

Linguistic Impoliteness And Rudeness II (LIAR II)

Poster Abstracts

The problem of linguistic politeness of the category “gender” in linguistics

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Recently growing attention has been devoted to a new approach in linguistics termed gender linguistics in connection with the advent of the category *gender* in scientific paradigm. That happened due to the fact that social factor has become determinative in language studies which are deeply related with an individual. Originally the researches in gender linguistics were made on European languages mainly in the West but don't have a long history and remain insufficiently studied area in Russian linguistics. The aim of this report is to examine the differences of gender linguistics, the approaches of the development of gender studies and to point out the issues of gender particularities in language.

Though the concept of “gender” is now in use and is recognized by majority of scientists, there are some linguistic impoliteness and difficulties in translation of this term. In the English language “gender” means not only grammatical category but also social category. But in the French language despite the existence of such words as “le genre” that means grammar category, and “le sexe” that means biological category, the word “le genre” is not used for “gender” designation, moreover its English equivalent is avoided. As a result French language prefers such constructions as “masculin-féminin”, “l'identité sexuelle”. In Russian linguistics the concept of “gender” is widely spread as well as its equivalents: gender relations, gender aspects, gender studies.

Furthermore, versatile analysis of gender features fills in gaps in gender linguistics as well as it also reveals facts important for sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, pragmatics, theory of politeness and other disciplines connected with language and society.

A pragmalinguistic analysis of politeness in literary discourse of English & Arabic

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This study examines the politeness phenomena in the literary texts of Arab dramatists like Tewfik Al Hakim, and novelists like Naguib Mahfouz on the one hand, and some dramatists from the English speaking world such as Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde. The study hopes to add a new perspective on how Arabic literary discourse should be analysed from a linguistic background. In addition to this, it may also help in revealing some insights related to the phenomenon of politeness in the literary discourse in the two cultures that will help readers from the two cultures to achieve better understanding and interaction when dealing with literary texts.

The study's main objectives are to identify and describe the strategies of politeness with reference to Brown and Levinson's Model and the Cooperative Principle maxims. Also, the study tries to contrast the role of gender, contextual factors that determine the choice of the strategy, and the frequency of use of the strategies in both languages. The study will try also to establish a relationship between the degree of politeness used in the speech of characters and the change in their interactive roles in the texts. It also aims to examine the discrepancies in the presentation of the politeness strategies in Arabic when translated into English, so as to be able to contrast the two cultures.

The methodology used for data collection is the construction of a corpus. The corpus consists of linguistic situations where the occurrences of directives and commissives – two of Searle's speech acts categories – are cited in the form of conversation chunks (considering the preceding and the following utterances) to situationalize them; so that other variables such as context, place

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and mood of the speaker or the hearer can be considered in the analysis. The situations will be analysed with reference to the observance or lack of observance of the Cooperative principle and with reference to Brown and Levinson's model of politeness (1978, 1987).

Exploring the use of the exemplar generation data collection method in requests and apologies

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Investigations in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics often rely on the discourse completion test (DCT) to collect samples of speech act data. The DCT, although one of the most commonly used data collection instruments, is also one of the most lamented for two reasons: (1) the arbitrary nature of the creation of the situations and (2) the use of written responses to investigate oral language. This paper addresses the first issue by using exemplar generation data. Liu (2006) used exemplar generation combined with likelihood investigations to create request and apology situations that were valid and reliable for the populations he tested. Liu's use of exemplar generation with Chinese EFL did result in tests with a high level of validity and reliability. This study replicates Liu's with a different population: American students studying Spanish as a foreign language. This paper contributes to work in politeness by addressing the perennial problem of test construction. By removing the arbitrary nature of situation creation, we can be more confident in the results obtained with our instruments.

Exemplar generation data collection involves the addition of multiple steps leading up to the creation of the DCT. Collection begins by asking members of the population to be tested to provide (in this case) request and apology situations they are likely to encounter in their daily life. Next, a different group of learners from the same population indicates the likelihood that they would encounter those situations in their daily life. After much revision, a DCT can be created that can be counted upon to be valid and reliable in terms of its situational content. Results of this study are compared and contrasted with existing data on American requests and apologies practices. Data are also compared to speech act practices in peninsular Spain (the control group for the study).

