

NUANCES OF (IM)POLITENESS: IMPOLITENESS AS AN IDENTITY MARKER

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Abstract

Politeness and impoliteness as communication strategies have been investigated in different ways and with different theoretical approaches since the sixties. The different theoretical accounts are not completely homogeneous with one another, but a proposal will be made to integrate them in a single model consisting in three layers, a “semantic”, a strategic and conversational, and a lexical one. This harmonisation is necessary to motivate different types of impoliteness as violation of one or more layers. In particular, two cultural communities, Naples and Livorno, are examined, in which impoliteness is not only ordinarily practised, but also adopted as cultural identity markers, which people are proud of, although they are also able to practise ordinary politeness. These two examples show the impact of cultural aspects on the very notion of politeness as well as on the different types of impoliteness. In fact, although the two towns share some aspects of their history and of their social structure, they practise two different types of impoliteness, violating different layers of the model proposed.

Keywords: Politeness; Impoliteness; Cultural markers; Social motivation of impoliteness; Historical motivation of impoliteness.

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1 Introduction

Politeness in social interactions has been studied since the sixties and many research studies have been carried out as well as the dissemination of a great number of scholarly articles and books. Impoliteness has also been studied, although with less depth, as, in many cases, it has been considered a complementary behaviour with respect to politeness, a sort of violation of the principles of politeness. More recent studies have recognised the impact of cultural aspects on the variation of politeness rules. In the following paragraphs, after a brief sketch of the major theories on both subjects, an attempt to harmonise all of them in a single schema will be presented, aiming at identifying different types of impoliteness. The discussion of the typical behaviours practised in two Italian local cultures, the ones of Naples and Livorno (Leghorn), where impoliteness is a sort of local identity marker, will give the opportunity to confirm the utility of a typology of impoliteness.

2 Literature Review

2.1 What is politeness?

The literature about politeness and its complementary, impoliteness, is relatively rich, but definitions of politeness are not uniform and touch different aspects.

On the one side, some scholars consider human communication as a potentially antagonistic situation and politeness as a set of communication strategies to reduce or avoid the risk of conflict (Lakoff, 1973, Leech, 1980, 1983, Kasper, 1990, Ide, 1989).

Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 1), elaborating on Goffmann's theory of face (1967), define it as "a complex system for softening face threats". They distinguish a positive face, related to self-esteem, and a negative face, related to freedom of behaviour; thus, any communication act challenging or offending self-esteem or freedom of action is a face-threatening act.

Arndt and Janney (1985, p. 282), in the context of foreign language teaching, suggest that politeness can be studied as "interpersonal supportiveness", consisting in being direct and emphatic in expressing positive feelings about the hearer, and indirect and non-assertive when expressing negative feelings. This approach highlights, in fact, a strategy of interaction between interlocutors, rather than a general theory of politeness. Following the same interpersonal approach, Lakoff (1975) introduces practical maxims aimed at ensuring smoothness in communication. Lakoff's maxims are the following three (Lakoff 1973): 1. Do not impose, 2. Give options, and 3. Make the hearer feel good. Leech (1983: 105-130) adds the following six more maxims: 1. Tact maxim: "Minimise the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other; maximise the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to other", 2. Generosity maxim: "Minimise the expression of beliefs that express or imply benefit to self; maximise the expression of beliefs that express or imply cost to self", 3. Approbation maxim: "Minimise the expression of beliefs which express dispraise of other; maximise the expression of beliefs which express approval of other", 4. Modesty maxim: "Minimise the expression of praise of self; maximise the expression of dispraise of self", 5. Agreement maxim: "Minimise the expression of disagreement between self and other; maximise the expression of agreement between self and other", 6. Sympathy maxim: "minimise antipathy between self and other; maximise sympathy between the self and other". These maxims try to detail the third Lakoff's maxim, in terms of cost/benefit, praise/dispraise, agreement/disagreement, and sympathy/antipathy.

Other scholars assume that politeness is based on a set of social rules (Watts, 2003; Sifianou, 1992; Hill et al., 1986). In an overview article, Brown (2015), summarising the studies on politeness, proposes three ways of being polite: 1. behaving according to social rules, following Watts et al. (1992), 2. following the politeness maxims, according to Lakoff (1973), and also according to Leech (1983), 3. managing the face work, following Goffman (1967) and Brown and Levinson (1987).

