

ATLANTIS

Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies

45.2 (December 2023): 287-301

e-ISSN 1989-6840

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.28914/Atlantis-2023-45.2.14>

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Politeness Theorizing and Operationalization in Two Less-Examined Settings: Professional Contexts and Internet-Mediated Interactions A Critical Review of

Dawn Archer, Karen Grainger and Piotr Jagodziński, eds. 2020. *Politeness in Professional Contexts*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. vi+334 pp. ISBN: 9789027207425

Chaoqun Xie, ed. 2020. *(Im)politeness and Moral Order in Online Interactions*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. v+185 pp. ISBN: 9789027205629

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Politeness (Brown and Levinson 1987), specifically *face work* (Goffman 1967) or *relational work* (Locher and Watts 2005) in general, plays an essential part in almost all trades and professions as well as all aspects of social life. While being attached great importance, politeness has not been much examined in interactions in two essential contexts: a) professional contexts; and b) Internet-mediated interactions. Intellectual inquiries into (im)politeness in these settings can greatly advance (im)politeness studies in terms of both theorizing and operationalization. However, few works have focused on the specific applications of politeness theory in professional settings (e.g., Jamet and Jobert 2013; Terkourafi 2015). In addition, such publications have been designed to add knowledge and insights derived from facework and (im)politeness studies, rather than to change the way professional interactions are perceived and conceptualized by those engaging in them (Jagodziński and Archer 2018). To fill this gap, the volume *Politeness in Professional Contexts* by Archer et al. (2020) seeks not merely to theorize about, but also to look at practical examples concerning the notions of (im)politeness and face work in authentic professional contexts. It is edited by leading scholars in the fields

of (im)politeness Dawn Archer, Karen Grainger and Piotr Jagodziński, and published by John Benjamins. The second book under review here, an initiative to enrich the under-investigated field of Internet-mediated (im)politeness, is *(Im)politeness and Moral Order in Online Interactions*, edited by Chaoqun Xie (2020), the founding editor of the journal *Internet Pragmatics*, and published by John Benjamins. This volume is a timely response to the *moral turn* in intellectual inquiries into (im)politeness. In the context of Internet pragmatics becoming increasingly important, it probes into the social morality underpinning the (im)politeness phenomenon in digitally-mediated communication, considerably adding to the extant literature. These two volumes greatly extend (im)politeness studies, not only by uncovering the intricate interplay between morality, (im)politeness and professional and web-based communication, but also by opening the way to future avenues of investigation.

A dominant theme informing the whole volume of Archer et al. (2020), and addressed in each chapter to varying degrees, is that a methodological barrier can be changed into a convincing argument when we support and develop a dialogue between linguist researchers and institutional professionals, as claimed by the editors in the introductory chapter. There is often a “methodological hurdle” (Archer et al. 2020, 6) that stands in the way of the researchers. In other words, their unique status as institutional agents may frequently catch them in a dilemma: the struggle to comply with institutional guidelines while proactively engaging in negotiating linguistic and communicative meanings. It is “an interactional cul-de-sac” (Archer et al. 2020, 195). However, the affordances provided by a researcher’s position as a member of a specific institution can effectively offset the methodological drawbacks, especially considering that their unique institutional status permits them to participate in institutional practice in an otherwise restricted site of investigation (Harrington 2018). Put another way, the researcher’s access to or even engagement in the types of institutional settings examined can facilitate theorizing about perceived conflicts and (im)politeness from the perspectives of scholars and lay people, therefore effectively informing (im)politeness research. A good case in point is that of Piotr Jagodzinski, the author of chapter eight. As a call center worker, he is familiar with the norms of the communities he investigated and this demonstrates that we can distinguish the identity of the researcher from that of a community practice participant without undermining the quality and objectivity of the analysis. As such, this volume makes a significant methodological contribution to politeness research.

