



An Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies in “Can You Ever Forgive Me?” Movie

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Abstract

This study applied pragmatics study to analyze impoliteness strategies that based on the movie titled “Can You Ever Forgive Me?” directed by Marielle Heller. The aim of this study was to discover the strategies of impoliteness that occurred from the conversation in the movie. The utterances were found and gathered by applying the theory of Culpeper (1996) for the data source. The object of this research was impoliteness strategies. The data source contained the conversation that was uttered by the characters from the movie “Can You Ever Forgive Me?”. The descriptive qualitative research design was employed to obtain the research findings. The data were acquired in a non-participatory method, which means that no participants were required during the process of data collection. The results revealed that the movie utilized all impoliteness strategies. It was found that bald-on-record impoliteness had five utterances, positive impoliteness had four, negative impoliteness had three, sarcasm/mock impoliteness contained two, and withhold politeness had only one.

Keywords: *impoliteness; impoliteness strategies; pragmatics.*

Introduction

For humans, language is the most important thing. It plays the most important role in human communication. Humans use language to share and socialize information and opinions. This process of communication may occur with two kinds of methods, there are politeness and impoliteness. It is possible to detect impoliteness in any form of communication, whether oral or written. The primary reason was that one face was being attacked by another. As a direct consequence of this, the phenomenon of impoliteness is becoming increasingly widespread.

The issue was discovered by the researchers of the present study in the film that illustrates expression. “Can You Ever Forgive Me?” was a film directed by Marielle Heller that addressed impoliteness strategies. This movie contained conversations that occurred about impoliteness strategies. One of them was negative impoliteness which was uttered by the main character named Lee Israel. The dialogue contained impoliteness expressed below:

Young Woman

(Speaker) : Fucking kill me if I’m doing this at her age.

Lee (Hearer) : I’ll kill you now if you ask nicely. (00.59-01.06)

The hearer's statement was considered as negative impoliteness. It was because this was a form of responding to the speaker by scaring or threatening the speaker. According to Culpeper (1996), negative impoliteness is intended to harm the negative face of the hearer. This action or statement breaks someone's desire to be free from pressure. It is the technique of attacking a person's self-public image in order to continue compelling him or her to agree with the speaker. This strategy has the potential to be humiliating, scaring, or underestimating.

There were several studies that had the similarity to the present study. The first study was conducted by Apriliana (2020). The study had the title "**Impoliteness Strategies and Power Used by European in This Earth of Mankind**". The researcher was intrigued about the types, functions, and purposes of impoliteness strategies and power employed by European characters in This Earth of Mankind. This research made use of four theories. The first theory to identify types of impoliteness is Culpeper's (1996). The second theory to identify impoliteness functions is Culpeper (2011). In addition, Beebe's (1950) and Bousfield's (2008) theories are utilized to comprehend the objective of using authority through impolite language. This study employed the descriptive qualitative research method because the data in this study are qualitative data in the form of conversations, which were then analyzed descriptively. Using the theory of Culpeper (1996), the first result of this study shows that the European characters in the novel contained all kinds of impoliteness. There are five types of impoliteness: (Simanjuntak & Ambalegin, 2022) 1) direct impoliteness (also called "Bald on record impoliteness"); 2) positive rudeness; 3) negative impoliteness; 4) sarcasm or mock impoliteness; and 5) withhold politeness. With a total of 17 conversations, negative impoliteness was the number that came up most often in the 40 conversations. This study also discovered two impoliteness functions based on Culpeper's (2011) theory: affective, with 22 conversations, and coercive, with 11 conversations. This kind of thing commonly happens in entertainment, like on talk shows that make nasty jokes, thus the entertaining function wasn't found.

The second study was conducted by Simanjuntak & Ambalegin (2022). This study examined Easy A's impoliteness strategies. Culpeper's theory (2011) supported this study. This descriptive qualitative study examined impoliteness strategies. This study found 16 utterances. The researchers found five types of impoliteness: bald on record, positive, negative, mock, and withhold. Easy A mostly used positive and negative impoliteness.

Previous and current research utilized the same Culpeper theory. The researchers classified the categories of impoliteness strategies in the data source using the theory. Similarities existed in the topic, as previous research also analyzed impoliteness strategies. The distinctions were in the data source, as this study utilized a movie "Can You Ever Forgive Me?". This study sought to determine the impoliteness strategies utilized in the film "Can You Ever Forgive Me?"

