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The Marital Disputes of Nigerian Celebrities: Emotional Cues in Nonverbal Communication

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Abstract

Nonverbal communication provides valuable insights into individuals' emotional states and communication patterns, and it is at the heart of every message conveyed or received. The study aimed at identifying nonverbal cues that Nigerian celebrities use to communicate their emotions during marital conflict, and examining the types of emotions these nonverbal cues depict. It is very significant, as nonverbal communication can reveal unintentional information, as well as cause your communication to be misinterpreted. Through this study, second language learners will know how to infer meanings that are not verbally communicated and interpret them accurately. The study was guided by the following research questions: (1) What nonverbal cues were used by Nigerian celebrities to communicate their emotions during marital conflicts? (2) What types of emotions do these nonverbal cues depict? Data for the study was collated primarily through online media platforms such as Facebook, blogs, Instagram, Twitter and newspapers such as Vanguards, Daily Post, Daily Trust, Premium Times and so on. The collated data was given a qualitative analysis using Albert Mehrabian's Contextual

theory of emotions. The findings showed that such nonverbal cues as cap lock, initial capitalisation, small letters, punctuation marks, emoticons, emojis, asterisk and formatting featured in the narratives of Nigerian celebrities. These identified nonverbal cues depicted such emotions as emphasis, contemplation, hesitation, uncertainty, incomplete thought, interruption, profanity, a short answer, smile or laughter, begging, death, intensity and so on. This study was recommended to be carried out among non-Nigerian celebrities to ensure the findings are adequate for generalisation.
Keywords: Nonverbal cues, emotional cues, nonverbal communication, Nigerian celebrities, marital disputes

Introduction

Marital conflicts have become a global threat, especially among Nigerian celebrities. With the advent of the internet and the introduction of social media, narratives of marital disputes, domestic violence, divorce and separation, which are both domestic and global issues, have become more popular. Language researchers have taken an interest in exploring different verbal and nonverbal communication in marital disputes. Nonverbal communication promotes effective communication by giving language learners insight into the speakers' feelings and averting any negative outcomes of their misinterpretation. Nigerian celebrities who are victims of marital challenges pour out their emotions while sharing their experiences. They deploy language nonverbally to encode and reveal the prevalent issues in their marriages. Nonverbal communication includes personal feelings, emotions, attitudes and thoughts through body movements such as gestures, postures, facial expressions, walking styles, positions and distance either consciously or involuntarily, more often subconsciously, and accompanied or unaccompanied by spoken language. Thus, it can be said that nonverbal communication is the way people unconsciously telegraph their private thoughts and emotions through body movements, such as how they fold their

arms, cross their legs, sit, stand, walk, use their hips and eyes, and even in the subtle way they move their lips.

Objectives of the Study

(1) To identify nonverbal cues that Nigerian celebrities use to communicate their emotions during marital conflict
(2) To examine the types of emotions these nonverbal cues depict

Statement of the Research Problem

Verbal language has a rich vocabulary regarding emotions, but words are often less trustworthy than nonverbal signs. The words we use to describe emotions are conventional and cannot capture the emotions that are spontaneous, usually unintentional, involuntary and unconscious. Thus, nonverbal communication conveys a tremendous amount of emotional information but must be understood within the context of the interaction, because it can be ambiguous. A series of studies have been conducted on nonverbal communication, which includes Eckman, P. and Friesen, W.V. (1969). *Head and Body Cues in the Judgment of Emotion: A Reformulation. Perceptual and Motor Skills*; Mehrabian, A. (1971) *Silent Messages*; Birdwhistell, R. L. (1970), "Kinesics and Context: Essays in Body Motion Communication"; Punyanunt-Carter, N. M. and Wrench, J. S. (2009), *Development and Validity Testing of a Measure of Touch Deprivation*; Bruneau, Thomas J. (1980*), Chronemics and the Verbal-Nonverbal Interface* and so on. However, little or no research has been done on emotional nonverbal cues in marital disputes, especially in relationships with Nigerian celebrities.

