

“AWE NO PLEASE LOVE US”: EXPLORING L2 TEACHERS AND LEARNERS’

PERCEPTIONS OF ONLINE INTERCULTURAL (IM)POLITENESS

by

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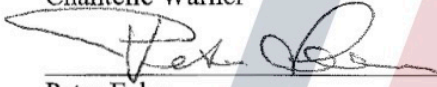
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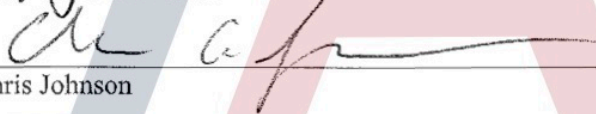
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Acknowledgements and Dedication

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Abstract

Based on Kecskés's (2014) intercultural pragmatics model, this study focuses on L2 teacher and learner perceptions of how conventionalized impoliteness formulae and implicational impoliteness (Culpeper, 2011) are shaped, negotiated, and produced interculturally on a social networking site (SNS), Instagram. In addition, the research sought to understand participants' perceptions of the potential teachability of (im)politeness using extracts from Instagram. Teachability here related to both the pedagogical potential of these materials and their appropriateness for a formal instructional setting. The findings of the study suggest that participants view impoliteness language as characteristic of online platforms and that the featured topic also played a strong role in whether an instance was viewed as impolite; however, a metapragmatic intervention included in the interviews suggests that participants can become more aware of the different ways in which (im)politeness can be produced or perceived by users of a lingua franca, when prompted to reflect on linguistic choices. As for the potential teachability of impoliteness in a formal educational setting, participants were divided. The reasons that they give for supporting or rejecting the idea of social media texts as a means of teaching impoliteness point to some of the possible challenges teacher educators and program developers might face in integrating intercultural politeness.

Chapter 1

Introduction to Intercultural Pragmatics and (Im)politeness within a Social Networking Site (SNS)

Intercultural pragmatics and discourse studies have focused attention on the theme of politeness ever since Brown and Levinson (1987) published their politeness theory. However, research into impoliteness has only recently become popular. Although (im)politeness research is a relatively new academic field, speakers of different languages and from across cultures have shown unabated interest in issues of politeness and proper behavior since its introduction. Perhaps current interest in such matters is inevitable. Because we are social by nature, societies have long shown concern for how their people should be treated and how they should treat others, endorsing education for children and students in etiquette and manners.

Nevertheless, scholars have not settled on a common conceptual framework for (im)politeness research. Brown and Levinson (1978) analyzed how people maintain principled relationships and avoid interpersonal conflict via different linguistic expressions and strategies. While academic interpretations of civility and politeness have increased since 1978, these linguists' early theories remain a touchstone for the field. Many approaches define (im)politeness through the lens of a particular theoretical framework. Brown and Levinson (1978) define politeness as attending to the wants of others in terms of one's public self-image, or "face." For these linguists, one's desire for approval (positive face) and the wish to act unimpeded (negative face) drive social interactions, together with the mutual need to save face.

In other approaches, definitions of (im)politeness closely mirror how lay users understand such language and behavior. For instance, Spencer-Oatey (2005) suggested that (im)politeness acts as an umbrella term that covers many evaluative meanings (e.g., warmth, friendliness,

consideration, respect, deference, insolence, aggression, rudeness). These meanings can have positive, negative, or neutral connotations and determine whether people perceive their social relations as (dis)harmonious. Ultimately, each definition, theory, and analysis of (im)politeness reflects the agendas of the individual researchers (Locher, 2015). One-size-fits-all definitions of politeness and impoliteness cannot exist for the simple reason that the research questions that drive the field are varied and encompass a broad range of theories and methodologies.

(Im)politeness research is an increasingly multidisciplinary area (Kádár and Haugh, 2013).

Contributions to this research explore incivility in many contexts, such as online and intercultural settings. More recent theories have proposed concepts of impoliteness as dynamic, cultural, and contextual phenomena within interactions (Mills, 2011). Intercultural (im)politeness, however, remains relatively unexplored. Indeed, Haugh and Kádár (2017) expressed surprise that researchers have primarily ignored intercultural (im)politeness, given that culture itself has played a crucial—albeit increasingly contested—role in the field since its foundation. They contend that research into (im)politeness has focused on the cross-cultural rather than the intercultural. Specifically, most studies have analyzed (im)politeness in intracultural settings, and compared cases across cultural groups, rather than exploring encounters between interactants with different cultural backgrounds. According to Haugh and Kádár (2017), researchers shy away from studying (im)politeness in intercultural settings because of the difficulty in defining “culture” and the assumption that intercultural encounters are less ubiquitous when interactants are using the L2. They argued that, despite ongoing critiques of the notion of culture, ignoring encounters that the participants themselves construe as intercultural amounts to throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Indeed, current debates about defining culture illustrate that, despite

being difficult to pin down, it is a highly productive analytical construct (e.g., Sifianou & Blitvich, 2017).

Current research into intercultural (im)politeness calls for a considered analytical approach that draws from both a theoretical stance on culture and an appreciation of the importance of grounding one's analysis in the understandings of the participants themselves. The latter requires a firm grasp of the relevance of the emic/etic distinction, processes of identification, and accommodation of studies into intercultural (im)politeness. Scholars also suggest that intercultural encounters can be studied at both a local, situated level and a broader, macro level.

Conducting (im)politeness research within online social networking sites (SNSs) proves particularly fruitful because it uncovers (in)civility's context-dependency. This aspect makes it challenging, if not impossible, to link to a particular setting, as the characteristics of the media and platforms involved complicate interpretations of (im)politeness. Nevertheless, they reveal fascinating details about how users within these spaces negotiate and co-construct (im)politeness, and how perceptions, interpretations, and the production of (im)politeness shape online interaction during encounters with users of different cultural backgrounds. Performing a systematic analysis of the language used in these platforms to see how users navigate online (im)politeness offers a worthy avenue of exploration, primarily because of the insights it would provide to second language acquisition and teaching.

Teaching and learning (im)politeness have gained currency within the field of second language pedagogy (e.g., Pizziconi & Locher, 2015; Mugford, 2019). This area combines research from (im)politeness studies with language pedagogy and language learning. Researchers are connecting newer ideas on politeness and impoliteness with the literature on developing pragmatic competence in applied linguistics and SLA, particularly for facilitating metapragmatic

awareness and language analysis. This approach is useful for making learners notice salient forms; i.e., the different ways of matching forms and functions in a learner's first language and a foreign language. However, Bella, Sifianou, and Tzanne (2015) have emphasized that learning and teaching (im)politeness is not at all straightforward. Their position of not abandoning the now-marginalized Brown and Levinson (1987) tradition, but instead merging it with a more discursive and postmodern view, is sensible and timely. Bella et al.'s emphasis on raising awareness is significant because it refrains from insisting that learners adopt L2 politeness preferences.

To date, the majority of existing research that has focused on impoliteness has predominantly failed to take into consideration teachers' and learners' perceptions of teaching impoliteness. This study aims to bridge that gap by placing a strong emphasis on L2 teachers' and learners' perceptions of intercultural impoliteness and the ways in which such perceptions could be managed and considered in actual L2 classrooms. It also examines existing awareness of the importance and pervasiveness of this phenomenon. It is important to consider the perceptions of both L2 teachers and learners. In the case of teachers, the teaching practices of educators are typically informed by their principles and beliefs. As such, if teachers do not agree with teaching impoliteness, this conviction will ultimately impact how educational initiatives are delivered. It is also important to understand the perceptions of learners because this will foster understanding of what students can tolerate and the most effective means of teaching impoliteness in the classroom.

This study investigates how users shape and negotiate (im)politeness on Instagram, an online intercultural setting. More specifically, it explores the perceptions of L2 teachers and learners of intercultural (im)politeness by examining posts extracted from Instagram. It also investigates

how SNSs frame (im)politeness, and the perceptions and attitudes of L2 teachers and learners on the posts' efficacy for teaching L2 (im)politeness. Chapter 2, the literature review, discusses such key terms and concepts as intercultural pragmatics, impoliteness (conventional and implicational), approaches to impoliteness research, and (im)politeness in SNSs contexts. Chapter 3 probes Instagram and analyzes the presence of (im)politeness in this and other online spaces, how users navigate (im)politeness in this context, and the research and teaching challenges that Instagram poses. Chapter 4 presents the study's methodology and the research questions the study aims to answer. It also looks closely at the Instagram posts that were used in the survey, and the example post that was used as part of a metapragmatic analysis exercise in the interview. Chapter 5 presents the first part of the results and considers how participants (both L2 teachers and learners) evaluate, perceive, and interpret instances of intercultural (im)politeness on Instagram. Chapter 6 delivers the second part of the results and reveals these participants' views on the Instagram posts' usefulness of teaching L2 impoliteness in a language classroom. The conclusion, Chapter 7, relates the insights gained from the results and discusses the implications of teaching L2 impoliteness based on the participants' perceptions. It also presents the future directions of this study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of intercultural pragmatics. It then presents an in-depth discussion on impoliteness as a linguistic phenomenon and considers its definition and the complex features that contribute to its connotations. The chapter then examines these notions within the context of the intercultural interactions that take place on SNSs.

2.1. Intercultural Pragmatics

Intercultural pragmatics represents a relatively novel approach to pragmatics (Kecskés, 2012) that considers how a common language system (i.e., a lingua franca) is employed in interactions between interlocutors who speak different first languages and who are from different cultural backgrounds (Kecskés, 2014; Kecskés, 2015a). Moeschler (2004) defines intercultural pragmatics as:

[T]hose facts implied by the use of language that do not require access to mutually manifest knowledge, but to specific contextual knowledge necessary for understanding the speaker's intention. In other words, intercultural pragmatics aims at understanding the extent to which non-shared knowledge affects and modifies the retrieval of intended meaning. (p. 50)

Kecskés (2012, 2014, 2015a) played an integral role in the establishment of intercultural pragmatics as a field of study and extended this area of research from existing pragmatics theories. He argued that the approaches that are employed in pragmatics research are not suitable for studying multilingual, transcultural interactions. This is problematic because a monolingual approach suggests that the principles of communication are universal (Wolf & Polzenhagen,

2006; Kecskés, 2014). In addition, general pragmatics research is typically concerned with analyzing language at the level of individual utterances and places a specific focus on speech acts (e.g., requests, refusals, invitations, etc.) and their function in interactions (Kecskés, 2012, 2014, 2015a; Sobyra, 2015), whereas intercultural pragmatics acknowledges that interlocutors creatively and dynamically construct and communicate knowledge at the discourse level; for this reason, an intercultural pragmatic approach analyzes sets of utterances as forms of discourse segments between participants (Kecskés, 2012, 2014, 2015a).

Intercultural pragmatics is based on specific notions of language, culture, and interaction. Kecskés (2014) argued that language use is governed by universal and culturally-specific principles. Also, language operates not merely as a restrictive mechanism but also as a mechanism by which thoughts and ideas are generated. It also helps a speaker to shape his or her ideas by providing several linguistic alternatives and options. According to the main theories of intercultural pragmatics, speakers are creative during interactions because they rely on language that is created in the process of communication as opposed to pre-assembled language sets that are based on pre-existing cultural and social frames (Kecskés, 2014). Kecskés also argued that interactions between interlocutors of different first languages (L1) who engage in intercultural communication via a common language may need to be conscious of how they use words and what they say because they may lack the necessary knowledge of the L2 and the norms, conventions, and beliefs of that language. Baker (2011) had earlier suggested that, from the perspective of intercultural pragmatics, intercultural communication takes a dynamic, fluid, and dialectical approach to culture. Baker's argument aligned with that of Kecskés (2014), who believed that culture is a fuzzy concept that is neither static nor evolving but is simultaneously both: it changes synchronically and diachronically over time and as interlocutors communicate

on the spot. In other words, culture is constructed through previously existing knowledge and emergent features at the moment people interact interculturally.

When engaging in intercultural communication, participants co-construct dialectal knowledge through both *priori* (prior background knowledge derived from cultural and social norms and conventions), and actual situational context (elements and experiences emerging from the context of the interaction) (Kecskés, 2014). As such, Kecskés' (2012, 2014) complex theory of intercultural pragmatics is grounded within a socio-cognitive approach that emphasizes the co-construction of knowledge while also highlighting the interactant's prior knowledge. It emphasizes how an individual's previous authentic, social, and situational experiences contribute to the construction and understanding of meaning. Understanding intercultural pragmatics within a socio-cognitive approach accounts for the intricate function of cultural norms and private mental processes, how these are implemented explicitly and/or reflectively by speakers as a result of socio-cultural contextual feedback devices, and how this affects and explains the construction of meaning and knowledge transfer (Kecskés, 2014). Socio-cognitive approaches conceptualize three, integrated kinds of knowledge: collective prior knowledge, individual prior knowledge, and actual situationally created knowledge, in order for an individual to achieve meaning construction and comprehension. The ultimate purpose of intercultural pragmatics is to observe intercultural discourse from the perspective that interlocutors participate in a joint transformation of knowledge and communicative attitudes and behaviors rather than a transmission of knowledge from L1 norms to L2 norms (Kecskés, 2015a).

The field of intercultural pragmatics focuses on how language systems are applied, both orally and written, in social interactions between people who communicate using a *lingua franca* in intercultural contexts (Kecskés, 2010). Kecskés (2010) outlined the applications of oral and

written language processing research in intercultural pragmatics as follows: (1) Communication between native speakers and non-native speakers of a language, (2) lingua franca interactions in which the interlocutors don't speak the same first language (L1), (3) multilingual discourse, and (4) bilingual or multilingual individuals' linguistic development and use of language.

A key concept in intercultural pragmatics is the notion of "culture." According to the intercultural pragmatics, culture is a vague concept because it is diversely allocated between individuals within a given society. That is, members of a particular community and/or cultural group embrace and implement their relatively common culture in a different way depending on the circumstances just as they project a different sense of identification within the same social and/or cultural group (as can be seen in Figure 1). The concept of interculturality plays a more central role in the paradigm of intercultural pragmatics than merely representing the culture that is embodied in the languages spoken by the interlocutors. It interprets cultural changes as diachronic changes in cultural constructs and models and synchronic changes in the cultural representation and speech individuals produce. As such, Kecskés (2015c) argues that:

[T]here is a shift from the communal/societal to the individual because conventions, common beliefs, norms, shared knowledge and the like that constitute a core common ground in L1 are quite limited in intercultural interaction so the participants should co-construct them. The socio-cognitive approach emphasizes that this shift does not mean that the individual is more important than the societal. What it means is that both are important but the actual situational frame is expected to be co-constructed by individuals who participate in the process because this language use frame and context is not given the way as it is in intracultural communication where prior experience of members of a

speech community results in relatively similar interpretation of situational frames. (pp. 190-191)

People of different nationalities or ethnic groups co-construct relatively spontaneous communicative exchanges which result in an intercultural phenomenon based on their cultural backgrounds. According to Kecskés (2010), this dialectical and dynamic phenomenon acts as the foundation upon which intercultural communication is established.

While Kecskés primarily theorized these concepts within the context of face-to-face interactions, they are also applicable within context of digital communications, which have become a ubiquitous part of everyday life, for example in relation to interactions found in social networking sites. Consider the following example, which consists of an image posted on the social networking site Instagram of a well-known reality TV star, Khloe Kardashian (as can be seen in Figure 1). The image depicts two men wearing Middle Eastern clothing sitting next to a Khloe wearing a cat costume and is captioned “Sheik Pussy.” In this example, the word “Sheik” is an Arabic honorific word that is used to refer to a man who holds an elite position within a community, while “Pussy” refers to a feline (although it has another meaning in English that is highly inappropriate or offensive in certain contexts). This image has garnered over 37,000 comments and sparked outrage among people of Middle Eastern descent. In fact, it attracted so much attention that it was even featured on the national news in some areas of the world. Participants, who appear to be native Arabic speakers, judging from the information presented in their profile pages, in this discussion drew on their knowledge of the Arabian culture while using information from their own cultural backgrounds to support their beliefs. Significantly, the cultural background of those engaged in this discussion influenced whether they found the image offensive and inappropriate or supported the original poster’s (OP’s)

caption choice. Moreover, when engaging in such intercultural interactions, people co-construct and negotiate meanings as they converse. Therefore, conversations shift and become messier during cross-cultural encounters, owing to context and the multiple and variable perspectives and pragmatic expectations.



Figure 1. A play on the words “Pussy” and “Sheik” that resulted in clashes between people of different cultures.

We do not know whether it was the OP’s intent to be impolite or rude (intention in relation to impoliteness will be discussed at length in later sections), by playing around with language and using the word “Pussy,” which has a double meaning in English (one of which can be interpreted as highly offensive in this context), after the word “Sheik” to cause offense to a specific group or culture. However, the discussions and comments that ensued highlighted how many social media users were critical of the use of the two words in combination, and a number of posters expressed their absolute disapproval, and/or stated that they were culturally offended. As a result of the

controversial nature of the image, comments that contained instances of impoliteness were common in the comments section (see Figure 2).

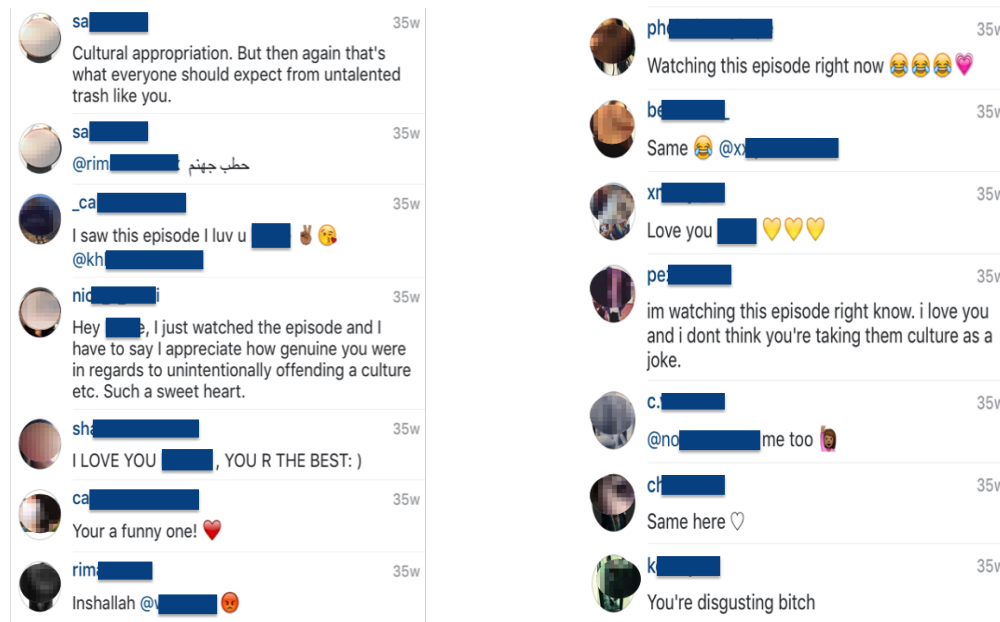


Figure 2. Responses to the “Sheik Pussy” post.¹

These communicative interactions showcase complex features of intercultural and intracultural communication within the scope of intercultural pragmatics. In particular, the exchanges corroborate Kecskés’ claims that the cultural norms, conventions, and beliefs of the lingua franca (e.g., English) play a limited role in intercultural communications. Instead, the interactions are dynamically and synchronously co-constructed in accordance with the intercultural elements by which speakers of different L1s use a lingua franca (English) to communicate within the standards, conventions, and principles of that lingua franca on different levels. In addition, by co-constructing meaning, interlocutors are cooperating to intentionally

¹Comment 2: حطب جهنم is a figurative phrase in Arabic which translates to “burn in hell”. Comment 7: Inshallah is used in Arabic to mean “God willing,” and in this context, the writer implicitly means that he/ she agrees with the previous statement.

generate a common ground and sense of belonging or affiliation to a certain discourse community, irrespective of the fact they are unable to reach agreement on the subject matter.

Intercultural pragmatics places a particular emphasis on the role the individual plays in actively building and maintaining communicative exchanges within a social framework that is continually regenerated during the process of intercultural communication. Within this framework, the common goal is to reach a common ground in which interlocutors can access a converged mental representation of shared knowledge that is both available in memory and co-constructed in the communicative process, thus, contributing to shaping intersubjectivity (Kecskés, 2015c). In other words, the discussions and interactions that take place on social network platforms might have different communicative purposes. These can include expressing disagreement, praise, impoliteness and so on, in order to convey thoughts that don't necessarily aim to consensually shape ideas and relationships, but rather to place these users in positions that allow them to reach a consensus, understanding, or position on a specific topic. Operating within the realm of intercultural pragmatics warrants a particular focus on the fact that online social interactions are context-sensitive, and that interlocutors who engage in intercultural communications on these platforms base their exchanges on prior contexts or knowledge as opposed to the actual situational context. In online contexts, the construction of actual meaning relies on the use and combination of existing repertoires and newly emergent elements which make up the actual situational context. As such in intercultural communication, interactants can draw on different types of knowledge sources, such as prior experience, and linguistic expression lexical units and communicative styles, for meaning to be activated (Kecskés, 2015c). This could help us in understanding why interlocutors' evaluations and conclusions about certain linguistic and pragmatic expressions could vary in intercultural encounters.

2.2. Impoliteness

Brown and Levinson (1987) conceptualized their theory of politeness on the notion of face, which Goffman (1967) postulated represented an individual's positive construction of social worth. Research has extensively examined the connection between face and linguistic politeness (Upadhyay, 2010). Locher (2012) highlighted how the existing literature has been specifically interested in investigating politeness theory in relation to the degree to which form and complex implication is connected, cultural differences, and how patterns of message structure, language use, and self-expression shape and construct social relationships. In that sense, the literature extends to relational work, in which research in this field "aims to better understand how people create relational effects by means of language, comprehend how this process is embedded in the cultural and situated context, and recognize how this is interrelated with social and cognitive processes" (p. 45) without using loaded terminology such as "polite" and "impolite" (Locher, 2012).

The field of impoliteness is multidisciplinary in that it can be investigated through a variety of different lenses. For example, scholars may be interested in examining verbal aggression in social psychology, verbal abuse in sociology, resolution of verbal conflicts in conflict studies, exploitative TV, and entertainment in media studies, or communications in the workplace in business studies. However, it is important to note that researchers in these respective fields would not necessarily label these instances as representing "impoliteness" (Culpeper, 2011). Linguistic impoliteness is understood as the use of words in a manner that interactants perceive to be rude, ill-mannered, or inappropriate. It can occur in a variety of social and interactional contexts and relates to the perceptions of both those who directly participate in the exchange and those who read or observe it (Upadhyay, 2010). What is considered to be an impolite behavior is

not limited to the language itself but is also ratified in discourse and is found in the co-constructed and negotiated norms of the interactants (Watts, 2003; Angouri & Tseliga, 2010; Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017). Studies in this area are relatively new, and interest in investigating impoliteness has only become prominent in the last decade (Kecskés, 2017), with a notable increase in research into this phenomenon being observed around 2008 (Culpeper, 2011; Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017). Although impoliteness is less researched than politeness, studies have demonstrated that it is a lot more complex than simply representing the antithesis of politeness. In fact, many recent studies have specifically concentrated on the challenges associated with conceptualizing the term (Culpeper, Bousfield & Wichmann, 2003; Angouri & Tseliga, 2010, Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017). As an outcome of these studies, a fundamental principle that underlies the classical scholarship (Culpeper et al. 2003, Bousfield, 2008) has emerged that stresses that impoliteness should not be regarded as part of politeness and that it requires distinct theoretical frameworks by which explanations for its mechanisms can be provided (Dynel, 2015).

The foundations of this field of impoliteness are principally grounded in the discipline of linguistics, particularly pragmatics, interactional sociolinguistics (Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017), communication studies, and sociopragmatics (Culpeper, 2011). Culpeper (2011) argued that sociopragmatics is the most suitable home for the field of impoliteness because most research on politeness has been situated in this field; therefore, it appears to be natural that its apparent antithesis should also be placed there. In addition, it is aligned well with the research agenda of sociopragmatics. Studies on linguistic impoliteness have predominantly investigated, albeit not exclusively, communicative behaviors and have incorporated a broader range of social interactions, relations, and situations involving several incidences in which the ways of realizing

impoliteness are entirely, or largely, linguistic, as is the case with the digital media of SNSs, emails, and so on (Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017).

Culpeper (2011) defined impoliteness as:

[A] negative attitude towards specific behaviors occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and /or beliefs about social organization, including, in particular, how one person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviors are viewed negatively— considered 'impolite'—when they conflict with how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be. Such behaviors always have or are presumed to have emotional consequences for at least one participant, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence. Various factors can exacerbate how offensive an impolite behavior is taken to be, including for example whether one understands a behavior to be strongly intentional or not. (p. 23)

Culpeper and Hardaker (2017) argue that this revised definition of impoliteness decentralized the speaker's viewpoint and the role of intentionality. Instead, the role of the hearer is emphasized in how he or she evaluated an act as impolite, and less on the intention of the speaker whether his/ her intentions was to deliver an impolite affect. Of course, intent can be a difficult construct to measure, unless the researcher has access to the speaker and gain such information through explicit retrospective comments. This will be further discussed later in this chapter.

2.2.1 Approaches to Impoliteness Research

The existing research into impoliteness has taken place in three waves (Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017). Naturally, most of the studies that were performed under the first wave followed the models of pragmatics and took their theoretical background from the works of Brown and Levinson's (1987) work of politeness theory and mitigating threats to face, thereby completely ignoring impoliteness (Culpeper, 2011; Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017). As cited in Culpeper and Hardaker (2017), the first comprehensive and theoretically grounded work to investigate communicative issues and impoliteness was performed by Lachenicht in 1980. However, this did not influence scholars to pursue this strand of research and, instead, studies about politeness surged especially within (interactional) sociolinguistics and (socio)pragmatics (Culpeper, 2011; Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017). Culpeper and Hardaker (2017) highlighted how this interest in politeness, at the neglect of impoliteness, is somewhat peculiar, because the latter is more salient in occurrence and attracts more public discussions. Moreover, Culpeper (2011) suggested that politeness theories are mostly not well equipped, either theoretically or descriptively, to explain or account for impoliteness. Specifically, they successfully present the thought that impoliteness is either some type of pragmatic failure, a result of doing nothing, or simply inconsistent behavior that is not worth considering. To close this gap, more studies on impoliteness have emerged, highlighting how this phenomenon can be strategic, systematic, sophisticated, and not uncommon (Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017).

The second wave of impoliteness research represented a shift away from politeness theories into the discursive or postmodern approach (Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017). This second wave involved a politeness approach that was expressed in connection to impoliteness. Researchers that have taken the discursive or postmodern approach to impoliteness, such as Watts (2003),

typically stress that the precise notion of impoliteness along with its definition are subject to a discursive struggle and that we should focus squarely on the articulation of that difficulty in discourse. Specifically, we should be concerned with how the layperson's understanding of impoliteness is manifest in their discourse as opposed to how the layperson's discourse corresponds to a conception developed by academics (Culpeper, 2011). Indeed, an important argument concerning second-wave approaches is that they do not explicitly describe politeness or impoliteness. They are, however, concerned with examining social interactions within which politeness or impoliteness are believed to be represented (Culpeper, 2011; Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017). The difference between this wave and the previous wave is that earlier impoliteness models focused more on the intention of the speakers when seeking to understand the impoliteness instance and excluded all other factors. They also tended to regard impoliteness as a rather stable feature of particular linguistic forms.

Finally, the third wave of approaches to impoliteness began to emerge with Bousfield's (2008) work on impoliteness. Such approaches sit at the intersection of classical and discursive approaches (Locher & Bousfield, as cited in Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017). They are primarily concerned with taking into account the perspectives of both the speaker and the listener while also considering the context in which impoliteness occurred as a means of deriving more stable meanings from particular linguistic forms.

2.2.1.1 Conventionalized Impoliteness Formulae

Culpeper (2011) devised an approach to impoliteness that is based on examining sociocultural knowledge within a particular community as a strategy by which it is possible to identify instances of impoliteness within discourse. Instead of following a set of strategies to identify impoliteness in a dataset and then testing these strategies, this approach encourages the

analysis of information in a manner that allows impoliteness to “emerge” from the data. Culpeper (2011) named this approach “conventionalized impoliteness formulae,” and described how it consists of linguistic expressions that act as “triggers” of impoliteness effects. A conventionalized impoliteness formula is a form of language in which context-specific impoliteness effects are conventionalized. The discussion on whether impoliteness is intrinsic in language has led to the search for a conventionalized impoliteness formulae. Culpeper & Hardaker (2017) suggested that the appeal of such an approach is that these formulae do not endure the whims of strategies and can be developed through the application of empirical methods. Culpeper (2011) argued that, to count as impolite, instances of impoliteness are often challenged, and these challenges need to be considered alongside the context in which the impolite acts occur. They can take the form of expressions, such as counter pairing of impoliteness, meta-pragmatic comments (e.g., “How rude”), and indications, whether verbal or non-verbal, that offense has been taken (i.e., feelings of humiliation or anger). Culpeper (2011) identified conventionalized impoliteness formulae by examining discourse in which impoliteness was dominant (e.g., army training and exploitative TV shows). He collected data from sources of this nature over a 15-year duration. To ascertain the extent to which potential formulae commonly carry impoliteness effects, Culpeper (2011) examined all entries in the two-billion-word Oxford English Corpus to ensure that over 50 percent of instances of each formulae type occurred in contexts in which they could be interpreted as representing acts of impoliteness. He compiled the list of formulae that met the above measures (see Table 1).

Table 1.

Conventionalized Impoliteness Formulae Model Adapted from Culpeper (2011)

Conventionalized Impoliteness Formulae	Example
1. Insults	
<i>a.</i> Personalized negative vocative	You moron
<i>b.</i> Personalized negative assertions	You are such a hypocrite
<i>c.</i> Personalized negative references	Your ugly face
<i>d.</i> Personalized third-person reference in the hearing of the target	That uneducated brat
2. Pointed criticism/ complaints	This is terrible
3. Unpalatable questions and/ or presuppositions	How can you be so manipulative?
4. Condescensions	That's childish
5. Message enforcers	You got it?
6. Dismissals	Get lost
7. Silencers	Shut the hell up
8. Threats	I'm gonna kill you
9. Negative expressives (such as ill-wishes and curses)	Go to hell

It is important to point out that Culpeper acknowledged that not all impoliteness instances contain conventionalized impoliteness formulae and recognized that there are conventionalized

non-verbal impoliteness behavior, such as one-fingered gestures or the use of an offensive emoji in digital contexts, although he did not explore these in depth.

2.2.1.2 Implicational Impoliteness

Culpeper (2011) explained that, in implicational or (non-conventionalized) impoliteness, interactants interpret or infer rudeness through actions or statements (or the lack thereof), regardless of intent. He cited three types of implicational impoliteness three categories, depending upon how the inference arises (pp. 155-156):

1. Form-driven: the semantic content of a behavior is marked.
2. Convention-driven:
 - a. Internal: the context projected by part of a behavior mismatches that projected by another part; or
 - b. External: the context projected by a behavior mismatches the context of use.
3. Context-driven:
 - a. Unmarked behavior: an unmarked (with respect to surface form or semantic content) and conventionalized behavior mismatches the context; or
 - b. Absence of behavior: the absence of a behavior mismatches the context.

2.2.1.3 Impoliteness and Intention

An early definition of impoliteness focused upon intention, assuming that the speaker intended to attack the listener in a way that allowed the context to be construed as impolite (Culpeper et al., 2003). Culpeper (2005) later revised this definition by shifting the emphasis away from the speaker: instead, the speaker and hearer's perception of intentionality determined impoliteness. Impoliteness thus occurred when (1) the speaker purposely signals a face-attack, or

(2) the listener deems behavior to be a calculated face-attack, or (3) a combination of the two. Graham (2007) noted that, while the early version of the definition holds true to some extent, it needs to specifically address situations in which the speaker and the listener have different perceptions and interpretations of the speakers' intent. Therefore, impoliteness was conventionally used as an overarching term for purposefully constructed face-threatening expressions by means of which the speaker intends (rather than happens) to cause face-damage (Culpeper et al. 2003; Bousfield, 2008; Dynel, 2015). The concept of intention is found at the heart of the dominant definitions of impoliteness (Culpeper et al. 2003; Bousfield, 2008), according to which impoliteness is an intentional act of face-aggravation (Dynel, 2015). However, intention is not an easy concept to determine; rather, only credible intentions can be reconstructed if adequate evidence is present (Culpeper et al. 2003). The result of intention credit and attribution is never certain, especially when analyzing data taken from digital-mediated contexts that is not accompanied by feedback from users.

Dynel (2012) observed how several definitions of (im)politeness have been presented in the literature that emphasize the significance of the speaker's intention and contextual cue as the two "co-determinants." Graham (2007) suggested that many of these studies hypothesize that, in the same interaction, it is fairly reasonable to assume that the speaker and listener(s) or reader(s) will have vastly dissimilar interpretations of the intention behind an utterance and this will, therefore, result in it being construed differently in terms of the degree of impoliteness (as can be seen in Figure 3).



Figure 3. Sample conversation on Instagram.

In connection with intercultural pragmatics, Kecskés (2015b) posed an important question: “What can be considered as impolite in intercultural interactions?” As no existing norms and “habits” exist in terms of the “regular” use of language, it is difficult to establish intercultural (im)politeness. It is also difficult to ascertain such norms solely through examining “frequency in context.” Instead, these norms should be identified by considering factors such as familiarity and resonance. In Figure 3, the first user made a comment about the physical appearance of the OP by stating that she “became fat.” Jay & Janschewitz (2008) argued that evaluating impolite linguistic acts involves the problematic task of drawing conclusions about the interactant’s identity, relationship, social norms and, most importantly, intentions and motivations. In that sense, it is very difficult to ascertain whether the first comment was posted with the intention of being impolite. It is entirely possible that the comment can be interpreted in different ways because such a comment can be a compliment in some cultures and an offensive remark in

others. Lakeoff (as cited in Locher, 2012) maintained that politeness rules (i.e., distance, deference, and camaraderie) are global while people's perceptions of what is polite or rude are not. In this regard, it is interesting to note how other users interpreted and responded to this comment. While only some commenters reprimanded the user for his or her use of the word "fat," one user voiced support for the OP. In fact, he or she went one step further and remarked that the individual who had described the OP as "fat" should learn "the proper way to talk." Therefore, this case is one where users negatively perceived the word "fat," regardless of the speaker's intention, thereby signaling to other users that this comment was very impolite. Interestingly, many research studies have examined and linked intent to impoliteness while neglecting to consider how intention can influence politeness or admiration speech acts. This may covertly imply that impoliteness can result in misunderstanding, as different words can have different interpretations depending on the intent of the speaker.

To differentiate between an intentional impolite act and an impolite act that was perceived to be impolite but was committed without such an intention, it is useful to consider the difference between impoliteness and rudeness, which theorists argue is grounded in whether the linguistic or nonlinguistic act was intentional or not (Culpeper, 2008). The model of intention-based impoliteness (e.g., Culpeper et al. 2003; Culpeper, 2008) indicates that it is the linguistic acts themselves that result in an impoliteness effect if they are produced with an intention to cause harm or attack face. This is different from rudeness, which is unintentional. Although researchers do not universally agree on an interpretation of "impoliteness" and "rudeness," there seems to be unanimous agreement on what constitutes linguistic impoliteness. Be it intentional or unintentional, the end result is the same: It can be viewed as offensive (Upadhyay, 2010).

There are varying opinions on what or who the source of impoliteness is. Indeed, while researchers agree that impoliteness is the practice of face-attacking conduct, there seems to be a lack of agreement on what constitutes impoliteness (Upadhyay, 2010). Watts (2003) postulated that what is considered as an impolite act is not enclosed exclusively in language itself but is also represented in discourse and is strictly entrenched in negotiated and co-established norms of interactants. On the contrary, as was noted in the previous paragraph, verbal acts can carry the impoliteness marker within them, especially if they are designed to cause the impolite effect (Culpeper, 2008).

Yet another view expressed by Kecskés (2015b, 2017) is that, in intercultural interactions, a given language does not contain an act that is inherently impolite because speech is context dependent and holds different interpretations depending on the situation. This is subject to change if people are using a lingua franca. In fact, Kecskés argued that participants may not be mindful of whether a behavior or linguistic act is impolite due to the implicitness or their lack of awareness of the paralinguistic means, which diverge from one culture to another. Hence, the speakers, rather than the utterances, that provide the focus for evaluating politeness because, in intercultural interactions, the interactants do not have existing conventions on which to base their utterances (Kecskés, 2015b). In other words, it is the speakers, not their words, that are perceived as polite or impolite.

2.2.2. Intercultural Impoliteness

To understand impoliteness that occurs during interactions in intercultural settings, it is important to identify and assess both the language(s) that are being used in the conversation and the cultural backgrounds of the speakers involved in the conversation (Haugh, 2010a).

Researching intercultural impoliteness involves studying and analyzing instances of impoliteness

that occur in intercultural interactions by collecting data pertaining to the interactions of people from different cultural backgrounds (Haugh, 2010a). Although research on impoliteness has gained extensive attention from scholars in recent years, impoliteness in intercultural interactions remains an understudied area (Haugh, 2010a; Kecskés, 2015b, 2017; Haugh & Kádár, 2017). Haugh (2010a) and Kecskés (2014) observed that, to date, no guiding theory about intercultural politeness has been developed. Kecskés (2017) suggested that the reason for this is because both impoliteness and politeness represent essential elements of cultural frameworks, conventions, and values, and perceptions of what is polite or impolite vary from culture to culture. Furthermore, Haugh and Kádár (2017) explained that scholars frequently fail to investigate (im)politeness in intercultural settings due to the following reasons:

- Interactions typically take place in an intracultural setting and, as such, are more readily available as data than intercultural interactions.
- It is becoming increasingly challenging to determine what constitutes an “intercultural” encounter.
- Researchers have restricted themselves by operating within a framework that views “culture” through a single lens by which culture is associated with different nation states. Approaches of this nature neglect all other cultural aspects that inevitably contribute to the complexity of the social interaction. A more in-depth discussion on culture will be presented in a later section.
- Impoliteness represents a problematic idea that questions whether there is a connection between human behavior and daily practices and norms, beliefs, and values that stem from a specific culture.

In addition to these reasons, research that focuses specifically on intercultural impoliteness has been lacking in other ways. For example, scholarly work that examines impoliteness in intercultural interactions has been primarily performed in English (Kecskés, 2017; Haugh & Kádár, 2017) and has employed Anglo-centered models and theories of impoliteness (Culpeper, 2011; Kecskés, 2017). Moreover, most studies have focused on the occurrence of impoliteness in intercultural interactions in institutional settings (Holmes, Marra & Schnurr, 2008). As such, other rich contexts have been neglected; for example, acts of impoliteness in digital environments (Haugh & Kádár, 2017; Graham & Hardaker, 2017). Furthermore, Haugh (2010a) noted that approaches to intercultural impoliteness research have primarily focused on the analysis of instances of impoliteness stemming from divergence in speech practices, “which may arise from pragmatic transfer, where particular lexical items, syntactic structures or pragmatic routines from one languaculture are (not) used in another” (p. 144) and the ways in which such practices can cause interactional uneasiness or umbrage. For example, a study by Murphy and Levy (2006) examined the perceptions of politeness and impoliteness within the context of intercultural email communications that were exchanged between Australian and Korean academics. They found that considerations and expectations of politeness varied across these two cultural groups and failure to use certain politeness strategies, such as formality in language and use of correct titles, may lead to a sense of discomfort. Studies concerning other cultural divergences, such as divergence in situation-specific expectations and diverging sociocultural values, have also become more apparent in the intercultural impoliteness literature (Haugh, 2010a). However, Haugh and Kádár (2017) suggested that such divergences may not necessarily cause offense but, rather, lead to a sense of a deeper misunderstanding that prevents interlocutors from understanding one another’s perspectives. In a study that investigated workplace meeting

practices among two different ethnic groups from New Zealand, Maōri and Paōkeha, Holmes, Marra and Schnurr (2008) found that misunderstandings can arise due to differences in the way in which these two groups initiate and terminate meetings as well as the manner in which they share critical comments. Specifically, the data revealed that, while the Maōri meeting participants tend to open the meeting in a direct, explicit, and elaborated manner, the openings to Paōkeha meetings are brief and minimal. On the other hand, any critical comments that Maōris have pertaining to workplace events and systems tend to be indirect, implicit, and generalized, while criticism that is leveraged in Paōkeha workplaces can be direct, contestive, and confrontational. The discrepancies between such norms can result in unintended impoliteness and offense that can be traced back to a basic misunderstanding of the politeness strategies conveyed in the approaches mentioned above.

2.2.2.1 Situating Impoliteness that Occurs in Intercultural Interactions

As Culpeper (2011) argues, studies on impoliteness need to incorporate an appropriate method of taking into consideration the fact that different groups of people—different “cultures”—exhibit different norms and values. As stated earlier, a key, yet often problematic, concept that needs to be deliberated when analyzing intercultural impoliteness data is that of culture. Oftentimes, researchers encounter challenges demonstrating that the data that has been compiled represents intercultural interactions and was collected in an intercultural setting. This raises questions as to what view of culture a researcher should adopt when examining impoliteness in intercultural interactions. Indeed, the debate in the literature about what constitutes culture is extensive. One view of culture is that of Holliday’s (1999) “small cultures” in which the intent is to shift away from viewing “culture” as a “stereotypical” notion that only prescribes to ethnicity and nation to embrace the complex and combined cohesive behavior of

any social group. Haugh and Kádár (2017) suggested that, while this perspective of culture seems, at first glance, to be appealing, it is actually problematic because it is very open ended to the point that any interaction would count as being intercultural. In my opinion, this perspective marginalizes a necessary view of culture, that of ethnicity and nationality, as being unimportant when examining intercultural interactions. The operating view of culture proposed by Haugh and Kádár (2017) appears to represent a more plausible approach that is better aligned with the purposes of this study. They suggested that:

In our view, an approach to culture [...] confounds two potentially distinct objects of analysis. On the one hand, there are regularities in how members do and mean things in interaction, that is, the ways in which we accomplish and make sense of the social actions, meanings, activities and so on that constitute our daily interactions. On the other hand, there are regularities in the ways in which members evaluate those social actions, activities, meanings and so on. We need to be studying such regularities at multiple levels, and examining the extent to which they correlate with the values, beliefs and so on that are both explicitly and implicitly conceptualized by members. (p. 603)

To this extent, culture in this study will be regarded as a construct that plays part in influencing individual interpretations and evaluations of (im)politeness in online intercultural interactions, as they draw on from their cultural background to reach such conclusions.

