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Editor-in-chief

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Implicational Impoliteness Strategies Used by Tweeters against Trump

Salar Qasim Rashid *

Ashraf Riyadh Abdullah **

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Abstract:

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) provides an opportunity for research into impoliteness and face-threatening acts (FTAs). Besides, compared to face-to-face interaction (FtF), CMC is more aggressive (Hardaker 2012: 71). Twitter is proving to be a valuable research medium in a number of fields, including political impoliteness. During his first impeachment hearing, Donald J. Trump, the 45th President of the United States (POTUS), is the target of impoliteness on Twitter by politicians and journalists, in this research. The research is distinctive in that it investigates impoliteness towards Trump by journalists and politicians which has not been studied before. Another reason for choosing this subject is that “implicational impoliteness” research has been largely ignored in the Iraqi scholarly domain of impoliteness; most researchers continue to use Culpeper's (1996; 2005) method.

The study primarily examines implicational impoliteness triggers directed against Trump on Twitter during the impeachment process, using a corpus of 18469 words that constitutes 409 tweets mostly from journalists and politicians. It uses Culpeper's (2011a) method to analyse tweets qualitatively. The study's aim is to answer research questions about the most common implicational impoliteness triggers and strategies used against the POTUS. The findings are consistent with Culpeper's method, and conclusions were reached successfully regarding the questions posed and statements hypothesised .

Keywords: Pragmatics, Sociolinguistics, Impoliteness, Twitter.

*Master student/ Dept. of English/ College of Arts / University of Mosul.

**Lect/ Dept. of English/ College of Arts / University of Mosul.

1. Introduction

Emerging Social Networking Sites (SNSs) have revolutionised communication procedures since the turn of the twenty-first century (Ean, 2011). People have begun to consider emerging communication technologies as a necessary component of building a new global communication paradigm. Scholars also proposed that as SNSs have increased in prominence, they provide the opportunity for deliberative communication features (e.g. Baek et al., 2011; Manosevitch and Walker, 2009; Papacharissi, 2004). Twitter, as one of the most rapidly growing and successful CMC medium today is also evolving as a rich research platform for researchers studying social communication. Impoliteness against politicians, specifically Trump, the 45th POTUS, is one of these topics.

Impoliteness has become prevalent on a variety of CMC sites, including Twitter. In this case, Twitter serves as a platform for showing impoliteness by explicitly insulting others. Impoliteness is described as an offensive expression aimed at the face of another individual (Culpeper, 1996). When speakers engage in impolite behaviour, they do so not only to avoid maintaining the addressee's face, but also to target them with insulting language (Bousfield, 2007). Despite the fact that the majority of people around the world already use the internet in their daily interactions, SNSs continue to be powerful platforms for engaging and interacting with people all around the planet (Acevedo, 2017). In some situations, SNSs allow everyone to criticise, insult, attack, and so forth.

Similarly, studies on politicians' usage of Twitter have showed that people mainly use Twitter as a broadcasting medium (Theocharis et al., 2016). Thus, politicians are a frequent subject of attacks in online exchanges. Culpeper (2005) also states that when people engage in impolite acts, they deliberately use insulting language to attack the target. In addition, Twitter and other SNSs are used to keep the rest of the world informed about global issues. For example, routinely disputes on Twitter between Trump and other United States politicians and more specifically, impolite language usage against Trump by his adversaries during the impeachment trial at the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020.

A *New York Times* report on the internet listed 598 people and entities Trump had insulted on Twitter until May 24, 2019 (Lee & Quealy 2019). It was found out that 63 people, mostly journalists and politicians have attacked Trump as reactions to insults already made by Trump. The conditions for including entities in this research are easy: their Twitter accounts must be verified, they must have reacted to Trump and; then, during Trump's impeachment trial, their tweets are examined for various linguistic impoliteness strategies.

This research is as the following: after the introductory section, section two states the problem of the study and the research questions, the third section undertakes the aims of the study, and section four proposes research hypotheses. Section five reviews related literature on (im)politeness, paying more attention to implicational impoliteness triggers. The next section comprises data collection and methodology. While in section seven the discussion will include various tweets and analyses them qualitatively. The outcome of the process of analyses is represented in this section, that is the corpus is elaborated qualitatively, analysing examples of tweets to find out different implicational impoliteness triggers directed at Trump, applying Culpeper's (2011a) model of analysis. The research shows that all implicational impoliteness strategies were operational to the Twitter corpus of this research, except "absence of behaviour", which seemed to be more applicable to face-to-face communications. Finally, the results of the analysis are discussed, the findings are explained, and the percentage of the strategies occurred in the analysis section in order to prepare a comprehensive conclusion for the research in section eight.

This research is conducted to take into consideration sociolinguistic variables, such as occupation, since the study's participants are mostly journalists and politicians. Politicians who represent the voice of the people, and journalists, as members of the media tasked with reporting the news; similarly, the target of the offence—Trump—is also attributed to a social class.

2. Statement of the Problem

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There is a gap in knowledge to be filled here since impoliteness and offence towards Trump have received less attention to the extent that they are almost neglected in the literature. The focus of this research is specifically placed on implicational impoliteness strategies towards Trump on Twitter, as an important CMC platform, by politicians and journalists.

In addition, in the Iraqi scholarly circle of linguistics, literature on impoliteness has mostly ignored “implicational impoliteness” research, which is more recent than “impoliteness strategies”. Furthermore, most the scholarly work stresses the politeness strategies rather than the impoliteness ones. This problem has encouraged the current work to fill in the gap by looking at impoliteness from another point of view. It particularly pursues to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the implicational impoliteness strategies used by politicians and journalists against Donald Trump on Twitter?
2. Have politicians and journalists used implicational impoliteness strategies differently against Trump on Twitter?

