

A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATION OF IMPOLITENESS IN FRENCH AND TURKISH*

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ABSTRACT

Politeness and impoliteness are, as is well known, interdisciplinary matters dealing with anthropology, ethnology, sociology, psychology, linguistics and pragmatics. To be able to draw the borders after a precise definition of one, the contents or definition of the other must be known. Even though universal common strategies exist for using both of them in some contexts of social interaction, there are also too many different ways of using them, and even more criterions of definitions for them.

"If politeness is not communicated, we can assume that the politeness attitude is absent" is one of the maxims defining the politeness principles proposed by Geoff Leech and it may provide us with a starting point for seeking the boundaries marking where and when an attitude or expression starts to be impolite or rude. While impoliteness may start when one does not avoid making others embarrassed or uncomfortable, rudeness may start when one infringes upon or attacks the other's personal territory. But at this point cultural values and estimations come into play. For instance, in a society like that of the Turkish people where the "honour" phenomenon is considered to have the priority over other values, and is also considered to be easily infringed upon, sometimes a simple innocent word or an attitude of a foreigner may cause a misunderstanding. Conversely, some emotional verbal reactions due to some cultural characteristics of the Turkish people may seem or be construed as impolite by people from other cultures. So, this study investigates, from a pragmatic and intercultural point of view, the linguistic features of disagreement expressions, language forms for orders and depreciation locutions that could and/or would be meant or construed as impolite or rude in French and Turkish.

Key Words: FTAs, FFAs, Impoliteness, intercultural Pragmatics, French, Turkish.

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ÖZET

Bilindiği gibi nezaket ve nezaketsizlik olguları toplumbilim, budunbilim, psikoloji, dilbilim, pragmatik ve kültürlerarası pragmatiğin ortak araştırma konularından biridir. Dilde nezaketsizliğin tanımının yapılması önce nezaketin tam ve doğru bir tanımını gerektirir. Oysa bazı toplumsal etkileşim ortamlarında, her ne kadar her iki olgu için de evrensel, dolayısıyla ortak stratejiler var olduğu kanısı yaygın olsa da, bu stratejilerin tanım ve kullanımları bir kültürden diğerine değişkenlik gösterebilmektedir.

G. Leech'in maksimlerine dayanarak nezaketin sözlü ya da sözsüz biçimde davranışa dönüşmediği durumlarda nezaketin olmadığını varsayarsak, bu, nezaket, nezaketsizlik ve kabalık olguları arasındaki sınırları çizebilme, hangisinin nerede başlayıp nerede bittiğini yorumlayabilme konusunda bir başlangıç noktası oluşturabilir. Bu durumda örneğin, bir bireyin bir başka bir bireyi utandıracak ya da rahatsız edecek davranışlardan ve bireysel özel alana girmekten kaçınmaması nezaketsizlik olarak yorumlanabilir. Ancak tam bu noktada devreye giren kültürel değerler ve yargılar olası tanım ve yorumların her toplumda ve kültürde aynı olamayacağını gösterir. Bu da kültürlerarası iletişimin sağlanıp sağlanamaması konusunda son derece önemli bir ölçüttür.

Bu çalışma öncelikle, kültürlerarası pragmatik bakış açısıyla, dil düzeyinde nezaketsizliğin göstergelerinden bazılarını Fransızca ve Türkçe'de çeşitli sözlü iletişim örneklerine dayanarak ve karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: FTAs FFAs, Nezaketsizlik, Kültürlerarası Pragmatik, Fransızca, Türkçe.

From Politeness through to rudeness

Politeness, impoliteness and rudeness are, as is well known, interdisciplinary matters dealing with anthropology, ethnology, sociology, psychology, linguistics and pragmatics. To be able to define one of them and specify its boundaries to the others, the contents or definition of the others must be known. Even though universal common strategies exist for using them in some contexts of social interaction, there are also a great many different ways of using them, and even more criteria of definitions for them. This has meant that the universality of (im)politeness is one of the subjects most studied whilst also being the most problematic.

If we begin by considering impoliteness to start when one does not avoid making others embarrassed or uncomfortable, we can consider rudeness to

start when one infringes upon or attacks others' personal territory. At this point, cultural and social values and estimations come into play, even in the same society, for the boundaries between politeness, impoliteness and rudeness are not always easy to draw. These boundaries are sometimes a function of the sense of humour, of the possibilities of the metaphors represented on the linguistics level which differ from one language to another, and sometimes of the cultural membership, ethnic as well as geographical. Concerning universal features and aspects of those three phenomena, before going on to identify and compare different ways of representing (im)politeness in different cultures, it would be appropriate to study definitions made in each of the languages/cultures to be compared.

This paper aims to study and analyze linguistic representation of impoliteness; more particularly, grammatical and lexical items used to attack others, in French and Turkish, to try to verify how the strategies used fit with theories developed on (im)politeness and also to discuss the aspects of impoliteness which could be universal and non-universal.

1. FTAs, FFAs and intercultural aspects of "impoliteness" phenomena

As M. Youmans states (2001:57), Brown and Levinson (1987) still provide the most commonly accepted scheme explaining linguistic politeness. They explain "negative face" as the desire not to be imposed upon and "positive face" as "the desire to be approved" (1987:13). "Negative politeness" allows maintaining the listener's "negative face" and "positive politeness" allows maintaining the listener's "positive face". Given that the "Bald on record strategy" is consistent with the fact of not making the effort to minimize or avoid acts threatening the face of the interlocutor, as J. Culpeper notes, (J. Prag. 2003:1547), it accommodates the phenomenon of impoliteness. Taking this observation as a base, we are going to try to apply certain forms of linguistic impoliteness observed in the model proposed by Culpeper, to look for – simultaneously - identical and different aspects of the cultural and linguistic representation of the impoliteness phenomena.