When analyzing intercultural interactions, Kecskés (2015b, 2017) questioned which approach to impoliteness to consider. He found the discursive approach relevant in intercultural pragmatics because it recognizes the individual interlocutor's role in determining impoliteness. It centralizes the role of the individual and the reactions of other interactants in sensing whether a linguistic expression is (im)polite. In short, discourse analysis supports the argument that it is the

speaker who is either polite or impolite (Kecskés, 2015b). Moreover, Kecskés (2015b) argued, interlocutors do not have access to a lingua franca or L2's conventions to the same extent as they do when engaging in L1 communications. Therefore, they have far less contextual support when participating in intercultural interactions than they do when engaging in L1 exchanges.

While this may be true to an extent in face-to-face communication, however, this may not be necessarily the case in digital communication contexts, especially SNSs. Androutsopoulos (2008) argues that technologically mediated communications place more emphasis on linguistic features and strategies than on other contextual factors. As such, users of SNSs are normally aware and conform collectively to digital communication practices that are: a) governed and controlled by the platform itself through its terms of use policies, and b) aligned the existing genres available on such platforms. Therefore, when users deviate from such known practices in a manner that can come across as impolite, other users may react in a way that highlights their perspective that such behavior is unacceptable according to the online social norms and conventions of the platform. For example, users can block other users for being rude or report other users and/or their comments for causing offense. The platform then decides if the report is valid and complies with their terms-of-use policy and will take action by deleting the comment or even suspending the user's account, depending on the violation. The technology itself allows users a measure of control. In that sense, when several users flag a comment or another user, it signifies the unacceptability of his/her actions. Thus, SNS platforms allow users to negotiate norms and co-construct judgments of impoliteness actively as an interaction unfolds, giving users a modicum of authority to determine who speaks and who doesn't. Of course, this can only occur if the act has been successfully evaluated as impolite by interactants within a conversation, whether such as falls under a conventionalized or (implicational) non-conventionalized

impoliteness formulae. In some cases, an impolite act can go unnoticed and may not be perceived as such if some users lack the linguistic, contextual, and cultural knowledge to arrive at that evaluation.

2.2.2.2 Researching Intercultural Impoliteness

Researchers who examine intercultural impoliteness are typically concerned with finding answers to questions about how interlocutors deal with instances of impoliteness that occur within a given discourse. More specifically, they analyze how interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds use a common language and the factors that lead a participant in a conversation to determine that an utterance is polite or impolite (Kecskés, 2017). To answer questions of this nature, the researcher needs to identify and take into consideration the concepts that play a key role in intercultural impoliteness.

As mentioned earlier, one of the main concerns when analyzing intercultural interactions is investigating whether or not participants in a given speech community have access to the existing norms, beliefs, and values of such a community when using a lingua franca to operate within such communities accordingly in the event they encounter an instance of impoliteness. Dynel (2015) described normative concepts as elements of social conventionalization that can be observed across different, yet linked, communities of practice in which the members are aware of the characteristics they share. This could clarify why individuals insist on relying on the norms with which they are familiar as a result of their previous exchanges with members of other communities of practice once they enter an alternative community of practice that employs aggressive conduct as an atypical norm. Kecskés' (2014, 2015b, 2017) notion of actual situational context is particularly relevant to this idea. Kecskés argued that interlocutors who are unfamiliar with each other's languages use a lingua franca, come from different cultural

backgrounds, and pick up cues that are readily available to them in the context in which the conversation is taking place as a means of co-constructing meaning. The perception of (im)politeness relies on different types of norms, whereas impoliteness is mediated in the context of cultural and personal norms, which can overcome local norms that might then “neutralize” a judgment that is impolite (Culpeper, 2008). As a result, an interactant may still understand the impoliteness of an utterance that falls into the current activity type or situational/co-textual norm at hand (Dyner, 2015). According to Kecskés (2017), this creates a conflict between the socio-cognitive approach of intercultural pragmatics and the discursive approach (e.g., Eelen, 2001) of impoliteness in that the discursive approach doesn’t recognize norms as being pre-existing or co-constructed, and focuses on describing the details of the specific instances of (im)politeness that occur during individual encounters through the use of versatile argumentative tools instead of simply considering the norms. As such, a norm in the discursive turn does not inform a practice objectively, but rather views it as relative to such practice. Kecskés has argued that the socio-cognitive approach supports the notion that interactants utilize both pre-existing norms and co-constructed norms in the production and comprehension of (im)politeness exchanges. A further element of this dilemma that needs to be taken into consideration is how interactants make use of the actual situational context in the event an impoliteness instance has occurred. Kecskés (2017) explained how, in intercultural communications, non-native speakers who are using a lingua franca may run into the problem of encountering linguistic formulas with which they are not familiar. When this occurs, interlocutors resort to literal meaning processing, which can result in the meaning of the (im)polite expression becoming lost or misinterpreted. Kecskés (2017) added the following explanation:

Occasionally the actual situational context is interpreted differently by the interlocutors because their prior experience is rooted in different cultures and in different experiences with different speech communities [...] When processing politeness or impoliteness functions of utterances, interlocutors in intercultural interactions may rely primarily on (mainly L1-based) prior context in meaning construction and comprehension rather than on actual situational context. This does not help the interpretation process as it does in L1. If context does not help, interpretation generally depends on what the utterance says rather than on what it actually communicates. As a consequence, interlocutors focusing on literal meanings may sometimes be unaware of politeness or impoliteness because it is conveyed implicitly or through paralinguistic means. (p. 23)

In this regard, the researcher's role here is to identify and recognize the norms of appropriateness for any given speech community as a means of assessing the interactions that take place between interlocutors and identifying (im)polite instances so that they can subsequently be compared against these norms (Kecskés, 2017). Kecskés (2017) posited that the researcher's interpretations and analysis may stem from his position and views as an outsider, which can conflict with the views of the interactants themselves. Therefore, to reach an informed analysis of whether an act is impolite, a researcher can utilize and analyze co-text, retrospective comments, and certain non-verbal reactions of interactants (Culpeper, 2011).

2.2.3 Social Networking Sites and Intercultural Pragmatics

It is useful to analyze the systematic and naturally occurring discursive interactions that take place on social network platforms from an intercultural pragmatics scope. Kecskés (2014) categorized the interactions that take place in CMCs as "interactive," "spontaneous," and

“emergent,” factors that fall into the paradigm of intercultural pragmatics. While linguistic features have been widely explored in terms of classification within modes of discourse (Ho, 2004), Kecskés (2014) called for research that investigated “the specifics of how discourse features and linguistic devices function to fulfil particular roles within specific contexts in the dynamic, interactive environment of online communication” (p. 238). Research on computer-mediated intercultural communication via social networking sites (SNSs) will offer valuable insights for intercultural pragmatics in that it explores relatively new means of intercultural interactions to gain a better understanding of what drives such communicative choices on these platforms.

2.2.3.1 Politeness and Impoliteness on SNSs

Since the current discussion is centered on SNSs, there is a need to consider what constitutes politeness in online practices. Recent research finds that negotiable “netiquette” norms—i.e., rules of etiquette for internet interactions that emphasize respect and courtesy—construct online communication among users within e-communities (Androutsopoulos, 2006; Graham, 2007), and any disruption of these norms can be construed to represent acts of impoliteness (Haugh, 2010b). Graham (2007) discussed the primary elements of netiquette norms that are mainly dominant in email practices and are governed by expectations of users’ attitudes in this particular online context. These include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) The necessity of including the content of the message in the subject line and avoiding wasting the reader’s time by staying “on topic” and ensuring the message truly reflects that subject, and (2) respecting the original sender’s privacy by not reposting his or her email message publicly without due permission (this is known as “blatting,” and it is marked as impolite behavior). Graham (2007) also made a very important observation about the difference between face-to-face and computer-mediated

interactions when he described how there is a lack of paralinguistic markers in the latter. Such markers would, as they do in face-to-face interaction (for example, prosody), help the message receiver to identify the intention behind a given utterance. As a result of the lack of these paralinguistic markers, it is difficult to determine the intention of the writer of Computer-mediated communications (CMC), and this directly influences perceptions of what behavior is polite versus what behavior is impolite (refer back to Figure 2 and Figure 3). From there, the focus of research has shifted from the role of politeness in maintaining social relationships to the notion of impoliteness and face-threatening attitudes (Culpeper et al., 2003). In particular, studies have concentrated on investigating the role linguistic expressions play in influencing upsetting and aggressive behavior (Locher, 2012).

As Graham and Hardaker (2017) noted, it is perhaps futile to delineate how impoliteness transpires on SNSs due to their ever-changing nature. Instead, it is helpful to seek the commonalities within which users exhibit impoliteness to support assessments of impolite behavior. Graham and Hardaker (2017) declared, “As more and more of our daily interactions take place in digital formats, we naturally shift our expectations about what counts as (in)appropriate and (im)polite in these contexts” (p. 786). Nishimura (2010), too, suggested that the appraisal and effects of rude behavior vary in online communities and that they depend on the embedded norms that one observes within them. Some studies have thus investigated the negotiated expectation of impoliteness within an e-mail community (Graham, 2007), impoliteness and swearing in written commentaries on YouTube (Dyner, 2012), and how written comments exhibit the relationship between impoliteness and identity in online contexts (Upadhyay, 2010).

Although an increasing amount of research has emerged about how interlocutors interpret rudeness and how confrontations surface and play out online, research into computer-mediated communications and impoliteness strategies is still lacking (Locher, 2010). There is a failure to understand the role of online identities, how internet users manifest them, and how such identities overlap with the relational work involved in pragmatics (Graham & Hardaker, 2017). While there is a notable gap in impoliteness research in digital communication contexts in general (Hass & Wächter, 2014), it is especially apparent when it comes to SNS platforms. To address this lack, the Journal of Politeness Research published a special volume on politeness and impoliteness in digital communications (Locher, 2010). Along with Nishimura's article (2010) mentioned above, this issue considered how written comments highlight the relationship between impoliteness and identity in online contexts (Upadhyay, 2010). Other examples of research in this area probe how internet users wield linguistic impoliteness as a mechanism for cyber-aggression or cyberbullying (Hosseinmardi et al., 2014; Hosseinmardi et al., 2015).

Indeed, aggressive rudeness is by no means foreign to SNSs (e.g., Mak & Chui, 2014; Harb, 2016; Hammod & Abdul-Rassul, 2017). Kowalski et al. (2014) define cyberbullying as "(a) intentional aggressive behavior that (b) is carried out repeatedly, (c) occurs between a perpetrator and victim who are unequal in power, and (d) occurs through electronic technologies." (p. 1109) According to Hosseinmardi et al. (2015), Instagram is among the top five SNSs regarding bullying, with the highest percentage of cyberbullying cases reported by users.

Impoliteness in SNSs realizes several functions; for example, expanding and preserving interpersonal unity (solidarity) between members through creating an equal setting in which the hierarchies that are present in the offline world are balanced, or merely increasing the speed and efficiency with which information is exchanged (Lu, 2010). Researchers appear to agree that

CMC promotes impoliteness (Hass & Wächter, 2014); that is, users of CMCs are more likely to communicate in a comparatively impolite manner than they would during face-to-face communication (Lu 2010). In CMC contexts, Upadhyay (2010) maintained that impoliteness is very much connected with disagreement. Upadhyay discerned that internet users purposefully resort to using linguistic impoliteness, in the form of explicitly face-attacking comments, to express disagreement, and specifically to speak out against an outgroup's ideological views, or to discredit and question ideological rivals (see Figure 3).

This discovery strongly indicates that there is a strong connection between (collective) identity and impoliteness in these spaces. In fact, Graham (2007) suggested that gaining an understanding of the context and the communicative norms of a certain community of practice facilitates an examination of the juncture between identity and the different interpretations of impolite and (non)politic acts as they are relevant to creating rapport within that community. After analyzing reader comments, Upadhyay (2010) observed that impoliteness is connected to how commenters identify themselves with a specific group and position themselves according to the ideological views of that group while exhibiting a willingness to act according to the group's desired goals. While he also asserted that the link between identity and impoliteness has not been researched in sufficient depth, Graham (2007) had suggested that speaker identity plays a central role in impoliteness behavior three years earlier. However, the two authors highlighted different aspects of how identity plays a role in online incivility. Whereas Upadhyay's concept of identity focused on one's interrelationships within a group, Graham considered how one positions oneself within the world.

Whether linguistic acts are genuinely cathartic or not, impoliteness is dependent on the speaker's intention and contextual factors (Dyner, 2012), along with other influences that are

peculiar to the norms exchanged within an e-community of practice (Graham 2007).

Additionally, Culpeper (2005) observed that impoliteness acts can posit entertainment propensities and fulfill voyeuristic tendencies that may form a part of internet norms.

2.3. Conclusion

This chapter discussed issues that pertain to intercultural pragmatics, and how impoliteness is situated in this framework. It particularly probed the connection between how culture, L1, and prior knowledge informs interactants' interpretation and evaluation of (im)politeness in intercultural communications. It further demonstrated that intercultural pragmatics emphasizes the meanings that interlocutors negotiate and co-construct in intercultural encounters.

Interactants are not only not confined by the norms of the lingua franca but they also actively shape what is polite or impolite as they converse. Moreover, they need not adhere to a specific culture or language's expectations in intercultural interactions.

Finally, this chapter highlighted SNSs as a space in which intercultural interactions can be observed and their role as a medium in shaping (im)politeness within the framework of intercultural pragmatics. The next chapter will elaborate on the SNS used for this study, Instagram.

Chapter 3

Exploring Instagram: A Space for Intercultural Interactions and Impoliteness

When evaluating how impoliteness occurs within an SNS setting, it is crucial to consider that each digital communication platform has its own constraints and features that may affect impoliteness (Graham & Hardaker, 2017). This study focused on exchanges that took place on Instagram, and the evaluation of the factors that influence impoliteness are limited to this platform. It goes without saying that impolite exchanges on SNSs at times resemble those that take place face-to-face.

This study features Instagram for several reasons:

- (1) Instagram allows users to use their preferred language when commenting; hence it supports many language scripts.
- (2) It allows users to post images and videos as well as comments, and to reply to prior comments.
- (3) Instagram is popular throughout the world; thus, its multimodal nature renders it ideal for studying online intercultural pragmatics.
- (4) Instagram is easily accessible through smartphones. This increases the response rate and, consequently, the opportunities to collect robust instances of impoliteness and disagreement (provided that the offensive comment feature is turned off and the comment has not been reported or deleted).

3.1. What is Instagram?

Instagram is a mobile application for editing and sharing photos that was first launched in October 2010. Instagram was purchased by Facebook in 2012 and has progressed to attract over 500 million daily active users. On average, more than 95 billion photos and videos are uploaded

to this social media platform on a daily basis, and these subsequently attract more than 4.2 billion “likes” every day (Instagram, 2017). Although Facebook maintains its place as the most prevalent SNS, with 71% of all adult internet users in the United States having an account, Instagram comes a close second. As of July 2018, there are approximately 116 million Instagram users in the United States (Statista, 2018). The popularity of Instagram is primarily attributed to the fact that pictures tend to appeal to mass audiences more than words, and it is for this reason that Instagram has become more popular than alternative social media platforms such as Twitter in terms of number of users (Lee et al., 2015).

The Instagram app operates on both Apple (iOS) and Android systems. It is a photo and video-sharing social networking app where users typically take photographs and/or videos on their cellphones and subsequently edit them using digital enhancement tools and filters. For example, a person can record a video of his friends and apply the above-mentioned themed tools, such as an animated fox or cat filter, in which the faces of the people in the video will appear with an overlay of animated fox or cat ears and whiskers to make them look adorable and cute. It is largely a social platform that allows users to quickly and easily share their edited files with others. Instagram’s popularity has been attributed to the increasing advancements of smartphones that are equipped with high-quality cameras (Salomon, 2013), and the ability to quickly and easily share these images may motivate users’ interests in using Instagram as opposed to alternative SNSs (Lee et al., 2015).

Instagram functions predominantly on mobile phones, and some of the application's features are exclusively available on these portable devices. In fact, Instagram’s website offers very little functionality (Salomon, 2013), and this is limited to liking posts, posting comments, checking feeds, and browsing and following other people’s accounts (see also Al-Ali, 2014). The

functionality available on the mobile application is far more comprehensive and includes the ability to create profile accounts (and update these profiles, including changing usernames, at any time), post content (including video, images, and recorded or live stories), apply filters, add captions, tag users, add locations, add hashtags, like contents (whether posts or comments), post comments (which, unlike Twitter, does not have a character length limit), check the feed, browse and explore hashtags, and browse and follow accounts (Al-Ali 2014).

In addition, the profile interface allows users to create accounts that contain their profile information, e.g. a biography, a profile picture, the number of posts they have made, and both the number of followers and number of accounts the user is following (see also Handayani, 2015). Several additional icons have been added to user account pages in most recent version of Instagram. These include a “message” feature that allows users to send messages to the account owner; a “follow” icon that allows users to follow others and receive notifications of post updates, an “arrow-down pop-up” menu bar icon that presents recommendations on accounts the page owner may be interested in following; two icons that allow the user to specify how the posts are viewed (either as one post as a whole with the caption, likes, and comments in view, or as just the posts three in a row); and an icon that displays photos in which the account owner has been tagged by other users. In addition, a three-dotted icon appears in the upper right part of the page. This includes a menu that consists of several options, including “block,” “report,” “hide your story,” “copy profile URL,” “share this profile,” and “send message.” Finally, there is a menu bar located on the bottom of the page. This includes the “home icon,” which takes the user to their feed page, a “search” icon that takes the user to a page on which they can search for content, users, hashtags, and places; an “add” icon that allows the user to import pictures from the library or take pictures directly from the device’s camera; a “heart” icon that allows the user

to view an overview of their own activity or those of the people they follow; and a “user” icon that takes the user to their own profile page (See Figure 4).

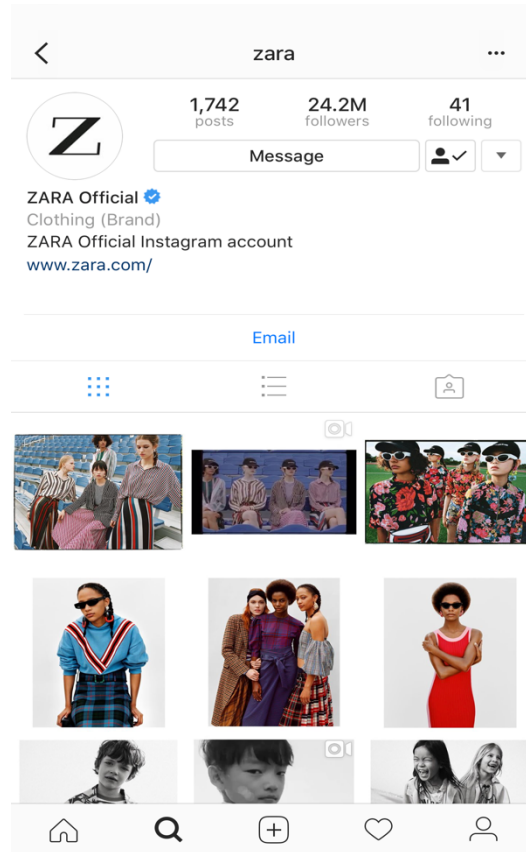


Figure 4. Sample profile page on Instagram.

Once a user clicks on a thumbnail of a post in a given account (see Figure 4), the page displays a larger version of the visual content that is available on that page. The user can also see the number of likes the post has garnered, any caption that accompanies the post, the first few comments, and a link showing the total number of comments (the user can click on this link to view more comments). Each post contains a timestamp of the time a picture or a video was posted, and the user has the option to geo-tag the post to a specific location. In the latest update, four icons are now available below the post: a heart-shaped icon that users can click to “love” a

post, a speech-bubble icon that redirects the user to the comments page, an icon that allows the user to share a post with other users as a direct message, and a bookmark icon.

In addition to Instagram's technological components described above, a description of Instagram's fundamental features including its capabilities as a visually-oriented app, degree of openness in terms of the storage of personal information, relational and networking features, and privacy settings is needed. Instagram's users utilize the app's visualizing features to satisfy their aspiration for self-presentation and develop social relationships. The appeal of Instagram lies in its function as a social networking and visually oriented app. In addition, Instagram offers users a variety of methods by which users can boost interpersonal networking and connectivity. For example, it incorporates a recommendation algorithm that facilitates the process by which users connect with one another, allows them to quickly and easily browse related posts, and provides suggestions about accounts and posts that may be of interest to the user (Yu et al., as cited in Kim, 2016). SNSs, such as Instagram, routinely release updated versions of their app with newly added features; however, not all features progress to gain widespread adoption and many of them are later dropped due to their lack of popularity.

Instagram realizes that privacy control is considered a major concern for contemporary SNSs users. boyd and Ellison (2007) highlighted how it is imperative that SNSs incorporate privacy settings that prevent users' personal identifying information from being shared, reputations being harmed, unsolicited contact and stalking activities, and hacking or identify theft. As such, all images and video posts that are shared on Instagram are public by default unless the user changes his or her profile account settings from public to private (Manikonda, Hu, & Kambhampati, 2014; Hosseinmardi et al., 2014). Once the account is set to private, users who wish to follow a given account will need to send a request to the account holder. He or she will subsequently

approve or reject that request. A key issue that relates to privacy concerns and that is also of paramount concern to SNSs is that of openness (Kim, 2016). Openness relates to how SNSs store personal information, such as contact information, and how this can make users prone to spam or phishing attacks. Openness also relates to the methods by which users connect with one another and how SNSs make such measures accessible to users. Hu et al. (2014) explained how the networking and following system that is incorporated in Instagram is asymmetrical in nature; that is, if User A wants to follow User B, User A must request access from User B. If the request is approved, User A can view the posts on user B's account, but user B doesn't have to follow User A. In other words, an Instagram user can have many followers without following anyone else in return (Manikonda, Hu & Kambhampati, 2014). This mechanism makes it possible for users to connect with Instagram users who share similar interests (Manikonda, Hu & Kambhampati, 2014).

Despite the popularity of Instagram as an SNS platform, it has attracted very little attention from researchers (Hu et al., 2014; Manikonda Hu, & Kambhampati, 2014). According to Lee, Lee, Moon, and Sung (2015), it wasn't until 2015 that studies that focus specifically on Instagram started to emerge. While the app has received increasing attention from scholars and practitioners, at present, very little is known about how people's linguistic activities and behaviors on Instagram are impacted by and impact their social, cultural, and environmental lives (which are represented through the images they choose to share with others on this platform) (Hu et al., 2014). This means that there is a need still for research that contributes to deeper understandings of Instagram and its use, e.g., social and psychological factors that encourage users' evolution into major fans and avid users of this application (Lee et al., 2015)

and the kinds of intercultural encounters that transpire in the collapsed contexts (Androutsopoulos, 2014) of these sites.

3.2. Types of Users on Instagram

To understand Instagram, it is important to develop an understanding of who uses it as an SNS platform and what motivates their interest in it. Graham and Hardaker (2017) stated that it is challenging to categorize online identities into fixed categories in digital contexts because of the complex nature of the different channels of communication involved and our perceptions and expectations of the interactions that take place on these platforms. In addition, Instagram users can participate in more than one role simultaneously when using the app. Graham and Hardaker (2017) have classified some online identities based on Lavé and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice model and grounded them within a computer-mediated context. A summary of these categories is presented below:

1. Participants perform one of the following sub-roles:
 - a. Newbies/out-group members: These users participate and are present; however, they are not formally acknowledged as in-group participants.
 - b. Core group/in-group members: These users are formally acknowledged as members of the group and have the social influence to change, impose, and even disrupt norms and expectations.

2. Lurkers: Users who are both present and non-present but are considered non-ratified.

Other users acknowledge the existence of this kind of user; however, their involvement is unpredictable because they may join or leave the group without the participant group's awareness.

3. Disruptors: This form of user can fulfill different roles including those of spammers, pimpers, and/or Trolls. Due to their lack of commitment to becoming participants, they are generally non-ratified, but present, members of an online community.
 - a. Users who post repeated messages, whether by themselves or through automated software, are known as spammers.
 - b. Pimpers are users who shamelessly advertise their products or work to accomplish personal interests.
 - c. Trolls purposefully disturb a group of online users for their own pleasure.
4. Administrators/Moderators: Users who hold both authoritative and administrative power; however, they may not necessarily be active participants in an online community.

These online roles described above are applicable to many SNSs and are also relevant to Instagram. This framework can help us to understand that Instagram users do not have a fixed role. Therefore, we should not assume that users of SNSs will always maintain the same roles or that interactions will always fulfill the same communicative purposes. For example, an account holder can be a participant, an administrator or moderator, but can shift back and forth to become a lurker. The same can be applied to any user who navigates the comment page. For example, let's assume that several users are engaged in a conversation in the comment section of a given page. If a troll decides to disrupt the flow of the conversation, a previous participant in the conversation can act as a moderator and report the comment, troll, or both. In this sense, Instagram epitomizes the fluidity of online participatory roles and identities are fluid described by scholars such as Graham and Hardaker (2017). Users can shift between roles or adopt multiple roles at any given point. In addition, Graham and Hardaker noted: "while digital communication has some broad, across-the-board rules, specific CofPs may have additional

norms and rules of their own and members of specific types may be held to a different standard than other members” (p. 793). We can also view Instagram as a platform in which users are emphasized in their participation in such an online space as interactants rather than members, hence, Gee’s (2004) notion of affinity spaces. Gee describes an affinity space as a “place, or set of places where people can affiliate with others is based primarily on shared activities, interests, and goals, not shared race, class, culture, ethnicity, or gender (p.73).” It is a space where knowledge is distributed through interaction with and through such space. Gee argues that valid a re-conceptualization of communities of practice is necessary because “if we start by talking about spaces rather than “communities” we can then go on and ask to what extent the people interacting within a space, or some subgroup of them, do or do not actually form community (p. 78).”

Kim (2016) investigated types of Instagram users, the functionality that attracts these users, and the socio-cultural elements that are connected to the use of Instagram as a means of developing a better understanding of the motivations that underpin people’s choices to use the platform. Their findings revealed that, in general, Instagram users engage with the platform for entertainment purposes and to pass the time. In terms of generational differences, younger users of Instagram tend to use Instagram because of the visualizing features and capabilities of the app, and to utilize its networking features to interact and communicate with others. On the other hand, members of the older generation reported using Instagram for professional purposes; namely, to develop a strong reputation. In a similar study that aimed to understand the motivations that underpin people’s use of Instagram, which included a comprehensive survey of 212 active Instagram users in Korea, Lee et al. (2015) concluded that five social and psychological mechanisms influence a user’s engagement with Instagram: social interaction (embedded in

connecting and communicating with other users to eliminate loneliness, form online connections, and gain online social support), archiving (which prompts users to save their activities and create a personal digital portfolio), self-expression (through video and image posts), escapism (in which users tend to seek relaxation and escape dilemmas they encounter in their offline lives, and to form connections with people they know or form parasocial connections with one's they don't know in real life such as celebrities), and peeking (where users can browse and look at what others are doing in their lives through video and image posts and live stream videos). Therefore, we can safely assume that Instagram users will encounter a variety of users as well as be subjected to a wide range of interactions and different communicative practices, one of which is impoliteness.

3.3. Impoliteness on Instagram

In the previous chapter, we discussed how impoliteness takes shape. Online communities appraise rude behavior differently, depending on their embedded norms. Netiquette in SNSs, or the lack thereof, springs from the solidarity that results from the creation of a supposedly equalized setting in which the offline world's hierarchies are erased. Moreover, the internet increases the speed and efficiency with which information is exchanged, giving rise to potential misunderstandings of tone and content. While linguists agree that CMC promotes crude behavior, the role of online identities and how computer users wield them in SNSs, especially one that is celebrated worldwide, remains under-researched. Therefore, this section focuses on the particularity of Instagram and how impoliteness manifests itself in this space.

Contributing to the lacuna of research related to (im)politeness in online spaces, is the reality present in all research in this area; from a researcher's perspective, it can often be challenging to determine whether an instance is impolite or not. Graham and Hardaker (2017) stressed this

point and described how the comparative level and nature of the impolite act is directly influenced by the context in which it occurs and the ideas, principles, aspirations, etc. of the participants. There are also cases in which the image itself seems to have only an indirect relationship to the comments. For example, Dove, a worldwide skincare company, shared an image of a cat juxtaposed next to some of its products on Instagram (see Figure 5). The image itself did not trigger any sort of controversy and was by no means offensive; however, an external event, which was an advertisement that Dove released in which women of different colors removed their shirts and simultaneously transitioned from one skin color to another, led to an explosion in the comments section on this particular image (garnering over 2000 comments). Some users left comments on the Instagram image to share their views that the TV commercial images of a black woman taking off her shirt to transition to a white woman were offensive and unacceptable. In addition, it is not just posts that can be irrelevant to how impoliteness occurs. Sometimes, users may employ profanity in the comments section to express solidarity and affection to other users with whom they are familiar (Hosseinmardi et al., 2014), which renders impoliteness highly context dependent.

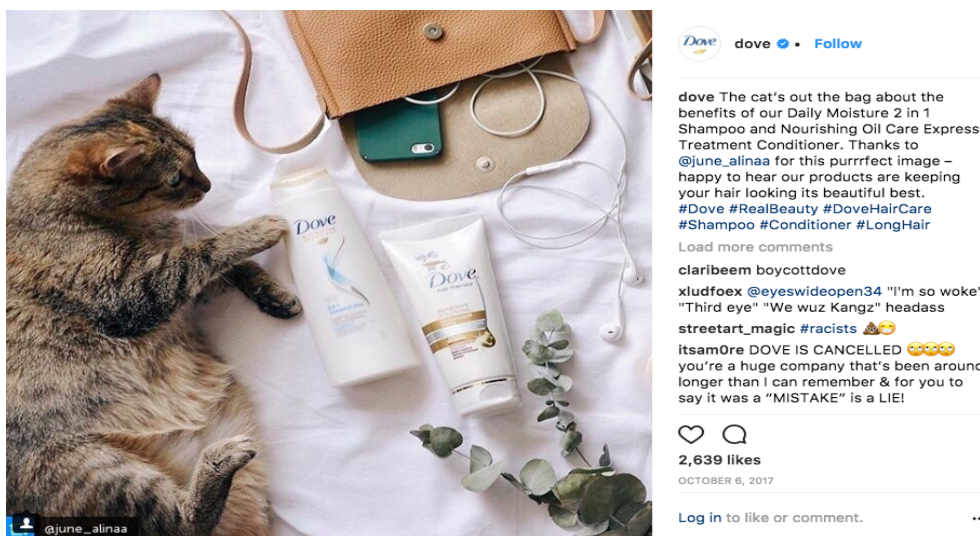


Figure 5. Impolite comments based on external events not related to the posted image.

Researchers are in general agreement that digital communications promote impoliteness (Hass & Wächter, 2014); that is, users of digital communications are more likely to act in an impolite manner in an online environment than they would if they were engaged in face-to-face communication (Lu, 2010). In digital communication contexts, Upadhyay (2010) maintained that impoliteness is very much connected with disagreement, which is consistent with the findings of Harb's (2016) analysis of the comments shared on Facebook pages. Upadhyay discerned that internet users purposefully resort to using linguistic impoliteness, in the form of explicit face-attacking comments, to express disagreement and, specifically, to speak out against an outgroup's ideological views or to discredit and question ideological rivals. This strongly indicates that there is a connection between (collective) identity (or affiliation) and impoliteness. In fact, Upadhyay (2010) argued that there is a correlation between impoliteness and identity in online communications.

Relatedly, Graham (2007) suggested that gaining an understanding about the context and the communicative norms of a certain community of practice helps researchers to better understand the juncture between identity and the different interpretations of impolite and (non)politic acts because they play a fundamental role in creating rapport within that community. Through analyzing reader comments, Upadhyay observed that impoliteness is an indicator of how commenters identify themselves with a certain group and position themselves according to the ideological views of that group while also exhibiting a willingness to function and act in a manner that contributes to the achievement of the goals of that group. He also highlighted how the link between identity and impoliteness has yet to be researched in sufficient depth. However, Graham (2007) suggested that speaker identity plays a central role in impoliteness behavior. Whether linguistic acts are genuinely cathartic or not, some scholars argue that impoliteness is

dependent on the speaker's intention in combination with contextual factors (Dyrel, 2012) and other influences that are peculiar to the norms exchanged within an e-community of practice (Graham, 2007). Other researchers argue that contextual factors are highly important, but intention is not (Culpeper, 2011). Additionally, Culpeper (2005) observed how acts of impoliteness can posit entertainment propensities and fulfill voyeuristic tendencies. For this purpose, it is useful to consider the approach suggested by Locher et al. (2015), which primarily focuses on the development of norms of appropriateness in which interlocutors judge one another's politeness. Similarly, this study will employ Graham and Hardaker's (2017) approach by which users' reactions to instances of impoliteness are perceived to represent an indication of their interpretation and understanding of the exchanges and, as such, affect the way in which they interact within the evolving conversation.

3.3.1 Factors that influence impoliteness in digital contexts

Some features and strategies of (im)politeness are exclusive to digital contexts. Interactions on SNSs deny participants the ability to use and read the facial expressions that interlocutors depend upon to signal or intensify emotions and tone. To compensate for this lack, users on SNSs such as Instagram employ emojis to reflect their feelings. Software developers, such as Apple, were perhaps wary of adding offensive gestures to the emoji inventory. However, as users became more determined in their efforts to mix texts and emojis, and sometimes even communicate in emojis only, Apple began adding more emojis to the portfolio that could be construed as being highly offensive, such as this: 🤡.

Another crucial aspect of digital communications is its ephemerality. Hosseinmardi et al. (2015) argued that the permanent nature of Instagram posts, and the speed and ease with which such posts can be distributed, make cyberbullying more prevalent and easier to execute.

However, the information that one shares online—including comments, posts, and other online artifacts—can all be erased. The possibility of erasure, by either users or the platform itself, coupled with the speed at which Instagram posts generate, complicate efforts to track impoliteness within or across the platform. Depending on the SNS, deletion may take time and effort, but, in general, people can retract a statement or remove an image they shared online.

Some additional features are unique to digital contexts and are applicable to SNSs that may influence acts of impoliteness and how they occur, are perceived, and are received by online interactants. Graham and Hardaker (2017) described the elements that can influence our interpretation and reaction to acts of impoliteness. Those that are relevant to Instagram are listed below:

- **Whether communications in a given medium are asynchronous, synchronous or somewhere in between.** Synchronicity exists on a scale; as such, while some mediums, such as live stream videos, are highly synchronous, others, such as emails, are asynchronous. Instagram, for example, is flexible and can slide on the synchronicity scale depending on several factors. First, there are the users who interact with each other on a real-time basis using the app. In this case, the users exchange instantaneous messages in a chatroom typesetting. Second, users may decide to share their opinions at different times. This may especially be the case if impoliteness is present within a conversation. It is plausible that some users may shy away from confrontation and decide to reply at a later time. Others may opt to avoid the conversation altogether, thereby moving the conversation from asynchronous to static. Interestingly, it is believed that the more asynchronous the medium is, the more prone it is to garner interpretations of impoliteness (Graham, 2007).

- **Whether the platform allows for private or public networking.** The general consensus is that the more private an online network is, the less likely it is that impoliteness will occur. On the contrary, public networks contain interactions between users who may not know each other, and this can impact productions and perceptions of impoliteness. This pattern exists on Instagram. While the conversations that were examined in the current study were extracted from public accounts and not private accounts, it was observed that users who engaged in conversations in the comments section of posts that were shared via a public account could get away with using curse words to mark closeness and affection as it was apparent they were acquaintances.
- **Whether the platform's purpose is networking or task-oriented.** While any platform may be used for both networking and task-orientated purposes, impoliteness can be determined and perceived differently depending on which of these two purposes a specific account falls under. For example, an Instagram page that belongs to a YouTube prankster may contain comments that would normally be considered impolite if they were posted on the account of a professional Instagram page belonging to a wedding planner, for example. Therefore, the context, purpose, and audience of the account within a platform can determine what is perceived as impolite and what isn't as well as influence the production of impoliteness instances.
- **How online information is considered through longevity and permanency.** This is one of the main differences between digital and face-to-face communications. Generally speaking, the information that is shared and available online is permanent. Awareness of this can directly impact how online users communicate and interact within such a medium and, at the same time, their interpretation and propensity to produce

impoliteness. Of course, some SNSs do offer options that tackle issues of permanency, such as Instagram's video stories feature, which allows users to post video segments that are a few seconds long. These segments can disappear after 24 hours and saving and archiving them is not possible without some form of workaround.

- **Unique features that are available via digital but not face-to-face communications.**

The features that are inherent within a given exchange directly impact whether an instance is perceived to be impolite and the extent to which we are able to convey our feelings toward such instances. In addition, they also allow us to establish and maintain the norms and conventions of a specific online community. For example, Instagram provides users with the option to block other users or report comments and undesirable behaviors. If a comment is reported, for example, the user will be prompted to explain why he or she reported that comment through responding to a series of questions. For example, he or she will be required to specify whether the comment construes "spam or scam" or "abusive content." In addition, Instagram offers users access to two types of filters: An automatic filter that detects possible offensive words, and a manual filter that users can use to manually input words they find offensive so they are not exposed to comments that may offend them.

- **Anonymity.** According to Graham and Hardaker (2017), anonymity is not necessarily a motivator for the occurrence of impoliteness because it can motivate people to more readily share information and participate in online activities, such as completing surveys or filing online complaints, because they feel protected by their privacy. The discussion about how anonymity can be linked to impoliteness is further elaborated upon in the following section.

Schubert (2015) argued that “the contextual effect of namelessness falls within the scope of pragmatics” (p. 2). In a digital communications context, users have the ability to create an account in an SNS app under a pseudonym and then act under this pseudonym in all communications that are conducted via the app without disclosing any personal information or visual material with “followers.” As far as digital communications and impoliteness goes, accounts of this nature are very interesting because they facilitate anonymous messaging (Hass & Wächter, 2014). The potential and link between negative user activity and impoliteness increases when a user acts anonymously on Instagram (Hosseinmardi et al., 2014). On some SNSs, such as Instagram, users can create accounts that disseminate or contain little-to-no personal information about themselves. However, the situation is very different on other SNSs, such as Facebook, where users typically connect with people they know. However, even in the case of Facebook (which mainly involves users’ connecting and transferring their offline relationships into an online space), people may still develop accounts under pseudonyms using fake profiles (Hass & Wächter, 2014). Anonymity offers people some degree of protection that they would otherwise not have access to when engaging in face-to-face interactions and can often lead to users exhibiting more explicitly impolite behavior than they would when interacting in person (Upadhyay 2010). Papacharissi (as cited in Kwon, Stefanone & Barnett, 2014) referred to online spaces as “privately public” spaces, in which users join public online communities and use these as a channel through which they can express themselves while keeping their real identity private. This is distinct from what Papacharissi referred to as “publicly private” spaces, in which users of some SNS platforms use their real identities to share private interactions or activities with “followers” in a public forum (as cited in Kwon, Stefanone & Barnett, 2014). Both phenomena can be observed in the example of the OP who shares her interests, and

personal and professional life while followers have the option to remain completely anonymous to the OP and other followers as they engage and interact with each other through the comments section on Instagram.

Wright (2014) observed how interactants often do or say things online that they would not normally do in face-to-face interactions (refer to Figure 2 & Figure 3). This phenomenon is known as the “online disinhibition effect,” which refers to “the loosening or abandonment of social restrictions and inhibitions in an online environment” (p. 432). Wright (2014) posited that the online disinhibition effect influences how people choose to be anonymous in online contexts in which they are inclined to separate their actions from the offline world and their real identity. This separation can subsequently impact how technologies reduce users' social accountability and inhibitions toward aggressive (or impolite) behavior by affording them an element of anonymity. The conjuncture between anonymity and impoliteness (or aggression) was also corroborated by Herring's argument (as cited in Upadhyay, 2010) that anonymity has a significant influence on online discourse and can motivate an individual to behave impolitely. Similarly, as opposed to anonymity but following the same principle of impacts in behavior, Kwon et al. (2014) argued that an individual's interpersonal visibility in an online space through which social information that is extensive and non-anonymous can be disseminated can directly impact an individual's attitudes and behaviors.

According to Schubert (2015), traditional views of sociopragmatics and discourse analysis have significant value and place a large amount of emphasis on knowledge of the background of participants. Schubert posited that anonymity could pose a major pragmatic challenge, especially in online communicative settings in which participants and online users do not have the advantage of knowing who they are talking to, which entails an absence of contextual

knowledge. On the one hand, Dynel (2012) highlighted how, in the context of online discourse, impoliteness may function as abuse, an active act of aggression, and power hierarchy building among anonymous internet users. He argued that this claim is aligned with the theories of prevalent, although not neutralized, impoliteness acts on the internet, as enabled by interactants' anonymity. On the other hand, he suggested that anonymity also encourages equality, through which it is possible for users to develop bonds of friendship. Therefore, impoliteness may foster solidarity and facilitate positive identity construction within a specific community of practice. Moreover, Dynel suggested that impolite language produces humor, either completely benign or hostile, and motivates a sense of affiliation between some community members at the expense of the ridiculed party.

3.4. Research and Teaching Challenges

3.4.1. Methodological Challenges

Data collection can be very challenging if extracted from SNSs platforms and the degree of difficulty can vary according to a number of factors. First, Graham & Hardaker (2017) posited that it is easier for researchers to obtain and collect data from asynchronous platforms than it is to extract meaningful insights from synchronous channels because the data in the former is typically archived; as such, it is possible to collect a large corpus of data, especially those consisting of texts as opposed to audio or video files. For example, it is easy to collect the comments posted on Instagram accounts and archive them for later analysis. However, because the purpose of this study is to collect comments that contain instances of impoliteness, it was challenging to ensure that the comments were collected as soon as they were posted to avoid the risk of them being reported and subsequently deleted or removed by the poster or account holder.