Two aspects are of particular note in Archer et al. (2020). Firstly, it addresses politeness in the under-researched or even overlooked business, medical, legal and security contexts, which are each frequently characterized by many behaviors unique to these settings. Such behaviors specific to these institutional interactions can be grouped into three categories: a) polite behaviors; b) impolite behaviors; and c) behaviors caught between or outside polite and impolite behaviors. The results of research on politeness based on this categorization can ensure the smooth operation of communications

and relationships in institutions. Secondly, in the exploration of these three types of behaviors in various interactional contexts in the thirteen chapters comprising this edited collection, a broad but theoretically-supported politeness definition is adopted and utilized to expound, analyze and inform institutional interactions.

Archer et al. (2020) comprises thirteen chapters. Chapter one is an introduction and the remaining twelve chapters are divided into three parts, each dealing with three to five original studies on politeness in a given type of professional context, namely medical settings (chapters two to five), business and organizational settings (chapters six to ten) and legal and security settings (chapters eleven to thirteen).

The introduction (chapter one) is itself divided into five sections. Section one gives a brief overview of politeness in medical settings by focusing on how face work is relevant to interactions in healthcare contexts (chapters two to five). Section two briefly introduces chapters six to ten, which explore how face work is pertinent to politeness in business and organizational contexts. Chapters six and seven explain and analyze their datasets within the framework of rapport management as proposed by Spencer-Oatey (2002; 2005; 2008), with an emphasis on the dynamics, negotiation and context-specificity of (im)politeness evaluations as well as rapport management in professional settings. The overriding theme of chapter eight is that the linguistic performances of call center practitioners could be positioned at the intersection of the specific (im) politeness interpretations of lay people and researchers on the one hand and be generally understood from the perspective of the essence of verbal communication on the other. The ninth chapter revolves around how to apply directives to emails in an institutional setting that calls for multilingual practices. The last chapter briefly discussed in section 2 (chapter ten) concerns how to establish and maintain rapport in cross-cultural business through emails written by a trader. The three chapters dealt with in section 3 (chapters eleven to thirteen) investigate politeness in legal and security settings. Since the face work implications of the interactional techniques adopted by judges is an understudied subject (Archer and Jagodziński 2015), this section, designed to fill the gap, sheds new light on how to examine (im)politeness and face work strategies in the courtroom specifically and in politeness research more generally. In section 4, the editors introduce the concepts of politeness, face work and relational work that are adopted throughout the volume. Section 5 briefly introduces three points that are pertinent to the subsequent chapters: a) how to interpret context in the general understanding of (im)politeness and face work; b) how to theorize (im)politeness in the future; and c) how the following chapters and other (im)politeness-related works are relevant to professional practice and training.

Part one of the volume begins with chapter two, which explores interactions between trainee doctors and patients, centering on face work, professional identity, rapport management and power dynamics. Drawing on a discursive approach to politeness theory, this chapter investigates how trainee junior doctors as would-be general practitioners in Britain try to establish and maintain rapport, ascertain patients'

