Interrogation, Questioning or Interview?: Police-Suspects Interactions in Nigeria

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Interviews and interrogations are important tools for securing convictions against the guilty and freeing the wrongly accused. As a response to the agitation of human rights activists in Nigeria on the latter, there have been efforts by the Nigeria Police to reconceptualise what transpires between men of the institution and suspects during investigations. As such, the institution now adopts, in principle, a more humane and non-coercive approach known as questioning at the expense of the much criticised approach known as interrogation in getting information and confession from suspects. In practice, however, not much demarcation has been made between the two terms and the third related one, interview. While this is obvious from keen observation, various existing works have glossed over it. This work therefore sets to attempt a conceptualisation of these three, with a view to ascertaining their place in the vocabulary of the Nigeria Police.

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1. Introduction
The interview conducted with the OC General Investigation1 (OCGI) of the station used as the setting for this research work and the observation made during data collection proper have given birth to this work. In the course of the interview that lasted about thirty minutes on my first day in the station, precisely in the OCI’s office, I emphasised my interest in the language used in “interrogating” suspects by the police. The said OCGI was quick to point my attention to the fact that the use of interrogation in my research topic was inappropriate. Interrogation, he claimed, is no longer in the parlance of the Nigeria Police, as a group of human rights activists had earlier fought against the use of the word in police-suspects’ interaction. He explained the word interrogate or interrogation connotes or carries elements of coercion, force, humiliation and dehumanisation. Hence, instead, police-suspects’ interaction can best be described as questioning.

However, what became obvious in the course of data collection was the constant use of the words “interrogation and interrogate” by IPOs while dealing with suspects. Also, one of the IPOs interacted in the process of data collection used the word interview while describing what transpired between him, his OC and a suspect.

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1 Officer in Charge of General Investigation
The question that came to mind after these observations is that “is there any definitional vagueness surrounding the conceptualisation of these three related but different words, especially as far as the language of the Nigeria Police is concerned?” This is the question this paper attempts to provide an answer to. As important as the issue raised above is, previous works such as Terebo (2012), Sadiq (2011), Adebawale (2010), Oyebade (2007), Ogunsiji (1989), Farinde (1997, 2011), Bamgbose (1971 and 1995), etc., have glossed over it.

2. Conceptualising Interrogation, Questioning and Interview

It is not very surprising the fact that many people (Nigerians) are yet to come to terms with the fact that the concepts of interrogation, questioning and interview are three separate concepts which do not necessarily have the same meaning. Perhaps, this is born out of their observation of the way and manner security agents and agencies, and police in particular, go about their investigative activities, which oftentimes does not reflect the differences between the three concepts. In view of this therefore, it is necessary to devote this portion of the research work to do justice to the differences between these three concepts. In doing this, the major characteristics of the concepts will be discussed.

2.1 Interview

The process of interview is non-accusatory. In other words, during an interview, the investigator adopts a neutral and objective attitude and does not accuse the subject of wrongdoing (Inbau et al., 2001:2). The primary goal of an interview is to gather information that is relevant to the investigation at hand. This information can include “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of any criminal investigation and can also involve assessing the credibility of the source of the information supplied by the respondent. Interviews are generally flexible and are free-flowing interactions. They are a dialogue between the investigator and the suspect. It is a question and answer session in which both parties may ask questions and give answers. The investigator usually has several key points he is interested in covering, but these are not so fixed, as they are subject to change as the dialogue continues or progresses. According to Inbau et al. (2001:2-4), an interview can be carried out at any point in time during an investigation to get some facts about the crime committed, to unravel the suspect’s potential culpability. Interviews are carried out in a more friendly or cheerful atmosphere. The interviewee feels relaxed and at ease. It is assumed that when an interviewee feels no anxiety or unthreatened by the interviewer doing the “questioning”, the greater the tendency that he or she would speak more and thus give out more information.

Complementing the position of Inbau et al. (2001), Meissner et al. (2012) reports that the information-gathering (interview) approach, used in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, and elsewhere, as more generally in Western Europe, is characterized by rapport-building, truth-seeking, and active listening, and
it is more reliable and prevents false confessions, as evident in its effective use in the countries mentioned earlier and Western Europe in general.