Direct verbal expression of rejection and criticism are considered, more or less, as face threatening acts in several societies, in some as impoliteness and in others as rudeness. In Turkish, politeness is mostly defined in terms of the respect notion, which is also one of its semantic components. According to this sort of conception of politeness phenomena, it's relatively easy to consider the absence of behavioural or linguistic manifestations of politeness as impoliteness. In French, even though respect is one of the semantic

components, politeness is defined instead in terms of "courtesy", "savoir-vivre", "tact" and "civility" notions. In the text below, the link established between "incivility" and impoliteness shows that: "... *l'incivilité s'oppose à la civilité, c'est-à-dire à la politesse, mais si on a choisi ce terme plutôt que celui d'impolitesse, c'est pour marquer le caractère spécifique de cette conduite, et aussi de souligner son refus de règles de société. Ces deux mots, de toutes façons, renvoient étymologiquement à la même idée : les contraintes culturelles de communication qu'imposent la vie ensemble, en ville, puisque cette ville, polis (grec), civitas (latin), est à l'origine de deux mots.*"¹ (...incivility is opposed to civility, i.e. to politeness, but if one has chosen this term rather than that of impoliteness, it is to highlight the specific character of this behaviour, and also to underline its rejection of the rules of behaviour. These two words, in any case, return etymologically to the same idea: the cultural constraints of communication which regulate life together in the city, since this city, polis (Greek), civitas (Latin), is at the origin of two words).

On cultural and social levels, in Turkish society, contradiction is considered generally as impolite behaviour. So people try to avoid contradiction and conflict in verbal interaction, something which is more obvious in hierarchical and professional relationships. As is well known, there is a link between (im)polite behaviour and verbal expression. Hence, for instance, in Turkish society people try to avoid saying "no", just as in some other Asiatic societies. In that sort of behaviour, there is, no doubt, a part of complaisance. As a politeness phenomenon, complaisance has existed in some occidental societies like French and English societies: "*La contradiction était considérée comme une offense envers la "complaisance", un terme du XVIIe siècle pour la politesse, signifiant accorder sa conduite à l'attente des autres... Toutefois, la montée de l'idéal de la sincérité ou "franchise", tout spécialement en Angleterre, conduisit à l'affaiblissement, voire à l'abandon, de cette forme de politesse. A la fin du XVIIIe siècle, sinon avant, elle pouvait être perçue comme une forme particulièrement orientale du faux-fuyant"* (P. Burke 1996 :116). In this direction, referring to Lacroix (1990:ch.3), Kerbrat-Orecchioni affirms that "it would be suitable to conceive "politeness" as a generic term which covers two types of demonstrations of which one would be non-deferential and the other deferential, which in France in traditional times constituted the principal form of good manners, something which has not ceased to be the case, nor has it lost ground to a less formal politeness" (2002:10). In French society, the fact that complaisance has not been considered as polite behaviour for a very long time provides an explanation for the direct manner of explaining disagreement. Zhihong Pu explains that: "If the Chinese culture sticks to the concept of

¹ <http://www.chilton.com/paq/archive/PAQ-98-334.html>

harmony in the dissymmetry of the co-operation and the conflict of the interaction, the French culture cares much less about it. To speak is above all to draw the cover toward oneself, to put forward one's point of view as well as oneself, and so conflict is an important shutter of dialogue for the French". Regarding the "respect" component, the phenomenon of courtesy seems to have aspects identical to that of Chinese society: "*L'esprit essentiel de la politesse chinoise repose sur le respect témoigné au supérieur et l'humilité manifestée par l'inférieur*". (2002:2) P. Zhihong indicates, in addition, that in terms of respect, the Chinese place great importance on age and experience, which is often the case in Turkish society as well.

It is thus considered, for example, within the family framework, that calling an elder by their first name is an act of impolite behaviour. Between brothers and sisters, the younger must call their elder "abla" (elder sister) or "abi" (elder brother), whilst the elders call their juniors by their first names. Similarly, one should not call other close family members, like grandparents, or an aunt or uncle, by their first name. In the event of conflict, it happens sometimes that the younger person or the junior addresses the elder or the old person by their first name. In this case, on the one hand, the speaker intends to scorn his interlocutor, and on the other hand, the act is regarded almost as an insult and very clearly impolite behaviour. As for French society, as Zhihong underlines, there is no linguistic mark of a difference in age between the individuals of the same generation, nor a distinction between the elders and the juniors, or between the uncles, aunts and nephews. In short, respect and politeness are not governed by age. Nevertheless, there is an aspect of showing respect in the (im)politeness, in the communication of young people with old people, especially the choice of "vouvoisement" or the use of the "tu" becomes a factor.