Method

Culpeper's theory (1996) was used to classify data from "Can You Ever Forgive Me?". Quantitative methodology was utilized to show the total number of the results of impoliteness strategies from the movie. Qualitative descriptive research is used in

this study. Since the researcher was studying impoliteness methods, the data came from "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" The researcher collected data using Sudaryanto (2015)'s observational approach. He emphasized the observational method for data collection. Since the researcher was not involved in film creation, the researcher used a non-participatory strategy to acquire data. The film's producer and researcher were not involved. Data were analyzed using Sudaryanto (2015).

Results

After conducting the research, researchers discovered **15 utterances** that contained impoliteness strategies in "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" movie.

Table 1. The strategies discovered from the utterances by both speaker and hearer from the movie "Can You Ever Forgive Me?"

No	Strategies	Frequency
1	Bald On Record	5
2	Positive Impoliteness	4
3	Negative Impoliteness	3
4	Sarcasm/Mock Impoliteness	2
5	Withhold Politeness	1
	Total	15

Data 1

There was a conversation from the main character, Lee (hearer), who responded to her co-worker (speaker). The conversation was about how the co-worker was annoyed by the sound of Lee's movement. Lee was drinking alcohol and the sound of the ice annoyed her co-worker.

Co-Worker (S): You know we're not allowed to eat or drink in here!
Lee (H) : **Oh, fuck off.** (01.08-01.13)

The hearer's (H) respond contained one of the strategies named bald-on record. It was considered as bald-on record because the hearer's statement showed clear instructions towards the speaker (S) to leave her alone by not complaining about her movement.

Data 2

A conversation occurred while Lee visited a vet to check on her cat's condition. The conversation occurred between Lee and a doctor, talking about the fact that Lee still

had a balance towards the vet on her cat's medication.

- Rachel (S) : I'm sorry, but the doctor told me that I need to have at least half the balance before I do any tests.
Lee (H) : **Didn't you people take a Hippocratic oath?**
Rachel (S) : You owe us \$82.
Lee (H) : God. Wow. (08.21-08.35)

The hearer's answer was considered as sarcasm/mocking impoliteness. It was because the statement showed the hearer's intention to try to humiliate the speaker by asking the speaker's credibility.

Data 3

A conversation occurred between Lee as the speaker and Glen as the hearer. The conversation happened when Lee visited a bookstore and tried to sell her old books to get some money. Suddenly she got offended by Glen.

- Lee (S) : You're a rude little ape.
Glen (H) : **Okay, get your garbage off my counter.**
Lee (S) : No! (10.14-10.17)

The hearer's statement contained bald-on record strategy. It was because that the hearer made a clear instruction to the speaker to get away from his counter and rudely saying that Lee's books were garbage.

Data 4

A conversation occurred between Jack as the speaker and Lee as the hearer. A conversation happened during Lee was in the bar, and met her old friend named Jack Hock. They were talking about how they met at the first time.

- Jack (S) : **Anyways, who are you to judge? It's four in the afternoon, and you're drunk!**
Lee (H) : I'm hardly drunk! (15.03-15.09)

The speaker's statement contained positive impoliteness strategy. It was because that Jack was trying to debate that Lee was drunk in the afternoon because she was at the bar.

Data 5

A conversation occurred between Marjorie as the speaker and Lee as the hearer. A conversation happened during Lee visited her agent, Marjorie in her office to talk about the reasons why Marjorie did not do the same thing to Lee as she did to Tom Clancy.

- Marjorie (S) : Meanwhile, you have destroyed every bridge I have built for you.
Lee (H) : See, that is beside the point. I am doing good writing!

Marjorie (S) : **Number three. Nobody wants a book about Fanny Brice! There is nothing new or sexy about Fanny Brice.** (24.35-24.48)

The speaker's statement contained a positive impoliteness strategy. It was because that Marjorie was trying to debate and convince that Lee just wasted the chance that Marjorie gave to her.

Data 6

An utterance created when Lee was debating with Marjorie about her job. Marjorie suggested that Lee had problems with her attitude and she also suggested that she needs to find a new job for a living.

Marjorie : You can be an asshole when you're famous, but as an unknown, you can't be such a bitch, Lee. Nobody is going to pay for the writer Lee Israel right now. **My suggestion to you is you go out there and you find another way to make a living.** (26.16-26.35)

Marjorie's last utterance indicated the strategy bald-on record. It was because that she made a clear instruction and suggestion for Lee to find a new job if she could not listen to Marjorie.

Data 7

Some utterances were created by Lee. The utterances happened during Lee had a conversation with Jack, telling him about her new problematic job.

Lee (S): I don't know why I told you. It's a waste of a secret. **I should have gone out there and gotten a rock and told the rock, 'cause I'd get a better response.** (36.25-36.33)

The bald sentences indicated the strategy of impoliteness, which is positive impoliteness. It was because the speaker was trying to convince herself by underestimating the hearer. The speaker thought the idea of telling her secret was such a bad idea.

