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Interactive programmes on private radio stations in Ghana: An avenue for impoliteness¹

ABSTRACT

This study aims at showing the impoliteness strategies employed during some radio interactions. The data used here are mainly recordings of the morning shows of some private radio stations in Ghana. We establish that all the recorded utterances have some features that correspond with at least one of Culpeper's (1996, 2005) impoliteness strategies, which are bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, off-record impoliteness and withhold politeness. However, many of the participants prefer the use of the on-record strategies to the off-record strategies of impoliteness. We therefore assert that many participants in interactive radio programmes in Ghana prefer to convey messages to their addressees in a more direct and unrestrained manner, with little or no attention to their (addressees') face needs. These participants attack the faces of more powerful people not only to demean their social status but also to demand quicker results and gain some psychological relief.

KEYWORDS

radio
Ghana
interactive
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face
(im)politeness
on record strategies

1. The present article is part of a larger project, 'Investigating impoliteness in interactive programmes on radio'.

1. INTRODUCTION

'Seven out of ten (70%) Ghanaians listen to radio for most of their political, social, and economic information, particularly in the capital cities and larger towns where several radio stations are found' (Selormey 2012: 2). Apart from serving as an avenue for listeners to obtain information on important socio-political events, radio programmes provide an opportunity to citizens to publicly express their opinions on national issues that they are interested in. These programmes also serve as a medium for interpersonal communication (Agyekum 2010; Selormey 2012).

Hollander (1996) establishes that many radio stations have devoted a portion of their broadcast week to listener-call-in programmes. The popularity of talk-shows on radio is clear evidence of this development. In his view, the call-in segment on radio is one of the few public media that allows for spontaneous interaction between a large group of people, and this form of interaction is an important event for its participants. He further explains that political efficacy and participation are core necessities for a healthy democracy and other developmental issues in a country; therefore, talk shows on radio are very important as they provide some of the spark that citizens need to be actively involved.

Ross (2004) identifies that motivations for participation in phone-in programmes include a long-standing concern about an issue bothering citizens, a desire to speak to or about a particular politician and a desire to express one's anger over a personal experience. According to her, callers consciously acknowledge that politicians and other policy-makers are not likely to change their minds and policies as a result of their critical intervention. However, these callers are much more optimistic about the programme's awareness-raising potential among listeners. They also subscribe to the view that they are contributing towards something meaningful and are representatives of the public at large through their participation in phone-in programmes. Among Ghanaians, Agyekum (2000) asserts that the radio listeners who have the opportunity to share their opinions about some occurrences in the society either through texting or phone-in programmes often contribute towards social change.

As a platform for public communication, interactive programmes on radio in Ghana are expected to be of 'a higher level of linguistic decorum, oratory, persuasive language and politeness' (Agyekum 2010: 153). Agyekum (2010) stresses that the notions of politeness expected in an interaction on radio are more crucial than in a face-to-face interaction because a radio interaction is generally considered as mass communication. Many societies demand that participants of radio interactions must observe some acceptable norms of communication so that they can be considered polite. Nevertheless, Bousfield (2008) opines that impoliteness plays a central role and is relatively frequent in interactive programmes that encourage self-expression, especially in independent and democratic societies. Culpeper defines impoliteness as a form of behaviour 'which conflicts with what one expects or what one wants, or how one thinks things ought to be' (2011: 23). He stresses that impoliteness comes about when (1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-attacking, or (3) a combination of (1) and (2).

Yankah (1998) observes that Ghanaians tend to use abusive language in the media, especially during radio discourse. He further attributes this practice

to the growth of mobile phone technology and the fact that radio discourse is a non face-to-face interaction. Yankah (1998) points out that

[...] as communication becomes more faceless, the indigenous norms of restrained discourse are bound to slacken, taken over by greater openness and candour where affront is inevitable. But this also deepens the communication crisis; for faceless communication on radio-phone in programmes, has yielded its fair share of emotionally charged contributions, which have sometimes been interpreted as discourtesy to authority. (Yankah 1998: 40)

This implies that participants in radio interactions take advantage of the mediated voice granted them through advancements in telecommunication technology to explicitly threaten the faces of people, specifically, those in authority.

In the same vein, Coker (2012) explores the uses and gratifications that people sought to derive from sending text messages on radio panel discussions in Ghana. He shows that sending text messages to radio discussions is motivated by various gratifications such as expressions of dissatisfaction about national, social and personal issues through deprecation in the form of 'verbal attacks, insults and name-calling'. He attributes the common use of deprecation and face-threatening messages towards others to the texters' awareness of the anonymity that the technology of radio affords (Coker 2012: 128).

