

Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies Used in Putin's Speech at Annexation Ceremony

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the types of impoliteness strategies used in Putin's speech at the annexation ceremony. All of Putin's speeches were intentionally delivered to cause damage to the hearers' negative and positive faces. Culpeper's (2011) classifications of impoliteness, which consist of five strategies that are the opposite of politeness, were adopted. The data were collected from the President of Russia, providing a rich source for analysis. Qualitative and quantitative analyses were employed to achieve the study objectives. Qualitative analysis allowed for a detailed examination of the impoliteness strategies employed, while quantitative analysis provided a broader understanding of their frequency and distribution. Putin mostly used the negative impoliteness strategy, directly attacking the West and their policies. Furthermore, he considered his authority higher than Kyiv and the West, so he insulted, belittled, blamed, and accused them. He used "bald on record" in several texts in a direct, concise, and clear tone when talking to the Ukraine President and his elites. The two remaining strategies, positive and mock impoliteness were rarely used. This research contributes to a better understanding of the messages conveyed by Putin and offers a political analysis of his speech. It provides valuable insights into the dynamics of impoliteness in political discourse and sheds light

on powerful figures' strategic use of language. The study's novelty lies in its exploration of impoliteness in Putin's speech, adding to the existing body of knowledge on politeness and impoliteness in communication.

Keywords: Putin's speech; negative impoliteness; bald on record impoliteness; authority; political messages.

INTRODUCTION

Goffman first introduced politeness theory in the 1950s, and was later developed by Brown and Levinson (1978). Their book, *Universals in language usage: Politeness phenomena*, was republished in 1987 with a new title, *Politeness: Some universals in language usage* (Watts, Ide and Ehlich, 2005). Politeness can be defined as "the ability to show awareness of another person's face" (Yule, 1995:60), as everyone has two faces: a negative and a positive one. Politeness theory includes five strategies that show how speakers can use language without offending the hearer(s): negative politeness, positive politeness, off-record, bald on record, and going off-record (Watts, 2003; Widyastuti, 2019; Soehendro and Jumanto, 2022). Additionally, it includes six maxims: sympathy, generosity, agreement, tact, modesty, and approbation (Leech, 1983). It is not an innate quality but rather a learned behavior that is acquired through interactions with society and other individuals (Rosyida, 2019). As such, it is not a natural phenomenon that existed before humans but rather a socially and historically constructed concept of good manners towards others (Shanshal, 2019). Demonstrating qualities such as modesty, kindness, and tact are all components of politeness that serve the same purpose. The concept of 'face' is closely associated with politeness, with pragmatists viewing it as an individual's public self-image that others are expected to recognize as their emotional and social identity (Shahrokhi and Bidabadi, 2013; Syafryadin, 2021).

Then this theory was developed by other scholars, and Richard J. Watts (2003) has even attempted to investigate the unacceptable and inappropriate behavior in social interactions, which are considered the opposite of politeness (Milal and Pramono, 2021). Additionally, Culpeper (2011) introduced impoliteness theory as the opposite of politeness theory. This theory has garnered almost as much attention as the politeness theory. According to Culpeper (2005), impoliteness theory shows how attacking others is perceived and conveyed in society through the use of specific strategies (Keshavarz, 2022). Linguists have better understood this phenomenon through Brown and Levinson's model (1987). For Watts (2003), impoliteness theory has faced struggles in the past and present, and it will likely continue to face these struggles in the future (see Jamet and Jobert 2013). Simply put, this theory explains the threatening or attacking behavior toward others' faces that can lead to social conflicts (Lambrou and Stockwell, 2007).

According to Culpeper (2005), impoliteness has two components: a mental attitude and an activated attitude. The mental attitude is associated with a participant who holds negative evaluative beliefs about particular behaviors in a particular social context, and the activated attitude is concerned with the attitude that is activated by those certain

contextual behaviors. Additionally, he distinguishes between rudeness (i.e., caused unintentionally) and impoliteness (i.e., caused intentionally). Culpeper (2005) stated that impoliteness occurs when: (1) the speaker deliberately communicates face-attack, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behavior as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2) (Culpeper, 1996). In this study, all of Putin's speeches were intentionally said to cause damage to the hearers' negative and positive faces. The researchers of this work adopted Culpeper's classifications of impoliteness, which are the opposite of politeness, and included the five strategies shown in Table (1):

