Chapter 4
Relational work and impoliteness:
Negotiating norms of linguistic behaviour

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1. Introduction[1]

In this chapter we follow up the notion of relational work proposed in Locher and Watts (2005), Watts (2005) and Locher (2006a). In Section 2 we will introduce and explain our understanding of relational work in detail, which involves terms such as appropriate social behaviour, and negatively and positively marked social behaviour. Since we posit that interactants' judgements about the relational status of a message are based on norms of appropriateness in a given instance of social practice, we will highlight the importance of frames of expectations against which both the speaker and the hearer judge relational work. In addition, it is important to stress that a term such as 'impoliteness' should be seen as a first order concept, i.e. a judgement made by a participant in an interaction with respect to the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the social behaviour of co-participants, rather than a second order, technical term in a theory of im/politeness. We therefore propose a discursive understanding of the norms of appropriate social behaviour that underlie the interactants' judgements.

In Section 3 we will draw on a brief Internet discussion of behaviour in a restaurant that was deemed impolite by some discussants but not by others in order to illustrate the discursive nature of judgements on impoliteness. In Section 4, we will present an analysis of a political interview on the BBC current affairs programme *Panorama* between the moderator, Fred Emery, and the then president of the National Union of Mineworkers, Arthur Scargill, recorded at the time of the miners' strike in 1984. We will discuss how the two interactants react to face attacks that can be understood as breaches of norms and how they frame each other as violating expectations in front of the television audience. In Section 5 we will present our conclusions and will offer implications for future research.

2.   Relational work and frames of expectations

Relational work is defined as the work people invest in negotiating their relationships in interaction (Locher 2004; Locher and Watts 2005; Locher 2006a). It is based on the idea that any communicative act has both an informational as well as an interpersonal aspect (cf. Watzlawick et al. 1967; Halliday 1978). In other words, communicative acts always embody some form of relational work. Taking this approach means that we are not restricted to studying merely the polite variant of the interpersonal aspect of a communication, as Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987) have predominantly done, but can equally focus on impolite, or rude aspects of social behaviour. Relational work, in other words, comprises the entire spectrum of the interpersonal side of social practice.

In our earlier work (e.g. Locher and Watts 2005), we argued that whether interactants perceive or intend a message to be polite, impolite or merely appropriate (among many other labels) depends on *judgements* that they make at the level of relational work *in situ*, i.e. during an ongoing interaction in a particular setting. These judgements are made on the basis of norms and expectations that individuals have constructed and acquired through categorising the experiences of similar past situations, or conclusions that one draws from other people's experiences. They are an individual's cognitive conceptualisations of those experiences. The notion of 'frame', as used, for example, by Tannen (1993) or Escandell-Vidal (1996), is what we are evoking here. So the theoretical basis of 'frames' are cognitive conceptualisations of forms of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour that individuals have constructed through their own histories of social practice. It is important to point out that these norms and expectations are acquired over time and are constantly subject to change and variation.

Just as norms of appropriate behaviour within a community of practice change over time, so do judgements about relational work. While individuals of the same social group, interacting in the same situation may have developed similar frames of expectations and may indeed judge the level of relational work similarly, there can still be disagreement within any social group about judgements on social behaviour. This is because the norms themselves are constantly renegotiated, and because the cognitive domains against which a lexeme such as *polite* is profiled change conceptually over time as well (cf. Sell 1992; Ehlich 1992; Watts 2006). We have called this flexibility the 'discursive' nature of im/politeness (Watts 2003; Locher and Watts 2005). There is, in other words, no linguistic behaviour that is inherently polite or impolite.

In Table 1, we present aspects of judgements that interactants might make when confronted with relational work that might qualify as *polite*. The assumption is that they orient to the norms of behaviour that are evoked by the frames

Table 1. Aspects of the spectrum of relational work, exemplified with the lexeme 'polite', in a particular context Y

	LEXEME (first order)	Two of the cognitive domains against which the lexeme is profiled		
Judgement (a):	impolite	inappropriate/ non-politic	+	negatively marked
Judgement (b):	(non-polite)*	appropriate/politic	+	unmarked
Judgement (c):	polite	appropriate/politic	+	positively marked
Judgement (d):	over-polite	inappropriate/ non-politic	+	negatively marked

* The judgement 'non-polite' is unlikely to be uttered.

of expectations specific to the social situation, and that the notions of appropriateness and markedness are the domains against which the lexeme *polite* is profiled. An interactant might therefore think that a particular utterance represents socially appropriate behaviour of an unmarked kind (judgement b), i.e. it is not likely to evoke an evaluative comment. At a different moment in time or in a different instantiation of social practice, relational work might be judged as positively marked and at the same time as socially appropriate (judgement c). We argue that this positive aspect might trigger a judgement of behaviour with lexemes such as *polite* (and maybe also *courteous*, *well-mannered*, etc.). Negatively marked behaviour, i.e. behaviour that has breached a social norm (judgements a and d), evokes negative evaluations such as *impolite* or *over-polite* (or any alternative lexeme such as *rude*, *aggressive*, *insulting*, *sarcastic,* etc. depending upon the degree of the violation and the type of conceptualisation the inappropriate behaviour is profiled against).[2] A *negative* evaluation is to be understood quite literally as the emotional reaction of individual interactants (as are positive evaluations). People may respond quite forcefully when the level of relational work does not match their expectations.

The notions of 'impolite' or 'polite' should thus be understood as judgements by participants in the interaction in question. They are, in other words, first order concepts rather than second order, theoretical ones. In this way our approach differs considerably from that of other researchers who have worked on politeness and impoliteness. Kienpointner (1997: 252), for example, states quite clearly that his approach to rudeness (rather than impoliteness) is of a second order type. This is most manifest when he talks of linguistic strategies

employed to achieve rudeness analogous to Brown and Levinson's ([1978] 1987) linguistic strategies for polite behaviour. The same can be said for Lachenicht (1980), Culpeper (1996), Culpeper, Bousfield and Wichmann (2003) and Culpeper (2005).

