



ARTICLE



<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02039-5>

OPEN

# Beyond relational work: a psycho-pragmatic analysis of impoliteness in Shakespeare's *King Lear*

Ayman Khafaga <sup>1,2</sup>✉

This paper offers a psycho-pragmatic analysis of impoliteness in Shakespeare's *King Lear* at the intradiegetic level of communication. The paper's main objective is to explore the extent to which impoliteness assessment is influenced by both the psychological traits of interlocutors motivated by their reality paradigms and the fictional participation of discourse participants, which targets a deeper understanding of the association between impoliteness, psychological dimensions of personality, and fictional participation in drama dialogue. The study is based on an eclectic framework by drawing inspiration from contributions in the field of impoliteness and relational work studies, with a special emphasis on Locher and Jucker's (2021) list of the factors influencing relational work, together with reference to studies on the relationship between psychological dimensions of personality and language use, with a focus on Archer's (2002) concept of reality paradigms. The paper has two main findings: first, psychological traits of interlocutors contribute significantly to the production, reception, and assessment of impoliteness and serve as antecedents of their verbal aggression; and, second, psychological impoliteness operates within a specific community of practice and has its own context-specific expectation frames.

<sup>1</sup> College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia. <sup>2</sup> Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Suez Canal University, Ismailia, Egypt. ✉email: [a.khafaga@psau.edu.sa](mailto:a.khafaga@psau.edu.sa)

## Introduction

In response to his question of what factors influence the use of impoliteness in drama dialogue, Culpeper (1998, p. 86) states that they are “social (dis)harmony” and “tensions between characters” that count for impoliteness in such a fictional genre. Culpeper’s assumption is also supported by other scholars (e.g. Bousfield and Culpeper, 2008; Bousfield and Locher, 2008; Locher and Watts, 2008; Terkourafi, 2008; Parvaresh and Tayebi, 2018; Haugh and Chang, 2019; Parvaresh and Tayebi, 2021), whose contributions advocate the idea that social disharmony is the main reason that causes impoliteness to emerge. The same group of scholars goes on to highlight the essential role of power structures, distance, and intentionality as indicative components in the production and judgment of impoliteness. In an open-ended list, Locher and Jucker (2021, pp. 155–156) also argue that there are some factors that influence relational work negotiations between interlocutors. These include personal factors, which refer to the interlocutors’ face and identity construction; relational factors, which encompass concepts of power, distance, affect, and relational history; frame factors, which constitute the roles of interactants in terms of rights and obligations, and norms and ideologies; and participation factors, which are concerned with the roles of discourse participants in the interaction process.

This paper extends the arguments for the role of the aforementioned factors in exacerbating how offensive an impolite behavior is taken to be to argue for the importance of psychological factors in the process of the taking and giving of offense in interaction. Its central premise is therefore that judging a specific behavior as offensive is not only based on the extent to which face or sociality rights are exposed and power structures are abused (Culpeper, 2011), or on the relational histories under which the delivered expressions have been used (Locher and Watts, 2008), or on the degree of intentionality ascribed to the actor(s) (Bousfield, 2010), or on the way infringed expectations, desires, and beliefs are cognitively active (Culpeper, 2011), or on the pragmatic inferences of what is said and what is meant by interlocutors (Parvaresh and Tayebi, 2021), but also on the psychological dimensions of interlocutors motivated by their reality paradigms, the way they view and interpret their worlds, and the fictional participation structures constituting the interaction process. Arguing from this position, this paper proposes that impoliteness should best be viewed not only as being caused by “a pragmatically controlled pragmatic process” (Recanati, 2004, p. 136, emphasis original) but also by a psychologically motivated and controlled process.

Approaching the psychological dimension of impoliteness is analytically conducted by drawing inspiration from contributions in the field of impoliteness and relational work studies, with a special emphasis on Locher and Jucker’s (2021) list of the factors influencing relational work, together with reference to studies on the relationship between psychological dimensions of personality and language use, with a focus on Archer’s (2002, 2011) concept of reality paradigms, which refers to the system of beliefs interlocutors employ to view and interpret their worlds. Crucially, the reality paradigms of interlocutors, which shape their mind frames and psychological traits, contribute not only to negotiating impoliteness but also to reconsidering the different determining factors affecting relational work. Thus, by taking Shakespeare’s *King Lear* as a source of its data, this paper attempts to discuss impoliteness in psychological terms by showing the extent to which the characters’ reality paradigms and the fictional participation influence the production, reception, and judgment of impoliteness at the intradiegetic level of communication.

Dialogic communication in fictional discourse is not essentially different from everyday communication (Locher and Jucker, 2021). In both types of communication, i.e. the fictional and the

real, there are always different recipient roles and different levels of communication. According to Locher and Jucker (2021), fictional discourse has three levels of communication: intradiegetic, which refers to the dialogue depicted between characters (character-to-character level of communication); extradiegetic, which constitutes the creator(s) of the piece of fiction and its audience/readers (author-to-reader level of communication); and supradiegetic, which encompasses a studio audience, either fake or real. At the intradiegetic level of communication, there are various recipient roles, including those who are addressed directly by the speaker (on-scene and on-dialogue participation in the context of this paper), and those who attend the conversational act but are not addressed (on-scene but off-dialogue participation in the context of this paper). Significantly, not only do the directly addressed recipients in fictional intradiegetic communication influence the speaker’s conversational behavior, but indirect recipients also play an important role in shaping the speaker’s attitudinal behavior (Locher and Jucker, 2021) to the extent that it may cause the conversation to be shifted from one behavior to another, sometimes contradictory (Messerli, 2017).

Four research questions are put forward in this study. First, to what extent do the characters’ psychological traits and reality paradigms contribute to the production and judgment of their behavior at the intradiegetic level of communication? Second, do the different factors influencing relational work have the same impact on the character’s behavior in the presence of psychological disorders? Third, to what extent do the recipients’ roles in the background of the scene (on-scene but off-dialogue participants) influence the interaction among interlocutors in the foreground (on-scene and on-dialogue participants)? Fourth, is there a significant correlation between impoliteness, characters’ reality paradigms, and fictional participation? The answer to these questions sheds light on the paper’s main objective, as it attempts to explore the extent to which impoliteness is influenced by the psychological dimensions of interlocutors’ personalities, their reality paradigms, and the fictional participation structures in the interaction process; and also highlights its significance, as it targets a deeper understanding of the tripartite association between impoliteness, reality paradigms, and psychological disorders of interlocutors in drama dialogue. Although the psycho-pragmatic analysis presented in this paper is performed on fictional communication, such a type of fictional discourse embodies various features of interpersonal communication that are usually represented in real-world interactions. Further reasons constituting the selection of literary texts to be investigated linguistically lie in Sinclair’s (2004, p. 51) argument that literature “is a prime example of language in use,” and also in McIntyre and Bousfield’s (2017, p. 761) contention that fictional discourse “has a role to play in the development of linguistic models and analytical frameworks, including, of course, theories of (im)politeness.”

## Literature review

**Linguistic (im)politeness.** Although classical research on (im)politeness has provided linguistics with miscellaneous theoretical and methodological insights since the concept became spotlighted as an academic concern (e.g. Goffman, 1967; Lakoff, 1973; Grice, 1975; Brown and Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1992), recent research has focused on broadening the theoretical frameworks of the traditional theories of politeness to further incorporate new conceptualizations of the term (e.g. Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Locher, 2006), or to investigate the opposite direction of the concept of politeness, namely the way language is employed to cause offense (e.g. Bousfield, 2008a; Locher and Watts, 2008; Culpeper, 2011; Dynel, 2015a; McIntyre and Bousfield, 2017; Parvaresh and

Tayebi, 2018, Mourad, 2021; Altahmazi, 2022; Su and Lee, 2022). According to Bousfield (2008a, p. 72), impoliteness is the antithesis of politeness, and he, therefore, defines it as “the communication of intentionally gratuitous and conflictive face-threatening acts that are purposefully delivered.” For Grice (1975, p. 45), the process of communication is governed by what he terms the “cooperative principle,” whose main concern, for Blum-Kulka (1997, p. 42), is “the ways in which communicators recognize each other’s communicative intentions.” Grice (1975) maintains that the cooperative principle is based on the assumption that human communication should be based on four conversational maxims in order for communicative acts to be more effective and efficient. These are the maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner, which require interlocutors’ conversational contributions to be informative, truthful, relevant, and perspicuous, respectively.

According to Bousfield (2008a), the lack of intention to offend on the part of the speaker and the lack of understanding of the intentional offense on the part of the hearer lead to an unsuccessful act of impoliteness. Concerning the realization of intentionality in impoliteness, Bousfield (2008a, p. 73) lists two types of speaker-hearer interaction that are caused by a number of impoliteness strategies. The first type of interaction is called “*accidental face-damage*,” which encompasses the state in which the speaker does not intend face damage, but the hearer recognizes the act as being intentionally face-damaging; and the second type is called “*incidental face-damage*,” wherein the speaker does not also intend face-damage, but the hearer constructs the speaker’s utterance as being unintentionally face-damaging. In both cases, impoliteness occurs as a result of one or more of the following reasons: *rudeness, sensitivity, hypersensitivity, a clash of expectations, a cultural misunderstanding, misidentification of the community of practice or activity type in which they are engaged* (Bousfield, 2008a, p. 73, emphasis original).

