الفظاظة عبر الثقافات: دراسة للجدالات البرلمانية باللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية

Impoliteness Across Cultures: The Case of English and Arabic Parliament Debates

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Abstract

The study is an attempt to investigate how impoliteness, as a pragmatic phenomenon, is naturally manipulated in political debates especially in parliaments or more specifically English and Arabic speaking parliament members. Hence the study explores the interplay of impoliteness and argumentation in politics. The study adopts the eclectic model of Jonathan Culpeper's typology of impoliteness triggers (Culpeper J. , 2016) and his impoliteness functions (Culpeper, 2011). The analysis reflects how impoliteness serves as a powerful tool for the negotiating of political problems. This study uncovers the role of impoliteness in portraying the political parliamentary scenes in two different cultures. The study found that the manipulation of impoliteness in politics is crucial for argumentation. Moreover, English debates show

a broader range of impoliteness triggers compared to Arabic debates, indicating more diverse linguistic strategies. Also, insults are the most frequent impoliteness trigger in both languages, highlighting their central role in political discourse.

Key words: Pragmatics, Politics, Impoliteness, Argumentation, Parliaments

المستخلص

تهدف الدراسة إلى استكشاف آلية توظيف الفظاظة، بوصفها ظاهرة تداولية، بشكل طبيعي في الجدالات السياسية وخاصة في مجالس النواب (البرلمانات) أو بشكل أكثر تحديدًا مجالس النواب متحدثي اللغة الإنجليزية واللغة العربية. ومن ثم تستكشف الدراسة التفاعل بين الفظاظة والجدال في السياسة. تتبنى الدراسة نموذجًا انتقائيًا لتصنيف جوناثان كولبيبر لمحفزات الفظاظة (٢٠١٦) ووظائف الفظاظة (٢٠١١). يعكس التحليل كيف تعمل الفظاظة كأداة قوية للتفاوض على المشاكل السياسية. تكشف هذه الدراسة عن دور الفظاظة في تصوير المشهد البرلماني السياسي في ثقافتين مختلفتين. وجدت الدراسة أن التلاعب بالفظاظة في السياسة أمر بالغ الأهمية للجدال. علاوة على ذلك، تُظهر الجدالات البرلمانية الإنجليزية مجموعة أوسع من محفزات الفظاظة مقارنة بالجدالات البرلمانية العربية، مما يشير إلى استراتيجيات لغوية أكثر تنوعًا. بالإضافة إلى أن الإهانات تعد أكثر محفزات الفظاظة شيوعًا في كلتا اللغتين، مما يسلط الضوء على دورها المركزي في الخطاب السياسي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التداولية, السياسة, الفظاظة, الجدال, البرلمانات

1. Introduction:

Pragmatics is the subfield of linguistics concerned with language use in context, focusing on how meaning is shaped by the social, cultural, and situational factors surrounding communication (Levinson, Pragmatic, 1983, p. 15). Within political discourse, pragmatics plays a central role in shaping how politicians communicate, persuade, and negotiate. Political discourse often transcends literal language and relies heavily on context, power dynamics, and shared knowledge between speakers and listeners (Austin, 1962, p. 10). Politicians use language strategically to influence

public opinion, frame debates, and assert power, using techniques that include speech acts, implicature, and (im)politeness strategies (Searl, 1969, p. 20).

In political contexts, politeness theory is a key pragmatic framework used to understand how politicians manage face and social roles while communicating. Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of politeness strategies focuses on how language is used to avoid face-threatening acts (FTAs) and maintain social harmony, particularly in hierarchical settings like politics (Levinson, 1987, p. 60). However, political language often veers away from politeness norms, especially in highly charged political environments, where impoliteness can be an effective tool for undermining opponents, asserting power, or provoking a reaction (Culpeper J. , 2011, p. 80). This shift from politeness to impoliteness in political communication is central to the understanding of how political discourse operates.

Impoliteness, as a strategic use of language that challenges social norms of politeness, has been increasingly studied within pragmatic frameworks. Culpeper defines impoliteness as the intentional use of language to disrupt the social norms of politeness and cause offense (Culpeper, p. 349). This can involve a range of linguistic strategies such as insults, threats, and sarcasm, designed to challenge or weaken the opponent's social standing or undermine their credibility (Culpeper, 2011, p. 90). In political discourse, impoliteness is not just a byproduct of heated emotions; it is a deliberate strategy used to achieve specific political goals, such as delegitimizing an opponent or shifting the public's attention (Bousefield, 2008, p. 112).

Culpeper's (Culpeper, 2011, p. 89)framework identifies three primary functions of impoliteness: affective impoliteness, which expresses emotions such as anger or frustration; coercive impoliteness, which involves forcing compliance or asserting power; and entertaining impoliteness, which is used to amuse others, often at the

expense of a target (Culpeper, 2011, p. 120). The pragmatics of impoliteness underscores the complex relationship between power, language, and social context. In political contexts, impoliteness can disrupt normal communication, but it also has the potential to be highly strategic, with implications for public perception and political outcomes.