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To repair or 'let-it-pass'. Which is more polite? Misunderstandings and repair in intercultural and English as lingua franca communication

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As increasing numbers of international students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds pursue studies in English-speaking countries, they are faced with the inevitable task of communicating successfully with others in a language foreign to them all. When native and non-native speakers of English communicate within or across groups, misunderstandings may have negative repercussions when not resolved in culturally expected ways, further resulting in communication breakdown and negative stereotyping. While misunderstandings and repair strategies have been studied widely in intracultural and intercultural communication (Schegloff 1987; Dascal 1999; Weigand 1999; House 2000, 2003; Tzanne 2000; Bosco et al. 2006), there is a meager of studies which analyze repair strategies from a politeness/impoliteness perspective.

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As differences in the use and interpretation of politeness across cultures are expected to influence speakers' selection of repair strategies, the present study, adopting a pragmatic approach, examines how L2 speakers of English in intercultural and ELF conversations in a British community handle misunderstandings and employ repair strategies. The study analyzes the factors governing the interlocutors' preferences for employing repair strategies vs. the 'let-it-pass' strategy (Firth 1996; House 2006). Data consist of a corpus of recorded conversations between native/non-native and non-native/non-native English speakers in an academic setting, in addition to naturally-occurring misunderstandings. Instances of misunderstanding and the ensuing repair/non-repair are extracted from the data and categorized by strategies employed for repair/non-repair and how L2 and ELF speakers negotiate meaning.

The qualitative analysis of the data uncovers the influence of politeness expectations on opting for a repair vs. non-repair. Data is analyzed and discussed within Sperber and Wilson's (1995) Relevance Theory framework which measures communication success in terms of expected vs. achieved relevance. Results indicate that the factors influencing the choice of repair/non-repair in intercultural and ELF conversations include cultural differences in interpreting politeness, face concerns, confidence in the use of L2 English, and the importance of the topic discussed.

The style of Malaysian requests in a formal domain: sociopragmatic approach

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The focus of this study is to describe sociopragmatic features of Malaysian students in the Malay communicative act of request. For the purpose, 264 students were asked to respond in Malay to 5 different domains in which they carry out the speech act of request. The study applies Byon's (2002) semantic formulae of request supportive move (RSM): opener, grounder, disarmer, preparatory and compliment. Based on the Byon's categories of RSM, this study aims to investigate: (i) the patterns of Malaysian requests (ii) the effect of social variables on the realization patterns of requests; and (iii) the strategies of request among Malaysian ethnics (Malay, Chinese and Indian). The result shows Malaysian students apply all request supportive moves in their speech. The requests are shown by various politeness markers of Malay: *tolong* (please), *boleh* (can/may/could), *mintaka* (ask), *mahu* (want). Most interestingly, this study found the Malaysian students make a large proportion of their requests directly. Based on the request speech event, the selection of direct request strategies are: imperative, i.e. *Tolong pinjamkan buku saudara...* (...please lend me your book...), explicit performative, i.e. *Saya mintaka menu lain* (I ask for another menu), hedged performative, i.e. *Boleh tak mintaka penangguhan...?* (Can (I) ask for extension...?); and want statement. i.e. *Saya mahu meminjam buku ini* (I want to borrow this book). The findings will contribute the pragmatic competence of request among Malaysian students in a formal domain.

The rudeness as a means for an achievement of the communicative aim in internet-forum

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Internet can be still defined as "a new phenomenon" in the world of information and communications. It is a new environment for the functioning of the language. There is even a new language –"net-language", based on the natural language, but changing deeply its form.

New text genres appear, such as "a chat", "an Internet-forum", etc. Every one of them uses specific language means. The common characteristic is that all they are written genres, using means of the oral speech. One of these means is the rude language or the "street speech".

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There are three variants of the attitude to the rude language in the Bulgarian Internet-space:

1/ rejection of the rude language as an intolerable form of communication by a special declaration of the forum creators;

2/ the rude language presents in the texts, showing only the personal cultural and intellectual level of the participants, without any other functions;

3/ the rude language is used by the communicators as a deliberate means to achieve their communicative purposes.