Following on from Bousfield’s (2010) prototype approach, which provides a social explanation of impoliteness, Culpeper (2011, p. 23) perceives impoliteness as a “negative attitude towards specific behaviors occurring in specific contexts.” It constitutes “communicative strategies designed to attack face, and thereby cause social conflict and disharmony” (Culpeper et al., 2003). Impoliteness, for Culpeper (2011), involves a conflict between interlocutors’ expectations concerning an interactional behavior and the negative attitude they adopt when those expectations are met. Although Culpeper (2007) emphasizes that intentionality is a crucial part of impoliteness, whose perception affects the evaluation of potentially face-attacking behavior, he recently argues that “there is no generally strong connection between intentionality and the degree of offense taken” (Culpeper, 2011, p. 69). This makes him conclude that intentionality can enhance the perceived offense, but it is not the criterion upon which linguistic forms are judged as impolite.

One observation about previous literature on (im)politeness is the agreement that impoliteness means the intentional attack of an interactant’s face in a non-harmonious conflictive way, either directly or indirectly. Previous research on impoliteness has concluded that such a face-threatening attack occurs as a result of a failure in the relational work negotiation process between interlocutors, which occurs when some or all of the factors governing relational work negotiations are not observed in interaction (e.g. Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Bousfield, 2008a; Bousfield and Culpeper, 2008; Terkourafi, 2008; Culpeper, 2011; Parvaresh and Tayebi, 2018; Haugh and Chang, 2019; Parvaresh and Tayebi, 2021). Sometimes, impoliteness emerges despite the observation of all the factors influencing relational work in interaction. The question now is: in the case of the observation of all the factors

governing relational work, what is the reason that makes interlocutors produce, receive and/or interpret an act as impolite or offensive? In light of this paper, it is the psychological dimension of interlocutors and their reality paradigms that play a crucial role in the production and judgment of impoliteness, and that is why they should be incorporated into the determining factors affecting relational work negotiations in interaction.

**(Im)politeness in fictional texts.** In fictional texts, (im)politeness has always been approached as a topic of interest by stylisticians whose contributions are dedicated to using (im)politeness frameworks to analyze fictional dialogue for characters (e.g. Leech, 1992); extending the theory of impoliteness to discuss relational frameworks that influentially contribute to the study of fictional characters (e.g. Spencer-Oatey, 2000); discussing impoliteness as banter (e.g. Bousfield, 2007); analyzing characterization through film dialogue (e.g. Dynel, 2015a); investigating evaluations of impoliteness and over-politeness in crime novel dialogues by integrating both the pragmatics of politeness and some analytical models from discourse analysis (Paternoster, 2012); exploring the concepts of impoliteness and aggravated impoliteness with relation to interlocutors’ intentionality (e.g. Rudanko, 2017); discussing the way the exercise of impoliteness shapes and is shaped by the relational power dynamics between intimate interactants in a fictional comic exchange (Mourad, 2021); probing the extent to which stage directions parentheticals are indicators of impoliteness at the micro-pragmatic level of fictional discourse (Khafaga, 2022); and examining the interwoven relationship between the metadiscourse of (im)politeness, language ideologies, and identity, by shedding light on the way identities are discursively constructed in the process of impoliteness assessment (Su and Lee, 2022).

In their attempts to approach (im)politeness in fiction, stylisticians are classified into two groups, each of which draws on the “face-based model” (McIntyre and Bousfield, 2017). The first group adopts the same traditional perspective of politeness postulated by Brown and Levinson’s (1987) classical theory of politeness (e.g. Brown and Gilman, 1989; Simpson, 1989; Bennison, 1998). Brown and Gilman (1989), for example, apply Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory of politeness, particularly their three universal determinants of politeness levels in dyadic discourse, namely power, distance, and ranked extremity, to the study of four Shakespearean tragedies, including *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*. Their study goes in conformity with the classic theory of politeness in terms of the two determinants of power and ranked extremity in the four selected plays, whereas it deviates from the theory with regard to distance. Simpson (1989) also uses Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory to investigate politeness in Ionesco’s *The Lesson*, wherein he emphasizes the relevance of Brown and Levinson’s theory to create a descriptive integration of the language used with the social relations of the discourse participants. In a similar vein, Bennison (1998) incorporates Brown and Levinson’s model of politeness (1987) and Leech’s politeness principle (1983), together with concepts from discourse analysis, such as turn-taking and interruption, to investigate the character of Anderson in Tom Stoppard’s *Professional Foul*. Bennison’s study is concerned with exploring the extent to which readers of plays can arrive at judgments on the personalities of characters through their conversations.

The second group, on the other hand, develops new analytical frameworks of the old theory to discuss impoliteness (e.g. Culpeper, 1998; Bousfield, 2007; Dynel, 2017). For example, Culpeper (1998) discusses the notion of impoliteness in dramatic dialogue by initially drawing on Brown and Levinson’s (1987)

**Table 1 Locher and Jucker's open list of the factors influencing relational work (Locher and Jucker, 2021, pp. 155–156).**

Personal factors	Pertinent questions
Face of the speaker	How is the speaker's own face endangered through the interaction? Can the speaker enhance or maintain his/her face through the interaction? What costs or benefits to face are involved when engaging in interaction?
Face of the addressee	How is the addressee's face endangered through the interaction? Can the interaction enhance, maintain or challenge the addressee's face? What costs or benefits to face are involved?
Identity construction	What consequences does the speaker's and addressee's choice of relational work strategies to challenge/maintain/enhance face in interaction have with respect to their identity construction?
Relational factors	Pertinent questions
Distance	Are the interactants close or distant?
Power	Is there a power difference between the interactants or are they hierarchically equal? Is one participant allowed to exercise power over the other within the context of the frame?
Status	Do the interactants differ in status (even in hierarchically equal contexts, interactants might differ with respect to the status they have gained in the group)?
Affect	Do the interactants like or dislike each other?
Density of network	Do the interactants know each other just from one type of interaction or do they have multiple ties?
Relationship history	Do the interactants have a history of previous encounters or are they meeting for the first time?
Frame factors	Pertinent questions
Roles of interactants	What roles do the interactants embody in the context of the encounter?
Rights and obligations	What rights come with each role? What obligations come with each role? What efforts would maintaining or challenging these rights and obligations have?
Sequences of actions	Are there expected actions that belong to the frame? Are they obligatory or can they be left out?
Norms and ideologies (local and cultural level)	Does the frame evoke particular norms of conduct with respect to societal norms such as the role of gender, power distribution, freedom of speech, etc? What effects would adherence or non-adherence in these norms and ideologies have?
Participation structure factors	Pertinent questions
Private communication	Is the interaction accessible only to the interlocutors?
Overhearer and witnesses	Can others witness the interaction?
Persistence	Is the interaction in a form that can be recalled later (taped or written communication) or is it ephemeral?

theory of politeness towards proposing a new analytical framework of impoliteness, through which one can investigate the linguistic strategies used to attack face. Culpeper's study accentuates the indicative role played by impoliteness in the study of drama texts because dramatic dialogue, for him, is characterized by different forms of social disharmony and conflict that can be better decoded by the study of impoliteness. Culpeper's attempt to develop the classical theory of Brown and Levinson starts with his seminal paper on impoliteness (1996), in which he offers the first systematic taxonomy of impoliteness in a fictional text: Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and has been fully crystallized by his impoliteness monograph in 2011, in which he discusses various topics pertinent to impoliteness, such as intentionality and verbal violence. Within the scope of telecinematic discourse, Dynel (2017, p. 455) sheds light on the methodological problems related to the study of (im)politeness in fictional and non-fictional discourse, particularly the issues of "verisimilitude and (im)politeness evaluations" that often face researchers when they approach telecinematic discourse.

**Locher and Jucker's (2021) list of the factors influencing relational work.** Locher and Jucker (2021, pp. 156–158) propose an open list of the potential factors influencing relational work negotiations in interaction. They classify these factors into four main groups: (i) personal factors; (ii) relational factors; (iii) frame factors; and (iv) participation structure factors. Each group comprises a further number of sub-factors, as is shown in Table 1.

As indicated in Table 1, Locher and Jucker's list abounds in key issues pertinent to relational work negotiations, including face, identity construction, relationship negotiations, frames, norms, ideologies, emotions, and participation structure. However, the list does not clearly consider the psychological dimension of the interactants' personalities among the factors affecting relational

work. Indubitably, interlocutors' psychological traits have a significant role in shaping relational work in interaction. In this paper, Locher and Jucker's (2021) categorization is augmented to include a further group of psychological factors that influence the way impoliteness is produced and judged. This proposed group of factors is mainly concerned with the psychological dimensions of the interlocutors' personalities and their reality paradigms that contribute to shaping their conversational behavior. Crucially, considering the psychological dimensions as a criterion influencing the judgment of relational work in general and impoliteness in particular offers further insights into the understanding of impoliteness in terms of intentionality, power relations and distance, roles and obligations, and participation structures in discourse, and shows the extent to which these concepts are influenced by the psychological state of conversationalists. Table 2 adds further clarification.