Argumentation on the other hand is a fundamental aspect of political discourse, as politics inherently involves debate, disagreement, and the use of language to persuade or justify positions (van Eemeren, F. H.; Grootendorst, R.;, 2004, p. 45). Political argumentation often involves rhetoric, which is the art of persuasion, and relies on both logos (logical reasoning) and pathos (emotional appeals) to influence public opinion and sway debates (Chilton, 2004, p. 31). Politicians craft arguments to justify policies, challenge opposition views, and persuade the public, but these arguments are also deeply embedded in social and cultural contexts, which shape their reception and effectiveness (Perelman, C; Olbrechts–Tyteca, L;, 1969, p. 52).

In political argumentation, impoliteness often intersects with rhetorical strategies. Politicians may use ad hominem attacks, false dilemmas, or appeals to emotion to win arguments, especially when stakes are high. The use of insults or aggressive language can function as a strategic tool in political discourse, either to provoke an emotional response or to weaken the credibility of an opponent (van Eemeren, F. H.; Grootendorst, R.;, 2004, p. 103). These argumentative strategies can overlap with impoliteness, where language not only aims to persuade but also to insult or damage the opponent's reputation, leading to coercive impoliteness (Chilton, 2004, p. 115).

While politeness and impoliteness often exist in opposition, their interaction in political discourse is complex. For example, during debates or parliamentary discussions, politicians may alternate between polite or formal language to make rational points and impolite or combative language to challenge their opponents or provoke a

response. This strategic shifting reflects the dual role of language in politics: to present reasoned arguments and to emotionally engage with audiences, particularly when there is a partisan divide (Tannen, 1998, p. 96).

The problem

Within the contrastive English−Arabic discourse analysis literature, no attempt has been made to investigate the interaction of impoliteness triggers and functions in English and Arabic political debates, hence the study aims to fill in this gap by sorting out the cross−cultural patterning of impoliteness in such heated debates.

The hypotheses involved in this study are:

1. The manipulation of impoliteness in politics is crucial for political argumentation.
2. English debates show a broader range of impoliteness triggers compared to Arabic debates.
3. Insults are the most frequent impoliteness trigger in both languages.

2. Methodology

The investigation adopts an integrative perspective that draws on the models offered by Culpeper (2011, 2016) on the functions and triggers of impoliteness, to look at political discourse. According to Culpeper's model (2016), impoliteness triggers include insults, threats and many kinds of provocation; however, the (2011) model embraces functions that comprise the emotive, coercive and the amusing functions.

This study selected the data for analysis from parliamentary debates in the USA, UK, Australia, Canada, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Kuwait and Iraq that took place between the years 2011 and 2020. These debates are important in terms of the stakes

involved as they focused on critical issues such as that of political corruption, economic crisis and the regulation of the mass media.

Culpeper's framework is used in the analysis to provide definitions and classifications of the triggers and functions of impoliteness in parliamentary canvasses. Each trigger and function described above is ranked in significance in a language, culture and context. This eclectic approach enables a holistic and contextualized understanding of impoliteness in political discourse.

3. The analytical part

3.1 The Analysis of English Parliament Debates

Brexit Debate (House of Commons, UK, September 2019)

Prime Minister Boris Johnson during a particularly tense debate about Brexit, shortly before the prorogation of Parliament.

Boris Johnson: "The best way to honor the memory of Jo Cox and to bring this country together would be, I think, to get Brexit done. And I must say, Mr. Speaker, I think that the best thing for the people of this country would be for this Parliament to get Brexit done and not be bullied into submission by those who want to ignore the will of the people."

MP Paula Sherriff: "We are tired of being called traitors and saboteurs… And to hear language like that, and to be told to shut up in the name of some supposed will of the people, is absolutely disgusting."

Impoliteness Triggers:

Threats (Conventionalized Formulae): Boris Johnson's phrase "not be bullied into submission" is a threat as he gives his critics the image of being bullies who wish to bring down the supporters of Brexit. This account very harshly insinuates that the people in opposition make efforts to overpower the majority.

Pointed Criticism (Conventionalized Formulae): Johnson's remark "the best thing for the people" conveys a criticism of the opponents subtly that they are the ones who are defeating the purpose of the people. Such a criticism implies that the anti-Brexit populists have taken a position that is antithetical to the common good.

Silencer (Conventionalized Formulae): "Stop using these words that divide the country." The opposition MP Daniel owl falls in the category of silences that include the sharp and flaccid ghosts on death and silences the previously heard ghosts. There is a tendency here on the part of the MPs John Mansfield to end Johnson's controversial remarks crusade. That says that the opponents are a threat to the society. The command components cut across all three themes of relaxed anger, threats, and warm calm.

