

## **Impoliteness: Using language to cause offence**

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### **1. Background**

Located in linguistic pragmatics, a field that focuses on language usage in context, this project offers a systematic and comprehensive impoliteness model that is not only theoretically informed but data-driven. It is developed through extensive analyses of contextualised data, as well as informant testing and computational analysis. Moreover, no previous study includes "every day" impoliteness interactions as a central and extensive data set, or attempts to cast light on the mechanisms of impoliteness through cross-cultural comparisons.

Impoliteness-related phenomena have been studied in diverse disciplines. However, no concerted attempt has been made to "join the dots" presented in these literatures. In sociology we find evidence that verbal abuse may be perceived to be as damaging as physical abuse (e.g. Batchelor et al. 2001; Burman et al. 2002). Yet no connection is made with, for example, Greenwell and Dengerink (1973), psychologists working on aggression, who arrived at the same conclusion. Tedeschi and Felson (1994: 171), two social psychologists, observe that "social harm may be imposed by insults, reproaches, sarcasm, and various types of impolite behaviour", but do not say what the substance of that impolite behaviour is. McEnery (2006) provides the linguistic substance for swearing, one potentially impolite type of behaviour. However, whilst his study reveals distributions across groups of users, it ignores social interaction and effects – it ignores social harm.

Until recently, work on impoliteness was sparse. Moreover, some of that work took *politeness* frameworks as a point of departure (e.g. Lachenicht 1980; Culpeper 1996; Bousfield 2008). However, in Eelen's oft-cited critique of politeness theories, the first listed in his summary of problems for politeness theory is: "The inability to adequately account for impoliteness by the same concepts that explain politeness" (2001:245). Of course, whether Eelen is entirely right needs careful consideration (it partly depends on the specific politeness model). However, the important point for this research project is that one cannot assume at the outset that politeness concepts are best-suited for the job. Consequently, I commenced with a clean slate, questioning the very basics. In fact, I replaced my previous definitions of impoliteness, which borrowed from politeness-theory, with the following: "Impoliteness involves (a) an attitude comprised of negative evaluative beliefs about particular behaviours in particular social contexts, and (b) the activation of that attitude by those particular in-context-behaviours". My project was partly aimed at fleshing out that definition: the nature of that attitude (e.g. its ontology, its relationship with emotion); what counts as "negative" (e.g. what beliefs, cultural contexts, emotions); what particular behaviours are involved; and how behaviours and contexts interact to activate that attitude (see **Annex-2**, for a fuller definition).

## 2. Objectives

The objectives in *italics* below are listed in order of weight, with the most important first.

*(1) To increase our understanding of an important area of social interaction by developing a descriptive and theoretical model of 'linguistic impoliteness' which is both comprehensive and robust.*

*(1.1) To propose a definition of linguistic impoliteness informed by (a) detailed study of public signs, charters, laws and documents restricting linguistic impoliteness and of reports of verbal abuse in the media; (b) corpus-based analysis of the usage of terms used to refer to impolite behaviour; and (c) a survey of the multidisciplinary literature relating to impoliteness.*

1.1 (a) and 1.1 (b) focused on impoliteness metalanguage terms (e.g. *impolite*, *rude*, *verbally abusive*) and metapragmatic comments (e.g. "that was rude/mean/nasty"). I considered both public metalanguage (e.g. public signs, policy documents), and private metalanguage (e.g. behaviours that would be labelled "rude" in a domestic setting). What emerged from these studies are the dimensions along which impoliteness terms varied, and information about the contexts in which they are used. For 1.1 (c), I carried out an extensive survey of the literature. I particularly utilised some concepts from Spencer-Oatey (e.g. 2008), which accounted for my data well. 1.1 (a), (b) and (c) shaped my full definition of impoliteness (e.g. the role accorded to intentionality).

