

# Table of contents

|                                                                                       |             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>                                                               | <b>XIII</b> |
| <b>CHAPTER 1</b>                                                                      |             |
| <b>Introduction</b>                                                                   | <b>1</b>    |
| 1.1 What is this book about?                                                          | 1           |
| 1.2 What is mock politeness?                                                          | 2           |
| 1.3 Why study mock politeness?                                                        | 5           |
| 1.4 Why take a corpus linguistic approach?                                            | 6           |
| 1.5 Why include a cross-cultural perspective?                                         | 7           |
| 1.6 Analysing mock politeness in an online community                                  | 8           |
| 1.7 Research questions                                                                | 10          |
| 1.8 Overview of the book                                                              | 11          |
| <b>CHAPTER 2</b>                                                                      |             |
| <b>Im/politeness mismatch</b>                                                         | <b>13</b>   |
| 2.1 Introduction                                                                      | 13          |
| 2.2 Functions of im/politeness mismatch                                               | 13          |
| 2.2.1 Politeness to avoid/mitigate face attack                                        | 13          |
| 2.2.2 Politeness to facilitate face attack                                            | 14          |
| 2.2.3 Deception                                                                       | 15          |
| 2.2.4 Mock impoliteness                                                               | 16          |
| 2.3 Introducing mock politeness                                                       | 18          |
| 2.3.1 Naming mock politeness                                                          | 19          |
| 2.3.2 The continuum of mock politeness: From internal to external mismatch            | 22          |
| 2.4 Conclusions                                                                       | 25          |
| <b>CHAPTER 3</b>                                                                      |             |
| <b>Mock politeness by another name? Irony, sarcasm, patronising and condescending</b> | <b>27</b>   |
| 3.1 Patronising and condescending                                                     | 27          |
| 3.1.1 Work from im/politeness studies                                                 | 27          |
| 3.1.2 Work from social psychology studies                                             | 28          |
| 3.2 Getting to grips with irony and sarcasm                                           | 29          |

- 3.3 Challenges in investigating irony and sarcasm 30
  - 3.3.1 Little second-order agreement on what “irony” and “sarcasm” refer to 31
  - 3.3.2 Little analysis of lay perspectives and use 32
- 3.4 Mismatch in irony studies 32
  - 3.4.1 Mismatch in the cognitive structure of irony 32
  - 3.4.2 Levels of mismatch 35
  - 3.4.3 Mismatch as a cue to irony 36
  - 3.4.4 Processing mismatch 38
- 3.5 Facework functions of irony and sarcasm 39
  - 3.5.1 Face-saving: Hearer-focussed 39
  - 3.5.2 Face-saving: Speaker-focussed 40
  - 3.5.3 Face-enhancement 41
  - 3.5.4 Face-attack 43
- 3.6 Accounting for contradictory findings on the effects of irony/sarcasm on face 43
  - 3.6.1 Acceptable aggression 43
  - 3.6.2 Participation role 44
  - 3.6.3 Deniability 45
  - 3.6.4 Other factors 46
- 3.7 Shared and distinguishing features of irony and sarcasm 46
- 3.8 Users of irony/sarcasm 48
  - 3.8.1 Culture 48
  - 3.8.2 Gender 49
- 3.9 Conclusions 50

## CHAPTER 4

- Whose im/politeness? 53**
- 4.1 Which im/politeness? 53
  - 4.1.1 Operationalising face 53
  - 4.1.2 Operationalising impoliteness 55
  - 4.1.3 Im/politeness in interaction 56
- 4.2 Whose im/politeness? 58
  - 4.2.1 Im/politeness and the anglocentric viewpoint 59
  - 4.2.2 First and second order im/politeness: Definitions and practice 60
- 4.3 Locating im/politeness: Metapragmatic approaches 63
- 4.4 Communicating mock politeness 65
- 4.5 Conclusions 72

## CHAPTER 5

|                                                                                                                                                          |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Methodological approaches to im/politeness mismatch</b>                                                                                               | <b>73</b> |
| 5.1 Introduction                                                                                                                                         | 73        |
| 5.2 Types of investigation                                                                                                                               | 73        |
| 5.2.1 Text analysis                                                                                                                                      | 75        |
| 5.2.2 Data elicitation                                                                                                                                   | 75        |
| 5.2.3 Experimental investigations                                                                                                                        | 77        |
| 5.2.4 Self-reported usage                                                                                                                                | 78        |
| 5.3 Identifying the object of study                                                                                                                      | 79        |
| 5.3.1 Metalanguage/metapragmatic studies of mock politeness                                                                                              | 79        |
| 5.3.2 Researcher decides a priori                                                                                                                        | 81        |
| 5.3.3 “Naïve” approach                                                                                                                                   | 82        |
| 5.4 Corpus linguistics and im/politeness                                                                                                                 | 82        |
| 5.4.1 The theory of im/politeness may be employed to account for the findings of a study                                                                 | 83        |
| 5.4.2 Detailed mark up may be used in the corpus in order to test an im/politeness hypothesis or build up a quantitative picture of qualitative features | 83        |
| 5.4.3 The corpus may be used to enable metalinguistic and metapragmatic approaches to the analysis of im/politeness                                      | 84        |
| 5.4.4 The corpus is used as a resource or bank for retrieving examples of a given im/politeness feature                                                  | 84        |
| 5.4.5 Benefits and challenges to combining corpus linguistics and im/politeness                                                                          | 85        |
| 5.4.6 Key notions from corpus linguistics for im/politeness study                                                                                        | 87        |
| 5.5 Conclusions                                                                                                                                          | 91        |