Nonverbal Communication

Pease and Pease (2006) stated that Ray Birdwhistell was the pioneer in the field of nonverbal communication. He focused on face-to-face encounters between two or more people and suggested that most human communication occurs through gestures, postures, position and distance. He described a 65% to 35% split between

actions and words. To corroborate it, Kisacky (2018) said that "researchers have estimated that more than half of communication (estimates range from 65% to 90% by various investigators) is non-verbal". Littlejohn and Foss (2016) state that the "first scientific study of nonverbal communication was seen in Charles Darwin's book, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. He argued that all mammals show emotions reliably in their faces". Today, studies on nonverbal communication range across many fields, including linguistics, semiotics, anthropology and social psychology. The ability to effectively communicate with another person goes beyond dialogue. Mcgowan (2014) opines that "some experts believe that communication predominately transcends the spoken word". Thus, Mehrabian (1981) devised a theory referred to as the '3 V's (verbal, vocal and visual) of communication'. He explained that verbal cues account for 7% of the communicated message, 38% for vocal cues, and 55% for visual cues. Consequently, the audience tends to trust the visual and vocal cues (posture, facial expressions, vocal cues and body movements) if what is said contradicts what is being communicated vocally and visually. Krumrey-Fulks (2019) define nonverbal communication "as communication that is produced by some means other than words (eye contact, body language, or vocal cues, for example)". Chukwu (2021) said that it uses body language such as rolling one's eyes, sighing, blinking one's eyes and crying. Navarro and Karlins (2008) add that nonverbal communication is a way to convey information "achieved through facial expressions, gestures, touching (haptics), physical movements (kinesics), posture, body adornment (clothes, jewellery, hairstyle, tattoos, etc.), and even the tone, timbre and volume of an individual's voice (rather than spoken content)"). Sometimes, we may not send verbal messages, but we continually send nonverbal messages. McGowan (2014) states that "nonverbal communication is the universal language that we speak, interpret and react to every day, whether we know it or not". It is present in our speech presentation, casual conversation with a friend or

written texts. Burgoon (2021) adds that nonverbal communication is those behaviours other than words themselves that form a socially shared coding system. They are typically sent with intent, interpreted as intentional, used with regularity among members of a speech community and have consensually recognizable interpretations. Bruce Perry, in Littlejohn and Foss (2016), states that human communication starts when words have no meaning. It starts with gazing, rocking, stroking, kissing and humming. It is in these nonverbal interactions that a human being is connected to another and communication begins. Based on the above definitions, nonverbal communication is at the core of all languages and communication.

Human beings have a remarkable brain-mediated capacity to make sounds and act as symbolic representations of other things. They are capable of creating thousands of complex languages with millions of unique words. Being able to understand deeply how body language portrays emotions and ideas can be either a huge asset or a glaring weakness in communication. A speaker's ability to manipulate his or her stance and use animated hand gestures can make the difference between effectively delivering an important message to the audience and letting the opportunity slip between his or her fingers as members of the audience find the speech boring or misunderstand the speaker's intention. Furthermore, being able to recognise nonverbal cues from a written text or body language in others helps a reader or listener understand instantly if someone is confused, angry, impatient, etc. We communicate nonverbally to impact our daily interpersonal interactions and express our feelings and emotions. Nonverbal communication is valuable and rich with information because humans use many different aspects of behaviour, appearance and environment to convey meaning. For example, a variety of emotional facial expressions can stimulate accurate meaning in the minds of others by conveying anger, happiness, sadness, respect, acceptance, rejection, etc. However, a particularly challenging aspect of

nonverbal communication is that it is ambiguous. Nonverbal communication can vary considerably across cultures and contexts.

Communicative Roles of Nonverbal Communication

Wrench, Punyanunt-Carter, and Thweatt (2021) identify the following roles of nonverbal Communication. They include:

Communicative value: Nonverbal communication plays a tremendous role in successfully engaging people in interactions.

Relational Purposes: Nonverbal communication is an essential element in relating to others. **Cultural Association**: The ability to adapt to or understand nonverbal behaviours associated with different cultures is one of the key factors in successful interactions with individuals from other cultures.