Another aspect of difference linked to the distinction between a first order and second order approach to impoliteness has to do with the notion of *intentionality*. Kienpointner (1997: 259) defines rudeness as "non-cooperative or competitive communicative behaviour". We certainly agree that non-cooperativeness may play a role in the definition of rudeness. On the other hand, if we interpret Kienpointner's 'or' as being an exclusive, logical operator (either P or Q, rather than P and/or Q), we wish to dispute that competitiveness is equal to rudeness. Competitive communicative behaviour may be cooperative and positively valued in certain contexts (cf. Tannen 1981; Schiffrin 1984; Watts 2003). Non-cooperativeness is important in behaviour that intentionally aims at hurting the addressee. Culpeper (2005: 37), Lachenicht (1980) and Bousfield (2007a/b, this volume) deal explicitly with intentional impoliteness/rudeness. Lachenicht (1980: 619), in mirroring Brown and Levinson's ([1978] 1987) politeness strategies, postulates the following:

> Aggravation strategies are also sensitive to social factors. A very powerful person will probably be attacked only by off record means. Friends and intimates would probably be attacked by means of positive aggravation whereas socially distant persons would be attacked by means of negative aggravation. (Lachenicht 1980: 619)

He goes on to say that "[i]f the purpose of aggravation is to hurt, then means must be chosen that *will* hurt" (1980: 619–620, emphasis in original). This comment points to the interlocutors' awareness of the norms of the interaction in question. If this were not the case, they could not play with the level of relational work and adjust it to their own ends. Taking a first order approach to impoliteness means that we are able to recognise this, whilst at the same time stressing the point that both the speaker's and the hearer's judgements have to be considered. A speaker may wish to be aggressive and hurtful, but still not come across as such to the hearer. Alternatively, a hearer may interpret the speaker's utterance as negatively marked with respect to appropriate behaviour, while the speaker did not intentionally wish to appear as such. In a first order approach to impoliteness, it is the interactants' *perceptions* of communicators' intentions rather than the intentions themselves that determine whether a communicative act is taken to be impolite or not. In other words, the uptake of a message is as important if not more important than the utterer's original intention.

There are also a number of important overlaps in our understanding of the phenomenon with previous work on impoliteness. Kienpointner (1997: 255), for example, also states that "rudeness could be termed inappropriateness of communicative behaviour *relative to* a particular context" (emphasis added) and is a matter of degree.[3] Mills (2005: 268) argues that "[i]mpoliteness can be considered as any type of linguistic behaviour which is *assessed as* intending to threaten the hearer's face or social identity, or as transgressing the hypothesized Community of Practice's norms of appropriacy" (emphasis added). Both Kienpointner's and Mills' perspective on rudeness here match our understanding of impoliteness as breaches of norms that are negatively evaluated by interactants according to their expectation frames.

Finally, the notion of power cannot be ignored when dealing with relational work in all its facets. Since relational work is defined as the work people invest in negotiating their relationships in interaction, power issues always play a crucial role in negotiating identities. In Watts (1991) and Locher (2004), we have dealt with the notion of power in interaction. Our understanding of power is that it is not a static concept, but is constantly renegotiated and exercised in social practice. All interlocutors enter social practice with an understanding of a differential distribution of social status amongst the co-participants, but the actual exercise of power is something that we can only witness in the interaction itself. We will return to the issue of power in the discussion of our examples, particularly in our analysis of the political interview in Section 4.

3. The dirty fork: Norms of behaviour discussed on an Internet forum

We have repeatedly argued in this chapter that norms of interaction are negotiable and in flux and that judgements about relational work are equally varied across social practices. In what follows we would briefly like to illustrate one instance of such a negotiation of norms that was found on a discussion board on a U.S. Internet site. This site deals with any issues that pertain to the topic of good eating (food, recipes, restaurants, etc.). One member describes the following scenario and ends with the question of whether or not the waiter's actions were "impolite":

(1)   Was this waiter's action impolite or not?
        So I was at a mid-priced restaurant (with tablecloths and cloth napkins) for lunch
        which was completely empty except for me and a dining companion at the window
        of the large dining room. After ordering, we were waiting for our food, when I

noticed that my fork was dirty. So, instead of bothering to call out to the waiter who was not in the room at the time, I decided to turn around and just grab the fork from the neighboring table. Just at that moment, the waiter walks in at the far end of the room who noticed me doing this. He promptly takes a fork from the service station and marches clear across the room, to place the missing fork on the neighboring table behind me. Not a word was spoken, and I thought nothing of it.

Question is, do you think this was rude of him to do this? Wouldn't a more discreet waiter have replaced the fork at another time than to 'correct' a diner's actions immediately after the fact?

The scenario described deals with a non-verbal example that evokes the question of appropriate behaviour in the frame of 'interaction in a restaurant'. It deals with the perceived rights and obligations of the waiter and the customer and reveals that the customer feels 'corrected' by the waiter. As a result, s/he is insecure about how to judge the situation with respect to whether the waiter's behaviour was impolite/rude or not.[4] It is interesting to see that the poster uses both the lexemes *impolite* and *rude* as first order terms and appears to equate the one with the other.[5]

By the time of the data collection, which took place 10 days after the original posting, this question had received 25 comments, but no further reaction from the original poster. The contents of these comments range from saying that there is no issue of impoliteness involved ([2] and [3]), to stating that the waiter may have breached a norm ([4] and [5]), and to postulating that it was in fact the customer who was *out of bounds/in the wrong* ([6] and [7]):

(2)   No. [in response to the question raised in (1)]

(3)   He replaced a fork so that the next table sat would have one. He did so "promptly" to make sure that when that table was sat the new customer would have a fork. You grabbed a fork from the next table; he replaced it. How is that rude?