### 2.2 Interrogation

Interrogations on the other hand are generally more tightly structured. It involves active persecution on the part of the interrogator. In other words, interrogations are accusatory. The interrogator usually begins an interrogation by directly accusing the suspect (accused) of committing the crime that is under investigation, and the entire transaction will revolve around the accusation (Inbau et al, 2001:2). Messner et al (2012) posits that this accusatory approach, fondly used in America and Canada during police investigation, is characterized by accusation, confrontation, psychological manipulation, and the disallowing of denials. Consequently, the investigator dominates the interrogation and the exchange will appear to be a persuasive monologue, rather than a question and answer dialogue. This is usually so because the investigator has already developed a mindset to unearth the truth from the person being interrogated, while the interrogated is appealing to the conscience of the interrogator, convincing him or her of his or her innocence. Unlike interview, the goal of an interrogation is not to gather information regarding a crime and a suspect’s potential culpability; but it is to learn the truth about the details of the crime from someone who is suspected to have committed the crime. The truth will often but not always involve the confession of the suspect being interrogated (Inbau et al, 2001:2ff). In Inbau et al’s submission, an interrogation should only be conducted when the investigator is reasonably certain that the suspect is guilty of the allegation levelled against him or her. From the following, it suffices to conclude the purpose of an interrogation is therefore not to discern the truth, determine if the suspect committed the crime, or evaluate his or her denials. Rather, police are trained to interrogate only those suspects whose guilt they presume on the basis of their initial investigation (Inbau et al 2001).

Interrogation involves a person being subjected to severe psychological (and sometimes physical) pressure, placing an individual in great discomfort. In interrogation, the investigator uses psychological and linguistic “warfare” to gain control and force a confession out of the person. These scholars thus recommended that an interrogation should not be the primary means for determining the truthfulness of a suspect; rather a non accusatory interview is a more appropriate forum for assessing truthfulness. In the light of this, dictionary defines interrogation as the act or process of questioning somebody closely, often in an aggressive manner, especially as part of an official investigation or trial.

### 2.3 Questioning

The position maintained by the said O.C.I. General is that questioning is devoid of the coercive features that characterise interrogation. Rather, it is purely a fact-finding activity. Perhaps, the police are operating in line with definition of questioning as : the activity of asking somebody questions (Oxford Advanced
Learner’s Dictionary). However, in the words of Farinde (2011), questioning in police-suspect interaction is different from what is obtainable in everyday conversation. It is assumed that in everyday conversation, all participants or interlocutors are free to ask questions. Contrariwise, in police-suspect interaction, “the typical social relation means that the underlying assumption, subject to certain exception, is that the police (interrogator) asks questions and the suspect replies” (Farinde, 2011:8). In line with this proposition, Gibbons (2008:120) asserts that the major characteristics of police questioning are that only one party is normally allowed or permitted to ask questions, and the other party is only allowed to respond and normally must respond; and these responses are legally constrained to be true. In the same vein, Stygall (1994:120) posits that questioning is a powerful tool the police use to control the flow of discourse, requesting particular information in a particular fashion, presenting the story in the order they impose, which does not follow, necessarily, the temporal succession of the actual events.

3. Arresting a Suspect or an Accused: The Procedure

According to Adesiyan (2005), a suspect is an individual who has been alleged to have committed a crime or an offence and an individual has been the victim of the offence or crime. The fellow brings the matter to the notice of the police station closest to him or her. The statement of the individual is taken by the desk sergeant who asks him or her questions ranging from when, where and how the crime was committed and who the offender is. After answering these questions, the most senior officer in charge of the police station assigns or directs one or more officers to take up the task of apprehending the “offender” and bringing him or her to the station. The police officer then follows the victim of the crime to the scene of the crime, where the suspect can be arrested. The process of arrest begins.

However, sometimes, the arrest of the suspect may be by warrant. This is usually true of very serious crimes e.g murder, manslaughter and other serious offences in this category. The warrant must be signed by a magistrate, a customary court president, a judge or a justice of the peace of the area where the crime has been perpetrated. Such a warrant of arrest must be on oath either by the complainant or by a material witness. On the realisation of the fact that a person is assumed to be innocent until proved otherwise, and that he has an absolute right to move about in any part of the country and to carry on his/her lawful duties without any undue interference from any other person, such other person will think seriously before tampering with this unfettered right unless there is justification for doing so. This implies that it is pertinent that any individual who may wish to arrest another person for an alleged offence must think twice and as such take caution in doing so as not to incur the wrath of the law eventually.

