PERCEPTIONS OF IMPOLITENESS AT A TURKISH STATE UNIVERSITY

Tuba DEMİRKOL

Abstract

Impoliteness is characterized by offence taken by one interlocutor upon communicative actions of another one. This study aimed to assess perceptions of impoliteness among the staff and students at a government university in Turkey. Data were collected via a questionnaire consisting of 5 open-ended questions. In this study, the concept of impoliteness was limited to the Turkish concept of rude (Kaba/lık). Data were using a rapport management framework. The findings show that instructors were the most likely to report student communicative actions as impolite due to their perception that it was an attack on their social status. In addition, students were the most likely to report student communicative actions as impolite when they were perceived to negatively affect their right to (social) association. The findings provide a foundation that can be used to form a positive social culture in the institution and limit the occurrence of impolite communicative actions. Additional research is required to better understand the nature of impolite communicative actions that occur at institutions and to implement appropriate educational programming designed to limit impoliteness.

Keywords: Impoliteness, rudeness, university learners, educational institution, rapport management.

1 Okt. Dr., Ankara Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi, e-posta: tuba.demirkol@asbu.edu.tr
Introduction

This study explores what communicative actions of university students would be interpreted as impolite by staff and student themselves in a state university context. This study is based on a data collected via a questionnaire exploring impoliteness incidents from the perspectives of different shareholders in a recently founded state university. Though we claim to use retrospection as the data collection technique, it is noteworthy to emphasize that though this university was founded three years ago, it accepted its very first students’ in its third year and the data collection was done in the very first year of its educational endeavour. Thus, the participants’ memories are expected to be recent and reliable since they were questioned about their experiences specific to this institution. The focus of this study was restricted to impoliteness rather than politeness relying on the assumption that polite behaviours are not as noticeable as impolite ones which would evoke stronger emotional reaction (Locher & Watts, 2005; 2008).

Impoliteness is context-dependent; actions, behaviours, and verbal communication (communicative actions) that may be considered impolite in one context may not be considered so in another context (İşik-Güler, 2008; Locher & Watts, 2008). According to Spencer-Oatey (2002), the social/psychological context is an important factor associated with an individual’s evaluation of communicative actions as impolite. Our motive to design this study has been the assumption that each institution represents a different and unique social psychological context and the basic culture of this context is framed by its members’ perceptions. Thus, this study might expand our understanding of university students’ communicative actions that are perceived as impolite by others. Due to its subjective nature, it may be hard to come up with a commonly accepted definition of impoliteness. Culpeper et.al. (2010) attempt to provide an approach to study impoliteness with a cross-cultural perspective and they pay attention to avoid viewing impoliteness as a dichotomy with politeness. They analyse impoliteness incidents reported by undergraduate learners from different cultural backgrounds, namely England, China, Germany, Finland, and Turkey. This study was inspired from Culpeper et.al.’s attempt to develop Spencer-Oatey's (2000, as cited in Culpeper et. al., 2010) rapport management framework for analysing perceptions of impoliteness. They state that ‘…the full up-take of Spencer-Oatey's framework by other researchers has been slight, and as far as impoliteness is concerned virtually non-existent’ (p.3).

In order to understand what impoliteness refers to, we will first revolve around the discussions about politeness. Leech (2005) states ‘a theory of politeness is inevitably also a theory of impoliteness, since impoliteness is a non-observance or violation of the constraints of politeness’ (p.18). The sine qua non of politeness discussions is the Goffman’s concept of face, which also forms the essence of Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory (1987). It is argued in Politeness Theory that we have two kinds of face: Positive and negative face. The former refers to the desire of being approved while the latter refers to the desire of being unimpeded. In Politeness theory, it is stated that any rational person considers producing polite utterances to maintain face wants of Self and Other during their interaction. Terkourafi (2008) evaluates face of Self and Other as acting on a dichotomy and only two options, either being polite or impolite, are seen possible in every interaction. Terkourafi approaches im/politeness from a holistic perspective and claims that judgements about im/politeness of a speech are made by listeners regarding not only linguistic means but also utilizing message coming from other channels such as body language, subsequent turns, and prosodic features. Thus, taking
contextual features into consideration allows researchers to see the broader picture rather than focusing just on linguistic aspect.