2. Linguistic Representation of Impoliteness

At a basic level, an impolite act is a function of the anticipated polite act, in which case impoliteness is rather a lack of tact, the absence of politeness. From this point of view, it is relatively easy to describe, roughly speaking, an impolite act. What is not very obvious is how to be able to distinguish impoliteness from rudeness on the linguistic level. Because, for example, in the event of the use of certain linguistic forms like various stylistic devices, irony, metaphors, or a register of language like slang, the interpretation of the statements depends strictly on the context and conditions of enunciation. Such as, for example, in the army, the use of imperative forms without any softeners will not be perceived as impoliteness or rudeness. To put the following questions can perhaps make it possible to obtain the basis for distinguishing impoliteness from the rudeness:

- Is the intention of the speaker really to threaten? (this is the hardest to determine)
- Is the threat an accomplished act?
- Is there really face damage? If yes, what is the degree of damage of the positive or negative face caused by the absence of the use of politeness strategies? For instance, up to what point, does not saying "please" or "thank you", call into question the social image of the individual, and hurt their feelings?

Contemptuous statements of the kind "*vous n'êtes qu'un incapable*" (you are just an incompetent), do more than call into question the human qualities of the Individual, but also represent a direct and severe judgment which wounds psychologically and harms the social image of the individual if it is made in public. And one can consider that the act is performed and the evil is done! But if one takes a strategy of politeness to express more or less the same judgement, for example: "*Vous n'êtes pas très doué en maths*" (You are not very gifted in math), this implies "you are nevertheless a little gifted but not too much". The adjective "very" softens just a little the brutality of the judgement. To specify a field as "math" conveys a restriction, i.e. the statement makes it possible to suppose that the person concerned is not unskilled in all fields. There is certainly a threat, but it is expressed with a blur and a slight ambiguity. Therefore, the degree of harmfulness is less compared to the assertion "you are just an incompetent". Let's take another example to see the difference between: "*it is perhaps not very honest*" (impersonal use) and "*you are a dishonest person!*" There is a difference in the speaker's intention as well as in the extent of the harmful effect on hearer. Although lexically, the components of the word "*malhonnête*" (şerefsiz) seem to be identical in Turkish and French, in Turkish the word weighs very heavily and would be perceived in both examples as an insult. Thus, just at this point, it is important to notice that it always should be considered the fact that the semantic components of the same word can vary from one language to another according to the cultural values.

Generally, any type of direct acts such as attacks, verbal aggression, insults or severe criticism, which damage face by the use of some adjectives and imperative forms of verbs, can be classified as rudeness in both languages:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| - " <i>Vous êtes ignobles!</i> " | "Çok alçaksınız!" | "You are horrid!" |
| - " <i>Tu es laid</i> " | "Çirkinsin" | "You are ugly" |
| - " <i>Vas-t-en!</i> " | "Defol!" | "Get out!", |
| - " <i>Fermes-la!</i> " | "Kapa çeneni!" | "Shut up!" |

There is, in addition ritual sentences in the two languages whose interpretations cannot be ambiguous in conflict situations, like:

- “*On ne vous a pas demandé votre avis !*”
- “*Size soruldu mu!*” (No-one asked for your opinion!)
- “*De quoi je me mêle!*”
- “*Sizi ilgilendirmez!*” (None of your business!)
- “*Pour qui vous prenez-vous!*”
- “*Siz kim oluyorsunuz!*” (Who do you think you are!)

2.1. “Negative Face” and “Negative impoliteness”

According to Culpeper, negative impoliteness is the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee’s negative face wants, e.g. to frighten, be condescending toward, scorn or ridicule, be contemptuous, to not take the other seriously, belittle the other, invade the other’s space (literally or metaphorically) or explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect (2005:41). The strategy, that he calls “sarcastic remark, mock politeness”, deals with negative face wants. In the following example, even if the remark or the so-called compliment does not concern the interlocutor directly, it’s nevertheless negative face wants. That is because: on the one hand, the individual territory of the interlocutor is invaded, on the other hand, she is ridiculed through the dog:

“*Non, il n’est pas débile, ton chien, il lui manque un cerveaux, c’est tout*”
(No, it isn’t moronic, your dog, it’s missing a brain, that is all)

The same strategy is employed in the following statement where a student makes fun of her girlfriend by referring to the fact that she cheated in all the examinations:

- “*Bu nasıl bir zeka böyle! Hiç çalışmadan başarıyorsun!*” (What intelligence! You succeeded without working at all!)

In the following conversation, the speaker does not take seriously the proposal of his interlocutor and answers in a tone of the mockery:

- “*Moi, je bosse pas lundi*” » (I will not be working Monday)
- “*Oui mais, moi, je bosse le lundi matin!*” (Yes, but I am working Monday morning!)
- “*Ben, dans ce cas-là tu arrives le lundi après-midi*” (So, this time you arrive Monday afternoon)

- "*Tranquillement, bonjour voilà j'arrive, j'étais dans les embouteillages*" (So, I go, coolly: Hello, here I am, I was stuck in traffic)
- "*Ben tu préviens à l'avance, ne te moques pas de moi comme ça !*" (You must announce it beforehand, do not make fun of me like that!)

The following example represents a dialogue which occurs between three guests, of which one is a man and the others are two women, on a Talk Show on TV in Turkey. Two of them have never met before. After long arguments, the woman, who finds impolite the way in which the man reacts, expresses her opinion in an indirect way even if she does not personalise the judgement. The man proud of himself makes the claim:

- "*Müzisyen zariftir!*" (A musician is elegant as a matter of principle!)
- "*Böyle de oluyor müzisyen!*" (There are musicians like this (me), too!)

