IMPOLITENESS AND MOCK-IMPOLITENESS IN DOM 2

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This paper offers an empirical analysis of impoliteness and mock-impoliteness in colloquial Russian conversation by examining the ways in which interactants produce and display an orientation to impolite and mock-impolite utterances. The corpus consists of recorded naturally occurring Russian talk-in-interaction gathered from the Russian reality television show 'Dom-2' represents the first usage of Russian reality television as a corpus for linguistic analysis.

Rather than adhering to a strict first-order, participant-constructed (Lachenicht 1980, Culpeper 1996, 2005) or second-order, analyst-constructed (Terkourafi 2005, 2008 Locher and Watts 2005, 2008) conception of impoliteness, the paper argues that one can be used to inform the other and utilizes both first and second order methodological approaches to classify impolite and mock-impolite utterances. The paper utilizes second-order approaches to identify potentially impolite or mock-impolite utterances; at the same time, it argues that the actual classification of impolite or mock-impolite utterances is a first-order concept discursively constructed through the ways in which participants orient to a given utterance. The identification of impolite utterances consists of three separate but compatible approaches: Culpeper’s (2005) model of impoliteness; the presence of taboo or foul language within an utterance; and those occasions where interactants publicly orient to an utterance as impolite through the usage of such words as grubij ‘rude’, or oskorbitel’nyi ‘offensive’.

The paper analyzes the specific ways mock-impolite turns are designed both linguistically (through lexical items, turn structure and prosody) and para-linguistically (through laughter, pauses, body language) and examines how mock-impolite turns are discursively co-constructed by the interactants.

Despite the increase in scholarship devoted to impoliteness, mock-impoliteness has received relatively little attention. By providing a detailed account of the design of mock-impolite utterances, the paper represents a significant contribution to a largely unexplored phenomenon.

1. Introduction

Scholars of impoliteness have readily noted and rightly observed that, compared to the robust literature about politeness, there is a paltry amount of literature concerning impoliteness (Bousfield 2008: 17). Recent scholars—most notably Jonathan Culpeper and Derek Bousfield—have begun to alleviate this imbalance; however, as yet relatively little attention has been paid to the notion of mock-impoliteness. This paper adds to the growing field of impoliteness studies by examining the ways that interlocutors not only produce but also orient to mock-impolite utterances. This paper is in line with some recent studies on impoliteness in making use of unscripted television (Culpeper 2006, Bousfield 2008) as a venue for linguistic analysis, but it is the first paper to examine the phenomena of impoliteness and mock-impoliteness in colloquial Russian and to do so using the relatively new genre of reality television.

For an utterance to be considered mock-impolite, it must both contain some characteristics conventionally associated with impoliteness (lexical content, prosody, body language or otherwise) but importantly also have some accompanying feature that differentiates it from an impolite utterance. The first task, then, is to define exactly what constitutes an impolite utterance. Previous scholarship can be divided into first-order and second-order conceptions of impoliteness. First-order conceptions of impoliteness are those which take the view that impoliteness is a judgment made by the participants according to their norms of their particular discursive practice. Second-order conceptions are those
which utilize conceptual models to determine the impoliteness of a given utterance. In contrast to the prevailing notion that first-order and second-order impoliteness are mutually exclusive concepts, this paper argues that one can be used to inform the other; it utilizes both first-order and second-order methodological approaches in the classification of impolite/mock-impolite utterances.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Politeness

Since Brown and Levinson’s seminal 1978 monograph (second edition 1987), much politeness research has been firmly rooted in Goffman’s notion of face (e.g., Goffman 1967). Goffman defines face as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (Goffman 1967: 213). Accordingly, face is mutually constructed and sustained during social interactions.

Viewing face as a discursively created entity necessarily entails that it is dynamic and changes from interaction to interaction. However, in their revision Goffman’s notion of face, Brown and Levinson posit a Model Person with a core stable set of values that treats communication as a rational and objective system. Watts (2003) argues against this approach, which he sees as a static and fixed notion of a personality, in favor of a construction of the individual’s self image that is contingent on social factors. Likewise, Werkhofer (1992) notes that Brown and Levinson’s notion of politeness considers only the production and not the perception of the utterance. In addition to these critiques one may also note that Brown and Levinson’s notion of politeness extends only over a single turn in talk-in-interaction and does not account for utterances extending over a number of turns throughout the interaction.

2.2 Impoliteness

Culpeper (1996) utilizes Brown and Levinson’s model as a departure for his seminal article on impoliteness. Terming impoliteness “the parasite of politeness” (ibid.: 355), Culpeper conceives of impoliteness as the use of intentionally face threatening acts. Culpeper lays out five super strategies that speakers use to make impolite utterances:

1. **Bald on record impoliteness**: performing the FTA (Face Threatening Act) in a direct, clear, unambiguous, and concise way even when face considerations are relevant.
2. **Positive Impoliteness**: strategies designed to damage the addressee’s positive face wants.
3. **Negative Impoliteness**: strategies designed to damage the addressee’s negative face wants.
4. **Sarcasm or mock politeness**: performing the FTA with politeness strategies that are obviously insincere.
5. **Withhold politeness**: Not performing politeness work where it is expected.

As Culpeper’s initial model of impoliteness was based on Brown and Levinson’s theory of politeness, it was subject to the same criticisms—in particular, that it was decontextualized and put a strict emphasis on production to the exclusion of perception. These criticisms led Culpeper to reformulate his model of impoliteness to incorporate the discursive nature of social interaction. Specifically, Culpeper (2005: 38) defines impoliteness as those occasions when “(1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behavior as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2).”
2.2.1 Impoliteness and Conversation Analysis

Despite Culpeper’s (2005) expanded definition of impoliteness as a function of relational work, the difficulty still remains just how to categorize specific utterances as polite versus impolite. Holmes and Schnurr note that “we can never be totally confident about the ascription of politeness or impoliteness to particular utterances, even for members of our own communities of practice” (Holmes and Schnurr 2005: 122). This is a shortcoming Hutchby (2008) attempts to rectify in his study of impoliteness in talk-in-interaction.