Leech (2005) also proposes an approach that is not restricted to consideration of linguistic means as the indicators of im/politeness. Leech describes politeness depending on six Conversational Maxims, which are Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement, and Sympathy (Spencer-Oatey, 2002; Hill, Ide, Ikuta, Kawasaki, Ogino, 1986). Leech (2005) states that The Principle of Politeness is applied in human communicative behaviour to avoid offence when mutually incompatible goals exist between two people. Leech mentions that politeness can be studied on two scales: *Absolute Politeness Scale* and *Relative Politeness Scale*. *Absolute Politeness Scale* is defined on the lexigrammatical forms and their semantic interpretation. *Relative Politeness Scale* is more context dependent and the norms for the situation determines perlocutionary effect of communicative behaviours. This way, Leech informs the importance of context in his evaluation of im/politeness, similar to Terkourafi’s understanding.

The approach I adopt in this study mainly stems from the point focusing on humans as social beings and exploring their perceptions of im/politeness in social relations. Spencer-Oatey (2002) states that linguistic means form just one part of any interactional engagement that should be analysed within its *situated psychological context* because every interactional behaviour is a kind of relational work. She expands the main focus of impoliteness research by adding the dimension of sociality rights to already existing face issue. The details of sociality rights and face will be presented in the data analysis section.

2. Methodology

2.1. The data and participants

Data collection in the study of impoliteness challenges researchers in certain ways. Authentic data is preferable but it has its challenges. It is hard to witness instances often enough to provide samples appropriate to requirements of specific studies. Additionally, the researcher should be continuously ready to notice and take note of details whenever those cases appear. The second option, to ask participants to act-out in impoliteness scenarios, is not welcomed and criticised ethically due to negative emotions to be evoke in participants (Culpeper et. al., 2010). The other option, asking participants to keep their own record of impolite cases as in the study of Spencer-Oatey (2002) allows to compile authentic data. However, it requires to employ participants who want to devote a lot of time for a study. Thus, due to time restrictions and the participant profile in this study, I opted for a different method of data collection. Participants of this study were comprised of native Turkish speakers in this study and reflected their culturally-formed perception of impoliteness through incidents they reported. I gave the participants (21 university students, 10 lecturer, 4 maintenance staff, 4 support staff) a kind of meta-pragmatic assessment questionnaire, which was adapted from the research of Işık-Güler (2008). Işık-Güler employed the full version of this questionnaire to find out the participants’ evaluations of im/politeness and the concepts they associate with im/politeness. For this study, I employed just one part of this questionnaire, which was about ‘rude’ and ‘rudeness’-that is ‘kabalık’ in Turkish. This concept appeared to be the one most frequently associated with impoliteness in Işık-Güler’s Turkish corpus study. The concept of rudeness also holds a *prominent position* among the associations of impoliteness for the English, according to Culpeper (2009, as cited in Waters, 2012).
Işık-Güler (2008) argues that employing a meta-pragmatic assessment questionnaire represents an emic stance in data collection. It doesn’t limit or direct participants to concentrate on just one area such as a specific speech act. To the contrary, it broadens the analysis by possibly wider spectrum of interactive events to be associated with rudeness by participants.

I asked the participants (who were comprised of lecturers, support stuff, maintenance workers, and students) to report only impoliteness incidents where the offence was caused by students, not anyone else. By restricting the focus on students, I do not claim that they are the main causes of offence in universities. I commenced this research with a focus on students’ communicative behaviours because they represent the major population in the university. They hold a major position in allowing the institution to reach its mission. Thus, this is an exploratory study which responses – labelled as linguistic behaviours or general ones- about rude/rudeness as the most frequent associations of impoliteness may identify salient offensive actions, if there are any, which should be avoided in this university. It may contribute to create a respectful school atmosphere where expectations about students’ positive attitudes are defined explicitly. I maintained Spencer-Oatey’s (2002) approach and analysed the incidents under the frame of rapport management model.

**Research question to be addressed by this study is:**

What communicative behaviours of university students were considered to be impolite by the Turkish native speaker participants?

**Results**

In the first part of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to supply background information about themselves (such as age, gender, their department or official position in the institution). This set of information is quantified in Table 1 and 2 below as for learners and other participants, respectively.

