

Discursive Construction of Asian Responses towards Impoliteness

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the responses of Asian speakers towards impoliteness they received. Using conversations between participants of the reality TV show ‘The Amazing Race Asia’ from Season Two and Season Four (Lau & White, 2007, 2010) as our data, we investigated how participants responded when their ‘face’ (sense of dignity) was being threatened or attacked. We explored the response options proposed by Bousfield (2008) and applied them to this Asian context. Findings of the study indicate that most of the participants responded to impoliteness by denying responsibility by offering an account or explaining their respective mistakes in order to reduce face damage. Those who avoided argument tended to either accept the face-threatening act or remain silent. Additionally, obeying a command was a response found in the study, which may be included under response strategies of accepting a face-threatening act.

Keywords: Responses, impoliteness, face-threat, counter, offensive, defensive

INTRODUCTION

Impoliteness is a multidisciplinary field of study (Culpeper, 2011, p.3). Media studies such as the study of television shows is an area of research that can be scrutinised for aspects of impoliteness. Impoliteness is largely embedded in reality TV shows, especially game shows such as ‘Survivors’,

‘Hell’s Kitchen’, ‘The Amazing Race’ and many others in which participants work as a team in order to win. In these situations, we can identify how participants handle pressure or emotion and respond to the impoliteness they receive from their team members.

During an interview, Henry Reed, a participant in ‘The Amazing Race Asia’ Season 2, claimed that he and his partner had trouble finding the directions to a pit stop during the race because of their poor communication skills. His words are given below:

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We definitely had trouble driving because we didn't communicate very well (The Amazing Race Asia Season 2, 2007).

Another participant, Paula Taylor, from 'The Amazing Race Asia' Season 2 further confirmed that if the team (Henry and Terri Reed) had not argued much, they might have been a really strong team. She said:

The fact that they fight so much actually slows them down. So like now, we just can see we don't scare about them anymore because really I'm sure if they don't have any emotional fight, they'll be really strong (The Amazing Race Asia Season 2, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

According to Austin (1990, p.277), a hearer will determine what is polite or impolite according to contextual factors, which include hearers' expectations of speakers' intentions and non-verbal cues. The participants' poor communication might be due to a lack of tolerance between the speaker and the hearer.

Responding to the claims made by the Asian participants of 'The Amazing Race Asia' reality TV programme that their constant arguments and use of impoliteness led to poor performance, this study investigated the kinds of responses made based on the impolite utterances received. While most studies have overlooked these issues (Culpeper *et al.*, 2003), this study

intends to fill the gap by identifying the ways hearers respond to face threats.

Responses Towards Impoliteness

Stewart (2008, p.36) claimed that hearers depend on their previous experience or knowledge to decode ongoing conversations. Based on Bousfield's (2008) response options model, when a receiver has received impoliteness which damages their face, they either respond or do not respond (Bousfield, 2008, p.188).

Bousfield's (2008) response options model shows that individuals who choose not to respond will remain silent. Staying silent can convey many meanings. The individual may be playing dumb or not knowing how to defend himself. Some would rather stay silent to accept the face-threatening act. Others might be silent while thinking how to defend themselves (Bousfield, 2008, p.188). It could also be offensive when one refuses to speak when it is one's turn to speak (Bousfield, 2008, p.188).

Otherwise, participants might remain silent when the meaning conveyed by an utterance is unclear or inaudible when spoken. Sometimes, attempts to answer are denied as the speaker constantly interrupts (Bousfield, 2008, p.190). In certain situations, it is better to stay silent to avoid more conflict, especially when facing a superior (Bousfield, 2008, p.191). This response aggravates the damage of face because the receivers are assumed as accepting the cause of the offending event. Apart from staying silent, withdrawing is

another no-response strategy. In this case, one participant withdraws physically, leaving the conversation in order to end the argument (Bousfield, 2008, p.215).

Conversely, individuals who choose to respond will either accept or counter the face attack (Bousfield, 2008, p.193). When receivers accept face attacks, they either agree or take the blame or even apologise for causing the offending event. Similar to staying silent, this, in fact, worsens face-threatening acts (Bousfield, 2008, p.193).

Based on Bousfield's (2008) response options model, countering a face attack can be divided into offensive and defensive strategies. However, both strategies come in pairs, such as offensive-offensive or offensive-defensive (Bousfield, 2008, p.193). An offensive-offensive strategy involves countering a face attack with another face attack. It usually occurs among interlocutors with equal social or power positions (Bousfield, 2008, p.193). For instance:

S1: Shut up, you fat pig.