(4)   Seems to me, the point is not what the waiter did, but how he did it. When it comes to customer service, it's about how you do your job, not just what you do. Since you remember the "incident" and enough to post it, it sounds like it was the way that waiter made a point of indiscretely replacing the fork. So just because he was doing his job, doesn't mean he wasn't also being rude about it.

(5)   maybe....depends on how he "marched," though. It sounds like the waiter did it to show that the customer transgressed. I see no mention of a mental inquiry of why the fork was taken off the table, and no mention of the waiter noticing the dirty fork. You can tell by the way someone goes about it – believe me, waiters can be pissy.

(6)   I think you were out of bounds by taking the fork. If you needed another napkin, would you've just jerked one off the neighboring table too? Why didn't you just ask the waiter for a new fork?

(7)   In my opinion, your actions were in the wrong. What if they had seated someone at that table not knowing that it was now short a fork?

What is interesting from our point of view is that there is no clear agreement among the contributors to the thread on how this brief episode should be classified with respect to the level of relational work. We can therefore witness the negotiability of norms and actually see them discussed by lay-people who evoke the first order lexemes of *impolite* and *rude* to describe their scenarios (see also Culpeper, this volume).

The thread actually becomes quite 'lively' with people adding to and disagreeing with each other's points of view. The contributors discuss different scenarios with respect to what would have been a (more) appropriate action on the part of the two interlocutors involved. They are thus comparing what would change with respect to relational work in alternative modes of behaviour. It also becomes clear that power issues are of importance here. They are evoked when the discussants define the roles of the customer and the waiter and talk about what is expected of them, i.e. they discuss their perceived rights and obligations. In example (8), a poster defends the waiter's actions:

(8)   I'm a waiter, I would have done exactly what the waiter did. I see something that needs to be taken care of, I will take care of it right at that very moment. If I don't, I'll forget and then someone will get sat at a table missing a fork.

This comment reveals that the poster perceives the waiter's behaviour to be within the bounds of appropriate behaviour. It also shows that s/he evokes his/her professional status as a waiter to give this comment more weight. Another contributor explicitly raises the issue of power in his/her contribution:

(9)   My question is why are you giving the waiter so much power to affect your lunch with a friend? Since the room was empty and your food hadn't arrived yet, maybe the best thing would have been to just wait until the waiter came back to your table and ask him for another fork but who really thinks about these things ahead of time? I probably would have done the same thing but since it was a 'tablecloth and cloth napkins' type of restaurant, the waiter probably should have replaced the fork for you. But hey – in the realm of things, nobody was hurt. I say let it go.

This contributor to the thread does not so much comment on the differential distribution of social status between the waiter and the customer, but on the fact that

s/he believes that the customer let the waiter *exercise* power over him/her, which implies a reason why the customer has a negative feeling about the incident. The comment thus refers to the interactional emergence of power and shows quite nicely that the contributor sees its impact to be in the field of relational work.

4.   Breaching norms in a political interview

Explicit metapragmatic comments on whether or not an individual's behaviour can be evaluated as *impolite*, *rude*, or any other of the extensive range of adjectives that may be used in English (and probably in any language) to refer to non-normative, inappropriate behaviour are almost invariably made after the event, which became evident from our discussion of the forum thread in the previous section. An immediate open evaluation of a co-participant's verbal behaviour as *rude* or *offensive* in the course of the interaction would constitute a face-threatening act and would endanger the efforts made to produce cooperative communication – although, as we pointed out in Section 2, by no means all instantiations of social practice *are* cooperative.

When we are confronted with openly competitive, conflictual social interaction, as is the case with the data we wish to analyse here, it is important to consider the kinds of institutional sanctions which constrain participants not to produce openly evaluative comments on inappropriate behaviour. This obviously makes our job as researchers more challenging. If impoliteness, like politeness, is a discursively disputable aspect of social practice (cf. the analysis in Section 3), we will need to use all our interpretative ingenuity in assessing co-participants' immediate reactions in order to arrive at our own evaluations of the non-normative and inappropriate nature of individuals' verbal behaviour. These will, of course, in turn be discursively produced first order constructs.

The stretch of social interaction we wish to analyse in more detail is a political interview on the BBC television current affairs programme *Panorama* which lasted for roughly ten minutes. Small sections of the interview have been used in previous research (cf. Watts 1991, 2003 and 2006). The programme was broadcast towards the end of the miner's strike in 1984 and the topic dealing with the miners' strike consists of a documentary film (purportedly giving evidence of violence on the picket lines, the hardship experienced by miners' families and the increasing number of miners trickling back to work) and the subsequent interview with Arthur Scargill, then president of the National Union of Mineworkers. The interviewer is the programme moderator, Fred Emery. In

this chapter, we shall focus on selected passages from the interview and, from a digitalised version of the original videotape, will also present visual markers of exasperation and frustration on the part of Scargill.

4.1.   *Political interviews and the problem of power*

The main purpose in analysing the interview is to show how our interpretation of inappropriate social behaviour – which could have been metapragmatically commented on by either of the two participants but wasn't – is intimately tied to issues of power and the exercise of power in the interview situation. Work on news interviews and political interviews (Beattie 1982; Jucker 1986, 2005; Greatbatch 1986; Clayman and Heritage 2002) gives evidence of an increased level of aggressiveness and a supposed concomitant loss of "respect" on the part of the interviewer towards political interviewees in the British media, although it is not entirely clear when this trend began. At all events, it was certainly in place at the beginning of the 1980s and was (and has remained) relatively prominent in the BBC's *Panorama* programme.