Graham & Hardaker (2017) suggested that the second concern for researchers is that of anonymity, and possibly dishonesty. Specifically, online users may decide to conceal their identity or share inaccurate demographic information. This can directly undermine the accuracy and reliability of any analysis that is based on this information. A third concern that I have personally experienced while collecting data from Instagram is keeping track of users who decide to change their usernames. During the process of collecting comments and grouping them into conversations, I have observed how some users have changed their usernames, and this makes it difficult to keep track of participants in a conversation. These changes may have been due to the deletion of users' accounts, possibly because they violated the terms of use of the platform. Alternatively, it could be that some comments were collected from older posts and users have later changed their usernames. A final challenge in research of this nature that is specific to Instagram involves deciding which device to use to archive the data. It can be difficult to conduct research when using the app from a mobile device (which is the purpose for which the app was designed) because comments cannot be copied and pasted. Instead, the researcher needs to take screenshots of a number of comments at a time, which can be very time consuming, especially if the comments page contains hundreds or thousands of comments. On a computer device, however, this task becomes much easier, although, depending on the number of comments, loading the comments can take hours, if not days. Sometimes the comments stop loading altogether, and the researcher is forced to recommence the painstaking process of loading the comments again, leading to much frustration and loss of time.

3.4.2. The Use of SNSs for L2 Learning

Many researchers have reported how researching SNSs for educational purposes is a challenging endeavor. The problems they commonly encounter include, but are not limited to,

sample size (Blattner & Fiori, 2011), privacy issues and inaccessibility to content (Mitchell, 2012; Lin, Warschauer & Blake, 2016), the homogeneity of the sample population (i.e., participants are mostly from one linguistic and cultural background) (Mitchell, 2012), the state of the SNSs as a network as well as its content in terms of permanence and ephemerality (Lamy & Mangenot, 2013), the SNS tool itself as it may pose challenges that prevent the collection of data on certain devices (e.g., Instagram is most effectively accessed on mobile devices but not computers) and the difficulty of incorporating SNSs in L2 teaching and learning practices (Lomicka & Lord, 2016).

At this stage, it is worth discussing the issue of ephemerality. SNSs operate in volatile contexts and, thus, data collection represents a major challenge for researchers (Zourou, 2013). Lamy and Mangenot (2013) described how many studies have encountered unexpected problems as a result of the researchers not being able to gain access to content on the SNS tool that they had previously accessed. This was not due to users changing their privacy settings but because SNS sites do not present researchers with the same data every time they access the SNS. In the past, researchers have dealt with this issue by taking screenshots during the process of research, and this helps them draw conclusions and find patterns. Thus, Lamy and Mangenot (2013) suggested that researchers who are engaged in studies on SNSs should collect data frequently and early to avoid issues of data ephemerality. When researching this paper and reading about multiple articles on different SNSLL, I attempted to examine one particular site, Livemocha; however, I found out that it had been permanently shut down having been taken over by another SNSLL. The threat of this was described by Lamy and Mangenot (2013) who warned that researchers who examine commercially owned SNSs outside their educational institution may be

at risk of experiencing site closures, renovations, or innovation, and that such modifications may hinder or change the course of their research project.

A similar issue to ephemerality that is also related to data collection is that of data ownership and data accessibility. Zourou (2013) conducted a critical analysis of how these two elements pose challenges for researchers who investigate the role of SNS in the development of language learning, specifically in an informal learning environment. The author argued that, from a research standpoint, the advent of online spaces in which learners self-regulate informal ways of learning aided by social networking tools is an encouraging and promising field of analysis, despite the fact that the difficulty of this task and the complexity of SNSs could not be entirely captured and thoroughly analyzed. Zourou observed that researchers cannot gain access to data generated by SNS users for research purposes without first securing explicit permission from the websites' administrators. In addition, Zourou claimed that research efforts are presently limited by the restrictions on data accessibility that the commercial companies that own the sites apply, and this prevents the acquisition of a complete range of user activity, or what is called large data sets. As such, the author observed that many Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL) scholars do not often request explicit consent from participants to take part in studies; rather, they prefer to use "data anonymization," through which they do not disclose the user data as a means of preventing personal and sensitive data from becoming publicly accessible when the research is published. This approach also allows researchers to use copyright-protected materials for scientific purposes without the fear of any repercussions. Furthermore, because of issues accessing data sets and the lack of appropriate research methodologies, Zourou (2013) suggested that CALL research is far from being capable of documenting the processes and findings of SNSs used for informal language learning as a dynamic and collaborative phenomenon. In

general, Zourou (2013) argued that several measures need to be taken to better and effectively address some of the research tensions and limitations that are related to CALL studies and those that investigate the use of SNSs for language learning purposes. These are as follows:

- Allow the re-use of user-generated content (UGC) by the learner-user as it can be regarded as a valuable means of raising awareness of the skills developed via informal learning contexts.
- Acknowledge that the shared content created by users in online communities can be useful for learners and teachers in that it can be a reflection of the real role that UGC plays in the context of social networks. This can be in the form of a data bank that provides a more open, distributed and participatory approach to technology-mediated human interaction.
- Advocate for creating openness to data in a scientific context, which leads to ease of accessibility of such data for research purposes; therefore, there is a need for more open, transparent and participatory structures for data sharing and collaborative research.
- Adopt a more constructive and pluralistic approach when designing conceptual and methodological tools that shape informal SNS language learning activity. This means that scholars do not necessarily need to lean towards, and strictly use, quantitative data or strictly implement qualitative analysis, which is the case with many of the studies published up to this point.²

² Although Lamy & Mangenot (2013) believe that qualitative methods are preferable in CALL research that investigates the use of SNSs in language education, they believe that most scholars adopt this approach because of

Another issue that cripples research efforts to gather data to examine the use of SNSs' for language learning purposes is that of privacy. This can pose risks to both the institution and the individual. In terms of institutional-related privacy issues, educational establishments may not be prepared to provide researchers with access to data or may not allow students to participate in studies, especially if they are under 18 years of age and require parental consent to take part in research (Halverson, 2011). The other privacy issue operates at an individual level and was experienced by Mitchell (2012) when she conducted her study on English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students. In her study, Mitchell examined the factors that motivated students to join Facebook and observed their interactions with their "friends." Since a participant added the researcher as a "friend," she was able to observe the online interactions and exchanges that took place. However, in some cases, and because of the privacy settings of some "friends" of the participants, the researcher wasn't able to access all comments in a conversation. While this could have negatively impacted the data analysis element of the research, Mitchell was able to successfully compensate for the lack of data using a triangulation methodology that included the use of interviews to ask participants to describe what went on in these semi-private conversations as a means of accessing the whole picture and supplementing the data that was collected from observing these conversations on Facebook.

While many research studies have investigated the use, benefits, constraints, and drawbacks of using SNSs for language learning in length, some of them fail to describe the practical issues associated with replicating these studies in actual classrooms. Halverson (2011) wrote an essay

the need for more knowledge and exploration on the contextual complexities of SNS and the ecology of networked learning before measuring and assessing acquisition of language.

detailing her own experience of using SNSs in a formal learning environment and, within this essay, she examined the benefits and limitations of such an integration. In her methodology, she emphasized a new literacies perspective and incorporated her understanding from learning in participatory cultures within a discussion of the role of social networking sites in formal settings. When conducting an investigation into the responsibilities of higher education and formal learning establishments with the intention of providing teachers with an overview of the benefits and limitations of the use of SNSs in education, Halverson (2011) found it relatively easy to select an appropriate SNS tool and learn about its features and limitations. However, she did experience difficulties aligning the social networking tools with the design of the classroom experiments. This indicates that there is a need for researchers to conduct studies that focus on the application of specific SNSs for pedagogical purposes and to report the outcomes in a more specific, as opposed to general, manner. Zourou (2012) further described this matter as follows:

The differences between social media applications are such that it is impossible to treat the social web as a whole and to make claims about their pedagogical value—if any—in general. Therefore, approaching the social web as though it were a homogeneous set of digital applications is like wanting to distinguish all the details in a landscape picture taken at a distance. This technological pluralism, coupled with the novelty of these tools in language education and the scarceness of empirical data so far [...] highlights the complexity of the field. (Zourou, 2012)

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This study aimed at collecting corpus data from Instagram, specifically of exchanges between users that contained instances of impoliteness. Although the exchanges generally took place in English, some comments made in other languages were gathered as well. These instances would be later used as material for participants to evaluate in terms of their perception of impoliteness (i.e., engage in metapragmatic and judgement tasks) in both the survey and interview. This triangulation of data through combining corpus virtual data, interviews and surveys significantly enhances our understanding of a person's (or population's) understandings linguistic expressions deemed as (im)polite. This process is effective in warranting exchanges of intercultural impoliteness as retrospective metadiscourse comments collected from participants (L2 teachers and learners) in both interviews and surveys give explanations on how they evaluated linguistic expressions in SNS-mediated interactions as impolite. Data collection procedures as well as a detailed description of the instruments used, and the sample population will be discussed in this chapter.

4.2. Research Questions

The present study explores how intercultural (im)politeness is evaluated in SNS-mediated interactions, namely Instagram, and how such evaluations inform L2 teaching and learning practices in developing metapragmatic awareness skills, something that existing literature on L2 learning has highlighted as an area of pragmatic instruction that is in need of further analysis (Tsutagawa, 2013). More specifically, this study aims to answer the following research

questions, with the aim of improving pedagogical practices in teaching impoliteness and intercultural pragmatics:

- What kinds of impoliteness are salient in Instagram conversations and how might that help us to make sense of intercultural pragmatics in the digital age?
- How do English second language teachers and learners perceive impoliteness in Instagram? What differences are there between these groups? What might this tell us about intercultural pragmatics in SNS?
- What are the perceptions, beliefs, and experiences of teachers and learners regarding the potential use of SNSs for teaching impoliteness, with an eye towards the ways in which they may influence the teaching of impoliteness?

4.3. Data Collection Procedures

4.3.1. Data Collection Site

This study selected Instagram for data collection site. I proactively followed some of the Instagram accounts I found to contain some controversial posts so that I could obtain as much data as necessary for this research project. The accounts that I chose to follow were public. In addition, the posts and comments I collected from accounts that I don't follow were also taken from public accounts. Therefore, no data from private accounts were used for this study. My sole role as a researcher was to adopt a virtual ethnographic approach as an online observer (Hine, 2000) during the corpus collection process was to observe patterns of interaction and collect conversations and posts that contained impoliteness and instances of disagreement. As such, I

did not contact or interact with other users, or leave any comment on any of the posts collected for this research.

4.3.2. Collecting the Corpus

Data was collected from Instagram between February 2016 and October 2017. The method focused on extracting interactional data from Instagram by employing an ethnographic methodology, mainly (non)participant observations. The procedure I adopted for identifying comments for impoliteness, whether conventionalized or implicational impoliteness, began with collecting posts that Instagram users or the general public perceived as controversial or offensive. This perception manifested itself in one of two ways: either the original post cropped up in online news stories that explicitly labeled the post controversial or offensive or the comments that appeared below the posts, which I analyzed, confirmed its incivility. Both situations produced insight and evidence into how and why people identify a post as impolite and how they react to it.

In some cases, the below-the-line comments became long discussions or arguments in which users debated the rudeness of the post's content and in the comments themselves. Thus, after collecting the corpus, I reviewed the comments to find exchanges that contained examples of impoliteness and disagreement, observed intercultural linguistic patterns, and recorded notes about the conversational patterns and the linguistic markers the users employed.

This study is based on a significant corpus consisting of a collection of 176100 comments from Instagram. A total of 13 public Instagram accounts were identified and selected for the data collection purposes. These accounts were selected because they contained at least one post that was related to a controversial topic. The comments were extracted from 27 posts that were taken from public accounts belonging to famous people (e.g., celebrity pages), and worldwide

companies (e.g., skincare brands). The comments were selected because they contain instances of impoliteness and/or disagreement and contributed to overall discourse between Instagram users. The operating definition for impoliteness for this study will be any linguistic expression, or online discourse markers (e.g., All-caps, emojis) that conveyed an impolite meaning based on the reactions and replies of users to such expression. To further validate that certain comments fall under the umbrella of impoliteness, the analysis included identifying words, phrases, and emojis used to communicate an impolite intent according to Harb's (2016) "Pragmatic Vehicles for Expressing CMC Disagreements" model as well as Culpeper's (2011) conventionalized impoliteness formulae (See Table 1). These comments were then grouped into conversations, where the total number is 199 conversations. For the purposes of this study, which is oriented towards ESL learners, a focus was placed on collecting comments that were written in English; however, some comments that were composed in languages other than English were also included if the overall conversation was predominantly in English.

The Instagram comments that were included in this study were chosen due to the following factors: (1) Popularity of the account holder, as indicated by the number of the followers (i.e., at least one thousand followers); (2) the nature of the content posted as being culturally controversial, which is determined by the number of the replies a post received and the nature of the comments that flagged this topic as such and, perhaps most importantly, (3) the number of comments and replies on these posts and whether users engaged in conversations that contained instances of impoliteness and/or disagreement.

Conversations in SNS-mediated interactions are constructed differently than ones created in face-to-face exchanges. Scholars have noted some of the features present in SNS-mediated interactions, which include an array of online and offline conversational contexts and engage in

semi-synchronous (immediate replied) and asynchronous (delayed replies) to posts (e.g., boyd, Golder, & Lotan, 2010; Leppänen, Pitkänen-Huhta, Piirainen-Marsh, Nikula, & Peuronen, 2009). Warner and Chen (2017) use the term conversationality, to capture the ways in which stretches of talk that are shaped like conversations can emerge within SNSs threads that are not necessarily dialogic. For the purposes of this study, a conversation will be defined as a stretch of talk that starts with a statement made by an Instagram user in which he/ she comments on the contents of a post, and the subsequent replies that this comment received from other users.

To ensure that the comments were archived so they could be used for later analysis regardless of whether they were deleted on the live platform, they were saved as screenshots and stored in a file with the original post image or video and caption. In some cases, where the comments contained very offensive language (e.g., the middle finger emoji), they were subjected to relatively quickly deletion because they offended the account holder and/ or users following that account. Only conversations that contained instances of impoliteness and/or disagreements were saved. An alternative approach, that was later adopted, was to load all the comments posted under a given post and save them all in a Word document so that they could be sorted out later and organized into conversation units. This would involve reviewing all the comments, filtering out the conversations, and saving each conversation so that it was clearer and more straightforward. This approach was taken with posts that contained over 5000 comments, but it was very cumbersome because loading thousands of comments can take a long time and the page can often stop responding after a certain number of comments had been loaded. In this case, I would have to refresh the page; however, that would require loading the comments all over again. It typically takes over three hours to load about 10,000 comments. The largest number of comments I was able to load was 54,085. After the comments had been sorted by conversation,

they were then categorized according to whether they contained impolite comments, disagreement or both.

Different approaches were employed to search for the posts on Instagram. The first approach involved directly using the application to search for posts in a random fashion. A special focus was placed on searching the accounts of public figures and famous people because celebrities, such as singers and actors, typically have a high number of followers. This means that the comments section will be in the thousands, and the chances of finding conversations that contain instances of impoliteness and disagreement in these Instagram accounts is much higher than finding equivalent examples in the accounts of less famous people. This may be because the followers of such accounts generally come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, some public figures generally have a tendency to provoke people, or maybe just express themselves, by posting materials that can be considered controversial. For example, some of the posts that were collected in the corpus of this study contained images of famous people wearing native Indian headdresses as part of a costume at music festivals and concerts. Many people viewed this behavior as offensive due to cultural appropriation and a general lack of respect of the headdress as a symbol of honor, strength, power, and trust, among many things. Fundamentally, in the Native American community, this headwear is strictly reserved for people who deserve to wear it. As a result of frequently screening the accounts of some famous people, the researcher's account feed was automatically selecting posts that were similar to the ones being viewed for the purposes of this research. However, they did not always contain materials or comments that were of interest to the researcher. As such, this feature did not necessarily make the search for comments containing impoliteness or disagreement easier.

Another method of searching for Instagram posts involved searching through online news engines and websites such as Google news and BuzzFeed. This approach was employed because many Instagram posts that cause controversy, such as those that relate to topics that offend others because of cultural appropriation, for instance, end up grabbing the attention of people and become newsworthy. Although this method made searching for posts easier, very few of them made the news. In addition, this approach was often frustrating and disappointing because many of the articles that were identified via the search were relatively old and the original posts were no longer available on Instagram for viewing. The news article itself would contain only a few random comments and describe the nature of the image or video post and the reasons why it generated negative reactions among the public. In the event the actual post had been removed, the news article did not contain sufficient data for the purposes of the data collection and analysis. However, these articles were helpful because they explained and described what the image conveyed, why it was problematic or had offended people, and the type of offence it caused (e.g., cultural appropriation, blasphemy of a certain religion...). Another aspect that the researcher found particularly helpful was that the article highlighted connections between the people who had posted the original image and those who were close or connected to them in real life. This was useful because whenever the original post had been deleted and the comments were lost, the researcher becomes aware of users who were connected to the original poster, which is where people would then go and post their comments related to the topic that caused offence by the original poster, even if the latter post contained no controversial elements. Other times, the actions or words that caused offense took place somewhere other than Instagram; for example, in real life at a news conference or on another social media platform such as Snapchat or Twitter. However, people would still visit the Instagram account of the individual concerned

or someone related to them to find a channel through which they could express their opinions on the topic.

The last method for searching for posts was through an acquaintance of the researcher. The researcher informed this person of the research objectives and inclusion criteria and requested the individual to look for controversial Instagram posts and comments that contained instances of impoliteness and/or disagreement. This individual then searched Instagram using their own account to find such posts. The sole role of this individual was to find posts that may be of interest to the research and to forward them to the researcher. This person did not engage in any other data collection procedures.

4.3.3. The example posts

The posts that were selected for analysis discussed topics that caused controversy among Instagram users and motivated discussions that led to intercultural impoliteness and disagreement. Their content was of a religious, cultural, or political nature. The study considered four posts for analysis. The first dealt with the issue of cultural appropriation: the celebrity Khloe Kardashian and her friends posed in their Halloween costumes. The controversy among the commenters arose from the traditional Arabian clothes worn by one of her friends in the picture. The second example came from the singer Rihanna's page. She posted an image and caption congratulating Saudi women gaining the right to drive officially. While neither the photo nor the caption caused offense, the discussion about the theme itself—Saudi women and Saudi Arabia as a country—generated comments that some users deemed impolite. The third post was taken from the singer Katy Perry's page. She had uploaded a picture of a Hindu goddess with the caption “current mood.” The comments contended that Perry's caption implied that she was likening herself to a goddess and was offensive to the Hindu religion. The final case study focuses on a

makeup artist's transformation of a white woman into a woman of color. The stated intent was to celebrate Cuban women. However, many users believed that he was changing a white woman into a black woman, thereby invoking and performing a variation of blackface. An analysis of these posts, based on Culpeper's (2011) model and that of Harb (2016), and excerpts of comments from the survey, appear later in this chapter.

Each of these Instagram posts appeared in the survey to gain an understanding of how this study's participants sensed (im)politeness. The participants—whose names have been modified or concealed in this study to protect their privacy—looked at the posts and the below-the-line comments and analyzed both to determine whether they detected impoliteness therein. They were also asked if they thought that each example and its accompanying comments were valuable instructional materials for learning L2 impoliteness. Finally, Rihanna's post was used in the interview to do a metapragmatic analysis in which the participants made critical observations, analyzed the language in the comments, and pondered the many ways that impoliteness can be conveyed online.



Figure 6. Khloe Kardashian's halloween costume post. (March, 3rd, 2017)

Let’s consider each example, how users expressed their opinions, how impoliteness manifested itself, and what—words, phrases, emojis, or breaches of social norms—triggered impressions of rudeness. Note that the below-the-line comments are presented here verbatim and include their original grammatical and spelling errors.

The first example presented in the survey was taken from a post that Khloe Kardashian published on Instagram. The post (Figure 6) contained an image of Khloe, and other people, dressed up in costumes for a Halloween party. The image was accompanied by a caption that read ‘Happy Halloween.’ Some Instagram users found this post offensive on the basis that one of the people portrayed was wearing traditional Middle Eastern clothes, known as thobe and Shimag, which are mostly worn by men in the Gulf region. The survey included the conversation, with its instances of impoliteness, presented below (Table 2).

Table 2.

Instagram Conversation in Reaction to Khloe Kardashian’s Post

<p>1. eden Stfu with cultural appropriation please people. Just. Stop. Being offended by something doesnt give you a moral high ground. She looks good with dreads and the guy with the sheik costume looks good to.. that's the point of Halloween, to dress up as something you're not, and Btw im hispanic and I LOVE when people dress up as tacos and amigos. We need to pick our</p>	<p>Culpeper’s (2011) Model: Insults: 2 Silencer: 3 Curses and Ill-wishes: 1 Challenging/ unpalatable questions or statement: 1 Dismissal: 1 Condescensions: 3</p>
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battles and stop being outraged over every little thing. Btw

@khlockardashian you look great ❤️

2. mai@eden if you think tacos is equivalent to wearing dreads or wearing a sheikh outfit - you are missing the point. Maybe come up with a something that's actually analogous.
3. krystin Couldn't agree more with @Eden
4. amberr@eden just because something doesn't effect you, doesn't mean it doesn't towards other Hispanic. You're one in a million love bug. People here are angry because we've been telling this family along with others that culture and peoples identity shouldn't be a costume. Appreciate it without appropriating it. I love Beyoncé but when she doesn't problematic things, we tell her. Let's learn and grow
5. kyva@eden please go kill yourself, just cause you don't value your culture you have no room to speak to people who value theirs.
6. eden Sorry @kyva not @kyva lmao
7. elle.mal@eden shut up stupid bitch
8. mai@eden just because your ok with other ppl appropriating your culture in Halloween and act stupid and drunk that dose not mean that others should be ok with that shit....cultural appropriation is not acceptable and my ppl's traditional clothes

Harb's (2016) Model:

Verbal Attack (VA): 4

Contradiction: 1

Counterclaim (CC): 4

Challenge (CH): 3

Exclamation (EX): 1

are not costumes to wear!!! So stfu!! Ppl should learn to accept that others are no ok with it and respect that!!!	
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The above conversation includes users who accused Khloe and her friend of cultural appropriation. Other users, however, found nothing offensive in the photo. The first user (eden) vented her frustration with a sharp comment aimed to silence (stfu, which is short for shut the fuck up). Her verbal attack attempted to preclude further discussion about cultural appropriation. She bolstered her position bringing up her ethnicity and condoning Halloween costumes that borrow symbols connected to her Hispanic culture, thereby using her ethnicity as a protective device against counter-argument.

Eden also resorted to the impolite language device of condescension, belittling users for their nitpicking and outrage. She voiced her solidarity with Kardashian by complementing her look and using the (❤️) emoji. Users who argued with (eden) used different pragmatic strategies to refute her claim that cultural appropriation is absent in this post. For example, comment [2] criticizes (eden)'s attempt to analogize a taco (food) with a sheik outfit (national male clothing) and challenges her to come up with a stronger argument. Another strongly-worded approach surfaced in comment [5]. This user, (Kvya), cursed and issued a verbal attack with her comment "please go kill yourself." She then berated (eden) for not valuing her culture and denied her authority to speak on behalf of those who appreciate theirs, thus invalidating (eden's) opinion.

The second example presented was selected from one of the posts uploaded by the singer Rihanna. In her post (Figure 7), she congratulated Saudi women on their ability to officially drive in Saudi Arabia. Neither the post itself nor the caption that accompanied it contained an explicit instance of impoliteness; however, the comments related to the post did contain some

conventionalized expressions of impoliteness that were stimulated by arguments related to politics, gender, and religion. The survey considered the conversation below and its impoliteness (Table 3).



Figure 7. Rihanna’s congratulatory post to Saudi women. (Accessed on September 26th, 2017)

Table 3.

Instagram Conversation in Reaction to Rihanna’s Post

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. act i hate saudi arabia buy happy for the women there ❤️ 2. act i didn't know she had so many saudi fans thats sick 3. i_mt@act Awe no please love us 4. mahaa@act thank you! 🌸 	<p>Culpeper’s (2011) Model:</p> <p>Pointed criticism: 1</p>
	<p>Harb’s (2016) Model:</p> <p>Verbal Attack (VA): 1</p> <p>Verbal Irony: 2</p> <p>Counterclaim (CC): 3</p> <p>Challenge (CH): 1</p>

<p>5. act@i_mt OMG no I love the people just have some issues with the government. I'm also muslim and happy for the saudi people & progression</p> <p>6. ekleel@act Saudi Arabia hates you as well sweetheart 😊</p> <p>7. mahaa@act أشكرها لدعمها للسيدات السعوديات I'm thanking her for supporting Saudi women. It's her personal choice to hate Saudi Arabia.</p> <p>8. act@mahaa I just meant the government not the people 🇸🇦💚 came out wrong. I'm also muslim 💚💚💚💚</p> <p>9. ghadi@act why you hate saudi arabia?</p>	<p>Exclamation (EX): 1</p>
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The conversation in

Table 3 attests to some users' belief that some of the comments were political attacks on the Saudi people. Although there were not many instances of conventionalized impoliteness, there are interesting cases of implicational impoliteness. Depending on how users and readers interpreted these comments, there was variability in understanding and interpreting them. The analysis began by looking at the first two comments [1] and [2] made by the same user (act). Comment [1] articulates the user's feelings for Saudi women (happy) and (❤️) and the country (hate). Comment [2] is more ambiguous and provokes two interpretations. "Thats [sic] sick," which follows the statement "i [sic] didn't know she had so many saudi [sic] fans," could be understood as slang for "that is cool," and thus a compliment. Alternatively, it could convey "sick" as in "disgusting." Since comment [2] lacks online discourse markers such as emojis, other users are left to judge for themselves the comment's intended meaning. In response to

(act)'s remarks, comment [3] exhibits implicational impoliteness by seemingly asking for love: "Awe no please love us." Again, because discourse markers are absent, it is plausible to infer sarcasm in this comment. The user may be employing verbal irony to signify disregard for and dismissiveness of (act)'s opinion.

Similarly, comment [6] employs verbal irony and sarcasm. In reply to (act)'s stated hatred of Saudi Arabia, the commenter retorts that Saudi Arabia hates them, too, adding "sweetheart" and "😘." While these signifiers normally denote endearment, the commenter wields them to imply the opposite: neither this person nor their opinion matters to them or to the people of Saudi Arabia. Finally, comment [9] discloses implicational impoliteness by laying a potential trap for (act) through a question that could be interpreted in two ways. The user (ghadi) queries, "why you [sic] hate saudi arabia [sic]?" This question either truly seeks to understand why (act) hates the country or it employs a challenging strategy to put them on the spot and provoke a confrontation.

The survey's third example (Figure 8) came from the North American singer Katy Perry, who uploaded a picture of Kali, a Hindu goddess, accompanied by a caption that read "current mood." The caption generated a controversy because some followers of Hinduism found it offensive. The survey considered the conversation below and its impoliteness (

Table 4).

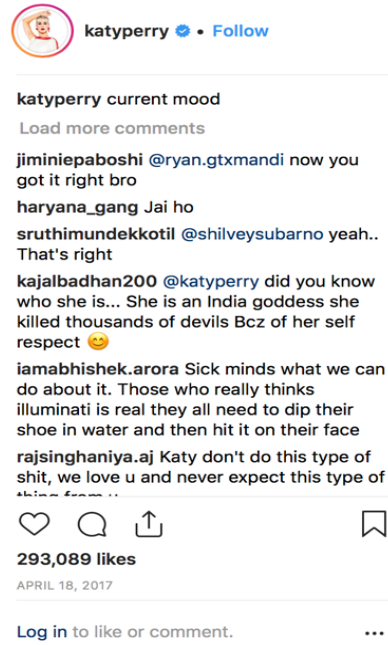


Figure 8. Katy Perry’s Hindu Goddess post. (Accessed on June 5th, 2017)

Table 4.

Instagram Conversation in Reaction to Katy Perry’s Post

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. rahul Kali is goddess in Hindu religion. I don't in what context Katy posted this picture. If she thinks it's funny so I don't support her. I can't put hanging picture of Jesus if I'm in pain. So she needs to understand. 2. vishal@rahul are you stupid...Do you think Gods care what you do with their photos..They care what your Karma is...And your Karma us not good here 3. vishal Indians love you Katy..🙄🙄 4. rahul@vishal I don't know how some guys like you say idiot anyone without knowing them? First go through what I have commented. If she intends to disrespect our goddess so she is a bitch for me. But her utterance is unclear. So I'm not making any conclusion. 	<p>Culpeper’s (2011) Model:</p> <p>Insults: 5</p> <p>Condescensions: 3</p> <p>Threats: 1</p> <p>Pointed criticism: 1</p> <p>Challenging/ unpalatable questions or statement: 1</p> <p>Dismissals: 4</p> <p>Message enforcer: 1</p>
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5. anoib IF IM FEELING HURT OR PAIN,DO I POST A PIC OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED ON MY IG AND SAY "current mood"?!?! NO! LEARN TO RESPECT OTHERS RELIGION YOU BIGOT
6. anoib Reported. Absolutely, disrespectful and disgusting.
7. vishal @anoib why are you people getting so angry..All you are doing is demonizing our religion..Don't act like those who kill on the pictures of their prophet...What will be the difference then
8. anoib 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔
9. kalani_aya @anoib no one is disrespecting you "god"....seriously get over it. Or if it's that big of an issue for you don't follow her :)
10. anoib @vishal Yes. But this 'singer' influences and claims to support all rights so obviously,if she posts a pic like this,what will the kids say? They would obviously think it's RIGHT when it's WRONG to disrespect a Religion like that!
11. davidkit @anoib Katy perry is an atheist, pls note that, and pls don't relate everything done by an american to christianity, again pls i beg you
12. anoib @davidkit She is a CHRISTIAN. HER PARENTS ARE PURE CHRISTIANS.
13. anoib @kalani_aya racist. You think it's okay for a singer who influences YOUNG CHILDREN to behave like this is fine?
14. davidkit @anoib she is now an atheist !!!
15. anoib @davidkit So that gives her the right to disrespect a Religion?
16. vishal @rahul again if she "intends" to disrespect it. Why will you call her bitch...Don't be like the people of other religions who abuse just because someone insulted their religion
17. kalani_aya @anoib yes I do. She did not do anything but post a picture. Get over it 👍
18. anoib @kalani_aya You aren't in a Hindu's shoes. Do you know how hurt a Muslim feels when they see a picture like this mocking their religion? Even Christians. You might be either of them or an Atheist. But please know,Hindus are hurt by

Harb's (2016) Model:

Verbal Attack (VA): 8

Verbal Irony: 1

Counterclaim (CC): 19

Challenge (CH): 6

Exclamation (EX): 6

Irrelevancy claim: 7

Contradiction (CT): 2

seeing this pic. And she has millions of fans from India which doubles the pain.

19. rahul @vishal hmm... Bro I'm not bigot. And I know she didn't do that advertently. Agree with you. God is there to clear the accounts of all of us.
20. kalani_aya @anoib you're ridiculous. Don't follow her if you think it offends you. She clearly didn't post it to mock anyone's culture or belief. You can take it anyway you want but no one cares either way
21. vishal @anoib you know that Gods or Goddesses dont care about Insult..But what other people are watching here are Hindus abusing a famous singer...How will the other religions will see us as.. Definitely not as a tolerant bunch
22. anoib @davidkit Your not an Indian? Great. Then please don't act like you know more than one. You clearly don't have the decency to think about being in another's shoe in their situation.
23. davidkit @anoib not at all, i don't defend her
24. anoib @vishal Abusing? Were simply asking her to not disrespect our religion and to MOCK us.
25. anoib @vishal If something like this happened to Muslims,their would be a fatwa issued for her head 😂😂😂
26. anoib @davidkit Enlighten me for one second,what exactly are you arguing me for?
27. vishal @rahul right...It doesn't matter she Insult them or not..what matter is that If she is a good human...I think she is
28. naomipar AHH cmon people! I am Hindu Indian in South Africa, proudly so!. There are days when I identify with Lakshmi ma's energy. There are days when I identify with Saraswathi ma and so on. Its the energy of Kali-ma she identified with. ITS OKAY!! I dont think she meant to offend nor do I find it offensive. 😊JAI KALI-MA! JAI MATA DI!❤️🌸
29. davidkit @anoib someone Just did the same thing by insulting Jesus christ but i didn't react violently like some of you are doing

<p>30. anoib @naomipar She didn't mean to offend yet she clearly meant to mock 😊</p> <p>31. anoib @davidkit And that gives you the right to judge others on how to behave? I'm sorry but your way to IRRELEVANT here.</p> <p>32. davidkit @anoib you don't understand my point!!!! I'm saying Katy Perry lives in the US and there nobody knows that the person on the picture is a divinity in india, before coming to india I could've also made the mistake to make fun of your gods thinking that they were Just paintings or Arts, so be diligent</p> <p>33. anoib @davidkit Notice that this INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT not only follows JUST AMERICAN'S but pretty much people all around the world TELLING HER THAT THE PICTURE IS OF AN INDIAN GODDESS AND SHE STILL HASNT TOOK IT DOWN. So again, irrelevant.</p> <p>34. vishal @anoib I know there would have been a fatwa..But what we are doing is also wrong..There are many Indians here who are abusing her...There is no need to that..</p> <p>35. rahul @anoib thanks for understanding our sentiments.</p>	
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Users' interpretations of whether the singer disrespected the Hindu religion fuel the below-the-line argument. This conversation began with (rahul) suggesting that the singer crossed a line by posting an image of Kali and captioning it with "current mood." (Rahul) analogized the offensiveness of the post to someone posting an image of a crucified Jesus Christ with a caption expressing that they were in pain, implying that such an act would offend followers of Christianity. Replies to comment [1] were split between those who agreed with or rejected it. For example, comments [5] and [6] made by (anoib) sided with (rahul), using the exclamation strategy to voice their disapproval of Katy Perry's post. Additionally, (anoib) used a verbal attack strategy by being condescending to another poster, (vishal), and insulting them in

comment [5] by calling them a bigot. The use of caps lock—which denotes shouting online—testifies to (anoib)’s anger. In comment [6], (anoib) claimed that they took action against (vishal) by reporting the comment, the user, or both to Instagram. (anoib)’s simple remark “reported” masks exactly what they found “disrespectful” and “disgusting” about (vishal)’s post. Whether they objected to the user, their statements, or both remains unstated, although any or all of these aspects are possible. Other users sided with (vishal), such as (kalani_aya), whose comment [20] dismissed (anoib)’s opinions as “ridiculous” and advised them to unfollow the singer if they felt offended. In that same comment, (kalani_aya) defended Perry and invalidated (anoib)’s opinion by deriding it as irrelevant and worthless.

The fourth, and final, example (Figure 9) used in the survey was posted by an American makeup artist who had created a look intending to celebrate Colombian women. However, some visitors to the Instagram account perceived the post to be impolite because the artist had transformed a white model, who had blonde hair and blue eyes, into a black woman. The makeup artist deleted the original post together with the comments due to the massive backlash it received. As such, I was not able to use those comments in this study. Prompted by their comments, the makeup artist reposted an image of the model before and after the transformation along with a long caption that detailed his intentions for the look he created and apologized for offending people. This post and the comments were used in the survey. The survey considered the conversation below for impoliteness (Table 5).

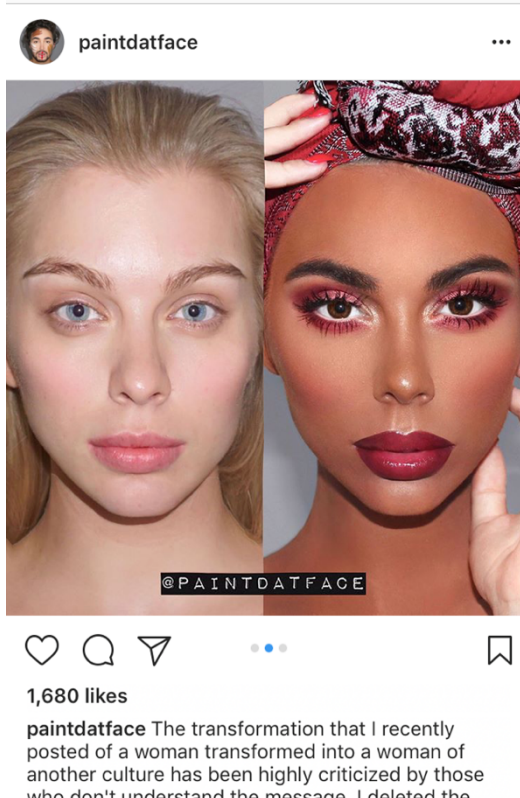


Figure 9. Makeup artist's blackface transformation post. (Accessed on May 30th, 2017)

Table 5.

Instagram Conversation in Reaction to the Makeup Artist's Post

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tia You have not one black woman on you page and the one time you muster up in your mind and deem it ok to post a "black" woman is when you transform a white woman into one. Please spare me the doe eyed innocent blurb you keep writing. The problem is white people like you who see us a a prop, something cool, or the new "it" thing We are not for your entertainment or hobby! You could have easily transformed a black woman as you have dome every other woman on this page Its pathetic and I'm sick of being disrespected! 2. milana People need to do some fucken research before they attack! Aka why ur bored and ignorant and only see this as COLOR. He has done work on A LOT of woc models on numerous platforms including his IG which you're bashing. So 	<p>Culpeper's (2011) Model:</p> <p>Insults: 7</p> <p>Pointed criticism: 3</p> <p>Challenging/ unpalatable questions or statement: 4</p> <p>Dismissals: 5</p> <p>Message enforcer: 1</p> <p>Silencer: 1</p>
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get to work bitches and cover your corners because our RACE is HUMAN not color or culture @Tia @Nai @Ncar

3. jetlag @Tia https://instagram.com/p/_QCPBLgGBP/ he does have a black girl featured
4. Nai @milana you mean on you? The middle Eastern with the blue CONTACTS? You're the ONLY woman "of color" on his page. Back to the topic though, we are not costumes. You cannot put us on like such
5. lynda @milana You look 2 different races in your photos 🖐️🖐️
6. Iamm You're arguing with brick walls. They just missed the whole message. Don't even waste your time @milana... he literally just said he's embracing his Cuban culture and Cubans come in different skin tones. It's like you can only do things if you're from that race. Because God forbid you try something new, you get dragged through the mud. Should he be a dark Cuban to do it? They can't look past artwork because color stumbles before they can even see through it.
7. Milana @Nai you don't even know what I am so please stop assuming! You're on a makeup page have you realized? His artwork is about transformation why isn't anyone mad that he transform a white Girl to an Asian women??! 🤔
8. Iambri @milana no.. We live in a world where people get lip injections and bigger asses and darken their skin to resemble colored folk yet colored folk are made fun of it for being authentic! Lol. We are our culture. Apparently.
9. Nai @milana Guess what? WE care. African-Cuban, African-American. Or just plain African, we WE Weeeeeee care
10. Iambri @Ncar I knw all about culture appropriation
11. Nai @milana since you're the poster child here, next time tell him to paint a girl as dark as me to your middle eastern or white self. I would LOVE to see that talent on him page. I would love for all women agreeing that this art to still say that shit is art too.
12. Ncar @milana it become color and culture when it come to cultural appropriation which by your tone sounds like you haven't experienced considering you have lip fillers 🤔🤔

Harb's (2016) Model:

Verbal Attack (VA): 12

Counterclaim (CC): 23

Challenge (CH): 9

Exclamation (EX): 12

Irrelevancy claim: 9

Contradiction (CT): 2

13. Near @Iambri wong person 🙄🙄
14. Tia @milana so I'm gonna address this real quick.. Just bc you were featured on his page doesn't make you captain save a ho. You can cape for this foolishness all you want but what you WONT do is tell me and my beautiful black women how we shouldn't be offended by something you don't identify as. So you can cut that right now. Second.... Like I said, there is not one BLACK woman represented on this page. I didn't say middle eastern, or anything elseI said BLACK women. I'm so tired of you non black women trying to tell us how we should feel.
15. Iambri @milana of course u don't lol. I can speak for many poc when i say that we have been made fun of years for having big butts big breasts and big lips and darker skin. Now everyone wants resemble what many if us naturally have and gey credit for it. Back when black celebs had big asses and big lips noone cared. Soon as Kylie and the rest of the flock got on board it changed the game. And like always blacks should get over it! Lol. Our culture and way of life is compromised and stolen, like always, with no recognition.
16. milana @Tia there is black woman on his page and in video tutorials and they're all beautiful!!! I'm not talking about myself only. It's not about defending because there's nothing defend here lol you just choose to see it a certain way make which makes you guys racist. Why would u make this post about black women only? How come no one is mad that he turned a white Girl to an Asian women?
17. Themadblack @milana Asian women were mad when he did yellow face too!! 🤔omfg
18. Tia @milana YOU DO NOT DICTATE HOW I AS A BLACK WOMAN SHOULD FEEL ABOUT ANY PERSON TRANSFORMING A WHITE WOMAN INTO A BLACK WOMAN. So do not try to argue that point with me or any of my other black sisters. You will lose every time. And guess what, it's just as much a problem if he transforms a white woman into an Asian woman. But if the Asian women do not speak up who am I to make them have an issue. It's wrong all across the board. You know what's racist? When you cannot see a problem with racism. That makes YOU part of the problem. We have no choice to see racism for what it is bc we deal with it DAILY. I'm not explaining another thing to you bc

you are so narrow minded, doe eyed, oblivious, and ignorant to REALITY. So I'm deciding not to cast another one of my pearls amongst swine. Have a great day

19. milana @Themadblack wtf is yellow face lol why the fuck are we comparing skin colors. We are all one!
20. Atong @Tia amen sis
21. Atong @milana lol the fact that you don't know what yellow face is making your ignorance shine through. Just give it up, learn from your mistakes, and stop harassing us
22. milana @Tia it seems as though there's a lot of anger and you're projecting it into the wrong feed. Voice yourself somewhere. Funny how people take this upon themselves and get offended #bye
23. milana @Atong yes because I don't judge people by the color of their skin like you guys do
24. Tia @Atong girl don't even entertain her. She was one of this "artists" clients and she is out here caping hard for him. And she is just as, if not more ignorant. Don't even waste your time sis.
25. Atong @milana saying someone is Asian or black or whatever race they are is not judging them, it is simply stating a biological fact. But making an assumption based off their race is judging and wrong. Get it right.
26. Atong @Tia your right at this point she's just amusing me and I'm done.
27. Themadblack @milana we are not all one my ancestors were enslaved and I'm still oppressed for my skin. So are Asians so are Mexicans so are Indians and the more you wanna be ignorant and act like nothings going on in the world the more you're gonna get on everyone's nerves
28. milana @Atong categorizing people in "color" is WRONG that's all I'm saying
29. Tia @Atong btw....your skin is GORGEOUS. if I could get a glow like yours I wouldn't need a highlighter lol
30. Watashi @milana don't say "categorizing by color is wrong" after you replied to me and ended your entire by saying "you

<p>guys". Makes you a hypocrite because you too were categorizing</p> <p>31. Tia @milana girl I already dismissed you!! Don't @ me anymore. What part of have a good day don't you understand 🙄🙄</p> <p>32. Supa @Tia SAY 🙌IT 🙌LOUDER 🙌FOR 🙌THE 🙌PEOPLE 🙌IN 🙌THE 🙌BACK 🙌</p>	
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Unsurprisingly, the comments contained heated arguments about the makeup artist's choices because of the issues of race they invoked. It kicked off with (Tia) in comment [1] criticizing the makeup artist's decision to create and explain this look. (Tia) rejected the makeup artist's explication, accused him of failing to feature at least one black woman on his Instagram page, and reprimanded him for transforming a Caucasian model to into a black woman. (Tia) also used quotation marks when describing the white woman as "black" to emphasize the makeup artist's charade. (Tia) employed various impoliteness strategies to voice her opinion, exclaiming, "Its [sic] pathetic," and issuing verbal attacks through the patronizing generalization "white people like you." In response, comment [2] from (milana) defended the makeup artist and commanded others to "do some fucken [sic] research before they attack!" (milana) deployed an exclamation strategy: she denounced (Tia) for not researching the artist's work and, therefore, invalidated her opinions. Yet, her final sentence, which contains the phrase "So, get to work bitches," arguably ends on an inclusive note, depending on how the reader interprets it. Some may assume that the phrase threateningly insulted other users as uninformed. However, the versatility of "bitches" in slang—where it also denotes endearment or solidarity— provides an alternative reading:

(milana) may well have been appealing to women globally to educate themselves and show respect to humanity itself.

