CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study is titled “The discursive construction of impoliteness in Malaysian radio prank calls.” It specifically addresses impoliteness in prank calls which are carried out by a local radio station, Hitz.fm. Also known as ‘Gotcha’ calls, these staged calls take place when the deejays trick a victim by fabricating a non-existent conflict. In terms of impoliteness, this study is concerned with how it develops in the discourse. It also inspects the various kinds of impoliteness strategies used by the interlocutors to communicate impoliteness. On the whole, impoliteness is viewed as a linguistic tool which serves as the backbone of radio prank calls.

Throughout the years, the radio has remained a popular platform for people to obtain information and entertainment. A survey conducted by Radio Audience Measurement Malaysia in 2011 revealed that radio listenership is still going strong in Peninsular Malaysia with 15.5 million or nine in ten people tuning in weekly (Digital Media in Malaysia, 2011). The only aspect which has undergone some changes due to the advancement of technology is the medium of listening to audio transmissions. Gone are the days where people relied solely on the traditional radio. Today, there are a myriad of ways in which one can tune in to a radio channel—through digital devices like iphones, ipads and smartphones or through sources like Facebook and YouTube which offer online internet radio.
The radio is a useful medium for broadcasting or disseminating information. It offers people programmes ranging from popular music stations to news channels. As competition is extremely tight among radio stations, there are ventures to formulate special activities to increase listenership. Common examples include quizzes, games or riddles which are made more attractive with the promise of prizes (e.g. vouchers, gifts or cash). Hitz.fm, a Malaysian English music station, has made a name for itself through the implementation of ‘Gotcha’ calls. These are prank calls which are intentionally carried out to assail an unsuspecting victim. Numerous identities and situations are also created to facilitate the interaction. In general, the entertainment value of the prank calls is established when the target loses control and becomes verbally aggressive. This is where impoliteness comes in.

This chapter is made up of six sections. They consist of the statement of problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study and a summary.

1.1 Statement of Problem

So what is impoliteness? At its most fundamental level, one could say that impoliteness is the opposite of politeness (Culpeper, 1996, p. 355). Kasper (1990, p. 193) observed that unlike politeness, impoliteness can hardly slip by undetected in an interaction. In short, it stands out glaringly. People tend to notice impoliteness as it is perceived to be a deviation from standard behaviour. Gilbert (1989, p. 377) supported this notion by stating that impoliteness is a type of nonconforming behaviour which draws forth intense responses. It raises questions about what constitutes apt behaviour in a given relationship. In most cases, impoliteness arrives at a conversation and leaves its mark by causing some form of face damage.
Just like any other interaction, radio discourse is not always smooth-sailing. There are programmes like radio talk shows which are prone to inviting conflict. This is especially so if they are political in nature. Hutchby (1996, p. 1) claimed that “open-line radio shows are notorious for generating a high degree of confrontational talk between their hosts and the callers.” This statement can also be applied to the context of radio prank calls. In these specially designed calls, the deejay provokes the receiver by hurling unmitigated face threats. It often results in flared tempers on the receiver’s part. In a nutshell, radio prank calls have a penchant of being highly antagonistic. Hence, there is much to be explored particularly in terms of how impoliteness is negotiated and dealt with in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.

Besides, impoliteness is not a linguistic phenomenon which takes place in a vacuum, that is to say, it is not something which suddenly pops out in a conversation. For impoliteness to occur, there has to be a trigger or reason behind it. To put it simply, a person would not act impolite if he or she was not offended or aggravated in the first place. This suggests that there is a certain process as to how impoliteness is realized in interactions. It is discursively constructed by the participants as they progress through conversational turns. The participants themselves will determine significant aspects like the reason impoliteness occurs, whether to go on using it and the manner in which it should be resolved. All these show that nothing is set in stone in terms of impoliteness. It is subjected to the circumstances of a context – impoliteness could be intensified at one point or reduced at another. It could also re-emerge in the discourse when things turn confrontational again. Not many studies have attempted to explore how impoliteness is discursively built and performed in a discourse. As such, research is required to shed light on this matter.
There are only a handful of existing studies which analysed impoliteness in the radio setting. On the whole, most of the literature emphasized heated exchanges in contexts like radio talk shows and radio interviews whereby a special guest is invited to talk on air. This is done either in person or through the telephone. Some researchers who have delved into this field include Hutchby (1996, 2008) and Meakins (2001), who looked into talk shows and Mullany (1999, 2002) who looked into political and non-political interviews. While such genres constitute popular choices in impoliteness research, other radio genres have been considerably neglected. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a study which explores a different category of radio interaction.

Very few studies have attempted to examine impoliteness in radio prank calls. The disposition of prank calls sets them apart from other contexts. Unlike the participants of talk shows who are aware of the circumstances, the targets of prank calls have no idea that they are on air. They are also led astray by false news from the deejays. Besides, it is not uncommon for the deejays to verbally attack the targets to get the prank going. The attacks here are usually more violent than those performed on talk shows or interviews.

In addition, the bulk of previous research favours topics such as the imbalanced power relationships between participants (Hutchby, 1996), gender (Mullany, 1999), orientations to impoliteness (Hutchby, 2008) and prosody (Culpeper, 2005) in deciphering impoliteness. Few have considered aspects like the progression of impoliteness in a discourse (Culpeper et al., 2003; Bousfield, 2007; Lorenzo-Dus, 2008) or the impoliteness strategies used to execute face-attacks (Culpeper, 1996, 2005; Hu, 2010). This research intends to address the mentioned gaps. Hence, the purpose of the
study is to investigate the stages which make up the progression of impoliteness and the impoliteness strategies used by the interlocutors of the ‘Gotcha’ calls.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

There are two objectives in this research. The first objective seeks to examine the stages which constitute the development of impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. Three distinctive phases of impoliteness are inspected—how it is initiated, how it develops and how it eventually draws to an end. This section covers issues like the causes of impoliteness, the types of responses to impoliteness and the varieties of impoliteness endings. The second objective seeks to investigate the different types of impoliteness strategies that are employed by the participants to communicate impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. The impoliteness strategies that are executed by the deejays and receivers are studied separately. Besides, the recurrent strategies are identified, analysed and explained.

Both objectives are interrelated to a certain extent. The progression of impoliteness is dependent on the impoliteness strategies used by the participants. To be more specific, different phases of the prank calls involve different frequency counts of impoliteness strategies. For instance, the beginning of the ‘Gotcha’ calls is marked by a low but steadily increasing usage of impoliteness strategies; the middle is usually the stage with the highest amount of impoliteness strategies; and the end is signalled by the eventual decrease of impoliteness strategies. All in all, impoliteness strategies help to initiate, build or reduce impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. As such, their presence contributes to the realization of impoliteness.
1.3 Research Questions

There are two research questions in this study.

1. What are the stages which constitute the progression of impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls?

This research question intends to investigate how impoliteness develops in radio prank calls. To produce a more comprehensive analysis, three stages are taken into account—the beginning, middle and end of impoliteness. These stages are reflected through the questions:

(a) What are the elements which initiate impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls?

(b) How does impoliteness develop in the ‘Gotcha’ calls?

(c) What are the types of impoliteness endings in the ‘Gotcha’ calls?

Previous literature which can be associated with this research question includes studies by Bousfield (2007) who explored the triggering, progression and resolution of impoliteness in television documentary recordings and Lorenzo-Dus (2009) who inspected patterns that prompted the discursive realization of impoliteness in a reality competition show. Bousfield’s (2007) framework of beginnings, middles and ends in impolite exchanges is adapted here. In general, this section is required to shed light on the process in which impoliteness unfolds in Malaysian radio prank calls.

In his research, Bousfield (2007, p. 2193) used the term “triggers” to describe the factors which cause impoliteness. Impoliteness is, thus, “triggered” in spoken exchanges. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2013), to trigger something means setting off an action or event. However, due to the nature of the data, this study prefers the term ‘initiate’ which refers “to cause or facilitate the beginning of an event” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2013). In this research, ‘initiate’ involves the act of
causing the beginning of impoliteness. ‘Initiate’ is chosen over ‘trigger’ because of its implication that something has begun and it entails other elements in the progression of an act. The study emphasizes both the beginning and end of impoliteness. As such, ‘initiate’ which suggests the presence of these stages is used. The factors which prompt impoliteness are known as ‘elements’ in this research. The term is derived from Jay’s (1992, 2000) elements of the “Offending Event.” This subject is elaborated in detail in Chapter 3.

Meanwhile, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2013) defined the term ‘develop’ as “to cause a certain event to unfold gradually.” In this study, it is employed to refer to the process in which impoliteness develops discursively in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. Lastly, ‘ending’ refers to how impoliteness concludes in the discourse. Bousfield’s (2007) term ‘resolution’ is considered inappropriate since it implies that a problem has been resolved. This situation is not applicable to radio prank calls because every conflict is fabricated in that setting. Since there are no real problems, there is no need for actual resolutions. Thus, ‘ending’ which simply refers to something that constitutes an end is preferred.

2. What are the impoliteness strategies used by the participants to convey impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls?
This research question strives to examine the kinds of impoliteness strategies which emerge in the confrontational talk between the deejay and receiver. The analysis is divided into two sections:

(a) What are the strategies used by the deejay to elicit impoliteness?

(b) What are the strategies used by the receivers to express impoliteness?
As illustrated above, the impoliteness strategies are examined separately—the strategies used by the deejay to provoke the receiver and the strategies used by the receiver to retaliate against the face threats. The predominant types of impoliteness strategies are noted and analysed. Meanwhile, previous studies which are related to this research question include Culpeper (1996) who investigated impoliteness strategies in the army recruit discourse and Kantara (2010) who looked into impoliteness strategies in a television series. This section is crucial as it reveals the interlocutors’ preferred impoliteness strategies as well as the functions they perform. Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) model of impoliteness is incorporated into the analysis.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to existing research on impoliteness particularly in the genre of Malaysian radio discourse. The results shed light on how impoliteness is used in an unmitigated manner in an understudied area namely radio prank calls. To begin with, this study benefits scholars from the field of Pragmatics as it illustrates the process in which impoliteness unfolds in a conversation. It stresses that impoliteness is not a phenomenon which happens in a single take. Instead, there is a certain sequential process as to how it develops in settings such as prank calls. A process comprising three stages is proposed—the beginning, development and ending of impoliteness.

Furthermore, the research also provides insights to the responses to impoliteness, an area which has not been thoroughly researched. The receivers’ responses in the ‘Gotcha’ calls are valid since they have no inkling that the call is all part of a prank. This contributes to the literature on impoliteness as most research focused on responses in discourses where the target is aware that the situation is monitored (e.g. live interviews or talk shows on radio or television). As the target realizes that he or she is
being recorded, he or she may refrain from acting in a manner which could tarnish his or her own face. What results from this are possibly faked emotions and stilted behaviors. Thus, responses in these broadcast settings may not be a true representation of how the targets would react in real-life situations. This research takes on a different path by addressing authentic emotions which are elicited due to impoliteness. The receivers of the ‘Gotcha’ calls have no idea that they are being monitored. Hence, they are more likely to openly convey raw emotions such as anger. The receivers’ reactions in the pranks are, in a nutshell, a direct and genuine representation of how they would respond in reality.

Besides, the study reveals the prevalent impoliteness strategies that are utilized by the participants of Malaysian radio prank calls. This indicates that there is a preference in choosing impoliteness strategies. The research also determines that the receivers utilized a lot more impoliteness strategies than the deejays. To put it another way, the receivers are more impolite in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. Impoliteness on the receivers’ part especially occurs when the deejays infringe on their rights or when the deejays cross a moral boundary. Such results point to the fact that there are social expectations as to how an interaction ought to be carried out. For example, a customer will expect to be treated with respect in a business interaction. Thus, language users will discover that once a transgression has taken place, people tend to retaliate by fighting for their rights. The research also illuminates the various methods which the receivers employ to battle for their positions in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.

In addition, this study will be useful for researchers in the media discourse as it elucidates how radio discourse is disrupted by impoliteness. Researchers will be able to observe the direct effects which impoliteness has on the outcome of the conversations.
Radio prank calls are unlike other settings like radio talk shows where impoliteness is employed only to a certain extent. A talk show host can criticise a guest speaker but the interaction rarely gets out of hand. Prank calls, on the contrary, have the propensity of becoming extremely volatile. As they are assumed to be private telephone interactions, receivers do not hesitate to make their feelings known. Therefore, it is common to have impolite reactions such as swearing, insulting and threatening in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. This study provides researchers as well as language users with an opportunity to tune in to unrestraint heated exchanges. They will also learn of the ways in which the participants navigate through the labyrinth of face-threatening, face-maintaining and face-saving in the prank calls.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

In terms of scope, this study focuses on two areas of impoliteness in radio prank calls. Firstly, it looks into the different stages which constitute impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls by investigating how it is initiated, how it progresses and how it ends. This section is analysed according to Bousfield’s (2007) model of beginnings, middles and ends. Secondly, the study examines the types of impoliteness strategies employed in the calls. This is analysed based on Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) impoliteness framework.

Two limitations were encountered in the study. Firstly, the data consists of only 25 ‘Gotcha’ clips which range from 2011 to 2012. This span of time is chosen due to the limited number of ‘Gotcha’ calls on Hitz.fm’s website. The earliest clips which are accessible are those starting from the year 2011. Besides, a phone call to the radio station confirmed that they do not keep a complete archive of the ‘Gotcha’ calls. As such, the researcher could only gather a year’s worth of data.
Secondly, the data which is used in this study encompasses edited versions of the calls. They are pre-recorded clips and not actual broadcast talk which takes place live. Certain portions of the conversations are censored because of their offensive nature. A recurrent example is expletives. They are always removed given the possibility that they may offend the audience. In addition, the names of people or companies who are involved in the prank are often omitted. They may wish to remain anonymous since there is a large albeit absent audience tuning in. By doing so, face can be saved. Overall, editing these details safeguards Hitz.fm’s reputation by reducing the risk of legal action.

Despite eliminating certain parts of the ‘Gotcha’ calls, the radio station ensures that a sense of liveliness is maintained in the conversations. The prank calls still sound as if they are broadcasted live. This is parallel to Hutchby’s (2006, p. 2) claims that although broadcast interaction may be pre-recorded at times, the editing warrants that the audience experiences the programme as a single take. Researchers like Corner (1999) and Ellis (2000) asserted that liveliness is an indispensable feature of broadcasting. Thus, its presence should always be emphasized.

1.6 Summary

This research is concerned about impoliteness which takes place in Malaysian radio prank calls. The data comprises 25 ‘Gotcha’ calls from Hitz.fm. Two aspects are thoroughly explored in this study. The first aspect addresses the progression of impoliteness in the prank calls. It explores issues such as the factors which motivated impoliteness, the responses to impoliteness and the manner in which impoliteness concludes. The second aspect discusses the types of impoliteness strategies embedded within the ‘Gotcha’ discourse. The functions of these strategies are also examined in detail. On the whole, impoliteness in radio prank calls is a subject that is worth
pursuing. This genre has not received much attention in impoliteness research as most of them tended to concentrate on settings like radio talk shows or radio interviews.

This study consists of five chapters. As shown above, the first chapter introduces the main outline of the research. Significant issues like the purpose, objectives and research questions are discussed. It is followed by the second chapter which provides insights to what has been done in areas related to this paper. Some examples include a review of existing theories on impoliteness, a review of previous literature on impoliteness in radio discourse and a general overview of radio prank calls. Meanwhile, the third chapter is required to illustrate the methodology of this research. Important features like the instrument, theoretical framework and data collection are inspected. The fourth chapter presents the results and discussions of the study. This is where the data is examined, interpreted and clarified in detail. Lastly, the fifth chapter includes conclusions, implications of the study and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction
The literature review consists of several sections which provide background information about the study. These sections include the various notions of impoliteness proposed by researchers, the entertainment value of impoliteness, a review of existing theories on impoliteness which are relevant to the research, previous studies on impoliteness in radio discourse, important insights to radio prank calls as well as a summary of the literature review.

2.1 The Notion of Impoliteness
A growing body of discussion is striving to determine what exactly impoliteness is. Perhaps the question which most researchers are seeking an answer to is “How is impoliteness best defined?” Till today, a consensus has not been reached regarding an unproblematic definition which captures the essence of impoliteness. A statement from Watts (2003, p. 9) aptly describes this situation: “… (im)politeness is a term that is struggled over the present, has been struggled over in the past and will, in all probability, continue to be struggled over in the future.” Many opinions have surfaced over the years in an attempt to construct a precise notion of impoliteness. Popular terms which are used to characterize impolite behaviour include ‘impoliteness,’ ‘rudeness’ and ‘face-attack.’ However, it should be noted that this study employs Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) working definition and concept of impoliteness in its analysis of impoliteness in Malaysian radio prank calls.
Researchers like Austin (1990), Holmes et al. (2008), Culpeper et al. (2003), Culpeper (2005) and Bousfield (2007) have opted for the term ‘impoliteness’ in their models. Austin (1990) suggested looking at impoliteness from the hearer’s point of view. Impoliteness generally takes place when an utterance is produced with the objective of not having any politic comments. Holmes et al. (2008)’s description of impoliteness is in tune with Austin’s (1990). They claimed that verbal impoliteness consists of linguistic behaviour that is evaluated as aggravating to the face or social identity by the hearer (Holmes et al., 2008, p. 196). Regardless of whether the act was deliberate, it infringes on the norms of proper behaviour in certain contexts or among certain participants.

For Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1546), impoliteness is viewed as communicative strategies that are used for the sole purpose of attacking a target’s face. This subsequently results in social disruption. Other researchers like Culpeper (2005, p. 38) emphasized the roles of both the speaker and hearer by recommending the following definition of impoliteness: “(1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behaviour as intentionally face-attacking or (3) a combination of (1) and (2).” In short, impoliteness is about how an offence is expressed and taken. It is also similar to politeness in that it is built in the conversation between the speaker and the hearer (Culpeper, 2005, p. 38).

Bousfield (2007) provided a comparable stance. He characterised impoliteness as the reverse of politeness which involves producing deliberately gratuitous and conflictive verbal face-threatening acts which are “(1) unmitigated in a context where mitigation is required and/or (2) with deliberate, aggression, that is with the face threat intentionally exacerbated, boosted in some way to heighten the face damage inflicted” (Bousfield,
Like Culpeper (2005), he maintained that impoliteness is only effective when the speaker’s goal of damaging face is perceived by the hearer.

On the contrary, the term ‘rudeness’ was suggested by researchers like Lakoff (1989), Kasper (1990), Beebe (1995) and Kienpointner (1997). Lakoff (1989, p. 10) depicted rudeness as rude behaviour which does not incorporate politeness strategies when one expects it and thus, it is perceived to be intentionally confrontational. Likewise, Kasper (1990, p. 208) claimed that rudeness is deviation from anything which is deemed polite in a particular social setting. It has a tendency to upset social equilibrium and is argumentative in nature. Meanwhile, Beebe (1995, p. 159) defined rudeness as “a face-threatening act which violates a socially sanctioned norm of interaction of the social context in which it occurs.” Unlike Austin’s (1990) hearer-based model, a speaker-oriented perspective was presented in which the speakers themselves opt to be rude. Hence, rudeness should not be mistaken for misjudged politeness.

Kienpointner (1997, p. 253) offered a more detailed definition where rudeness is “a kind of prototypically non-cooperative or competitive communication behaviour which destabilises the personal relationships of interacting individuals […] creates or maintains an emotional atmosphere of mutual irreverence and antipathy, which primarily serves egocentric interests.” However, in a more recent paper, Kienpointner (2008) proposed treating ‘impoliteness’ and ‘rudeness’ as synonyms where they both refer to non-cooperative or competitive behaviour (Locher & Graham, 2010, p. 111).

Locher and Graham (2010, p. 111) correctly observed that a definitional struggle seemed to exist between the terms ‘impoliteness’ and ‘rudeness.’ There is still no clear agreement on how one should distinguish them. However, there have been suggestions
to differentiate these terms based on the much-debated idea of intentionality. Terkourafi (2008, p. 62) maintained that ‘rudeness’ refers to the deliberate face-threatening variant of competitive or uncooperative exchanges in an interaction whereas ‘impoliteness’ refers to unintentional face threats which occur due to the speaker’s ignorance in cross-cultural situations.

In contrast, Bousfield (2008) and Culpeper (2008) proposed the opposite. They believed that ‘impoliteness’ consists of the intent to threaten or damage a person’s face while ‘rudeness’ consists of the unexpected or unintended variant. There are also others like Spencer-Oatey (2000) who employed ‘impoliteness’ and ‘rudeness’ interchangeably, claiming that they are virtually synonymous. Culpeper (2011, p. 111) acknowledged that the terms do overlap to a certain extent since ‘impolite’ matches a subset of meanings of ‘rude.’ However, he cautioned that this does not entail that they are synonyms.

Lastly, the term ‘face-attack’ was recommended by Goffman (1967) and Tracy (2008) to categorize impolite behaviour. Goffman (1967, p. 14) pointed out that a face threat is constructed when a person commits an offence with the purpose of inflicting open insult on the receiver. Meanwhile, Tracy (2008, p. 173) defined ‘face-attack’ as communicative acts which are perceived as intentionally impolite, discourteous and offensive. She claimed that the term ‘impolite’ was too tame to characterize the serious acts of face threats and it left “unexamined whether acts that insult should be conceptualized in the same discourse family as those that smooth interaction and display considerateness” (Tracy, 2008, p. 173). Besides, a face-attack involves an assessment of situated communication instead of stand-alone utterances. One has to take
into account what a person says and not focus solely on how it was said (Tracy, 2008, p. 176).

Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) notion of impoliteness is applied throughout this research. It is considered most fitting given the fact that this research is concerned with how impoliteness is intentionally used by the deejays to execute face-attacks in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. Furthermore, it explores the many occasions where the receivers counter the threats to their faces. This often happens when they interpret the verbal attacks as malicious or deliberate. In a nutshell, Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) model is selected as it covers significant aspects which define this study. The ‘Gotcha’ calls are a successful venture by Hitz.fm. They have, in fact, become synonymous with the radio station. Although most of the calls are laden with impoliteness, the listeners still take an immense liking to them. This leads to the inference that impoliteness possesses certain entertaining abilities in prank calls.

2.2 The Entertainment Value of Impoliteness

While impoliteness is often associated with less than flattering acts such as insults, it can be enjoyable under some circumstances. This statement especially applies to the media discourse. Lorenzo-Dus (2009, p. 163) noted that there is a connection between explicit face-attacks and entertainment in broadcasting contexts like talk shows (Hutchby, 2001; Wood, 2001), political debates (Lorenzo-Dus, 2009) and reality shows (Culpeper, 2005; Hu, 2010). Grindstaff (1997, 2002) supported this notion by stating that people experience a type of emotional release when an unmitigated face-attack is launched in, for example, a talk show. It has even been equated to the “money shot” of pornographic films.
Evans (2012) pointed out that television genres habitually make a joke out of impoliteness. Verbal abuse is portrayed as a game of competitive and witty repertoire. For example, a series called *All in the Family* was an overnight success in 1971 and became one of the longest running shows in American history. The story revolves around the lives of the Bunker family. The father, Archie, is an ill-mannered man whose hobbies include insulting and complaining. He rebukes his wife, Edith, by calling her a ‘dingbat.’ He also labels his son-in-law as ‘Meathead’ and verbally assaults him at every given opportunity (Hsu, 2010). Despite being filled with face-attacks, the audience found the show amusing and hilarious. This reinforces the statement that impoliteness has the ability to entertain in the context of the media.

The media today offers a plethora of television shows like *America’s Next Top Model* and *The Amazing Race* which contain no physical violence. Yet, impoliteness is prevalent in the form of verbal aggression. Chory’s (2010, p. 182) findings revealed that comedies and sitcoms are television genres which display the most verbal aggression. Frequent name-calling and snarky gossiping has contributed to a much nastier viewing experience (Hsu, 2010). However, instead of repelling the audience, impoliteness has helped some series gain immense popularity and legions of fans. For instance, *The Big Bang Theory*, which tells of the lives of four socially-awkward geniuses, is renowned for the usage of sarcasm among its characters. It has enjoyed good ratings and was nominated for ‘Best Comedy Series’ at the 2012 Emmy Awards (*Emmy Winners and Nominee 2012: The Complete List*, 2012). The show’s lead actor, Jim Parsons, even won two consecutive Emmys for ‘Outstanding Lead Actor’ back in 2010 and 2011 (Serjeant, 2011). All these clearly demonstrate that impoliteness in *The Big Bang Theory* is appreciated by the viewers.
Likewise, radio prank calls are made more attractive through the usage of impoliteness. Malaysian radio station, Hitz.fm, implements this technique to boost listenership. The ‘Gotcha’ calls are a hit among the listeners although they contain a fair amount of impoliteness. Their popularity is supported by the fact that these prank calls have been around for the past decade.

Lorenzo-Dus (2009) and Culpeper (2011) came up with specific terms to describe this type of impoliteness. Lorenzo-Dus (2009, p. 83) introduced ‘confrontainment’ or conflict-based televisual entertainment to refer to situations where anger is expressed without inhibition or when mitigative devices are not utilized to defuse the intensity of an on-going conflict in television programmes. He argued that impoliteness has turned certain presenters of reality shows into celebrities. A few examples include Anne Robinson from The Weakest Line, Gordon Ramsey from Hell’s Kitchen and Donald Trump from The Apprentice. One thing which these presenters have in common is their tendency to be extremely impolite. Robinson has been described as “the rudest person on television” and “a cross between Cruella de Vil, a dominatrix and a bossy school ma’am” whereas Ramsey is infamous for peppering almost every sentence with the expletive “fuck” when ranting on his show (Culpeper, 2005, p. 49).

Further, a link has even been established between the presenters and their personal catch phrases. For instance, Anne Robinson’s favorite line is “You are the weakest link, goodbye” whereas Donald Trump’s signature statement is “You’re fired” (Lorenzo-Dus, 2009, p. 164). The catch phrases are impolite because they present unmitigated threats to the contestant’s positive face. They inform the targets that they are no longer part of the team or show. Yet, the catch phrases are why the presenters are now popular figures.
Based on this, one can also deduce that the audience enjoys watching impoliteness unfold in reality shows.

Meanwhile, Culpeper (2011, p. 252) proposed labelling this kind of impoliteness as ‘entertaining impoliteness.’ It is exploitative to a certain extent since it entertains at the expense of a target. As such, entertaining impoliteness is similar to other functional forms of impoliteness in that there is often a victim or at least a possible victim. However, it is neither necessary for the target to be aware of the impoliteness nor is it necessary for the audience being entertained to be aware of who the target is (Culpeper, 2011, p. 234). What matters is that other people, apart from the target, must comprehend the potential impoliteness consequences which the target faces. Culpeper (2011, p. 234) also stressed that impoliteness is creative and complicated. It can be dramatised significantly for the purpose of entertainment.

In addition, Culpeper (2011, p. 234) introduced five sources of pleasure which pertain to the entertainment value of impoliteness. Firstly, viewers stand to gain emotional pleasure at the prospect of tuning in to confrontational interactions. Watching impoliteness can generate a state of arousal which viewers find enjoyable. Myers (2001, p. 174) backed this claim by stating that arguments have a unique appeal in broadcast media like chat shows. People want to watch conflict unfold in these discourses. Secondly, viewers can obtain aesthetic pleasure because there are elements of creativity embedded within impoliteness. This is related to the competitive nature of arguments. When a person is verbally attacked, it is likely that he/she will react with a superior attack. In order to do so, one needs to employ one’s creativity skills to design an effective defence strategy (Culpeper, 2011, p. 234).
Thirdly, the audience gets to experience voyeuristic pleasure by watching human weaknesses being exploited (Culpeper, 2011, p. 234). When people respond to impoliteness, an emotionally sensitive part of their private self is revealed. This makes them more vulnerable. Many programmes in the media contain impolite interactions to highlight the participants’ weak points. For example, reality shows like *The Apprentice* and *Hell’s Kitchen* thrive on pointing out the contestants’ faults in every episode.

Fourthly, the audience can take pleasure in watching someone in a worse condition than them (Culpeper, 2011, p. 235). There are plenty of circumstances where the participants are subjected to humiliation, criticism or insult by the host or experts. Amusement is attained as the audience is considered superior over the contestants.