Some concerns have been raised about interactive programmes on radio that allow the public to freely voice their opinions about issues under discussion in live broadcast in Ghana. Many communication experts have highlighted private radio stations that use local Ghanaian languages, and have argued that their interactive programmes flaunt the norms of the Ghanaian community in relation to communication in public (Agyekum 2000, 2004; Coker 2012; Marfo 2013; Asamoah et al. 2014). These communication experts maintain that the interactive programmes serve as a channel for exhibiting impoliteness even though primarily, they serve as a medium for the masses to express themselves on issues bothering the citizens.

On this premise, we would like to look at how impoliteness is manifested during the interactive programmes of some private radio stations in Ghana. We will first explore, in accordance with Culpeper's (1996, 2005) impoliteness model, the strategies that radio interactants use to express impoliteness. We will then present the differences in the frequency of the use of these strategies.

2. IMPOLITENESS MODEL

Culpeper (1996) comes up with an impoliteness model that can be considered as a side-by-side but opposite structure to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness.

The main difference between Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies and Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies lies in their orientation to face. The politeness strategies are employed to maintain or enhance face, while the impoliteness strategies are employed to attack face (see Culpeper 1996: 356). These strategies relate to some significant social variables including relative power and social distance.

Below is a paraphrase of Culpeper's (1996: 356–57) strategies of impoliteness:

2. Accra is the capital town of the Greater Accra Region.

- Bald-on-record impoliteness

This strategy is mainly used where there is much face at stake and where there is an intention on the part of the speaker to attack the face of the addressee. The speaker does not try to save the face of the addressee in any way. 'The FTA is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimised' (Culpeper 1996: 356).

- Positive impoliteness

The FTA is designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants (Culpeper 1996: 356). A speaker who employs this strategy defies his addressee's desire to be approved of. Examples of this strategy from Culpeper (1996: 357) include to 'ignore', 'snub the other', 'exclude the other from the activity', 'disassociate from the other', 'be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic', 'use inappropriate identity markers', 'use obscure or secretive language', 'seek disagreement', 'make the other feel uncomfortable', 'use taboo words, abusive or profane language', 'call the other names', etc.

- Negative impoliteness

The FTA is designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants (Culpeper 1996: 356), that is, attacking a person's desire not to be impeded upon. The use of this strategy according to Culpeper (1996: 358) involves to 'frighten', 'condescend, scorn, or ridicule', 'invade the other's space', 'explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect' and 'put the other's indebtedness on record'. Culpeper et al. (2003: 1555) include another strategy in this category, which is 'hinder or block the other – physically or linguistically'.

- Sarcasm/off-record impoliteness

Sarcasm refers to the use of politeness strategies for social disharmony rather than the expected harmony. The politeness strategies used in this respect are clearly insincere and remain surface realizations. In terms of off-record impoliteness, the offence is conveyed indirectly by way of an implicature and could be cancelled or denied on account of a post-modification or any other type of elaboration offered. However, the intention behind the utterance clearly outweighs its surface meaning (Culpeper 2005: 44).

- Withhold politeness

This strategy is realized when a speaker remains silent or fails to act where politeness is expected. Culpeper (1996: 357) defines it as follows: 'the absence of politeness work where it would be expected'. Culpeper (2005: 42) adds that 'failing to thank someone for a present may be taken as deliberate impoliteness'. This suggests that the speaker has withheld politeness.

3. DATA

This study draws data primarily from radio interactions, specifically morning shows, from six different private radio stations in Ghana. The selected radio stations that are used for the study are Adom FM and Peace FM in Accra,²

Kessben FM and Boss FM in Kumasi,³ and Kekeli Radio and US FM in Ho.⁴ These private radio stations do not broadcast live feeds of programmes from the national radio stations in the country; many of their interactive programmes are mainly their own initiatives.

Participants of these interactive morning shows are mainly language users from various social, cultural, ethnolinguistic and educational backgrounds in the country. They are strictly encouraged to use the most widely spoken indigenous Ghanaian language among the inhabitants of the towns where this radio stations are situated. Thus, in Accra and Kumasi, Akan is used whereas in Ho, Ewe is used. Participants who cannot speak Akan or Ewe are also allowed to use English (Ghana's defacto official language) as the medium of their contributions. In such instances, the host of the programme usually finds some means to translate what they said to the listeners. The morning show includes a newspaper review segment, after which there is a panel discussion on some issues reported by the newspapers. Listeners are also provided the opportunity to air their views through texting and phone-in segments.

The panel discussions, interviews, phone-in and texting segments of the morning shows aired on the aforementioned FM stations were recorded between August, 2013 and February, 2014, and later transcribed. 50 of these recordings from each of the communities, necessary for the purposes of the present study, were purposively sampled and numbered (see Cresswell 1994: 148).