3. Aims of the Study

In line with the research questions posed regarding impoliteness towards Trump by politicians and journalists on Twitter, this study tackles the following aims:

1. Revealing the implicational impoliteness strategies used by politicians and journalists against Trump on Twitter.
2. Finding out the differences between implicational impoliteness strategies used by politicians and journalists against Trump on Twitter.

4. Hypotheses

In terms of the previously mentioned aims, the following hypotheses are proposed regarding impoliteness towards Trump by politicians and journalists on Twitter:

1. The implicational impoliteness strategies are used by politicians and journalists against Trump on Twitter.

2. Some implicational impoliteness strategies against Trump, such as “internal convention-driven”, are used widely by politicians but not journalists on Twitter.

5. Literature Review: (Im)politeness

Socio-pragmatics is the main area for impoliteness studies but most noticeably communication studies and interactional sociolinguistics, because most work on politeness has been developed in this domain and it seems neutral that its clear opposite, impoliteness, should also be here, as impoliteness is oriented towards 'explaining communicative behavior'. Another factor is that impoliteness suits with the socio-pragmatics study agenda. (Culpeper, 2011a: 5).

According to Culpeper (2011a), impoliteness is a multidisciplinary area of research that can be studied in different disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and literary studies. Culpeper also thinks that impoliteness occurs during social interaction. On the other hand, according to Brown and Levinson's (1987 [1978]) principle, any behaviour that seeks to preserve the addressee's face is polite; by contrast, any behaviour that threatens the addressee's face is impolite, that is, an impolite act is the lack of politeness. In addition, impoliteness is characterised as a premeditated attack on the face of another (Archer, 2008; Bousfield, 2008; Limberg, 2009).

Contrary to Bousfield (2008), and Wieczorek (2013), Leech believes that "the best way to start theorizing about impoliteness is to build on a theory of politeness, which is clearly related phenomena and, in fact the opposite of politeness" (Leech, 2014, p. 219). Culpeper did exactly that in his first influential paper.

Impoliteness is said to be intentional if the speaker's purpose is to damage the hearer's feelings. According to Culpeper, certain linguistic elements are impolite both in and out of context. He refers to this as “experiential norms,” which he describes as the most important aspect in determining politeness and impoliteness, that is, where a behaviour is based on one principle, it is considered polite; when it is founded on another, it is considered impolite (Culpeper, 2008: 29).

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Impoliteness, according to Culpeper, is defined as "the use of strategies that are designed to have the opposite effect – that of social disruption. These strategies are “oriented towards attacking face, an emotionally sensitive concept of the self” (Culpeper, 1996: 350). This is the first definition, and it reflects Brown and Levinson's definition of politeness. Impoliteness, according to Culpeper, is directed at the addressee's face desires (whether positive or negative), rather than encouraging social unity. Later on, Culpeper et al. (2003: 1546) expands on this concept, rephrasing it as "communicative strategies designed to attack face, and thereby cause social conflict and disharmony". Following that, Culpeper's (2005: 38) concept was expanded further when he included the speaker's “intention” as an essential factor in conducting impoliteness, "impoliteness comes about when: (1) the speaker communicates face attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behavior as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2)."

In his later works, (for example, Culpeper 2010: 3233; 2011a: 23) he proposes a revised definition of impoliteness that takes into account negative behaviour, context, potential intentions, and perceptions of participants: “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 a 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 one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be. Such behaviour always has or is 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 behaviour is taken to be, including for example whether one understands a behaviour to be strongly intentional or not”. However, this definition is explained all over Culpeper’ (2011a) and remained the same.

For Locher & Bousfield (2008: 3) impoliteness "is face-aggravating in a particular context." Bousfield's (2008: 72) description of impoliteness is the intentional communication of gratuitous and conflictive verbal face-threatening acts that are delivered: (1) unmitigated, in contexts where mitigation is needed, and/or (2) with deliberate aggression, that is, with the face threat exacerbated, 'boosted,' or maximised in some way to heighten the face damage inflicted.

Furthermore, impoliteness is defined by Holmes et al., 2008 as "linguistic behaviour assessed by the hearer as threatening her or his face or social identity, and infringing the norms of appropriate behaviour that prevail in particular contexts and among particular interlocutors, whether intentionally or not". Besides, Tracy and Tracy (1998: 227) define impoliteness as: "communicative acts perceived by members of a social community (and often intended by speakers) to be purposefully offensive". Furthermore, Culpeper (2018: 2) refers to "linguistics impoliteness" as: "language that is used to cause offence or is perceived to cause offence". Finally, Culpeper and Tantucci (2021: 147) redefine im/politeness and adopt Culpeper (2011)'s general concept of im/politeness, with some modifications: "[i]m)politeness is an evaluative attitude, ranging on a positive-negative continuum, towards specific in-context-behaviours. Such behaviours are viewed positively – considered "polite" – when they are in accord with how one wants them to be, how one expects them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be. The converse is the case for behaviours considered 'impolite'". However, scholars did not come up with a unified definition of im/politeness.