problems, make diagnoses and recommend appropriate follow-up actions in various simulated interactions. Apart from providing empirical data on an under-researched area, the chapter takes the original approach of examining (im)politeness from the perspective of applied linguistics, which highlights the practical value of the discursive approach to theorizing (im)politeness and face work, as well as rapport management in doctor-patient interactions. In such communications, senior practitioners can employ key linguistic frameworks regularly to facilitate their roles as medical trainers. The focus of this chapter is on how rapport management is manifested in simulated medical consultations and how it is relevant to (un)successful diagnosis delivery. Besides, an examination is also made regarding the enactment of power as an essential, closely associated aspect of rapport establishment and maintenance in such consultations. Next, chapter three explores interactions in video-taped simulations of trauma and debriefing, field notes and training documentation to probe the links between leadership, rapport-establishing and clinical practice. This contribution aims to demonstrate that linguistic studies, more specifically politeness studies, can be practically applied to the healthcare domain. Directed at politeness in interprofessional medical interactions and the coordination of interprofessional work as a primarily linguistic phenomenon and a specific pragmatic phenomenon, the chapter not only sheds new light on rapport-building strategies in temporary medical teams but also provides information about the importance of professional practice and communicative skills in the training of medical professionals. In chapter four, its author discusses the way that the ideological and moral aspects of healthcare in modern times are expressed during daily stroke rehabilitation practices and the way that the roles and identities of institutional practitioners are presented and managed by way of patient-professional talk in this specific context. Since the moral order is built on institutionalized rights and obligations and the moral worlds are aroused and actionable in talk (Heritage and Lindstrom 1998, 397), it is timely to apply politeness theories, or face work and relational work more broadly, to the study of communication in healthcare. Chapter five, which concludes section one, studies how users of mobile health apps and mobile medical apps, including medical professionals and lay people, negotiate the norms of correct communicative behaviors and relational work (Locher and Watts 2005). The analysis focuses on the use of humor, differentiated into intentional use and unintentional use, as a strategy to manage relations or rapport in health and medical app-mediated communications, with a special emphasis on intentional, strategic humorous behaviors.

Since politeness in hospital contexts largely remains under-explored, the investigations encompassed in section one may indeed develop politeness theories *per se*, as well as politeness theorizing and operationality. This can be explained by the fact that in medical settings, what is at play is not merely personal face considerations but also professional and institutional considerations. By applying variations of politeness theories to different medical participants and contexts and by applying politeness and face notions to institutional interactions, the four chapters in section one provide

essential information about how to behave appropriately in professional settings and extend scholarly perceptions of face work, relation-building and (im)politeness theoretically. The merit of these four chapters consists not merely in their detailed examinations of interactions unfolding in hospital settings but also in how the authors question certain deep-seated theoretical proposals made by previous studies. The active negotiation of interpersonal relationships between the engaged parties, which is enabled through linguistic choices, is also a characteristic of these chapters, where importance is attached to the volatile demarcation between the transactional interaction and the relational interaction and the challenge of distinguishing these two categories in the analysis of service encounters.

The five chapters of the second part look at politeness in business and organizational settings. Chapter six mainly analyzes how conflicts have been managed and rapport maintained among students on a Master of Business Administration course who were grouped by the course administrators. This study is beneficial to interlocutors who tend to use many resources to manage potentially conflicting interactions in verbal communication, thus providing new insights into the handling of problematic relationships in workplaces calling for considerable interdependence and cooperation among team members. Chapter seven moves on to look at a paper examining the impacts of how interpreters display (im)politeness, focusing on interpreters who make alternative interpretations between English and British sign language. Considering that perceived inappropriate or impolite utterances are most likely to immediately catch someone's attention (Kasper 1990; Ruhi 2008), the author of this paper sheds light on interpreting issues that are arguably challenging to explore and provides valuable insights into how individuals evaluate (im)politeness. Chapter eight reports on a study that explicitly applies a folk-pragmatic approach to (im)politeness. This approach makes a contribution to resolving "sterile eclecticism" (Haugh 2018, 158) in (im)politeness inquiry. Additionally, this approach integrates lay and scholarly perspectives on language, thereby breaking through the limitations of an individual perspective of analysis. Chapter nine discusses the results of a study comparing English and Spanish business emails. This chapter fills a gap in the literature on cross-cultural pragmatics by looking at directives in English and Spanish business emails from the angles of pragmatolinguistics, cross-cultural communication and sociopragmatics in relation to the perception of (im)politeness. These three aspects represent three significant limitations in the intellectual inquiries into cross-cultural pragmatics: a) most studies in cross-cultural pragmatics use data elicitation methods, including role-plays or discourse completion tasks; b) cross-cultural pragmatics scholarship reveals a scarcity of investigations that systematically explain how social and discursive contexts impact the use of language; and c) few studies systematically examine the perception of language. Chapter ten probes the unexplored particular setting of the sole trader, where business-to-consumer mail is used to build long-term client relations. This chapter focuses on relational work examined from two angles: a) what is being written

or conveyed; and b) how information is being conveyed, by scrutinizing more than 1,000 emails that a sole trader has written to her business clients around the world who contracted her proofreading and transcription services.