Fifthly, the viewers are safe from whatever risks or conflicts that are faced by the participants of the programme (Culpeper, 2011, p. 235). They are observing from a safe distance while deriving pleasure from it. For instance, watching a fight occur on a TV programme is much safer than being physically present at the scene. Culpeper (1998) also added that in terms of literary genres, impolite interactions help to improve aspects like plot and characterization. In other words, they contribute to the dramatic entertainment of literary works. A corpus study which investigated the distribution of words over text types by Culpeper (2011) produced results which concurs with the statement above. Fiction had the highest frequency of the terms ‘rude’ and ‘impolite.’ This entails that impoliteness is required for high drama.

The five sources of pleasure which relate to the entertainment value of impoliteness can be applied to the context of radio prank calls. To begin with, the listeners can obtain emotional pleasure by listening to numerous heated arguments and disagreements in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. They can also gain aesthetic pleasure by paying attention to how the
receivers employ their creativity skills to deflect the deejay’s attacks. Besides, voyeuristic pleasure is acquired when the deejay blames the receiver for a conflict which does not exist. The audience is also superior as they are able to indulge on how the receiver is stuck in a demeaning situation. Finally, the listeners are safe in the sense that they are not directly involved in the intense conversation between the deejay and receiver. All in all, radio prank calls do rely on impoliteness to boost their appeal.

2.3 Review of Impoliteness Theories

Unlike research in the field of politeness which has enjoyed a rich history, the study of impoliteness has been largely marginalized. Locher and Bousfield (2008, p. 2) even described it as the “the long neglected ‘poor cousin’ of politeness.” It is only recently that more attention is paid to impoliteness. A growing body of theories were introduced over the years by researchers like Lachenicht (1980), Austin (1990), Culpeper (1996, 2005) and Mills (2005) who advocated impoliteness theories; Jay (1992, 2000) who proposed a concept of cursing; Kasper (1990), Beebe (1995) and Kienpointner (1997, 2008) who put forth rudeness theories and Terkourafi (2008) who proposed a model which involved both impoliteness and rudeness.

Lachenicht (1980), Austin (1990) and Culpeper (1996, 2005) all share one thing in common—their theories are either extensions of or are derived from Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness framework. Lachenicht (1980, p. 619) proposed the concept of ‘aggravating language’ which refers to the conscious and deliberate effort to aggravate the hearer. Four aggravation super-strategies are listed in accordance to face threat. They consist of:

(i) Off record: Vague insults, hints, and implications. It is similar to the politeness strategy and is produced to allow the insulter to experience a challenge from the
hearer who is emphasizing his/her innocence.

(ii) Bald on Record: Openly producing face-threatening acts and impositions such as “Close the window” or “Finish your meal.” It is similar to the politeness strategy.

(iii) Positive aggravation: A strategy that informs the hearer that he/she is not approved of, does not fit in or will not be assisted.

(iv) Negative aggravation: A strategy that imposes on the hearer’s freedom of action and attacks his social position or actions. 


Social factors determine the usage of the aggravation strategies. Lachenicht (1980, p. 619) claimed that off record could be employed to attack powerful people whereas positive aggravation may be used to attack close friends. Meanwhile, negative aggravation will most likely be deployed to attack people who share socially distant relationships.

Despite providing in-depth reviews of face-aggravating strategies, Lachenicht’s (1980) model has a few setbacks. Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1553) argued that there are problems with the consistency and validity of this model. Firstly, Lachenicht (1980, p. 631) maintained that “positive aggravation informs the hearer that he is not liked, will not be cooperated with and does not belong.” However, in other areas of the model, this statement concerns the negative face, not the positive face. Thus, if positive and negative aggravations are presumed to correlate with positive and negative face in Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, then they are unsuccessful in doing so (Culpeper et al., 2003, p. 1554). Lachenicht’s (1980) model also centred purely on anecdotal cases and written information from insult dictionaries. As no actual
conversations were examined, the model offers only hypothetical assumptions and thus, cannot be generalized to real-life interactions.

Austin (1990) postulated a hearer-based approach in her model of impoliteness. In a face-attack, the speaker attempts to highlight features of the interaction which are face-threatening and enhances them in an indirect way. Three strategies were looked into—bald on record, on record and off record. Bald on record consists of a strategy which allocates minimal attention to the hearer’s face wants (Austin, 1990, p. 45). It is utilized when the speaker is more powerful than the hearer or when the speaker is from a group that reinforces its solidarity by openly attacking the hearer from an out-group (Austin, 1990, p. 45). Besides, Austin (1990, p. 53) stated that on record face-attacks involve unnecessary redressive actions from the speaker. It occurs when the hearer realizes that redress is not required and presumes that the speaker is aware of this too.

This interpretation could make the hearer doubt the sincerity of the speaker’s utterance. For instance, the speaker could talk about the hearer’s gender or beliefs in an admiring way although the hearer is known to be sensitive with such references (Austin, 1990, p. 54). Meanwhile, off record face-attacks depend on the hearer’s capability to retrieve the implicature from an utterance. According to Austin (1990, p. 61), the real face-attack cannot be recovered from merely the utterance itself. It relies very much on the context as well as the interactants’ mutual experiences. For example, a speaker could employ hints which touch on values which the hearer has strong views about. In summary, Austin (1990, p. 169) stressed that when it comes to the actual effect of utterances, hearer perception is more important than speaker intention.
Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1554) believed that Austin’s (1990) impoliteness model was a helpful reminder that Brown and Levinson (1987) had overlooked the function of the context and hearer. However, they maintained that she had persistently neglected the importance of the speaker’s role. The entire model revolved around the construal and perception of impoliteness, not its communication. As a result, there were examples which contained the miscommunication of politeness where either too little or too much politeness was used in a certain context (Culpeper et al., 2003, p. 1554). Another weakness of Austin’s (1990) model was the failure to test the interpretations of offence (Culpeper et al., 2003, p. 1554). Hence, it cannot be ascertained if hearers would react in the same manner in actual interactions.

Culpeper (1996, 2005) introduced six impoliteness strategies which are used for the purpose of attacking a person’s face. They encompass bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, off-record impoliteness, withhold politeness and sarcasm or mock impoliteness. There are no claims as to how the impoliteness strategies ought to be arranged according to the degree of offence. Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1547) asserted that there is a need for an impoliteness framework since the bald on record category in Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory does not adequately characterize the phenomenon of impoliteness. It only covers specific settings where the face threats are so minimal that some politeness work is needed (Culpeper et al., 2003, p. 1547).

Other than that, Culpeper et al. (2003) also identified two means in which impoliteness strategies occur within a person’s turn. They are, however, not mutually exclusive. The first method involves employing a strategy or combination of strategies repeatedly to construct a parallelism. Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1561) stated that words, grammatical
structures, intonational contours or any attribute of a pragmatic strategy could be utilized repetitively to construct a parallelism (a perceptually significant pattern where certain attributes are stable while others may differ).

An example includes producing a series of challenges continuously with minimal gaps between each of them (Culpeper et al., 2003, p. 1561). Here, repetition is used to enhance the challenge, increasing the threat to the hearer’s face. Besides, Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1561) claimed that repetition serves to ‘hog’ the conversational floor. The speaker can use it to impose on the hearer’s negative face by refusing to let him/her speak even though it is his/her turn in the interaction.

The second method involves merging a certain strategy with other strategies. Unlike Brown and Levinson (1987) who did not integrate politeness strategies, impoliteness strategies can be combined with each other. The example of “What the fuck you doing?” was provided from Culpeper et al.’s (2003, p. 1561) findings. Negative impoliteness (asking a challenging question) is merged with positive impoliteness (using a taboo word). The expletive acts as a grammatical intensifier to boost the impact of the challenge. But on an interpersonal level, it is employed to mark the negative feelings that the speaker harbors towards the hearer (Culpeper et al., 2003, p. 1561). It was also discovered that taboo words are most likely used in combination with other strategies.

Culpeper (1996, p. 354) added that there are situations where the susceptibility of the face is unequal and this leads to a reduced need to cooperate. Powerful people can afford to be more impolite because they can impose on a less-powerful person’s ability to respond with impoliteness. They can also threaten harsher retaliation if the less powerful person is impolite. Take for example the discourse of a courtroom. A witness
has far less power to negotiate face wants whereas the barrister has nearly unrestricted power to aggravate the witness’s face. However, there are sanctioned situations where the less powerful can exacerbate the more powerful. Culpeper (2011, p. 216) listed parliamentary discourse as an example where oppositional parties are given the green light to attack the Government.

Similar to Austin (1990), Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1555) highlighted the importance of context by maintaining that impoliteness does not just take place from a certain strategy. One has to take into account the context in which impoliteness is employed. The concept of intentionality is also crucial in deciphering impoliteness. Studies concerning social communication (e.g. Leary et al., 1998; Stamp and Knapp, 1990; Vangelisti and Young, 2000) have shown that aggravating verbal behaviours are deemed more hurtful, immoral and unpleasant if hearers interpret them as deliberate. Regardless of this, Culpeper (2011, p. 51) believed that intentionality is not a prerequisite for impoliteness as people can still get affronted in the absence of it. He suggested viewing intentionality based on a scalar concept.

The weaker points on the scale include notions such as responsibility for or control over an act or the foreseeability of an act (Culpeper, 2011, p. 52). While the target may not consider the utterance to be intentional, he/she may still take offence if he/she deems it predictable. Hence, the speaker, especially if it involves a friend, should have foreseen the possible consequences and avoided issuing the utterance. This view is parallel to Ferguson and Rule’s (1983) findings which demonstrated that should one fail to avoid delivering unintentional but foreseen harm, it results in evaluations of moral culpability.
In addition, impoliteness has the propensity to escalate, a situation which conflict literature has termed ‘conflict spirals’ (Culpeper et al., 2003, p. 1564). They are generally fueled by reciprocity. In this instance, the target attempts to construct a strategy that is more offensive than the one hurled by the speaker. Besides, people feel that retaliating is acceptable and warranted if they have been verbally attacked. This opinion echoes Brown and Tedeschi’s (1976) claim that such retaliation is seen as less aggressive or it can be perceived as an act of fair defence.

Mills (2005) pointed out a weakness in Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) impoliteness model. She underscored the fact that impoliteness is not necessarily perceived as impolite if the norms of a Community of Practice permit offensive face-attacks (Mills, 2005, p. 270). Culpeper’s (1996) data was irrelevant since impoliteness is institutionalized and conventionalized behaviour in the army. Culpeper (2005) offered a counter argument in a paper which analysed impoliteness in a quiz show. He maintained that theoretically, the hearer will not interpret the host’s impoliteness as a face-attack because it is perceived to be all part of the show (Culpeper, 2005, p. 65). Nevertheless, things are more complex in practice. When the target’s face is being attacked, it is hard to view impoliteness in context. Evidence to support this statement was provided—a contestant displayed non-verbal signals which indicated that he was affronted by the host’s impolite remarks (Culpeper, 2005, p. 67). Therefore, impoliteness can still cause offence in contexts which sanction impoliteness.

Not everyone is keen to adopt Brown and Levinson’s (1987) point of view though. Eelen (2001) strongly opposed their idea of treating impoliteness as the absence of politeness. The central idea was that impoliteness is some sort of pragmatic failure, a result of failing to do something or simply irregular behaviour that is not worth
considering. Eelen (2001) argued that impoliteness ought to be analyzed in its own terms and in isolation from politeness. This is because the politeness concepts cannot adequately explain impoliteness with the same efficiency in which they account for politeness (Eelen, 2001, p. 121).

Besides, impoliteness is often employed as a counter measure as it possesses the ability to restore one’s face and block the other party’s coercive strategy (Culpeper, 2011, p. 205). This view is also supported by Harris et al. (1986) who believed that the best method to salvage one’s face during a verbal attack is to counter-attack. People mostly opt to counter back since accepting a face-attack increases the amount of damage to one’s face (Culpeper et al., 2003, p. 1562).

Mills (2005) put forth a model which discussed the notion of Community of Practise. Any behaviour which is interpreted as a threat to the hearer’s face or social identity is categorized as impoliteness. Mills (2005, p. 268) followed in Culpeper’s (2005) footsteps by asserting that the hearer’s responses are essential in evaluating whether impoliteness transpired deliberately. Besides, impoliteness should never be considered as something which is uncommon or illogical. This statement is in line with Kienpointner (1997) and Culpeper et al.’s (2003) views that “engaging in impolite behaviour is perfectly rational and is far more ‘normal’ than is predicted by Gricean-based theories of human communication” (Mullany, 2008, p. 236).

Mills (2005, p. 270) also argued that confrontational or impolite interactions can indeed represent the ‘norms’ of certain types of discourses. The example of an army training context was cited. The dominant groups draw on ritualized codes of linguistic behaviour which can make seemingly unwarranted impoliteness appear as a norm. Thus, the
hearers are unlikely to categorize such attitudes as impolite. This proposition elicited a number of disputes from other researchers. Bousfield (2007, p. 2189) opposed Mills’ (2005) concept by offering the example of smoking which is more prevalent in a bar than a restaurant. Yet, this does not entail that smoking is the norm for all of the patrons in the bar. A norm must be judged as a compulsory constituent element for an activity type ‘X’ to be an activity type ‘X’ (Bousfield, 2007, p. 2189). Hence, even if face-threatening language was forbidden in the army training context, it would still be army training.

Jay (1992, 2000) focused on the expression of cursing which is defined as wishing harm on a person. It also refers to the usage of taboo language with the objective of conveying the speaker’s emotional state and expressing that information to listeners (Jay and Janschewitz, 2008, p. 268). Cursing involves a range of different speech acts which include profanity, insults, slurs and obscenity. There are numerous possible factors that can trigger such face-threatening behaviour from a person. Jay (1992, p. 98) proposed classifying these factors as the elements of the “Offending Event.” A list of thirteen triggers were introduced – age, sex, status, ethnic/group, physical appearance, social-physical setting, non-human wrongdoer, self as wrongdoer, the event, behavior, language, intentionality and damage.

Offending events are made out of major elements which differ from situation to situation (Jay, 1992, p. 98). These major elements consist of the individual or event which provokes the anger and the social-physical setting of the event. Jay (1992, p. 98) claimed that the offending events are “…the most important in determining how anger is expressed verbally.” In addition, the elements of the “Offending Event” should not be considered discrete elements that stand alone. They should instead be regarded as
elements which can combine with each other. Jay (1992, p. 12) also emphasized that the context in which cursing occurs will determine how speakers compose messages and how hearers interpret and respond to them.

According to Jay and Janschewitz (2008, p. 270), swearing is considered rude when it is used to intentionally attack a person. In essence, it comprises a face threat (e.g. *You fucking asshole!*). Swearing is also deemed rude when it is employed to openly vent intense emotions. This form of swearing is known as ‘volcanic rudeness’ (Jay and Janschewitz, 2008, p. 270). Bousfield (2007, p. 2192) stated that Jay (1992, 2000) is not solely concerned about the notion of communication since the elements include aspects like ‘non-human wrongdoer’ and ‘self as wrongdoer.’ However, he also noted that Jay’s (1992, 2000) model is useful in describing the triggers of impoliteness.

On the other hand, there are researchers like Kasper (1990), Beebe (1995) and Kienpointner (1997) who recommended theories of rudeness. Kasper (1990) made a distinction between motivated rudeness and unmotivated rudeness. Motivated rudeness takes place when there is an intentional violation of norms in which the speaker wants to be acknowledged as being rude. It is further divided into rudeness due to lack of affect control (e.g. losing temper), strategic rudeness (e.g. sanctioned rude behaviour in courtrooms) and ironic rudeness (e.g. saying “DO help yourself” to someone who is eating greedily) (Fraser, 2005, p. 70). In contrast, unmotivated rudeness includes norms which are violated on the account of ignorance. For instance, they could be mistakes made by children or second language learners who are unfamiliar with the protocols of a community. It is generally committed without a particular goal or agenda in mind.
Beebe (1995, p. 159) asserted that the transgression of socially sanctioned norms are essential to the perception of rudeness. Rudeness can upend social harmony and lead to uneasiness, antagonism or disagreement among the interlocutors. Besides, rudeness only takes place if there is inadequate redressive action to reduce the force of the threat or if it does not happen in an emergency context which would eliminate the requirement for redressive actions. Beebe (1995) maintained that rudeness is more of a bald on record attack on a target’s face rather than an unsuccessful attempt at politeness. To put it another way, it is a type of behaviour which is very much confrontational in nature. This is consistent with Lakoff (1989) and Kasper’s (1990) views.

Drawing inspiration from Lakoff’s (1989) theory of strategic rudeness, Beebe (1995) suggested a similar concept of instrumental rudeness in which rudeness is employed to accomplish certain goals. Speakers who opt to be rude are often trying to achieve either one of two instrumental functions—to express negative emotions or to obtain power. This also supports Kasper’s (1990) views on the functions of rudeness. In addition, rudeness may not be deliberate in that the speaker knowingly prepared it in advance; however, it is deliberate in the sense that it performs a function which the speaker planned (Beebe, 1995, p. 166). As such, Beebe (1995, p. 159) insisted that instrumental rudeness ought to be perceived as part of a person’s pragmatic competence.

Kienpointner (1997) established a typology of communicative rudeness based on suggestions from Kasper (1990) and Culpeper (1996). However, unlike Culpeper’s (1996) framework where there is no degree of offence in impoliteness strategies, the varieties of rudeness are placed from left to right according to their level of competitiveness. There are two main categories—cooperative rudeness and non-cooperative rudeness. Cooperative rudeness refers to “utterances which at first sight
seem to be rude according to standard rules of polite behaviour in a speech community [but] can in fact be cooperative behaviour in specific contexts” (Kienpointner, 1997, p. 257). Swear words fall into this group. While swearing is generally seen as rude in most communities, it is perceived as ritualized banter by the aborigines of Northern Queensland (Culpeper, 1996, p. 353).

In contrast, non-cooperative rudeness is the opposite form which is divided into motivated rudeness and unmotivated rudeness (Kienpointner, 1997, p. 269). Motivated rudeness involves circumstances where the speaker wants to be seen as rude. It can be further divided into three functions—strategic rudeness in public institutions, competitive rudeness in private conversations and rudeness as political social defence. Meanwhile, unmotivated rudeness refers to accidental mistakes made by people who share the same culture or language (Kienpointner, 1997, p. 269). They comprise slips of the tongue in which the produced utterances are not meant to be rude. This is consistent with what Culpeper (2005) called ‘unintended impoliteness.’ Kienpointner (1997, p. 254) also agreed with Culpeper et al. (2003) that the inappropriateness of a communicative behaviour should be studied in relation to a particular context. He supported Fraser’s (1990) view that sentences are not inherently rude and that it is the speakers who are rude.

Locher and Watts (2008, p. 80) addressed Kienpointner’s (1997) definition of rudeness as “non-cooperative or competitive communicative behaviour” in their work. While they agreed that non-cooperativeness can play a part in the characterization of rudeness, they disputed the fact that competitiveness equalled to rudeness if the ‘or’ was interpreted as “an exclusive, logical operator (either P or Q, rather than P and/or Q)” (Locher and Watts, 2008, p. 80). This is because competitive communicative behaviour
can be positively valued in contexts like “sounding” among young black adolescents in America. It is done to enhance in-group solidarity since there is shared knowledge in the community.

Terkourafi (2008, p. 60) asserted that impoliteness and rudeness are made out of a type of perlocutionary effect. In this case, the hearer is under the impression that the speaker is approaching or withdrawing inappropriately based on cultural norms. Three kinds of face-threatening behaviour were identified—impoliteness, rudeness proper and unmarked rudeness (Terkourafi, 2008, p. 60). Impoliteness refers to face threats which are perceived to be non-intentional or accidental. The addressee’s face is threatened but he/she does not attribute a face-threatening intention to the speaker. Unmarked rudeness occurs when the face threat is anticipated in contexts which have certain expectations on how face ought to be dealt with (Terkourafi, 2008, p. 60). Just like some situations which encourage face-saving actions, there are others which advocate face-threatening behaviour. The example of cognate curses in Egyptian Arabic which parents use to their children was given. As the curses are a conventionalized form of unmarked rudeness, they are often expected.

Conversely, rudeness proper refers to face threats which are deliberate. It is also dependent on the addressee’s evaluation of the situation. Terkourafi (2008, p. 68) stated that at this stage, the face threat is unforeseen and there are no conventions supporting the context in which it occurs. The other participants’ value systems, moods and emotional predispositions towards the speaker will determine whether or not the speaker’s face will be constituted. As such, rudeness proper is a rather risky move and it is usually avoided if the addressees are more influential than oneself (Terkourafi, 2008, p. 68). This notion of impoliteness drew forth some criticisms. Bousfield and Locher
(2008, p. 10) claimed that Terkourafi’s (2008) model had plenty of overlap with Culpeper (2005) as well as Locher and Watt’s (2005) approaches. However, they also lauded Terkourafi for conspicuously paving her own path in theorizing impoliteness.

This study incorporates Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) model of impoliteness as its theoretical framework. It is chosen because the impoliteness strategies that are employed to cause face damage in the ‘Gotcha’ calls consist of motivated or intentional impoliteness. In other words, the deejays deliberately employ impoliteness to hurt the hearer on the receiving line. Other than that, this study also examines the reactions of the deejay and receiver in the radio prank calls. Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) model which covers the perspective of both the speaker and hearer is, therefore, deemed most fitting.

2.4 Previous Studies on Impoliteness in Radio Discourse

Before this section elaborates on previous literature on impoliteness in radio discourse, a general overview of broadcast media is provided to ensure that the readers obtain a clearer idea of what makes up a broadcast context. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (2013), broadcast media involves programmes which are transmitted via radio or television for public use. Interaction which is carried out in this setting is known as broadcast talk. Clayman (2008) claimed that broadcast talk is “a specific category of programming in contrast to both fictional entertainment and traditional news.” It contains different programming genes which are informational, non-scripted to a certain extent and arranged around the processes of communication.

Scannell (1991, p. 1) stated that broadcast talk refers to communicative interaction between participants in a discussion, regardless of whether it is a talk show or interview, which is simultaneously constructed to be heard by an absent audience. In short, all talk
which is conducted on radio or television is public discourse (Scannell, 1991, p. 1). Majority of the events are usually scheduled programs like call-in radio shows which are created by broadcasters (Clayman, 2008).

Hutchby (2006) identified several features of broadcast talk in the radio discourse. To begin with, there is a great amount of unscripted talk. The speaker does not merely read aloud from a script or memorize lines for the show. Programs like phone-ins, interviews and talk shows contain interaction which unfolds in the real time of the show (Hutchby, 2006, p.1). As such, the participants are required to be creative in constructing responses. Broadcast talk also involves live talk in that it is broadcasted live like news interviews or it maintains a sense of liveness in the editing. Thus, even though it may be pre-recorded at times, the editing ensures that the audience experiences the event as a “single take” (Hutchby, 2006, p. 2). In addition, broadcast talk contains interaction with people other than professional broadcasters. For example, politicians, celebrities or even ordinary members of the public can be invited to participate in the programme.

In recent years, there has been an increased interest in the study of impoliteness in broadcast talk. Impoliteness is aplenty in contexts like talk shows which employ confrontational tactics to lure in audiences. Lorenzo-Dus (2008, p. 81) claimed that conflict talk in broadcasting hardly includes any interpersonal niceties but depends a lot on hostile argumentation to deliver the show. This view is parallel to what Culpeper (2005) had noted, that the audience of today seems to enjoy conflict-ridden conversations.

However, research on broadcast media has an inclination of focusing on visual culture. That is to say, television discourse is often favored over non-visual contexts like radio
discourse. As a result, research on impoliteness in the radio discourse is not nearly as extensive as what has been done in the television discourse. It has earned the title of being the relatively neglected medium of communication. Only a handful of settings such as talk shows and interviews have received some attention. Researchers who delved into this field include Hutchby (1996, 2008) and Meakins (2001) who investigated talk shows and Mullany (1999, 2002) who looked into political and non-political interviews.

Hutchby (1996) employed a conversation analysis approach to explore power play in the sequential organization of arguments in a British radio talk show. The standard sequential unit for an argument consisted of the “action-opposition” sequence where actions which are interpreted as debatable are opposed (Hutchby, 1996, p. 483). Subsequently, the opposition itself might be perceived as arguable. The caller was obligated to take on the first position by introducing the topic. This placed the caller’s opening turn as the first action in a probable action-opposition sequence.

Meanwhile, the hosts assumed the second position which allowed them to initiate the first opposition in every call. In other words, they were allocated the more powerful position in the argumentative context. The hosts could display doubt or challenge the agenda-relevance of certain remarks with questions like “So?” (Hutchby, 1996, p. 495). The questions also forced the caller to resume the floor once more to justify their statement.

On top of that, the hosts would try to gain control of the agenda by selectively constructing the gist of the caller’s utterances. This technique involves summarizing or expanding on the content of what the caller said previously. Hutchby (1996, p. 488)
pointed out that the asymmetry between the first and second position was “built into” the general structure of the calls. However, this did not mean that it was a one-way feature in radio talk shows. There were times where the callers managed to manoeuvre the hosts into assuming the first position and got hold of the more influential second position. In short, the roles were switched between the participants. To prevent this from happening, the hosts kept away from voicing out any remarks which reflected their own personal view of a topic (Hutchby, 1996, p. 492).

Besides, Hutchby (2008) also investigated the interpretation of impoliteness in a more recent study. Hearer perception has regularly been considered tricky or challenging. Holmes and Schnurr (2005, p. 122) stated that “it is often difficult to be sure about the interpretation of specific speech acts, and perhaps we can never be totally confident about the ascription of politeness or impoliteness to particular utterances.” Even Mills (2005) who consulted the participants of her research stated that there was no guarantee of understanding what really took place. Hutchby (2008, p. 227) addressed this issue by analysing how the participants of an interaction demonstrated an orientation to the actions of others as impolite in settings like a radio phone-in broadcast. There are two methods in which one can orient to impoliteness—doing “being interrupted” and reporting rudeness.

Hutchby (2008, p. 227) claimed that interruptive speech cannot simply be traced to its sequential placement. They have to contain a moral dimension in which they are oriented to as interruptive. To put it another way, the participants themselves have to present a negative evaluation which indicate that they found an interruption to be impolite. Examples were provided in the study where recipients explicitly declared that they “haven’t finished” or openly stated “Please don’t speak when I’m speaking”
(Hutchby, 2008, p. 228). This happened after the speaker made multiple interruptions that were some syllables away from an appropriate transition-relevance place. On the other hand, reporting rudeness takes place when a person informs another of the rudeness of a third party who is not present. Story prefices were employed to create an idea of what the story was about. This enabled the hearer to determine the ‘point’ which he/she should be paying attention to and shape his/her reaction accordingly (Hutchby, 2008, p. 233).

Other than that, Hutchby (2008, p. 237) revealed that certain contextual features were carefully built in to urge the hearer to evaluate the type and extent of rudeness which the speaker was subjected to by the third party. Techniques like providing first-hand accounts of an incident were utilized to support the speaker’s story. These descriptions were designed to persuade the hearer to affiliate with the speaker’s wronged stance (Hutchby, 2008, p. 237). The success of the story design was reinforced when the story recipient displayed parallel reactions to the speaker. Hutchby (2008, p. 238) concluded that the phenomenon of impoliteness depends on its successful detection as impolite. It basically boils down to how impoliteness is constructed and responded to. This echoes Austin (1990) and Culpeper’s (2005) beliefs that hearer perception is essential in construing impoliteness.

Meakins (2001, p. 8) investigated impoliteness in radio call-ins by adapting Sperber and Wilson’s (1997) Relevance Theory. Three superstrategies of impoliteness were introduced—individual, relationship and social impoliteness which were examined in relation to implicature and contextual effects. The individual face encompasses a person’s need for others to acknowledge his/her characteristics (Meakins, 2001, p. 88). It also includes the need to be feared. Individual impoliteness took place when the host,
John Laws, told the caller “You’re a lunatic.” The noun ‘lunatic’ implicitly suggested a barrage of other demeaning adjectives like ‘crazy’, ‘mad’ and ‘stupid.’ This insult enhanced Law’s opinion-setter face and caused damage to the caller’s individual face (Meakins, 2001, p. 88). The relationship face comprises the need to be free from imposition and it is tied to the persuasive power that a person has over another. Besides, it is highly dependent on context.