Trying to find some coherence in these approaches, it appears that all of them are complementary with one another. Conflict avoidance and face work form the “semantics” of the “acts of politeness”, as all of them are based on the intention of making the interaction as smooth as possible. Maxims, as well as interpersonal supportiveness express the rules to “map” such semantics onto specific communication acts. Finally, social rules mostly deal with the choice of the surface forms, such as discourse structure and lexicon.

This schema is supposed to hold universally, although it is clear that politeness has various realisations according to the cultural variation. Thus, the crucial point is to “parametrise” these rules to account for the different realizations of politeness across cultures.

2.2 What is impoliteness?

The seminal studies by Brown and Levinson tend to consider impoliteness the opposite of politeness, but do not dedicate the necessary attention to treat its features. Impoliteness is not necessarily a simple violation of the rules of politeness, and it is important to distinguish intentional from unintentional impoliteness acts (Culpeper & Hardaker, 2017).

Culpeper and Terkourafi (2017) stress the importance of pragmatics-based approaches to impoliteness, considering neo-Gricean pragmatics and the possibility of extending Grice’s implicature to explain it. In the same line of thought, the importance of social and intercultural models is stressed in the works by Eelen (2001) or Mills (2009).

On a more classificatory line, Culpeper (1996) proposes six strategies of impoliteness, 1. Bald on record impoliteness, consisting in an unambiguous Face Threatening Action (FTA); 2. Positive impoliteness, based on direct threats to the hearer’s positive face; 3. Negative impoliteness, based on direct threats to the hearer’s negative face; 4. Off-record impoliteness, consisting in offensive implicatures, and 5. Withhold impoliteness, which consists in the absence of politeness where it is required. The sixth strategy, Sarcasm, is not relevant to this article. Terkourafi (2005), based on the use of imperative in Cypriot Greek, stresses the relevance of the extra-linguistic context in which an interaction takes place, and the conventionalised formulae.

Also, intention has a great relevance in the study of impoliteness; Culpeper (2005, p. 38) specifies that “impoliteness comes about when: (1) the speaker communicates face-attack *intentionally*, or (2) the hearer *perceives* behaviour as *intentionally* face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2)”.

Despite the many criticisms and the proposal of different approaches, it is difficult to identify the differences between the theories of (im)politeness and those of impoliteness¹. In fact, the notion of face still stands at the basis of all the

¹ By impoliteness the very offending acts are meant as well as the theories on impoliteness, while (im)politeness designates all the theories dealing with both politeness and impoliteness.

approaches; the strategies proposed by Culpeper (1986) are still based on the notion of FTA. Important refinements are the suggestion of the importance of intentionality and the relevance of the social and cultural aspects.

2.3 Politeness/impoliteness in cultural variation

The analysis of two Italian subcultures in which impoliteness and rudeness are considered a sort of positive identity markers, besides showing to what extent (im)politeness is culture-dependent, gives the opportunity to highlight different ways of violating politeness rules. In fact, although both subcultures practise different types of impoliteness, they share a sort of pride of local tradition, which has probably different motivations, as it will be shown.

The analysis of the variation of impoliteness shows that it is a complex phenomenon and may arise from different types of violation of social rules.

As a preliminary step, it is probably necessary to try to merge the different approaches to (im)politeness into a single frame, as anticipated above.

The first step is to distinguish intentional and unintentional impoliteness. Unintentional politeness may derive either from ignoring some of the social conventions adopted by a community, from a difficulty of getting attuned to the social environment in which the interaction takes place, or from not being aware of some private facts of the hearer. Intentional impoliteness derives from an intentional violation of many of the constraints imposed by politeness rules.

Intention is the basis of communication, and if an act of communication is to be classified as an FTA, it is necessary that the speaker consciously intend to perform it *and* the hearer understands such intention, based on a sort of a shared knowledge of the meaning and the intentional texture of any speech (communication) act. In fact, impoliteness depends upon the perception of both the impolite speaker and the hearer's sense of having been offended.