**Psychology and language use: Narcissistic grandiosity and impoliteness.** Much multidisciplinary research has been conducted on the relationship between psychological dimensions of personality in general and language use (e.g. Pennebaker et al., 2003; Preston, 2006; Tausczik and Pennebaker, 2010; Tamborski et al., 2012; Holtzman et al., 2019; Dimitrova et al., 2022). These studies have come to terms with the assumption that personality disorders and psychological traits lead to specific language patterns that, sometimes, are in congruence with the linguistic norms of language use and, at other times, violate these norms. Narcissism is one of the psychological dimensions of personality that not only influences the way behaviors are produced but also determines the way impolite behaviors are judged. According to Morf and Rhodewalt (2001), narcissism refers to the state in which a grandiose self-perception is linked to such motivations as the need for esteem, power, and entitlement. They maintain that a

**Table 2 The proposed group of factors influencing relational work.**

Psychological factors	Pertinent questions
Psychological dimensions of personality	What are the psychological traits the interactants possess? Are there any psychological disorders interlocutors suffer from? Do interactants understand each other's psychological personalities? Do interactants observe each other's psychological face (needs)?
Reality paradigms	What are the beliefs interlocutors use to view and interpret their world? Do interactants behave from specific mental perspectives or mind frames? Do interactants consider or ignore each other's paradigms? Does the change in reality paradigms lead to a change in relational work?

narcissistic personality disorder is a long-term pattern of abnormal conduct marked by an inflated sense of self-importance, an overwhelming desire for praise and admiration, and a lack of understanding of others' feelings. The same viewpoint is adopted by Goldman et al. (1994), who argue that a narcissistic personality is characterized by a persistent pattern of grandiosity, a need for admiration, and a lack of empathy. According to Tamborski et al. (2012, p. 943), narcissism has two dimensions: an intrapersonal dimension of grandiosity and an interpersonal dimension of entitlement, with the former orienting the narcissist towards maintaining an internal sense of self-importance and the latter orienting the narcissist towards maintaining status vis-à-vis others. A similar view is also adopted by Vize et al. (2018), who point out that narcissistic individuals tend to be disagreeable extraverts, meaning that they are impolite and not compassionate, as well as gregarious and dominant. This also tunes with Ronningstam's (2011) contention that narcissism means self-glorification and a narcissistic person identifies herself/himself with the optimum because s/he considers herself/himself above everything.

Some previous studies highlight the connection between narcissism and language use (e.g. Fast and Funder, 2008; Tausczik and Pennebaker, 2010; Schwartz et al., 2013; Preotiuc-Pietro et al., 2016; Holtzman et al., 2019). These studies discuss the role of language as a potentially essential cue of narcissism by shedding light on the idea that language has generally been linked to personality. For example, Tausczik and Pennebaker (2010, p. 37) investigate the extent to which words are psychologically loaded, by exploring the way through which narcissistic personalities employ specific personal pronouns and verb tenses to communicate grandiosity and self-superiority in communication, as well as to increase the psychological distance between them and their recipients. They conclude that emotional words narcissistic individuals employ "provide important psychological cues to their thought processes, emotional states, intentions, and motivations." Dimitrova et al. (2022) also argue that there is a connection between self-relevance and emotional salience. They maintain that an individual's self-image or face is influenced by the "degree of attraction or aversion to emotionally-valenced information" (p. 17). For them, such emotional attraction can be judged by the use of particular words that psychologically operate as emotion motivators.

The psychological weight of language has also been accentuated by Ransom et al. (2019), who investigate the extent to which lexical choices influence the perception and judgment of relational work. Another study conducted by Preston (2006) explores the relationship between the use of directives and the existence of narcissism as a psychological dimension of personality, clarifying that the directive mode is pertinent to narcissistic individuals since directivity serves to achieve a number of goals such as psychological satisfaction, which, in turn, is entirely sought by any narcissistic personality. Furthermore, Gawda (2022) discusses the linguistic features that characterize individuals with particular personality traits,

specifically those who have psychopathic deviation. She maintains that the relationship between language and personality is governed by a number of factors, including the personality's psychological traits, emotional activation, and the contextual environment where interaction occurs.

Within the scope of (im)politeness studies, Brown and Levinson (1987, pp. 61–62) argue that the concept of 'face' refers to "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others ... in particular, it includes the desire to be ratified, understood, approved of, liked or admired," for positive face; and "the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others," for negative face. In both cases, these 'wants' are psychologically-based desires that every member wants to claim for himself (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 61). They, therefore, perceive face in terms of universal individualistic psychological wants. Such a universally psychological dimension of face is also accentuated by Bousfield (2008a, p. 237), who argues that face considerations are "psychologically rooted and driven," which, in turn, emphasizes the role of psychological dimensions of interlocutors' personalities in shaping their relational work in interaction.

**Archer's (2002, 2011) reality paradigms.** Archer's (2002, p.14) "reality paradigms" refer to the state in which interlocutors operate out of and filter information about their world through specific mental perspectives or mind frames. She argues that reality paradigms are "the truth filters," which "interlocutors use to interpret/make sense of their worlds" (Archer, 2011, p. 86). In this sense, a reality paradigm, for her, equates to Fowler's (1986, p.130) concept of "mindstyle," which refers to "the systems of beliefs [and] values ... by reference to which a person or a society comprehends the world." For Archer (2002), the mental perspectives of interlocutors construct their reality paradigms and, therefore, make them operate within specific paradigms that shape what the truth is for them. Sometimes, the conversation is not consistent with the interlocutors' reality paradigms, and, therefore, they react offensively to counter the propositions contradicting their paradigms. The contradiction between the conversational propositions and the interlocutors' reality paradigms leads to a change not only in discourse functions but also in the way relational work is managed and negotiated. For example, a narcissistic individual who behaves within a paradigm of grandiosity reacts impolitely (sometimes aggressively) if he/she is treated in a way that does not go in congruence with the conversational norms created by his/her reality paradigms.

Additionally, the interlocutors' commitment to acting in accordance with their own paradigms causes them to disregard their recipients' paradigms for the obvious reason that they contradict their views (Archer, 2002, 2011). Thus, understanding the interlocutors' reality paradigms serves to enhance the understanding of facework among them. Significantly, one of the characteristics of reality paradigms is that they can be shifted throughout time (Archer, 2011). That is, under specific

conditions pertaining to the conversational scenarios spanning over time, the interlocutors' reactions may be changed from one paradigm to another. For example, relational work strategies (i.e. those functioning impoliteness) are replaced by other strategies (i.e. those functioning politeness). In fictional discourse, as is the case for *King Lear*, this change is usually realized in parallel to both the development of characterization and the change of world views pertaining to characters.

**Fictional participation.** According to Messerli (2017), the participation structure varies from one fictional genre to another. It is ordinary, therefore, to find a participation framework for, for example, a novel that is different from the participation structure in drama or telecinematic discourse (see, e.g. Goffman, 1979; Bubel, 2008; Dynel, 2011; Brock, 2015). Such frameworks plurality establishes the recipients' roles in the different types of fictional discourse. Messerli (2017, p. 26) maintains that participation in fiction represents a type of "mediated communication" between the creators and the recipients of a fictional artifact. Such a process of communication "takes place in a specific setting and entails specific relationships between all those participants that it involves." For him, those relationships should be defined in order for readers to be able to describe the participation structure in fiction.

At the intradiegetic level of communication, the core concern of this paper, participation is practiced by the fictional characters involved directly and/or indirectly in the communication process. According to Locher and Jucker (2021), characters are presented in the fictional work by presence and dialogue or only by presence without being involved in dialogue. In this regard, Locher and Jucker (2021, p. 42) argue that "in addition to the person to whom an utterance is directly addressed, there may be others also belonging to the party of conversationalists and some bystanders who accidentally hear what is being heard." Crucially, the participation roles of the characters in the background (on-scene but off-dialogue participation) influence the way the interaction in the foreground (on-scene and on-dialogue participation) takes place (Messerli, 2017, p. 30). This has previously been accentuated by Goffman's (1979) argument that communicative acts between ratified participants are influenced by those around them who are listening in or looking on.

According to Locher and Jucker (2021), there are three participation roles: auditors, who are ratified by the speaker and listening to the conversation; bystanders, who are also ratified by the speaker but are not presented in the dramatic scene; and overhearers, who are not ratified by the speaker and may listen to the conversation. Bell (1991, p. 91) terms these participation roles "recipient roles," maintaining that participants, apart from the speaker, are assigned four roles: (i) addressees, who are known, ratified, and addressed by the speaker; (ii) auditors, who are known and ratified but not addressed by the speaker; (iii) overhearers, who are known to be there but not ratified; and (iv) eavesdroppers, who are not known to be in the communication process.

## Methodology

**Data: Collection, description, and rationale.** The data used in this study comprises Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1606). The play consists of 26 scenes distributed across 5 acts. Despite the many scenes in the play, the analytical focus will be on the opening scene, which consists of 308 lines and almost all the characters in the play have been involved in it, either via the on-dialogue (direct) participation or the off-dialogue (indirect) participation. More specifically, the analytical focus is on the conversational turns of Lear, the three daughters (Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia),

and Kent. The extracts used in the analysis are taken from the Arden edition of the works of William Shakespeare, edited by Kenneth Muir and first published in 1952. Also, the citation of the quotations extracted from *King Lear* is given in the usual Act, scene, line(s) format.

The main reason constituting the rationale for selecting this scene in particular lies in the fact that it reflects the extent to which the interlocutors' action environment is totally shaped by their psychological traits, their reality paradigms, and the structures of fictional participation, which, in turn, influences not only their relational work negotiations in the scene but also their subsequent conversational behavior, characterization involvement, and plot development in the play. Furthermore, selecting fictional texts to be pragmatically analyzed is due to two reasons. First, the analysis of these texts helps to "understand how fictional texts are likely to be understood by readers" (McIntyre and Bousfield, 2017, p. 759); and, second, using fictional texts as data serves to "test particular approaches to pragmatics" (Clark, 2007, p. 196). The reason for this, according to McIntyre and Bousfield (2017, p. 760), is that fictional texts abound in stylistic effects, such as conflict and dramatic tension, which violate the different aspects of interaction. Such violations "can be revealing of how processes of interaction work, and these insights can be useful to pragmatists in reassessing and revising pragmatic concepts and frameworks for analysis" (McIntyre and Bousfield, 2017, p. 760).

