

Impoliteness Strategies in Negotiating Power in Broadcast Political Interview

This paper reports on a section of my research project into the workings of power within broadcast media discourse in British and Russian cultures. The following research question will be addressed in the paper: to what extent are impoliteness and rudeness a feature of power relations between interviewers and interviewees in British and Russian political interviews. In addressing that question I analyse excerpts from the BBC discussion and news programmes *HARDtalk*, *Straight Talk*, *Newsnight*, *Question Time* and Russian TV programmes of a like genre and format. Methodologically, my research is based on DA, CDA and CA with the general principal of prioritising micro-analysis to explain macro-issues.

My research is informed by scholarship on power, media discourse, impoliteness and rudeness studies. In analysing impoliteness I draw on Culpeper's definition of it and his taxonomy of impoliteness strategies (Culpeper 1996, 2005, 2008); theories that address power as dynamic, relational, contextually-expressed, complex and contestable; and studies of power that propose that it is related to conflict, confrontation, disagreement, asymmetry, control, manipulation, dominance, rudeness, and impoliteness (Hutchby 1996; Locher 2004; Limberg 2008; Thornborrow 2004; Wartenberg 1990; Watts 1991, 2003).

On the basis of the scholarship, my claim is that power, being a multi-dimensional phenomenon, should be analysed alongside several dimensions simultaneously and can be explained better by characterising it through its "contextual variants" such as conflict, confrontation, asymmetry, impoliteness, etc. I argue that relations between power and its contextual variants are similar to that between an abstract unit like a phoneme and its realization through allophones. I support this by showing how interviewers and interviewees use culture-specific impoliteness strategies in their power game in broadcast political interview.

References

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