S2: Shut up, you idiot.

In this conversation, it can be noted that after being commanded by S1 to keep quiet and being insulted as a fat pig, S2 counters the offensive utterance with another face attack by calling S1 an idiot.

Individuals who use offensive-defensive strategies tend to defend their own face. Bousfield (2008, p.195) notes that this strategy aims to deflect or block in order to reduce the face damage. Abrogation is a defensive strategy speakers use by switching

roles and avoiding the responsibility for causing the offending event in order to save face (Bousfield, 2008, p.195).

According to Bousfield (2008, p.197), ignoring a face attack is a defensive counter strategy where the individual responds positively or expresses insincere agreement. This often occurs due to differing power positions. On the other hand, offering an account or explaining one's action may also defend and reduce the face damage. In other words, the recipient can deny the responsibility with an explanation or by providing excuses (Bousfield, 2008).

Pleading is another type of defensive strategy in Bousfield's (2008) response options model. For instance, an individual may respond with some politeness strategies like "Please don't do this to me" or cry (Bousfield, 2008, p.200). When they plead, they are damaging their own positive face. This strategy is used to seek sympathy from the offender and, at the same time, make them look terrible for not withdrawing the face attack (Bousfield, 2008, p.200).

The response options mentioned above were previously developed by Culpeper *et al.* (2003). Bousfield (2008) later modified these responses and expanded the model. According to Bousfield (2008, p.206), there are other defensive strategies in different discourses that can be considered. All of these response strategies (i.e. keeping silent, accepting face attack by agreeing or apologising, countering face attack with another face attack, explaining one's action, ignoring FTA, abrogating and standing off) are seen as being highly related to this study.