**Research procedures.** The methodological procedures adopted in this paper encompass three stages, and all of them revolve around the discussion of relational work and impoliteness in *King Lear* from a psycho-pragmatic perspective. The first stage constitutes the analysis of relational work in terms of Locher and Jucker's (2021) factors influencing the production, reception, and assessment of relational work in interaction. The focus in this stage is on showing that in many interactional situations and despite the fact that all factors shaping relational work are observed by interlocutors, impoliteness emerges because of other psychological factors that are not listed in Locher and Jucker's list. This, in turn, indicates that Locher and Jucker's list needs to be theoretically augmented to allow the incorporation of some psychological factors. This proposed augmentation results from the assumption that Locher and Jucker's list seems to be inadequate for a comprehensive judgment on impolite behaviors, which may constitute the reason why they describe it as an "open list" (Locher and Jucker, 2021, p. 155). The second analytical stage shows how psychological impoliteness is motivated by the reality paradigms through which interlocutors perceive and interpret their world. The focus in this stage is on highlighting the various paradigms that influence the relational work among discourse participants, and how the shift in these paradigms affects interlocutors' relational work with the development of the dramatic events in the play. The third stage is confined to discussing impoliteness in light of fictional participation (Messerli, 2017; Locher and Jucker, 2021) to probe the extent to which recipient roles, either via on-dialogue participation or off-dialogue participation, motivate the psychological dimensions of interlocutors in a way that affects the production and judgment of impoliteness.

## Analysis

**Relational work in *King Lear* in light of Locher and Jucker's (2021) list.** The first analytical step in this study is to discuss relational work pertaining to the characters involved in the opening scene. This is conducted in light of Locher and Jucker's (2021) open list of the factors influencing relational work, with the aim of testing the appropriateness of these factors to a

comprehensive judgment of the interlocutors' consequent impolite behavior that occurs as a direct consequence of the interlocutors' conversational attitudes in scene one of *King Lear*. As alluded before, the conversational turns pertaining to the characters involved in the first scene of the play are the focus of the analysis.

The first scene witnesses Lear's decision to divide his kingdom among his three daughters, Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia, maintaining that he intends to give up the responsibilities of government and spend the rest of his life visiting his three daughters:

Know that we have divided/In three our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent/To shake all cares and business from our age; /Conferring them on younger strengths, while we/ Unburthen'd crawl toward death. (I.i.37–41)

However, the division is preconditioned by the degree of love each of his daughters expresses to him:

Tell me, my daughters,... /Which of you shall we say doth love us most? That we our largest bounty may extend/ Where nature doth with merit challenge. (I.i.48–53)

In response to their father's question, Goneril makes use of her father's desire to be glorified:

Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter; /Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty; /... No less than life,... /A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable; /Beyond all manner of so much I love you. (I.i.54–61)

Regan also flatters the old king by using similar expressions of love as her sister, Goneril, did:

I am made of that self metal as my sister,.../I find she names my very deed of love; /Only she comes too short: that I profess/ Myself an enemy to all other joys, /Which the most precious square of sense possesses; /And find I am alone felicitate/ In your dear highness' love. (I.i.69–76)

On her part, Cordelia, who is sure that she "cannot heave/My heart into my mouth" (I.i.91–92), responds with "Nothing, my lord" (I.i.87). For White (2000), Cordelia's silence is a denial of filial affection, which serves to threaten Lear's public self-image, as her 'nothing' wounds his pride as a king and a father. It is Cordelia's 'nothing' that stimulates the psychological part of Lear's personality, provokes his narcissistic grandiosity, and causes the whole drama to emerge. Her 'nothing' is perceived by the old king as accidental face-damage intentionally committed to attack his face.

In the above extracts, the conversational turns of Lear, Goneril, and Regan do not demonstrate any mutual clashes or social disharmony. However, they clearly mirror the two daughters' success to understand their father's psychological traits as well as to appropriately evaluate the narcissistic grandiosity paradigm he adopts. The two daughters, therefore, manage to satisfy the old king's psychological eagerness for flattery. Obviously, Lear's decision of dividing his kingdom among his three daughters, his question to them to express their love to him, and Goneril's and Regan's protestation of love show a clear observance of the factors mentioned in Locher and Jucker's (2021) list. Clarifying this and in terms of the personal factors, the first category of the list, it is noticed that, in normal interaction and with the exclusion of the psychological traits pertaining to interlocutors, the face of Lear as a speaker and the face of the three daughters as hearers are not endangered by the way the conversation is managed. The question of Lear is a normal way of addressing if perceived as an act of communication, either from a father to his daughters, or from a king to his subjects. No threat to the addressees' face is

detected since the "interactants' judgments about the relational status of a message are based on norms of appropriateness in a given instance of social practice" (Locher and Watts, 2008, p. 77). The same holds for the identity structure of interactants; Lear's question and the daughters' responses are in congruence with their identities. Again, there is nothing in the communication process that can be said to challenge the relational work negotiation between interlocutors or, in Kienpointner's (1997, p. 259) words, there is no "non-cooperative or competitive communicative behavior" between them.

Concerning the notions of power, status, and distance between interlocutors in the first scene of *King Lear*, readers can obviously notice that the interactants are close to each other and that hierarchical power is also observed; either this power is practiced by a king over his subjects or by a father over his daughters. Further, there is no signal that refers to any clashes that make interactants dislike each other. On the contrary, the relationship history accentuates the fact that no previous confrontations occurred between Lear and his daughters. Still, one can say that Goneril and Regan flatter Lear in response to his test by expressing their love for him in an exaggerated way. However, the fact is that the two scheming daughters understand their father's psychological nature and make use of it to achieve their purposes. Their flattery can be perceived as normal because deceptive language, within specific contexts, is a reasonable self-protective strategy to maintain relational quality and enhance a good interpersonal relationship between interlocutors (Kalbfleisch, 2001). Even Cordelia's 'nothing' would never upset Lear if the old king did not suffer from narcissistic grandiosity. As such, it is the psychological dimension of the character of Lear that significantly affects the conversational acts to be delivered in a specific way.

As for the frame factors, the roles of the interactants in the first scene are defined and the sequence of their conversational acts belongs to and is appropriate for the frame of interaction. Also, the rights and obligations of each discourse participant are defined and maintain an appropriate type of interaction featured by specific norms and ideologies pertaining to each participant and his/her role in the communication process (Locher and Jucker, 2021). All these factors are typically applied to the interaction that occurs between Lear and his addressees in the first scene of the play. No non-normative, inappropriate, and/or offensive behavior of anyone of the interactants is detected, and all instantiations of social practice are cooperative. Accordingly, the conversational behaviors of Lear and his daughters do not breach the norms of impoliteness or are expected to be evaluated negatively according to the interlocutors' expectation frames. This correlates with Mills's (2005, p. 268) argument that "impoliteness can be considered as any type of linguistic behavior which is assessed as intending to threaten the hearer's face or social identity, or as transgressing the hypothesized community of practice's norms of appropriacy."

In the same vein, Kent's interruption of Lear's decision to disinherit Cordelia: "Good my Liege,..." (I.i.120) communicates negative emotions on the part of Lear, who perceives Kent's intervention as an accidental face-damage behavior that threatens his face. This, in turn, causes the king to react aggressively: "Peace! Kent!/ Come not between the dragon and his wrath" (I.i.121–122). Such a reaction emphasizes Vergis and Terkourafi's (2015) argument that there is a close connection between the speaker's emotional state and the management of impoliteness in interaction. For Locher and Jucker (2021, p. 154), positive and negative emotions in connection with face "have to do with judging the level of relational work with respect to the norms that belong to the particular frame in its socio-cultural contexts." Despite the fact that Kent's interruption ends any attempt of face

negotiations with the old king, as he violates the “community of practice” (Bousfield, 2008a, p. 73) concerning the way of addressing a powerful king in front of other attendants, it can be perceived as benefit-oriented impoliteness. This goes in conformity with Locher and Watts (2008, p. 80), who postulates that “competitive communicative behavior may be cooperative and positively valued in certain contexts.” In the case of the conversational act between Kent and Lear, the former’s interruption targets the benefits of the latter, i.e. it aims to make Lear surrender his decision on Cordelia’s disinheritance.

Despite the fact that the interaction process between Lear and his addressees in scene one observes the various factors governing relational work listed in Locher and Jucker’s (2021) list, it paves the way and is a direct reason for various consequent impolite behaviors between interlocutors. This indicates that Locher and Jucker’s list seems to be inadequate for an appropriate judgment on impoliteness. The question now is: what is the reason that causes impoliteness to emerge between Lear and his addressees despite the observation of all the factors listed by Locher and Jucker? The answer lies in the fact that neither Lear, in his question to his daughters, nor Cordelia, in her response to this question, observes the psychological dimension of each other’s personalities. Lear, on the one hand, does not understand the psychological nature of his youngest daughter, and Cordelia, on the other hand, does not satisfy the psychological part of her father’s narcissistic personality. Both of them act in accordance with their own reality paradigms that form their expectation frames without any consideration of the way their interlocutors see the world around them, i.e. without a proper understanding of their interlocutors’ reality paradigms. Lear’s and Cordelia’s inability to intelligibly perceive each other’s reality paradigms causes impoliteness to emerge. Understanding the psychological traits of interlocutors and their reality paradigms, therefore, is crucial for arriving at an appropriate assessment on impoliteness in interaction.