Prevention of Attribution Error: Nonverbal communication is particularly vulnerable to attribution errors. An individual's behaviour can be explained in relation to his\ her internal tendencies, rather than an external factor.

It makes communication inevitable and omnipresent: Nonverbal communication makes it impossible for humans not to communicate meaning. Thus, humans cannot escape communicating meaning. They can communicate meaning through silent treatment, walking steps, body movement, posture, facial expression, gestures, eye contact/ lack of eye contact, etc.

Complementing: Nonverbal behaviour is used in combination with the verbal portion of the message to emphasise the meaning of the entire message.

Contradicting: Nonverbal communication sometimes contradicts verbal communication and can be more meaningful than verbal communication.

Accenting: Accenting is seen when a word or part of a message is emphasised or underlined. Pounding the table, for example, can underline the importance of your message.

Repeating/Reinforcing: Nonverbal communication repeats the meaning of verbal communication and assists the receiver by reinforcing the sender's words.

Regulating: Regulating the flow of communication is often accomplished through nonverbal behaviour. According to Ekman and Friesen (1969), regulators are "acts which maintain and regulate the back-and-forth nature of speaking and listening between two or more interactions". Your friends can regulate communication by nodding their heads when you are speaking.

Substituting: At times, nonverbal behaviour serves to replace verbal communication.

Types of Nonverbal Communication

Grammarians such as Chukwu (2021), Segal et al. (1999), Littlejohn and Foss (2009), Wilson (2021), Grothe and College (2022), https://www.iedunote.com/nonverbal-communication, and Punyanunt-Carter and Wrench (2009) etc. identified the following types of nonverbal communication:

1. Proxemics (amount of space): Clark et al. in Chukwu (2021) state that proxemics "relates to Latin proximus, meaning nearest, and studies the ways in which space is handled in communication". It is the amount of space that people feel is necessary to put between themselves and others as they interact. According to Punyanunt-Carter and Wrench (2009), it "is the study of communication through space".

2. Chronemics (utilization of time): Chronemics is a field of study that examines the utilization of time in nonverbal communication. Littlejohn and Foss (2009) stated that (our notions of time, how we use it, the timing of events, our emotional responses to time, and even the length of our pauses contribute to the communicative effect of time). For example, a slight pause before finishing an announcement can help build a sense of anticipation in one's audience.
3. Kinesics (body movement and gestures): Kinesics is the systematic study of nonverbal body movements relative to communication. Punyanunt-Carter and Wrench (2009) state that kinesics studies how gestures, facial expressions, and eye behaviour communicate.
4. Haptics (touch): Haptics is the study of touch as a form of nonverbal communication. Hybels and Weaver in Wilson (2021) sees it as the study of touch or coming into physical contact with another person. Touch is used in greeting (e.g. shaking hands with someone or hugging a friend), comfort (e.g. patting an upset friend to ease the pain and provide comfort), affection (e.g. kissing your romantic partner), task accomplishment (e.g. visiting a salon to have your hair cut), and control (parents or guardians putting an arm around their children's or wards' shoulders to help them walk faster if there was a need to hurry them along).
5. Environment/Physical Appearance: Wilson (2021) states that "environment includes objects we use to adorn ourselves and the artifacts we surround ourselves with in order to create an impression". Environmental factors, such as furniture, architectural style, interior decorating, lighting conditions, colours, temperature, noise and music, affect the behaviour of communicators during interaction. The conditions of a particular environment can alter the choices of words or actions that communicators use to accomplish their communicative objectives. On the other hand, artifacts are items (glasses, jewellery, canes, shoes, clothing or any

object) with which we adorn our bodies or which we carry with us. They are associated with our bodies and communicate meaning. These objects provide nonverbal cues that help others form impressions. Eyewear and clothing are very famous artifacts that most people recognise.