5.1 Implicational Impoliteness (Non-conventionalised Impoliteness)

Some specific verbal and non-verbal behaviours can cause impolite interpretations in certain contexts even if such behaviours are not "pre-loaded for impoliteness" (Culpeper 2011a: 155). In other words, an interlocutor may choose non-conventionalised impoliteness in certain events. Culpeper (2011a: 155-6) specifies three kinds of implicational impoliteness which are identified by

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implication or inference as the following: form-driven, convention-driven, and context-driven. Culpeper's classification of implicational impoliteness is categorised into three categories, each of which differs in terms of how the implication is triggered:

- (1) Form-driven impoliteness: a verbal behavior's surface form or semantic content is marked.
- (2) Convention-driven impoliteness:
 - a. Internal: a verbal behaviour contains a mismatch between one part and another.
 - b. External: a verbal behaviour mismatches the context.
- (3) Context-driven:
 - a. Unmarked behaviour: an unmarked and un-conventionalised verbal behaviour mismatches the context.
 - b. Absence of behaviour: the absence of a (predictable) behaviour mismatches the context (Culpeper 2011a: 155-156)

Concerning marked there is an understanding that all impoliteness triggers are marked – they are odd to an extent. Culpeper (2011a) argues against such a sense in that the usage of marked here is “restricted to aspects of the surface form or semantic content”. I assume that the first group of implicational impoliteness, which is form-driven, is comparably easier to be perceived by people than the other two groups of implicational impoliteness, which are convention-driven and context-driven.

5.1.1 Form-driven Implicational Impoliteness

In this category of implicational impoliteness a verbal behavior's surface form or propositional content is marked, where a verbal behaviour here refers to any utterance that triggers the inference or implication for impoliteness. The group, hence, includes linguistic expressions that can be identified using common terms like “insinuation”, “innuendo”, “casting aspersions”, “digs”, “snide comments/ remarks” (Culpeper 2011a: 156). (Culpeper 2011a: 156-157) also states that these widespread phenomena have something in common that they all refer to implicit messages that are triggered by

formal surface or semantic aspects of a behavior and have negative implications for particular people.

Verbal behaviours which include form-driven impoliteness are “almost always addressed to the person for whom the consequences of the behaviour are negative” (Culpeper 2011a: 157). In the current research, the tweets that contain this type of impoliteness are addressed exclusively to Trump. However, there are situations where other parties might take offence along with Trump, such as his aides or his administration; but the main target of the damage is Trump.

In handling form-driven impoliteness, various kinds of occurrences will be discussed, including instances that depend on marked surface form or propositional content which are related to Grice’s (1975) Cooperative Principles, which Culpeper (2011a) thinks that they fit the kind of impoliteness under investigation, and will be proved to be as such in some tweets and contexts. Following that, another instance will be discussed that rely on mimicry and echoes.

The application of the Cooperative Principle would, of course, be dependent on the context. What constitutes a simple and straightforward expression, for example, will vary depending on the type of which it is a part (Culpeper 2011a: 158). The occurrences in the discussions demonstrate how Grice's Cooperative Principles can identify certain characteristics of impoliteness; each of them showing the application of one maxim.

Culpeper (2011a: 161) concludes that mimicry is a caricatured representation. Goffman (1974: 539) cited in (ibid) points out, that mimicry includes quoting others. However, if anyone quotes "too much," the quoter becomes "suspicious". Echoes are particularly good example of form-driven impoliteness, specifically used in tweets against Trump. When a tweeter uses echoes, he/she not only quotes the interlocutor's expression, but often imitates idiomatic phrases or prosodic features to convey his/her disapproval or rejection. Typographic features in tweets, such as double quotation

marks, reflect this caricatured repetition of someone's behaviour (for example, an utterance or a tweet).

5.1.2 Convention-driven Implicational Impoliteness

This category of implicational impoliteness includes instances where utterances breach some conventions; as a result, interlocutors may consider them as impolite. Culpeper (2011a: 166) sub-categorises convention driven impoliteness into two types: internal convention-driven, where parts of the same behaviour mismatch in a context; and external convention-driven where a specific behavior mismatches the context. In other words, a polite as well as an impolite message existed and merged into the same behaviour (i.e. utterance). Culpeper (2011a: 166) concludes that sarcasm, teasing, and humour, such as "[harsh/bitter] jokes/humour," are common words for this type of impoliteness.

5.1.2.1 Internal convention-driven

This type of convention-driven implicational impoliteness involves behaviours that contain a mismatch of verbal, oral and visual elements (Culpeper 2011a: 169). Culpeper focused on instances "involving prosodic mismatches, not least of all because prosody was clearly flagged up as an issue in my report data (visual aspects rarely were)" (Culpeper, *ibid*). In regard to this research of internal convention-driven, my focus will be on instances where there is mismatch between parts of the same verbal message. Since prosody is relatively difficult to express in tweets, this type of impoliteness does not contain much typographical elements.

In the political and judicial discourse there are some expressions which are polite in nature, but used in a context to imply impoliteness, such as "I hate to be rude", "no offence", and "with respect". These expressions have one thing in common: they all express a desire to minimise the negative effect of what is about to be said. They seem to be employing some kind of politeness strategy in this instance. More precisely, using the Maxim of Quantity, the term "I hate to be rude" means that the speaker would consciously avoid being rude. But if they really wanted to avoid

rudeness, they would not have stated the part of the message that conveys impoliteness (Culpeper 2011a: 175). In the investigation of tweets made by tweeter towards Trump, however, similar expressions were found that function likewise, like “we do not hate Trump”. Besides, some other expressions were also used predominately by politicians, such as “President Trump”, “the President”, and “The President of The Unites States”—terms related to deference, that orient our direction clearly to politeness other than impoliteness. Interestingly, study has shown (as cited in Culpeper 2011a: 177) that there are:

features related to deference, respect, depersonalization and distancing – features associated with negative politeness (B&L 1987) – conveyed by, for example, terms of deference such as ‘the Prime Minister’, ‘my Right Honourable Friend’, ‘Honourable (or Right Honourable) Gentleman/ Lady (or Friend)’. On the other hand, these are followed by such propositions as:

that the Prime Minister refuses to answer questions (accusation)
 that his failure to answer questions is ever more evident (contempt)

(Harri
 s
 2001:
 464)

Similarly, tweeters in my study also used some terms of deference, such as, “the President”, “President Trump”, and “the President of the United States”, which all expresses some mitigation of the negative effect of what is just about to be said, and seems to be used as a politeness strategy.