Hutchby utilizes a conversational analytic approach to defining impoliteness and limits himself to only those occasions where the participants publicly orient to an utterance as polite/impolite. He examines interruptions and explicit reports of rudeness in naturally occurring speech-in-interaction and argued that analysts should shift their attention from defining particular linguistic devices that a participant may or may not utilize, and instead examine the ways in which participants themselves orient to the actions or utterances of others as impolite.

While Hutchby’s study was the first to examine impoliteness from a conversational analytic perspective, conversation analysis has dealt with how speakers orient to utterances from its very inception. Conversation analysis is centrally concerned with how speakers orient to utterances. It aims to describe the procedures and expectations with which participants produce and understand ordinary conversational conduct (Heritage 1984: 245).

Sacks and Schlegloff (1973: 295–96) argue for the ‘sequential implicativeness’ of a turn, by which it projects a relevant next turn or activity type; they observe that many conversational actions form a pair linkage, which they term adjacency pairs. Among such adjacency pairs are the ritualized exchanges of ‘Hello’ and ‘Goodbye’, but notably also more complicatedly paired actions such as question-answer, request-grant/rejection, etc.

Sacks and Schlegloff do not make the claim that adjacency pairs are inherently linked or invariably produced as succeeding actions. Rather, their claim is that there is a normative framework, such that, after the hearer’s recognition of an utterance of a first pair part (a question, request etc.), there is the expectation, derived from the interlocutors’ habitus, that the next speaker will produce the second pair part (an answer to the question, the granting of the request, etc.). This expectation that the second member of the adjacency pair will be uttered is contingent upon the utterance of the first turn of the adjacency pair and allows both the interlocutors and analysts to find that specific conversational events (answers to questions, refusals of requests etc.) are either present or absent. The fact that conversation is built up of successive turns again allows for both the interlocutors and analystsspeakers (and again analysts as well) to demonstrate their mutual understanding of the task at hand.

2.2.2 Impoliteness and Activity Types

While conversation analysis does offer a glimpse into the expected linguistic structure of an utterance through adjacency pairs, it does not consider how the specific context of an activity helps to shape and structure a given utterance. Levinson (1992) argues that the key to the meaning of utterances lies in knowing the nature of the activity in which the utterances play a role. Speech acts and speech activities are, for Levinson, reflexively related in so far as one influences the production of the other. Levinson defines an activity type as “a fuzzy category whose focal members are goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded events with constraints on participants, setting, and so on, but above all on the allowable contributions” (Levinson 1992: 69). Each particular activity type gives the participants an “inferential schemata” (Levinson 1992; 72), which contain a corresponding set of assumptions and expectations that accompany the production and perception of an utterance.
A similar account of the relationship between speech acts and activity types through the notion of *relational work* has been offered by scholars of politeness/impoliteness, most prominently Locher and Watts. Their conception of relational work uses the notion of face, not as reformulated by Brown and Levinson (1987), but as originally put forth by Goffman; it is intended to cover not just politeness/impoliteness, but “the entire continuum from polite and appropriate to impolite and inappropriate behavior” (Locher 2004: 51). Locher and Watts’ point of departure is the notion that impoliteness (and politeness) is dependent on the judgments that the participants make during an ongoing interaction in a particular setting. Moreover, these judgments are based on and constructed through an individual’s history of social practice, that is, their history of interactions with the interlocutors and within their society in general. Interactants orient to particular norms of behavior that a given social interaction evokes. An impolite utterance, according to Locher and Watts (2008: 79), has two fundamental characteristics: a breach of the expectations of a given interaction and a negative assessment by the participants according to the norms of a given interaction.

### 2.3 Mock-impoliteness

Culpeper refers to mock-impoliteness as “impoliteness that remains on the surface, since it is understood that it is not intended to cause offence” (Culpeper 1996: 352). Leech defines banter as mock-impoliteness meant to encourage social harmony, yet does not readily define what mock-impoliteness apart from stating it in terms of banter (Leech 1983: 254). Kienpointer (1997: 261) offers a typology of rudeness where mock-impoliteness is conceived of as a form of cooperative and simulated rudeness. Terkourafi (2008: 68) defines mock-impoliteness as ‘unmarked rudeness’; she suggests that ‘unmarked rudeness’ occurs when an utterance is used in a conventionalized setting and the participants have ‘homologous habitus’.

Perhaps the best-known study of mock-impolite behavior is Labov’s (1972) study of the phenomenon of ‘sounding’ (the competitive usage of ritual insults) among the youth of the African-American community in New York. Labov documented that insults could potentially have a socially affiliative effect. In addition, there was a rigid structure to ‘sounds’. A sound could not be just any competitive insult but had to be false; otherwise it would qualify as a genuine insult. In addition, the use of a sound often led to the occurrence of a second sound designed to ‘top’ the first (Labov 1971: 153). They thus formed adjacency pairs where the production of one led to the expectation of another sound.

Other than Labov’s pioneering work, studies that specifically address mock-impoliteness have been relatively few. In a study on the role of insults in the construction of male identity among Spanish teens, Zimmerman (2003: 57) found that utterances typically analyzed as constituting FTAs can actually function as a means of constructing a generational identity; he termed these utterances *antipolite*. Bernal (2008) examines insults in colloquial Valencian Spanish and divides impoliteness into two types: *authentically impolite speech acts* and *inauthentically impolite speech acts*. Bernal also argues that addressees oriented to authentically impolite speech acts differently; such mock-impolite utterances are typically accompanied by laughter or a joke, while authentically impolite utterances typically evoke protests and confrontation.

### 3. Methods of identifying impolite and mock-impolite utterances

#### 3.1. Linguistic and paralinguistic cues

One approach to identifying impolite and mock-impolite utterances is the methodology employed by Hutchby (2008), in which utterances are impolite only in so far as interactants publicly orient and ascribe impoliteness to others through evaluative terminology. In English such evaluations might include terms like *rude, insensitive, impolite*, etc.; similarly, in Russian they might include *grubyj* ‘rude’, *oskorbitel’nuyj* ‘insulting’, *nevëžlivyj* ‘impolite’ and numerous others.
However, not all impolite utterances provoke such explicit evaluations. Culpeper (1996, 2005) identifies utterances as possibly impolite by looking at the use of particular impoliteness output strategies (see also Bousfield 2008: 99). It should be noted that Culpeper intends for his model to be used only to identify potentially impolite utterances, not to evaluate utterances as actually impolite, since the true evaluation of an utterance as impolite or mock-impolite is discursively constructed by the participants during a given interaction.