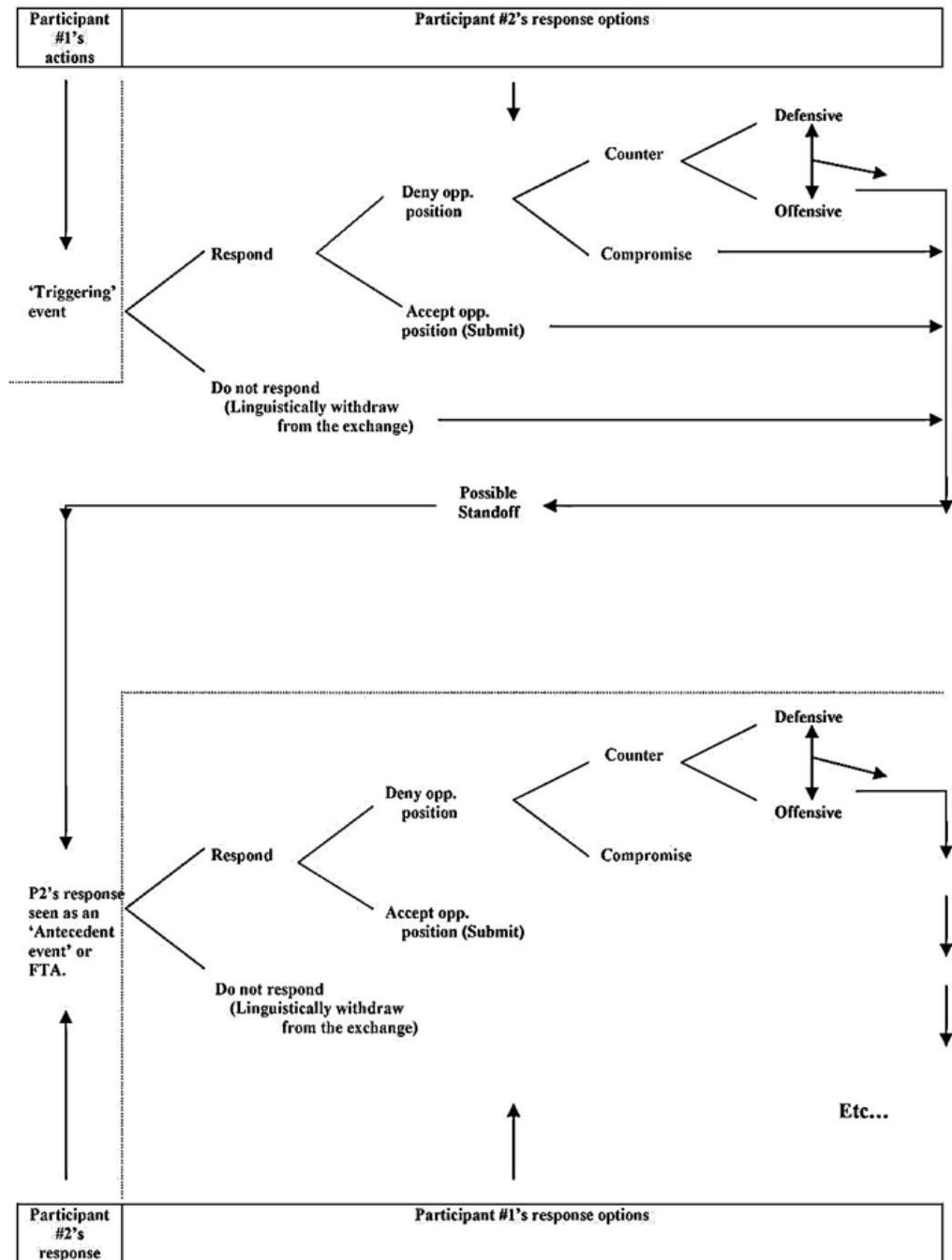


Fig. 1: Bousfield's (2008) response options model

Bousfield (2008) has applied the response options model on several TV shows such as 'Redcaps', 'Soldiers To Be', 'The Clampers', 'Parking Wars', 'Boiling Points' and 'Raw Blues'. He discovered that the recipients of impoliteness in these TV shows responded according to his response options model. However, there is no evidence found of the stand-off response option in the excerpts from the police, military or kitchen scenarios. This is because the participants in those data had different social roles and power relations in impoliteness discourses (Bousfield, 2008, p.215).

Nonetheless, Perelmutter's (2010) research shows a different kind of option. She conducted a study on conversations between a modern Russian mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Based on this study, she discovered that when the daughter-in-law was offended by the mother-in-law, such as when her performance of the household chores was criticised by her mother-in-law, she could not confront her directly due to social differences and power relations. However, she restored her face later by complaining to her peers in an online forum support group in order to gain their support or approval. Based on the study, the daughter-in-law metaphorically attacked the offender in order to restore her previous face damage.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This was a qualitative study examining how interlocutors responded to impoliteness. Conversation Analysis (CA) was employed

as a basis for the analysis, which included the features of turn-taking, overlaps and interruptions.

With the use of CA, it was also easier to analyse interruptions or when two individuals spoke simultaneously as they were represented in the transcript (Bousfield, 2008, p.8). For instance, overlapping speech occurred when speakers intended to take over the conversation. If the speakers attempted to prevent the interruption, they increased their volume and kept talking. Yet, overlapping can sometimes be co-operative when interlocutors are just mirroring what they say. As for adjacency pairs, arguments occurred when the expressed point of view was a follow-up with a challenge as response (Paltridge, 2006, p.115). Consequently, how the receivers responded to the insult or face-threat they received could be identified.

Hutchby (2008) conducted a study on impoliteness through the use of conversation analytic approach. Based on his study, he emphasised that researchers should be more focused on the way interlocutors orientated themselves towards impoliteness they received from others instead of just being concerned with particular linguistic devices (Furman, 2011). This is because conversation analysis deals with the way speakers organise their utterances during a conversation (Furman, 2011).

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The data gathered for this study were retrieved from four selected episodes in Season Two and six selected episodes in Season Four of 'The Amazing Race Asia'

(Lau & White, 2007, 2010) reality TV show (see Table 1). Each episode of the reality show was downloaded from ‘Watch Series’ (2007, 2010) website (<http://watch-series-tv.to/>). Season Two and Season Four were selected for this study based on participants’ social relationship.

This reality TV show was chosen to examine the way Asian participants interacted with each other while under pressure. It focuses on the participants, who have to perform specific tasks, and they are constantly being pressured to search for directions to get to their destination. Ultimately, they are competing with other participants from different countries in undertaking the tasks to reach their objective.

The selected participants for this study were Asians. Table 2 reveals the profile of the participants, which includes the pseudonyms, relationships among teammates, age, gender and the country they were from in Seasons 2 and 4.

There were a total of 14 participants sampled for this study. Out of these 14

participants, four came from Malaysia and four from Hong Kong while there were two participants each from Singapore, India and Indonesia. They were mostly siblings, friends, cousins or couples as stated in Table 2.

