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## **Impoliteness in the media and its reception**

### **Abstract**

The aim of the chapter is to investigate impoliteness in select samples extracted from the Polish media. The examination is threefold and encompasses the following levels of analysis: linguistic, pragmalinguistic and sociolinguistic. The data are presented from the following perspectives: the situational and linguistic background, immediate context, reflections on self-image/face of the sender and on social norms, intentions of the sender and the addressee, emotions and hierarchical interpersonal relationship (including the option of blocking a possible reply). Social reception of the impolite behaviour and the motivation behind it constitute an important part of the study.

**Keywords:** linguistic impoliteness, interaction, interpersonal relations, reception

### **1. Introduction**

The world becomes boorish at a terrifying pace. At one time, the lack of good manners was associated with the community of bums and lower classes. Educated people and those with high social status tried to keep up the norms, at least on the surface - from not blowing one's nose in the street to their attitude to neighbours. (...) Words, which once would not get through one's throat, are now uttered in public (...) (Łysiak, 2008:14).<sup>1</sup>

In our times, impoliteness (including linguistic impoliteness) in everyday life is not a rare phenomenon. In fact, it seems that there is "a friendly atmosphere" around impoliteness and a social consent for this type of conduct. Strangely enough, even the public sphere is not free from impoliteness, and, rather than opposing impoliteness, as one would expect, it often replicates some of its mechanisms. This interesting phenomenon will be examined in our study presented in the remainder of this chapter.

Linguistic impoliteness is a relatively young topic of scholarly investigation which poses new challenges for contemporary linguistics. The research areas typically analysed in terms of (im)politeness and/or linguistic aggression largely encompass political discourse or the so-called language of/in the media. The Polish publications which deal with the issue of linguistic (im)politeness and/or



aggression include both monographs (e.g. K. Ożóg (1990), R. Huszcza (1996), M. Peisert (2004), I. Kamińska-Szmaj (2007), M. Marcjanik (2008)), and edited collections, such as: *Język a kultura* v. 11 entitled *Język polityki a współczesna kultura polityczna*, edited by J. Anusiewicz and B. Siciński (1994); *Język w mediach masowych*, edited by J. Bralczyk, K. Mosiołek-Kłosińska (2000); *Język a kultura* v. 17 entitled *Życzliwość i agresja w języku i kulturze*, edited by A. Dąbrowskiej and A. Nowakowskiej (2005); *Grzeczność nasza i obca*, edited by M. Marcjanik (2005) (see also other examples in *Bibliografia prac z zakresu polskiej etykiety językowej* (2006) by J. Bloch).

The list of texts published in English is even richer. Worthy of mention are the following publications within the classical, discursive and interactive trends (listed chronologically): E. Goffman (1967), P. Grice (1975), G. N. Leech (1983), P. Brown and S. C. Levinson (1987), G. Eelen (2001), S. Mills (2003), R. J. Watts (2003), M. Locher (2004), D. Bousfield (2008), J. Culpeper (2011) (for more see the bibliography of (im)politeness collected by J. Culpeper *Impoliteness - related bibliography*).

Interestingly, current studies about (im)politeness rarely focus on how verbal behaviour is perceived by language users. Regardless of whether or not (im)politeness is seen in terms of breaching the principles of etiquette, some evaluative comments may appear to be jocular, ironic, bold, uncompromising, or opposite to the values shared by society at large. Therefore, along with indicating characteristic features of impolite public speech, it is the aim of this chapter to discuss how impolite speech is received. It is hoped that this line of reasoning will help to explicate a kind of fashion for, and agreement to, such impolite verbal behaviour.

Accordingly, the remainder of this chapter will deal with the following issues: (1) select linguistic contexts will be presented with the focus placed on the observed impolite linguistic behaviour; (2) within each sample, characteristic features of this type of behaviour will be pinpointed and ways of its social reception will be noted; (3) by way of conclusion, some outcomes flowing from the data will be drawn, and reflections on contemporary verbal conflicts in political discourse will be offered.

## 2. Data analysis

The aim of this part of the chapter is to present selected examples of linguistic impoliteness and to discuss verbal conflicts not only on the linguistic level but also in terms of broader aspects of verbal conflicts viewed from the perspective



of pragmatics and the sociology of language. Along with these, A. Awdiejew shows other planes of analysis (in connection with the fundamental object of interaction grammar, which is conversation):

The analysis of a conversation, seen as a complex object, assumes at least three planes of investigation: the interaction grammar plane, the sociolinguistic plane and the psycholinguistic plane. Interaction grammar is capable of discovering and describing the employed speech acts as well as establishing a general communicative goal to which the sender is aspiring. The sociolinguistic plane makes it possible to determine the social motivation of a given verbal behaviour (the determination of interlocutors' social status, social role distance, and their parameters on which a given verbal communication is dependent). Finally, the psycholinguistic plane can explicate the subjective motivation of interlocutors (it examines subjective parameters of verbal action in a given psychological situation: life aims of interlocutors, their preferences, style of behaviour, etc.). (Awdiejew 2007:67)<sup>2</sup>

It is essential that a digression be made at this point with reference to the functioning and possible inclusion of the last plane in the present study. Naturally enough, the psycholinguistic plane is subject to a considerable subjective bias and thus the complexity of inner psychological states (usually non-observable directly) – in our opinion – should be discussed on the basis of a description of the very message sender or addressee, or it should be determined on the basis of their verbalised suggestions (explicit verbal declaration).

In the wake of it, along with a direct verbal context, other elements of analysis gain importance. On the one hand, information stemming from interaction, motivation, social determinants, the identity of interactants, their (in)equality in the interpersonal relationship, etc., play a role, and, on the other, information derivable from the social reception of the complexity of meaning captured by a specific linguistic form are crucial. A. Awdiejew observed the following:

Objectified content of a situation should be distinguished from interaction configuration in which it is immersed, as in this configuration the very content shown (...) is not subject to change. Thus, one should distinguish a situation that is a state of affairs shown on the conceptual level from an interaction configuration seen as a pragmatic determinant of a verbal contact. (Awdiejew 2007:52)<sup>3</sup>

The interaction configuration in turn consists of:

the interactive sender (I) and addressee (YOU), parameters updating space and time (HERE and NOW), and a necessary and sufficient set of pragmatic



conditions separate for each speech act, which determine the type of interaction intention (the aim of the interaction) encoded by the sender. (Awdziejew 2007:63)<sup>4</sup>.

All in all, the discussion of sample behaviours presented below will comprise: (1) a general description of situational background and the linguistic behaviour; (2) specific components of description, such as: verbalization and direct context, reference to one's self-image and/or public image, reference to social norms, a description of intentions of the sender and the perception of the sender, emotions, directness of contact, distribution of power in a hierarchical interpersonal relationship (and within it also the option of blocking the addressee's reactions), and (3) indications of social reception.