The replies that followed these two comments took one of the two sides represented by (Tia) and (milana): that the makeup artist was offensive to women of color (WOC), or that the makeup artist did no wrong. For example, (Iamm) in comment [6] sympathized with (milana) but noted that (milana) is “arguing with brick walls,” thereby disparaging the other users. (Iamm) voiced his support for the makeup artist and challenged other users to consider the makeup artist’s own race (Cuban). He asked whether, if the artist were a darker-skinned Cuban, others would find his transformation work more acceptable.

In contrast, (Tia) argued emphatically against (milana). For instance, in comment [18], (Tia), utilizing the exclamation strategy, shouted at (milana) through caps lock. She also employed the verbal attack strategy by asserting that because (milana) did not see this image as a racial issue, she is equally guilty of racism: “That makes YOU part of the problem.” Finally, comment [18] used an implicational impoliteness strategy in the form of dismissal with its facetious send-off, “Have a great day”, dismissing (milana) once and for all and terminating their argument.

4.4. Phase 1 – Survey on Perceptions and Teachability of (Im)politeness in Instagram

4.4.1. Survey Design

The surveys administered for this study aimed at understanding how participants from different cultural and L1 backgrounds interpret and perceive online instances as (im)polite. The survey was designed as two surveys where one for geared for second/ foreign language teachers, and the other for second language learners. The questions in both surveys are relatively the same, and only differed when asking participants’ perceptions and experiences as either teachers or

learners of an L2. The survey included both open-ended and closed questions and was divided into two parts. The first part included statements about perceptions and experiences of teaching/learning L2 impoliteness. The second part included four posts taken from Instagram accompanied by a conversation taken from the comments' section underneath each post. The reason behind selecting these particular posts and their subsequent conversations rests on having at least one occurrence of (direct/ explicit) conventionalized impoliteness formulae and at least one occurrence of (indirect/ implicit) non-conventionalized impoliteness. In selecting the posts to be included in the surveys the researcher sought to ensure a wide range of topics, and focused comment threads including what appeared to be intercultural interactions around a range of topics in which a diverse range of conceptions of what constitutes impoliteness were expressed. For example, topics related to religious blasphemy can be considered taboo in most, if not all, Muslim countries; however, perceptions of such comments are very different in the United States, where freedom of speech is regarded as a basic human right that is safeguarded by the constitution. This would indicate that, for example, religious topics may cause less controversy in the U.S. than Saudi Arabia and, as such, be less likely to stimulate conversations that contain impoliteness or disagreement. On the contrary, the same comments in Muslim countries are likely to cause offence, especially if Islam is the focus of a controversial topic. When selecting posts that attracted a large number of comments, priority was given to examples that stimulated no less than 100 responses.

Each example was followed by a rating scale where participants were prompted to evaluate each post and/ or the comments in the conversation on an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 'not impolite at all' to 'extremely impolite'. In addition, participants were prompted to identify the words and phrases that they perceived as impolite, elicit the reason(s) behind the use of such

impoliteness, whether they believe that each example could be appropriate material to teach/learn in an L2 classroom, and whether they would change anything in order to teach/learn these examples in an L2 classroom.

The survey participants were asked to rate each post using an 11-point Likert scale that ranged from 0 (not impolite at all) to 10 (extremely impolite) according to their perception of what constitutes impolite behavior. In addition, they were asked to identify any linguistic forms that they thought carried an impolite affect (e.g., shut up, wtf), as well as indicate how they reacted to the impolite language used, the reasons they attributed to the posters' use of such language, and whether they think that this example would be suitable for classroom-based analysis of impoliteness. The other part of the survey prompted participants to look at these examples regarding their teachability. It asked the participants whether they considered each post as valuable instructional material to teach/learn L2 impoliteness and the reasons for their responses.

4.4.2. Survey Participants

In total, 87 people participated in both surveys. However, of these, the responses of 15 participants were discarded because they were incomplete. As such, 72 survey responses progressed to the data analysis stage. The teachers group survey was completed by 48 participants whose ages ranged from 23-66 years ($M=36.02$, $SD= 8.64$). Their experience of teaching a second/foreign language ranged from 1-30 years ($M= 9.56$, $SD= 6.24$). Their first languages were as follows: Arabic (8 participants), English (16), German (1), Indonesian (1), Italian (2), Japanese (2), Javanese (2), Korean (1), Portuguese (3), Russian (1), Serbian (1), Spanish (2), Tagalog (1), Thai (2), Turkish (3), and Urdu (2). The languages that the teachers taught as a second or foreign language either currently or previously included Arabic (1), English

(43), French (1), German (1), Indonesian (1), Italian (2), Japanese (2), Korean (1), Latin (1), Portuguese (3), Russian (3), and Spanish (4). In the L2 English learners' group, the survey was completed by 24 participants, whose ages ranged from 18-51 years ($M=28.88$, $SD=6.28$). Their experience of learning a second language ranged from 2-31 years ($M=14.33$, $SD=7.94$). Their first languages were as follows: Arabic (17), English (4), Italian (1), Portuguese (1), and Urdu (1). Participants' gender was not considered as a variable in this study.

4.5. Phase 2 – Interviews on Perceptions and Teachability of (Im)politeness in Instagram

4.5.1. Interview Design

Semi-structured interviews were conducted after participants had finished completing the online survey. These interviews were administered in a manner that focuses on gathering responses from who are belong to different cultural groups and who evaluate instances of impoliteness through (non)participant observations (see Nakane, 2006) as well as recall their experiences with intercultural impoliteness. According to Haugh (2010a), the benefit of triangulating interviews with other data collection methods, such as survey, lays in giving “the researcher insight into the ways in which members of the sociocultural group construct norms of appropriate behavior and therefore may have greater generalizability than insights garnered from post-event interviews.” (p. 156) The questions asked in the interview were designed to elicit insights into how the participants perceived impoliteness, whether their cultural background influenced their interpretation of impoliteness, and their opinions of the use of SNSs to teach impoliteness in the classroom. The questions spanned two broad categories: Evaluations of intercultural impoliteness and the teachability of impoliteness. The interview included four questions. The first three questions were designed to extract information from the participants

about their personal experiences of L2 impoliteness or those of their acquaintances, their perceptions of teaching conventionalized and non-conventionalized impoliteness formulae, and their opinions on the use of SNSs to teach impoliteness in the classroom. The last question provided the participants with an opportunity to evaluate a specific example in the survey by performing a metapragmatic analysis (see p. 125).

4.5.2. Interview Participants

At this stage of the research, the first 16 participants, one male and 15 female, who completed the survey were contacted and asked to participate in interviews. These participants completed the online survey and were later asked to contribute further to the study as they had disclosed they were willing to partake in a semi-structured interview. The age of the participants ranged from 21 to 36 years ($M=29.13$, $SD=4.32$ years). Four of them spoke English as their native language, two identified as being Arabic as a native language alongside English, one spoke Russian as a second language, and one spoke Spanish as a second language. Nine of the participants spoke Arabic as their native language and English as their second language. There was also one native speaker of Turkish, one native Indonesian speaker, and one native speaker of Spanish all of whom spoke English as a second language. All but one participant had experience of living and learning in a country in which their second language was the native language. These countries include the United States, Australia, Mexico, and Russia. The ethnic groups of the participants were White North American (2), Asian (1), Arab (2 Iraqis, 1 Omani, 7 Saudis, 1 Palestinian), Hispanic (1), and Turkish (1). Nine of the participants taught a second language as a profession, and their experience of teaching a second language ranged from 1-10 years ($M=6.11$, $SD=3.10$). Seven of the participants were learners of English as a second language and had been studying the language for between 2 and 25 years ($M=16.33$, $SD=7.87$).

The participants completed the survey online through the Qualtrics Website. The survey was designed for use with two population sample groups: One group consisted of people who had experience of teaching a second language as a profession, the second consisted of participants who were learners of English as a second language. The questions in the survey included both open-ended and close-ended questions. The surveys that were distributed among the two groups contained similar questions; however, some items were reworded slightly differently to either ask specifically about “teaching experience or knowledge,” for the participants in the professional group, or “experiences as learners” for those in the learners’ group. The overarching aim of both surveys was the same: To acquire an understanding of how impoliteness is perceived and evaluated among people who have different L1s and cultural backgrounds by asking participants to rate examples of intercultural impolite instances found in the comments and posts extracted from Instagram.

4.6. Recruitment process

All of the participants were invited to contribute by email. Some of them were friends, or friends or colleagues of friends, and others were colleagues. A snowballing element occurred during recruitment as some participants invited others for the experiment. The email invitation to the survey included two links: one for a survey designed for L2 teachers and the other for a survey created for current or former L2 learners. Participants clicked on the link of the survey corresponding to the group to which they belonged. Those who completed the surveys first were invited to the interview. This first-come-first-served manner produced a random selection process.

Chapter 5

Teachers and Learners' Perceptions of Instagram Posts in Relation to (Im)politeness

5.1. Introduction

This chapter reports on data collected from two sources: a survey with 72 participants and interviews with 16 participants. In both cases, participants were either L2 English language learners (n= 24) or second language teachers of English (n= 48). The discussion presented herein will elaborate on the analysis of impoliteness from Instagram presented in the previous chapter, by including the perspectives of these teachers and learners. Specifically, this chapter will examine participants' experiences and interpretations of impoliteness and their perceptions, experiences, and beliefs about learning impoliteness in a second language classroom as well as about the potential of SNSs for facilitating this.

5.2. Findings: Evaluations of Intercultural Impoliteness

5.2.1. Survey Findings

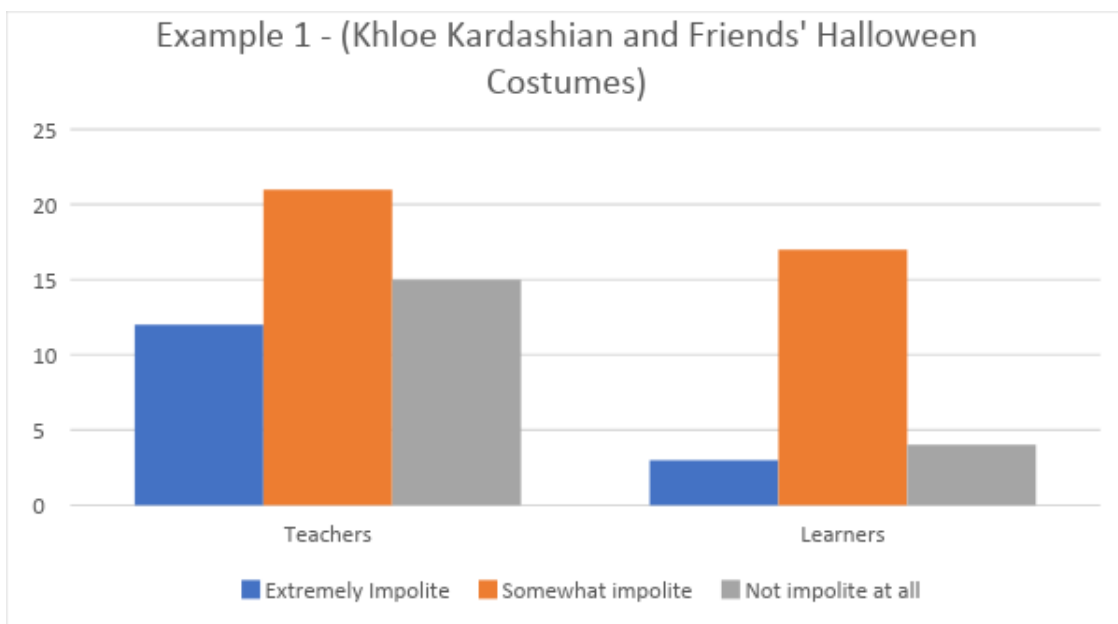
Respondents to the survey came from two groups: L2 teachers and L2 learners, and the survey questions were designed to elicit information relevant to the research questions listed above. Specifically, the questions elicited respondents' evaluation of online instances of intercultural (im)politeness in the SNS Instagram, their judgements as to whether incorporating L2 impoliteness into formal instruction is appropriate, and whether they have had any experience learning or teaching impoliteness in a second language classroom setting.

The first part of this section presents a detailed analysis of the data gathered, while the second, concerning respondents' views on the appropriateness of incorporating L2 impoliteness into formal curricula, is discussed in the next chapter.

5.2.1.1. Reactions to Instagram posts

In this part of the survey, participants in both groups were asked to look at four examples of Instagram posts, paying attention to each image that was posted, its accompanying caption, and a conversation selected from the comments section of each post. The four examples were: 1) a post by Khloe Kardashian in which she and some friends posed in Halloween costumes; 2) a post by Rihanna in which she congratulates Saudi women on receiving the right to drive; 3) Katy Perry's post about a Hindu Goddess; and 4) a make-up artist's post about transforming a white woman into a woman of color (see Chapter 4).

Turning first to the post with Khloe Kardashian, we can see in the chart that follows that respondents were divided in their reactions to the posted comments, with members of both groups finding some of the expressions impolite, while others regarded them as normal.



Graph 1. Reactions to Khloe Kardashian's post.

Overall, there is considerable variability in the teachers' evaluations of impoliteness, whereas the majority of learners viewed the post and/or comments as somewhat impolite. Twenty-six of

the 48 (54.2%) teachers judged the language to be impolite, especially the first two responses that attributed the impoliteness to the medium (i.e., SNSs):

- I was a bit disturbed by the bad language used here, but to tell you the truth, the fact that we are reading such replies all the time these days would make it less offensive, unfortunately. **(A native Arabic-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- Sad resignation. Comments on social media often dissolve into ridiculous name calling very quickly, and it's depressing. **(A native English-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- This conversation first of all is atrocious. I hate when people call each other out without giving helpful arguments and points of view. Instead it seems to simply go back and forth meanly and aggressively making fun of the previous person that posted it. There is name calling and curse words and it is all together all inappropriate. **(A native English-speaking teacher of L2 English and Spanish)**

On the other hand, 22 of the 48 responses (45.8%) in the same group objectively analyzed the appropriateness of the language used in relation to, and as inherent in, the medium (i.e., SNSs):

- Looks like a typical online disagreement. The people aren't being polite to each other, but this level of impoliteness is pretty moderate, it's the sort of things people feel comfortable telling strangers online. **(A native Russian-speaking teacher of L2 Russian)**
- Though the language used is completely impolite, I don't have any reaction that's supposed to be triggered by using such impolite language. That's perhaps because it's become almost normal to hearing such offensive language in such social media platforms where one account is being followed by millions of people from different

parts of the world. I don't think I would ever expect one certain use of language over the other especially that most people don't know each other and therefore don't care how the recipients of the language would feel about it. **(A native Arabic-speaking teacher of L2 English)**

The division in the teacher group was mirrored in the learner group, where 15 of 24 respondents (62.5%) considered the (im)politeness in this Instagram post only in terms of its setting, regarding this type of language as the “norm” in SNSs’ communications:

- It is common to see like this language in some social media posts. **(A native Arabic-speaking learner)**
- I have both seen and heard this kind of language used in similar situations on social networks. **(A native Arabic-speaking learner)**
- They were having normal conversation were someone is trying to explain a point, then it turns aggressive. Typical online language. **(A native Urdu-speaking learner)**

The remaining nine (37.5%), however, like the minority in the teacher group, judged the language used by their own personal response to it, in some cases alongside a consideration of the norms of the medium:

- Not surprised because its Instagram, but a little uncomfortable. **(A native Portuguese-speaking learner)**
- Somewhat shocked about how aggressive the comments became later on. **(A native English-speaking learner)**
- My reaction to the language being used in the conversation would be that it was not that inappropriate until the end, when a person commented go kill yourself to someone else. This language is surprising because it is harmful and extremely rude to

say that to someone you don't know. (**A native English and Arabic-speaking learner**)

It is clear that respondents in both groups were influenced in their judgement by their personal reactions to the language used in the posts. Those respondents in both groups who experienced an emotional reaction to the language—as indicated by their words “shocked,” “uncomfortable,” and “surprised”—formed a negative evaluation of the (im)politeness it contained. Furthermore, they were more likely to perceive that the exchange became heated, and that the use of the impolite language damaged the dialog, in some cases to the point of bringing it to an end altogether.

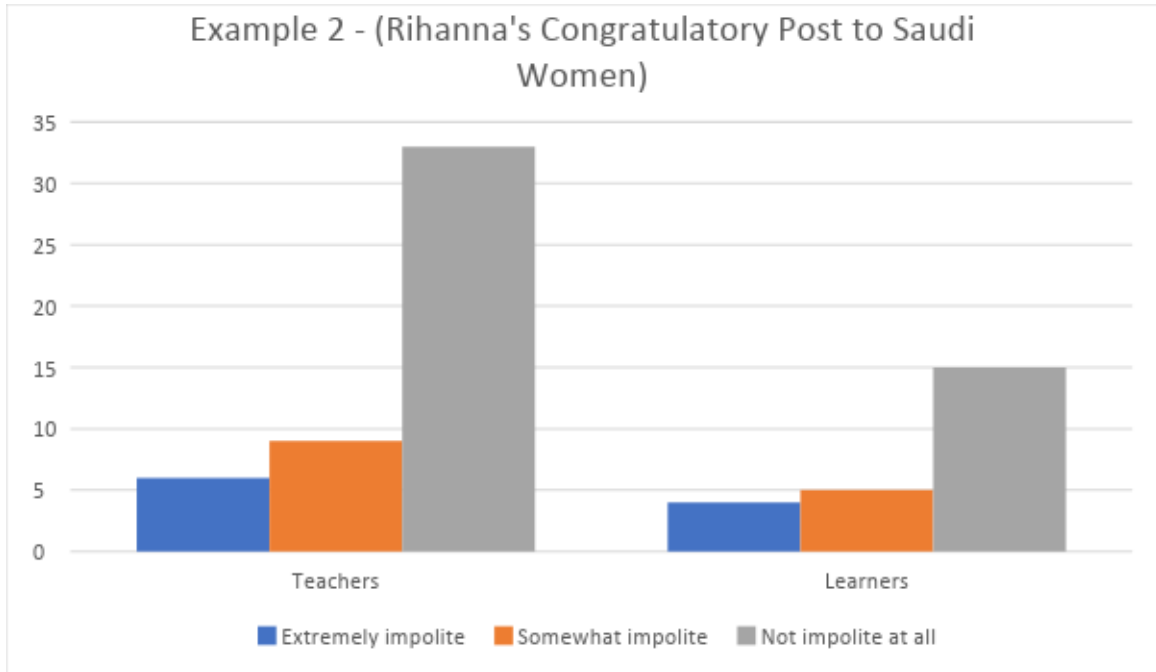
This is in contrast to the majority of respondents who -- whether or not they deemed it impolite -- viewed the language strictly within the norms of the medium, and concluded it was “normal” for social networking spaces online: that any language which might be perceived as impolite if the discussion was carried on other settings was not necessarily so here, within a digital context. In their opinion, it was a matter of register.

In addition to focusing on the role of the medium and the register typical of SNS's, respondents in both groups also concentrated on the post's theme—cultural appropriation—and its role in determining the post's politeness or impoliteness. In short, they commented on the post's topic, the specific language used in the comments, and how Instagram configures that language. For example, one teacher commented that the post offended a particular cultural group by appropriating clothes that the culture respects. This participant commented, “Its [sic] not part of my culture, but this is a clear case of cultural appropriation. No wonder people felt offended.” In addition, an analysis of responses in this post reveals a shared understanding by both groups of participants that (im)politeness, and the form in which it is expressed, is influenced by the

medium; in other words, (im)polite comments made online have a particular form and context that influences perceptions of impoliteness and reactions to it. One learner remarked, “Cultural appropriation is a topic I am fully familiar with [...] so if I was chatting with people who feel offended in person, I would adjust my behavior. Online, I would just ignore.” Another participant, a teacher, concurred: “I think its [sic] coming from the social settings, its culturally, maybe even universally easier to be rude on the internet especially if you don't know the people you are talking with personally.”

Other participants engaged more closely with the commenters’ language to judge instances of (im)politeness. For example, one teacher noted, “I wouldn't be offended by this, but I recognize that this kind of language should really only occur between close friends, particularly with the use of "bitch", "shit", "stfu", and "lmao". If I were friends with (kvya’s) [an Instagram user who commented on the post], I would talk with him/her in real life about why encouraging someone to kill themselves, even if only meant as a rhetorical device meant to minimize what someone is saying and to invalidate them, is completely inappropriate to use. I would ask them not to use that kind of language around me.”

In the second example, there was more consensus. The majority of respondents in both groups considered the replies to Rihanna’s post to be “not impolite.” In both groups, respondents judged the comments as either polite or impolite according to their affiliation status with the nation in question. In other words, their reactions depended upon whether they belong to Saudi Arabia (insider/ emic view) or considered it from their specific national perspective (outsider, etic view).



Graph 2. Reactions to Rihanna’s congratulatory post.

Eight of the 24 learners (33.3%) and 11 of the 48 teachers (22.9%) deemed the comments either as impolite or impolite based on their affiliation with Saudi Arabia, producing the following evaluations:

- Typical in the US. I really wouldn't care. I personally can separate my country as my homeland, as a political entity ruled by morons and the people. So if someone said they hated my country bc of the government, I'd say oh I hate them too. I don't really see a problem except with the person who says SA [Saudi Arabia] doesn't like you either. reminds me of, if you dont like US, get out of it. I absolutely hate that crap, pardon my impolite language :) If you really liked your country, you'd learn to criticize as well as praise because you'd want it better, not worse or the same (**A native Serbian-speaking teacher of L2 English**).

- That person was trying to make a point. She does not like the government. I think it is fine to make such criticism. But maybe in countries like Saudi, people think that's offensive. I don't know. **(A native Japanese-speaking learner)**
- I was very hurt since I am from Saudi Arabia. She said these awful things because no one knows who she is and no one can do anything to her. Typical social media. **(A native Arabic-speaking learner)**
- I'm very upset reading this conversation and find some of the language appalling even though it's online. The juxtaposition of act's comment about equating having a lot of Saudi fans as being something "sick" or repulsive shows a lack of respect and a lack of intercultural communicative competence. The strong language and the overgeneralizations used to speak about Saudi Arabia also make me really upset, probably because I have heard similar language from people who have lived in various countries all over the world. It makes me really sad to see such ignorance in the world. **(A native Arabic-speaking teacher of L2 English)**

The above comments show some respondents based their judgements from the basis of emic or etic perspectives, that is whether or not they affiliated themselves with Saudi Arabia. For example, the native Japanese-speaking participant who argued, "I think it is fine to make such criticism" demonstrates that they do not interpret the practice of criticizing others' governments to be impolite. However, their comment, 'maybe in countries like Saudi, people think that's [sic] offensive. I don't [sic] know,' signals their uncertainty as to whether Saudis would consider this practice to be rude. The participant ultimately distanced themselves from the Saudis and employed their specific cultural knowledge to analyze the post's (im)politeness, thus taking an etic approach. However, its understanding of intercultural differences resides in the participant's

realization and acknowledgment that Saudis may interpret such criticism differently. The Serbian L2 English teacher's response offers personal opinion—"I personally can separate my country as my homeland, as a political entity ruled by morons and the people"—while simultaneously encouraging critique of one's country to love and improve it: "If you really liked your country, you'd learn to criticize as well as praise because you'd want it better, not worse or the same." Therefore, these first two responses argued that criticism of a government is not intrinsically impolite and does not signal hatred of one's own or others' government.

In the third and fourth responses, however, the two Saudi participants analyzed and judged (im)politeness from an emic perspective. They concluded that some of the comments were an attack on their country and took offense at the words used therein. Notably, the participants responded to particular linguistic choices, perceiving them to be markers of rude behavior (e.g., "that's sick"). Their reactions signaled that they negotiated others' points of view by reading the entire conversation and decided that (act) was disrespectful and made hurtful comments. Despite this user's apology and use of heart green emojis (❤️) and the Saudi flag (🇸🇦) in an attempt to remedy the situation and dampen anger, some Saudi participants remained offended.

Nonetheless, a large number (43.8% of teachers and 41.7% of learners) in both groups did not identify the language used as impolite; rather, they thought that the user who employed the rudest language (act) was simply trying to find ways to express him- or herself, rather than to offend the readers.

- Just a normal internet interaction. Looks like a surprisingly polite conversation given the topic. He was just stating his opinion. **(A native Portuguese-speaking teacher of L2 English)**

- These conversations take place all the time on social media. It sounds fine to me. Although they had some disagreement points (or probably misunderstanding), yet they used polite words to express their opinions. **(A native Urdu-speaking learner)**

These two responses, among others in the survey, indicate that expressing one’s opinion about political entities and governments is not impolite. Instead, they imply that it is a freedom to which everyone is entitled. They also refer to the language used as “surprisingly polite” and stated, “they used polite words to express their opinions.” These responses imply that SNSs are a recognized venue for expressing political views and engaging in politically-charged arguments. Indeed, their comments reaffirm this view: “Just a normal internet interaction” and “These conversations take place all the time on social media. It sounds fine to me.”

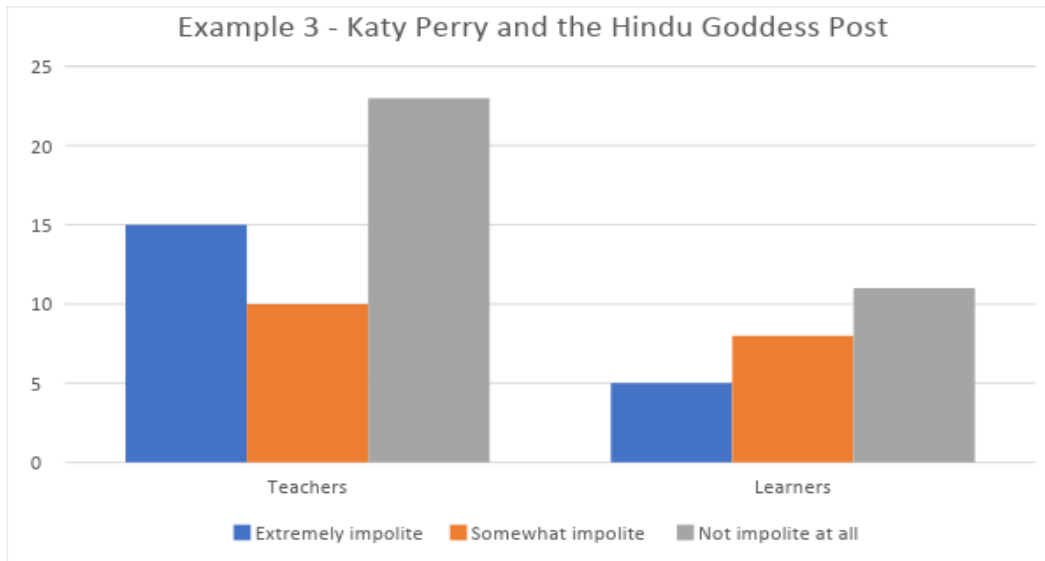
However, many of the respondents showed low tolerance for the words “sick” and “hate,” in particular when associated with or directed towards a specific group of people. In fact, when asked which words they interpreted as impolite, the word “hate” appeared 38 times in the teachers’ group and 18 times in the learners’ group. The word “sick” cropped up as impolite 27 times in the teachers’ group and 13 times in the learners’ group. “Hate” provoked the following reactions:

- The hate speech here is so offensive. Also the direct way they are talking about their hatred to other ppl. **(A native Korean-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- I have Saudi and Muslim friends so I find this offensive and would not want people to be speaking this way about them. I am more defensive when I read this. I think this person was trying to be funny, but it did not come out that way. Especially with the way the politics are right now. Plus I don't think you should ever say you ‘hate’ a whole country. **(A native English-speaking teacher of L2 Spanish)**

- I do not like it. Word HATE is a huge word and it is not a good place for it here. (**A native German-speaker learner**)
- I makes me sad that people use hateful language with each other. How some people say words like hate and be fine with that?? (**A native Arabic-speaking learner**)

The first respondent criticized users' direct expression of hatred for being offensive and unacceptable. She indicated in another question related to this post that she felt that such hate is targeted and is triggered from racism against a particular national group, as evinced by the comment, "I didn't know she had so many saudi fans thats [sic] sick." The second respondent reveals solidarity with the Saudi people because of her personal relationship with Saudis: "I am more defensive when I read this." While she noted that the commenter intended to be humorous, she nevertheless interpreted their comments as offensive and unacceptable, given the current political tensions. The third and fourth respondents overtly condemn the use of "hate" in this context. It is worth noting that some respondents make the interpretation that the slang use of "sick" is "awesome." This will be discussed further later in this chapter.

For the third example, the survey prompted participants in both groups to analyze Katy Perry's post of a picture of a Hindu goddess bearing the caption "current mood." Participants differed in their approaches when analyzing this example. Some focused on the singer's choice of image and accompanying caption; others scrutinized the comments and evaluated them in terms of (im)politeness; others considered both elements.



Graph 3. Reactions to Katy Perry’s post.

The graph above represents their different interpretations of both the image and caption (post) and conversation (comments). Collectively, the majority of participants in both groups, 23 of 48 teachers (47.9%) and 11 of 24 learners (48.83%), thought that the post and/or comments were not impolite. Fifteen teachers (31.25%) and five learners (20.8%) judged either the post or comments, or both, as “extremely impolite,” while a total of 18 participants across both groups, 10 (20.8%) teachers and 8 (33.3%) learners, considered the post and/or comments to be “somewhat impolite.” When they perceived the post to be impolite, respondents from both groups associated this with the sensitive topic, religion:

- This entire conversation is terrible. People are simply throwing around ideas, most of them uninformed of each other's points of view, and then arguing with each other. The entire thing is tense to read and unhelpful. It's also offensive to basically every religion. **(A native Javanese-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- This is definitely the one that made me angry: no one is disrespecting you "god".... seriously get over it. Or if it's that big of an issue for you don't follow her :) An utter

disrespect for someone's religion/tradition, patronizing superior attitude, and of course the - if you dont like it, leave and the "get over it". Such comments, with the smiley face at the end and all are the worst. This is the dangerous stuff to warn the students about - it's not necessarily the specific language that is impolite but the discourses they're drawing on. **(A native Tagalog-speaking teacher of L2 English)**

- Awful and rude discussion. No one has any idea why Katy Perry posted the picture or its context, so they all jump to conclusions and slag each other off. Still not as bad as it could be as there are some rational points and no one is talking about terrorists, cancer, Nazis or 9/11 (yet). Main reaction of mine is of despair. **(A native English-speaking learner)**
- I was not that surprised by the impolite language used in this conversation because it was related to religion. I've read several of these types of conversations on the internet before. I find it sad that we can no longer have civil conversations and discussions without being rude. **(A native English-speaking learner)**

Members of both groups perceived the content of Katy Perry's post, a Hindu goddess with the caption "my current mood," as deriding religious belief. The first, second, and fourth responses affirm this impression through their descriptions of "terrible," "disrespectful," "sad," "rude," and "offensive." Both teachers and learners denounce mocking another person's religion and deem such actions as highly offensive. For example, the second respondent contended that one comment in particular—"no one is disrespecting you [sic] 'god' seriously get over it. Or if it's that big of an issue for you don't follow her :)"—was especially rude. They highlighted the commenter's use of quotations marks around "god" as disrespectful, a verdict compounded by the commenter's dismissive attitude towards those taking offense at the singer's Instagram post.

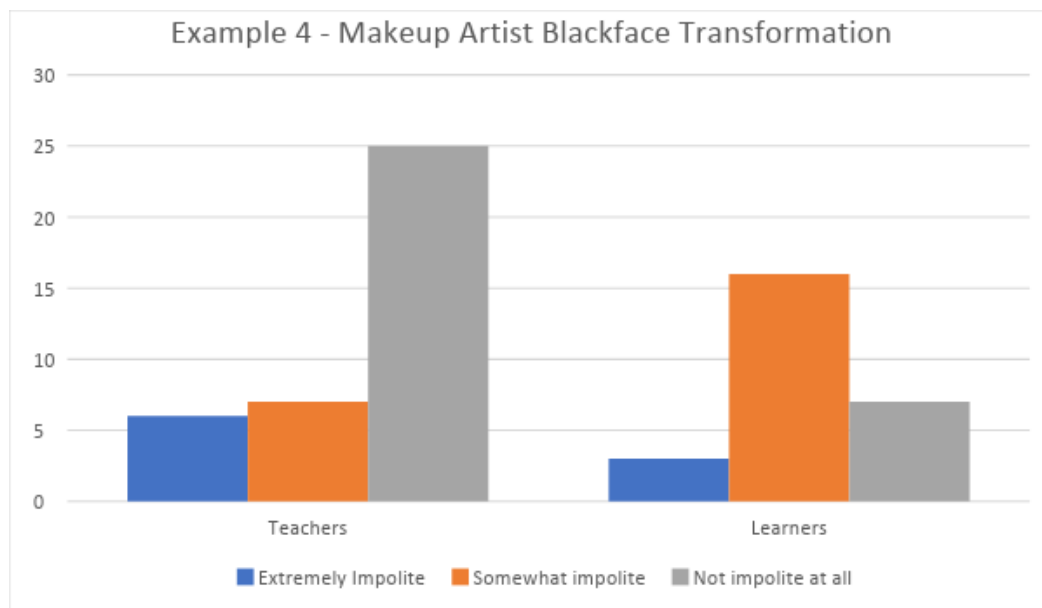
The Instagram user's comment and tone invalidated and made insignificant those insulted by Perry's post, hence the respondent's call for awareness of the discourse that prompts offensive commentary.

Equally, other respondents stated that mocking any or all religion is simply another form of expressing an opinion, i.e. a part of freedom of speech, and is therefore acceptable. Respondents across both groups shared the view that heated and impolite comments are typical of debates around sensitive subjects, although that does not excuse them. Some also characterized such comments as resembling civil discourse, in which those in the discussion come to a communal sense of the situation:

- They seem to be working through the problem and coming to some kind of understanding. There is some polite language interspersed in the dialogue. **(A native Turkish-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- I don't think language is being used in an impolite way in this example. In fact, I think participants are actually having a discussion without insulting each other. When one of the participants calls another "bigot" could have been a point in the conversation that changed its mood. However, as the word bigot may not be considered a strong insult—or maybe that depends on the person and their background—, the participants continued to be polite but still expressed their anger and frustration about the situation. **(A native Thai-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- The language used was very mildly offensive in the beginning then it's simmered down to just a debate. **(A native Arabic-speaking learner)**
- I would describe it pretty normal. People talk that way about religion online. I don't see any problem with their language. **(A native English-speaking learner)**

The responses above confirm that religion is a sensitive topic. Some viewed it automatically as a trigger for incivility. Others noted that the discussion was civil. The first two responses above believed that the comments contained “some polite language” or no impolite language and that the users were working out the discourse and coming to an understanding of their different views of religion. The second respondent observed that, despite the presence of the insult “bigot,” the users maintained their politeness strategies. Additionally, the third respondent described the language in the conversation as “very mildly offensive.” The fourth respondent found the language to be “normal,” adding that religion is often discussed online. This participant’s neutral stance may result from their immunity to rude language because of the topic that provoked it (religion), the medium, or both.

The final post in the survey concerned a makeup artist who transformed a white woman into a woman with darker skin. As in the previous example, participants in both groups analyzed both the content of the post (i.e., the meaning behind the transformation through makeup) and the comments below it.



Graph 4. Reactions to makeup artist’s blackface transformation post.

As the above graph demonstrates, the majority of respondents in the teacher group (52.08%) perceived neither the discussion nor the post as impolite, while most participants in the learners' group (66.7%) thought that the post and/or comments were somewhat impolite. It is surprising that only 12.5% of teachers and 12.5% of learners regarded the post and/or comments as extremely impolite although the post handles another charged topic: race. Yet some believed that the post was not impolite:

- As far as I've understood, Milana is trying to be liberal and tolerant, also known as color-blind, while the black girls are trying to make a point that color is a reality as people are treated differently by the color of their skin. I didn't notice anything specifically impolite, but some discourses have an impolite impact, such as color blindness. The girl Milana seems like she has no clue why everyone is worked up and needs to be explained. **(A native Serbian-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- I was pleasantly surprised to see those taking part in this acting relatively tame. There was little name calling throughout, few swear words, and not a lot of insulting. I was expecting it to be a lot worse because of how sensitive the topic of black face can be for people of color in the US, particularly given its troublesome history. I was happy to see people disengage rather than resort to name calling. **(A native English-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- It's normal when people start to talk about races. People like to vent over stuff like this online because you can't really express yourself openly in real life. **(A native Arabic-speaking learner)**

All three responses affirm that the issue of race is complicated and often likely to provoke rude language. The second response acknowledges name-calling, a few swear words, and other

examples of rudeness, as well as the controversial history of blackface, the theme in the portion of conversation selected for the survey. However, this respondent regarded the comments in the conversation as “relatively tame.” The third respondent notes that race is a sensitive topic that can be discussed more freely online but not so much in face-to-face interactions, where confrontation or conflict may occur. This reaction raises the point that people may go online to work through these debates. This particular respondent rated this post and its comments a three out of 10, thereby giving it a low score for impoliteness.

There were, however, 12.5% of the teachers who did interpret these comments as ‘highly impolite’:

- My reaction is horrified. I can't believe people bash each other back and forth like this on the internet. We never changed people's minds by cursing at them and screaming in all capital letters. People also don't use many logical arguments with good thought processes that would actually help engage in dialogue about issues, and I can't handle this conversation as a whole. **(A native English-speaking teacher of L2 English and Spanish)**
- I was disgusted when I saw the picture then more when I read the posts. When someone is hiding inside their homes typing this, they don't know the effects of how hateful they can be. **(A native Arabic-speaking teacher of L2 English)**

The first respondent reacted strongly against the impolite communication strategies in the comments, such as cursing and using capital letters. Horrified by both these strategies and the senseless argumentation, they renounce the entire conversation. The second respondent agreed. They too felt “disgusted” and contended that the terminology would have a negative impact on readers or other commentators, which they found unacceptable.

A larger majority of respondents in the learner group, 16 out of 24 (66.7%), regarded the comments as “somewhat impolite”, as the reactions below illustrate:

- I was shocked to see what people were saying. To say that we are all one race is not correct and things like saying that you are “color blind” is offensive because it means that you are not willing to look at the history that people have gone through. (**A native English-speaking learner**)
- I don’t like this kind of expressions [sic], probably because in my own language they are very impolite. Terms referring to race and gender in such a way are very offensive in Portuguese. (**A native Portuguese-speaking learner**)

These responses denounce the comments as offensive and shocking. The second respondent, in particular, refuses to accept certain expressions and draws a comparison to their own language and social norms (Portuguese). Based on expectations from their own language, they interpreted this conversation as offensive and impolite.

The native Portuguese-speaking learner clearly employed an etic perspective to compare social and linguistic norms between Brazil and the United States to evaluate instances of (im)politeness in the commentary. Because the topics and terminology are unacceptable in Portuguese society, this participant deemed the conversation to be impolite.

The different reactions from respondents in the teacher and learner groups imply that social identities, such as membership of social and ethnic communities and racial, national, or class divisions, may have influenced how they perceived (im)politeness in the users’ comments. The teachers tended to view the comments as a discussion about different perceptions of race and race relations in the USA. The learners, on the other hand, were more likely to see them as objectionable. Significantly, some participants remarked that they expected the debate to be

heated, but that they found it not to be. Other participants noted that the conversation was too impolite for their liking and reacted against the language that was used.

5.2.2. Interview Findings

5.2.2.1. Part I – Recalling Instances of Personal Impoliteness

To better understand how people perceive acts of impoliteness generally, a smaller group of participants were selected from those who took part in the survey to be interviewed. Those who finished the survey earliest were recruited by email to be interviewees. They were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity and to follow their narratives more easily. In order to get a sense of how participants understood impoliteness and intercultural pragmatics more broadly, interviewees were first asked to recall an incident that occurred to them or an acquaintance, in their L2, which represented an impolite encounter. The narratives that appear in this section come from the participants who could recall instances of impoliteness in an intercultural setting.

Eman, an Omani English language lecturer, recalled a discussion she had with two of her colleagues, one from Peru and one from Brazil, in Australia about cultural differences and (im)polite norms and practices. She said:

We were talking about cat-whistling. So, for us, if someone did that or called you ‘beautiful’ in public, it is very offensive and inappropriate. But for them, in Brazil for example, if a beautiful woman walks by a group of men and they don’t throw out any compliments or cat whistle at her, then it is considered very rude. So, I think that it is culture that shapes meanings behind words and how they can be taken as either polite or impolite.

