Original Paper

How to Interrogate Impolitely During Custody: A Case Study of

In the Name of People

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Abstract

Based on an analytical qualitative study on the custodial interrogation in the Chinese television drama In the Name of People, this paper attempts to generalize and analyze the impoliteness strategies used by interrogators, using Culpeper's (1996) Impoliteness Framework as the research tool. We intend to provide some suggestions on how to make use of impoliteness by interrogators in real police interrogation. Through data analysis, we find that: (1) Negative impoliteness strategies, sarcasm or mock politeness strategies are used most frequently by interrogators; (2) Interrogators should avoid using impoliteness strategies which may exasperate suspects; (3) Bald on record and positive impoliteness strategies are very helpful in enhancing the efficiency of interrogating; and (4) Mixed impoliteness strategies when used together are more powerful.

Keywords

Impoliteness Framework, impoliteness strategies, custodial interrogation, In the Name of People

1. Introduction

In China, interrogating suspects is an essential procedure of criminal investigations after suspects are detained. Interrogation is also one of the most critical measures of public security office or people's procuratorate. Interrogating suspects refers to an investigative activity during which investigators, following the legal procedures, ask suspects questions about the facts of a case and other relevant issues by verbal interactions (Fan, 2004: 298). Interrogation is also an important process for investigators to obtain relevant evidence and clues of crimes, and it is a face-to-face verbal communication between interrogators and suspects (Cai, 2008: 130).

In the course of the interrogation, the interests of the two sides are confrontational, so impoliteness is prevalent. The impolite behaviours of interrogators are of particular interest; because their utterances

play a vital role in the interrogation (leading the conversations) and how they are going to balance the pros and cons of using impoliteness actually makes "a linguistic art" (Song, 1958: 49). Interrogators cannot be too impolite, since Article 50 of Criminal Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China regulates that "*Judges, procuratorial personnel and investigators ... are strictly prohibited from extorting confessions by torture, collecting evidence through threats, enticement, deception or other unlawful means, or forcing anyone to provide evidence proving his/her own guilt*". Nevertheless, why do interrogators still take the risks to sound impolite? Is it the most effective way to get what they want? In this descriptive and analytical qualitative study, we aim to investigate the roles and functions of impoliteness used by interrogators, and attempt to provide some suggestions on impoliteness employment.

2. Literature Review

According to Kádár (2008: 127), "the theories regarding the utilisation of language in police interviews and courtroom interactions have been refined" since recent developments in critical discourse analysis and forensic linguistics. Researchers in various disciplines such as conversation analysis (Charldorp, 2014; Sliedrecht et al., 2015; Mason, 2016, etc.); discourse analysis (Heydon, 2005; Kádár, 2008; Farinde et al., 2015, etc.) and pragmatics (Kassin & Mcnall, 1991; Kurzon, 2001; Al-Badawi, 2013, etc.) have studied police interrogation in different settings and countries.

We have found an increasing amount of literature on the power relations between police officers/interrogators and suspects (cf. Kádár, 2008; Tutaş & Azak, 2014; Farinde et al., 2015). Through analysing a traditional Chinese criminal investigation as a case study, Kádár (2008: 130) argues that power could be redistributed in traditional Chinese criminal investigations, and "the utilisation of honorific/rude formulae as discourse resources (cf. Kádár, 2007) plays a fundamental role in the struggle to gain/preserve power in the course of criminal investigations". He provides a new angle and possibility of power redistribution in criminal investigations and reminds us that the role and power of suspects/criminals should be taken into account in the linguistic studies of modern police interrogation. Nevertheless, as an "asymmetrical" (Mason, 2016: 79) exchange, the police-suspect interrogation is "largely slanted in favour of the police interrogators" and is "a peculiar discourse genre where there is interplay of power asymmetry and dominance" (Farinde et al., 2015: 146). Therefore, we believe it is such a discourse genre where impoliteness strategies can be put to good use. As Tutaş and Azak (2014: 370) point out, impoliteness is "the most important weapon to win the struggle for power". Similarly in the police-suspect interactions in a TV series, Al-Badawi (2013: 31) concludes that "characters that possess power will get hold of the conversational floor and will have more chances to attack face". His analysis of the data "reinforces Culpeper's claim that impoliteness is not thrown randomly into the text" (Al-Badawi, 2013: 40), but rather is systematically created to produce complicatedness and suspense. Mason (2016: 80) also views "clearly defined procedures and strategies aimed at eliciting a suspect's confession" with pre-determined topics and sequences as police interrogation, which largely

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differs from non-institutional interactions. Based on the above conclusions and findings is the current study taken to investigate the patterns and functions of linguistic impoliteness used by Chinese interrogators, and to further provide some implications in real Chinese police interrogation.