As far as the definition of impoliteness is concerned, we assume that impoliteness is understood as a negative attitude, which violates

the set of linguistic politeness behaviour patterns shared by a community, customarily subordinated to specific pragmatic situations (Marcjanik 2008:12)<sup>5</sup>,

that influence the quality of the interlocutor's self-image, which is always linked to emotions. Following Culpeper, who focuses on the role of interaction and its various constitutive factors,

Impoliteness is a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and/or beliefs about social organization, including, in particular, how one person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviours are viewed negatively – considered 'impolite' – when they conflict with how expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be. Such behaviours always have or are presumed to have emotional consequences for at least one participant, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence. Various factors can exacerbate how offensive an impolite behavior is taken to be, including for example whether one understands a behavior to be strongly intentional or not. (Culpeper 2011:23)

## 2.1 Sample A - S. Niesiołowski, MP (11 May 2012)<sup>6</sup>

### 2.1.1 Situational background and linguistic behaviour

Resulting from a controversial debate on the extension of retirement age, which was ongoing in the Polish lower parliament chamber (the *Sejm*) in 2012, "Solidarity" unionists decided to block access to the *Sejm* premises for a couple of hours on 11 May, not letting MPs leave the building. A number of journalists observed the situation and reported on the commentaries expressed on site.



When Stefan Niesiołowski (MP) wanted to leave the building, a reporter named Ewa Stankiewicz turned to him:

*E. Stankiewicz: Panie pośle, przepraszam...*

E. Stankiewicz: Mr. Deputy, excuse me...

*S. Niesiołowski: A skąd pani jest? Skąd pani jest?*

S. Niesiołowski: And where are you from? Where are you from?

*ES: Ewa Stankiewicz. Nie chcieli pana wypuścić z Sejmu?*

ES: Ewa Stankiewicz. They didn't want to let you out of the Sejm premises?

*SN: Ja nie chcę z panią rozmawiać.*

SN: I don't want to talk to you.

*ES: Czemu?*

ES: Why is that?

*SN: Nie chcę z panią rozmawiać. Wie pani dlaczego.*

SN: I don't want to talk to you. You know why.

*ES: Dlaczego?*

ES: Why?

*SN: Niech pani idzie do Pospieszalskiego. Niech pani idzie.*

SN: Go to Pospieszalski. Just go.

*ES: Ale ja jestem Ewa Stankiewicz. Ja mam osobne nazwisko i osobne imię.*

ES: But I am Ewa Stankiewicz. I have my own forename and my own surname.

*SN: To jest pani od tego filmu „Solidarni”, tak? Tego PiS-owskiego paskudztwa, tak?*

SN: You were involved in that film “Solidarni”, weren't you? This “Law and Justice” muck, is that right?

*ES: Nie „PiS-owskiego paskudztwa”, tylko dokumentu.*

ES: Not “Law and Justice” muck but a documentary.

S. Niesiołowski walks to and fro. He keeps his arms folded and eyebrows knitted. There is not even a shadow of a smile on his face. During the exchange, he approaches the reporter and turns towards her.

*SN: Nie chcę z panią rozmawiać! Niech pani idzie do PiS-u. Proszę to odwrócić.*

*Rozbiję pani kamerę, jak będzie pani mnie filmować bez mojej zgody.*

SN: I don't want to talk to you! Go to “Law and Justice”. Turn it away from me. I'll smash your camera if you film me without my consent.

The deputy approaches the journalist, raises his voice, and reinforces his words with a gesture. He turns around and walks a few meters away, not listening to what the journalist is saying, which is

*ES: Przed chwilą nie mógł pan wyjść z sejmu. Czy pan wie dlaczego?*

ES: You couldn't get out of the Sejm building a moment ago. Do you know why?

The deputy turns around and asks

*SN: Czy pani jest głucha? Niech pani idzie do PiS-u i tych swoich PiS-owskich*

*lizusów. Proszę nie rozmawiać ze mną, bo pani rozbije kamerę... Bez mojej zgody proszę nie filmować! Roztrzaskam pani kamerę! Ostrzegam.*

SN: Are you deaf? Go to "Law and Justice" and those unionist bootlickers of yours. Please do not talk to me or I'll smash your camera. Without my consent please do not film me! I'll smash your camera! I'm warning you.

He raises his voice while approaching the camera trying to push it away. From the crowd, another voice is heard:

*- Stefan, weź ... Daj spokój. Pani po prostu prowokuje.*

- Stefan, come on... Give it a break. She is just provoking you.

*ES: Jestem osobą publiczną!*

ES: I am a public person!

*SN: Nie mam ochoty, żeby mnie pani filmowała!*

SN: I don't want you to film me!

E. Stankiewicz still tries to say something. S. Niesiołowski approaches her, covers the lens with his hand and says:

*SN: **WON STAD!***

*SN: **SOD OFF!***

*ES: Ja wezwę policję.*

ES: I'll call the police.

*SN: Proszę wzywać.*

SN: Go ahead.

Someone says that there are already a lot of police and, still the deputies cannot leave the building.

*ES: Ja wezwę policję, bo pan się dopuścił rękoczynów.*

ES: I'll call the police because you resorted to fisticuffs.

Somebody standing next to S. Niesiołowski says:

*- On tylko zabrał kamerę...*

- He just took the camera...

The deputy says:

*SN: **WON STAD! Won do PiS-u.***

*SN: **SOD OFF! GO TO "LAW AND JUSTICE"***

*ES: Pan powiedział „won do PiS-u”?*

ES: Did you say "Sod off! Go to <<Law and Justice>>"?



Now, for a better understanding of the situation some explanation is in order. The deputy S. Niesiołowski is a politician representing Civic Platform (PO). He is also a professor of life sciences (specialization—entomology), lecturing at University of Łódź. Ewa Stankiewicz is a Polish director, screenwriter and a journalist. “Law and Justice” (PiS) is a Polish conservative political party, the opposition to the ruling party, Civic Platform (PO). The film “Solidarni 2010” was a production by E. Stankiewicz and J. Pospieszalski made after the Tu-154 air crash in Smoleńsk. It is a documentary that contains a record of conversations between people gathered at Krakowskie Przedmieście in Warsaw during the mourning period and at the funeral of the presidential couple in Cracow.

### 2.1.2 Discussion

In the analysis below, the utterances seen as impolite are marked in bold typeface. The first word we will analyse is *Won*. It is an expletive that calls for immediate exit, qualified in Polish as colloquial, common, insulting and boorish. It stems from Russian; hence, its possible occurrence in phrases like *Paszol won*, *Poszła won*, e.g. *Poszła won, ty śmierdząca małpo!* (*Sod off, you stinky ape!*; IPI PAN Corpus of Polish), *Taki kulturalny człowiek, a „paszol won” do mnie wrzasnął!* (*Such a cultured man and he shouted “paszol won” to me;* Anusiewicz, Skawiński 1996:45). This type of expression is typically directed towards people who are not accorded too much respect or who are despised. This type of behaviour clearly threatens one’s face – in this case the journalist’s dignity is threatened and the **image** one creates is damaged.

E. Stankiewicz acts officially, pursuing her professional and social tasks; her aim is to gain information and to report on the news. Thus, she has a sense of fulfillment of an obligation and she sees a positive value in it. Moreover, she thinks that others are of the same opinion. The creation of one’s image bears the hallmarks of self-creation (as aptly noticed by Culpeper 2011:26), yet the process may be upset by emotional reactions such as those presented by Deputy Niesiołowski. His public image was considerably strained by the use of a crude and insulting tone. It is commonly known that each community has a set of norms that describe certain behaviours, situations and ways of thinking about them in the context of desired or undesired social behaviour. Naturally enough, depending on the requirements and conventions typical of a given culture, including linguistic conventions, they may differ substantially as they do not depend on some universal “natural logic” (Wierzbicka 1999:223-227). In line



with the **Polish customs**, it is conduct unbecoming to a professor, deputy, or a man known from the media to express oneself and treat somebody in this way. Such behaviour definitely damages the qualitative image of the speaker, built on the basis of his academic achievements, professional work, political activities and personal features. The deputy reacted emotionally. He insulted the journalist and attacked the cameraman. Was this his intention? It does not seem that intentionality was the main impoliteness trigger in this case (this is what is claimed by Culpeper 2011:51). There were several factors that could have spurred his reaction. Surely, emotions played a role. From this point of view, one deals with the so-called **affective impoliteness** (Culpeper also distinguishes coercive and entertainment impoliteness, 2011:233). It is common knowledge, however, that people may be annoyed but may not show it as they can control their emotions. The Deputy Niesiołowski is not the reserved type. In this situation, some other **stimulator** was activated, which in this case was associating E. Stankiewicz with a concrete political context – the political party “Law and Justice” - and with concrete social issues, which were the events of the air crash in Smoleńsk (*You were involved in that film “Solidarni”, weren't you? This “Law and Justice” muck, is that right.; Go to “Law and Justice*).