6. Artifacts: Artifacts are the things we possess that influence how we see ourselves. They are forms of decorative ornamentation that are chosen to represent self-concept and we use them to express our identity to others or to communicate something about our sense of self. What we choose to surround ourselves with communicates something about our sense of self. Thus, artifacts may project group membership or affiliation, gender, role or position, class or status and personality. They can include rings, tattoos, brand names, logos, clothes, cars, watches, briefcases, purses and even eyeglasses. Furthermore, Iorhemba (2017) explains artifacts as objects made or modified by human culture, individuals or a group; they are portraits and images of real things and are symbolic to particular persons, groups or communities. For example, the wear and makeup on one's body portray one's personality, culture and ethnicity. Each adorning feature has a particular motive, impression or signification.
7. Olfactics: The study of our sense of smell and how smells are perceived is known as olfactics. Generally, it refers to the influence of scent on perceptions. Scent can draw others in or repel them, and the same scent can have different impacts on different people. Tom, Grothe and College (2022) explain that some cultures, such as in Africa and the Middle East, have a preference for standing close enough to a person in conversation to be able to detect body odour. In such cases, odour is used to categorise people according to status, power or social class. Wearing

an expensive perfume or cologne can signal status and wealth in many cultures. On the other hand, manual labour and lower social status are likely suggested by the smell of sweat or a strong body odour.

8. Vocalics (voice)/Paralinguistics: Cherry (2025) explains paralinguistics as vocal communication that is separate from actual language. It is the vocal utterances other than words that serve as a form of communication. It comprises how we speak and involves pitch, volume, rate of speech, tone, quality, tempo, resonance, rhythm, pause and silence and articulation to help determine the context of the message. For example, the powerful effect that tone of voice can have on the meaning of a sentence can be seen when we talk in a strong tone of voice. Listeners might interpret the statement as approval and enthusiasm but the same words said in a hesitant tone can convey disapproval and lack of interest. These aspects of communication significantly impact meaning and help in a better understanding of the speaker's intention, emotion and attitude.
9. Music: Andriamasy (2023) states that "music is a universal language that can be understood and appreciated by people of all cultures and backgrounds". The language of music is mainly made of sounds, rhythms and musical notes, rather than spoken words. In human society, it plays such roles as entertaining, comforting, inspiring, socializing and so on. Music, such as anthems, concert venues, singing together, and celebratory music can bring people together, while protest songs, generational differences in taste, and distasteful or hateful lyrics can pull people apart.

Emotional Cues in Nonverbal Communication

According to Ekman (2024), "emotional expressions are involuntary signals that provide important information to others"

Pease (2024) adds that emotions are recognised from a whole pattern of nonverbal signals, which are usually consistent with each other and with the expectations created by the context. Thoughts and dialogue are immaterial or abstract, but non-verbal communication happens physically. It is often active in a specific setting, and the clues used to describe it can make the character's emotions and the entire scene more immediate. The hallmark of an emotion is that it has a signal in the face, voice or body movement. They provided information about the intensity and tense versus the relaxed dimension of communication. Darwin (1872) stated that a tensed person sits or stands rigidly, upright or leaning forward, often with hands clasped together, legs together, and muscles tense. In such a case, the hands and feet display emotions that the face tries to conceal. Furthermore, Green and Burleson in Riggio (2006) argued that "the ability to convey nonverbal messages to others, particularly the sending of emotional messages, is a critical skill for social success, and a fundamental component of the larger construct of communication competence".

In speech, emotion is easily identified as it can be indicated by facial expression, body movement or tone of voice. Isaac and Essien (2024) add that "some obvious emotional cues are making a fist when angry, dropping your jaw when surprised, or clearing your throat when you are not sure of something". They further explain that the most informative channel for expressing emotions is the face, while gestures, postures and body movements are the second channel for emotion. However, posture and body movements are less informative than the face. The reason is that people do not always display the emotional expression that corresponds to their emotional state because there are display rules governing which emotions may be expressed. In addition, there are often very good reasons for not showing what one is feeling. On the other hand, it is quite difficult to control emotional expression, even impossible to control some aspects of it, such as pupil dilation and perspiration.