Table 1: The social profile of the learner data set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>18-20</th>
<th>18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>English Literature</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Affairs</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth reminding that all learners (21 in total) were studying at compulsory preparatory class and they have the special feature of being very first students enrolled in this institution, which was founded just three years ago and has just initiated its preliminary academic endeavour in two departments, English Literature and International Affairs.
Table 2: The social profile of other participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position at the Institution</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Level</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from Table 2, in total 18 participants from different official positions in the institution have completed the questionnaire. Administrative people were from the Office for Student Affairs while the 2 of service staff from the security and 2 were from the cafeteria. The selection criteria of these people was whether meeting the learners during the day was a requirement of their responsibility or not. So, all these people are the ones who meet learners regularly at least a few times throughout a typical day. I refrained from pointing at Power or Distance as the basic criterion for the sample selection since I could not use them as the criteria for the selection of participants, though one way or other they may explain the relations between the sides, such as using social distance to explain the relation between learners and service staff.

One other point to be made about data collection process is that the researcher distributed the questionnaire individually by asking people if they would like to be a part of this study about impoliteness and she further introduced the items briefly for each volunteer in order to prevent any misunderstanding of the questions and emphasize that the last question should be answered by recalling cases of impoliteness experienced in this school, if there was any. As a consequence, 18 people volunteered to respond and the researcher allocated at least 2 days for completing the questionnaires. Thus, I aimed to supply the participants with enough amount of time for reflecting on the questions. The data gathered was classified by utilizing an Excel sheet. The incidents were distributed to four categories shown in Table 3.

Data Analysis and Discussion

3.1. A Brief Summary: Rapport Management Framework

In this section, I will describe how the frame of rapport management, which is comprised of face management and management of sociality rights, was applied in data analysis. While suggesting a framework for the analysis of the management of relations, Spencer-Oatey (2002) revolves around controversial concepts existing in politeness discussions. She lists these main concepts - which are face, maxims, and rights - as complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Spencer-Oatey highlights particularly face and maxims as 'fundamental issues' in the management of relations. She argues that linguistic politeness is a strategy in management of relations and its evaluation should be made context dependent where face and rights are considered. The components of rapport management frame are presented in Table 3 below.
As can be appreciated from Table 3, she comes up with a concise framework composed of management of *face* and *sociality rights*. Accordingly, she uses *face* as referring to ‘the positive social value a person affectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact’ (p.9) and *sociality rights* as referring to ‘fundamental personal/social entitlements that a person effectively claims for him/herself in his/her interactions with others’ (p.9). These two components are seen influential in both individual and group level interactions. One other sub-category for *face*, which is *Relational face*, was added by Spencer-Oatey (2008, as cited in Culpeper et. al., 2010). Details of these sub-components will be provided below. Extracts will be provided from the data under each subcomponent and I will discuss how specifics of those cases guided the data analysis.

3.2. Results for the Impoliteness Incidents

The data was analysed mainly by the researcher, who is the writer of this article. In order to increase the reliability of the data analysis, I asked a colleague to help for the analysis. I chose her because she had a PhD degree in the field of English Language Teaching and studied on qualitative data. Since I have collected 38 reports in total for this study, it was not possible for her to analyse every incident. We randomly chose 10 cases for her to analyse. In order to make her familiar with the framework, we studied the components of it and appreciated their content. We categorised these randomly chosen cases. We came up with the same categorisation in 8 of 10 cases. The reason of the difference appeared in those 2 cases was the fact that incidents described there were involved in more than one category. This is an appropriate place for reminding that there were several other cases which were clearly related to two different categories. Those cases were added to the number of samples in each category separately. Thus, some of the scenarios were counted more than once. We are aware of the fact that the results reflect our own judgements about the cases and some people may not agree with our categorisation. Though, we assume that the differences to arise would be slight in a categorisation to be done by another researcher.

Though it may not be very informative to provide quantitative data in this kind of study, especially like this one with a small number of participants, statistics may draw a general picture for us. I start presenting results with a table showing frequencies of the items according to the categories in the rapport management framework. I will continue with more detailed explanation for the categories in the rapport management framework along with extracts. Table 4 below displays the frequency rates of the impolite incidents and
Table 4: Distribution of impoliteness incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quality Face</th>
<th>Social Identity Face</th>
<th>Equity Rights</th>
<th>Relational Rights</th>
<th>Association Rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Stuff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance Stuff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from Table 4 above, the distribution of the impoliteness incidents were scattered among the categories. While students reported incidents for nearly each category, maintenance stuff stated that they did not face any rude behaviour from the students. Learners and support staff reported several cases that they viewed as rudeness, the ones that mostly fell to the category of social identity face. As we discussed above, some cases were put under more than one category since there was overlapping in the type of face and/or right threatened by those communicative behaviours. We continue to analyse the results by presenting extracts for each subcomponent of face management and sociality rights, respectively.

