



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Pragmatics

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/pragma

Impoliteness recycled: Subject ellipsis in Modern Russian complaint discourse

Renee Perelmutter*

University of Kansas, Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures, 1445 Jayhawk Blvd., Rm. 2127, Lawrence, KS 66045-7590, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 31 July 2009

Received in revised form 23 June 2010

Accepted 2 July 2010

Keywords:

Impoliteness
Relational work
Complaint discourse
Reported speech
Modern Russian
Subject ellipsis
Distancing

ABSTRACT

(Im)politeness is usually discussed in context of an ongoing discourse situation. In this article, I show that relational work is not limited to a single conversation: specifically, the impact of a face attack can carry over to subsequent conversations.

During a face attack, one of the options for the hearer is to remain silent, not defending his/her face (Culpeper, 1996:354). This option might be used when the offender is significantly more powerful than the hearer; the power differential sharply restricts the hearer's options for defending face (Culpeper et al., 2003:1562; Austin, 1990:279; Bousfield and Locher, 2008:8–9). However, in some cases the hearer does not simply accept the damage to his/her face. Unable to confront the offender directly, the offended restores face by complaining to peers and soliciting their commiseration and approval.

Using Modern Russian data, I show how an offensive conversation between two interlocutors (usually a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law) is recycled when the offended later complains at an online support group. The complainer often uses a special construction with subject ellipsis to introduce the reported offensive discourse. By using this construction, the offended retroactively and symbolically attacks the offender, thus repairing damage to face.

© 2010 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Impoliteness, broadly understood as a variety of face-aggravating verbal behaviors, has lately been garnering extensive scholarly attention (Culpeper, 1996, 2005, 2008; Bousfield, 2008; Bousfield and Locher, 2008; Culpeper et al., 2003; Terkourafi, 2008, among others). Classical politeness theories (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983) came under scrutiny for marginalizing non-cooperative communication, and for assuming that impoliteness can be studied using concepts developed for politeness (for a detailed critique of politeness theories, see Eelen, 2001). More recently, scholars have been suggesting that both politeness and impoliteness should be examined through a broader lens of rapport management (Spenser-Oatey, 2002, 2004, 2005) or relational work (Locher and Watts, 2005; Culpeper, 2008). For instance, Locher and Watts suggest that “relational work, the “work” individuals invest in negotiating relationships with others [...] is a useful concept to help investigate the discursive struggle over politeness” (Locher and Watts, 2005:9). Rather than focusing solely on cooperative behaviors, these studies look at interpersonal communications as a continuum of polite, neutral (also called appropriate or politic¹), and impolite exchanges.

* Tel.: +1 785 8409220.

E-mail addresses: renee.perelmutter@gmail.com, rperel@ku.edu.

¹ Watts et al. (2005) defines ‘politic’ as socially appropriate behavior; he distinguishes between two kinds of politic, or socially appropriate, behaviors: unmarked politic behavior” (non-polite) and marked politic behavior, i.e. polite behavior (Watts et al., 2005:xli–xliii). On the other hand, Watts separates polite and politic when he observes that polite behavior is “behavior in excess of politic behavior” (Watts, 2003:30) (For critique of Watts’ distinction between politic and polite, see Xie et al., 2005). Although I am aware of the problems associated with this term, it is used in this study to denote linguistic behaviors that are perceived by speakers and hearers to be unmarked in terms of (im)politeness, corresponding to what Watts calls ‘unmarked politic behavior’.

Another criticism of Brown and Levinson's classic work involves its focus on production. Later studies have also been paying attention to reception, since what is considered polite or impolite by the hearer is dynamically determined by a variety of contextual factors. These factors can include the discourse that proceeds or follows the (im)polite utterance, the hearer's assumptions about the speaker's intentions, possible visual cues from the speaker, and the audience's reaction (Austin, 1990:277).

Reception can also be influenced by the hearer's expectations, which are often based on past experiences (Tannen, 1993:53). According to Stewart (2008:36), speakers rely on their "long-term knowledge bases as well as the short term memory of the ongoing speech context" to interpret the ongoing discourse situation. It follows that a hearer's reaction to an utterance is not limited to the content and context of the current discourse, but can rely on a wealth of past experiences, including, potentially, past conversations with the speaker. A single conversation can be influenced by past conversations, and in turn can have long-term impact on future relational work. However, at this time, most studies deal with (im) politeness phenomena within the scope of an isolated conversation. Culpeper draws our attention to impolite conversations where face is repeatedly renegotiated in longer stretches of interaction (but still within a single conversation) as the hearer responds to a face attack by a face attack of his/her own (Culpeper, 2008:37). In this article, I show that the scope of relational work does not have to be limited to a single conversation.

Tannen (2006) discusses such a phenomenon when she traces family conflict discourse from its first occurrence – an argument between a husband and wife about household duties – through additional conversations in which the original language is recalled, restructured and recycled. In Tannen's data, arguing spouses use restructured discourse to reestablish cooperation and restore each other's face after the original conflict. Thus, a conversation is often but a link in a chain of conversations on the same or similar topic in which face is constantly renegotiated.

Locher and Watts note that "impolite behavior is just as significant in defining relationships as appropriate/polite or polite behavior" (Locher and Watts, 2005: 11). It is possible, however, that the impact of impolite behavior on face is not only equal, but greater than the impact of polite behavior. If the spouses in Tannen's study would exchange compliments, for example (or engage in other polite, face-upholding behavior), there would be little need for them to revisit the polite utterances later. On the other hand, impolite verbal behaviors such as coercive impositions, insults and threats, tend to linger in the hearer's memory, causing negative emotions long after they've been uttered. Such utterances can later be recalled (most likely not verbatim) in an attempt by the offended party to restructure the original offence and thus retroactively defend against the face attack.²

However, it is not always possible for the offended to restore his/her face through continuous exchanges with the offender, either in a single long conversation (as in Culpeper, 2008), or in a chain of conversations (as in Tannen, 2006). A face attack restricts the hearer's response options (Bousfield and Locher, 2008:8–9); one of the hearer's possible reactions is to remain silent, rather than to reciprocate with a face attack of his/her own (Culpeper, 1996:354). This choice can be motivated by the speaker's significantly greater power (Culpeper et al., 2003:1562; Locher and Watts, 2005). Power differential and a possible non-response are also discussed by Limberg (2009) in his work on threats. Limberg remarks that the addressee can opt out of the response to the threat; he also shows that for speakers of English, non-response is not always a preferred option. If a threat is issued by a person of greater power, and if such a threat is perceived as unjust, an indirect rejection of a threat may be more likely in some situations, such as encounters with policemen (Limberg, 2009:1385–1391). Regardless of whether the offended party chooses to remain silent or offers some kind of an indirect response, such responses do not necessarily restore the damage to face. This is especially true when the power figure is a constant presence in the offended's life (unlike Limberg's authority figures), the power differential is significant, and the damage to face ongoing—such as in the case of familial conflict, or conflict with a boss. Austin (1990) notes:

The major variable involved in the decision whether or not to save face is power. The power variable is the one which, more than others, allows an individual to be humiliating and coercive without fear of retribution. People cannot always be expected to defend their face when threatened, since the consequences of this could be more damaging than the face attack in other areas such as job security, employment prospects and physical safety. (Austin, 1990:279)

In a situation such as described by Austin, the hearer cannot save his/her face during the isolated conversation with the powerful offender; nor can he/she be expected to do so later, in subsequent conversations, since the power variable is likely to remain a constant.

However, it is incorrect to assume that the hearer will refrain from face-restoring talk in all future contexts, and that his/her damaged face cannot be restored at all.

² Tannen's work on reported speech (2007) shows that there is no such thing as a faithful, verbatim report of preceding discourse. Speech that is being reported is unlikely to have been uttered in the way it is presented, and thus reported speech is largely a construct of the reporter, which Tannen calls *constructed dialogue*: "In many cases... the material represented as dialogue was never spoken by anyone else in a form resembling that constructed, if at all. Rather, casting ideas as dialogue rather than statements is a discourse strategy for framing information in a way that communicates effectively and creates involvement." (Tannen, 2007:112). Even verbatim reports change their meaning once they are taken out of their original context and situated in the new context of the report (Bakhtin, 1975/1981: 340, cited in Tannen, 2007). In this article, I use the term "reported speech" not to imply that any original discourse can be reported verbatim, but rather in the sense of Tannen's *constructed dialogue*; the reporter is influenced by the original discourse and is reconstructing it in the context of complaint.

Using Modern Russian data, I show how offended hearers attempt to restore face by reporting the offensive conversation to peers in online forums especially dedicated to complaints. Both complaints about the offender's actions and complaints about the offender's verbal behavior are reported on such forums, and it is the latter that is explored in this article. By reporting the original impolite speech to peers, previously silenced persons are able to restore face in the egalitarian context of the online complaint circle. The peers are expected to lend their support and approval to the complainer; sometimes they even verbally attack the original offender.

2. Subject ellipsis and (im)politeness phenomena

While introducing the original offensive speech to peers, the complainers often use a special construction with subject ellipsis to retroactively attack the face of the offender. Before proceeding to discuss complaint discourse, I would like to contextualize the usage of subject ellipsis in Russian, and examine its correlation with (im)politeness phenomena.

2.1. Subject ellipsis in Russian

Subject ellipsis appears in Russian in a variety of contexts in which the identity of the agent is irrelevant to the discourse, indeterminable, or otherwise backgrounded. Thus in (1), the identity of the officials looking for explosives is not important—the focus is on the fact that the bombs were not found:

- (1) *Ni na odnoj stancii peterburgskogo metro vzryvnyx ustrojstv ne našli*
 NEG on one station St.Petersburg.ADJ metro explosive devices NEG found.3PL
 '[they] didn't find explosive devices in any of the St. Petersburg metro stations'
 (Rambler.ru news)

In Modern Russian, subject ellipsis can also appear with reported speech. Normally, reported speech does not involve ellipsis: speakers usually introduce reported discourse by attributing it to the original speaker in the following fashion: *X skazal/skazala, čto...* 'X said that...' with explicit personal reference and agreement between the subject and predicate. However, subject ellipsis appears most often with reported speech when (I) the original speaker is an abstraction; (II) the original speaker is unfamiliar and socially remote.