The last group is presented by the Internet-forums on the social and political topics, like *dir-bg*, which are used for our research.

In the Internet-forum the man is anonymous. He is invisible, he can not be touched; it is impossible to define his location. This gives him full freedom.

Alone in the space, he owns as a tool only the language in its written form. His aim is to influence on the space, to change it. Rudeness here is not censored, because it is not directed to a concrete person, but to the space itself. Rudeness is a direct way to destroy the existent order to affirm another, positive position.

An unique phenomenon here is the vast quantity of absolutely new in Bulgarian Language words, created by the communicators especially to express rudeness.

Impoliteness in Laki language

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Laki or Lekî is a local language which is spoken in **central Zagros region of Iran** and some areas of **Iraq**. It has many similarities with **Kurdish** and sometimes is considered as a dialect of **South Kurdish** but according to **David Neil Mackenzie**, scholar of Iranian languages, Laki is a separate language. In this Indo-Iranian language, six different ways of impoliteness are used.

The most widespread way of impoliteness especially among old people consists of **proverbs which are full of impolite words**. These meaningful sentences are a part of Laki folklore. Like oral literature of any language; Laki folklore is also full of meaningful, interesting and partly impolite proverbs. The only aim of using these sentences is not insulting but mostly, people use them to convey their meaning in a simple way.

Take the case of “*khær æ khæræ sæ væ kärwänsērä besærēnē*” (The best donkey is the one that brays in caravans.) This proverb is said to intelligent and talented persons who do not have ambition. Speaker of this proverb wants to say that you should pursue higher goals and do not convince with lower ones. Another proverb is “*nänwahr meni, gälü jäfer*” (You are a shepherd who eats my food but herd for another person.) This proverb is addressed to ungrateful people. Another example is “*bädæ mäkhō, kæfæ mærine*” (they eat wind and extrude foam.) This is used for poor people who have nothing to eat.

The second way of being impolite is through **the names of animals** such as nag, bear, bull, calf, sheep, goat, rabbit, lizard, crow, donkey, dog and beast. **Nag (yäbū)**, **bear (khærs)**, and **bull (gä)** are addressed to persons who **ignore feelings of others**. These persons try to achieve their goals while they do not pay attention to people who are around them. **Donkey (khær)**, **calf (gæor)**,

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sheep (pæs), goat (bæz) crow (ghələ), dog (sæg) and beast (chūär pä) are applied for **humiliating**. **Rabbit (khærūsh)** is used for persons who are very **playful** and do not concentrate on their own work. **Lizard (märmülek)** is utilized for **trickster people**.

According to **intonation; gestures and expression of face**, the degree of offensiveness of the mentioned nouns fluctuates. Pronouncing these nouns in **falling intonation** and with gestures like **frown** signals the **deep insult**, while **rising intonation** which accompanied with **smiling face and relaxed manner** signals **less insult** and even sometimes shows joking. Joking with these words is usual between close friends. Among the mentioned words; nag, bear, bull, donkey, dog, beast, calf, sheep, goat are more offensive than the words rabbit, lizard and crow. The words of the second group are less insulting and in most of times, they are a mixture of joking with insult.

The third way of impoliteness in Laki language includes of words like “bollæt,” “ghodæsh,” “nëkbæt,” “nehäd,” “gæn” and “äkhershær” that are addressed to some persons to show their **wickedness and villainy**. These offensive adjectives are usually used by old people especially old men when they are very angry. These words are very offensive especially when they are used with falling intonation and angry expression. Young people may sometimes use this group of words for joking but old men use them for deep insulting. These words are more offensive than the two earlier groups.

The fourth way of rudeness is with words like “gūzmel,” “zærdæl,” “chokol,” “mofü,” “cherken,” “kermæzhen,” “veräch” and “feten” that are used for scorning. In these cases; usually, young persons especially boys may address some of their classmates with these adjectives. These adjectives are used according to the personal and physical characteristics of the affronted people. For example “goozmel” is addressed to weak persons who always want to fight with others without any particular reason. “Zardal” and “chokol” is addressed to thin people. “Mofoo” and “cherken” are said to dirty and sloppy persons. “Kermæzhen” is addressed to people who interfere in everything which is not relevant to them. “Verach” is said to talkative people. “Feten” is utilized for snitches.