Quality face

Spencer-Oatey (2002) herself associates quality face with positive face of Brown and Levinson (1987). She defines quality face as ‘the value that we effectively claim for ourselves in terms of such personal qualities…. and …. closely associated with our sense of personal esteem’ (p. 9). What was meant by personal qualities were specified as our competence, abilities, appearance, etc. One incident threatening Quality Face was reported by one of the support stuff. He was working in one of the cafeterias in campus and reported the case below as a situation of rudeness he experienced in this university.
Participant 12

I don’t remember a very serious offense but some learners throw the money on the counter carelessly when they order tea or coffee as if they own the school. I find it bossy.

Apparently, this person expects learners to be more careful while paying the money for their order. He does not represent a powerful position over the students. But, he deserves to be treated neutrally without being looked on by students, who do not represent a Power on him, either. His comment indicates that he finds this action bossy and he expects learners to be neutral towards him. This kind of offensive behaviour was a threat to his self-esteem. However, those learners perhaps do not notice that a service member can take their behaviours serious enough to feel offended. This finding serves as a support for the argument of Haugh (2007). He states that occurrence of mismatch between the interactants’ expectations about their own place and the place of other interactant can lead to impoliteness.

One other point from this extract is that the participant has experienced the same case a few times. Still, he refrained from displaying his affective response to those learners who caused this offense. Haugh (2015) argues that sometimes the one who takes offence may avoid indicating his/her disturbance due to the social pressure. I argue that during formation of an institutional culture, people should be encouraged to indicate their response to the cases they consider as impoliteness. I am aware that inviting people to react to impoliteness explicitly has some challenges, especially if too much affective stance is taken by interlocutors. However, I believe that members of institutions can be systematically led to show their reactions and cases of impoliteness can be analysed without adopting personal stances.

Social Identity Face

As can be appreciated from Table 4, all the cases compiled under this category were reported by lecturers and support staff. This looks not surprising since Social Identity Face is mainly about general and social roles rather than individual relations and the cases compiled here were mainly the ones threatened the general social role of the participants, i.e. as being teacher representing Power or an elderly service staff deserving respect. Spencer-Oatey (2002) defines social identity face as ‘concerned with the value that we effectively claim for ourselves in terms of social or group roles, and is closely associated with our sense of public worth’ (p.9). We can infer that Social identity face is a response to the criticisms directed towards Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory on the ground that it ignored social dimension.

Participant 4

We were holding a kind of meeting where we gave brief information about elective L2 courses offered in our university. One of the learners used the word ‘sen’ instead of ‘siz’ despite the fact that he noticed I was older than him and I was a teacher there. I thought this was a rude behaviour according to the rules of courtesy.

In this example, the learner is considered to be rude because s/he ignores to use an honorific pronoun in Turkish, which is ‘siz’. In Turkish, ‘siz’ is a pronoun indicating either social distance or power, though in English its counterparts is the same pronoun, which is ‘you’. Accordingly, in Turkey learners in all levels of education, from primary school to
university, are expected to call a teacher as ‘siz’. Thus, they indicate their awareness of her as deserving respect due to her power. When the learner failed to show this kind of essential respect for the teacher, the teacher took offense. Furthermore, her disappointment resulted also from the fact that the student ignored her age. In Turkish culture, one is expected to avoid using the pronoun ‘sen’ even towards the people from the same age when they encounter for the first time, let alone an elderly person. Zeyrek (2001) comments that respecting older people is a cultural value that is individuals are exposed at very early ages in their family structure. This indicates that they are expected to extend this code of respect to their whole social life. Regarding this fact, it is normal that the teacher viewed this incident as rudeness. A similar case was stated by one of the maintenance staff.

**Participant 14**

Some learners have humiliating attitude towards administrative staff. I have encountered a learner calling me ‘sen’ instead of ‘siz’. Also some learners use imperatives while talking to us.

What the participants reported above shows that Turkish people find it quite rude when an unfamiliar person, especially a younger one, do not address them with the honorific pronoun ‘siz’. The participant 14 also thinks that they are facing this kind of rude attitude from students due to their position in the university. Because they are maintenance staff and do not represent an authority, the students are not courteous towards them. I argue that the case above has also involvement in association rights. I think this person takes offense from the fact that students cannot appreciate the importance of their job. They deserve respect from students because without the effort of maintenance staff, management of issues such as registration, grades, etc. would be chaotic.

