

NUANCES OF (IM)POLITENESS: IMPOLITENESS AS AN IDENTITY MARKER

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Abstract:

Politeness and impoliteness as communication strategies have been investigated in different ways and with different theoretical approaches since the sixties. The different theoretical accounts are not completely homogeneous with one another, but a proposal will be made to integrate them in a single model consisting in three layers, a “semantic”, a strategic and conversational, and a lexical one. This harmonisation is necessary to motivate different types of impoliteness as violation of one or more layers. In particular, two cultural communities, Naples and Livorno, are examined, in which impoliteness is not only ordinarily practised, but also adopted as cultural identity markers, which people are proud of, although they are also able to practise ordinary politeness. These two examples show the impact of cultural aspects on the very notion of politeness as well as on the different types of impoliteness. In fact, although the two towns share some aspects of their history and of their social structure, they practise two different types of impoliteness, violating different layers of the model proposed.

Keywords: *Politeness; Impoliteness; Cultural markers; Social motivation of impoliteness; Historical motivation of impoliteness.*