

# **Online Animosity: Impoliteness Strategies and Triggers of Hostility in a Social Networking Site in Brunei**

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## **Abstract**

Customers expressing dissatisfaction onscreen is not uncommon. This is especially true for a company with a mass following. Often, lodging a formal complaint may not yield an immediate response. As such, some customers decide to pester the company's social networking page out of frustration. This paper looks at these hostile comments and explores the animosity using impoliteness strategies and triggers developed by Culpeper in 1996 and 2011 respectively. Data were collected from the Facebook page of a communication service provider company in Brunei between January and August 2018. The study shows not all strategies and triggers from the model are manifested in this online setting. Preliminary findings also suggest the majority of the subjects preferred to complain directly and explicitly. In addition, male commenters tend to be more hostile than females.

## **Introduction**

Bruneians are avid users of the Internet (Wood, 2016). With the rise of social networking sites (SNS) like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in the past decade, Brunei is the world's fourth highest in social media penetration today, with 95% of the population regularly using the Internet (Waqiuddin Rajak, 2018).

In SNS, users are typically allowed to create, share, read, comment, watch or listen to any type of content available. With just a few clicks on the search bar, any subject imaginable can instantly appear on the screen with multiple results. Due to this accessibility of information, online communication is now almost limitless – constrained only by a device and an Internet connection.

Unfortunately, such convenience in computer-mediated-communication (CMC) also makes it inevitable for acts of harassment to occur. Technological abuse does not only take place on an individual level; it is common in the realm of corporate business as well. Once customers' expectations are not reached, some of them will turn to the company's social networking pages and leave unpleasant messages for others to see.

The current study looks into these hostile comments using an impoliteness framework developed by Culpeper (1996; 2011) and aims to answer the following research questions:

- i. What impoliteness strategies and triggers are observed in the data?
- ii. What are the most common and rare strategies and triggers employed?
- iii. Who employs more impoliteness strategies and triggers?

## **Literature review**

### ***Defining impoliteness***

Bousfield and Locher (2008) describe impoliteness as a face-aggravating behavior in a particular setting. Holmes, Marra and Schnurr (2008, p. 196) assert that verbal impoliteness consists of "linguistic behavior assessed by the hearer as threatening her or his face or social identity". Regardless of whether the act was deliberate, they believe that impoliteness infringes

the norms of proper behavior in certain contexts, among certain participants. Terkourafi (2008) concurs that the expression used in impoliteness is not conventionalized relative to the context of occurrence but threatens the face of the addressee instead.

The current study adopts the impoliteness theory of Culpeper (1996). Impoliteness consists of communicative strategies designed to attack face, which will cause social conflict and disharmony (Culpeper, Bousfield & Wichmann, 2003). Culpeper (2005, p. 38) identifies impoliteness as a “situation in which a speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, and/or the hearer perceives the face-attack as intentional”. Culpeper (2010) also provides an operationalization and definition for impoliteness as the following:

A negative attitude towards specific behaviors occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and/or beliefs about social organization, including, in particular, how one person's or group's identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviors are viewed negatively when they conflict with how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be. Such behaviors always have or are presumed to have emotional consequences for at least one participant, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence. Various factors can exacerbate how offensive an impolite behavior is taken to be, including for example whether one understands a behavior to be strongly intentional or not. (p. 3233)

Culpeper's model (1996) was specifically formulated to answer Craig, Tracy and Spisak's (1986) call for a comprehensive treatment of face-attack strategies. According to Culpeper (2016), the framework is also a 'flip side' of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model. Culpeper's impoliteness is considered complementary to the politeness theory because it is believed that the politeness phenomenon is best understood with reference to impoliteness (Bousfield, 2008; Mohammed & Abbas, 2015). After testing Culpeper's model across different discourses, it was found that it was suitable for real-life data (Bousfield, 2008).

Culpeper designed five impoliteness superstrategies, hereinafter referred to as impoliteness strategies (see Appendix A). They are the opposite of politeness strategies, as they are specifically formed to attack face. He also formulated nine impoliteness triggers (see Appendix B).

### ***Impoliteness within CMC***

While there is a large body of work regarding politeness in the literature, not enough attention has been given to impoliteness, especially within CMC (Locher, 2010). Nonetheless, there has been a gradual increase of interest in the area within the last decade.