### Psychological impoliteness and reality paradigms in *King Lear*.

In light of Archer’s (2002, 2011) reality paradigms, judging the behavior of Lear, the three daughters, and Kent as impolite may summon some sort of psychological refutation, particularly if one considers the personality traits of these characters. Thus, Lear’s question is a psychological product of his narcissistic grandiosity, and Cordelia’s response is also a psychological representation of her truth paradigm. The chances Lear offers Cordelia to “speak again” (I.i.90) and to “mend your speech a little” (I.i.94) are clear evidence that he behaves out of a paradigm of grandiosity. Also, Cordelia’s “I am sure, my love’s/ More richer than my tongue” (I.i.78–79) and “I cannot heave/ My heart into my mouth” (I.i.91–92) indicate that she behaves from an inability paradigm resulting from her introversion. Accordingly, Lear’s initial question: “Which of you shall we say doth love us most?” (I.i.51) can pragmatically be interpreted in two ways. First, Lear does not understand the nature of his daughters’ personalities, and therefore, he asks his question out of an inability paradigm, which refers to the individual’s inability to recognize the world around him in an appropriate way. Consequently, Lear is unable to interact properly and, in most cases, receives reactions that contradict his expectation frames. Second, the old king knows the personality traits of his daughters and, in this case, he behaves out of his unwillingness paradigm, which necessitates a specific behavior that aims at fulfilling a hidden purpose: the psychological need for flattery and egoism. The same holds for Cordelia; her conversational turns with her father indicate that she behaves according to both the truth and inability paradigms. Her insistence not to flatter her father signifies that she behaves from a

truth paradigm, as she does not want to flatter the old king by telling lies like her two sisters. She, however, prefers to be honest and truthful: “So young, my Lord, and true” (I.i.107), and her “my love’s more ponderous than my tongue” (I.i.78–79) indicates that she is unable to express the love that rests in her heart with words.

Significantly, the psychological illness Lear suffers from, manifested in his desire to be flattered, has been foregrounded in the dramatic dialogue. At the very beginning of the play, Lear is introduced as a narcissistic personality, one that greatly admires himself (Schafer, 2010). The king’s request to his daughters to express their love for him, the criterion upon which he will divide the kingdom among them, is clear evidence that he suffers some sort of psychological illness. Such a psychologically disturbed personality is clearly demonstrated later on when the king recognizes his delicate psychological state: “O! let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!/ Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!” (I.v.47–48). In light of Goldman et al. (1994), a person who suffers from a narcissistic personality disorder reacts with disdain, rage, or defiant counterattacks when he/she is criticized or undermined. Lear’s reaction to Cordelia’s ‘nothing’ is a psychological outcome of his being humiliated and, therefore, his narcissistic personality does not accept Cordelia’s expression of love. Crucially, it is not only dissonance, lack of agreement, or disharmony between Lear and his addressees that determine the way he evaluates certain language or behavior as offensive (Parvareh and Tayebi, 2021); rather, there is something that goes beyond relational work that also determines how interlocutors judge offensiveness in interaction: the psychological dimensions of personality. Once the ego of the powerful king was provoked, he was unable to control his precipitated belligerent behavior in response to the provocations caused by his daughter’s failure to flatter him.

According to Lear’s own reality paradigms, the behavior of both Goneril and Regan, despite the fact that it flouts the maxim of quality (Grice, 1975) due to the high degree of flattery loaded in it, is relevant and congruent with the appropriacy expectations that make up the king’s paradigm of grandiosity. Obviously, flouting the maxim of quality, which constitutes that interlocutors should be truthful in their conversational contributions, by the excessive use of flattery on the part of Goneril and Regan accentuates the fact that the reality paradigms adopted by interlocutors often direct their conversation to go beyond the ordinary norms of dialogicity in the communication process. Further, the adherence to the expectation frames on the part of Lear is also the reason that pushes him to disinherit Cordelia and to banish Kent because their behavior, however consistent with Grice’s maxim of quality, contradicts his reality paradigms. Interestingly, the same paradigm of grandiosity influences the old king’s action-environment to launch his curse upon Goneril and Regan when their behavior runs counter to his expectation frames.

Furthermore, with the development of actions and the change of the dramatic situations pertaining to interlocutors, the reality paradigms of all the main characters involved in the conversational process in the first scene are shifted to adopt different reality paradigms contradictory to those adopted initially. The shift in the interlocutors’ reality paradigms comes as a result of a shift in the context of the dramatic events in the play. The roles the interlocutors embody in the context of the encounter have been changed, constituting new behavior frames that evoke particular norms of conduct. Also, power relations differ, and the whole power is shifted to be in the hands of Goneril and Regan. This is clearly shown in the attitudinal behavior the two daughters adopt after the old king surrenders his kingdom to them. Now, their view of the world around them has changed and, therefore, they exercise power explicitly over the powerless



**Table 3 Reality paradigms shift in *King Lear*.**

Character	Reality paradigm		Psycho-pragmatic interpretation
	Before conflictual interaction	After conflictual interaction	
Lear	Narcissistic grandiosity and power paradigm	Humility and weakness paradigm	Influences the production, reception, and judgment of impoliteness between interlocutors
Cordelia	Truth, reticent and inability paradigm	Gratitude and self-sacrificing paradigm	
Goneril and Regan	Flattery and self-interest paradigm	Ingratitude and power paradigm	
Kent	Faithfulness and advice paradigm	Altruistic loyalty paradigm	

king who initially surrenders his kingdom because he does not successfully evaluate the way his two daughters behave in the first scene. Obviously, Lear fails to understand the reality paradigms the two daughters adopt when they flatter him. To clarify this, Lear’s narcissistic grandiosity paradigm, by which he starts his conversational turns in the play and enforces him psychologically to behave impolitely with Cordelia and Kent by his violent abuse of the former and his banishment to the latter, as well as to absorb Goneril’s and Regan’s flattery quite willingly, is shifted towards the end of the play. The old king, who is excessively impolite towards Cordelia and Kent in the first scene, no longer behaves out of a grandiosity paradigm, but he starts to communicate from a humility and weakness paradigm. The king, who reacts furiously to Cordelia’s ‘nothing’: “Here I disclaim all my paternal care,/Propinquity and property of blood,/And as a stranger to my heart and me/ Hold thee, from this, forever” (I.i.113–116), addresses Cordelia with complete sympathy and love: “We two alone will sing like birds i’ th’ cage./When thou dost ask me a blessing, I’ll kneel down/ And ask of thee forgiveness” (V.iii. 9–11). The king, who describes Cordelia as “so young, and so untender?” (I.i.106) in the opening scene, is now flirting with her: “Her voice was ever soft, / Gentle, and low- an excellent thing in woman” (V.iii.72–73), and beseech to her to “stay a little” (V.iii. 271). The king, who threatens Kent: “Come not between the dragon and his wrath” (I.i.122), welcomes him afterward: “You are welcome hither” (V.iii.289). Consequently, understanding the psychological dimension of the character of Lear allows us to see the extent to which his journey towards self-enlightenment is a result of the shift in his reality paradigms. Significantly, Lear’s final request to be forgiven by Cordelia indicates that he initially treated her cruelly and offensively because in human interactions, Schafer (2005) argues, any excruciating offense is often followed by urges to forgiveness.

Similarly, the flattery paradigm Goneril and Regan instrumentally employ in the first scene to win a more opulent part of the kingdom is changed to an ingratitude paradigm when they seize power. Here, the shift in power relations between interlocutors leads to a shift in the way the two daughters evaluate, view, and interpret the world around them. Now, the relational factors the two daughters observed in the opening scene, particularly in terms of power relations, have been changed with the change in their situation in the drama, and they choose different relational work strategies than those employed initially. Goneril and Regan are able to evaluate the world around them differently, particularly in terms of understanding the psychological dimension of their father’s personality. From her part, Goneril impolitely rejects her father’s Knights and behavior:

By day and night, he wrongs me; every hour/He flashes into one gross crime or other, /That sets us all at odds: I’ll not endure it... Put on what weary negligence you please.../Idle old man, /That still would manage those authorities/ That he hath given away! (I.iii.4–19)

In the same vein, Regan adopts the same ingratitude paradigm by defending her sister’s attitude and by refusing to host the old king.

O, Sir! You are old; /Nature in you stands on the very verge/ Of her confine: you should be rul’d and led/By some discretion that discerns your state/ Better than yourself. Therefore I pray you/That to our sister you do make return; /Say you have wrong’d her. (II.iv.148–154)

Obviously, the production, reception, and judgment of impoliteness in *King Lear* is a psychologically-based process motivated by the reality paradigms adopted by interlocutors, the way these paradigms are shifted throughout the dramatic dialogue and the degree to which the interlocutors’ expectation frames are psychologically fulfilled or not in the fictional interaction. Table 3 adds more clarification.