*(1.2) To reveal and describe the linguistic strategies involved in generating impoliteness, as well as their social functions, the kinds of social contexts they interact with and the nature of that interaction, by exploring diverse social contexts, from the public and institutional (e.g. military recruit training) to the private and domestic (e.g. family arguments).*

Whilst I had a considerable and diverse collection of data in which impoliteness was frequent, I took on board the comment of Referee 3 of my original application that I lacked "everyday" instances of impoliteness. I thus elicited 100 diary-reports (plus a further 400 from informants in other countries) as a central dataset (see section 2). Using these diary-reports plus the other datasets, I identified an array of linguistic strategies that, according to certain criteria, could be deemed to have triggered impolite effects. I also considered the functions of impoliteness events. Although there can be overlap, three functional types are identifiable: affective, coercive and entertaining.

*(1.3) To establish a set of impoliteness strategies that can be considered highly conventional within the cultures of my data (mostly U.K. based).*

The notion of conventionality is not something that has been properly discussed either with reference to politeness or impoliteness. The single exception here is the work of Terkourafi (e.g. 2001), which underpins my understanding of conventional impoliteness. The key here is regularity of occurrence within specific impoliteness contexts by which the particular linguistic item becomes conventionally associated with impoliteness effects. Regularities emerged from my datasets. However, as a

further check on the strength of any particular item, I investigated patterns of occurrence and contexts within what is probably the largest structured corpus of naturally-occurring data in the world (see section 2). I also investigated the role of taboo expressions and prosody.

*(1.4) To enhance our understanding of 'creativity' in relation to linguistic impoliteness, including both its nature and social functions. Particular attention will be given to understanding the role of creativity in amplifying impoliteness and in neutralising impoliteness (e.g. as in the case of 'mock impoliteness' or banter).*

Having defined creativity, I initially explored it in the context of impoliteness events with the function of entertaining. I then went on to demonstrate how a full array of creativity can be found in impoliteness discourses that not only entertain but have the prime function of promoting social cohesion (cf. banter). Here, creativity can help signal the fact that the impoliteness is "non-genuine", thus helping neutralize it. However, creativity also occurs in discourses that do not entertain but are coercive. Here, it can amplify impoliteness effects.

*(1.5) To test dimensions that might underlie the proposed model of impoliteness, including whether: (a) different degrees of impoliteness are associated with different conventional impoliteness strategies; (b) as indirectness increases there is a proportional increase in impoliteness; (c) as impoliteness strategies multiply there is a proportional increase in impoliteness effects; and (d) the more powerful the speaker the less impolite the utterance is perceived to be.*

I designed a rating-scales questionnaire to examine (a) whether the scales I provided (e.g. how *impolite*, *rude*, *patronising*, etc. a contextualised behaviour was) constituted a cohesive set, (b) whether there was a correlation between strategies with different degrees of directness and conventionality and degrees of impoliteness, and (c) the effect of different degrees of power. Broadly speaking, neither of the hypotheses one might extrapolate from the current politeness literature turn out to be correct for impoliteness, and, above all, power relations are crucial. I did not study the effect of multiple impoliteness strategies through this method, concentrating on simple strategies (I tackled multiple strategies in my qualitative analyses).

*(2) To consolidate the academic area of impoliteness studies by raising its profile and enhancing networking and information exchange amongst diverse interested parties (not just those belonging to disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, and psychology, but also people in areas such as business studies/organizational studies, media studies, literature, legal studies and diplomacy).*

I co-edited (with Derek Bousfield) a special issue of the *Journal of Politeness Research*. This brought together academics from diverse fields, e.g. Jay (neuro-psychology), Kienpointner (rhetoric), Tracy (human communication). I also organised (with Bousfield) two conferences on impoliteness, which attracted participants from diverse areas, and I co-organised a specialist panel on impoliteness at a major conference (see section 5 for details).