Impoliteness Functions:

Affective Impoliteness: The arguments become emotionally loaded when Johnson is rude and challenges the audience by using threats; this can be labeled as using affective impoliteness. While accusing the rivals of mistreatment, he gives a more profound reason for the discontent and divisions within the nation, thus increasing the degree of hostility of the particular discussion. Coercive Impoliteness: The bulleted words that Johnson states, "bullied into submission" is a picture of threats and that is also sometimes a form of coercive impoliteness wherein people attempt to use social forms of leverage on others to win an argument. This phrase places those opposing

Johnson as aggressors and so from the viewpoint of self-interest, they will reconsider the position or be criticized by the society.

Affective Impoliteness (Silencer): The opposition MP's silencer ("Stop using this language") functions as affective impoliteness by accusing Johnson of dividing the national. The MP emotionally challenges Johnson's rhetoric, aiming to reframe the debate as harmful and inappropriate, thus undermining his position.

Australian Parliament (House of Representatives, 2012)

Presenter: Julia Gillard in a renowned address within Australian parliamentary history, Prime Minister Julia Gillard delivered a vigorous counterargument to the remarks made by opposition leader Tony Abbott. Gillard declared, "I will not be lectured about sexism and misogyny by this man. I will not." Her statement was a direct attack on Abbott's character, accusing him of being a misogynist. Abbott had earlier insinuated, "If the Prime Minister wants to, politically speaking, make an honest woman of herself," which was a thinly veiled insult intended to undermine Gillard's credibility, reflecting the deep animosity between the two leaders.

Impoliteness Triggers:

Unpalatable Presupposition (Conventionalized Formulae): Tony Abbott's statement, "If the Prime Minister wants to, politically speaking, make an honest woman of herself," contains an unpalatable presupposition. It implies that Gillard, up to this point, is not honest, and that her integrity or character is in question. The phrase is offensive as it plays on gendered stereotypes and presupposes dishonesty, making it an indirect yet powerful trigger of impoliteness.

Condescension (Conventionalized Formulae): Abbott's remark also functions as condescension. The phrase "make an honest woman of herself" is patronizing and

diminishes Gillard by invoking a stereotype that undermines her credibility and leadership. This phrasing carries historical sexist connotations, framing Gillard in an inferior light.

Silencer (Conventionalized Formulae): In response, Gillard's declaration, "I will not be lectured about sexism and misogyny by this man. I will not," acts as a silencer. This shuts down Abbott's line of criticism by refusing his authority to speak on issues of sexism and misogyny. Her forceful repetition of "I will not" strengthens her rejection, aiming to cut off any further comment on the topic.

Impoliteness Functions:

Affective Impoliteness (Abbott's unpalatable presupposition): Abbott's unpalatable presupposition functions as affective impoliteness, as it seeks to demean Gillard by implying that she lacks integrity. This provokes frustration and anger by showing her as dishonest in an indirect manner, manipulating gendered language to invoke a negative emotional reaction.

Coercive Impoliteness (Abbott's condescension): Abbott's condescending tone is an example of coercive impoliteness, as it attempts to place Gillard in a socially inferior position by using a gendered insult. By suggesting that Gillard needs to prove her honesty, Abbott is applying pressure to coerce her into defending herself, reinforcing the power dynamic between them.

Affective Impoliteness (Gillard's silencer): Gillard's silencer ("I will not be lectured…") functions as affective impoliteness by emotionally rejecting Abbott's authority and labeling his rhetoric as sexist and inappropriate. This response redirects the emotional intensity of the exchange, putting Abbott on the defensive and reframing him as the aggressor, while simultaneously empowering her position.

Abbott's use of an unpalatable presupposition and condescension attempts to undermine Gillard's credibility, while her silencer aggressively shuts down his remarks, turning the confrontation to her advantage.

Canadian Parliament (House of Commons, 2011)

Speaker: Justin Trudeau Context: In a heated debate about campaign ethics, then-MP Justin Trudeau lost his temper and hurled an explicit insult at another member. Trudeau exclaimed, "He is nothing but a piece of shit," a remark that stunned the House. The Speaker of the House immediately intervened, reminding Trudeau and the other MPs, "I would like to remind the honorable member for Papineau that parliamentary language is something that we all take seriously here." Trudeau's outburst was widely criticized and led to a broader discussion about the standards of conduct in Parliament.

Impoliteness Triggers:

Insults (Conventionalized Formulae): Justin Trudeau's outburst, "He is nothing but a piece of shit," is a clear insult, a direct and derogatory attack on the character of the other member. This highly offensive language serves as an explicit impoliteness trigger, violating norms of respectful discourse in parliamentary settings.

Negative Expressions (Conventionalized Formulae): The phrase "nothing but" further amplifies the insult, emphasizing total disregard for the target's character and reducing them to something worthless. This intensifies the severity of the insult, embedding it within a strong negative expression.

Silencer (Conventionalized Formulae): The Speaker's intervention, "I would like to remind the honorable member...," functions as a silencer. The Speaker aims to restore decorum by reminding Trudeau and others of the expectations for

parliamentary language. This is a formal attempt to stop the impolite exchange and maintain the institution's standards.