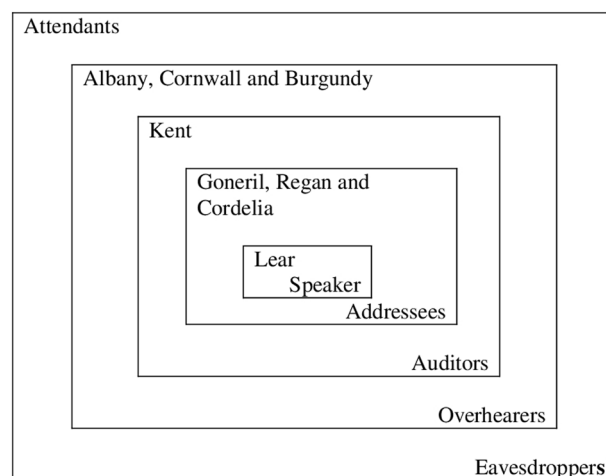
Crucially, a specific type of impoliteness is sometimes employed to cause a shift in the addressee’s reality paradigms. For example, although Kent’s intervention to Lear: “Good my Liege/Think’st thou that duty shall have dread to speak/ When power to flattery bows?” (I.i.148–149) is perceived as impolite, it is an “instrumental impoliteness” (Bousfield and Locher, 2008, p.139) that serves to influence Lear so as to dissuade him from his decision to disinherit Cordelia. It is therefore a type of impoliteness that targets a shift in Lear’s reality paradigms. As such, Kent’s verbal impoliteness can be situated between Goffman’s (1967, p.14) intentional and incidental levels of face damage, particularly his definition of the latter level as “unplanned” behavior. Kent’s main goal can be seized from his utterance: “See better, Lear; and let me still remain/ The true blank of thine eye” (I.i.159–160). Despite the fact that Kent’s instrumental impoliteness targets an altruistic goal, he fails in it because he does not understand the reality paradigms pertaining to his king. The old king will never accept being addressed by an affiliate in such a way that touches on his narcissistic grandiosity, particularly in the participation of other recipients in the scene. Lear’s narcissistic grandiosity prevents him not only from perceiving Kent’s altruistic attempt appropriately as a kind of help but also as “purposefully offensive” (Tracy and Tracy, 1998, p. 227) since, in light of Lear’s paradigm of egoism, it has been “calculated to convey complete disrespect and contempt” (Goffman, 1967, p. 89). This has implications in terms of the relationship between impoliteness and intention. That is, impolite behaviors may be perceived as addressee-offensive-oriented on the surface, whereas they are instrumentally benefit-oriented.

Regardless of the assumption that the speaker’s intention is one of the defining features of impoliteness (Terkourafi, 2008; Bousfield, 2010; Rudanko, 2017), this determining role of intentionality seems to be missed with reality paradigms that are shaped by psychological disorders. Intentionality has no role to play in Lear’s reaction to the flattery of Regan and Goneril,

Kent's intervention, or Cordelia's 'nothing'. Lear's reaction is a product of his addressees' behavior being delivered to satisfy his grandiosity paradigm or contradict his expectation frames. This accentuates this paper's assumption that the psychological dimensions of interlocutors' personalities should be incorporated as determining factors influencing relational work. To clarify this, in light of the assumption that power influences the future action-environment of the addressees (Culpeper et al., 2003; Culpeper, 2007; Bousfield, 2008b; Bousfield and Locher, 2008), Lear, still a powerful king, and in response to Cordelia's 'nothing', is supposed to react violently. However, he decides to give her a second chance "to speak again," warning her that "nothing will come out of nothing" (I.i.90). Here, it is Lear's grandiosity and his inherent psychological disorder that prevent him from reacting at first; the king wants to be glorified, his sole aim is to be flattered in front of others. He feels insulted by Cordelia's two 'nothings', particularly because they are delivered in front of other characters participating in the scene. This, in turn, accentuates the effective role fictional participation contributes to the understanding and assessment of impoliteness in interaction.

**Psychological impoliteness and fictional participation in *King Lear*.** Fictional participation effectively motivates psychological impoliteness in *King Lear*. In light of the fictional participation framework (Messerli, 2017; Locher and Jucker, 2021), in the conversation between Lear and Cordelia, Cordelia is the addressee of the communicative act and the one who is supposed to respond and react to Lear's question. However, there are other auditors in the scene (Regan, Goneril, Kent, etc.) who are off-dialogue but on-scene participants. These auditors are ratified by Lear as official listeners to his conversation with Cordelia. Also, Lear is aware that other participants in a neighboring room are listening to his conversation (overhearers). They are not ratified as on-scene participants, but they are accepted to be there by the king. Crucially, the participants in the first scene have influenced Lear's decision. Significantly, it is not only the degree of the auditors' personalities and their relationship with the speaker that determine the latter's behavior (Messerli, 2017, p. 26; Locher and Jucker, 2021, p. 43) but also the psychological dimensions of the interlocutors' personalities contribute effectively to relational work by demarcating the communicative acts performed and/or witnessed by fictional participants. Lear's reaction is psychologically motivated by his mental state in which he receives Cordelia's 'nothing', which stimulates his grandiosity as a powerful king in front of his subjects. Thus, judging Lear's reaction as impolite or offensive is not only based on speaker-intended inferences but also on other "assumptions" that are not "speaker-intended" (Ariel, 2019, p. 104). That is, neither intentionality nor power activated the offensive behavior of the old king; his reaction, however, is psychologically motivated. Here, Lear feels wronged and upset because his grandiosity is disregarded. In such a relational work relationship, Lear is expected to produce a severe reprimand to Cordelia: "nothing will come out of nothing, speak again" (I.i.90). Lear's reaction by giving another chance to Cordelia to "mend your words a little" (I.i.94) is an obvious indication that the intentionality to offend is totally missed. Also, the fact that Cordelia's 'nothing' is produced in front of intradiegetic witnesses exacerbates the potential *psychological* face loss of Lear. Figure 1 shows the fictional participation structure in the opening scene of *King Lear* at the intradiegetic level of discourse.

As indicated in Fig. 1, the first observation of the participation structure of the first scene of the play demonstrates that Lear and the three daughters are not alone in the scene, but other recipients are involved in the dramatic event. These recipients represent the on-scene and on-dialogue participation (i.e. those involved in the



**Fig. 1** Recipient roles in the intradiegetic level of discourse in the first scene of *King Lear* (based on Locher and Jucker, 2021, p. 43).

ongoing interaction in the foreground) and/or the on-scene but off-dialogue participation (i.e. those uninvolved in the ongoing interaction in the foreground but are there in the background). The fact that Lear's conversation with his three daughters is attended by Kent, and is potentially overheard at least by Albany, the Duke of Burgandy, and the King of France, together with his narcissistic grandiosity, influence the relational attitude of Lear towards Cordelia's 'nothing' and Kent's interruption. Further, emphasizing the role of psychological factors in determining impolite behavior in interaction, one can refer to Goffman's (1979, p. 10) argument that "speakers will modify how they speak, if not what they say, by virtue of conducting their talk in visual and aural range of nonparticipants." The fact that Lear's reaction towards Cordelia and Kent is very offensive means that he does not have the ability to modify or beautify it, which in turn indicates that there is something beyond his linguistic abilities that provokes his narcissistic personality and stimulates his grandiosity paradigm to control his linguistic choices. Here, the participation role played by the ratified auditors evokes the psychological state of the egotistic king in a way that affects not only his linguistic reaction but also the way the rest of the play's dramatic dialogue evolves.

## Findings and discussion

**Psychological dimensions of interlocutors and their reality paradigms contribute significantly to the production, reception, and assessment of impoliteness.** The psycho-pragmatic analysis of *King Lear* demonstrates that impoliteness should be judged in terms of not only relational negotiation considerations among interlocutors but also the psychological dimensions of their personality as well as the reality paradigms via which they view, make sense of, and interpret their world. It is analytically evidenced that the criteria upon which impoliteness is judged, maintained, and managed should be augmented to include the psychological traits pertaining to interlocutors. Thus, it is not only power relations, distance, the density of work, relationship history, status, affect, roles of interactants, or participation structure (Locher and Jucker, 2021) that determine the way relational work is negotiated in interaction but also psychological dimensions of personality have a crucial role to play in the process of impoliteness judgment. The analysis has shown that for a better understanding of impoliteness, we need to understand the mental states of discourse participants. Likewise, in a fictional world, in order to understand the psychological dimensions of characters or where they are coming from mentally, we need to

consider their reality paradigms (Archer, 2002, 2011). Understanding the reality paradigms of characters demonstrates the extent to which their facework is functioning and the way their expectations frames operate within their own worlds. As such, judging impoliteness appropriately, in the context of this paper, cannot be only arrived at by the pragmatic inferences made by interlocutors (Parvaresh and Tayebi, 2021), or by looking into relational history pertaining to them (Locher and Watts, 2008). This paper, however, proposes that impoliteness should also best be perceived as being a product of a psychologically motivated process. Accordingly, the psychological dimensions of interlocutors' personalities and the extent to which they understand one another's psychological traits are crucial factors that determine the degree of the giving and taking of offense and the way impoliteness is negotiated in interaction.

**Interlocutors' psychological disorders are antecedents of their verbal aggression.** The analysis also shows that psychological disorders and mental illnesses pertaining to interactants are antecedents of verbal aggression in *King Lear*. The narcissistic personality of Lear and his grandiosity paradigm via which he views people around him are the driving forces beyond his verbal aggression against his addressees. This does not entirely reconcile with Hamilton's (2012) assumption that hostility is the main reason for verbal aggression. Tracing the conversational turns of discourse participants in the play demonstrates that there are no previous conflicts that prognosticate any type of hostility among them. As such, the assumption that there is any hostile relationship history between interlocutors is far-fetched here. There is another reason that lies beyond relational work factors listed by Locher and Jucker (2021) that causes verbal aggression to emerge in the play at hand: the psychological disorders interlocutors suffer from. Lear's narcissistic personality and his grandiosity paradigm cause his verbal aggression to occur. Accordingly, incorporating further psychological factors as determining elements into the factors influencing relational work contributes effectively to a comprehensive judgment on impoliteness.