The law requires that the police officer or other person making the arrest shall actually touch or confine the body of the person arrested, unless there is a submission to the custody by word or action. This implies no resistance is expected from the person to be arrested. However, where the person to be arrested uses force
in resisting arrest, or execution of the warrant of arrest, it is lawful for a person who is empowered by the law to effect the arrest to use force as may be reasonably necessary to overcome the force put up by the person to be arrested. However, the law does not justify any unnecessary restraint on the person being arrested except by the order of the court, a magistrate or a justice of peace. Put in another way, an arrested person shall not be handcuffed unless the person arresting has reasonable grounds to believe that there is the tendency of violence from the arrested person or of an attempt to escape arrest or the restraint is in the interest of the person arrested. The Law demands that the police officer making an arrest inform the person to be arrested of the cause of the arrest except when the person is in the actual commission of the crime or escape from lawful custody (Adesiyan 2005:1-2).

3.1 The Rights of a Suspect/Accused under the Nigerian Criminal Law
Salman (2009) observes there are certain rights that are accorded every suspect or accused person as enshrined in the country’s laws. These rights are divided into three viz pre-trial rights, trial rights and post-trial rights. The one related to this study however is pre-trial rights and shall be reviewed as appropriate. Under the pre-trial rights are right to life, right to dignity, right to remain silent, right to bail, right to be informed of the nature of the offence, and right to time and facilities for defence.

3.1.1 Right to Life
According to Salman (2009), a suspect (or an accused), just like every other Nigerian, has a right to life under the constitution, subject to certain exceptional cases or situations. According to the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, no person shall be deprived intentionally of his life except in execution of the sentence of a court in relation to a criminal offence of which an individual has been found guilty.

3.1.2 Right to Dignity
In this regard, Salman (2009) submits the 1999 Constitution, section (34) provides thus: Every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his/her person, and accordingly (therefore) “No person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment”. From the foregoing, it is obvious that a suspect is entitled to being treated with respect and sense of humaness. The police has the statutory power to effect an arrest, especially on commission of an offence or upon reasonable belief that an offence is about to be committed. However, such arrest must be in compliance with the provision of the constitution. When a suspect is arrested, he or she must be treated with utmost respect and dignity. Such a suspect must not be subjected to handcuffing or leg-chaining, except in a case or situation the suspect has been perceived to want to attempt to escape or where the suspect is violent, resisting arrest. The officer effecting the arrest is expected to take the suspect to the police station. As observed by Salman (2009), “it is sad to note that these provisions are observed more in breach than compliance by the Nigerian Police.
3.1.3 Right to Remain Silent
As submitted by Salman (2009), this is another pre-trial right of the suspect as provided in the country’s constitution. A suspect (undergoing interviewing, questioning or interrogation) has the right to remain silent during the questioning or interrogation exercise, before he consults with a legal practitioner. With respect to this, the constitution provides thus: “Any person who is arrested or detained shall have the right to remain silent or avoid answering any questions until after consultation with a legal practitioner or any others of his choice in Nigeria”.

3.1.4 Right to Bail
Bail is a basic constitutional right guaranteed by the 1999 Constitution (Salman, 2009). Bail here refers to the temporary release or freedom that is granted to a suspect before he or she is charged to court. It is a temporary release or freedom from custody, pending the conclusion of investigation or determination of the case against the suspect. Constitutionally, the police has the power to grant bail at the pre-trial stage and this power is exercisable before the suspect is charged to court. When a police officer arrests a suspect without a warrant, such a suspect is expected to be released on bail on his or her surety’s cognisance if it will not be possible to present such before the court within twenty-four hours. However, this provision might not be applicable if the officers perceive the committed offence to be a serious one. Salman concluded on this that it is apparently obvious (perhaps from the practice of the police) that the police use bail as punitive rather than a facilitative tool of administering justice.

3.1.5 Right to be informed of the Nature of the (Committed) Offence
This is another fundamental (human) right a suspect or an accused person is accorded before trial. A suspect has the prerogative of being informed of the nature of the offence he/she has been alleged to have committed. In other words, he/she needs to be appropriately and adequately informed of the reasons for his/her arrest. In line with this, the constitution stipulates thus: “Any person who is arrested or detained shall be informed in writing within twenty-four hours of the fact and grounds for his arrest or detention (in a language he understands)”.

3.1.6 Right to Time and Facilities for Defence
A suspect has the right to adequate time and facilities in preparing for the defence. Due to the intervals between arrests, arraignments and eventual prosecution of a suspect, provisions exist for time and facilities towards his defence, pending the conclusion of police investigation. However, as pointed out by Salman (2009), reported cases of corrupt practices by the police officers in this regard, have shown that suspects and accused persons always experience difficulties in having access to their counsel.
4. Research Methodology
An ethnographic approach (method) of data elicitation was adopted for data collection in this work. The ethnographic method\(^2\) is one which can be applied to the study of a group of people who are connected by shared interests, identity and/or culture. This approach involves the researcher being integrated in the culture or social field of interest (‘in the field’) and spending a sustained period of time with the subjects or participants of their research in order to observe and document their (language) behaviour as objectively as possible.