*(3) To communicate findings from the project to a diverse range of non-academic users dealing with bullying, harassment, confrontational interactions and antisocial behaviours, including policy formers, public service employees (e.g. traffic wardens, prison officers, council adjudicators), legal professionals and social workers.*

My international impoliteness conferences, especially the second one, were key to my communications strategy. Participants included academics from diverse disciplines and some non-academics (e.g. from the NHS). I also timed a press release about my ESRC work to coincide with that second conference. The conference and my work were reported in the national and local newspapers, and I was interviewed on the radio. Moreover, I have devised a website reporting my work and supplying other information about impoliteness. This is deliberately written in a non-academic style, in order to be widely accessible. I have also sent out "website alerts" to various government agencies via the Home Office's *Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour and its Causes* unit, in order to make them aware of the website (**Annex-3**).

*(4) To develop the career of the applicant by providing him with the opportunity to acquire wide-ranging knowledge of research theories and methodologies, to produce a substantial piece of high-quality research (a monograph), and to establish himself at the hub of a network of people researching/interested in impoliteness.*

Not only had I the time to read research in diverse areas, but I have had the opportunity to talk to and collaborate with people from other disciplines. Notable here is the ongoing collaboration I have forged with John Dixon (Psychology Department, Lancaster University). I have also produced a substantial research monograph (see section 6). I am in touch with a vast network of people researching impoliteness. At the heart of this is the *Linguistic Impoliteness and Rudeness (LIAR)* conference series, and associated e-mail list. An unexpected consequence of my raised profile due to this project is that in November 2009 I was appointed co-editor of the prestigious *Journal of Pragmatics*. Furthermore, my Head of Department has recommended that I put myself forward for promotion (a Chair).

### **3. Methods**

#### **3.1 Data sources**

I analysed the following data sets: *Fly-on-the-wall documentaries*, *Exploitative TV shows*, *Graffiti dialogues*, *Tapped phone calls* and various *Corpora*. Regarding the final item, at the beginning of my research leave I applied for permission to use the Oxford English Corpus and was granted it. This corpus contains a remarkable two-billion words of naturally-occurring language data. Furthermore, I sought to rectify the lack of "everyday" instances of impoliteness in my data. I devised a diary-report form to elicit a detailed description of impoliteness events in which informants had been involved, including what was said, contextual information and the informant's reflections on that event (**Annex-4**). Informants (undergraduate students) were not required to complete the form in class, but to treat the form more like a diary that they

would fill in as and when a relevant event occurred. I distributed well over 1000 forms, in order to attain 100 completions (students forgot to fill it in, lost the form, etc.). The data I obtained was very rich. In addition, I asked colleagues in other countries to help attain matching data sets. Thus, I obtained a further 400 completions from China, Finland, Germany and Turkey. One general limitation of this data is that the majority of the informants were female (**Annex-5**).

I also devised, with help from John Dixon, a ratings questionnaire which was administered to 95 Lancaster University undergraduates. The questionnaire contained three different scenarios (factory meeting room, courtroom, parade ground) which were manipulated for utterances varying in directness (i.e. "you be quiet", "could you be quiet" and "you aren't being quiet"). Also, the three scenarios were repeated with the power relation reversed (e.g. the employee commands the boss). Students read these and then evaluated the utterances in the scenarios on six scales, incorporating the following items: *patronising*, *rude*, *aggressive*, *inappropriate*, *hurtful* and *impolite*. The first five items were chosen because they had appeared in the top six groups of metalinguistic expressions which my diary-report data informants had used. This is an unusual step compared with other studies, which tend to use labels which suit and are chosen by researchers (see **Annex-6**, for a sample ratings questionnaire).

### 3.2 Identifying impoliteness in the (non-elicited) data

How do I arrive at a decision that some behaviour in the (non-elicited) data is impolite? I was guided by the following sources of evidence, roughly ordered in terms of their weight:

- Co-text (e.g. a riposte),
- Retrospective comments (e.g. "that was rude"),
- Certain non-verbal reactions (e.g. nervous laughter), and
- Use of conventional impoliteness formulae.