The man in question is a musician and understands very well that the statement by the woman implies that he is not elegant/polite at all. And the woman, who feels obliged to be more explicit, goes on addressing a woman singer who has known him for a long time:

- "*Siz kaç yıl birlikte çalıştınız, öğretemediniz mi zarafti?*" (You worked together with him for years, could you not have taught him elegance?)²

Contrary to the woman, the man uses the singular second person pronoun addressing the woman even though he does not know her and he criticizes her professional qualities by showing her to be badly educated:

- "*Sen nasıl öğretemsin? Senin eğitime ihtiyacın var?*" (What kind of professor are you? You need to be educated yourself!)

His criticism aims at scorning and ridiculing the woman who was really on TV to speak about the bad impact of certain television programs. The expression "what kind of", which is a query expression, has a function that implies disappreciation and scorn. In fact, only the conditions of enunciation can make it possible to distinguish the value of the expression in statements starting with "what kind of man", "what kind of student" etc.

2.1.2. Questions concerning private life as FTAs

The private life is definitely the personal territory of an individual. Questions concerning the private life of individuals may very well be judged

² Talk Show: A takım, Star TV. 26.05.2006

impolite, depending on the culture in question. In Turkish society, even if the cultural values vary by region, one should not be surprised to receive questions concerning age or monthly income from people to whom one is not especially close, and it is not considered impolite to ask a couple about why they do not or can not have children etc. Just because the question is asked, doesn't mean it has to be answered, because, nevertheless, the act is generally disturbing and often regarded as a threatening act. Hence, to show that the limit is exceeded, Turks say "sana ne?" or "sizi ilgilendirmez" (it is none of your business) like do the French "de quoi je me mêle?", or "ça ne vous regarde pas" etc. Of course, this type of answer is also impolite, notwithstanding the fact that questions about the private life are not very polite. It should thus be noted that in such a case one FTA produces another.

In a broadcast of a talk show, a girl who takes part in the program by telephone to speak with a comedian starts asking him questions. After questions concerning the comedian's professional life, she poses a question concerning his private life. Although it is a rather humorous program, the question on the private life of the artist was probably perceived as disturbing and that's why at first the comedian did not answer and instead just smiled. When the question came a second time, the comedian did answer but in a humorous fashion.

S- "Kız arkadaşınız var mı? 'Eğer yoksa?' (Do you have a girlfriend, if not, why?)

A- "Verecen mi?" ((If I don't) Will you give it to me?)

B- "Kimseye kalbini verme" (Do not give your heart to anybody)³

This conversation occurs, of course, in a humorous context. But the answer, which announces implicitly that the question should not have been posed, comprises sexual implications by posing an ambiguous question, in addition to which a reference is made to the verb "to give", which is interpreted sexually by the interlocutor and the public. So the girl who feels attacked by the answer expresses her astonishment and the presenter of the program intervenes to remove the ambiguity and to direct the interpretation of the response by saying: "So, don't give anybody your heart".

2.1.3. Can the form of address be considered an FTA?

This is, maybe, the most concrete way of approaching another person. So it may be considered as a first step in entering the other's territory, in some

³ Talk Show: Beyaz show, Kanal D. 12.05.2005

way, and thus the choice of the form and the way of address is one way, at least, to indicate the nature of a social relation between individuals. In French and in Turkish, even though it is possible to define some standards for the use of the pronouns of address, particularly in a given intercultural situation, it may turn out to be a challenge to be able to decide which form to use. In such a situation, nothing but the anxiety that a person could feel would be proof that the bad choice being considered, a priori, may be not impolite, but probably not polite either.

The Turkish language distinguishes, as does French, the familiar use of the second person singular pronoun "sen"(tu) from the formal use of the second person plural pronoun "siz" (vous). Even though, as we mentioned before, the young should not call their elders by their first name in connection with a "deference phenomenon" in a family, it is very common to use "sen" mutually, just as between friends. So, use of "sen" indicates intimacy, friendship and solidarity. In French also, mutual use of the familiar "tu" (tutoiement) is a mark of solidarity and intimacy: "*Le tutoiement réciproque se pratique: à l'intérieur de la famille proche, dans la famille au sens large, c'est-à-dire avec les grands-parents, les oncles et tantes et les cousins; entre amis*" (2004 :13). But in terms of friendship, the passage of "vous" to the "tu" "probably takes more time for the French than it does for the Turks". This is one of the reasons why Turks often find the French arrogant and distant.

The choice between the "sen" and "siz" pronouns may be a problem in contexts where people, who don't know each other, meet, or in a professional context, where generally the norms of the hierarchical system impose the use of "siz" by the inferior part, and a bad choice may be considered as absence of respect as well as impoliteness. Even though the use of formal "siz" in Turkish indicates "deference", in some social contexts, and "distance", in others, between individuals who don't know each other and are meeting for the first time, as is the use of formal "vous" in French, choosing to use it may depend on the internal social and cultural environment in Turkish society. In the countryside for instance, it's very common to use the familiar "sen" even between individuals who don't know each other. But one should almost exclusively use "vous" in French society at a first meeting, whatever the social and cultural environment is.

The age factor as well as socio-professional status seem to have a role in the choice of pronoun in both societies. The role of respect in politeness phenomena actually seems to be maintained also in France, according to results obtained by Hughson's research: The desire to show respect is indicated by the non-reciprocal "tu-vous" expression. The fact that a person is older than oneself indicates that he deserves respect".(2004:14) A study by Schoch

(1978:64), which is quoted in the same article of Hughson, shows that the use of “vous” signifies two different things: employers attribute to “vouvoiemnt” a sort of respect value as a mark of social difference. In the university environment, making use of “vouvoiemnt” signifies generally “distance” or “reticence”.