Impoliteness Functions:

Affective Impoliteness (Trudeau's insult): Trudeau's insult functions as affective impoliteness, meant to provoke an immediate emotional reaction. The use of explicit language demonstrates Trudeau's loss of temper and intends to degrade the other MP in a public and humiliating manner, aiming to damage the target's dignity in the heat of the debate.

Coercive Impoliteness (Insult as Domination): Trudeau's insult also has a coercive function by forcefully asserting dominance in the argument. By using such inflammatory language, Trudeau seeks to shut down any further opposition from the target, coercing them into submission or silence through the strength of his verbal attack.

Affective Impoliteness (Speaker's Silencer): The Speaker's silencer serves an affective function by attempting to neutralize the emotional intensity of the debate. While Trudeau's outburst escalates the tension, the Speaker seeks to remind the MPs of their obligations to decorum, thus aiming to defuse the situation and reestablish control over the emotional climate in the House.

US Congress (House of Representatives, 2021)

Speaker: Nancy Pelosi Context: In the aftermath of the January 6th Capitol riot, Speaker Nancy Pelosi delivered a scathing critique of those who supported the insurrection. She said, "They are complicit in the destruction of democracy," directly accusing certain members of Congress of betraying their oaths. A sharp response from the opposition is provoked, with one member responding, "Your hyperbole is

dangerous," to suggest that Pelosi tried to over-describe the situation and heightening tensions. This exchange exemplified the deep partisan divide in the US Congress at that time.

Impoliteness Triggers:

Pointed Criticism (Conventionalized Formulae): The assertion of Nancy Pelosi's that "They are complicit in the destruction of democracy," functions as a sharp critique. Pelosi directly and harshly undermines the credibility of her political opponents by accusing specific members of Congress of deliberately endorsing the January 6th Capitol riot and subverting democratic principles.

Unpalatable Presupposition (Conventionalized Formulae): Even the reference by Pelosi to congressional members as "complicit" carries with it an uncomfortable presupposition that congressional members knowingly supported actions that are existential threats to democracy. It is both derogatory and quite harmful, as it implies guilt by association, regardless of whether particular individuals are named or not.

Pointed Criticism (Conventionalized Formulae): The resulting opposition comment, "Your hyperbole is dangerous," represents pointed criticism, calling Pelosi an exaggerator and thereby undermining her credentials in the process. Using the word "dangerous" implies that Pelosi's comments could inflame already high political tension, so it adds to the criticism.

Impoliteness Functions:

Affective Impoliteness (Pelosi's Pointed Criticism): Pelosi's pointed criticism functions as affective impoliteness, as it seeks to provoke outrage by accusing her opponents of betraying democracy. By framing them as complicit in a national crisis, Pelosi's

words aim to evoke a strong emotional response, casting her opponents in a deeply negative light and positioning them as enemies of democratic values.

Coercive Impoliteness (Pelosi's Presupposition): The unpalatable presupposition in Pelosi's statement also functions as coercive impoliteness. By framing her opponents as complicit in the destruction of democracy, Pelosi exerts social pressure, forcing them to defend themselves against such a serious accusation. The aim is to coerce them into either retracting their support for the insurrection or justifying their actions publicly.

Affective Impoliteness (Opposition's Response): The opposition's counter, "Your hyperbole is dangerous," serves as affective impoliteness, aiming to dismiss Pelosi's accusations as exaggerated and irresponsible. By labeling her rhetoric "dangerous," the opposition seeks to undermine her argument and redirect the emotional intensity back at Pelosi, accusing her of heightening tensions rather than addressing the issues calmly.

Both Pelosi's and the opposition's pointed criticisms and unpalatable presuppositions reflect strong affective and coercive impoliteness, escalating the emotional and political tension in an already polarized environment. Pelosi's accusations challenge the integrity of her opponents, while the opposition seeks to neutralize her rhetoric by framing it as harmful exaggeration.

UK Parliament (House of Commons, 2015)

Speaker: Michael Gove Context: In a debate on education reform, then-Education Secretary Michael Gove criticized opposition to his policies by referring to the education establishment as "the blob," a term used to describe bureaucrats and unions resisting change. Gove stated, "The blob is blocking progress." This derogatory term was intended to belittle those who opposed his reforms. An

opposition MP responded, "You are insulting educators," accusing Gove of disrespecting the professionals who work in the education system. The exchange highlighted the contentious nature of the education reform debate

Impoliteness Triggers:

Insults (Conventionalized Formulae): Michael Gove's use of the term "the blob" functions as an insult. The term pejoratively characterizes the educational system, encompassing administrators and unions, as a singular, obstructive entity impeding advancement. By employing a contemptuous and disparaging term, Gove diminishes individuals who reject his ideas, characterizing them as regressive and resistant to change.

Pointed Criticism (Conventionalized Formulae): Gove's assertion, "The blob is obstructing progress," constitutes a sharp critique. It explicitly charges the educational establishment with obstructing reform and impeding progress in education, portraying the resistance as a barrier to constructive change.

Pointed Criticism (Conventionalized Formulae): The statement of opposition "You are insulting educators," functions as a direct criticism. This remark plainly accuses Gove of insulting experts in the school system, foreshadowing that his language eliminates their contributions and role in society.