Common Emotional Cues Used in the Digital World/ Written Text

1. Emoticons

The Oxford Languages Dictionary defines an emoticon as "a representation of a facial expression such as a smile or frown, formed by various combinations of keyboard characters and used to convey the writer's feelings or intended tone". Allard-Kropp (2018) explains that "Emoticons serve to express a point or add context to what is being communicated since one's tone of voice and facial expressions cannot be seen at the time of viewing". According to Grannan (2022), "emoticons are punctuation marks, letters and numbers used to create pictorial icons that generally display an emotion or sentiment. That's actually where the portmanteau "emoticon" comes from emotional icon." Calin (2019) states that emoticons originated in the early 1980s and have added a new dimension to digital communication. He adds that emoticons are a valuable form of nonverbal communication in which different teams of neuroscientists have studied the reactions they trigger in the human brain. All the studies concluded that they triggered strong activity in the brain area connected to processing emotions, even though they would trigger no response in the brain area connected to recognizing human faces. In other words, people can read the emotions conveyed by emoticons while being aware that they do not represent real human faces.

2. Emojis

Emojis are symbols or visual representations of emotions. Emojis is "small digital icons or images used to express emotions, ideas or concepts in electronic communication, such as text messages, social media posts, and emails (https://keyhole.co/social-media-glossary/emojis/). They are used to enhance emotional expression (tone, humour, sarcasm), increase comprehension and clarity, foster connection and relatability, cross language and cultural barriers, enhance memory and recall and boost engagement and response rates. They have become an integral part of nonverbal communication in the online space and allow us to express

ourselves more vividly in written communication. These emojis cover a wide range of human emotions that successfully substitute for human facial expressions. They help us express such emotions as smiley and sad faces, frowning, raising eyebrows, laughing, crying, etc. Grannan (2022) states that emoji originates from the Japanese, "picture," and *moji*, "character". They are a slightly more recent invention and include pictographs of faces, objects and symbols. Examples are the distinct style of Apple's emoji, such as yellow cartoony faces with various expressions, as well as families, buildings, animals, food objects, mathematical symbols, and more. He added that Shigetaka Kurita is often credited with inventing emojis in 1999, though the Japanese conglomerate SoftBank released the first set of emojis in 1997. Kurita's emojis, which were intended for a Japanese user base, were very simple—only 12 pixels by 12 pixels—and were inspired by manga art and Kanji characters. To attract Japanese customers, Apple hid an emoji keyboard on the first iPhone in 2007, but North American users quickly became aware of the keyboard. Now, emojis are available in almost all messaging apps, and while different apps have distinct emoji styles, emojis can translate across platforms, thanks to Unicode. This is why an iPhone user can receive a smiling pile of poo emoji from someone using a Samsung Galaxy. A smiley face that contains a character you can find on your computer keyboard is an emoticon, while a little cartoon figure that is free from the binds of punctuation, numbers and letters is an emoji.

3. Paralanguage

Paralanguage is the non-lexical component of spoken communication that includes intonation, voice pitch and speed, gestures, hesitation noises, etc. (Calin, 2019). All of these seem to be lacking in written communication. However, things are no longer exactly like this, as social media communication has them in abundance. Calin further explains that "A team of

scientists from the University of Wisconsin analysed data from Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to observe the implications of textual paralanguage in marketing communications". The study showed that people translate all the components of paralanguage (auditory, tactile or visual) into writing. The following tools of paralanguage are used: orthographic signs, caps, third-person speech or translating noises into text. People emphasise something important using caps (e.g. SERIOUSLY) or reply to what they are unsure of using "ummm… Capitalization can also be used to convey intensity.

4. Handwriting Styles and Punctuation Marks

Handwriting styles and punctuation marks can be used to convey emotions. Punctuation marks, such as exclamation points, question marks, ellipses and double colon (::word::), can convey emotions and attitudes. For example, an exclamation mark can convey excitement or anger, while an ellipsis mark can suggest hesitation or uncertainty.

5. Formatting

People use many formatting options to express their feelings and thoughts in written or online communication. Some of the examples are bold, underlining, mixed fonts or sizes or colours, all caps and italics. Italics can be used for emphasis and direct internal thoughts, which can be hard to read. Bold, underlining or all caps can be used to emphasise a character's emotions. More examples of formatting are square brackets ([]), angle brackets (single or double) (< > or << >>), guillemets (« » used as quote marks), parentheses (), asterisks (*word*) and slashes (single / or double //).