In part three, attention is shifted to (im)politeness in legal and security settings. Chapter eleven describes the face work achieved through judges' questioning practices in two distinctive genres of judicial speech, that is, oral argument in appellate court and small claims civil trials. This research aims to provide a picture of face work in the courtroom in such judge-centered speech styles and reflect on how to best conceptualize and utilize context in face work and (im)politeness studies. Chapter twelve deals with how small talk benefits undercover officers at an airport in that it affords Air Marshals and Behavioral Detection Officers a veil under which they are able to observe the behavior of passengers, who believe that they are just engaging in light, airy chat (Archer et al. 2019, 467). It can be seen that small talk in its own right could play a specific, instrumental or transactional role in settings where such role is disguised under its stereotypical, phatic cover. Part three ends with chapter thirteen, which focuses on the negotiation strategies adopted by an American police negotiator in a common barricade incident and provides important face work implications. Informed by face work and linguistic notions such as "reality paradigms" (Archer et al. 2018, 186), the author, Archer, describes the training that she has been developing to alter how practitioners perceive and conceptualize interaction. The study extends and operationalizes the reality paradigms specifically for police negotiators. As a result, they manage to identify the mental models of the world of the subjects before striving to affect them. According to Archer, "mental models" are particularly important for police negotiation because they pertain to belief, obligation, (not) knowing, tentativeness, etc., which can shape not only how a subject understands their world, but also how they make inferences or predictions from what others have said or done and decisions on how to act in consequence. For instance, the negotiator can convince the subject to surrender a firearm and end a barricade incident by convincing them that they have a future. The negotiator's tactic is to tell the subject that they are going to be okay, etc., that is, to project an immediate future reality for them that is different from the subject's prediction that they would be killed by police snipers.

Xie (2020) comprises six research articles by eminent scholars in the domain of (im)politeness. These papers present how complex (im)politeness is as a social practice by focusing on the moral and immoral aspects of (im)politeness in web-based communication. They illustrate how seemingly inappropriate behaviors can trigger situated moral judgments that can sometimes legitimize impoliteness if it is regarded as a tool to restore the moral order and can thus facilitate social interaction by bonding like-minded individuals. What is highlighted in these studies is how to make the moral order overt and prominent when we generate and interpret Internet-mediated (im)politeness as a form of social practice and how situated (im)politeness may play interactional roles (Xie 2016). In these respects, the (im)politeness phenomenon may

give us a glimpse of the complex intertwining of various communicative subjects, speech genres and interactional contexts.

What makes this book prominent and valuable lies in its focus on how (im) politeness interacts with the moral order in web-based communication, or put another way, how to contextualize digitally-mediated (im)politeness in social morality. The moral order has been defined as “the regularities that underlie (im)polite behavior and evaluations within an interaction” (Kádár 2017, 25). Proof of the presence of the moral order in Internet-mediated interactions was collected from the diverse web-based communicative contexts cited in the six contributions of this edited piece, including the economic crisis in Greece, carpooling in Slovenia and controversies over the nationhood of Australia. The studies relate to the moral order cases of online impoliteness (e.g., conflicts, disagreements and insults) on such social platforms as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and discussion fora, as well as analyses of Internet-mediated gaming and the embodiment of digital cultures in fictions. As such, this volume makes and foregrounds the link between (im)politeness behaviors and the moral order in online interactions, confirming the essence of (im)politeness as evaluation and the moral foundation of (im) politeness evaluation, and demonstrating what matters when (im)politeness assessments are evoked, what comprises the moral order and how (im)politeness assessments are shaped by social morality. It follows that this volume not only responds in a timely manner to the moral turn in the domain of (im)politeness inquiries but also proves how vibrant this domain is in the ubiquitous context of the Internet as a fresh lens through which we can better perceive social interaction.