In addition, interviews were conducted to basically ascertain the judgement of individuals in each of the communities under investigation on the recordings. The necessity of the interview can be traced to the assertion that the notion of (im)politeness is dependent on 'judgements'. That is, a speaker's intention is irrelevant for listeners or hearers to assess a comment as offensive. Hence, it is not the intention of the speaker, rather it is the judgement of listeners or hearers that establishes whether a comment is considered offensive or not (Holmes et al. 2008; Locher and Watts 2008). Locher and Watts (2008: 78) maintain that usually, 'judgements' are based on and constructed through an individual's history of interactions within his or her society. This gives us a hint that the more one has lived in a particular community, the better his or her history of interaction for proper judgement.

Also, in relation to proper judgement in many Ghanaian contexts, many people tend to look up to the elderly because they are considered 'the custodians of culture', 'the symbol of wisdom' and 'society's memory databank' (see Agyekum 2004: 137 for details). Thus, the interviewees recruited for the study were individuals older than 50 years of age, who had lived in their respective communities for at least twenty years.

In each of the communities investigated, ten people were recruited through snowball sampling (earlier interviewees recommended other potential candidates who may be willing to participate in the study) and personal networks (see Marshall 1996 on sampling). The respondents were first questioned on their perception of impoliteness⁵ in general to serve as a basis for their judgements of the recorded radio utterances.

The respondents were further asked to randomly select a number from the collection presented to them. They then listened to the recorded utterance that corresponded with the selected number and were asked to identify and explain why a particular utterance can be considered impolite. It is needless to say at this point that the judgement of an utterance as impolite was largely

3. Kumasi is the capital town of the Ashanti Region.
4. Ho is the capital town of the Volta Region.
5. The responses gathered for the perception of impoliteness among the communities studied have been presented and discussed in Thompson and Agyekum (2015).

6. Background, here, refers to the stories that caused radio participants to make utterances that are deemed as impolite.

centred on the interviewees' native speaker intuition and their knowledge of the culturally established communicative norms and values of Ghana.

The utterances judged as impolite were subsequently categorized according to Culpeper's (1996, 2005) impoliteness model and described. The frequency of occurrence of the impoliteness strategies in all the communities was then analysed.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We gathered from the responses to the question 'what is impoliteness?' that, among the communities investigated, impoliteness refers to the use of language to show disrespect to others, especially people higher in terms of social status or older in age (see Thompson and Agyekum 2015). The following are examples of some general comments that the respondents made about some of the utterances that they were presented with:

- 'It is abusive'.
- 'It sounds offensive; it is unacceptable to say that to an elderly person or someone in authority'.
- 'The speaker is right but the statement is inappropriate because it is too direct and should be mitigated'.

The utterances in the subsequent subsections are considered possibly impolite based on the aforementioned responses gathered from the individuals during the interviews. Furthermore, each of the impoliteness strategies in terms of Culpeper's (1996, 2005) impoliteness model employed by a participant in an utterance during the interactive programmes to criticize and display disregard for others is highlighted and analysed. The most frequently used impoliteness strategy during radio interactive programmes in all the speech communities investigated is also shown.

4.1 Impoliteness output strategies

In the subsections below, the impoliteness strategy is first introduced. This is followed by the background⁶ of the utterance selected in relation to the strategy. The utterance, the FM station and the date of recording are also presented in addition to the analysis.

4.1.1 Bald on record impoliteness

Background I

The chairman, the presidential candidate and the vice presidential candidate of the NPP, an opposition party, presented a petition to the Supreme Court accusing the electoral commission and the sitting president (President Mahama) of rigging the 2012 elections. As demanded by the rule of law, the electoral commissioner (Dr Afari Gyan) was invited by the court for cross examination.

1. Oh Afari Gyan! What have you done to yourself, your family and Ghanaians? In fact, you are a disgrace to all old ages (Boss FM 19 August 2013).

The speaker displays his disregard for *Afari Gyan* by plainly (without any form of redress) calling him *a disgrace to all old ages*. Considering the use of *in fact*, it

becomes obvious that the speaker lays emphasis on the face-threat in addition to its transparency.

Background II

The president and other members of the executive arm of government pledged to allocate 10 per cent of their salaries to support the Community Health Improvement Services (CHIPS) compounds in the rural Ghana project.

2. *Ɔmampanyin akatua wate so10% no, is just one of his political gimmicks.*

'The president's reduction of his salary by ten percent is just one of his political gimmicks' (Kessben FM 2 December 2013).

In this instance, the speaker is so explicit and blunt that a listener does not have to struggle to understand the face threat directed towards the president.

Background III

It was reported that during the International Youth Fellowship (IYF) Volta Regional Camp meeting, former President Rawlings stated that the high level of corruption in the Fourth Republic started under former President Kufuor and was institutionalized by the late President Mills.

3. *President Rawlings fe criticisms wome le consistent o.*

'The criticisms of President Rawlings are not consistent' (Kekeli Radio 9 January 2014).

The face-threat in the statement above is seen in light of the fact that the speaker does not limit his evaluation about *President Rawlings* to the story at hand. He⁷ generalizes all the criticisms of his addressee as *not consistent*.