Previous studies have found online users are likely to employ positive impoliteness strategies in SNS. This finding was supported by Wibowo and Kuntjara (2013), Hammod and Abdul-Rassul (2017), Yulidar (2017) and Shinta, Hamzah and Wahyuni (2018). One of Culpeper's impoliteness strategies – withhold politeness – was also found to be consistently absent in the same studies.

Meanwhile, Shamilah Abdul Halim (2015) and Xavierine (2017) observed the most common impoliteness trigger used by commenters in their studies is insult.

### ***Complaints in Brunei***

While there is no study in the context of Brunei using the impoliteness framework, there are indeed a few in the area of complaint speech acts. According to Hamdan et al. (1991, p. 80), politeness lies in making language less direct through “metaphors, euphemisms, or allusions” – consequently equating indirectness with politeness.

In a study of complaint letters in a newspaper in Brunei, McLellan (1996) claims that most introductory sentences tend to adopt an indirect or gradual approach to the main issue through a buffer move that seeks to “preface the criticism with a positive statement, thereby showing that the criticism is not to be mistaken for disloyalty and is not intended as an attack on the country or ministry concerned” (p. 234). A similar observation was also found in Noor Azam and McLellan (2000) where they concur that Bruneians tend to avoid confrontation of any form.

These findings were different than those of Ho’s academic exercise in 1998 (as cited in Henry and Ho, 2010). She found Bruneians’ letters of complaints tended to follow a “straight-in” pattern of an introductory sentence that could be both direct and confrontational. Additionally, Henry, Lee and Khadiza (2005) agree Bruneians are hostile, aggressive and direct to the point of being confrontational when expressing their anger.

Henry and Ho (2010) compare the act of complaining in Brunei between 1988 and 2005, and conclude it has metamorphosized from one that was indiscriminately direct and aggressive to one that is direct but diplomatic and polite.

Ho, Henry and Alkaff (2012) find indirect – i.e. polite – requests may not be effective in getting adequate attention due to their ambiguity. They also observe that direct – i.e. impolite – requests which are clear, concise and baldly stated are considered to be effective. Furthermore, direct requests that border on rudeness or aggression or are purposely being offensive are considered to be ineffective.

## Methodology

The current study adopts a qualitative research design using a descriptive approach.

### **Data collection**

DST is a communication service provider company and is considered to be one of the most successful companies in Brunei. At the time of writing, they have accumulated a total of 62,446 likes on their Facebook page. The researcher chose the company as they are popular onscreen as they are offscreen. The number of engagements in the DST Facebook page contributed immensely to the size of data in the current study.

The researcher used a Google Chrome extension called *Full Page Screen Capture* on the DST Facebook page to collect all the posts and comments between 1 January and 31 August 2018. The extension allowed the researcher to save all the data in a single PDF File.

### **Subjects**

All users who were commenting in the DST Facebook page within the allocated research timeframe were immediately considered. Personal details (e.g. age, profession and nationality) were not investigated because such information was not supplied by most subjects, though some attempt was made to consider the gender of the commenters.

### **Data analysis**

All comments were individually examined and selected to ensure their suitability to answer the current study’s research questions. Polite and non-hostile comments were immediately disregarded. The usable ones were further evaluated to determine the strategies and triggers employed using Culpeper’s impoliteness model.

Brunei Malay and English are the most commonly used languages in Brunei. For the current study, both code-mixing and monolingual use of language were considered. English translation

is provided for each Malay example and the Malay words are here shown in italics. To achieve natural-sounding translations, the English equivalent may not be literal in some cases.

## Findings

There were 4,362 comments collected altogether within the time of the research. Upon individual inspection, there were only about 5% of them that are usable. The other 95% were not used because they do not conform to a standard definition of a consumer complaint, which is “an expression of dissatisfaction on a consumer’s behalf to a responsibility party” (Landon, 1980). In the current data, these discarded comments are typically expressed in a form of questions, requests, compliments, greetings or appreciations (e.g. “how much is the starter pack?”, “superdeal please”, “great job dst brunei”, “happy chinese new year!!”, “thank you for upgrading the plan”).

### ***Impoliteness strategies***

Culpeper (2016) defines strategies as “ways to achieving particular goals in interaction that are conventional for a particular community” (p. 424). He proposes (1996), and later revises (2011), five impoliteness strategies for situations designed to attack face. These strategies are: bald-on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, off-record impoliteness and withhold politeness.