I. The original speaker is an abstraction. Subject ellipsis is used when the original speaker is unknown or forgotten, or if the reported speech is imagined and has never taken place in actuality, resulting in the absence of an agent who could have uttered the reported discourse, as in (2):

- (2) *Interesno, esli by mne skazali, čto dlja*
 interesting if would me.DAT.SG said.3PL that for
spasenija ee žizni ja dolžen proplyt' do tex skal?
 saving her life I need swim.INF till those rocks
 'Interesting, what if they told me that to save her life I needed to reach these rocks by swimming?'
 (RNC; D. Bykov. *Orfografija.*)

II. The original speaker is concrete but unfamiliar, and his/her appearance in the reporter's life is accidental; moreover, the original speaker is socially remote, and often is more powerful than the reporter. In this case, the identity of the original speaker is backgrounded and thus less salient to discourse, while the content of the utterance is central and salient. This construction is often used when referring to bureaucracy, doctors, or policemen. Usually, though not always, it co-occurs with a situation where the reported speech has impeded the reporter's freedom of action in some way, as in (3):

- (3) *Ne doezžaja do Komsomol'skogo, na postu "Kalinovskaja",*
 not reaching to Komsomol'sky on military.post Kalinovskaja
menja zaderžali. Proveriv dokumenty, mne skazali,
 me.ACC.SG detained.3PL having.checked documents me.DAT.SG said.3PL
čto nado obratno exat' v Naur.
 that needs back go to Naur
 'Just before reaching Komsomol'sky, on "Kalinovskaia" military post, I was detained. Having checked [my] documents, [they] told me, that [I] need to go back to Naur.'
 (oral history recorded by A. Čerkasov)

My article investigates yet another, formerly unidentified construction with subject ellipsis and reported speech, in which the original speaker is concrete, familiar to the reporter, and in a position of direct authority over the reporter. The original speaker is explicitly mentioned in the preceding discourse, and his/her identity is relevant to the discourse.

However, the original speaker had been reportedly offensive. The offended party reports the offender's speech, introducing it with the construction *mne.DAT.SG skazali/zajavili/soobščili.3PL* 'to me [they] said/informed/announced', omitting the subject reference to the offensive authority figure. This is exemplified in (4), where the mother-in-law is referred to in the sentence *svekrovi tak skazala* '[I] said so to my mother-in-law':

- (4) *I svekrovi tak skazala... [..] I ešče naš samyj ljubimyj trabl*
 and mother.in.law.DAT thus said.FEM and more our most favorite trouble
na kogo poxož rebenok. Vy čto, tolko na ix semju.
 on whom.ACC resembles.ADJ child you what only on their.GEN family
Ja tut kak-to skazala, čto u rebenka uxo ottopyrennoe kak u menja,
 I here once said that of child.GEN ear sticking.out.ADJ like to me.GEN
tak mne zajavili, čto ty- u moej dočki
 so me.DAT announced.3PL what you to my.GEN daughter.GEN
tože uxo ottopyrennoe.
 also ear sticking.out.ADJ

'And [I] said so to my mother-in-law... And in addition, our very favorite trouble – [to discuss] whom the child resembles. Oh my god, [the child must resemble] only their family. Once I said that the child's ear is sticking out like mine, so [the mother-in-law] announced to me: "What are you [talking about]? My daughter also has an ear sticking out'

(user Mandarinka on *snoha.borda.ru* forum for daughters-in-law)

In both examples (2) and (3), subject ellipsis is used when reporting speech that is perceived as impolite, i.e. potentially damaging to the reporter's face. When ellipsis is used with construction II, the original speaker is an authority figure, but an accidental one – his/her identity is irrelevant, and the reporter is unlikely to meet him/her again. The reporter expresses his/her negative reaction to the utterance, rather than to the original speaker.

The crucial difference between constructions I and II on one hand and the construction under discussion on the other is that in I and II the omitted subject of reported speech is irrelevant (being either an abstraction or an unknown/accidental figure), and is never explicitly mentioned in the surrounding discourse. In example (4) and other examples of the construction under discussion, the original speaker is well-known from the surrounding discourse.

When the agent is not known or unimportant to the narrative, impersonalization or subject ellipsis are expected in Modern Russian. However, when the agent is known, and moreover is central to the discourse, subject ellipsis is an unexpected and marked choice whose function needs to be uncovered.

2.2. Subject ellipsis and (im)politeness phenomena

In this section, I will show how subject ellipsis can be used in Modern Russian in conjunction with (im)politeness phenomena. In order to discuss subject ellipsis, it is important to first situate it in the larger context of reference manipulation and its connection to relational work.

In Modern Russian, social attitudes and relations can be signaled through reference—including, but not limited to, pronominal reference. In their major work on deixis and society, Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990) note that pronouns can be used to signal various social attitudes and relations, including the degree of respect/condescension and the degree of intimacy/exclusion. A certain form may be considered appropriate depending on a wide range of factors, such as degree of formality and social distance, public vs. private discourse, and emotional excitement, among others. Since these relations are not static, pronominal usage can change and evolve throughout the course of a conversation. According to Mühlhäusler and Harré, each culture recognizes a normal or appropriate usage of pronouns, which a socially competent speaker should be able to employ to "ensure a relatively trouble-free arrangement of displays of deference, condescension and solidarity appropriate to one's standing" (pp.122–123). It follows that choice of pronominal deixis can be interpreted as polite and politic/neutral, or impolite depending on a variety of contextual factors.³

In Russian, (im)politeness can be signaled through three commonly encountered reference-related phenomena: impersonalization, subject ellipsis, and manipulating the number and person of the subject. Though those strategies are formally diverse, their usage has a commonality. The choice of one of those strategies over the construction with a nominative subject and predicate in agreement with that subject is often pragmatically motivated, usually involving some type of epistemological distancing which can be employed for the purposes of (im)politeness. When the reference to the

³ I cannot comment on relative 'appropriateness' or 'normality' of polite vs. impolite verbal behaviors; an impolite reference may be perceived as appropriate or even expected by speakers and hearers in some contexts of conflict—the impolite behavior's expected status, nevertheless, does not diminish its offensiveness.

speaker is manipulated, this usually signals politeness; whereas the reference to the hearer is often (though not exclusively) manipulated to signal impoliteness.

Reference to the speaker is usually manipulated through impersonalization, or impersonalization combined with ellipsis. By the term impersonalization, I refer to the choice of constructions that syntactically disallow a nominative subject.⁴

For example, to express a basic meaning of wanting, a nominative subject with a predicate in agreement can be used, as in (5); however, when polite requests are made, an impersonal (dative experiencer) construction is used, as in (6):

(5) *Ja tak xochu kolbasy!*
I.NOM so want.1SG salami
'I want salami so much!' (RNC; N. Koljada. "My edem, edem, edem...")

(6) *Mne by očen' xotelos' uslyšat' vaše mnenie o Naste*
1SG.DAT would very like.3SG.NEUTR.REFL hear.INF your opinion about Nastja
'I would like very much to hear your opinion about Nastja.'
(Russian National Corpus; D. Doncova. *Uxa iz zolotoj rybki*)

Impersonal constructions where the subject-like reference appears in the dative case (the so-called dative experiencer constructions) emphasize the viewpoint and experience of the referent, while signaling this referent's lowered responsibility and lack of control over the event encoded by the predicate (Nichols, 1981, in press; Israeli, 1997; Timberlake, 2004). Unsurprisingly, signaling lowered responsibility over a face-threatening act such as a request is a prominent strategy used to mitigate face threats. Impersonal constructions with the speaker encoded by the dative case are therefore used frequently for negative politeness (cf. Mills, 1992 for discussion of Russian indirect requesting strategies).

When combined with impersonalization, ellipsis plays an important role in further reducing the threatening potential of a request by further de-emphasizing the reference to the speaker. Thus, in both (6) and (7) the speakers refer to themselves with an overt (6) or omitted (7) dative experiencer:

(7) *Xotelos' by uslyšat' vaše mnenie po etomu voprosu*
like.3SG.REFL would hear.INF your opinion on this question
'[I] would like to hear your opinion on this issue.'
(Russian National Corpus; *Nashi deti: podrostki*)

Both politeness and impoliteness can be signaled through the speaker's choice of reference to the hearer. Second person singular reference is neutral/politic between interlocutors who are on friendly terms and are equals in power. In many contexts, it is polite or even politic (i.e. expected, unmarked for politeness) to use the plural pronoun *vy* 'you.2PL' in reference to a single person (see Zemskaja, 1997 for detailed discussion). On the other hand, the usage of the singular pronoun *ty* 'you.2SG' where *vy* 'you.2PL' is expected is considered impolite (cf., Zemskaja, 1997:291–295; Apresjan, 1988:34–35). If power differential is present, the addressing the less powerful person with the second person singular (rather than plural) is impolite and described in literature as the and the rude (*xamskij*) form of address (Xolodovič, 1979:70), and the managerial

⁴ While multiple definitions and classificatory systems exist, Russian impersonal constructions, i.e. constructions that syntactically lack a nominal subject, can be more simply classified into two major types according to whether a subject-like entity, i.e. an entity potentially responsible or correlated with the action expressed by the predicate) is present or absent.

In the first type of impersonals, any subject-like entity is syntactically impossible. All scholars agree on labeling these constructions impersonal, since they literally lack a person who can be formally associated with the event. Labels like "true impersonals" (Israeli, 1997:126) and "absolute impersonals" (Babby, 1998) have been used to describe these constructions. Expressions of weather and season/time of day, as well as some perception events, appear in this type. Thus in example (a), the impersonal verbs mean 'evening was coming' and 'there was a smell' respectively:

a. *Večerelo. Paxlo ogurcami.*
was.eveninging.NEUTR.SG smelled.NEUTR.SG cucumbers.INSTR
'Evening [was coming]. [The air] smelled of cucumbers.'
(Y. Smelyakov. "Point of View.")