The conversations were naturally occurring speech and thus, spontaneous representations of the participants’ emotions. For instance, when participants succeeded at a task, they were delighted whereas, when they were faced with obstacles or challenges, they tended to argue.

The data were analysed based on the conversation analytic approach. The episodes were transcribed according to Jefferson’s (1984) Transcription Conventions (see Appendix). The conversations were organised according to different categories of responses using Bousfield’s (2008) response options model. The findings were, therefore, supported by the analytical vignette from the selected samples.

TABLE 1
Selected Episodes from Seasons 2 and 4 of ‘The Amazing Race Asia’

Season	Selected Episode	Minutes per Episode
2	1	47:59
	2	48:03
	7	46:59
	10	46:07
4	1	49:09
	2	51:34
	3	46:03
	4	47:28
	6	48:15
	12	44:02

TABLE 2
Profile of the Participants

Season	Year	Pseudonyms	Relationship	Age	Gender	Country
2	2007	Vivian	Sisters	29	Female	Malaysia
		Prue	Sisters	24	Female	Malaysia
2	2007	Molly	Dating for 10 Years	28	Female	Hong Kong
		Evan	Dating for 10 Years	26	Male	Hong Kong
4	2010	Cheryl	Rebel Pals	21	Female	Singapore
		Mona	Rebel Pals	22	Female	Singapore
4	2010	Hudson	Father & Daughter	53	Male	Indonesia
		Nicole	Father & Daughter	24	Female	Indonesia
4	2010	Ian	Married couple	33	Male	Malaysia
		Tyra	Married couple	38	Female	Malaysia
4	2010	Sean	Cousins	25	Male	India
		Mike	Cousins	23	Male	India
4	2010	Alex	Dating couple	32	Male	Hong Kong
		Whitney	Dating couple	24	Female	Hong Kong

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the conversations of the participants responding towards face attacks they received. Table 3 presents the frequency of the types of response strategies used by the Asian participants. The findings reveal that the defensive counter strategy, which is denying by offering accounts or explaining one's actions, was the most used strategy.

Defensive Counter Strategies

Defensive counter strategies used by participants sampled in this study included denying by offering an account or explaining one's action, ignoring an FTA, abrogation and stand-off.

Deny by offering accounts or explaining one's action. When their face was attacked,

several participants used this strategy to reduce the face threat by showing it to be erroneously delivered in the first place (Bousfield, 2008, p.198). In the following example, Prue doubts Vivian's sense of direction for being too dependent on her.

Example 1 (S2, E10):

Context: The following conversation occurred when Prue and Vivian were on their way to Hercules Fountain in Royal Palace, Hungary, to search for their next clue.

1. Prue: I think you're relying on me [to think where it is].
2. Vivian: [**I'm not relying on you**], Prue. I dunno.
3. Prue: Neither do I.

4. Vivian: So don't say that.
Don't say I'm relying on you. I'm not.
5. Prue: No, I'm saying if you think is that, then we can just try.

As shown in Example 1, line 1, Prue accused Vivian of not being independent enough when seeking directions. In return, Vivian defended herself by denying the accusation (line 2) and claimed that she was not relying on Prue (line 4) in order to reduce her face damage.

In Example 2, Mona doubted Cheryl's concentration while searching for the directions to get to their next task.

Example 2 (S4, E2):

Context: The following conversation took place in Sabah, Malaysia, when Mona and Cheryl were on their way to their next task.

1. Mona: Turn right?
2. Cheryl: Yeah.
3. Mona: [Are you reading the sign or looking at the scenery?]
4. Cheryl: [Oh wait, the sign.]
I'm looking at the sign and I'm matching it with my clue. You can't expect me give you an instant answer you know.

((Change of scene))

5. Cheryl: The marked flag. Oh, left, left. Why you turn right?
6. Mona: You pointed there, dude.
7. Cheryl: **I said left, here.**

In line 3, Mona doubted Cheryl for not focusing on the competition task. In return, Cheryl defended herself by claiming that

TABLE 3
Types of Response Strategies Used by Asian Participants

Types of Response Strategies Used by Asian Participants				Frequency
Respond (33)	Counter (21)	Defensive (19)	Offering an account or explaining one's action	13
			Ignoring FTA	3
			Abrogation	2
			Stand-off	1
	Accept (12)	Offensive (2)	Counter face attack with another face attack	2
Obey			5	
Agree			4	
Does Not Respond (17)	Silent	Apologise	3	
			17	

she needed some time to look for the sign, as shown in the utterances, “I’m looking at the sign and I’m matching it with my clue. You can’t expect me give you an instant answer you know,” (line 4). The second argument occurred when Mona misunderstood Cheryl’s direction and made a wrong turn. Then, she blamed Cheryl for pointing in the wrong direction in the utterance, “You pointed there,” (line 6). In return, Cheryl defended her face and insisted that she gave the correct direction (line 7).

