(IM)POLITENESS AS INTERSUBJECTIVE ACHIEVEMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF POWER INTERRUPTIONS IN TWO RADIO PHONE-IN PROGRAMMES[1,2]

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Abstract

One of the serious issues of theorizing about politeness that has recently been raised (Eelen 2001, Watts 2003) is whether the current politeness models devised by researchers adequately account for concepts and procedures to which social actors adhere when engaging themselves in real-life interactions. As an alternative to the core politeness theories of considerable tradition and volume of research that they have inspired and which conceive of politeness as a set of strategies designed to achieve harmony, avoid interpersonal conflict, enhance mutual co-operation, attend to face-wants, stay within the terms of the current Conversational Contract etc., a newly emerging paradigm of politeness understood as "discursive struggle" approaches (im)politeness issues as being discursively struggled over by the interlocutors themselves in the course of on-going interaction. Informed by the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this novel model of politeness and using authentic data from two radio phone-in discussion programmes from two different socio-cultural settings the paper analyzes those instances of authentic interaction involving power interruptions in which interactants appear to be engaged in the struggle for the achievement of mutually shared understanding of what constitutes (im)polite behaviour.

1 Introduction

Over the past three decades the research into linguistic politeness has firmly been established as an extensively researched domain on the crossroads of social psychology, cognitive psychology, pragmalinguistics and sociolinguistics. Yet what politeness is has not been satisfactorily clarified and the content of the concept of politeness remains a much debated issue. In its lay understanding, behaviour showing consideration for others has always formed a significant part of public and private discourse. As a scholarly concept politeness was established relatively recently with the impetus coming from philosophy – Grice postulated also the existence of the "Be polite" maxim on which he himself did not further expand; as a result, he initiated the foundation of modern politeness theory within the domain of linguistic pragmatics (Lakoff, Leech, Brown and Levinson). Since then a number of "second-order politeness" models (Eelen 2001) have been elaborated aspiring to offer insight into the nature of human as a social and psychological being. Within a relatively short time-span, politeness

research has become a popular avenue of social scientific research generating a wealth of theoretical and empirical studies (For an overview of the research into politeness see, for example, Fraser (1990), Kasper (1994), Eelen (2001) and Watts (2003).) Its principal achievement appears to be Brown and Levinson's model (1978/1987), which has become a synonym for politeness studies. Despite its influence, some of its crucial tenets, such as universality, rationality, predictiveness, focus on the speaker only, disregard for impoliteness, its basis in speech-act theory, static character, etc., have been widely criticized. In the past few years, however, research into politeness issues has been undergoing serious changes which have not only tried to improve and/or alter the existing model(s) but have attempted to define a new paradigm of research. Politeness model seen as "discursive struggle" has taken some strides to establish itself not as just a new "commodity" on the politeness market but also the one which would challenge the currently prevailing mode of thinking about politeness issues and which would initiate a post-pragmatic era within politeness research. The objective of the paper is to investigate the phenomenon of interruption from the perspective of this newly emerging approach while trying to demonstrate that, contrary to its traditional treatment as a face-threatening (and intrisically impolite) act, its potential face-threat is rather a matter of mutual negotiation, or "discursive struggle". Using two samples of talk-in-interaction we shall observe that the interactants jointly work on reaching a shared understanding of whether or not interruption is impolite for them.

2 Modelling politeness research: from modernism to postmodernism

The ground-breaking intiatives of the founders of academic research into the politeness theory in the West in the 1970s, which were launched by Lakoff and Leech, reached their full swing with the elaboration (1978) and re-publication (1987) of the classic politeness model by Brown and Levinson (B&L), which delineated the agenda for empirical research for many years to come. Probably the best articulated model has been widely used across various cultures and domains of language use and will probably remain so for the nearest future. However, the early 1990s saw the rise of models which not only began to challenge B&L's basic assumptions but also offered alternatives grounded in different social theory. It was in the collection of papers edited by Watts, Ide and Ehlich (1992) that the arguments for a new model based on alternative social-theoretical foundations were clearly articulated for the first time (the collection was re-published again in 2005 with a new foreword by its chief editor). As Eelen (2001: 195) observes, B&L's theory is built upon Parsonian, structural-