The chapter “(Im)politeness, Morality and the Internet” by Chaoqun Xie, the editor of the volume, claims that (im)politeness is, in essence, “a matter of morality and ethics” (Xie 2011, 105). Attaching great importance to moral dimensions in (im) politeness research can not only incubate new modes of thinking on (im)politeness, but also facilitate the revisiting of classic, traditional subjects in this domain. In the context of the moral turn mentioned above, (im)politeness could be viewed as a complicated system in that the generation, interpretation and assessment of (im)politeness can be multifaceted, involving contextual, linguistic, cognitive, behavioral, emotional, moral, ethical, social, historical and cultural components (Xie and Yus 2017; Xie 2018). Xie also emphasizes that the interplay between (im)politeness and morality is becoming increasingly important in contemporary pragmatics scholarship, with a growing body of important publications on (im)politeness in digitally-mediated interactions produced in recent years, as reviewed by Graham and Hardaker (2017).

“The Personal and/as the Political” by Georgakopoulou and Vasilaki gives insights into social media-mediated impoliteness phenomena from the perspective of small stories about Greek socio-economic crises on Facebook and YouTube. According to the authors, comments are used to severely criticize political leadership and perceived opponents and attribute the crisis to them, therefore combining “doing impoliteness” with “storying the crisis” (Xie 2020, 11). What is brought to the fore is the salient link

between on-record and off-record impoliteness strategies (Taylor 2016) used to attack political figures and the particular narrating status of narrators as sufferers, witnesses of suffering and spokespersons for the common suffering in stories about the crisis. A framework for doing impoliteness in such contexts is attested: on-record and off-record impoliteness that is adopted at the end of small stories and legitimized by the preceding accounts. Within such a framework of small stories (Georgakopoulou 2016; 2017), the impolite bashing of political figures allows the audience of the platform to not only personalize and construct expertise but also to reassert and restore the moral order in political affairs.

Next, drawing on a discourse analysis approach to posts from a car- and van-pooling group on Facebook, Reiter and Orthaber's contribution, "Exploring the Moral Compass," touches upon the moral indignation of Slovenian cross-border commuters to and from Austria at the providers of van services. Due to perceived transgressions of the mutually expected code of conduct among the providers and users of the van services, the morally indignant users employ hostile verbal attacks, such as exaggerations, complaints, insults and threats, to accuse providers of transgressing some of the social responsibilities that bind the members of the group and of lacking accountability. In contrast, van service providers resist and challenge these accusations using similar verbal impoliteness strategies. The verbal impoliteness confrontation between the two parties thus offers a glimpse of conflicting behavioral expectations at a time when socioeconomic changes are underway. In this study, the users' adoption of impoliteness strategies may function to restore the moral order on the one hand and enable cross-border commuters to display and maintain an in-group identity on the other hand.

In "Ya Bloody Drongo!!!," Sinkeviciute investigates the role of impoliteness-related discourse in conveying situated moral judgment in a Facebook dispute over the "nationhood" of Australia, which was triggered by a post advocating that "Australia is not real" and "Australia is one of the biggest hoaxes ever created" (Xie 2020, 75). As the post threatened the national face and identity of Australia, more than 55,000 hostile and aggressive comments were made to "bash" it using four main impoliteness strategies, namely insulting the intellectual abilities of the post author, suspecting the author of drug abuse and consequently mental disability, using violence-related speech and counterattacking the author's national face and identity (Xie 2020, 91). These strategies not only express the moral judgment of the inappropriateness of the post, but also repair the wrongdoing.