**Psychological impoliteness operates within a specific community of practice and has its own context-specific expectation frames.** The analysis demonstrates that psychological impoliteness operates within a particular community of practice, wherein the reality paradigms of interlocutors should be considered. Bousfield (2010, p. 120) terms this community of practices as "communities-wide" concepts, which allow "individuals to make judgments in relation to their understanding of norms, the norms of which are socially acquired." Bousfield uses this concept to develop a prototype approach to refine his definition of impoliteness in order to place his model within a more social realm. His new approach offers a linguistic explanation for the notion of offense by connecting it to his 'communities-wide' concepts. Crucially, linking impoliteness to the specific communities of practice wherein the analysis occurs serves to widen the scope of analysis of any impolite behavior in a way that allows the consideration of any number of offensive scenarios in the interaction process (Bousfield, 2010). Bousfield's concept of communities of practice makes him emphasize that sociocultural groups within speech communities possess generalized ideas according to which any behavior is measured as appropriate or inappropriate. These shared ideas, Bousfield (2010) argues, are predicated upon the concept of the "Model Person" adopted from Brown and Levinson's (1987, p. 84) theory of politeness, which refers to the ability of the group members to understand how a model person should behave within their general ideas context. Brown and Levinson's idealized concept of a model person refers to the "reasonable

approximation to universal assumptions," which for them, is based on three sociological factors: power, distance, and rank. This paper proposes that psychological impoliteness has its own community of practice, which not only refers to the responsibility of discourse participants for recognizing others' face, as well as for familiarizing themselves with their interlocutors' utterances to display specific linguistic observations to power, distance, and ranking of the imposition (the three crucial factors that determine the level of politeness a speaker adopts towards his interlocutors) but also refers to the necessity of considering the psychological dimensions of interlocutors in the interaction process. Within the scope of psychological impoliteness, the shared conceptualizations between interlocutors should allow the incorporation of the psychological traits of personality into the determining factors affecting the judgment of impolite behavior and shaping the community practices wherein interaction occurs.

As a result, psychological impoliteness cannot be perceived as "haphazard impoliteness" (Culpeper, 2005, p. 359), which refers to the state in which speakers lose control over their emotional outbursts; rather, in the context of this study, it is a systematic behavior within a particular norm of a community practice characterized by its own context-expectation frames, shaped by the interlocutors' mentalities as well as their reality paradigms, and motivated by the fictional participation in the context of interaction. Furthermore, according to Locher and Watts (2008), interlocutors, in their negotiations of facework, usually draw on context-specific expectation frames that are also used to judge the interlocutors' behavior as polite or impolite. For them, such frames sometimes go in conformity with the appropriacy expectations (Culpeper, 2005) of a given community practice and, some other times, violate them. In the case of the scene of the kingdom division and given a full consideration of the characters' reality paradigms, both Goneril's and Regan's responses to Lear are consistent with the latter's expectation frames, whereas Cordelia's 'nothing' violates them. This, in turn, accentuates the extent to which psychological dimensions of personality shape the expectation frames of interlocutors and, by association, influence their future action-environment to be unfolded in a specifiable way.

## Conclusion

This study provided a psycho-pragmatic investigation of impoliteness in Shakespeare's *King Lear* at the intradiegetic level of communication. Its central premise was that judging a specific behavior as offensive in the process of the taking and giving of offense in interaction goes beyond the observation of relational work factors towards the understanding of the psychological traits of interlocutors motivated by the reality paradigms they adopt and the participation structures in the fictional dialogue. The analysis showed that the appropriate understanding of the interlocutors' psychological traits and the way they view their world offers us greater insight into the way relational work is managed and negotiated in interaction and plays a key role in furthering characterization, plot, and the interpretation of fictional discourse. The analysis further demonstrated that it is not only "social (dis)harmony" or "tensions between characters" that count for impoliteness in dramatic dialogue (Culpeper, 1998, p. 86). The psychological dimensions of interlocutors, their mental state during the process of interaction, and the way they perceive and interpret the world around them have a significant role to play in the production and judgment of impoliteness. Impoliteness, therefore, should be best viewed as being caused by a psychologically motivated and controlled process. Such a psychologically controlled process necessitates a deeper understanding of the dynamic interplay of impoliteness, participation

structures, and the psychological dimensions of personality in interaction. This provides useful insights into the way interlocutors' reality paradigms operate within particular community practices, the way their expectation frames are constructed, and the reasons their future action-environment can be shaped and/or reshaped in a specific conversational manner.

**Future directions.** For future research, this paper has a number of recommendations. First, the paper recommends a discussion of the psychological dimensions of personality, the various participation roles, and the reality paradigms in discourse settings other than the fictional. This can be conducted by shedding light on the way psychological disorders of interlocutors, their reality paradigms, and the different recipient roles they have affect the production and management of relational work in interaction. Second, in gender studies, the paper recommends an investigation of what may be called 'gendered participation' and the extent to which it influences the attitudinal behavior of discourse participants. That is, does the participants' gender, either in the foreground or in the background of the communicative act, have a role to play in the way relational work is managed and maintained among conversationalists, particularly in gender-segregation-oriented communities? A third potential area for research would be a discussion of what Dynel (2015b, p. 336) terms "beneficiary impoliteness," in which there is an altruistic motive beyond the impolite behavior, as opposed to "intentionally gratuitous and conflictive" impoliteness (Bousfield, 2008a, p. 72), or "purposefully offensive" impoliteness (Tracy and Tracy, 1998, p. 227). Beneficiary impoliteness can be traced and discussed in naturally-occurring conversation settings, such as classroom discourse (teacher-to-students), familial discourse (father-to-sons/daughters), and clinical settings (doctor-to-patients). These recommended studies might enrich our understanding of (im) politeness in these discourse settings and are anticipated to reveal findings similar and/or different from those approached in this study, particularly in terms of the association between impoliteness, on the one hand, and psychology and gender, on the other, as well as the perception of impoliteness as a recipient-benefit oriented type of behavior.

Received: 5 February 2023; Accepted: 14 August 2023;

Published online: 29 August 2023

## References

- Altahmazi T (2022) Impoliteness in Twitter diplomacy: offence giving and taking in Middle East diplomatic crises. *J Politeness Res* 18(2):281–310. <https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2019-0032>
- Ariel M (2019) Different prominences for different inferences. *J Pragmat* 154:103–116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2019.07.021>
- Archer D (2002) Can innocent people be guilty? A sociopragmatic analysis of examination transcripts from the Salem witchcraft trials. *J Hist Pragmat* 3(1):1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jhp.3.1.02arc>
- Archer D (2011) Libelling Oscar Wilde: The case of Regina vs. John Sholto Douglas. *J Politeness Res* 7:73–99. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jplr.2011.004>
- Bell A (1991) *The language of news media*. Blackwell, Oxford
- Bennison N (1998) Accessing character through conversation: Tom Stoppard's Professional Foul. In: Culpeper J, Short M, Verdonk P (eds) *Exploring the language of drama: From text to context*. Routledge, London and New York, pp. 67–82
- Blum-Kulka S (1997) Discourse pragmatics. In: van Dijk TA (ed) *Discourse as social interaction. Discourse studies: a multidisciplinary introduction*. Sage, London, pp. 38–63
- Bousfield D (2007) Never a truer word said in jest: a pragmastylistic analysis of impoliteness as banter in *Henry IV, Part I*. In: Lambrou M, Stockwell P (eds) *Contemporary stylistics*. Continuum, London, pp. 195–208
- Bousfield D (2008a) *Impoliteness in interaction*. John Benjamins, Philadelphia and Amsterdam
- Bousfield D (2008b) Power and impoliteness. In: Bousfield D, Miriam L (eds) *Impoliteness in language*. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin and New York
- Bousfield D (2010) Researching impoliteness and rudeness: issues and definitions. *Interpers Pragmat* 6:101–134. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110214338.1.101>
- Bousfield D, Culpeper J (eds) (2008) *Impoliteness: eclecticism and diaspora*. *J Politeness Res* (special Issue) 4/2. <https://doi.org/10.1515/JPLR.2008.008>
- Bousfield D, Locher M (eds) (2008) *Impoliteness in language: Studies on its interplay with power in theory and practice*. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin and New York
- Brock A (2015) Participation frameworks and participation in televised sitcom, candid camera and stand-up comedy. In: Dynel M, Chovanec J (eds) *Participation in public and social media interactions*. John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, pp. 27–47
- Brown R, Gilman A (1989) Politeness theory and Shakespeare's four major tragedies. *Language Soc* 18:159–212. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404500013464>
- Brown P, Levinson S (1987) [1978] *Politeness. Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
- Bubel C (2008) Film audiences as overhearers. *J Pragmat* 40(1):55–71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2007.10.001>
- Clark B (2007) Introduction to Derek Bousfield's "never a truer word said in jest": a pragmastylistic analysis of impoliteness as banter in *Henry IV, Part I*. In: Lambrou M, Stockwell P (eds) *Contemporary stylistics*. Continuum, London, pp.195–196
- Culpeper J (1996) Towards an anatomy of impoliteness. *J Pragmat* 25:349–367. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(95\)00014-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(95)00014-3)
- Culpeper J (1998) (Im)politeness in dramatic dialogue. In: Culpeper J, Short M, Verdonk P (eds) *Exploring the language of drama: from text to context*. Routledge, London and New York, pp. 83–95
- Culpeper J (2005) Impoliteness and entertainment in the television quiz show: *the Weakest Link*. *J Politeness Res* 1(1):35–72. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jplr.2005.1.1.35>
- Culpeper J (2007) Reflections on impoliteness, relational work and power. In: Bousfield D, Locher M (eds) *Impoliteness in language*. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, pp. 22–53
- Culpeper J (2011) *Impoliteness: using language to cause offence*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
- Culpeper J, Bousfield D, Wichmann A (2003) Impoliteness revisited: with special reference to dynamic and prosodic aspects. *J Pragmat* 35:1545–1579. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166\(02\)00118-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0378-2166(02)00118-2)
- Dimitrova L, Vissia E, Geugies H, Hofstetter H, Chalavi S, Reinders A (2022) No self without salience: affective and self-relevance ratings of 552 emotionally valenced and neutral Dutch words. *J Psycholinguist Res* 51:17–32. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-021-09784-1>
- Dynel M (2011) "You talking to me?" The viewer as a ratified listener to film discourse. *J Pragmat* 43:1628–1644. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.11.016>
- Dynel M (2015a) Impoliteness in the service of verisimilitude in film interaction. In: Dynel M, Chovanec J (eds) *Participation in public and social media interactions*. John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, pp. 157–182
- Dynel M (2015b) The landscape of impoliteness research. *J Politeness Res* 11(2):329–354. <https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2015-0013>
- Dynel M (2017) (Im)politeness and telecinematic discourse. In: Locher M, Jucker AH (eds) *Pragmatics of fiction*. De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin/Boston, pp. 455–487
- Fast LA, Funder DC (2008) Personality as manifest in word use: correlations with self-report, acquaintance report, and behavior. *J Personal Soc Psychol* 94(2):334–346
- Fowler R (1986) *Linguistic criticism*. Oxford University Press, Oxford
- Gawda B (2022) The differentiation of narrative styles in individuals with high psychopathic deviate. *J Psycholinguist Res* 51:75–92. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-021-09824-w>
- Goffman E (1967) *Interaction ritual: essays in face-to-face behavior*. Aldine Publishing Company, Chicago, IL
- Goffman E (1979) Footing. *Semiotica* 25(1–2):1–29. <https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.1979.25.1-2.1>
- Goldman H, Gruenberg A, Mezzich J, Peele R, Setterberg S, Skodol A (1994) Personality disorders. In: Williams J (ed) *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (IV)*. America Psychiatric Association, Washington, DC, pp. 650–661
- Grice H (1975) Logic and conversation. In: Cole PP, Morgan JL (eds) *Syntax and semantics, vol 3*. Academic Press, New York, pp. 41–58
- Hamilton MA (2012) Verbal aggression: understanding the psychological antecedents and social consequences. *J Lang Soc Psychol* 31(1):5–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X11425032>
- Haugh M, Chang W (2019) "The apology seemed (in)sincere": variability in perceptions of (im)politeness. *J Pragmat* 142:207–222