functionalist model of society which is conceived of as an independent system in a "cybernetic hierarchy" in which the supra-individual precedes the individual. Politeness is seen to function as a "normative instrument" ensuring society's internal coherence, stability and the given status-quo. However, the enormous worldwide empirical research inspired by B&L's model has gradually revealed a serious flaw of this "grand" theoretical scheme, viz. that it ceases to correspond to the lay persons' perceptions of politeness; this results in a widening gap between politeness theory and real-life understanding of what is (not) polite behaviour. To bridge this gap, a post-structuralist initiatives were launched with proposals by Eelen (2001), Watts (2003), Locher and Watts (2005), and Watts (2005). Their alternative theorization, epitomized as "politeness as discursive struggle", finds its social-theoretical foundation in Bourdieu's theory of practice and habitus and Watts' concepts of "politic behaviour" and "emergent networks". By aiming to distance itself clearly from the currently predominant rational (or "modernist") mode, the new paradigm opens a way for constructivist ("post-modernist") theorization.

Conceiving of politeness anew these authors claim that, rather than predicting polite behaviour *in abstracto*, research into politeness should be based on a close examination of situated practices of interactants in authentic socio-cultural settings and should be on alert to search for *their own* evaluations of what constitutes polite behaviour. Accordingly, perceptions of politeness should be seen to emerge contextually in socio-communicative verbal interaction within communities of discourse. Contrary to the B&L's practice, in which politeness is equalled to facework, polite behaviour is seen to constitute only a part of relational work most of which is classifiable as appropriate to the discursive format, i.e. *politic* behaviour. Politeness is then seen to reside potentially in the act of "giving *more than is required* by the expected politic behaviour" (Watts 2003: 130; emphasis added). While polite behaviour is a salient, positively marked (non-)linguistic behaviour beyond politic behaviour, no particular linguistic forms are tied to it as its intrinsic realisations. However, particular forms of (verbal) behaviour in an ongoing interaction might potentially be open to interpretation as (im)polite by those directly involved in it. Linguistic (im)politeness is thus only one aspect of facework (and not the entire facework, as advocated by B&L), and is noticeable only as being additional to, or deviational from, that type of (linguistic or otherwise) behaviour which participants follow to stay within the politic frame of interaction.

This radically new model brings about a shift in the agenda for politeness research the task of which should be "to *locate* possible realisations of polite and impolite behaviour and offer a way of assessing how the members *themselves*

may have evaluated that behaviour" (Watts 2003: 19-20; italics added). (Im)politeness then becomes discursively struggled over by participants whose judgements of (in)appropriateness are determined by cognitive structures (frame and/or habitus) which they develop within a given community of practice. Within the habitus, defined as "the set of dispositions to behave in a manner which is appropriate to the social structures objectified by an individual through her/his experience of social interaction" (Watts 2003: 274), each participant is attributed face by the others; interaction is seen to consist of the construction, reproduction and maintenance of faces. Facework is that type of behaviour which attempts to preserve one's own and/or the other's face. Attribution of face is done reciprocally in accordance with the lines participants take; lines are patterns of verbal/non-verbal acts by which participants express their view of the situation and which form the basis of their evaluation of other participants. While staying within the line is an expected/politic type of behaviour, falling out of line constitutes a break from the politic behaviour and poses a potential face-threat to a partner (hence it may be evaluated negatively as impolite, or even rude). Potential face damage arising from falling out of line may be compensated for by supportive facework, which may be signalled by certain conventionalized structures, and which may be open to potential evaluation as being polite.

In the close inspection of our data samples from two radio phone-ins we shall attempt to spot those locations where struggle over perceptions of interruptions as possibly (im)polite might have taken place, and to point out the clues which might have led the participants to evaluate the others' possible stepping out of line as (im)polite. Furher, we shall see that the two programmes involve differing evaluations of this interactional procedure. Before that, however, we will briefly discuss interruption from Conversation Analysis (CA) perspective after which we outline a comparative framework of participation for the two programmes to serve us as a benchmark against which potentially (im)polite behaviour will be assessed.