**Relational Face**

Culpeper et. al. (2010) mentions addition of one new subcomponent to face category. Relational Face is an issue in managing unique relations with others who are personally known and important (Chen, Boucher, and Tapias, 2006; Culpeper et. al., 2010). These significant other(s) are differentiated from general group members whose identities do not matter (Culpeper et. al., 2010). Thus, in order Relational Face to be an issue, the relation between interlocutors should have a personal investment due to a Power or/and Social Distance concern.

**Participant 2**

One of the students keeps having short sleeps during the lesson. When I make a general warning, she pretends to pay attention to what we are doing for a while. However if she is not attracted by the topic, she again puts her head on the desk and sleeps again. The interesting point is that she is very sincere during the break times and she tries to have an intimate relation with me by indicating her interest for my classes. But I count those times during which she sleeps as a sign of disrespect to me as their teacher and my effort.

We counted this event as related to both Social Identity Face and Relational Face. The learner threatens her teacher’s social identity face by sleeping during the class time. The teacher evaluates this behaviour as disrespect and threatening her role as ‘hoca’ (Turkish
equivalent of teacher), as a member of a social group who deserves respect. Moreover, we believe that the student’s action influences her teacher’s Relational Face negatively. Even though the student tries to develop a positive rapport with the lecturer by showing her interest and love for the teacher during the break times, she keeps sleeping during the class. This kind of dual interpretation is not surprising but natural (Spencer-Oatey, 2007). Spencer-Oatey argues that a person who is suffering from a specific illness may reflect this situation for describing his individual status while at the same time having that illness may imply a collective identity for that person with other people suffering from the same illness. Similarly, this teacher’s comment is two-dimensional, involving her personal relation to the learner and her expectation as a member of teaching staff, a collective identity.

**Equity rights**

Spencer-Oatey (2002) describes Equity Rights as follows: ‘We have a fundamental belief that we are entitled to personal consideration from others, so that we are treated fairly: that we are not unduly imposed upon or unfairly ordered about, that we are not taken advantage of or exploited, and that we receive the benefits to which we are entitled’ (p.9). She points at the notions of cost-benefit and autonomy-imposition. The extract below illustrates an indirect involvement of Equity Rights.

**Participant 8**

I realized that some learners insistently used their mobile phones during the class hours for purposes not related to the content of my teaching. At the beginning of the term, I allowed them to use these devices just as appropriate to the tasks I would give in the lesson. I had stated that their use would be just for the lesson and under my observation.

This incident is primarily appropriate to be discussed in relation to Social Identity Face. However, it is also a case violating Equity Rights since our answer is yes to the question of ‘Does the interaction evoke an understanding that something counters a state of affairs in which a participant considers that they are...disadvantaged, unfairly dealt with?’ (Culpeper et. al., 2010, p. 12). In this extract, the teacher implies her discomfort about students using mobile phones during the class. She evaluates it as exploitation of her goodwill and a challenge to her authority.

**Student 2**

During the lunchtime, while we are waiting in the queue for taking our lunch, some people try to get into the queue in front of us despite our warnings when it happens.

In this example, the learner finds it rude for another learner to jump the queue and get the food before them. This is clearly a case against equity rights since that learner clearly ignores other people’s priority that they gain by waiting in the queue. The learner states that they warn these people. What is mainly disturbing here is the fact that this action has been attempted several times despite warnings. In a new environment, it is important to set the rules directing interaction in order to avoid chaos. This participant reacts against unfairness and show the ignorant learners that their behaviours are not acceptable.
Association Rights

The second sub-category of Rights is about both 
interactional association-dissociation and affective association-dissociation. Spencer-Oatey (2002) defines association rights as follows: 'We are entitled to association with others that is in keeping with the type of relationship that we have with them....We are entitled to an appropriate amount of conversational interaction and social chit-chat with others’ (p.10). The following incident includes an attempt to threaten affective association rights of the participant.

Student 5

Once, I got into the elevator and there were some others with me. I accidentally pressed a button for going up instead of going down to the cafeteria. Some students in the elevator grumbled. This is also my school, not only theirs, and I was mistaken, as it may happen to anybody else.