Impoliteness Functions:

Affective Impoliteness (Gove's Insult) — Gove uses "the blob" as an example of affective impoliteness in that it motivates the oppositional manner and when a derogatory term is used on opponents, therefore it seeks to generate an emotional response. The way Gove throws around the term "educrat" is deliberately designed to annoy and infuriate defenders of the so-called traditional education establishment. By

doing so, the insult is aimed at tarnishing the credibility of his critics and garnering support for his reforms.

Coercive Impoliteness (Gove's pointed criticism:) Goves pointed criticism acts as a form of coercive impoliteness, forcing the opposition to explain why it is against his plan for reform. When Gove depicts enemies of scrub trees as "blocking progress," he pulls the defenders into a debate, compelling them to look like opponents of worthy improvement. Not only is this a personal attack on the people in the opposition, it is also an effective strategy for delegitimizing opponents.

Gove`s sharp criticism serves as coercive impoliteness forcing the opposition to defend their stance against his reforms. This is known as affective impoliteness. By calling them obstructing progress Gove forces his detractors to defend their position turning them into enemies of positive change. The criticism is used as a means of undermining the oppositions credibility as well as a personal attack. **3.2 The Analysis of Arabic Parliament Debates**

Kuwaiti Parliament (2011)

Musallam Al-Barrak During a contentious session addressing governmental corruption, MP Musallam Al-Barrak alleged the Prime Minister's involvement in corrupt practices. He asserted, "The Prime Minister has transformed the government into a den of thieves." This audacious allegation incited a tumult in the parliament, prompting government supporters to vociferously respond. Al-Barrak's statements were perceived as a direct assault on the government's credibility, prompting demands for legal proceedings against him for defamation.

Impoliteness triggers

Insults (Conventionalized Formulae): Musallam Al-Barrak's assertion, " لقد حول رئيس الوزراء الحكومة إلى وكر للصوص" ("The Prime Minister has transformed the government into a den of thieves"), constitutes a blatant affront. By referring to the government as a " وكر للصوص" (den of thieves), Al-Barrak clearly undermines the integrity of the Prime Minister and his administration, implying that they are engaged in corrupt and dishonest actions.

Pointed Criticism (Conventionalized Formulae): Al-Barrak's allegation assigns the accountability for the government's purported wrongdoing straight to the Prime Minister. His phrase "لقد حول ... " ("has turned") identifies the Prime Minister as the individual accountable for converting the government into a corrupt institution.

Negative Expressions (Conventionalized Formulae): The phrase "وكر للصوص" (den of thieves) is a negative expression that likens the government to a hideout for criminals. The metaphor evokes a sense of lawlessness and immorality, intended to degrade the image of the entire administration.

Impoliteness Functions:

Affective Impoliteness (Al-Barrak's insult): By using the phrase "وكر للصوص" (den of thieves), Al-Barrak engages in affective impoliteness. His statement is designed to provoke outrage, particularly among those loyal to the government. The comparison to thieves not only humiliates the Prime Minister but also invites public anger, implying that the government is robbing the nation of its resources and integrity.

Coercive Impoliteness (Al-Barrak's pointed criticism): The use of "لقد حول" ("has turned") functions as coercive impoliteness by putting the Prime Minister in a position where he must defend his actions. Al-Barrak's accusation pressures the government to respond, forcing the Prime Minister and his supporters to either address the

corruption claims or risk further damage to their reputation. This coercive element pushes the government into a corner, demanding accountability.

Affective Impoliteness (Government's response): This reaction shows the stress and emotional intensity surrounding the debate on corruption, as both sides fight to protect their positions. The notable insults ("وكر للصوص "), incisive critique, and pejorative language in Al-Barrak's statement fulfill both emotional and coercive purposes. His rhetoric is to undermine the government's credibility, elicit emotional reactions, and compel the Prime Minister to justify himself. The opposition's response further illustrates the emotional instability of the discourse.

Jordanian Parliament (2013)

Physical Threat (Conventionalized Formulae): Talal Al-Sharif's act of pulling out a gun during the parliamentary session represents a physical threat. In Arabic, this could be expressed as " سحب المسدس " ("pulling out the gun"). This action transcends verbal insults and is an extreme display of aggression, meant to intimidate and assert dominance over the opposing party. In the context of parliamentary debate, such a threat goes beyond words, marking a clear intention to use force if necessary.

Insults (Conventionalized Formulae): While the exact words are not provided, the accusations of corruption can be represented by a phrase like " أنت فاسد "("You are corrupt"). Such direct accusations are insulting because they imply dishonesty and moral failings, and they are often used to delegitimize political opponents in highly charged environments like parliament. The use of the word " فاسد " ("corrupt") not only insults but also seeks to ruin the opponent's credibility and public image.