Relationship impoliteness was used to increase the power hierarchy between Laws and the caller. Imperatives like “Don’t call me a hypocrite” were used by Laws to hint that he was the one in control (Meakins, 2001, p. 88). This is consistent with Hutchby’s (1996) findings which indicated that it is usually the host who has more authority. Besides, Meakins (2001, p. 119) stated that social face includes a participant’s need for another participant to acknowledge his/her choice of group membership. Social impoliteness happens when challenges are hurled towards these groupings. Laws accomplished this when he insulted a caller for giving her daughter a Native American name (Meakins, 2001, p. 122). Despite producing a rather detailed analysis of impoliteness superstrategies and contextual effects, Meakins’ (2001) study has a setback in that there was hardly any literature on previous studies concerning radio discourse. The study would have been more comprehensive if earlier research on impoliteness in related contexts were provided.

Unlike Hutchby (1996, 2008) and Meakins (2001) who focused on the usage of impoliteness and orientations to it, Mullany (1999) addressed an additional issue in her study of linguistic politeness in political or non-political radio interviews—gender. Her findings revealed a significant difference between the behaviours of male and female interviewers. In political interviews, female interviews were more concerned of their
interviewees’ faces and employed less face-threatening questions (Mullany, 1999, p. 128). In contrast, male interviewers paid less attention to their female interviewees’ face needs. Antagonist questions were often utilized to aggravate them. In an example, the interviewer, John Humphrys questioned the credibility of the interviewee, Hillary Armstrong by saying “…now that you’re in power, they are high quality, they didn’t used to be did they?” (Mullany, 1999, p. 129). Male interviewees were also more likely to challenge the interviewer for the purpose of enhancing their status. In non-political interviews, female interviewers utilized supportive questions whereas male interviewers were less supportive to female interviewees (Mullany, 1999, p. 132).

Similar to Hutchby (2008), Mullany (1999) also took note of the occurrence of interruptions. In political interviews, Mullany (1999, p. 134) stated that female interviewers interrupted male interviewees more frequently than male interviewers did to their female interviewees. Despite so, it was the male interviewer/female interviewee dyad which had the highest success rate in interruptions. Interruptions also occurred least in the female interviewer/female interviewee dyad. No interruptions were recorded in the female interviewer/female interviewee dyad in non-political interviews. On the contrary, male interviewers interrupted most when the interviewees were female (Mullany, 1999, p. 136). Mullany’s (1999) findings correspond to earlier work like Goodwin (1980) and Tannen (1990) who discovered that female participants were more cooperative as compared to their male counterparts who had a tendency to be competitive.

In an updated paper, Mullany (2002, p. 8) proposed for the Communities of Practice approach (CofP) to be revised as the Synthetic Community of Practice (SCofP) so that it could account for discourses which occurred in constructed contexts like political radio
interviews. The participants themselves have to decide what polite or impolite behaviour is. The results of this study are in line with Hutchby’s (1996) research but challenged those of Meakins (2010) who argued that it was always the interviewer or host who was in control of the conversation. Mullany (2002, p. 12) demonstrated that there were cases where interviewees had a firm say in the topics they wanted to discuss. This ultimately reduced the local power which the interviewers had over the interviewees. An example was illustrated in a political interview between John Humphrys and Hillary Armstrong.

In this interview, Humphrys bombarded Armstrong with a host of questions which were designed to threaten her position. He also interrupted Armstrong on multiple occasions when she attempted to justify the situation. After several of these persistent attacks, Armstrong accused Humphrys of being impolite by employing the antagonist question “I don’t think you want me to get a word in edgeways do you John?” (Mullany, 2002, p. 12). Hence, the typical roles were reversed—the interviewee was the one who initiated the question-answer sequence instead of the interviewer. Mullany (2002, p. 15) asserted that Armstrong’s reaction indicated that Humphrys had violated the norms of the SCofP in a political interview. As a result of her protest, he allowed her to perform a turn in the interaction without further interferences. This demonstrated that there was a shift in power, though temporary, between the interviewer and interviewee.

In addition, several local researches have attempted to analyse discourse in radio talk shows. Lee (1998) discovered some similarities in the discourse strategies which were used by hosts in the organization of turn-taking and topic management. It was also revealed that the host played a key role in facilitating the conversation among the interlocutors. Meanwhile, Zuraidah Mohd Don (1996) conducted a study on interruptive
speech in Malay broadcast interviews. Her results showed that the participants often turned to prosodic cues like loudness, length and pitch to denote their desire to continue or forfeit their turn or to compete for the present turn. Zuraidah Mohd Don (1996) also showed that speakers overtly flouted Grice’s conversational maxims to convey implied meanings.

Using Sacks et al.’s (1974) model of turn-taking, Siti Nurbaya (2002) explored the various types of interruptive and non-interruptive behavior in radio talk shows. Her findings established that an interpretive study of the context of an utterance is crucial to determine whether an utterance is considered an interruption. Intervention behavior like ‘cutting-in’ happened when a speaker cut into the current speaker’s ongoing talk and snatched the conversational floor from the current speaker (Siti Nurbaya, 2002, p. 114). This resulted in a violation of the present speaker’s rights. In general, one could anticipate a speaker’s intervention if the participants shared the same knowledge or when the subject of the interrupter’s turn was partly communicated in previous sequences (Siti Nurbaya, 2002, p. 115).

Further, any form of intervention behavior or interruption was deemed less severe if the floor was returned to the current speaker. It was less severe if it was returned sooner and most severe if it was never returned. In her findings, Siti Nurbaya (2002, p. 116) pointed out that the floor was constantly restored sooner to current speakers at points of interventions. This demonstrated that the interlocutors of radio talk shows were conscious of the alternation of speaker turns in the discourse and did not hold the floor for long. In short, the floor was always yielded when there was a turn completion. This in turn provided the co-participants with the opportunity of having a turn at talk (Siti Nurbaya, 2002, p. 116).
As illustrated by the review of previous literature, hardly any studies have been conducted on radio prank calls. The bulk of research seems to favour relatively typical genres such as radio phone-ins, interviews and talk shows. Besides, they tended to concentrate on similar subjects such as orientations to impoliteness, turn-taking and gender. There is also hardly any local research on impoliteness in the radio discourse. All this leaves plenty of room to be explored when it comes to impoliteness in radio prank calls. This study takes on the challenge by looking into the stages which constitute the progression of impoliteness and the impoliteness strategies employed in Hitz.fm’s ‘Gotcha’ calls. The section below discusses numerous aspects of radio prank calls.

2.5 Radio Prank Calls

This section examines radio prank calls in detail. It contains three different sub-sections. The first section provides a general idea of what radio prank calls are. It covers topics such as the purpose of prank calls and current Malaysian radio stations which employ them as part of their programme. The second section raises issues about the possible negative consequences or downside of conducting radio prank calls on the public. The third section discusses the issues of face, role of participants and impoliteness in radio prank calls.

2.5.1 General Overview of Radio Prank Calls

Prank calls refer to phone calls which are deliberately made with the purpose of pulling off a practical joke (What is a Prank Call?, 2012). They are also known as crank calls or nuisance calls. The Macmillan dictionary defined them as telephone calls whereby
the caller deceives or tricks the person on the receiving end (Prank Call, 2012). Thus, radio prank calls are prank calls which are carried out through the means of radio.

There are various reasons why people conduct prank calls but most of it can be attributed to the entertainment factor. Prank calls are usually performed for a person’s own personal pleasure of humiliating the target. For example, one can ring up and disturb random strangers for the sheer fun of it. The idea of using prank calls for a spot of mischief is nothing new. One of the earliest prank calls dates back to 1884, eight years after the invention of the telephone. An unidentified person played a prank on a group of undertakers by requesting them to bring over freezers, candlesticks and coffins for some allegedly dead people who were very much alive (McNamara, 2012).

Aside from that, prank calls can also be utilized for the purpose of publicity. Broadcast media sometimes take advantage of the entertainment value of these calls to lure in more followers. In Malaysia, radio stations like Hot.fm and Hitz.fm implement this strategy to increase their appeal. Hot.fm, which is a popular Malay music station, performs prank calls which are known as Panggilan Hangit (loosely translated as Hot Calls). The deejay basically rings up a victim who was set up by a friend to convey a piece of bad news which is untrue. In its official website, Hot.fm encouraged its listeners to take part in these prank calls as they can enhance solidarity among friends (Panggilan Hangit, 2012). It also offers attractive and lucrative prizes for the best prank call.

Likewise, Hitz.fm, a Malaysian English music station, conducts prank calls which are termed ‘Gotcha’ calls. The same formula is applied in which a story is fabricated to trick the victim. The ‘Gotcha’ calls are performed by the Morning Crew which consists
of two deejays. They carry out the calls twice every weekday. The first prank is at 7.20 a.m. whereas the second prank is at 8.20 a.m. The deejays often assume false identities to throw the receiver off guard. At times, they also alter the pitch of their own voices or play various background noises to sound more convincing. However, the prank is always revealed towards the end of the conversation. It is normally signalled with the ritualized “Gotcha!” exclamation.

It is worth noting that the audience appears to have some discursive knowledge of radio prank calls. This is unsurprising since the ‘Gotcha’ calls have been around for a decade. There is a sense of familiarity whenever the audience tunes in to these calls. To put it another way, they are aware of the procedures that are involved in pulling off a ‘Gotcha’ call—(1) a friend/family member chooses the victim and informs the deejays of possible circumstances that could irk him/her, (2) the deejays call up the victim and carry out the prank and (3) the prank as well as the person who set the victim up are revealed. All in all, the audience knows what to expect when listening to the prank calls.

2.5.2 Downside of Radio Prank Calls

Although radio prank calls have the propensity to be hilarious, they can go horribly wrong especially if they are perceived to be malicious in nature. A few examples are provided to prove this point. On April 2005, a New York radio talk show called The Dog House played a prank on a Chinese restaurant. The deejay told the restaurant’s female employee that he wanted to order “slimp flied lice” and that he wanted to see her “hot Asian spicy ass” (Du, 2007). The remarks sparked outrage from the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA) who claimed that it was “racist, vulgar and sexist.” Subsequently, the radio talk show was cancelled and the on-air hosts were suspended (Nichols, 2007).
Additionally, a woman in Kentucky sued a deejay after he informed her that she had won $100,000 in a radio contest. As it turned out, he was only going to award her with a “100 Grand” candy bar. The suit claimed that the deejay had “falsely represented the prize with the intention to cheat, defraud, and play a malicious joke upon plaintiff” (Deitz, 2005). In a more serious and tragic case, a nurse who was attending to a pregnant Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, committed suicide after falling victim to a prank performed by an Australian radio station in December 2012. The deejays deceived Jacintha Saldanha into believing that the call was from Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Charles (Williams, 2012). This prompted her to transfer the call to a colleague who went on to describe the condition of Kate's pregnancy sickness in detail.

The deejays conceded in an interview that they did not expect the call to make it through to the Duchess's ward. One of them was quoted saying "It was something that was just fun and light-hearted and a tragic turn of events no-one could have predicted or expected" (Williams, 2012). The deejays have been removed from air and the radio station decided to stop airing prank calls for good. The Australian deejay's quote effectively captures the dangers of performing prank calls without care. What begins as an innocent and amusing act can result in devastating consequences for either party involved, be it the radio station or the victim.

In February 2013, a reader wrote to local newspaper, the Star, to voice out his disgust towards a prank call made to workers from two different restaurants. The deejay rang up the first restaurant to place an order and then asked the worker to reiterate it. Just before the worker did that, the deejay linked the line to the second restaurant where the worker was required to take another order (Lee, 2013). Due to confusion, both parties ended up
shouting and swearing. The reader commented: “These two radio DJs don’t know how
difficult running a business is. To have your business dealing with such mindless calls is
a cost to the business” (Lee, 2013). All these incidents point out that prank calls should
always be monitored to a certain extent. Important aspects like whether or not the prank
would cause severe humiliation or damages to the victim or whether or not the prank
would cause great offence to a certain community must be taken into consideration.
This especially applies if the prank revolves around a topic which is highly sensitive.
Topics of such nature include race, religion, culture or gender.

While an unaffected group may find the prank humorous, the target group is less likely
to find it funny. In one of the examples above, the New York deejays clearly crossed the
line when they took the Chinese culture as the butt of the joke. Racial insults like these
are often not tolerated within a given community. As such, radio prank calls have to be
carefully designed since the degree of impoliteness and topic can determine how they
would be taken by the hearer. To sum it up, there are boundaries which should not be
infringed on even when the intention is to have some fun.

2.5.3 Face, Role of Participants and Impoliteness in Radio Prank Calls

There is face at stake regardless of the type of interaction. It could be a conversation
between close friends or a conversation between a salesman and customer. Face is
always on the line and it is up to the interlocutors on how they want to navigate through
the labyrinthine of face-saving, face loss or face enhancement. The bottom-line is that
face matters. As Goffman (1967, p. 5) puts it, face is the "positive social value in a
person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a
particular context." It is essentially linked to what others perceive of the person
involved. The amount of face hanging in balance depends on factors like the presence of
other people. Culpeper (2011, p. 48) claimed that more face is at stake if there is wider public exposure.

This statement aptly describes the discourse of radio prank calls. Everything that is broadcasted on the radio is public as it is available to listeners from all corners of the world. Hence, victims of radio prank calls may have to endure immense face losses since their vulnerabilities are exposed to state-level audiences. When it comes to face in radio prank calls, there are several issues worth bringing up. Firstly, there are times where face is one-sided in these calls, i.e. the deejays or pranksters are fully aware of the situation as they are the ones in charge of setting the scene. Since they have the upper hand in the conversations, they can avoid losing face. The receiver, on the contrary, has absolutely no idea of the prank and is thus more susceptible to face loss.

However, one cannot deduce that the deejays can escape every single time. There are circumstances where the receivers may turn the tables on the deejays through techniques like verbal aggression. This is consistent with Hutchby's (1996, p. 488) claims that power asymmetry is not a one-way feature in radio discourse. The roles can be reversed in which the receiver could manoeuvre the deejays into assuming the more vulnerable position. In other words, the deejays are not immune to face loss. They too could end up looking like fools.

Secondly, face is affected although the participants do not have a proper schemata of the receiver. One has to bear in mind that the audience does not know who the receiver is or how he/she looks like. In short, they have no background knowledge of the target. The audience would at most be provided with his/her name, job and the situation which led up to the prank call. Other than that, the receiver pretty much remains a person without
a face. Even the deejays have limited knowledge of the receiver. They rely only on basic information to pull off the pranks. As such, they are often unable to tell the precise outcome of the interaction. The deejays are principally co-constructing the interaction as it progresses pronto. Despite so, one cannot conclude that the receiver has total anonymity. There could be family and friends who are intimate enough to recognize him/her on air or those who were already notified of the prank call.

Face is constructed, salvaged or damaged based on the actions or roles played by the participants. In radio prank calls, there are three interlocutors - the deejays, receiver and audience. Each of them contributes differently to the conversation. The deejays take on the role of the director. They are the ones who organise the atmosphere of the scene. Besides, it is the deejay's job to draw forth angry or heated responses from the receiver. This is a role which Thornborrow (2001) has termed ‘dramatizer.’ They dramatize the situation to increase the entertainment value of the prank call. This view also echoes Hutchby’s (1996, p. 74) opinion that radio hosts are “oriented to the task of pursuing controversy.” This means that they analyse the recipient’s utterances and look for things to argue about.

The role of the receiver can be surmised into a simple word - defender. In radio prank calls, the receivers are frequently placed in conflictive positions where they are accused of some wrongdoing which they never committed. It is in situations like these where they have to stand up for their rights. Unlike the deejays who know that there is an audience tuning in to the conversation, the receivers are under the impression that the call is a private conversation between two parties. When impoliteness is perceived, people are more likely to express emotions in private conversations as compared to public places (Mills, 2003, p. 146). They tend to let loose in private settings as there is
less face at stake. Telephone calls fit the bill perfectly as the hearer does not even have to see the speaker in person to talk. Even if one were to lose face, only one party would be present to hear it. Thus, it is possible that the receivers would react more violently in the radio prank calls as compared to public face-to-face interactions.

All of the interlocutors of a prank call are susceptible to face loss except for the audience. The audience is spared from potential face threats as they are technically absent from the discourse. Scannell (1991, p. 3) maintained that the place where broadcast talk occurs is separated from the place it is heard. The audience is not situated in the same studio as the broadcasters. They could receive the information in numerous places like at home or on the bus. That is to say, the audience does not participate directly in the conversation between the deejay and receiver. Heritage (1985) and Montgomery (1986) described this type of audience as an audience of 'overhearers' or 'overhearing recipients of a discourse.' Besides, the listening status of such audiences has also been labeled 'eavesdroppers on a cozy chat' (O'Keefe, 2006, p. 17).

The audience is allocated a different role in the prank call discourse. Their role is that of a judge. They listen to the conversation between the deejay and receiver and proceed to evaluate various aspects. For instance, they could judge how capable the deejay was in deceiving the victim or they could judge how gullible the victim was in perceiving the prank. Other aspects include evaluating how damaging the face threats were or whether or not the prank was a success or failure.

In a nutshell, the way face is handled and the roles that the participants perform contribute to the expression of impoliteness in radio prank calls. The deejays rely on a certain degree of impoliteness to ensure that the prank call goes as planned. They
accomplish this through hurling aggravating insults at the target. In contrast, the receiver employs impoliteness as a defence mechanism against the deejay's verbal onslaught. Impoliteness is also used to express hostile emotions. The only party that does not actually use impoliteness is the audience. They do, however, assume the roles of evaluators of impoliteness. They are given the opportunity to decide whether impoliteness was warranted, over the top or entertaining. Although they are not physically present, the audience is needed to keep the show running. This reflects Webster et al.'s (2006) opinion that every activity of the media, whether it is content-related or market-related, is centered on the audience.

2.6 Summary

On the whole, the literature demonstrates that research in the field of radio discourse has suffered considerably. Only certain genres such as radio talk shows and radio interviews were given emphasis. Majority of the research also tended to center on similar topics. These topics include the asymmetrical power relationship between the host and caller, gender and orientations to impoliteness. Very few studies have explored the types of impoliteness strategies found in the radio discourse. The usage of impoliteness strategies could vary according to the different situations they occur in. They could also reflect crucial elements like emotions, attitudes and opinions on certain issues. Therefore, this is an area worth looking into.

The study of how impoliteness develops in radio programmes has also been neglected. By exploring the beginnings, middles and endings of impoliteness, inferences can be made as to how impoliteness is constructed in confrontational radio conversations. In addition, even fewer researchers have attempted to observe the genre of radio prank calls despite their prevalent presence in radio stations. This study intends to add on to
existing literature by examining the stages which contribute to the progression of impoliteness as well as the impoliteness strategies used in Hitz.fm’s ‘Gotcha’ calls.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction
The methodology of this study covers the instrument, theoretical frameworks—Bousfield’s (2007) model of beginnings, middles and ends and Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) impoliteness model, method, ethical issues, data collection and procedures, analysis of the data, a pilot study of the research and lastly a summary.

3.1 Instrument
Transcription is used as the instrument to measure and document impoliteness in Malaysian radio prank calls. Relevant sections of the conversation between the deejay and receiver are transcribed according to Jefferson’s (2004) transcription symbols. A list of the symbols which emerge in this study is shown in Appendix A. It is to be noted that certain conversational turns are featured in bold in the analysis. This functions to highlight areas where impoliteness is present. As such, texts in bold are used to emphasize information-rich parts rather than serve conversation analysis purposes. Although only sections that are pertinent to the analysis are transcribed, one could obtain the full transcript of the prank calls upon request from the researcher.

The data consists of 25 ‘Gotcha’ calls. As mentioned previously, ‘Gotcha’ calls are staged calls which are conducted by Malaysia’s English music radio station, Hitz.fm. It is a popular segment performed by the Morning Crew twice on weekdays—once at 7.20 a.m. and once at 8.20 a.m. Two male deejays are involved in the pranks. They are known as JJ and Ean. As for the victims, 15 of them were male whereas 10 of them
were female. It is impossible to determine their exact demographics as their identities are always anonymous. The victims are set up by their own friends, family or colleagues. Thus, just about anyone could end up as a victim of the pranks. They are not limited in terms of age, sex or occupation. There are three steps in conducting a ‘Gotcha’ call – (1) a friend, family or colleague nominates the victim and suggests possible circumstances for the prank, (2) the deejay calls up the victim and carries out the prank and (3) the deejays reveals the prank as well as the identity of the person who set the victim up. The ‘Gotcha’ calls are downloaded from Hitz.fm’s official website (www.hitz.fm), specifically from its Podcast section.

The nature of the ‘Gotcha’ calls revolves around two main themes. The first theme involves a business transaction gone wrong. This takes place when the deejay messes something up and the receiver, who is the customer, has to bear the severe consequences of the blunder. There will usually be some form of loss on the receiver’s part (e.g. monetary matters, damaged items) and this is what results in verbal impoliteness. In the data, eleven clips were of such nature – P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P15, P19, P20, P21, P23 and P25. On the other hand, the second theme involves some wrongdoing on the receiver’s part. The deejays call up the receivers to accuse them of committing an offence, whether real or imagined. In such clips, the deejays often resort to verbal abuse. As such, the receivers are forced to retaliate to defend their own faces. This is where impoliteness comes into the picture. In the data, fourteen calls were of such nature – P4, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P16, P17, P18, P22 and P24.

Intensity sampling is employed as it allows the researcher to gather information-rich samples that manifest the phenomenon intensely (Patton, 1990, p. 182). In this study, representative examples of impoliteness in the prank calls are collected. Clips which are
prioritized include those that contain a lot of heated or aggressive reactions such as shouting, swearing, insulting, threatening and condemning. These reactions basically express the intent to attack a person’s face. To put it another way, they are selected due to their impolite nature, which is the focus of this research. The clips for this study span from 2011 to 2012. This one-year period was chosen because the archives of the ‘Gotcha’ calls offer only such a range. Earlier clips are not accessible on the website. The selected clips are coded as P1 to P25 according to their sequence of occurrence.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

Two models are utilized as the theoretical framework of this study. The first consists of Bousfield’s (2007) model of beginnings, middles and ends which examines the process in which impoliteness unfolds in an interaction. The second comprises Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) impoliteness model which discusses the different impoliteness strategies as well as impoliteness output strategies in a discourse.

3.2.1 Bousfield’s (2007) Model of Beginnings, Middles and Ends

Bousfield (2007, p. 2185) introduced a model which explores the triggering, progression and resolution of impoliteness in spoken exchanges. The data is based on television documentary recordings. The construction of this model was necessary since traditional approaches (e.g. Lachenicht, 1980; Culpeper, 1996; Kienpointner, 1997) to the study of impoliteness hardly take into account the responses to a face threat. Bousfield’s (2007) model is divided into three stages–discourse beginnings, discourse middles and discourse ends. Each of these stages is supported by concepts put forth by various researchers from related fields of interest (e.g. impoliteness, conflict management). These researchers include Jay (1992), Culpeper et al. (2003) and Vulchinich (1990). In short, Bousfield’s (2007) model of beginnings, middles and ends
comprises a combination of ideas that are relevant to the progression of impoliteness in a discourse. The model is shown in Figure 3.1.

According to Bousfield’s (2007) model, impoliteness must first be triggered. This demonstrates the fact that impoliteness is not an isolated phenomenon and that it ought to be analysed in context. The general idea is that the person who is being impolite must
have been provoked at some point into employing impoliteness (Bousfield, 2007, p. 2190). This is where Jay’s (1992) elements of the “Offending Event” come into the picture. The concept of “Offending Events” is integrated into Bousfield’s (2007) model to account for the different factors which could instigate impoliteness from the participants. After perceiving that there has been an attack on their face, the participants are then provided with several options to respond with. Culpeper et al.’s (2003) summary of response options is adapted here. The participants have the choice of opting for a more defensive approach or a more offensive approach. Lastly, Vuchinich’s (1990) notion of conflict termination is included to address the resolution of impoliteness. Once again, the participants are given a choice to settle the conflict in a mitigated manner or an aggravating manner. The triggering, progression and ending of impoliteness are elaborated further in the following sections.

3.2.1.1 Beginnings

For discourse beginnings, Bousfield (2007) adapted Jay's (1992) elements of the “Offending Event” to address the possible triggers of impoliteness. In general, impoliteness is instigated when a person believes that there is a threat to his or her face. The proposed types of elements include age, sex, status, ethnic/group, physical appearance, social-physical setting, non-human wrongdoer, self as wrongdoer, the event, behavior, language, intentionality and damage. They are further elaborated in the list below.

The Offender: The person who committed the offence has some qualities, real or imagined, accurate and inaccurate.

Age: Child, teenager, adult, elder are the most prominent features.
Sex: The gender of a speaker or listener plays a crucial role in human interaction particularly when it comes to swearing or aggravating behaviors. For instance, "bitch" is allocated for females whereas "son of a bitch" is allocated for males.

Status: Social and economic status influence how one communicates anger. Factors include rich/poor, employer/employee, level of education, religious authorities or type of job.

Ethnic group: One's ethnic origin or race can affect the way in which the speaker expresses anger towards the offender.

Physical appearance: Anything that deviates from what is presumed to be normal could contribute to furious insults regarding physical differences. This includes factors like body size, weight, abnormal facial features, body movement/locomotion or deformities.

Social–physical setting: Settings like relaxed/business, homogenous/mixed grouping, private/public, relatives/strangers. There is less restraint in communication in the first element of each of the pairs. Anger is more likely expressed in situations where it is not greatly sanctioned.

Non-human wrongdoer: The anger stems from actions that are accidental or non-intentional. In short, a person is not the cause of anger. Examples include being bitten by a dog or being hit by a falling branch.

Self as wrongdoer: The offending party or behavior comprises one's self. It involves self directed anger which serves as a self-corrective procedure. For instance, one could say to oneself "Next time be careful when you walk idiot!" after stubbing a toe.

The Event: The nature of an action or the lack of it on the part of the wrongdoer that affronted the person. The event could involve behavior that was expected but not shown, the manner in which it happened or certain types of communication. Aspects
such as the temporal and physical qualities of the event are evaluated in relation to the spontaneity or intentionality of the cause of the event.

**Behavior**: Unforeseen, ill-mannered, deviant, vulgar, aggressive or brusque. The behavior is judged in terms of legal or moral values, particularly when it involves unacceptable social or sexual behavior.

**Language**: Speech that triggers impoliteness. What a person says or the way in which the language is conveyed can affront another. Examples include libel, slander, verbal abuse or "fighting words" laws in a culture.

**Intentionality**: Intentionality plays a role in the construal of an offending act. It matters whether or not the event was caused by accident. The more deliberate the act seems to be, the more justified an angry reaction.

**Damage**: There is loss on the speaker’s part. It can be measured in terms of the degree of physical pain, duration, cost in dollars or waste of time/energy. The bigger the damage, the higher the possibility that it cannot be amended and thus, the more anger is directed at the event.

(Jay, 1992, p. 98–100).

Bousfield (2007, p. 2193) suggested renaming the elements as "Offending Situations" since the term "Offending Events" implies only single occurrences. While the most recurrent combination was Event-Behavior in the findings, Bousfield (2007, p. 2193) maintained that there are numerous forms which triggers of offending situations can take. The ‘Gotcha’ call which is used in the pilot study supports this view. A total of three elements namely Event, Language and Behavior, are present. The deejay irked the receiver by bringing up the issue of the damaged towel (Event), vehemently insisted that she was the one responsible for it (Behavior) and used aggravating language to condemn her (Language).
The nature of radio prank calls in this research does not necessitate the usage of *all* the “Offending Situations.” Only six elements – Status, the Event, Behavior, Language, Intentionality and Damage are prioritized. These elements are given emphasis due to their relevance in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. In terms of ‘Status’, the deejays may assume authoritative identities such as officers to intimidate the receiver whereas in terms of the ‘Event’, the deejays always ensure that a conflictive situation is present to cause open offence. The elements of ‘Behavior’ and ‘Language’ are chosen because the deejays often behave in infuriating ways or use face-threatening language to aggravate the receiver. Meanwhile, ‘Intentionality’ is included as there are times where the receiver realises that the deejays are being deliberately impolite and is provoked into delivering impoliteness. Lastly, ‘Damage’ is selected since the receivers are frequently given the impression that they are about to experience some kind of loss. However, it is revised as ‘Potential Damage’ in the study. This is because no actual damages are inflicted on the receiver. The severity of potential damages differs according to the point of view of the participants. The deejays foresee the ‘damage’ as it is part of the prank. They *know* for sure that nothing bad will happen to the receiver. Hence, the problem is non-existent from the perspective of the deejay. On the contrary, the receivers see the prank as something very real. Fear forces them to visualize how devastating the damages could be. Thus, the potential damages are thought to be extremely grave from the perspective of the receiver.