Graham's contribution, "Impoliteness and the Moral Order in Online Gaming," focuses on how a female gamer, Raihnbowkidz, adopted impoliteness strategies to "bash" and counteract an adverse moral order in the web-based gaming context (i.e., the encouragement of impoliteness against female gamers) to gain social capital within the Internet-mediated gaming community. In the context of a prevailing moral order that positions the female gamer as inferior, unwelcome or peripheral (Kádár 2017)—as exemplified by the rituals and tropes (e.g., spam and banter) reinforcing gendered

practices in the open-forum chat data—, Raihnbowkidz made an overt move to fight against the prevalent practice of encouraging impolite behaviors against female gamers. The strategies she used—including altering the participation framework of her stream and clearly voicing the motivations, adopting tropes that embody the negatively perceived status of women gamers—were meant to “manipulate the expectations of the online gaming medium and its hegemonic notions of femininity” (Xie 2020, 99). Her adaptation of the identity prescribed by the established social moral order represents an awareness of social morality, a way to question unutterable but prevalent Internet-mediated social practices (Xie 2020, 120) comprising the moral order and an attempt to initiate change by navigating and restructuring the moral order.

In his contribution “Impoliteness Online,” Kienpointner qualitatively analyzes destructively impolite utterances (i.e., hate speech) in online discourse, something he refers to as “destructive use of language” (Xie 2020, 125). Although drawing on the standard impoliteness or rudeness typologies and their recent extensions (e.g., Culpeper 2005, 2011; Kienpointner 2008; Kleinke and Bös 2015), this analysis somewhat modifies and elaborates on these typologies when exploring online face-attacking behaviors that mainly rely on the use of expletives. Additionally, Kienpointner briefly examines the underlying political, cultural and social causes of the current dramatic growth in online hate speech and proposes some countermeasures to combat it.

The final contribution is Kádár and Fukushima’s “The Meta-Conventionalization and Moral Order of E-practices.” *Meta-conventionalization* is “the coding of the conventional interpersonal practices of a particular group, or various groups, in the form of entertainment as films and novels” (Xie 2020, 149). In this contribution, a Japanese novel entitled *Densha-Otoko* (“Train Man”) is presented as a good case in point, with particular reference to the language style of the protagonist, *Densha Otoko*, and his peers, which features abbreviations, intentional typos, intentional variations in the inflectional endings of imperatives, *kanji* puns, etc. These elements of fictionalized conventional practices mark the identity of *otaku-s*, socially inept youths who withdraw from the reality of daily life and prefer web-based interaction as a way of interpersonal communication. The fictional characters’ use of such elements enhances a moral norm of committing to this in-group identity, according to Kádár and Fukushima.

These two edited volumes attract scholarly attention to the (im)politeness phenomena in professional and in Internet-mediated contexts, where such pragmatic phenomena constitute an essential and pertinent subject of study because the intimately associated concepts of power and politeness are omnipresent dimensions of interactions in these settings (Schnurr 2009; Holmes and Schnurr 2017). Previous studies have examined (im)politeness in various interactional contexts, including business settings (e.g., Bargiela-Chiappini and Gotti 2005), medical settings (e.g., Locher and Schnurr 2017), military settings (Barata 2014), telephone conversations in call centers (e.g., Marsden and Holmes 2014; Archer and Jagodzinski 2015), etc. However, inquiries into (im)politeness in legal, security and digitally-mediated settings have remained