This reply triggered a series of aggressive reactions that were construed as unacceptable in the situation. The perception of the scene was such that according to the addressee it required a policing service (*I'll call the police*). E. Stankiewicz felt both offended and threatened. As A. Awdiejew notices:

(...) for the proper interpretation of the interlocutor's behaviour in an interaction, the speaker should have interactive competence, which is a part of communicative competence and assumes that one can recognize the interlocutor's intentions in every speech act being interpreted by an addressee. It is possible because verbal behaviour is learned, which makes it possible to recognize and typologise the employed linguistic forms (Awdiejew 2007:46)<sup>7</sup>.

Considering the above, the behaviour of the deputy (verbal and non-verbal as well as para-verbal - attacking the camera, unfriendly gestures, raised voice, crossed facial expression) may be classified as a type of act which A. Awdiejew (2007:126) characterizes as **intentionally determined** – it is caused by one of the participants of an interaction expressing rage, anger and insults towards the addressee, and it creates an unfavourable condition for one of the interlocutors, thus hampering effective communication. Moreover, the typical feature of this interaction is the **directness of contact**. Specifically, this type of contact is *non-bona-fide*, and within this, a subtype of a conflictive contact is found, which



always appears as a consequence of negative emotions, and whose aim is verbal degradation of the interlocutor (Awdiejew 2007:50).

Equally important for the analysis of verbal behaviour are interpersonal relations of the interlocutors. A hierarchical relationship may have a considerable influence on the flow of interaction. Equal status as well as unequal social roles ascribed to dialogue participants may either stimulate verbal behaviour or cause a block for certain reactions. A. Awdiejew describes the role of power distribution as follows:

The type of participation in a dialogue depends on patterns of the interlocutors' behaviours, i.e. the roles which they adopt. (...) In interaction grammar the concept of a role has a narrower meaning and it is determined by the dominance of, or subordination to, one of the interlocutors while a given speech act is being realized (Awdiejew 2007:65).<sup>8</sup>

In the sample under investigation, there is inequality of the interlocutors taking part in the act of communication, with the domination of the sender resulting from his social status. This hierarchical distribution of power leads to the situation where the possibility of making a direct riposte by the addressee, i.e. the person being verbally attacked, is blocked. In consequence, E. Stankiewicz does not reply in the same tone, does not continue the dispute; rather, she withdraws from the conflict and, consequently, it comes to an end.

Summing up, the scene described above deals with impolite behaviour of the deputy towards the journalist. The impolite behaviour, which is not acceptable in the Polish model of politeness, damages the addressee's dignity as well as the sender's image. Unequal status of the interlocutors blocks the possibility of making a reply to the offensive verbal behaviour.

### 2.1.3 Reception

This part of the paper will deal with **reception**, which is understood as the way impolite verbal behaviour is received by the third party, i.e. message receivers, who have the status of observers, and who are not interlocutors in a communicative act. The sample under inspection has been largely assessed negatively, as one going beyond the Polish social norms. It must be remembered that

Social restraints do not need to lead to the situation of necessity, yet they cause an obligation. One does not have to reckon with it, yet this would have its consequences: a person may be ridiculed or be treated with aversion by the society (Grabias 1994:226).<sup>9</sup>



The conversation described in this section is a case in point. S. Niesiołowski does not seem to seek social popularity. He is better known as a person who is likely to express a biting remark or a spiteful comment in public. For example, this is what he said to a TVN station reporter about G. Napieralski after the voting over the president's veto of the Media Act on July 29 2008:

*Jak śmie ten obrzydliwy załgany hipokryta, ten obłudnik Napieralski, mówić, że nie dali legitymacji partyjnej telewizji.* (Source: <http://www.tvn24.pl> [DOA 27 III 2013])  
How dare the **hideous, mendacious hypocrite, the double-dealer** Napieralski say publically that they did not give TV a party ID.

At a session of the Sejm on 15 December 2011, the Deputy A. Macierewicz said:

*Jeszcze jedno wyjaśnienie. Kiedyś rzeczywiście miałem to nieszczęście, że byłem po imieniu z panem Niesiołowskim, ale już dawno nie jestem z tym panem po imieniu. Nie życzę sobie, żeby odzywał się pan do mnie po imieniu.*  
One more explanation. I was unlucky once to be on first-name terms with Mr. Niesiołowski, but it does no longer hold true. I do not want you to call me by my first name.

S. Niesiołowski replied

*Co ty możesz sobie życzyć, cymbale?* (Source: <http://wyborcza.pl> [DOA 27 III 2013])  
What is there for you to want, **you dope?**

At a session of the Sejm on 11 May 2012, the deputy L. Dorn said:

*(...) pani marszałek gestem takiej arogancji, odmowy wpuszczenia prezydium związku zawodowego na galerię, likwidowała ten efekt i ukazywała, można powiedzieć, prawdziwe oblicze układu rządzącego wobec ludzi i wobec związku,*  
*(...) Madam Speaker, with a gesture of such arrogance, a refusal of letting in the presidium of the trade union to the Sejm building gallery, eliminated this effect and showed, one might say, the true face of the ruling coalition towards people and the union,*

and then deputy Niesiołowski said

*Kończ, błaznie.* (Source: <http://wyborcza.pl> [DOA 27 III 2013])  
Finish, you **fool.**

In the paper *Beware of the deputy!* (*Uwaga: zły poseł!*) K. Feusette explicitly condemned the deplorable conduct of S. Niesiołowski calling him



a “ridiculous madman”. He tried to describe ironically the sources of his behaviour.

*Trzeci wariant przyczyn furii Niesiołowskiego – ten, który podają rządowe podlizusy – jest taki, że biednego, starszego pana sprowokowano. Oznaczałoby to, że partia rządząca wyznaczyła i utrzymywała na stanowisku wicemarszałka Sejmu III RP człowieka nie tylko niepanującego nad sobą (...), ale także kogoś, komu wydaje się, że włączona kamera może filmowanej osobie wybić „oko lub zęba” z odległości trzech metrów. (Feusette 2012:10)*

The third variant of the sources of Niesiołowski's fury - one which is given by governmental creeps - is that the poor, old man was provoked. This would mean that the ruling party appointed for the post of the deputy minister for the Sejm of the third Republic of Poland, and allowed to continue in the post, a man who is not in control of himself (...), but also a man who thinks a switched on camera can knock one's tooth out or pluck one's eye out from a distance of three metres.