Chinese scholars have studied on interrogation from various perspectives and disciplines: law (Wu, 2001; Cai, 2008, etc.), psychology (Bi, 2005, 2008, etc.), linguistics (Yuan, 2008; Zhang, 2014; Bi & Chen, 2014; Zhang, 2016). We can see that Chinese researchers have paid more attention to the linguistic perspectives in recent years. However, as Bi and Chen (2014: 90) put it, "In China, studies on the interrogation still lack depth and remain a relatively new research field". Hence it is necessary to do some research on Chinese police interrogation by pragmatic theories.

In China, the current pragmatic studies on interrogation are regrettably understudied. Mao (2006) discovers the large scale of hedges in courtroom trials, and she asserts the necessity of hedges by their pragmatic functions. Li (2006) looks into the interrogators' employment of linguistic politeness in Chinese police interrogation based on a combination of Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle and Verschueren's (2000) Theory of Adaptation. Li (2006: ii) observes that interrogators adopt linguistic politeness (a satisfying or "favourable" way) to "adapt to the social and mental world" of the interrogatees in order to achieve their ultimate goal (the interrogatee's confession) with legitimacy. We argue that politeness strategies are relatively weak or not so powerful as impoliteness; besides, employing impoliteness does not necessarily cross the line (legitimacy). Huang (2014) conducts a pragmatic study of police-suspect interview, which studies choices of speech acts in question-answer interactions. Huang (ibid.), corpus-driven, provides a new angle and way of interpreting interrogative interactions. Qu (2014) also notices the impoliteness in courtroom, and following the pragmatic perspective, she analyzes the conflict talk on the data from Bo Xilai's case and other cases from a legal program. A panoramic review of the above studies reveals that scarce literature is devoted to the impoliteness in the discourse of Chinese police interrogation, and their findings cannot be fully utilised by interrogators to improve their efficiency in interrogating.

3. Theoretical Framework

The present study adopts Culpeper's (1996) Impoliteness Framework as the research framework. Using Brown & Levinson (1987) as his point of departure, Culpeper's (1996) Impoliteness Framework (IF) describes communicative strategies designed to attack face, which is contrast to Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory (PT). IF closely mirrors PT with superstrategies and output strategies that speaker selects from based on the (perceived) level of risk. The superstrategies are summarized as follows (Culpeper et al., 2003: 1554-1555).

    (1) Bald on record impoliteness. … bald on record impoliteness is typically deployed where there is much face at stake, and where there is an intention on the part of the speaker to attack the face of the hearer.

    (2) Positive impoliteness. The use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face

wants.

(3) Negative impoliteness. The use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants.

(4) Sarcasm or mock politeness. The use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remain surface realizations.

(5) Withhold politeness. Keep silent or fail to act where politeness work is expected.

These superstrategies are to be used to analyze the research data in this paper. Also, Culpeper et al. (2003: 1556) list some "frequently occurring output strategies for 'positive impoliteness': 'ignore, snub, fail to attend to H's needs', 'avoid agreement', and 'use taboo language, swear, be abusive'; and "frequently occurring output strategies for 'negative impoliteness' include: 'condescend, scorn, ridicule', and 'hinder linguistically (e.g., interrupt, deny turn) or physically (e.g., block other's passage)'" (Culpeper et al., 2003: 1557). However, Culpeper et al. (ibid.) point out that "different phenomena and patterns remain to be found in other discourse types". Therefore, we wish to explore the output impoliteness strategies by interrogators in the discourse of police interrogation.

4. Database and Analysis

In the following section we are going to closely analyze the data collected from the TV drama *In the Name of People* and categorize the data according to four superstrategies (Note 1) proposed by Culpeper (1996: 356) and then focus on the output strategies used by interrogators. Since the process of interrogation is a crucial part of the plots, the occurrences of the utterances are logically connected so that the audience can follow up the plots. Therefore, despite its fictionality in nature, the interactions in this TV series are worth to be studied as conventional discourse of police interrogation. Additionally, studying them can provide quite a few insights into how impoliteness is employed by interrogators in this particular kind of discourse.