The hypothesis proposed here is that the production of a communication act in the domain of politeness goes through three layers:

- face-work: as anticipated above, this is the semantic layer and establishes what has to be "saved / defended" or "threatened". From a cultural point of view it will be necessary to establish what the object of this work is: according to Brown and Levinson face is positive, i.e. self-esteem, and negative, i.e. freedom of action, but it is known that, for instance, in Eastern cultures self-esteem must be substituted with public esteem and also freedom of action has peculiar definitions (Cadot, 2020);

- strategies: these define the mapping of generic face work onto specific communication acts. The cultural approach should explain, for instance, how the maxim "do not impose" is practically met, by defining what is "imposing" in the different cultures;

- social rules, which define what the proper words and expressions are according to the rules of proper behaviour and proper language.

Thus, an impolite behaviour may appear as a violation of one of the three layers, or all of them. In the following paragraphs two cases will be presented, in

which impoliteness is not only practised as a normal behaviour but is also considered a sort of identity marker. These cases will show how different types of violation may occur, and they can be explained relying on an analysis of the social structure of the investigated community and its history. These are the complex phenomenon of Neapolitan *cazzimma* and the normal rudeness practised in the town of Livorno.

3 Case Studies

3.1 The Neapolitan “cazzimma”

Cazzimma is a particular interactional behaviour codified in Neapolitan society. The definition commonly given is “*Cazzimma* is the “art” of taking advantage of any situation (even if simply mental, after having damaged the others), using “quibbles” (which others do not even see), which by Machiavellian reasoning allow to improve one’s state...on a base of parity such that your damage is my advantage”, shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Plate ordinarily on sale in Naples as souvenir for tourists
(Sold for 5 euros on napolimania.com)

Figure 1 is a souvenir plate sold by the tourist organization “Napolimania”, and, implicitly, it is evidence of *cazzimma* being not only a way of behaviour, but also a feature of Neapolitan culture so specific as to be used as an identity indicator. Another good definition is “opportunistic savvy”.

There are many anecdotes talked about this ability of the people to create situations out of which it is possible to get some advantage. The director Vittorio De Sica, during a television interview in the sixties, told an episode which occurred to him. He was shooting in Naples a film with 300 extras and at the end of the day the administrator started to pay them per day. A person approached and asked him when he could be paid. De Sica questioned where he was and what his role was. The

interlocutor answered, “I did not act in your film but for the great admiration I have for your genius I remained all day at my window to watch you work and so I missed the working day... and you must refund me”.

Another story which is commonly told is the one of a taxi driver who took a client and a dog; at the end of the run, he asked for 1000 liras more than what was indicated by the taximeter. When asked why, the taxi driver answered, “you must refund me for my fear of the dog”.

Many other anecdotes, reported in various radio or television interviews, confirm that this sort of behaviour consists in creating an inexistent obligation, which limits the freedom of action of the hearer, with the aim of forcing him/her to do something in favour of the speaker, in general by charging money.

In this case there is a clear threat to the negative face, in terms of Brown and Levinson’s theory; however, there is no explicit rudeness neither in terms of violation of the strategies, nor in terms of lexical choice. This pattern of behaviour can be described in terms of the mental attitude, which can be represented as “ANY DAMAGE TO YOUR SELF-ESTEEM/FREEDOM OF ACTIONS/FACE IS MY ADVANTAGE”; hence any violation of positive or negative face is a good strategy. In the above anecdotes, the threat to the negative face is obtained by simply creating a fictional situation of obligation.

Nevertheless, also more explicit strategies to damage the others to create a mental sense of inferiority are a preparation to take the maximum advantage. This is a violation of Lakoff’s, as well as some of Leech’s maxims. Face threatening can be a good way of making the interlocutor feel uncomfortable and offering the opportunity to be attacked. The violations are so complex and intermingled with one another that it is difficult to unravel them orderly.

In some cases, the kind of communicative behaviour illustrated so far can produce real rude interactions. An example of such rudeness is given by a Neapolitan actor, Alessandro Siani, who defines *cazzimma* in the following dialogue:

A: Che cos’è cazzimma? [→ “what is *cazzimma*?”]

B: Nun t’o bboglio ricere. [→ “I don’t want to say it to you”]

In this turn-taking, B aims at stressing the annoyance felt when hearing A’s question; B’s utterance can be formalised in terms of intentional structure (Allen & Perrault 1980) as “B wants A to understand that A is nothing to the mind of B – therefore A does not deserve B’s attention (and answer)”.