5.1.2.2 External convention-driven

The other type of convention-driven impoliteness is associated with behaviours that involve “a mismatch between expressed behaviour and the context” (Culpeper 2011a: 178). To recognise this type of impoliteness, the analyst or the interpreter does not have to go

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through the entire procedures of inferencing that characterise ironic interpretation; instead, can expedite the procedure by recognising the sarcastic context expected by the sarcastic impolite phenomenon. External convention-driven impoliteness can be constituted by multimodal mismatches that contain prosody which triggers a sarcastic or ironic implication. However, written discourse offers more examples of mismatches between parts of what is said and the context in which it is said, rather than multimodal mixes (Culpeper 2011a: 179).

5.1.3 Context-driven Implicational Impoliteness

The last group of implicational impoliteness is context-driven impoliteness. Unlike the last two groups of implicational impoliteness, the interpretation of an impolite belief in this group is mainly governed by the high expectations emerging from the context. This group is of two types: unmarked behaviour, and absence of behaviour.

5.1.3.1 Unmarked Behaviour Context-driven

This type of context-driven impoliteness contains behaviours which is linguistically considered unmarked. That is, the utterance seems to be a completely cooperative utterance on the surface. However, in certain context it could trigger an impolite interpretation. The assessment of impoliteness in this context is greatly influenced by whether the use of power is interpreted as an infringement of power, rather than whether one has power or not (Culpeper 2011a: 181). Patronising behaviours are as such.

5.1.3.2 Absence of Behaviour Context-driven

The final type of implicational impoliteness refers to situations where the context requires an expected, polite behaviour by interlocutors but then found to be concealing, such as retaining from thanking an interlocutor for a gift where it is needed (Culpeper 2011a: 182-183). The corresponding strategy for absence of behavior is Culpeper's (1996) "withhold politeness" superstrategy. Brown and Levinson (1987: 5) also mention the consequences of not showing politeness "politeness has to be communicated, and the

absence of communicated politeness may, *ceteris paribus*, be taken as the absence of a polite attitude.” In a similar way, Watts (2003: 169; see also 131; 182) indicates that a failure of politic behaviour, is regarded as immoral as behaviour that is purposefully intended to be impolite and damages the interlocutor. However, my data did not contain any occurrences of such kind of impoliteness. It could be because such expectations and withholding politeness are not observable in tweets in a CMC medium like Twitter. It is also concluded that absence of behaviour could be more related to face-to-face interactions. Finally and most likely, tweeters might have wanted to express their impolite beliefs toward Trump in a tweet, otherwise, absence of behaviour, for them, meant absence of tweets.

6. Data Collection and Methodology

The data of the current research is collected from an online platform, Twitter, as part of social networking service. A corpus of (18469) tokens which constitute 409 tweets is gathered to be analysed qualitatively. As a result, the data is naturally occurring data, that is, the researcher has no influence on the occurrence of the data, which means it happened in spite of researcher’s position (Potter, 1996). The data collection procedure was time consuming as all tweets were collected manually. It is also obvious that Trump’s impeachment trial occurred on December 18, 2019 and lasted for 1 month, 2 weeks and 4 days (48 days), who was then acquitted on February 5, 2020. Thus, the final date of impeachment represents the start of data collection from participants, and the data represents the same time period of impeachment (tweets of 48 days).

After finding a list of people on a *New York Times* (2019) article which includes 598 people and other entities Trump has attacked on Twitter since he had taken over the reins of power as the POTUS (Lee & Quealy 2019), the researcher opted for those tweeters with verified Twitter accounts who attacked Donald Trump during his impeachment trial.

7. Discussions and Analysis

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“Everybody knows who Donald Trump is — it’s time we show them who we are.”



(@JoeBiden, 2020)

In this section a detailed description is given of how tweets are used to cause offence towards Donald Trump by politicians and journalists on Twitter. This description is based on a corpus of 409 tweets as shown in Table 1 below. The analysis of the data is based on Culpeper’s (2011a) approach.

#	Occupation	No. of Tweeters	No. of Tweets
1	Politicians	33	207
2	Journalists	26	154
3	Attorneys	2	23
4	Actors/Actresses	1	9
5	Climate Activists	1	16
	Total no.	63	409

Table 1: List of analysed tweets per occupation

The corpus comprises 485 occurrences of impoliteness triggers, that is, linguistic strategies and formulae which can be classified as incorporating language use which is open to an interpretation as impolite. Figure 1 shows the distribution of impoliteness strategies as defined by Culpeper (2011a).