In the discourse of police interrogation, interrogators are not supposed to attack the face of suspects for legal and moral reasons. Theoretically speaking, suspects should be treated in equal status with interrogators, while in reality there is great inequality of power. Interrogators always take the initiative, and suspects only have to listen and answer questions. In this context, interrogators have clear goals to achieve—to get useful clues of crimes and other information related to the crime as noted previously. As Culpeper et al. (2003: 1575) believe, "people choose to use impoliteness to expedite their goals". Therefore, interrogators use different impoliteness, even which means face damage on the suspects. In the following part we address the impoliteness on the part of interrogators and investigate its effects on the suspects, whether impoliteness can expedite interrogators' goals or not.

4.1 Data Collection

The source of our data is a popular Chinese TV drama called *In the Name of People* (人民的名义 */renmin de mingyi*). The interrogations on the suspect "Liu Xinjian" are crucial parts of the plots and determine the possibility of revealing the corrupted officials. Apparently the strategies used by

interrogators in this case are of vital significance and research value. The current research is a case study of the interrogations on "Liu Xinjian" by the approach of Culpeper's (1996) Impoliteness Framework, trying to discover the functions of impoliteness in triggering suspects to confess, and how interrogators make use of impoliteness as a pragmatic strategy to help work out cases. All conversations in the discourse of the interrogation on "Liu Xinjian" are transcribed verbally before translated into English. In order to preserve the original sense and style, we keep the original Chinese transcripts in the paper.

Culpeper et al. (2003: 1555) observe that "impoliteness does not simply arise from any one particular strategy, but is highly dependent on context". The context plays a pivotal role in the perceiving of impoliteness, hence in addition to interrogators' utterances, we include the utterances of the suspect "Liu Xinjian". However, due to the limited space and our research focus, we would leave out the less relevant parts of drama details.

The interrogation lasts several sessions, so there are various interrogators from session to session. We would consider idiosyncrasy in the use of impoliteness, but given institutional discourse, we treat every interrogator with one identical role—the interviewer. Besides, there are mainly three procurators who participated in the conversations, "Hou Liangping" (Procurator Hou), "Lu Yike" (Procurator Lu) and "Lin Huahua" (Procurator Lin).

4.2 Bald on Record Impoliteness

"Bald on record impoliteness is typically deployed where there is much face at stake, and where there is an intention on the part of the speaker to attack the face of the hearer" (Culpeper et al., 2003: 1554). Interrogators cash in on bald on record impoliteness here. Because of the actual inequality of power between procurator and suspect, bald on record impoliteness can attack the face of suspects, as shown in the following example [1].

> [1]侯检察官：自从当了汉东油气集团董事长兼总裁之后，你都做过些什么？你从那个时候起就*丢失了灵魂*，丢在了错误的报恩思想上。
>
> Procurator Hou: What have you done ever since you became the chairman and CEO of Handong PVN? From that time on, *you have lost your soul (Note 2)* in the wrong thought of paying debts of gratitude.

Procurator Hou employs the bald on record impoliteness by directly pointing out Suspect Liu's mistake. It attacks Liu's face clearly and directly, yet presumably presupposing that he used to have a good soul. By saying that "*you have lost your soul*", Procurator Hou sets Liu to self-reflect. It is an effective strategy for suspects who are already regretful, because the procurator speaking in this way seems to represent the justice and the absolute power. Suspects would realize their mistakes and begin to confess, especially after various strategies of interrogation, as in [2].

> [2]侯检察官：刘总，你本质上不是一个贪婪的人，我相信你在背诵共产党宣言的时候，是真心实意的，你的主观并不想成为党和人民的害群之马，但是你没有抵挡住一己私欲，你看看你现在，*背叛誓*

言，背叛信仰、背叛人民！

Procurator Hou: Mr. Liu, you are not a greedy man in nature. I believe you are sincere when reciting the Communist Manifesto. You don't want to become a black sheep among the Party and the people, but you didn't resist your own selfish desires. Look at yourself now; *you have betrayed your oath, your belief and the people*!

嫌犯刘：（抬手做投降状）别说了，别说了……好吧……（停顿）我说……（开始招供）

Suspect Liu: *<raising two hands like surrender>* Stop, stop … all right … *<pausing for seconds>*, I will talk … (*beginning to confess*)

Procurator Hou does not merely employ the bald on record impoliteness in this conversation, but he paves a series of compliments before that. This seems more effective than solely using bald on record impoliteness. At first Procurator Hou saves Suspect Liu's positive face and believes in his good nature, and then compares the current Liu with the past Liu. This comparison is a great blow and the contrast is unbearable for the suspect. Procurator Hou makes use of the psychology of the suspect's desires to be approved of again by confessing, and he combines the face-saving strategy with the bald on record strategy, so that the defensive wall of Suspect Liu's mind is broken down.