But *Cazzimma* is also perceived as courage and independence of action. The Neapolitan singer Pino Daniele in one of his songs (*A me me piace ‘o blues* 1980) says “tengo a cazzimma e faccio tutto quello che mi va” (→ I have *cazzimma* and I make whatever I like). In fact, it is characterised in some positive terms, as courage, and bravery, as in Figure 2.

Cuore
Coraggio
CAZZIMMA!

Figure 2. Heart, Courage and Cazzimma (from facciabuco.com)

Evidence is that “cazzimma” is considered a sort of cultural identity feature, also evidenced in communicative practices addressed at tourists, as is likely to be inferred from the images shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Souvenirs for tourists
(a. T-shirt on sale on dapersonalizzarre.it, b. appeared on parlandodisport.it, and c. book on sale on Amazon).

3.2 Livorno, the so-called cradle of impoliteness

Livorno has been considered a place of ignorance and rudeness since the XIX century, and this feature has been dealt with indulgence by some authors. Sabatino Lopez (1898), a writer and journalist from Livorno, writes in 1898 that the people are “una razza un po’...rozza, un po’ grezza [→a race a bit... rough... a bit crude]”.

An anonymous article issued online in *Il Tirreno* (14/4/2012, <https://www.iltirreno.it/livorno/cronaca/2012/04/14/>) accounts for the character of people in Livorno; among the main features arrogance, sincerity, anarchy, irony, quarrels immediately quelled with a punch (the drink), and foul language are quoted.

In a recent book by Raffone (2023, p. 7), the author declares in the introduction “mettendo in luce i “difetti” dei livornesi e, in particolare, la loro “ignoranza” definita, impietosamente, “pesante, greve e sgradevole”” [highlighting the “flaws” of the people from Livorno, and particularly their “ignorance” defined, unmercifully, “heavy, crude and unpleasant”]. However, in the same introduction, the declaration of the manager of a cultural centre is “Livorno è una città piena di difetti, dove però si vive molto bene” [→Livorno is a town full of flaws, but where one lives very well].

According to the dictionary definition, *ignorance* is “a lack of knowledge about something” (Cambridge Dictionary online), yet, in Livorno it is used with the meaning “the quality of being offensive or impolite”, and this is the meaning adopted, between quotes, in many texts describing the people of Livorno. This feature is motivated by the directness of any interaction; in normal conversations there is never an attempt to eliminate or mitigate the impact of an utterance onto the face of the interlocutor. Direct speech consists in using direct terms, but also not avoiding conflicts, thus violating Leech (1980)’s assumption that conflict must be avoided in conversation. Directness in speech extends over all the interactions; no turn of phrase is used to tone down the strength of the thought to be communicated.

The use of such a language is almost never taken as offensive by the ordinary people of Livorno, as the level of susceptibility is lower than the one experienced by interlocutors in other towns, including in Tuscany, where the level of susceptibility is already lower than the one evidenced by those living in the remaining parts of Italy. Yet, for the locals there is no offense, or, in the affirmative, as the journalist writes, it will be quelled with a punch. Punch has been introduced by English sailors but has become a local drink in its full rights. An example of such insensitivity to offenses is given by Lopez (1898) quoted above; a couple is dancing and somebody addresses the lady with a comment on her overweight figure. The gentleman, far from being offended, will laugh and answer “Va bene: la mia è grassa, ma la tua non mi pare uno steccolo [→Ok; my lady is fat, but yours does not seem a stick]”.

An additional feature is the large use of vulgar language as a systematic “first way of expression”. Vulgar language is accepted in all social levels as the most direct kind of communication. Normal communication in Livorno implies the use of dirty words as the most efficient way of communication; therefore, they are not even perceived as dirty words, but simply as a direct terminology.

Also, an important feature of behaviour is underpinned by the search for witty jokes, which some people may take as offensive.

The association of dirty talk and witty jokes ignites a number of very crude, but colourful expressions like *ha' ca'ato fori dar vaso* [→ you pooped out of the pot = you made an improper move], *ma cosa voi, una fetta di 'ulo co' pinoli?* [→ what do you want more, a slice of ass with pine nuts? = you are asking too much] and many other less quotable expressions.