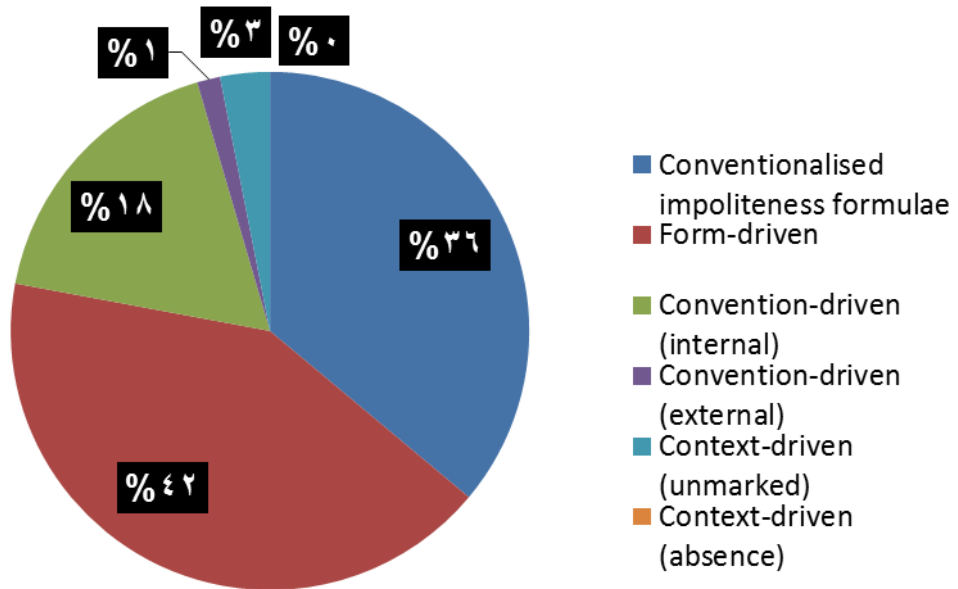


Figure 1: Distribution of impoliteness strategies in tweets

7.1 Implicational Impoliteness (Non-conventionalised Impoliteness)

As a whole, with 310 instances of usage, the main category, implicational impoliteness, predominantly constitutes 64% of overall impoliteness occurrences. In the following, occurrences of all categories of implicational impoliteness will be discussed bringing tweets as examples for the analyses and discussions.

7.1.1 Form-driven

Form-driven implicational impoliteness is the most frequently used strategy in my corpus with (203) occurrences which is equivalent to 42% of all impoliteness types.

The occurrences below show how Grice's Cooperative Principles can identify certain characteristics of impoliteness; each of them showing the application of one maxim. Consider example (1) below, for instance, which shows flouting the **Maxim of Quality**.

(1)

[situation: Trump downplays the injuries of 11 U.S members of armed forces in an Iranian attack]

“Donald Trump faked a medical condition to avoid serving. He’s never had to sacrifice a day in his life.

He will never understand the sacrifices our service members and their families make. We deserve a better Commander-in-Chief.”

In (1) above, which is made by a politician, the attacker’s utterance flouts the Maxim of Quality, at least from our perspective as readers of the tweet. Hence, we will say it is false to state that Trump has “never” had to sacrifice “a day” in his life, and it is false to state that he will “never” understand the sacrifices made by service members and their families. It’s worth noting the importance of using intensifiers in this case. The term “never” appears to be stressed twice in the tweet, and an accusation without evidence in the first part of the tweet by stating “Trump faked medical condition”, further reinforces the impolite belief towards Trump. We deduce the impolite interpretation by conducting a required inferential procedure, that is, Trump *MAY* have sacrificed, at least *ONE* day in his life, and he *WILL* at least understands these sacrifices in the *FUTURE*, who knows?!

If we look at the tweet from Trump’s viewpoint, or one of his follower’s point of view, who might read the tweet, they will definitely infer the impolite belief and possibly counterattack the offender, or at least defend themselves. Besides, they might count a list of “sacrifices” Trump has made during his lifetime and how he understands these sacrifices; and they might also “prove” that Trump has “never” counterfeited a medical paper as a trick to gain military deferment from enrolling in the armed forces.

As a researcher, to be more objective in this respect, my viewpoint in the above discussion is neither positive nor negative, that is,

whether Trump has sacrificed, or has faked the medical deferment. I am not here in the position to prove or deny such claims. However, there are many reports, some by Trump’s aides, seem to be proving the claim that Trump has never gone to Vietnam War as a serviceman. But what is significant for the analysis of the type of impoliteness under scrutiny is that in both cases a formal linguistic term triggers an impolite implication that has negative consequences to Trump, and what leads us to conclude an impolite interpretation other than polite is the use of intensification “never” twice, reinforced by an accusation “faked medical condition”.

Flouting the **Maxim of Quantity** is also possible. Observe the tweet in (2) below, made by Joe Biden, and see how the interpretation of impoliteness is inferred. Note also the use of another type of implicational impoliteness, unmarked behaviour context-driven (see sub-section 7.1.4) at the beginning of the tweet.

(2)

[situation: Trump gives the State of the Union Address on Feb 4, 2020 and will be acquitted by the Senate after one day, the presidential campaign has already started. The tweet is made at the same date of Trump’s speech]

“Everybody knows who Donald Trump is — it’s time we show them who we are. We choose:

Hope over fear.

Science over fiction.

Unity over division.

Compassion over cruelty.

Truth over lies.”

The tweeter in (2) above flouts the Maxim of Quantity, more particularly the sub-maxim of providing more detail than appears to be necessary about the choices he has listed in the second part of the tweet. Joe Biden begins his tweet with an utterance that is a type of implicational impoliteness called unmarked context-driven. The utterance “Everybody knows who Donald Trump is—”, is used to describe Trump negatively which, at the first glance, draws an

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attention that there is more coming in regard to offending Trump; and it also draws an impolite belief that *everyone knows Trump to be a negative person*. The function of the *em dash* here is to emphasize the conclusion of the utterance¹. Concerning flouting the Maxim of Quantity, the attacker is more informative than is required (e.g. Hope over fear, Science over fiction, etc.). Considering the context, the attacker, as well as the reader, knows well enough that the negative terms (i.e. the second part) of each of these pairs are referred exclusively to Trump, and that Trump will definitely be furious being referred to as such. Consequently, the impolite interpretation that Trump is known by these negative terms can be undertaken. In other words, (fear, fiction, division, cruelty, and lie) all refer to Trump. If the tweeter did not want to offend Trump, he would not have referred negative terms to him, and could have possibly stated an utterance like *we choose hope, science, unity, compassion, and truth*, without stating the negative terms and thus it was open to an interpretation as polite. But in this case the interpretation reads: *everybody knows Donald Trump who has chosen fear, fiction, division, cruelty, and lies*.