3   Turn-taking, interruption and politeness

Interruption is a by-product of the mechanism of turn-taking (TT) which is a key item on the CA agenda. Underlying the switching of the turns between speakers and addressees is the TT mechanism, which allocates them their respective roles, tasks and responsibilities and grants the current speaker the "right to turn". Normally, turn exchange is done at transition-relevance places (TRPs) with participants orienting themselves to the coordination of their actions, which results in a minimum occurrence of marked overlap or pause. TRPs, however,

often become an area of "struggle" for control over participation. Interruption is seen as a procedure which penetrates "the boundaries of a unit-type *prior* to the last lexical constituent that could define a possible terminal boundary of a unit-type" (Henley & Thorne 1975: 114; original emphasis). As a violation of TT, interruption leads to the current speaker's loss of turn. A corollary feature of turn projectability is that the speaker is entitled to the amount of time necessary for the completion of his/her turn: "1.a. If the turn-so-far was constructed in such a way that the current speaker selected the next speaker, then the person selected had the *right* to begin to speak in next turn" (Psathas 1995: 37; emphasis added). It follows that an incursion aimed at challenging this entitlement to turn is denying the current speaker's right and may be seen as intrusive, violative, or even hostile. Talbot (1992) views interruptions as "appropriations of a right to speak" (ibid.: 458). B&L (1987) view interruption as a double face-threatening act (FTA) posing a threat to the addressee's positive (PF) and negative face (NF) by showing, respectively, that the speaker does not care about, or is indifferent to, the hearer's feelings, wants (B&L 1987: 66-67) and that s/he denies the hearer's "freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (ibid.: 61).

Abundant evidence from casual conversations shows, however, that it is doubtful whether all incursive acts should be interruptive, hence hostile and potentially evaluable as impolite. Moreover, in the majority of cases there is no explicit evidence of interruptive behaviour being evaluated (negatively or otherwise) by the interruptees at all. Consequently, we can argue against such simplistic approach relying solely on the "mechanics" of TT and which, as a result, would rule out numerous instances of interruption which are sequentially disruptive but interpersonally supportive (cf. "recognitional interruption"; Ferenčík 2006).

A finer categorization of interruption, which accounts for a contradiction of structural disruptiveness and interpersonal supportiveness, is present in Goldberg (1990; cited in Guillot 2005), who distinguishes between relationally neutral interruptions, which arise from the listener's participatory rights and obligations by addressing immediate communicative needs (as in repairs), and relationally loaded interruptions, which are a by-product of the listener's participatory wants and which are further subdivided into rapport interruptions (with overlapping goal orientations, viewed as co-operative acts) and power interruptions (with divergent goal orientations, viewed as acts of conflict). This perspective permits us to view certain uses of interruption as interpersonally non-violative; as they may be displays of the interruptor's orientation to an overlapping goal, they are not met with negative evaluation (i.e. as potentially impolite); contrary to this, as co-operation-seekers they may be open to polite interpretation.

As a type of violative behaviour, interruption poses a problem as interactant's perception need not necessarily correspond with that of an outsider's/analyst's; following CA methodology, we shall search for displays of member's own judgements of what is (im)polite.

4 The data site[3]

The data are taken from a set of transcripts of calls to two radio phone-in talk shows, *Irv Homer Show* (IHS) and *Nočné dialógy* (ND), recorded over the years of 1995-2000. Phone-in talk show is an instance of a public participation radio programme which gives the radio audience an opportunity to voice their opinions in live broadcast and discuss them with the host of the programme (in IHS) or with an invited guest (in ND). Participation within the phone-in format bears features of semi-institutional interaction which is characterized by the uneven and pre-determined access of participants to the interactional resources. This imbalance, however, is not closed towards contestation, and possible shifts in the pre-allocated patterns of resources and practices become a manifestation of

Phone-in programme:		*Irv Homer Show*	*Nočné dialógy*
Social context:		ediated interaction within public space	
Mass-media genre:		live radio phone-in programme	
Dominant mode:		confrontation/co-operation	co-operation
Participants:		host, caller	host, caller, guest
Lines:	Caller	provides relevant input (asks questions, presents opinion ...)	
		announces topic(s) to the switchboard	?
	Host	manages callers' participation, involves caller in phatic talk	
		presents opinions, answers questions, gives advice, makes jokes, teases	-
	Guest	N/A	answers questions, presents opinions, gives advice
Faces:	Caller	relevant, opinionated, knowledgeable	
	Host	professional, knowledgeable	
		jovial, popular, friendly, controversial	neutral
	Guest	N/A	competent, knowledgeable