6. GIFs (Graphic Interchange Formats)

GIFs are animated images that convey people's feelings. Making use of GIFs in digital communication replaces the use of words altogether. One does not need a full sentence to express a thought or an emotion when a simple GIF can do the job in an even funnier

way. Every person with a Facebook account has most likely been involved in at least one GIF *dialogue*. Calin (2019) states that "GIFs (also called 'reaction GIFs' or 'animgifs') are so popular that about two-thirds of social media users know of or use them daily. Even online publications use GIFs in their articles, especially when the subject has a strong visual component – such as movies or sports."

Nigerian Celebrities and Marital Disputes

There has been an alarming increase in divorce rates worldwide. Although divorce rates in Nigeria are not as high as in European societies, news of divorce involving celebrities, notable sportsmen and women is on the increase. The statistics of blissful unions crashing due to domestic violence and infidelity, among other reasons necessitating a once happily married couple to part ways over irreconcilable differences, is staggering. In Nigeria, the collapse of marriages among common men and women makes the headlines, but the experiences of celebrities usually spread like wildfire. Celebrity marriages in Nigeria have become a hot topic due to the rate at which they hit the rocks. This is because of their alluring roles in society. According to *Punch Newspaper*, 23 April 2023, the Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, in their reports entitled 'Prevalence and Patterns of Marital Dissolution in Nigeria', indicated that the rate of divorce in some states was higher than the prevailing rates in some European countries. According to their reports, the divorce cases recorded by area courts and demographic fieldwork in the Niger Valley area of Sokoto State showed an increase in the divorce rate, ranging from 11.0 to 19.9 percent in 1979, which was higher than the prevailing rates in some European countries at the time. In the South-South, 30 percent of married women among the Yako, a tribe in Cross River State, were divorced. Another study in 1968 proved that the divorce rate per 100 extant marriages among the Yoruba of South-West Nigeria was between 3.4 and 4.5 percent. Also, the 2006

National Population Census data recorded that 704,000 Nigerians were divorced, with 230,000 males and 474,000 females. 2018 data from Nigeria's Demographic and Health Survey revealed that women were more likely than men to be divorced or separated, as three percent of women were either divorced or separated as against one percent of men. Furthermore, Aljazeera pegged Kano State as home to the largest number of divorcees in Nigeria in 2019. In March 2022, the president of the Igando Customary Court in Lagos State, Koledoye Adeniyi, decried the high rate of divorce among young couples. *Vanguard News*, Monday 05 February 2024 reports that a total of 3, 000 divorce cases were recorded in Badagry Lagos community, in 2018. Similarly, Umar Yakubu recorded over one million registered divorcees in Kano State alone in a report entitled, "Deciphering the High Rate of Divorce in Nigeria," (2019). A total of 14 divorce cases were recorded in the limelight industry in 2023. The number increased by five percent compared to what was recorded in the previous year. Most times, the parties involved cited irreconcilable differences, infidelity, domestic violence, denial of sex and so on as part of the reasons for their filing for divorce. The worst part of it is that those celebrities we look up to as role models are leading the pack. This ugly trend has left much to be desired as far as the original concept of marriage is concerned.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is abvnchored in Charles Darwin's theory of the origin of nonverbal communication, and the Contextual Theory of Emotions by Albert Mehrabian as the determining factor in nonverbal communication. Charles Darwin (1809-1882) believed that non-verbal behaviour is universal.

It is also a product of evolution and many generations of interpreting emotions through non-spoken means. Based on his research, all mammals (both human and non-human) show emotions that are universally understood, and what constitutes a

physical equivalent of a certain emotion. Darwinian Theory states that nonverbal cues for specific emotions can be traced as far back as the first humans and can be seen in some closely related animal species. Thus, this suggests that unique facial contortions or precise body movements universally represent a certain emotion.

Furthermore, the Contextual Theory of Emotion by Albert Mehrabian considers context to be the determining factor in understanding the emotions and attitudes of people in nonverbal communication. It explains that factors (style, expression, tone, facial expression and body language) other than words alone can convey different emotions and attitudes in different communication situations. Thus, when trying to convey meaning (as the speaker) or interpret meaning (as the listener), care needs to be taken. Based on research, Mehrabian concluded that only 7% of feelings and attitudes take place through the words we use in spoken communications, 38% take place through tone and voice, and the remaining 55% take place through body language.