Escalation (Implicational): The escalation of the argument, turning from words to physical violence, is marked by actions such as " تحول النزاع إلى مشاجرة جسدية "("the dispute turned into a physical altercation"). This escalation is an implicational trigger,

where the intensity of verbal conflict culminates in a dangerous physical confrontation, showing how impoliteness can amplify emotions to the point of violence.

Impoliteness Functions:

Coercive Impoliteness (Al-Sharifs Physical Threat): سحب المسدس or firing a gun is an example of coercive impoliteness. This dramatic act uses intimidation to force the other side to comply or acquiesce. Al-Sharif asserts his dominance over his opponent by introducing violence into the conversation and uses the threat of harm to try to quell further dissent.

Affective impoliteness: the accusation of corruption أنت فاسد is an example of affective impoliteness (Al-Sharifs insult and escalation). It is meant to provoke rage and a defensive reaction thereby jeopardizing the integrity of the opponent. This is made worse by the turn into a violent altercation as feelings of anger guilt and annoyance surface. Expressions such as تحول النزاع إلى مشاجرة جسدية (the dispute turned into a physical altercation) which highlight the escalation of emotional tension during the argument are indicative of this.

Affective impoliteness: Conflict escalation particularly the brandishing of a firearm is an example of affective impoliteness. The emotional stakes are significantly raised when the situation progresses from verbal insult to physical threat. The سحب المسدس (drawing the gun) act serves as an example of how rudeness can escalate tension and hostility between two people and lead to violent outcomes.

Lebanese Parliament (2020)

Impoliteness triggers

Insults (Conventionalized Formulae): With the words أنت لص وخائن للشعب (You are a thief and a traitor to the people!) the opposition MP is openly insulting Gebran Bassil. By referring to him as a thief (صئنة) and a traitor Bassil is being accused of betrayal and corruption by the opposition MP. By accusing Bassil of being a member of the corrupt elite that is to blame for the nation`s economic collapse this harsh language aims to undermine his moral character and political allegiance.

Pointed Criticism (Conventionalized Formulae): In response Bassil said أنت لا حق لك (لي التحدث إلي بهذه الطريقة (You have no right to speak to me like this). Bassil is demonstrating his power and trying to put an end to the accusations by outright contesting the opposition MPs right to disparage him. His use of لا حق لك (You have no right) casts doubt on the veracity of the opponents criticism and establishes himself as a respectable participant in the debate.

Insults (Conventionalized Formulae): Bassil's retort, "أنت لست سوى دمية بيد القوى الأجنبية" ("You are nothing but a puppet of foreign powers!"), is another insult. Here, Bassil accuses the opposition MP of being manipulated by external forces, which is a sharp attack on the MP's integrity and political independence. The word "دمية" ("puppet") is a derogatory term implying subservience and lack of agency, describing the opposition MP as weak and easily controlled.

Impoliteness Functions:

Affective Impoliteness (Opposition MP's Insult): The opposition MP's insult (" أنت لص وخائن للشعب") serves affective impoliteness, as it is intended to provoke strong negative emotions, such as anger and humiliation, in Bassil. By calling him a thief and traitor, the MP is not only attacking Bassil's character but also fueling the widespread public anger against the ruling elite. This accusation aims to strike at Bassil's moral standing and evoke a defensive or emotional response.

Coercive Impoliteness (Bassil's Pointed Criticism): Bassil's challenge to the opposition MP's right to insult him ("أنت لا حق لك في التحدث إلي بهذه الطريقة") functions as coercive impoliteness. By denying the MP's authority to speak in such a manner, Bassil is coercing the opponent to retract or reconsider their attack. This criticism seeks to pressure the opponent into ceasing their aggressive rhetoric and to frame himself as someone who commands respect.

Coercive Impoliteness (Bassil's Insult): Bassil's insult (" أنت لست سوى دمية بيد القوى الأجنبية") also serves a coercive function. By labeling the opposition MP a "دمية" ("puppet"), Bassil is undermining the MP's legitimacy and attempting to reduce their political influence. The insult not only attacks the MP's integrity but also questions their autonomy, aiming to silence or delegitimize them in the eyes of the audience and other political figures.

Egyptian Parliament (2016)

Impoliteness triggers

Insults (Conventionalized Formulae): Mortada Mansour's statement, "أنت مجرد كلب ينبح" ("You are nothing but a barking dog"), is a direct insult. By calling his fellow MP a " كلب ينبح" ("barking dog"), Mansour dehumanizes the opponent, reducing them to a submissive and worthless creature. The term "barking dog" implies a lack of authority, portraying the MP as someone who talks loudly but is inconsequential in the larger political discussion.

Threats (Conventionalized Formulae): Mansour further escalates the insult with the phrase "سأسحقك تحت قدمي" ("I will crush you under my feet"). This is a threat of physical harm and intimidation, which goes beyond verbal abuse. The expression "crush you under my feet" is an aggressive metaphor intended to show dominance and threaten the MP into silence or submission.

Pointed Criticism (Conventionalized Formulae): In response the opposing MP used harsh criticism calling Mansour طاغية (a tyrant). This criticism aims to discredit Mansour as a leader who allegedly flouts democratic ideals in addition to attacking his political stance. In order to portray Mansour as autocratic and outside of democratic norms the opposition MP calls him a tyrant.