Table 1: Frameworks of participation in phone-in talk shows

the struggle for discursive power. The format of the two shows reveals certain differences in the forms of habitus (with accompanying differences in the perception of politeness): while IHS generally prefers confrontation over co-operation and allows for a certain amount of face-threat to be built into its politic behaviour, ND generally represents a co-operative format in which confrontation is rare and, if present, potential face-threat is ameliorated by politeness payment. As to interruption, it follows that not all occurrences of violative talk are evaluated negatively, i.e. as impolite, and, conversely, some occurrences may even be open to positive evaluation, i.e. as interpersonally supportive (hence polite).

Table 1 outlines the framework of participation in the two phone-ins setting out lines of appropriate (expected, normal, neutral, politic) participation against which any departures (i.e. falling out of line) may be bearing on evaluation as (im)polite.

5   Analysis: interruption as a resource in struggle for discursive power

Using parallel extracts from IHS and ND, the paper analyzes occurrences of interruption from the viewpoint of their possible (im)politeness implications with the goal of checking whether or not participants reveal negative evaluation of this "intrinsic FTA". We will focus here on the occurrence of one type of interruption only, viz. relationally loaded power interruption (cf. Goldberg 1990), and try to check whether, within the two respective discursive formats, there are any signals of its being evaluated negatively, i.e. as impolite. Both analyzed extracts are similar in two ways: first, they instantiate moments of conflictual talk which deploy series of interruptions and, second, both institutional figures, the IHS host and the ND guest, utilize this TT tactic as a means to reach their interactional goal, viz. that of undermining caller's credibility and rendering his/her position unfounded. Needless to say, this procedure constitutes a potential face-threat to the caller's NF (as well as to the host's/guest's PF, as FTA are bi-directional). In the first extract, which is taken from a series of calls on the issue of legalization of prostitution, the moderator exerts persistent effort to undermine the credibility of the caller's claim (which is that for males mistresses are more trustworthy than anybody else).

(1)   **IHS IV 2**

001 M   .h to eh John in Wilmington good morning John welcome to the Irv Homer
002   show.
003 C   eh good morning. Irv I have to disagree with you on e:h <u>this</u> one .h but e:h I
004   you know but I'll make eh three quick points ´cause it's a hot day and we don´t

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005        want to argue. .hh number one, you know there there has there have been
006        arrests in the White Water. so it's not it's not a completely ridiculous
007        investigation. .h number two, people do tell their mis men do tell their
008        mistresses things they do not tell // anybody else? + number three
009 M→                                          // well ha ha John John John John John have
010        you ever had a mistress?
011 C      no I haven't.=
012 M      = well then how do you know what men tell their mistresses.=
013 C      =it's a legitimate? no. the police know it so it's a // legitimate (         )
014 M→                                                         // now wait a minute. Jo are you
015        saying .h are you saying that priests have mistresses?
016 C      no no. the // ( )
017 M→            // well then how how do you? know? how do you know //
018 C→                                                              // ((laughter))
019        now let me say // that just one more point Irv and then you can talk. okay?
020 M→                   // no no no no no no John John John John I´m not gonna argue
021        with you I just want you to clarify .h some of your statements now. .h you said
022        mistresses know a lot? and you don't have a mistress? so there´s no way I can
023        find out whether you revealed anything to mistress or not .h then you said
024        priests know that mistresses? and do you know any priests who have mistresses?
025        .h and you don't know of any priest .h who has revealed to you. John? // .h the
026 C                                                                           // no I
027 M      sanctity of the confessional? .h where the priest so you know what? .h I heard?
028        .h that this guy? I I I eh eh // ( )
029 C→                                // wait a minute. I said police // not priest.
030 M                                                              // oh police. oh well do
031        you know any police officers .h who have revealed anything .h eh p people who
032        have arrested anyone where they revealed that the mistress or something? that
033        they .h that they have credibility?
034 C      well they they have gotten clues from mistresses. yes. that I know. police
035        officers have told me that. //.h a lot of them say. if you want to know don't ask
036 M                                 // oh poli ok.
037 C      the wife. ask the mistress.
038 M      okay.
039 C      okay? number three though. …
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In order to challenge his "epistemological disposition" (He 2004), the host uses the first interruption (line 9) to initiate the caller's self-repair – he checks whether the caller belongs to the membership category of "a man who has had a mistress" so as to be able to present the claim as authentic. Upon the caller's admitting that this is not the case (i.e. that he does not draw on his personal experience, line 11), the host (in line 12) repudiates the caller's position as he is unable to "authenticate" it (Thornborrow 2001). This move challenges the caller's NF (his competence, or "cognitive preserve"; B&L 1987) and is thereby open to potential interpretation as impolite. In what could be his attempt to save his NF the caller quotes the police (which the host hears as "priests") as a "reliable" source of the given information (line 13). The ensuing talk brings further threat to the caller's NF: while building his argumentation on a misheard word ("priest"