The final item is particularly weak and dangerous. For example, an insult is a conventional impoliteness formula, and but it can never be used as the sole source of evidence for an impoliteness interpretation, as it could be used in a context where it is interpreted as banter. (There is also a danger of circularity, given that I am interested in revealing such formulae). On the other hand, ignoring such formulae completely throws the baby out with the bath-water. In naturally-occurring conversation, they represent points where there is potential for impoliteness and thus points where participants are likely to direct interpretative effort in understanding the status and nature of that impoliteness (as well linguistic effort in managing that potential impoliteness). Thus, for impoliteness analysts they can be considered interpretative focal-points.

## 4. Results

### *Impoliteness terms and comments*

Metalanguage reveals people's understandings of impoliteness (it is talk about the talk that is linked to impoliteness attitudes). Particular terms tend to cluster in particular academic disciplines (*verbal aggression* in psychology; *rude* in history; *impoliteness* in linguistics, etc.) (**Annex-7**). *Rude* is outstanding as the term of general non-

academic usage, whereas the usage of *impoliteness* is negligible (which is one reason it is a good candidate for usage as a blanket-term) (**Annex-8**). Using multiple traditional thesauri, I noted that the items *impolite*, *rude*, *(verbally) abusive*, *offensive* and, to a slightly lesser extent, *(verbally) aggressive* form a cohesive semantic set with some specific semantic characteristics (**Annex-9**).

However, it is possible that people generally use completely different terms from those in academia. I analysed 200 metalinguistic expressions given by informants in descriptions of the impoliteness events they reported. These were grouped into six main clusters on the basis of semantic similarity, the central expression of each being (in order of decreasing size of the cluster): *patronising*, *inconsiderate*, *rude*, *aggressive*, *inappropriate*, *hurtful*. People most often get upset about people using language that patronises them: someone is perceived to act in a way which presumes a position of power or superiority that they are not considered to have. Using informant reflections and extensive corpus analyses, I mapped these expressions in semantic space, and two key dimensions emerged: symbolic violence and more out-group versus more in-group. (**Annex-10**). *Rude*, for example, is associated with a mild degree of symbolic violence and is most frequently used in out-group situations (especially, public service encounters).

Regarding impoliteness comments, I studied "over-politeness". I showed that, contrary to the literature (e.g. Watts 2005), over-politeness is rarely taken offensively. Instead, it mostly is a matter of miscommunication. I then focussed on prescriptive metapragmatic comments attempting to enforce how things should be and codify social norms. I examined rules in institutional and public contexts, showing that the connection with impoliteness is clear, particularly with respect to insulting, verbally abusive and/or threatening behaviours. In order to tap into the more implicit rules that infuse our everyday and more private lives, I examined manuals that prescribe rules for such situations (see **Annex-11**, for a categorisation of one example). Such rules often capture conventional impolite behaviours. Conventions are not socially neutral. They are part of and underpinned by ideologies, particularly dominant ideologies, and those ideologies are strongly involved in determining what counts as impoliteness, as expressed in such manuals.

### *Impoliteness concepts*

Current definitions of impoliteness deploy the following concepts: face, social norms and rights, intention and emotion. They generally lean either towards the notion of face or the notion of social norms. Although these notions are not entirely separate, I demonstrated that an account of my data needs both. Spencer-Oatey's (e.g. 2008) framework incorporates both, which is why I adapted and developed it for impoliteness. With regard to face, Quality face (personal positive values, cf. Spencer-Oatey 2008) turned out to be overwhelmingly the most important type of face relating to impoliteness. Social norms as authoritative standards of behaviour are the basis of sociality rights. I argued that these rights relate to morality, and that this is an important feature of impoliteness.

For some definitions of impoliteness, intentionality is criterial. However, I showed evidence that people take offence even if they know that the behaviour that caused it was not fully intentional. We can accommodate this finding by taking intentionality to be a scalar concept comprised of various components, not all of which may be in focus. People can still take offence if they know intentionality to be only weakly involved (e.g. somebody was responsible for an act and/or should have foreseen its offensive effects). Of course, this is not to deny that perceiving strong

intentionality can reinforce the offence taken. Generally we should not get carried away with intentionality – it is but one notion by which people try to understand impoliteness (people also rely on, for example, stereotyping, perceptual salience and perspective).