Impoliteness Functions:

Affective impoliteness is exemplified by Mansour's insult ("أنت مجرد كلب ينبح") and threat ("سأسحقك تحت قدمي"). The threat increases the emotional intensity by suggesting possible bodily harm whereas the insult seeks to evoke an emotional reaction in the other MP such as anger frustration or embarrassment. By combining physical threats with verbal abuse the two MPs hope to create an emotional power imbalance by dehumanizing and frightening the other.

Coercive Impoliteness (Mansours Threat): The threat of defeating the enemy under his feet is a prime example of coercive impoliteness. In an attempt to quell opposition by demonstrating physical dominance Mansour uses combative language to force the other MP to submit. By imposing authority and discouraging further criticism the threat forces the opponent to back down or give in.

Affective Impoliteness (Criticism from Opposition MP): Mansour is the target of the biting criticism (أنت طاغية) which is meant to cause him emotional distress. The opposing MP humiliates Mansour by calling him a tyrant and characterizing him as a repressive and undemocratic person. In order to cause a response that might lower Mansours reputation in political discourse this criticism seeks to discredit his public image.

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Pointed Criticism (Conventionalized Formulae): Haitham Al-Jubouri's statement, " هذه الميزانية سرقة في وضح النهار" ("This budget is a robbery in broad daylight!") is an example of pointed criticism. By comparing the budget to a robbery, Al-Jubouri is accusing the Finance Minister and the government of corruption and mismanagement. This harsh critique is designed to directly attack the government's financial practices and create doubt about its integrity.

Insults (Conventionalized Formulae): The Finance Minister's retort, " أنت آخر شخص يتحدث عن النزاهة، بالنظر إلى تعاملك المشبوه" ("You are the last person to talk about integrity, considering your own dubious dealings!"), is a direct insult. By accusing Al-Jubouri of having "dubious dealings," the Minister is attacking Al-Jubouri's own credibility and integrity, trying to discredit him as a legitimate critic. The insult is a counterattack meant to undermine Al-Jubouri's moral authority in the debate.

Escalation (Implicational): The exchange escalates quickly, with MPs shouting over each other. The verbal conflict here represents an implicational trigger, where the intensity of the language and accusations pushes the situation beyond a rational debate into an emotionally charged and chaotic confrontation. This escalation is not just a simple exchange of words but signifies how impoliteness can inflame tensions and disrupt order.

Impoliteness Functions:

Affective Impoliteness (Al-Jubouri's Pointed Criticism): Al-Jubouri's statement, " هذه الميزانية سرقة في وضح النهار" ("This budget is a robbery in broad daylight!") serves as affective impoliteness. His use of the word "سرقة" ("robbery") is an emotionally charged accusation, intended to provoke anger and outrage. It is meant to shame the government and stir public resentment against the financial mismanagement being

criticized. The emotional impact of this accusation seeks to mobilize the audience's sense of injustice.

Coercive Impoliteness (Finance Minister's Insult): The Finance Minister's retort, " أنت آخر شخص يتحدث عن النزاهة " ("You are the last person to talk about integrity") functions as coercive impoliteness. By questioning Al-Jubouri's credibility and accusing him of corruption, the Minister attempts to force Al-Jubouri into a defensive position. The implication is that Al-Jubouri's own questionable past invalidates his critique, coercing him to either respond or be silenced in the face of the attack.

Affective Impoliteness (Escalation): The escalation of the situation, with MPs shouting over each other, functions as affective impoliteness. This verbal chaos intensifies the emotional stakes of the debate, as both sides escalate their criticisms and accusations. The shouting is an emotional reaction to the verbal provocations and shows how impoliteness can inflame tensions to the point of disrupting order and rational discussion.

3.3 Quantitative analysis

In this section the impoliteness triggers and functions in both languages are contrasted following the number of frequency:

Impoliteness Triggers:

Table (1) impoliteness triggers in the

Insults = 7
Pointed Criticism = 6
Negative Expressions =2
Threats – 3 instances
Condescension = 1
Silencers = 1
Physical Threat =1