Overview

The direct and non-manipulative way of delivering bald on record impolite utterances is seen in all the examples in this section. The examples support the view of Dalton (2013: 5) that speakers who use the bald on-record strategy are 'non-manipulative...but are potentially crass'. Bald on-record impoliteness strategy is usually expected from a person who is in a higher position than his addressee. Generally, if the speaker is significantly more powerful than the addressee, the difference in power may restrict the addressee from reacting. The addressee may also not react for fear of suffering negative repercussions.

Although the referents of these statements in the instances above are people of high social status, the speakers do not soften their choice of words; they rather voice their opinions bluntly. In example 1 for instance, the electoral commissioner is referred to as *a disgrace to all old ages* and in example 3, the *criticisms* of an ex-president are described as *not consistent*. Here, we see the outright attack on the face of these personalities. The examples presented above therefore show that in radio discourse, some speakers who are in lower positions than their addressees use the bald on-record impoliteness strategy.

This practice can be attributed to the fact that radio participants, especially callers and texters, can hide under the increased freedom of the press and the

7. He and other forms of the third person masculine pronoun in the discussion of the utterances are used generically for the sake of convenience. They refer to both male and female speakers, and do not necessarily mean that all the speakers are males.

veil of anonymity that radio interactions offer them. They can choose hostile linguistic forms for publicly criticizing and attacking the faces of people who are more powerful than them.

4.1.2 *Positive impoliteness*

4.1.2.1 *'Use of Obscure/Secretive Language'*

(Refer to Background II)

4. John Dramani Mahama is 419 (Kessben FM 2 December 2013).

The number, 419, as used in the aforementioned example, is a coded language, which means fraudulent. If a reader or a hearer is not familiar with its use, he or she will be confused and has to ask for its meaning. The substrategy employed in this example is 'the use of obscure language'. It is obvious that example 4 is very concise, but we realize that it is an unclear and indirect way of saying that *John Dramani Mahama* (the president of Ghana) is fraudulent. This example is thus noted as a positive impoliteness strategy rather than a bald on-record strategy.

4.1.2.2 *'Act of Seeking Disagreement'*

Background IV

The General Secretary of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), popularly known as Sir John, made some comments about the Supreme Court that were considered contemptuous. The comments were brought to the attention of the judges and they invited him to come and defend himself.

5. *Wo a wobeka se Sir John ankasa amma party no biara, na w'adwene mu ye ha. Seriously, because enye supreme court asem no a, anka Sir John onkoka supreme court ho asem.*

'Anyone who says Sir John did not speak for the party is light minded. Seriously, because, if not for the Supreme Court case, would Sir John have spoken about the Supreme Court' (Boss FM 20 August 2013).

The substrategy 'seek disagreement' is seen here. The utterance signals that the speaker disagrees with those who are arguing that *Sir John* did not speak for the party. He does this by attacking their mental faculty in the statement *w'adwene mu ye ha*: 'you are light minded'.

4.1.2.3 *'Use of Abusive Language'*

Background V

General Nunu Mensah, the National Security Advisor, while addressing a gathering during the commissioning of a nine-classroom block that he built for a senior high school in Accra, told public sector workers who are dissatisfied with the president's administration to pick up their passports and get out of the country.

6. All over the world, military officers are trained and recognized as gentlemen. As a barracks boy, I have first-hand experience of these characteristics. They may sound tough when they deal with each

other but in fact, they are really excellent gentlemen especially when they deal with us 'idle civilians'. The General's demeanour and actions are a far cry from this training and for me *a great embarrassment* for all that I hold sacred and respectful to the gentlemen of the armed forces. The least said about this, the better (Peace FM 24 October 2013).

According to Culpeper (1996: 361), 'the notion of face is not confined to the immediate properties of the self, but can be invested in a wide range of phenomena such as one's family, job, nationality'. This assertion by Culpeper (1996) can be clearly seen in the statement, [...] *the General's demeanour and actions are a far cry from this training and for me a great embarrassment for all that I hold sacred and respectful to the gentlemen of the armed forces*. It can be identified that the face-threatening act is not just an attack on the *General's* personality but it is an attack on his job (his membership in the armed forces).

Background VI

It was reported that the tarred roads in and around the SSNIT flats in the Ho municipality were all worn out and filled with a lot of potholes.

7. The urban authorities or city people who are responsible for the road in our communities must take possession and repair the roads. If they need to surcharge a little more money because they don't have money, that is fine. It is something they can throw to us so that we can chip in a little here and there to sympathize with them. But to make roads, to have beautiful buildings put up there and not really maintain the road, *it is just stupidity* (US FM 3 February 2014).