Emotions are key to impoliteness. Van Dijk (1987: 188-89) claims that evaluative beliefs, which constitute attitude schemata, may be associated with emotive aspects, such as like and dislike. I argued that behaviour evoking an impoliteness attitude schema on the part of either the producer or target is highly likely to trigger semi-automatically associated emotions. My diary-report data showed that emotions flowing from the violation of face are self-conscious emotions including embarrassment, whilst the violation of sociality rights are oriented to moral emotions, including anger and contempt.

I integrated the various components of impoliteness and showed how they can come together in a model for the understanding of impoliteness (loosely based on the model of text comprehension described in van Dijk and Kintsch 1983, and van Dijk's work on racism, e.g. 1987) (**Annex-12**).

### *Impoliteness formulae*

**Annex-13** presents a list of important English impoliteness formulae conventionalised for particular contexts. These formulae are mostly conventionalised in spoken interaction, and thus will have supporting prosody and visual actions. I claimed that these formulae vary according to 3 scales: degree of conventionalisation, the extent to which they are context-dependent or context-spanning, and the degree of offence they are associated with. I hypothesised that there is likely to be an interaction between the final two scales such that the more offensive a behaviour is the more likely it is to be context spanning.

I argued that the intensification of conventional impolite formulae is more than an optional extra: it is part of what makes impolite formulae attitudinally extreme, less equivocal and more likely to cause the target to take offence (cf. Young 2004). I proposed that this is achieved primarily in two ways: (1) message intensity (the use of words which are strongly negatively affective, including taboo words, and/or modifiers, some of which can also be strongly negatively affective), and (2) through non-verbal, especially prosodic, intensification.

### *Impoliteness and directness (and explicitness)*

Fifty-nine of my diary impoliteness reports did not involve conventional impoliteness formulae as triggers. Hence I described *implicational* impoliteness at length, proposing three data-driven categories according to the kind of trigger: form-driven, convention-driven and context-driven. I explained form (or expression)-driven phenomena such as innuendo, insinuations and snide remarks through Gricean implicature (1975), and mimicry through the theory of echoic irony (Sperber and Wilson 1995). Other triggers for implicational impoliteness involve a mismatch. Convention-driven linguistic triggers involve a mismatch between the context conventionally associated with the behavioural trigger and either the context associated with another part of the behaviour or the context of use. They cover everyday notions such as sarcasm, and, as with mimicry, multimodality is key. I argued that the use of conventional politeness strongly mismatching a context in which a polite interpretation is not sustainable is likely to exacerbate the perceived impoliteness of the behaviour. Context-driven triggers, where behaviour is either

unmarked or altogether absent in contexts where it is clearly expected, constitute a marginal category.

Hypotheses about (im)politeness and directness (Leech 1983; Brown and Levinson 1987) turned out not to be entirely supported by my rating-scale questionnaire study. Generally, with respect to directness, it is departures from the conventional that led to higher evaluations of impoliteness (**Annex-14**), even in contexts where any request is likely to be deemed impolite. I suggested that this is due to some politeness leakage from conventionally polite structures, for example, "could you X" structures (direct and non-conventional structures lack this "halo effect" and are thus more likely to be deemed impolite).