R. Ziemkiewicz in the article *Loutology of 3rd Republic of Poland* cites the deputy's words as an example of a lack of manners:

*Oczywiście zwracanie się do kobiety per „won stąd” (...) potępienia „starej” inteligencji nie budzi, w dobrym tonie jest raczej demonstracyjna pobłażliwość dla „nerwusa” (...) (Ziemkiewicz 2012:56)*

Naturally, addressing a woman by saying “sod off” (...) does not draw condemnation in the eyes of the “old” intelligentsia; rather, it is expected that one would show ostentatious understanding for a “jitterbug”.

By the very title of the article – *In the symbiosis with loutishness* – M. Magierowski assessed the deputy's behaviour negatively. Moreover, he indicated that the Prime-Minister D. Tusk found it inappropriate:

*Gdy doszło do słynnej szarpaniny między S. Niesiołowskim a E. Stankiewicz, premier D. Tusk przebywał z wizytą w Kanadzie. Dotarły jednak do niego słuchy o niekonwencjonalnym zachowaniu szefa sejmowej Komisji Obrony. Uznał je za niestosowne i zasugerował, że poseł powinien przeprosić dziennikarkę. „Przepraszę, jak Tusk mi każe.” - odpowiedział Niesiołowski. (Magierowski, 2012: 30)*

When the famous scrimmage between S. Niesiołowski and E. Stankiewicz took place, the Prime-Minister D. Tusk was on an official visit to Canada. Nevertheless, he heard about the unconventional behaviour of the head of the Polish Sejm Defense Committee. He acknowledged that it had been inappropriate and suggested that the deputy should apologize to the journalist. “I'll apologize when Tusk tells me to do so” – Niesiołowski replied.

In the very same text, one can see other ways of reception too. The author cites an excerpt from a letter written by R. Rudecka-Kalinowska to D. Tusk, in which she states that in her opinion the whole situation was an attack on the



deputy, a provocation, an attempt at insulting and breaking the law by the journalist:

*Dzień, w którym zażądałeś od legendy polskiej opozycji profesora S. Niesiołowskiego przeproszenia znieważającej go i łamiącej prawo PiS-owskiej propagandystki, autorki socrealistycznych PiS-owskich produkcyjniaków – może być dniem, w którym Twoi wyborcy odwrócą się od Ciebie, Donaldzie. Bo Twoi wyborcy znoszą już długo zniewagi, lżenie, prowokacje, oszczerstwa, chamstwo, insynuacje, kłamstwa ludzi, wobec których Ty okazujesz zbyt wiele wyrozumiałości (...) (Magierowski 2012:30)*

The day when you demanded from the Polish legend of opposition, professor S. Niesiołowski, an apology to a “Law and Justice” propagandist who insults, breaks the law, and is the author of the socialist “Law and Justice” propagandist film, may be the day when your electors turn their back on you, Donald. Your electors have long endured insults, abuse, provocations, slander, loutishness, insinuation, lies told by people to whom you express too much understanding (...).

From this it transpires, indirectly, that (1) electors of “Civic Platform” do not see any wrongdoing in boorishness, and condemning it may even be seen as unfair (for people like them S. Niesiołowski is probably a politician who is original and who just uses crude language); (2) the journalist is to blame as she is the inciter, who purposefully wants to draw public attention to herself, and whose professional activities definitely do not deserve recognition. Among internet users, a discussion flared up: *Such words should never be said towards anybody.* – wrote Agnieszka Pomaska, Civic Platform MP. Blogger Azrael in turn acknowledged that S. Niesiołowski “*przeziął*” (“overdid it”).

A TV journalist, T. Siekielski said

*Nieważne, jakie ma poglądy E. Stankiewicz, nie broń chamstwa i agresji w polityce.* (Source: <http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl> [DOA 27 III 2013])

Regardless of what political view E. Stankiewicz represents, do not defend loutishness and aggression in politics.

Examples of other comments are cited below:

Piotr from Gdynia (15 May 2012)

*Pani Stankiewicz staje się podwójna ofiara...ofiara ataku nie zrównoważonego psychicznie chama z ławy sejmowej i obecnej nagonki na nią przez mainstream i obrońców tegoż chama z jego własnego ugrupowania z masakra siedząca na stołku marszałka sejmu włącznie.*

Ms. Stankiewicz is becoming a double victim...a victim of an assault by a mentally unbalanced lout from the Sejm bench, and the current smear campaign organized by the mainstream, and the defenders of the very lout from his own party, including the massacre holding on to the post of the Speaker of the Sejm.



antyPOd (15 May 2012)

*Pani Ewo! proszę walczyć o swoje dobre imię, proszę nie rezygnować z podania tego typu do sądu! Delikatność i takt także ma swoje granice, a chamstwo PO prostu wykorzystuje Waszą – prawych i kulturalnych dziennikarzy – postawę!*

Ewa! Please stand up for your good name, please don't give up on suing this guy!

Subtlety and tactfulness also have their limits, and loutishness of the Civic Platform just uses your – upright and cultured journalists – attitude!

maja (16 May 2012)

*Ty głupia służusko pisuarów, jak ktoś ci powie że nie chce być filmowany i nie będzie z tobą rozmawiał to masz sie wynosić. Niesiołowski powinien cię tak potraktować jak świętoszkowaci zwolennicy Rydzyka w Częstochowie potraktowali dziennikarkę Polsatu-powinnaś dostać z liścia jak ona. (Source: <http://wpolityce.pl/dzienniki> [DOA 27 III 2013])*

You stupid minion of pissuirs, when somebody tells you he doesn't want to be filmed and won't be talking to you, you should just go away. Niesiołowski should treat you like the sanctimonious supporters of Rydzyk in Częstochowa treated the Polsat journalists – you should be smacked in the face.

Naturally, it is impossible to show all private opinions put on the internet (hence the sources provided in brackets), but what can be already observed is that the reactions are varied. Interest in the topic was so great that after some time, the option of adding a comment to the clip was turned off on youtube.pl.

## 2.2 Sample B. – K. Wojewódzki and M. Figurski (12 June 2012)<sup>10</sup>

### 2.2.1 Situational background and linguistic behaviour

On 12 June 2012, Radio Eska Rock broadcast the programme *Poranny WF* run by Kuba Wojewódzki and Michał Figurski. They talked about the Ukraine vs. Sweden football match, won by Ukraine, which took place during Euro 2012 (hosted by Poland and Ukraine).

*K. Wojewódzki: A wiesz co ja wczoraj zrobiłem po tym meczu z Ukrainą?*

K. Wojewódzki: Do you know what I did yesterday after that match with Ukraine?

*M. Figurski: No?*

M. Figurski: What?

*KW: Zachowałem się jak prawdziwy Polak...*

KW: I behaved like a good Pole...

*MF: Kopnąłeś psa.*

MF: You kicked a dog.



*KW: Nie, wyrzuciłem swoją Ukrainkę.*

*KW: No, I didn't. I fired my Ukrainian cleaning lady.*

*MF: A to dobry pomysł... Mi to jeszcze nie przyszło... Wiesz co? Ja po złości jej dzisiaj nie zapłacę.*

*MF: That's a good idea...I haven't had this idea myself yet...You know what? Out of spite, I won't pay mine today.*

*KW: Wiesz co, to ja swoją przywrócę, odbiorę jej pieniądze i znowu wyrzucę.*

*KW: You know what? Then I'll give mine the job back, take her money back, and fire her again.*

*MF: Powiem ci, że gdyby moja była chociaż odrobinę ładniejsza, to jeszcze bym ją zgwałcił.*

*MF: You know, if mine was a bit more beautiful, I'd also rape her.*

*KW: Eee... Ja to nie wiem, jak moja wygląda, bo ona ciągle na kolanach.*

*KW: Oh well... I don't know what mine looks like because she is on her knees all the time.*

It should be mentioned that Jakub Władysław Wojewódzki, known as Kuba Wojewódzki, is a Polish radio music journalist and a columnist, while Michał Figurski is a Polish presenter, TV and radio producer, radio journalist, and a compère. In their conversation, they assume that Ukrainian women working in Poland are usually employed in Polish houses as cleaning ladies and domestic help or housekeepers.