for "police"), the host formulates the proposition "priests have mistresses" and invites the caller to make an explicit commitment to it (line 15). To do so, the host resorts to an interruptive tactic accompanied with a formulaic request (*wait a minute*), which only underscores its violative nature. As a response, the caller issues a token of a denial (line 16) which becomes a sufficient cue for the host to draw the conclusion that the caller negates the content of the proposition "priests have mistresses" and to identify a fault in the caller's argumentation (line 17); this procedure further aggravates threat to caller's NF.

Up to this moment the caller has been made to comply with the trajectory of the talk as delineated by the host. As a self-defensive tactic, however, the caller himself utilizes interruption (line 18) to claim his participatory right for the unfinished turn and openly sanctions the host's interruptive behaviour by calling to attention the TT rule (line 19: *let me say just one point and then you can talk*). The caller's orientation to the TT mechanics is interpretable as a display of his evaluation of the host's incursive behaviour, who has methodically denied him a chance to exercise his right to a fair access to the conversational floor, as stepping out of line and, consequently, as potentially impolite. However, his request for the partner's adherence to the "rules of the game" is blatantly ignored by the host (line 20) by his production of a "deep incursion" into the caller's turn. After this demonstration of a total control over discourse space, follows a display of a total control over the content of the talk (lines 21-27): the host offers an extensive summary of his version of what the caller has said. Displays of control over the space and content of the talk are prime manifestations of host's institutional power. The extract concludes with a resolution of the misunderstanding: the caller initiates a repair (line 29) and identifies the host as being responsible for it. The host passes this implicit act of accusation unnoticed and offers no facework to compensate for the caller's potential face loss; quite the contrary, in line with his general tendency to subvert the caller's credibility the host challenges the caller's "cognitive preserve" again (line 30). This time, however he accepts the caller's authentication (line 38) whereupon the talk shifts to another topic.

In the given extract both participants are engaged in a struggle for access to discursive resources employed in the control over floor and content whereby they discursively negotiate the lines of participation and (re)construct the discourse format of the show. The host, with whom the institutional power is invested, appears to have a monopoly over the floor, by utilizing interruption as a principal control device and reinforcing it by an extensive (and effective) use of reduplication of linguistic structures, as well as over the content, by employing the strategy of formulation of caller's assumed claims. The caller, being almost always on the defensive, avails himself of the resources of interruption and repair.

Overall, in the conflictual situations participants employ little facework to signal willingness to attend to co-participants' face-needs. Since it is probably the case that this kind of behaviour constitutes a part of their habitus for the talk-show, they may have stayed within the framework of politic behaviour; there are clues, however (such as the caller's invocation of the TT rule), that partners' behaviour may have been taken as falling out of line and, being thus negatively marked, it may have become open to interpretation as impolite.

In a parallel extract from ND the caller and the guest (the then Minister of Culture) are engaged in a debate over the current political situation over the interpretation of which they seem to find little agreement, since they advocate contradictory positions.