### *Impoliteness cultures and contexts*

Impoliteness is very sensitive to cultural context. Regarding "national cultures" (a problematic notion), my diary-report datasets revealed the importance of: Quality Face for the English data and Turkish; Equity Rights for the Chinese; Association Rights for the German (**Annex-15**) (cf. Spencer-Oatey 2008, for category details). Equity, for example, is fundamental in Chinese culture, being reflected in, for example, Confucianism and everyday proverbs, so it is no surprise that offence is more frequently taken. I also considered, at a more micro level, contexts where the social norms and cultural ideologies (e.g. "machismo") mediating the value systems that underpin face lead to the positive evaluation of behaviours which others would take as negative and impolite. Dominant ideologies sustain and normalise – legitimise – such behaviours. What people tend to react to and label as impoliteness are abuses of power, that is, cases where a person or group exerts power over another person or group beyond what is considered legitimate. This argument is consistent with my metalinguistic label findings (cf. *patronising* above), and also my rating-scale questionnaire. The latter suggested that power relations were highly influential in determining judgements of impoliteness. Conventional directness was not considered impolite at all when high-power speakers command relatively low-power addressees (**Annex-16**). In contrast, when low-power speakers command high-power addressees, the mere fact of commanding someone who has relatively high power in a context where one clearly has no special right to do so is enough to lead to the evaluation of strong impoliteness (**Annex-17**). At these higher levels of impoliteness the finer linguistic differences amongst command items with their different degrees of directness get lost in the "white noise" of offence.

I cast light on three areas of face and social norms. One concerned the role of context in priming face components and social norms. Referring to work in social cognition (e.g. Fiske and Taylor 1991), I argued that which particular component or norm is activated in the mind for a particular encounter will be influenced by: (1) the situational context, and (2) the recency and (3) the frequency with which that component / norm has been activated in the past. Another area concerned key factors in face loss. I argued that the emotional sensitivity of face components and their degree of public exposure are crucial to understanding the potential for face loss (**Annex-18**). The third concerned the role of language in dynamically constructing "(im)politeness thresholds", and the implications this has for subsequent interactants. In particular, I emphasised the importance of reciprocity in accounting for counter-impoliteness.

I discussed banter and some types of teasing and humour as particular kinds of re-contextualised conventionally impolite formulae resulting in non-genuine

impoliteness such as banter. I demonstrated that mock impoliteness relies on some degree of mismatch between conventionally impolite formulae and the context, along with additional signals (e.g. laughter), to signal that the impoliteness is not genuine. I noted that the functions of mock impoliteness extend beyond the reinforcement of solidarity to include cloaked coercion and exploitative entertainment.

I also focussed on the role of context in neutralising impoliteness effects. I presented the case that, generally speaking, neutralisation by context is difficult to achieve: context in many cases is likely to be overwhelmed by the salience of impoliteness behaviours.

### *Impoliteness functions*

Three key functional types of impoliteness event emerged in my data. Affective impoliteness can simply involve the unrestrained expression of emotion in contexts where it is prohibited or not normal. A more instrumental variant involves the targeted display of heightened emotion, typically anger, with the implication that the target is to blame for producing that negative emotional state. Coercive impoliteness seeks a realignment of values between the producer and the target such that the producer benefits or has their current benefits reinforced or protected. I predicted that coercive impoliteness is more likely to occur in situations where there is an imbalance of social structural power, though it can also be used in more equal relationships to engineer a gain in social power. Entertaining impoliteness involves entertainment at the expense of the target (or potential target) of the impoliteness, and is thus always exploitative to a degree. I proposed that there are five sources of pleasure that can be involved in entertainment impoliteness, but I dwelt more on aesthetic pleasure as it is here that the connection with creativity is clearest.

Just as all creativity requires a backdrop, I argued that potential politeness is in the background of impoliteness, and that the higher the politeness threshold the stronger the potential for impoliteness. I identified four types of creativity in the literature – pattern-re-forming, pattern-forming, situational deviation and unusual implicitness – and demonstrated that they all can exist in impoliteness events. Contrary to Carter (2004), I pointed to evidence of completely non-ritualised, genuine impoliteness patterning establishing disaffection and divergence. I suggested that this kind of genuine impoliteness pattern-forming is driven by reciprocity and other motivations calling for a riposte. However, there is always the possibility that the competitive activity itself begins to become the motivating factor, and this detracts from genuine, personalised impoliteness.