We define a "political interview" as a subgenre of the "news interview" as defined by Clayman and Heritage (2002: 7–8) since it is clear that not all news interviews involve politicians. The term "political interview" itself is used to define media interviews with politicians held with the intention of providing the wider audience with an idea of the interviewee's political views, policy statements and, obviously, media presence.

The development of a more conflictual, aggressive mode of conducting political interviews helps to counterbalance the status that politicians are institutionally endowed with when they appear as public figures in the media. In an extract from the BBC Editorial Guidelines[6] addressed to programme producers the following advice is given:

> **We should be clear when making requests for political interviews about the nature of the programme and context for which they are intended.** Our arrangements must stand up to public scrutiny and must not prevent the programme asking questions that our audiences would reasonably expect to hear. (emphasis in original)

The statement that the programme arrangements should not prevent questions "that our audiences would reasonably expect to hear" can be interpreted as a justification for these new interviewing techniques. Given the documentary shown at the beginning of the programme and the exasperation that the majority of *Panorama* viewers must have felt after almost eleven months of strike, interviewing Scargill certainly did "fit the nature of the programme". So most of

Emery's questions can be interpreted, without exaggeration, as those that the audience would have expected to hear.

Research work on interviewing assumes that the power relations between interviewer and interviewee are skewed in favour of the interviewer, since s/he has the right to choose which questions to ask, even though the interviewee is still at liberty to refuse to answer a question (e.g. Jucker 1986, 2005). However, what normally occurs in political interviews is that the interviewee hedges proper answers to questions or uses the question as a means to expatiate at length on other issues (cf. the analysis of the interview between David Dimbleby and Tony Blair in Watts 2003: chapter 9). We would prefer to consider power as playing a role in *all* social interaction, including any form of interviewing (Watts 1991; Locher 2004). Locher (2004: 38) uses both Watts' and Wartenberg's definitions of the exercise of power, which we present here as follows:

> *A* exercises power over *B* when *A* affects *B* in a manner contrary to *B*'s initially perceived interests, regardless of whether *B* later comes to accept the desirability of *A*'s actions. (Watts 1991: 62)

> A social agent *A* has *power over* another social agent *B* if and only if *A* strategi-cally constrains B's action-environment. (Wartenberg 1990: 85, emphasis added)

The checklist Locher gives to summarise the nature and exercise of power con-tains the following propositions, which fit neatly into our way of viewing power in social practice:

– Power is (often) expressed through language.
– Power cannot be explained without contextualization.
– Power is relational, dynamic and contestable.
– The interconnectedness of language and society can also be seen in the display of power.
– Freedom of action is needed to exercise power.
– The restriction of an interactant's action-environment often leads to the exer-cise of power.
– The exercise of power involves a latent conflict and clash of interests, which can be obscured because of a society's ideologies.

(Locher 2004: 39–40)

Power, like impoliteness, is discursively negotiated and is always latently present in every instantiation of social practice. Indeed, power is intimately linked to individuals' perceptions of impolite behaviour, as we shall see in the analysis of the political interview.

4.2. Contextualising the interview

Before proceeding to our analysis, we need to give some important background information in order to place the interview into its proper socio-historical context. The 1984 miners' strike began in the South Yorkshire coalfield as a protest against the National Coal Board's (NCB) decision to close five pits in the area. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), whose president at the time was Arthur Scargill, officially supported the strike action but omitted to hold a national ballot among the union's members as to whether the union as a whole wanted to continue the strike. When challenged on this issue by Emery, Scargill states the following (cf. the transcription conventions are given in the Appendix):

(10)   I carried out the wishes and instructions of my members\ and those instructions were\ that we should not have a (.) national ballot under rule 43\ (..) but that we should support the action that had already been taken by miners\ prior to me making any statement on the matter under national rule 41\ (..) if I had have ignored that instruction\ I would have been guilty (..) of defying the conference of my union\

The "conference" of the NUM, however, is not to be equated with a democratic, rank and file vote, as Emery suggests to Scargill at a later point in the interview. In the documentary film preceding the interview, one of the miners had commented on the fact that, had Scargill chosen to ballot the union members' views earlier in the strike, he would probably have won, thus implying that support of the rank and file of union members has now dwindled considerably.

The strike openly played into the hands of the Conservative government of the time under Margaret Thatcher, who were determined not to give way. In fact, the NCB's closure plans went much further than the original five pits, as Scargill explicitly notes during the interview. Whether the Thatcher government *were* "guilty" of intervention with the Coal Board to prevent an agreement remains an allegation made by Scargill,[7] but close analysis of the interview appears to indicate the strength of Scargill's argument. The waste of large sums of taxpayers' money after 11 months of strike will not have disposed the television audience favourably to Scargill's attempted evasive tactics in answering Emery's first question: "Are you now willing to discuss uneconomic pits?"

Another of the issues addressed by the documentary was the use of physical and verbal violence by NUM members manning the picket lines, although this is not particularly stressed during the interview. When it *is* mentioned by Emery (see stave 1 in example (14) below), Scargill counters with the accusation of police brutality in dealing with the picket lines ("I certainly condemn violence on the picket lines"). The main thrust of the film was to demonstrate the futility

of the strike, given the fact that miners and their families were beginning to feel the pinch and were slowly giving up and trickling back to work. There are dramatic scenes towards the end of the film of miners searching for fuel on snow-bound slagheaps, and during the interview Scargill, but never Emery, refers to the miners being "starved back to work".

The physical set-up of the interview in the studio is that of an oval table with Emery at one end and Scargill at the other. The camera switches from one participant to the other.[8] The only time when we have a frontal view of the whole table showing both the interviewer and the interviewee is in example (12) below when they indulge in a veritable 20-second tirade of incomprehensible simultaneous speech, which took one of the authors of this chapter at least two hours to transcribe.