Table (2) impoliteness triggers in the

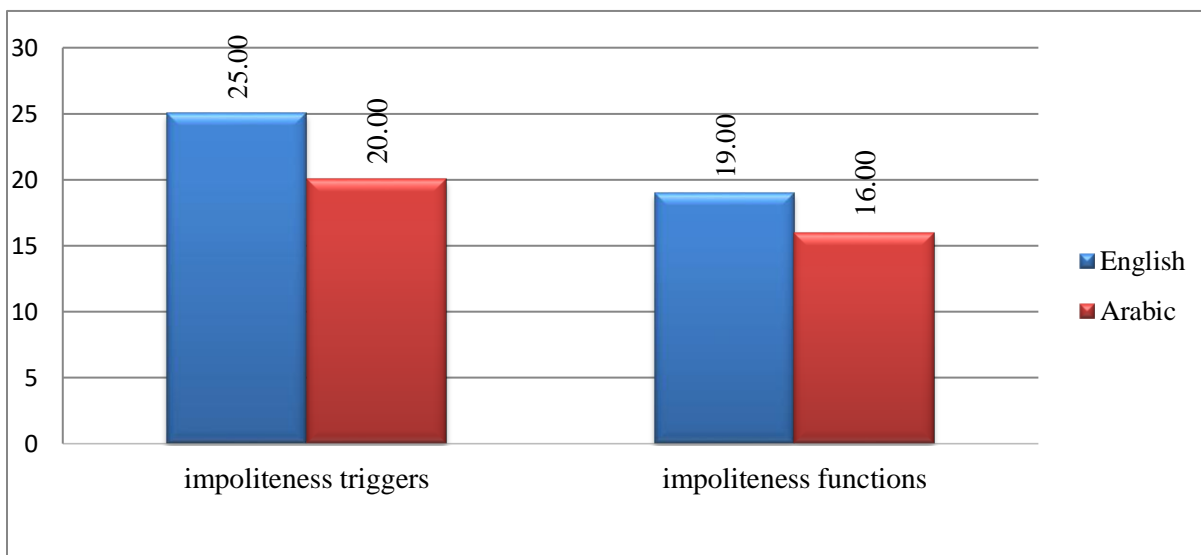| |
|---|
| Insults = 7 |
| Pointed Criticism = 5 |
| Negative Expressions = 2 |
| Physical Threat = 1 |
| Escalation = 2 |
| Unpalatable Presupposition = 1 |
| Silencers = 1 |

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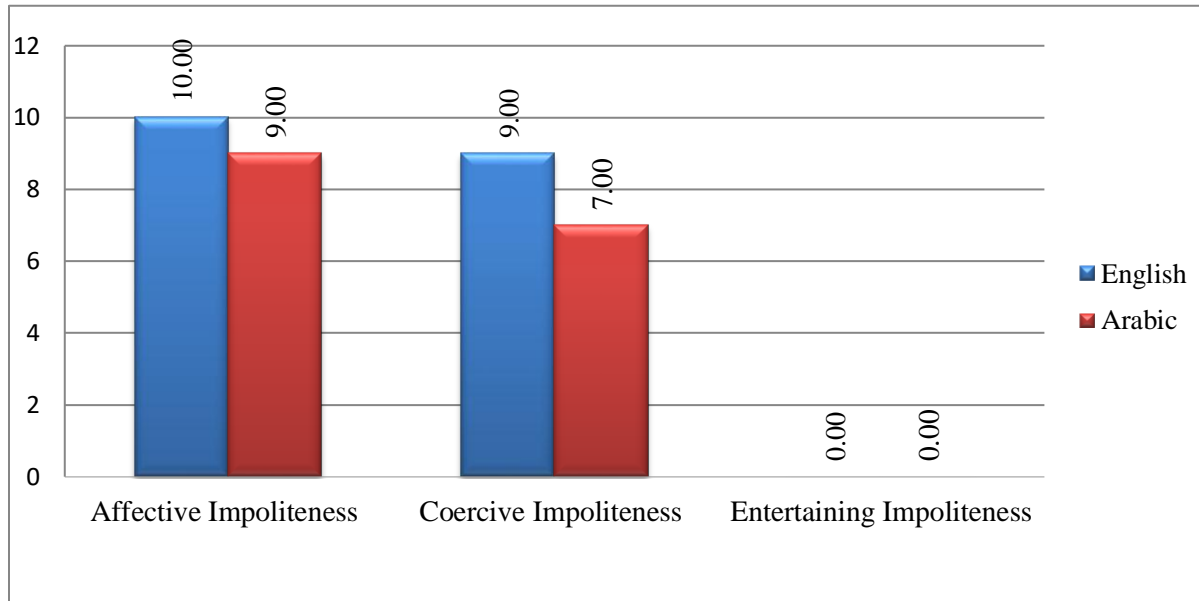Figure (1) the total scores of the impoliteness triggers and functions in

Figure (2) the total scores of the types of impoliteness functions in both

Conclusions:

Based on the quali-quanti analysis, the following conclusions can be reached:

1. English debates show a broader range of impoliteness triggers (10 types) compared to Arabic debates (8 types), indicating more diverse linguistic strategies.

2. Insults are the most frequent impoliteness trigger in both languages, occurring 7 times each, highlighting their central role in political discourse.

3. Coercive impoliteness appears more often in English debates (9 instances) than in Arabic (7), suggesting a more confrontational style in English politics.

4. Affective impoliteness dominates both languages, with 10 instances in English and 9 in Arabic, reflecting emotionally charged political exchanges.

5. Entertaining impoliteness is absent in both languages, suggesting that impoliteness in politics is mainly used for serious purposes rather than humor.

6. Arabic debates feature fewer impoliteness triggers (20) and functions (16) than English debates (25 and 19), possibly reflecting cultural differences in political discourse.

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