In this example, the speaker seems to be quite upset about urban authorities doing little or nothing in terms of road maintenance in his community and others. In expressing his concern, the speaker uses a rather unacceptable word, *stupidity*, on radio, a public platform. The speaker expresses his displeasure with no attempt to save his face and that of his addressees by baldly using *stupidity*, which is considered highly abusive.

Overview

The foregoing discussion shows that apart from the bald on-record impoliteness strategy that is used to express impoliteness on radio in Ghana, the positive impoliteness strategy is also employed. It has been realized that the speakers of each utterance discussed critically and systematically defy their addressees' desire to be approved of.

We have shown that the attack on an addressee's desire to be approved of during radio interactions is done through various substrategies. However, the substrategies, 'the act of ignoring, snubbing, and making the other feel uncomfortable', were not found in the data. These substrategies were not found in the recorded utterances because they are usually achieved through silence, facial expressions and gestures (Laitinen 2011). The absence of these strategies can therefore be attributed to the fact that radio discourse is a non face-to-face interaction between a speaker and the addressee. Therefore, the use of non-verbal cues is not obvious.

8. Kaba is a type of traditional blouse for ladies in Ghana.

4.1.3 Negative impoliteness

4.1.3.1 'Condescend, Scorn, or Ridicule'

(Refer to Background II)

8. *President, 10% yi enye adee bi a ese se wode hoahoa wo ho efise wo, wommɔ ka. Wodidi kwa, woda kwa, woguare kwa, wosera nku kwa, wo car koraa a wote mu no, wote mu kwa, wo biribiara ye kwa. Nka eye akwadaa bi a yeawo no na yereto ne din a, anka yebefre wo kwakwa.*

President, this ten percent is not something you should be proud of because you do not spend on anything. You eat freely, you sleep freely, you bath freely, you smear pomade freely, even the car in which you sit, you sit in it freely. Everything of yours is free. If it were a new baby that must be named, you would have been named 'free free'. (Boss FM 3 December 2013)

The substrategy 'scorn' can be identified in the above example repeatedly. Through parallelism, the speaker repeats *kwa* 'freely' in the above statement as a way of imposing on the *president's* negative face. In relation to this strategy, Holmes (1984: 355) in Culpeper et al. (2003: 1560) avers that 'repetition itself serves as a rhetorical device to increase the force of the repeated speech act'. The repetition of *kwa* does not only advance the speaker's assertion but it also intensifies the attack on the addressee's face.

4.1.3.2 'Explicitly Associate the other with a Negative Aspect'

9. *Nea erekɔ so wɔ NDC amammuo yi mu deɛ akɔye se mmaa kaba, woto anim a, na akyire amoa. Amammuo no nye. Wɔnnwene ɔman no ho o. ɔman no a yede ama wɔn se wɔnnɔdi so no wɔnnwene ho o. Sika na wɔredwiri gu wɔn bɔɔ mu.*

The issues in this NDC governance is like the ladies' traditional blouse, as you iron the front part, the back crumples. The governance is bad. They don't think about the nation. They do not think about the nation that has been handed over to them to rule. It is just the money they keep stealing into their pockets. (Boss FM 19 August 2013)

In this utterance, the speaker uses the substrategy 'explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect' by comparing NDC's governance to *kaba*⁸. He does not talk about how beautiful it looks; rather he concentrates on how one struggles to iron it to show how bad the governance is. He also asserts that the leaders are only interested in the wealth of the nation but not the welfare of the citizens. This implies that the leaders are selfish.

4.1.3.3 'Be Contemptuous'

10. *Mabia be, water company de woto vovo na company wo kataã le Ghana? De wole extraordinary na dzɔɔfe wo kataã? Menye nye kple wo fe dzɔga wokɔ fetu xem na woa? Ke nukae dzɔ hafi ne etsi gba eye ne gblɛ woazu dziku na wo?*

Is the water company different from other companies in Ghana? Are they extraordinary from other workplaces? Is it not our taxes that are used to pay them? Why is it that when a pipe bursts and we talk about it, they get angry? (Kekeli Radio 15 January 2014)

The speaker in this instance also uses the substrategy 'be contemptuous' through parallel rhetorical questions. It can be seen that the speaker does not understand why workers of the water company become angry when they are criticized or chastised. The speaker strongly disapproves of their attitude. The speaker implies that they are just like other workers; they are not above criticisms. The speaker's contempt is mainly displayed through the following rhetorical question: *is it not our taxes that are used to pay them?* The speaker suggests that without the taxes of citizens, workers of the water company cannot make ends meet, therefore, they should accept the complaints of the citizens. The speaker in this respect imposes on the negative faces of his addressees.