Table (1): Culpeper's (2011) Five Impoliteness Strategies

No	Impoliteness Strategy	Definition
1	Bald on record impoliteness	For Culpeper (ibid), the speaker has the power to damage the listener's face by saying the utterance in a direct, profane, clear, explicit, or straightforward way. For instance, <i>shut the gate, don't talk too much, shut up</i> , etc.
2	Positive impoliteness	In this strategy, the interlocutor tries to show the addressee that s/he is disapproved or unwelcomed in any activity where the hearer's positive face is damaged by him/her. Like, <i>you don't matter to me, sorry, what the fuck you doing here, you are an idiot</i> , etc.
3	Negative impoliteness	According to this, the speaker wants to attack the listener's negative face wants by clearly making others in a negative situation, invading their space, interfering with their freedom of action, or humiliating them. As, <i>"How much do you make?"</i> , <i>"stop wearing these stupid clothes"</i> , etc.
4	Mock Impoliteness	For this strategy, the face-threatening act is actualized with the use of politeness strategies that are plainly insincere, where it gives the opposite meaning of what the speaker has been uttered. Such as, someone has had an accident, and his friend said in a sarcastic way: <i>"Have a nice day."</i>
5	Withhold politeness	The speaker does not use polite behavior as the listener expects it. As seen in this utterance, S1: <i>Would you drive me to the main street?</i> S2: <i>(Silent)</i> (ibid).

In every communicative encounter, when a person intentionally attacks another person's face to cause harm, it results in damage to their positive or negative face, and such behavior is considered impolite. Impoliteness has been defined in various ways. For instance, according to Culpeper (2005), anything that causes social disharmony and

conflict is impolite. Impoliteness has been studied in different fields, including business studies, history, social psychology, literary studies, political studies, conflict studies, media studies, sociology, religion, education and others (see P'erez de Ayala, 2001; Bolívar, 2005; Toddington, 2015; and Nainggolan's, 2021; Rahmawati, Hidayat and Kurniawan, 2021; Pasaribu, Daulay and Nasution, 2022). The use of impoliteness in political texts is one characteristic that attracts political researchers' attention. Nevertheless, there are still insufficient impoliteness studies in political analysis (Minoo and Ashkan 2019).

Several studies have been conducted to analyze the use of impoliteness theory in political texts. For example, Nainggolan (2021) examined the hatred directed at Donald Trump, using Culpeper's (2005) strategies in the analysis of data collected from several comments. The writer focused on four strategies only: bald-on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and mock impoliteness. Another study by Cahyono (2018) analyzed Trump's tweets and showed that his power made him use offensive language in different tweets on Twitter. Furthermore, Rheem and Ahmed (2022) analyzed Biden's speech during the withdrawal from Afghanistan using data collected from a written transcript on a website and from YouTube. In their paper, Biden was found to have used all five impoliteness strategies in several situations.

Additionally, Ifechelobi and Okpokiri (2021) worked on data collected from selected Nigerian newspapers, focusing on political actors' speeches of Nigeria's two major political parties. They used Culpeper's classifications and Austin's theory to show the strong connection between positive impoliteness strategy and electoral violence in Nigeria (see Garcia-Pastor 2002; Harris, Grainger, and Mullany 2006; Maalej 2012; Ibrahim 2020). Based on what has been mentioned, this study focuses on Putin's speech, aiming to uncover the political messages he intends to convey in each context and whether these statements are appropriate.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researchers tried to investigate the types of strategies used in Putin's speech at the annexation ceremony and whether the messages were intended to cause damage to the hearers' positive or negative faces. To determine the types of impoliteness strategies used, the researchers relied on Culpeper's (2011) classification of impoliteness theory, which has five categories: negative impoliteness, positive impoliteness, bald on record, sarcasm or mock impoliteness, and withhold impoliteness. This study did not consider the last strategy as the intended hearers were not involved in face-to-face communication. The data were collected from the President of Russia. At the same time, other sources such as The Washington Post, Al Jazeera, News Agencies, and Reuters mainly focused on attacking Kyiv only. However, Putin attacked both the West and Kyiv,

particularly the United States. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses have been used to accomplish the study objectives. The Frequency analysis was used to demonstrate how many times impoliteness strategies were used in Putin's speech.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

During the annexation ceremony, Putin often attacked the hearer's face and used a clear, direct, and concise approach when discussing the West and its policies. He also attacked countries that abide by Western rules. In one message, Putin said, "*We will defend our land with all the powers and means at our disposal... who is not with us is against us.*" He expressed his desire and blatantly attacked the intended person's face. He formally called on the President of Ukraine to end hostilities, but it was done directly: *We call on the Kyiv regime to immediately end hostilities...*" In other situations, the President of Russia directly attacks the West without trying to reduce the potential face-threatening impact, as well he criticizes Western policies and neo-colonial plans, as it appears clearly in the below quotation:

"West ... threw off their masks, showed their true insides... their neo-colonial plans in the same hypocritical way, even with a pretense of peacefulness... undermining any sovereign centers of development... They target everyone..."