Methodology

The primary sources of data for this study include online media platforms that aid in bringing celebrities' experiences to the public or global spheres. Such platforms include Facebook, blogs, Instagram, Twitter, Vanguards, Daily Post, Daily Trust, Premium Times and so on. Texts or narratives on Nigerian celebrities, such as actors, actresses, musicians, politicians, traditional rulers and pastors who had marital disputes, were collated. Other sources such as books, journal articles and the internet were also used. The collated data were given a qualitative analysis to identify and classify nonverbal cues that signalled emotions in the narratives of Nigerian celebrities who are victims of marital crises.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question One:

What nonverbal cues are used by Nigerian celebrities to communicate their emotions during marital conflicts?

No	Nonverbal Cues	Examples
1.	Cap Lock	a. However, I am ABSOLUTELY certain that I will not be NUMBERED as a wife or be cajoled to accept a practice that does not align with my faith and family values. b. "God blessed me with a happy, peaceful, and lovely family in a beautiful and JOINTLY built "mansion" c. "His name is STAR DIKE MUNACHIMSO YUL-EDOCHIE. d. A reality that is SAD for my loving and adorable children e. "LEAVE NOW ALIVE OR LEAVE AS A CORPSE" f. I have never cheated on my husband, NEVER! Not with Don Jazzy, Tuface, Dr. Sid g. His Excellency caused his Private Secretary to process the DEED of assignment documents for the house.
2.	Initial Capitalisation	a. "Beyond all the unnecessary facades, Polygamy is a life choice and no one should be compelled to accept it. b. "My Father My Maker, as I pray, anyone that will cause me pain may I not meet them. If they are already in my life, disconnect me from them in Jesus' Name. Amen." c. End to a Road! d. what we love most, Our children! e. My husband is Brother Iginla, f. His Excellency caused his Private Secretary to process the DEED of assignment documents for the house,
3.	Small Letters	a. "Finally, i accept the reality of the End to a Road! b. A sad reality that gives room & hope for a brighter and more fulfilling future! but necessary for a peaceful and lovable future. c. suddenly i am incommunicado
4.	Punctuation Mark i. Ellipsis	a. I personally believe everyone deserves an opportunity to make things right when they stray… b. that started from little or nothing…humble

		beginnings. c. But not every marriage was ordained by God…" d. I had been suspecting that he was into Yahoo...
	ii. Quotation Mark	a. built "mansion" b. "Today I announce the beginning of a new dawn and the close of a chapter.…I shall no longer be referred to as wife to the Ooni of Ife or as Queen of Ile-Ife but as the Queen of the people and mother of my adorable Prince."
	iii. Em dash	a. No regrets over my failed marriage – b. his—— cousin, Franklyn helped him plan it. c. She keeps accusing me of chasing women despite the fact that she's never caught me -----Stephanie is not ready for marriage
	iv. Asterisk	a. "So a f**king man say(s) I'm on drugs. b. MARRY YOUR FRIEND.*
	v. Question Mark	a. and I can't use his sexual disease against him??
	vi. Exclamation Mark	a. For me, I will drag your life from hell and back until I'm ok!! b. Everything I do is to show the good human that you are!!! c. I try to stay gracious!! d. NEVER! e. Stop marriage-shaming women!!!!
	vii. hyphen	I am called all sorts of names - 'witch', and 'mermaid spirit.
	viii. Colon	It has never been: it is about the will of God.'
5.	Emoticon	a. A sad reality that gives room & hope for a brighter and more fulfilling future! b. For the 2nd time in 2years c. If push comes to shove & suddenly i am incommunicado d. there has been trouble in my "perceived paradise".,
6.	Emoji	□□,□
7.	Formatting: i. Italics	a. *I have a happy life free from abuse.* b. *all in the name of bringing down and tarnishing the image of your ex*

Research Question Two:

What types of emotions do these nonverbal cues depict?

