

Lucía Fernández Amaya, María de la O Hernández López, Reyes Gómez Morón, Manuel Padilla Cruz, Manuel Mejías Borrero and Mariana Relinque Barranca, eds. 2012. *New Perspectives on (Im)Politeness and Interpersonal Communication*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars. i-vii + 278. ISBN: (10): 1-4438-4171-4, ISBN: (13): 978-1-4438-4171-9.

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The title of this volume promises the reader “New Perspectives on (Im)Politeness and Interpersonal Communication.” Indeed, in the introduction it is clear that the editors favour the relatively recent “discursive approach” initiated by Eelen (2001) and championed by, among others, Locher and Watts (2005), Watts (2005) and Mills (2011). However, only three chapters could be said to implement either a postmodern perspective (chapter one) or more recent methods of analysing (im)politeness (chapters three and eleven). The rest either take a traditional approach (Lakoff 1973; Leech 1983; Brown and Levinson 1987) or make no overt mention of the theoretical framework adopted.

The volume is divided into four parts: Part one, “State of the Art of (Im)politeness Studies,” is made up of one chapter; part two, “(Im)politeness in the Media,” comprises chapters two to four; part three, “Impoliteness, Speech Acts and Language Teaching,” chapters five to seven; and part four, “In Other Specific Contexts,” chapters eight to eleven.

Chapter one, by Miriam Locher, is a useful overview of research into politeness, from foundational studies to the author’s own “relational work” approach. It finishes with a series of “points of criticism and questions” on various topics in politeness studies (51) and the identification of avenues still to be explored in this field.

With regard to Locher’s own approach, her rationale for coining the term “relational work” instead of “facework” is that the latter is often associated with Brown and Levinson’s theories (1987) on politeness and that since then facework has “been reduced to referring to mitigating behaviour only,” whereas relational work “refers to the entire gamut of interpersonal effects” (45). However, this ignores the fact that many associate facework just as strongly with Goffman (1967) and that there are researchers who, like Penman (1990), employ the term to cover protective, threatening or even aggressive facework.

Locher sees both identity and face as being constructed during interaction (“*in situ*”) rather than being pre-constituted (46). This radical interactional approach appears to imply, counter-intuitively, that people’s identity can change depending on the context. Furthermore, Locher’s concepts of face and identity are both dynamic and negotiated during interaction, making it difficult to see where one ends and the other begins.

Chapter two opens with an analysis of the comments on a YouTube video that centre on an incident in which congressman Joe Wilson shouted “You lie” at Obama during the latter’s speech at a joint session of Congress. The author, Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, hypothesises that Wilson’s behaviour will be deemed inappropriate by the YouTubers who comment on it. Given the split in American society between right and left, this assumption seems somewhat naïve and, unsurprisingly, turns out to be unfounded. She further relates impoliteness with “uncontrollable emotions and lack of restraint” (76) but the examples she provides do not offer convincing evidence of this (77).

Garcés-Conejos Blitvich puts forward the idea that a genre approach is better suited to the analysis of (im)politeness than that offered by the communities of practice (CofP) approach because members of a CofP “tend to use multiple genres when communicating” (69). She goes on to say that each genre “may call for different types of interaction generally associated with certain sets of norms” and that “those generic norms are the ones the analyst needs to assess vis-à-vis assessments of im / politeness.” However, norms of any type do not exist in a vacuum and depend on actual participants to be instantiated. In other words, genre norms alone are not enough to assess (im) politeness in interaction; an approach that takes the actual participants into account, like CofP, is also needed.

It is clear that genre has a place in many analyses but, as one can see in some of the chapters in this volume, a specific genre-based approach is not needed—a short description of the genre under study is normally enough. Once the theoretical preliminaries are over, what we are offered in this chapter is actually a well-executed but standard discourse-analytical study.

In chapter three, Mancera Rueda analyses impoliteness in the comments on articles in digital versions of Spanish newspapers. Her study shows that FTAs are especially common in the comment sections of conservative publications. While the corpus covers four years, only fifty comments from each publication are included. The selection seems to have depended on the content of the comments and their length (108) but we are not told how it was carried out. Citing Fuentes Rodríguez and Alcaide Lara (2008), it is stated that the image of the author of derogatory remarks suffers greater damage (than the addressee) “because through his or her words he or she is seen as capable of descending into a direct confrontation using the language of the gutter.” Personally, I find it difficult to see how the image of the author or the recipient of an insult could be damaged when they are protected by anonymity.

In the next chapter, Laura Mariottini examines (im)politeness in the translation of four Almadóvar films into Italian. Unfortunately, there are several cases in which poor proof reading is evident—“labial sync” (112) instead of “lip sync” being just one. With regard to content, the section on swear words (128-31), in which pragmatic equivalence is sidelined completely, clearly points to the fact that the article, although interesting as an analysis of translation equivalents in Spanish and Italian, hardly scratches the surface of (im)politeness in the dubbing of films. Another problem is that the analysis of *figlia mia*

for *hija mía*, for instance, seems to be based on intuition, as empirical data is not used to back up the author's claims, nor are other authors cited. This also applies to the author's assertion that *dai* should be used when translating a Spanish vocative. Her analysis would be more credible if it was based on contrastive linguistic evidence of the type found in House (1998).