These two examples illustrate one of the common responses that could be seen throughout the data in this study as the participants tried to justify their actions in a way to avoid a direct admission of responsibility.

Ignoring the face attack. This strategy usually occurred when participants responded with an insincere agreement or the implied face attack was ignored. In Example 3, Alex and Whitney were upset that they could not perform the first detour task.

Example 3 (S4, E4):

Context: The following conversation took place in Ambalangoda, Sri Lanka, when Alex and Whitney decided to switch detour tasks.

1. Alex: ((Bangs the table))
2. Whitney: Let’s go.
3. Alex: I told you.
4. Whitney: You said you can do it, right?

5. Alex: Yeah, yeah, can you do it? Can you tell me what is this?
6. Whitney: No.
7. Alex: No, can you do it? Can you just tell me? Don’t waste time. Can you tell me what’s this?
8. Whitney: No, we’re leaving.
9. Alex: No, I’m not leaving without you telling me this.
10. Whitney: Why? I don’t know it.
11. Alex: You’ve learned it.
12. Whitney: I don’t know it.
13. Alex: You’ve learned it.
14. Whitney: No, we didn’t do it over and over and over. Sorry.
- ((Change of scene))
15. Whitney: It’s your fault.
16. Alex: My fault? **It’s always my fault=**
17. Whitney: =Because it is your fault. You just like to get defensive.

In lines 5, 7 and 9, Alex attempted to seek disagreement with Whitney by urging her to read the words again. Whitney avoided agreeing with him (line 8) and abrogated the responsibility for choosing the task (line 15). In return, Alex replied with an insincere and sarcastic agreement,

“It’s always my fault” (line 16). According to Bousfield (2008, p.198), this strategy can also be offensive, given that it is an unconcealed misunderstanding of Alex’s meaning.

Abrogation. Abrogation is one of the defensive strategies in which participants switch roles to avoid responsibility of the offending event. In Example 4, Prue was upset at Vivian for entering the wrong lane.

Example 4 (S2, E7):

Context: The following conversation occurred when the team accidentally entered the wrong lane while heading to Yongin for their next task.

1. Prue: WE’RE SO CLOSE,
WE’RE SO CLOSE.
BUT I LOOKED
DOWN ((*at the map*)). SO I DIDN’T
KNOW WHERE
WE WERE
HEADING
ANYMORE. I
DUNNO WHAT
BROWN SIGN YOU
SAW.
2. Vivian: **BUT AT LEAST,
BUT AT LEAST
YOU ALSO DIDN’T
KNOW. YOU’RE
ALSO WRONG
YOU SEE.**
3. Prue: I KNOW WE ARE
SUPPOSED TO

KEEP LEFT. TO
KEEP LEFT. WE’RE
NOT SUPPOSED
TO TURN. WE’RE
NOT SUPPOSED
TO TURN 4.1 KM,
UNDERSTAND?

4. Vivian: I’m asking you, I’m asking you. Shhh::
Now, I’m asking you to calm down.
5. Prue: Hah::
Damn lah.

As shown in line 2, Vivian switched the responsibility of entering the wrong lane to Prue when she claimed that Prue was also wrong because she too was not aware of where they were heading. In return, Prue disagreed by stating that she had known all along that they were supposed to be in the left lane. Clearly, Vivian was trying to avoid becoming the only focus for the offending event when she shifted the responsibility to Prue.

Stand-off. This strategy often occurred when one of the participants changed the topic i.e. after realising that neither party was going to compromise. Example 5 is the continuation of the event from Example 4 when Vivian accidentally entered the wrong lane and caused her team to be delayed.

Example 5 (S2, E7):

Context: The following conversation took place in Woncheon, South Korea, where Vivian entered the wrong lane, which eventually led to the team wasting their time and

energy, as well. This resulted in Prue being impolite.

1. Prue: We have to get back.
Whatever it is we have to get back.
2. Vivian: I already say just now
I [was wrong.]
3. Prue: **[I DON'T CARE]
ABOUT JUST
NOW, THIS SUCKS
OK. [WE WERE ON
THE RIGHT
TRACK].**
4. Vivian: **[OK, just look at
Anseong.]**
5. Prue: WE WERE SO
CLOSE LIKE
ABOUT TEN
MINUTES AWAY.
You have to get back
or we will definitely
out ok, now.