No	Nonverbal Cues	Emotional Indication
1.	Cap Lock	Emotional emphasis, intensity

		(Emotive strengthener)
2.	Initial Capitalisation	Emphasis
3.	Small Letters	Hastily written (Tensed feeling, anger, sadness)
4.	Punctuation Mark i. Ellipsis	Contemplation, something has been left out, hesitation or uncertainty
	ii. Quotation Mark (single or multiple)	Emphasis
	iii. Em-dash	a hanging or an incomplete thought, interruption
	iv. Asterisk	Profanity or a short answer
	v. Question Mark (single or multiple)	Exaggerate question or emphasis
	vi. Exclamation Mark (single or multiple)	Exclamation, shouting, emphasis
	vii. hyphen	Contemplation
	viii. Colon	Smile or laughter
5.	Emoticon	Express a point or addition of context
6.	Emoji	Begging, death
7.	Formatting: i. Italics	Emphasis and direct internal thoughts

Discussion of Findings

The result of research question **one** showed that cap lock, initial capitalization, small letters, punctuation marks (ellipsis, quotation mark (single or multiple, em-dash, asterisk, question mark, exclamation mark, hyphen, colon), emoticon, emoji and formatting (italics) featured in the narratives to depict personal feelings of the Nigerian celebrities about their experiences. Cap lock, initial capitalisation and punctuation marks featured more prominently in the text. This agrees with Van Kleef and Cote (2021), who state that emotional expressions are outwardly perceptible clues that suggest the presence of an emotional state in the expresser, and they include facial, vocal/acoustic, bodily/postural, verbal/textual, and symbolic/pictorial expressions (e.g., emoticons or emojis). *AllAg Media* adds that the photos you choose to post on social media, the colours you pick for your website and the fonts you use in your brochure all affect the message you are trying to

send. Other stylistic things include the way you use italics, apostrophes, exclamation points or capital letters. These emotional cues were deployed to shape the narrative and reveal their different emotions, perspectives, attitudes and expectations in marriage.

Research question two revealed that the emotions depicted by the nonverbal cues reflected positive and negative emotions, with negative attitudes outweighing positive ones. Nonverbal behaviours communicate information that may modify the verbal message and express hidden ideas and feelings. Youssef (2023) supports this by stating that nonverbal clues express feelings, attitudes and intentions and can express certainty, comprehension, agreement, disagreement or point out an error. In addition, they can be employed to convey courtesy, respect or deference. Croes et al. in Youssef (2023), add that following the social meaning paradigm, nonverbal acts have connotative meanings that are societally and culturally produced. As a result, nonverbal cues can convey a variety of social meanings, depending on the situation and culture. *Cliffsnotes.com* adds that some nonverbal cues indeed seem to be universal, while others differ in meaning from one culture or context to another and are regulated by cultural norms called display rules**.** This analysis provides insight into the negative image or attitudes of Nigerian celebrities towards their marital crises. Thus, this study revealed that online platforms have encouraged a great magnitude of public disclosure of personal life and have engaged more resources for expressing attitudinal meaning. Such a magnitude of self-disclosure and their inability to control their negative emotions could have implications for marital dispute resolution, as it would likely make the resolution unresolvable. These emotional cues in Nigerian celebrities' marital disputes "are pointers to the fact that celebrity status does not shield individuals from the same issues that affect ordinary people. In many cases, it amplifies them" (Ijeoma Thomas-Odia in *The Guardian*, 23 December 2023).

Conclusion

People rarely use words that convey the issues and needs at the heart of the problem when they are upset. Segal and Smith (2024) corroborate this by saying that the most important information exchanged during conflicts and arguments is often communicated nonverbally and conveyed by emotions. When we listen for what is felt as well as what is said, we connect more deeply to our own needs, emotions and those of other people. Listening in this way strengthens and informs us. In line with Albert Mehrabian's Contextual Theory of Emotions, some nonverbal cues, such as facial contortions used to express some emotions, such as anger, disgust, happiness, sadness and contempt, can be universally recognised. However, other emotions, such as anger, fear and so on require a contextual interpretation of the unique emotions they convey.

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