Chapter five contains Jeremy King's study of optional internal and external request modifications as politeness strategies in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Spanish. He analyses two theatrical genres: *pasos* and *comedias* and a collection of "familiar letters." Given the obvious unavailability of oral texts, these genres were deemed to be the closest to oral language available. I found King's conclusion that familial letters are not characteristic of spoken discourse (149) unsurprising as it is written-to-be-read discourse unlike the theatrical corpora. The author implements Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) methodology to analyse his corpora, which he compares with findings from Modern spoken Spanish. His results show that Early Modern Spanish and Modern Spanish "are remarkably similar" with regard to internal and external request modifications, which is especially interesting given that several studies have shown that this is not true regarding the requests themselves (151).

In chapter six, Maíz Arévalo offers some interesting results in her study of responses to compliments. Nonetheless, as in other chapters in this volume, more details about prosodic information and how the corpus was gathered would have been enlightening. The author's description of the Spanish corpus reads thus: "a corpus of fifty Peninsular Spanish compliments—together with their responses—has been collected as field-work notes" (158). We are not told where or when, nor are we given details about the relationship between the interactants. One her most interesting findings is that Spanish males evade accepting compliments while females tend to overtly reject them (163-65). This contrasts with their English counterparts in which rates of acceptance, rejection, and evasion of compliments are equal for the genders. The results for the effect of the complimenter's gender on the complimentee's response are also worth noting.

Barón Parés, in chapter seven, offers some interesting findings on politeness in an EFL context. One is the overuse of "please" at early stages (189), while another provides evidence that pragmatic competence improves without overt pragmatic instruction in later levels when the students have a greater command of the foreign language (190). She also finds that lack of proficiency in the L2 among children can also lead them to "produce very impolite pragmatic sequences" (191). Her most important discovery is that pragmatic development is linked to a great extent not only to grammatical competence in the L2 but also to previous knowledge of L1 pragmatics.

The main thesis of chapter eight, which opens part four of this volume, is Mugford Fowler's contention that Anglicisms in phatic exchanges in Mexican Spanish are used pragmalinguistically as boosters or face threateners (198). He defines phatic language following Malinowski (1923, 315) as words that fulfil a "social function" where "the actual words do not matter" (198). However, in the very next sentence he says that "phatic

anglicisms” fulfill “very specific pragmatic solidary functions” (204). The fact that Anglicisms are selected by speakers instead of native words seems like a deliberate stylistic choice so one is left wondering exactly what is meant by the term “phatic.”

The actual examples of Anglicisms that are collected, such as “loser” and “hello” (205-06) and the use of the Spanish prefix “re-” with English words—“re-happy”—are interesting in their own right. The corpus was gathered using “observers,” who collected “opportunity samples.” Rather than recording the overheard dialogues, they reconstructed them and committed them to writing. This produced a corpus of 238 phatic utterances and 47 impolite samples. This method has its drawbacks, as many instances of Anglicisms were omitted because they “were too numerous to be written down using this data collection technique” (205) and no prosodic information was collected to help disambiguate between the possible meanings of the utterances.

Chapter nine, by Ruth Breeze, is made up of a detailed and insightful analysis of the mitigation of FTAs within the context of arbitration procedures at the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes. Questioning an arbitral decision constitutes a serious challenge to the authority of the other members of the tribunal and is also a risk to the challenger—the perfect scenario for a study on (im)politeness. Breeze, who uses Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theories in her qualitative and quantitative study of five cases, finds that the vast majority of disagreements are mitigated in several ways. An interesting finding is the use of feigned surprise as an off-record strategy. She supplies several excellent examples that illustrate the scope and inventiveness of politeness strategies (228) and also includes instances of mitigation that may be constrained by the rules of legal rhetoric such as substituting affirmative statements with conditionals (230).

In chapter ten, Mejías Borrero focuses on the use of “like” as a pragmatic marker in American English. He includes in his corpus the comedy series *Seinfeld* and three American films of the “chick-flick” genre. The rest of the corpus is made up of the author’s own recordings during lunch breaks and casual conversations with friends and classmates, interaction with the author’s own students in class and conversations heard on buses or on the metro. The corpus is perhaps too heterogeneous as it includes written-to-be-spoken discourse as well as naturally occurring speech. Moreover, we are not given information on the recorded informants’ ages, gender or social class. With regard to the substance of the article some of the instances of “like” which are classified as mitigators could just as easily be seen as fillers: “Did you spend more than, *like*, 30 dollars for them?” Especially problematic are cases where “like” is used to talk about third persons: “Wasn’t she dressing *like*, very casual?” The author puts forward that this is to “compensate the hearer’s loss of face” (246), but if said third person or persons cannot hear the conversation, it is difficult to see why any compensation is needed. Finally, in a paper focusing on “like” in speech, one would expect prosodic evidence.

In the eleventh and final chapter, Romero Trillo and Lenn analyse discourse markers in English, Spanish and also the acquisition of English discourse markers by non-native

Spanish speakers—an ambitious aim for just one article. The chapter starts off with a definition of discourse markers (DMs) that could define almost any part of speech: “elements that fill the discursual and cognitive slots that spoken language needs in order to weave the net of interaction” (259). Because of this, the subsequent analysis of DMs is disappointing and unconvincing. I found this chapter rather difficult to read as it is taken for granted that the reader will understand certain concepts such as “biunivocal addressor-message relationship” (261), a “principled process” or a “cognitive standardised process” (260). Finally, I find it surprising that only four of the sixteen cited works are not (co-) written by one of the authors of this paper and that none of the most influential papers on DMs are mentioned at all.

This volume includes some interesting contributions but due to their heterogeneity—both in quality and subject matter—most readers would probably only find one or two of interest. A more rigorous selection of articles would have made this publication a more rewarding experience for those who are eager to encounter research that really makes a difference in what is a fascinating field.

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Received 8 January 2013

Accepted 13 January 2014

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