The following sections will explore the animosity of online complaints according to the adopted model of impoliteness, using the data collected as examples.

### ***Bald-on record impoliteness***

Bald-on record impoliteness uses the most hostile language in comparison to other strategies. It is performed in a direct, concise, clear and unambiguous way. The usage of this strategy aims to threaten the face of the intended hearer – or in the case of this research, the addressee – without attempting to minimize the damage at all.

- (1) *penipu!!!*  
liar!!!
- (2) *Pencuri credit*  
Credit crook
- (3) *karit ni dst ah and cekik darah jua*  
DST is stingy and bloodsucking too
- (4) *Dst bangsat makan duit haram company paling cilaka*  
Scoundrel DST is eating laundered money; the most wretched company

From the examples above, it can be seen that commenters who were using this strategy were fully maximizing the effect of impoliteness. The complaints were not prefaced with any buffering strategies such as identification of the addressee, a general statement, or narrating one or more incidents (Noor Azam & McLellan, 2000) to lessen the impact. The impoliteness was explicit and straight-to-the-point, typically using an insulting name-calling or accusation.

### ***Positive impoliteness***

The second strategy is called positive impoliteness. It involves making the addressee feel excluded from a certain activity. Although the animosity is unmistakable, this strategy is still less direct than that of bald-on record, and therefore less hostile. There are many ways to

perform positive impoliteness. These include ‘ignoring’, ‘disassociating’ or ‘being disinterested’ with the addressee. See Appendix A for a full list of output strategies.

On 13 April 2018, DST posted a giveaway advert on their Facebook page (see Appendix C). In conjunction with the company’s 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary, they were giving away a total of B\$200,000 worth of prizes. One of the 81 comments they received regarding the post is below:

- (5) we dont need your \$200,000 giveaway nigguh! We aint going to be happy with this sugarcoating \$200,000 giveaways!

In this example, the commenter was shown to be not interested in the giveaway by rejecting the offer, and seeking disagreement by saying the giveaway is not what the people need, nor is it something to be happy about. The commenter even accused DST of sugarcoating their poor service with this giveaway, and went as far as using the term ‘nigguh’ – an alternate spelling of ‘nigger’. Although the usage of the term may not be applicable in Brunei, ‘nigger’ is often used as “an offensive and contemptuous term for a black person or a member of any dark-skinned race” (Merriam Webster, n.d.).

All of these characteristics were obtained from a single comment that can be interpreted as an attempt to offend the company and therefore make them feel excluded or alienated.

### **Negative impoliteness**

Negative impoliteness, on the other hand, involves interfering with the addressee’s freedom to do a certain activity. It is performed by damaging the addressee’s negative face wants. Like positive impoliteness, its level of hostility and directness is less than that of bald-on record. Below are the examples of negative impoliteness from the current data:

- (6) *Mun nada orang mau makai line dst ani bah, baru kamu tau*  
You’ll be worried if nobody’s using your line anymore
- (7) *Mentang-mentang lah kami nada pilihan lain, menindas namanya ni*  
[You’re doing this] because we don’t have other options – this is called oppression
- (8) *Yuran tahunan bebayar tapi kamu inda berapa berusaha untuk menyelesaikan masalah ani*  
We’ve paid our annual fees and yet you’ve hardly done anything to solve this issue

In Example (6), the commenter was instilling fright by warning DST that they will lose all of their existing customers one day if they keep up with their poor service. In Example (7), the commenter was associating DST with a negative aspect, i.e. oppression, for their expensive data packages. In Example (8), the commenter was explicitly reminding DST of their debt: that their poor service problem is still not fixed even after years of receiving annual payments from their customers.

### **Off-record impoliteness**

Off-record impoliteness can be tricky to identify. In comparison with the three previous strategies, off-record impoliteness is much less direct and hence less hostile. This strategy is performed by means of implicature, in which the implicated impoliteness can be denied if ever challenged. For example, if an addresser were to say “I’m thirsty”, the addressee could interpret it as the addresser asking for a drink. However, the addresser could easily deny this and claim that they were merely stating a fact that they were thirsty.

Example (9) illustrates the presence of this strategy from the DST Facebook page:

- (9) no customer at the Mall and I waited for 15 minutes to get served

On the surface, Example (9) does not seem abusive, hostile or impolite at all. The comment simply looks like a mere statement, with the slight hint of a complaint. However, this is why off-record impoliteness is tricky, because it is done by means of implicature.

