2 and 3 to include both S and H in the discussion. This is a positive politeness strategy that ensures inclusivity of both the speaker S and the hearer H in an activity involving peace negotiation.

Negative Politeness

Negative politeness is a super Strategy that seeks hearer's wants for freedom. This strategy affirms the H's (?) wants to have his desires unimpeded and his actions unhindered. The thrust of negative politeness is the addresser's respect towards the addressee, giving him freedom to react in a freeway (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Brown & Levinson (1987) categorized negative politeness into five supra-strategies: Be direct, don't presume/assume, don't coerce, Communicate addressee's wants, Redress other wants of addressees. The speakers of texts 4 and 5 employ the hybrid strategy with the tendency towards directness. It is a strategy that fuses both baldness on record delivery and redress of a face threatening act (FTA) (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Jiboku, 2020). Let us examine the texts below:

Text 4: To build a peaceful nation, we must accept responsibilities, stop blaming games and leverage on every opportunity to build the country of our dreams. This is a fact (Facebook comment, 2024)

Text 5: The fact (koko) is that no one should stop us, please (Facebook, comment, 2024)

The idea in **text 4** above is an indirect speech act since the speaker disregards the efforts made so far by the government in ensuring peace and security and insists that we should 'accept responsibilities. The speaker is 'direct' with the infusion of indirectness that someone perhaps is not performing his duties but rather resorting to 'blame game' which should be jettisoned in order to leverage on opportunities and build a better nation. As evident in **texts 4 and 5**, the speakers tend to express their opinions unimpeded and unhindered. The speakers tend to break the social distance occasioned by cyberspace to affirm their commonality as Nigerians by the use of Nigeria slang 'koko' and pronouns such as '**we**' and '**us**'. These pronouns are used by the speakers to minimise social distance among the virtual interactants. The use of '**please**' in **text 5** above not only presents the lexical item as a respect marker but also a word for seeking support and affirmation in discourse.

Bald-on record

Bald-on record is a strategy often used by speakers who closely know their audience (Bamgbose & Olalekan, 2016). In bald-on record strategy, a speaker says something directly and clearly. This strategy is generally found in people who are close to each other, know each other very well and feel comfortable in the environment. This strategy is mutually known by both speakers and hearers to emphasise maximum efficiency, no face redress is necessary and it could be found in an emergency situation such as security where quick action is needed (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This strategy is captured in text 6 below:

Text 6: Those people responsible for the violence in Nigeria should please shield their sword (X, 2024)

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The excerpt above is the expression by one of the netizens who possibly knows that all the violent group members are Nigerian and those who would have caused security issues in its diverse forms in the country are possibly Nigerians too. The pragma-semantic import is that the lexical item **'those'** modifies the noun **'people'** - the head of a nominal group, and such a modifier can be used to signal social distance between the speaker's group and those causing security breaches in Nigeria. However, the speaker used the lexical item as a choice word to signal culpability of those perpetrating insecurity without threatening their face.

Off-Record

The off-record is a strategy that uses indirect language and removes the speaker from the potential of being imposing (Bamgbose, 2016). This is a super politeness strategy done in such a manner that it may be difficult to attribute a single communicative intent to the speech act. This strategy is applicable when the speaker wants to do a FTA but wants to avoid the responsibility for doing it. Off record politeness strategy is done by way of conversational implicature and overstatement. This is employed if the speaker wants to do the FTA and chooses to do it differently by giving the hint that the hearer is expected to make inferences in order to recover the communicative intent of the speaker. Off record politeness strategy is used by speakers to indirectly express a proposition.