Second, statistically more prominent type of impersonals allows for an animate entity (usually in the semantic role of experiencer) to be encoded by a noun in an oblique case. In the Eastern European linguistic tradition, such non-nominative subject-like entities are referred to as *logical subjects* as opposed to *grammatical*, i.e. nominative subjects (Mrázek, 1956; Galkina-Fedoruk, 1958; Zolotova, 2000). Literature on various Russian logical subjects deals with their possible status as grammatical subjects, as well as on their semantic and pragmatic properties (for a detailed literature review, see Davies, 2005).

Among the constructions with a logical subject, the dative experiencer construction is perhaps the most frequently discussed. In this construction, an animate entity is encoded by the dative case; there is no agreement with the predicate. Semantically, the animate entity participates in an action or event specified by the predicate, but is not responsible for it. This entity's participation in the event is not volitional, as in (b), where the speaker expresses an involuntary craving for lemonade:

(b) *Mne očen' xočetsja limonadu*
me.DAT very want.REFL lemonade
'I want some lemonade so much!' (RNC; V.T. Šalamov. *Kolymskie rasskazy*)

ty ‘you.sc’ which, according to Zemskaja (1997), is used for “heightening one’s social status and lowering the status of the addressee. A factory director can address a worker or an engineer this way, even if they are older than him” (Zemskaja, 1997:292).

Another type of impolite reference is the usage of third person when referring to an interlocutor. To my knowledge, this type of reference has not been described for Modern Russian, except tangentially by Zemskaja, who notes that it is impolite to be using third person pronouns (*he, she*) when referencing a person present in the conversation (Zemskaja, 1997:283–284). For example, if three persons Maria, Ivan and Natalia are having a conversation, it is impolite for Maria to tell Ivan, “She just met me” – instead, a proper name, i.e. “Natalia just met me” should be used, since using ‘she’ would signal exclusion of Natalia from the conversation. An anonymous reviewer notes a similar restriction in English.⁵

This strategy can be employed purposely to aggravate the other’s face, as part of ‘Ignore, snub the other’ strategy examined for English by Culpeper (1996). In Culpeper’s example, two sergeants attack the face of a private, who is gagged and thus prevented from responding. While Private Alves is mostly addressed in 2nd person, one of the sergeants uses the 3rd person reference, which Culpeper briefly analyses in the following fashion:

“They use the strategy Ignore, snub the other in talking about her in the third person: ‘I think she’s nutso’” (Culpeper, 1996:363)

Heinemann, discussing complaints in interaction during Danish home help visits, points out a similar strategy: in one exchange, a care recipient is marked as a non-ratified participant when the caregivers refer to her in third person using the noun *fruen* ‘lady’. The care recipient is present and takes offense at this reference, but is dismissed by the caregivers (Heinemann, 2009:2411).

In addition to ‘Ignore, snub the other’, speakers of Modern Russian can employ a slightly different and even more offensive impoliteness strategy—using the third person singular (with or without subject ellipsis) when directly addressing an interlocutor: *smotri čto delaet* ‘look what [he/she] does’. This strategy is used in Russian when the speaker is trying to convey extreme disapproval of the addressee’s personal qualities or actions, as in (8), where the Big Bad Wolf attempts to make Little Red Riding Hood stop dancing in the rain:

- (8) *Idem! Iščto vydelyvaet! I kak tol’ko*
 go.2PL.IMP EMPH what inappropriately.does.3SC and how only
ne stydno! Unee babuška zaboleta, a ona...
 NEG ashamed.ADJ to her.GEN grandmother sick and she
 ‘Let’s go! Look what she’s doing! And why [isn’t she] ashamed! Her grandmother is sick, and she...’
 (Corpus of Spoken Russian; *About Little Red Riding Hood*)

While this strategy is similar to the ‘Ignore, snub the other’ strategy discussed above, there are two important differences. First, in both the English and Danish data, the speaker using the 3rd person reference to refer to a present party is not directly addressing the snubbed party, but rather another interlocutor, with whom the speaker affiliates. In Russian, this third party is not obligatory. Indeed, many examples occur in conversations between only two interlocutors, the impolite speaker and the target of impoliteness. Like in the ‘Ignore, snub the other’ strategy, a speaker who switches from second to third person is symbolically excluding the referent, while simultaneously addressing an audience. However, in Russian this audience can be an imaginary one, mentally constructed by the offensive party (I am not aware of this possibility in English). Second difference is that even though the utterance becomes an aside to a real or imaginary audience, it is addressed directly to the target of impoliteness, who is expected to hear and to react to it, and even change his/her behavior, as in (8). In real-life interactions, the speaker would often, although not always, look directly at the addressee while employing this strategy. Thus, I think that in Russian this strategy is not used to ignore the addressee while affiliating with a third party (as in Ignore, Snub strategy), but rather to directly attack the addressee’s positive face by conveying the speaker’s extreme disapproval. Despite this attack, the offended often remains a ratified participant in the conversation.

Thus in (9), Speaker1 addresses his interlocutors with a face attack, accusing them of partying while he needed their help. A switch from second to third person reference occurs in Speaker1s speech twice, first when he addresses the whole crowd, and again when he attacks a single person. Note that there is not a single person with whom Speaker1 affiliates in this group. The offended Speaker2 affiliates with the large group of people attacked by Speaker1. Speaker2 is a ratified participant in the

⁵ The anonymous reviewer also points out that third person pronominal reference is acceptable when referring to present animals (such as cats), but not to people. Russian also allows this usage when referring to animals—this probably has to do with the animals’ inability to participate in conversations and/or be influenced by face strategies; I suspect (using anecdotal evidence) that third person pronominal reference is also neutral to use when referring to present babies and even young children. The picture is much more complicated when using this strategy to refer to adults who lost (or never acquired) speech, as well as when referring to present foreigners with limited understanding of the spoken language.

conversation: he responds, and his response is expected and acknowledged by Speaker1. The offended Speaker2 responds using a polite form of address (vy 'you.2PL') despite the insult:

- (9) Speaker1. *Net, nu vy i xoroši!*
 NO EMPH 2PL EMPH good.ADJ.PL
Menja tam razdelyvajut ...
 me.1SG.ACC there dissect.3PL
a oni zdes' guljajut!
 and they here are.partying.3PL
- Speaker2. *Izvinite, a čto my dolžny byli delat'?*
 excuse.2PL but what we need.ADJ were do.INF
- Speaker 1. *On eše i sprašivaet.*
 he.3SG still EMPH asks
- Speaker 1. 'How good you people are! [They] are dissecting me there, and you [lit.they] are having a party!
- Speaker 2. 'Excuse me, what were we supposed to do?'
- Speaker 1. 'I can't believe you [lit. he] are asking!'
 (Corpus of Spoken Russian; V. Men'šov. *Širli-Myrli*)

When referring to a single person, the third person plural can also be used to indicate the speaker's disapproval, and it is even more offensive than the switch to third person singular demonstrated in examples (8) and (9). Thus in (10), an example of intergenerational conflict, the mother responds to her daughter's denial by switching person and number reference in mid-sequence, accusing her daughter of planning a violent physical attack:

- (10) Anya: *Potomu čto net!*
 because that no
- Anya's mother: *A čego kričiš'-to?*
 but why scream.2SG-EMPH
Ty čego kričiš' na mat'?
 2.SG why scream.2SG at mother
Iš'! Oni modu vzjali! Kričat' na mat'!
 EMPH 3PL fashion took.3PL to yell at mother
Skoro bit' načnut!
 soon to beatstart.3PL
- Anya: 'Because [I'm saying] no!'
- Anya's mother: 'Why are you screaming? Why are you screaming at [your] mother? Look [at you]! What is this new fashion you've [lit. 'they've'] adopted? To scream at mother! Soon you [lit. they] will start beating [me]!
 (Corpus of Spoken Russian; R. Bykov. *Avtomobil', skripka i sobaka Kljaksa*)

In (10), the mother starts with a second person singular reference (*ty kričiš'* 'you are screaming'), switches to third person plural reference with the pronoun 'they' (*oni modu vzjali* 'they've adopted a fashion') and ends with a third person plural reference with subject ellipsis *načnut* '[they]. . . will start' as both the face attack and the gravity of the accusations increase.

A switch from singular personal reference to plural reference with subject ellipsis often occurs with fixed expressions indicating extreme disapproval, such as *ponaexali tut* '[they've] arrived here', *razveli tut* '[they've] cultivated/made [something] here' and others. The usage of third person instead of the context-appropriate second person signals negative distancing of the speaker from the hearer. The offensiveness of the second to third person shift increases from third singular to third plural to third plural with subject ellipsis. Wierzbicka remarks that such distancing is associated in Polish culture with hostility and alienation (Wierzbicka, 1985:156); the negative ramifications of distancing are found also in the Russian communicative system. Such distancing is interpreted as a face attack akin to the speaker physically and demonstrably leaning away from a person whose behavior the speaker considers socially unacceptable.

To summarize, reference manipulation can be understood as the speaker's choice not to refer to his or her interlocutor using a nominative subject in a context-appropriate neutral (politic) person and number. Reference manipulation can

Table 1
Reference manipulation.

Reference to /referring with	Speaker	Addressee
Subject in nominative case singular, verb in agreement	Politic <i>ya govoriu</i> '1.SG.NOM say.1SG.'	Politic in some circumstances, impolite when the polite plural is expected <i>ty govorish</i> 'you.2SG say.2SG'
Dative experiencer, verb does not agree (impersonalization) – especially with verbs of perception, cognition and desire Change of number from 2.sg to 2pl (referring to a single interlocutor)	Negative politeness <i>mne думаetsya</i> 'to me.DAT.SG. thinks.NEUTR.REFL' (= 'I think')	Positive and negative politeness <i>vy govorite</i> 'you.2pl. say.2pl' when referring to a single interlocutor Impoliteness <i>oni esche i sprashivaiut</i> 'they still EMPH ask.3PL'
change of person From second to third (with or without change of number) when referring to the present person/addressee Subject ellipsis	Negative politeness, but only if combined with impersonalization – and sometimes further indirectness <i>tak xochetsya</i> 'so want.NEUTR.REFL. (= 'I want'), <i>xotelos</i> 'by 'wanted.NEUTR.REFL. COND' (= 'I'd like')	Impoliteness, but only when combined with change of number from singular to plural when referring to a single interlocutor <i>mne zaiavili</i> ... 'they me.DAT announced.3PL'

encompass such phenomena as impersonalization,⁶ subject ellipsis, and change of reference from second to third person, and from singular to plural. All of those strategies have a common meaning of epistemological distancing. When the speaker is distancing him/herself from the addressee in this way, impoliteness is likely to be triggered. Table 1 illustrates possible outcomes of reference manipulation in a conversation between two interlocutors. "Speaker" and "Addressee" columns denote the grammatical encoding of speaker or addressee in the utterance, which are illustrated by short examples.