4.1.3.4 'Frighten (Instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur)'

11. *Nipa bi ntumi nnwene nsisi so na wɔmomeɛse up. Wɔn a wɔdi yen so wɔmo nnye nripa bi a wobetumi de wo ho ahye wɔmo mu. Internet qualification nom ne ade na wɔnom de aba. Wo a wokura PHD anaa woye Emeritus, wohwe na nea onnim huu na ɔbeshow wo policy direction dee a, na wokɔɔ sukuu no ohumu kwa. Wonnya nhuu hwee, wobegye dimetus, wobehem atare dan ho na wawae awe.*

Some people cannot make complete thoughts and are thus messing up. Those ruling us are not people you can trust. They came with internet qualifications. If you have a PHD or emeritus and you expect someone who knows nothing to show you policy direction, then you went to school for nothing. You have not seen anything yet. You will obtain dimetus, paste it on the wall and later, pull it off to chew. (Kessben FM 20 August 2013)

The speaker uses the substrategy 'frighten (instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur)' in this utterance. The speaker is referring to the elites in Ghana who do not want to be involved in political matters. He first explains to his addressees that those at the helm of affairs are not qualified enough and are not dependable. The speaker then frightens his addressees by telling them that if they only pursue academic heights and leave governance to those who cannot handle it, they (the elites) will not receive the benefits worthy of their achievements.

Overview

The discussion above illustrates that a negative impoliteness strategy is employed in addition to bald on-record and positive impoliteness strategies during interactions on radio. Some instances of the substrategies of negative impoliteness strategy listed in Culpeper's impoliteness model have been identified. It has also shown that speakers can employ repetition or parallel structures as a way of intensifying the imposition on the negative faces of the

addressees. The use of these repeated forms and parallel structures emphasizes the attitude of the speakers towards their respective addressees. These forms tend to intensify the effect of the impoliteness strategy on the addressee (Culpeper et al. 2003).

4.1.4 Sarcasm/off record impoliteness

Background VII

Former President Rawlings praised Justice William Atuguba, the presiding judge of the election petition hearing, for the way in which he steered the affairs of the Supreme Court. He described Justice Atuguba as ‘the man of the decade’, saying that he was not commending him because of the outcome of the court case but rather for his character, discipline and fearlessness, which helped to stamp the authority of the judiciary.

12. *Mene Owura Justice Atuguba a anka asem a former president Rawlings aka no, I would not take it as a commendation because yen nyinaa yanim se me nua panyin former president Rawlings baabi a ogyina no, onnyina yie.*

‘If I were Mr. Justice Atuguba, I would not have taken what the former president Rawlings said as a commendation because we all know that, *my elder brother former President Rawlings has no good standing*’ (Adom FM 14 October 2013).

The use of the kinship term, *brother*, in this utterance is notable. Although the speaker’s intention is to attack the addressee’s face, he starts by relating to him closely by calling him *me nua*, ‘my brother’ and also acknowledging his position by referring to him as *panyin*, ‘elder’. He then spites him, saying *baabi a ogyina no, onnyina yie*: ‘he has no good standing’. This statement is considered inappropriate and impolite because it refers to an ex-president. The use of *my elder brother* is obviously sarcastic since the force of impoliteness outweighs the politeness strategy adopted in the utterance.

Background VIII

The 2012 presidential candidate of the NPP’s, his running mate and the party’s National Chairman challenged the validity of the 2012 elections and sent a petition to the Supreme Court. They stressed that they had some evidence of widespread irregularities that favoured the president and greatly impacted the final outcome of the poll. Citizens were waiting for the verdict of the court.

13. *We need a new Ghana, a new Ghana a ede unity beba, a new Ghana a asisie nni ho. A new Ghana with leadership a wɔmo wɔ vision, wɔmo wɔ love for the nation. Enkɔye wɔmo a sikadie bɔne ahyehye wɔn mu ma. Momma yemmɔ mpaɛ.*

We need a new Ghana, a new Ghana that will bring unity, a new Ghana where there is no cheating. A new Ghana that has leaders who have vision and love for the nation. Not a leadership that is full of spending extravagantly. We need to pray. (Kessben FM 24 August 2013)

On the surface, one can say that this speaker's closing remark of *momma yemma mpaee* 'we need to pray' and his repetition of *a new Ghana* are sincerely emphasizing his wish for *a new Ghana* but the use of *new* implies that there is an old Ghana. Taking a closer look at this utterance, it can be deduced that in the 'old Ghana', the leaders are cheats, the leaders are visionless and have no love for the nation such that they are always spending extravagantly. This statement is therefore an indirect face-attack on the leaders of this 'old' Ghana.

Background IX

It was announced that there has been an increase in fuel prices.

14. I want to know if John Mahama cannot rule Ghana, he should tell us (Boss FM 19 August 2013).

This statement could have been analysed as bald on-record impoliteness if the speaker had directly said 'John Mahama cannot rule Ghana'. However, the speaker tactfully makes this statement a request to avoid any form of confrontation. It is thus obvious that the speaker employs the 'off-record' strategy to condemn his addressee.