### 2.2.2 Discussion

Clearly, it was the intention of K. Wojewódzki and M. Figurski to make the linguistic behaviour jocular and entertaining, and to introduce a specific sense of humour (stemming from the convention of morning programmes), and this was done without any reflection concerning rules of etiquette and the possible reception of their language. Hence, one can classify this kind of linguistic behaviour as a special type of impoliteness. K. Wojewódzki acknowledges on a social networking site that this programme of his is not for everybody and he explains its specific nature as follows:

*Tworząc ją, wiemy, że udało nam się powołać do życia określoną konwencję oraz słuchacza, który ją rozumie. Niestety czasami pojawiają się intruzi z krainy patosu i przesady. Apeluję zatem do wszystkich szukających u nas nienawiści, ksenofobii czy rasizmu. Nie znajdziecie go. (Source: <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl> [DOA 28 III 2013])*

By creating this programme we realize that we managed to bring to life a specific convention and a listener who understands it. Regrettably, sometimes intruders from the land of pomposity and exaggeration appear. I thus appeal to all those looking for hatred, xenophobia and racism in our programme. You won't find it.

When the channel of communication is the radio, one cannot talk about a typical interaction (*face-to-face*) - contact between the sender and the addressee



is indirect. Because of this specific communicative situation, the distribution of power in this interaction is such that the addressee is subordinated to the sender, who has the dominant position. Relationship management of this type creates favourable conditions for emotive-evaluative function to emerge (Awdziejew 2007:65). This situation in turn blocks any possible reply. We do have, however, some reaction to this impolite talk in the weekend edition (29-30 June 2012) of *Gazeta Wyborcza* newspaper, which published letters from Ukrainian women living in Poland directed to K. Wojewódzki and M. Figurski:

#### A letter from Tatiana:

*Za żadne pieniądze nie zgodziłabym się na pracę u was! Honoru nie sprzedam nawet za milion. (...) straszne chamstwo się u was szerzy (...) Ale panie Figurski, robić sobie żarty z gwałtu? Niech pan sobie tak z żoną żartuje, jeśli na to pozwoli. Nie należy podbijać własnej wartości kosztem innych. (...) Pierwsza przybiegnę na protest, domagający się waszego zwolnienia. I wszystkie koleżanki przyprowadzę. Czy wolność słowa oznacza bezkarne obrażanie? Pracuję legalnie, mam własne mieszkanie w Warszawie, na Ukrainie zbudowałam dom. Jeżdżę na wakacje do Egiptu, na Cypr. Byłam w USA. Zarobiłam na to wszystko uczciwą pracą. A wy?*

I wouldn't agree to work in your country, not for all the world! I won't sell my honour even for a million. (...) awful loutishness is spreading in your country (...). But Mr. Figurski, to joke about a rape? You can joke like that with your wife, if she allows you to. One shouldn't boost one's self-esteem at the cost of others. (...) I'll be the first to arrive at a protest demanding your dismissal. And I'll bring all my friends. Does freedom of speech allow audacious insulting? I work legally, I have my own flat in Warsaw, in Ukraine I built a house. I go to Egypt and Cyprus on holiday. I was in the USA. I earned it all with my hard and honest work. And you?

#### A letter from Tan

*Miałam 18 lat, gdy przyjechałam do Polski po raz pierwszy. Teraz mam 36, połowę życia przepracowałam tutaj. Nauczyłam się asertywności. (...) Po waszej gadce wykoleiło mnie na dobę. Wróciła niepewność, strach. To był cios poniżej pasa. Nawet nie wiem, co powiedzieć. Panie Figurski, ma pan rodzinę na Ukrainie. Jak im pan to wszystko wytłumaczy?*

I was 18 when I come to Poland the first time. Now I'm 36, I have worked half of my life here. I have learned how to be assertive. (...) When I heard your twaddle I felt devastated for 24 hours. Insecurity and fear returned. It was a low blow. I just don't know what to say. Mr. Figurski, you have a family in Ukraine. How will you explain it all to them?



## A letter from L.

*Jesteście panowie znani, bogaci, macie drogie samochody, firmowe ciuchy, możecie pozwolić sobie na wszystko, ale brak wam kultury osobistej. Jeśli obrażasz człowieka, który sprząta u ciebie w domu, to trochę tak, jakbyś sam siebie obrażał. I nie płacisz mu jałmużny, ale wynagrodzenie za wykonaną pracę. Gdy dowiedziałam się, co powiedzieliście, chciało mi się płakać. Taka straszna niesprawiedliwość. Nie zasłużyliśmy na te słowa (...) Czy panowie pomagają potrzebującym? Pomagamy my, biedni. Wysyłamy SMS-y na cele charytatywne. (...) A wy przez swoje idiotyczne wypowiedzi wyrzucacie tyle pieniędzy w błoto. Kocham Polskę. Dała mi więcej niż Ukraina, choć to najlepsze miejsce na ziemi.*

(Source: <http://www.archiwum.wyborcza.pl/Archiwum> [DOA 28 III 2013])

You are famous, rich, have expensive cars, name-brand clothes, you can afford anything, but you are ill-mannered. If you insult a man who cleans your house, to some extent it's like insulting yourself. And you don't give alms to them but a salary for the service provided. When I learned what you said, I felt like crying. It's a terrible injustice. We don't deserve such words (...). Do you help the needy? We, the poor, help them. We send out donation text messages to support charity. (...) And you, saying such idiotic things, throw so much money down the drain. I love Poland. It's given me more than Ukraine has, even though it's the best place in the world.

It transpires from these letters that some addressees notice hierarchical interpersonal relations and **social roles asymmetry** between the participants of the verbal conflict; in this context, they feel inferior in terms of their social status. As their esteem is belittled, they feel mental discomfort, yet they openly express their negative emotional attitude to the words uttered on air. They see in them a violation of their dignity (**self-image**) and they perceive the senders' behaviour as a violation of **social ethical norms** accepted in their culture (*One should not boost one's own esteem at the cost of others.*). This opinion is echoed in comments of other listeners (we will return to this issue in the section on reception). In this case, we also deal with a *non-bona-fide* type of contact, i.e. **a conflictive contact**, which leads to verbal degradation of the interlocutor (Awdiejew 2007:50).