4.3. *Analysing the struggle for power*

Given our comments on the conflictual nature of political interviews in the media and the BBC's own guidelines on the kinds of questions that audiences might reasonably be expected to hear, Emery's behaviour would appear to be sanctioned by a redefinition of the norms of appropriateness in this public form of social practice. The viewing audience are not likely to evaluate his utterances with adjectives such as *impolite*, *rude*, *insulting*, or *aggressive*, although the incomprehensible simultaneous speech in example (12) below might indeed be open to this kind of interpretation, as we shall argue later. Scargill, on the other hand, can frame[9] Emery's behaviour as having any of these qualities in order to present himself (and by extension the NUM) as the butt of unjustified criticism at the hands of the media. The problem is that Scargill, as a public figure, must be aware of the norms of appropriateness in operation during the interview, and for this reason could hardly allow himself to use any of the adjectives listed above. The analysts' question, therefore, is how we can interpret Scargill's attempt to frame Emery as being impolite by other means.

The first evidence of such an attempt occurs shortly after the beginning of the interview in example (11). The significant section of the sequence for our analysis is highlighted in grey:

(11)

| 1 | E: | peter taylor reporting\ well with me in the studio watching the film\ is mr arthur scargill\ president of the national union of mineworkers\ mr scargill\ (..) the issue causing (..) the breakdown (.) was all last week/ the issue (..) at the front of the news\ and in everybody's minds\ was the union's refusal to accept the closure of uneconomic pits\ are you now willing to discuss uneconomic pits\ |

	S:	(..) we're not prepared to go along to the national coal board\ and
2	E:	you're not\ sorry if I interrupt you (.) there\ y/ I- I/ let me just remind you that—
	S:	start— [er::] [er::] are you- are you going to let
3	E:	you- you said you're not\ let's
	S:	me answer the question\ you put a question\ for god's sake let me answer\
4	E:	- let's have the (.) question again\ and see of we (..) get it right clear\ are you now willing to discuss uneconomic pits\ go ahead\
	S:	(..) can I answer\

After introducing Scargill in stave 1, Emery goes on to contextualise the question he intends to put as being the issue "at the front of the news and in everybody's minds", thereby including the television audience through the pronoun *everybody*. The question concerns Scargill's and the NUM's willingness (or unwillingness) to discuss uneconomic pits. Scargill begins his answer in stave 1 but is stopped in his tracks by an intervention in stave 2, which Emery himself admits is an interruption. On being interrupted Scargill looks down and away from his interlocutor and compresses his lips with a down-turned corner of his mouth (Stillshot 1). The posture shows him as having leaned back slightly from the force of the interruption. In other words, Scargill's facial expression and posture at this point in the interaction reveal what could be interpreted as resigned exasperation.
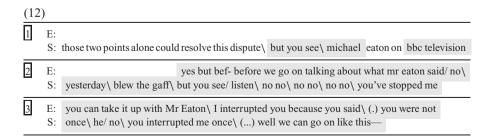

Stillshot 1.   Scargill's reaction to Emery's first interruption

Emery's "you're not" (stave 2) is a pre-empted answer to his question, even though it is as yet unclear how Scargill would have answered had he been allowed to continue. His way out of the face-threatening situation is to apologise for the interruption, but the brief bout of stammering following the apology is evidence of a certain amount of insecurity. Scargill realises this and immediately intervenes with two filled pauses "[er::]" at the same time as Emery is producing the somewhat highminded moralistic utterance "let me just remind you that–" (stave 2).

How does power play a role in the interpretation of this sequence? Emery has given the floor to Scargill but promptly restricts his freedom of action to answer in the way that he wants and not as Emery imagines he will. Restriction of Scargill's action-environment as the interviewee in a political interview is an exercise of power by Emery, and it is expressed through language. At the same time the restriction of an interviewee's action-environment is sanctioned to a certain extent in this interactional context.

In order to counter the exercise of power by Emery, it is essential that Scargill represents him as having acted rudely and aggressively without actually using either of these lexemes himself. His reassertion of the right to answer the question is accompanied by the emotional utterance "For God's sake let me answer!" indicating a negative evaluation of Emery's behaviour as violating the norms of appropriateness, as he frames them in this interaction, along the parameter of impoliteness. This is played upon in stave 4 when he mockingly asks for permission to answer the question when it is put the second time ("can I answer").

After example (11), Scargill is given the time to make a lengthy answer. Throughout, he avoids explicitly answering the question, although Emery (and presumably the television audience with him) infers that the preconditions that Scargill talks about at such great length are indeed preconditions placed on talks by the National Coal Board to the effect that uneconomic pits are indeed the issue. He changes tack in example (12), stave 2, by referring to BBC's Michael Eaton having "blown the gaff" the previous evening, only to be stopped once more by Emery:

(12)

1	E:
	S: those two points alone could resolve this dispute\ but you see\ michael eaton on bbc television

2	E: yes but bef- before we go on talking about what mr eaton said/ no\
	S: yesterday\ blew the gaff\ but you see/ listen\ no no\ no no\ no no\ you've stopped me

3	E: you can take it up with Mr Eaton\ I interrupted you because you said\ (.) you were not
	S: once\ he/ no\ you interrupted me once\ (...) well we can go on like this—

4	E:	prepared to discuss uneconomic pits\ right\ can I remind you what mr orme said in commons
	S:	I'm sorry\ I did not say that\ no\ you- you can listen to me\

5	E:	today\ (..) no\ (..) let me remind you what mr orme said\ he said that— yes\ but you take
	S:	and I will give an answer first of all\ (..) what happened was\ that mr eaton said yesterday on