Flouting the **Maxim of Manner** can also lead to conclude the impolite belief in tweets, such (3) below by CNN anchor Christopher C. Cuomo.

(3)

[situation: Trump states in a tweet before the impeachment trial continues at the Senate, that Obama before him withheld aid from many countries too]

“How about [K]ennedy and other [GOP] senators saying they never heard what was argued about what [T]rump knew and did. We have bee[n] reporting it out for months. Silos are toxic. We should not control outcomes, but we must insist on fair process. Trump lied to you ab[ou]t [P]arnas. Why?”

¹ See <https://www.thepunctuationguide.com/em-dash.html> for details.

The tweeter flouts the Maxim of Manner, particularly the sub-maxims of *be brief*, and *avoid ambiguity/obscurity*. It seems that the tweeter was rushing to write quickly. This is evidenced by many mistakes in his tweet, such as “kennedy”, “trump”, “parnas” etc., where capital letter is required for personal nouns. But what marks the utterance as impolite is the keyword “Trump lied”, which has negative implication towards Trump, and what guides us to conclude it as a form-driven implicational impoliteness is its inconspicuousness. First and second parts of the tweet include obscure sentences, and an attack on Republican members. Then, the tweeter jumps to another subject which is also ambiguous, and terminates his tweet with a question after an attack on Trump. In addition to that, the tweeter exploits the Maxim of Manner by being not brief.

A final example involving Grice’s **Maxim of Relation** to draw an impolite interpretation in form-driven impoliteness towards Trump, as shown in the explanation of (4) below by a comedian Kathy Griffin, tweeted in defense to another comedian George Lopez.

(4)

[Situation: In response to a post mistakenly claiming that a country had offered a \$80 million bounty on Trump's head, the comedian George Lopez, jokingly writes, "We'll do it for half", causing outrage and a trending hashtag #ArrestGeorgeLopez against him on Twitter]

“Calm down trump cult! @georgelopez is a professional comedian and...OH FUCK OFF. THIS JOKE IS HILARIOUS & you all know it.
#impotus #trumpfail #comedy”

The implication of example (4) is based in part on assumptions about the message's intended audience. If we look at the tweet from Trump's perspective, he might conclude that though the addressee is his supporters, referred to as “cult!”, the target is him, which is confirmed by the fact that it includes a hashtag which Trump finds offensive “#trumpfail”. To further illustrate the goal, the attacker

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used another hashtag #impotus, meaning *impeached president*. The phrasal verb "calm down" is used as a command, condescending Trump's supporters "Trump cult!" who seem to be upset, and a further insult by a conventionalised impoliteness formula "FUCK OFF"; but these all appear to have no direct relevance to Trump and is not stated exclusively to Trump. Thus, it violates the Maxim of Relationship. Thus, Trump would imply that referring to his supporters as "trump cult," is meant to offend him, even though he is not the intended addressee.

After applying all Maxims of Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principles, in the following, mimicry and echoes as distinct cases of form-driven impoliteness will be discussed.

The example in (5) below made by Jim Acosta will illustrate the concept.

(5)

[situation: In one event Trump gives two contradictory statements about the climate in Davos, one positively in a press conference, the other negatively during his speech in the summit, attacking the climate campaigners]

"Trump also told reporters he's a "big believer in the environment." But during his speech in Davos Trump attacked climate activists as "perennial prophets of doom.""

Trump's utterances "big believer in the environment" and "perennial prophets of doom" were both made on the same day in a separate but related context. In a single tweet, Jim Acosta restates and repeats these two statements. As can be seen, the journalist uses quotation marks to make his statements appear to be quotes. Not only that, but embedding these two behaviors (utterances) in such a way as to convey contradiction, implying to the reader that *Trump is a liar*, and that *lie* is an implicit identity trait of Trump. Given the context, Acosta has embedded the tweet under investigation into a previous tweet where he accuses Trump that "He [Trump] is really trying to steer clear [of not answering question about

impeachment]", reinforcing the assumption that he intends to offend Trump. The echoer's negative attitude toward the echoed is hence expressed by echoes. In other words, the journalist implies that Trump is lying to people about his actions, and that this lying has become a part of Trump's personality. In addition, he wants also people to believe that Trump is a liar. It is also noted that Jim Acosta has used this strategy of mimicry and echo in his other tweets, embedding parts of Trump's utterance, such as imitating Trump saying "Some of those people are stone cold killers"; and in other instances insulting Trump to be a liar.

The preceding discussion has shown that journalists and politicians use form-driven impoliteness to convey a range of impolite attitudes against Trump. A possible explanation for this widespread usage on Twitter is that, since the utterance's surface form and propositional content are clearly marked, few contextual features are required to comprehend the implied impoliteness of the utterance. As a result, some tweeters realise that this type of strategy is easier for their followers to understand than those that require a deeper insight of social conventions. This is the kind of impoliteness that will be explored in the following sub-section.

7.1.2 Internal Convention-driven

Internal convention-driven impoliteness occurred 85 times in my data, with the most occurrences that contain verbal formula mismatches, more specifically, mismatches that one part of the message contains a polite expression "President Trump" which counts 52 times. The rest of the occurrences were cases that contain expressions such as "the President" (23) times, "the President of the United States" (2) times, and other cases containing a mismatch between parts of the tweet, including sarcastic behaviour.