He clearly uses straightforward language to show his disapproval about different issues, as spreading corrupted thoughts into the societies, doing illegal things, robbing people's rights, telling lies to the world, and other things, as it appears plainly in the below quotation:

The West... agreements... go to the wastebasket... are declared false.... a dirty deceit... treaties... has no moral right... to stutter about the freedom of democracy... have been unilaterally broken ...They drowned the truth in an ocean of myths, illusions and fakes, using extremely aggressive propaganda, lying recklessly, like Goebbels... They spit on the natural right of billions of people, most of humanity, to freedom and justice, to determine their own future on their own. Now they have completely moved to a radical denial of moral norms, religion, and family... the same system of robberies and racketeering... the dictatorship of the Western elites is directed against all societies... a complete denial of man, the overthrow of faith and traditional values, the suppression of freedom acquiring the features of a "reverse religion... to the list of barbarians and savages..."

The importance of impoliteness in the above text serves the purpose of assertively expressing Putin's position and criticism without employing diplomatic language or

softening the message. Through the use of direct and blunt attacks, Putin aims to convey his disapproval of specific policies, actions, and ideologies with clarity and impact.

As well, as attacking United States and its policy and followers (i.e., countries that follow western rules) in different ways. Putin employs impoliteness to criticize and condemn their actions and policies. He calls attention to the historical use of nuclear weapons [the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II]; thus, Putin implies that the United States established a precedent for deploying these immensely destructive weapons. Besides, he directly and explicitly accused both the United States and Great Britain of purposefully demolishing multiple German cities without any military justification. Putin refers to the aggression and brute force in US policy, and he claims that the US dictates its terms using a "fist law" approach, which can be masked at times but ultimately represents the same underlying essence of coercion and use of force. This puts Putin's perspective as a critique against their actions and policies.

"The United States.... use nuclear weapons twice, destroying the Japanese cities... " ... the US... turned... many other German cities into ruins without any military necessity... to intimidate both our country and the whole world... The US dictate is based on brute force, on fist law. Sometimes beautifully wrapped, sometimes without any wrapper, but the essence is the same – fist law... sheer deception... It's just designed for fools."

For Negative impoliteness, Putin insulted and belittled Zelenskyy's self-image when he described the West as "*their real masters*". Furthermore, he invaded his neighbor's home when he put his hand on southeastern Ukraine with a vote and violated international law by saying, "*People living in... are becoming our citizens. Forever.*" Throughout his speech, he belittled, blamed, doubted and accused the West, and associated Western and US expectations and deeds with bad intentions (attacking the Western negative face). It is evident that Putin used negative impoliteness to attack the negative face wants of his targets, aiming to damage their self-image and undermine their authority.

"The so-called West... they expected that Russia would not recover... the neo-colonial system ... to hit us, weaken and destroy Russia... to plunder ... at the expense of the power of the dollar... to collect real tribute from humanity... hence their aggression towards independent states, towards traditional values and original cultures, attempts to undermine... others are bribed, intimidated...they destroy entire states,

leaving behind humanitarian catastrophes, disasters, ruins, millions of ruined, mangled human destinies, terrorist enclaves, social disaster zones, protectorates, colonies and semi-colonies... is waging against Russia. They do not wish us freedom... see us as a colony... do not want equal cooperation, but robbery... see us not as a free society, but as a crowd of soulless slaves... Our development... is also a threat to them... The West is counting on impunity... Where did they come from? Who even saw these rules? Who agreed?...why they decide so, who gave them such a right is not clear... totalitarianism, despotism and apartheid... divide the world...-"rogue country", "authoritarian regime"... discriminate, divide peoples...that plans for interventions in Russia were repeatedly made... the West managed to seize the wealth of Russia... treated us like a colony – trillions of dollars were siphoned out of the country... instead of democracy-suppression and exploitation; instead of freedom – enslavement and violence... occupy... the development of biological weapons, experiments on living people... destructive policy, wars, and robbery... provoked today's colossal surge in migration flows. Millions of people suffer deprivation, abuse, die...Everything goes to the same European countries... it is another swindle and outright deception... The American and most European politicians ... uses the tragedy of these people to weaken their competitors, to destroy nation states. the United States, pushing through the EU's complete renunciation of Russian energy...to completely taking over the European market... switched to sabotage... having organized explosions...they actually began to destroy the pan-European energy infrastructure... take everything impudently, blackmail, bribery, intimidation... They switch arrows to Russia... They lie again... overcame by appropriating the legacy and resources of the Soviet Union ... They need to break Russia and other states... in order to plunder other people's wealth... have been unilaterally broken under far-fetched pretexts."