The rest of the elements are deemed unfitting for the research and are therefore omitted. Take for example the “Offending Situations” of Age – Physical Appearance. Radio
prank calls are made up of conversations that are carried out through the means of telephone. As such, there is no face-to-face interaction. This renders the elements of ‘Age’ and ‘Physical Appearance’ irrelevant since one cannot tell these features simply by listening to a person’s voice. The elements of ‘Non-human Wrongdoer’ and ‘Self as Wrongdoer’ are also simultaneously eliminated. The calls always involve humans and the fault always lies with the other person, not the self. Besides, elements like ‘Sex’ and ‘Ethnic Group’ are unrelated as the ‘Gotcha’ calls apply to the general public regardless of age, race or sex.

This research covers only the perspective of the receiver in its analysis of impoliteness elements. The deejays’ perspectives are not included because it is their job to be impolite in the pranks. To put it another way, the deejays’ impoliteness can be attributed to the need of enhancing the entertainment value of the ‘Gotcha’ calls. Besides, the deejays already expect impoliteness from the receivers. They can foresee the consequences as they are always the ones who initiate the argument. The receivers, on the other hand, see many reasons to be impolite in the discourse. This is because the deejays resort to a variety of negative situations to aggravate them. In the study, the elements are positioned where the deejay first succeeds in provoking the receiver into delivering impoliteness. This juncture of discourse is chosen as it demonstrates the starting point of impoliteness on the receiver’s part.

3.2.1.2 Middles

For discourse middles, Bousfield (2007) altered Culpeper et al.’s (2003) summary of response options to analyse the responses towards impoliteness. The original summary is shown in Figure 3.1:
Bousfield (2007, p. 2202) made some modifications since Culpeper et al.’s (2003) model did not address certain important issues. Firstly, Bousfield (2007, p. 2202) claimed that while the response option may be implicit, what occurs after the first (Impoliteness-Response) turn was not explained in detail by Culpeper et al. (2003). Secondly, Culpeper et al. (2003) did concede that they had left out how these heated exchanges eventually draw to an end. Bousfield's (2007) revised model is demonstrated in Figure 3.1.

The hearers of an utterance have two options once they perceive that a face-threatening act has been committed by the speaker. They can either opt to respond or not to respond (stay silent). Staying silent could be interpreted in a number of ways. Thomas (1995, p. 2196) claimed that it could be a defensive means of protecting one's face or it could be an offensive means of refusing to speak up when there is an expectation to do so. For hearers who respond, they can deny the opponent's position or they could accept it. When one accepts the face-attack, one may take responsibility for the impolite act or one may agree with the impolite judgment that is embedded within a face threat (Bousfield, 2007, p. 2198).

Meanwhile, participants who decide to deny the other party's position are presented with two choices. Bousfield (2007, p. 2199) asserted that they could choose to counter the offending event or compromise with the other party. To counter it, the participants can
select one or use a combination of offensive or defensive strategies. Offensive strategies are mainly employed to counter face-attack with face-attack whereas defensive strategies are employed to defend the interlocutors’ faces. Offensive strategies refer to those suggested by Lachenicht (1980), Culpeper (1996), Culpeper et al. (2003) and Kienpointner (1997). For this study, only Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) impoliteness strategies are utilized. This is further explained in the next section. A list of defensive strategies is also compiled based on works by Brenneis and Lein (1977), Cohen et al. (1986), Culpeper et al.’s (2003) and Bousfield (2004). The list is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: List of defensive strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defence strategy</th>
<th>Definition/explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct contradiction or inversion</td>
<td>Offer a simple rejection of the proposed content of the face threat performed by a participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abrogation (social and/or discoursal role-switching)</td>
<td>The interlocutor denies personal responsibility for the offending event which made him/her the target of another interlocutor's impolite face threat. One variant comprises switching social roles from being addressed in the role of a private citizen to that of a public servant. This is the act of abrogating one's responsibility on a higher authority. Another variant comprises a switch in discourse roles in which a participant stresses that he/she is only acting in a representative role or as a mouthpiece. Examples include the statement &quot;I'm just following orders!&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismiss, make light of face damage, joke</td>
<td>The interlocutor views the face attack as non-damaging or without severe consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignore the face attack, offer insincere agreement</td>
<td>Allow the person performing the face-threatening act to let off steam. Insincere agreement takes place when one offers surface agreement. Another variant of this counter strategy occurs when the implied face attack is ignored. This is especially apparent in sarcasm where the surface meaning is accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer an account or explanation</td>
<td>The interlocutor attempts to provide new and possibly redressive information about the triggering event which prompted the other interlocutor to be impolite. One could offer an explanation of one's actions in order to lessen the face damage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plead</td>
<td>A theoretical defensive option. The interlocutor is damaging his/her own positive face by pleading to prevent a threat of greater face damage. There is usage of politeness strategies and respect which may serve to make the offender look bad for not mitigating the face attack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opt out on record</td>
<td>The interlocutor opts out as a counter strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat the situation as a different 'activity type'</td>
<td>The interlocutor who is defending his/her own face shifts the context from one 'activity type' into another 'activity type.'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Bousfield, 2007, p. 2201)

Defensive and offensive strategies are not mutually exclusive. They can be used in combination. Whatever the response is, there is still a risk that the response itself could
become a new offending trigger (Bousfield, 2007, p. 2199). The middle stage of impoliteness in this research is set at the point where a significant change occurs in receiver’s prosody. To be more precise, it is marked by the occurrence of anger. Anger is chosen because it is the most important emotion in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. It is the primary reason why they are so entertaining. The concept is as such – the angrier the receiver, the more amusing the discourse is.

In addition, it is likely that the receivers would be more inclined to use impoliteness when they are riled. Murray and Arnott (1993, p. 1106) claimed that anger is characterized by “slightly faster tempo, much higher pitch average, louder, breathy, chest tone, abrupt pitch change on stressed syllables and tense articulation.” For the middle stage, these traits are used to identify the most heated segment of the ‘Gotcha’ calls. This is where the receivers are at their angriest or most irritated.

Besides, these prosodic features are excellent indicators as to whether impoliteness has intensified in the discourse. This is in line with Culpeper’s (2005, p. 150) statement that prosody is sufficient to serve as a cue for impoliteness. The conversations in the ‘Gotcha’ calls often become most aggressive towards the middle. Nonetheless, it is to be noted that prosody is only employed to mark the middle stage of impoliteness. This study is not concerned with an in-depth analysis of prosody.

3.2.1.3 Endings
Bousfield (2007) incorporated Vuchinich's (1990) five types of conflict termination to account for the resolution of impoliteness. They include (1) Submission to opponent, (2) Dominant third party intervention, (3) Compromise, (4) Stand-off and (5) Withdrawal (Bousfield, 2007, p. 2202). This study employs all the strategies except for ‘Dominant
third party intervention.’ It is removed because the prank calls involve only two parties—the deejay and receiver. 'Submission to the opponent' takes place when the interlocutor caves in and acknowledges the other party's position. In the clip used in the pilot study, the receiver submitted to the deejay when she agreed to take down his account number to pay for a damaged towel.

A 'Compromise' happens when the interlocutors reach a concession in which they opt for a position between the opposing positions that make up the conflict. For example, in a ‘Gotcha’ call where the deejay claimed that he was reducing the receiver’s scholarship funds, the receiver compromised by suggesting that they meet up to talk things out. Meanwhile, a 'Stand-off' occurs when both parties refuse to submit to each other. It could result in another round of impoliteness since the initial perpetrator of the impolite act could view the counter utterance as impolite. This strategy is used in a ‘Gotcha’ call where the deejay insisted that the receiver did not pay his insurance fees although it was paid months earlier. Towards the end of the call, the receiver argued heatedly and threatened to give up the insurance.

Lastly, a 'withdrawal' takes place when one of the participants withdraws from the interaction or physically departs from the place (Bousfield, 2007, p. 2210). In the ‘Gotcha’ calls, this strategy occurs when the receiver exits the conversation by hanging up on the deejay. An example can be found in the clip where the deejay persistently asked the receiver to sign up for an English Language programme. The receiver became irritated and hung up on him.

In this study, the ending stage of impoliteness is set at the point before the prank is revealed to the receiver. The receivers’ reactions are noted right before the deejays cut
them off. This point of the discourse is selected because impoliteness generally ends after the prank is disclosed. Even if the receivers swear when they realize that it is a ‘Gotcha’ call, it is not considered impolite as the swear words are more of an expression of shock rather than a face-threatening act.

Similar to the beginning stage, the ending stage includes only the perspective of the receiver. It is meaningless to investigate the deejays’ perspectives as impoliteness is not required anymore towards the end of the call. Their priorities have shifted from aggravating the receivers to concluding the conversation. Hutchby (1996, p. 106) claimed that in radio talk show disputes, the hosts are the always the ones who have ‘the power of the last word.’ The same applies to radio prank calls. It is the deejays who decide when and how the conflict is settled. But it is a different case for the receivers. They may go on using impoliteness as they could still be very angry with the deejay.

In summary, Bousfield's (2007) model of beginnings, middles and ends is adapted because it offers a comprehensive account of the progression of impoliteness in confrontational exchanges. It includes every prominent stage from how it is first instigated right up to how it concludes. That way, the model enables people to see that impoliteness is not a phenomenon which appears out of the blue. It demonstrates that impoliteness can be progressive in nature when placed in the context of radio prank calls. The underlying assumption of this study is that impoliteness takes place according to a sequential process in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.

3.2.2 Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) Model of Impoliteness

Using data from the army recruit context, Culpeper (1996, 2005) introduced an impoliteness model which covers the perspectives of both the speaker and listener.
Impoliteness is seen as having two levels—the aggravating information embedded within the utterance and the knowledge that the information is being conveyed on purpose. The model has six superstrategies which are specifically designed to attack a person’s face. They include:

(i) **Bald on record impoliteness** – The face-threatening act is carried out in a straight-forward, clear and concise manner in situations where face is not minimised. It could also include direct confrontational questioning and explicit expressions of reservation.

(ii) **Positive impoliteness** – Strategies that are employed to threaten the hearer's positive face wants. This is achieved by damaging the need for acceptance.

(iii) **Negative impoliteness** – Strategies that are employed to threaten the hearer's negative face wants. This is accomplished by impeding on a person’s need for independence.

(iv) **Off-record impoliteness** – The face-threatening act is carried out in the form of an implicature yet in a manner where an attributable intention evidently prevails over any others.

(v) **Withhold politeness** – There is no politeness work where it is expected. Not thanking someone for a gift is an example.

(vi) **Sarcasm or mock politeness** – The face-threatening act is conducted by employing politeness strategies which are clearly untrue, and therefore stay surface realisations.

(Culpeper 1996, 2005)

In addition, a list of impoliteness output strategies for positive and negative impoliteness was proposed. These output strategies play a part in fulfilling the strategic
ends of a superstrategy (Culpeper, 1996, p. 357). The list for positive impoliteness output strategies comprises:

1) **Ignore, snub the other** – Not acknowledging a person.
2) **Exclude the other from an activity**
3) **Disassociate from the other** – Denying connection or common ground with another person, steering clear of taking a seat together.
4) **Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic**
5) **Use inappropriate identity markers** – Using title and surname when there is an intimate relationship or using a nickname when there is a distant relationship.
6) **Use obscure or secretive language** – Employing jargon to confuse others or using a code which is familiar to others in a group but not the hearer.
7) **Seek disagreement** – Choosing a delicate topic to elicit conflict.
8) **Make the other feel uncomfortable** – Failing to avoid silence, joke or employ small talk.
9) **Use taboo words** – Employing swearwords or using abusive language and profanity.
10) **Call the other names** – Using deprecating nominations. (Culpeper, 1996, p. 357)

Meanwhile, the list for negative impoliteness output strategies aims to:

1) **Frighten** – Instilling an idea that harmful actions to the others would take place.
2) **Condescend, scorn or ridicule** – Emphasizing relative power among others. Being patronizing.
3) **Do not treat the other seriously. Belittle the other** – Using diminutives.
4) **Invoke the other's space** – Literally by positioning self closer to the other than the relationship allows or metaphorically by talking or asking for information that is too personal given the relationship.
5) **Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect** – Personalizing the other by
using pronouns “I” and “you.”

6) *Put the other's indebtedness on record* – Revealing a person’s weakness in public to make him/her lose face.

(Culpeper, 1996, p. 358)

However, this does not mean that the lists are fixed and finalized. One could add on to the output strategies as long as the strategy is relevant to the situation. Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1559) contributed the strategy of *to challenge* as part of negative impoliteness output strategies. The speaker would employ this against the hearer through the usage of rhetorical questions. While these questions do not necessitate an answer, they do stimulate the given ‘answer’ in the minds of the participants (Bousfield, 2008, p. 241). Furthermore, the way the challenges are worded often makes it hard for the targets to prevent damages to their own faces. Labov and Fanshel (1977, p. 98) pointed out that there are two types of responses when it comes to a challenge—defence or admission.

The interpretation of impoliteness strategies as well as output strategies relies on the context in which they occur. Hence, they should never be analyzed in isolation. Culpeper (1996, p. 358) maintained that apart from these strategies, there are other methods that could be used to express impoliteness. Take the violation of a turn-taking sequence for example. One could commit a face-threatening act by interrupting or disregarding the other speakers. There is also the issue of prosody. Culpeper et al.’s (2003) research addressed this topic by suggesting two prosodic strategies for negative impoliteness. These strategies include: (1) to hinder linguistically and (2) to invade auditory space.

The act of hindering linguistically happens when the speaker deprives the hearer of his/her freedom to talk. This is achieved through the means of interruptions or denial of
a turn. They could also be amplified through one's intonation. Meanwhile, the act of invading auditory space occurs when there is a ‘raising’ of voice in terms of pitch and loudness (Culpeper, 2003, p. 1572). It is motivated internally by intense emotions such as anger and frustration. This type of emotionally-driven impoliteness is what Culpeper (2011, p. 59) called ‘affective impoliteness.’ Besides, speech which is louder than what the physical distance requires is interpreted as an intentional attack on a person’s negative face. The most generic example is shouting. Jay (1992, p. 97) pointed out that shouting also ensures that the hearer is aware of the speaker’s anger. In other words, it makes the hearer accountable for the other party’s emotional state.

In summary, Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) impoliteness framework is selected due to the nature of this study. The data consists of radio prank calls. Since they are staged and deliberate, a high level of impoliteness is often utilized to rile up the receivers, evoking intense reactions for the sake of the programme. This is done with the sole purpose of increasing the entertainment value of the ‘Gotcha’ calls. With emotions running high, it is possible that the receivers would react less politely than how they usually would in normal interactions. Thus, it is deduced that various types of impoliteness strategies as well as impoliteness output strategies are present in the hostile exchanges. The underlying assumption of this study is that the receivers may use more impoliteness strategies than the deejays in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.

### 3.3 Method

A qualitative approach is employed throughout this study to examine impoliteness in Malaysian radio prank calls. Creswell (2012, p. 16) noted that a qualitative study explores a problem and constructs a thorough understanding of a particular phenomenon. It is a method which has a penchant of yielding rich data. Consequently,
the qualitative approach enables the researcher to gather significant insights of the “what,” “where,” and “how” of impoliteness in the prank calls. The researcher is given the opportunity to go beyond surface interpretations and come up with a detailed investigation of how impoliteness unfolds in the conversations as well as the different types of impoliteness strategies used to express impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.

The qualitative approach is also apt since this study focuses on describing and clarifying the phenomenon of impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. It is basically concerned with emergent patterns or themes in the data. The patterns which are observed include the stages which constitute impoliteness in the discourse—how it is initiated, how it develops and how it ends and the impoliteness strategies used in the prank calls. In this case, transcription plays a vital role in the task of deciphering impoliteness. Selected excerpts which contain appropriate information are transcribed according to Jefferson’s (2004) transcription symbols.

3.4 Ethical Issues

To ensure that the gathering of data did not lead to any ethical violations, the researcher referred to the guidelines set by the Association of Internet Researcher (AoIR) on internet research ethics. AoIR specified that resources that are obtained from publicly accessible websites are deemed ethically acceptable (Markham et al., 2002, p. 9). For this study, the data comprises ‘Gotcha’ calls which are downloaded from Hitz.fm’s website. This website is open to anyone who is interested in listening to the clips. It does not even require users to set up an account to log into the site. In addition, the clips can be downloaded free of charge. Therefore, consent is perceived as unnecessary.
3.5 Data Collection and Procedure

There are several procedures which accompany this research to ensure that it is conducted in a systematic manner. To begin with, the researcher listens to the ‘Gotcha’ clips ranging from the year 2011 to 2012. Intensity sampling is then employed to select 25 clips which are rich in impoliteness. These clips generally contain aggressive responses from the receivers. They also consist of those which are filled with conflict, arguments and disagreements. To put it another way, confrontational discourse is preferred in the data. Given the hostile environment, such interactions could have a higher level of impoliteness.

The next step involves downloading the ‘Gotcha’ clips from Hitz.fm’s website. Subsequently, they are labelled as P1 to P25. Appropriate examples are then extracted from the clips and transcribed accordingly. It is to be noted that while the study employs Jefferson’s (2004) transcription symbols, it is not concerned with Conversation Analysis. The transcription symbols serve only to indicate conventional interactional aspects such as interruptions, overlaps or shouting. Impoliteness is analysed based on these transcriptions. The procedures for data collection are summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: The stages in data collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Researcher listens to ‘Gotcha’ calls from 2011 to 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25 clips which are rich in impoliteness are selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The clips are downloaded from Hitz.fm’s website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The clips are labelled as P1 to P25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Suitable examples are extracted from the clips and transcribed according to Jefferson’s (2004) transcription symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Impoliteness is analysed based on the transcriptions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6 Data Analysis

There are two stages of analysis in this study. The first stage involves determining the stages which contribute to the progression of impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.
Bousfield’s (2007) model of beginnings, middles and ends is incorporated as the framework. Three different stages which relate to the unfolding of impoliteness are investigated. They include (1) how impoliteness is initiated, (2) how impoliteness develops and (3) how impoliteness is brought to an end in Malaysian radio prank calls. In the first aspect, the elements of “Offending Situations” which are adapted from Jay’s (1992, 2000) concept of “Offending Events” are employed. They are used to analyse the prevailing factors which motivated the usage of impoliteness in the calls. In short, the causes of impoliteness are looked into.

In the second aspect, Culpeper et al.’s (2003) model of response options is used to account for how the interlocutors deal with impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. It demonstrates the extent to which they are affected by impoliteness. Features such as whether the hearers responded or whether they acted defensively or offensively are examined. The dominant pattern of responses is taken note of. In the third aspect, Vuchinich’s (1990) four types of conflict terminations are integrated into the analysis to determine the emergent forms of impoliteness endings in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. It addresses questions like “Did the hearer give in without a fight?” (e.g. Submission) or “Did the hearer oppose the offensive attacks with offensive moves?” (e.g. Stand-off).

On the other hand, the second stage of data analysis involves analysing the types of impoliteness strategies and impoliteness output strategies in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) model of impoliteness which consists of six impoliteness superstrategies is used as the framework. This stage is divided into two parts—(1) the deejay’s usage of impoliteness strategies and (2) the receiver’s usage of impoliteness strategies. The impoliteness strategies are categorized according to their types and their frequencies calculated. This is done to investigate the participants’ preferences in using
the strategies. The participant's choice of impoliteness strategy is then explained in terms of its function in the discourse. The findings here will also reveal which participant is more impolite in the prank calls.

3.7 Pilot Study

The pilot study of this research involves a ‘Gotcha’ call which was performed on 24 August 2012. In this call, the receiver was set up by her friend, Timothy, who knew that she had ruined a hotel towel recently. The deejay posed as a representative from the hotel and informed the receiver that she had to pay for the damage or face legal action.

The analysis starts off with the first research question—the stages which constitute the progression of impoliteness. At the discourse beginning, the results show that the receiver is provoked into delivering impoliteness by the deejay’s relentless indictments. The excerpt is shown below.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>DJ: It's not that much. It's about a hundred and fifty bucks for the towel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>R : Hundred and fifty for a towel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>DJ: Yeap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>R : Erm:: I need to talk to Timothy and the rest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>DJ: Wh Why do you need to talk to Timothy? It’s your fault, you pay for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>R : Eh it’s not only me you know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>DJ: But you dyed your hair. Do you understand the process here? You (. ) dyed your hair (. ) wrapped your hair, your hair caused the stain on our towel. ((exaggerated slow tone))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>R : Okay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the excerpt, the deejay’s act of condemning the receiver operates as the “Offending Situation.” It consists of the elements Event – Language – Behavior. The receiver obviously wants to discuss the matter with her friends. But the deejay, who is the offender in this case, snubs her by reinforcing the fact that she is the perpetrator of the damaged towel. The accusation “It’s your fault, you pay for it” is made personal due to the usage of the possessive pronoun “your” and second person pronoun “you.” The deejay’s impoliteness succeeds in aggravating the receiver as it initiates an immediate
protest in Turn 27 “Eh it’s not only me you know.” This defensive move rejects complete responsibility for the offence.

Besides, the findings indicate that impoliteness develops significantly in the middle of the ‘Gotcha’ call. The excerpt below illustrates the deejay’s further attempts of attacking the receiver.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Exchange</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>DJ: It’s a small matter let’s not make it big thing because technically this can go to criminal charges because you are damaging ah: private [property]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>R : [Ya I know::]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>DJ: You understand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>R : Then .hhh I’m not working now so it’s like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>DJ: I understand it’s a hundred and fifty ringgit you can get it from whomever that you thought is involved or you can get it from your parents but when can we expect this money?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>R : Maybe by next month?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>DJ: Next month??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>R : Ya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>DJ: I cannot accept that I’m sorry. You have till the end of tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>R : Seriously?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>DJ: Susan if we don’t get the money by the end of tomorrow you can expect a lawyer’s letter. ((threatening tone))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>R : Ah okay. Can you give me a bank account or something like that?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the stage where the receiver gets most irritated. Despite so, the results reveal that she caves in most of the time to the deejay’s demands. The deejay intensifies the face threat by bringing up “criminal charges” in Turn 30. But before he can finish his utterance, the receiver responds by cutting in with “Ya I know.” This statement is an offensive move as it is an interruption which obstructs the deejay’s speech. The manner in which she retaliates also suggests that she is impatient and annoyed. However, the receiver’s abrupt reaction is simultaneously an acknowledgement of his position on the matter. This shows that she is aware of the dire circumstances if she fails to assume responsibility.

The final stage of this particular ‘Gotcha’ call reveals that the receiver utilizes the “Submission to the Opponent” termination strategy. She submits to the deejay’s face-
attacks without putting up much of a fight. The excerpt below demonstrates how the call ended.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>DJ: Okay erm our bank account number you have a pen and paper?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>R : Ya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>DJ: Okay six zero three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>R : Six zero three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>DJ: Nine five four three three three one one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>R : Ah ha? (uncertain laugh) You sure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>DJ: Yes very sure. It’s Hitz.fm. I’m JJ how are you doing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>R : ((laughs)) Oh my God Timothy I’m gonna kill him!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>DJ: ((laughs)) Don’t ever da damage hotel property it’s very bad!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>R : ((inhales)) Oh my God I cannot ((laughs)) Oh I’m still gonna kill him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>DJ: Alright go ahead kill him but we gotta say GOTCHA!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>R : ((laughs))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The receiver accepts the face-attack when she complies with the deejay’s request to take down his account number. She does this without further protests or arguments. The single word “Ya” in Turn 43 seals her submission to the deejay. Hence, the deejay succeeds in coercing her into agreeing with his terms by using impoliteness. It is standard procedure for the deejay to reveal his true identity towards the end of the call. Impoliteness on the deejay’s part often stops here. Upon discovering that her friend set her up, the receiver responds with two threats which convey the intent to kill him. In this context however, the threats are not meant to be taken seriously since the receiver probably interprets the ‘Gotcha’ call as a joke. The aggravating properties of the threats are also mitigated by her laughter in Turn 49 and Turn 51.

The second research question of this study addresses the various impoliteness strategies in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. Culpeper's (1996, 2005) impoliteness model is incorporated in this analysis. It investigates the impoliteness strategies used by the deejays to elicit impoliteness as well as the impoliteness strategies used by the receivers to counter the verbal attacks.
In the 'Gotcha' clip for the pilot study, the deejay makes use of two types of impoliteness strategies. The first comprises negative impoliteness which damages the receiver's negative face by impeding on her actions (Culpeper, 1996, p. 356). The example is illustrated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>DJ: It’s a small matter let’s not make it big thing because technically this can go to criminal charges because you are damaging ah: private [property]</td>
<td>The deejay’s usage of negative impoliteness is located in Turn 30. It consists of the impoliteness output strategy to frighten. The blunt statement aims to strike fear in the receiver by relating the offence to “criminal charges.” Such a linkage exacerbates the severity of the situation as it outwardly suggests that the offence can be compared to those committed by real criminals. Besides, the deejay’s utterance is also a threat which promises horrible consequences if the receiver does not give in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>R: [Ya I know:]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>DJ: You understand?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>R: Then .hhh I’m not working now so it’s like</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>DJ: I understand it’s a hundred and fifty ringgit you can get it from whomever that you thought is involved or you can get it from your parents but when can we expect this money?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>R: Maybe by next month?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>DJ: Next month??</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>R: Ya.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>DJ: I cannot accept that I’m sorry. You have till the end of tomorrow.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>R: Seriously?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>DJ: Susan if we don’t get the money by the end of tomorrow you can expect a lawyer’s letter. ((threatening tone))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>R: Ah okay. Can you give me a bank account or something like that?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second type of impoliteness strategy employed by the deejay comprises bald on record impoliteness. Culpeper (1996, p. 356) maintained that this impoliteness strategy occurs when the face-threatening act is carried out in a direct and unambiguous manner. An example is portrayed below.
In this dialogue, bald on record impoliteness appears in Turn 20 where the deejay asks the receiver to splash water on her face. This is a direct imperative which functions to insult the receiver’s nonchalant attitude. It is impolite as it is produced in a very straight-forward manner. In addition, it is conveyed in a way which indicates that the deejay is irritated with the receiver. His crudeness yields a frustrated answer from her in Turn 21 "I'm not sure how I'm gonna pay." The receiver had mentioned previously that she is a student and thus, cannot afford paying the fee.

Likewise, two types of impoliteness strategies are employed by the receiver – positive impoliteness and negative impoliteness. Positive impoliteness is used to aggravate the addressee’s need for acceptance (Culpeper, 1996, p. 356). The example is shown below.

Positive impoliteness is deployed in Turn 25 when the receiver blurts out that she is not the only one responsible. This involves the impoliteness output strategy to seek disagreement. It intends to deny the accusations in Turn 24. Defensive in nature, it is also produced to amend the earlier damages to the receiver’s face. Besides, positive impoliteness is employed to distance herself from the offence. This is achieved through implying that there are others involved in the matter. The act of shifting responsibility creates an impression that the receiver is less accountable for the damage.
Apart from that, the receiver employs negative impoliteness in the discourse. It is performed to impede on the deejay’s speech. The example is illustrated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 DJ:</td>
<td>It’s a small matter let’s not make it big thing because technically this can go to criminal charges because you are damaging ah: private [property]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 R :</td>
<td>[Ya I know::]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 DJ:</td>
<td>You understand?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this excerpt, negative impoliteness consists of the impoliteness out strategy to hinder linguistically. The receiver interjects the deejay’s speech in Turn 2 with “Ya I know.” This is a transgressive move as it violates the rules of turn-taking in an interaction. The receiver refuses to allow the deejay to finish his turn. She forcefully gains the conversational floor to deflect the threats. In addition, the receiver verbally drags the word “know” to signal that she is well-aware of the outcome if she does not settle the fee. This move also reflects her annoyance towards his statements which appear to undermine her ability to understand the situation.