2.1.3.1. Use of singular second person pronoun for scornfulness: “Who do you think you are?”

In Turkish, use of the singular second person pronoun “sen” may have a scornful value according to the context in which it is used. We have noticed that political party leaders often use the expression “*who do you think you are*” in political discourse when addressing their adversaries in a conflicting framework. According to different contexts this saying (expression) may be interpreted as “What gives you the right to do such and such a thing”:

(1) “(SHP) Genel Başkanı Murat Karayağın ‘Başbakan Erdoğan, ‘CHP’nin kökü bereketsiz’ diyor. Sen kim oluyorsun da CHP’nin köküne laf söylüyorsun!” (Murat Karayağın, leader of the SHP says that the origin of CHP... Who do you think you are to talk about the origin of CHP?)

(2) “İlgili komisyon başkanı diyor ki “yargıya güvenmiyoruz”. Sen yargıya güvenmiyorsun da, sen kim oluyorsun? Sana kim güveniyor ki? Sana kim güveniyor; niye güvensin sana?”⁴ (The president of the commission concerned said: “we do not trust the court”, but who do you think you are? Who would trust you, and why would he?”

(3) “Bu topraklar içerisinde sen hangi tasarrufla Suudi Arabistan’a git diyorsun, sen kim oluyorsun?” (In this country, what right do you have to say: “go to Saudi Arabia”, who do you think you are?)⁵

What is very interesting in the three speeches is that the three politicians criticize their opponent, after having made references to what the opponent said in a debate, and speak using the pronoun of the second person singular, “sen”. Now, those that they address are absent at the time of their speech. This shows that the usage of the pronoun that allows personalisation reinforces their threat. If, in addition, one takes into account the fact that impersonal usage, like using

⁴ Extract Speech of D. Baykal, leader of political party CHP
http://www.belgenet.com/2003/baykal_181103.html

⁵ Extract from a speech by the Prime Minister who, in the assembly of the party (02/05/2006), answered one of the old presidents of the Turkish Republic who had said, while speaking about the prohibition of the wearing of scarf in schools: “those which want to carry a scarf can go to Saudi Arabia”

the structure of the passive voice, allows indirectness in expression, meaning the negative force of the personification by the pronoun "sen" is observed more clearly. At this point, we therefore concur with Culpeper who classifies personalising as a strategy of negative impoliteness. (2005: 41).

2.2. "Positive Face" and "Positive impoliteness"

Positive face (desire for closeness with a counterpart) is threatened in the case of disagreements, criticisms and refusal, something which Holtgraves (2005:75) takes up again, referring to Goffman's face work analysis, and the Brown and Levinson (1987) politeness theory. Positive impoliteness, which seeks to damage the positive face wants of the interlocutor, is defined by Culpeper as the use of strategies designed to damage to addressee's positive face wants, e.g., ignoring the other, excluding the other from an activity, being uninterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic, using inappropriate identity markers, using obscure or secretive language, seeking disagreement, using taboo words or calling the other names (2005:41). Several Talk Show programs on TV represent, here and elsewhere, many examples of face threatening acts like "The Weakest Link" that is a quiz show, studied and analysed in the paper of Cuipeper. The following examples represent, for the case of French, this kind of threatening acts. A French comedian, being a guest in a television broadcast, caricatures a Zionist colonist and right after some SMS:s from the audience went by on the TV screen :

-*"Dieudo Le Pen, même combat?"* (Dieudo, Le PEN, the same battle?)

-*"Dieudo, ton cas relève de la psychiatrie"* (Dieudo, yours is a case for the psychiatrist)

- *"Ça te ferait rire si on faisait des sketches sur les odeurs des Blacks ?* (Would it make you laugh if one made sketches on the odours of Blacks?)

In the first sentence, the comedian is identified with the bad image of an extremist political party leader who has the reputation of being clearly racist. In the second, he is more or less marked to be insane. Most contemptible of the three is the last one: by referring to the colour of skin, not only is "the odour of Blacks" intimated as a fact, but it also wants to affirm that all Blacks smell bad, which constitutes an insult – so rudeness more than impoliteness - aimed towards all Blacks⁶. Lexical choice plays, no doubt, a huge role for the degree of

⁶ The direct quotation of Dieudonné with Fogiel, presenter of the broadcast in question, examined for "racial insults" Thursday September 8, 2005 by the court of Montpellier, lead on September 29 to the conviction of Marc-Olivier Fogiel on a charge of "racial insults". Fogiel is fined to pay 5000 euros, Marc Tessier, former president of France-Televisions 4000 euros, Good Laurent, ex editor 2000 euros, and Gamelin his assistant, 1000 euros.

rudeness. The matter, which is sufficiently heavy, targets the identity and the properties or “saying properties” of a community of people represented in the person of the comedian. Indeed, the leader of the party to whom one refers in the example above, has speeches which do not comprise any ambiguity but remarks which can be regarded as rudeness:

“The day when we have in France no longer 5 million but 25 million Moslems, it is they who will be in charge. And the French... will walk along the pavement with lowered eyes. When they don't, they will be asked “Why are you looking at me like that, are you asking for a fight? And all they can do is to quietly slip by, if they want to avoid a beating”⁷.