The use of insults is often a signal of potentially impolite utterances. Thus Culpeper (1996) mentions taboo language (swearing, abusive or profane language) as one marker of impolite utterances in English. However, this is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for an utterance to be identified as impolite. Some of the Spanish insults examined by Bernal (2008: 782) “carry a negative lexical load” but nevertheless capable can read as positive affect, not negative affect. In general, it should be noted that Russians tend to view taboo language differently than English or Spanish speakers. As Watts (2003: 15 citing Rathmayer 1999) notes, Russians conceive of a polite person as one who is likeable calm, well wishing and one who stresses intimacy and the display of friendliness. Russians nearly unanimously maintained that a polite person should absolutely not use vulgar or coarse language. Indeed, my own observations suggest that Russians tend to link the use of taboo words with impoliteness more than Americans do and to evaluate them more negatively. Nevertheless it is not enough to simply classify an utterance as from its lexical content we must also look at its use in interaction.

Paralinguistic features can also aid in the interpretation of utterances as polite or mock-impolite. As Culpeper (2005: 68) notes, the communicative resources for impoliteness extend well beyond grammar and lexicon; in particular, prosody can play a central role in the creation and evaluation of impoliteness. Bernal (2008) also notes that prosodic considerations (tenor, rising tone, laughter) play a large role in the determination of an utterance as authentically impolite or mock-impolite (Bernal 2008).

### 3.2. Adjacency Pairs and Impoliteness

In section 2.2.1, I noted that Sacks and Schlegloff (1973: 295–96) demonstrate that the participants of an interaction display their mutual understanding for the task at hand through adjacency pairs and the conversational turns themselves; moreover, these adjacency pairs can be used to accomplish particular actions. Following this, I take the position that adjacency pairs can be used to ‘do impoliteness’ and, accordingly, to ‘do mock-impoliteness’. Impoliteness and mock-impoliteness can be created using any number of turns—from a single turn (in the case of graffiti or a single profane utterance) all the way to an indefinite string of profane language over the course of innumerable turns. However, in my analysis I pay particularly close attention to three-turn sequences.

The reasoning for this is as follows. If we take as our starting point some particular utterance, then, according to the notion of adjacency pairs, the second utterance contains within it the means by which the previous speaker can determine how their utterance was understood. That is, if the initial utterance is a question and the second turn is an answer to that question, the first speaker is able to determine that his utterance was understood by virtue of the answer being the second part of the adjacency pair. Similarly, the third turn is the means by which the initial hearer (second speaker) comes to know if the uptake that s/he displayed in the second turn was in fact appropriate or correct. Each subsequent turn is an opportunity for the interactants to demonstrate to their interlocutors their understanding of the previous turn and is what Heritage terms “the basic building blocks of intersubjectivity” (Heritage 1984; 256).
3.3. Distinguishing mock-impoliteness from actual impoliteness

Many authors have emphasized that mock-impoliteness is not impoliteness (e.g., Leech 1983, Culpeper 1996, Kienpointner 1997, Terkourafi 2003, 2005, 2008, Bernal 2008, Locher and Watts 2003, 2005, 2008), yet their accounts do not explain how mock-impolite utterances are produced and oriented to. See table 1 for my representation of impolite and mock-impolite utterances.

I contend that mock-impolite utterances are parasitic on impolite utterances and so contain linguistic or paralinguistic features of a characteristically impolite utterance. That is, the locutionary content of an impolite utterance and a mock-impolite utterance contain similar elements. I have therefore represented impolite and mock-impolite illocutions as arising from an identical locution. The difference arises at the level of the illocution. I propose that, in addition to impolite illocutions, there exist also mock-impolite illocutions. A mock-impolite illocution is one in which the socially conventionalized impolite illocutionary force has been negated. Thus the difference between an impolite illocution and a mock-impolite illocution is not in the lexical content or the locution, but in the intended illocutionary force, the desired uptake and perlocutionary effect. Where impolite illocutions are intended to scorn, belittle or otherwise use further impoliteness strategies, mock-impoliteness illocutions carry no such intention and can function as affiliative and promoting social solidarity.

A similar distinction between mock-impolite and impolite illocutions is examined in Bernal (2008), who finds that, despite certain utterances having the illocutionary content (insults and taboo language) of an impolite utterance, these utterances do not always have the perlocutionary force of an impolite utterance. For this reason she distinguishes between authentically impolite utterances and non-authentically impolite utterances. Authentically impolite utterances have perlocutionary effects such as causing anger, protestation, confrontation, raised voices, and escalation of tension. In contrast to this, inauthentically impolite utterances, which do not have the illocutionary force of an impolite utterance, typically have perlocutionary effects such as exclamations accompanied by laughter, friendly responses, and the establishment or continuation of a relaxed atmosphere.

A subsidiary question of all of this is what accounts for the perception of a potentially impolite utterance as a mock-impolite utterance? Scholars have attempted to demonstrate the effects of context on the perception of an utterance and much of this work centers on the notion of activity types, or contextual frames. Terkourafi argues for a concept of unmarked rudeness, wherein particular contexts have embedded within them particular expectations about how face will be handled; unmarked rudeness occurs in conventionalized contexts and when the interlocutor’s frames of expectation are homologous (Terkourafi 2008: 68). Locher and Watts (2008) argue for a similar conception through their invocation of a ‘frame’, which they understand to be a cognitive conceptualizations of appropriate and inappropriate behavior constructed through the interlocutors’ histories of social practice, against which the lexeme polite or impolite is judged.

This paper is in line Terkourafi, Locher and Watts in arguing that impoliteness and mock-impoliteness is at least in part a first-order construct; however, it also uses Levinson’s (1992) notion of activity types as a means to understand the contextual significance of a given utterance. Activity types are “a fuzzy category whose focal members are goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded events with constraints on participants, setting, and so on, but above all on the allowable contributions” (ibid.: 69). A given activity type allows for the participants to construct an inferential schemata that heavily predisposes speakers toward a particular type of utterance, and predisposes the hearer toward expecting a certain utterance.