From the above two examples, it is inferred that bald on record impoliteness strategy is often effective in pushing the suspects to confess. In addition, if the strategy is used after some sincere compliments of the suspects, the effects would be much stronger.

4.3 Positive Impoliteness

Positive impoliteness can be found in our data, in which several output strategies are used. The following interchange between Procurator Lin and Suspect Liu takes place in the context that Suspect Liu confesses some details on how he helped Secretary Zhao with his power as a boss of a state-owned enterprise.

[3]林检察官：有好处都给了赵家，*难怪老百姓叫你是赵家的狗。*

Procurator Lin: You give all the profits to the Zhaos, *no wonder people say you are the Zhaos' lackey*.

嫌犯刘：（*极其愤怒，情绪失控，大声反驳*）你说什么？！你再说一遍！你骂谁是狗！啊？……你居然敢骂我是狗，你疯了吧你！我投诉你！你在侮辱我的人格！你们领导呢？

Suspect Liu: *<furiously shouting>* What?! You dare say that again! You call who as a lackey? Eh? … (Note 3) You dare call me a lackey! Are you crazy? I will sue you! You are insulting my personality! Where is your boss?

In [3], Procurator Lin calls Suspect Liu's names by using a derogatory nomination—*the Zhaos' lackey*. It is such a harsh comment that it immediately exasperates Liu. Meanwhile, this derogatory nomination greatly damages his positive face wants, since he is in high social status and he is always the one to be respected, instead of being "insulted" in this way. Procurator Lin does not hate Suspect Liu personally, since she does not know him before this case; also she knows her words are being recorded. Why would she still use such harsh impoliteness on him? This may be accounted for by her wishing to

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irritate Liu on purpose, so that he would realize his bad image in people's mind and regret his crimes. Note that Procurator Lin does not say directly to Liu, "You are a lackey", but instead, she indirectly indicates the bad reputation of Liu by saying, "*people say you are the Zhaos' lackey*". It is a clever cover-up for direct insults. Nevertheless, this strategy does not work on Liu, but instead slows down the interrogation process, because Liu is so angry that he refuses to say anything since then, unless Procurator Lin is replaced by another procurator. This example shows that interrogators are supposed to avoid impoliteness strategies which exasperate suspects, because the latter may be too angry to talk, resulting in interrogation slow-down.

4.4 Negative Impoliteness

Negative impoliteness is "the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants "('frighten', 'condescend, scorn, or ridicule', 'invade the other's space', 'explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect', 'put the other's indebtedness on record', 'hinder or block the other—physically or linguistically', etc.)" (Culpeper et al., 2003: 1555). Negative impoliteness strategies are widely utilised by interrogators, because in the context of this discourse, the suspects already lose the physical freedom of walking around. The suspects' freedoms are maximally restrained and many of their personal wants are denied satisfaction; consequently, negative impoliteness strategies prevail.

[4]侯检察官：（*摆手*）*打住打住……*刚才还说昨天聊得不错呢，怎么？*脑子又短路了？*

Procurator Hou: <*gesture of stop*> *Stop here* … I just said we had a nice talk yesterday, what's wrong? *Is it a brain fart?*

In [4], Suspect Liu is interrupted, which means Procurator Hou adopts the 'hinder linguistically' output strategy of negative impoliteness, to avoid wasting too much time listening to useless talk by the suspect. In this case, Liu tries to buy time for his complice to bail him out, so he begins to weave irrelevant stories. Procurator Hou justifiably stops Liu.

Another negative impoliteness strategy is used here by Procurator Hou saying that Suspect Liu has a "*brain fart*". He scorns Liu in this discourse to make him say something useful. It is also necessary because the suspect needs to be reminded, and his response to this utterance is rather peaceful, since this impoliteness is no big deal (more like a joke).

Through analysis on the data collected, we find negative impoliteness strategies are used by interrogators for eight times in total. Besides, all of these impoliteness strategies are employed in order to prevent or stop the suspect from straying from the point. Obviously this strategy is very useful to save time and stay on the focus of the interrogation, and it sharply increases the efficiency of interrogation. Since these conversations have a lot in common, we would not list them here and analyze each of them. Example [4] can represent the other ones.