few and far between to date. In Archer et al. (2020), chapters eleven to thirteen deal exclusively with (im)politeness studies in these contexts, thereby filling the blank in the existing literature. These three contributions are, therefore, particularly valuable, especially considering the substantial influence of the *specificity* of professional settings on the norms and practices of (im)politeness specific to the interactional activities of institutional staff (Holmes and Schnurr 2017, 639). As Daly et al. (2004) claim, the abuse of swearing, taboos and jokes characteristic of communications among members of specific working teams can serve to enhance solidarity and mark in-group identity rather than to humiliate team members and threaten their face. These three contributions, by Tracy, by Archer et al. and by Archer, cast fresh light on the intricate interplay between power and (im)politeness in the legal and security contexts and illustrate how given workplace settings shape particular (im)politeness norms and practices among specific interlocutors. Context-specific or situated (im)politeness highlights the power of context in shaping politeness theorizing (Tracy 2020, 268). Context can be constantly employed as an essential notion that underlies the interpretation of particular practices of talk and (im)politeness (Tracy 2020, 266). Given that sometimes a particular set up is not recognized as an (informal) institution, it is necessary to examine various institutional activities where individuals seek services and serve as professional agents when we attempt to theorize the way that individuals attend to the need for rapport, face and deference (Tracy 2020). Xie (2020) enriches the scholarship of pragmatics and particularly the pragmatics of Internet-mediated communication, by contextualizing (im)politeness studies within the issues of moral judgment, evaluation and ethical consideration. The six contributions all highlight the intricate (im)politeness-morality interplay in online interactions where norms of appropriateness are incessantly followed, negotiated and transgressed. The pragmatic topics covered in these contributions, including online face and relational work, perceived standards of online appropriateness, the part (im)politeness plays in constructing and marking specific identities online, online self-presentation, ethical considerations in online setting, etc., all shed fresh light on classic, conventional (im)politeness issues (e.g., face work, relational work, etc.), while at the same time modifying and expanding long-established (im)politeness paradigms (e.g., the Politeness Principle, etc.). The results and discussions on these topics in this volume are a valuable addition to the growing body of pragmatic inquiries into digitally-mediated interactions. Additionally, the prospective venues of studies proposed in the contributions, for example strategies used by female gamers to resist identities imposed by established social morality and to alter socially-accepted moral practices on different gaming platforms, the influence of Internet-mediated interactions and multiple modalities on the conceptualizations of and challenges to socially-established moral practices, what comprises the web-based moral order, etc., encourage us to adopt new thinking modes and perspectives on (im)politeness, revisit classic topics in the traditional domain of (im)politeness in online contexts, examine Internet-mediated communication theoretically, enact important

pragmatic issues (e.g., gender bias, code of conduct, etc.) and initiate changes in specific, real-world contexts. These proposed new areas of investigation will most likely allow us to take a more intensive and extensive look at (im)politeness from the perspectives of linguistics, pragmatics, psychology and cognition, considerably broadening our horizon in the academic domains of (im)politeness and, more broadly, pragmatics.

These two edited works attest to and somewhat accelerate the moral turn in the (im)politeness domain. Recent years have witnessed the laudable enthusiasm for the examination of the morality of (im)politeness (e.g., Kádár and Haugh 2013; Kádár and Márquez-Reiter 2015; Haugh 2015, 2018; Kádár 2017). Kádár and Haugh (2013) propose seeing (im)politeness as a form of social practice, therefore providing a detailed account of the links between moral order and (im)politeness. According to them, the social practice of politeness involves the argumentativity, variability and negotiability of socially-established moral practices. (Im)politeness evaluations are subject to open dispute in any appeal for the moral order and in any engagement in the social practices that give rise to it in that members of different social groups or even members of the same group may not always perceive the moral order in the same way (Kádár and Haugh 2013, 69).

Indeed, all the case studies covered in the contributions of these two edited volumes attest to the argumentativity, variability and negotiability of the moral order through various forms of the institutional and online social practice of (im)politeness. Furthermore, these case studies point to some or even all the deontic, benefactive, epistemic and emotional dimensions of morality (Haugh 2015), the interrelation between (im)politeness and (im)morality (Kádár and Márquez-Reiter 2015), the moral basis of (im)politeness assessments (Spencer-Oatey and Kádár 2016), the connection between social morality and (im)politeness assessments (Davids 2018), the impact of specific perception and practice of social morality on (im)politeness assessments (Xie 2020), etc. It follows that these two books bring to the fore the moral considerations of (im)politeness not only in these themed volumes but also in the intellectual inquiry of (im)politeness as a whole. As such, it is imperative to reconsider the moral order from fresh perspectives when we make (im)politeness evaluations, particularly considering the “new vision of sociality” (Mey 2018) of Internet-mediated and institutional interactions.