6	E:	that up with mr eaton\ yes\
	S:	television\ that the twelve percent as capacity of this industry\ was going to be closed\ by the

7	E:	
	S:	national coal board\ twelve percent capacity equals sixty pit closures\ and sixty thousand jobs

8	E:	yes\ the point is\ when I asked you whether you were prepared to discuss uneconomic pits\ and
	S:	lost\

9	E:	you said\ "no we're not"\ I interrupted then\ because mr orme said in the commons today/ let me remind you\ in the debate\ that the num's offer of unconditional talks means\ and I quote\ that anyaspect can be discussed\ including . . .
	S:	

Emery's initial interruption just after the beginning of the interview has put Scargill on his guard and this results in a 20–second free-for-all in which each of the two participants tries to restrict the other's freedom of action to take or retain the floor. The consequence is incomprehensibility on the part of anybody listening to the programme. The discursive struggle for power here is again linked to the notion of the norms of appropriacy in relational work. It is also at this point in the programme that we get a diagonal camera sequence, which means that both participants are visible to the audience (Stillshot 2). Throughout this

Stillshot 2.   The camera angle during the 20–seconds overlap

20–second sequence, Emery's manual gestures are evidence of an aggressive attempt to take over the floor, whereas Scargill uses his hands defensively to retain it.

We interpret the change of camera perspective as resulting from the necessity faced by the programme editor of deciding which of the two co-participants to focus on at that moment. The diagonal shot is evidence of his/her dilemma. One of the possible conclusions that members of the audience may have made at this point in the interview is that the two co-participants are not only inconsiderate to one another but also towards the wider audience.

The co-participants' utterances during this 20–second sequence may or may not have been understood by members of the wider audience, but when we look at the transcript, we realise after the event that both participants were closely monitoring what the other was saying. For example, Emery makes the following statement in stave 3: "I interrupted you because you said you were not prepared to discuss uneconomic pits". He then uses the discourse marker "right" to induce Scargill to corroborate this fact and is immediately countered by Scargill's "I'm sorry. I did not say that" (stave 4). Once again, Emery is trying to restrict Scargill's freedom of action by framing him as not being prepared to discuss this issue.

Now, the problem here is to decide whether the implicature Emery has inferred from Scargill's unwillingness to discuss preconditions set by the NCB is valid. Let us return to the socio-historical contextualisation of the interview itself. The audience and both Emery and Scargill are aware that by this time in the strike (after 11 months) the "preconditions" that Scargill mentions concern the need to discuss the issue of uneconomic pits. So when Scargill talks about those preconditions for negotiation with the NCB he can only mean the need to discuss those pits. We conclude from this that Emery's implicature is indeed valid. On the other hand, Scargill is still perfectly justified in claiming that he did not *say* anything about uneconomic pits. At all events, Emery's framing of Scargill appears to have been successful when he repeats his accusation once more without being contradicted this time by Scargill: "When I asked you whether you were prepared to discuss uneconomic pits, and you said, 'No, we're not' . . . " (staves 8–9, example (12)).

Three further sequences will now be looked at briefly in which Emery comes very close to insulting Scargill. The first of these concerns the list of promises which Scargill originally made to the miners, their failure to have taken effect and Emery's accusation that Scargill doesn't have "any clout" in example (13). Example (14) concerns the dispute over whether or not Scargill allowed the NUM to ballot the opinion of its members. Example (15) is the open accusation made by Emery but thinly disguised as being an opinion voiced by other trade

union leaders and left wingers that Scargill is "a disaster" when it comes to negotiating:

(13)

1	E:	but if- if- if that is a victory\ as you claim\
	S:	as it does to keep him at work\ producing coal\ (..) it doesn't make sense\

2	E:	(..) and you promised them\ let me remind you\ all last summer\ that coal stocks were running down\ that power cuts would soon come in august\ and by christmas\ and they wouldn't and so on\ the fact is\ (..) you've got no clout\ have you\ to deliver on those promises you made to
	S:	

3	E:	them\ how much longer are you going to ask your miners to suffer\
	S:	let me make two points first

4	E:	
	S:	first of all\

(14)

1	E:	look\ whatever the merits of your case\ let's look\ if we may\ at your tactics\ not having a ballot\ when many of your own people/ ronnie mott we heard there in that film\ believed that you might have won\ (..) had a ballot been held in favour of a strike\ not condemning picketing violence was another thing which he also mentioned\ which alienated a lot of opinion from your case\ making misleading promises\ as I mentioned\ having your funds sequestered\
	S:	

2	E:	haven't you in fact let your members down\
	S:	(..) no\ I haven't\ I would let my members down if

3	E:	
	S:	I betrayed them\ and I'd never do that\ first of all\ (..) don't say that I didn't have a ballot\ (..) I

4	E:	well you didn't\ did you\
	S:	carried out the wishes on the instruction— if you're going to keep interrupting when you

5	E:	no\ I/ you said\ "don't say that I didn't have a ballot"\ and you didn't\ (..) go ahead\ (..) you
	S:	ask me a question\

6	E:	didn't have a ballot\
	S:	(...) I carried out the wishes and instructions of my members\

(15)

1	E:	do you know what they say about you\ (..) other union leaders I've spoken to\ other left wingers\ they say that [er::] you make a marvellous advocate for your case\ but as a negotiator\
	S:	

2	E:	(..) you're a disaster\ (..) it's true\ isn't it\
	S:	oh\ (..) well of course\ it means that you're [er::] talking as

3	E:	
	S:	silly as they [er::] are\

The major issue in each of these three sequences is whether or not Emery can be considered to have gone beyond the bounds of the redefined norms of appropriate behaviour for a political interview. If any of these three sequences contains a blatant face attack directed at Scargill with an attempt to malign Scargill's character, both Scargill and the television audience would be justified in evaluating his behaviour as at least *impolite*, if not *aggressive* or downright *insulting*.