In this section, I have discussed how reference manipulation can be used in Russian to signal (im)politeness through various types of distancing, including subject ellipsis. In the following sections I will discuss how subject ellipsis with reported speech is used in online complaint discourse. The offended party complains about offensive discourse by a power figure, usually familial (such as the mother-in-law); subject ellipsis is used when the offended party retroactively and symbolically attacks the offender in front of his/her peer group.

3. Subject ellipsis in complaint discourse: the data

3.1. Data collection

While the original offense occurs in a face-to-face conversation, all examples of complaint discourse in this paper were collected online. Most of my data was collected from Russian online forums dedicated to family life, such as *rodim.ru*, *tetkam.net*, *snoha.borda.ru*, and others. Additional supporting data on subject ellipsis and impersonalization (in sections 1 and 2 above) was collected from online newspapers, the Russian National Corpus, and the Corpus of Spoken Russian, which is a subcorpus of the Russian National Corpus.

Computer-mediated communication has been studied to show how rich social information can be delivered in text-based environments, both synchronous (such as instant messaging), and asynchronous (such as forums). Computer-mediated communication is comparable to face-to-face communication in richness of social cues (Chen and Chiu, 2008) and development of group identities (Postmes et al., 1999, 2002), development of interpersonal relationships (Walther, 1992, 1996), and negotiation of pragmatic categories such as (im)politeness (Graham, 2007). Online forums offer an easily accessible and sympathetic outlet for reporting offensive discourse; a similar off-line context might not be available to the complainers.

3.2. Complaining in virtual contexts

Complaining is an important social activity whereby the complainer makes his/her troubles known to an audience, inviting others to acknowledge and react to these difficulties (Emerson and Messinger, 1997; Heinemann and Traverso, 2009). The complainer is hoping to receive support and sympathy from the complaint recipient(s); both the complaint recipient(s) and the complaining party can benefit from this activity, since complaining can serve as a rapport-building tool between the complainer and the complaint recipient(s) (Ruusuvuori and Lindfors, 2009:2416, 2433).

⁶ Wierzbicka discusses one such offensive strategy in Polish: using an impersonal syntactic construction with an infinitive instead of an imperative (a usage which is considered neutral/politic in Polish): "the impersonal infinitive [...] implies that the addressee is not worthy to be addressed as an individual human being, and that the speaker does not wish to establish any 'I-you' relationship with him/her. In particular, the speaker excludes the possibility of any reply from the addressee." (Wierzbicka, 1985:155).

Despite the potential benefits of complaining, launching a complaint can also be dangerous, since the recipient does not always affiliate with the complaint. Such disaffiliation is potentially very damaging to the relationship between the parties. According to Heinemann, “Engaging in a complaint is a delicate activity through which the complaint-initiator lays claim to having the kind of relationship with the recipient that is sufficiently intimate to obtain affiliation” (Heinemann, 2009:2449). Even if the close relationship exists, the complainer must determine whether the audience will affiliate with the complaint at this time (Drew, 1998:323–324; Traverso, 2009:2386; Heinemann and Traverso, 2009:2382).

Researchers often remark on the delicate, tentative and indirect nature of complaints (Laforest, 2002:1597)⁷; this may account for their scope as long sequences, i.e. drawn-out conversations that can touch on many topics. The sequence often begins with the complainable matter being briefly introduced or alluded to; depending on the reception by the audience, such “complainables” can evolve into fully-fledged complaints that are negotiated step-by-step in discourse (Schegloff, 2005; Drew and Walker, 2009:2412; Heinemann and Traverso, 2009:2382; Traverso, 2009:2388).

Thus, the position of the potential complainer emerges as precarious: he/she needs to find a closely affiliated person or persons to whom it would be appropriate to launch the complaint; complaining to these persons is potentially harmful to the rapport already established between the parties. In addition, the potential complainer cannot be sure whether the recipient will affiliate with the complaint, or even whether the recipient will be sensitive enough to recognize and follow up on potential “complainables” which the complainer launches in the initial stage of the sequence.

In contrast to real-life complaint sequences, online contexts offer complainers an unprecedented safety and a supportive environment in which to launch complaints. First of all, it offers an opportunity to complain anonymously to virtual strangers, which reduces and often entirely eliminates the threat of damaging a relationship with a closely affiliated individual. Since the majority of complaints launched online are targeting a non-present third party, anonymity helps prevent the possibility that the complaint will be reported to its target; this is especially important when the target of the complaint is an authority figure.

The second advantage of complaining online lies in the fact that affiliation is all but guaranteed to the participants of certain virtual communities. Thus, the forum *snoha.borda.ru* (literally ‘daughter-in-law.board.ru’) is a complaint community established specifically for daughters-in-law who want to complain about their mothers-in-law. Similarly, a family-oriented forum <http://eva.ru> has a special subforum labeled “Love Triangle”, which includes multiple support threads for both cheated-upon wives and for mistresses. Another subforum of *eva.ru*, “I want a child,” is dedicated to women who are having trouble conceiving. A person who complains about infertility in the “I want a child” subforum, for example, is likely to receive responses from young women who affiliate with the complainer just because they themselves experienced infertility.

The third advantage of the online complaint context is its communal nature: while in a real-life situation it is often hard for the potential complainer to find even one person who would listen to his/her troubles, online communities often attract multiple participants ready to affiliate with the complaint, and who are interested in the matter (thus, people who frequent the “I want a child” subforum of *eva.ru* are interested in infertility). This eliminates the imposition aspect of complaining and allows the complainer to forego the preliminary stage of the complaint sequence of launching complainables and attempting to establish affiliation. The online complainer can begin straight away with the complaint proper, and expect to receive supportive responses from the community. As will be seen from the data, participants often respond to the complainable matter by recounting their own similar experiences, thus co-constructing the complaint and building an “interactional team” of affiliated individuals (Drew and Walker, 2009:2405; Heinemann, 2009:2442; on co-construction see Jacoby and Ochs, 1995). A complaint is thus “collectivized” by the multiple participants of the community: the community presents a united front against the perpetrator of the offense (Laforest, 2009:2460). According to Heinemann, collectivized complaints are “particularly strong because they establish coalitions” (Heinemann, 2009:2438). Thus, the attractiveness of online contexts lies in the ease of obtaining affiliation necessary for successful complaining—as well as for other long sequences, such as giving and receiving advice.

3.3. The mother-in-law as a popular complainable matter

Complaint sequences involving the mother-in-law are especially popular in Russian cyberspace. Participants of family-oriented forums are often invited to complain in threads enticingly titled, for example, ‘the mother-in-law and how to fight this’ (<http://rodim.ru>) and ‘the taming of the mother-in-law’ (<http://wap.snoha.borda.ru/>). Such threads tend to generate lively discussions—thus, a post entitled ‘[my] mother-in-law is always coming over’ on the forum *rodim.ru* elicited 124 responses, containing both multiple complaint stories and advice to the complaining forum members.

The significance of the mother-in-law, specifically the *svekrov* ‘husband’s mother’ as the ultimate offensive authority figure is motivated by societal customs. Prior to the Revolution, Russian society was mostly agrarian; Russian peasant

⁷ My preliminary investigation shows that Russians complain more readily and less delicately than English speakers; complaints are often an essential part of daily interactions (many complaints are routinely launched as a response to the greeting *kak dela* ‘How are things?’) However, obtaining affiliation is still crucial for launching complaints on many specific problems. My work in progress on Russian complaints is based on data collected from the Corpus of Spoken Russian (CSR).

households traditionally were exogamous and patrilocal, with the bride relocating to her groom's village and living in an extended household with the groom's parents (Avdeev et al., 2004). The bride was expected to take over menial household chores and to defer to the authority of the mother-in-law. Multiple folklore items are attested, documenting the traditional intergenerational conflict between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law (Stein, 1979). During the 20th century, Russia underwent a transition from a largely agrarian society to an increasingly urban society in which single-family households became the norm; however, three-generational households are still common, fluctuating between 20% and 25% of all households during the 20th century, according to data cited in Afontsev et al. (2008: 182). Due to a relatively early first-marriage age and difficulty in obtaining separate housing, many newlyweds chose to move in with their parents and raise children in a multi-generational household (Afontsev et al., 2008). Even if the newlyweds live separately, their parents are expected to take part in the newlyweds' life, provide advice on daily matters, and participate in the upbringing of grandchildren.

The historically conditioned expectations of generational power inequality within the family set up the societal expectations that mother-in-laws are not polite to their daughters-in-law. Such expectations are crucial when hearers interpret utterances by their interlocutors. According to Terkourafi (2001:121) the hearer cannot interpret an utterance as polite unless he/she believes that the speaker is polite. Similarly, the hearer's interpretation can be influenced by a belief that the speaker is inherently impolite—thus Mills (2009) states that “often what is at issue is a negative judgment about the person accused of impoliteness” (Mills, 2009:1049).

Terkourafi remarks that norms of polite behavior are born as a result of repeated interactions between two interlocutors, when a certain type of behavior “enters their common stock of collective experiences. It can then serve as the model for future interactions” (Terkourafi, 2005:249). This observation is applicable to impolite, as well as polite behavior—and to whole societies. The forum *snoha.borda.ru* (literally ‘daughter-in-law.board.ru’, a complaint community for daughters-in-law) has a special subforum entitled *Mne povezlo* ‘I got lucky’, where the posters are invited to share stories about non-offensive mothers-in-law. Polite mothers-in-law are perceived as a rarity, an exception to be celebrated, while impolite mothers-in-law are perceived as default. This is certain to color the reception of utterances by the daughters-in-law.