The fifth group includes the sentences like “**təfæ æ zæminnæ tu pä männiæ mæle**” (**Damn to the earth that you walk on.**), “**təfæ rüt**” (**Damn to you.**) and words like “**ævæzi**” (**æbnormäl**) that are used for **humiliating**. Almost all impolite words are used for humiliating but the degree of humiliation of these sentences and adjectives is higher. The sentences and words of this group especially the first sentence are always offensive but with falling intonation and serious manner, the effect of them is more. The sentences and words of this group less than the earlier groups are used among members of families and friends.

The sixth way of being impolite in Laki language is through **gestures** which are usually used for **humiliating**. These gestures are applied whether alone or with some sounds. Some of them are universal and are used in other languages. A perfect example for rude gestures is putting the palm of one hand down on or near the head of somebody that is usually accompanied with the sound “em.” This gesture must not be mistaken with the similar gesture which is used for patting. In the gesture for patting, the hand touches the head of a person with a friendly manner and without any voice. But in the insulting gesture; the hand is put on or near the head of another person with angeriness or humiliation and mostly without any touch.

Take the example of **thumb-up gesture** in which one fist is clenched and held opposite the body while the thumb is up. It can be a kind of sexual harassment. Another insulting gesture is looking at people proudly and with the side of eyes. The other form of this gesture is not looking at people at the time of speaking with them. This gesture is made for humiliating but it may also be

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made because of being ashamed of something or telling a lie. All the above-mentioned gestures especially the second one is very insulting and in most situations, they are more offensive than the insulting words.

According to **intonation; expression of face, context, relationship between the people who affront and affronted ones**, the degree of offensiveness of these insulting words, sentences, and gestures changes. Falling intonation which accompanied with seriousness, anger or humiliation signals deep insult while rising intonation with a smiling expression on face shows less insult. If close friends insult to each other with smiling face and in a situation which is not so worrying, it lead to less insult or even joking. But when insulting happen among some strangers and in a worrying condition, it signals deep insult.

Communication in a Collaborative Learning Tutorial Group: a longitudinal observational case study

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According to socio-cultural theories, learning takes place when knowledge is co-constructed by participants in social activities. This supports the use of collaborative learning (CL) in education where participants develop new understandings through resolving differences of opinion and re-equilibrating original cognitive mental schemas. Importantly, collaborative learning benefits learners through access to a diversity of perspectives supporting the use of CL in Higher Education in the current climate of widening participation where cohorts are mixed in terms of age, gender, and ethnic, social and educational backgrounds.

However, navigation of the social and interactional goals in CL may be tricky. Students are required to contradict and argue, satisfying goal interaction, while maintaining group harmony. According to face theory, criticising the input of others is considered ‘face-threatening’ and is often avoided. This difficulty is magnified when the social distance and perceived social status between collaborators is large. Strategies to manage rapport are also thought to differ according to the historical and cultural background of those involved in interactions.

Key research question: Do adult students diverse in background engage in critical learning transactions during collaborative learning (in the situated context of this study) or are the social skills required to manage conflict too tricky to negotiate?

The poster will present the background literature to support the rationale, research aims and objectives, contextual detail and preliminary findings of an interpretive case study using Conversational and Discourse Analysis.

*This work forms part of a thesis for a Doctorate of Education undertaken through the University of Huddersfield, School of Education and Professional Development.

Ta'arof and level of being impolite in the Iranian society

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Oriental societies in general and the Iranian society in particular have their own and specific regulations for interactions, the most difficult for foreigners to overcome. Speaking a good Persian is not enough to feel comfortable in the Iranian society. One must be fully acquainted with the Iranian etiquette of speech, so called **ta'arof** (from Arabic “interchanging compliments”) which must be followed faithfully so as not to be perceived as impolite person. In other words, not being enough polite (that is not using **ta'arof**) may be considered as impoliteness, even in the case of foreigners.

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The usage of *ta'arof* differs according to gender, age and social status or position of the people involved in interaction. The present paper deals with all these cases with standard situations and their analyses; the aim and strategy of using “polite” or “impolite” formulas are presented as well. Particular emphasis is placed on the double usage (polite and impolite) of the “polite formulas” in different contexts.