4.1 Procedure for Data Collection
The researcher, having collected an approval letter from the Acting Head of the Department, proceeded to the state headquarters of the Nigeria Police in Oyo State to seek the approval of the State Commissioner of Police of Oyo state. With the approval got, the researcher was attached to the State Criminal Investigation Department (C I D), Iyaganku Division of the Nigeria Police, Ibadan, Oyo State. This, undoubtedly, must have been borne out of the fact that the Criminal Investigation Department of the station specialises in handling all manners of criminal cases and investigation, and as such could serve as a veritable source of reliable data needed for such a work as this. Some preliminary interviews were conducted with some men of the force to gain insights into how the outfit operates. A digital tape recorder and a higher education notebook were used for data collection. The digital recorder was usually placed on the table of the IPOs to record everything that transpired between them and the suspects; after the permission letter must have been shown to them, and the researcher stayed some few distance away from the actual scene of the interrogation scene to record all that transpired. This was usually done twice a week and it lasted for a period of four months. The data gathered were transcribed into texts and for those conversations that took place in Yoruba, efforts were made to transcribe them into the English language.

5. Data Presentation and Analysis
It is important to point out here that the analysis done here is to attempt a classification of police-suspects’ discourse, that is, whether it is interrogation, interview or questioning. As such, relevant data from the pool of data collected are presented and analysed for conceptual clarification and classification. Special emphasis is placed on words or expressions in **bold** in the data presented.

**CASE 1: Fraud**
*Background Information: The suspect had been in detention for some days before he was brought out for interrogation. In the course of the interrogation, the researcher observed the suspect had been alleged to have defrauded a popular*
commercial bank in Ibadan. The interrogation/questioning lasted for about forty five minutes.

Excerpt 1
IPO: You know why you are here. Why are you here?  
SUS: There is an allegation that there is an issue of money; customer’s money
IPO: To the tune of?  
SUS: I don’t know it offhand  
IPO: Don’t even tell me that; it has been read to you (in annoyance)

Here, the IPO was direct, making it apparently obvious he was not interested in the suspect’s claim he could not remember the amount of money he was alleged to have duped his victim with (the woman at the centre of their discourse). The statement is likened to a command which literally means “shut up or what rubbish are you saying”. The IPO chose to go this way to send a message to the suspect that he could not bear the “nonsense” he was saying. To him, the suspect was not saying the truth.

Excerpt 2
SUS: I am not hiding anything from you. Even if (mention the name of his “accomplice”) is here, I will say all these in his presence..., he can’t deny it.  
IPO 1: It is you that will take us to where we can get him  
IPO 2: How do you mean he can never deny? Is there any written document that he signed? (raising her voice)  
SUS: I don’t know where he lives, but I do normally send him text messages  
IPO: Ṭọ̀gbẹ̀ni, Ṭọ̀gbẹ̀ni, sé ọ̀ sign ọ̀wọ̀́ ibẹ́kànkan pé ọ̀un gbọ́wọ́ lọ́wọ́ ẹ̀? All these things you are saying are nothing.

Mr (man), did he sign any document that he collected any money from you?

The contemptuous way the IPO used the term “Ṭọ̀gbẹ̀ni” here, shows that its use connotative. The way it is used here by the IPO to address the suspect does not portray its meaning as used by the Yorùbá to mean “Mr.”( to show politeness) (see Oyetade, 1995). It is a metaphorical expression used to address the suspect by the IPO to send a warning signal to him that his explanations were not acceptable, as far as he, the IPO, was concerned. The second IPO (IPO2) raised her voice at the suspect when he claimed his alleged “accomplice” cannot claim any ignorance as far as the issues surrounding the allegation is concerned. This is purposely done by the IPO to overwhelm the suspect and put him on the spot, knowing fully well that she is, by virtue of the institutional power of the police, more powerful than the suspect. As if this was not enough, the IPO threatened the face of the suspect with the
statement “all these things are nothing”, which interprets as “Mr man, you are saying rubbish”. This constitutes a possible psychological pressure on the suspect.

A critical appraisal of this excerpt reveals elements of interrogation, in line with the position of Inbau et al. (2001). This can neither be considered an interview or questioning. It will be recalled that the definition of questioning for instance by the argument of the interviewed OCG depicts no elements of coercion or intimidation.