Even though other powerful figures (such as bosses, parents and occasionally lovers) can appear as offenders, the offense coming from the in-laws is especially damaging because it threatens the offended on multiple levels. Spenser-Oatey (2002, 2004, 2005) defines those levels when she discusses rapport management as involving a person's quality face, or a fundamental desire to have one's personal qualities (such as intelligence and appearance) positively evaluated by others, and a person's social identity face, or the “fundamental desire for people to acknowledge and uphold our social identities and roles” (Spenser-Oatey, 2002:540). During interactions with others, a person is concerned with his/her equity rights, defined as the right to be fairly treated by others; and association rights, defined as the right to “association with others that is in keeping with the type of relationship we have with them” (Spenser-Oatey, 2002:540–541).

Conflict with parents-in-law can threaten the offended's quality face (through claims that, for example, the daughter-in-law or the son-in-law is not pretty or intelligent enough for the offender's son or daughter). Social identity face is jeopardized as the parent-in-law routinely questions the younger person's ability to adequately fulfill the role of a son or daughter-in-law. Possible damage to equity rights occurs when, for example, the parent-in-law approaches the daughter or son-in-law with impositions or impolitely worded requests; and most importantly association rights are always damaged during such a conflict, since it not only jeopardizes the offended's relationship with the parent-in-law, also but his or her relationship with their spouse. In fact, one of the frequent complaint themes is the husband's reaction. The wife expects him to take her side in the conflict, and to verbally defend her against his mother. This doesn't always happen, prompting forum posters to suggest and discuss the possibility of divorce. Because of the multi-level nature of the threat, it is not surprising that the relational work involved happens across conversations, often occurring again and again over long periods of time.

3.4. Gender breakdown of data

Complaint discourse is often perceived as a feature of primarily female discourse (Kramer, 1975; Romaine, 1999), though some notable recent research shows that men also engage in cooperative gossip and complaint behaviors, albeit on different topics (Johnson and Finlay, 1997; Acuña Ferreira, 2004). My complaint data almost exclusively features female speakers; however, this is motivated at least partially by corpus selection, i.e. forums primarily geared towards women participants (this is often apparent from the website titles themselves, such as *mama.ru*). However, male speakers also can complain in this fashion. An offensive authority figure is involved in both male and female complaints, although men seem to complain about senior colleagues more frequently than women do (more data is needed to substantiate this).

Although no definitive conclusions on gender can be drawn from my data, further studies could help determine whether gender-influenced power imbalances affect the frequency of silencing during face attacks. A silenced person would be more likely to restore face through complaints than a person who successfully defended his/her face during an attack.

3.5. Copyright and fair use

All data used in this paper was collected from Russian sources and thus falls under Russian copyright laws. The Russian Federation's copyright law states that unauthorized usage of texts (i.e. fair use) is allowed in cases when (a) author's full name and full source of text is cited and (b) citation in original or translation is done for “scientific, scholarly, polemic, critical, and informational purposes from lawfully published works in volume justified by the citation's goal, including

citation of excerpts from newspaper and magazine articles” (Article 19 in the Copyright Law of 1993; Article 1274 in the Copyright Law of 2006).⁹ The creators of the Russian National Corpus and its sub-corpus CSR make the corpus data available for scholarly purposes as per Article 19 of the Russian Federation’s Copyright Law.¹⁰

The data also falls under fair use according to the US law, since the market value of the original texts is unlikely to be affected, the length of examples is limited, and the examples are used for research purposes (Lieberman, 2000). In addition, I took special care to follow the Principles of Reuse and Enrichment of Linguistic Data as outlined in Lewis et al. (2006).

While the full names of the forum posters are not always disclosed, sources of examples are cited throughout, and full URLs are documented in Appendix A.

4. Reference manipulation in reported speech and the retroactive face attack

As was shown in section 1.3, reference can be manipulated in discourse for the purposes of (im)politeness. However, reference manipulation can occur not only in a regular conversation, but also when the speaker reports on previous discourse. As noted in section 1.2, the usage of subject ellipsis when referring to the original speaker is not always connected to relational work; reference can be omitted when the subject (i.e. the original speaker) is an unknown or irrelevant entity. However, relational work occurs when subject ellipsis is used and yet the original speaker is known and mentioned in the surrounding discourse.

When the speaker reports on face-threatening discourse, ellipsis is not required: an explicit nominative subject usually appears in reported speech, even when conflict is indicated, as in (11), a conversation about the reporter’s impending wedding:

- (11) *Slušajte, a u vsech mamy takie nenormal'nye?*
listen but to everybody moms such crazy.ADJ
Moja zajavila mne, čto moja svad'ba –
mine announced me.DAT.SG that my wedding
važnyj etap v ee žizni
important period in her life
'Listen, does everybody have such crazy moms? Mine announced to me that my wedding is an important period in her life.'

(user Lesly on *tetkam.net* forum for women)

In (11), the reporter complains about her mother, who attempts to actively participate, possibly even control her daughter’s wedding, thus impeding the daughter’s freedom of action. However, the face threat here is presented as accidental rather than intentional; the speaker doesn’t present her mother’s speech as a purposeful face attack. The speaker’s overall baffled, rather than offended attitude is signaled by the choice of *nenormalnye*, a word that can be translated as ‘crazy’ but implies eccentricity, rather than the more negative *sumasšedšie* ‘crazy’ or *bezumnye* ‘insane’. The speaker is asking her audience whether the desire to meddle in wedding plans is common to all mothers; her usage of the diminutive *mama* ‘mom’ indicates that the relationship with her mother is a positive one overall.

In contrast, the omitted subject construction (hereafter OSC) is used when the relationship with the offender is damaged, and the damage to face especially severe. Thus in (12), a young woman is complaining about a young man, the relationship with whom abruptly and unexpectedly ends after a night of sex:

- (12) *Ponravilsja mne paren'. Nekotoroe vremja prosto*
liked.REFL me.DAT young.man some time simply
obščalis', vmeste vremja provodili, potom estestvenno došlo
talked.PL together time spent.PL then naturally arrived.NEUTR
do intimnoj blizosti. A nautro mne zajavili gordo,
to intimate closeness and in.morning me.DAT.SG announced.3PL proudly
čto ja tebe ničego ne obešč'al i ne nado bylo stroit'
that I you.DAT nothing NEG promised and NEG must was build.INF
nikakix illuzij na moj sčet. I ušel.
no.NEG.ADJ illusions on my account and left.MASC
'I liked one guy. At first [we] just talked, spent time together, then naturally it came to sex. And in the morning [they] announced proudly, that I did not promise anything to you and [you] should not construct any fantasies about me. And[he] left.'

(user Carevna on forum *prazdnik.by*)

⁹ The Russian Federation’s copyright law can be accessed through multiple websites including www.medialaw.ru and www.internet-law.ru.

¹⁰ The RNC’s terms of usage are outlined in <http://www.ruscorpora.ru/corpora-usage.html>.

Although the OSC can be used to report a single instance of a severe face attack as in (12), it is more routinely used in a complaint sequence to indicate not just a single incidence of a face threat, but a chain of such incidences. Thus the reported speech in (13) is but a single conversation in an ongoing husband-and-wife conflict. The wife, who does the reporting in (13), is pregnant and about to give birth. She has been continuously threatened throughout her pregnancy by the husband's professed lack of desire to have children. The recurring nature of the conflict is signaled by *opjat* 'again' in *opjat' mne soobsčili* '[they] announced to me again':

- (13) *Opjat' mne soobsčili,*
 again me.DAT.SG announced.3PL
čto rebenka emu ešče v principe rano
 that child him.DAT.SG still in principle early
i on ne hotel – eto tol'ko ja hotela...
 and he NEG want.3SG this only I wanted
 'Again he announced (lit. '[they] announced') to me that it's too early for him to have a child in principle,
 and he did not want [the child,] only I wanted [it.]' (user Malinika on mothers' forum *rodim.ru*)

The repeating nature of the face threat is also evident in (14), where the face-threatening acts performed by the original speaker are enumerated by the reporter. After the list of previous offenses is presented, the OSC *mne zajavili* '[they] announced to me' introduces the main complaint—the mother-in-law's demand that the reporter should cook at inconvenient hours:

- (14) *Čto by ja ne sdělala, vse ne tak, gotovlju ne tak,*
 what would I NEG do everything NEG SO cook NEG SO
stiraju ne tak, pribiraju ne tak i ne togda kogda ej
 launder NEG SO clean.up NEG SO and NEG when when her.DAT
zaxotelos'! Ja dolžna prijti s raboty i stat' u plity.
 desire I need come.INF from work and stand.INF by stove
Popytki objasniti, čto ja rabotaju do semi...priveli k tomu
 attempts explain.INF that I work till seven led to this
čto mne zajavili: togda prijdi, vypej
 that me.DAT.SG announced.3PL then come.2SG.IMP drink. 2SG.IMP
chego-nibud' – kofe ili lekarstva kakie-nibud', čtoby
 something coffee or medications some-such so.that
vzbodritsja – i gotov'!
 perk.up.INF and cook.2SG.IMP
 'No matter what I do everything is wrong – the way I cook is wrong, the way I do laundry is wrong, the way I
 clean up is wrong and not at the time she wants. [She thinks that] I need to come home from work and stand
 by the stove. Attempts to explain that I work until 7pm... lead only to that she announced to me (lit. 'to me
 [they] announced'): "Then come, drink something such as coffee or some kind of medicine to perk up,
 and – cook!"
- (anonymous comment on women's website/forum *passion.ru*)

In (14), the original offense is reported as having occurred on multiple levels. The mother-in-law does not approve of the reporter, who is doing *vse ne tak* 'everything wrong', thus attacking the reporter's positive face; she also insists that the reporter cook only when it is convenient her, thus threatening on the reporter's negative face, i.e. the desire to be unimpeded in one's actions (note that the mother-in-law reportedly uses the bald-on-record imperative, *gotov'* 'cook.2sg. IMP' rather than a polite indirect request). Using Spenser-Oatey's classification (2002, 2004, 2005) the mother in-law threatens the reporter's social identity face by criticizing her ability to successfully fulfill her role of daughter-in-law and wife. The reporter's equity rights are threatened since she is not being treated with fairness; her association rights are threatened through the conflict with the mother-in-law and the implied conflict with the husband. In addition to the power differential and the severity of the face threats in (14), it is clear from the list presented in the beginning of (14) that the mother-in-law's face-aggravating behavior is not isolated and the damage to the daughter-in-law's face is an ongoing affair.