In a hypothetical situation where the addressee, i.e. DST, wanted to challenge this comment, the company could ask the following questions to the commenter: “Are you saying our service is too slow? Are you accusing our employee at the Mall branch of being inefficient? Are you suggesting that we’re wasting your time?”. The addresser could easily just deny this and say they were not implicating anything other than just stating a fact: that they had to wait for 15 minutes to get served even though there were no other customers at the Mall.

### ***Withhold politeness***

Withhold politeness is a strategy where an addresser is withholding an act of politeness towards the addressee when it is expected. For instance, the addresser’s failure to give thanks after receiving a gift from the addressee is considered to be an instance of deliberate impoliteness.

This fifth strategy was not found in the current data. In an instance where DST is offering a promotion or giveaway on Facebook, not receiving any appreciation from their online users is hardly regarded as being impolite.

### ***Sarcasm or mock politeness***

Along with the five strategies, Culpeper (1996) also came up with one meta-strategy: sarcasm or mock politeness. It is deployed with the use of politeness strategies which are clearly insincere and thus remain surface realizations (Culpeper, 2016).

- (10) i’m smiling because all my friends can call their families 24/7 and i’m just sitting at new Bukit Beruang waiting for signals. thank you dst

In Example (10), the commenter claimed to be smiling and was thanking DST for making him wait for signals. With such service, logically, the commenter should not be smiling or thanking the service provider at all. This is why sarcasm or mock politeness is a meta-strategy, because it requires a higher level of discernment to understand the impoliteness. Similar to withhold politeness, the impoliteness in this strategy is not direct, as it does not have an overt abusive or hostile quality.

### ***Impoliteness triggers***

Impolite comments typically have specific structural characteristics which form a set of formulae. Culpeper (2011) classifies these formulae as ‘triggers’. A trigger is an alternate way of looking at strategies. Where strategies are more abstract and dependent on purpose and intent, triggers are more structured, conventionalized, routine and regular.

Culpeper identified nine impoliteness triggers altogether. Like strategies, not all triggers were employed in the current data.

### ***Insults***

Insult is a direct impoliteness. In general, it has a [you] [are] [insult] structure. For a complete list of structures identified by Culpeper, refer to Appendix B. In the current data, the insults being used are in a form of profanities:

- (11) you cheap heartless miserable specimen
- (12) you are worthless piece of shit

### **Pointed criticisms/complaints**

Pointed criticism or complaint is also a type direct impoliteness. It is straightforward in nature – structured by using a determiner or possessive pronoun, followed by a verb [be], and the criticism/complaint itself: [that/this/it] or [his/her/your noun] [is/are/was/were] [criticism/complaint].

- (13) Your internet is too expensive
- (14) Internet *kamu* lagging, fixed it!  
Your Internet is lagging, fix it!
- (15) Your annual fee is impractical now
- (16) YOUR DATA IS TOO EXPENSIVE COMPARE TO ALL OUR NEIGHBOUR COUNTRY

The hostility in Example (16) is not only amplified by comparing the price with that of other countries, but also by using capital letters throughout the entire comment. This usage of capitalization signifies the commenter's anger and impatience with the company.

### **Challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions**

This trigger is performed when an addresser is challenging the addressee with a rhetorical question with or without a preconceived assumption. The purpose of this trigger is either to intensify the magnitude of the problem or to provoke or challenge the addressee.

- (17) *Yatah* exciting news *ni*?  
So is this the supposedly exciting news?
- (18) *Bila tah kamu kan maju ni*?  
When are you guys going to move forward?
- (19) *Kenapa dst suka menalan kredit atu kan*?  
Why does dst keep swallowing my credit?
- (20) When *lah* you all want to give us better deal?

The presuppositions implicated in the examples above are: (17) DST's news was not exciting; (18) DST is not progressing or moving forward; (19) DST likes to 'swallow' credit; and (20) DST has yet to offer a good deal for their customers.

### **Condescension**

When an addresser is treating the addressee like a child or a baby, even though the addressee is clearly not, the impoliteness in this case is prompted by the use of condescension. This trigger could also be done by simply belittling the addressee.