In line 3, the utterance, "I don't care about just now" shows that Prue was unwilling to forgive Vivian. Instead, she kept reminding Vivian of her earlier mistake by shouting. In line 4, Vivian made a move to stand off by changing the topic, as shown in the utterance, "Ok, just look at Anseong." This defensive counter response shows that the receiver did not suffer any loss of impolite face damage.

Offensive Counter Strategy

Offensive counter strategy occurs when participants counter face attacks with another face attack. In other words, they

damage the other's face in order to save their own face. Example 6 shows that the team was arguing about the directions while on the road to their next destination.

Example 6 (S4, E1):

Context: The following conversation took place when Alex and Whitney were heading to Georgetown, Malaysia, for their next task.

1. Alex: Why is there a junction at the Georgetown?
2. Whitney: That's where it is.
3. Alex: **How do you know that?**
4. Whitney: Well, how do you know where it is? You don't know where it is. **Just shut up and drive.**
5. Alex: Just shut up and, **just shut up and sit there.**

From lines 3 and 4, it can be seen that Alex and Whitney continuously disagreed while trying to figure out the way to Georgetown. The question that Alex posed in line 3, "How do you know that?" indicates that he doubted Whitney's competency on the directions, which was also the primary reason for their disagreement. In return, they countered with an offensive-offensive strategy when they commanded each other to keep quiet, as shown in lines 4 and 5.

This offensive-offensive response strategy occurred because both interlocutors

were of equal social and power positions and so, they could freely command each other.

Accept. When participants take the responsibility for the reason in which the impolite utterances are expressed and accept the face attack (Bousfield, 2008, p.193), they tend to respond by obeying, agreeing or apologising.

Obey. Many believe that when the offender is more powerful than the hearer, the hearer will mostly keep silent and accept the face threatening act when his or her face has been attacked (Austin, 1990, p.279; Bousfield & Locher, 2008, pp.8-9; Culpeper *et al.*, 2003, p.1562). For instance, girls of Lebanese origin are raised to be disciplined and to obey their parents and teachers without a fuss (Bacha *et al.*, 2012). In Chinese culture, Confucian beliefs are upheld, for instance, children or the young must always respect and obey their parents or the elders; a wife must obey her husband; and an employee should obey his or her superior without any objection. Limberg (2009) claimed that English native speakers often prefer not to respond to a threat, especially if a threat is delivered by someone with greater power status. Hence, when one disobeys, he or she is considered impolite.

Rong (2009) has conducted a study on the characters of the film, 'The Joy Luck Club', to analyse conversations from the film based on politeness and impoliteness theories. The mother (Suyuan) believed that her daughter (June) should always obey her commands. When June did not do so, Suyuan reclaimed her status as mother by raising her voice. June's disobedience

and arguing with her mother appeared to be impolite due to the generation gap and societal expectations. However, the samples in this study show a different trend as the participants tended to obey their partners although they had the same power position.

In Example 7, Tyra was frustrated at her husband, Ian, for providing the wrong answer on the screen because every wrong answer led to them being penalised for two minutes.

Example 7 (S4, E3):

Context: The following conversation took place when Tyra and Ian were searching for the picture of a golden Buddha on the television screen, which would lead to the clue for their next destination.

1. Tyra: Honey, next time don't. **Just look okay? Look! Look! Look!** Don't just simply do too fast.
2. Ian: ((*found the clue*)) Correct!
3. Tyra: Huh, really?
4. Ian: Yeah. And we are *going* there. Whoo hoo hoo.
5. Tyra: Bag. Bag. Bag. I cannot carry the bag. **You carry it**, I'm tired now.
6. Ian: ((*obeys command and carries the bags*))

In line 1, it can be observed that Tyra treated Ian as if she were more intelligent than him. In this instance, she reprimanded

him for repeatedly providing the wrong answers. Using the contraction “don’t” and the interrogative form “Look!” illustrate the manner in which Tyra assumed higher authority and warned Ian to be more alert. Further, in line 5, the utterance, “You carry it,” indicates Tyra’s command that Ian should carry her bag. She appeared to be quite fed up, helpless and tired due to the mishap. In return, Ian kept quiet and obeyed his wife (line 6). In this instance, Ian seemed to be subservient, less powerful, listening and obeying his wife without any protests at all. Tyra, in this case, had the upper-hand.