4. Methodology

The methodological tools that this paper will utilize are largely those from speech act theory and conversation analysis. However, this paper does not limit itself to a single methodological approach, but
aims to utilize both conversation analysis and speech act theory to gain a better understanding of the production and perception of impolite and mock-impolite utterances.
4.1 Data

My corpus for this study consists only of naturally occurring speech from the Russian reality television show *Dom-2*. In order to accurately transcribe the talk in interaction and note paralinguistic features, I captured the free streaming content from the website [www.dom2.ru](http://www.dom2.ru) (last accessed on February 28 2011) by using the screen capture technology Snapz Pro X. This allowed the files to be saved to the hard-drive, where they could then be accessed, viewed, and excerpted.

*Dom-2* is a reality television show where the participants are explicitly trying to *postroit’ ljubov’* ‘build a loving relationship’. The majority of the participants live on site in housing built specifically for the show and have their lives filmed. Some participants rotate in and out of the show weekly; however, the majority of the participants have been on the show for a year or more.

4.2 Methodological Concerns

One of the problems that analysts often encounter in gathering naturally occurring speech data is the Observer’s Paradox. While my problem here is not directly that of the Observer’s Paradox (as there is no linguist on the site of *Dom-2*), some may still question the naturalness of the speech and interactions in the data set. Early research in Conversation Analysis avoided this by using data recorded from naturally occurring telephone conversations (Sacks 1963, Schlegloff 1968), while early research on politeness/impoliteness simply ignored it and instead focused on the production of speech acts as formulated by the analyst (Brown and Levinson, Leech 1983, Kienpointner 1997, Lachenicht 1980). However, more recent research has begun to utilize data from what Bousfield (2008; 17) terms “fly on the wall documentaries,” (a classification which also includes my corpus *Dom-2*) such as dialogues from the British television documentary *Soldier Girls* (Culpeper 1996), the British police documentary *Raw Blues* (Bousfield 2008), the British television show *The Weakest Link* (Culpeper 2005), and the Gordon Ramsey cooking show *Boiling Point*, where verbal expletives and impoliteness run particularly rampant (Bousfield 2008). These shows all utilize some form of a camera crew or recording equipment, and all of the participants are aware that they are being recorded, which has prompted some question the extent to which these data can still be termed ‘natural’. However, recent research (De Fina 2011, Koven 2011) has suggested that some speech situations (most notably the sociolinguistic interview) previously thought of as unnatural, are in fact just another type of speech genres and should not be thought of as unnatural. Such a reclassification of what was previously conceived of as a very unnatural speech genre may bolster my argument for characterizing the language and social interactions in *Dom-2* as natural.

One final note regarding this particular data set is that the participants are explicitly goal-oriented, insofar as they have come to the show specifically to find love. However, this again does not seem to substantially differ from real-life interactions. Wittgenstein famously conceives of all language use as a game, which by its very nature is goal-oriented. Likewise, Bousfield (2008), following a theoretical underpinning also utilized by Culpeper (2003), Bandura (1973), Lakoff (1989), and Beebe (1995), also frames his conception of impoliteness as strategic and goal-oriented.

With these considerations in mind, there are definite benefits to be had in utilizing a data set taken from reality television. First, the data is exclusively unscripted, naturally occurring speech and although there is editing, the participants do not know which of their interactions will be chosen for the final cut. Moreover, the data are recorded not only as audio recordings, but also as video, which allows the analyst to examine body language, direction of gaze, gesture, and other paralinguistic cues. Given the vastness of the data set (over 10 hours of videotaped speech in interaction) and Culpeper’s observation that television entertainment seems to lend itself quite naturally to instances of impoliteness (Culpeper 2005), there are enough data to conclude that Leech’s statement “conflictive illocutions tend, thankfully, to be rather marginal to human linguistic behavior in normal circumstances” (Leech 1983: 105) is rather mistaken.
5. Analysis

Turning now to the data, we can see the theoretical principles discussed above at work. I will first offer an analysis of impolite turns in order to establish a descriptive account of impoliteness before analyzing the mock-impolite turns. The motivation for this is that, as suggested above, mock-impoliteness is parasitic on impoliteness; thus an analysis of mock-impolite turns is predicated on a baseline description of impolite turns. The classification of these utterances is done in accordance with Culpeper’s impoliteness strategies (1996: 356–57; see 2.2 above).

It is important to note that the analysis that follows is not a comprehensive account of impoliteness and mock-impoliteness in Russian in all of their possible manifestations. Such an account would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. Rather, the analysis is intended to describe these particular examples. Nevertheless, these examples do shed light on some of the possible strategies interlocutors can use to express impoliteness and mock-impoliteness in other contexts.

5.1 Impoliteness

It is perhaps beneficial to begin with a readily identifiable case of impoliteness. The impoliteness strategy here is that of condescending scorn or ridicule. This interaction involves four interlocutors (Sergej Ermakov (Se), Tat’jana (T), Inna (I) and Elja (E)), although the conversation is largely dominated by Sergej and Tat’jana. They are all seated at the kitchen table drinking tea and snacking. The ongoing conversation deals with the potential outcomes of the upcoming ladies’ vote, where there is the distinct possibility that Tat’jana will be voted off of the show. Sergej has been attempting to narrate a story and Tat’jana has been continually interrupting him to dispute the contents of the story.

Se: Кать, слышишь? свою пасть закрой с тобой разговариваю.
T: Охренел, что ли? Пасть у тебя!
Se: Пасть закрой ты чмом!
T: Сереж (throws hot tea in his face)
Se: Ты кипятком, сука, ты чё меня кипятком обливашешь?
T: А ты чё меня чмом называешь?
I: Вы чё, одурели?
Se: Ты чё кипятком?
T: А ты какого хрена, я тебе! (Sergej spits in her face, and she begins to kick him)

S:Kat’, do you hear me? Shut your trap, [people] are talking with you.
T:Have you gone nuts or something? You’re the one with the trap!
Se: Shut your trap, you loser!
T: Serež (throws hot tea in his face)
Se: You [threw] boiling water— you bitch, why did you throw boiling water on me?
T:Why are you calling me a loser?*
I: What, are you two out of your minds?
Se: Why did you throw boiling water on me?
T: And why the hell did you—I’ll get you! (Sergej spits in her face, and she begins to kick him)