- (21) *bah berakal-berakal tah 23 tahun sudah atu*  
it's time to be smart, you're 23 years old already

DST is a big and successful corporate company with a mass following in the country. To have a random stranger antagonize the company such as in Example (21), as if the commenter was talking down to a child, is inappropriate.

### **Threats**

Threat is a tactic use by an addresser to intimidate the addressee. Intimidation can either be in a form of physical aggression or verbal warning. In the following example, the commenter was

threatening to report DST to HM for their poor service. HM here refers to His Majesty the Sultan, the Head of State of Brunei Darussalam, who holds the power of all affairs pertaining to the country.

- (22) *jangan sampai ada customers direct complain kali ke-2 arah HM melawat masa pemberian kunci fasa 4 ani*  
 don't let us complain directly to His Majesty for the second time during his visit to deliver the key for the upcoming fourth phase

### **Negative expressives**

A negative expressive is a swearword addressed towards the addressee. Like an insult, a negative expressive is a direct impoliteness.

- (23) *Sial bah!!*  
 What rubbish!!  
 (24) Special your ass

### **Message enforcers, dismissals, silencers**

Message enforcers are expressions used by an addresser to enforce or emphasize a point to the addressee (e.g. "listen here", "read my lips", "you got it?", "do you understand?"), while dismissals are intended to get rid of the addressee (e.g. "go away", "get lost", "go to hell"), and silencers are performed to make the addressee stop talking (e.g. "shut up", "be quiet", "enough talking"). These three triggers were not observed in the current data. The examples provided were taken from Culpeper (1996).

## **Discussion**

### **Absence of a strategy**

Withhold politeness was not observed in the current study. This strategy is typically used in a spoken interaction. In normal situations, being polite is expected. Examples of politeness include greeting someone upon an encounter, thanking someone for their help, and saying goodbye upon departing. Withholding such good and positive manners would be considered as deliberately being impolite.

On the other hand, interaction within CMC is contextually different. Due to its setting, communication is limited to only textual contact. Non-verbal cues – behavioral, emotional and prosodic – are generally not present unless explained for example by using asterisks, emojis and capital letters:

- (25) *Bayar tiap bulan (full payment) tapi service \*thumbs down*  
 I've made my payment every month (full payment) but your service is a \*thumbs down  
 (26) connection very poor since a week ago..below 1 mbps of 5mbps promised speed  
 😞  
 (27) *KALAU NADA SUPERDEAL TUKAR JADI PCSB SAJA INDA PAYAH DST MENYUSAHKAN*  
 IF THERE'S NO SUPERDEAL, THEN I'LL JUST CHANGE TO PCSB, NO MORE DST, WHAT AN INCONVENIENCE



Onscreen communication often functions simply to relay messages. As such, good manners (i.e. politeness) that are expected in a normal face-to-face conversation are not anticipated in CMC. Unless required by the addresser, withholding politeness is rarely considered as being impolite in SNS. Therefore, the strategy is not practical in the setting of the current study.

However, the absence of withhold politeness in CMC is not always the case. For example, in a situation where an addresser is requesting a response (e.g. “please get back to me asap”, “this is urgent, reply immediately”, “would you like to hang out?” and so on), not responding would be considered impolite.

### ***Absence of triggers***

The presence of the nine triggers in verbal communication is not unusual. Some of them even possess qualities that can be transferred easily to CMC. However, in the current data, these triggers do not include message enforcers, dismissals and silencers. Their absence is perhaps due to the domain of communication. These three triggers have a quality that makes them sound too direct, which is suitable in a face-to-face interaction but not in an online setting. This is especially true for a silencer, as this trigger is literally instructing the addressee to be silent – a situation only applicable in a spoken interaction. Meanwhile, a message enforcer is quite redundant, as the addressee can just easily reread previous messages, without having the addresser enforcing the point they are trying to make in the first place. Dismissal on the other hand is an odd trigger to have in CMC as the addresser can just stop responding or leave the chat space anytime without resorting to dismissing the addressee.

Another possible reason why these triggers were not observed in the current study is because finding examples of them in the Brunei context was difficult. Due to the commenters’ unique cultural and linguistic background, finding examples in the data according to Culpeper’s conventionalized formulae and examples was tricky. It is probable that these triggers do exist in the current study but were expressed in an exclusively Bruneian way that the researcher was not aware of. Further research needs to be done to confirm this.

