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“Do you wanna talk about impoliteness? How rude!”

Introduction

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Introduction

“Do you wanna talk about impoliteness? How rude!”

Ever since the publication of *Politeness – Some Universals in Language Use* in 1978, the study of verbal interactions has been somewhat biased and “linguistic politeness” has established itself as the main research area. Brown & Levinson’s model has of course been adapted and criticised but it remains highly influential. More recently, however, a new research paradigm has emerged, that of impoliteness.

Many scholars, like Culpeper [1996], [2003], [2005] and [2010] or Bousfield [2008], now endeavour to counterbalance the previous theory and study the notion of “impoliteness” more thoroughly than ever before. Is the study of impoliteness bound to replace the study of politeness? Is it simply a way of compensating for a research area that has been neglected for too long or is it the beginning of a new approach to the study of verbal interactions encompassing both politeness and impoliteness under the umbrella term of *(im)politeness*?

The articles of this issue of *Lexis* are the proceedings of the mini-conference organised by the Centre d’Etudes Linguistiques of the Université Jean Moulin – Lyon 3. The purpose of this conference was to prepare the theoretical ground for the conference on “Linguistic Impoliteness and Rudeness” to be held in May 2011 at the Université Jean Moulin – Lyon 3. In 2008 Denis Jamet & Manuel Jobert organised a conference on “Euphemism” (*L’Empreinte de l’Euphémisme – Tours et détours*, Jamet & Jobert (eds), Paris, L’Harmattan, 2010) in which many presentations were devoted to euphemisms construed as mitigating devices and dysphemisms interpreted as Face Threatening Acts.

We should like to thank Professor Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni (Université Lumière – Lyon 2) for accepting to be the keynote speaker of this mini-conference. Her expertise and availability at this time were highly appreciated by the participants.

The first three articles of this issue are devoted to considerations relative to politeness and impoliteness. **Manuel Jobert** (Université Jean Moulin – Lyon 3) assesses the importance of studies on impoliteness in the present context and advocates a global approach to *(im)politeness*. **Olivier Simonin** (Université de Perpignan) tackles *(im)politeness* in connexion with Grice’s Cooperative Principle and Sperber & Wilson’s Relevance Principle. **Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni** (Université Lumière – Lyon 2) introduces several nuances, such as “overpoliteness” or “polirudeness” in order to obtain a better theoretical grasp of the complexity of what verbal interactions are about. She draws examples from several political debates featuring Nicolas Sarkozy and from everyday exchanges taking place in educational settings. With **Nadia Lahiana** (Institut Supérieur des Langues de Tunis), we remain in the context of French political debates, construed as a means of exposing conflict talk. **Valerija Sinkeviciute** (University of Vilnius) studies first encounter conversations in Spanish and in English, comparing positive and negative politeness in two movies. **Rudy Loock** (Université Charles de Gaulle – Lille 3) adopts a syntactical approach to *(im)politeness* and studies how appositive relative clauses may be used to soften the possible FTA. Along the same lines, **Graham Ranger** (Université d’Avignon et des Pays de Vaucluse) analyses the different uses of *You see!* as a parenthetical comment clause in initial, median and final positions as well as a politeness marker. Finally, **Julie Neveux** (Université de la Sorbonne – Paris 4) analyses metaphors as potentially impolite speech acts.

The present issue gives a fairly good indication of what (im)politeness studies may entail. Be they theoretical, applied, comparative, syntactic or rhetorical, the different approaches are varied and cover a wide range of issues.

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