Each type of language contact is of a pragmatic nature wherein emotions play a crucial role. The dialogue above has been classified as a contradiction to the concept of friendship or mutual recognition of one's values. The primary intentions of the sender's joke were completely misunderstood by the listeners, who, after all, dictate message interpretations and eventually define them as polite or impolite. R. J. Watts expresses it in the following way:

Whether or not a participant's behaviour is evaluated as polite or impolite is not merely a matter of the linguistic expressions that s/he uses, but rather depends on



the interpretation of that behaviour in the overall social interaction. (Watts 2003:9)

### 2.2.3 Reception

Words, which were uttered during the programme, have been regarded by the Media Ethics Council as a sign of xenophobia, gross loudness and hate speech. The dialogue became an issue of national importance – even the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs intervened as the language was found unacceptable and insulting the dignity of the Ukrainian people. Marcin Bosacki - the Polish Ministry spokesman - presented an official stand on this matter:

*Wypowiedź tych panów była nie tylko idiotyczna, ale skandaliczna i chamska. Takie wypowiedzi, szeroko dzisiaj komentowane przez media ukraińskie, osłabiają lata wysiłków budowania przyjaźni między Polakami a Ukraińcami, nie między rządami obu państw, ale zwykłymi obywatelami, czego zwieńczeniem jest wspólna organizacja Euro 2012, która budzi uznanie całego świata.*

(Source: <http://sergiodearana.natemat.pl> [DOA 28 III 2013])

The comments made by the two men were not only idiotic but also scandalous and boorish. Such comments, which today have extensive coverage in the Ukrainian media, impair years of efforts to build Polish-Ukrainian friendship, not between the governments of the two countries but between ordinary citizens, of which the crowning achievement was the co-organization of Euro 2012, an event which gained wide recognition in the entire world.

The National Broadcasting Council and the prosecution have already dealt with the issue too. On 25 June 2012, the Eska Rock Radio Board decided to take the programme off the air. K. Wojewódzki was suspended for two months and M. Figurski was dismissed from his job. The Association of Polish Journalists conferred them the title of the Vultures of the Year 2012. This anti-award is granted to those journalists who become known for extreme unreliability and who flout the rules of professional ethics.

The Association gave the following grounds for their decision:

*Antynagrodą wyróżniamy w tym roku audycję, która zamiast służyć ludziom, poniża ich i traktuje instrumentalnie.*

This year the anti-award will be conferred to the radio programme which, rather than provide service to people, humiliates them and treats them like objects.

K. Feusette criticized such a linguistic behaviour in his paper *Who defends the Vultures of the Year*:



*Gdyby nie byli przewidywalni, można by nazwać ciekawymi przypadkami. Wojewódzkiego i Figurskiego omotała bowiem ksenofobia nietypowa, niezwiązana z kwestiami etnicznymi, lecz z przekonaniem o własnej wyższości nad ludźmi o innym kolorze skóry czy niższym statusie społecznym.* (Feusette, 2013:38)

Were they not predictable, one could call them interesting cases. Wojewódzki and Figurski are possessed by untypical xenophobia, which is not linked with ethical issues but the conviction of their superiority over people of different skin colour or of inferior social status.

A number of comments on the situation can be found. For example K. Kolenda-Zalewska (a TV journalist) criticizes K. Wojewódzki and M. Figurski and sees in their activities a massive attack. Another journalist, J. Kuźniar, admitted on this blog that they were kicking around journalists and that he was not going to take part in it. However, Z. Hołdys (a Polish musician), on his Twitter account, called those who criticize the journalists from the programme *Poranny WF* believers of a religion for “peasants and lesser scum”. Sara May – a celebrity musician – commented on the event in the following way:

*M. Figurski i K. Wojewódzki przekraczali granice, balansowali na poziomie tego, co przystoi i tego, co w naszym kraju karalne. Bawili się i dowcipkowali. Jak widać do czasu (...) Kontrowersja to ludzka rzecz. Skandale były, są i będą. Świat rozwija się dzięki tym nieprzyzwoitym, niepokornym, nieprzewidywalnym, kreatywnym i odważnym. Wyrażanie własnych myśli to podstawa. Nie można dać się zamknąć w klatce nakazów i zakazów, bo zwariujemy.* (Source: <http://www.se.pl> [DOA 28 II 2013])

M. Figurski and K. Wojewódzki were trespassing the borders, were balancing on the level of what is unbecoming and what is punishable in our country. They were playing and joking. As one can see, up to a point only (...). Controversy is a human thing. Scandals happened in the past, are happening now, and will happen in the future. The world evolves owing to the indecent, rebellious, unpredictable, creative and brave. The right to express your own thoughts is a fundamental thing. One cannot agree to get imprisoned in a cage of dictates and bans because we will go nuts.

A number of different receptions could also be found among the Internet comments, e.g.:

Jan Czipionka (21 June 2012)

*Nikt nie kuma ironii? F&W nie nadają się jednak do przypadkowego społeczeństwa...*  
Nobody susses out the irony? After all, F&W do not fit a random society...

Tomasz Rokseła (21 June 2012)

*To zabawne jak na niski poziom WFu najbardziej narzekają ludzie, którzy po prostu nie potrafią zrozumieć dość prostej ironii.*



It's funny that the complaints about the low level of expression of WF are usually voiced by those who cannot grasp simple irony.

Marek Kotowski (22 June 2012)

*W&F stali się pospolitymi burakami, ich ironie i żarty już się skończyły to tak jakby wrócić do niemego kina. Jeśli TVN nie ma nowych twarzy aby zrobić lepszy i ciekawszy program to niech zbankrutuje zamiast wydawać grube pieniądze na dwóch psychopatów. Tego już nie da się oglądać jak i słuchać. Ja przynajmniej przerzucam się na kanał Discovery.*

W&F have become ordinary bumpkins, the time for their irony and jokes is over, this is as if we went back to the silent film era. If the TVN station has no new faces to make a programme which is better and more interesting, it should go bankrupt rather than spend hefty sums of money on two psychopaths. It's impossible to watch them or to listen to them any more. At least I switch over to the Discovery Channel.

Wojtek Jarczewski (18 December 2012)

*Akcja Superexpressu nadaje się raczej dla studentów psychiatrii jako przypadek wybitnie kliniczny. Czy ta Hieną Roku to w ogóle coś istotnego? Znając Kubę to ucieszysz się z tej nagrody i przysporzy mu ona tylko popularności. I dobrze. Brakuje w naszych mediach dowcipnych i inteligentnych ludzi. Ale żart z Ukrainkami mi się nie podobał.* (Source: <http://natemat.pl> [DOA 28 III 2013])

The attack by Superexpress [a tabloid newspaper in Poland] is suitable for students of psychiatry as a great example of a clinical case. Is this Vulture of the Year Award of any importance at all? As far as I know Kuba, he'll be pleased with this award and it will only make him more popular. And good for him. Our media lack witty and intelligent people. But the joke about the Ukrainian women did not appeal to me.

#### 4. Summary

The present paper has been an attempt to interpret various contexts and their evaluations in terms of what is generally recognized as impoliteness (also known as verbal aggression, hate speech, verbal conflict; or labeled with gradation, depending on the strength of impoliteness, e.g. obscenity, crudity, impertinence, boorishness, etc.). Pragmalinguistically, there are four contexts which determine language interpretation: linguistic, interpersonal, instrumental and cultural. In the context of language, any speech acts associated with a given communicative behaviour are taken into account. The interpersonal context informs about relations between interlocutors. All activities one performs during the act of speaking (e.g. raising one's hand, nodding, facial expression), contribute to the instrumental context. The cultural context in turn, as the name suggests, is associated with the culture of a community, which has been



moulded by years. All these contexts were considered in this chapter. Let us now recapitulate some of the main points stemming from the analysis presented in the previous sections.