According to the above text, Putin uses negative impoliteness to strongly criticize and belittle various entities, particularly Kyiv, the West, and the United States. Putin argues that the objective of the West is to uphold a neo-colonial system, exploit other nations for their own gain, and undermine the values and cultures deeply rooted in tradition. He proceeds to criticize the ruling elites of specific states, alleging their involvement in corrupt practices, intimidation tactics, and the destabilization of entire nations, resulting in dire humanitarian catastrophes. Putin raises profound doubts regarding the moral right of the West to pass judgment on matters of freedom and democracy. He characterizes historical transgressions committed by Western elites, such as the global slave trade, genocide of Indian tribes, and the opium trade, accusing them of intentionally exterminating ethnic groups and treating nations like colonies.

Furthermore, Putin accuses the West has occupied various countries and engaging in destructive policies, wars, and robberies. He suggests that the surge in migration flows can belong to the West's actions, where they use the tragedy of these people to weaken competitors and destroy nation-states. Putin specifically criticizes the American elite for exploiting these individuals' suffering to advance their interests and undermine their rivals. Also, he directs accusations toward the West, particularly the Anglo-Saxons, of engaging in sabotage and deliberately undermining the pan-European energy infrastructure. He argues that the West acts brazenly, adopting tactics such as blackmail, bribery, and intimidation. He asserts that the West often shifts blame onto Russia and lies about the root causes of various issues, claiming that the West used the collapse of the Soviet Union to break Russia and other nations to further their own interests. In short, Putin points out the unilateral breaking of treaties concerning anti-missile defense and intermediate- and shorter-range missiles, implying a lack of trustworthiness on the part of the West.

He did not stop there; he also belittled and ridiculed Germany, Japan, and the Republic of Korea by describing them as slave and occupied countries: "*They actually occupy Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea... cynically call them equal allies... this is a real shame... like a slave, silently and meekly swallow this rudeness.*"

In positive impoliteness, Putin ignored and excluded Kyiv from considering the case of the four regions: "*But we will not discuss the choice of the people in Donetsk... We will rebuild ruined settlements, housing, schools, hospitals... our vast motherland.*" Putin used a positive impoliteness strategy to show his superiority over the West and its allies by attacking their faces positively. He expressed his own positive qualities and made the hearers feel inferior by comparison. Additionally, he used negative impoliteness strategy by attacking Kyiv directly and indirectly to show his disapproval of their actions and to distance himself from them. The bald on record strategy was also used by Putin when he made direct and blunt statements about his intentions and desires without any attempt to mitigate their potential face-threatening impact. Overall, Putin used a combination of strategies to convey his political message in the annexation ceremony.

Putin also utilized a form of impoliteness known as mock impoliteness. In the quoted speech, Putin used phrases such as "*noble medical research*" and "*Sometimes beautifully wrapped*" as examples of mock impoliteness. These phrases were intended to be dishonest and convey a meaning that contradicts the literal

interpretation. By employing this strategy, Putin aimed to undermine the credibility or sincerity of certain actions or statements. When Putin referred to "noble medical research," he likely used mock impoliteness to suggest that the research being discussed was not truly noble or ethical. This use of irony implies that there may be ulterior motives or hidden agendas behind the research being presented. Similarly, when he mentioned something being "*beautifully wrapped*," he was likely employing mock impoliteness to suggest that the outward appearance or presentation of a certain concept or idea was deceiving or misleading. This use of sarcasm implies that there is something undesirable or questionable beneath the surface. By employing mock impoliteness, Putin aimed to subtly criticize or undermine certain aspects or actions without explicitly stating his disapproval. Overall, the use of mock impoliteness in Putin's speech highlights his skill in employing rhetorical devices to convey his intended meaning while maintaining a certain level of indirectness. Analyzing such strategies provides valuable insights into the persuasive techniques used in political discourse and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the speech's implications.

The results show that much of Putin's speech centered on tacking the West, accusing them of insulting and belittling Kyiv's self-image and excluding them from deciding the case of four regions. Additionally, he belittled the West and their elites in various ways. He accused them 54 times of being responsible for what is happening in Russia and the world. He also questioned the West and their elites many times, associating Western and US expectations and actions with bad intentions. The Table (2) clearly illustrates the frequency and percentage of the negative impoliteness used.