4.5 Sarcasm or Mock Politeness

Sarcasm or mock politeness is "the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remain surface realizations" (Culpeper et al., 2003: 1555). In the discourse of police interrogation, sarcasm or mock politeness is also used frequently by the procurators. We find that sarcasm or mock

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politeness is used for eight times in our data.

[5]嫌犯刘：我也是摸着石头过河，那你说水性不好，这，谁能保证不呛几口水，是吧？

Suspect Liu: I'm just crossing the river by feeling the stones, and I'm not good at swimming. See, I can't guarantee that I won't swallow water, can I?

陆检察官：呛几口水没问题，*别把自己淹死了。*

Procurator Lu: It doesn't matter to swallow some water; *just be careful, don't drown yourself.*

嫌犯刘：……我不怕死啊，淹死就淹死吧。

Suspect Liu: … I'm not afraid of death. If I drown myself, let it be!

陆检察官：*演讲完了？*我们还有七个问题，时间宝贵啊！

Procurator Lu: *Your speech finished?* We've got seven more questions. Time is precious.

In example [5], we can see that Procurator Lu uses mock politeness twice. At the first time, she tells Suspect Liu to be careful and not to drown himself. It is actually a metaphor, in which swallowing water means committing crimes and drowning means getting caught and arrested. Procurator Lu uses sarcasm in order to emphasize the mistake of Liu indirectly and implicitly. As a matter of fact, sarcasm makes Procurator Lu's utterance even stronger in perlocutionary effect. At the second time, she uses sarcasm strategy again by referring Suspect Liu's sayings to a "*speech*". Her utterance implies that what Liu just said is nonsense and he was just wasting time (by saying "Time is precious"). Moreover, it shows that she is uninterested in and unsympathetic with what he said. The employment of sarcasm or mock politeness can draw the suspect's attention back to the major topic and also avoid generating conflicts with suspects.

It is a good choice for interrogators to use sarcasm or mock politeness strategies, because they are supposed to be polite to suspects. When they cannot be truly polite to suspects, they turn to mock politeness, which enables them to strengthen their power of utterances while keeping calm.

One more example of using mock politeness, very interesting:

[6]林检察官：哟！*刘总，出汗了！要不要帮您擦一下呀？*

Procurator Lin: Hey! *Mr. Liu, you are sweating. Would you like me to wipe your sweat?*

嫌犯刘：哦不用，我是因为这屋里闷，太热，你们不热？

Suspect Liu: No. It's so stuffy and warm in this room. Isn't it warm?

Procurator Lin pretends to be concerned about Suspect Liu's feelings, when she sees him sweating. The temperature in the room is actually very low, obviously it is because Liu is very anxious and nervous during this interrogation. The pressures put on him make him sweating. Procurator Lin notices that and she says "*Would you like me to wipe your sweat?*"; it is not a sincere offer, but rather a mock politeness strategy used to declare victory over the progress of interrogation. However, is it necessary to say these words in this discourse? We think it is also indispensable to further put down the defenses of the suspect. Interrogation is like a war (Bi, 2008: 137) between interrogators and suspects. Once a party has prevailed, it will continue its attacks and consolidate its victory. In this context, Procurator Lin also continues to attack Liu's face in order to further urge him to confess. The strategy of mock politeness is

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harmless on the surface, but it is actually much more powerful than other impoliteness strategies. In consequence, to use mock politeness or sarcasm is a rational choice for interrogators in the discourse of police interrogation.

4.6 Mixed Strategies

As Culpeper et al. (2003: 1555) argue, "some strategies can be mixed", we notice different strategies co-occurring in some conversations.

[7]嫌犯刘：……什么官大官小，不都是为人民服务，是吧？

Suspect Liu: … No matter what ranks of official position we are in, our goal is to serve the people, isn't it?

侯检察官：说得真好，（*转向陆检察官*）你看，刘总觉悟多高啊。

Procurator Hou: Well said. *<looking at Procurator Lu> See! Mr. Liu has such high consciousness.*

In [7], Procurator Hou uses two kinds of impoliteness strategies, mock politeness and positive impoliteness. By speaking to Procurator Lu and ignoring the existence of Suspect Liu, Hou uses positive impoliteness; by saying ironically that "*Mr. Liu has such high consciousness*", he employs sarcasm or mock politeness. This way of mixed impoliteness strategies makes the utterance more ironic to the hearer. The suspect feels his positive face quite threatened. We find mixed strategies achieving stronger effects of face-attack and in this case, leading the suspect to feel ashamed. Furthermore, this utterance creates sharper contrasts, hence attention-grasping to the audience. Procurator Hou's saying so is motivated by complimenting qualities of Suspect Liu which he is devoid of, the effects of sarcasm soaring so high that Liu himself feels the pang of shamefulness; and thus Procurator Hou pushes him to criminal confession.