Shams, a dual-nationality American whose parents emigrated from Iraq to the USA in the 1970s, similarly interpreted impoliteness by focusing on the meanings behind the words employed. She is a B.A. biology major student at a US university. She reported that:

My first encounter with impolite language was around middle school here in the US. I wasn't used to it at all because, you know, my household not even in English or Arabic you'd hear curse words, but especially in English. That would be a huge deal. So, we were sitting at lunch, and there was this group of middle schoolers, and this guy started to go off at his parents because he got grounded. So, he started cursing as saying 'fuck them, I hate them' and 'they are the worst people in the world.' And his friends started to join in about how terrible their parents were. But I was raised to never talk bad about my parents. So, I really felt bad and offended, and I didn't want to listen to that. I was shocked and uncomfortable.

Another incident that highly embarrassed one of the interviewees concerned transferring pragmalinguistic features, such as intonation, of the L1 to the L2. In this case, some expressions are taken, ipso facto, as rude. Impoliteness here was perceived as a behavior that did not conform to specific expectations. It caused misunderstanding and unintended rudeness, as Rashid, who is a Saudi medical doctor completing his fellowship at a US university, relates:

I think that in all my experiences with impoliteness, people misunderstood my intentions or actions and they became impolite back to me. One of my instructors was going around the classroom checking the students' work and giving them feedback. And I was waiting for a long time, too long, for my turn. When I saw her heading my way, I said "Finally!" in an enthusiastic tone, because I was happy that she came to me at last. But she totally misunderstood my tone. She yelled at me in front of the class and said that

I was very rude. I was really shocked, and I kept apologizing over and over to her. I didn't mean to upset her. I mean, the cultural difference in this situation was terrible. I waited for class to be over and went to apologize again. But, can you imagine? She didn't accept it! She went and told all other instructors in the program about me. I didn't deserve that negative publicity, because I explained to her that it's a matter of cultural difference.

Arwa, a Saudi B.A. student who took intensive English courses in the US, recalled a teacher's reaction after she threatened in jest to kill herself over a challenging assignment:

Once an instructor gave me a difficult task and I jokingly said, "I'll kill myself". I was exaggerating, but he said, "if you say this again, I'll have to notify the police." I didn't think it was that serious!

Dana, a Saudi who graduated with a master's degree in entrepreneurship in the US, also encountered disapproval when jokingly issuing threats:

We use [threats] too loosely as Saudis but in a humorous manner and not really as a threat. But I remember our American instructors were saying that we shouldn't use such phrases because someone could sue us. And in one situation, an instructor said that he will call the police if he heard students say it again. So, we understood that it's rude to say it in English, things like "I'm going to kill you."

Zain, a Saudi female student who studied English as a second language in Australia for 15 months in 2015-2016, recalled the following experience:

I was at an intensive English language program at my university. And one of my male classmates, who was from Jordan, might have mistakenly thought that we were

close friends. I'm generally friendly with everyone, but I didn't not regard our friendship as 'close.' We were both Arabs, so it's only natural that there would be boundaries to our interactions. So, we were in class and our teacher put on a video which was a documentary about obesity. The purpose was to have a discussion where everyone would share their opinion and experiences and solutions to this issue. When it was his turn, he talked a little about what he thought obesity was and said "just like [Zain's] body" and laughed. Can you believe it?! He called me fat in front of everyone! I was visibly upset, and the teacher quickly reprimanded him. He [the teacher] played Meghan Trainor's 'All about that bass' after class was over just to cheer me up. That was really sweet and funny.

These anecdotes tap into issues that are highly culturally dependent and sensitive: parental respect, relationship boundaries, interactions between men and women, interactions between students and teachers or between people of different status, and expressing humor. For example, a strong reaction from Eman and Shams was generated and, in both cases, they perceived the actions and behaviors they recalled to represent impolite acts.

However, in these instances, participants acknowledged that the people involved in their stories (e.g., the two colleagues in Eman's recollection, and the male schoolmate and his friends in Shams's recollection) had different perceptions of their actions and linguistic expressions. They also developed a sense that such instances, behaviors, and expressions shift during encounters as people interact and negotiate impoliteness. In Eman's situation, she learned that in different cultures, for example, that of Brazil and Peru, admiring an attractive female stranger is appreciated and an act that men frequently perform. Similarly, Shams, although condemning her schoolmates' behavior, realized that they were using impolite expressions to their parents in a

manner that both expressed their frustration with their parents and strengthened their bond and solidarity as friends.

Participants' interpretations of polite or impolite instances and actions depended on elements embedded in their own cultures, such as navigating relationships between people of different genders or with people in a position of power. Significantly, participants were aware of how people who belong to various cultural and/ or L1 backgrounds did not necessarily share their perceptions about what constitutes (im)politeness, thus causing them to commit acts that were acceptable in their specific culture but that others considered rude. Through these narratives, this study advances our understanding of intercultural (im)politeness. It traces how participants developed their awareness of how to negotiate actions, linguistic expressions, and situations to reach informed judgments and interpretations of incivility in the L2, especially in intercultural interactions. Additionally, participants demonstrated a heightened awareness of the vast range of rude words and behavior.

5.2.2.2. Part II – Metapragmatic Analysis of Impoliteness on Instagram

The next section of the interview was intended to reveal how metapragmatic analysis can reveal both similarities and differences among respondents of different cultural, national, and linguistic backgrounds. Furthermore, it aimed to gather data which might suggest how participants in intercultural and interlinguistic dialog can enhance their pragmatic skills.

Respondents were asked to carry out both micro and macro analysis of a post uploaded by Rihanna, containing both image and text, in which she sent her congratulations to Saudi women when the law was changed to allow them to drive. The micro analysis directed respondents to consider the utterance in isolation, whereas the macro analysis directed their attention to the wider context. Given that none of the respondents considered the image she used to be impolite,

the interviewer directed their attention solely to the language used by Rihanna herself and in the comments posted below her post, in particular two made by (act) and (i_mt): “i hate saudi arabia buy happy for the women there ❤️” and “I didn’t know she had so many saudi fans thats sick” (act), and ‘Awe no please love us’ (i_mt). Within these comments, the respondents were particularly asked to focus on the expressions “thats sick” and “please love us” (the micro analysis element), before stepping back to consider how they played within the larger context of post and comments taken together (the macro analysis). They were asked to evaluate whether or not either contained examples of impoliteness, and whether any common discourse could be identified which linked these examples.

Table 6.

Exchange used for Metapragmatic Micro- and Macro-Analysis

1.	act... i hate saudi arabia buy happy for the women there ❤️
2.	act... i didn't know she had so many saudi fans thats sick
3.	i_mt...@act... Awe no please love us
4.	mahaa...@act... thank you! 🌸
5.	act...@i_mt... OMG no I love the people just have some issues with the government. I'm also muslim and happy for the saudi people & progression
6.	eklee...@act... Saudi Arabia hates you as well sweetheart 😏
7.	mahaa...@act... أشكرها لدعمها للسيدات السعوديات. I'm thanking her for supporting Saudi women. It's her personal choice to hate Saudi Arabia.

8. [act...@mahaa...](#) I just meant the government not the people 🇸🇦❤️ came out wrong. I'm also muslim ❤️❤️❤️❤️
9. [ghadi...@act...](#) why you hate saudi arabia?

Evaluations of impoliteness varied greatly among participants. This is unsurprising, because, as Culpeper (2010) stated:

(Im)politeness can be more inherent in a linguistic expression or can be more determined by context, but neither the expression nor the context guarantee an interpretation of (im)politeness [...] If impoliteness is defined as a negative evaluative attitude evoked by certain situated communicative behaviors, then an expression that did not in some way link itself to interpersonal context could hardly be inherently impolite. Expressions can be semanticized for impoliteness effects to varying degrees. (pp. 3236-7)

At the same time, there are some apparent patterns related to the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the participants that emerged. The general pattern was that the majority of native Arabic speakers in the sample, except for two, detected i_mt's use of sarcasm in the third comment in his use of the words "please" and "love," whereas many of the other participants viewed these as the conventionalized forms of politeness strategies these words would tend to indicate. Sarcasm was also detected by Ipek, whose first language is Turkish and who is both undertaking a doctorate at a US university in second language teaching and simultaneously working as a language teacher. When the researcher asked the group what they thought the speaker was really trying to convey, Ipek responded:

Oh yeah! That was an impolite comment [...] They weren't asking for love. They were saying "You know what? We don't really care whether you love us or hate us." So, they were being sarcastic. So, I don't know if it was impolite because they were defending their side. So, I think that it was a smart way of dealing with that hatred and you know they could have reacted more differently and directly by saying "fuck you."

Other participants, four in particular, Amal, Lamar, Zain, and Rashid, who are all Saudis and speak Arabic as their native language, not only perceived this instance sarcastic and impolite to some degree, they also viewed it as a "justified" impolite response to an impolite comment. In addition, they assumed that the user who made the comment was most likely to be Saudi because sarcasm is a socio-linguistic norm and strategy that is very commonly used to defend someone's position and/or respond to an impolite remark in their culture. It is worth mentioning that the researcher, who also identifies as Saudi, reached the same conclusion that this comment had a sarcastic tone and, therefore, decided on this basis to include this as a subject for analysis. The participants' remarks were as follows:

He was being sarcastic, and I have a feeling that he is Saudi because this is our style or way of speaking in these situations. It was impolite but in a justified and smart manner. I would have done the same thing. I don't think that it was impolite. What do you think?

- Amal, a second language teaching PhD student at a US university.

Very sarcastic! I liked it! I don't know if it was polite or impolite, but I think it was used correctly in the right time. It was slightly impolite because it didn't show understanding. He could have said something else. But this is a great comeback! [...] that

first comment, seriously who says that?! That they are happy for somebody but hate who they are?!

Researcher: But he/she said that he/she was happy for them.

It doesn't matter! How can you congratulate someone and insult them at the same time?! The irony. Too contradictory.

- Rashid, a Saudi medical doctor completing his fellowship at a US university.

I really appreciated his response. It made me feel like justice has been served (laughs). It's a snarky remark. [He was] being sarcastic and maybe he was impolite. I don't know. I may be biased to this part.

- Lamar, a B.A. speech, hearing, and language major student at a Saudi university.

(Laughs) the 3rd comment was being sarcastic. I bet you he was Saudi.

Researcher: you don't think he was asking for love?

No way. You can tell that from the context. I don't think he was impolite. I actually think it was a polite way to say we don't care. He has a sense of humor.

- Zain, a Saudi ESL student in Australia.

It is clear from these comments that the respondents identified the remark as sarcastic in spite of the fact that there are no additional cues to indicate that this is not a serious comment, e.g. any emojis, exclamation marks, etc. Their understanding of "Awe no please love us" was therefore that the apparently polite "please" request for affection "love us" was darkly humorous and the real message was that the poster was completely indifferent to Rihanna's feelings about his or

her country and customs. Furthermore, the Saudi respondents in particular justified their perceptions of (im)politeness in emic terms, e.g. “I would do the same” or “I may be biased.”.

It is noteworthy that most respondents were unsure whether the third comment was or was not impolite. They initially stated that it was impolite but then retracted the comment by stating that it was impolite to some degree. Later, they remarked that they were uncertain about the judgment that the user who had left the third comment had performed an impolite act. They were in agreement, however, that a suitable and appropriate response to the impoliteness that they perceived was articulated by the first user (act) in the first and second comments, and that, if impoliteness was actually intended by the user who published the third comment, such impoliteness was justified. The question as to whether a “justified” mock impoliteness or sarcasm is a suitable defensive linguistic mechanism and response to impoliteness was articulated by Maram. Maram is Shams’s older sister, a master’s student in biochemistry at a US university and an Iraqi-American who, like Shams, strongly identifies with both her American and Iraqi identities, but leans towards her Iraqi self. Both she and Shams were interviewed together, and their responses to the third comment were as follows:

Shams: I thought it was funny. I take it as sarcasm. That’s how I understood it when I first read it.

Maram: It’s like dry humor. It’s like “Ok, thanks but no thanks.”

Shams: Yeah. He’s basically saying: “no one asked for your love.” I don’t consider it impolite in this context.

Maram: I think that when I first read it, no. But, now that you pointed it out, I see how it can be impolite (laughs).

Shams: It's because the first person was rude.

Maram: So, is it ok to be rude back and have that not count as impolite? You can't so that!

Shams: well, if they are offending me, then why not?

Maram: That's like saying an eye for an eye.

Shams: (laughs) I don't know. I mean that person wasn't causing any harm. He was just responding. I don't think it's impolite. I can see why people would think it is, but in this specific context, I don't think it is.

Shams seems to agree with the above three Saudi participants on the point that impoliteness that is intended to be a defensive response to a previous impolite expression is justified and, therefore, does not constitute an impolite act. What intensifies this remark is that this third comment was sarcastic and didn't really contain any obvious impolite linguistic expression, or what Culpeper (2010, 2011) describes as conventionalized impoliteness formulae. Instead, the user playfully and creatively used the word "please" and "love" in a sarcastic manner to communicate the message and intent that, indeed, these feelings were not needed and that the first and second comments in the conversation can be disregarded and ignored because no one cares. However, Maram, who initially didn't view the third comment as impolite, acknowledged that it can be perceived as an impolite remark to some degree. She articulated her disapproval of employing a strategy that "justifies" responding impolitely to a previous impolite utterance on the grounds that it is not a suitable response.

Now, let's consider the group of participants who did not perceive the third comment to be a sarcastic impolite response. Interestingly, none of these participants were native Arabic speakers.

Another important observation is that none of them acknowledged that it could carry a sarcastic meaning. For example, Madison, a North American public school teacher who teaches English to immigrant elementary students, commented as follows:

I think that she is just saying and asking for understanding, or maybe acceptance.

I don't think it is impolite at all.

A similar observation and evaluation were offered by Nara, an Indonesian PhD student of second language teaching at a US university, who said:

I didn't consider it impolite. Maybe this person was trying to understand what the first commenter was coming from [...] I think this person is asking the first commenter by saying "don't hate us", because you can see in the fifth comment, the first commenter responded by saying "I don't hate you, I just hate the system." So, I think we don't have to feel anger or triggered by that.

The fact that the third comment was conveyed in written form and without any use of discourse markers, such as punctuation or emojis, coupled with the absence of contextual clues that are normally present in oral speech (e.g., intonation) might have led these participants to evaluate the third comment as a polite expression (Graham & Hardaker, 2017). In addition, these participants utilized and processed the literal meaning of the words "please" and "love" as a request for understanding and acceptance. It is worth noting that these participants failed to acknowledge that such a comment could be perceived as sarcastic, even though the first user in the conversation did acknowledge it in his/her fifth comment, which read: "act...@i_mt... OMG no I love the people just have some issues with the government. I'm also muslim and happy for the saudi people & progression." This might highlight how these participants based their

evaluation of the third comment on their prior L1 knowledge, which could have led to them concluding that the third comment was not sarcastic.

Now, let us shift the focus from the third comment to the second comment made by act: “I didn’t know she had so many saudi fans thats sick.” Before I discuss the participants’ reactions to the second comment, an analysis of the linguistic choices and discourse markers that this user employed in the preceding and following comments within the conversation will help to elucidate the conversation from Instagram. The user’s (act’s) first comment indicated that she had negative feelings about the government of Saudi Arabia; however, she was pleased that Saudi women will be allowed to officially drive, a decision that has been passed by the government. This user further expressed her support of Saudi women by using a red heart emoji (❤️) and went on to comment about the number of Saudi fans of singer Rihanna, which is articulated in the second comment. It is worth mentioning that this comment contained no discourse markers, which renders the word “sick” ambiguous. The fifth and eighth comments were an attempt to save face in response to the backlash the user received after her comments were perceived as impolite by other users. In the 8th comment, in particular, act tried to justify her comments and providing further explanation as to what she meant by her first and second comments. She attempted to achieve this by focusing her negative emotion on the government and not the people. This is further supported by her use of green heart emojis (💚) and the Saudi flag emoji (🇸🇦), which represents an attempt to show solidarity with other Saudi users and reduce any aggressiveness and animosity that is being directed at her. The second comment, and particularly “that’s sick,” can be interpreted in different ways. However, in this context, if we isolate the comment from the rest of the conversation, we would reach the conclusion that an impolite linguistic act has occurred in which “sick” would mean “disturbing” and/ or

“disgusting.” However, if we consider the user’s attempt to repeatedly stress that she is happy for Saudi women, and her use of emojis, we can arrive at the evaluation that “sick” could have been used to mean ‘cool.’

Surprisingly, none of the participants in the current study reached the latter explanation of “sick” meaning “cool,” and only eight of them acknowledged that sick could mean cool. None of the eight believed that this meaning was the intended one by the user (act) in his/ her 2nd comment. For example, Lamar interpreted the use of the word as follows:

Yeah, “that’s sick” as “being gross” and not as in “cool”[...] I think that if it had punctuation or emojis, it would make more sense and it would become more clear what she meant by sick.

Researcher: But, in later comments, she mentioned that she was happy for the people and used green heart emojis and the Saudi flag emoji.

She was just saying that to make herself feel better or look better. And, it doesn’t make sense because in the 8th comment she put the Saudi flag and the green hearts. So, how is it that she hates the government and uses such emojis? She’s doing it to save face. If it were me, I would have deleted my first two comments. It doesn’t make sense that she didn’t delete it after all the replies she got and instead tried to cover up for what she said.

Lamar essentially rejected the interpretation that the word sick was used in a positive manner to mean cool, even though (act’s) previous and following comments attempted to imply and direct readers to that interpretation. Therefore, participants who arrived at the conclusion that the word sick didn’t mean cool and was offensive because they perceived it to mean “disgusting”

processed the propositional meaning of the word and disregarded some of the contextual cues and the context in which these cues were used.

Other participants reported that they were not aware of the fact that the word “sick” could mean “cool.” Given this lack of awareness, they could only evaluate the word as impolite, which supports the findings of Sharifian and Tayebi (2017), as further discussed below, that culture molds perceptions of (im)politeness, constructs meaning, and directs people to identify certain behaviors and expressions as polite or impolite. As the Arabic translation of sick is maradh, literally meaning ‘feeling ill’, Arabic speakers are culturally conditioned to associate this word with unpleasantness, pain, and suffering in general. Indeed, the term maradh is used by Arabic speakers to describe socially unacceptable speech or behavior; it is therefore completely understandable that they should regard it as insulting when applied to some aspect of their own nation or culture. This supposition on their part would be strengthened given that the word “sick” came very soon after the word “hate”, which (despite the happiness emoji (❤️) alongside) is very strongly negative. Respondents thus tended to dismiss the emoji as meaningless or insincere and based their evaluation of the comments as impolite on the words which preceded it.

5.3. Discussion

The findings outlined in the section above suggest that the data gathered by interview and survey can be placed in certain themes which can then be used as means of gauging to what extent, and how, it is possible to identify intercultural impoliteness. These include perceptions of impoliteness as being connected to identity, cultural conceptualizations, context, emic and etic perspectives, and simply as a normalized element of the digital setting.

5.3.1. Identity and Perceptions of (Im)politeness

The connection between impoliteness and ideas of identity has been the subject of considerable discussion (Blitvich, 2013; Bou-Franch & Blitvich, 2014). Identity, particularly social identity, has an important role in intercultural pragmatics, as impoliteness is perceived and conveyed according to the norms of ethnic, national, or other culturally constructed groups (Blitvich & Sifianou, 2017). The findings of the present study corroborate this idea, given that the respondents clearly gauged levels and instances of impoliteness from the perspective of the cultural group with which they identified, in some cases explicitly and in others not.

One example of this tendency was demonstrated during the metapragmatic analysis described in the previous section, of a post in which the user (act) made comments that could be perceived as derogatory towards Saudi culture, and to which some Saudi respondents reacted from the perspective of their nationality. A similar tendency to take a stance or feel an affiliation with a culturally constructed group, this time a religious or racial one, was shown by the different reactions manifested in the comments under the image of a Hindu goddess posted by the North American singer Katy Perry and the photo of a white woman made-up to appear black (refer to Appendix X). Moreover, their reactions towards other respondents or commenters who did not agree with them were similarly couched in terms of defending (or perceiving as under attack) a cultural affiliation. For example, some thought that it would be impolite to disagree with those who thought the use of “black” makeup by white women because in so doing they would contradict what a racially marginalized group held to be appropriate, and this would in itself be a discourtesy. They expressed the view that this type of disagreement was also impolite because it allowed some to cast themselves as victims and therefore others as aggressors, thereby permitting themselves to use aggressive language in retaliation, and to draw a sharp distinction

between themselves – “us” – and those in the conversation who disagreed with them – “them” – (most obviously in the dialog between tia and milana).

5.3.2. Cultural Conceptualizations of Impoliteness

This study concludes that participants drew on their social and cultural norms in the L1 to determine what constitutes a polite or impolite act in the L2. Participants’ recollections of personal experiences with people from different L1 and/or cultural backgrounds, in which they evaluated interactions that centered on humor or relationships between people of different genders or status, revealed how their cultures influenced their judgments. For example, Zain felt insulted when her male Jordanian classmate joked about her body weight. Even though both Zain and her classmate spoke Arabic as their native language, and thus shared the same L1, they came from different cultural backgrounds. While the Jordanian erroneously thought that Zain would find his joke funny and that the two were close enough to make teasing remarks acceptable, Zain considered his joke to be rude and humiliating.

Interestingly, Zain recognized her male Australian professor’s decision to play “All about the Bass,” a song celebrating women’s bodies of all shapes and sizes, as a sweet gesture that aimed to raise her self-esteem. Her reactions to these two incidents unveil the nuances in concepts of impoliteness and politeness. When her male Jordanian classmate commented on Zain’s body, she was upset, yet she appreciated her teacher’s effort to cheer her up by playing a song that celebrated curvy women and viewed it as a considerate gesture. Kecskés’ (2017) notion of context-dependency in intercultural impoliteness seems appropriate here. He posited that the interlocutors in intercultural communication cannot rely on existing common ground, shared knowledge, or conventionalized context because they have different L1s and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, to avoid unintentional rudeness, interactants need to co-construct

meaning as they progress through the communicative process. However, it is not clear that Kecskés' context-dependence covers all cases in which intercultural groups pool linguistic and cultural experience to co-create meaning, and whether his notion applies to online contexts. For example, in the context of Instagram, the varied reactions of respondents during the metapragmatic analysis of the words "awe no please love us" disclose that co-construction of meaning did not occur. Some people detected sarcasm, while others regarded it as a genuine request to the user (act) to understand Saudi culture. Therefore, during the process of co-constructing, it appears that group members do not entirely leave behind the understandings they have absorbed from their particular linguistic and cultural background when engaging in online intercultural interactions, perhaps because of the lack of contextual and cultural knowledge that is present in online communications. Indeed, they may choose not to engage in co-construction at all, possibly because it is easier to rely on the familiar when attempting to interpret (im)politeness expressed in a foreign language.

The findings also mirror what Haugh (2010a) suggested in that cultural heterogeneity causes interlocutors across the cultural divide to inevitably arrive at different conclusions and evaluations of impoliteness, and that such variability is complex, yet problematic, in understanding intercultural impoliteness. Culpeper (2010) further explained that what is perceived as (im)polite ultimately relies on interactants' assessment of the social norms of appropriateness that have been previously acquired in speech events. This provides evidence that linguistic behaviors can, in some cases, be inherently impolite while not being inherently impolite in others. When Shams and Eman recall times at which they have personally experienced or witnessed impoliteness, their dismay at this perceived impoliteness was tempered by their recognition of intercultural differences and the realization that the people using this

language did not necessarily mean to give offense. Thus, both respondents appear capable of evaluating impoliteness both according to the cultural norms of the context in which it occurs and as a measure of the speaker's intentions.

There was considerable variability in how the participants in both the teacher and learner groups perceived and, thus, evaluated instances of intercultural impoliteness. This was articulated by Haugh (2010a), who observed how cultural heterogeneity will inevitably cause variability in evaluations of (im)politeness. Sharifian & Tayebi (2017) argued the following:

[S]peakers show variations and differences in their access to and internalization of cultural cognition. Also, cultural cognition is dynamic in that it is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated across generations in a speech community, as well as through contact with other speech communities [...] it is argued that the distribution of cultural conceptualizations among speakers in a speech community is heterogeneous and that variability in these conceptualizations is at the very heart of each speech community. This is, in fact, how the misunderstandings between people within one speech community can be accounted for. The heterogeneous nature of the distribution of cultural schemas across a speech community in fact provides a basis for speakers to evaluate other interlocutors' communicative behavior, for example as not adhering to a particular schema [...] which then leads to the assessment that they are 'impolite'. (p. 576)

Chang and Haugh (2011) argued that, in an intercultural interaction, there are no pre-existing constructs that drive social interaction; as such, constructs are being developed and discursively co-constructed through interaction. For that purpose, participants arrive at the conclusion that impoliteness has occurred through processing converging and diverging interpretations of actions that are interactionally achieved in situated discourse. Consider the Instagram user (act)'s

comments under Rihanna's post. The user (act) started the conversation by remarking that they are happy for Saudi women, but that they hate their government. Upon commenting, this user had no expectations as to whether they would get a reply, who would reply, whether others would condone or condemn the comment, and so on. Therefore, we can assume that there are no predetermined, pre-existing constructs that drive the social interaction on Instagram. However, the reaction that (act)'s initial statement provoked set the pace and tone for the entire conversation: (act) received attacking replies because of their choice of words (i.e., "hate," "sick"), so they tried to defend their position and claimed that they did not intend to cause offense. Thus, when assessing intercultural impoliteness, it is wise to consider culture as an important construct in the analysis, as exemplified by native Arabic-speakers' connotations of "sick." However, we should also remember that Sifianou and Blitvich (2017) highlighted that cultures are not homogeneous and that even within one culture there are variations in how interactants in specific situations perceive impoliteness. Mills and Kádár (2011) argued that (im)politeness expressions and behaviors could be regarded as the resources and norms that are available within particular cultures and that different groups view in different ways.

Interactants in an intercultural setting will sometimes draw from their own cultural background to assess whether a given instance is (im)polite. At the same time, as can be seen in the comments of participants such as Eman, Zain, and Shams, L2 speakers can be aware of their culturally constructed conceptualizations. Sharifian and Tayebi (2017) posited that an explanation of personal evaluation of impoliteness can be found within cultural linguistics, which argues that a major part of cognitive conceptualizations is both cultural and heterogeneously distributed across a speech community in what is known as cultural conceptualizations. The notion of cultural conceptualizations refers to conceptual processes that

have been rooted in the cultural experiences of individuals who identify with a specific speech community. As such, they act as resources by which interactants process and construct meaning during communicative interactions.

The suspicion of several Saudi respondents that the person who posted those words was him- or herself Saudi offers further evidence that cultural concepts lie behind the identification of different means of (im)politeness, such as irony or sarcasm. These Saudi respondents pointed out that using sarcasm as a means of defense is typical of a native speaker of the Arabic spoken in their country. I checked the user's profile and found that their suspicion was correct: the user self-identified as a Saudi national. Impoliteness formulae such as the one embedded in this comment can therefore be identified by speakers of the languages in which such formulae are norms; equally, non-speakers may lack the culturally specific knowledge necessary to interpret the meaning behind the words correctly.

The findings in this part of the study also support Kecskés' argument that interactants in intercultural communications rely – and even over-rely- on the literal and compositional meaning of expression, which Kecskés refers to as semantic analyzability, as well as the prior L1 knowledge, instead of the actual situational context, to interpret whether an act is (im)polite. This can explain why some of the participants concluded that the term “that's sick” in the second comment and “please love us” in the third comment had a propositional meaning. Eman and Zain, for example, despite being graduate teachers of English as a second language, were unaware that the word ‘sick’ – literally, “unwell” – could also convey the meaning of “cool.” Both speak English fluently, but had not previously come across instances of the word being used in this way. Significantly, they either ignored or did not recognize the contextual cues embedded in the comments that (act) utilized to mitigate interpretations of impoliteness (e.g.,

heart emojis signifying solidarity and happiness for Saudi women). Therefore, they connected “sickness” with the negativity that such a state literally implies, as it would be connected in that way in their own L1. The case of “awe no please love us” is subtly different, as here the inability to interpret the underlying sarcasm is not because of a lack of knowledge of current slang, but due to an unfamiliarity with the cultural norms by which impoliteness may be implicationaly communicated in an apparently polite request for understanding.

5.3.3. Perceptions of Impoliteness in Relation to Context

It is clear from findings from both the survey and interviews that respondents were aware of “context” as a crucial element in gauging and understanding impoliteness. One example of this is that they were aware that the word “bitch” had a different weight and meaning when used in SNSs than it would if used in other contexts, in which it would be considered significantly more offensive. This understanding can be regarded as part of a discursive approach, which privileges context over semantic analysis, requiring speakers to appreciate the social, cultural and linguistic identities of the interactants, and the nature of the forum in which they are staging their debate or conversation. There is a considerable consensus among scholars in the field that this, rather than a narrow focus on the intentions of the speaker or the isolated meaning of the words s/he chooses, is the better way to detect and weigh impoliteness (House, 2010). However, the findings suggest that participants did not always employ a discursive-analysis approach when evaluating impoliteness and sometimes resorted to using a semantic-analyzability approach, as when some interviewees interpreted the word “sick” to mean “disgusting” instead of “cool.” One explanation lies in participants’ biased evaluations of (im)politeness based on a desire to show solidarity towards those being offended (e.g., the native English-speaking teacher who said, “I have Saudi and Muslim friends so I find this offensive and would not want people to be speaking this way

about them”) or their affiliation with the recipient(s) of impolite acts (e.g., the respondent who revealed, “I was very hurt since I am from Saudi Arabia”). In these cases, respondents seemingly ignored contextual cues when evaluating impoliteness and instead relied on semantic analyzability to judge linguistic behaviors.

Settling on cultural norms as the vital element in understanding (im)politeness within context and between different interactants, however, does not necessarily clarify how well, or whether, different L1 speakers will gauge or detect it. “Culture”, “norms”, and “context” are all, in themselves, sophisticated conceits in which enormous variability is inherent. It is unsurprising that reactions based on three already slippery and mobile concepts resist categorization. For example, the makeup artist’s post generated comments that participants in both the teachers and learners’ groups thought were either impolite or not impolite based on their own evaluation, yet considering two responses in particular:

- I was shocked to see what people were saying. To say that we are all one race is not correct and things like saying that you are “color blind” is offensive because it means that you are not willing to look at the history that people have gone through. **(A native English-speaking learner)**
- I was pleasantly surprised to see those taking part in this acting relatively tame. There was little name calling throughout, few swear words, and not a lot of insulting. I was expecting it to be a lot worse because of how sensitive the topic of black face can be for people of color in the US, particularly given its troublesome history. I was happy to see people disengage rather than resort to name calling. **(A native English-speaking teacher of L2 English)**

Both participants speak English as their native language, both are American, and both understand to some extent the history behind blackface. Therefore, we can assume that these two participants have common knowledge of the cultural and historical background of the topic at hand (blackface), which suggests that they are aware of the linguistic and social norms that apply to this topic. Additionally, both participants read the entire conversation and thus understand the context in which this conversation took place and how other users reacted to the comments and the post itself. Therefore, we would have assumed that the two participants would have assessed instances of (im)politeness similarly. However, one participant thought that the conversation was rather mild, and the other thought deemed it offensive. While they both agreed that some degree of impoliteness was present in the discussion, they differed in their reaction to the language that was used (i.e., pleasantly surprised vs. shocked). Therefore, in analyzing instances of (im)politeness, these participants did not just rely on a shared understanding of cultural norms associated with blackface. Instead, their process of judging the degree and severity of (im)politeness was more complicated, involving cultural standards, context, and their understanding of these concepts in terms of race.

5.3.4. The common use of impoliteness in SNSs

Most respondents were aware that impoliteness is commonly used within SNSs and should be taken as having a different meaning and intensity than if the same language had been used in different settings, for example face to face. Further, there was general agreement that the freedom and privileges conferred by anonymity allows this impoliteness to flourish. It is common in internet forums for posters and commenters to go far beyond conventional forms of politeness and begin using words or expressions, including racial and gendered insults, that they

would not use in a non-digital setting, possibly for fear of being physically challenged or having their identity revealed to their peers.

Indeed, the freedom of expression allowed by the internet means that language which would be considered offensive in other settings is regarded as normal when used online: here, there is no danger of physical retaliation, no single person's opinion automatically has more weight or status than anyone else's, no one has to use the language of deference, and the rules are thus different. SNSs, as part of the digital world, offer these characteristics of anonymity and the safety that goes with them. Messages posted are, furthermore, regarded as having only a short lifespan, as opposed to ones uttered in print media. Thus, the conventions observed in face to face interaction or traditional media – including conventions around courtesy – are set aside.

5.4. Conclusion

Across both groups, several key findings emerged about the importance of context, and the complexity of any analysis made of intercultural (im)politeness. Firstly, there was a common understanding across both groups that impoliteness is often inherent in a digital context because of the anonymous and often ephemeral nature of the dialogs engaged in online. Therefore, if people choose to engage in debate in that setting, even if only passively by reading others' posts and comments, they must expect to encounter words, expressions, or sentiments which leave them shocked, dismayed, or repulsed. This might be conceived of as one of the rules of engagement for any online activity.

That said, the fact that people are aware that they will almost certainly encounter offensive (to them) material online does not stop that material from having an impact: in other words, realizing such language has become commonplace in a digital setting does not stop it from being shocking to people who would not normally use such terms. This is because, despite its common

use in an online environment, it conflicts either with their socio-cultural norms or their individual idea of right and wrong, insofar as these two can be distinguished. Furthermore, a general understanding was also revealed, again across both groups, that internet forums such as Instagram frequently host discussions of sensitive subjects which are less likely to be brought up in other settings, for example race and gender, and that these subjects are in themselves more likely to evoke insulting and strong language.

The second secondary finding was that metapragmatic analysis might be effective in enabling learners to step back and reflect on whether an utterance is intentionally or implicationaly impolite, in what way, and to what degree. Within the study, the metapragmatic awareness exercise acted as an intervention. The researcher helped participants to look beyond their initial assumptions about the language and relationships between interactants, analyze language beyond the isolated semantic level, consider the discourse as a whole, and look carefully and critically at the contextual cues embedded in the online conversations presented in this exercise. This intervention resulted in some participants changing their perspectives about instances they initially perceived as either polite or impolite. It thus opens up the possibility of teaching L2 intercultural impoliteness, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

When the same word or expression can be polite in one setting but impolite in another (for example, “bitch” is unremarkable to some online users but would be deeply offensive in other, particularly offline, settings), L2 speakers therefore have to bring together techniques of both micro and macro analysis. A semantic analysis of the words considered in isolation is not sufficient; it has to be backed up by an analysis of the wider context and discourse, with an understanding of the relations between the interactants, and their expectations of each other and of the setting in which they are interacting. This in itself is complex, because people not only

have to weigh up which analysis to privilege in different cases, but also to bring in – or attempt to set aside – their own preconceived socio-cultural norms in attempting to understand a context or discourse which might be alien or distasteful to them personally. And on top of this, they must also attempt a balancing act between the norms in which they have been acculturated and their own personal preferences, which may not necessarily mirror those of their own culture. Thus, even though some individuals may recognize that certain terms have become normalized in certain settings, they may still personally find them impolite.

It is thus clear that the nexus between the different levels of analysis which must be made is a complex one, and that it requires not only a good knowledge of the L2 but also an awareness of one's own culture and the L2 culture, as well as that in which the dialog or debate in question is located. This complexity includes social and linguistic identity and background, which are themselves broken down into many more components such as age, education levels, generation, ethnicity, gender, and so forth. These variables must be considered alongside an awareness of context and semantic analysis. Considering all these variables and elements will give participants in or observers of intercultural exchange the flexibility to realize that language is both independent of and dependent on its context; that it is dynamic, and that its meanings may change across cultures, across groups within cultures, and as the result of co-construction whereby a particular intercultural group allocates new shared meanings to existing words or expressions. Having the techniques for both micro and macro analysis will enable people to perceive the behavior and the intention behind the language.

It can be inferred from the findings of the sample considered in this paper, however, that the importance of a person's own cultural knowledge can never be underestimated, no matter how many analysis techniques they learn to apply, and how sophisticated these are. This is

exemplified in the tendency shown by individuals to immediately identify interactants as members of, or outsiders to, their own particular socio-cultural and linguistic group; in other words, to immediately adopt either an emic or etic perspective. This is not necessarily a negative, as identifying interactants as others mitigates the effect that their use of potentially offensive or impolite language would have: something that would not be acceptable if said by another member of one's group can be acceptable when it is recognized that the utterer belongs to a group with different codes of behavior.

Finally, it is worthy of note that when impolite words or expressions are contained in certain impoliteness conventions, or formulae, they are more easily identifiable as such. There is greater difficulty when the impoliteness is indirectly made, or made by implication. Users of online spaces, like those of offline spaces, observe certain (im)politeness conventions, although these may be different to those used in the offline world – which themselves are culturally dependent and specific. Recognizing and understanding these online conventions will allow interactants to identify when (im)politeness is intended, and to what degree. As was seen in the case of the “awe no please love us” comment, the implicational rudeness was difficult to detect for speakers from a cultural background in which the use of sarcasm as defense is not common, although it may equally have been because implicational rudeness commonly depends on factors such as tone of voice, body language, facial expression, and so forth, which are obviously missing in an online interaction. It becomes even more complex when ostensibly conflicting emojis are posted, for example a happy face next to a post or comment intended to be negative, sarcastic, or offensive, as these fall outside conventions around (im)politeness.

This is where learners are not only exposed to contextualized input but also engage in metapragmatic analysis of relevant phenomena, thereby raising their awareness of the pragmatic

norms of their L2 (Haugh & Chang, 2015). Conducting such metapragmatic analysis can be informative in helping students develop the awareness they need to understand appropriateness and develop the skills required to analyze context and contextual cues and look beyond the literal compositional meaning of words when evaluating acts of (im)politeness. Indeed, Felix-Brasdefer and Mugford (2017) argued that appropriateness is a key factor in developing learners (im)politeness strategies as they may be unable to understand target-language patterns and behaviors on their own. To achieve such understanding, L2 learners need to develop context-sensitivity skills in order to be able to communicate with others in ways that accommodate the norms for a given situation in addition to being able to express themselves. Such activity can help learners to focus on the language practices and styles developed by groups of people as they engage in intercultural interaction. By analyzing these linguistic practices, L2 learners can identify the norms of appropriateness for a given community of practice and then apply these norms to evaluate whether a certain utterance is polite or impolite. Therefore, explicit instruction following this method of metapragmatic analysis of intercultural impoliteness can help learners look for cues, such as the explicit comments made by interlocutors, during the interaction, or the reciprocation of concern that is evident in the adjacent placement of expressions of concern relevant to the norms invoked in that particular interaction (Kecskés, 2017). Chapter 6 further discusses the question of whether L2 impoliteness can be taught and, if so, how.

Chapter 6

Teacher and Learner Perceptions of the Teachability of Impoliteness and the Potential of SNSs as a Resource

6.1. Introduction

The ability to produce and perceive (im)polite behaviors in a second language is necessary for an L2 learner to develop pragmatic knowledge and competence. This study seeks to understand how L2 teachers and learners perceive impoliteness in intercultural settings, as well as how they feel about teaching and/or learning about it in a formal academic language-classroom setting. The former was discussed in detail in the previous chapter; in this chapter, I will focus on the latter, relating to the perceptions of the teachability of impoliteness. As previous studies have shown, teachers' and learner's attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions are essential in the successful implementation of new pedagogical approaches (Johnson, 1994; Ellis, 2008).

The following chapter presents the results of teachers and learners' perceptions about the teachability of L2 impoliteness. It analyzes responses from the same survey and interviews that the previous chapter discussed and contains the same participants. I will first present the survey results, then consider the interviews, and conclude by reviewing them together. The discussion addresses how participants feel about teaching L2 impoliteness, whether conventional or implicational, and how they feel about using SNSs to teach L2 impoliteness.

6.2. Teaching Politeness: Literature Review

The teaching of L2 pragmatic knowledge has been highly encouraged by scholars such as Meznah (2018), Al-Fatlawi (2018), Ishihara (2010), and Jeon and Kaya (2006). Summarizing

existing research in the field, Felix-Brasdefer and Mugford (2017) identify three crucial issues that have been addressed in research on the development of L2 pragmatic knowledge: (1) the value of instruction in maximizing learning; (2) the role of exposure to pragmatic input in the FL classroom; and (3) raising socio-pragmatic awareness.

Rose and Kasper (2001) provide empirical data that suggests that students may learn certain pragmatic features slowly - or never - if teachers do not explicitly or implicitly teach them. That is why Reiger (2015, 2018) calls for the explicit instruction of some practical aspects of the language, such as (im)politeness, in the L2. When teachers draw students' attention to the pivotal role of socio-cultural and socio-pragmatic elements and explain how they play a crucial role in the perception and interpretation of interactional behavior, learners achieve an enhanced understanding and awareness of the complexity and the ubiquitous nature of (im)politeness in intercultural encounters. Reiger (2015) notes that interactants come from different communities and do not (necessarily) share the same or presumed norms, expectations, perceptions, and interpretations of interactional behavior. Therefore, without instruction, L2 learners may interpret other interactants' behavior as not just impolite but as deliberately rude.

Pizziconi (2015) suggests that "explicit teaching enhances salience, but it is practice (actual participation and hypothesis testing in situated contexts of use) that facilitates the process required for understanding" (p. 126). Additionally, Culpeper (2010) argues that indirect experiences of impoliteness do not define for speakers what society regards as impolite, which means that regular occurrences do not sufficiently add to a learner's competence. This demonstrates a need for learners to be exposed to instances of L2 impoliteness and be given opportunities to confront and analyze metapragmatic knowledge and instances of impoliteness to capture and understand their communicative meaning and underlying information fully. L2

teachers' aim when teaching impoliteness should shift from focusing on teaching isolated examples of impoliteness to providing students with enough pragmatic rules and sociocultural and linguistics norms that both supply them with the tools to operate within a target language setting and allow them to integrate within it. For this reason, many scholars advocate instructional methods based on metapragmatic analysis and instruction in which participants engage in such activities as the cross-cultural examination of their L1 and L2 cultures and group discussions of socio-pragmatic differences in relation to impoliteness norms (e.g., directness and indirectness) (Bella, Sifianou, & Tzanne, 2015; Rieger, 2015, 2017, 2018; Felix-Brasdefer & Mugford, 2017).