Persian language is very rich and expressive from the point of view of “impolite” or “aggressive” lexis and phraseology, but their usage in society is not unlimited.

Application of some obscene expressions may be considered as one of the cases of impoliteness. Taking in account Iranians’ eagerness for using idioms and proverbial expressions in ordinary or even in official speech, Persian proverbs provide a good example of the latter phenomenon. Many of Iranian outstanding poets and writers (like Sa’adi, Obeid Zakani and others) used obscene lexis and phraseology in some of their writings, but in nowadays publishing policy in Iran the cautious approach to the problem and lack of eagerness to publish such literary works can be traced.

The problem of using obscene expressions in Persian is discussed in brief in the final part of the paper.

Politeness and impoliteness in cross-cultural communication

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Study of the main principles of politeness and impoliteness in cross-cultural communication enables to avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity thus providing effective communication niveau.

Politeness is generally understood as respect and consideration for other people, ease and gracefulness of manners; desire to please others by anticipating their wants and wishes. In context of cross-cultural communication this meaning tends to fail due to its narrowness and imperfection. So, in the wider, cross-cultural meaning we can perceive politeness as a set of rules, or strategies that are culturally-specific, ritualized in communication that tends to harmonize communication and avoid conflicts.

A good example of communication failure and wrong pattern actualization is given by N.I. Formanovskaya [Formanovskaya 2005: 337]. She cites a case happened to Prof. V.V. Preobrazhensky who once was in a Chinese bus and translated a polite Russian request “Are you getting off?” into Chinese. The passenger got annoyed and exclaimed “It’s none of your business! It’s up to me whether I go out or not!””. That translation was accepted as an intrusion into the passenger’s privacy and so a conflict probability in that case was high.

There is a point of view that there exist polite and impolite cultures and societies [Tanaka & Kawade 1982], some Russian researchers claim that the Russian culture and language tend to be less polite in comparison with the English language and culture [Muratov 2000]. We support the point of view given in the work [Larina 2003] that suggests that there are no polite/impolite nations and cultures but there are different, culture-specific behavioral norms that are usually based on social and cultural relationships, cultural values and national peculiarities. Politeness is tied up with the most basic principles of socio-cultural organization, and interpersonal relationships within social groups and should be viewed in the context of social distance and Power distance which are considered the main dimensions of cultures [Hofstede 1984, 1991].

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Being interculturally polite is a very useful though complicated ability because a person communicates not only ideas, but attitudes as well. Rarely our speech has the form of Meaningful Talk. Such a case can be considered to be an exception rather than a rule. So that it is suggested to single out the so-called Interactional communication which aim is not only to communicate information but to communicate feelings and attitudes as well.

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Radio rude: Interpreting trademark impoliteness in the media

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For the best part of the last couple of decades many media talk show hosts in the UK have resorted to rudeness to attract attention to themselves, their programmes and, last not least, the commercials broadcast on them. Rudeness is a strong form of, in this case verbal, impoliteness, perhaps the most general term for breaching the commonly observed manners of interpersonal behaviour. The hosts' *uncommon* manners became their trademark, earning them 'almost a celebrity' status.

The proposed poster considers the phenomenon in the context of a late night show on a regional radio in Britain at the turn of the last decade of last century. Its host once remarked: 'I do one of these programmes where people phone in and I tell them to get stuffed'. And again: 'I'm not known for my pleasantness. My language is blue, too, so at least you have to realise these things.' For many, this proved no deterrence, and hardly any more defence.

Up to a hundred examples of utterances are analysed, a number which allows to attempt the first goal of this study, a data-driven taxonomy of verbal misdemeanour. On the other hand, the author's ambition is also to verify the grounds for the variety of terms such as impertinence, insolence or irreverence. Despite a rich heritage of not necessarily synonymous expressions, no simple matching of names with examples seems possible.

The main purpose of the poster, however, is pragmatic, not semantic. It is to try to draw a line between gratuitous abuse, either intended only to shock or – even more shockingly – unintended, and caller criticism. Rudeness is rife on the show for its own sake but also to censor arguable

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nonsense. Due to their idiosyncrasy, the data yield an interesting insight into the pursuit of sense – opposing its opposite.

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