In (15), the OSC appears in connection with a slightly different chain of conversations. Here, a young woman Kalinka had a quarrel with her husband (conversation 1); subsequently called the mother-in-law to ask her advice about the quarrel with the husband (conversation 2); and is complaining about the conversation with the mother-in-law in an online forum

(conversation 3). We can assume that conversation 1 was recycled in conversation 2, which is now recycled in the example (15) before us:

- (15) *Pozvonila... soveta ego mamy sprosit' (porugalis' sil'no). Tak called.FEM.SG advice his mom ask.INF quarreled.PL strongly so mne zajavili – razbirajtes' sami₂ vy kogda me.DAT.SG announced.3PL figure.out.2PL.IMP serves you.PL when shodilis' u menia že ne sprašivali sovetov, came.together.PL at me.GEN EMPH NEG asked.PL advice.PL i voobše, kogda ja UVODILA!!! ego ot byvšej ženy ja že znala, and at.all when I led.away him from previous wife I EMPH knew kak vesti sebja s nim! how behave.inf self with him*
 '[I] called to ask his [=my husband's] mother's advice, [because] my husband and I had quarreled badly. So [they] announced to me – work it out yourselves, when you started dating you didn't ask my advice, and in any case, when I STOLE!!! (sic) him from his ex-wife I knew how to behave with him!'

(user Kalinka on mothers' forum *nashi-detki.org.ua*)

Here, Kalinka feels extremely threatened because her face was already damaged through the bad quarrel with her husband. After the quarrel, she sought to restore face through the conversation with the mother-in-law, who not only did not accommodate her on that regard, but reciprocated with face-damaging discourse of her own. During Conversation 2, Kalinka discovers that the mother-in-law harbors long-term resentment towards her, thinking the young woman responsible for the break-up of her son's first marriage (in an additional post in the topic, Kalinka adds *zato ona mne skazala, što taila v sebe 2.5 goda* 'at least she told me, what she had concealed inside her for 2.5 years!') The negative impact of this accusation on the young woman's face is emphasized by the capitalization of *uvodila* 'stole' of *kogda ja UVODILA ego* 'when I stole him.' In an additional post in the topic, she further elaborates on this word choice (note the continuing usage of the OSC in *vylili* '[they] poured' to mean 'she poured'):

- (16) *Ja [...] prosto byla v šoke ot "uvela". V dushen'-ke I simply was in shock from stole in soul-DIMIN mojej potom bylo oščuščenije, kak budto govna litr vylili! mine later was feeling as if excrement.GEN liter poured.3PL*
 'I was simply in shock because of "stole". Later there was a feeling in my soul that she [lit. they] poured a liter of excrement on me'

(user Kalinka on mothers' forum *nashi-detki.org.ua*)

Here the conversations on a similar (or evolving) topic do not happen between the same participants; however, all three conversations feature one constant participant, the young woman whose face is being continuously hurt. She is seeking to restore face first through the conversation with the mother-in-law, and when that turns out to be further face-aggravating, turns to an online complaint conversation with peers.

In the long example of (17), the conflict is recycled over the course of at least four conversations. In the first conversation, the young woman Kosha asks her mother-in-law not to interfere while Kosha is nervously trying to change a newborn's diaper. The mother-in-law takes offense and storms out of the room (conversation 1). In conversation 2, Kosha apologizes and the mother-in-law responds with unspecified insults. In conversation 3, Kosha's mother has a conversation with the mother-in-law about the incident. Conversation 4 is the complaint sequence presented in (17):

- (17) *Ja rodila [...] i tut načalos'... Ona na menja obidelas' I gave.birth and here it.began she on me offended.REFL iz-za togo, što ja poprosila ee sliškom ne suetitsja, because that that I asked her too.much NEG hassle.REFL tak kak u menja ne polučalos' zapelenat' moego so that to me NEG succeeded.REFL swaddle my neposedu i ja nervničala, a ee popytki vse razložit' active.one and I was.nervous and her attempts everything put.INF ešče*

po poločkam (snjatyj pampers, pelenki i proč.)
 on shelves removed.ADJ diaper, swaddle.blankets and etc. even
 bol'se ovtlekali ot processa. Na čto mne zajavili "Tak
 more distracted from process to which me.DAT announced.3PL so
 i skazi: pošla von iz komnaty" i ... udalilas' iz komnaty.
 and say get out of room and removed.REFL from room
 Kogda ja, nakonec, spravilas' s rebenkom i priexala
 When I at.last managed with child and arrived
 moja mama, ja rešila mirno uregulirovat' konflikt i pošla
 my mom I decided peacefully regulate.INF conflict and went
 prosit' prošeniya (a vdrug moi slova i pravdo (sic) prozvučali
 ask forgiveness and suddenly my words and really sounded
 kak-to ne tak). Na čto mne vy-skazali vse, čto obo
 somehow NEG thus upon which me.DAT out-said everything that about
 mne dumajut (ne očen' lestnymi slovami). Ja ne vyderžala i
 me think.3PL NEG very complimentary words I NEG resisted and
 v sezax (sic) zakrylas' v komnate. Popytka mojej mamy
 in tears closed.REFL in room attempt my mom
 objasnit', čto ja ešče vsemu tolko učus' i mne nužna
 explain.INF that I still everything only learn and me.DAT is.needed
 podderžka zakončilis' tože provalom. [...] V nastojaščee vremja ona so
 support ended also failure.INSTR in current time she with
mnoj ne razgovarivaet voobščee. [...] Kak byt'? Esli pytaešsja byt'
 me NEG talk at.al how be.INF if try.2SG be
 xorošej xozjajkoj, materju, nevestkoj, a tebjja vtapyvajut v
 good housewife mother daughter.in.law and you.2SG grind.3PL into
 grjaz'?
 dirt

'I gave birth and here it began. She took offense when I asked her not to hassle too much because I couldn't manage to swaddle my active baby, and her attempts to arrange everything on shelves (used diaper, swaddle blankets, etc.) distracted me even more from the process. To that she (lit. they) said: "Then just say openly: "get out of the room!" and removed herself from the room. When I finally managed with the kid and my mom arrived, I went to ask her (the mother-in-law's) forgiveness – maybe my words really sounded off somehow). To that she (lit. they) poured out everything she (lit. they) thought about me, in not so complimentary words. I couldn't stand it and in tears closed myself in my room. The attempts of my mom to explain (to the mother-in-law) that I am still learning everything and need support also ended in failure. Currently she is not talking to me at all. What to do? When you try to be a good housewife, mother, daughter-in-law, and they grind you into dirt?'

(user Kosha on mothers' forum *rodim.ru*)

Example (17) is interesting on many levels. First, during Conversation 1, both women suffer damage to face: Kosha because her mother-in-law threatens (probably non-intentionally) her social identity face, i.e. her ability to fulfill the new role of mother; while Kosha threatens the mother-in-law's social identity face in turn, by jeopardizing her ability to fulfill the new role of grandmother. Offended by this, the mother-in-law ascribes impolite language to Kosha (*pošla von* 'get out'), and, following the instructions contained in the ascribed language, exits the room, since she perceives herself as being inappropriately excluded from the new family. Note that Kosha uses the OSC when introducing the ascribed language she did not, in fact, utter. In the second conversation, Kosha attempts reconciliation and apologizes (note the hedging language of the complaint; by conversation 4, it appears that Kosha is no longer sure she did the right thing), but the mother-in-law responds with insults. Kosha again introduces those unspecified insults with the OSC *mne vyskazali vse, čto obo mne dumajut* 'they poured out everything they thought about me.' The third conversation happens between Kosha's mother and the mother-in-law, and fails at restoring harmonious relationships. In conversation four, Kosha complains at a mothers' forum *rodim.ru*, in a special thread entitled "The mother-in-law and how to fight it" (this active thread has 1001 posts at the date of writing). Kosha finishes her complaint by a rhetorical question, showing exactly how her social identity face is jeopardized by the conflict: it interferes with her ability to be *xorošej xozjajkoj, materju, nevestkoj* 'a good housewife, mother, daughter-in-law' (note the OSC at the end of this sequence: *vtapyvajut v grjaz'* '[they] grind you into dirt').

In this section, we have seen that the omitted subject construction is used to introduce reported discourse that is perceived by the reporter as extremely face-aggravating; the damage to face is often not isolated but cumulative (it can be perpetrated repeatedly by a single person, or sequentially by a number of different persons).

In a face-to-face conversation, reference manipulation involving a shift from singular to third person plural with lack of agreement and subject ellipsis would indicate distancing and be face-aggravating. In reported speech, the same type of reference manipulation is used to signal the reporter's disagreement with the content of the reported utterance and his/her distancing from it (thus in (17), the reporter distances herself from the aggravating language that is being ascribed to her, but which she did not utter). The OSC indicates the reporter's negative evaluation not only of the offensive speech, but also of the original speaker.

In a face-to-face conversation, reference shift from second to third person (with or without ellipsis) signals exclusion and often implies an audience (usually imagined, but sometimes real), whom the speaker invites to observe and judge the hearer's inappropriate social behavior (see examples 8, 9, and 10). When speech is reported with the OSC, this is done in front of a real audience in a complaint circle. Through the usage of the plural (versus the politic singular) third person reference with ellipsis, the original offender is symbolically excluded from conversation and presented for judgment of the complaint circle. In this way, the original offender's face is retroactively attacked, and the reporter's face restored.