2.2.1. Is to forget to say “Bonjour” an FTA?

Kerbrat-Orecchioni evaluates definitions of politeness on lexical, referential and conceptual levels, before discussing the “universality of politeness” question and proposes to distinguish FFAs (Face Flattering Acts) from FTAs. Kerbrat-Orecchioni thus distinguishes FTAs from FFAs and affirms in addition that the words of greetings can be categorized neither as FTAs nor as FFAs (2002:4-5). That distinction seems to allow, a priori, at least in the case of French, the identification of the criteria for verbal acts which should not carry a threatening aspect for the positive face of the interlocutor. One can also admit that the majority of FFAs like the “thanks” and compliments have a universal aspect, because there is, in all languages, at least a word which expresses “thanks” as well as more sophisticated expressions for recognition and gratitude. However, the absence of a greeting can also be taken as a threatening act, just like not saying “thank you” or not apologizing, because there is, in this kind of case, the absence of an expected verbal action. Culpeper defines “withhold politeness” as keeping silent or failing to act where an expression of politeness is expected (2003:1555). Failing to express greetings, thanks or excuses can be classified as “withhold politeness”. The importance granted to the greeting seems to constitute a good example.

⁷ *“ Le jour où nous aurons en France non plus 5 millions mais 25 millions de musulmans, ce sont eux qui commanderont [...] Et les Français raseront les murs, descendront des trottoirs en baissant les yeux. Quand ils ne le font pas, on leur dit « Qu'est-ce que tu as à me regarder comme ça, tu cherches la bagarre ? » Et vous n'avez plus qu'à filer, sinon vous prenez une trempe ».*
M. Le PEN, Leader of the political party “Front National” in an interview in le Monde on April 19, 2003. After this interview, The Parquet (the Public Prosecutor's Department) took the correctional court of Paris to condemn Jean-Marie Le PEN, brought proceeding for provocation with racial hatred, in two months of imprisonment with deferment, 8,000 euros and a year of ineligibility.

From there, on the intercultural level, the only problematic point seems to be, culturally speaking, the degree of importance which one attaches to FFAs and how to judge when the absence of FFAs becomes impoliteness. For example, the French society attaches a paramount importance to saying "thank you" and to the greeting which, generally, is regarded neither as an FFA nor as an FTA. However, since in French society, it is customary, upon eye contact, to exchange greetings even between individuals who do not know each other, a lapse in saying "bonjour" can be perceived as an aggression, especially if it happens, for example, while communicating with tradesmen, in cafés, in restaurants, in tourist information offices etc. In such a situation, one makes a remark to the individual who forgot to say "bonjour", the remark being a "BONJOUR", often pronounced with a strong intonation, if the person who forgot to say hello is also French. A French person does not, in general, take the remark as a threatening act and tries to make up for his/her lapse by answering: "bonjour"⁸. If it is a tourist or somebody identified as a foreigner who forgets to say "bonjour", the remark is kind, "on dit bonjour chez nous" ("we say "bonjour" here!"). In this case the reaction is undoubtedly according to the culture of origin of the "foreigner". And so it happens, that many Turks, in love with the French language, that leave for France, all happy and excited about being able to practise French in France, sometimes return disappointed about the attitude of the French whom they found aggressive. In fact, in the event of the foreigner being Turkish, having made a real effort seeking the exact words to be able to express himself as well as possible in French before starting to communicate, and forgetting finally what is essential - "Bonjour" for the French - he or she receives a reaction that is perceived as brutal, often more than impoliteness. Obviously Turks are not alone in being shocked by the reaction of the French: *"In France, it is seen as a serious faux pas to forget a bonjour and some form of au revoir at virtually every human encounter. Try ordering a baguette, or asking the way, without starting with the niceties and you'll see what I mean."* On recommence... *Bonjour Monsieur/Madame," will be the response, and it may well be accompanied by an icy glare...*⁹

⁸ This remark made on a French blog, demonstrates that the remark concerning forgets can be also judged even by French people: "Adressons nous à un commerçant, un représentant de la force publique, un employé de banque, ou à toutes personnes dont une partie de l'activité professionnelle consiste à prodiguer une information et demandons lui un renseignement. Inmanquablement la réponse est: bonjour (avec un air agacé non dissimulé...) suivi d'un silence. Léger flottement; il semble que l'on ait dit s'il vous plaît, voir excusez moi, mais c'est vrai on a oublié le bonjour. Alors, lachement on obtempère, et on reformule.- Bonjour, vous les avez en bleus? Pour faire court, ce bonjour extorqué, cette demande de respect derrière laquelle pointe le ressentiment commence singulièrement à nous casser les couilles".

⁹ <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/colinrandall/may06/impolitesse1.htm>

Kerbrat-Orecchioni makes the distinction between “apoli” and “impoli” (2002:14) speaking about the perception of the absence of greeting in various cultures. Indeed, it is necessary right there to add that the reaction received concerning the lapse of memory – that can be judged as a kind of intolerance - can also be considered impoliteness or rudeness. If the lapse of memory is regarded as an act threatening the positive face of the person concerned, the reaction can be regarded as an act threatening the positive face of the interlocutor – of a kind seeking a conflict.

2.3. “Bald on record impoliteness”

Returning to talk shows, in Turkey like elsewhere, they are conceived with the intention of creating conflict by direct provocation, or with humour, to improve ratings. « *Tout le monde en parle* », one of the most popular programs in France, represents a good example where, in a humorous tone, the guests are often put in an embarrassing situation. From general information, professional and private collected beforehand, about the guests who are often famous people, one puts questions to attract an even larger audience. The following conversation, which occurs between Jean-Claude Van Damme and the presenter of the programme Thierry Ardisson, contains certain FTAs which one can regard as what Culpeper calls “bald on record impoliteness”:

TA- *“Vous dites que vous avez beaucoup appris en conduisant des petits cons plein de pognons qui se foutaient en l’air avec de la drogué”* (You say that you learned much by driving little idiots loaded with dough who committed suicide by taking drugs)

JC-V- “aha”

TA- *“Ça vous a pas empêché de faire pareil après!”* (That did not prevent you from doing the same thing later)

JC-V- “Non”,...