Overview

Apart from the three strategies discussed earlier that Bousfield (2008: 95) classifies as 'on-record impoliteness strategies', participants of radio interaction also use 'off-record impoliteness'. Obviously, the face-threat is not directly expressed; it is the duty of the hearer to deduce what the speaker is actually saying. Participants who employ this strategy in radio interactions respect the face needs of their addressees and are less confrontational in conveying their messages. They are able to modify a statement that meets with the disapproval of other participants and save their own faces.

4.1.5 Withhold politeness

This strategy was used together with other strategies, and was realized in radio interactions across all the communities in only one form – mentioning the names of addressees without their respective titles. A title, according to Salifu (2010: 286), 'confers various forms of authority or prestige on the holder including political, territorial, religious, economic or social authority, or it may be simply a mark of honour, without any authority whatsoever'. Among Ghanaians, a title is a status marker that must not be omitted when referring to anyone who has one, especially when he is within earshot (Agyekum 2003).

Considering example 1 for instance, the addressee is referred to as *Afari Gyan* instead of *Doctor Afari Gyan*. This speaker, thus, ignores the norms of the Ghanaian society and refers to his addressee with the bare names.

In examples 4 and 14 too, it is seen that the president of Ghana is addressed by his name only without the title *His Excellency*. It appears that during interactive radio programmes on political issues, the participants can freely refer to the president and other political leaders by their bare names. Although this may be a convention, it is still considered impolite in light of the sociocultural norms of communication of Ghanaians (Agyekum 2003).

It is therefore common to find radio participants who are members of the ruling party referring to the political leaders with their right address forms. On

the other hand, many of those who are in opposition just mention the bare names of these leaders. Since this act of omitting titles is common among the opposition parties' activists, it may be a signal that they have refused to acknowledge the leadership statuses of the rulers. Hence, it is a threat to the positive face wants of their addressees. The omission of titles during radio discourse as observed in this study supports Lin's (2003) view that this practice is common during non face-to-face interactions.

It is usually preferable and not considered a face-threatening act to refer to a person who holds a title with his title alone instead of referring to him by his bare name. For instance, in example 6, the act of referring to the addressee as *the General* instead of *Nunu Mensah* is considered polite.

4.2 Frequency of impoliteness strategies

This section presents the frequency (freq) of the impoliteness strategies as they occurred during the radio interactions recorded in the various communities. In Table 1, the difference or similarity in the preference of a particular strategy in one community compared to the other is shown. Table 1 is followed by Figure 1, which highlights the strategy that is often employed to express impoliteness on interactive radio programmes across the communities. The strategy 'withhold politeness' is not presented in this section because as stated earlier, there was no single occurring instance where this impoliteness strategy was used independently in the data gathered for this study.

As can be seen in Table 1, in Accra, the positive impoliteness strategy is employed in 38% of the recorded utterances while the negative impoliteness strategy is employed in 32%. Bald on-record impoliteness is seen in 24% of the utterances, and off-record impoliteness is seen in only 6% of the utterances. Of the utterances recorded in Kumasi, it is observed that the positive impoliteness strategy and the negative impoliteness strategy have an equal percentage (24%) of occurrence. Just as seen in Accra, in Kumasi, the off-record impoliteness strategy is the least (12%) employed strategy. The majority of the recorded utterances (40%) in Kumasi involve a bald on-record impoliteness strategy. It is realized that similar to Kumasi, in Ho, the bald on-record impoliteness strategy is employed in the majority (38%) of the recorded utterances. 28% of the utterances involve a positive impoliteness strategy. The use of negative impoliteness is seen in 26% of the utterances. The off-record

Impoliteness strategy	Accra		Kumasi		Ho		Total	
	Freq	Percent(%)	Freq	Percent (%)	Freq	Percent (%)	Total (Freq)	Total (%)
Bald On Record	12	24	20	40	19	38	51	34
Positive	19	38	12	24	14	28	45	30
Negative	16	32	12	24	13	26	41	27
Off record	3	6	6	12	4	8	13	9
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	150	100

Table 1: Impoliteness strategies in radio interactions in Accra, Kumasi and Ho.

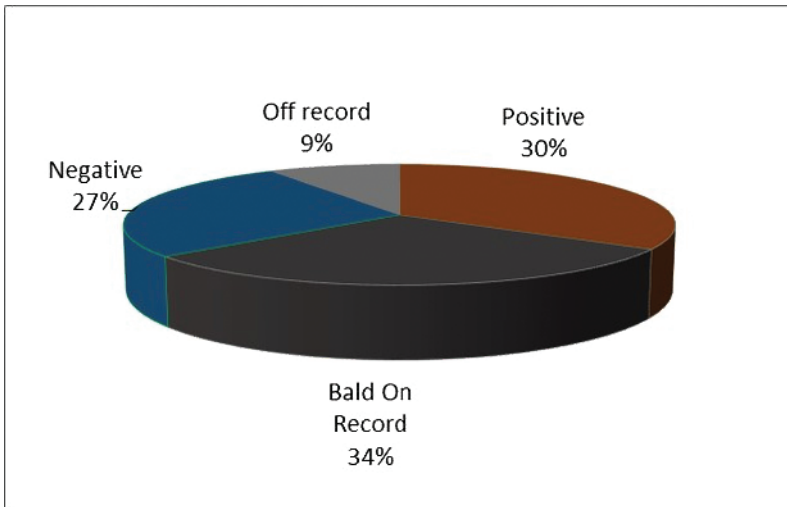


Figure 1: Impoliteness strategies in radio interactions in all communities.