The potential of metapragmatic awareness raising was evident in the study reported on in Chapter 5, in which a metapragmatic analysis exercise of an Instagram post and its comments was conducted with a subset. Participants in that study reported that the exercise was “interesting” and “fun”, and that it yielded “new” insights into how some impolite expressions are perceived differently by different cultural groups. This was because they had had the impression that some things are, or should be, “obvious”, and this assumption was not borne out by the different interpretations that came up from analyzing phrases in the exercise undertaken during the interview. The participants' responses are in line with current research on (im)politeness, in that the focus is on recognizing that L2 users, especially in intercultural interactions, have choices in how they wish to participate in the TL in terms of impoliteness. This is in agreement with what Liddicoat (2014) advocates, that is, that it is both useful and effective for L2 learners to be able to reflect on pragmatic differences as they stem from different cultural understandings, paving the way for developing intercultural communicative competence.

Such knowledge is necessary for understanding the different interpretations that arise from intercultural impoliteness.

These issues are definitely not foreign to the context of L2 teaching. For example, Cheng and Wang (2004) reported that L2 teachers were not able to teach effectively because they are not well equipped, and less prepared to teach the subject matter. A survey carried out by Vazquez and Sharpless (2009) of U.S. teacher training programs revealed that where pragmatics is included at all, it focuses on theory rather than practice. However, among the qualifications necessary for a teacher to instruct L2 pragmatics effectively would be a good grasp not only of the pragmatic variations of the TL (Schneider & Barron, 2008) but also of the L1 of the learners, to guard against offence or upset; and the ability to convey that knowledge to their students by providing educational activities based on pragmatics and with metapragmatic information embedded in them. It appears, however, that formal training in these attributes is necessary for language teachers to be effective teachers of pragmatics, and that such educational techniques cannot be thought of as coming naturally to instructors.

The explicit teaching of impolite speech acts enables learners to make the appropriate form–function connections between these elements as they progress in their development of pragmatic competence (Félix-Brasdefer, 2007) and may enhance learners’ understanding of the complexity of intercultural (im)politeness. They may learn that, in some cases, it is not the act that is (im)polite but, rather, the manner in which that act occurs in a given sociocultural setting that renders it (im)polite (Rieger, 2017). In fact, Felix-Brasdefer and Mugford (2017) claim that pragmatic development is possible among uninstructed L2 learners; however, scholars are in agreement that instruction of pragmatic input is necessary for developing L2 pragmatic

competence. They have proposed a model for teaching (im)politeness in the classroom with the intention of realizing the following objectives:

1. Raising learners' awareness of the pragmatic features of impoliteness; and
2. Providing learners with pragmatic input that helps them in identifying contextual and co-textual cues that aid them in perceiving impolite expressions as such.

Such methods encourage instructors to think about utilizing a discursive approach to teaching (im)politeness because they emphasize that interpretations of impoliteness can vary depending on the context in which the interaction takes place. Indeed, these methods orient learners to understanding the notion of "conventionality", in that conventionalized impoliteness formulae are determined by several factors that include (but are not limited to) familiarity with the expression or act, psychological salience, and personal and emotional resonance (Kecskes, 2017). For this reason, impoliteness metadiscourse is needed for learners to be able to identify an interactant's position and orientation, and the norms that drive these two factors (Culpeper, 2011). Therefore, the importance of teaching conventionalized forms of impoliteness is that it encourages L2 learners to think about their judgement and evaluation as not just a matter of individual assessment, but as influenced by a given community's norms and how such norms have shaped certain expressions of a language as impolite (Mills, 2005). The challenge for both teachers and learners, Felix-Brasdefer and Mugford (2017) argue, "is to help learners understand (im)politeness practices from different points of view (both L1 and FL/FL) and help them understand that (im)politeness is not always interpreted in the same way in different cultures and by interactants in a given situation" (p. 511). For this reason, they call for teaching that would develop an ethnographic awareness in learners.

If uninstructed, learners may take a long time or may never learn certain pragmatic aspects of the L2, such as conventionalized forms of impoliteness, it is only logical to assume that L2 learners will have even greater difficulty acquiring implicational impoliteness, or non-conventionalized impoliteness formulae, on their own (see Bouton, 1994). The difficulty in teaching this kind of impoliteness is that interpretations of an implicationally impolite act can differ depending on the context and situation, making it a time-consuming job (Felix-Brasdefer & Mugford, 2017). This could even explain the lack of research done into teaching and learning implicational impoliteness.

What may exacerbate this issue is the lack of teaching material that focuses on conventionalized forms of impoliteness. This has been a major obstacle in teaching pragmatics in general, in that it is an area of language that is not explicitly covered in language textbooks (Vasquez & Fioramonte, 2011). In turn, there is a push towards utilizing naturally occurring language in the instruction of L2 pragmatic features (Ishihara, 2010; Chang & Haugh, 2011; Haugh & Chang, 2015; Al-Fatlawi, 2018). However, in regard to impoliteness, examples in naturally occurring language may not be easily found or encountered (Culpeper, 2010). In fact, conventionalized impoliteness formulae, even though they may be encountered in real life, do not occur as frequently as other pragmatic features (Culpeper, 2011).

However, as the current study shows through the corpus of data collected, SNSs provide a medium in which such language can be found and used as instructional material to teach (im)politeness. Various studies examined the potential of SNSs in facilitating the development of pragmatic competence. For example, a study conducted by Lantz-Andersson (2017) investigated how SNSs, primarily Facebook, can facilitate L2 learners' socio-pragmatic competence by analyzing language play in learners' use of linguistic repertoires for both pragmatic and

socializing purposes. In this study, Facebook offered a space for students to engage in casual communication by means of language play such as irony, punning, and rhyming. Although Instagram is not as ubiquitous as Facebook in L2 learning and teaching research, it is slowly gaining in popularity among researchers in the field. Akhiar, Mydin, and Kasuma (2017) examined students' attitudes to using Instagram to practice their L2 writing skills. They found that learners had a positive learning experience and were comfortable sharing aspects of their lives through content posted on Instagram and publishing multimodal content that included essays and a corresponding visual component.

Research on language teacher cognition has also been an area of extreme interest. Johnson (2006) suggests that it has made a substantial contribution to our understanding of how teachers' beliefs and perceptions influence their practice and therefore impact the learning process. Borg and Al-Busiadi (2012) emphasize that teachers' beliefs can powerfully shape both what teachers do and, consequently, the opportunities that learners receive. Additionally, teacher education is more likely to have an impact on their practices when it is based on an understanding of their beliefs. Therefore, understanding teachers' views about L2 impoliteness is an essential element in how they design activities and materials and, primarily, whether they include L2 impoliteness in the curriculum. It is also critical to orienting students in the different ways people express (im)politeness in intercultural interactions.

Only a few studies addressing language teachers' beliefs about L2 impoliteness were available when I started this research. Of these studies, one worth talking about was conducted by Ahmadi and Soureshjani (2011). They focused on whether EFL Iranian learners and teachers differed in their attitudes toward teaching impoliteness and whether gender was a factor that influenced those attitudes. Their study indicated that, regardless of gender, teachers tend to prefer

to teach politeness over impoliteness. This conclusion is unsurprising in Iran, where students must abide by principles of civility, especially within formal situations. While teachers would like to teach impoliteness, they think it is not possible because it may create cultural problems and managerial obstacles. In contrast, learners were unaware of such issues and were more in favor of teaching impoliteness, again regardless of their gender.

As the teachers were more experienced and well aware of the potential obstacles inherent in explicitly teaching impolite aspects of language, they were pessimistic about teaching it directly and preferred indirect teaching. The language learners, however, being mostly unaware of such problems, showed a stronger tendency toward direct instruction.

Finally, the study showed that both females and males in both groups of teachers and learners thought that if impoliteness were to be taught, then it isn't reasonable to make gender distinctions between how they are taught. They agreed that they deserve equal treatment, and that teaching language components and skills should be done the same between both genders.

This chapter provides further insights into the teaching of L2 impoliteness and aims to understand both teachers and learners' perceptions of its teachability, specifically by looking at intercultural impoliteness and the use of online resources and material extracted from Instagram.

6.3. The Potential Teachability of Impoliteness

6.3.1. Survey Results

This section reports the results of the survey, specifically analyzing the data collected from the close-ended questions that were sectioned into two parts. The first part comprised seven items about perceptions of teaching L2 impoliteness for the teachers' group and six items about perceptions of learning it for the learners' group. The second part was composed of five items for

the teachers' group and three for the learners' group. This part asked both groups about their experiences of teaching or learning L2 impoliteness in a formal educational setting. All the participants answered all of the questions in both sections, as they couldn't progress in the survey without doing so. The following tables show the distribution of responses to the survey questions along with the means and standard deviations (SD) for the total number of participants in both groups.

Table 7.

Teachers' Perceptions about Teaching L2 Impoliteness

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
1. IL ³ should be taught to adult language learners	14	19	11	4	12	6.27
2. IL should be taught at various levels of language learning	12	20	12	4	12	6.53
3. I feel uncomfortable teaching IL in general	8	10	19	11	12	4.83
4. I feel uncomfortable teaching IL to a specific gender of students	5	8	21	14	12	7.07
5. Teaching IL in a formal educational setting is inappropriate	5	6	24	13	12	8.76
6. Teacher training is essential to teaching IL in the L2	23	20	5	0	12	11.22

³ IL = impolite language

7. Interested in using SNSs to teach IL	20	19	6	3	12	8.76
Total: 48						

Table 8.

Teachers' Experiences Teaching L2 Impoliteness

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
1. Faced administrative challenges when teaching IL	0	0	8	12	5	6
2. Had difficulties finding textbooks and other formal instructional tools to teach L2 IL	9	7	4	0	5	3.92
3. I felt prepared to teach L2 IL	3	9	7	1	5	3.65
4. Students were uncomfortable learning about L2 IL	1	5	11	3	5	4.32
5. Students had different perceptions about IL based on their cultural background	5	7	7	1	5	2.83
Do you have experience teaching L2 impoliteness? Yes (20) No (28)					Total: 20	

These tables reflect the polled teachers' perceptions and experiences of teaching impoliteness. The first table reveals their perceptions about teaching L2 impoliteness. The total number of respondents in this group was 48. The responses in the surveys ranged from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." The majority response to each question is displayed in bold in all the tables. Overall, the majority of the respondents (29.2% strongly agree; 39.6% agree) seem to

be in favor of teaching impolite language to adult learners in language classrooms. The majority of this group (25% strongly agree; 41.7% agree) are also in favor of teaching such material to learners of various levels (beginner, intermediate, and advanced).

When asked how they would feel about teaching such material, 39.6% disagreed, and 22.9% strongly disagree with the statement that they would feel uncomfortable teaching such language or content to students. When asked if such discomfort may be caused by the presence of a specific gender, 43.75% disagreed, and 29.2% strongly disagreed. Both statements (3) and (4) in the survey contained open-ended follow-up questions. They asked those who agreed or strongly agreed with feeling uncomfortable teaching impolite language in general, and/or to a specific gender, to explain why in (3) and toward which gender and age they would feel discomfort in (4). Respondents who indicated unease with teaching impolite language offered various reasons for their potential discomfort: (a) unfamiliarity with impolite language; (b) not using this kind of language in their own daily interactions; (c) using rude words goes against their own personal morality; (d) concerns for causing offense to students; (e) concerns for coming across as unprofessional or disturb the classroom setting as an academically professional and standardly polite environment; (f) preference for teaching strategies for politeness over impoliteness; (g) teaching impolite language goes against the teacher's homeland's culturally-accepted gender roles, and (h) students may pick up such language elsewhere than in the classroom (e.g., TV, YouTube). Ten women and three men strongly agreed (10.4%), or agreed (16.7%), that they were uncomfortable teaching impolite language to students of specific genders. Some women instructors who responded that they either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement asserted that they would feel uncomfortable teaching this material to male students because they are female and some impolite language can be gender-specific. Others noted that they would feel

uncomfortable in the presence of both genders, or that gender did not matter and that their unease concerned content, specifically when impolite language is gender-specific. As for the age range, there was considerable variability in the responses. Some female teachers indicated that they would feel uncomfortable teaching such material to all ages; some were disquieted with the idea of explaining it to adult male learners, especially those of high school and college age; and others thought that such material would be inappropriate to teach to children or minor students. Female teachers offered the following reasons for feeling anxious about teaching this material to specific genders: (a) because of their own gender (e.g., a female teacher teaching male students); (b) because some impolite language is gender-specific; and (c) the appropriateness of teaching such material to different age groups (i.e., adult learners vs. exposing children and minor students to such material). Some of these female teachers (four out of the ten) did, however, explicitly state that their discomfort about teaching impolite language does not take away from the importance of explaining it to some degree to students. The three male teachers replied that they would feel uncomfortable teaching such material to both genders and to all ages. Their reasons were as follows: (a) it is unnecessary to teach such material because it is not right; (b) it opens the door to endless questions; and (c) translating impolite language from L2 to L1 poses problems since some rude expressions contain or connote different degrees of impoliteness in different languages.

Regarding teaching impolite language in a formal educational setting, the majority of respondents (50% disagreed; 27.1% strongly disagreed), that the classroom environment is not an appropriate place to teach such content. Additionally, most respondents either strongly agreed (47.9%) or agreed (41.7%) that teachers need to have the proper training to teach such material

specifically in the L2. The majority of respondents (50% strongly agree; 39.6% agree) stated that they would be interested in using SNSs to teach impolite language in the L2.

Table 8 sought to understand if respondents had experiences of formally teaching L2 impoliteness in the classroom and how such experiences went. Out of the 48 participants, 20 indicated that they had experience teaching L2 impoliteness in class. None of the participants faced administrative challenges when teaching L2 impoliteness: 40% disagreed, and 60% strongly disagreed with the statement. When asked whether finding language textbooks or other formal instructional material that explicitly teaches L2 impoliteness was difficult, 45% strongly agreed, 35% agreed, and only 20% disagreed. Their levels of preparedness to explain impoliteness in the L2 varied: 15% reported that they strongly agreed, and 45% agreed that they felt prepared to teach such material, while 35% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed. Their opinions regarding their students' experiences with learning impolite words in the L2 differed: 55% disagreed and 15% strongly disagreed with the idea that their students felt uncomfortable while learning this content in their L2, whereas 5% strongly agreed and 25% agreed that their students experienced some discomfort when learning impolite words. Lastly, 35% of teachers agreed, and another 35% disagreed that the students' individual cultural backgrounds led them to have different perceptions as to what constitutes impolite language.

Overall, the results from the first table suggest that many teachers have positive attitudes toward teaching impolite language, albeit to a limited extent, to L2 learners. The results also demonstrate that teachers believe that explaining rude words can be integrated into the curriculum, that teaching such material in a formal educational setting is acceptable, and that they are in favor. The majority of teachers also expressed interest in using SNSs as an

instructional tool to teach L2 impoliteness. However, many respondents indicated that proper training is needed to teach L2 impoliteness.

On a positive note, the results from the second table indicated that most respondents did not face or faced very minor administrative constraints when teaching such material. Most teachers seem to have had difficulties using or finding textbooks that contained information about L2 impoliteness. Yet, despite the lack of instructional texts, over half of the participants felt prepared to teach this material. The majority of the teachers reported that they didn't think their students felt uncomfortable learning these words in class. However, an equal number of teachers agreed and disagreed as to whether their students interpreted and perceived impolite language differently based on their cultural background and understandings.

The next section analyzes the results from the learners' group questionnaire regarding their perceptions and experiences with learning L2 impoliteness.

Table 9.
Students' Perceptions about Learning L2 Impoliteness

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
1. Importance of learning IL in the L2	6	10	5	3	6	2.94
2. I would feel uncomfortable learning IL in general	4	5	11	4	6	3.36

3. I would feel uncomfortable learning IL if a specific gender of students is present	3	7	11	3	6	2.45
4. Learning IL in a formal educational setting is inappropriate	6	9	5	4	6	2.16
5. I would be interested in learning about strategies for dealing with IL in my L2	10	14	0	0	6	7.12
6. Interested in using SNSs to learn IL	5	12	3	4	6	3.37

Total: 24

The table above reveals learners' attitudes toward assimilating L2 impoliteness in a language classroom. There were 24 respondents in total, and they could respond by stating "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." The items in this table were similar to the items in the teachers' group survey but were geared toward students' perceptions of learning L2 impoliteness. The results showed that the majority of respondents (25% strongly agreed; 41.7% agreed) believed that it was important for language learners to grasp L2 impoliteness, whereas 20.8% disagreed and 12.5% strongly disagreed with this statement. When asked whether they would feel uncomfortable learning this material, 45.8% disagreed and 16.6% strongly disagreed, whereas 16.7% strongly agreed and 20.8% agreed. This item contained an open-ended follow-up question that prompted respondents who strongly agreed or agreed to explain why learning L2 impoliteness discomfited them. Their reasons included a) not wanting to feel embarrassed or awkward practicing or being asked by teachers about certain impolite expressions, and b) that

learning rude expressions in the L2 is unnecessary and creates a sense of unprofessionalism in the classroom, which could cause some students discomfort. A combination of respondents (12.5% strongly agreed; 29.2% agreed) confirmed that they would feel uncomfortable if a specific gender were present, whereas 45.8% disagreed and 12.5% strongly disagreed with this statement. This item, too, contained an open-ended question that prompted users who strongly agreed or agreed with this statement to indicate which gender they would feel uncomfortable being around when learning impolite expressions, what age range, and why. Out of the ten students that answered “strongly agree” or “agree” to this question, nine were female, and one was male. Female respondents indicated that they would be uncomfortable if male students were present, or if the classroom were mixed. All of the women asserted that they would be most uncomfortable if the students were adult learners, or of high-school age and above. Their reasons included the fear of having students of the opposite sex make inappropriate or “funny” comments, making for an awkward classroom atmosphere, or that their culture makes it unacceptable for women to be present around men when impolite language is used. The male respondent averred that he would feel most uncomfortable if female students were present, specifically those around his age, because it is culturally unacceptable and disrespectful to use such language when women are around and would thus make the classroom atmosphere unbearable.

The next item asks whether learners think the classroom is a suitable place to acquire L2 impoliteness. More than half of the participants (37.5% strongly agreed; 25% agreed) concurred that learning about L2 impoliteness in a formal educational setting such as the classroom is inappropriate, while 20.8% disagreed and 16.7% strongly disagreed. However, all respondents either strongly agreed (41.7%) or agreed (58.3%) that they would be interested in learning

communicative strategies for dealing with L2 impoliteness. Additionally, the majority of participants strongly agreed (20.8%) or agreed (50%) that they are in favor and are interested in using SNSs as a learning tool to acquire L2 impoliteness.

Table 10.

Students' Experiences in Learning L2 Impoliteness

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
1. I had a good experience learning about impolite language in class.	0	3	0	0	2	0.00
2. The information I learned in class about impolite language was helpful.	1	2	0	0	2	0.47
3. I felt uncomfortable learning about impolite language in class.	0	0	2	1	2	0.47
Do you have experience learning impolite language in a second or foreign language classroom?						
Yes (3) No (21)					Total: 3	

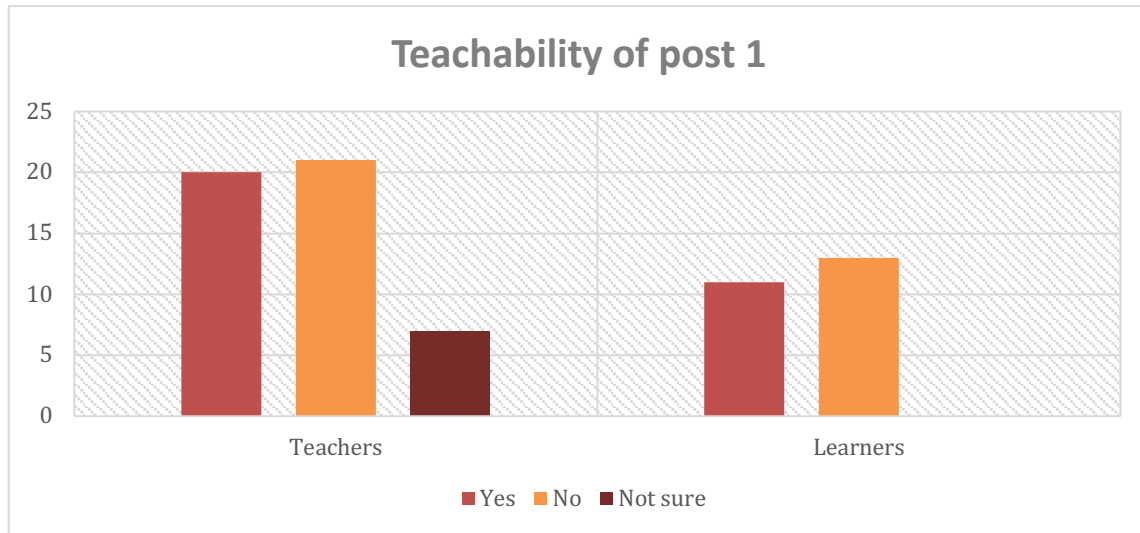
Table 10 looked at respondents' actual experience with learning about impolite language in a formal language classroom in their L2. Out of the 24 respondents in the learners' group, only three had undergone this experience. All three participants agreed that they had had a positive experience learning about L2 impoliteness in the classroom. Moreover, they believed (with one strongly agreeing and two agreeing) that the information they had acquired in the classroom

about L2 impolite language was helpful to them. Perhaps unsurprisingly, two respondents disagreed with the suggestion that they felt uncomfortable learning about L2 impoliteness, while one participant strongly disagreed with this statement.

Overall, even though learners favored the idea of learning about impoliteness in their L2, their responses differed from those in the teachers' group. That is, while some learners supported the concept of learning L2 impoliteness, many respondents rejected or showed reluctance toward the idea of discussing it in a formal educational setting, such as a classroom. Paradoxically, many learners recognized the importance of grasping L2 impoliteness, and all of them expressed interest in using SNSs to learn these words and phrases. The results of the second table are not very representative because only three participants had experienced learning L2 impoliteness in a language classroom. However, they indicated that their experiences were positive, believed that learning such material was helpful, and encountered no feelings of discomfort

6.3.2 Perceptions about Instagram and the Teaching of Impoliteness

This section discusses how participants in both groups viewed four Instagram posts that the survey presented as teaching material for L2 students to learn in the class. The participants rated each post in terms of its potential for teaching impolite language. Both groups considered the language that was used in the post as well as each post's subject matter when determining its suitability as teaching material.



Graph 5. Perceptions on teachability of Khloe Kardashian’s post.

The first post came from Khloe Kardashian and showed a picture of her and her friends wearing costumes for Halloween (see p.80). The survey had users debate whether one of the costumes, a man dressed in Arab national clothing, was offensive and appropriated and mocked a culture and its people. The previous chapter discussed the groups’ perceptions, evaluations, and interpretation of such content in terms of (im)politeness. To determine its teachability, participants in both groups looked at whether each post provided suitable material for teaching L2 impoliteness in a language classroom. Looking at Khloe Kardashian’s post, there is little difference between those who think that it is not a good example to be taught to L2 learners (21 out of 48 in the teachers’ group - 43.75%; 13 out of 24 in the learners’ group - 54.2%) and those who think it represents a good teaching example (20 out of 48 in the teachers’ group - 41.2%; 11 out of 24 in the learners’ group - 22.9%). Participants in both groups who favored this post’s use for teaching or learning L2 impoliteness offered the following rationales:

- With older students, I can see using this as a discussion point. I would point out that the language here seems to be acceptable online but would not normally be acceptable in person. **(A native English-speaking teacher of L2 Spanish)**

- It could work as an example of how hard it can be to express yourself when angry, and how to try to avoid straight up swearing and belittling as a communication device. (Native speakers of the L2 will not react well to "shut up stupid bitch" in most situations I can think of). It would work to show that impolite language needs to be used carefully, and that you can't use it as a blanket option as much as you can polite language. **(A native English-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- Good example of impolite language on the internet, with reference to a topical political issue, in combination with some attempts at rational arguments. Good display of internet abbreviations and non-standard language as well, e.g. "ppl". Barely scratches the surface of what's available but maybe that's a good thing. **(A native Spanish-speaking learner)**
- I think this is a good example to teach student because it exposes them to abbreviated insults (i.e. stfu). It also shows how the use of impolite language could cause things to get worse. **(A native Arabic-speaking learner)**

These responses demonstrate an awareness that communicating online differs from face-to-face interactions. This variation may cause users to engage in arguments and, therefore, resort to using impolite words that are specific to online contexts, such as abbreviations (e.g., “stfu”). The participants understand the need to teach such language to L2 learners for these reasons: to acquire communicative strategies and linguistic choices to determine context (whether online or in life); to navigate and respond to rudeness; to raise awareness of current affairs and the arguments they engender; and to understand how rude language may escalate and worsen situations.

Some participants in both groups perceived Kardashian’s post as a poor example for teaching L2 impoliteness. These participants gave the following reasons for their negative answers:

- This would create a disagreement on the topic itself and the students would start using these words in their responses. **(A native Arabic-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- This is not an example I would use. It is more than just impolite language here- it is also deep issues of cultural appropriation and what is or is not part of that notion. Also, the language and the tone of the conversation is beyond offensive, and I didn't even like to read it, let alone teach it. We have to understand that our examples should be realistic, but they should also be chosen well and with sensitivity. The picture itself could be problematic for some students and that should be considered as well. **(A native English-speaking teacher of L2 English and Spanish)**
- No, because this is a type of language that should not be used in life. No one deserves to be told to kill themselves. **(A native Italian-speaking learner)**
- I don’t think it would be a great idea to teach students because it’s like we are encouraging the use of it. **(A native Portuguese-speaking learner)**

The two comments from teachers, along with other survey responses, reveal that they are concerned about both offending their students and their reactions to the post’s discourteous visual and written content. The second comment raises another point that accorded with the views of teachers who disliked the post as a teaching tool: teachers’ tolerance of impolite language. Those who found the language in the post unacceptable displayed strong negative reactions to teaching it to L2 learners. As one respondent declared, “The language and the tone of the conversation is [sic] beyond offensive, and I didn't even like to read it, let alone teach it.”

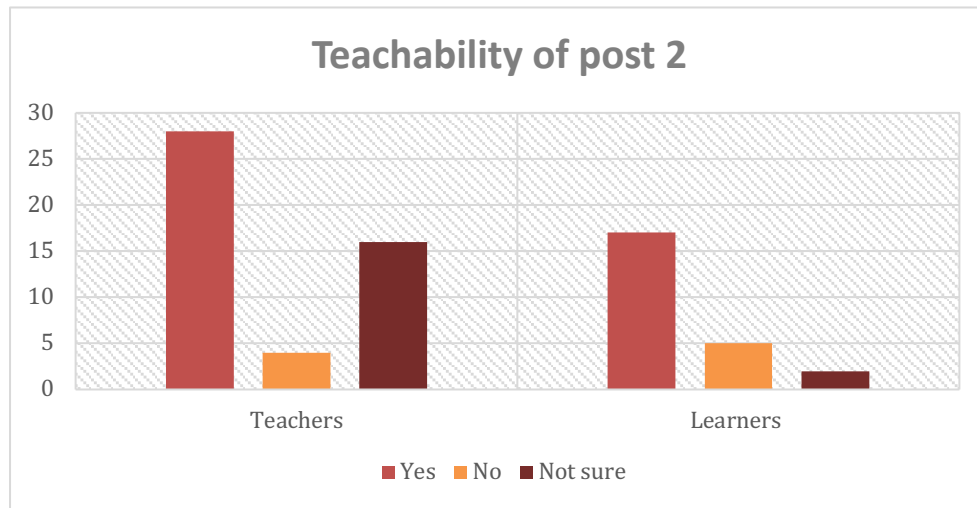
The main concern for learners, both in the comments above and in the survey, is that explaining rude words will prompt L2 learners to use coarse language. Notably, students found offhandedly rude comments from Instagram users, particularly one from a poster telling another poster to “kill themselves,” highly offensive.

While the learners were straightforward in their replies, some of the teachers were hesitant to declare that they would or would not use this Instagram post in their teaching. Seven of the 48 participants (14.6%) confirmed its teachability but with reservations, or were unsure about its usefulness:

- I think this conversation could be used in a language classroom as a good example of multiple things (e.g., cultural competence, real use of L2, language impoliteness). I am not sure, however, if I would use it in one of classes without first surveying my students about their linguistic and communicative needs. That is, I am not sure whether knowing this type of language would help them achieve their learning goals. For instance, I have been an L2 learner of English for about 15 years now, and I just learned what “stfu” means—I did not need to know this to have successful interactions using my L2 for 15 years. **(A native Spanish-speaking teacher of L2 Spanish)**
- Not sure. Maybe it is a good example to some extent. Because technically we don't know who they are or why they said that. We can only make assumptions. **(A native Javanese-speaking teacher of L2 English)**

These two responses reflect teachers' uncertainty of how to teach this material if they cannot determine the underlying factors that provoked it, such as intention, cultural background, knowledge, and social status. The first response reveals concerns about meeting L2 learners'

objectives and expectations and determining whether internet-related colloquial language such as “stfu” is necessary for them to acquire. This respondent questions whether coarse words would add to L2 learners’ knowledge or if they can routinely interact with speakers of L2 without knowing these expressions.



Graph 6. Perceptions on teachability of Rihanna's post.

This example presented a post uploaded by Rihanna in which she congratulates Saudi women on officially winning the right to drive (see p. 83). The comments section contained responses to a particular user who conveyed happiness for Saudi women but expressed hatred for the country’s government. Other users replied to the comment with sarcasm and rejected the user’s stance. When asked about the teachability of this post, a significant number of participants from both groups concurred that this example would be suitable to teach L2 impoliteness: 28 of the 48 teachers (58.3%) agreed, as did 17 out of 24 (70.8%) learners. They gave the following reasons for their views:

- I think so because it's VERY common as I see it. Learn how to praise, learn how to criticize; learn how to take praise; learn how to take criticism. Suspend your judgement for a second; control your feelings for a second; think whether you want to

participate by asking questions and learning about other perspectives, or you want to leave because you're dealing with idiots. **(A native Serbian-speaking teacher of L2 English)**

- I think this is a good example because, although this conversation could've turned into an exchange of highly impolite comments, the use of politeness led it to something more amicable. **(A native-Japanese speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- Yes. To teach student that not every culture is the same and we need to be more loving and understanding. The language is not that impolite, which is another plus. **(A native Urdu-speaking learner)**
- This could be helpful for foreign exchange students and are worried about being stereotyped. It will provide these students with the tools to understand what is being said about them and how to respond. **(A native English-speaking learner)**

As we can see, the above comments agree that the below-the-line conversation avoided extreme impoliteness and allowed for the airing of varied perspectives. The first observation explains that this example is a good one because it demonstrates the ubiquity of such language. Moreover, it illustrates how to give and take praise and criticism and how to navigate one's reactions when being subjected to criticism or praise. The second response notes that teachers could use this example to show how to be savvy language users, how to steer away from heated arguments that engender rudeness, and how politeness strategies can shift the direction of a heated argument into a toned-down, friendlier conversation. The third comment, from a learner, argues that Rihanna's post can promote understanding of those belonging to different cultural and L1 backgrounds. The student also states that the language used in the comments was not that impolite, and thus can be used in the classroom. The final observation targets foreign exchange

students who may likely encounter stereotyping. The learner contends that teaching this example would prepare these students to understand how they are being talked about and provide them with strategies for addressing these situations.

However, four out of 48 of teachers (8.3%) and five out of 24 learners (20.8%) thought that Rihanna's post was not useful for teaching L2 learners:

- It might be offensive to the students and encourage hatred to other cultures... so maybe not. It just doesn't feel right. **(A native Arabic-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- It doesn't really contain impolite language, so I don't think this would be a good example. **(A native German-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- No. It not very impolite and doesn't have a lot of impolite language. **(A native Arabic-speaking learner)**
- No, because in my opinion no impolite words were used. **(A native English-speaking learner)**

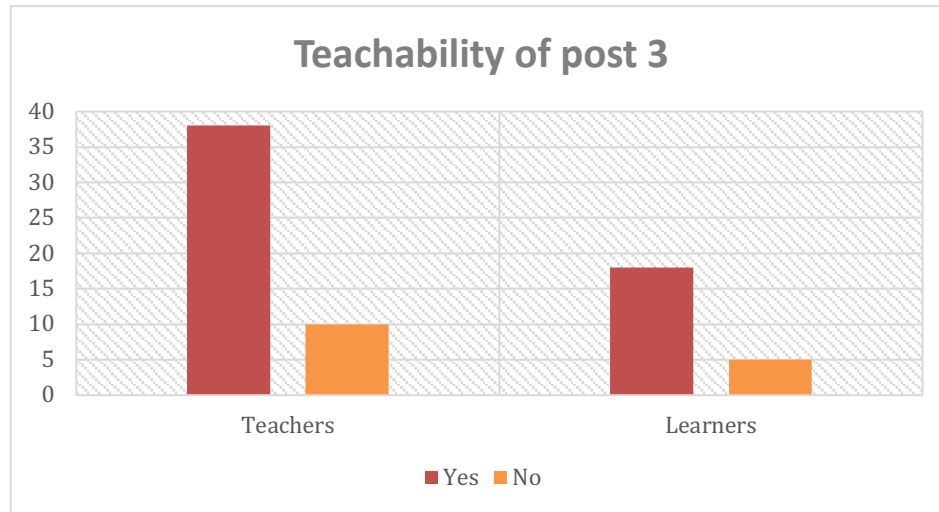
Surprisingly, their reasons focused on the lack of impolite language in the Instagram comments. Only the first explanation cited above indicates concern that students would consider the comments to be offensive or promote negative behavior towards people of different cultures.

A sizeable number of participants, particularly in the teachers' group, were unsure whether this Instagram post offered a productive means of teaching L2 impoliteness. Sixteen out of 48 teachers (33.3%) were reluctant to label this a good example for teaching L2 impoliteness, while only two out of 24 learners (8.3%) felt the same way. Their uncertainty derives from the following concerns:

- I don't know, maybe? It does give some example of attempts at repairing a misunderstanding. **(A native English-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- I don't know if students will benefit much from the language here. Maybe yes for cultural understanding?? **(A native Korean-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- I'm not sure. There is so much about the context that is unclear and needs further explanation. **(A native English-speaking learner)**

Both the teachers and the learner admitted that they doubted whether any impolite language appeared in the post. In fact, the learners' group focused more on navigating impoliteness, while in Chapter 5, the majority of participants believed that impolite language was not used at all in the below-the-line comments. Additionally, they were unclear as to what the post would teach, how to come up with learning objectives, and whether they fully understood the context for the Instagram users' comments. Therefore, they needed more information to decide whether the language in this conversation should be taught to learn L2 impoliteness.

The third post, uploaded by Katy Perry, featured a picture of a Hindu Goddess and used the caption "current mood." It caused some controversy, and many users wrote comments declaring whether or not it offended them (see p. 87).



Graph 7. Perceptions on teachability of Katy Perry's post.

Overall, both groups favored using this post as instructional material for teaching L2 impoliteness (38 out of 48 teachers – 79.2%; 18 out of 24 learners – 75%). The following are representative examples of the reasons given for using the post:

- Religion is a very universal but also personal topic that can strike controversy if people don't show understanding to one another's religion. That's why this is a very good example to teach students how to be tolerant and respectful. **(A native Portuguese-speaking teacher of L2 Portuguese)**
- I think this would be a good example to teach students and native speakers, but it might be too nuanced for beginner and intermediate learners. I would want to include something like this on arguing strategies used by speakers of English and what the consequences of using this kind of language might be. **(A native English-speaking teacher of L2 French and Russian)**
- Yes, because it's offending a religion and someone's beliefs. And in my opinion, they should always be respected. **(A native Arabic-speaking learner)**

- Yes, it would because it a long conversation with many points of view. Also, it teaches students how to respect and have conversation with others' beliefs and cultures. **(A native English-speaking learner)**

The first respondent thought that talking about sensitive issues like religion would not only make L2 students aware of the impoliteness that topics such as religion can spark but also promote tolerance and respect. The second comment wonders whether this example could be too subtle for beginner or intermediate language learners to apprehend. This teacher would, however, include it in the context of a learning objective when demonstrating “arguing strategies used by speakers of English and what the consequences of using this kind of language might be.” The learners’ reactions mirror the first teacher’s response and affirm that teaching this post would raise students’ awareness of the delicate issue of religion and respect for and tolerance of other faiths. As these examples show, a strong motivator for participants in viewing this example as teachable is the topic itself, religion, and the idea that such exposure to this topic should spread awareness of accepting of others’ stances and/ or at least not get into heated arguments and try to understand each other’s’ perspective.

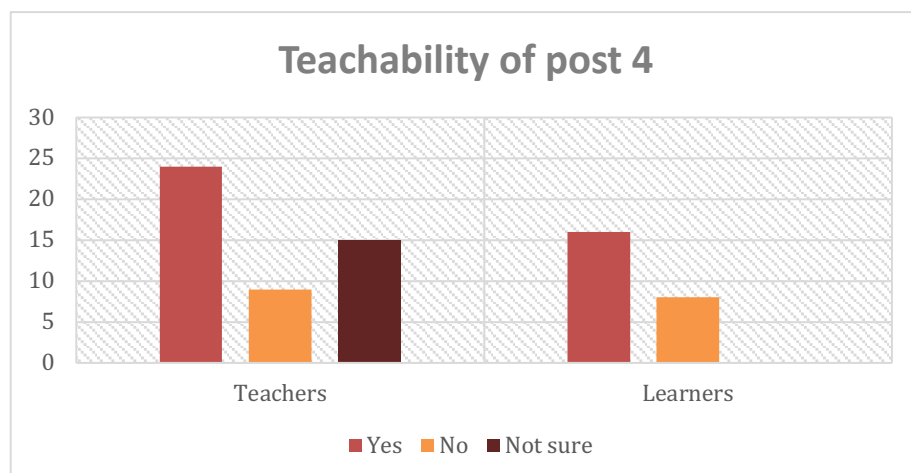
Yet, ten teachers (20.8%) and six learners (25%) rejected this post’s serviceability for teaching L2 impoliteness. Those who disagreed with using the post to teach L2 impoliteness gave the following reasons for their opinions:

- Not for language use, no. The language is very offensive and makes me uncomfortable. In teaching students language use, I aim to make them talk in a polite way and discuss their opinions professionally without getting personal. **(A native Arabic-speaking teacher of L2 English)**

- I don't think I would use this example. I am unfamiliar with the culture and religion. I would need more information first. **(A native Tagalog-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- Too long, lots of spelling / grammar mistakes and lack of English-specific impolite language make this one less good for use classroom use. **(A native English-speaking learner)**
- No. personally I don't think it should be used the picture and topic could be sensitive to students. **(A native Arabic-speaking learner)**

These responses raise different issues regarding the post's potential unsuitability. The first teacher preferred to demonstrate polite communicative strategies, while the second teacher worried that they lacked the appropriate knowledge and information to teach this material. The third response, from a language learner, pointed out the text's many grammatical and spelling errors, and the fourth respondent considered the content too sensitive—and thus offensive—for students. Notably, these responses seemed to address impoliteness in general instead of rudeness within this specific post. This was typical of the discussion as a whole.

This final selection was initially posted by a makeup artist who transformed a white woman into a woman of color (see p. 92).



Graph 8. Perceptions on teachability of makeup artist's post.

Many participants in both groups believed that this example was beneficial for teaching impolite behavior to L2 learners. In fact, 24 teachers (50%) and 16 learners (66.7%) affirmed its suitability, whereas only nine teachers (18.75%) and nine learners (33.3%) found it to be a poor example. Fifteen teachers (31.25%) labeled themselves unsure. Those who viewed it positively said this:

- Yes! I think this is another good example of how to have a good interaction without being impolite—or even possibly how to react to “impoliteness” in a healthy way. **(A native Spanish-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- Yes, the language isn't too crude and the ideas behind the messages are something to discern and discuss, especially because race can be perceived in a different way by the people in the target society. **(A native Turkish-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- I actually think this would be a good example to teach students because there was a lot of tonal language like “I already dismissed you” as well as words like “wtf” and actual curse words that can be used. **(A native Arabic-speaking learner)**

- I think it would it teaches what appropriate terms to use and how to use it and when to use it. (people of colors, African American, black, Yellow for Asian). **(A native Italian-speaking learner)**

These comments cite the post's content when illustrating its viability as a teaching tool, observing that it deals with the sensitive topic of race and shows students how to respond to impoliteness with healthy communicative strategies. The second respondent notes that the language is not overly crude and that it invokes different perceptions about the subjective topic of race, rendering it useful for classroom discussion. The third comment focuses on the tone of the posters' language, while the fourth respondent points out that the post would prompt discussion about terminology when referring to different cultural and racial groups.

Those who found the post unhelpful for teaching and learning offered the following reasons:

- No, the text is too long. But we can modify it because it also lets students know why something is considered impolite, especially to raise awareness of the racial sentiment background that might cause it; i.e. so that students wouldn't be as ignorant. **(A native Indonesian-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- No, this issue is extremely sensitive. Too many racist comments and name-calling. Why would anyone want to teach their students to be racist?? And I think I would be in trouble if I had black students in my class. I wouldn't want to offend them. **(A native Russian-speaking teacher of L2 Russian)**
- No. It may cause problems among students during class. **(A native Arabic-speaking learner)**
- Too long. Too depressing. Not very specific to many students learning English. **(A native English-speaking learner)**

Two respondents considered the commentary to be too long to be effective. One teacher, however, adds that the conversation could be shortened, thereby acknowledging that it makes valuable insights into how to teach impoliteness. However, one respondent, a learner, deems it not only too long but also “too depressing,” and thus unlikely to help students.

Additionally, the above remarks underscore the idea that the post’s content and topic, blackface, may not be relevant to many English-language learners. Two respondents express concern about how students in a class would react to this example. One teacher questions why they would teach something that contains highly impolite content about a sensitive topic, especially if students of color are present in the classroom, a worry echoed by the third respondent.

Once again, learner respondents were forthright in their assessments, while a considerable number of teachers were uncertain whether this material could be taught in a language classroom:

- I don’t know if I can teach this topic to learners outside the US. How would this apply to say Japanese students learning English in Japan? **(A native Japanese-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- Thinking about my Saudi students, not sure how to make this example relevant to them...? **(A native Arabic-speaking teacher of L2 English)**
- It could be, but I don't want to read it. I really dislike the hateful speech that is so antagonistic. **(A native English-speaking teacher of L2 English and Latin)**
- I honestly don’t know how to teach this. I’m not comfortable with the language that is being used here, but I still think students should learn about delicate issues such as race. **(A native English-speaking teacher of L2 Spanish)**

A common theme surfaces in these reactions: discomfort with the language used in this example. However, they acknowledge the post's usefulness to L2 learners. Nevertheless, some respondents fail to see the material's relevance to students located outside the US, especially the depiction of blackface, which is specific to English-speaking cultures.