Another example of mixed strategies can be found at the close of the interrogation, which plays a key role in the confession urge, because after Procurator Hou's utterance, Suspect Liu does begin to confess.

[8]侯检察官：（*打断*）刘总刘总，*你的话留到法庭上再说。（接到电话："陆处长啊……（斜眼身后的 刘新建）什么？赵瑞龙进关了，马上实施拘捕，突击审讯，你们先审着，我这边快结束了，我这边结 束马上来找你们。"）刘总，和你说过了，我能零口供定你的罪，我说到做到！（对周检察官说）不 用审了，带走吧（有人来准备把他带走）。*

Procurator Hou: *<interrupting>* Mr. Liu, *leave your words to the court. <getting a phone call: "Director Lu … (a quick glance at Suspect Liu) What? Zhao Ruilong (Note 4) came back? Arrest him at once and interrogate him. You guys do the interrogation and I will join you as soon as I finish my work here."*) Mr. Liu, I've told you I would convict you even without any confession. You have my words. *<to Procurator Zhou> We don't have to interrogate him, take him away* (*Someone enters the room and is ready to take Liu away*).

嫌犯刘：（*慌张*）侯局长我交代我都交代。

Suspect Liu: *<in panic>* Director Hou I will! I will tell everything!

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In the above conversation, Procurator Hou plays a little trick and indirectly lies to Suspect Liu that his complice will be arrested, too. In addition, Hou uses two impoliteness strategies in his utterance, also elevating Liu's panic and his belief in Hou's lie. By saying "*leave your words to the court*", Hou opts for the negative impoliteness strategy by frightening Liu. This sentence implies that Liu does not have a chance to confess any more, and he is faced with a more severe penalty. This strategy is quite effective in frightening the suspect. Along with Procurator Hou's lie over the phone, he enhances the credibility of his lie by saying to Procurator Zhou "*We don't have to interrogate him, take him away*". This positive impoliteness strategy makes everything he said so real that Suspect Liu believed there was no room for confession. The fears brought about trigger Liu's unfolding himself in the final scene.

The above two examples indicate that by using mixed impoliteness strategies, the effects of interrogators' utterances get boosted and suspects tend to confess more easily.

5. Conclusions

The present study explores the applications of Impoliteness Strategies (Culpeper, 1996; Culpeper et al., 2003) in the discourse of police interrogation. Hopefully our study can serve as a theoretical complement to Culpeper's (1996) Impoliteness Framework as in a new discourse type. In this paper we have analyzed how impoliteness strategies are used by interrogators in the discourse of police interrogation and reach these findings:

(1) During custody of criminals, negative impoliteness strategies, sarcasm or mock politeness strategies are used most frequently by interrogators, and these strategies prove to be effective in causing the suspects to confess;

(2) Interrogators should avoid impoliteness strategies which exasperate suspects because they may slow down the interrogating session;

(3) Bald on record and positive impoliteness strategies are often efficient means of interrogating;

(4) Mixed impoliteness strategies can be employed by interrogators around the breakdown of the suspects.

Practically, these findings can provide some suggestions to interrogators in real criminal investigations, so that they can raise their efficiency in interrogating by using impoliteness strategies and avoiding using certain impoliteness strategies. And theoretically, this study explores the output impoliteness strategies by interrogators in the discourse of police interrogation, which provides insight into the patterns of impoliteness strategies in a Chinese custodial interrogation setting. This type of discourse has been regrettably understudied in pragmatics, especially from the perspective of impoliteness frameworks.

The limitations of this research lie in the fictionality of the research data, because they are collected from a TV drama, instead of real interrogation. Additionally, the effects of these strategies are actually influenced by idiosyncrasy (as different suspects may response differently to the same strategy); this is where further research can focus on. Finally, as a qualitative and analytical study, it is inevitably

subjective; further studies can use other methodology like corpus to increase the objectivity of the research results.

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Notes

Note 1. The fifth superstrategy "withhold politeness" does not appear in the data, so we will not discuss it in our analysis.

Note 2. Italicization be the ours.

Note 3. Due to the limited space and our research focus, we leave out the parts designed to tell details of the plots or considered irrelevant.

Note 4. One of Suspect Liu's major complices.