TA- *Et pendant des années vous essayez de rencontrer, des producteurs, des acteurs, vous êtes toujours le mec un peu collant, il faut dire la vérité... vous attendez les mecs sur le parking, les acteurs, les producteurs...* (And during years you were trying to meet producers, actors, you are always the guy a little sticking, the truth should be said... you waited for the guys in the car park, actors, producers...)

JC-V- *Mais c’était avant la drogue hein! Quand on fait de la drogue on sait plus quelle voiture c’est, quel mec on a parlé...* (But that was before the drugs! When you’re taking a drug, you don’t know any longer which car is yours, to which guy you spoke...)

TA- *Donc, vous allez mettre des tracts sur les pare-brises avec votre nom, votre téléphone et tout, y a un truc qui se passe là! Et vous êtes toujours ce genre de mec un peu collant quand même!* (Therefore, you will put leaflets on the windscreens with your name, your telephone number and all; you have a little thing going on there! And you are always this kind of guy who never goes away.)

JC-V- *Pas collant, insistant!* (No, just being persistent)

TA- *Très insistant!* (Very persistent!)

Adjective "collant" ("sticking"), although softened by the adverb "un peu" (a little) aims directly at the positive face of the actor. Moreover, he reacts and corrects it by another adjective, "persistent", which is less heavy. So the illustration constitutes an example of bald on record impoliteness, defined by Culpeper as "the FTA is performed, in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimized" (2005:41). Another particularity of that talk show is the fact that even though the presenter and guest address each other using the formal "vous", their register of language is often slang with many "taboo" words".

Another example of dialogue which represents different forms of directness occurred in a talk show from one of the private channels on Turkish TV:

B.Z: *"Senin karakterinde var, içinde kötülük var senin"* (It is a part of your personality, there is evil in you)

S.S: *"Hırslanmışsın"*. (You became ambitious)

The invited singer B.Z., who is irritated by the words of the presenter, attacks her by the word "kötülük" And continues by criticizing her manner of speaking:

B.Z: *"Konuşma üslubun çok çirkin. Bu yüzden sen önce nasıl konuşulur onu anlayacaksın"*. (Your way of speaking is very ugly: This is why you will learn how to speak)

S.S: *"İstersen programı terk et ve sana şarkı söyletmeylem"*. (Leave the show, if you prefer, and we won't make you sing!)

B.Z: *"Yok yok, program senin programın değil sonuçta"* (No no, after all, it is not your own program)

After the criticism of the singer, the presenter of the program S.S. suggests indirectly that she must accept her manner of speaking, if not, she must leave the program and insinuates that if she leaves, she will not sing and thus miss the chance to promote her new album. It thus acts as a threat softened by "if you prefer", indirectly, and directly by "we won't you make sing".

The singer stays but suggests by expressing contempt, that it is not, in any event, her program (S.S.'s)

S.S: "*Başka güvendiğin insanların programı mı?*" (Is this the program of other people on whom you count?)

B.Z: "*...Sen bu konuda istersen benimle yarış yapma, benimle iyi geçin!*" (Don't try to compete with me on this subject if that's what you are trying. You should get along with me!)

S.S: "*Onu biliyorum zaten.*" (I'm already aware of that.)

B.Z: "*Çok terbiyesiz bir insansın.*" (You are very rude)¹⁰

After that, singer B.Z. puts down her microphone and walks off the show. The level of the conversation starts to change, rather to fall, by the use of the imperative form of the verbs which represent "directness" and by the use of a word, "*Terbiyesiz*" which is not really a "taboo word" but an insult nevertheless. Because of this, the threatened interlocutor will feel the need for a counter-attack to save her positive face, and to use even stronger words so that the discussion would be transformed into a real argument on live TV.

Concerning blunders which can be regarded as threatening acts, they are, in theory, not voluntary. A popular and very mediatic professor often invited on TV, sometimes makes this kind of blunder. In the conversation below, the fact that the guest made a mistake when he said the presenter's name is a blunder. But his answer after the presenter's correction is definitely impolite:

Z. Beyaz: "*Sayın Cevizkabuğu!*" (Dear Cevizkabuğu!)

H. Cevizoğlu: "*Cevizkabuğu değil Cevizoğlu efendim!*" (Not Cevizkabuğu, Cevizoğlu, sir!)¹¹

Z. Beyaz: "*Ne fark eder efendim, konuyu dağıtmayın!*" (It does not matter! Do not change the subject please!)

One can make find similarities between the manner of speaking of this professor and that of the leader of French Communist Party George Marchais¹², who also had a very particular style of speaking. Once, he had had enough of being interrupted by the journalist Jean-Pierre Elkabbach who was interviewing him, on the channel "Antenne2", and finished by uttering the sentence, which has now become famous: "*Taisez-vous Elkabbach!*" (Stop talking, Elkabbach!).

¹⁰ "*Hürriyet*" Turkish newspaper: 04-05-2006

¹¹ In Turkish, the majority of the names have a meaning and some of them comprise the word "oğlu" which means "son". In this precise case, the speaker mixes the name of the presenter "Cevizoğlu" with the word "Cevizkabuğu" which means "walnut Shell".