Simply looking at the escalation of nonverbal violence, we can see that neither Tat’jana nor Sergej take very kindly to one another’s utterances. The illocutions within the interaction demonstrate this escalation as well. The interaction begins with a directive from Sergej to Tat’jana svoju past’ zakraj ‘shut your trap’. The traditionally intended perlocutionary effect of such a directive (namely, having the
addressee shut her mouth) is not achieved; instead, the directive is met with a social sanction—*Oxrenel čto li?* ‘Have you gone nuts or something?’ and the assertion ‘*past* u tebja ‘you’re the one with the trap’. Sergej meets this assertion with two further illocutionary acts. The first is a repetition of his directive that she shut her mouth, and the second is an insulting declarative *ty čmom* [sic] ‘you are a loser’. It is this insult to which Tat’jana orients. The perlocutionary effect of the declarative *ty čmom* is to provoke Tat’jana to throw burning hot tea in Sergej’s face. That Tat’jana’s turn orients not to the assertion that she is a bitch (*suka*), but instead to the declaration that she is a loser (*čmom*), i.e., ascribe intention to the interlocutors. Sergej is quite startled after Tat’jana throws hot tea in his face and explicitly asks for the justification of her actions. Tat’jana does not offer a straight answer; rather, she asks for a justification of his calling her a loser. The typical preferred response to a question is an answer, yet Tat’jana in her next turn responds with another question—*A ty čē menja čmom nazvyvaes’?* ‘why are you calling me a loser?’. While responding to a question with a question is unexpected and uncooperative, it does make it clear that what is at issue for Tat’jana is not why she has to be quiet, but why Sergej has declared that she is a loser. Furthermore, the fact that the perlocutionary effect of such a declarative is to cause Tat’jana to throw hot tea in his face allows for a straightforward reading of this interaction as impolite.

Before turning to less obvious examples of impoliteness, let us examine another interaction where it is straightforward to ascribe impoliteness to the turns and utterances. The following excerpt is taken from a conflictive interaction between the couple Saša (S) and Daša (D). Saša is lying on the bed with his cat Myška, while Daša is standing up and walking around the room. The conflict stems from Daša’s belief that Saša is emotionally distant to her. Throughout this clip Daša speaks extremely quickly and at a very high pitch, both of which are generally characteristic of extreme agitation.

D: Ты к Мышке, смотри больше блин эмоций испытываешь каких-то! Нормально, нет?

S: Потому что она на меня не обижается. (said with a lowered tone into the pillow)

D: Ты чё, пятилетний что ли? не обижает. Ну ты хоть постыдился бы!

Здоровый ты. Тыфу. Мне так сейчас тьфу мне так вот щас просто я в такие моменты думаю вообще фу мне прямо ты знаешь ты мне сейчас так противно.

S: Не смотри на меня тогда, если тебе противно. Закрою вообще эту шторку.

D: Так ты так обалдел вообще. Как ты себя ведёшь? Нормальный нет?

D: Look—you feel more freaking emotions about Myshka than me! You’re a normal person, aren’t you? [pause] You’re just such a pig!

S: Because she doesn’t get mad at me. (said with a lowered tone into the pillow)

D: What are you, a five year old? She doesn’t get mad [at you]. You should be ashamed of yourself!

You’re sane aren’t you? You make me sick. In moments like this I totally think that you are just repulsive to me.

S: Don’t look at me then, if I’m repulsive to you. I’m going to close this curtain completely.

D: So you’ve gone completely crazy. How are you behaving? You’re a normal person, right?

Here Daša’s initial utterence contains two different illocutions, both of which fall under the impoliteness strategy of associating the other with a negative aspect. There is the declarative *Ty k Myške smotri bol’še blin emocij ispytyvaes kakix-to* ‘you feel more emotions toward Myška [than to me],’ where the negative aspect comes from the fact that people are supposed to be more emotional with their
lovers than with animals, and correspondingly Daša believes that Saša is more emotional with the cat than her. Second there is the declarative *Ty takaja svin'ja prosto* ‘you are just such a pig’. This is an interesting turn as Saša’s turn does not directly orient to the impolite declaratives, but instead to a question that was not uttered at all, ‘why are you acting this way?’ when he states *potomu čto ona na menja ne obižaetsja* ‘because she doesn’t get mad at me’. This illocution carries the implicature that Daša offends him. We can see that this registers with Daša, as she then accuses Saša of acting like a five-year-old and states that he should be ashamed of himself which is in line with the impoliteness strategy of condescending scorn or ridicule. The illocution which is of particular interest here is Daša’s declaration that Saša makes her sick. This illocution ‘you make me sick’ is the first turn of a three-turn structure that allows for the analyst to classify the initial locution as an impolite utterance through the structure of the adjacency pairs. Daša states in the initial turn that *ty znaeš ty mne sejčas tak protivno* ‘you know you are so repulsive to me right now’, which is in accordance with the impoliteness strategy of scorning or belittling someone and has the illocutionary force of declaring Saša to be repulsive. The perlocutionary force of this illocution and impoliteness strategy can be seen Saša’s second turn: he shuts the curtain between them and offers a directive to not look at him in a stern tone of voice. Then, in her third turn, Daša again questions his behavior by uttering questions which serve as a social sanction of his behavior: *tak ty tak obaldel voobšče, ty kak vedeš sebja, normal'nyj net?* ‘You’ve gone crazy, look how you are acting, you’re a normal person right?’. Here Daša shows that she has understood Saša’s second turn as impolite by offering a negative evaluation of his behavior.

Both of the interactions just discussed allow for a fairly straightforward ascription of impoliteness without much need to rely on either theoretical analysis or a detailed description of their structure on a turn-by-turn basis. However, impoliteness is not always so readily apparent. That is not to say that more subtle instances of impoliteness do not have certain features in common with these examples; indeed, similar strategies can be seen both where impoliteness is quite apparent and where it is a bit more subverted. In order to see these similarities, we will now turn to some examples.

The following excerpts are taken from an interaction between Venceslav (V), Alina (A), and one of the hosts of the show, Olja (O). This interaction takes place at the *lobnoe mesto* (‘execution place’), an outdoor gathering where new participants are introduced, existing participants are voted off of the show, and new romantic liaisons are revealed. Venceslav and Alina have just announced, that they are a couple; according to the established rituals of the show, they now need to show some proof of their relationship—typically in the form of a public kiss.