Another example is illustrated in the following conversation, where Nicole (the daughter) and Hudson (the father) were discussing who should perform the next task.

Example 8 (S4, E9):

Context: At Malimbu beach, teams were required to dive into the sea in order to retrieve a money briefcase. This was a roadblock task where teams needed to decide on one member to participate in the task.

1. Nicole: ((*Reading the route info*)) Who can you count on to take a dive? You.
2. Hudson: OK, I can dive
3. Nicole: Open it! ((*Refers to another envelope*))
4. Hudson: ((*obeys and opens the envelope*))

In line 3, Nicole commanded her father to open the other envelope. As noted by Culpeper (2011, p.115), it is acceptable to give a command to one’s child but not to one’s parents as it depends on the potential contextual relationship. Conceptually, this act damaged her father’s face directly. As always, Hudson did not give any response but obeyed his daughter (line 4). In this instance, Hudson acted as the offender, being the one with ‘lethargic behaviour.’

The next example took place at St. James Power Station in Singapore. The teams were required to perform a two-minute magic show in which they needed to unlock their handcuffs in order to obtain the next clue.

Example 9 (S4, E12):

Context: Mona could not unlock the handcuffs. As the handcuffs got stuck, they also hurt her hands.

1. Mona: It’s fucking hard. Can you take it out? QUICK TAKE IT OUT!
2. Cheryl: ((*obeys the command*))

When one is in pain, being polite is the last thing on one’s mind and this is exactly the case in Example 9. In line 1, Mona, who was in pain, lost her patience. She swore and loudly commanded Cheryl and the other helpers to take the handcuffs off. Cheryl had no choice and obeyed the direct command without uttering a word.

It is apparent that the participants did not rebuke one another, but appeared to

accept impolite and swear words thrown at them. The participants had every right to disobey the impolite commands and directives received since they were of equal power and social position with their partner, but instead, they appeared to be unperturbed and carried on with their task.

Agree. In agreeing with the face attack, it may increase the face damage to the recipient. However, participants sometimes use this strategy to avoid conflict. In the following example, Hudson was curious to know whether the other team got the taxi. His action eventually annoyed Nicole.

Example 10 (S4, E12):

Context: The following conversation took place in Singapore when the team was heading to the nearest Caltex service station to find a vintage car in order to get their next clue.

1. Hudson: Are you sure they, the Richards, still didn't get the taxi?
2. Nicole: Yes.
3. Hudson: Where are they?
4. Nicole: They're there.
5. Hudson: Oh, ok ok.
6. Nicole: **Dad, focus! Next time listen to me.**
7. Hudson: **Yeah, ok ok.**

As seen in line 6, Nicole directed her father to focus and listen to her in the future. This act showed that she was domineering and exerting power over her father. In

return, Hudson conceded in order to save time, as shown in the utterance, "Yeah, ok ok" (line 7).

Apologise. When recipients apologise, they are taking the responsibility for the reason the impolite utterances were expressed. The following example occurred in Coronet Peak, New Zealand when the teams were searching for their clue at the snow hill .

Example 11 (S4, E6):

Context: Hudson was looking for the clue buried in the snow hill with a meter detector in order to get to the pit stop. However, Cheryl's meter detector also directed her to the same area as Hudson's.

1. Hudson: Go somewhere else, Cheryl.
2. Cheryl: My meter says the exact same thing as yours did. **I'm sorry,** Hudson.

In line 1, Hudson directly commanded Cheryl to go somewhere else because he was worried that Cheryl might find the clue before he did. In this case, Hudson's command, "Go somewhere else," can also be considered as a dismissal. In other words, he wanted Cheryl to leave. While insisting that her meter was giving the same reading as his, Cheryl accepted Hudson's direct impoliteness and apologised (line 2).

Do Not Respond

Receivers who do not respond to an act of impoliteness would remain silent. Sometimes, participants would rather stay silent as an indication that they accept the face-threatening act in order to avoid more conflict.

Silent

In Example 12, Evan is frustrated at Molly for being unable to help out with the detour task.

Example 12 (S2, E2):

Context: The following conversation took place in Manila, The Philippines, when the team was doing their detour task.