CASE 2: Fraud

Selling a parcel of land to two persons. This involved an 86-year old man who was alleged of selling a parcel of land to two different individuals. The interrogation lasted for about thirty minutes in Yoruba, because the old man could not communicate effectively in the English language. However, there were few instances of code switching and code mixing as the interrogation continued.

Excerpt 1

IPO: Bàbá, sè è mọ X?
   Old man, do you know X?

SUS: Mo mọ̀ ì
   I know him

IPO: Bàwo lẹ́ sè mọ̀ wọn?
   How did you know them?

SUS: Èmi ni mọ tālè fún wọn
   I was the one that sold a parcel of land to them

IPO: Bàbá, sè è mọ̀ pé ejò wà lórí ọ̀lẹ̀ yẹ́n kí è tó tālè yẹ́n fún wọn (accusing the old man)
   You know there was a dispute over that land before you sold it

IPO: Kí ló wá dé tèjò wá bẹ̀rẹ̀ nígbara tè tó tālè fún wọn? (raising his voice)
   How come that there is a dispute over it after selling it to them?

In the excerpt above, the IPO employed interrogation to overpower and overwhelm the suspect. For instance, he addressed the suspect as follows: IPO: Bàbá, sè è mọ̀ pé ejò wà lórí ọ̀lẹ̀ yẹ́n kí è tó tālè? “Old man, (did) you know there had been disputes over the land before you sold it out.” The manner in which the IPO asked the question shows that it is a declarative accusatory question rather than a fact-finding one. According to Farinde (2011), one unconventional way of asking question by the police while interacting with suspects is to put the question as a blunt declarative statement that puts pressure on the suspect, rather than an interrogative form and await the suspect’s agreement. These are very powerful forms of question because they project the proposition of the questioner.
The IPO accused the suspect of going ahead to sell the parcel of land knowing fully well that there was a dispute over the land. The statement looked like a question but it is a simple and direct statement that depicts the old man as a criminal/fraudster with the manner and tone with which it was asked. In actual fact, the IPO was of the opinion that the old man was a criminal or fraudster who sold the disputed parcel of land to more than two people in spite of the fact that there was a serious controversy over the land. The IPO further asked in annoyance “Kí ló wá dé téjó wá bẹ̀rẹ̀ nígbà tè ti talè̀ fún wọn?” (raising his voice ↘). This was actually done to counter the response of the suspect when he claimed there was no dispute over the land before it was sold. This was not just a question but an intimidating and coercive one that challenged the integrity of the suspect. In fact, it was obvious that the IPO was not interested in getting a response from the suspect, rather, to scare him into saying the truth. The IPO could not imagine why disputes suddenly arose over the disputed land if indeed there was no dispute before it was sold. To him, the suspect was telling a lie.

Excerpt 2

IPO: …  [int.] Oníjìbìtì ni yín
You are a fraudster

SUS: È jè kí n sọ ńkan fún un yín…
Let me tell you something

IPO:  [int.] Ní sùúrù. Oníjìbìtì ni yín; ṣè dè sọ pé ṣè ò ríran
Hold on. You are a fraudster; and you claimed to have sight problem.

SUS: Oh! ógá mi, jè kí n sọ fún ọ...  [int.] …
Okay my boss, let me tell you something.

IPO: Tèmi ni kí ẹ gbó; èmi ò ní gbó tì yín because ẹ tí wùwà olè
You must listen to me; I won’t listen to you because you have manifested the trait of a thief.

IPO: … Ah!ah!! (short silence). It is okay. Ìgbà tí ìjà ti wà lórí ilè náà báyií, kí lè fẹ́ ṣé?
Okay. What do you want to do now that there is a dispute over the land?

SUS: Ehn, bí wón bá gbá mí láyè, bí ó bá di Monday, à á kówó wọn wá fún wọn.
If I am permitted, I will return their money on Monday.

IPO: (short silence) Bàbá, wón ma gbowó wọn kẹ́ tó kúrò níbí lóníi
Old man, they will collect their money before you leave here today
SUS: Ọwọ yín ló wà
*It is in your hand*

IPO: Yes(authority)...

SUS: It’s all right oo but eh [int.]

IPO: *Because, ẹ mò pé wàhálà wà lórí ọ̀gà ẹ̀n kẹ́ tó talè fún wọ́n
*You know there was a dispute over the land before you sold it out

SUS: Kò sí wàhálà lórí ọ̀gà ẹ̀gá mi
*There was no dispute over the land my boss

IPO: ... wípé ẹ̀ sọ pé owó wọ́n lè fẹ́ dá padà tůmọ́ sí pé ẹ̀ gbówó ẹ̀n ọ̀gà jìbítí ni
*That you said you will return their money implies you collected their money in a dubious means.