In this case, the student took offence because s/he felt the pressure of being groaned about due to a small mistake s/he did. The other students showed their discomfort via their behaviours. The student felt like her/his social identity face was violated. S/he implied that that school was a place for all the students and she would not take an action to disturb other students on purpose. Moreover, her/his disappointment results from the lack of tolerance indicated by the other students’ reactions despite that fact that it is her right to use that elevator as a member of that school. This finding confirms Zeyek (2001), who claims that collectivist nature of Turkish society leads people to take associated group members’ actions seriously thanks to group ties among them, whether it is in family, school, or same organization. Zeyrek states that if a person is inside the group boundaries, that person deserves more trust. In the case above, the learner informant says ‘this is also my school’, which signals her/his commitment to the school. Thus, the cause of disturbance is also the lack of solidarity. According to the participant, a group member should be automatically associated with more tolerance and respect in comparison to an outsider.

Conclusion

This study has reflected an approach of postmodern politeness work –as Culpeper (2008) labels it- since it attempts to depict lay people’s perceptions of impoliteness via context-dependent events. In this particular way, the evaluations of impoliteness were not limited to the specific linguistic formulae or conventionalised views about impoliteness.

This paper represents an initial and small step to form a positive institutional culture in a specific university. Though impoliteness research has been done in different kinds of institutional contexts such as a corporate organization (Mullany, 2008), a hospital (Grainger, 2002) and academic advising sessions (House, 2010), to my knowledge, there is no other study exploring impoliteness incidents in any institution from the perceptions of different members such as students, lecturers, and support staff. This study was situated in a newly established state school, which is still going through the formation of an institutional culture. In this ongoing process, I argue that exploring people’s context-based experiences with regular intervals will arise an institution-wide awareness about all shareholders’ politeness expectations. People will have a sound understanding of what constitutes impoliteness in this specific context. I suggest reporting these incidents with regular intervals and inviting people from the institution also in the coming years. Thus, people will take the direct message that a polite frame of interaction is promoted in this
institution and they will have a sound understanding of what constitutes impoliteness in this specific context.

One challenge of conducting a study like this appeared to be about the categorisation of incidents in the data. This challenge was partly due to the intertwined nature of events. In other words, some events violated more than one type of face and/or right. The second one was about to make the discrimination between the face and rights categories since, as Spencer-Oatey (2007) herself confirms, these two concepts may appear to be closely connected or bound-up. As she suggests, a real understanding of individuals’ behavioural conventions as well as those of their communities is required for appreciating the type of violation for a given case.

This study needs to be improved in several ways in terms of methodological aspect. First of all, the number of participants was limited. Another study with a larger sample may result in a bigger pool of cases. Secondly, some of the participants wrote ‘no’ when they were asked if they encountered any incidents of rudeness and this restricted the number of cases collected for the study. As for most of the qualitative studies, the data analysis was influenced by the subjective evaluation of the researcher though interrater reliability was checked for one third of cases chosen randomly. Another point is that the focus of this study was restricted to offences caused by learners only and other studies exploring incidents of impoliteness caused by different members of the institution also can be useful. Finally, future studies which will reveal prosodic features of impolite talk will be also welcomed in the field since this study also did not address those features in the data analysis.

As Locher and Watts (2008) argue, both politeness and impoliteness are reality and valid concepts for human interaction. Though this study has been an initial attempt to unveil the participants’ perceptions of impoliteness, future studies targeting a broader sample of participants and exploring their im/politeness perceptions also may contribute to the unique culture of this institution. Locher and Watts (2008) state that perceptions of impoliteness are constructed via individuals’ social practises and highly personal. Depending on the results of this study, I also argue that perceptions about impoliteness are considerably shaped by the general approach of our culture. In order to deepen our understanding of impoliteness, cross cultural studies can be highly informative. Future studies comparing institutional cultures of higher education institutions from different countries would yield interesting results, as well.

One final remark about the study is that the data provided us with mainly two types of information: what the offensive part was in reported cases and how the participants felt when they confronted those situations. Thus, their reactions to the incidents were generally missing. In other words, most of the participants did not give a full account of events including their reactions. In a more detailed study where the participants may be encouraged to state how they reacted to impoliteness incidents would yield a richer data. I assume that reactions given when confronted with impolite/offensive interactional behaviours are also worth of investigating. I believe that this kind of analysis would open a new avenue of research where the content of reactions against impoliteness can be analyzed as well as the content of impolite behaviours themselves. Thus, this field is in need of a taxonomy for classifying the types of these reactions, similar to the rapport management framework employed in this study as a way of analysing threats that rudeness poses.
References


GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU & KABALIK ALGI ANKETİ

Bu çalışma Tuba Demirkol tarafından, bu üniversitede yürütülecek olan bir araştırmanın veri toplama bölümünü oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma, kurumumuzda farklı pozisyonlarda çalışan görevlilerce ve eğitim öğretim gören öğrencilere ‘kaba/kabalık’ kavramlarının öğrencilerin hangi söz ve/ya davranışlarıyla eşleştirildiğini saptamak ve farkındalığımızı artırarak kurum sosyal yapısını olumlu yönde geliştirmek amacıyla tasarlanmıştır. Verdiğiniz cevaplar ve kimliğiniz tamamen gizli tutulacaktır. Elde edilecek bilgiler bilimsel yazılarla kullanılmaktadır. Çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz.

Tuba Demirkol
tuba.demirkol@asbu.edu.tr

Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılmıyorum ve istediğiniz zaman yarıda kesip bıraksamamıza izin veriyorum. Verdiğiniz bilgilerin kimliğini saklayarak sadece bilimsel amaçlı yazılarla kullanılmamasını kabul ediyorum. (Lütfen kutucuğu işaretleyiniz.)

Lütfen kendiniz hakkında kısa bilgiler veriniz:

**Bölüm 1:**

1. Uyruğunuz: T.C. _____ Diğer: _____
2. Cinsiyetiniz: Kadın _____ Erkek: _____
3. Yaşınız: _____
4. Bildiğiniz yabancı diller: _______________
5. Bu dilde yeterliliğiniz:
   - Çok iyi: _______ İyi: _______ Orta: _______ Çok Az: _______
   (Çok iyi: Yabancılarla yazılı ve sözlü olarak mükemmel bir şekilde anlaşabilirim.
   İyi: Yabancılarla yazılı ve sözlü olarak rahat bir şekilde anlaşabilirim.
   Orta: Yabancılarla yazılı ve sözlü olarak anlamakta zaman zaman zorlanıyorum.
   Çok az: Yabancılarla yazılı ve sözlü olarak anlaşmakta çok zorlanıyorum.)
6. Eğitim düzeyiniz (tamamladığınız eğitim seviyesi):
   - Lise ______
   - Ön lisans (2 yıl): ____
   - Lisans (4 yıl): ______
   - Yüksek lisans (Mastrur): ______
   - Doktora: ______
   Varsa sürdürmekte olduğunuz eğitim düzeyi:
   - Lise ______
   - Ön lisans (2 yıl): ___
   - Lisans (4 yıl): ______
   - Yüksek lisans (Mastrur): ______
   - Doktora: ______
7. Çalıştığınız kurumdaki pozisyonuz:
8. Yıl olarak toplam iş tecrübeniz:
9. Daha önce bir yükseköğretim kurumunda çalıştysanız:
   Toplam yıl: __________ Daha önceki mesleki pozisyonunuz: __________

10. Yurt dışı yaşam tecrübeniz varsa, nerede ve ne kadar süreligiye olduğunu belirtiniz:
   ________________________________

11. Şu anda Ankara Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi’nde öğrenci iseniz:
   Bölümünüz:____________________
   Ailenizin yaşadığınız şehir: _____________
   Ailenizin yaklaşık yıllık toplam geliri: ___________

Bölüm 2: Lütfen aşağıdaki maddeleri elinizden geldiğince ayrıntılı olarak (varsa geçmişte yaşadığınız ya da mümkün olduğunu düşündüğünüz örnek durumlardan bahsederek) yanıtlayınız.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Kaba/Kabalık kelimesinin size ifade ettiği anlamlar:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Bu üniversitede kayıtlı bir öğrencinin hangi sözcükleri veya hareketleri karşısında kaba/kabalık kelimesini kullanabileceğini anlatınız.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kaba/kabalık kelimesinin size çağrıştığı diğer Türkçe kelime(lar) ve duygular nelerdir?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Kaba/kabalık olarak nitelendirdiğiniz bir sözcük veya hareket karşısında kendi tavrunuz/tutumunuz nasıl olur?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Öğrencilerle muhatap olma sıklığınız:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gün boyunca sürekli:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haftada birkaç kez:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Okulumuzdaki kayıtli öğrencilerden size Kaba/kabalık olarak nitelendirdiğiniz sözü veya davranışsal boyut içeren bir tavıla karşılıştınız mı? Cevabınız evet ise, bu durumu anlatır mısınız?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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