Consider (6) below where Adam Schiff uses the same expression "President Trump" as well as another one which is more formal. Note how internal convention-driven impoliteness constituted three times by verbal formula mismatches in one tweet.

(6)

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[situation: The House of Representatives voted to impeach Trump in the impeachment trial]

“Tonight, the House voted to impeach the President of the United States.”

We all feel the weight of history in this moment, but President Trump's grave misconduct left us no choice but to impeach.

Now it is incumbent on the Senate to conduct a fair trial. No one is above the law.”

The tweet consists of three ideas characterised by greater line spacing between them, which seems the tweeter found to be essential, as it can enhance readability.² In the first, the tweeter informs the reader to important news about the president. In the second, he expresses his emotions of grief and sorrow, and in the third and concluding utterance, he asserts for a fair trial.

Exploring deeper into the tweet, we find that Adam Schiff commences with an utterance that contains both a polite expression and an impolite one. The polite expression which represents a formal term of deference is referring to Trump as “the President of the United States”. This is preceded by an impolite speech “the House voted to impeach” which encompasses the core of the issue of accusing Trump—who has denied ever since the impeachment trial and who has already stated that he is the innocent victim of a “witch hunt”, and “a cruel hoax”. Thus, it is implied that, it is enough to mention the word “impeachment” to triggers an impolite belief to Trump. Consequently, we have two mismatches of behaviours, thus, the first internal convention-driven impoliteness is guaranteed.

In the second part of the tweet, Adam Schiff seems to be concerned as he expresses his sorrow using an idiom which means: *our*

² See Bringhurst (2012).

collective historical experiences can be so burdensome that limits our progress which can weaken our relationships and make it difficult to make decisions. Hence, the idiom “We all feel the weight of history...” represents some mitigation from the negative consequences of what is about to be said “President Trump's grave misconduct”, which is in itself an insult of conventionalised impoliteness formula. Again, there is another mismatch which is formed by a polite behaviour and an impolite, separated by “but”. This is the second occurrence of internal convention-driven strategy.

The final part of the tweet also contains a mismatch. The politician terminates the tweet which comprises two opposite behaviours: the first segment “Now it is incumbent on the Senate to conduct a fair trial” is expressed in a polite manner, as long as it is “incumbent”, and “the Senate” will “conduct a fair trial”—conventionally everyone want a fair trial. On the other hand, the second segment “No one is above the law” comprises an impoliteness towards Trump: In English, the pronoun no one is used to mean no person or not a single person, but in this context it is implied to refer exclusively to Trump, since there is no one else under investigation other than Trump and no one else will be impeached. As a result, three internal convention-driven implicational impoliteness strategies are used by the tweeter in merely one Twitter post.

See (7) where an expression similar to “I hate to be rude” is used by a politician.

(7)

[situation: Trump’s impeachment trial]

“Where’s the proof Trump is innocent of the charges? We do not hate Trump, but we love our country and will continue to hold him accountable.”

In this tweet the expression “We do not hate Trump” similar to “I hate to be rude” is used as a polite strategy to minimise harm towards Trump. The expression seems to mitigate the impolite belief that could be implied from what has been said before

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“Where’s the proof Trump is innocent of the charges?” But this unpalatable question *per se* is a conventionalised impoliteness formula, which presupposes that Trump is not innocent (or criminal), thus represents an impolite part of the utterance. In addition to that, the use of “but” after the polite expression, implies that what follows is rude or harmful “[we] will continue to hold him [Trump] accountable”. Consequently, internal convention-driven impoliteness is guaranteed to offend Trump by an imbalance of two contradictory behaviours, that is, an impolite message at the beginning and at termination, as well as a polite one at the middle of the tweet.

7.1.3 External Convention-driven

The data showed merely 7 occurrences of this type of impoliteness. In most cases there were at least a mismatch between part of the tweet and the context in which it is used, where a polite interpretation was not possible for a marked behaviour in a context. Note example (8) below where an actress, presumably a well-known comedian³ uses sarcasm that lead to constitute an external convention-driven impoliteness strategy against Trump.

(8)

[situation: Kathy Griffin is shown on a promo of her docu-comedy film where she is holding a mask that looks like Trump's severed head. She embeds the promo into her tweet]

“Hey #Trump, I know you’re super busy getting #Impeached, but I think you’ll love this multi-award winning feature film. OK, some of it is about how I prevailed over you. People really seem to like that angle. They laugh & get all inspired & stuff. You might learn something.”

The comedian begins her tweet with an exclamation to attract Trump’s attention “hey Trump” that seems to be in a way that is not

³ Kathy Griffin’s handle, @kathygriffin has 2.1M followers on Twitter

polite⁴. This informal term is used as a way of greeting mostly between friends sometimes instead of *hi*, *hello*, but they do not seem to be and it is implausible one attracts the attention of a president as such. Then she continues with a superficially polite statement filled with a phony apology “I know you’re super busy...” Traditionally, it is improbable to tell a president like Trump, even by his close aides of being *super busy*, especially mentioning a phrase “#impeached”, not only because of the hashtag, but Trump basically finds the whole impeachment process insulting and has already considered it a “hoax”, and a “witch hunt”. Thus, the statement marks the utterance as a sarcastic or ironic behaviour. In this context it is highly unlikely that the comedian is making a genuine apology. As a result, the behaviour mismatches the context in which it is said, and eventually an external convention-driven impoliteness is achieved.