1. It is possible to observe both similarities and differences between the communicative situations analysed above. For example, the impoliteness expressed by S. Niesiołowski as well as the insults voiced by K. Wojewódzki and M. Figurski were explicitly stated. In the case of the deputy, however, impoliteness is complemented with other observable elements of communication, such as facial expressions and gestures (nonverbal and paraverbal elements are thus discernible), which stem from the direct type of contact. In the case of K. Wojewódzki and M. Figurski, because of the channel of communication, it is impossible to observe the instrumental context. What is stated *expressis verbis*, however, is accompanied with irony, (embarrassing) jokes, mockery and humiliation of the addressee. Occasionally, impoliteness may be neutralized, for example by laughter, conspiratory winking, etc., yet this situation takes place in a restricted context, and thus typical implications that might potentially affect a change of message interpretation could not be noticed. In both types of contexts presented in this paper, the addressees' image/ dignity is violated, which disallows saving one's face. The senders, contrary to their intentions, damage their own image and make it impossible to create a positive face, to use Goffman's (1967:5) wording. The emotive-evaluative function of dialogue also emerges. Another element that is shared by both contexts is a lack of social approval for such impolite behaviour, as for the majority it disagrees with the social norm established by the community. In the Polish culture what is definitely unacceptable and

*wartościowane jako zdecydowanie niegrzeczne, są te akty, w których nadawcy nie respektują rangi odbiorców i formułują swój akt w sposób, który narusza ich poczucie godności.* (Gałczyńska 1999:17)

evaluated as absolutely impolite are those speech acts in which the sender disregards the social rank of the addressee and where the senders formulate their speech act in a way which violates the addressees' dignity.

Additionally, in both cases defined intentionality is effectuated, the contact is *non-bona-fide*, and is of a conflictive nature. Negative emotions emerge, which qualifies this interaction as affective impoliteness (or even an overt aggression, we shall return to this issue below). The status of the interlocutors is unequal, which hampers a direct riposte. By and large, both examples have a



negative reception, yet justifying, defending, and supporting comments were also voiced.

While analysing affective impoliteness expressed by S. Niesiołowski, I tried to grasp the factors which triggered impoliteness, i.e. the evaluative attitude towards the recipient, for example the negation of the entirety of the competencies and attitudes represented by E. Stankiewicz due to ideological disparity. As for K. Wojewódzki and M. Figurski, their intention was to be impolite for entertainment. The sources of such behaviour may be sought in the style or convention of the radio programme they wished to create. Efforts to follow the teenagers' style of talking known as lolspeak (as part of "youthspeak" of the so-called impulse culture) cannot be excluded, even if in its primitive version. A lack of reflection on the possible ways of message reception by the addressee (or disregarding it on purpose) produced the opposite result, viz. it was interpreted as humiliation rather than entertainment.

2. Considering the sender's attitude towards the addressee, it is not just linguistic impoliteness in the samples analysed in this chapter, but, in fact, aggression. Verbal aggression is an activity wherein the sender expresses negative feelings towards the addressee and disparages him by expressing a negatively charged evaluation of all his activities. Hence, an aggressive utterance tends to be a completely negative evaluation of everything connected with the recipient. H. Satkiewicz (2000:28–33) points out that aggression may be overt or covert. The former occurs when the sender uses some linguistic means of negative charge (words of low stylistic register, i.e. insulting, together with some prosodic features, such as a raised or harsh tone). The latter in turn is manifest in texts axiologically neutrally charged, which, however, may hurt and deprecate, for example irony, derision, false empathy, etc.

3. As regards reception, a few more observations are in order. Firstly, as already mentioned, the general reception of the two excerpts under investigation is negative, which stems from the widely accepted social canon of behaviour. The presentation of opposite viewpoints is supported by varying types of argumentation.

Secondly, reference is made to the senders' achievements. In the case of S. Niesiołowski, it is emphasized that he was victimized by the communist authorities, that it goes without saying what great services for our country he performed, and that he has the courage to react to provocative behaviour. As for K. Wojewódzki, it is stressed that he is a well known individual (even in the



USA) and media celebrity, a creative and courageous journalist, and that, in fact, by means of his programme he wants to revile Polish vices.

Thirdly, attempts were made to disparage the addressee. E. Stankiewicz was made, inter alia, a propagandist and an inciter; Ukrainian women in turn were depicted as lacking a sense of humour.

Fourthly, it has been shown that what is interpreted as impolite may be intended to be construed as a joke, bantering, etc. (in a given situational and relational practice). Further to that, more insults were hurled at those who were of a different mind, most notably on the Internet.

Finally, in both cases under inspection, the insulting behaviour was discussed as if it was a single incident, while a number of insulting expressions towards various people, such as *hypocrite*, *dope*, or *fool*, were also expressed by S. Niesiołowski on other occasions. K. Wojewódzki and M. Figurski, on the other hand, in their programme aired in 2011, insulted the dark-skinned Alvin Gajadhura, the speaker of the Road Transport Inspectorate by saying *Let's call the Negro*, thus suggesting that his phone works in a bush-like network for the black people, and that the programme is sponsored by the Warsaw branch of the Ku Klux Klan. Clearly, it can be assumed that both the deputy and the journalists have no intention of being politically correct and of adhering to the social norms of polite behaviour. Moreover, they do not draw conclusions from the public debate on this topic, and any attempts to justify their impoliteness will be interpreted as a consent to further impertinent remarks.

All the above-mentioned types of arguments do not contribute anything new to the gist of the matter, thus they might be labelled as “a propos” arguments, as some “parallel beings” – they have the same point of reference (thus they are a propos of the communicative situation described above), even so they constitute a good thematic platform for other similar topics to evolve. Our attempt to verify them logically allowed us to draw the following conclusions: if somebody is credited with some achievements or enjoys wide recognition, as, for example, a show business celebrity, he cannot or does not want to (although should) control his emotions and the supposed provocation, and thus he is allowed to insult other people, laugh at their expense, humiliate and ridicule them, etc.

These observations support the fact that preferences of language users for the adherence to social etiquette and the evaluation of such behaviour may be an interesting and interdisciplinary research topic, which can pinpoint the motives for social acceptance of courteous behaviour and, by the same token, its popularization.



*Z socjologicznego punktu widzenia nasilanie się agresywnych wypowiedzi w przestrzeni publicznej nie ulega wątpliwości. (...) Gdy miliony Polaków nie znajdują w przestrzeni medialnej głównego nurtu odzwierciedlenia swoich problemów, niepokojów i pragnień, to nie należy się dziwić, iż tworzy się potencjał do nastrojów (...) przejawiających się m. in. w agresji słownej. (Zybertowicz 2012:6).*

From the sociological point of view, there is no doubt that aggressive talk is on the increase in the public sphere. (...) When millions of Poles fail to find a reflection of their own problems, anxiety and desires in the media, it's no wonder that an atmosphere favourable for language aggression surfaces.

Considering what the world around us can offer, it seems that the strongest impulse for aggressive behaviour is to gain popularity, to win a political game, to present everything in terms of unconventional entertainment, to attract attention, and to win renown. Another motive is a populist willingness to curry favour with others, in particular the "cool"; those more sensitive, however, view such behaviour as a primitive and vulgar entertainment for the masses, yokels, rout, the hoi polloi.

In certain quarters (in particular among teenagers), impoliteness is a desired behaviour because, in the system of values, it places a person on the opposite end of a population as compared with the majority (e.g. adults). This aspect is pointed out by H. Spencer-Oatey:

many secondary school children in England feel they will lose face among their peers if they appear to be too clever and/or studious, because they value the attribute 'cool' more highly than clever or hardworking. (Spencer-Oatey 2007: 644)

E. Mistewicz (2012:111) suggests that new media require customization; therefore, some journalists maintain that they should be *annoying*, *expressive*, and *recognizable*. Politicians benefit from discussions on this issue, which, naturally, evoke strong emotions, as they have learned how to express themselves in order to be in the limelight and to evoke tension by the sheer uttering of their surname.