SUS: Oun tó jé kí n sọ bẹ̀ ẹ̀ ni pê [int.]
*The reason I said that was that

IPO: Ẹ màà sòrà̀; ó dígbá tí n bá sòrà tán
*Shut up! You can talk until I finish talking

SUS: Ẹ màà gbó [int.]
*Hear me out.

IPO: Ẹ gbó tèmi (raised his voice)

Further in the discourse, the IPO called the suspect *oníjíbítí* “a fraud” without mincing words, after having threatened him he must pay the money before he would be “let off the hook” of the police. IPO: ẹ́ ẹ̀ san owó ọ̀gà ẹ̀n kẹ́ tó kúrò níbí lènù. *Oníjíbítí ní yín “You will refund the money before you are let go today; you are a fraudster”. The IPO was direct and “disrespectful” if this statement were considered from the Yoruba culture. The IPO was quite aware of this but just chose to be discourteous to the suspect, because he had found him “guilty” of the offence he was alleged of. Also, the IPO repeated the same statement but in an abusive manner adding “Ẹ dè sọ pé ẹ̀ ò ríran” “And you claimed to the visually impaired”. This was an obvious insult to the old man, who was led in by a woman we later understood was his younger sister, because “he had partial blindness” from old age.

The IPO came out fully to intimidate the suspect where he issued a threat to the suspect as follows: IPO: Bàbá, wón ma gbówó wọ́n kẹ́tó kúrò níbí “old man, these people will collect their money before you leave here today”. The message in this statement was very clear and unambiguous. The IPO had indicted the personality of the suspect, and therefore he would not be allowed to leave the custody of the police until he paid the money he had *dubiously* collected from the
victims. This was a serious blow on the integrity of the suspect, who so far had not been able to convince the IPO he was completely honest in the controversial land transaction. And as explained earlier, this is not in line with the Yoruba culture to which the IPO glaringly alluded in the interrogation exercise with the use of the honorific pronoun “Ẹ” by a younger person to issue commands and threats to an elderly person. However, the IPO used this method to condemn the ridiculous and dubious act of the old man. And making an incision on an already decaying wound, the IPO asserted “Ẹ mọ pé wàhálà wà lórí ọ̀jọ̀ yên kẹ tọ́lẹ́ fún wọn”. This is a direct accusation that maligned the integrity of the suspect. What else could he say to exonerate himself when he had been directly accused by the IPO to have gone ahead to sell the land, having known there were issues on it.

The excerpt above is characterised by elements of interrogation such as intimidation, accusation and threat. The IPO here resorted to interrogation having got an inkling that the suspect was guilty of the allegation levelled against him.

CASE 3: Rape

Background Information: The suspect, who should be in his early twenties, was alleged of raping a young lady in company of his friends. He actually allegedly lured the victim into his room and conspired with his alleged accomplice to rape her. The matter was brought to the attention of the police, consequent upon which the suspect was arrested and brought to the police station for interrogation.

Excerpt 1

IPO1: Are you ready to say the truth now? (in a coarse voice)
SUS: Mo pè é ní ọjọ̀ yen, a jọ̀ sòrò pé a fẹ̀ fẹ̀ ara wa; ó dẹ́ ní ọ̀jọ̀ ti gbọ̀
I called her on that day and said I was interested in her and she agreed

IPO1: ago mélòó lè wọlé?
What time did you both go into the room?

SUS: Ìgbà [int.]
When

IPO: Ago mélòó lè wọlé?(raised his voice ➔ and the stick in his hand)
What time did you both go into the room?

SUS: Ten!ten!!ten!!!, mo ń dayin lóhùn daddy (screaming)
Ten!!! I am actually answering you daddy

The introductory question in this excerpt is indicting and accusatory. It shows that the IPO had already concluded that the suspect was guilty of the allegation. Hence, the interrogative nature of the interaction between him and the suspect. As the conversation progressed, the police officer demonstrated his impatience and the fact that he was not interested in the long story the suspect wanted to start narrating when asked what time he took the victim into the room. This he did by interrupting the suspect and raising his voice at him. Being scared by this intimidating act, the suspect screamed Ten! ten!! ten!!!, mo ń dayín lóhùn daddy (three times). The
suspect here referred to the IPO as daddy to appeal to his positive face, perhaps the harsh treatment meted out to him by the IPO would reduce. All the IPO did here are indications that the interaction is an interrogation rather than interview or questioning.

Excerpt 2
IPO 3: Ṣé o ní iyá?