Nonetheless, these three triggers are not completely impractical within CMC (Xavierine, 2017; Shamilah Abdul Halim, 2015). Their employment in other studies suggested that the commenters were so angry that they treated their online communication similar to a real-life situation. The researcher believes that the non-employment of message enforcer, dismissal and silencer in similar studies could also be affected by the different research scopes. Where the scope of the current study is relatively limiting – i.e. communication is one-sided (from addressers’ only) and not open (complaints only) – perhaps future studies can find the presence of all triggers if the scope involves a two-way communication between the addresser and addressee, and the types of communication investigated is not limited to just one.

### ***Frequency of (un)employment***

Preliminary findings have shown that the most common strategy employed in the current data is bald-on record impoliteness, while the most common trigger is pointed criticism or complaint. Both this strategy and this trigger are straightforward and aggressive in themselves. This suggests most subjects in the data prefer to approach complaints directly and explicitly.

On the other hand, aside from the non-existence of one strategy and three triggers in the current data, the least common strategy and trigger employed are off-record impoliteness and condescension respectively. The impoliteness in these strategy and trigger is not forthright and to an extent is performed by means of implicature. The finding infers that only a small fraction of the subjects prefer to use subtlety and indirection when complaining.

### **Gender differences**

The researcher was unable to analyze in depth the number of complainants in each gender. However, based on surface observations, there are more male complainants than female in the current study. This implies a hostile comment is more likely to come from a male complainant. Upon further inspection, it was observed that female complainants are more inclined to opt for less direct approaches when complaining.

It must be noted as well that some commenters chose not to share their gender publicly in their profiles. Thus, gender identification had to be done by looking at their names, photos and, occasionally, the context of their comments (e.g. “my husband was [...]” is a female commenter). Nevertheless, this identification may not be entirely accurate, as some commenters can be dishonest when representing themselves online.

### **Conclusion**

The current study shows there are four impoliteness strategies observed in the data: bald-on record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness and off-record impoliteness. In addition, there were six triggers altogether: insults; pointed criticisms or complaints; challenging or unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions; condescension; threats; and negative expressives. These strategies and triggers are shown to be transferable in an online setting even though they were originally intended for face-to-face communication.

The fifth strategy outlined by Culpeper, withhold politeness, was not found in the data, together with three triggers: message enforcers, dismissals and silencers. The absence may be due to their unfeasibility in an online setting, the difficulty of finding examples in the data, and the limited scope of the research.

The study also found that the majority of the subjects employed a direct and explicit approach, and only a handful used an indirect and less hostile tactic in order to complain. In addition, there are more male subjects in the study and they tend to post more hostile comments than the female counterparts – as female complainants are found to be more subtle.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A. Impoliteness Strategies and Example Output Strategies (Culpeper, 1996; 2005)

#### BALD-ON RECORD IMPOLITENESS

the face threatening act (FTA) is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimized.

#### POSITIVE IMPOLITENESS

the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants, e.g. *Ignore, snub the other* – fail to acknowledge the other's presence. *Exclude the other from an activity*. *Disassociate from the other* – for example, deny association or common ground with the other, avoid sitting together. *Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic*. *Use inappropriate identity markers* – for example, use title and surname when a close relationship pertains, or a nickname when a distant relationship pertains. *Use obscure or secretive language* – for example, mystify the other with jargon, or use a code known to others in the group, but not the target. *Seek disagreement* – select a sensitive topic. *Make the other feel uncomfortable* – for example, do not avoid silence, joke or use small talk. Use taboo words – swear or use abusive or profane language. *Call the other names* – use derogatory nominations.

#### NEGATIVE IMPOLITENESS

the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants, e.g. *Frighten* – instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur. *Condescend, scorn or ridicule* – emphasize your relative power. Be contemptuous. Do not treat the other seriously. Belittle the other (e.g. use diminutives). *Invade the other's space* – literally (e.g. position yourself closer to the other than the relationship permits) or metaphorically (e.g. ask for or speak about information which is too intimate given the relationship). *Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect* – personalize, use the pronouns “I” and “you”. *Put the other's indebtedness on record*. *Violate the structure of conversation* – interrupt.

#### OFF-RECORD IMPOLITENESS

the FTA is performed by means of an implicature but in such a way that one attributable intention clearly outweighs any others.

### WITHHOLD POLITENESS

the absence of politeness work where it would be expected. For example, failing to thank somebody for a present may be taken as deliberate impoliteness.