5. Reaction of the audience

The audience's reaction to the reported speech is an important component in restoring the reporter's face. Forum members' reactions to Kalinka's complaint in (15) include sharing similar mother-in-law stories, advice, supportive remarks and smiles to signal positive companionship and solidarity. The response in (18) by forum poster Armida follows her admission that like Kalinka, she is a second wife. Note that the speaker here recycles the wordage of Kalinka's complaint, also incorporating the OSC:

- (18) *No menja xot' ne obvinjajut, čto uvela!* ☺ [...]
 but me.ACC at.least NEG accuse.3PL that stole
Nu k svekrovi ja b za sovetom ne pošla! Tol'ko k mame!
 PART to mother.in.law I would for advice NEG go only to mom
 'At least [they] don't blame me, that [I] stole! But I wouldn't go to my mother-in-law for
 advice – only to [my] mom!' (user Armida on mothers' forum *nashi-detki.org.ua*)

Armida incorporates a number of elements to boost Kalinka's face:

- she compares their similar stories, thus including Kalinka not only in the society of the complaint circle but also in the smaller group of second wives who are not liked by their mothers-in-law;
- she notes that Kalinka's situation is more severe than hers, since Armida at least is not being accused of stealing her husband, thus acknowledging the severity of the reported face threat;
- she recycles Kalinka's OSC, swapping the original *zajavili* '[they] announced' with the even more offensive *obvinjajut* '[they] accuse', emphasizing her disagreement with the original speaker's accusation reported by Kalinka;
- she incorporates a smiley, signaling her solidarity, acceptance and liking of Kalinka;
- she offers friendly advice. Friendly advice from peers, in the Russian communication system, is considered polite and face-affirming; thus Belyaeva (1996:21) writes that "contrary to Americans, Russians perceive advice as cooperative, socially positive speech act" (see also Alekseeva, 1990:52–54 on appropriateness of advice among peers).
- Armida's advice to Kalinka excludes people in the category 'mother-in-law' from those one should rely on to restore face. This exclusion further defines the peer group as supportive to daughters-in-law such as Kalinka, and exclusive of mothers-in-law.

In response to Kosha's long complaint quoted in (17), poster Nadin attempts to boost Kosha's face by incorporating a number of techniques, many different from Armida's:

- (19) *Kak ja zametila, svekrovi v bol'sinstve svojem očen'*
 like I noticed mothers.in.law in majority self very
"nežnye" i obidčivye sozdanija (eto sovsem ne pro moju,
 delicate and easily.offended.ADJ creatures this at.all NEG about mine
ona drugim beret ☺). Kosha, svekrov' s Vami ne
 she different.INSTR takes Kosha mother.in.law with you.2PL NEG
razgovarivajet i xren s nej (sorri). Muzh na vashej
 talks and horseradish with her sorry husband on your.2PL
storone? (dvaždy xren s nej). Ja tože če-to tam
 side twice horseradish with her I also for.some.reason there

plakala, vozmuščalas', udivljalas', rasstraivalas', a potom pljunula,
 cried complained wondered got.upset and later spat
ee ne peredelat', tak začem svoji nervy na nee tratit'?
 her NEG change.INF, so what.for self nerves on her spend

'As I noticed, mothers-in-law in their majority are very delicate and easily offended (mine isn't, she has different tactics). Kosha, your mother-in-law doesn't talk to you, and to hell with her (sorry). Your husband is on your side? (Twice to hell with her). I also cried, complained, wondered, got upset but later gave up – she (=my mother-in-law) cannot be changed, so why spend nerves on her?' (user Nadin** on mothers' forum *rodin.ru*)

Like Armida, Nadin's response incorporates a smiley and a comparison between the complainer's situation and her own. She not only includes Kosha into the community of offended daughters-in-law, but also expresses solidarity with the full range of Kosha's emotions associated with this conflict ('cried, complained, wondered, got upset'). In addition, Nadin presents the mother-in-law's original taking offense as unjustified: it is a quality of mothers-in-law to be excessively delicate and easily offended. Significantly, she incorporates an insult into her response: *xren* 'horseradish' is the Russian euphemism for the male sex organ; the insult is directed at Kosha's mother-in-law. The very colloquial and rude insult directed at the mother-in-law is contrasted to the extremely polite reference by Nadin to Kosha herself, using 2nd person plural polite pronominal reference, which is even more politely capitalized: *svekrov' s Vami ne razgovarivajet i xren s nej (sorri)* '[your] mother-in-law doesn't talk to you.PL, and to hell with her (sorry)'. Such a sharp contrast between the politeness of the reference and the insult emphasizes the affiliation of Nadin with Kosha, who is extremely polite to the complainer while at the same time directing an impolite insult at the complainer's adversary. The apology (*sorri*) that follows the insult does not decrease the severity of the insult, but serves to emphasize that only Kosha's mother-in-law, and not Kosha herself, is targeted by this attack.

It is unclear whether the peer group's commiseration, inclusion, advice and even retroactive face attacks targeting the offender are always effective in restoring the complainer's face. The poster of (15), Kalinka, continues the conversation with Armida and others by posting her thoughts, incorporating smiles, and even lending support to other complainers in the group. Kosha, on the other side, did not respond to Nadin and did not post again in the complaint thread.

6. Conclusion

In situations when the face-aggravating speaker's power is disproportionately greater than the offended hearer's, the hearer's opportunities to restore face in a conversation with the offender are limited. This is especially true when the offending party is a familiar and proximate one (such a familial authority figure or a boss). Thus, in my data, the mother-in-law's power is significantly greater than her daughter-in-law's because of the generational gap, societal expectations, and the potentially harmful effect on the hearer's relationship with the spouse. The situation can be additionally complicated by the fact that the face-aggravating speech act is not an isolated occurrence but rather a recurring event, such as in example (15), where the daughter-in-law references a number of conversations in which the mother-in-law criticized her performance of household chores. In such cases, the less-powerful hearer often resorts to a non-response, or to an indirect response that does not satisfactorily restore face.

The hearer's inability to respond directly to the original face attack(s) does not mean that the face of the hearer can never be restored. The offended hearer can later attempt to restore face in a different conversation. This can involve a repeated conversation with the offender, having others speak with the offender on the hearer's behalf, and complaining in the supportive context of the peer circle. Thus, the impact of an impolite verbal act is not necessarily limited to a single conversation, or even to the same set of interlocutors. Specific linguistic means, such as the Modern Russian omitted subject construction, may be used to report offensive discourse and boost face.

The fact that impoliteness tends to be recycled across conversations is especially interesting in comparison to politeness. Polite speech events are not, as a rule, recycled – unless a boost to positive face (such as a compliment or praise from a more powerful or desirable individual) is involved. It would be interesting to consider to what extent impoliteness may have a greater, and longer-lasting, impact on face than politeness.

In this article, I emphasized the importance of studying relational work across multiple conversations, especially where it involves significant damage to face. Limited by available data, this study used complaint conversations that report on offensive discourse, but the original face-aggravating conversations were not available for study. The mechanisms involved in recycled relational work should be further studied, ideally with data recorded from multiple original and recycled conversations.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to professors Alan Timberlake (Columbia), Johanna Nichols (Berkeley), Peter Grund (Kansas), and Steven Dickey (Kansas), who read and commented on numerous drafts of this paper. Many thanks to the two anonymous reviewers for their insightful and detailed commentary. Any remaining mistakes are mine alone.

Appendix A. URL addresses of online examples (All examples were last accessed on 7/30/2009)

Examples from the Russian National Corpus (RNC) can be accessed at <http://russcorpora.ru>

Examples from Corpus of Spoken Russian (CSR) can be as accessed at <http://www.ruscorpora.ru/search-spoken.html>

- (1) <http://news.rambler.ru/Russia/head/5822424/>
- (3) <http://memo.ru/hr/hotpoints/N-Caucas/filtry00/app1.htm>
- (4) <http://wap.snoha.borda.ru/?1-1-30-00000756-000-0-0-1200252254>
- (11) <http://tetkam.net/vb/archive/index.php/t-6120-p-4.html>
- (12) <http://www.prazdnik.by/forum/viewtopic.php?f=22&t=2460>
- (13) <http://www.rodim.ru/conference/lofiversion/index.php/t11335-150.html>
- (14) <http://www.passion.ru/family/16.htm>
- (15) <http://www.nashi-detki.od.ua/showpost.php?p=417&postcount=9>
- (16) <http://www.nashi-detki.od.ua/showpost.php?p=456&postcount=13>
- (17) <http://www.rodim.ru/conference/lofiversion/index.php/t4203.html>
- (18) <http://www.nashi-detki.od.ua/showpost.php?p=446&postcount=10>
- (19) <http://www.rodim.ru/conference/lofiversion/index.php/t4203.html>