To say that a co-participant does not have clout and cannot deliver on promises made in example (13) is, admittedly, a weak form of insult, but it is the kind of statement that one might expect in present-day political interviews. It is, in other words, sanctioned[10] behaviour, and it is highly likely to have been expectable in the early 1980s. Scargill's response does not display a show of indignation; he simply goes on with the utterance "Let me make two points first of all." We would therefore suggest that Scargill does in fact accept the redefined norms of appropriate behaviour for televised political interviews, which strengthens our interpretation that he has tried to frame Emery as being aggressive in example (11).

Accusing an interviewee of making misleading promises, implying that he has been undemocratic in not allowing the union to ballot the opinion of its members and is responsible for having the funds of his trade union sequestered in (14) are a little less severe, since, apart from Emery's personal evaluation of the promises having been misleading, it is true to say that the funds were sequestered and that the NUM did not have a ballot amongst its members. However, it is precisely these facts which are likely to damage Scargill's (and also the National Union of Mineworkers') public image if they are admitted. It is interesting to see that it is the accusation of not having held a ballot which causes the altercation which follows and not the accusation of being misleading or the sequestration of the union funds. Scargill chooses to challenge the one accusation which is a crystal-clear fact in the eyes of the general public (including Emery), and he resorts to the same strategy as at the beginning of the interview, viz. the framing of Emery as restricting his freedom of action to explain the matter by interrupting him.

By far the most damaging insult is the one put forward by Emery in (15), viz. that Scargill is a disaster when it comes to negotiating. The visual sequence of Scargill's reaction to this veiled insult shows an increased rate of blinking and a movement of the tongue across the lips possibly indicating a dry mouth at this point. This is the one point in the whole interaction, with the possible exception of Emery's initial interruptive sequence, at which Scargill might have been able to frame Emery as indulging in insulting behaviour. He is prevented from doing so by Emery's skilful embedding of the insult into alleged statements

by third parties ("Do you know what they say about you, other union leaders I've spoken to, other left wingers? They say that . . ."; stave 1) and by inviting Scargill himself to comment on the truth of the proposition that he is a disaster ("It's true, isn't it?"; stave 2). Scargill's response is to frame both those who Emery claims have made this statement and Emery himself as "talking silly" (staves 2–3) and to launch into a self-righteous appraisal of his own past achievements as a negotiator in the Yorkshire coalfield.

In the absence of explicitly expressed evaluations of the co-participants' behaviour as going beyond the sanctioned norms of appropriate behaviour in a televised political interview, i.e. lexemes such as *impolite*, *rude*, *insulting*, *aggressive*, etc., we are forced to fall back on other utterances by the co-participant in the defensive position in a political interview, who is almost always the interviewee. What we have tried to do in this section is to demonstrate that we have to keep a close check on affective linguistic reactions such as "for God's sake let me answer" (example (11), stave 3), accusations of illicit behaviour such as "you interrupted me once" (example (12), stave 3), "don't say that I didn't have a ballot" (example (14), stave 3), "if you're going to keep interrupting when you ask me a question" (example (14), stave 4), or countering a perceived insult with another such as "it means that you're as silly as they are" (example (15), stave 2–3). We have suggested that a further rich source of evidence is to interpret the defensive co-participant's gestures, body posture and facial expressions as displaying frustration, indignation, shock, etc. Beyond that, one other method would be to record the reactions of the participants after the event, or in the case of the television audience to gather a set of verbalised reactions to what the viewers observed, which would be similar to collecting the various responses from an Internet discussion board such as the one looked at in Section 3. While there is a danger that there might be a discrepancy between the *in situ* reaction and reaction after the event, there must be some kind of overlap to give the researcher interpretative clues.

One point should have emerged from our analyses in Sections 3 and 4, and that concerns the desirability of working from genuine data collected in instances of social practice and working from first-order notions of what participants in social practice categorise as impolite behaviour rather than working from an idealised theory of what impoliteness is. We shall investigate the consequences of this approach to impoliteness in the final section.

5.   Implications and conclusions

Relational work refers to all aspects of the work invested by individuals in the construction, maintenance, reproduction and transformation of interpersonal relationships among those engaged in social practice. In this sense it is equivalent to facework, but only if we accept that facework is always present in any form of socio-communicative verbal interaction. If facework is only taken to refer to rationally motivated means of mitigating face-threatening acts, which is implicit in the Brown and Levinson understanding of facework, then it cannot always be taken to be present in social practice.

Goffman (1955) conceptualises face as "a socially attributed aspect of self that is on loan for the duration of the interaction in accordance with the line or lines that the individual has adopted for the purposes of [the] interaction" (Watts 2003: 105). He tends to look at the social side of face, whereas Brown and Levinson focus on its cognitive nature. Relational work understands face as combining the two, in that what an individual develops as his/her continual construction of self depends on social interaction, and social interaction takes place between individuals.

Relational work is always inherent in all forms of social practice, and it involves every individual's conceptualisation of the behaviour appropriate to the forms of social practice in which s/he is engaged. At the same time different conceptualisations depend crucially on the conceptualisations made by others, i.e. the work invested in constructing, maintaining, reproducing and transforming ongoing interpersonal relationships is at one and the same time both social and individual. It is, in other words, intersubjective.

We cannot therefore expect that the relational work that we carry out in every instance of social interaction that involves us as participants is always at a level of personal consciousness, and where it is not (which we would take to be the default situation), we suggest that it is socially unmarked. It is simply social behaviour which goes unnoticed, a part of what Bourdieu (1990) calls our "feel for the game", or, to use the notion of frames of expectation once again, part of what we are used to and expect to occur.