### Impoliteness Meta-Strategy

#### SARCASM OR MOCK POLITENESS

The FTA is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remains surface realizations.

### Appendix B. Impoliteness Triggers and Conventionalized Impoliteness Formulae (Culpeper, 2011)

#### INSULTS

1. Personalized negative vocatives
  - [you] [[fucking/rotten/dirty/fat/little/etc.] [moron/fuck/plonker/dickhead/berk/pig/shit/bastard/loser/liar/minx/brat/slut/squirt/sod/bugger/etc.] [you]
2. Personalized negative assertions
  - [you] [are] [so/such a] [shit/stink/thick/stupid/bitchy/bitch/hypocrite/disappointment/gay/nuts/nuttier than a fruit cake/hopeless/pathetic/fussy/terrible/fat/ugly/etc.]
  - [you] [can't do] [anything right/basic arithmetic/etc.]
  - [you] [disgust me]/[make me] [sick/etc.]
3. Personalized negative references
  - [your] [little/stinking] [mouth/act/arse/body/corpse/hands/guts/trap/breath/etc.]
4. Personalized third-person negative references in the hearing of the target
  - [the] [daft] [bimbo]
  - [she][‘s] [nutzo]

#### POINTED CRITICISMS/COMPLAINTS

- [that/this/it] [is/was] [absolutely/extraordinarily/unspeakably/etc.] [bad/rubbish/crap/horrible/terrible/etc.]

#### CHALLENGING OR UNPALATABLE QUESTIONS AND/OR PRESUPPOSITIONS

- why do you make my life impossible?
- which lie are you telling me?
- what's gone wrong now?
- you want to argue with me or you want to go to jail?

#### CONDESCENSION

- [that] [‘s/being] [babyish/childish/etc.]

#### MESSAGE ENFORCERS

- listen here (as a preface)
- you got it? (as a tag)
- read my lips
- do you understand [me]? (as a tag)

## DISMISSALS

- [go] [away]
- [get] [lost/out]
- [fuck/piss/shove] [off]

## SILENCERS

- [shut] [it/your] [stinking/fucking/etc.] [mouth/face/trap/etc.]
- shut [the fuck] up

## THREATS

- [I'll] [I'm/we're] [gonna] [smash your face in/beat the shit out of you/box your ears/bust your fucking head off/straighten you out/etc.] [if you don't] [X]
- [you'd better be ready Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> to meet me/do it] [or] [else] [I'll] [X]
- [X] [before I] [hit you/strangle you]

## NEGATIVE EXPRESSIVE (CURSE AND ILL-WISHES)

- [go] [to hell/hang yourself/fuck yourself]
- [damn/fuck] [you]

## Appendix C. DST Giveaway Advert

The image shows a Facebook post from DST dated April 13, 2018, announcing a large giveaway. The post text reads: "WIN BIG IN OUR LARGEST EVER GIVEAWAY! In conjunction with our 23rd Anniversary, we're giving away B\$500 credit to 200 lucky postpaid subscribers, and B\$100 credit to 1000 lucky prepaid subscribers! If you've been a Prima, Easi, GO!broadband or Home Broadband subscriber for more than 6 months on your current active subscription, sign up for our draw and stand a chance of winning! For each number of years that you've been with us, you'll get the same corresponding number of chances (for example, 5 years with DST, 5 chances). Register for free at [giveaway.dst.com.bn](http://giveaway.dst.com.bn) from now until 15th May 2018. Terms and Conditions Apply."

To the right of the post is a large, vibrant purple and yellow graphic for the "DST 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNIVERSARY GIVEAWAY". The graphic features a large yellow number "23" in the top right corner. The central text reads "DST 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNIVERSARY GIVEAWAY" in bold yellow letters, with "B\$200,000 WORTH OF PRIZES TO BE WON!" below it. At the bottom of the graphic, it says "DST subscribers\* can register for free at [giveaway.dst.com.bn](http://giveaway.dst.com.bn)". A small asterisk note at the bottom left of the graphic states: "\* Applicable for Easi, Prima, GO!broadband and Home Broadband subscribers of more than 6 months on current active subscription. Terms and conditions apply." The DST logo with the tagline "THE FUTURE. NOW." is in the bottom right corner of the graphic.

Below the graphic, the Facebook interface shows "194 Likes 81 Comments 64 Shares".