**O:** Венц, ну ты понимаешь да что мне, как нормальному человеку, нужно доказательство
**V:** Каких ты хочешь доказательств?
**O:** Поцелуй! Горько горько горько!
*(Others clap and speak in unison in support of the kiss)*

**O:** Venc, well, you understand, yes, that I, as a normal person, need proof.
**V:** What kind of proofs would you like?
**O:** Kiss [her]! Kiss, kiss, kiss!
*(Others clap and speak in unison in support of the kiss)*

Here there is the impoliteness strategy of putting the other’s indebtedness on the record through the host’s use of the modal *nužno* ‘need’ and the statement “I, as a normal person, need proof”. This indebtedness stems largely from the ritualized nature of announcing new pairings on *Dom-2*. These kisses are the burden of proof and are meant to prove the veracity of the relationship. Further there is the directive to kiss, which does not initially result in perlocutionary success. Instead, what ensues is a
negotiation over Alina’s actions. Within this negotiation, the host Olja employs several other of impoliteness strategies to achieve the desired perlocutionary effect of causing them to kiss one another. However, Olja’s speech acts and impoliteness result in Alina’s contesting and not cooperating with the directive.

Participants: горько горько горько горько

A: (holding up index finger) Секундочку, секундочку. Я не очень люблю, когда мне указывают, какие мне надо делать движения или эмоции и так далее и так далее (Other participants hoot and boo)

A: я буду целоваться с Венцем тогда, когда мне будет комфортно и удобно.

A: I don’t like it much when people tell me what kind of movements I have to perform or emotions, and so on, and so on. (Other participants hoot and boo)

A: So I’ll kiss Venc when it’s comfortable and convenient for me.

This uncooperative behavior leads Olja to use the impoliteness strategy of associating the other with a negative aspect, yet, unlike the earlier excerpts between Saša and Daša and between Sergej and Tat’jana, there is not any escalation in conflict. The interaction continues along its uncooperative course without any expressions of conflict among the interlocutors.

O: А по-моему, тебе просто этого не хочется нет? Давай будем честными. Зачем ты нас обманываешь?
A: Кого я обманываю?
O: Вот ты уже попала на проект ты не обязана строить отношение с человеком, который тебе не нравится.

O: In my opinion, you just don’t feel like it, right? Let’s be honest. Why are you deceiving us?
A: Who am I deceiving?
O: Look, you’ve already got onto the project; you’re not required to build a relationship with a person that you don’t like.

Here we have two presuppositionals in davaj budem čestnými ‘let’s be honest’ and začem ty nas obmanyvaes’ ‘why are you deceiving us’? Both are examples of the impoliteness strategy of associating the other with a negative aspect, and both make this association implicitly rather than explicitly. The exhortation of davaj budem čestnými ‘let’s be honest’ entails that Olja believes Alina to be dishonest and the question začem ty nas obmanyvaes’ ‘why are you deceiving us?’ necessarily entails that Olja believes Alina to be dishonest. However, in responding to the presuppositional question ‘why are you deceiving us?’, Alina does not offer an answer (the preferred second turn of a question) but instead responds with another question Kogo ja obmanivaju ‘Who am I deceiving?’ This would seem to be an anomalous turn according to the norms of conversational interaction, but Alina is not directly orienting to what is said. Instead, she orients to the entailed presupposition that she is deceiving the host and the others on the show.

This seemingly unexpected move illustrates the methodological need to use both speech act theory and conversation analysis in tandem. Conversation analysis does not allow for a reading beyond what is said, yet, as shown in Alina’s turn, at times interlocutors orient not to what is said, but to implicit
associations, which cannot be dealt with using only conversation analysis. Without appealing to the presuppositions within an illocution, it is impossible to offer an adequate explanation of this turn.

Analyzing all of the above interactions using both conversation analysis and speech act theory allows us to draw four generalizations. Impolite turns and illocutions lead to conflictive speech (Kogo ja obmanivaju? ‘who am I deceiving?’); they do not follow the expected adjacency structuring (one directive offered after another, a question offered in response to a question); they exhibit an escalation in aggression (physical or verbal) through the course of a given interaction (burning tea thrown in the face, spitting and kicking) and they are met with social sanctions (e.g., oxrenel čto li? ‘Have you gone nuts or something’; Vy če odureli? ‘what, are you two out of your minds’? Nu ty xot postydilsja by ‘You should be ashamed of yourself’).

5.2 Mock-impoliteness

I began with the premise that mock-impoliteness necessarily is parasitic to impoliteness. This is because, in order for an utterance to be produced and perceived as mock-impolite, it must have the potential to be read as authentically impolite. Therefore, there are certain similarities between mock-impoliteness and impoliteness. The following examples bear this out.

I will begin with a fairly transparent example. The following excerpt has three different interlocutors (Tomas (T), Maša (M) and Inna (I)) although it is mainly Tomas and Maša who dominate the excerpt. Maša has just returned to the Dom-2 complex after having nearly been voted off of the show. She returns to a roomful of people that voted against her. In her opening turn, she utilizes an illocutionary force indicating device to display to the interlocutors that this is not an impoliteness strategy but a mock-impoliteness strategy.

M: Привет, семья. Прям все кто про кроме Венцеслава. Все вра-враги. Шучу—друзья, друзья.
T: Привет, Маша.
M: Здравствуйте. Как дела, Томас?
T: Супер, Мария Палыч. Решили выселить нас из Городских квартир.
M: Серьёзно а Ты думаешь силёнок хватит у тебя?
T: Не знаю, может и хватит может и нет.
I: Будут пробовать сказали.
M: Да?

M: Hey, family. Everyone who was “for” except Venceslav [is here]. All [my] en-enemies. I’m kidding—friends, friends.
T: Hey, Maša.
M: Hello. How are things, Tomas?
T: Super, Marija Palyč. xiii They decided to evict us from the city apartments.
M: Seriously? Do you think that you’ve got enough strength for that?
T: Don’t know, maybe enough, maybe not.
I: They’re going to try, they said.
M: Yes?