### 3.7.1 Layperson Analysis

A layperson analysis was performed to investigate if the examples of impoliteness for the pilot study were deemed impolite by laypeople. Four participants were selected to be part of this analysis. They are all students in their early twenties and come from middle-class backgrounds. The participants were selected through convenience sampling. They were only chosen if they listened to Hitz.fm and were readily available for the tests. The researcher could reach the participants easily because they live nearby. The examples for this test involved impoliteness strategies. Four excerpts of the ‘Gotcha’ clip were provided. Two comprised impoliteness strategies employed by the deejay and the other two comprised impoliteness strategies employed by the receiver. Altogether, three types of impoliteness strategies were looked into—negative impoliteness, positive impoliteness and bald on record impoliteness.
The contexts of the examples were provided along with the transcription of the dialogues. Other than the transcript, the participants were also given the opportunity to listen to the audio version of the excerpts. They were then asked to rate the (im)politeness of the statements based on the Likert scale. The test basically consisted of a questionnaire. An example of the test is demonstrated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R : Hmm::: ((sleep tone))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DJ: You need to wake up and splash some water on you face or something la because I really need to settle this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: I’m not sure how I’m gonna pay.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question:** Do you think that the deejay was polite or impolite when he said “You need to wake up and splash some water on you face or something la because I really need to settle this”?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polite</th>
<th>Impolite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the layperson test are summarized in Table 3.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excerpt</th>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>Participant 2</th>
<th>Participant 3</th>
<th>Participant 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deejay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (negative impoliteness)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (bald on record impoliteness)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (positive impoliteness)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (negative Impoliteness)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings show that the participants generally found all the statements in the test to be impolite. Their ratings range from 5 to 7 on the Likert scale, indicating that they found the utterances to be either rather impolite, impolite or very impolite. Most importantly, the layperson test reveals that the participants' interpretations of impoliteness are mostly in line with the researcher's own interpretation. To put it another way, what is perceived as impolite by the researcher is also perceived as such by the laypeople. Hence, it can be deduced that this research is feasible.
3.8 Summary

In summary, the results of the pilot study indicate that the research is feasible. The theoretical frameworks of this study—Bousfield’s (2007) model of beginnings, middles and ends and Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) model of impoliteness ensure that specific areas of interest such as the stages which establish the progression of impoliteness and impoliteness strategies are explored thoroughly. In the first stage of analysis, the findings indicate that there is indeed a sequential process in which impoliteness unfolds in the ‘Gotcha’ call. In the second stage, it is revealed that impoliteness strategies like positive impoliteness and negative impoliteness are often used to convey impoliteness. The data collection method (intensity sampling) proves to be pertinent as it manages to produce data which is abundant with impoliteness. This is crucial since impoliteness constitutes the core of the study. Transcription of relevant parts also allowed the researcher to conduct a detail moment-by-moment examination of impoliteness in the radio prank calls. All in all, the pilot study demonstrates that the research is right on track.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and analysis of impoliteness in Malaysian radio prank calls. It is divided into two main sections which include the stages which constitute the progression of impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls and the types of impoliteness strategies used in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. The first section contains three sub-sections—the initiating of impoliteness, the progression of impoliteness and the end of impoliteness. The second section encompasses two sub-sections—impoliteness strategies used to elicit impoliteness and impoliteness strategies used to convey impoliteness.

4.1 Stages which Constitute the Progression of Impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ Calls

This section addresses the first research question which investigates how impoliteness unfolds in the ‘Gotcha’ conversations. Three important stages of impoliteness are taken into account—how it is initiated, how it develops and how it ends. The analysis of these stages determines if impoliteness transpires according to a sequential process. Besides, it is important to note that each of the stages vary in terms of participation. The deejays are more involved in the beginning of the ‘Gotcha’ calls. It is here where the process of eliciting impoliteness from the receiver begins. The receivers, on the other hand, are often baffled by the conflict presented to them. Thus, they do not participate as much compared to the deejays.
The participation of the deejays and receivers reaches a peak in the middle of the discourse. Both parties are fully engaged in the conversation with the deejay attacking the receiver and the receiver retaliating against the attacks. Towards the end of the call, the participation begins to decline. The deejays ease up the heated exchanges by revealing the prank. Majority of the receivers would then pass it off as a good joke. This marks the conclusion of the ‘Gotcha’ calls.

4.1.1 The Initiation of Impoliteness

In Bousfield’s (2007) model, Jay’s (1992) elements of the “Offending Event” are used to address the possible triggers of impoliteness. However, this study only employs six elements that are pertinent to the examination of the radio prank calls. They consist of status, the event, behaviour, language, intentionality and potential damage. To reiterate, these elements are positioned where the deejay first succeeds in provoking the receiver into delivering impoliteness. The findings demonstrate that all six types are present in 25 of the ‘Gotcha’ calls. Table 4.1 summarizes the types of elements and their frequencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Elements</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Damage</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionality</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The element which takes place most is the ‘Event’ (N= 24). This points out that it is the deejays’ actions which primarily provoke the receivers into employing impoliteness. It is followed by ‘Behaviour’ (N = 23) which entails that the deejays perform in ways antagonistic enough to elicit impoliteness. ‘Potential Damage’ (N = 15) comes in next whereby the receivers are driven to impoliteness because they face the possibility of
suffering losses. This is followed by ‘Language’ (N = 10) in which the deejays verbally abuse the receivers and ‘Intentionality’ (N =4) where the receivers interpret the deejays’ deeds as deliberately impolite. Lastly, there is ‘Status’ (N = 2). This is where power relations are emphasized in expressing impoliteness. Altogether, 79 elements are present in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.

The results support Bousfield’s (2007, p. 2193) statement that the elements of “Offending Situations” do not stand alone. In each of the ‘Gotcha’ calls, there is always more than one element in an offending event. The minimum combination consists of two elements whereas the maximum combination consists of five elements. Besides, the results are also in line with Bousfield’s (2007, p. 2193) findings that the grouping of Event – Behaviour occurs most recurrently in the data. They are either the only elements present or they merge with others in the prank calls.

4.1.1.1 Event – Behaviour
Excerpt P2 demonstrates an example of the Event – Behavior combination. In P2, the receiver was set up by her friend who knew that she would not need any English lessons since she is an English language lecturer. The deejay called to offer the receiver an English language package to improve her English. She brushed him off during his first two attempts by stating that she was busy. This is the deejay’s third attempt at calling the receiver.

**P2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DJ: <strong>Hello good afternoon Miss. I’ve been trying to call you a few days about [a a]</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>[Yes] I know. I’ve been really busy it’s the end of the semester I’ve a lot of work to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>R2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>DJ: <strong>Oh semester. You still student ah?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The deejay’s relentless pursuing operates as the “Offending Situation.” It is made up of the elements Event – Behaviour. The ‘Event’ involves the deejay’s attempts of selling the English Language programme although the receiver does not need it. This is because she is already proficient in the language. The element of ‘Behaviour’ comprises the deejay’s overly persistent attitude in promoting the programme. As illustrated in Turn 1, the deejay has tried calling the receiver three days in a row to convince her. The combined elements elicit an impolite response from her in Turn 2. The receiver interjects the conversation and provides the excuse that she is very busy. This interruption is impolite as it denies the deejay a proper turn in the discourse. It also echoes the receiver’s intense disinterest in what the deejay has to offer.

The findings concur with Bousfield’s (2007, p. 2193) claims that the “Offending Situation” can be the last element of a broader and cumulatively offensive chain of events which did not happen in the present moment. The receiver’s exasperation festers over several days before it is finally unleashed at the deejay during the third call. One could say that the third call was the ‘final straw that broke the camel’s back.’

4.1.1.2 Potential Damage

The element of ‘Potential Damage’ plays a significant role of generating impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. The data reveals three kinds of possible losses or damages that the receivers stand to encounter. These include (1) the loss of cash in which the receiver suffers damages in terms of monetary matters, (2) damaged goods in which something belonging to the receiver is ruined and (3) negative outcomes to the self in which
damages are inflicted upon a personal aspect of the receiver’s life. Table 4.2 summarises the types of ‘Potential Damages’ found in the findings.

Table 4.2: Types of ‘Potential Damages’ faced by the receivers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of ‘Potential Damage’</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Cash</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Outcome to the Self</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaged Goods</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results show that the prospect of losing money is what motivates most of the receivers to use impoliteness in the prank calls. ‘Loss of Cash’ has 10 occurrences. The frequency at which this tactic is employed shows that people guard their finances seriously and tend to get upset when potential losses are expected. It is followed by ‘Negative Outcome to the Self’ with three occurrences and ‘Damaged Goods’ with two occurrences. An example of ‘Loss of Cash’ is provided in P15.

In P15, the receiver was set up by her own daughter who knew that her mother had sent the Nintendo Wii for inspection. The deejay posed as the person in charge of the work and claimed that he had replaced the parts of the Nintendo Wii even though the receiver requested for only an inspection. The deejay then demanded that she paid RM550 for the service.

**P15**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DJ : Okay ah the Nintendo Wii is ready already for him to ah er pickup but er the costing is gonna be five hundred and fifty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>R15: I told you all already I must I’m er I’ll ask you all to check first then only let me know [then only.] Hah?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>DJ : <em>[Oh it’s not]</em> it’s not here in the report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>R15: No it’s I already told the man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>DJ : <strong>But we changed already the parts. It's five hundred [and fifty.]</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>R15: [No no no.] No no no. I won’t pay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>DJ : <strong>But it’s changed</strong> =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>R15: =This is cheating. This is cheating you know. [Because] I already told the man. Definitely.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The “Offending Situation” comprises three different elements of impoliteness: Event – Behaviour – Potential Damage. The ‘Event’ is portrayed by the deejay’s actions of switching the Nintendo Wii’s parts without permission. As shown in Turn 7, the receiver did not ask for it. The element of ‘Behaviour’ occurs due to the deejay’s stubbornness in insisting that the parts are already altered. This is reflected in Turn 8, 10 and 12. He ignores the receiver’s clarifications and demands for the money. In this case, he is placing his needs ahead of his customer’s needs. Besides, the deejay refuses to acknowledge the ‘error’ he made.

‘Potential Damage’ is, however, the greatest element of impoliteness in this call. The notion that she may have to spend RM550 for repair services which she did not request for sends the receiver over the edge. Impoliteness first appears in Turn 11. The phrase “No no no” presents a threat to the deejay’s face as the baldness of the denial demonstrates an intention to defy his requirements. Meakins (2001, p. 14) supports this statement by asserting that the act of overly disagreeing with people indicates disrespect towards their views. The utterance “I won’t pay” is also portrayed as an absolute statement of fact which contains a sense of finality. It is constructed as such to highlight the receiver’s resoluteness in overcoming the deejay’s resistance.

The deejay’s continued persistence aggravates the receiver and this initiates the outburst in Turn 13. Repetition is employed here to exacerbate the face threat. The phrase “This is cheating” is reiterated twice within the same turn. In the second sentence, “you know” is added as a message enforcer. The receiver resorts to these provoking techniques to accentuate the deejay’s deceitfulness. They depict him as a liar who intends to swindle innocent people out of their money. This is consistent with Austin’s (1990, p. 12) claims
that the speaker often highlights features of the interaction which are face-threatening and enhances them in an indirect way in a face-attack.

The impression that something undesirable is about to happen to their personal lives also sets off impoliteness from the receivers. This is classified as ‘Negative Outcome to the Self.’ In P12, the receiver’s friend, Jodin, set her up. The receiver was applying for a medical surgery degree in a university. The deejay posed as a person from the university’s HR department. He informed the receiver that she failed to send in the dean’s list certificate for the registration. Unless she sent it in that day, they would not be able to accept her.

**P12**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>DJ : =No if you don’t send today how am I going to take you for seventh September? That’s not very far from now. That’s why ah that’s why I’m bit worried for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>R12: Why my school tak cakap apa-apa pun? Because I have another two friends yang dapat medical dia orang tak cakap apa-apa pun. Kenapa? Why didn't my school say anything about this? Because I have two other friends who got offered the medical degree and they didn't say anything too. Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>DJ : No maybe they posted. Whatever it is I nak hhh deal with you sekarang. I'll deal with them later. Meanwhile, I need [to talk to you because when do you aim on sending in this information? Because I need it before 12 o’clock today confirm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>R12: [Mmm hmm.] Giler? 12 o’clock? I cannot post it today! Post office buka ke today? [Mmm hmm.] Are you crazy? 12 o’clock? I cannot post it today! Is the post office even opened today?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Malay language appears in this dialogue as it was initiated by the receiver earlier on in the discourse. She had opted to speak to the deejay in Malay. The deejay promptly follows suit and conducts the conversation in a mixture of Malay and English. This is unlike the usual calls which are carried out in English. The deejay’s actions of adjusting according to the receiver’s choice of language shows that radio prank calls can be discursively constructed on the spot. In other words, they are not rigid programmes which operate based on a fixed format. The deejay’s proposition functions as the
“Offending Situation” in this call. Three elements are present here: Event – Behaviour – Potential Damage.

The ‘Event’ takes place when the deejay makes the suggestion that the receiver mails the certificate by that day in Turn 20. This is unfeasible since the receiver is from Johor Bahru and the deejay is from Kuala Lumpur. It will take at least a day before the letter arrives. ‘Behaviour’ is portrayed by the deejay’s unhelpful attitude. In Turn 22, he brusquely brushes off the receiver’s questions and gives a vague answer. The deejay also produces a firm assertion to disregard the receiver “Whatever it is I want to hhh deal with you now.” This statement implicates that he finds the receiver troublesome and wishes to settle the matter as soon as possible. In addition, it is used with the intent of foreclosing further questioning or arguments. The deejay’s exhalation also reflects his impatience.

Moreover, the element of ‘Potential Damage’ incites the receiver. In this case, she may lose her chance to register for the medical degree. This results in a negative impact on her life since graduate studies are crucial in determining one’s future work. The culminating effects of the elements initiate an impolite reaction from the receiver in Turn 23. Her utterance “Are you crazy?” is face-damaging as it openly questions the deejay’s sanity. This is followed by a complete rejection of the matter “I cannot post it today!” and a challenge “Is the post office even opened today?” The challenge is posed as it was Hari Raya when the deejay called. General knowledge entails that post offices are closed on public holidays. This fact is used to force the deejay to acknowledge how preposterous his idea is.
Besides, the data demonstrates that the receivers tend to get riled up if something belonging to them has been damaged. This is categorised under ‘Damaged Goods.’ In P5, it was not disclosed who set the receiver up. But the person knew that the receiver had sent her car for repair and decided to use that context for the prank. The deejay posed as the mechanic in charge and pretended to wreck the car in the background through the phone.

P5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 DJ</td>
<td>I understand. Ya ya we seem to have a few of those problems. Don’t worry. At the moment one of my foreman is test driving the car and ah shouldn’t be problem and we could be passing the [car wait hold on ah.] Hold on miss ah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 DJ2</td>
<td>[Boss! Boss! Boss!] Boss! ((indistinct))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 DJ</td>
<td>((indistinct)) Ya ya ya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 DJ2</td>
<td>((indistinct)) Boss the:: the car. The test drive car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 DJ</td>
<td>((indistinct)) Which which test drive car?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 DJ2</td>
<td>The one the Ah Chong is driving. Accident la boss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 DJ</td>
<td>What?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 DJ2</td>
<td>Right in front here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 DJ</td>
<td>What accident? Which car?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 DJ2</td>
<td>The:: silver one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 DJ</td>
<td>Which one? Aiyoo::</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 DJ2</td>
<td>The ((bleep)) Just only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 DJ</td>
<td>Okay okay never mind never mind. Shh! Shh!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 R5</td>
<td>Is that my car?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 DJ2</td>
<td>You want me to bring Ah Chong in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 DJ</td>
<td>Ya sorry. Ah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 R5</td>
<td>Is that my car?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 DJ</td>
<td>Oh Ah:: Ah yes la ma’am. I’m so sorry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 R5</td>
<td>MR. KAMARUL! CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT’S WRONG WITH THE CAR NOW?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 DJ</td>
<td>No the the car was okay I erm ah:: I don’t know because they they they were test driving it and I think they crashed. Maybe something wrong with your ge. I think gear. [Gear]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An “Offending Situation” is established due to the deejay’s negligent worker. This example comprises the elements Event – Behaviour – Potential Damage. The ‘Event’
involves the act of crashing the receiver’s car. The statements in Turn 13, Turn 15 and Turn 19 intend to make the receiver realize that it was her car which they ruined. Meanwhile, ‘Behaviour’ consists of the deejay’s desperate attempts to cover up the blunder. In Turn 13, the phrases “Shh! Shh!” indicate that he initially plans to keep the incident from the receiver. The hedges “Oh” and “Ah” in Turn 27 also echo his reluctance to tell her the truth. However, the deejay admits the mistake later on in the same turn.

The type of ‘Potential Damage’ encountered here comprises ‘Damaged Goods.’ The deejays manage to conjure a horrific image of the car’s condition through the word “accident.” The elements of the “Offending Situation” irk the receiver into issuing impoliteness in Turn 28. She personalizes the utterance by shouting his name and then angrily demands to know the condition of her car. Thus, impoliteness is utilized to force the truth out of the deejay. It is accomplished through the technique of intimidation. Impoliteness emerges once more in Turn 30 when the receiver impedes on the deejay’s speech by reminding him that the accident is his fault. The act of blaming the deejay constitutes a threat to his face.

4.1.1.3 Language

Likewise, ‘Language’ is a strategy which is incorporated to elicit impoliteness from the receivers. This element transpires when libel or slander is employed. In P17, the receiver was set up by his girlfriend who wanted him to return to England. Based on this context, the deejays posed as immigration officers informing the receiver that his Visa had expired. He was then ordered to deport for England.

P17

7   DJ : So it’s finished it’s the end of it’s its time for the end =
8   R17: =Wait wait wait wait. Whatchu mean whatchu mean finished?
9 DJ : As in er because the the:: the time is expire. That mean on our end we have to we have to make for you go back to the England.

10 R17: Whoa whoa whoa whoa! Wait a minute. Whatchu mean? My my my Visa is fine. I checked it. It’s fine.

11 DJ : Sir I have access to the screen of the Visa. Er I think there’s no point you try to argue shout at me because your Visa is is is finished Sir so =

12 R17: =NO IT CAN’T BE IT CAN’T BE! My company deals with all that. [I’m sure they got it sorted.]

13 DJ : [Your er.] Okay maybe your company is ((bleep)) you?

14 R17: No no no no why would they do that?

15 DJ : Okay Sir =

16 R17: =Why why would they risk it all?

17 DJ : I can put you through to your ((bleep)) now.

18 R17: Yes please please! Because because I’m not happy with this [when I know for a fact that I’m allowed to stay here.

The “Offending Situation” is made up of four elements: Event – Behaviour – Potential Damage – Language. The ‘Event’ consists of the abrupt announcement that the receiver’s Visa has expired. One can observe this in Turn 7 and Turn 9. It has the potential to elicit impoliteness as it presents a nasty shock to the receiver who is clueless about the matter. ‘Behaviour’ is demonstrated through the deejay’s uncooperative attitude in Turn 11. The statement is impolite as it implicates that the deejay is not interested in listening to the receiver’s attempts of clarifying the situation. He is adamant in sending the receiver back to England. This brusque style is intentionally adapted with hopes that the receiver will retaliate with offensive moves.

There is also ‘Negative Outcome to the Self’ in terms of ‘Potential Damage.’ The receiver faces the daunting likelihood of losing his job in Malaysia and being deported to England. His personal life will be greatly affected as he has to give up everything that he has worked for in the recent years. Additionally, the element of ‘Language’ is responsible for the receiver’s usage of impoliteness. This is exemplified in Turn 11. The deejay opts for the word “shout” although the receiver never does that throughout the
excerpt. Furthermore, taboo language is utilized in Turn 13. The expletive serves to fan the receiver’s anger by intensifying the offensiveness of the utterance.

As intended by the deejay, the receiver counters the threats with impoliteness. He raises his voice significantly in Turn 12 and retorts with a challenge in Turn 14. This question disputes the deejay’s claims that the company is involved. Besides, it reinforces the receiver’s belief that the Visa is still functional. Impoliteness is also exhibited in Turn 18. Despite the usage of the politeness token “please,” the utterance is still face-damaging due to the explicit declaration that the receiver is “unhappy” with the deejay. Beebe (1995) categorised this type of impoliteness as “instrumental rudeness.” It is carried out to achieve either one of two goals – communicate negative emotions or acquire power. In this ‘Gotcha’ call, impoliteness is used to express hostile emotions.

4.1.1.4 Intentionality

On top of that, the element of ‘Intentionality’ is accountable for impoliteness on the receiver’s part. It takes place when it has been perceived that the deejay is being deliberately malicious. In P3, the receiver is a mutual friend of both the deejays. He was getting his toilet bowl fixed as it was faulty. His brother was aware of this and set him up. The brother asked the deejays to inform the receiver that the plumbing services would cost more. The deejays pranked the receiver by notifying him that they were about to remove his toilet bowl. They also added an extra charge of RM800 for the services.

P3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>DJ: Ya we have to take the whole toilet bowl the problem is the toilet bowl now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>R3: Aiyo then ah:: what is it going to cost la?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>DJ: It’ll cost maybe er in excess of eight hundred ringgit ah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>R3: HAH? EIGHT HUNDRED? Eh cannot la like that why so expensive how am I going to afford eight hundred [you take my toilet bowl like that and go?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>DJ: [Toilet bowl] toilet bowl not cheap ma toilet bowl [is very]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five different elements of impoliteness constitute the “Offending Situation.” They include Event – Behaviour – Language – Potential Damage – Intentionality. The ‘Event’ comprises the deejay’s intention of taking away the toilet bowl without obtaining the receiver’s permission. The element of ‘Behaviour’ encompasses the degrading manner in which the deejay ridicules the receiver in Turn 20. The deejay’s humiliating suggestions are an immense blow to the receiver’s face since answering Nature’s call is sensitive business. This move is in line with Bousfield’s (2007, p. 2186) characterisation of impoliteness where the face threat is purposely amplified or exaggerated to wreak more damage to a person’s face.

Likewise, the element of ‘Language’ is found in Turn 20. The deejay constructs the utterance in such a way that it sounds deceivingly helpful at first—the receiver is made to believe that there are certain alternatives to cope with the situation. However, he is then treated to a rude shock with the following disparaging sentences “You can use a cup. You can also use a bottle.” It soon becomes obvious that the deejay is making fun of the receiver. In addition, the receiver also faces the prospect of losing a great deal of money for the repairs. This is where ‘Potential Damage’ comes in. The idea of paying so much for something he did not agree to infuriates the receiver. Impoliteness is
initiated when he launches into an angry tirade in Turn 21. A stream of questions is deployed to challenge the deejay.

Moreover, there is the element of ‘Intentionality.’ This is shown when the receiver explodes in Turn 21. The phrase “eh come on la eh” signals his awareness that impoliteness was intentionally executed by the deejay in the conversation. As a counter measure, the receiver proceeds to categorize the deejay’s remarks as “nonsense.” This direct statement functions to cause open insult. Besides, the following sentences “What is this? How can you ask me to use a cup?” display his incredulity at being spoken to so impolitely. The findings here are parallel to studies by Stamp and Knapp (1990) and Vangelisti and Young (2000) who discovered that face-threatening verbal behaviours are viewed as more hurtful if the hearers construe them to be purposeful.

4.1.1.5 Status

Lastly, the element of ‘Status’ occurs when the deejay uses some form of authority to coerce the receiver. In P7, the receiver is also a Hitz.fm deejay. The deejays, who are his colleagues, found the receiver’s lost name tag and took it. They set him up by pretending to call from the company’s security management. They informed the receiver that his tag was used to check into the CEO’s room. An explanation was then demanded from the receiver.

P7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>DJ: Okay I’m just checking because I saw you tagging into ah third floor a restricted area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>R7: Erm third floor? No no not not the third floor no.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>DJ: <strong>Our system shows that you tagged into third floor okay. Why you went inside there?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>R7: Oh no I didn’t go there. Ah I think there’s something wrong with my tag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>DJ: <strong>No where is your tag now?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>R7: My tag is umm that’s a good question. I don’t have my tag on me. I don’t know where my tag is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>DJ: <strong>Where is your tag now? Because this is a very big mistake you done.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>R7: Okay I need to I need to probably speak to you in person cause erm erm right now I can’t really do it through the phone. Can I speak to you in person?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 16   | DJ: **Yes can. But erm I wanna check with you. What you did in the third floor? Why you
The deejay’s impolite accusations serve as the “Offending Situation.” He is established as the Offender owing to the elements Event – Behaviour – Language – Status. The ‘Event’ comprises the deejay’s allegations that the receiver entered the CEO’s room without authorization. This is exhibited in Turn 10. ‘Behaviour’ comes into the picture when the deejay begins acting more and more aggressively. One can perceive this in Turn 14, 16 and 18. In every turn, the deejay bombards the receiver with imposing questions while turning a deaf ear to his explanations.

‘Language’ takes the form of slander where the deejay makes false and damaging statements about the receiver who never went to the third floor. In Turn 14, the intensifier “very” and adjective “big” are inserted to amplify the severity of the threat. This is also done to frighten the receiver. Meanwhile, ‘Status’ emerges due to the power imbalance between the two parties. Culpeper (1996, p. 354) asserted that powerful people can be more impolite since they can threaten severe retaliation if a less-powerful party were to be impolite. In this call, the receiver believes that the deejay is from the company’s security unit. As such, it is presumed that he holds more ‘power.’ The deejay uses this to his advantage by injecting authority into his utterances. Turn 16 illustrates an example where commanding questions are deployed. The deejay’s unfounded allegations affront the receiver who produces an impolite protest in Turn 19. “No” is repeated five times in a sheer act of defiance. He speaks rapidly and forcefully, attempting to exonerate himself. The receiver’s adamant attitude forces the deejay to comply with his demands to meet in person.
4.1.2 The Progression of Impoliteness

Bousfield’s (2007) summary of response options is adapted to analyse the types of responses exhibited by the receivers in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. The reactions generally depend on how impoliteness is taken. As mentioned previously, the middle stage is set at the point where the conversation gets most heated in the calls. The findings are demonstrated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Types of response options in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Options</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responded to FTA</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did Not Respond to FTA</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denied Opposing Position</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepted Opposing Position</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countered</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromised</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defensive Strategies</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offensive Strategies</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of Defensive and Offensive Strategies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the receivers in the ‘Gotcha’ calls opt to respond to the deejay’s face-threatening utterances. None of them stay silent. Besides, 24 of the receivers choose to deny the deejay’s position on the issue. Only one receiver accepts the deejay’s stance by submitting to his impolite actions. The results here ascertain that the receivers are a group of people who refuse to be patronized. They prefer to fight and stand up for their rights. Meanwhile, 24 of the receivers decide to counter the offending event. None of them attempt to compromise to the situation. The lack of compromise demonstrates that the deejays manage to sufficiently provoke the receivers. Majority of them are too angry to think about negotiating. Thus, one could deduce that anger motivates the receivers to pick the more aggressive option.
Eight of the receivers employ defensive strategies in the data. While they are not as hostile as offensive strategies, defensive strategies shelter one’s face against the onslaught of a verbal attack. On the contrary, 13 of the receivers react by implementing offensive strategies. Hence, it appears that the receivers favour offensive strategies over defensive strategies when responding to provocation in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. Lastly, three of the receivers opt for a combination of defensive and offensive strategies to tackle the “Offending Situation.”

4.1.2.1 Accepting the Opponent’s Position

Out of the 25 ‘Gotcha’ calls of this study, only one contains an example in which the receiver accepts the deejay’s face-attacks. It is located in P4. The receiver recently lost his credit cards when he left them in his office. His friend, Ryan, knew about this and asked the deejays to set the receiver up by posing as the thief. The deejay called the receiver and taunted him for his carelessness.

P4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>DJ: What for want to see you? You’re gonna turn me in you’re gonna call the police!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>R4: ((laughs)) No la <strong>dude</strong>. Come la come la.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>DJ: Hah?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>R4: <strong>Dude</strong> actually honest la I’m not too worried you spent anything because I’m not on the losing side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>DJ: You’re not on the losing side? You just everything you just lost ten thousand dollars and I enjoyed it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>R4: Yes ah?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>DJ: I enjoyed every bit of it. That’s why I’m asking got any brains left in that afro of yours or not? [Or you shaved all of it off?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>R4: [No la bro.] Ya ya I’m really stupid. Dude I would really love to meet up. So:: once again like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The deejay hurls a face-damaging utterance in Turn 54. A huge threat is presented when the deejay boasts about his exploits of spending the receiver’s money. He does this knowing very well that the receiver may get distraught at the thought of losing so much money. Moreover, his first question implies that the receiver is a moron. Despite
encountering verbal impoliteness, the receiver meekly accepts the deejay’s stance in Turn 55. “No” is supplied to the deejay’s first question on whether he has brains or not. The act of self-damaging is further reinforced by his own confession “Ya ya I’m really stupid.” On the one hand, these acknowledgements support the impolite belief that he is a fool. On the other, they reflect the receiver’s complete submission to the deejay.

Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1562) claimed that accepting a face-attack intensifies the amount of damage to a person’s face. This is precisely what happens in the excerpt—the receiver incurs more face loss. His mild behaviour can be attributed to the circumstances of this ‘Gotcha’ call. The receiver is under the impression that he is talking to the thief who stole his credit cards. As such, he may have refrained from employing offensive moves for fear that the deejay may get mad and hang up. Besides, the receiver uses the terms ‘bro’ and ‘dude’ to reduce the possibility of causing offence. They are also employed to establish a sense of camaraderie between the interlocutors. Perhaps the receiver wishes to maintain good relations so that he can prolong the conversation. This is done to extract more valuable information from the deejay.

4.1.2.2 Usage of Defensive Strategies

Eight of the receivers opt for defensive counter strategies in responding to the “Offending Situation.” The findings determine that three types of defensive strategies are utilized in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. They include ‘Direct Contradiction’, ‘Offer an Account/Explanation’ and to ‘Plead.’ These strategies either occur alone or merge with each other. Table 4.4 illustrates the types of defensive strategies and their frequencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Defensive Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direction Contradiction + Offer an Account/Explanatation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Contradiction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Contradiction + Plead</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data shows that ‘Direct Contradiction’ makes a constant appearance in the defensive strategies employed by the receivers. It is used most frequently in combination with the strategy of ‘Offer an Account/Explanation’ (N = 5). This is followed by ‘Direct Contradiction’ by itself (N = 2) and the combination of ‘Direct Contradiction’ and ‘Plead’ (N = 1). The pattern which emerges suggests that the receivers prefer to deny a propositional content and then provide justification for their actions. Justification is often performed to present new information which redresses previous threats.

An example is portrayed in P23. In this ‘Gotcha’ call, the receiver was set up by her friend, Zoey, who informed the deejay that the receiver works as a real estate agent. The deejay called the receiver and told her that he was interested in buying a piece of land for his dog.

**P23**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>DJ : So what is [the possibilities] of my dog having a land under his name?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>R23: [Umm.] In such case I need to enquire to my lawyer already.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>DJ : You have your lawyer? But you just informed me that you know!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>R23: I know about humans but not dogs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>DJ : But isn’t it should be same because technically I’m paying money for it. Why’s [the problem whether it’s a human or dog? And this dog is like my child! You know?]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>R23: [I understand. I under. No:: I understand, I understand.] But I because I have I have not been faced with this kind of question before. [Because all the time] the client is asking me to pass on the property to children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The deejay becomes hostile in Turn 32 when he demands to know why the receiver cannot take immediate action. The receiver responds to this in Turn 33. She denies his views regarding the issue and counters with a defensive strategy. The receiver begins by attempting to pacify the deejay with “I understand.” This phrase projects a sense of empathy which entails that she relates with his situation. It is repeated three times to get her point across. Subsequently, she employs the ‘Direct Contradiction’ counter strategy.
to reject the deejay’s accusation that she is being discriminative towards dogs. This is demonstrated by the single word “No” which is verbally dragged for emphasis. After that, the receiver clarifies her earlier response in Turn 31 that she has not encountered any real estate businesses involving dogs. This involves ‘Offering an Account/Explanation.’

The receiver’s justification is carried out with the purpose of mitigating the triggering event in Turn 31 which ‘aggravated’ the deejay into using impoliteness. Bousfield (2007, p. 2200) stated that one could include new and redressive information about the event to lessen the face damage incurred earlier on. The receiver follows suit by elaborating further on the matter. She explains patiently that her clients have consisted of people so far. Thus, she is not familiar with land ownership procedures concerning animals. This explanation aims to defuse the confrontational atmosphere. It also emphasizes the receiver’s willingness in helping the deejay despite the unusual circumstances.

The next example depicts the sole usage of ‘Direct Contradiction’ in which the receiver provides a direct denial of the deejay’s impolite statements. A sample is extracted from P13. In this clip, the receiver was set up by her friend, Nur Azahar, who knew that she used his credit card to pay for the gym membership fees. He informed the deejay to act as if the credit card was cancelled. Thus, the fees remained unpaid. The deejay called the receiver and accused her of not paying three months’ worth of fees. She was then asked to pay a total of RM950 to renew her membership.

**P13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>R13: So why haven't you call me for this past three months? =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>DJ : =Because we give a three months leeway we understand certain people have problems and all that. Then after three months that's when you get the call.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>R13: No I mean like before this every month they will call me. Your your staff will call me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The deejay cleverly twists the receiver’s words in this excerpt and turns it into a conflictive situation. This is in line with Hutchby’s (1996, p. 74) statement that radio station hosts are inclined to pursue controversy in the discourse. They adopt a sceptical attitude to look for possible arguments in what the hearer says. The deejay exacerbates the face-attack by implicating that the receiver is a liar in Turn 50. He also explicitly refutes the receiver’s claims that the staff calls the customers every month. This is illustrated in the deejay’s final utterance “No that’s not our…” The utterance is serves to reinforce the deejay’s accusation that the receiver is a liar.

The deejay’s accusation initiates an immediate response from her in Turn 51. She denies his position and counters with a ‘Direct Contradiction.’ The receiver rejects the deejay’s allegation with a strong “No” which is verbally elongated to establish her point. This response, which is also an interruption, aims to impede on the deejay’s turn in Turn 50. This is done to take over the conversation floor and to get the receiver’s point across. The receiver then strengthens the utterance with “I did not make up stories.” It is produced to defend her position. On the whole, the defensive strategy serves to deflect the deejay’s aggravating statements. This is consistent with Culpeper’s (2011, p. 205) concept that impoliteness is frequently used as a counter measure as it can restore one’s face and block the other party’s coercive strategy.

The final type of defensive strategy in the ‘Gotcha’ calls is a combination of ‘Direct Contradiction’ and ‘Plead.’ An example is exhibited in P24. In this clip, the receiver...
was set up by her neighbour, Joe. He informed the deejay that the receiver was currently abroad and that her car was parked outside his house. The deejay told the receiver that he was going to tow her car away because he received several complaints about it.

P24

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DJ</td>
<td>But it’s been more than two weeks ma’am so you have to understand we have to do our job. So we’re towing [the car]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R24</td>
<td>[No no no!] Please don’t! I’ll I’ll ask my friend to drive the car inside inside his house. You understand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJ</td>
<td>I understand but we already on the machine so someone has to pay the compound because it’s already towed up. Tied up already.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R24</td>
<td>No no no! Please don’t! Please don’t! [I’ll I’ll.] No no no! You have to you have to ask the neighbourhood for the sixteen one. You have to understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJ</td>
<td>[Aiyo:: Aiyo:: Ai but but we already put it on the machine you have to understand=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R24</td>
<td>=NO NO NO! YOU PLEASE DON’T! YOU PLEASE DROP IT FIRST. DON’T TOW MY CAR PLEASE. I’M OUTSTATION YOU COULDN’T THAT! YOU HAVE TO [UNDERSTAND MY SITUATION!]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The face-threatening act encompasses the deejay’s unreasonable assertions that he has to tow the receiver’s car away despite the fact that she is abroad. As demonstrated in the excerpt, the receiver rejects his position on the matter and counters with a flurry of defensive moves. The most distressed response, however, is shown in Turn 25. The receiver raises her voice and deploys the ‘Direct Contradiction’ strategy. This is accomplished through the word “No” which is repeated thrice for emphasis.

The defensive strategy ‘Plead’ appears in her succeeding sentences. Bousfield (2007, p. 2200) maintained that this strategy is marked by the abundant use of politeness strategies. The receiver’s response clearly incorporates them. The politeness token “Please” is used three times within a single turn to stimulate sympathy. She begs the deejay to stop towing her car away as she is not around to settle the matter. The response ends with the receiver beseeching the deejay to “understand” her difficult situation. This invites the deejay to empathise with her and view things from her perspective.
On the one hand, the receiver is damaging her own positive face by imploring. On the other, the act of pleading can place the deejay in a bad light for not withdrawing his offending actions. The findings here mirror Goffman (1967, p. 14) and Bousfield’s (2008, p. 200) studies which revealed that the ‘Pleading’ strategy was used by recipients in similar situations—when they faced the possibility that their vehicle was about to be hauled away.

4.1.2.3 Usage of Offensive Strategies

The results reveal that 13 of the receivers employ offensive strategies in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. This is where they counter a face-attack with a face-attack. The types of offensive strategies are elaborated further in the subsequent section on impoliteness strategies. A clip which showcases an example is P14. In this call, the receiver was set up by his friends, Jeff and Ram, who informed the deejays that he would be infuriated if he was accused of not paying bills which he had already settled. The deejays called the receiver and threatened to blacklist him if he did not settle the Maxis outstanding bills.

P14

38  DJ : But now has already come to debt collection tau Sir!
     But now has already come to debt collection you know Sir!
39  R14: SO WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO ABOUT IT?
40  DJ : You have to pay to settle it or else got to blacklist.
41  R14: EXCUSE ME! I’m not paying anything you blacklist you send me a lawyer’s letter I’ll take all of you all to court (.) AKU DAH BAYAR SEMUA LO KAU FAHAM TAK?
     EXCUSE ME! I’m not paying anything you blacklist you send me a lawyer’s letter I’ll take all of you all to court (.) I’VE PAID EVERYTHING ALREADY DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
42  DJ : Okay faham faham. Tapi! It’s like this. I got here what I’m supposed to do is call and collect. But then according to the list you tak bayar lagi so that’s why I’m calling to ask =
     Okay I understand I understand. But! I got here what I’m supposed to do is call and collect. But then according to the list you have not paid so that’s why I’m calling to ask =

The deejay’s refusal to believe that he has already paid the bills sends the receiver into a fit of rage. His biting response can be observed in Turn 41. This situation displays what
Kasper (1990) termed “rudeness due to lack of affect control.” It happens when a person uses impoliteness as a result of losing his/her temper. The receiver promptly denies the deejay’s stance and refutes it with an aggressive move. The face-attack is initiated with “Excuse me!” which is not employed for the purpose of politeness. It is more of an expression of indignation.

This is followed by an overt declaration that he is not paying anything and a threat that he will sue the deejay if he continues pursuing the subject. Such moves induce face loss as the declaration imposes on the deejay whereas the threat frightens him into giving in. Besides, the receiver elevates his voice towards the end of the utterance. Shouting is deployed to terrorize the deejay in this case. The phrase “…do you understand?” is also an impolite message enforcer to stress the receiver’s argument. It is inserted to magnify the aggravation to the deejay’s face.

4.1.2.4 Usage of Defensive and Offensive Strategies

Three receivers opt for a mixture of defensive and offensive strategies. An example is illustrated in P19. The receiver was set up by her sister, Cecilia, who knew that she had lodged a complaint about her stolen cable. The deejay called to address the problem and pretended to get her address wrong. This resulted in a delay in services.

P19

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>DJ : Ya okay okay okay. I I double check. No that’s the problem. We trying to rectify the problem. [Okay okay so]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>R19: [Ah ha,] Okay now now now. Lets say because the cable is always being stolen and then is there anything that your side can provide some solution for it? [Instead of all us have to]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>DJ : [I I can I can] try my best to fix fix the that problem la but the current problem of the address change that one I can try to rectify as soon as possible la. And and and try to fix it okay? We cannot promise anything maybe within the next six months? Is that okay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>R19: Six months? ((incredulous tone)) Ah I will only say to you that there will be reports monthly reports that the cable is stolen actually. No no no! I cannot accept this. No no no. Either your side come up with the solution to provide us something like you know the cable change the cable into fibre or something.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The deejay’s offer to fix the problem in six months irritates the receiver who wants it done as soon as possible. An offensive move is executed in Turn 19. The receiver rebuffs the deejay by claiming that there will be monthly thefts if the problem is left unattended. This act of predicting the outcome threatens the deejay’s face as it highlights the possible consequences of his irresponsibility. ‘Direct Contradiction’ is implemented next. The phrase “No no no” is repeated twice to constitute her complete rejection of the deejay’s proposal. Shortly afterwards, the receiver veers back to an offensive strategy. She vehemently prescribes a solution (i.e. change the cable into fibre variety) to solve the problem. This move is offending since it restricts the deejay’s actions. To put it another way, the receiver is forcing him to conform to her wants.

4.1.3 Impoliteness Ending

In Bousfield’s (2007) model, Vuchinich’s (1990) notion of conflict termination is incorporated to account for impoliteness resolutions. This section adapts four types of conflict termination in the analysis of impoliteness endings. They include (1) Submission to the Opponent, (2) Compromise, (3) Stand-Off and (4) Withdrawal. To reiterate, the ending stage is set at the point before the prank is revealed to the receiver. Figure 4.1 illustrates the types of impoliteness endings and their frequencies in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.
The results ascertain that the ‘Stand-Off’ strategy (N = 13) is the most prevalent type of impoliteness ending. This shows that majority of the receivers are resilient when it comes to fighting for their stance. ‘Stand-Off’ is succeeded by ‘Submission to the Opponent’ (N = 6) and ‘Compromise’ (N = 4). This points out that the receivers are more likely to accept the deejay’s views than compromise with them. Finally, there is the strategy of ‘Withdrawal’ (N = 2). Two receivers employ this concluding strategy by hanging up on the deejay in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.

4.1.3.1 Stand-Off

More than half of the receivers select the ‘Stand-off’ strategy in the data. It transpires when they refuse to conform to the deejay’s face-threatening acts. An example which displays this is located in P5. This is the clip where the receiver sent her car for repair. The deejay used that context for the prank and posed as the mechanic in charge. He pretended to wreck the car in the background through the phone.

P5

49 DJ: =Yes yes yes yes. Okay my foreman just informed me that the the reason why he got distracted was the radio came blasting on. Has that happened before ah?
The receiver launches into a ‘Stand-off’ when the deejay stubbornly refuses to admit his role in crashing the car and blames the radio instead. A confrontational move is performed in Turn 50. On the whole, the receiver’s utterance conveys the belief that the deejay is a liar who is blatantly trying to cover up his wrongdoing. She threatens his face by scoffing at his explanations. The phrases “Please la” and “Come on la” reflect her great distrust of the deejay. They are also used to express the receiver’s incredulity towards his feeble and absurd excuses.

Furthermore, the receiver intensifies the face-attack by classifying his words as “nonsense.” This implicates that the deejay’s words are not worth listening to. It is made even more detrimental with stress and volume. Evidence which comprises the experience of driving the car is then used to support the accusation. This also boosts the impoliteness of the utterance because it offers a direct criticism of the deejay’s justifications. The receiver concludes her scathing remark with a command “Do not give me such a nonsensical answer.” Face loss is incurred on the deejay’s part as it plays the double role of an imposition as well as a warning to stop lying. In this case, both parties refuse to submit to each other until the prank is finally revealed in Turn 53.
4.1.3.2 Submission to the Opponent

Six of the receivers eventually give in to the deejay in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. This happens when they accept the deejay’s views without further argument. An example is depicted in P11. The receiver was set up by his friend, ET, who knew that the receiver visited the karaoke outlet recently. The deejay posed as the security officer of the karaoke outlet. He claimed that the receiver’s IC was registered at the place but the security camera showed a different person. An explanation was demanded from the receiver.

P11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>DJ2: Yes that’s what you need to do for boss la because my boss very angry. Many people borrow their friend’s IC to get discount. But it’s not their IC so he make a rule in ((bleep)). If it’s not your IC can get in trouble. Last month someone go jail!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>R11: Okay so okay now when can I =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>DJ2: = So what you want to do? What is your action?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>R11: What is the action you want?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>DJ2: Two things you can do. One thing you can tell your friend to pay back the money then case close.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>R11: No I I don’t need to pay back you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>DJ2: Hah. Hah. Then close! After that nothing or this friend your friend ET ah? Because ET made you have a Gotcha call from Hitz.fm bro.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this excerpt, the deejay gains the receiver’s compliance after coercing him relentlessly. This is realized through threatening the receiver with the prospect of jail in Turn 63. Instead of countering the verbal attacks, the receiver deploys a single question which speaks volumes of his submission in Turn 66. The way in which this question is structured makes it even more aggravating to the receiver. If he were to phrase it as “What should I do?” he would have caused less damage to his own face. This is because the pronoun “I” entails that the receiver has some control over his actions. In short, he still has a say in the matter.

However, “you” which refers to the deejay is employed instead. This leads to the inference that the deejay’s views are prioritized over the receiver’s own. It also demonstrates that the receiver willingly allows the deejay to dictate his actions. He does
this although the deejay gives him a choice to choose what to do next in Turn 65. In a nutshell, the deejay is given the upper hand in resolving the issue. All these moves reflect the receiver’s submission to the deejay in the discourse.

4.1.3.3 Compromise

Four of the receivers decide to compromise with the deejay in the findings. Here, the deejay and receiver negotiate to reach a situation which satisfies both parties. An example is shown in P23. This is the clip where the receiver was set up by her friend, Zoey, who informed the deejay that the receiver works as a real estate agent. The deejay told the receiver that he was interested in buying a piece of land for his dog.

P23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>R23: That’s the thing. I need to ask my lawyer. So I have to ask. Because she’s my friend I will just ask I will just ask that I have this friend who would like to buy land in Melbourne and would like to pass on the land to the dog? [Is there a possibility?] So you have to give me some time to ask. Do you understand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>DJ : [Yes. Okay.] I understand. You really have to you have to understand that Rocky’s like my child okay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>R23: Ya:: I [I]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>DJ : [You better put a hundred per cent on this ah.] Try to help me out on this=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>R23: =I cannot be hundred per cent. I cannot. I I can help you on that see what’s the possibility. Otherwise maybe you could I I would do my best to help ah. I cannot give you er er [guarantee or whether you will get it. Ah.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>DJ : [I understand. I understand.] I hope one day Rocky will have a land. But I want to know do you listen to JJ and Ean from Hitz.fm?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>R23: (;) Oh my God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>DJ : (((laughs))) What’s up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>R23: What the (((bleep))) (((laughs)))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>DJ &amp; DJ2: (((laugh)))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The deejay attempts to exacerbate the face threat by adding a condescending utterance “You better put a hundred per cent on this” in Turn 42. The receiver responds to this with a compromise in the subsequent turn. She explains that she is unable to guarantee the success of this venture. However, a negotiation is made when the receiver promises that she would do her best to attend to his request. Both parties stand to gain something if all goes well. The receiver has a potential business project with the deejay whereas
the deejay may get to fulfil his ‘wish’ of obtaining a piece of land for his beloved dog. The receiver’s compromise seems to have worked as the deejay accepts it in Turn 44. This is evidenced by the utterance “I understand. I understand.”

### 4.1.3.4 Withdrawal

There are two receivers who withdraw from the ‘Gotcha’ calls. As the interlocutors do not engage in face-to-face interactions, they cannot leave physically. Hence, ‘Withdrawal’ is attained through the act of hanging up the phone. An example is portrayed in P25. It was not disclosed who set the receiver up. The deejay informed the receiver that he had found the goat in the flyer which the receiver ‘distributed.’

**P25**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>DJ : Yes I’m calling about the flyer er that er you pushed out ah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>R25: What flyer what pushed out? Hello? Who’s this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>DJ : No my name’s Sugu and I I managed to find the goat okay? ((sound of goat bleating)) So [how do I claim ((sound of goat bleating))]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>R25: [I think you got the wrong number.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>DJ : ((sound of goat bleating)) No no no hello I’ve got the flyer here. It says zero one eight ((bleep)) two seven four please call if you find the goat. I found the goat ((sound of goat bleating)) It looks like the goat in the picture so where can I claim my reward?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>R25: Okay go ((bleep)) off!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Receiver hangs up)*

As illustrated in P25, the deejay provokes the receiver by insisting that he has found the goat in Turn 7. The sound of bleating is intentionally slotted in to enhance the face threat. This is parallel to Thornborrow’s (2001) concept of the ‘dramatiser.’ The term is used to describe the deejay’s role in the prank calls. As the scene setter, it is his duty to ensure that the discourse turns heated. This is done to increase the entertainment value of the ‘Gotcha’ calls. The bleating which is inserted into the call sounds unauthentic and is bound to raise the ire of the receiver. The receiver is clearly annoyed when he tells off the deejay in Turn 8. An expletive, which is censored in this clip, is used to retaliate against the attack. He terminates the call after that by withdrawing. This is impolite
because no proper closing utterances are employed to signal the end of the discourse. The receiver’s abrupt exit cuts off the conversation and leaves it hanging.

4.1.4 Summary of RQ1’s Findings

In summary, the findings of this section support the researcher’s earlier inference that verbal impoliteness unfolds according to a sequential process in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. This process in turn entails that impoliteness is not a phenomenon which makes random appearances. It must be previously invoked, that is to say, there has to be a triggering event behind the usage of impoliteness. Besides, the findings also concur with Bousfield’s (2007) claims that three stages make up the progression of impoliteness. They include the initiating, development and ending of impoliteness. Figure 4.2 recapitulates the process in which impoliteness unfolds in radio prank calls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiating</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Ending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event, Behaviour</td>
<td>Deny/Counter/ Use offensive strategies</td>
<td>Most prevalent ending: Stand-off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2: Summary of the progression of impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.

Bousfield (2007) had used television serial documentaries as his data. This study proves that his concept of how impoliteness develops in a conversation can also be applied to the context of radio prank calls.

Additionally, the data reveals that it is the circumstances of the ‘Gotcha’ calls as well as the deejay’s behaviour which compel the receivers to deliver impoliteness. The
receivers generally fight tooth and nail to protect their own faces. As such, offensive moves are favoured over defensive moves. Most of them also refuse to back down until the prank is revealed.

4.2 Impoliteness Strategies in the ‘Gotcha’ Calls

Of course, impoliteness would not be realized without the help of impoliteness strategies. This section delves into the second research question of the study which examines the types of impoliteness strategies employed in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. Two distinctive but important aspects are covered here. They consist of (1) the impoliteness strategies used by the deejay to elicit impoliteness and (2) the impoliteness strategies used by the receiver to express impoliteness. The results will disclose the preferences of both parties in using impoliteness strategies. It would also reveal which party is more impolite in the prank calls. Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) model of impoliteness is incorporated to facilitate the analysis.

4.2.1 Impoliteness Strategies Used to Elicit Impoliteness

This segment investigates the impoliteness strategies used by the deejays to provoke impoliteness in the pranks. The success of the ‘Gotcha’ calls boils down to whether or not an antagonistic discourse is established between the interlocutors. In other words, conflict talk is key to attract audiences. This view echoes Lorenzo-Dus’ (2008, p. 81) statement that broadcasting media like radio stations do not emphasize so much on interpersonal niceties but rely on hostile argument to deliver the show. This is where impoliteness strategies play a vital role. Table 4.5 summarises the impoliteness strategies performed by the deejays in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.
Table 4.5: Types of impoliteness strategies to provoke impoliteness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type(s) of Impoliteness Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record Impoliteness</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>102</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings determine that four types of impoliteness strategies are present in the prank calls—negative impoliteness, positive impoliteness, bald on record impoliteness and sarcasm. However, the strategy which dominates the data consists of negative impoliteness (N = 67). This brings forth the deduction that the obstruction of actions and speech are what enrage the receivers most. Negative impoliteness is followed by positive impoliteness (N = 25) in which the deejay outwardly shows his disapproval of the receiver and bald on record impoliteness (N = 9) where the face threat is carried out without any redressive actions. There is also a single occurrence of sarcasm (N = 1). It involves expressing politeness strategies that are essentially untrue. Overall, a total of 102 impoliteness strategies are carried out by the deejays.

4.2.1.1 Negative Impoliteness

An example for negative impoliteness is located in P22. It was not disclosed who set the receiver up. But the person knew that the receiver was going back to Nepal for a study break. The person also knew that the receiver would never give his parents’ phone number to anyone as they did not know that he was studying in Malaysia. The deejay accused the receiver of acting suspiciously and questioned his motives of going back to Nepal.

P22

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>R22: Ah sorry I cannot still give you that number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>DJ : <strong>Then I can say sorry your Visa can be cancelled.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>R22: Oh ah:: okay no problem but you have to talk to my college authorities then [because they are the ones doing this.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>DJ : [Why do I have to.]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three rounds of negative impoliteness are deployed to incite the receiver. The first move emerges in Turn 42. When the receiver refrains from giving the number, the deejay threatens to retract his Visa. This utterance is captured within the impoliteness output strategy to frighten. It strives to startle the receiver into complying with the deejay’s request. This is based on the fact that the receiver is an international student in Malaysia. Hence, the notion of losing the Visa may cause him to relent since it is a hassle to re-apply for it. The receiver, however, responds nonchalantly and asks the deejay to talk to the authorities of his college.

Undeterred, the deejay performs another round of negative impoliteness in Turn 44. It is used to hinder linguistically and express scorn. The deejay self-selects a turn and interrupts the receiver by questioning his earlier statement. He did not wait for the receiver to finish his explanation. This intrusion is impolite as it impedes on the structural flow of the conversation. Subsequently, the deejay launches into the second question “With that threat I’m scared is it?” This poses a threat to the receiver’s face as the deejay is accusing him of something which he did not do. The receiver’s utterance in Turn 43 is not a threat. It simply informs the deejay what he has to do. Aside from that, the question mocks the receiver over his poor attempt of ‘intimidating’ the deejay. The arrogant manner in which it is performed increases the loss of face.

When the receiver denies the accusations, negative impoliteness is once again executed in Turn 46. The deejay begins by reaffirming his accusation. Mimicry is then employed...
when the deejay repeats the receiver’s words “You talk to my college.” Judging by the disparaging way it is uttered, one could deduce that the deejay meant it as a face-attack. Mimicry generally serves as a criticism of the receiver’s behaviour. This sustains Culpeper’s (2005, p. 57) statement that mimicry is used to make the target realize that the speaker is condemning or rejecting the reiterated issue.

Lastly, there is the impoliteness output strategy to condescend. This is constructed through the question “You think your college is bigger than me is it?” Power relations are brought in here. The deejay patronizes the receiver by implying that he holds more authority than the receiver’s college. In other words, it is hinted that the college will not be able to help him with the matter. This entails that the receiver will have to submit to the deejay. The tag question “is it?” also challenges the receiver to affirm the propositional content. The deejay is posing as an officer from the immigration department. Compared to the college, it is clear that his position is more influential. The tag question intends to put down the receiver as well as enhance the impact of the face threat.

4.2.1.2 Positive Impoliteness

In general, the deejays employ positive impoliteness to aggravate the receiver’s need to be accepted or approved of. An example is demonstrated in P13. This is the clip where the receiver was set up by her friend, Nur Azahar, who knew she used his credit card to pay for the gym membership fees. He informed the deejay to act as if the credit card was cancelled. The deejay called the receiver and accused her of not paying three months’ worth of fees. She was then asked to pay a total of RM950 to renew her membership.
In this excerpt, positive impoliteness is employed in Turn 54. It is realized through the impoliteness output strategy to be disinterested. Impoliteness on the deejay’s part occurs when he brusquely waves off her request to refer to her consultant first. The proclamation “You can do whatever you want…” reflects his disinterest in the subject. This is very offensive as it conveys the impolite view that the receiver’s case is neither significant nor worth spending time over. Furthermore, the utterance is reinforced by the metacommunicative device “…you understand?” It aims to highlight the deejay’s impatience regarding the receiver’s failure to comprehend that he does not care about what she does.

There is also the impoliteness output strategy to be unconcerned. Similar to the strategy of to be disinterested, it is implemented to construct the face-damaging belief that the fees are all the deejay is concerned about. This is illustrated when the deejay claims that he just wants to fill in his report and then asks about the payment in Turn 54. The usage of impoliteness here echoes Kienpointner’s (1997, p. 253) assertion that impoliteness festers in an atmosphere of antipathy which mostly serves egocentric interests. In this ‘Gotcha’ call, it is the deejay’s self-centred and disrespectful behaviour which affronts the receiver. It initiates an irritated response from her in Turn 55. Although she agrees to pay the fees, it is obvious from her tone that she is not happy with the deejay.
4.2.1.3 Bald on Record Impoliteness

There are also moments where the deejays go all out and perform a face threat which is not minimized or mitigated in any way. This is where bald on record impoliteness comes in. An example is shown in P22, the clip in which the deejay interrogated the receiver about his intentions of returning to Nepal. Despite the persistent demands, the receiver refused to give the deejay his parents’ phone number.