1. Evan: Could you screw this stuff on? You not even screw it on.
2. Molly: What stuff?
3. Evan: You're getting pretty useless now man.
4. Molly: ((*silent*))

Evan was annoyed with Molly's act. Consequently, he associated her with the negative aspect of being useless with the emphasis on the personal pronoun 'you' in the utterance, "You're getting pretty useless now man" (line 3). This act somehow also lowered Molly's competency in completing the task. However, Molly did not respond, but kept silent (line 4).

In the next example, Mike and Sean were required to travel from the Thean Hou Temple to Batu Caves, Kuala Lumpur.

However, they accidentally misplaced their route information.

Example 13 (S4, E1):

Context: The team was searching for their route info.

1. Mike: Route info. Where is the route info? How can you lose this man? How can you lose it? There. There it is.
2. Sean: ((*silent*))

In line 1, Mike blamed Sean for losing the route information. He used the personal pronoun 'you' instead of 'we', although it was the responsibility of both team members to be careful with the route information. He also repeated the utterance, "How can you lose it," when they did not locate it. However, Sean did not respond but instead, kept silent (line 2).

Another example can be seen in the following conversation where Tyra and Ian had just completed their roadblock task.

Example 14 (S4, E1):

Context: This conversation took place in Batu Caves, Malaysia, when Tyra was in pain because she had accidentally sprained her ankle earlier. Thus, Ian carried Tyra to the cab.

1. Tyra: Ah::: BABY! OUCH!
2. Ian: Pain? =

3. Tyra: =Yes, painful.
(*Ian accidentally drops Tyra on the floor*) Are you NUTS? PAIN!
4. Ian: ((*silent*))

While heading to the cab, Ian accidentally dropped Tyra on the floor. Tyra yelled in pain and called him “nuts” (line 3), which made him the offender as he had added more pain and grievances. Nevertheless, he did not apologise for his careless act nor did he respond as an act of acknowledging his mistake (line 4).

The analysis shows that some participants accepted FTAs and they chose not to respond by remaining silent. Perhaps the participants wanted to avoid triggering further impoliteness or arguments because they felt it was a waste of time and energy as the competition was time-limited.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated the various responses of the participants towards the impoliteness they received. The findings revealed that most of the recipients of the impoliteness in this study tended to defend themselves in order to save face. The highest frequency of defending was by giving an explanation or some form of excuse to deny responsibility in comparison with ignoring FTAs, abrogation and stand-offs. This shows that the participants tended to deny responsibility and reduced face damage of the impoliteness received in order to show that the impoliteness was mistakenly issued in the first place.

Participants, who accepted the various forms of impoliteness thrown at them, tended to either respond by agreeing or apologising, which signified their willingness to take full responsibility for their actions as they were probably guilt-ridden. In doing so, they avoided triggering more conflict. All of these response options increased the intensity of FTAs towards the addressees.

Apart from the category of responses highlighted by Bousfield (2008), obeying the orders is a response option that can be added under response strategies of accepting an FTA. The instances of commands made in the study were never ignored; instead they were met with silence. The male participants tended to treat silence as a strategy to manage time, maintain group harmony and control conflict. It appears that maintaining silence as a response option was highly important to the Asian participants, and, as such, this finding contributes to the field of pragmatics and, specifically, Bousfield’s (2008) response options model.

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APPENDIX

Jefferson Transcription Conventions (1984)

Symbol	Name	Function
[text]	Brackets	Indicates the beginning and end points of overlapping speech or interruptions in conversation.
=	Equal Sign	Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single utterance. The next speaker begins instantly at the end of the current speaker's utterance. This usually occurs during turn taking or when one is defending his/her points.
.	Period	Indicates falling pitch or intonation.
?	Question Mark	Indicates rising pitch or intonation. This demonstrates the way one poses questions.
,	Comma	Indicates a temporary rise or fall in intonation.
ALL CAPS	Capitalised text	Indicates shouted or increased volume speech. This usually occurs during an argument or when trying to dominate the conversation.
<u>underline</u>	Underlined text	Indicates the speaker is emphasising or stressing the speech.
:::	Colon(s)	Indicates prolongation of a sound. This is also used to show annoyance.
(XXX)	Single parenthesis with triple X	Speech which is unclear or of doubtful in the transcript.
((<i>italic text</i>))	Double parentheses	Annotation of non-verbal activity, such as gestures or facial expressions.

NOTE: The transcription process took approximately six weeks, i.e. seven days per week and eight to 10 hours per day to complete. All the 24 episodes were transcribed based on Jefferson's (1984) Transcription Conventions. This set of conventions provides information about the occurrence of simultaneous speech, showing when and how impolite utterances occurred.