(2)   **ND III 7**

081 C   … ja si myslím tak? .hh že predsa toto všetko čo je nenormálne
082   že nie sú pripustení ľudia proste ku kontrole na žiadnom. .hh vlastne v žiadnej
083   oblasti. // to je nie je normálne. to nie je normálne. a vy si musíte uvedomiť .hh že
      … *I think that all this is abnormal that people are not allowed to get access to*
      control in any field // this is not normal this is not normal you have to realize that
084 G→   // a to kdo tvrdí. že sú nie pripustení.
                  // and who claims that. that they are not allowed.
085 C   predsa tu. .hh sú ľudia? trebárs ktorí na polovicu je to na tom Slovensku. .h nie
086   je to nie je to rozhodne inak. .hh je to na polovicu a tí ľudia. ktorí trebárs
087   nemajú taký istý názor. a nie sú teraz ich .hh ich lídri eh vo vláde. .hh to

088   neznamená že tí ľudia tu neexistujú a nechcú na Slovensku žiť. .hh sú
089   vygumovaní. sú eh vygumovaní eh teda je tu snaha vygumovať //
      well there are people here? say half of them in Slovakia. it's definitely not
      otherwise. there are about half of them who perhaps are not of the same
      opinion. and they are not now their leaders are not in the Cabinet. this does
      not mean that these people do not exist and they do not want to live in
      Slovakia. they are erased. there is an effort to erase them //
090 G→   // a nemôžu
091   sa prejavovať veď preboha živého v eh ale ako vygumovaní. veď väčšina novín
092   je v rukách opozície. deväťdesiat percent informácií. ktoré dostáva občan tohto
093   štátu? // sú opozične ladené to znamená že .h gdo komu bráni vyjadrovať svoj…
                  // and they are
      not allowed to exert themselves for God's sake how are they erased. the
      majority of the press is in the hands of the opposition. ninety per cent of
      information which a citizen of this country gets // are oppositional which
      means that who impedes whom to express their ..
      (…)
143 C   na to nás musí upozorňovať Západ veď oni nás toto všetko sledujú. a predsa
144   chcú medzi seba kultúrnych ľudí. .hh a to nás musí mrzieť že nás medzi seba
145   nechcú. .hh to by //
      but the West has to indicate they monitor all this and they want only cultured
      people among themselves. we have to regret that they do not want to admit
      us among them. that would//

146 G→	// to gdo povedal že nás nechcú medzi seba. //veď my
	// who said that they do not want us among them. // well
147	sme tam. veď sme im
	we are there. well we
148 C→	// no tak nie šak
149	nejdeme do NATO. nejdeme e:h vlastne e:h nemáme .hh ani nejakú už nádej
150	možno ani do Európskej únie v tých prvých .hh radoch .h a toto všetko by
151	nemuselo byť keby sme boli tolerantní a nechceli za každú cenu si presadzovať
152	.hh teda svoje? a svoje? i keď to je tak mocensky. .hh predsa eh ľudia sa musia
153	dohodnúť. veď to nie je možné takto. .hh a to napätie v spoločnosti // to
	// well we are not.
	we are not joining NATO. there is no hope for us to maybe join the EU in the first
	wave and all this needn't have happened if we had been tolerant and didn't want to
	enforce ours? at all costs by force. people have to find agreement. this is not
	possible. this tension in the society // that
154 G	// no vážená
155	pani ja: ak dovolíte by som tiež rád niečo povedal? lebo aby to nebol monológ?
	// well dear
	madam, if you permit I would also like to say something? so it wouldn't be a monologue
156 C	no tak určite.
	well of course
157 G	.hh sú to Nočné dialógy. ja si myslím že .hh eh máte jednoznačne názory iné? ja
158	si vás napriek tomu vážim? …
	these are 'Night dialogues'. I think you have clearly different opinions? but I respect you in spite of that…

In the extract the caller advocates a particular act of the oppositional MPs who occupied the headquarters of the Ministry of Culture wereby to draw attention of the public to the fact that they find no standard way of implementing their political goals. The guest resorts to the same tactic as that of the IHS host – he tries to create a monopoly over the call's floor and content. Resorting to interruption, he employs the "who claims that" strategy twice to render the caller's argumentation unfounded: first to deny the caller's claim that the opposition is denied access to a fair amount of political control (line 84), and, second, to refuse the caller's claim that the "West" monitors the situation in Slovakia and refuses to admit the country into its political structures (line 146). The wordings of the denials constitute FTAs to the caller's NF because they challenge not only the truthfulness of the propositions "they are not allowed access" and "they do not want to admit us", but also the very authority of the producer of the position ("who claims this"); what is more, both guests' formulations almost literally reiterate caller's position. This tactic is open to an interpretation as impolite by the caller who, in a self-defensive way, gives evidence in support of her claim while resorting to interruption (line 148). What is more, she produces what could