P22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>R22: Ah sorry I cannot give you number but if you give me the address of yours I’ll be there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>DJ : Okay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>R22: Give me the address please.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>DJ : Yes no problem. Hold on but I want to know before I give you the address.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>R22: Okay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>DJ : Er does your parents know that you’re studying in Malaysia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>R22: Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>DJ : Don’t lie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>R22: Sure la!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>DJ : Be honest with me. I can sense a lie. You’re lying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>R22: Aiyer you should be some Bond or something la.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bald on record impoliteness is carried out twice in this excerpt. The first example is located in Turn 84. The curt and negative imperative “Don’t lie” is employed to attack the receiver’s face. As one can observe, there are no redressive devices in this insult. This utterance is also impolite because it is a confirmation tool which explicitly depicts the receiver as a liar. The second example emerges in Turn 86. Likewise, the directive “Be honest with me” is laden with authority and challenge. It projects the detrimental belief that the receiver is a deceitful person. It also coerces the receiver to accept the face threat. The command is intensified by the deejay’s bold declaration that he has the ability to detect lies.

The deejay’s utterance concludes with the assertion “You’re lying.” This sentence is made more critical than the one in Turn 84 due to the usage of the second person
The pronoun “you.” The addition of “you” personalizes the face-attack as it directly refers to the receiver. Furthermore, the face-threatening properties of this accusation are enhanced by the sense of finality which accompanies it. The deejay’s impoliteness succeeds in initiating an offensive response from the receiver in Turn 87. He ridicules the deejay about his ‘instincts’ by associating him with James Bond.

### 4.2.1.4 Combination of Impoliteness Strategies

Apart from that, the results of this section support the views of Lachenicht (1980, p. 635) and Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1561) which indicated that different kinds of impoliteness strategies can merge together in an interaction. It is mostly done to increase the force of the face threat. Table 4.6 displays the various combinations of impoliteness strategies found in the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combination of Impoliteness Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness + Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness + Bald on Record</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record Impoliteness + Positive Impoliteness + Sarcasm</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the findings, the deejays make use of seven combinations of impoliteness strategies. The minimum combination comprises two impoliteness strategies while the maximum combination comprises three impoliteness strategies. The merging of ‘Negative impoliteness + Positive impoliteness’ is employed most frequently (N = 4). This is succeeded by the co-occurrence of ‘Negative impoliteness + Bald on record impoliteness’ (N = 2) and ‘Bald on record impoliteness + Positive Impoliteness + Sarcasm’ (N = 1). Each of these groupings is presented in the following section.
4.2.1.4.1 Negative Impoliteness + Positive Impoliteness

An example is extracted from P11 to represent this mixture of impoliteness strategies. The receiver was set up by his friend, ET, who knew that he visited the karaoke outlet recently. The deejay posed as the security officer of the karaoke outlet. He claimed that the receiver’s IC was registered there but the security camera showed a different person. An explanation was demanded from the receiver.

P11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>DJ2: Okay okay sebab 23 hari bulan July kita ada you punya IC nombor sekali dengan you punya detail. Tap bila kita tengok kamera yang saya tengok orang yang sudah masuk ah bukan sama dengan awak. Okay okay because on the 23 of July we have your IC number along with your details. But when we looked at the camera, the person I saw coming in was not you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>R11: Ah ha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>DJ2: You paham tak? Yang kasi IC tu. You ada you punya IC kena curi kau you punya IC kena pinjam ka you punya IC kena tipu ka you kena cakap ah. Do you understand? That IC. You have was your IC stolen? Was your IC lent to someone? Was your IC ripped off? You have to tell me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>R11: Okay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>DJ2: You bukan answer okay okay. Saya mau tau. Saya tanya soalan sini. 23 July tahun ini ((mumbles in Tamil)) Kejap saya panggil colleague saya. ((indistinct)) Hello mai sini Tim. Tak de faham la Tim. You cakap dengan dia hari tu 23 July dia ada masuk dia punya IC tapi bukan dia. Cakap dengan dia. You don’t just answer okay okay. I want to know. I am asking a question here. 23 July this year ((mumbles in Tamil)). Hang on I will call my colleague ((indistinct)) Hello come here Tim. He didn’t understand Tim. You tell him that on 23 July he did give his IC but the person was not him. Talk to him.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Negative impoliteness is first used to attack the receiver’s face in Turn 25. It is established through the impoliteness output strategies to condescend and to belittle. The act of condescending is reflected through the deejay’s behaviour when he impatiently informs the receiver that he is actually asking a question. An air of haughtiness is present and this supplements the verbal impoliteness. Overall, it expresses the judgement that the receiver should have given a proper answer instead of the nonchalant “okay” in Turn 24. Meanwhile, the act of belittling is portrayed by the impolite implication that the receiver is slow in grasping the gravity of the situation. This is done to make the receiver feel like an idiot.
Positive impoliteness is used towards the end of the utterance. It takes place when the deejay suddenly begins speaking in Tamil. This concerns the impoliteness output strategy to use obscure language, that is to confuse the hearer with jargon or a language which he/she is not familiar with. It is disclosed earlier in the call that the receiver is a Chinese as the first deejay had conversed with him in Cantonese. Thus, it is inferred that the second deejay launches into a tirade in Tamil knowing full well that the receiver will not understand him. Given the context in which it is produced, it is likely that the deejay is making unflattering or disparaging remarks about the receiver. The inability to decipher what is being said augments the aggravation to the receiver’s face.

4.2.1.4.2 Negative Impoliteness + Bald on Record Impoliteness

A combination of negative impoliteness and bald on record impoliteness is demonstrated in P10. It was not disclosed who set up the receiver. The deejays were informed that the receiver works as a mechanic. The deejay called the receiver claiming that he sent his car to the receiver’s shop for repair. When the receiver denied this, the deejay accused him of losing his car.

P10

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>R10: Erm: I I no my my boss never tell me anything about white ((bleep)) boss. I don’t have the car. [There’s no car white ((bleep))]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>R10: Boss okay I don’t have your car here. [There’s no BMW.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>DJ : [THEN? THEN?] YOU GONNA FIND A WAY TO GET ME A NEW ((BLEEP))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>R10: Ah Boss you be careful please. You don’t talk so angrily. I don’t have your car okay? ((enunciates each word))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is a mixture of negative impoliteness and bald on record impoliteness in Turn 32. Negative impoliteness in this case is encapsulated by the impoliteness output strategies to invade auditory space and to frighten. The strategy of invading the receiver’s auditory space is depicted through the deejay’s shouting. Raising one’s voice when conversing on the telephone is unwarranted since the party on the receiving end can hear the speaker if he speaks with a normal volume. Therefore, shouting is used to express hostile or intense emotions. It is concluded that the deejay intentionally yells at the receiver to heighten the face damage. This is also an attempt to provoke the receiver into issuing impoliteness.

The output strategy to frighten can be linked to the strategy of invading the receiver’s auditory space. In this utterance, the deejay employs shouting to intimidate the receiver. Not only does this create a strong impression that he is furious, it also intends to make the receiver feel guilty about the situation. This reflects Culpeper’s (2011, p. 59) view that shouting makes the hearer accountable for the other party’s emotional state. On the other hand, bald on record impoliteness takes place when the deejay instructs the receiver to find him a new car. Control is exerted as the deejay is dictating the receiver’s actions. The deejay’s offensive moves manage to incite the receiver. He retaliates by delivering a warning in Turn 33.

4.2.1.4.3 Bald on Record + Positive Impoliteness + Sarcasm

An example for the co-occurrence of three different impoliteness strategies—bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness and sarcasm is obtained from P10. This is the ‘Gotcha’ call where the receiver is also a Hitz.fm deejay. The deejays, who are his colleagues, found the receiver’s lost name tag and took it. They set him up by pretending to call from the company’s security management. They informed the
receiver that his tag was used to check into the CEO’s room. An explanation was then
demanded from the receiver.

**P7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>DJ: My name’s Kumar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>R7: Okay thanks Kumar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>DJ: Where are you now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>R7: I’m on second floor I’ll meet you at the ground floor right now ya Kumar?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>DJ: NOW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>R7: Ya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>DJ: <strong>Make it now bro.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>R7: Ya I’m on the way right now.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this excerpt, the grouping of all three impoliteness strategies is demonstrated in Turn 36. To begin with, bald on record impoliteness is used to establish a command. It is produced in a brisk and imposing manner which leaves the receiver with little choice but to comply with the deejay’s orders. More face loss is endured because of the authority which the deejay possesses. He is after all the ‘security officer’ of the receiver’s company. This gives him the right to instruct the receiver. Positive impoliteness and sarcasm make an entrance towards the end of the deejay’s utterance. As shown above, the pleasant term “bro” is utilized. In terms of positive impoliteness, it consists of the output strategy to use inappropriate identity markers. The deejay and receiver do not share ties which are intimate enough for them to be brothers.

The strategy of using improper identity markers also overlaps with sarcasm to a certain extent. The surface meaning of “bro” entails the insincere denotation that the deejay sees the receiver as someone who is as close as a brother. Yet, if one were to take the context of this call into account, it becomes obvious that such a relationship is not possible between them. The deejay has been fervently accusing the receiver of trespassing in the previous turns. Based on this, one could say that it is the negative
underlying interpretation which the deejay intends to convey—that the receiver is not his bro and that he views the receiver as a wrongdoer.

While ‘bro’ has an impolite disposition, it also has a more positive side. The term ‘bro’ is regularly used in informal English among certain communities of practice in Malaysia (e.g. youngsters). Close male friends often address each other as ‘bro’ as a marker of solidarity. However, it is also common to hear a person addressing a male stranger as ‘bro’ in a conversation. This term functions to mitigate any possible offense or to ease the awkwardness between the interlocutors. It could also simply be employed because the speaker wants to appear friendly. Therefore, another way of interpreting the deejay’s usage of ‘bro’ is that he intended to mitigate the force of the imperative. They serve to make the imperative less face-threatening.

4.2.2 Impoliteness Strategies Used to Convey Impoliteness

This section investigates the types of impoliteness strategies employed by the receivers in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. As mentioned previously, the deejay’s goal is to inflict as much damage as possible on the receiver. It is, therefore, understandable that the receivers resort to impoliteness to protect their faces. Studies by Brown and Tedeschi (1967) have shown that retaliation is often interpreted as an act of fair defence in a verbal attack. It is also perceived to be less aggressive. Table 4.7 summarizes the types of impoliteness strategies which surfaced in the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Impoliteness Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record Impoliteness</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In general, the findings determine that four types of impoliteness strategies are used by the receivers. They include negative impoliteness, positive impoliteness, bald on record impoliteness and sarcasm. This is parallel to earlier findings where all four strategies were used by the deejays to elicit impoliteness from the receivers. They are also sequenced in the same order. Negative impoliteness occurs predominantly in the data (N = 88). One could deduce that it is the preferred strategy that receivers incorporate to block the deejay’s coercive actions. It is utilized 21 more times than the deejays (N = 67).

Negative impoliteness is followed by positive impoliteness (N = 73). The results reveal that this strategy is used far more often by the receivers as compared to the deejays (N = 25). Besides, the receivers also deploy bald on record impoliteness for counter attacking purposes (N = 19). Similar to positive impoliteness, it is used more frequently by the receivers than the deejays (N = 9). To sum it up, a total of 182 impoliteness strategies are recorded in the data. Compared to the deejays (N= 102), the receivers lead the score with an additional 80 strategies. This sustains the researcher’s earlier assumption that the receivers will employ more impoliteness strategies than the deejays. To put it another way, the receivers are more impolite in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. Table 4.8 effectively illustrates a comparison of impoliteness strategies between the deejays and receivers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Impoliteness Strategy</th>
<th>Deejay</th>
<th>Receiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record Impoliteness</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>102</strong></td>
<td><strong>182</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the whole, impoliteness is used to a greater extent by the receivers of the ‘Gotcha’ calls. The reason why they implement more impoliteness strategies than the deejays can be linked to the circumstances they are subjected to. Practically all of the receivers are
forced to endure hostile environments in which they are threatened, unfairly blamed or criticised incessantly. Most of time, the receivers are also allocated inferior positions. Therefore, it is understandable and perhaps unsurprising that they feel a greater need to employ impoliteness as a counter measure. The receivers need it to prevent further face loss. From their perspectives, impoliteness is warranted in the context of these prank calls.

In contrast, the deejays only require impoliteness for the purpose of carrying out face-attacks. They rarely rely on it to protect their own faces. Defence is deemed unnecessary since the deejays are well-informed that everything is fabricated in the discourse. Hence, face-threatening acts which are communicated by the receivers are just brushed aside or ignored. They are never taken personally. The types of impoliteness strategies employed in the ‘Gotcha’ calls are elaborated in the following section.

4.2.2.1 Negative Impoliteness

A case which displays the construction of a parallelism is shown in P5. Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1561) claimed that this happens when a strategy or combination of strategies is used repeatedly in a discourse. In this ‘Gotcha’ call, it was not disclosed who set the receiver up. But the person knew that the receiver had sent her car for repair and decided to use that context for the prank. The deejay posed as the mechanic in charge and pretended to wreck the car in the background through the phone.

**P5**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>DJ: It’s it’s located ah ah erm:: why ah ma’am? You want please please don’t make this big news please. All of us will get into trouble. It’s just a small acc it’s a small accident. Radiator I I. Okay looks bad okay. I can send you pictures. [It’s okay]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>R5: [Yes please] send me a picture through my er what this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>DJ: But please don’t make a big noise about this ah. I’m so sorry the accident but we might have to charge you service charge la ma’am. Because at least. I mean the the parts all I can put in under I can [can]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>R5: [Look here Encik Kamarul.] Is it my fault? I crash the car? Did I even touch the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As presented above, negative impoliteness is utilized in Turn 46. It consists of the impoliteness output strategies to hinder linguistically and to challenge. The first strategy takes place when the receiver denies the deejay a proper turn to speak in the discourse. She cuts him off halfway, clearly infuriated by the service charges. This interruption is aggravating as it is an unjustified verbal impediment. A series of challenges which comprises three questions is then executed by the receiver. They are rhetorical in nature and are produced rapidly with minimal gaps between each of them. Repetition of these challenges amplifies the amount of damage inflicted upon the deejay’s face. In addition, it is used as a rhetorical device to monopolize the conversation floor. This is done so that the deejay is temporarily silenced.

Besides, the rhetorical questions are employed to coerce the deejay to accept the receiver’s position. They are designed in such a way that the deejay has no choice but to concede his mistake. To be more specific, the rhetorical questions are phrased as closed questions. This means that the deejay’s answers are limited to only ‘yes’ and ‘no.’ It is highly unlikely that the deejay will answer ‘yes’ after orchestrating the crash earlier on in the call. Hence, he is left with the self-damaging option of ‘no.’ This situation concurs with Bousfield’s (2008, p. 134) statement that the manner in which challenges are worded makes it hard for the targets to prevent damages to their own faces. Moreover, the rhetorical questions communicate the impolite belief that the deejay is a greedy man. This stems from the fact that he still wants the receiver to pay for service
charges after wrecking her car. The receiver’s concluding remark that she was not even there during the accident serves as a booster to the challenges.

### 4.2.2.2 Positive Impoliteness

In most of the ‘Gotta’ calls, positive impoliteness is implemented to refute the deejay’s antagonistic claims. A sample is obtained from P17 to demonstrate this. The receiver was set up by his friend, Colin, who knew that the receiver was single at the moment. The deejay posed as the brother of the receiver’s ‘girlfriend’ and reprimanded the receiver for ‘dumping’ her.

**P17**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>DJ : Joanne. Okay okay. Enough of this lying. All guys I’ve I’ve heard of these lie. Oh ya I don’t know we didn’t date you know we just hanging out and then she picked the wrong she had the wrong idea. I understand that. Okay guys go like that. But tell me the truth now. Man to man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>R17: Man to man?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>DJ : Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>R17: Hah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>DJ : So? Did you go out with my sister?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>R17: <strong>No:: I don’t know whose your sister. I never see your sister. I never talk to your sister.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>DJ : So in other words you talking to a total stranger for three minutes for no reason is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>R17: Ya I really don’t know who is it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interaction which is displayed above is a classic example of how positive impoliteness is manifested in the prank calls. Turn 54 is subsumed under the impoliteness output strategy *to seek disagreement*. The deejay demands to know whether the receiver went out with his ‘sister’ in Turn 53. Based on what is said earlier, he fully expects the receiver to admit it. Yet, the receiver chooses to deny this position in Turn 54. The negative word “No” is employed and it is made more offending due to the way it is dragged emphatically. This is followed by an overt rejection in which the receiver stresses that he has no idea who the deejay’s sister is.
The receiver could have stopped here as he has made his point clear. Nonetheless, he accentuates the impoliteness of the utterance by adding two more declarations for emphasis “I never see your sister. I never talk to your sister.” These blunt statements outwardly dispute the deejay’s claims and inform him that he is wrong. Apart from that, they convey the impolite view that the deejay is an irrational person who makes unfounded accusations.

4.2.2.3 Bald on Record Impoliteness

On the whole, bald on record impoliteness is deployed when the receivers want to articulate a face-threatening act in an unambiguous manner. An example is found in P15. This is the ‘Gotcha’ call where the deejay informed the receiver that he had replaced the parts of her Nintendo Wii even though she asked for only an inspection. Extra fees were charged and this enraged the receiver.

P15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>DJ : I I No I can [I can try]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>R15: <img src="https://example.com" alt="Because my husband will see you all there." /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>DJ : No! Don’t bring husband all m’am! Please!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>R15: No. So what’s what what you gonna do now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>DJ : It’s hai it’s a small thing! It’s a I know you=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>R15: =It’s just that the way you talked ah. It’s crazy you know!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The deejay’s flagrant statement that it is a small matter in Turn 45 suggests that the receiver is overacting. The receiver perceives this as a face threat and becomes hostile. Harris et al. (1986) maintained that the best method to salvage one’s face during a verbal attack is to counter-attack. The receiver evidently believes in this concept as she refutes the deejay’s attack with a bald on record impoliteness strategy in Turn 46. This is accomplished through characterizing the deejay’s manner of speech as “crazy.” It notifies the deejay of her derogatory opinion of him – the receiver believes that he is a
mad and foolish person. The fact that the receiver’s utterance is phrased as an exclamation also functions as a cue for impoliteness. It enables the receiver to project her emotions of anger and disgust with glaring clarity. As a result, the deejay is forced to endure more face loss.

4.2.2.4 Combination of Impoliteness Strategies

Besides, combinations of impoliteness strategies are included to boost the attack on the deejay’s face. While the deejays employ three types of combinations, the receivers make use of four.

Table 4.9: Combinations of impoliteness strategies to convey impoliteness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combination of Impoliteness Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness + Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness + Bald on Record Impoliteness</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness + Bald on Record Impoliteness + Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm + Positive Impoliteness + Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The merging of ‘Negative impoliteness + Positive Impoliteness’ transpires recurrently in the data (N = 18). This is succeeded by ‘Negative impoliteness + Bald on record impoliteness’ (N = 4). Meanwhile, the combinations of ‘Negative Impoliteness + Bald on Record Impoliteness + Positive Impoliteness’ and ‘Sarcasm + Positive Impoliteness + Negative Impoliteness’ share a single occurrence each (N = 1). Altogether, 24 examples of impoliteness strategies co-occurrences are discovered in the data. The receivers once again appear to have triumphed over the deejays (N = 7) in terms of impoliteness. Table 4.10 illustrates the comparison of impoliteness strategies combinations that are used by the deejays and receivers.
Table 4.10: A comparison of combinations of impoliteness strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combination of Impoliteness Strategies</th>
<th>Deejay</th>
<th>Receiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness + Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness + Bald on Record Impoliteness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bald on Record Impoliteness + Positive Impoliteness + Sarcasm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Impoliteness + Bald on Record Impoliteness + Positive Impoliteness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm + Positive Impoliteness + Negative Impoliteness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2.4.1 **Negative Impoliteness + Positive Impoliteness**

To illustrate the merging of negative impoliteness and positive impoliteness, an example is shown in P10. The deejay was informed that the receiver works as a mechanic. He called the receiver claiming that he sent his car to the receiver’s shop for repair. When the receiver denied this, the deejay accused him of losing his car.

**P10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Deejay</th>
<th>Receiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>DJ : But I left the car there.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>R10: HOW DO I KNOW LA? YOU CALL SIMON AND YOU ASK SIMON LA. YOU ASKING ME I DON’T HAVE YOUR CAR! NO RECEIPT NOTHING! KAMARUDDIN YOU SURE YOU KAMARUDDIN OR NOT?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>DJ : I am sure I’m Kamaruddin. Simon told me he’ll pass the car to you to do it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>R10: I DON’T HAVE YOUR ((BLEEP)) CAR! OKAY?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>DJ : I need the car for Raya you know? I told you already I told Simon I give you the car on Tuesday, Friday I need it to drive back balik Raya. I need the car for Raya you know? I told you already I told Simon I give you the car on Tuesday, Friday I need it to drive back for Raya.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>R10: YOU TAKE BUS LA GO BACK RAYA! I DON’T HAVE YOUR CAR!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1564) specified that impoliteness can escalate when the target attempts to construct a strategy that is more offensive than the one hurled by the speaker. The escalation of impoliteness occurs in Turn 45 and Turn 47. When the deejay vehemently insists that he sent his car to the shop in Turn 44, the receiver snaps. The combination of negative and positive impoliteness is performed in both turns.

Negative impoliteness encompasses the output strategy *to invade auditory space*. The receiver is yelling furiously throughout the conversation. Shouting is a form of prosodic intensification which makes a person’s words more salient. This is face-threatening as
the receiver is making sure that the deejay is aware of his anger. In other words, he is blaming the deejay for his current state of mind. Besides, there is the output strategy *to be contemptuous*. The receiver generally behaves in an insolent manner. He rejects the deejay’s statements in Turn 45 and orders him to take a bus in Turn 47. All this is done without considering the circumstances of his ‘customer.’ They also reflect his intense dislike towards the deejay.

Moreover, both turns contain positive impoliteness. In Turn 45, it is realized through the impoliteness output strategy *to use taboo words*. The taboo word is used as an impolite intensifier. Jay (2000, p. 11) claimed that taboo intensifiers can “deflate the low value of the item to which it refers to yet further.” In this case, the receiver is devaluing the deejay’s car. It is also aggravating as the expletive augments the negative emotional experience for the deejay. On the contrary, positive impoliteness is reflected through the output strategy *to be unsympathetic* in Turn 47. Instead of identifying with the deejay’s situation, the receiver brusquely tells him to take the bus. He is unconcerned about the complications the deejay may face. For instance, taking the bus could cost the deejay in terms of time and cash. Behaving insensitively represents the receiver’s disregard for the deejay.

### 4.2.2.4.2 Negative Impoliteness + Bald on Record Impoliteness

An example of the combination of negative impoliteness and bald on record impoliteness is demonstrated in P3. The deejays pranked the receiver by notifying him that they were about to remove his toilet bowl. They also added an extra charge of RM800 for the services.

**P3**

26 DJ: Okay you don’t want to use the cup or the bucket then easy every time you need to go ((bleep)) ah you can go to the shopping mall near your house ah.
The deejay’s ridiculing has taken a toll on the receiver. He explodes in rage and verbally abuses the deejay in the subsequent turns. This results in what Culpeper et al. (2003, p. 1564) called ‘conflict spirals.’ They are generated by the interactional reciprocity between the deejay and receiver. The co-occurrence of impoliteness strategies is exhibited in Turn 27 and Turn 29. Negative impoliteness is represented by the output strategies to challenge and to invade auditory space in both turns.

The questions are structured similarly as rhetorical questions which challenge the deejay’s character and professionalism. Additionally, they are made more provocative through the use of personalized pronouns. “You” is employed to refer directly to the deejay. These challenges do not need a response from the deejay but they do evoke in his mind, what the expected answer is. Hence, the unrequired and unspoken agreement of the deejay to the receiver’s statement that he is “stupid” and “mad” is on record and left dangling in the air. The face damage is intensified as the deejay is manipulated into thinking about impoliteness. Besides, the receiver also intensifies the face-attack through shouting.

Bald on record impoliteness unfolds when the receiver produces direct insults which are not mitigated in any way. In Turn 27, the receiver explicitly describes the deejay as “stupid.” This negative adjective can be associated with a host of other demeaning traits—foolish, senseless and irrational. Likewise, the utterance in Turn 29 outwardly
suggests that the deejay is “mad.” This also entails other undesirable qualities—crazy and absurd. All these intend to cause open offence to the deejay.

Hutchby (1996, p. 488) claimed that power asymmetry is not a one-way feature in radio talk shows. The findings here indicate that this statement is also applicable to radio prank calls. Although the deejays have the power to configure the pranks, there are numerous times where the receivers managed to assume the more influential position. They often gain the upper hand by aggressively countering the threats to their faces. These attacks can get so intense that the deejays are forced to stay silent for the time being. The excerpt above is a good example.

4.2.2.4.3  Negative Impoliteness + Bald on Record Impoliteness + Positive Impoliteness

The mixture of negative impoliteness, bald on record impoliteness and positive impoliteness can be observed in P16. The receiver was set up by his girlfriend who wanted him to return to England. Based on this context, the deejays posed as immigration officers informing the receiver that his Visa had expired. He was then ordered to deport for England.

P16

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>DJ2: Yes it is. What’s the problem exactly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>R16: Erm I I don’t know. I just get a call from some ((bleep)) ((bleep)) telling me that my work Visa has er expired. And is and apparently I’m gonna be sent back to England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>DJ2: Right well er I’ll be honest with you here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>R16: I can’t just leave here and get sent back. I know for a fact that my company has given me a work Visa here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>DJ2: I understand. [But]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>R16: [Explain explain] to me what the ((bleep)) going on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grouping of impoliteness strategies is shown in Turn 28. When the deejay remains ambiguous about the matter, the receiver enquires heatedly for an explanation. Negative
impoliteness comes about through the output strategy to hinder linguistically. The receiver commits the transgressive act of interjecting before the deejay is able to finish his sentence. To put it another way, the floor is snatched from the deejay even though it is still his legitimate turn in the discourse. Meanwhile, bald on record impoliteness appears in the form of a directive which is used to demand for details.

The receiver could have added certain politeness tokens to redress the force of the imposition (e.g. Please explain to me what’s going on). Yet, he chooses not to include any of them. This means that he wanted to come off as impolite. This is in line with Austin’s (1990) comment that impoliteness transpires when an utterance is created with the goal of not having politic comments. Lastly, positive impoliteness is also deployed to attack the deejay’s face. It comprises the output strategy to use taboo words in the sentence “…explain to me what the ((bleep)) going on.” Apart from serving as a booster to impoliteness, the expletive aims to make the deejay feel uncomfortable. It also points out that the he is not approved off.

4.2.2.4.4 Sarcasm + Positive Impoliteness + Negative Impoliteness

An example for the merging of sarcasm, positive impoliteness and negative impoliteness is portrayed in P3. This is the clip where the deejays pranked the receiver by notifying him that they were about to remove his toilet bowl. They also added an extra charge of RM800 for the services.

P3

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>R3: [You check.] Ya. [No no no no no] (. ) No no no no Chan you listen here okay? You don’t do anything to my toilet bowl you don’t touch anything in my toilet. You wait for me to come home. I’m coming home now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>DJ: Aiyo okay la then we have to attach the toilet bowl back I have to charge you another fee ya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>R3: HEY WHAT? WHO ASKED YOU TO TAKE OUT THE TOILET BOWL? NOBODY ASKED YOU TO TAKE OUT THE TOILET BOWL YOU DON’T HAVE TO [CHARGE ME] ANYTHING YOU DON’T TOUCH ANYTHING!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>DJ: [Ok ok Mr.] Mr. Noam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Excerpt P3 illustrates the ending stages of the ‘Gotcha’ call. By this time, the deejay has managed to rile the receiver up into a fine fury. When the deejay attempts to placate him in Turn 38, the receiver responds with sarcasm. The word “friend” is used in Turn 39. After reviewing the hostile conversation in which the deejay mocks the receiver relentlessly, one could say with certainty that “friend” is not the word to describe their relationship. This leads to the deduction that the receiver uses the term sarcastically to counter attack. It is the covert face-damaging meaning, not the surface meaning, which is highlighted. The receiver is basically declaring that the deejay is not his friend.