This way of communicating is explicitly considered a distinctive feature of the local identity; “siamo di Livorno, siamo ignoranti, ma siamo gente di cuore” [→we are from Livorno, we are ignorant, but we are heartfelt people]. In some public declarations this way of expression is understood as “words of freedom and sincerity” (Favilla 2018, pp. 15-16): “I livornesi [hanno] la sincera crudezza dell'espressione ed il cuore e...quello che i livornesi hanno nel cuore, l'hanno in bocca...” [→People from Livorno[have] the sincere crudeness of expression and the heart and...what they have in their heart, they have also on their mouth]

4 Discussion

Both Naples and Livorno are characterised by a pattern of behaviour that in other cultures could be considered rude. Naples communicative exchanges are characterised by the attempt to gain advantage over the interlocutor, even by embarrassing her/him to put her/him in a difficult position. This is generally known as *cazzimma*.

In Livorno there is no attempt to gain advantage, but simply the need to be direct and short. The impolite language is in general more direct than a polite expression; it is simpler and more direct to reject an argument by saying “what you say is bullshit” than “your argument does not hold”.

In both cases this rude communicative behaviour is considered an integral part of the local identity. *Cazzimma* is the subject of a number of touristic souvenirs, while the people in Livorno, who are not particularly oriented to tourism, consider their interactional practices as evidence of sincerity and directness.

The two towns have some features in common. Both have been important commercial ports for long, i.e., for five centuries in Livorno and probably for two millennia in Naples, and both have been multi-ethnic societies. Livorno has been created as a multi-ethnic society ever since 1593's law issued by the Grand Duke of Tuscany Ferdinand I Medici. It mentions the major nationalities, *i.e.*, Levantines, Western Spaniards (Jews), Portuguese, Greeks, Germans, Italians, Jews, Turks, Armenians, Persian and others, and establishes that (*Costituzioni livornine*, preamble and art.1, <https://www.liberliber.eu/libri/pdf/costit.p>) “concediamo ... che possiate venire a stare, trafficare, passare e abitare con le vostre famiglie...nella detta città e porto di Livorno” [→we concede ... that you can come and live, trade, pass, inhabit with your families in the mentioned city and harbour of Livorno]. This absolute freedom has created a composite society, in which no attempt of integration unless

of spontaneous sort has been done and all behavioural rules were not absolute; hence the only possibility was and still is that of overlooking most social conventions.

Naples has been multi-ethnic for centuries by its very history. Naples is an ancient town: it has been established by Greek colons in a territory inhabited by Samnites and went through a number of different foreign dominations (by Romans, Byzantines, Normans, Swabians, Angevins, Aragonese; see *Encyclopaedia Britannica* s.v. <https://www.britannica.com>). This produced in the population the need to devise all sorts of measures to survive through these changes, and it is the motivation for *cazzimma*, that is a way of getting advantages from whatever situation. In this view impoliteness or rudeness is simply an instrument in a more complex self-defensive behaviour based on offense. Thus, though paradoxically, *cazzimma* belongs to the face work, nonetheless in such a way as to allow for the speaker's face protection and advantage seeking.

The question is what makes the people of the two towns consider this uncommon behaviour as an identity mark. In fact, they are aware of polite behaviours and able to practise them. However, these do not qualify the specificity of their identity. This last feature can be motivated by the need to justify a behaviour generally considered not proper.

4.1 A personal experience: cultural conflict

A further point of comparison is the practising of divergent conversational management strategies, which can be motivated by a different order of priority of conversational rules. To better illustrate this difference, a personal experience can clarify the differences among these approaches. Years ago, I moved from Livorno to Piedmont. My ordinary behaviour, without being particularly offensive, used to be very direct, but this was not accepted in Piedmont, where the formality of behaviour is particularly appreciated, to the point that Italians tend to consider “*piemontese falso e cortese* [→Piedmontese false and polite]”. The telephone calls I was used to runs as follows:

Telephone call 1

H: Hello

Me: Oh, hello! I wanted to talk to you about...

H: Stop! Call me later, I am busy now

Me: When?

While I had to learn the following style, almost a ritual behaviour:

Telephone call 2

H: Hello

Me: Hello! Am I disturbing you?

H: No

Me: May I speak?

H: Yes

Me: I wanted to talk to you about....