Institutional impoliteness is underpinned by power structures, and has associated dominant ideologies by which impoliteness is legitimated and (typically) unchallenged. The functions of impoliteness here do not pertain to the level of the individual but the dominant group behind the institution: they serve collective intentions, which an individual may be less than fully conscious of, leaving the institutional ideologies unchallenged. I focused on two specific functions of institutional impoliteness. One is institutional mortification, which promotes activities with the function of "killing" some aspect of a person's self so that it can be replaced with an approved self (e.g. army recruit training). The other is institutional exploitation, which refers to institutions, especially those relating to the media, which promote activities with the function of attacking some aspect of a person's face or sociality rights in order to, for example, entertain others (e.g. exploitative television shows).

## 5. Activities

- Four oral referred papers at key international conferences: LPRG (Leeds), IPrA (Gothenberg), SS17 (Amsterdam) and BAAL (Newcastle)
- Five invited lectures: Cardiff, Leeds, Sheffield, UWE, Warwick
- One conference panel (co-organiser): *Impoliteness in Language: New Perspectives on 'politeness issues'* (IPrA).
- Two conferences (and an associated email list):

*Linguistic Impoliteness And Rudeness I* (LIAR I). 3-4 July 2006. University of Huddersfield. 75 delegates from 28 Countries. (Co-organiser)

*Linguistic Impoliteness And Rudeness II* (LIAR II). 30 June-2 July 2009. Lancaster University. 135 delegates from 33 countries. (Lead organiser)

- I established the *Cross-Cultural Impoliteness Project* (CCIP) network. Key members include: Leyla Marti (Boğaziçi University, Turkey) Meilian Mei (Zhejiang University of Technology, China), Minna Nevala (University of Helsinki) and Gila Schauer (Lancaster University, UK). A broader and looser network of parties interested in impoliteness was established by the two conferences and their associated email list.
- Teaching activities (specifically on impoliteness): Supervision of two doctoral students and one visiting scholar.

## 6. Outputs

- In total I published (or submitted for publication) (a bibliographic list is in the **Annex-19**):
  - one 115,000 word monograph;
  - one special issue of a journal;
  - three journal articles;
  - five book chapters;
  - one book review; and
  - one magazine article.
- The key, most substantial output is:

Culpeper, J. (submitted) *Impoliteness: Using Language to Cause Offence*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge

- The impoliteness special issue is noteworthy, because it evolved from the impoliteness conference I organised with Derek Bousfield and united rather diverse academics:

Bousfield, D. and J. Culpeper (2008) *Impoliteness*, Special issue of the *Journal of Politeness Research* 4(2): 161-337

- The project website [www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/Impoliteness/index.htm](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/Impoliteness/index.htm) is designed to be widely accessible, and also act as a hub for interested parties.

## 7. Impacts

- The *LIAR II* conference was reported in *The Times* (January, 2009).
- I was interviewed by BBC Radio Lancashire (July 2009).
- Project findings were reported in the: *Lancashire Evening Post*, *Lancaster Guardian Series*, *Garstang Courier*, *Pendle Today*, *Burnley Express*, *Morecambe Visitor & Reporter* and *Blackpool Gazette* (August 2009).
- Invited contribution to *EMagazine: The Magazine for Advanced English*, The English and Media Centre, catering for UK A-level students of English language and literature.
- Policy development impacts are expected as a consequence of dissemination of this research by the government's *Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour and its Causes* unit.

N.B. The main project output has not yet been published.

## 8. Future Research Priorities

- The priority for the work I am doing with John Dixon (Psychology Department, Lancaster University) is to encompass more complexity and more "naturalism" in our investigations. We start by taking on board the prosodic features of impoliteness (missing in most studies) in an experiment which will run in December 2009. We are planning a future grant application to the ESRC.
- The *Cross-Cultural Impoliteness Project* (CCIP) network was formed because cross-cultural aspects of impoliteness constitute a lacuna in the literature. More specifically, our next step is to investigate impoliteness metalanguage in a cross-cultural perspective.