Maša frames the entire interaction as affiliative by greeting those in the room as her ‘family’. She then quickly declares that they are all her enemies (except for Venceslav) and then just as quickly she declares that she was only joking. Maša’s self repair of the declaration that they are enemies allows the analyst to state that vragi is an inappropriate identity marker. We can also infer that this is a very
tense situation from the context surrounding the interaction. Maša was nearly voted off of the show by
the very people whom she is addressing. The delicacy of this situation (and the addressee's vulnerability
to face attacks) is perhaps helpful in explaining why Maša is careful to utilize a illocutionary force
indicating device (I'm kidding—friends, friends) rather than allowing the interlocutors to reach this
understanding for themselves. Specifically their decision to vote for Maša's expulsion from the show
makes them more likely to read Maša's comments as impolite and Maša addresses their predisposition
by utilizing an illocutionary force indicating which neutralizes any impoliteness from her illocution that
may have otherwise been perceived.

While it is not entirely clear what the reaction would have been without the usage of the
illocutionary force indicating device, we see that here there is no orientation to the face threatening act
of calling them enemies. Instead, Tomas and Maša simply go about their everyday business in the
discussion of the city apartment. There is a four-turn development in which Tomas orients not to the
declaration that he is an enemy but to the utterance as being nothing more than a standard greeting.
This is the preferred turn of a greeting and return greeting: Tomas offers privet 'hello', which suggests
that he has taken Maša's turn as simple greeting rather than an impolite utterance. Maša then displays
her understanding that Tomas has rightfully interpreted her turn as a mock-impolite utterance through
continuing on with the interaction in a matter-of-fact way. That is, she moves past the greeting and
begins questioning Tomas about his everyday affairs. There is no offer of repair and no attempt to clarify
any misunderstanding of her utterances. Thus, by using publicly available information, the analyst can
state with some degree of confidence that Maša intended her remarks to be only mock-impolite and
that Tomas rightly understood her remarks to be mock-impolite.

Looking at another interaction, we again see further usages which indicate that lexical items
traditionally perceived and produced with an eye to impoliteness can also be used to express mock-
impoliteness as well. The following excerpt is between Sergej Ermakov (Se) and Polina (P). Sergej and
Polina had a brief romance together, but are no longer together at the time of this interaction. This
interaction takes placefirst in a hallway and from there they move into the kitchen, where sausages are
cooking. Just prior to the beginning of the clip there has been some sort of physical activity wherein
Polina has pinched Sergej's nipples. This sort of physical interaction is one that could be read as being
violent and impolite, but Sergej does not orient to it in this manner, and instead smiles and continues to
joke with her in spite of what seems like some physical discomfort.

S: Зачем ты за сиську меня ущипнула. Oh Ohhh. Сучка! за сиську ущипнула. (approaches from
behind puts her arms around her neck and yells something indecipherable but containing the
word сука) Ай пойдем чайку попьём.
P: Но я в шлепках как с базара.
S: Ну чего здесь чё тебе ни в шлепках не ходится?
P: Ты болной что ли?
S: Тебе нужно каблуки срочно потому что у тебя жопа потому что висит. я уже их тыкал. Подожди.

S: What did you pinch my nipple for? Ohhh. Little bitch! Pinched my nipples. (approaches from behind
puts her arms around her neck and yells something indecipherable but containing the word 'bitch'). Let's go have some tea.
P: But I'm in sandals like from the bazaar.
S: Well, how come you can't walk around in sandals here?
P: Are you crazy?
S: You need to put some heels on immediately because your ass—because it's hanging out. I already
poked them [sc. the sausages]. Wait.
The mock-impoliteness strategy used here is that of scorning and belittling the other through the repeated usage of the words sučka and suka. The traditional illocutionary force of sučka is that of impoliteness, yet the perlocutionary effect of such illocutions here does not seem to be in accord with the perlocutionary effects noted earlier with impolite illocutions. That is, there is no escalation of violence, and there is no conflict over the terms used. While Tat’jana does not offer any repair or direct response to Sergej’s use of sučka or suka, she does accept his invitation to come into the next room for tea. In addition there is another adjacency pair that supports demonstrates traits of mock-impoliteness.

In response to the Sergej’s comment ”Well, how come you can’t walk around in sandals here?” she questions his sanity stating “Are you crazy?” This is not followed by an answer to the question but instead by the declaration that Polina ”You need to put some heels on immediately” and the assertion that her ass is “hanging out”. Neither of these utterances are explicitly oriented to, yet the video clearly shows that there is no change in the body language between the two of them that might indicate a change in the tenor of the conversation and importantly they both continue on with the task at hand, tending to the cooking sausage. We cannot use linguistic data to support the argument in the last two turns that they are mock-impolite, but we can see through their body language and their attending to the task at hand that these remarks are not understood to be impolite.

The next clip is between the host (Olja (O)) and a man (Sergej (S)) who has just come onto the show and is attempting to establish himself as a legitimate participant. The ritual of the show, as mentioned above, is that potential participants come and meet the accepted participants in the lobnoe mesto, where the host then asks them a numer of pressing questions in order to find out why they came and with whom they want to build a relationship.

O: А по профессии кто?
S: Индивидуальный предприниматель.
O: То есть нет образования ах ха ха.
S: Ах ей ха ха. Экономист экономист.
O: Ну хорошо экономист и прошлой борец. За чем ты к нам пришёл?
O: And what is your profession?
S: Entrepreneur
O: That is you don’t have an education hahaha?
O: Alright economist and former wrestler. Why did you come to us?

The straightforward reading of Olja’s assertion that, if Sergej is an entrepreneur does not have an education. The traditional reading of such an illocution is that of impoliteness as education is a desirable trait to have, while a lack of it is not. Importantly, Olja’s turn concludes with laughter, which indicates that the illocutionary force is non-serious; this gives Sergej the cue that her illocutionary force is not impolite but is instead only mock-impolite. In the next turn, Sergej publicly displays his understanding of this through latching his turn with laughter to hers. The perlocutionary effect then of this mock-impolite turn is that of laughter. Additionally, in Olja’s next turn she moves on to the next topic without repairing the previous turn which indicates that her illocution was understood in the way in which it was meant.