have been interpreted by the guest as his implicit accusation (lines 150-153) for his responsibility for the state of affairs; as a face-defensive measure the guest attempts to restore, via another interruption (line 154), his control over the floor. Contrary to the parallel IHS extract above, where the interruption by a more powerful participant is executed bluntly, the ND guest employs NP facework: the discourse marker "no" (*well*), the address term „vážená pani" (*esteemed lady*), a semi-formulaic expression of procedural meaning (Watts 2003) "ak dovolíte" (*if you permit*), indirect request "rád by som niečo povedal" (*I´d like to say something*), and the requirement that the dialogical discourse format be adhered to. All these multiple signals, especially the reminder of the participation rules (an FTA threatening caller's NP) and the address term, which is strategically employed to maximize the interpersonal distance, suggest that the guest may have gone beyond what is politic behaviour in this show; his over-polite behaviour is then open to an interpretation as impolite by the caller.

6   Conclusion

Interruption as a constructionally disruptive method, by seizing the conversational floor and denying the "right" of the current speaker to bring their turn to an end, has a significant "moral" aspect and is generally associated with negative evaluation as impolite. In our sample analysis of conflictual discourse we found no evidence of such explicit evaluation. Firstly, throughout the calls participants take the lines which are in accordance with the faces they try to put forward within the habitus they have developed for this type of verbal encounter. Accordingly, the major part of the interactional behaviour is appropriate, hence unmarked, or non-polite. This part of the overall relational work, which participants invest in the negotiation of their relationships, is important for achieving and maintaining co-operative communication. What is and/or what is not co-operative behaviour, however, is the matter of the individual perception and intersubjective negotiation of what constitutes the norm for the phone-in shows and what is the departure from it. Overall it appears that within IHS and ND talk show formats there have developed differing perceptions of acceptability and appropriateness. IHS appears to allow for a more significant presence of interruptive behavior: interruption seems to be a part of politic behaviour and is generally not evaluated negatively; rather, it aids in speeding up the tempo, signals higher degree of involvement and gives interaction greater dynamism. Besides, it is a powerful resource to control the flow of interaction on the part of the talk-show host whose effort is to maximize its utility in expanding his own, while reducing his partner's, amount of talk and in controlling its content. In ND, however, interruption is

comparatively rare; due to its being associated with behaviour that goes beyond what is considered appropriate, it tends to be perceived negatively. In general, localization of participants' action which would move away from the expected/ appropriate behaviour and which would bear on (im)politeness is problematic since participants avoid directly addressing each other's behavior as (im)polite (viz. there are no instances of classificatory politeness; Watts 2003). Accordingly, there are no explicit evaluations of interruptions as impolite, although there are certain signals that partner's intrusive behaviour is acting out of line in a negative way, such as when a participant resorts to quoting the TT rule. Our data suggest that interruptions are not unequivocally treated as intrinsically impolite; rather, their possible evaluations as impolite appear to be intersubjectively construed.

Notes

[1] A version of the paper was presented at the 10th International Pragmatics Conference in Göteborg, Sweden, 9-13 July 2007, in the *Politeness* lecture session.

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[3] The paper analyzes transcripts of original IHS and ND data as recorded and elaborated by the author of the paper. Since the language of the latter show is Slovak, translations into English are provided for the sole purpose of familiarizing readers with the content of the calls; these translations are, however, not analyzed, which rules out possible interference as to the status of interruption in the two subcorpora.

Transcription symbols:

+	pause	.hh/hh.	inbreath/outbreath
//	overlapping talk	?	rising tune
(( ))	unclear talk/ ((laughter))	,	continuing tune
.	falling tune	*nepočul*	stressed syllable
:	vowel prolongation	= =	no gaps between turns

Abbreviations:

A	Answer	B&L	Brown and Levinson
C	caller	CA	Conversation Analysis
FTA	Face-threatening Act	G	guest
IHS	Irv Homer Show	M	moderator
ND	*Nočné dialógy* show	NF	negative face
PF	positive face		

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