impoliteness strategy is the least (8%) employed strategy in the utterances recorded in Ho, like it is in both Accra and Kumasi.

Figure 1 shows that generally, during radio interactions, the bald on-record impoliteness strategy has the highest percentage of occurrence (34%) while off-record impoliteness has the lowest percentage of occurrence (9%). The difference between the percentage of occurrence of bald on-record impoliteness and that of positive and negative impoliteness strategies is relatively slight. While positive impoliteness has 30% of occurrence, negative impoliteness has 27% of occurrence. It is obvious that, all together, on-record impoliteness (bald on-record, positive and negative impoliteness strategies) has 91% of occurrence while off-record impoliteness strategies have only 9% of occurrence.

Overview

It is observed that during interactive radio programmes, participants mainly display on-record impoliteness compared to off-record impoliteness while expressing their views. This implies that many of the participants across the communities investigated prefer not to recount their displeasure about their addressees in a subtle manner. The findings corroborate Yankah's (1998) assertion that radio discourse in Ghana is characterized by 'greater openness and candour. Admittedly, some of these participants just hide under the veil of anonymity that radio discourse provides to exhibit their antipathy and share their opinions in ways that can easily be interpreted as disrespect to authority. The preference of the on-record impoliteness strategies highlights their intention to explicitly display hostility and to demean the social status of their addressees (see Bousfield 2008). Nevertheless, some of these participants use the on-record impoliteness strategies not merely because radio discourse is faceless but because they are aware that, generally, such linguistic choices are needed for certain effects such as demanding quicker results and gaining psychological relief.

In many speech communities in Ghana, much value is placed on verbal eloquence and indirectness especially when speaking to authority; however, there are situations that call for direct and unrestrained speech even in face-to-face interactions (Yankah 1991; Obeng 1994). For instance, among the Akans, there are maxims such as *asem deɛ ɛda ne kwan mu a, na woaka, yennyi nto nkyen, na yenkyea no nso*, 'if an issue is lying on its path, you say it, we neither remove it or put it sideways nor bend it', and *asem nokware, yento sebe*, 'you don't have to apologize to say the truth'. These maxims point to the fact that employing 'off-record strategies' in interactions may not always be productive in achieving the desired results. Thus, one should share their concerns in an open and plain manner when necessary for positive effects. On such occasions, the use of unrestrained speech has more of a profound, socially constructive role than a socially disruptive one (Hopkinson 2014).

Moreover, in face-to-face interactions, there are times when speakers submit to the Akan maxim, *ka na wu na nsemfoo ye ahi*, 'say it as it is and die, for foolish matters are disgusting'. That is, it is better to voice your opinion even if this would lead to your death. Such speakers deliberately disregard the consequences of their speech and express their feelings as bluntly as possible and often in an antagonistic manner just for psychological relief or to make an impact. They may end their statements by saying, *maka m'akoma so asem*, 'I have said what was on my heart', which implies that they are psychologically relieved. Bearing in mind that there is some room for 'emotionally charged language' even in face-to-face interactions, participants in radio interactions express themselves freely and do not anticipate any consequence (Yankah 1998). As they are protected by the shield of anonymity, they tend to employ the on-record impoliteness strategies to express their disapproval towards people who are considered to be socially more powerful.

5. CONCLUSION

This article has dealt with the strategies of impoliteness in Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness model employed during interactive programmes on radio in Ghana. The article has demonstrated that across all the communities investigated, the recorded utterances used for this study have at least one of the following strategies: (a) bald on-record impoliteness, (b) positive impoliteness, (c) negative impoliteness, (d) off-record impoliteness and (e) withhold politeness.

The article has further demonstrated that in these communities, the on-record impoliteness strategies are more favoured than the off-record impoliteness strategies. This is seen in light of the fact that the on-record impoliteness strategies have 91 per cent of occurrence whereas the off-record strategies have 9 per cent of occurrence. It has been established that many participants in radio interactions across all the communities prefer to convey messages to their addressees in a more direct, plain and unrestrained manner, with little or no attention to their (addressees) face needs for certain effects. These effects include demanding quicker results and gaining psychological relief.

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