At any point in ongoing social interaction, however, something might occur which lies outside this frame of normality and which demands our attention as a co-participant since it doesn't fit the frame, and at such junctures in the overall social practice it demands that we make some kind of moral judgement. Marked behaviour of this kind might elicit positive evaluations, one of which would be to judge the behaviour as *polite*. Negatively marked behaviour, on the other hand, will evoke judgements of impoliteness, but it is also likely to evoke a wide range of possible responses ranging from the relatively neutral *impolite*,

through *rude* to *boorish*, *aggressive*, *insulting*, *inconsiderate*, as well as a host of other negative judgements.

Our understanding of relational work entails an understanding of these judgements, whether positive or negative, as being discursively constructed and as being individual evaluations of the social behaviour of others. In this sense, both "politeness" and "impoliteness" are what we call first-order constructs and are not second-order terms in a rational, universal theory of politeness.

In this chapter we have focused on the negatively marked side of relational work in an attempt to tease out how those involved in ongoing social interaction evaluate the verbal behaviour of their co-participants. We have noted that, while making judgements about the behaviour of others *after the event* could easily entail the metapragmatic use of lexemes such as those given above, they are far less likely to be used metapragmatically during the course of an interaction. This makes it much more difficult for a researcher (also after the event) to make interpretations of negatively marked behaviour. In the Emery–Scargill interview we thus needed to pay close attention to comments made by either of the two participants during the interview, to study closely the visual signals revealing negative evaluations, to consider the wider implications of what is involved in producing a television broadcast of this type (the significance of the documentary film shown immediately prior to the interview, the physical set-up in the television studio, the editing being carried out live with camera shots, etc.) and, above all, to contextualise the sequence of social practice within a wider socio-political, socio-historical context. If the researcher is prepared to do all this (and probably much more than we have indicated in this chapter), then it is indeed possible to tease out negative evaluations of co-participants' behaviour which would lie within the range of impoliteness in the relational work being carried out.

It is also possible to see how forms of impoliteness (just like forms of politeness), even though they may be discursively disputed terms, are intimately involved in the exercise of power. It would not be possible to attribute attempts to gain and exercise power if relational work were not seen as a continually flexible, continually changing attempt to negotiate meaning in social practice, and it is for that reason that impoliteness, like politeness, is only a human universal if we are prepared to see it as the product of individual instances of social interaction.

Appendix

Readers who are interested in seeing a full transcript of the interview should contact Richard J. Watts.

Comment on transcription conventions:

The transcript has been made with an adaptation of the Hiat transcription conventions (cf. Ehlich 1993) in which turns are represented horizontally in the form of musical staves rather than vertically as in a drama script. This takes up a little more space but is particularly useful to represent concurrent speech by two or more interactants.

Simplified transcription conventions:

\	end of a tone unit
/	"self-interruption" leading to a recycling of the turn
the- the	repetition
—	unfinished utterance
::	lengthened syllables (only apparent here in the filled pause [er::])
[er::]	material included within square brackets refers to non-lexical utterances
(.)	unfilled pause of under 0.5 seconds
(..)	unfilled pause of between 0.5 and 1 second in length
(...)	unfilled pause of more than 1 second

Notes

1. With many thanks to Derek Bousfield and Holger Limberg for valuable comments on this chapter.
2. At the same time, what some people consider to be marked socially appropriate behaviour might be interpreted by others as being inappropriate to a certain extent. This might lead to latently negative evaluative lexemes such as *standoffish*, *stuck-up*, *hoity-toity*, etc., thus indicating that an individual who expresses such an evaluation is aware that others would consider the behaviour as appropriate, but personally interprets it negatively. This is because individuals' mappings of how lexemes should be profiled against the wider concept of inappropriate behaviour are highly likely to differ (Watts 2006).
3. While Kienpointner (1997) uses the 'term' rudeness as an umbrella term, i.e. as a second order term, he still recognises that rudeness as well as politeness are not absolute terms.

4. There need be no one-to-one correspondence between what that person felt at the time of the interaction and what he/she reports at a later stage.

5. The poster equates *rude* with *impolite*. It is interesting to see that certain contributors to this volume make second order distinctions between these terms (Terkourafi, Culpeper, Bousfield).

6. Available at www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/edguide/politics/politicalinterv.shtml [2006]. Although we don't have access to instructions given to editorial staff in the 1980s, we can assume that similar guidelines would have been issued at that time.

7. Scargill says "the fact is there was government intervention to stop it" and later "I condemn the f/ police brutality that I saw\ and massive state interference and intervention".

8. Our personal impression was that the physical set-up frames notions such as *distance* and *unreachability* and effectively turns the metaphor of the table as the locus of conciliation via negotiation into a metaphor of an unbridgeable gap between two irreconcilable points of view. In this way the sense of a gulf between interviewer and interviewee is heightened.

9. The term "frame" in this context should be understood slightly differently from the expectation frames posited earlier in this chapter, but nevertheless as being related to them. We use "frame" in the present analysis to refer to ways in which individuals engaged in social practice *represent* others (including co-participants) through the various semiotic codes at their disposal. The difference between the two uses of "frame" is this: whereas frames of expectation are formed through earlier experience of social practice, representational frames are constructed in ongoing instances of social practice to represent the character traits, ideas and opinions of and even statements made by others. They are used as a means of creating in third persons (here the television audience) expectations as to how the represented others are likely to behave. In the present sequence of social practice, the desired representation is one of inappropriate behaviour on the part of the other, i.e. Emery attempting to frame Scargill as behaving inappropriately, and vice versa.

10. Sanctioned behaviour does not automatically mean that it is normalised in its effect, i.e. that it does not hurt the recipient (cf. Culpeper 2005).

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