*Zyskują media. (...) zaproszenie S. Niesiołowskiego z J. Brudzińskim zawsze zapewnia „oglądalność” (...) Zyskują odbiorcy. Wreszcie rozumieją politykę. Mają o czym porozmawiać z sąsiadami i przyjaciółmi. (...) Zyskuje Platforma. Na śmietniku wczorajszego dnia zaległa trudna, kluczowa reforma (...) Nikt już o niej nie pamięta (...) (Mistewicz 2012:96).*

The media benefit. (...) the invitation of S. Niesiołowski together with J. Brudziński guarantees a large audience (...). The viewers and listeners benefit. At last they understand politics. There is something to talk about with the neighbours and friends. (...). The Civic Platform benefits. In the mess of the past, an outstanding, tough and crucial reform got stuck (...). Nobody remembers it any more (...).



Similar discussions on impoliteness and fights against "hate speech" also appear on the television, revolving largely around the issues of moral relativism and cynicism in verbal skirmishes (e.g. an interview with the deputy J. Palikot in the programme *Kod* (aired on 12 May 2012; source: <http://www.tvp.pl>, [DOA 2 IV 2013])).

To recapitulate, as communication is often dynamic, evolving and unpredictable, research on (im)politeness needs to be further specified, first and foremost in terms of the methodology, and must overcome a number of obstacles. The analysis of impoliteness presented in this chapter makes it evident that the concept of context considerably exceeds the boundaries imposed by speech acts. As a matter of fact, conclusions concerning the degree of (im)politeness emerge from message reception by addressees rather than from the evaluation of content by an external observer. The addressee's reception is the key element in message interpretation as it is more crucial and precise than a sheer unravelling of the speaker's intentions.

### Notes

- 1 Świat chamieje przerażająco szybko. Kiedyś brak dobrych manier kojarzył się tylko ze społecznością lumpów i niższych sfer. Ludzie wykształceni i z wysokim statusem społecznym starali się przynajmniej zewnętrznie utrzymywać normy. Poczynając od niesmarkania na ulicy, a na stosunku wobec bliźnich kończąc. (...) Słowa, które kiedyś nie przeszłyby przez gardło, teraz często padają publicznie (...) (Łysiak 2008:14).
- 2 Analiza konwersacji, jako obiektu bardzo złożonego, zakłada przynajmniej trzy płaszczyzny badania: płaszczyznę gramatyki interakcyjnej, socjo- i psycholingwistyczną. Gramatyka interakcyjna jest w stanie wykryć i opisać zastosowane typy aktów mowy i ustalić ogólny cel komunikacyjny, do którego dąży ich nadawca. Płaszczyzna socjolingwistyczna umożliwia określenie motywacji społecznej danego typu zachowania werbalnego (ustalenie statusu społecznego interlokutorów, dystans ról społecznych oraz innych parametrów, od których zależy dany typ komunikacji werbalnej). Wreszcie płaszczyzna psycholingwistyczna daje możliwość wyjaśnienia subiektywnej motywacji interlokutorów (rozpatruje subiektywne parametry działania werbalnego w danej sytuacji psychologicznej: cele życiowe interlokutorów, ich preferencje, styl zachowania itd.). (Awdiejew 2007:67)
- 3 Zobjektywizowana treść sytuacji powinna być oddzielona od układu interakcyjnego, w którym jest zanurzona, gdyż w tym układzie sama treść przedstawiona (...) nie ulega zmianom. Należy więc rozróżnić sytuację jako stan rzeczy przedstawiony na poziomie ideacyjnym i układ interakcyjny jako wyznacznik pragmatyczny kontaktu werbalnego. (Awdiejew 2007:52)
- 4 interakcyjny nadawca (JA) i odbiorca (TY), parametry aktualizacji przestrzeni i czasu (TU i TERAZ) oraz odrębny dla każdego aktu mowy konieczny i wystarczający zbiór warunków pragmatycznych, które określają typ intencji interakcyjnej (celu interakcyjnego) nadawcy. (Awdiejew 2007:53)



- 5 zbiór przyjętych w danej społeczności wzorów językowych zachowań grzecznościowych, zwyczajowo podporządkowanych określonym sytuacjom pragmatycznym (Marcjanik 2008:12)
- 6 Source: <http://www.youtube.com> [DOA: 11 VII 2012].
- 7 (...) dla prawidłowej interpretacji zachowania się partnera w interakcji mówiący powinien dysponować kompetencją interakcyjną, która jest częścią kompetencji komunikacyjnej i zakłada umiejętność rozpoznania intencji partnera w każdym interpretowanym przez odbiorcę akcie mowy. Jest to możliwe dlatego, że zachowanie werbalne ma charakter wyuczony, co umożliwia rozpoznanie i typologizację zastosowanych form językowych. (Awdiejew 2007:46)
- 8 Charakter uczestnictwa w dialogu jest uwarunkowany wzorami zachowań mówiących, czyli rolami jakie przyjmują na siebie interlokuterzy. (...) W gramatyce interakcyjnej pojęcie roli ma charakter węższy i jest określane przez dominację lub podporządkowanie się jednego z interlokutorów w trakcie realizacji określonych aktów mowy. (Awdiejew 2007:65)
- 9 Ograniczenia społeczne nie stwarzają wprawdzie sytuacji konieczności, ale powodują przymus. Jednostka może się z nimi nie liczyć. Poniesie jednak wówczas konsekwencje takiej postawy: zostanie ośmieszona lub obdarzona społeczną niechęcią. (Grabias, 1994:226)
- 10 Source: <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl> [DOA 28 III 2013].

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in the society

Case in Iranian serial

*Qahveye Talkh (Bitter Coffee)*

### Abstract

Media is one of the sources of socialization (Davis 2004). Television, radio and internet are media which are easily accessible and a large group of people, mostly children, use every day. Being polite or impolite is the important factorization which could be communicated or realized through media. However, this area has been done to understand the role of language in socialization. For over 10 years that there has been a concerted effort to explore the language of social interactions which might be labeled "impolite" or "non-polite" (Mills 2005). Politeness/impoliteness dichotomy has been shown different by scholars. Some look at impoliteness as "exceptional" and therefore politeness is the standard and threat while others argue that impoliteness itself "never" is not "exceptional" and account for the constructed nature of the politeness and its relation to its own terms rather than seeing it as a deviation from politeness. *Qahveye Talkh* (Bitter Coffee) is one of the famous satirical series created by the state TV over the world which uses humor very often through impoliteness. This study will analyze the language of impoliteness, suggested in the world by using Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies to understand the nature of verbal impoliteness through this serial which is used by people to talk to each other. how media is employed to spread the verbal impoliteness or humor through, and whether media helps to change the manner of talking towards impoliteness. Verbal non-verbal impoliteness will also be considered wherever necessary.

**Keywords:** impoliteness, media, language change

## 1. Introduction

Impoliteness is a branch of pragmatics which some scholars like Mills (2005) recently decided to explore by names of "impolite" or "non-polite" in social interaction. It is part of everyday language use and people should be prepared to interact in impolite situations, identify potentially impolite practices, or at least