Even if we consider what was stated by the comedian so far as genuine politeness, it contrasts with the next part of the utterance by a coordinating conjunction *but*, that triggers the implicature that there is a contrast between its two halves. Hence, the second part “I think you’ll love this multi-award winning feature film” is also regarded a pseudo polite behaviour. Of course, Trump will not love a film which is produced exclusively to attack him by a comedian. Here also does exist another mismatch between the sarcastic behaviour of the utterance and the context. This is the second external convention-driven strategy.

The comedian furthers her insults towards Trump by moving on to an imaginary phase of conversation saying “OK”, as if Trump has asked *What the film is about?* She replies sarcastically “some of it is about how I prevailed over you” which is also impolite and marked. What enforces an interpretation of sarcastic behaviour that triggers impoliteness is the next parts of the utterance “[p]eople really seem to like that angle [how I prevailed over you]” and “[t]hey laugh &

⁴ See Cambridge dictionary online
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/hey>

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get all inspired...” The comedian then terminates the interaction attacking Trump’s competence/intelligence “You might learn something” accompanied by a sarcastic behaviour.

7.1.4 Unmarked Behaviour

The corpus contains 15 occurrences of unmarked behaviour, such as (9) below made by a presidential candidate, Mike Bloomberg.

(9)

[situation: Mike Bloomberg embeds a video in his tweet showing Trump talking about change, synchronically previewing synopsis of some kind of destructive change, presumable made by Trump]

“Donald Trump said he was going to bring change to this country.

He did.”

The utterance seems to be a completely cooperative utterance on the surface in Gricean sense. It does not contain neither marked utterances, nor mismatch of behaviours that may trigger an impolite belief. In other words, this utterance could be said and perceived as polite in most cases. For example, one of Trump’s aide, or a White House spokesperson could make a statement as such or reply to a question as such, emphasizing that Trump has done what he has promised to bring change to their country. They may list some of Trump’s achievements regarding change in a positive way. The statement is perceived as polite by audience, even by Trump. However, the tweet made by Mike Bloomberg in this particular context is impolite. He is a presidential candidate and one of Trump’s opponents. It is highly unlikely that he compliments or praises Trump while conducting presidential campaign and the evidence is previewing Trump as presumably doing destructive change, rather than positive. Thus, the tweet is considered an unmarked behaviour.

8. Conclusions

Various conclusions can be drawn based on the results in the analysis section. In general, the present conclusions are related to the aims of the study and hypotheses. Thus, the following is a list of conclusions:

1. All implicational impoliteness strategies were used by both politicians and journalists against Trump on Twitter., except “absence of behaviour”. This finding lends credence to the hypothesis suggested in (1), with exceptions recognized. It also was found that “implicational impoliteness strategies” were common in politicians’ tweets with 163 (%53) occurrences, and 112 (%36) times by journalists out of 310 occurrences in total.
2. Some implicational impoliteness strategies against Trump on Twitter are used widely by politicians, but not journalists, such as “internal convention-driven” with 67 (%79) occurrences of usage by politicians and merely 14 (%16) by journalists. This finding provides support to hypothesis number (2).

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استراتيجيات الوقاحة المستنبطة ضمناً التي يستخدمها المغردون ضد ترامب

سلار قاسم رشيد *

أشرف رياض عبدالله **

المستخلص

يوفر الاتصال بوساطة الحاسوب (CMC) فرصة للبحث في الوقاحة والأفعال التي تهدد الوجه (FTAs). مقارنة بأنماط الاتصال الأخرى، وتعدُّ CMC أكثر عدوانية من الاتصال وجهاً لوجه (FtF) (71: 2012 Hardaker)، ويثبت موقع تويتر أنَّه وسيلة بحث قيِّمة في عدد من المجالات، بما في ذلك الوقاحة السياسيَّة، وفقاً لهذا البحث كان دونالد ج.ترامب، الرئيس الخامس والأربعون للولايات المتحدة (POTUS)، هدفاً لوقاحة السياسيين والصحفيين على تويتر، خلال أول جلسة محاكمته، والبحث الحالي مميِّز؛ لأنَّه يحقق في السمات غير المهذبة للصحفيين والسياسيين تجاه ترامب، التي لم تتم دراستها من قبل؛ فضلاً عن إهمال البحث غير الأدبي الضمني؛ فقد تم تجاهله إلى حد كبير في المجال الأكاديمي العراقي، ويواصل معظم الباحثين استعمال طريقة كولبير (1996؛ 2005)، التي تركِّز على الاستراتيجيات بدلاً من المحفزات والصيغ.

وتفحص الدراسة في المقام الأوَّل دوافع عدم الأدب الضمني الموجهة ضد ترامب على تويتر في عملية المساءلة، وذلك باستعمال مجموعة من 18469 كلمة تشكل 409 تغريدة معظمها من الصحفيين والسياسيين، ويستعمل البحث طريقة كولبير (2011 أ) لتحليل التغريدات نوعياً، والهدف من الدراسة هو الإجابة عن أسئلة البحث حول أكثر المحفزات والاستراتيجيات الضمنية شيوعاً والمستعملة ضد شخص يتمتع بالسلطة مثل رئيس الولايات المتَّحدة، وتتوافق النتائج مع طريقة Culpeper، التي توصلنا إلى استنتاجاتها بنجاح فيما يتعلَّق بالأسئلة المطروحة والبيانات المفترضة .

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوقاحة، التداولية، علم اللغة الاجتماعي، تويتر

* طالب ماجستير/قسم اللغة الإنكليزية/كلية الآداب/جامعة الموصل.

** مدرس/قسم اللغة الإنكليزية/كلية الآداب/جامعة الموصل.