6.3.2. Interview Results

Since the interview participants—L2 learners (n=8) and teachers (n=8)—were selected from the survey respondents (n=16), they had already seen and analyzed the Instagram posts. The interview questions focused on their opinions concerning the teaching/learning of conventional impoliteness formulae, the teaching/learning of non-conventional impoliteness formulae, and whether they would use SNSs to teach/learn L2 impoliteness.

6.3.2.1. Teaching/ Learning Conventionalized Impoliteness Formulae

Culpeper (2010) defines a conventionalized impoliteness formula as “a form of language in which context-specific impoliteness effects are conventionalized” (p. 3243). In other words, they are words or phrases that convey impoliteness and that hearers recognize as rude (see below). These formulae, according to Culpeper (2011), vary along three scales: their degree of conventionalization; the extent to which they are context-dependent or context-spanning; and the degree of offence with which they are associated. For example, Culpeper (2010, 2011) suggests that the following items count as conventionalized impoliteness formulae:

- a. Insults (e.g., you are a bastard)
- b. Pointed criticism/ complaints (e.g., this is total crap)
- c. Challenging or unpalatable questions (e.g., why are you making my life miserable?)
- d. Condescension (e.g., that's being babyish)

- e. Message enforcer (e.g., listen here)
- f. Dismissal (e.g., go to hell)
- g. Silencer (e.g., shut the hell up)
- h. Threats (e.g., I'm going to kill you)
- i. Curses and ill-wishes (e.g., please die)

In the interview, the researcher presented these categories of impoliteness and gave an explanation for each (see Appendix). The participants were then asked whether they would be willing to teach or learn these conventionalized forms of impoliteness in a classroom setting and to provide an explanation for their answer. Respondents showed different levels of tolerance for degrees of impoliteness, and their opinions on the appropriateness of teaching and/or learning these forms varied. The following remarks from some who favored teaching/learning impoliteness in a language classroom suggest the range of responses.

The “Yes” Group

I honestly would want to teach my students about all of them and let them see what the consequences of each type of impolite language are. I would love to have a discussion about when and why these different types of impolite language are used, examples of them, and a candid discussion about other rhetorical strategies that might be more effective for accomplishing their communicative goals. For example, using types f, g, h, and i might result in damaging a relationship beyond repair. Learners might want to consider using other rhetorical strategies if they want to or have to maintain a relationship with someone.

- Sally, a native English teacher, teaching English as a second language at a language institute.

I would teach the conventionalized forms of impoliteness because a lot of L2 learners don't know much about [them] in their L2. They mostly learn about topics like how to order at a restaurant or how to ask for directions and so on. So, learning what to say, but especially how you say it, is really important.

- Sima, a Palestinian teacher teaching ESL immigrant students in the US.

I think I would teach them all. All these forms are important because I think that they are fundamental to online interactions in the sense that people use them so easily because they don't know each other and it's not face-to-face interactions. So, they don't need to use politeness strategies. But it doesn't give anyone the right to act like this. I would want to have my students learn how to respect each other's ideas. I mean, I am not afraid to use the f-word (in the classroom), I mean why not. I'm not cussing at my students. The f-word or other words, I'm not afraid of using them or referring to them in the classroom. Even in Turkey, as long as this is in college and not in high school.

- Ipek, a Turkish teacher teaching ESL.

I think we can teach [students] all these categories. At least for them to know that if they are not going to say it, then if somebody says it to them, they know that it is impolite language. Again, we are not teaching them to students so they can say them, but more for the sake of knowledge.

- Nara, an Indonesian teacher teaching ESL.

The respondents, in this case, teachers from different cultural backgrounds, support teaching L2 impoliteness. Sally notes that teaching impoliteness to L2 learners would open up a discussion about the effect of various types of rudeness on relationships and its consequences. Teaching impoliteness, she suggests, would give students a better sense of the rhetorical strategies they need to employ to achieve their intended communicative objective. Sima observes that impoliteness is an underemphasized topic in the L2 curriculum. She asserts that exposing students to such content need not focus on teaching the vocabulary, advocating instead for the teaching of pragmatic competence. She adds that rudeness can be conveyed through an intonation that the hearer(s) perceive as impolite. Ipek is in favor of teaching all of Culpeper's conventionalized impoliteness formulae and declares that each one is important for L2 students to learn. She also observes that impolite language is pervasive in online interactions and that it is vital to teach L2 impoliteness as part of facilitating digital literacies in L2 learners. Ipek notes that politeness strategies sometimes do not apply in online interactions, although she highlights the need for students to respect others' ideas and beliefs. She states that she is not hesitant to teach L2 impoliteness in Turkey or elsewhere; however, she would explain coarse language only to adult students. Finally, Nara remarks that teaching these formulae is essential and could help students decipher whether someone is being impolite to them, yet emphasizes that she would explain them for information purposes only.

The "Maybe" Group

Some of the participants thought that teaching forms of impoliteness may be manageable, but would only focus on certain of the types listed. That is, they had reservations about what types they would and would not address in the classroom. The reasons for their considering certain

types inappropriate varied. For example, Madison said that she would leave some of these forms out because they are not suitable for the age group of students that she is currently teaching. She made the following comment:

Because I teach K-2, I would probably leave out all the curse words [category i]. For silencers, kids know that that is rude. So, instead of saying “shut up” you can tell them to say, “please be quiet”. So, I would teach that [...] I could also teach them not to say bad words like the s-word. Of course, they think that that refers to “stupid”. I would probably teach threats too, and dismissal like “please go away” or “I don’t want to play with you right now”. Condescensions, too, would be good to teach. Insults, but to a point.

Madison’s comment demonstrates she is taking into consideration how to dial down the degree of impoliteness in order to make the language in which it is embedded suitable for her very young students. She rejects curses and ill wishes as good material for students of that age because such expressions seem to be an extreme form of impoliteness. She mentioned that she would consider teaching the other forms, such as insults, but only to the degree appropriate for early elementary level students.

Other participants, particularly those in the learners’ group, thought about the psychological consequences of teaching some of these impolite forms in a classroom. Specifically, the following participants expressed their concern that teaching certain impolite forms in the classroom might trigger insecurities within some students and cause offence to others. These participants made the following comments:

I would choose to learn about things like message enforcers, threats, curses, and ill-wishes. But I wouldn’t agree [with] teaching insults, because it is too obvious and direct. And what if someone [in class] has depression because of a sensitive topic

discussed in class, like insults against an obese person and they were obese themselves? What if we learn about “go kill yourself” in class during that discussion? I don’t think that’s ok.

- Tala, a Saudi PhD student studying Law in a US university

I mean, if it’s part of the curriculum then I’ll learn it [...] as long as it doesn’t trigger anyone. So, if someone, for example, has a mental illness or condition or is conscious about their weight or appearance, and if the examples brought in the classroom have people insulting such students, then I’m not ok with that. So, if someone is suicidal for example, and they read about people’s comments saying “please die”, that will negatively affect them.

- Lamar, a B.A. speech, hearing, and language major student at a Saudi university.

Impoliteness, I mean especially like how they were presented in the [survey] examples, they were brought up in many sensitive topics. Like that blackface example, I don’t want students, especially black ones, to be offended.

- Amal, a second language teaching PhD student at a US university.

These responses indicate that participants would consider teaching or learning impoliteness. Others expressed their concern over the psychological and emotional wellbeing of students. For example, they fear that discussing such language in the classroom can trigger insecurities, which may cause students to harm themselves.

The “No” Group

Some participants expressed their complete discomfort about both teaching and learning about impoliteness in the classroom, and therefore rejected the idea that it should be taught at all. Some of these participants, like Eman, mentioned that teaching impoliteness in the classroom may encourage students to adopt negative linguistic behavior outside it. She comments:

I'm against teaching impolite language. I mean, it will be embedded somewhere in your curriculum or while speaking with students. I can, for example, if there was a text and there is a dialogue between two people and there is offensive language used, I might ask students what they think about this type of language. So, it would be an indirect approach. I don't think it is valid to teach them these forms [...] but if we ever encounter them, then I would point it out [...] If I go and teach them about impoliteness, then it might trigger that kind of language in their daily lives, and that's what I'm trying to avoid. So, I like to promote positivity.

Rashid, thinking from a learners' perspective, was also against learning impoliteness in the classroom. In his response, he questioned whether this material was necessary for L2 learners to learn in a formal setting because he thinks that they can acquire it outside the classroom. He noted that:

I would not want to learn about these forms. I feel like there is no need to learn about them. I think that people would learn them naturally, like from movies or TV shows.

For some participants, the appropriateness of introducing or teaching impoliteness in the classroom was related to their view academic settings are reserved for academic subjects.

Cultural conceptualizations about the classroom and its status as a “sacred” place in which knowledge is distributed— a common belief among my native Arabic-speaking participants— influenced their perceptions about coarseness as an appropriate topic in this setting. Some of my native Arabic-speaking participants commented,

Like, even if someone says something impolite out loud, everyone would look at them with shock and think it’s inappropriate, so how would we do that in a classroom? I wouldn’t want to be put in that situation and it is just unacceptable in our society.

- Arwa, a B.A. student majoring in English Literature in a Saudi University.

I feel that the classroom is a place where students are being taught academic things. Impolite language can be acquired and should not be taught in a classroom. Students can acquire such language from social media or TV or friends. Education should be honored and respected. It should not be at a level where rude language is taught. I mean I just don’t understand how you would teach impolite language in language programs. I never studied it when I was at an intensive language program here.

- Dana, a Saudi entrepreneur.

I find it weird actually, to bring impolite language in the classroom just because I want to teach these students how to react to it. I don’t believe in that [...] To me it is spreading bad or evil rather than doing good. I mean, I’m teaching them words that have not been around them at all, but I brought them into the classroom, they will go out and practice them for sure. And I’m against that. I would rather let them go, live their lives, and at any point, if they are confronted by a person who was using impolite language, I

think it will be their personality that will make them decide how to react to that. It's not up to me as a teacher teaching them how to react to that.

- Eman, an Omani English language lecturer.

In summary, the participants divided into three categories: those who supported the teaching of L2 impoliteness, those who accepted the idea but had reservations, and those who disagreed with teaching this aspect of the English language. Those in favor believed that teaching impoliteness would give students the necessary communicative and pragmatic skills to express themselves more clearly and recognize incivility if it was used against them. Those participants that had reservations thought that, while some formulae were teachable, others were too extreme to teach to specific age groups. Moreover, some student populations risked causing or experiencing offense, and thus psychological or physical harm. Respondents who disagreed with teaching impoliteness labeled it inappropriate within the academic culture of the classroom, but perhaps appropriate for informal learning through SNSs. Additionally, they considered the classroom to be a sacred space that could turn into a negative space, potentially triggering some students and disrupting the classroom community.

6.3.2.2. Teaching/ Learning Non-conventionalized Impoliteness Formulae

Non-conventionalized impoliteness formulae, or implicational impoliteness, refers to language that may not appear to be impolite on the surface but is interpreted as impolite in a particular context (Culpeper, 2011). A very good example of this is the “awe no please love us” comment that was analyzed in the previous chapter by participants in this study. While participants showed different opinions about teaching/learning L2 conventionalized impoliteness formulae, all participants thought that teaching/learning implicational impoliteness would count as acceptable in a language classroom. For example, Dana, who was opposed to the idea of

teaching conventionalized formulae of impoliteness thought the following remarks about implicational impoliteness:

Learning about this kind of impoliteness could save us learners from confusion so that we can understand what people actually mean.

- Dana

Here, Dana claims that implicational impoliteness is hard for L2 learners to detect, potentially causing confusion, misunderstanding intended meanings, and thus lacking the ability to respond appropriately. Therefore, she supports leaning about it in class. While Dana argues against teaching overtly impolite expressions (such as the insult “bastard”), she defends teaching implicational impoliteness because it is more subtle and the terminology comprises less apparent forms of impoliteness. Similarly, Eman was completely against teaching conventionalized impoliteness. However, when asked about teaching implicational impoliteness, she admitted,

In this case, I see the point. It’s because it’s not about the impolite language anymore, but more about what is embedded in the language itself and how people understand others’ intentions. Teaching that to students could come in handy actually, especially for when they don’t know if someone insulted them for instance because the language they used did not appear impolite on the surface.

Eman was against teaching conventionalized impoliteness because it went against her role as a teacher and educator. She believed that she should be teaching students to behave civilly instead of rudely. However, she changed her stance on teaching implicational impoliteness, since it is challenging for students to detect and needs pragmatic competence and cognitive processing through explicit instruction.

Interestingly, this question was posed and considered after the participants had taken part in the metapragmatic analysis exercise (discussed in the previous chapter) and after analyzing an Instagram comment that was either sarcastic or a genuine appeal for understanding, depending on how one inferred its tone. The participants had clearly become more aware that people convey impoliteness not only through conventionalized forms (e.g., curses) but also through implicit means. Impolite intent is disguised within linguistic expressions and only becomes evident through critical analysis, which even teachers opposed to teaching conventionalized impoliteness judge to be an essential skill to be learned.

Sima, who believed in teaching conventionalized impoliteness, unsurprisingly also favored teaching implicational impoliteness. She remarked,

You need that versatile representation of impoliteness in class because you are trying to reach an audience that is complex. So, if you tell a student that saying something is rude, you need to realize that there are different versions of rudeness. Even phrases like ‘I love you’ can be said to have an impolite intent. So, there are different types of impoliteness and I think that we should teach them all.

Here, Sima displays her understanding that some contexts and intonations may convey impolite meanings. She sees the complexity of impoliteness the more she comprehends its various forms. Similarly, Amal sees the benefits of teaching of both conventionalized and implicational impoliteness:

I think that it is important to teach both implicit and direct forms of impoliteness and how to respond to each kind. I think it is even more important to teach the implicit kind because it is easy to detect direct impoliteness. Another thing is that the implicit kind can have variations in meaning depending on the culture of the speaker.

Amal advocates teaching conventionalized and implicational impoliteness; however, she underscores the need for the latter because it is more difficult to detect. She also notes that implicational impoliteness is highly dependent on each speaker's cultural background. Therefore, L2 learners may fall victim to the cultural nuances of implicational impoliteness, whether directed at them or unknowingly using it themselves and inadvertently causing offense.

While participants had varying opinions about the teaching of conventionalized impoliteness, they all agreed that teaching and/or learning implicational impoliteness is both important and necessary. Participants justified their stance for teaching this kind of impoliteness on the premise that it is harder for L2 learners to notice. This, in turn, calls for the need to teach them how to detect it and the communicative strategies necessary to respond to it.

6.3.2.3. Using SNSs for Teaching/ Learning Impoliteness

Both teachers and learners showed interest in using this medium for pragmatic instruction, particularly to teach and learn (im)politeness. Participants made the following comments:

Why not? I feel like it's a good tool for learning. It's engaging, entertaining, and refreshing. Something different from textbooks. I mean this is what we students use on a daily basis, not textbooks. So, I think it would be cool to incorporate something we regularly use in the classroom.

- Arwa

I think it's a great way to get authentic examples, particularly because it's hard for me to think of examples to give to my students.

- Sally

I would use it the same way you used your examples in the survey. So, bringing in examples from Instagram for example and analyzing the language there.

- Sima

I think it is a really good idea. I haven't really thought about it until you brought it up. I've seen it for using to teach grammar or spelling. But I haven't really thought about it to teach impolite language. So, I really like the idea.

- Madison, a North American public school teacher of ESL

I would use it, why not! In a conference, I learned that technology is not a tool for students, it's their environment. I think that it is part of their daily lives and they socialize that way. So, bringing something from their environment I think brings in authentic material. It is not uncommon that students, for example those using Instagram, are following celebrities and they might have seen or even used impolite language. So, I would use it. I mean it's already there.

- Ipek

The above responses confirm that many of these participants from both groups were enthusiastic about the use of SNSs for teaching and learning. Teachers commented on how SNSs could be a valuable resource for finding and presenting L2 intercultural impoliteness to the classroom. They also mentioned that examples extracted from SNSs are authentic and capture the complex factors at play in constructing language and interactions. In the learner's group, Arwa represented the views of her peers when she asserted that using SNSs to learn various pragmatic and language aspects such as impoliteness departs from traditional and stuffy

textbooks. She, too, condoned learning from realistic examples that students already use and are familiar with in their daily lives.

Yet, some participants from both groups, while realizing that SNSs offer a valuable resource for teaching and learning language skills, opposed using them for teaching and learning impoliteness:

Honestly, I don't think social media is a good platform for learning because those posting the comments are doing so anonymously. So, everyone is just saying whatever they want, and no one really cares about manners and etiquette. They would be defensive, and you'd end up with a conversation that is not constructive. So, in the case of self-learning, I don't think it is a good idea. But, if it was in the classroom and the tasks are guided by a language teacher, then that would be a better idea, like these examples that you had in the survey.

- Rashid

I'm not very active on social media. So, to be honest, I got lost when reading some of the comments in your survey. For example, I didn't know what (stfu) meant until I googled it. But I realize the importance of them (SNSs), and people tend to be themselves when using them. So, the impression I got when reading the comments in your survey is that people are not even thinking about what others are saying. They are just hitting on "reply" and they just want to say something back. And you would think that because it is written language people would take longer to think about how to respond, but I don't think that that's the case here. I mean I understand that social media is a part of the student's life, but actually sharing personal experiences and having that

personal face to face connection has stronger effects on learning. So, I think that it is a good idea to not just rely on social media and share more personal experience.

- Carolina, a native Spanish-speaking lecturer of L2 English and Spanish

These two responses from a learner (Rashid) and a teacher (Carolina) reveal their opposition to using SNSs to learn or teach rudeness. Rashid voices concern about anonymity on Instagram and its subsequent neglect of etiquette. He does, however, note that SNSs are valuable for learning impoliteness only if used in a classroom environment under the guidance of a language teacher. In contrast, Carolina reveals that she is not an active user on SNSs, so abbreviations that are context-specific to online interactions, such as “stfu,” were foreign to her. While she acknowledges the importance of such media in students’ daily lives, she contends that there are greater impact and benefits in using face-to-face instructional methods, including sharing personal experiences of impoliteness in the classroom and analyzing that narrative with students.

6.4. Discussion

As the survey and interview responses reveal, participants held different attitudes to explicitly teaching impoliteness. Some approved the idea of the explicit teaching of conventionalized impoliteness formulae and considered it a necessary component of developing L2 learners’ pragmatic competence. These participants recognized that impoliteness is a component of the language that learners will inevitably encounter as they engage in L2 communications. Therefore, it should be treated like other pragmatic features of the language and receive the same emphasis in instruction.

A comparison of the teachers and learners' perceptions of teaching/learning L2 impoliteness indicates that both groups tend to favor formal instruction; however, in both groups, a majority

of participants stated that, while they would not feel uncomfortable with either teaching or learning L2 impoliteness, it would be wrong to completely ignore the sample of participants who expressed discomfort, either generally or when a specific gender is present. Participants located their anxiety in their lack of knowledge about L2 impolite language, since using coarse language was absent from their daily interactions. Teachers, especially, voiced concern about the damage teaching such language would do to their role and image as educators, their professionalism, and their personal morality. They also worried about offending students and disturbing the class environment by inviting confrontation. Their reactions uncover the challenges facing the teaching of impoliteness, as teachers may not know what to teach, how to explain it, how to create a safe environment to teach it, how to avoid heated confrontation, and what consequences they can expect when teaching such material. Say something instead about this tension between what they view as important and their discomfort. It is also worth mentioning that the different responses to conventionalized and non-conventionalized impoliteness.

Teachers with experience in teaching L2 impoliteness indicated that they had difficulty finding relevant textbooks or other formal instructional materials. In fact, research has identified deficiencies in language textbooks stemming from their presentation of (im)politeness through comparisons that highlight the differences in social behavior between “the learner’s culture” and “the target’s culture” (Reiger, 2015). To compensate for the lack of L2 impoliteness teaching materials, teachers and learners could consider using online resources such as SNSs, an option that many of the survey participants favored. Online resources are abundant with controversial topics that often spark arguments featuring incivility. Moreover, they expose teachers and learners to intercultural interactions where they can reflect upon, analyze, critique, and evaluate misunderstandings and possibly rudeness.

Concerning the use of Instagram posts to teach L2 impoliteness, the teachers were more critical, and thus careful, in their analysis. They often hesitated to declare an example good or not, instead answering “not sure.” Learners, however, more decisively answered either “yes” or “no.” An explanation for this could be that learners considered learning the language and content only, while teachers factored in the instructional material, the feasibility of explaining the content through SNSs, the students’ reactions, learning objectives, and assessment measures.

For the most part, more participants in both groups regarded all but the first post included in the survey to be good for learning L2 impoliteness. Many agreed that discussing delicate topics, such as race or religion, gives students the appropriate communicative tools and strategies that help them engage in conversations, express their opinions, and understand and respect others’ opinions without using impolite language. Some participants even described the language in particular Instagram posts as rather mild. However, this very reason led some participants, specifically in the teachers’ group, to reject the post’s suitability because it doesn’t contain impolite language. In fact, they would have preferred to have taught extreme impoliteness but felt that the risk of offending students was too high. Additionally, they were concerned about the material’s appropriateness within a classroom setting.

Many teachers signaled their opposition to teaching impoliteness because they are personally intolerant to such language, thereby labeling many, if not all, the Instagram posts as unteachable material. The teachers implied, and in some situations explicitly said, that they would rather teach and promote polite language and behavior rather than expose students to impoliteness. However, these teachers overlook the fact that students will inevitably engage in L2 interactions and they will invest time in negotiating relationships with others, a practice known as relational work (Locher and Watts, 2005).

In the interviews, some learners and teachers resisted the idea of teaching conventionalized impoliteness formulae for several reasons: students should not be encouraged or even exposed to this kind of impoliteness; the focus should be on reinforcing politeness strategies; the teaching of impoliteness goes against the teachers' role as an educator, and they feared classroom disruption and/or offending students. Those who opposed teaching conventionalized L2 impoliteness in an academic classroom think that impolite language drags the classroom to a low, non-academic level. Out of the 16 interviewees, eight of them—all native Arabic-speakers—upheld the view of the classroom as a sacred space that had no place for incivility. From their perspective, the classroom culturally symbolizes the area in which teachers impart “valuable” knowledge to students. It demands to be respected, and topics such as impoliteness are not suitable, do not qualify as “valuable” knowledge, and can be learned elsewhere. Cultural conceptualizations of impoliteness in Arabic are that it is “low” and “inappropriate.” Echoing Sharifian and Tayebi (2017), therefore, such conceptualizations influence our judgement of what is appropriate and what is not, which is why some participants in this study rejected the idea that the explicit teaching of conventionalized impoliteness in the classroom is acceptable. This is also in line with Ahmadi and Soureshjani (2011), whose findings suggest that a classroom is regarded as a formal setting and impoliteness is usually used in informal settings, a discrepancy which causes them to reject teaching impoliteness in language classrooms. Additionally, not only did some participants oppose the teaching and/or learning of conventionalized impoliteness in the classroom but they also revealed that they would be “uncomfortable” teaching or learning such material. If this affective factor is present, it may hinder the process of learning and yield counterproductive outcomes. The reasons behind such discomfort, as reported by the participants, varied. Instructor participants, for example, reported that they lack the training to teach such material, and

expressed concerns about the ages of their students, whether this material would “pass” as appropriate enough to be included in the curriculum, and the administrative constraints of some countries which place greater restrictions on what can be included in the curriculum.

However, all participants across both groups approved of teaching L2 implicational impoliteness because they believe that it is harder to detect and would assist learners in deciphering and better understanding the intentions behind what others are saying to them. Participants like Nara and Amal contend that the ultimate goal for teaching impoliteness is not to teach L2 learners to be rude but to afford learners the necessary pragmatic knowledge and skills to make choices about how to respond to impoliteness when confronted with it (Mugford, 2008).

A dilemma facing teachers is making the decision of which L2 pragmatic aspects they want to focus on teaching to different L2 learners. Learner participants expressed that they would be uncomfortable learning about impoliteness because the topic is inappropriate and it may therefore be embarrassing for students in class to engage with it. Moreover, they were conscious that students of both genders were present in class and pointed out that that could be embarrassing when dealing with such material. This is in line with Vasquez and Fioramonte (2011), who found that some L2 learners show resistance to learning certain L2 pragmatic aspects of the language. Vasquez and Fioramonte comment on this particular issue as follows:

It also serves to illustrate the expression of agency and subjectivity of individual language learners, who may feel that learning about sociopragmatic norms that differ from those of their L1 somehow poses a threat to their identity, or represents an attempt to change who they are [...] when it comes to pragmatics in the L2 classroom, we must provide language learners with multiple linguistic tools and resources in the L2, but we must respect the choices individual learners ultimately make— whether those choices

involve adopting the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic norms of the target language, or whether they involve actively resisting those norms. (p. 11)

It is complicated to quantify implicational or non-conventionalized formulae of impoliteness because any expression can be voiced in a manner that delivers an impolite intent. That is why many participants believed that SNSs would be a valuable resource to use when teaching impoliteness. Although many acknowledged this, not all participants approved of using SNSs to teach or learn impoliteness. The disapproving teachers preferred face-to-face interactions and personal connections with the students, while the learners could not see the usefulness of SNSs for self-learning and thought that only guided instruction could effectively teach impoliteness. Nevertheless, L2 teachers should devise ways to give their students enough background and linguistic and sociocultural knowledge to make informed analyses and evaluations of the pragmatic features expressed in SNS interactions. SNSs potentially provide the kind of authentic interactional data that can help L2 learners compare pragmatic aspects of the language between the L1 and L2 to raise socio-pragmatic awareness. The implications of the above findings further suggest that teachers ought to develop instructional materials from which learners can acquire pragmatic competence in ways that allow them to understand their interlocutors' intended meaning in the L2. This is where SNSs can play a role. Some of this study's participants seem optimistic about and open to the idea of using SNSs to facilitate intercultural pragmatic knowledge, and, more specifically, to teach impoliteness, whether in its conventionalized or implicational forms. However, certain considerations must be borne in mind.

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter considered the responses from both teachers and learners from the survey and interviews. While some participants were in favor of teaching impoliteness, others rejected the

idea entirely. The survey responses reveal that the majority of participants in both groups thought that the examples extracted from Instagram are valuable materials for teaching and learning L2 impoliteness. Those who considered these examples to be teachable based their judgments on the themes and the prospect that such content could add to the learners' linguistic repertoire and advance their pragmatic competence. Although the first post yielded more negative than positive reactions from both groups, the margin between the two was slim, which should be taken into consideration. The participants who labeled the examples unteachable gave various reasons: the expressions were not vulgar enough; the posts promoted negative and rude behavior; there was a high risk of personal discomfort when exposed to such language, and unfamiliarity with the context and culture concerning sensitive topics and themes.

In the interviews, the participants were divided between those who would not teach conventionalized forms of impoliteness and those who would, but all the participants across both groups considered teaching implicational impoliteness to be both helpful and necessary to communicate in the L2 effectively. Most participants were divided when it came to teaching/learning conventionalized forms of impoliteness. Those who were in favor of teaching it explained that (im)politeness is an integral part of the language and achieving pragmatic competence in the L2 is essential. It should, therefore, be included in the L2 curriculum. Those who were in favor of teaching impoliteness but with some reservations cited the students' ages as a factor. In addition, they were afraid of offending them and took into consideration their psychological wellbeing. Finally, those who opposed this kind of teaching questioned the appropriacy of dealing with vulgar language in a formal educational setting and preferred having students acquire it outside the classroom.

Significantly, both groups were unanimous in asserting that there are benefits to teaching implicational impoliteness. The chief reason cited is that it is harder to detect and notice; therefore, guided instruction would help learners recognize such language and be prepared to react appropriately according to the context. As a result, participants began to think about impoliteness beyond its conventionalized forms.

Finally, some participants encouraged using SNSs as a resource to teach/learn impoliteness. They realized that SNSs abound with L2 impoliteness of all kinds and offer online intercultural interactions. Others, however, preferred either face-to-face instruction or using SNSs for learning impoliteness under the guidance of an L2 instructor.

These results establish that both the teachers and learners realized that impoliteness is an area of language that has increased, perhaps especially online. They agreed that it may be difficult to shield L2 students entirely from being exposed to uncomfortable and difficult situations and that L2 users may encounter a lack of cooperation and support in some L2 communication. For this reason primarily, as well as many others, it is useful for L2 teachers to consider including the teaching of L2 (im)politeness in the curriculum and the ways in which they can (a) be prepared and comfortable to teach such content, and (b) carefully navigate such material in the language classroom. This topic is discussed further in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Future Directions

This study has contemplated the perceptions and attitudes of L2 teachers and learners to understand their views about intercultural (im)politeness in its two forms, conventional and implicational, through the participants' analysis of Instagram posts and their below-the-line comments. The study also gained an understanding from these participants about the Instagram posts' teachability within a formal language classroom. It aimed to find answers for the following research questions:

- What kinds of impoliteness are salient in Instagram conversations and how might that help us to make sense of intercultural pragmatics in the digital age?
- How do English second language teachers and learners perceive impoliteness in Instagram? What differences are there between these groups? What might this tell us about intercultural pragmatics in SNS?
- What are the perceptions, beliefs, and experiences of teachers and learners regarding the potential use of SNSs for teaching impoliteness, with an eye towards the ways in which they may influence the teaching of impoliteness?

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 probed these questions citing examples from the data.

7.1. Pedagogical Implications

When studying a second language, learners usually focus on how to employ language resources to interact effectively and appropriately in target-language contexts and successfully negotiate a wide range of predictable communicative situations. However, L2 users often face

uncomfortable and problematic situations in which they need to interact under difficult, erratic, and demanding circumstances. They have to make on-the-spot decisions, often with limited information and performing under tense communicative pressure to produce quick and socially acceptable responses. Language proficiency in itself may not provide sufficient resources to negotiate negative or uncomfortable situations. This is an area of (L2) education that needs to receive much greater attention and has to some extent been ignored in the teaching of English (Mugford, 2019).

As we saw in our discussions, participants were divided between those in favor of teaching L2 (im)politeness, some who were hesitant but accepted the idea in general, and some who were against this idea completely. Many cited their levels of (dis)comfort as a factor that played a part in their decision. Indeed, those who were against teaching impoliteness emphasized that they would feel uncomfortable doing so. Both groups identified their discomfort stemming from being against using impolite language in general or from not knowing how to deal with such material.

These reactions attest to the need for careful but different consideration specific to each group. Where teachers are concerned, this study confirms and agrees with Bella et al.'s (2015) call for targeted teacher-training courses that include politeness issues and research findings from interlanguage pragmatics. Such courses would allow teachers to gain the necessary skills to teach delicate topics like impoliteness effectively to a diverse spectrum of learners. As Kasper (1997) noted, the most apparent reason for incorporating pragmatics into teacher training is that it allows teachers to establish the skills that L2 learners need, implement relevant activities, and mix pragmatics' objectives in curricula.

The lack of such materials suggests the need for ESL and SLA programs to prepare teachers to teach and create content for teaching impoliteness. This type of training could also be carried out by participating in online teaching communities, through dialogues with other educators, and by staying connected with pragmatics research and the development of intercultural competence. For example, teachers could analyze what constitutes “appropriateness” in the target language and what pedagogical tools and methods they can employ to illustrate and clarify it to students. Bella, Sifianou, and Tzanne (2015) expand on this issue by asking whether L2 educators should eschew the use of impoliteness strategies or place more emphasis on providing students with the necessary linguistic repertoire to use language in ways that would help them negotiate themselves in situations of impoliteness.

Bella et al. (2015) have criticized Brown and Levinson for perceiving culture as a static concept. Acknowledging that this is a critical issue, recent research attempts to provide mitigated, context-specific findings to develop a detailed framework that includes some of the tendencies of specific groups in specific situations. However, foreign language teachers have neither the means nor the tools to do this, especially if they live outside the target language community and are not native speakers of its language. Language learners cannot be expected to make informed assessments without the necessary background knowledge, and teachers are not politeness researchers who can quickly identify situations that are open to interpretation as being polite or impolite. Teachers need training and information about (multiple and coexisting) norms of appropriate, respectful behavior in specific genres against which classroom discussion can take place. These norms change over time and may differ from one context to the next and even from individual to individual, but an informed teacher can acquire a base from which to start explaining and sensitizing students to issues of polite and impolite behavior.

Although it is vital for teachers to feel comfortable teaching this material, students, too, must feel at ease and safe in the classroom while learning impolite expressions. Teachers first need to establish well-constructed learning objectives and carefully select their materials for introducing and teaching L2 (im)politeness. This would ensure that teachers give guided and controlled instruction of the material. Students would then have a clear idea of what is expected of them, and teachers would control the rude expressions and behavior to which they expose students. It would also ensure the safety of students: teachers could control how far to push boundaries, how not to offend learners, and how to avoid triggering insecurities that may lead to physical or psychological harm.

When dealing with impoliteness, it is imperative that teachers create a safe space for students to discuss the topics and express their opinions respectfully. Teachers can regulate the discussion through guided questions and debate. It may be wise for teachers to survey their students first to understand their tolerance and perceptions about impoliteness and then select materials and topics accordingly. Our survey uncovered a considerable number of learners who admitted feeling uncomfortable about learning L2 impoliteness either in general or when a specific gender is present. Their reaction illustrates a need for teachers to assess the contributory factors to their unease and how to accommodate learners' needs. In short, no matter how important it is to teach impoliteness, if the students—or even one student—consider the materials or topics uncomfortable, impolite, or offensive in the slightest, it is probably best to reconsider including such material in the curriculum or to choose a different means of teaching impoliteness. Ultimately, teachers must defer to students' willingness to learn impoliteness. Failure to do so would be counterproductive for learning.

Furthermore, both learners and teachers must understand that the instruction of L2 impoliteness goes beyond its conventionalized formulae (e.g., curses and insults). As we saw in the previous chapter's analysis of the comment "awe no please love us," a seemingly nice statement can convey rudeness or sarcasm through intonation. The opposite is also true: impolite words may be bandied about affectionately to express closeness or solidarity with others. In fact, Rieger (2018) contends that (im)politeness is not necessarily a property of linguistic forms, but a feature of the socio-pragmatic usage of these forms in conjunction with other communicative and interactional behavior in situ. Any term, phrase, or formula that renders an utterance polite can also be used to offend, just as linguistic terms or expressions that are used to hurt can be wielded for different purposes. Therefore, teachers should bear in mind that (im)politeness is a socio-cultural and socio-pragmatic construct. It is also a significant and ever-present aspect of complex human interactions, a prominent part of the language, and it should have a conspicuous position in the L2 curriculum.

Additionally, in response to teachers who think that learning L2 impoliteness is unnecessary, there needs to be an understanding that issues of (im)politeness are not innate (Watts, 2003), especially when someone is learning an L2. Therefore, the obligation to teach (im)politeness in the context of teaching a second language holds true. Learners need to know how to express themselves and how to apply pragmatic skills and strategies that allow them to evaluate expressions and behaviors appropriately as polite or impolite to avoid being unintentionally rude or erroneously interpreting others' behavior as impolite (Bella, Sifianou, and Tzanne, 2015).

This analysis refutes the assumption that politeness strategies are universal (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Generalizing about politeness is unrealistic, especially in intercultural interactions. Bella, Sifianou, and Tzanne (2015) cited researchers who investigated various

speech acts at the discourse level in different socio-cultural contexts and recommended ways of teaching them to non-native speakers. However, this creates a dilemma for teachers for two reasons. First, they cannot expose learners to the many ways in which speakers of the L2, whether native or not, utilize both pragmalinguistic and socio-pragmatic aspects of the L2. Second, they cannot provide L2 learners with a complete set of formulae that they can use to avoid pragmatic failure. Therefore, I am in favor of Bella et al.'s (2015) suggestion that L2 teachers must provide learners with supportive techniques that show how (im)politeness strategies are employed in the L2, analyze a wide range of data from various genres, and draw generalizations accordingly. Bella et al. (2015) observe that, in the past, drawing conclusions and generalizations created prescription-type formulae that learners had to adhere by to come across as "pragmatically correct." However, in current research, generalizations derive from the resources available to a group and their tendencies to use particular forms to express politeness or impoliteness. Crucially, both L2 teachers and learners belong to different lingua-cultural systems; therefore, they need to understand the basics before proceeding with the particularities of the target language as well as seek assistance through available resources.

In fact, Escandell-Vidal (2004) suggested that habits developed in our primary socialization (L1 system) are durable and hard to shed. Thus, established practices & representations, such as discourse-management strategies, coupled with assumptions about participants' roles, identities, and ideologies of normative behavior generate different interactional expectations that guide interpretation. When frustrated, these interactional expectations can cause degrees of communication breakdowns and failures, even for advanced-level students with sufficient pragmalinguistic knowledge, as they may struggle to adjust to target socio-pragmatic norms (Pizziconi, 2015). Therefore, guided explicit instruction of L2 impoliteness promotes acceptance

and tolerance when negotiating meanings and engaging in intercultural interactions. It also brings a deeper understanding and enhanced awareness of the socio-cultural and socio-pragmatic relativity of (im)politeness, heightened knowledge of non-shared norms and practices, and systematic questioning of one's understanding of what constitutes (im)polite behavior (Rieger, 2015).

When using SNSs for L2 instruction, L2 teachers should consider the fast pace at which these mediums change. Therefore, when constructing lesson plans, developing the material, and navigating through the platform, L2 teachers need to prepare for the constant advances of SNSs by establishing guidelines and strategies that integrate these online spaces productively. Also, L2 teachers must assess the readiness and preparedness of students to navigate these online spaces. McBride (2009) argues that L2 learners may not be pragmatically proficient enough to integrate SNSs into their learning or to communicate in such areas effectively.

The findings of this study reveal that participants in both groups were more open and comfortable to teaching and learning implicational impoliteness than they were with conventionalized impoliteness. However, as the data suggests, implicational impoliteness can be more discrete and less obvious to participants than conventionalized impoliteness; as such, it is likely more challenging to teach. Therefore, there is a distinct need to invest in more training that specifically addresses implicational impoliteness in terms of understanding what it is, how it can be recognized and understood, and how it can be taught in a language classroom setting.

This could be achieved through teacher development courses or training programs and workshops that specifically focus on each type of impoliteness and lay bare some of the perceptions and biases teachers might have about these different forms. For example, it was interesting to observe how the participants in the current study believed that teaching

implicational impoliteness is appropriate for the classroom context on the basis that it is more nuanced and subtle, and does not involve conventionalized forms of impoliteness such as insults. However, the data also suggests that implicational impoliteness is not necessarily less severe than conventionalized impoliteness; just because something is not explicitly said does not mean it has less impact in terms of the repercussions of impoliteness.

Teacher education might then focus on raising awareness of implicational impoliteness and how it functions in discourse, training programs or workshops could also focus aspects of teaching it. For example, teachers can undergo training on how to facilitate both “noticing” (e.g., looking for certain keywords, emojis, or syntactic structures) and “questioning” (e.g., responding to a potentially impolite remark by asking for clarification) as strategies to recognize intercultural implicational impoliteness, as modelled in the metapragmatic described in Chapter 5. Benefits could also be gained from helping educators to understand how metapragmatic analysis approaches can be employed as an awareness-raising activity for teacher training and within efforts to teach impoliteness to students.

The findings of this study also indicated that teachers didn’t necessarily want to teach impoliteness; however, they understood the need to raise students’ awareness of its occurrence, the situations in which it may occur, and how best to respond to these situations. Some of the teacher participants disclosed that they did not feel that it was their job to teach impoliteness, but they also recognized that implicational impoliteness is more difficult to notice and, therefore, students could only be taught to observe it through explicit teaching approaches. As such, in this regard, it is necessary to develop appropriate training interventions that raise teachers’ awareness of the forms and manifestations of impoliteness and the implications it has within intercultural

communications. Teacher education could thus place an emphasis on how teachers' conceptual understanding of language shapes the way in which they teach it.

In addition, a workshop could also be tailored to train teachers on how to use online spaces, specifically SNSs, to gather instructional material for impoliteness. More specifically, it could teach educators that online SNSs, and online spaces in general, are abundant with examples of intercultural impoliteness and progress to instruct them how to select examples for use in the classroom, determine whether the content is considered interculturally impolite, and identify what criteria to follow to ensure the course content is aligned with the students' age, tolerance, educational level, and so on.

Finally, the results of this study indicate that teachers and learners had different perceptions of online impoliteness. This supports the notion that there is a requirement to explicitly teach L2 impoliteness, particularly in an intercultural setting, due to the fact that instances of (im)politeness can be interpreted differently according to a range of variables; for example, the interlocutors' cultural and L1 backgrounds. As such, teaching L2 impoliteness can positively shape learners' intercultural pragmatic awareness and competence. To communicate competently when conversing in intercultural settings using an L2 or a lingua franca, it is important that learners are aware that the language and linguistic expressions they employ may be interpreted differently by different people. As such, it might be necessary to engage in strategies of negotiation of meaning to enable the recipient to understand the intent behind the expressions that are used. Such strategies can be taught through explicit instruction of both conventionalized impoliteness and implicational impoliteness.

7.2. Directions for Future Research

The main emphasis of this study on L2 teachers' and learners' perceptions of impoliteness. While the study considered the cultural backgrounds and L1s of participants, the variability made it difficult to draw generalizable conclusions about the ways in which language and culture might shape perceptions of politeness or the teachability thereof. Using the research methods developed here, further studies could involve more participants from specific cultural groups to ascertain if any themes occur that account for differences and/or similarities between these groups. It would also be potentially interesting to consider additional participant variables, for example how participants' genders or teaching experience played a role. It would also be worthwhile to consider additional variables in the examples themselves, for instance, how does the use of humor or the perceived use of humor factor into evaluations of impoliteness?