¹² George Marchais passed away on Thursday November 20, 1997.

2.4. Is speaking slang an FTA?

Each language has a priori, slang like a category of register of language. But it's not certain that the conditions and the contexts of its use are identical just as its degrees of acceptability are different in various social and cultural conditions. Within several social frameworks, the use of slang, which is generally identified with a certain social class which is lacking in education and civility, is considered in Turkish as rudeness. Contrary to what generally occurs in France, in Turkey, in the media, the use of taboo words, for instance like those which have sexual references, are very restricted. This is why the word is often represented by the initial letter and three dots if it's written, and signaled by a beep on TV. The utterances of a very mediagenic model, made when stopped by the police in a state of Intoxication, contain some of these words:

–“ehliyetimi vereyim ve bu ülkeden siktir olup gideyim... Beni Türkiye'ye madara ettiniz, uyuşturucu mu kullanıyorum, bi bok mu yedim? İki üniversite bitirdim ben! İlkokul mezunu orospu çocuklarıyla beni muhatap ettiniz... Size pasaportumu ehliyetimi her bi bokumu vereceğim”.

(I give you my driving licence and I will leave this country..! Am I doped? Did I make a shit? I finished two universities, and you humiliate me in front of these sons of a bitch (she shows the journalists), I give you my passport, my licence all my shit!)

The drunken model was followed by the paparazzi, who would never have spoken in this fashion to avoid giving a bad image of her. In French, use of “taboo words” depends, of course, on social and cultural contexts but it does not necessarily imply impoliteness. Some artists and actors allow themselves to use them publicly. The very famous French singer, Serge Gainsbourg, who had a particular language and a style that was often provoking did not always mind his language in various situations, as one can observe in the interview that he gave to the journalist of “Libération”:

Libération : « Tu as un fantôme? » (Do you have a phantom?)

S.G. « Je n'ai que des fantasmes : baiser les morts, les mortes. Ou alors faire baiser ma chienne... Non, qu'est-ce que je pourrais faire d'un fantôme? » (I have only phantasms: to fuck dead men and women. Or, then to make my bitch fuck...)

Libération: « Faire chier encore un peu le monde? » (To keep boring everyone a little more?)

S.G. : « Oui, c'est ça. Très bien » (Yes, that's it. Very good!)

He was asked to imagine his death in this interview published by "Libération" on Monday March 4, 1991¹³.

Gainsbourg had once put the famous presenter of French TV, Michel Drucker, in very embarrassing a situation in a program broadcast live where he had said, speaking of Whitney Huston who was also on the show, "I want to fuck her"¹⁴. Thus one can consider that it is just a freedom which the artists give themselves, or that it is a privilege for them not to have to supervise the standard of their own language. But that does not change the vulgar and rude aspect of the act. Because following the words of Gainsbourg, Whitney Huston was shocked and had difficulty to take them as a joke, even if the presenter tried to correct the situation by saying that Gainsbourg was drunk etc. And Gainsbourg continued in French "no, *j'ai dit que je voudrais bien la baiser*". It should be noted that Gainsbourg is a great character and his way of speaking is not revealing for saying generalities, although there are others like Léo Ferré for example. So, that's why, beside several parameters like social, cultural and anthropological, it would be necessary to take into account also individual factors in the development of the models of strategies of impoliteness, as Holtgraves underlines it (2005: 79).

At the intercultural level, besides this difference of the use of slang in public places, the use of slang in private contexts, i.e. between friends or amongst young people, has similar aspects in Turkish and French societies.

Conclusion

When one takes the mark of "distance" and the representation of "respect" as components of the politeness phenomena, addressing someone, whom one does not know, with the pronoun of the second singular person (tu/sen) is a sign of impoliteness in Turkish and in French and it is the only relevant point as invariant. Even in a situation of serious conflict, a French person who has no intimate relation to the other person keeps using the "vous" the majority of time, whilst in Turkish, the use of the "vous" can transform into the use of the "tu". In such a case, the French use of the "vous" reinforces the distance between the individuals, and in Turkish the use of the "sen" marks a lack of respect by the speaker for his interlocutor. In connection with cultural values and judgements, linguistic absence of expression of gratitude or recognition is perceived as impoliteness in Turkey but rudeness in France.

¹³ <http://davidpage.ifrance.com/>

¹⁴ Gainsbourg chez Michel Drucker: <http://gainsbarre.typepad.com/>

At the linguistic level, use of depreciative adjectives and selected words expressing dissension may be considered as impolite or rude according to the semantic components which constitute the words and the adjectives in each language. Because although those words seem lexically identical as you pass from one language to another at the pragmatico-semantic and cultural levels, their weights can not be identical.

Impersonal uses allow, in the two languages, the softening of criticism and judgement in conflict situations. Thus, the uses of the possessive adjective personal pronouns aggravate the face damage. Concerning the damage of the negative face, each language has its own linguistic formulas depending on their respective linguistic properties which represent impoliteness as an act of defense, as in the example of « de quoi je me mêle/ sana ne! » (It's none of your business).

Humour seems to be a medium in making legitimate any type of threatening acts. Sarcastic remarks and mock politeness are used in the same manner in both languages to threaten the negative face of interlocutors. The reaction varies according to sensitivities of each individual.

Since the subject is rather broad, all the aspects of impoliteness and rudeness could not be treated in this work. The subject will thus make for a widened and deepened treatment with a broader corpus in our next work.

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