Text 8: Look at Nigeria, She could have done well like other countries but insecurity is the problem and the leaders may seem to have not done enough (Whatsapp, 2024)

Text 9: My views, no security, no peace and no peace, no nation, that is the issue we have now, but those in charge would rather do better otherwise…(Whatsapp, 2024)

These excerpts above are indirect expressions of the respective speaker's views on security and peace in Nigeria. The expression "would rather do better otherwise…" in **text 9** is an indirect expression that the government is not taking the fight against insecurity in the country seriously and if not properly checkmated, may pose serious challenge to corporate existence of the nation; this is corroborated by **text 8** which began with the verbal element **'look'**. The latter is syntactically presented to show the speaker's awareness of security challenges and the danger it poses to peace and harmony in the country without outright threatening the interlocutor's face. This is a strategy to protect the face of the speaker and mitigate security threats in Nigeria.

Speech Acts and The Role of Social Media in Peace Discourse

The basic tenet of speech acts theory is that we do things with words (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). It provides insights on how we use language to perform acts on a daily basis. Austin (1962) classified the speech acts into: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. The locutionary act is the act of saying something. It is the production of meaningful linguistic utterances. The illocutionary act is the act performed by saying something. It is the social function which the speaker intends to perform by means of his utterances and perlocutionary act is the effect of the utterances on the hearer. Thus, it is the consequences or effects of the utterance on the addressee. Searle (1979) further classifies the illocutionary acts into five categories: assertive (representatives), directives, commissives, expressives and declarations. These illocutionary speech acts are necessary in our analysis of security situations in Nigeria as explicated in the excerpts below:

Text 10: Fulani herdsmen have killed over 20 persons in Benue State, again!They were **killed** while attending the mass burial of the victims of attack by the same Fulani herdsmen (Facebook, 2023)

This text consists of three speech acts since there are three clauses. These three clauses have their illocutionary intentions. The illocutionary purpose of the first clause (locution) "Fulani herdsmen have killed 20 people in Benue State" is to give information (information giving) to interlocutors about the

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killing in Benue. Thus, the illocutionary speech act is expressive and the illocutionary force is to 'inform' while the perlocutionary effect is the expression of **'surprise'**. The speaker was shocked that such a dastardly act could happen '**again**' after some people were gruesomely murdered a few weeks earlier by the same militant group. This act of surprise necessitates the speaker to end his expression with an exclamation marker. The second is a locution comprising two clauses – independent and dependent clauses. The independent clause "the victims were killed" is anaphoric to the first clause in the sense that the speaker nonetheless expressed shock at the gruesome killing of people while they were attending a mass burial of victims killed by the same Fulani herdsmen. The illocutionary force is 'reporting' i.e. stating the obvious fact that Fulani herdsmen had become consistent and indiscriminate in their killing, hence, the new attack was done during a mass burial of victims killed before by the same foes. The class of illocutionary speech act that satisfies the claim made above is assertive.

Text 11: The security situation in the country is becoming too bad, even some prominent personalities are calling on Nigerians to defend themselves. You remember in the past when T.Y. Danjuma called on Nigerians to defend themselves that attests to how bad the situation is currently (Facebook, 2023)

This text consists of five speech acts since there are five clauses. The illocutionary intent of the first locution "the security situation in the country is becoming too bad" is to give information, significantly reporting the security situation in the country and how bad it has become over time. As evident in the data, the second and third clauses project the call on Nigerians by a prominent personality such as T.Y Danjuma to defend themselves on the spate of the incessant killing by Fulani herdsmen in Benue and other parts of the country. The illocutionary force of the speech act is 'urging'. To forestall the incessant killing, T.Y Danjuma urged Nigerians to take up their arms in self-defence. The class of the speech act is directive. The last clause "that attests to how bad the security situation is currently" is an affirmation of how bad the security situation in the country is at the moment. It is an assertive speech act, affirming the security challenges in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