Table (2) Negative Impoliteness Frequency and Percentage

Negative Impoliteness	Frequency	Percent
Act of insulting	2	3%
Act of belittling	1	1%
Act of invading	1	1%
Act of accusation	54	71%
Act of blaming	4	5%
Act of questioning	6	8%
Act of associating expectations with bad deeds	8	11%
Total	76	100%

The Table shows that the act of accusation was used more frequently than other acts in Putin's speech (71%); the act of associating expectations with bad deeds came after it (11%); the act of questioning was in third place (8%); and the act of blaming the West was in fourth place (5%). Meanwhile, the other types of negative impoliteness were used almost equally (3% and 1%).

Regarding bald on record, Putin obviously talked about his desires and attacked the hearer's face. He also clearly attacked Western elites (i.e., countries that follow Western rules). Moreover, he formally called the President of Ukraine to end everything, but he did so very directly.

Table (3) Bold on Record Frequency and Percentage

Bold on Record	Frequency	Percent
Act of Attacking the West	28	70%
Act of Attacking the US	6	15%
Act of Attacking the elites	2	5%
Act of calling others directly	1	2.5%
Act of talking about someone's desire	3	7.5%
Total	40	100%

According to Table (3), the act of attacking the West has the highest frequency (70%), followed by the act of attacking the US (15%). Talking about someone's desire is ranked in the third place (7.5%), while attacking the elites and calling others directly are at about the same level (5% and 2.5%).

In positive impoliteness, Putin ignored and excluded Kyiv from considering the case of the four regions: "*We will not discuss the choice...we will rebuild ruined settlements.*" For sarcasm and mock impoliteness, he used "*noble medical research*" and "*beautifully wrapped*", which are clearly dishonest, where he intends the opposite of these. Finally, this paper has not used withholding impoliteness because we do not have a hearer involved in Putin's speech.

Table (4) Impoliteness Strategies Frequency and Percentage

Impoliteness Strategies	Frequency	Percent
Bald on record	40	33%
Negative impoliteness	76	63%
Positive impoliteness	2	2%
Sarcasm or mock impoliteness	2	2%
Total	120	100%

For Table (4), negative impoliteness is the most frequently used impoliteness strategy (63%), followed by bold on record (33%). The other two strategies were used less frequently (2%).

CONCLUSION

The listener understands an act as purposely face-attacking when it causes disharmony and conflicts in society; therefore, impoliteness occurs when the speaker deliberately performs an act to attack others' faces (Culpeper, 2005). In this paper, the researchers aimed to investigate the impoliteness strategies used by Putin during the annexation ceremony. The analysis of Putin's impoliteness strategies, supported by qualitative and quantitative data, provides valuable insights into his use of offensive and impolite words. The researchers adopted Culpeper's (2011) classifications of impoliteness. The first four strategies, bald on record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock impoliteness, were used in different contexts. It became clear that Putin discussed his desires and attacked the hearers' faces directly in most cases. He spoke clearly and concisely when talking about his enemies and attacked countries that followed them. The results of using impoliteness strategies in Putin's speech showed that negative impoliteness is the most common impoliteness strategy, followed by bold on record. The other two strategies were used less often. Thus, the messages were conveyed directly without considering the consequences of the words. Putin expressed his anger openly and accused the West, US, and their elites for what is happening in the world and Russia. In other words, all of Putin's speeches were intended to cause damage to the hearers' negative and positive faces. The researchers argue that Putin's perceived authority and possession of devastating weapons gave him a sense of freedom to employ such language without significant concern for potential negative consequences for himself or his country. This finding

highlights the significance of power dynamics and their influence on the use of impoliteness strategies in political discourse. However, the researchers also emphasize the need for caution in Putin's relationships with other countries. While he may feel emboldened by his authority and weaponry, the potential trouble that could arise from strained diplomatic relations is acknowledged. This suggests that, despite his perceived freedom to employ offensive language, there are still potential risks and consequences for Putin and his country. The research findings emphasize the delicate balance between assertiveness and the potential negative implications of impoliteness on international relations.

In summary, this study contributes to understanding the messages conveyed by Putin through his impoliteness strategies and provides a political analysis of these strategies. The significance of the study becomes evident by connecting the findings to the theory of impoliteness and the observed data. It sheds light on the use of negative impoliteness, the influence of power dynamics, and the potential consequences of impoliteness in international relations. These insights have broader implications for understanding the dynamics of political discourse and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field.

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