- Holtzman NS, Tackman AM, Carey AL, Brucks MS, Küfner ACP, Grobe Deters F, Back MD, Pennebaker JW, Sherman RY, Mehl MR (2019) Linguistic markers of narcissism: an exploratory LIWC analysis of 15 samples. *J Lang Soc Psychol* 38(5-6):773–786. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X19871084>
- Kalbfleisch P (2001) Deceptive message intent and relational quality. *J Lang Soc Psychol* 20:214–230. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X01020001010>
- Khafaga A (2022) Caught on page! Micro and macro pragmatics of stage directions parentheticals in Tom Stoppard's *Professional Foul*. *J Pragmat* 193:27–42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2022.03.005>
- Kienpointner M (1997) Varieties of rudeness: types and functions of impolite utterances. *Funct Lang* 4(2):251–287. <https://doi.org/10.1075/fo1.4.2.05kie>
- Lakoff R (1973) The logic of politeness; or minding your p's and q's'. *Chicago Linguistics Society* 8:292–305
- Leech G (1983) *Principles of pragmatics*. Longman, London
- Leech G (1992) Pragmatic principles in Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*. In: Toolan M (ed) *Language, text and context: essays in stylistics*. Routledge, London, pp. 259–278
- Locher M (2006) Polite behavior within relational work: the discursive approach to politeness. *Multilingua* 25:249–267. <https://doi.org/10.1515/MULTI.2006.015>
- Locher M, Jucker A (2021) *The pragmatics of fiction: literature, stage and screen discourse*. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh
- Locher M, Watts R (2008) Relational work and impoliteness: negotiating norms of linguistic behaviour. In: Bousfield D, Locher M (eds) *Impoliteness in language: studies on its interplay with power in theory and practice*. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin and New York, pp. 77–99
- McIntyre D, Bousfield D (2017) (Im)politeness in fictional texts. In: Culpeper J, Michael H, Dániel K (eds) *The palgrave handbook of linguistic (im)politeness*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 759–783
- Messerli TC (2017) Participation structure in fictional discourse: authors, script-writers, audiences and characters. In: Locher MA, Jucker A (eds) *Pragmatics of fiction*. De Gruyter Mouton, Berlin/Boston, pp. 25–54
- Mills S (2005) Gender and impoliteness. *J Politeness Res* 1(2):263–280. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jplr.2005.1.2.263>
- Morf CC, Rhodewalt F (2001) Unraveling the paradoxes of narcissism: a dynamic self-regulatory processing model. *Psychol Inq* 12:177–196. [https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1204\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1204_1)
- Mourad L (2021) Impoliteness and power dynamics in intimate interactions: an analysis of Joe Blann's 'Things We Had'. *Lang Lit* 30(4):315–340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09639470211034283>
- Muir K (ed) (1952) *King Lear*. Methuen and Co.LTD
- Parvaresh V, Tayebi T (2018) Impoliteness, aggression and the moral order. *J Pragmat* 132:91–107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2018.05.010>
- Parvaresh V, Tayebi T (2021) Taking offence at the (un)said: towards a more radical contextualist approach. *J Politeness Res* 17(1):111–131. <https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2020-0032>
- Paternoster A (2012) Inappropriate inspectors: impoliteness and overpoliteness in Ian Rankin's and Andrea Camilleri's crime series. *Lang Lit* 21(3):311–324. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963947012444221>
- Pennebaker JW, Mehl MR, Niederhoffer KG (2003) Psychological aspects of natural language use: our words, our selves. *Annu Rev Psychol* 54:7–577. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.54.101601.145041>
- Preotiuc-Pietro D, Carpenter J, Giorgi S, Ungar L (2016) Studying the dark triad of personality through Twitter behavior. In: *Proceedings of the 25th ACM international on conference on information and knowledge management*. ACM, pp. 761–770
- Preston NC (2006) *How to communicate effectively and handle difficult people*. Allyn and Bacon, USA
- Ransom T, Dale R, Kreuz R, Tollefsen D (2019) How do different types of alignment affect perceived entity status. *J Psycholinguist Res* 48:961–985. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10936-019-09642-1>
- Recanati F (2004) *Literal meaning*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
- Ronningstam E (2011) Psychoanalytic theories on narcissism and narcissistic personality. In: Campbell WK, Miller JD (eds) *The handbook of narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder: theoretical approaches, empirical findings, and treatments*. John Wiley and Sons, pp. 41–55
- Rudanko J (2017) Towards characterizing a type of aggravated impoliteness, with examples from *Timon of Athens*. *Lang Lit* 26(1):3–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963947016663588>
- Schafer R (2005) Cordelia, Lear, and forgiveness. *J Am Psychoanal Assoc* 53(2):389–409
- Schafer R (2010) Curse and consequence: King Lear's destructive narcissism. *Int J Psychoanal* 91:1503–1521. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-8315.2010.00340.x>
- Schwartz HA, Eichstaedt JC, Kern ML, Dziurzynski L, Ramones SM, Agrawal M, Shah A, Kosinski M, Stillwell D, Seligman MEP, Ungar LH (2013) Personality, gender, and age in the language of social media: the open-vocabulary approach. *PLoS ONE* 8(9):773–791. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0077379>
- Simpson P (1989) Politeness phenomena in Ionesco's *The Lesson*. In: Carter R, Simpson P (eds) *Language, discourse and literature: an introductory reader in discourse stylistics*. Routledge, London and New York, pp. 169–190
- Sinclair J (2004) *Trust the text*. Routledge, London
- Spencer-Oatey H (2000) Rapport management: a framework for analysis. In: Spencer-Oatey H (ed) *Culturally speaking: managing rapport through talk across cultures*. Continuum, London and New York, pp. 11–46
- Su H, Lee W (2022) Metadiscourse of impoliteness, language ideology, and identity: Offense-taking as social action. *J Politeness Res* 18(2):227–255. <https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2019-0013>
- Tamborski M, Brown RP, Chowning K (2012) Self-serving bias or simply serving the self? evidence for a dimensional approach to narcissism. *Personal Individ Differ* 52:942–946. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2012.01.030>
- Tausczik YR, Pennebaker JW (2010) The psychological meaning of words: LIWC and computerized text analysis methods. *J Lang Soc Psychol* 29:24–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X09351676>
- Terkourafi M (2008) Towards a unified theory of politeness, impoliteness, and rudeness. In: Bousfield D, Locher M (eds) *Impoliteness in language: Studies on its interplay with power in theory and practice*. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin and New York, pp. 45–74
- Tracy K, Tracy S (1998) Rudeness at 911: re-conceptualizing face and face attack. *Hum Commun Res* 25:225–251. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1998.tb00444.x>
- Vergis N, Terkourafi M (2015) The role of the speaker's emotional state in im/politeness assessments. *J Lang Soc Psychol* 34(3):316–342. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X14556817>
- Vize CE, Lynam DR, Collison KL, Miller JD (2018) Differences among dark triad components: a meta-analytic investigation. *Person Disord: Theory Res Treat* 9(2):101–111. <https://doi.org/10.1037/per0000222>
- White, R (2000) *Innocent victims: poetic injustice in Shakespearean tragedy*. Tyneside Free Press, Newcastle

## Acknowledgements

This study is supported via funding from Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, project number (PSAU/2023/R/1444).

## Competing interests

The author declares no competing interests.

## Ethical approval

This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by the author.

## Informed consent

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by the author.

## Additional information

**Correspondence** and requests for materials should be addressed to Ayman Khafaga.

**Reprints and permission information** is available at <http://www.nature.com/reprints>

**Publisher's note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.



**Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

© The Author(s) 2023