The usage of “friend” can also be categorized under positive impoliteness. This involves the impoliteness output strategy to use inappropriate identity markers. Instead of using the deejay’s title or surname which tallies with their distant relationship, the receiver settles for the insincere “friend.” It is even reiterated twice to heighten the offensiveness of the face threat.

The final impoliteness strategy embedded within this utterance comprises negative impoliteness. The sentence “…don’t you don’t tell me to calm down…” is made up of the output strategy to condescend. It is impolite as the receiver is underscoring his superiority over the deejay. Technically, this is valid since the receiver is the deejay’s customer. There is a common saying which goes “The customer is always right” in the world of business. As such, the customer’s needs should always be prioritised. The receiver is aware of this privilege and uses it to his advantage. The utterance also
expresses the impolite belief that the deejay does not have the right to ask him to “calm down.” This once again underscores the receiver’s dominance in the discourse.

4.2.3 New Output Strategy for Negative Impoliteness

The data of this study uncovered a potential new strategy that could add on to the list of negative impoliteness output strategies outlined in Culpeper’s (1996, 2005) model. This output strategy comprises the act of gloating. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2013), ‘gloat’ is defined as “to observe or think about something with triumphant and often malicious satisfaction, gratification, or delight.” It is also viewed as rubbing a sensitive issue in a person’s face. Gloat is related to negative impoliteness as it occurs when the speaker communicates negative sentiments of the target or the target’s things. To be more precise, the speaker imposes on the target by expressing excessive satisfaction about having something which the target is deprived of (Hauwa, 2012, p. 20). Hence, the hearer’s fundamental rights to personal preserves are obstructed.

Overall, the findings ascertain that there is a ‘Gotcha’ call which contains the strategy of gloating. The example is embedded within P4. The receiver recently lost his credit cards when he left them in his office. His friend, Ryan, knew about this and asked the deejays to set the receiver up by posing as the thief. The deejay called the receiver and taunted him for his carelessness.

P4

10  DJ: You you recently lost your credit card is it?
11  R4: Ah:: who’s this anyway?
12  DJ: No you don’t need to know who I am la bro. Did you lose your credit card or not?
13  R4: Ah why ya?
14  DJ: I just wanna say thank you so much bro. I enjoyed my laptops I took my girlfriend out to Starbucks [filled out my my car with full tank and all that.]
15  R4: [Oh. Okay.]
DJ: [You know where I went or not bro?]
R4: Huh?
DJ: You know how much I enjoy or not with your credit cards?
R4: Tell la bro.
DJ: I went to Lowyat I bought a laptop for myself for my girlfriend all you know?
R4: Only one ah?
DJ: I bought two!
R4: Oh:: two right?
DJ: Ah! Hey bro I wanted to ask you one thing la about the laptop issues.
R4: Ah.
DJ: Because I bought the laptops I forgot to buy mouse la. Can you lend me one more credit card ah?
R4: Can la dude. You come and see me first then we’ll we’ll I’ll give more credit cards.
DJ: What for want to see you? You’re gonna turn me in you’re gonna call the police!
R4: ((laughs)) No la dude. Come la come la.
DJ: Hah?
R4: Dude actually honest la I’m not too worried you spent anything because I’m not on the losing side.
DJ: You’re not on the losing side? You just lost everything you just lost ten thousand dollars and I enjoyed it.
R4: Yes ah?
DJ: I enjoyed every bit of it. That’s why I’m asking got any brains left in that afro of yours or not? [Or you shaved all of it off?]

The deejay performs the act of gloating on multiple occasions. The first attempt is located in Turn 14. The deejay gleefully thanks the receiver for providing him with the opportunity to purchase so many things with his credit cards. The expression of gratitude is an immense blow to the receiver’s face as he is forced to deal with the bitter consequences of losing the credit cards. This subsequently yields a host of negative emotions such as regret, resentment and anger. In addition, the fact that the deejay takes his time to list out the purchased items mirrors his malicious intent to upset the receiver.

The deejay’s impoliteness does not stop here. In the second half of the excerpt, gloating is demonstrated in Turn 38, Turn 40 and Turn 42. The deejay adds salt to the injury by asserting that he bought not one but two laptops. Such information is aggravating since it is common knowledge that laptops are very expensive. This entails the notion that the receiver has suffered severe financial losses. The smugness of the deejay’s voice also magnifies the force of the attack on the receiver’s face.
Gloating is once again used in Turn 52 and Turn 54. A face threat is constructed when the deejay points out that the receiver has lost ten thousand dollars. It is further enhanced by his self-satisfied proclamations of “I enjoyed it” in Turn 52 and “I enjoyed every bit of it” in Turn 54. All these are uttered to accentuate the deejay’s triumph over the receiver. To make matters worse, there is nothing the receiver can do to stop him. He is under the deejay’s mercy since he does not know who the culprit is. All in all, gloating is deemed impolite here as it is a painful and intentional reminder of the receiver’s carelessness.

4.2.4 Summary of RQ2’s Findings

In general, the results of this section ascertain that the deejays and receivers’ preferences in using impoliteness strategies are parallel to each other. Both parties employed four types of impoliteness strategies which are sequenced in the same order—negative impoliteness, positive impoliteness, bald on record impoliteness and sarcasm. However, there is an apparent difference when it concerns the frequency of these strategies. The receivers used far more impoliteness strategies, outnumbering the deejays by 80 strategies. Therefore, it is inferred that the receivers tend to be more impolite than the deejays in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.

The findings also support the views of Culpeper et al. (2003) that various rhetorical techniques such as repetition, mimicry, parallelism and combinations of impoliteness strategies are regularly implemented to heighten impoliteness in the discourse. Besides, the results are consistent with Hutchby’s (1996, p. 488) claims that power asymmetry is a two-way feature in the radio discourse. There were multiple times where the receivers seized the more dominant conversational position from the deejay. This resulted in the deejay being momentarily silenced or the deejay submitting to the receiver’s wants. In
addition, a new form of negative impoliteness output strategy is discovered in the data. It encompasses the strategy *to gloat* which is executed to express malicious self-satisfaction. All in all, impoliteness would not have been constructed without the help of impoliteness strategies in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter offers an overview of the research paper. It consists of sections such as the study’s conclusions, implications, recommendations for future research in the field of impoliteness and a summary.

5.1 Conclusions

Two key elements of impoliteness in the context of Malaysian radio prank calls were discussed. To briefly recap, they include (1) the stages which constitute the progression of impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls and (2) the types of impoliteness strategies used by the participants of the ‘Gotcha’ calls. Four conclusions are reached towards the end of this study.

Firstly, this study ascertained that there is indeed a pattern in which impoliteness unfolds in Malaysian radio prank calls. The central idea is that impoliteness is not a linguistic phenomenon which transpires in a single take. Instead, it undergoes several stages which subsequently entails that there is a sequential process involved. The process can be surmised into three phases—the beginning, middle and end of impoliteness. This is consistent with Bousfield’s (2007) results. In general, the findings demonstrated that impoliteness is caused by factors like the deejay’s face-damaging actions; it then advances according to the receiver’s reactions (e.g. to respond or stay silent, to deny or to accept the stance); and it finally concludes depending on the type of termination strategy the receiver uses.
Besides, impoliteness should never be analysed in isolation. The fact that it takes place according to a chronological order supplements the view that there has to be a reason behind impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. Crucial aspects such as the context or the participants’ actions or behaviours which prompted impoliteness have to be taken into account. All these provide insights to how impoliteness is constructed in interactional exchanges. The results revealed that impoliteness could either occur in a present situation or it could stem from a broader and cumulatively offensive sequence of events which did not occur in the present moment. In a nutshell, one cannot attempt to decipher the end product of impoliteness without considering how it was initiated.

Secondly, impoliteness is carried out through the means of employing various kinds of impoliteness strategies in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. A general outline is established in which the deejays initiate the attacks and the receivers counter back. The study determined that the receivers are more likely to opt for offensive strategies compared to defensive strategies. They are also more inclined to defy the deejay’s position than acknowledge it. Apart from that, the receivers used far more impoliteness strategies than the deejays. Therefore, it is surmised that they tend to be more impolite in the radio prank calls.

When faced with verbal abuse, most of the receivers responded by retaliating. This concurs with aggression research which revealed that verbal insults are often reciprocated (Baron and Richardson, 1994, p. 142).

The results demonstrated that the participants used similar types of impoliteness strategies. These include negative impoliteness, positive impoliteness, bald on record impoliteness and sarcasm. The pattern which emerges suggests that there is a consistency in the occurrence of impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. This reflects
Culpeper et al.’s (2003, p. 1575) findings which indicated that there are consistent ways in which interlocutors threaten face in certain contexts. The deejays use impoliteness strategies to establish face-threatening scenarios to provoke the receivers. In this sense, impoliteness is tailored in a manner which ensures that it elicits violent emotions from the receivers. All this is done to increase listenership. Hence, impoliteness is intentional on the deejay’s part.

On the other hand, the receivers employ impoliteness as a means of self-defence. This is fuelled by the strong desire to undo the damages to their faces. For most of the part, impoliteness is also utilized to express antagonistic emotions in regards to some conflict or misunderstanding. The findings showed that the receivers incorporated rhetorical strategies such as shouting, challenging and interrupting to boost impoliteness.

Thirdly, the entertainment value of the ‘Gotcha’ calls is entirely dependent on the occurrence of impoliteness. This is what Culpeper (2011, p. 233) described as ‘exploitative impoliteness’ which entertains at the expense of a victim. The discourse is amped up with numerous arguments and shouting matches. On the whole, the concept is as such—the more aggressive the calls, the more enjoyable they are. This is the reason why the deejays have to work hard to incite the receivers. Without impoliteness, the ‘Gotcha’ calls will lose their appeal as they will be no different from normal mundane conversations. The audience also tunes in to these calls with the expectation of being treated to a volatile discourse. This demonstrates that they are able to foresee the potential impoliteness effects on the receivers. Such discursive knowledge is present since radio prank calls have been around since the last decade.
Fourthly, there appears to be similar themes of impoliteness in the media discourse. In terms of the progression of impoliteness, this study along with research by Bousfield (2007) who examined television documentaries and Lorenzo-Dus (2009) who investigated a television reality show determined that impoliteness does unfold according to three stages—beginning, middle and end. Other parallel findings include illustrating that the elements of Event – Behaviour occurred predominantly and that it was usually the host/deejay who terminated the conversations.

In terms of impoliteness strategies, this study along with Culpeper (1996) who looked into the army recruit discourse, Culpeper (2005) who analysed a television quiz show and Kantara (2010) who examined a television series showed that the participants employed similar impoliteness strategies to communicate face-attacks. Some recurrent strategies comprise negative impoliteness and bald on record impoliteness. Techniques like constructing a parallelism or combining impoliteness strategies were also present in these studies. In general, radio and television discourses have displayed comparable results. This suggests that impoliteness has a rather consistent pattern in the context of the media.

5.2 Implications

Impoliteness occurs more often than one thinks. That is to say, it is a relatively common phenomenon in verbal interactions. Impoliteness could be found in a discourse between neighbours or a discourse in a classroom. The possibilities are endless. This study offers readers an interesting perspective by addressing the progression of impoliteness and impoliteness strategies used in Malaysian radio prank calls.
This is a scope which language learners could consider when faced with impoliteness in various situations. They would discover that there are certain methods or structures which a speaker may incorporate into an argument. For example, the receivers of the ‘Gotcha’ calls often turn to linguistic devices such as repetition, interruptions and shouting to convey face-attacks. The strategies which are employed in the radio prank calls may in fact be adapted in other discourse types. Hence, this study enlightens readers on what to expect in a confrontational interaction.

In addition, this research helps with the understanding of mannerisms in handling impoliteness. Readers would be able to observe how impoliteness affects the interlocutors of a radio discourse. In short, the ways in which impoliteness is taken and dealt with are highlighted. All these illustrate social behaviour in an antagonistic situation. What sets this study apart from others is the context itself. Unlike settings like talk shows where the targets are informed of the situation, the receivers in radio prank calls do not realize that they are being monitored. As such, the responses and behaviours which are elicited here are genuine in nature. This provides a true representation of how the targets may react to impoliteness in real-life situations.

### 5.3 Recommendations

While this research covers two important features of impoliteness, there is still much to be done in the genre of radio prank calls. The study has looked into the various responses portrayed by the receivers. Yet, it examines only explicit reactions and not the perceived offensiveness of the deejay’s face-attacks. This means that the receiver’s personal view on the matter is not consulted. One could review this by conducting interviews or questionnaires to gather input on how the receivers felt at the moment of
the verbal assault. The findings will provide a more precise analysis of orientations to
impoliteness in the ‘Gotcha’ calls.

Another aspect of impoliteness which is in need of further research is prosody. When
construing an utterance, one should not only consider what is said, but also how it is
said. Prosody which includes elements like loudness, tone, pitch and speed enables the
speaker to express a wealth of interpersonal meanings in an interaction. For example, a
command is signalled by a high onset and a markedly low final fall which amplifies its
finality (Culpeper et al., 2003, p. 1571). The prosody of an utterance can also convey
the ‘attitude’ of the speaker. This is useful when it comes to deciphering impoliteness
strategies such as sarcasm. The study is limited to only surface interpretations of
prosody in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. The prosodic contours of utterances which are employed
to communicate impoliteness are not explored in-depth.

Besides, one could add to existing research by examining the turn-taking sequence in
radio prank calls. This could include analysing both verbal and non-verbal behaviours.
In terms of verbal behaviour, elements such as adjacency pairs or turn allocation
components can be taken in account. These will determine how the participants of the
‘Gotcha’ calls shape the discourse by assigning turns to the speakers. Meanwhile, in
terms of non-verbal behaviour, elements like laughter, pauses, exhalations or intakes of
breath can be inspected. These features serve as cues of the participants’ emotions and
attitudes. In other words, they are clear indications of how the participants feel about a
certain topic.
5.4 Summary

This study addresses a topic which has been largely neglected in radio discourse research—prank calls. Impoliteness serves multiple purposes in this context. It can be a linguistic tool to provoke a target, a strategy to counter attack and a method to garner more listeners. There are several points in this study which are worth reiterating here. To begin with, it has been determined that impoliteness pans out according to a sequential process in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. It cannot be analysed in isolation as aspects such as the participants’ behaviours have to be contemplated. Apart from that, different types of impoliteness strategies are deployed to achieve different communication ends. It was also revealed that the receivers are more impolite than the deejays in the prank calls. Retaliation is generally preferred over submission when responding to provocation.

In addition, impoliteness is the primary reason behind the success of the ‘Gotcha’ calls. It engages the audience and enhances the entertainment quality by emphasizing on heated exchanges between the participants. Lastly, it appears that impoliteness has a regular pattern in media interactions. The results of this study concurred with findings by researchers like Culpeper (1996, 2005), Bousfield (2007) and Lorenzo-Dus (2009).

This study also informs readers of the many ways in which impoliteness is dealt with in the radio discourse. Furthermore, it offers a different angle in impoliteness research by looking at raw and sincere emotions. This is a significant change from the usual contexts where conditions are monitored and emotions are stilted. While this study conducts an in-depth analysis of impoliteness in radio prank calls, there is still much to be explored. There are other crucial issues to be noted such as the role of prosody in
impoliteness, the perceived offensiveness of a statement and turn-taking sequences in the ‘Gotcha’ calls. As the old saying goes, ‘there’s always room for improvement.’
REFERENCES


McNamara, P. (2012). *History's first prank phone call was way back in ... 1884?* Retrieved from http://www.networkworld.com/community/blog/historys-first-prank-phone-call-was-way-back-1884


## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Jefferson’s (2004) Transcription Symbols

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[</td>
<td>A left bracket indicates the point of overlap onset.</td>
<td>DJ: Ah we got [language R2: [Improve my what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>]</td>
<td>A right bracket shows the point at which two overlapping utterances end, if they end simultaneously, or the point at which one of them ends in the course of the other.</td>
<td>DJ: [Erm] it’ll cut down to six k. R1: [Ah ha.] Six k?!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Equal signs indicate no break or gap.</td>
<td>DJ: Chan here from the = R3: = Ah yes yes Chan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.)</td>
<td>A dot in parentheses specifies a brief interval within or between utterances.</td>
<td>Okay (. ) ((bleep))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(( ))</td>
<td>Doubled parentheses indicate aspects of the utterance such as laughter, whispers and coughing.</td>
<td>How’s it going Thayakaran? ((laughs))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>::</td>
<td>Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound.</td>
<td>Oh:: two right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORD</td>
<td>Upper case indicates especially loud sounds relative to the surrounding talk.</td>
<td>MAD OR WHAT YOU?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.hhh</td>
<td>A dot-prefixed row of ‘h’s indicates an intake of breath.</td>
<td>Then .hhh I’m not working now so it’s like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hhh</td>
<td>A row of ‘h’s indicate an outbreath.</td>
<td>I want to go back with my parents you know! hhh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( )</td>
<td>Empty parentheses demonstrate that the transcriber was unable to get what was said.</td>
<td>I I didn’t go to third floor ()</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B
(1) Transcription of ‘Gotcha’ Call in the Layperson Test

Damaged Hotel Towel (24 August 2012)

Context: The receiver was set up by her friend, Timothy, who knew that she had ruined a hotel towel recently. The deejay posed as a representative from the hotel and informed the receiver that she had to pay for the damage or face legal action.

1  R: Hello?
2  DJ: Hi good morning?
3  R: Yes?
4  DJ: Can I speak to Miss Susan please?
5  R: Yes.
6  DJ: Hi Miss Susan. I’m calling from ((bleep)) resort.
7  R: Yes.
8  DJ: Okay it’s regards about some damaged good we have.
9  R: Mm hmm.
10 DJ: Okay we need someone to pay for this because we called Mr. Timothy earlier and he says it’s not his problem it’s your doing. So we need you to pay for this.
11 R: Why is it my problem?
12 DJ: You damaged one of our hotel towels. So we wondering when can you come about to pay for the towel. It’s stained orange now. It’s a nice white towel.
13 R: Okay:
14 DJ: So umm we were wondering where can we send the bill or can we charge it to your credit card?
15 R: Why: is it so long after one two months?
16 DJ: Because you hid it. We didn’t know who it was. I called Mr. Timothy and Mr. Timothy passed me to your number because he said it’s none of his business. So: have you been done this in different hotels? Or it’s our hotel the only hotel you think is stupid enough to fall for you trick?
17 R: It’s so long you know I didn’t think that they’ll actually call.
18 DJ: Yes I know. Because we have can you please =
19 R: = Hmm::
20 DJ: You need to wake up and splash some water on you face or something la because I really need to settle this.
21 R: I’m not sure how I’m gonna pay.
22 DJ: It’s it’s not that much. It’s about a hundred and fifty bucks for a towel.
23 R: Hundred and fifty for a towel? Er I need to talk to Timothy and the rest.
24 DJ: Wh Why do you need to talk to Timothy? It’s your fault, you pay for it.
25 R: Eh it’s not only me you know.
26 DJ: But you dyed your hair. Do you understand the process here? ((exaggerated slow tone)) You (. ) dyed your hair ( . ) wrapped your hair, your hair caused the stain on our towel.
27 R: Okay.
28 DJ: So when about can we expect the money please?
29 R: Erm::
30 DJ: It’s a small matter let’s not make it big thing because technically this can go to criminal charges because you are damaging ah: private [property]
31 R: [Ya I know::]
DJ: You understand?
R: Then... I'm not working now so it's like =
DJ: = I understand. It's a hundred and fifty ringgit you can get it from whomever that you thought is involved or you can get it from your parents but when can we expect this money?
R: Maybe by next month?
DJ: Next month?
R: Ya.
DJ: I cannot accept that I'm sorry. You have till the end of tomorrow.
R: Seriously?
DJ: Susan if we don't get the money by the end of tomorrow you can expect a lawyer's letter.
R: Ah okay. Can you give me a bank account or something like that?
DJ: Okay our bank and account number you have a pen and paper?
R: Ya.
DJ: Ok six zero three.
R: Six zero three.
DJ: Nine five four three three one one.
R: Ah ha? ((laughs)) You sure?
DJ: Yes very sure. It's Hitz.fm. I'm JJ how are you doing?
R: ((laughs)) Oh my God Timothy I'm gonna kill him.
DJ: ((laughs)) Don't ever da damage hotel property it's very bad!
R: hhh Oh my God I cannot ((laughs)) Oh I'm still gonna kill him.
DJ: Alright go ahead kill him but we gotta say GOTCHA!
R: ((laughs))

(2) Layperson Analysis Questionnaire
This research was carried out to investigate impoliteness in a 'Gotcha' call by Hitz.fm. 'Gotcha' calls are prank calls where the radio deejay calls up an unsuspecting victim to inform him/her about a piece of fake news. The purpose of these calls is to get the receiver as angry as possible since this would then increase the entertainment value.

Please read the following dialogues from the 'Gotcha' call and listen to the audio clips provided. Rate the degree of (im)politeness according to the Likert scale.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Context: The receiver was set up by her friend, Timothy, who knew that she had ruined a hotel towel recently. The deejay posed as a representative from the hotel and informed the receiver that she had to pay for the damage or face legal action.
Question: Do you think that the deejay was polite or impolite when he said “Susan if we don’t get the money by the end of tomorrow you can expect a lawyer’s letter”?

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R: Hmm::: ((sleepy tone))
DJ: You need to wake up and splash some water on you face or something la because I really need to settle this.
R: I’m not sure how I’m gonna pay.

Question: Do you think that the deejay was polite or impolite when he said “You need to wake up and splash some water on you face or something la because I really need to settle this”?

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DJ: Why do you need to talk to Timothy? It’s your fault, you pay for it.
R: Eh it's not only me you know. ((defensive tone))
DJ: But you dyed your hair. Do you understand the process here? You ((pause)) dyed your hair ((pause)) wrapped your hair, your hair caused the stain on our towel. ? ((exaggerated slow tone))
R: Okay.
Question: Do you think that the receiver was polite or impolite when she said “Eh it’s not only me you know. ((defensive tone))”

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DJ: It’s a small matter let’s not make it big thing because technically this can go to criminal charges because you are damaging ah private [property]

R: [Ya I know] ((annoyed tone))

DJ: You understand?

Question: Do you think that the receiver was polite or impolite when she said “Ya I know ((annoyed tone))”?

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Appendix C

Transcription of a ‘Gotcha’ Call for Analysis

1. Reducing Scholarship Funds (11 May 2011)

**Context:** The receiver was set up by his friend, Parthiban, who knew that the receiver is sensitive about money matters. The deejay called up the receiver and informed him that they were going to cut off a huge amount of his scholarship funds. It was reduced drastically from RM18,000 to RM6,000.

1. R1: Hello?
2. DJ: Mr. Thaya ((bleep)) please?
4. DJ: Ah this is ah Kevin calling from ((bleep)). Okay ah what’s happening now you already receiver your four thousand ah? Your your first first batch?
5. R1: Ya.
6. DJ: Okay your total you know is twenty-four thousand ah?
7. R1: Yes.
8. DJ: Okay I need to come you basically need to come and discuss with me because we are interviewing a few people to inform them that we are actually cutting off some of the funds ah [so]
9. R1: [Wait!] Wait! Are you going to cut off my funds as well? =
10. DJ: = That’s why. That’s why I:: need to discuss with you. If you want to talk on the phone I can talk on the phone also. But ah first thing’s first ah. You have to understand that ah I want to apologize also ah that there’s some cuts ah. [It’s basically budget cut.]
11. R1:[How much you’re gonna cut?] Alright.
12. DJ: Ah twenty-four k is your total. [Erm] it’ll cut down to six k.
13. R1: [Ah ha.] Six k?!
14. DJ: Ah six thousand. So you’ll be only receiving another six thousand from us.
15. R1: That means my total amount is only going to be six?
16. DJ: Only at six unfortunately =
17. R1: = Why is this why is this happening all of a sudden? =
18. DJ: = Because er why is this happening is there was an overload of students for us also. So we had to pick and choose.
19. R1: Man who am I speaking to?
20. DJ: Kevin Kevin Kevin.
21. R1: Kevin ah.
22. DJ: Kevin Chong. So you let me know if you happy or not about this and I just need to fill in [a form]
23. R1: [Actually honestly I’m not happy ah Kevin but ah what I can do is can you pass me any contact number? Maybe I can ask my dad to speak to you guys [so]
24. DJ: [Okay! Can can can can! Can I get your. Can I ask you a few questions first then you get him to call me or call my boss. But what I’m telling you now
R1: Hmm mmm.

DJ: So that’s why I need to basically fill in a report. I just need to know your input. I know it’s not gonna be happy but I need to get it still.

R1: So you mean I have to fill in a like reasoning [and]

DJ: [You can tell me now.] I can fill in now for you so by the time you sign you talk to he just wants to talk to you. It’s like an apology also but I need your reasoning now.

R1: Obviously I’m not happy with it.

DJ: Okay.

R1: I mean I have to be frank with you [I mean to cut] like er twenty-four out of six I’m only like getting eighteen k I’m definitely not happy about it.

DJ: [Oh please please.] Er: is it okay if I ask you to keep this to yourself first?

R1: Ya no problem I mean it’s gonna be myself only I’ve got nothing much important to =

DJ: =You don’t tell it. If people ask you whether you get your full loan can you say yes (.) first?

R1: You mean you mean if someone else is going to ask me [whether I got the full] loan you expect me to say yes?

DJ: [Ya.] Just for the first four months.

R1: I I I =

DJ: = Because we don't want the name to be tarnished so fast because I have to cut today forty-four people.

R1 :Okay::

DJ: So is that okay with you if anyone approach you or: ask you if you getting full loan you say yes?

R1: Er: no it's not. It's not okay with me.

DJ: (.) Woi.

R1: Ah ha sorry but it's seriously not okay with me. First thing of all, even if I do for this whole month it's not going to make a difference in my coming incoming pay right?

DJ: No.

R1: Okay so then I don't see a reason why I should be hiding this.

DJ: Okay =

R1: = Because personally I'm the one affected here and you don't expect me to take care of your name right?

DJ: No not at all.

R1:Ah ha. That's that's a very pre that's pretty unfair.

DJ: hhh Okay =

R1: = I'm losing like 18K over here and you can still ask me to keep this on the low.

DJ: Yeah just four four months only. After that you can talk talk to you know whoever you want about it.
R1: Sorry bro but I don’t think so man because ah: it’s not easy for me to come up with the rest of the 18K you know?

DJ: Ya ya ya. I understand your situation =

R1: = So I don’t think I’m in the right state of mind to keep this on the low.

DJ: Are you ah:: who are you gonna tell?

R1: Let’s see man. I haven’t decided yet.

DJ: If you can just keep it to your family that’ll be good for us also. You know I don’t want people to think that we are taking away our scholarships =

R1: = No but shouldn’t you guys consider actually who are you guys gonna give the loan to before before coming up with such a =

DJ: = We did! But somewhere the system broke down because there’s too many people now. We cannot afford.

R1: Okay::

DJ: So we gave our first batch of money away now there’s not enough.

R1: Okay okay so you're Kevin Chong from ((company)) ah.

DJ: So you free to come and see me today?

R1: Ya ya I'm free I'm free. We're okay where to come [okay if I come to Bangsar you know ((bleep)) lrt station?] [Okay if you go to] lrt ya ya ya ya. Okay you get off the you know ((bleep)) you look for one shop there the the it will have the two offices for PTPTN’s name at the top it's called the JJ and Ean’s shop.

R1: JJ and?

DJ: Ean.

R1: (. ) Ean?

DJ: Yeap.

R1: (. ) Okay.

DJ: Well you might know them as the Hitz.fm morning crew buddy.

R1: Okay oh ((bleep)).

DJ: How's it going Thayakaran? ((laughs))

R1: ((laughs)) Who who who told you guys this?

DJ: Ha ha ha. We got it from Partiban man.

R1: Oh ((bleep))

DJ: What are you gonna do to him?

R1:Ah:: He's dead man ((laughs))

DJ: ((laughs)) You got your loan la don't worry buddy.

R1: ((laughs))

DJ: Hey bro?

R1: Ya bro?

DJ: Gotta say GOTCHA::!!

R1:Gotcha man.

*Full transcripts of the ‘Gotcha’ calls can be obtained upon request.*