Do you have a mother?

SUS: Mo ní
I do have

IPO 3: Ọ lè bá iyá ẹ sùn?
You can sleep with your mother?

IPO 3: Ọ lè dó iyá ẹ?
You can sleep with your mother

IPO 2: Jé n wokò ẹ bó ọ̀ sè ọ̀ (command)
Let me look at your penis

IPO 1: Wón ní ko gbókó ẹ síta! (raised her voice)
You are commanded to bring out your penis (for us to see!)

IPO 3: Gbé kíní síta! (raised her voice)
Bring the thing out!

SUS: (Brought out his penis)

IPO 1: Olóríburúkú. Okó tí ọ́ nító nǹkan
A Misfortune bearer! A ridiculously small penis

IPO 2: Ẹ è lè rójú rere Ọlún.....
You people cannot see the favour of God.

In this excerpt, the IPOs humiliated and embarrassed the suspect with their questions on whether he could sleep with his mother or sister. This is like a bitter pill for the suspect to swallow because in the Yoruba culture, it is actually a taboo for relatives to have sexual intercourse, and asking an individual if he could sleep with his mother or sister in such a sharp and undiluted manner, especially in the public as this, could be very embarrassing and demeaning; what the IPOs have been able to achieve with their questions. As a follow up to this, the IPOs commanded the suspect to bring out
his penis for public examination; a development that birthed an embarrassing comment from one of the IPOs as follows: “Okó tí ó tó ìkan” A *ridiculously small penis*. The IPO, being a full-grown Yoruba woman, is assumed to be well aware of the popular proverb in the language that says: A *Kií tojú oníka mésàn án kà á* which translates as “*We don’t usually count the fingers of a nine-fingered man in his presence*”. However, she chose not to abide by the principle and ideology of this proverb when she told the suspect to his face that his penis is ridiculously small. This is tantamount to reducing the manliness of the suspect, telling him he would be a “little man” before his woman.

The last IPO to speak crowned it all with showers of curses on the suspect and his accomplice saying they can never find the favour of God. This is the greatest of the humiliation meted out to the faces of the suspects in the course of their interaction with them. Any human being said to be in the disfavour book of God is as good as dead as such would live a life of frustration, hardship and regret. The IPO surely realised all these but will not mince her words in addressing the suspects as such for they have “committed” an act that is forbidden by the women folk. All these were used to coerce, overwhelm and overpower the suspects and relegate them to the background.

**CASE 4: Obtaining Goods and Credit on False Pretence**

*Background Information: The suspect here was an Alhaji, a businessman who deals in grains for feeding livestock. He was said to have collected goods on credit on false pretence*

**Excerpt A**

IPO: Ṣé wón ti gbójà fún yín télẹ̀?

*Has he supplied you goods before?*

SUS: Kíí ṣe first.... wón ti gbójà fúnmi télẹ̀, but ki í ìÊèmi ná gbefún directly, ẹnitì wón gbójà fún ló ń gbe fún mi....

*That was not the first, he has been supplying goods to me before, but not directly; it has always been through a third party.*

IPO: [int.] Sh!!!, Alhaji (banging his table)

SUS: Yes please

**Excerpt B**

IPO: Tell us how you met the three of them

SUS: È fé wà aggressive sí mi (*You are a bit aggressive to me*), and I don’t deserve that. Yes. If you know me very well, if you ask the people that know me, you will know I don’t deserve this. (*His phone rang and was discussing another transaction with the caller, after which he continued with his*
statement. He even had access to the newspaper the IPO put on his table, as he was flipping through while the interaction was on)

Excerpt C

A short period of silence...

IPO: Are you through sir? Àbí kí ó fún yín lómi?

Are you through with the statement or should I offer you water?

SUS: Òlóún yóò nífẹ yín. È mu wá. È ri pé mo tí ŋi sweat gan, mo ní ifúnpá

God will love you too. Bring it. I am already sweating, because I am hypertensive

IPO: (Offered the suspect water) Ó yẹ kẹ ma calm down ni anything tí ẹ bá ó ṣe

You are supposed to be calm whatever you are doing

SUS: Mi ò experience irú eléyií rí (picking the newspaper on the table of the IPO and started I never experienced this before flipping through)

IPO: Kò sí wàhálà

There is no problem

SUS: Ó da

Okay

IPO: Bàbá, sé ẹ ma jàşáró?

Baba, will you eat porridge?

SUS: Yí ó da fún yín, wallahi, ẹ yà mí lènu gan

It will be well with you. Honestly, you surprise me

SUS: Kí l’orúkọ yín

What is your name?