Having examined the coded data and subsequent analysis of the data collected for this research, it was observed that majority of the sampled respondents using social media (Whatsapp, Facebook and X) are female respondent, representing 60% (30) of the respondents, while 40% (20) of the sampled respondents using social media are males. Table 1 shows that the slightly highest percentage of the respondents, representing 42% (21) of the data collected are Facebook and WhatsApp users, while Facebook, WhatsApp and X users are the second highest of 40% (20); whereas Facebook and X users and finally X and WhatsApp users are least ranked at 10% (5) and 8% (4) respectively. This shows that Facebook and Whatsapp, and Facebook, WhatsApp and X are veritable platforms for disseminating security and peace-building information among other kinds of information. Shagbaor, et al (2023) posit that the media are major stakeholders in the fight against insecurity in any part of the world because they are responsible in educating relevant stakeholders on the dynamics of insecurity and how to address them. They further posit that Facebook and WhatsApp have revolutionised the media landscape by opening forums for more public access to security information (Asemah, et al 2017; Chukwuere & Onyebukwa, 2018; Mediant, 2019; Okafor & Onyenekwe, 2020; Uduma, et al 2022), a claim which is corroborated in this research.

Table 3 shows correlation values of social media and language use, social media and security, and social media and peace-building as 0.361, 0.300 and 0.528 respectively. This shows that social media is positively and significantly related to security, language use and peace-building respectively. This further affirms the fact that social media has become an integral part of our lives in recent times, and its impact on security is undeniable; by allowing for surveillance of invaluable tools for monitoring potential threats and

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presenting new opportunities for conflict resolution (Bans, 2006; Gluboa, 2009). Social media and peace-building has the highest correlation value of 0.528 showing that social media has contributed significantly in connecting peace mediators, and checking of security dynamics. Social media and peace-building are not only concerned with conflict behaviour but also addresses the underlying conditions and mindsets that lead to violence, such as discrimination, unequal access to job opportunities, prejudice, mistrust, fear and animosity among groups. In keeping with Budde & Eickhoff's' (2022) sideas, peace building projects should foster trust, build bridges and provide forums for people of different backgrounds to freely express themselves over issues which are known to give rise to conflict, and social media is a powerful tool for dialogue, discussion, debate and negotiation for peace in the society (Budde & Eickhoff, 2022).

The socio-pragmatics aspect of the study examines the strategies for discussing and negotiating peace in discourse. These strategies are politeness and speech acts. Politeness according to Thomas (2003) is the practical application of good manners or etiquette in behaviour and language use. Watts (2003) defines politeness as the language a person uses to avoid being too direct, or a language which displays respect towards or considerations for others. Jonathan (2011) sees politeness as a way of showing regard for others in speech, manner and behaviour. Mills (2003, p. 6) posits that politeness is the expression of the speaker's intention to lessen face threats carried by certain face threatening acts (FTAs) towards another. Thus, politeness means to be courteous and attempt to 'save face' for another. Yule (1996) refers to 'face' as the public self-image an individual seeks to protect and claim respect for himself. In this regard, every interactant seeks not to lose his/her face during social interaction. The four politeness strategies employed in this study were used to explicate the need for diplomacy in lexical choices while negotiating peace in the country. Discussants on security matters and peace builders were found to use more of positive politeness in their discourses than bald on record. This result shows the intricate nature of security and peace-building discourse in a developing country such as Nigeria. On the other hand, speech acts are used by interactants in security and peace-building discourse to perform varied illocutionary acts, ranging from reporting, urging, stating, informing, calling out, to educating people on the issues of security and peace-building in the country.

CONCLUSION

The study is an investigation of Pragmatics perspective of the role of social media in security and peace-building discourse in Nigeria. The crux of the study is to investigate the correlation between social media and peace-building and socio-pragmatics strategies of politeness and speech acts in discourses of security and peace-building. This research has implications on using politeness strategies in communication involving security and peace-building. As a discursive strategy, it was found that participants in security and peace-building discourse are mindful of their lexical choices with the intention of saving the 'face' of their interlocutors and avoid the obvious danger associated with inappropriate linguistic choices. The study concludes that language use on social media plays a significant role in security and peace-building discourse because of its wider coverage and dissemination of security-related information in real time; therefore, politeness strategies and appropriate speech acts are necessary in discussion, debate, dialogue and negotiation of peace and security in Nigeria.

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