Further, this mock-impolite illocution is also playing an additional role as well, that of affiliation. Sergej has just come onto the show and according to out-group social conventions, he should be treated with a certain degree of respect and not be subject to face threatening acts. Yet, even in the very first interaction with the host Olja is already asserting that he does not have any education, but significantly she uses mock-impoliteness rather than impoliteness to make this assertion. This sort of
behavior is not in line with larger social conventions, but it is line with the in-group social conventions of
the show, where the host is licensed with a certain authority to issue these mock-impolite utterances at
the lobnoe mesto. That she is including him with the in-group social conventions indicates that mock-
impoliteness here is also serving a socially affiliateive and socially inclusive function by allowing Sergej Y
to be included in the in-group social conventions.

Mock-impoliteness can also be formed through the usage of prosody. In the next extract the
host, Ksenja (K), utilizes prosodic cues that allow the interlocutors to read her utterance as a mock-
impolite utterance. The following clip takes place at the lobnoe mesto ‘the execution place’ and the host
is asking Rita (R) about how she came to have a new cell phone. Ženja (Ž in the transcript) is her
husband.

K: Итак Рит, ты стала счастливой обладателем нового телефона
R: да [laughter]
K: Как-то так твой муж еще твой муж а сам догадался о какой телефон о каком телефон ты
мечтала. это как-то получилось
Ž: ну расскажи расскажи
R: я случайно
Another Woman: Ошиблась
R: Да ошиблась писала своей подруге и случайно Жене отправила
K: Конечно. Мы всегда это делаем случайно. Абсолютно вообще
Мы всегда это делаем случайно.

K: So Rita, you became the happy owner of a new telephone.
R: Yes [laughter].
K: Somehow your husband is still your husband, and guessed himself uhh what telephone, which
telephone you were dreaming of. How did this happen?
R: I accidentally
Ž: Well, tell [them], tell [them]
Another Woman: You made a mistake.
R: Yes, I made a mistake—I was writing to my friend and accidentally sent it to Ženja.
K: Of course. We always do that accidentally. Absolutely, we always do that accidentally.

Here we have the locution that Ksenja believes that women always accidentally send hints to their
husbands about which phones they want. The illocution here is that of a declaration wherein Ksenja
states that sending text messages to husbands which specify which phones they want is always done on
purpose. This can be perceived as an impolite utterance as the locution is that Ksenja believes that Rita
sent this text message on purpose and belief is associated with a negative social value in so far as
women should not simply dictate to their husbands which phones they are to buy for them. However
this locution does not carry that association as it is said with a raised intonation throughout and the
slapping of her glove on her knee. Both of these serve as illocutionary force indicating devices which
allow for the reading of the utterance as a mock-impolite rather than impolite illocution. Further, Ksenja
includes herself in this assertion (“We always do that accidentally. Absolutely, we always do that
accidentally” (emphasis mine)) which is a way of establishing common ground between herself and Rita.
Importantly, Rita responds to this illocution and statement of solidarity with laughter and does not
reject the establishment of common ground. The perlocutionary effect then of such an illocution is not
only to cause Rita to laugh but also to establish common ground between herself and the host.
Using these examples as a basis we can draw several conclusions. In contrast to their impolite counterparts, mock-impolite utterances do not exhibit an escalation in conflict. We saw this when the traditionally impolite word sučka does not lead to conflictive speech, and when Maša declares all those who voted against her (except for Venceslav) to be enemies, yet the interlocutors do not orient to this as an impolite illocution, but instead as a mock-impolite illocution which had the perlocutionary effect of a greeting. Mock-impolite utterances can contain laughter, a feature missing in the impolite illocutions contained in this corpus. These illocutionary force indicating devices like laughter and explicit identifiction of joking are also missing in my corpus of impolite utterences. In addition these mock-impolite illocutions are uttered within a context that predisposes one to an affiliative reading. Such contexts were flirting, same sex joking and ritualized banter on the part of the host, Olja with Sergej. The analysis also shows that mock-impoliteness can also be used signal social solidarity and be socially affiliative.

6. Conclusions

This paper has offered a methodological framework that allows for the identification and examination of impolite utterances as a way of determining how participants create and orient toward mock-impolite utterances. Mock-impoliteness has received scant attention in previous research. Of the available studies, only Labov and Bernal have examined the structure of such utterances. To come to a better understanding (rather than simply theorizing) of how mock-impoliteness functions, a detailed analytic examination of the conversational turn sequences like the one utilized here is necessary to reach informed conclusions about the function and execution of impolite/mock-impolite utterances.

In addition, the methodology used here suggests that conversation analysis and speech act theory can be utilized to inform one another. Speech act theory has largely concerned itself strictly with the production of utterances rather than their perception. By adopting the assumption of conversation analysis that the utterance of one turn projects the logical completion of the next, one is able to reach a deeper and more detailed understanding of the production and perception of the phenomenon of mock-impoliteness.
Locution

Conventional Impolite Illocution

- Accuse, Attack, Assert, etc.
- Desired Uptake
- Desired Perlocutionary Effect

Non-conventional Mock Impolite Illocution

- (M) Accuse, (M) Attack,
- (M) Assert etc.
- Desired Uptake
- Desired Perlocutionary Effect

TABLE 1
REFERENCES


It should be noted that although there is the expectation that the second member of the pair will follow the first, this expectation is outside of the adjacency pair and it is not entirely clear where in the process the recognition of the first member of the adjacency pair occurs.

Conversation analysts have also noted that adjacency pairs can also be utilized to accomplish particular actions such as rejections of requests, offers, proposals (Davidson, 1984), agreements and disagreements (Pomeranz, 1975, 1978, 1984), and corrections (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977; Jefferson, 1983), to name just a few.

(Locher 2004; Locher and Watts 2005; Locher 2006a; Locher and Watts 2008; Watts 2003)


My thanks to Paul Kotheimer of the Arts and Sciences Digital Media Laboratory of The Ohio State University for assisting me in this process.

Kat’ and Serež are colloquial vocative forms of the names Katja and Sereža, the hypocoristics of Ekaterina and Sergej; their use is intended to show that the given referents are being addressed.

While ‘loser’ is an adequate translation of this term, there is more negative connotations associated with the word čemo than loser in English.
The literal translation of gor’ko is ‘bitter’, but when used in instances such as this gor’ko is an exhortation to kiss. Such exhortations are most strongly associated with weddings, which may allude to the seriousness with which others view the status of the relationship.

Venc is a shortening of the name Venceslav.

It is interesting to note here the usage of her husband’s last name in addressing her here (Palyč rather than Palyča).