IPO: XYZ (The IPO mentioned his name)

SUS: XYZ what? (Asking for the surname of the IPO)

IPO: XYZ  XYZ (Mentioned his surname)

A careful examination of these excerpts is very interesting. In the A part of the excerpt, the IPO, not knowing the status of the suspect, was somewhat aggressive to him, banging the table to instill fear in him and put him on the spot. In the B part, the suspect tried to save himself from the hand of the IPO by pointing out to him he did not deserve the humiliating and unsavoury treatment meted out to him by the IPO, considering his affluent status (being an accomplished businessman). The suspect could have resorted to this defence mechanism, knowing fully well that high-profile individuals, as opposed to low-profile ones, are accorded some level of respect or courtesy during police-suspect interactions. This perhaps sent a signal to
the IPO who had to change the tempo of the interaction to redress the pressure mounted on the suspect. To achieve this redress, the IPO employed the “offer/give a gift to the hearer” politeness strategies: Àbí kí ń fún yín lómí? “Or should I offer you water?”, Bàbá, sé ì mé ma jàṣáró? “Baba, will you eat porridge?”, “be optimistic”: Kò sí wàhálà “There is no problem”; Exaggerate interest, approval, sympathy to H : Ò yẹ kẹ ma calm down ní anythi ng tí ẹ bá ń ṣe “You are supposed to be calm then whatever you are doing”. He equally allowed the suspect pick his phone when it rang, after which he picked the newspaper on the table of the IPO to flip through; a privilege low-profile suspects do not enjoy. According to Inbau et al (2001), these are features of interview, that is, absence of pressure on the person being questioned and the interviewee feels relaxed and at ease. Also both parties can ask questions. In the concluding part of this excerpt, the suspect engaged the IPO in some questions.

Another case in point that shows status influences the way IPOs employ language during police-suspect interaction was the case of a barrister that was arrested over an undisclosed crime or offence. Having met with the IPO in charge of the case to indicate my interest in the case, the IPO later got back to me that the OC (Officer in Charge) of the case ordered him to take the lawyer suspect’s statement in his (OC) office, considering his personality. Deduceable from this therefore is the fact that high-profile individuals enjoy some level of preferential treatment from IPOs during police-suspects’ interaction, while low-profile individuals are subjected to demeaning conditions. What struck one the most was the use of the word “interview” when the said IPO was whispering the order of the OC into my ears as follows: “ògá mi ní kí n ṣe interview yẹn nínú office òun because of the personality of the person involved” “My boss ordered me to conduct the interview in his office, considering the personality of the person involved”. It then suffice to posit therefore that low-profile suspects go through interrogation, while low-profile-suspects are subjected to interviews during police-suspect interaction.

5. Observations and Conclusion
Having taken time to explore the definitional conceptualisation of the three concepts of interrogation, questioning and interview vis-a-vis what transpires between IPOs and suspects in the Criminal Investigating Department, Iyaganku Police Division, Ibadan, Oyo state, the following observations are made:

- The two concepts of interrogation and interview feature in police-suspect interaction/discourse in the station;
- Police officers’ use of language in police-suspects interaction reveals the ideological belief of the institution that a suspect, especially a low-profile one, is a criminal until otherwise proved;
- Social status or social class plays a major role in the way IPOs address and treat suspects during police-suspect interaction.
While IPOs employ interrogation to overwhelm and instill fear in the minds of low-profile suspects; subjecting them to psychological imbalance, high-profile suspect-police interaction could be best described as an interview, at least at the initial stage.

If the picture painted above reflects what is found in the Nigerian policing system, it then suggests that the conduct of the men of the institution in the administration of justice in the country leaves much to be desired.

It then suffices to conclude that, more often than not, the Nigeria Police, do not follow the established process of investigating crimes, which is moving from preliminary interview to interrogation proper, if the result of the interview shows elements of culpability on the part of the suspect. It is important for the Nigeria Police to understand that a suspect is not yet a criminal until investigation proves so, and as such, should be treated in accordance with the tenets and precepts of the 1999 constitution as far as the rights of suspects are concerned (see the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria). This paper aligns with the conclusion of Meissner, Russano, & Narchet (2010) that interrogation methods increase the likelihood of false confession, while interview methods protect the innocent yet preserve interrogators’ ability to elicit confessions from guilty persons.

We therefore recommend that there is a need for constant orientation and re-orientation of the men of the institution, especially on the need to act professionally to ensure the protection of the rights of suspects, particularly in their deployment of language during police-suspect interactions.
References