These edited volumes also testify to the arguably complex nature of (im)politeness phenomena and call for the adoption of various new theoretical perspectives from which such elusive phenomena need to be appreciated, evaluated and interpreted (Haugh 2018, 158). In these volumes, the contributors deal with specific impoliteness practices through the lenses of institutional and of Internet-mediated interactions from various perspectives: linguistic, cognitive, behavioral, socioeconomic, contextual, emotional, historical, cultural, moral or ethical. Whichever perspective is adopted, the (im)politeness inquiry is essentially and ultimately interdisciplinary and it is and needs to be oriented toward the presence and existence of human beings (Xie and Yus 2018). Another factor

contributing to the complex construct of (im)politeness is that the field of (im)politeness covers a multitude of old and new topics. In addition to the long-discussed topics such as face work, (in)appropriateness, impoliteness typologies, etc., relatively new and emerging subjects include the following questions: a) Are individuals doing politeness really more polite than those doing impoliteness?; b) Will those doing politeness naturally turn out to be increasingly polite eventually?; c) Is it because of the specialized knowledge about the intrinsic working mechanisms of the (im)politeness phenomena that they become increasingly polite?; d) Is being polite or growing increasingly polite related to self-cultivation and human nature?; and e) How has morality found its way into “the game of polite interaction” (Goffman 1959, 211) in particular and social interactional practices in general? (Xie 2020). All these emergent inquiries relate to the moral law within the self (Kant 2015, 129), which echoes the claim that “[p]oliteness of the heart is a kind of true politeness; it is politeness within” (Xie 2020, 5). This ontological conceptualization of politeness can be pretty complicated, which warrants constant intellectual inquiries from diversified angles.

These volumes do, however, have certain drawbacks. First and foremost, there is not a conclusive chapter that offers a review of how much politeness research serves interactions in the four categories of contexts—medical, business, legal and security, in Archer et al. (2020); and Internet-mediated communication in Xie (2020)—and how these settings, in turn, best theorize and operationalize (im)politeness concepts. It is an unfortunate oversight that in each book a chapter has not been dedicated to a critical look at the present and future of (im)politeness studies in professional contexts in the former volume and Internet-mediated contexts in the latter in order to point out the achievements, advantages, aspects of weakness and requirements of such academic investigations from the perspectives of different methodologies, theories and practices to shed new light on readers. Besides, both books would have been improved if the studies selected in each had analyzed data from a greater number of contexts to increase the validity and reliability of the theorizing and operationalizing of politeness concepts for their respective settings. However, these weaknesses are insignificant compared with the strengths, especially the information gap-filling nature, of these two books.

Readers may probably think that there are many topics worth further exploration and expounding upon that are not covered in these volumes. It is, however, impossible to present in two books a complete story and a full picture of the complexity of the (im)politeness-moral order interplay in institutional and online communication. Nevertheless, these books do foreground such interplay in human interaction, uncovering something vital about ourselves and our life worlds. Hopefully, based on this foregrounded interaction, (im)politeness-related topics will be explored more and more intensively and extensively.

To sum up, the contributions of the first of the two edited volumes investigate (im) politeness in business, medical, legal and security settings, the second in Internet-mediated settings, illustrating the significance of comprehending the way that

interactions are managed and negotiated in institutional and online contexts. In a nutshell, these two books provide new insights into professional and Internet-mediated (im)politeness settings for students, researchers of different profiles and institutional practitioners.¹

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¹ This work was funded by the National Office for Philosophy and Social Sciences of China, CN (grant number: 21FYYB058).

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Received 29 March 2023

Revised version accepted 17 July 2023

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