Moreover, since this study focused on the views and attitudes towards teaching and learning (im)politeness, further research could pilot materials similar to those used in this study to examine the effects of actually using material extracted from Instagram, or other SNSs, to teach impoliteness. Analysis of intercultural pragmatic development—specifically learning impoliteness in the classroom, how language learners interact, and how they negotiate (im)politeness and evaluate it in the L2—would provide valuable insight into the advantages and disadvantages of using SNSs to teach (im)politeness. From a research perspective, the metapragmatic analysis approach provides a solid base of information about the process in which language learners can analyze language extracted from SNSs to dissect, negotiate, co-construct, evaluate, interpret, and reach decisions about how to produce specific patterns of communication. This may serve as a starting point for continued research on various populations of students and on a variety of conversational elements that can address language learning, both

linguistic and social. Additionally, naturalistic data from social media users who are simultaneously language learners can provide information into how multilingual individuals negotiate and develop pragmatic awareness of impoliteness in intercultural encounters.

Appendix A

Surveys

Teachers' Survey:

IMPOLITENESS SURVEY

Name:

Age:

Native language:

Years of experience in teaching a second or foreign language:

What language(s) do you teach?

Part 1:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Perceptions About Teaching Impolite Language				
1. I believe it is important to teach impolite language to adult language learners.				
2. I believe that impolite language should be taught at various levels of language learning.				
3. I would feel uncomfortable teaching impolite language in general.				
3a. If you agree, please indicate why.				
4. I would feel uncomfortable teaching impolite language to a specific gender of students.				
4a. If you agree, please circle the following (male, female, both).				
4b. If you agree, please indicate the age range (e.g., high school students, college students... etc.)				
4c. If you agree, please indicate why.				

5. I think that teaching impolite language in a formal educational setting is inappropriate.				
6. Teachers should be trained to teach and offer strategies to students for dealing with L2 impoliteness.				
7. I wish I had been taught more about impolite language in my L2 classes.				
8. I would consider using non-traditional instructional materials / sources (such as digital social media) to teach impolite language.				
9. I think it is better to only teach impolite language to intermediate or advanced level students.				
Experience in Teaching Impolite Language				
10. Do you have experience teaching impolite language? (please circle) Yes No <i>(if not, please skip to question 17)</i>				
11. I have faced administrative challenges when teaching impolite languages.				
12. I had difficulties finding textbooks (or other formal instructional tools) that teach impolite language.				
13. I have experience using digital social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram... etc.) as a teaching tool.				
14. I felt that my students were or would be uncomfortable learning about impolite language.				
15. I felt prepared to teach L2 learners about impolite language.				
16. Students perceptions about examples of impolite language were different based on their cultural backgrounds.				

Part 2. Please view the following examples and answer the questions:

Example one: The conversation that follows was found on Instagram under this post:



1. [eden](#) Stfu with cultural appropriation please people. Just. Stop. Being offended by something doesnt give you a moral high ground. She looks good with dreads and the guy with the sheik costume looks good to.. that's the point of Halloween, to dress up as something you're not, and Btw im hispanic and I LOVE when people dress up as tacos and amigos. We need to pick our battles and stop being outraged over every little thing. Btw [@khloekardashian](#) you look great ❤️
2. [mai@eden](#) if you think tacos is equivalent to wearing dreads or wearing a sheikh outfit - you are missing the point. Maybe come up with a something that's actually analogous.
3. [krystin](#) Couldn't agree more with [@Eden](#)
4. [amberr@eden](#) just because something doesn't effect you, doesn't mean it doesn't towards other Hispanic. You're one in a million love bug. People here are angry because we've been telling this family along with others that culture and peoples identity shouldn't be a costume. Appreciate it without appropriating it. I love Beyoncé but when she doesn't problematic things, we tell her. Let's learn and grow

5. [kyva@eden](#) please go kill yourself, just cause you don't value your culture you have no room to speak to people who value theirs.
6. [eden](#) Sorry [@kyva](#) not [@kyva](#) lmao
7. [elle.mal@eden](#) shut up stupid bitch
8. [mai@eden](#) just because your ok with other ppl appropriating your culture in Halloween and act stupid and drunk that dose not mean that others should be ok with that shit....cultural appropriation is not acceptable and my ppl's traditional clothes are not costumes to wear!!! So stfu!! Ppl should learn to accept that others are no ok with it and respect that!!!

- **Rate the conversation**

Not at all impolite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Extremely impolite
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- *Please underline the parts that you think constitute impolite language.*
- *How would you describe your reaction to the language used in this conversation? Please be as concrete and specific as possible.*
- *If you think impolite language was used, what might be the reason(s) behind its use, based on what you see in the conversation?*
- *Would this be a good example to teach to students? Why or Why not?*
- *Would you change anything in this example in order to teach it?*

Example two: The conversation that follows was found on Instagram under this post:



1. [act](#) i hate saudi arabia buy happy for the women there ❤️
2. [act](#) i didn't know she had so many saudi fans thats sick
3. [i_mt@act](#) Awe no please love us
4. [mahaa@act](#) thank you! 🌸
5. [act@i_mt](#) OMG no I love the people just have some issues with the government. I'm also muslim and happy for the saudi people & progression
6. [ekleel@act](#) Saudi Arabia hates you as well sweetheart 😞
7. [mahaa@act](#) أشكرها لدعمها للسيدات السعوديات. I'm thanking her for supporting Saudi women. It's her personal choice to hate Saudi Arabia.
8. [act@mahaa](#) I just meant the government not the people 🇸🇦❤️ came out wrong. I'm also muslim ❤️❤️❤️
9. [ghadi@act](#) why you hate saudi arabia?

- **Rate the conversation**

Not at all impolite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Extremely impolite
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- ***Please underline the parts that you think constitute impolite language.***
- ***How would you describe your reaction to the language used in this conversation? Please be as concrete and specific as possible.***


- ***If you think impolite language was used, what might be the reason(s) behind its use, based on what you see in the conversation?***

- ***Would this be a good example to teach to students? Why or Why not?***

- ***Would you change anything in this example in order to teach it?***

Example three: The conversation that follows was found on Instagram under this post:



 **katyperry** • Follow

whitequeen_96 @ashking1997 cause i saw stupid people asking stupid questions and commenting stupidly. And when i posted my view, another stupid guy came across me .

ashking1997 @whitequeen_96 oh okay I just came here because I just wanted to know if Katy perry is practicing Hinduism now, but when I came to the comment section the last comment was literally 2 mins ago and I scrolled up and found u berating an Indian, for which I support u. Isn't Katy perry just amazing? I fall in love with her every time I see her. Words are not enough to capture her beauty with it

whitequeen_96 @ashking1997 well thank you for understanding..

ashking1997 @whitequeen_96 Yeah! Thank you! Wonderful talking to u. Wish u the luck for the future.

♡ 💬

293,750 likes

APRIL 18, 2017

Log in to like or comment. ...

1. **rahul** Kali is goddess in Hindu religion. I don't in what context Katy posted this picture. If she thinks it's funny so I don't support her. I can't put hanging picture of Jesus if I'm in pain. So she needs to understand.
2. **vishal@rahul** are you stupid...Do you think Gods care what you do with their photos..They care what your Karma is...And your Karma us not good here
3. **vishal** Indians love you Katy..😂😂
4. **rahul@vishal** I don't know how some guys like you say idiot anyone without knowing them? First go through what I have commented. If she intends to disrespect our goddess so she is a bitch for me. But her utterance is unclear. So I'm not making any conclusion.
5. **anoib** IF IM FEELING HURT OR PAIN,DO I POST A PIC OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED ON MY IG AND SAY "current mood"?!?! NO! LEARN TO RESPECT OTHERS RELIGION YOU BIGOT
6. **anoib** Reported. Absolutely, disrespectful and disgusting.
7. **vishal @anoib** why are you people getting so angry..All you are doing is demonizing our religion..Don't act like those who kill on the pictures of their prophet...What will be the difference then
8. **anoib** 🐸🐸🐸🐸🐸🐸🐸🐸🐸
9. **kalani_aya @anoib** no one is disrespecting you "god".....seriously get over it. Or if it's that big of an issue for you don't follow her :)

10. [anoib @vishal](#) Yes. But this 'singer' influences and claims to support all rights so obviously,if she posts a pic like this,what will the kids say? They would obviously think it's RIGHT when it's WRONG to disrespect a Religion like that!
11. [davidkit @anoib](#) Katy perry is an atheist, pls note that, and pls don't relate everything done by an american to christianity, again pls i beg you
12. [anoib @davidkit](#) She is a CHRISTIAN. HER PARENTS ARE PURE CHRISTIANS.
13. [anoib @kalan_aya](#) racist. You think it's okay for a singer who influences YOUNG CHILDREN to behave like this is fine?
14. [davidkit @anoib](#) she is now an atheist !!!
15. [anoib @davidkit](#) So that gives her the right to disrespect a Religion?
16. [vishal @rahal](#) again if she "intends" to disrespect it. Why will you call her bitch...Don't be like the people of other religions who abuse just because someone insulted their religion
17. [kalan_aya @anoib](#) yes I do. She did not do anything but post a picture. Get over it 🍊
18. [anoib @kalan_aya](#) You aren't in a Hindu's shoes. Do you know how hurt a Muslim feels when they see a picture like this mocking their religion? Even Christians. You might be either of them or an Atheist. But please know,Hindus are hurt by seeing this pic. And she has millions of fans from India which doubles the pain.
19. [rahal @vishal](#) hmm... Bro I'm not bigot. And I know she didn't do that advertently. Agree with you. God is there to clear the accounts of all of us.
20. [kalan_aya @anoib](#) you're ridiculous. Don't follow her if you think it offends you. She clearly didn't post it to mock anyone's culture or belief. You can take it anyway you want but no one cares either way
21. [vishal @anoib](#) you know that Gods or Goddesses dont care about Insult..But what other people are watching here are Hindus abusing a famous singer...How will the other religions will see us as.. Definitely not as a tolerant bunch
22. [anoib @davidkit](#) Your not an Indian? Great. Then please don't act like you know more than one. You clearly don't have the decency to think about being in another's shoe in their situation.
23. [davidkit @anoib](#) not at all, i don't defend her
24. [anoib @vishal](#) Abusing? Were simply asking her to not disrespect our religion and to MOCK us.
25. [anoib @vishal](#) If something like this happened to Muslims,their would be a fatwa issued for her head 🤔🤔🤔
26. [anoib @davidkit](#) Enlighten me for one second,what exactly are you arguing me for?
27. [vishal @rahal](#) right...It doesn't matter she Insult them or not..what matter is that If she is a good human...I think she is
28. [naomipar](#) AHH cmon people! I am Hindu Indian in South Africa, proudly so!. There are days when I identify with Lakshmi ma's energy. There are days when I identify with Saraswathi ma and so on. Its the energy of Kali-ma she identified with. ITS OKAY!! I dont think she meant to offend nor do I find it offensive. 🙏JAI KALI-MA! JAI MATA DI!❤️🌸
29. [davidkit @anoib](#) someone Just did the same thing by insulting Jesus christ but i didn't react violently like some of you are doing
30. [anoib @naomipar](#) She didn't mean to offend yet she clearly meant to mock 😏
31. [anoib @davidkit](#) And that gives you the right to judge others on how to behave? I'm sorry but your way to IRRELEVANT here.

32. [davidkit @anoib](#) you don't understand my point!!!! I'm saying Katy Perry lives in the US and there nobody knows that the person on the picture is a divinity in india,before coming to india I could've also made the mistake to make fun of your gods thinking that they were Just paintings or Arts, so be diligent
33. [anoib @davidkit](#) Notice that this INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT not only follows JUST AMERICAN'S but pretty much people all around the world TELLING HER THAT THE PICTURE IS OF AN INDIAN GODDESS AND SHE STILL HASNT TOOK IT DOWN. So again, irrelevant.
34. [vishal @anoib](#) I know there would have been a fatwa..But what we are doing is also wrong..There are many Indians here who are abusing her...There is no need to that..
35. [rahul @anoib](#) thanks for understanding our sentiments.

- **Rate the conversation**

Not at all impolite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Extremely impolite
------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------------------

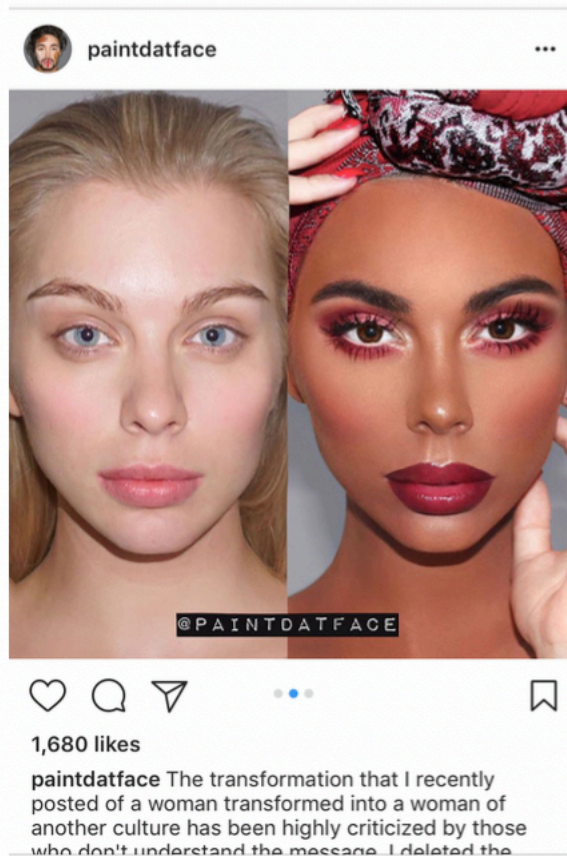
- ***Please underline the parts that you think constitute impolite language.***
- ***How would you describe your reaction to the language used in this conversation? Please be as concrete and specific as possible.***

- ***If you think impolite language was used, what might be the reason(s) behind its use, based on what you see in the conversation?***

- ***Would this be a good example to teach to students? Why or Why not?***

- ***Would you change anything in this example in order to teach it?***

Example four: The conversation that follows was found on Instagram under this post:



1. [Tia](#) You have not one black woman on you page and the one time you muster up in your mind and deem it ok to post a “black” woman is when you transform a white woman into one. Please spare me the doe eyed innocent blurb you keep writing. The problem is white people like you who see us a a prop, something cool, or the new “it” thing. We are not for your entertainment or hobby! You could have easily transformed a black woman as you have dome every other woman on this page. Its pathetic and I’m sick of being disrespected!
2. [milana](#) People need to do some fucken research before they attack! Aka why ur bored and ignorant and only see this as COLOR. He has done work on A LOT of woc models on numerous platforms including his IG which you’re bashing. So get to work bitches and cover your corners because our RACE is HUMAN not color or culture @Tia @Nai @Ncar
3. [jetlag](#) @Tia <https://instagram.com/p/QCPBUgGBP/> he does have a black girl featured
4. [Nai](#) @milana you mean on you? The middle Eastern with the blue CONTACTS? You’re the ONLY woman “of color” on his page. Back to the topic though, we are not costumes. You cannot put us on like such
5. [lynda](#) @milana You look 2 different races in your photos 🙌🙌

6. [lamm](#) You're arguing with brick walls. They just missed the whole message. Don't even waste your time [@milana](#)... he literally just said he's embracing his Cuban culture and Cubans come in different skin tones. It's like you can only do things if you're from that race. Because God forbid you try something new, you get dragged through the mud. Should he be a dark Cuban to do it? They can't look past artwork because color stumbles before they can even see through it.
7. [Milana @Nai](#) you don't even know what I am so please stop assuming! You're on a makeup page have you realized? His artwork is about transformation why isn't anyone mad that he transform a white Girl to an Asian women??! 😏
8. [lambri @milana](#) no.. We live in a world where people get lip injections and bigger asses and darken their skin to resemble colored folk yet colored folk are made fun of it for being authentic! Lol. We are our culture. Apparently.
9. [Nai @milana](#) Guess what? WE care. African-Cuban, African-American. Or just plain African, we WE Weeeeeee care
10. [lambri @Ncar](#) I knw all about culture appropriation
11. [Nai @milana](#) since you're the poster child here, next time tell him to paint a girl as dark as me to your middle eastern or white self. I would LOVE to see that talent on him page. I would love for all women agreeing that this art to still say that shit is art too.
12. [Ncar @milana](#) it become color and culture when it come to cultural appropriation which by your tone sounds like you haven't experienced considering you have lip fillers 😏😏
13. [Ncar @lambri](#) wong person 😏😏
14. [Tia @milana](#) so I'm gonna address this real quick.. Just bc you were featured on his page doesn't make you captain save a ho. You can cape for this foolishness all you want but what you WONT do is tell me and my beautiful black women how we shouldn't be offended by something you don't identify as. So you can cut that right now. Second.... Like I said, there is not one BLACK woman represented on this page. I didn't say middle eastern, or anything elseI said BLACK women. I'm so tired of you non black women trying to tell us how we should feel.
15. [lambri @milana](#) of course u don't lol. I can speak for many poc when i say that we have been made fun of years for having big butts big breasts and big lips and darker skin. Now everyone wants resemble what many if us naturally have and gey credit for it. Back when black celebs had big asses and big lips noone cared. Soon as Kylie and the rest of the flock got on board it changed the game. And like always blacks should get over it! Lol. Our culture and way of life is compromised and stolen, like always, with no recognition.
16. [milana @Tia](#) there is black woman on his page and in video tutorials and they're all beautiful!!! I'm not talking about myself only. It's not about defending because there's nothing defend here lol you just choose to see it a certain way make which makes you guys racist. Why would u make this post about black women only? How come no one is mad that he turned a white Girl to an Asian women?
17. [Themadblack @milana](#) Asian women were mad when he did yellow face too!! 😏omfg
18. [Tia @milana](#) YOU DO NOT DICTATE HOW I AS A BLACK WOMAN SHOULD FEEL ABOUT ANY PERSON TRANSFORMING A WHITE WOMAN INTO A BLACK WOMAN. So do not try to argue that point with me or any of my other black sisters. You will lose every time. And guess what, it's just as much a problem if he transforms a white woman into an Asian woman. But if the Asian women do not speak up who am I to make them have an issue. It's wrong all across the board. You know what's racist? When you cannot see a problem with racism. That makes YOU part of the problem. We have no choice to see racism for what it is bc we deal with it DAILY. I'm not explaining another thing to you bc you are so narrow minded, doe eyed, oblivious, and ignorant to REALITY. So I'm deciding not to cast another one of my pearls amongst swine. Have a great day

19. [milana @Themadblack](#) wtf is yellow face lol why the fuck are we comparing skin colors. We are all one!
20. [Atong @Tia](#) amen sis
21. [Atong @milana](#) lol the fact that you don't know what yellow face is making your ignorance shine through. Just give it up, learn from your mistakes, and stop harassing us.
22. [milana @Tia](#) it seems as though there's a lot of anger and you're projecting it into the wrong feed. Voice yourself somewhere. Funny how people take this upon themselves and get offended #bye
23. [milana @Atong](#) yes because I don't judge people by the color of their skin like you guys do
24. [Tia @Atong](#) girl don't even entertain her. She was one of this "artists" clients and she is out here caping hard for him. And she is just as, if not more ignorant. Don't even waste your time sis.
25. [Atong @milana](#) saying someone is Asian or black or whatever race they are is not judging them, it is simply stating a biological fact. But making an assumption based off their race is judging and wrong. Get it right.
26. [Atong @Tia](#) your right at this point she's just amusing me and I'm done.
27. [Themadblack @milana](#) we are not all one my ancestors were enslaved and I'm still oppressed for my skin. So are Asians so are Mexicans so are Indians and the more you wanna be ignorant and act like nothings going on in the world the more you're gonna get on everyone's nerves
28. [milana @Atong](#) categorizing people in "color" is WRONG that's all I'm saying
29. [Tia @Atong](#) btw....your skin is GORGEOUS. if I could get a glow like yours I wouldn't need a highlighter lol
30. [Watashi @milana](#) don't say "categorizing by color is wrong" after you replied to me and ended your entire by saying "you guys" .Makes you a hypocrite because you too were categorizing
31. [Tia @milana](#) girl I already dismissed you!! Don't @ me anymore. What part of have a good day don't you understand 😞😞
32. [Supa @Tia](#) SAY IT LOUDER FOR THE PEOPLE IN THE BACK 🗣️

- **Rate the conversation**

Not at all impolite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Extremely impolite
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- **Please underline the parts that you think constitute impolite language.**
- **How would you describe your reaction to the language used in this conversation? Please be as concrete and specific as possible.**
- **If you think impolite language was used, what might be the reason(s) behind its use, based on what you see in the conversation?**

- *Would this be a good example to teach to students? Why or Why not?*

- *Would you change anything in this example in order to teach it?*

Learners' Surveys:

IMPOLITENESS SURVEY

Name:

Age:

Native language:

Years learning a second or foreign language:

Part 1:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Perceptions Learning Impolite Language				
1. I believe it is important to learn impolite language in my second language (L2).				
2. I would feel uncomfortable learning impolite language in general.				
2a. If you agree, please indicate why.				
3. I would feel uncomfortable learning impolite language if a specific gender of students is present.				
3a. If you agree, please circle the following (male, female, both).				
3b. If you agree, please indicate the age range (e.g., high school students, college students... etc.)				
3c. If you agree, please indicate why.				
4. I think that learning impolite language in a formal educational setting (e.g., school, CESL) is inappropriate.				
5. I would be interested in learning about strategies for dealing with impolite language in my L2.				
6. I wish I had been taught more about impolite language in my L2 classes.				
7. I would be interested in using non-traditional instructional methods (such as digital social media) to learn impolite language.				

8. I think it is better to teach impolite language to intermediate or advanced level students.				
Experience Learning Impolite Language				
<p>9. Do you have experience learning impolite language in a second or foreign language classroom? (please circle) Yes No</p> <p><i>(if not, please skip to question 13)</i></p>				
10. I had a good experience was learning about impolite language in class.				
11. The information I learned in class about impolite language was helpful.				
12. I felt uncomfortable learning about impolite language in class.				
<p>13. If you were to learn about impolite language in a foreign or second language class, what would you like the take away to be?</p>				

Part 2. Please view the following examples and answer the questions:

Example one: The conversation that follows was found on Instagram under this post:



1. [eden](#) Stfu with cultural appropriation please people. Just. Stop. Being offended by something doesnt give you a moral high ground. She looks good with dreads and the guy with the sheikh costume looks good to.. that's the point of Halloween, to dress up as something you're not, and Btw im hispanic and I LOVE when people dress up as tacos and amigos. We need to pick our battles and stop being outraged over every little thing. Btw [@khloekardashian](#) you look great ❤️
2. [mai@eden](#) if you think tacos is equivalent to wearing dreads or wearing a sheikh outfit - you are missing the point. Maybe come up with a something that's actually analogous.
3. [krystin](#) Couldn't agree more with [@Eden](#)
4. [amberr@eden](#) just because something doesn't effect you, doesn't mean it doesn't towards other Hispanic. You're one in a million love bug. People here are angry because we've been telling this family along with others that culture and peoples identity shouldn't be a costume. Appreciate it without appropriating it. I love Beyoncé but when she doesn't problematic things, we tell her. Let's learn and grow
5. [kyva@eden](#) please go kill yourself, just cause you don't value your culture you have no room to speak to people who value theirs.
6. [eden](#) Sorry [@kyva](#) not [@kyva](#) lmao
7. [elle.mal@eden](#) shut up stupid bitch

8. [mai@eden](#) just because your ok with other ppl appropriating your culture in Halloween and act stupid and drunk that dose not mean that others should be ok with that shit....cultural appropriation is not acceptable and my ppl's traditional clothes are not costumes to wear!!! So stfu!! Ppl should learn to accept that others are no ok with it and respect that!!!

- **Rate the conversation**

Not at all impolite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Extremely impolite
------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------------------

- ***Please underline the parts that you think constitute impolite language.***
- ***How would you describe your reaction to the language used in this conversation? Please be as concrete and specific as possible.***

- ***If you think impolite language was used, what might be the reason(s) behind its use, based on what you see in the conversation?***

- ***Would this be a good example to teach to students? Why or Why not?***

Example two: The conversation that follows was found on Instagram under this post:



badgalriri [Follow](#)

badgalriri love to see progression. women will now be able to drive in Saudi Arabia 🇸🇦💕🇸🇦 artist: @tagreedbagshi

Load more comments

spanishreek Lb

jalofisfake Camcer

jalofisfake Cancer

7_2h @suisse_1017 ايش ايش
 ~~~~~  
 ~~~~~

mikextraining 🌟🌟🌟🌟

suisse_1017 @7_2h هاي ماسونية وعابدة شيطان، كلشي واضح.

alanzrytag @_nen_12 ~~~~~

alanzrytag 🌈🌈🌈🌈

yung_phano When she only goes for billionaires..

❤️ 💬

884,927 likes

SEPTEMBER 26

[Log in](#) to like or comment. ...

1. [act](#) i hate [saudi arabia](#) buy happy for the women there ❤️
2. [act](#) i didn't know she had so many [saudi](#) fans thats sick
3. [i_mt@act](#) Awe no please love us
4. [mahaa@act](#) thank you! 🌸
5. [act@i_mt](#) OMG no I love the people just have some issues with the government. I'm also [muslim](#) and happy for the [saudi](#) people & progression
6. [ekleel@act](#) Saudi Arabia hates you as well sweetheart 😊
7. [mahaa@act](#) أشكرها لدعمها للسيدات السعوديات. I'm thanking her for supporting Saudi women. It's her personal choice to hate Saudi Arabia.
8. [act@mahaa](#) I just meant the government not the people 🇸🇦❤️ came out wrong. I'm also [muslim](#) ❤️❤️❤️
9. [chadi@act](#) why you hate [saudi arabia](#)?

- *Rate the conversation*

Not at all impolite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Extremely impolite
--------------------------------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	----------	-----------	-------------------------------

- *Please underline the parts that you think constitute impolite language.*
- *How would you describe your reaction to the language used in this conversation? Please be as concrete and specific as possible.*

- *If you think impolite language was used, what might be the reason(s) behind its use, based on what you see in the conversation?*

- *Would this be a good example to teach to students? Why or Why not?*

Example three: The conversation that follows was found on Instagram under this post:



katyperry • Follow

whitequeen_96 @ashking1997 cause i saw stupid people asking stupid questions and commenting stupidly. And when i posted my view, another stupid guy came across me .

ashking1997 @whitequeen_96 oh okay I just came here because I just wanted to know if Katy perry is practicing Hinduism now, but when I came to the comment section the last comment was literally 2 mins ago and I scrolled up and found u berating an Indian, for which I support u. Isn't Katy perry just amazing? I fall in love with her every time I see her. Words are not enough to capture her beauty with it

whitequeen_96 @ashking1997 well thank you for understanding..

ashking1997 @whitequeen_96 Yeah! Thank you! Wonderful talking to u. Wish u the luck for the future.



293,750 likes

APRIL 18, 2017

Log in to like or comment.

...

1. [rahul](#) Kali is goddess in Hindu religion. I don't in what context Katy posted this picture. If she thinks it's funny so I don't support her. I can't put hanging picture of Jesus if I'm in pain. So she needs to understand.
2. [vishal@rahul](#) are you stupid...Do you think Gods care what you do with their photos..They care what your Karma is...And your Karma us not good here
3. [vishal](#) Indians love you Katy..😂😂
4. [rahul@vishal](#) I don't know how some guys like you say idiot anyone without knowing them? First go through what I have commented. If she intends to disrespect our goddess so she is a bitch for me. But her utterance is unclear. So I'm not making any conclusion.
5. [anoib](#) IF IM FEELING HURT OR PAIN,DO I POST A PIC OF CHRIST CRUCIFIED ON MY IG AND SAY "current mood"?!?! NO! LEARN TO RESPECT OTHERS RELIGION YOU BIGOT
6. [anoib](#) Reported. Absolutely, disrespectful and disgusting.
7. [vishal @anoib](#) why are you people getting so angry..All you are doing is demonizing our religion..Don't act like those who kill on the pictures of their prophet...What will be the difference then
8. [anoib](#) 🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌🍌
9. [kalani_aya @anoib](#) no one is disrespecting you "god".....seriously get over it. Or if it's that big of an issue for you don't follow her :)
10. [anoib @vishal](#) Yes. But this 'singer' influences and claims to support all rights so obviously,if she posts a pic like this,what will the kids say? They would obviously think it's RIGHT when it's WRONG to disrespect a Religion like that!

11. [davidkit @anoib](#) Katy perry is an atheist, pls note that, and pls don't relate everything done by an american to christianity, again pls i beg you
12. [anoib @davidkit](#) She is a CHRISTIAN. HER PARENTS ARE PURE CHRISTIANS.
13. [anoib @kalani_aya](#) racist. You think it's okay for a singer who influences YOUNG CHILDREN to behave like this is fine?
14. [davidkit @anoib](#) she is now an atheist !!!
15. [anoib @davidkit](#) So that gives her the right to disrespect a Religion?
16. [vishal @rahul](#) again if she "intends" to disrespect it. Why will you call her bitch...Don't be like the people of other religions who abuse just because someone insulted their religion
17. [kalani_aya @anoib](#) yes I do. She did not do anything but post a picture. Get over it 🍌
18. [anoib @kalani_aya](#) You aren't in a Hindu's shoes. Do you know how hurt a Muslim feels when they see a picture like this mocking their religion? Even Christians. You might be either of them or an Atheist. But please know,Hindus are hurt by seeing this pic. And she has millions of fans from India which doubles the pain.
19. [rahul @vishal](#) hmm... Bro I'm not bigot. And I know she didn't do that advertently. Agree with you. God is there to clear the accounts of all of us.
20. [kalani_aya @anoib](#) you're ridiculous. Don't follow her if you think it offends you. She clearly didn't post it to mock anyone's culture or belief. You can take it anyway you want but no one cares either way
21. [vishal @anoib](#) you know that Gods or Goddesses dont care about Insult..But what other people are watching here are Hindus abusing a famous singer...How will the other religions will see us as.. Definitely not as a tolerant bunch
22. [anoib @davidkit](#) Your not an Indian? Great. Then please don't act like you know more than one. You clearly don't have the decency to think about being in another's shoe in their situation.
23. [davidkit @andb](#) not at all, i don't defend her
24. [anoib @vishal](#) Abusing? Were simply asking her to not disrespect our religion and to MOCK us.
25. [anoib @vishal](#) If something like this happened to ~~Muslims~~ Muslims their would be a fatwa issued for her head 🤔🤔🤔
26. [anoib @davidkit](#) Enlighten me for one second,what exactly are you arguing me for?
27. [vishal @rahul](#) right...It doesn't matter she Insult them or not, ~~what~~ what matter is that If she is a good human...I think she is
28. [naomipar](#) AHH cmon people! I am Hindu Indian in South Africa, proudly so!. There are days when I identify with Lakshmi ma's energy. There are days when I identify with Saraswathi ma and so on. Its the energy of Kali-ma she identified with. ITS OKAY!! I dont think she meant to offend nor do I find it offensive. 🙏JAI KALI-MA! JAI MATA DI! ❤️🌺
29. [davidkit @andb](#) someone Just did the same thing by insulting Jesus ~~christ~~ christ, but i didn't react violently like some of you are doing
30. [anoib @naomipar](#) She didn't mean to offend yet she clearly meant to mock 😏
31. [anoib @davidkit](#) And that gives you the right to judge others on how to behave? I'm sorry but your way to IRRELEVANT here.
32. [davidkit @andb](#) you don't understand my point!!!! I'm saying Katy Perry lives in the US and there nobody knows that the person on the picture is a divinity in ~~india before~~ india before coming to india I could've also made the mistake to make fun of your gods thinking that they were Just paintings or Arts, so be diligent
33. [anoib @davidkit](#) Notice that this INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT not only follows JUST AMERICAN'S but pretty much people all around the world TELLING HER THAT THE PICTURE IS OF AN INDIAN GODDESS AND SHE STILL HASNT TOOK IT DOWN. So again, irrelevant.

34. [vishal @anoib](#) I know there would have been a fatwa..But what we are doing is also wrong..There are many Indians here who are abusing her...There is no need to that..
35. [rahul @anoib](#) thanks for understanding our sentiments.

- **Rate the conversation**

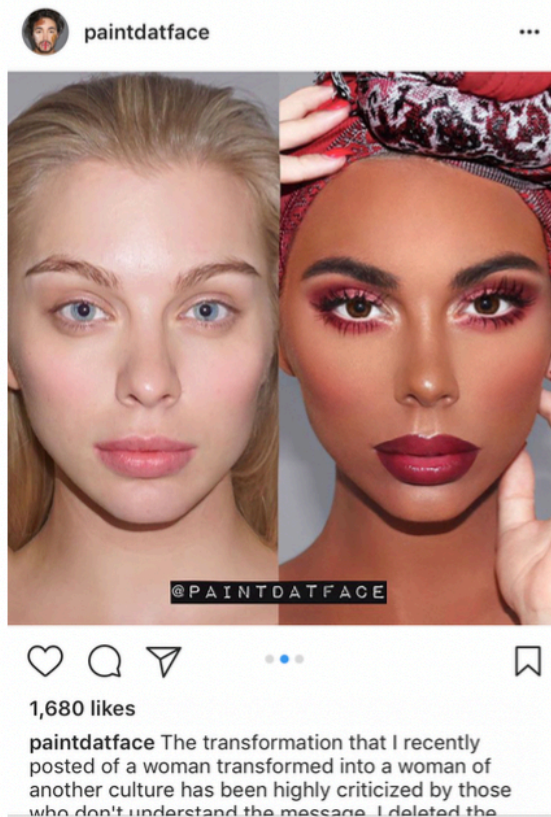
Not at all impolite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Extremely impolite
------------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----------------------

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- **How would you describe your reaction to the language used in this conversation? Please be as concrete and specific as possible.**

- **If you think impolite language was used, what might be the reason(s) behind its use, based on what you see in the conversation?**

- **Would this be a good example to teach to students? Why or Why not?**

Example four: The conversation that follows was found on Instagram under this post:



1. **Tia** You have not one black woman on you page and the one time you muster up in your mind and deem it ok to post a “black” woman is when you transform a white woman into one. Please spare me the doe eyed innocent blurb you keep writing. The problem is white people like you who see us a a prop, something cool, or the new “it” thing. We are not for your entertainment or hobby! You could have easily transformed a black woman as you have done every other woman on this page. [Its](#) pathetic and I’m sick of being disrespected!
2. **milana** People need to do some fucken research before they attack! Aka why ur bored and ignorant and only see this as COLOR. He has done work on A LOT of woc models on numerous platforms including his IG which you’re bashing. So get to work bitches and cover your corners because our RACE is HUMAN not color or culture @Tia @Nai @Ncar
3. **jettag** @Tia <https://instagram.com/p/QCPBUgGBP/> he does have a black girl featured
4. **Nai** @milana you mean on you? The middle Eastern with the blue CONTACTS? You’re the ONLY woman “of color” on his page. Back to the topic though, we are not costumes. You cannot put us on like such
5. **lynda** @milana You look 2 different races in your photos 🙄🙄
6. **lamm** You’re arguing with brick walls. They just missed the whole message. Don’t even waste your time 🙄 @milana... he literally just said he’s embracing his Cuban culture and Cubans come in different skin tones. It’s like you can only do things if you’re from that race. Because God forbid you try something

- new, you get dragged through the mud. Should he be a dark Cuban to do it? They can't look past artwork because color stumbles before they can even see through it.
7. [Milana @Nai](#) you don't even know what I am so please stop assuming! You're on a makeup page have you realized? His artwork is about transformation why isn't anyone mad that he transform a white Girl to an Asian women??! 😏
 8. [lambri @milana](#) no.. We live in a world where people get lip injections and bigger asses and darken their skin to resemble colored folk yet colored folk are made fun of it for being authentic! Lol. We are our culture. Apparently.
 9. [Nai @milana](#) Guess what? WE care. African-Cuban, African-American. Or just plain African, we ~~WE~~ Weeeeeee care
 10. [lambri @Ncar](#) I knw all about culture appropriation
 11. [Nai @milana](#) since you're the poster child here, next time tell him to paint a girl as dark as me to your middle eastern or white self. I would LOVE to see that talent on him page. I would love for all women agreeing that this art to still say that shit is art too.
 12. [Ncar @milana](#) it become color and culture when it come to cultural appropriation which by your tone sounds like you haven't experienced considering you have lip fillers 😏😏
 13. [Ncar @lambri](#) wong person 😏😏
 14. [Tia @milana](#) so I'm gonna address this real quick.. Just bc you were featured on his page doesn't make you captain save a ho. You can cape for this foolishness all you want but what you WONT do is tell me and my beautiful black women how we shouldn't be offended by something you don't identify as. So you can cut that right now. Second.... Like I said, there is not one BLACK woman represented on this page. I didn't say middle eastern, or anything elseI said BLACK women. I'm so tired of you non_black women trying to tell us how we should feel.
 15. [lambri @milana](#) of course u don't lol. I can speak for many poc when i say that we have been made fun of years for having big butts big breasts and big lips and darker skin. Now everyone wants resemble what many if us naturally have and gey credit for it. Back when black celebs had big asses and big lips noone cared. Soon as Kylie and the rest of the flock got on board it changed the game. And like always blacks should get over it! Lol. Our culture and way of life is compromised and stolen, like always, with no recognition.
 16. [milana @Tia](#) there is black woman on his page and in video tutorials and they're all beautiful!!! I'm not talking about myself only. It's not about defending because there's nothing defend here lol you just choose to see it a certain way make which makes you guys racist. Why would u make this post about black women only? How come no one is mad that he turned a white Girl to an Asian women?
 17. [Themadblack @milana](#) Asian women were mad when he did yellow face too!! 🤔omfg
 18. [Tia @milana](#) YOU DO NOT DICTATE HOW I AS A BLACK WOMAN SHOULD FEEL ABOUT ANY PERSON TRANSFORMING A WHITE WOMAN INTO A BLACK WOMAN. So do not try to argue that point with me or any of my other black sisters. You will lose every time. And guess what, it's just as much a problem if he transforms a white woman into an Asian woman. But if the Asian women do not speak up who am I to make them have an issue. It's wrong all across the board. You know what's racist? When you cannot see a problem with racism. That makes YOU part of the problem. We have no choice to see racism for what it is bc we deal with it DAILY. I'm not explaining another thing to you bc you are so narrow minded, doe eyed, oblivious, and ignorant to REALITY. So I'm deciding not to cast another one of my pearls amongst swine. Have a great day
 19. [milana @Themadblack](#) wtf is yellow face lol why the fuck are we comparing skin colors. We are all one!
 20. [Atong @Tia](#) amen sis
 21. [Atong @milana](#) lol the fact that you don't know what yellow face is making your ignorance shine through. Just give it up, learn from your mistakes, and stop harassing us.
 22. [milana @Tia](#) it seems as though there's a lot of anger and you're projecting it into the wrong feed. Voice yourself somewhere. Funny how people take this upon themselves and get offended #bye
 23. [milana @Atong](#) yes because I don't judge people by the color of their skin like you guys do

24. Tia @Atong girl don't even entertain her. She was one of this "artists" clients and she is out here caping hard for him. And she is just as, if not more ignorant. Don't even waste your time sis.
25. Atong @milana saying someone is Asian or black or whatever race they are is not judging them, it is simply stating a biological fact. But making an assumption based off their race is judging and wrong. Get it right.
26. Atong @Tia your right at this point she's just amusing me and I'm done.
27. Themadblack @milana we are not all one my ancestors were enslaved and I'm still oppressed for my skin. So are Asians so are Mexicans so are Indians and the more you ~~wanna~~ be ignorant and act like nothings going on in the world the more you're gonna get on everyone's nerves
28. milana @Atong categorizing people in "color" is WRONG that's all I'm saying
29. Tia @Atong btw....your skin is GORGEOUS. if I could get a glow like yours I wouldn't need a highlighter lol
30. ~~Watashi~~ @milana don't say "categorizing by color is wrong" after you replied to me and ended your entire by saying "you guys" .Makes you a hypocrite because you too were categorizing
31. Tia @milana girl I already dismissed you!! Don't @ me anymore. What part of have a good day don't you understand 😏😏

Supa @Tia SAY IT LOUDER FOR THE PEOPLE IN THE BACK

- **Rate the conversation**

Not at all impolite	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Extremely impolite
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- **Please underline the parts that you think constitute impolite language.**
- **How would you describe your reaction to the language used in this conversation? Please be as concrete and specific as possible.**

- **If you think impolite language was used, what might be the reason(s) behind its use, based on what you see in the conversation?**

- **Would this be a good example to teach to students? Why or Why not?**

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

1. Have you ever been in a situation where impolite language in your second language was used against you or others around you (either online or face-to-face)? What was the cause? How did you deal with the situation?
 - a. What do you think could have been different if you were taught about impolite language in formal second language classroom?
2. Impolite language can take the form of:
 - a. Insults (e.g., You are a bastard)
 - b. Pointed criticism/ complaints (e.g., this is total crap)
 - c. Challenging or unpalatable questions (e.g., why are making my life miserable?)
 - d. Condescension (e.g., that's being babyish)
 - e. Message enforcer (e.g., listen here)
 - f. Dismissal (e.g., go to hell)
 - g. Silencer (e.g., shut the hell up)
 - h. Threats (e.g., I'm going to kill you)
 - i. Curses and ill-wishes (e.g., please die)

Which one(s) would you consider teaching/ learning, and why? Are there ones you would not teach/ learn at all? Which and why?
3. How do you feel about using social media to teach or learn impolite language?

4. Please look at this Instagram post and read the following comments:



1. [act...](#) i hate saudi arabia buy happy for the women there ❤️
2. [act...](#) i didn't know she had so many saudi fans thats sick
3. [i_mt...@act...](#) Awe no please love us
4. [mahaa...@act...](#) thank you! 🌸
5. [act...@i_mt...](#) OMG no I love the people just have some issues with the government.
I'm also muslim and happy for the saudi people & progression
6. [eklee...@act...](#) Saudi Arabia hates you as well sweetheart 😊
7. [mahaa...@act...](#) أشكرها لدعمها للسيدات السعوديات. I'm thanking her for supporting Saudi women. It's her personal choice to hate Saudi Arabia.
8. [act...@mahaa...](#) I just meant the government not the people 🇸🇦❤️ came out wrong. I'm also muslim 🌟🌟🌟🌟
9. [ghadi...@act...](#) why you hate saudi arabia?

- a) What do you think of the whole conversation? Do you see any instances of impoliteness?
- b) What do you think of the 1st and 2nd comments made by (act)?
- c) What do you think of the 3rd comment made by (i_mt) in response to (act)? What is he/she trying to say?
- d) What do you think about (act)'s later comments in the conversation?
- e) Are there any other impoliteness instances you'd like to point out in the comments?

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