These two examples only highlight two different trends, as they are not mutually exclusive and are not ritually fixed, especially evidenced in the first conversation. Telephone call 1 starts with a violation of the maxim “give options”, as Me opens by immediately mentioning the reason of the telephone call. However, Me knows that H will stop the conversation if (s)he is unavailable. H does not perceive my intrusion as a violation of her/his negative face, as (s)he knows that (s)he can interrupt the conversation, without this being considered an offense. In fact, the abrupt stop is not perceived as a defence strategy or a face threat.

In telephone call 2 the two opening moves are dedicated to the verification of the availability of the interlocutor. Starting a telephone call according to strategy 1 in an environment in which the preferred strategy is 2, can produce some embarrassment. In fact, Me starts by violating the maxim “give options”, assuming that H will stop the conversation, but, although (s)he feels the opening move as an intrusion and therefore a threat to his/her face, does not dare to call for a stop. H does not want to pay impoliteness back, because (s)he ignores that Me would not feel the stop as impoliteness.

This example shows a difference in the core notion of politeness, which will probably explain partly how impoliteness can be locally parametrised, and it can be explained in terms of conversational rules.

The conversational rules I was used to run as follows:

1. The Speaker starts his/her communicative plan.
2. The Hearer may
 - a. accept S’s plan → the conversation goes on;
 - b. explicitly reject S’s plan → the conversation is interrupted.

Following Piedmontese cultural patterns, the rules run as follows:

1. The Speaker checks the availability of Hearer to accept communication.
2. The Hearer may
 - a. declares availability → the conversation goes on;
 - b. Hearer isn’t available → the conversation is delayed.

The difference between the two approaches does not consist in different face management rules, but in different priorities assigned to conversational strategies. They can be summarised as: <control availability ><introduce subject matter>, but the way they are realised is more orderly in conversation 2; in conversation 1, on the contrary, the two rules are inverted in the form: <introduce subject matter><declare unavailability>. The comparison of these two conversational habits shows how unintentional impoliteness may arise from the unawareness of some local social conventions.

5 Conclusions

The different approaches to the definition of (im)politeness highlight each a different aspect of this complex feature, which turns out to be more a behavioural phenomenon, with linguistic consequences, rather than a plainly linguistic one.

Returning to the distinction of politeness in three layers (see above), any one of them can be violated producing impolite behaviours not directly comparable with one another. Neapolitan *cazzimma* is an intentional violation of one's interlocutor face, which may also involve some superficial violations, such as the use of offensive language or improper strategies, with the only objective of embarrassing the interlocutor.

On the contrary, the communicative behaviour of the people from Livorno violates the rules of good manners and is often imposing and using improper strategies, but without any intention of violating the face. Thus, it is no surprise that the level of susceptibility is rather tolerant and any quarrel is "quelled with a punch" (see§5).

The intentional aspect of these exchanges is also very important. Neapolitan *cazzimma* is based on the intention to embarrass the interlocutor, and, in most cases, to depict a situation in which the interlocutor is debtor to the speaker in real or moral way. In the "ignorance" (see §4) of Livorno, there is no intention to offend or create a moral debt in the interlocutor, rather simply to avoid ordinary good manner rules in the name of a sort of absolute freedom.

In both cases, this peculiar management of the interaction is taken as a positive marker of identity, associated with courage in Naples and freedom in Livorno. This is probably a concealed measure to save face in front of the other communities, which will consider those behaviours as improper and impolite. This is probably a way of compensating the accusation of impoliteness with a positive evaluation.

These examples show that (im)politeness rules hold universally, but the "parametrisation" can only affect some of the three layers identified in the previous paragraph (§ 3). The borderline between a polite and an impolite behaviour depends upon several social features affected by the historical developments of each society.

Polite/impolite expressions are the consequence of such behaviours and a series of formal social rules. If such formal rules evolve, the expressions will also evolve. In this view, the raise of a 'woke' culture, a way of promoting a new moral, will probably affect, among others, the language and the very expression of politeness/impoliteness will change.

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² *Deh!* Is a typical interjection which can take a large variety of meanings according to intonation and pitch.

³ *Cacciucco* is a typical meal of Livorno, consisting into a mixture of various fish, in general low-quality fish, in tomato sauce, served with garlic bread. The word probably comes from the Turkish

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term *kuçuk*, meaning “small”, because it is made of small fish. In this title it is used in the meaning of “mixture”.