References

- Acuña Ferreira, Virginia, 2004. Complaint stories in male contexts: the power of emotions. *Spanish in Context* 1 (2), 181–213.
- Afontsev, Sergey, Kessler, Gijs, Markevich, Andrei, Tyazhelnikova, Victoria, Valetov, Timur, 2008. The urban household in Russia and the Soviet Union, 1900–2000: patterns of family formation in a turbulent century. *The History of the Family* 13 (2), 178–194.
- Alekseeva, L.I., 1990. Rechevoi akt soveta v sovremennom russkom iazyke. *Potsdamer Forschungen* 106, 43–58.
- Apresjan, Jurij D., 1988. Pragmatičeskaja informacija dlja tolkovogo slovarja. In: *Pragmatika I problemy intensional'nosti*. Institut jazykoznanija AN SSSR, Moscow.
- Austin, Paddy, 1990. Politeness revisited—the dark side. In: Bell, Allen, Holmes, Janet (Eds.), *New Zealand Ways of Speaking English*. Multilingual Matters, Philadelphia, pp. 277–293.
- Avdeev, Alexandre, Blum, Alain, Troitskaia, Irina, 2004. Peasant marriage in nineteenth-century Russia. *Population* 59 (6), 721–764.
- Babby, Leonard, 1998. Voice and diathesis in Slavic. In: *Paper Presented at Workshop on Comparative Slavic Morphosyntax*, Spencer, IN.
- Belyaeva, Yelena, 1996. Advice and soviet: a cross-cultural perspective on speech acts. In: Johnson, J.M., Juge, M.L., Moxley, J.L. (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society*. Berkeley Linguistics Society, Berkeley, CA, pp. 13–24.
- Bakhtin, M.M., 1981. Discourse in the novel. In: Bakhtin, M.M., Emerson, C., Holquist, M. (Trans.), Holquist, M. (Ed.), *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. University of Texas Press, Austin, 259–422.
- Brown, Penelope, Levinson, Stephen C., 1987. *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Bousfield, Derek, 2008. Impoliteness in Interaction. John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia.
- Bousfield, Derek, Locher, Miriam##A. (Eds.), 2008. *Impoliteness in Language: Studies on its Interplay with Power in Theory and Practice*. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.
- Chen, Gaowei, Chiu, Ming Ming, 2008. Online discussion processes: effects of earlier messages' evaluations, knowledge content, social cues and personal information on later messages. *Computers and Education* 50 (3), 678–692.
- Culpeper, Jonathan, 1996. Towards an anatomy of impoliteness. *Journal of Pragmatics* 25 (3), 349–367.
- Culpeper, Jonathan, 2005. Impoliteness and *The Weakest Link*. *Journal of Politeness Research* 1 (1), 35–72.
- Culpeper, Jonathan, 2008. Reflections on impoliteness, relational work and power. In: Bousfield, Derek, Locher, Miriam A. (Eds.), *Impoliteness in Language: Studies on its Interplay with Power in Theory and Practice*. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 17–44.
- Culpeper, Jonathan, Bousfield, Derek, Anne, Wichmann, 2003. Impoliteness revisited: with special reference to dynamic and prosodic aspects. *Journal of Pragmatics* 35 (10/11), 1545–1579.
- Davies, Laura, E., 2005. A construction-grammatical analysis of impersonalization in Russian. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Princeton University.
- Drew, Paul, 1998. Complaints about transgressions and misconduct. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 31, 295–325.
- Drew, Paul, Walker, Traci, 2009. Going too far: complaining, escalating and disaffiliation. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41 (12), 2400–2414.
- Eelen, Gino, 2001. *A Critique of Politeness Theories*. St. Jerome Publishing, Manchester.
- Emerson, Robert M., Messinger, Sheldon L., 1997. The micro-politics of trouble. *Social Problems* 25 (2), 121–134.
- Graham, Sage Lambert, 2007. Disagreeing to agree: conflict, (im)politeness and identity in a computer-mediated community. *Journal of Pragmatics* 39 (4), 742–759.
- Galkina-Fedoruk, E.M., 1958. *Sovremennij russkij jazyk. Gosudarstvennoe učebno-pedagogičeskoe izdatel'stvo*, Moscow.
- Heinemann, Trine, 2009. Participation and exclusion in third party complaints. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41 (12), 2435–2451.
- Heinemann, Trine, Traverso, Veronique, 2009. Complaining in interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41 (12), 2381–2384.
- Israeli, Alina, 1997. Semantics and Pragmatics of the “Reflexive” verbs in Russian. Otto Sagner Verlag, Munich.
- Jacoby, Sally, Ochs, Elinor, 1995. Co-construction: an introduction. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 28 (3), 171–183.
- Johnson, Sally, Finlay, Frank, 1997. do men gossip? An analysis of football talk on television. In: Johnson, Sally, Meinhof, Ulrike (Eds.), *Language and Masculinity*. Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, MA.
- Kramer, Cheris, 1975. Women's speech: separate but unequal? *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60 (1), 14–24.
- Laforest, M., 2002. Scenes of family life: complaining in everyday conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics* 34, 1595–1620.
- Laforest, Marty, 2009. Complaining in front of a witness: aspects of blaming others for their behaviour in multi-party family interactions. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41 (12), 2452–2464.
- Lewis, William, Farrar, Scott, Langendoen, D.Terrence, 2006. Linguistics in the Internet age: tools and fair use. In: *Proceedings of EMELD 2006 Workshop on Digital Language Documentation: Tools and Standards: The State of the Art*.
- Leech, Geoffrey N., 1983. *Principles of Pragmatics*. Longman, London.
- Lieberman, Mark, 2000. Legal, ethical and policy issues concerning the recording and publication of primary language materials. In: Bird, S., Simons, G. (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Workshop on Web-based Documentation and Description*.

- Limberg, H., 2009. Impoliteness and threat responses. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41, 1376–1394.
- Locher, Miriam A., Watts, Richard J., 2005. Politeness theory and relational work. *Journal of Politeness Research* 1 (1), 9–33.
- Mills, Margaret H., 1992. Conventionalized politeness in Russian requests: a pragmatic view of indirectness. *Russian Linguistics* 16 (1), 65–78.
- Mills, Sara, 2009. Impoliteness in a cultural context. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41 (5), 1047–1060.
- Mráček, Roman, 1956. K jednočlenným veřtám slovesným. In: Havránek, Bohuslav (Ed.), *Kapitoly ze srovnávací mluvnice ruské a české*. Československá akademie veřd, Praha.
- Mühlhäusler, Peter, Harré, Rom, 1990. *Pronouns and People: The Linguistic Construction of Social and Personal Identity*. Blackwell, Oxford, UK/Cambridge, MA, USA.
- Nichols, Johanna, 1981. *Predicate Nominals: A Partial Surface Syntax of Russian*. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.
- Nichols, Johanna, in press. A case of rare fluid intransitivity in Europe: Russian. *Berkeley Linguistic Society*, 32.
- Postmes, Tom, Spears, Russell, Lea, Martin, 1999. Social identity, group norms, and “deindividuation”: lessons from computer-mediated communication for social influence in the group. In: Ellemers, N., Spears, R., Doosje, B. (Eds.), *Social Identity: Context, Commitment, Content*. Blackwell, Oxford, pp. 164–183.
- Postmes, Tom, Spears, Russell, Lea, Martin, 2002. Intergroup differentiation in computer-mediated communication: effects of depersonalization. *Group Dynamics* 6, 3–16.
- Ruusuvuori, Johanna, Lindfors, Pirjo, 2009. Complaining about previous treatment in health care settings. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41 (12), 2415–2434.
- Romaine, Suzanne, 1999. *Communicating Gender*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ.
- Schegloff, Emanuel A., 2005. On complainability. *Social Problems* 52 (4), 449–476.
- Spenser-Oatey, Helen, 2002. Managing rapport in talk: using rapport sensitive incidents to explore the motivational concerns underlying the management of relations. *Journal of Pragmatics* 34 (5), 529–545.
- Spenser-Oatey, Helen, 2004. Rapport management: a framework for analysis. In: Spenser-Oatey, Helen (Ed.), *Culturally Speaking: Managing Rapport through Talk across Cultures*. Continuum, London, pp. 11–46.
- Spenser-Oatey, Helen, 2005. (Im)politeness, face and perceptions of rapport. *Journal of Politeness Research* 1 (1), 95–119.
- Stewart, Miranda, 2008. Protecting speaker's face in impolite exchanges: the negotiation of face-wants in workplace interaction. *Journal of Politeness Research* 4 (1), 31–53.
- Stein, Helga, 1979. *Zur Herkunft und Altersbestimmung einer Novellenballade*. Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, Helsinki.
- Tannen, Deborah, 1993. What's in a frame? Surface evidence of underlying expectations. In: Tannen, Deborah (Ed.), *Framing in Discourse*. Oxford University Press, New York/Oxford, pp. 14–54.
- Tannen, Deborah, 2006. Intertextuality in interaction: reframing family arguments in public and private. *Text & Talk: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Language, Discourse & Communication Studies* 26 (4–5), 597–617.
- Tannen, Deborah, 2007. *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Terkourafi, Marina, 2001. *Politeness in Cypriot Greek: A frame-based approach*. DPhil thesis, University of Cambridge.
- Terkourafi, Marina, 2005. Beyond the micro-level in politeness research. *Journal of Politeness Research* 1, 237–262.
- Terkourafi, Marina, 2008. Toward a unified theory of politeness, impoliteness, and rudeness. In: Bousfield, Derek, Locher, Miriam A. (Eds.), *Impoliteness in Language: Studies on its Interplay with Power in Theory and Practice*. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 45–74.
- Timberlake, Alan, 2004. *A Reference Grammar of Russian*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Traverso, Veronique, 2009. The dilemmas of third-party complaints in conversation between friends. *Journal of Pragmatics* 41 (12), 2385–2399.
- Walther, Joseph B., 1992. Interpersonal effects in computer-mediated interaction: relational perspective. *Communication Research* 19 (1), 52–90.
- Walther, Joseph B., 1996. Computer-mediated communication: impersonal, interpersonal, and hyperpersonal interaction. *Communication Research* 23 (1), 3–43.
- Watts, Richard J., 2003. *Politeness*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Watts, Richard, Ide, Sachiko, Ehlich, Konrad (Eds.), 2005. *Politeness in Language. Studies in its History, Theory and Practice*. 2nd revised and expanded edition. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin.
- Wierzbicka, Anna, 1985. Different culture, different languages, different speech acts: Polish vs. English. *Journal of Pragmatics* 9 (2/3), 145–178.
- Xie, C., He, Z., Lin, D., 2005. Politeness: Myth and truth. *Studies in Language* 29, 431–461.
- Xolodovič, A.D., 1979. *Problemy grammatičeskoj teorii*. Nauka, Leningrad.
- Zemskaja, Elena A., 1997. Kategorija veřživosti: obščie voprosy – nacional'no-kul'turnaja specifika russkogo jazyka [The category of politeness: general issues – the national-cultural specifics of the Russian language]. *Zeitschrift für Slavische Philologie* 56 (2), 271–301.
- Zolotova, Galina, 2000. Ponjatje ličnosti/bežličnosti i ego interpretacii. *Russian Linguistics* 24 (2), 103–115.

Renee Perelmutter is an assistant professor of Slavic and Jewish studies at the University of Kansas. She holds a Ph.D in Slavic Linguistics from University of California, Berkeley. Her research interests include morphosyntax and pragmatics of Slavic and Yiddish. Her articles appeared in *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, *Russian Linguistics*, and the *Slavic and East European Journal*. She co-edited *New Approaches to Slavic Verbs of Motion* (John Benjamins, 2010) with Viktoria Hasko.