## CHAPTER 6

|                                               |           |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Data description and corpus tools</b>      | <b>93</b> |
| 6.1 The two forums                            | 93        |
| 6.2 Ethics and online data                    | 95        |
| 6.3 Challenges in a cross-cultural comparison | 96        |
| 6.4 Building the corpora                      | 97        |
| 6.5 Annotating the corpora                    | 101       |
| 6.6 Additional corpora                        | 103       |
| 6.7 Tools for analysing the corpora           | 103       |
| 6.7.1 Sketch Engine                           | 103       |
| 6.7.2 Wordsmith Tools                         | 104       |
| 6.7.3 Collocational Network Explorer          | 104       |
| 6.8 Corpus methods                            | 106       |
| 6.9 Conclusions                               | 107       |

CHAPTER 7

**Evaluation and use of the metapragmatic labels irony and sarcasm 109**

- 7.1 Introduction 109
- 7.2 A collocational approach to evaluation of irony and sarcasm 110
  - 7.2.1 Co-occurrences of irony/ironic and sarcasm/sarcastic 110
  - 7.2.2 Ironic/sarcastic and co-occurrence with explicit im/politeness labels 111
  - 7.2.3 Ironic/sarcastic in the distributional thesaurus 115
- 7.3 Evaluation, functions and participation roles 117
  - 7.3.1 Evaluation and participation role 117
  - 7.3.2 Evaluation and gender 119
  - 7.3.3 Functions of mentions 121
- 7.4 Conclusions 125

CHAPTER 8

**Examining the behaviours labelled as ironic and sarcastic 127**

- 8.1 Introduction 127
- 8.2 Evaluation in the behaviours described as IRONICO/ironic and SARCASTICO/sarcastic 127
- 8.3 Facework in the behaviours indicated as ironic and sarcastic 129
  - 8.3.1 Face-attack 130
  - 8.3.2 Face-saving 138
  - 8.3.3 Face-enhancing 144
- 8.4 Mismatch in the behaviours labelled as ironic and sarcastic 145
  - 8.4.1 Absence of im/politeness mismatch 146
  - 8.4.2 Location of im/politeness mismatch 148
- 8.5 Conclusions 150

CHAPTER 9

**Metapragmatic labels and mock politeness 153**

- 9.1 Introduction 153
- 9.2 References to insincerity in meta-politeness labels 153
  - 9.2.1 Mock politeness 157
  - 9.2.2 Mock politeness or deceit? 157
  - 9.2.3 Politeness as an institutional requirement 158
  - 9.2.4 Excess politeness 158
  - 9.2.5 Summary 159
- 9.3 Which metapragmatic labels are used to refer to mock politeness? 159

|       |                                                                           |     |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 9.4   | Facework (and deniability) in the behaviours                              | 162 |
| 9.4.1 | The “impolite” element: Expression of negative attitude                   | 163 |
| 9.4.2 | The “mock” element: Mismatch and indirectness                             | 164 |
| 9.4.3 | Identifying mock politeness: A brief summary                              | 166 |
| 9.5   | How are the mock polite behaviours evaluated?                             | 167 |
| 9.5.1 | Participation roles and evaluation                                        | 167 |
| 9.5.2 | Evaluation of mock politeness labels: A collocational network perspective | 173 |
| 9.6   | Sociolinguistic variables in the choice of metapragmatic labels           | 175 |
| 9.7   | Conclusions                                                               | 177 |

**CHAPTER 10**

|                                            |                                                                             |     |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>The shape of mock polite behaviours</b> | <b>179</b>                                                                  |     |
| 10.1                                       | Introduction                                                                | 179 |
| 10.2                                       | Types of im/politeness mismatch                                             | 179 |
| 10.2.1                                     | Expectations of mismatch type                                               | 180 |
| 10.2.2                                     | Overview of mismatch types                                                  | 181 |
| 10.2.3                                     | Mismatch of favourable evaluation of face and attack on face                | 183 |
| 10.2.4                                     | Mismatch of favourable evaluation of face and violation of sociality rights | 184 |
| 10.2.5                                     | Mismatch of upholding sociality rights and violation of sociality rights    | 184 |
| 10.2.6                                     | Mismatch of upholding sociality rights and attack on face                   | 185 |
| 10.2.7                                     | Metapragmatic labels and types of im/politeness mismatch                    | 186 |
| 10.2.8                                     | Mock politeness and mismatch of addressee                                   | 189 |
| 10.3                                       | Mismatch location                                                           | 190 |
| 10.4                                       | Conventionalisation: The case of HTH                                        | 194 |
| 10.5                                       | Functions of mock politeness                                                | 196 |
| 10.6                                       | Patronising and condescending                                               | 198 |
| 10.7                                       | Conclusions                                                                 | 199 |

**CHAPTER 11**

|                    |                                                                                                           |     |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Conclusions</b> | <b>203</b>                                                                                                |     |
| 11.1               | Overview                                                                                                  | 203 |
| 11.2               | Findings                                                                                                  | 203 |
| 11.2.1             | What metapragmatic labels are used to refer to mock politeness in the (British) English and Italian data? | 204 |
| 11.2.2             | How do these labels and behaviours relate to one another within languages?                                | 204 |

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                     |            |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 11.2.3 | How do these labels and behaviours relate to one another across languages?                                                                                                          | 206        |
| 11.2.4 | What is the relationship between the English and Italian first-order uses of these metapragmatic labels, and the behaviours which they describe, and the second order descriptions? | 207        |
| 11.3   | Future directions                                                                                                                                                                   | 209        |
|        | <b>References</b>                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>211</b> |
|        | <b>Index</b>                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>231</b> |