Data 8

A conversation occurred between Jack and Lee. It happened while Jack visited Lee's apartment and her apartment was not clean.

Jack (S) : It smells really bad.
Lee (H) : **Yeah, do you think I'm deaf? I heard them.** (44.51-44.56)

Lee's statement contained the strategy that was positive impoliteness. It was

because the hearer responded by debating the speaker that the fact she was also aware of the situation.

Data 9

An utterance was created by Jack. It happened after Jack found out that Lee's apartment condition was horrible.

Jack (S) : **I don't mind, Lee. Come on. Let me in. I'll come and help you.** (45.09-45.13)

This utterance contained withhold politeness. It was because Jack offered help to Lee, but she did not even respond or say thank you.

Data 10

A conversation happened between Lee and Marjorie. The conversation happened while Lee was trying to reach Marjorie, but she did not return the call. Then Lee pretended to be someone else named Nora.

Marjorie (S) : Nora, hello.
Lee (H) : Is this a good time?
Marjorie (S) : Of course it is. So wonderful to hear from you.
Lee (H) : **You star fucker! Is that one word or two?!** (47.04-47.11)

Lee's statement indicated the strategy of impoliteness named negative impoliteness. It was because the hearer humiliated the speaker by saying rude things towards her.

Data 11

A conversation occurred between Jack and Lee. It happened when Jack visited Lee with a horrible look. He was beat up by someone.

Jack (S) : You really should replace the shower curtain, Lee.
Lee (H) : **You wanna discuss decorating with me?** (57.15-57.20)

Lee's statement was considered as sarcasm/mock politeness. It was because that the hearer asked the speaker if he wanted to discuss about decorating, where the speaker was in a horrible situation.

Data 12

A conversation occurred between Alan and Lee. It happened while Lee visited Alan's bookstore, and they were talking about how Alan was going to help Lee.

- Alan (S) : I'll lie. But you're gonna pay me \$5,000.
Lee (H) : I don't know what you're talking about.
Alan (S) : Well, come on, I'm not gonna rat you out or anything.
Lee (H) : **That's very generous of you.** (01.02.59-01.03.16)

Lee's utterance contained sarcasm/mock politeness. It was because that the hearer gave a compliment to the speaker, which was not true because the speaker was trying to blackmail her.

Data 13

A conversation between Jack and Lee has occurred. It occurred when Jack confronted Lee about what she was doing.

- Jack (S) : I mean, very well, I'm sure, but come on. Nobody is buying Lee Israel letters.
Lee (H) : **You steal from me again, and I'll fucking kill you.**
(01.06.06-01.06.20)

Lee's statement contained negative impoliteness. It was because the hearer attacked the speaker by scaring him if he was going to do the same thing again.

Data 14

A conversation occurred by Lee and Jack. It happened when Lee and Jack discussed about the situation when Jack visited a bookstore and tried to sell the letter.

- Lee (S) : You left it there? God, you idiot.
Jack (H) : **Stop calling me an idiot.** (01.07.26-01.07.30)

Jack's statement indicate bald-on record. It was because the hearer made a clear instruction towards the speaker that he did not like to be called idiot.

Data 15

A conversation happened between Lee and Jack. It happened when Lee came home and she found that her cat died.

- Lee (S) : **Oh, for fuck's sake, get the fuck out of my house!**
Jack (H) : Darling, I can explain. Lee, I'm so sorry. It's not my fault. It must have just happened right now.
Lee (S) : Get out. Get out! Get out! (01.17.20-01.17.35)

Jack's statement indicate bald-on record. It was because the speaker made a clear instruction towards the hearer to leave her house immediately.

Discussion *Pragmatics*

Yule (2017) emphasized pragmatics is the study of what individuals truly mean

when they speak; this field of study is also referred to as "speaker meaning." Not only is it necessary to be able to determine the meaning of each word included inside a sentence, but it is also necessary to be able to determine what others mean by what they say in the context in which it is uttered in order to fully comprehend what they are trying to communicate. Pragmatics is also referred to as the study of "invisible" meaning, which refers to the process by which humans are able to comprehend what is intended even when it is not expressly expressed. In order to achieve this goal, those who are attempting to communicate need to be able to rely on a significant number of assumptions and expectations that are held by the majority of people. Investigating these presuppositions and expectations helps offer insight on how we interpret information beyond the exact words that are stated. From the perspective of pragmatics, there is always more to communication than what is being said.

Impoliteness

According to Culpeper (2011), impoliteness may be broken down into three categories: (1) the speaker intentionally attacks the receiver's face; (2) the receiver understands or observes the conduct as an attempt to attack the recipient's face; or (3) a combination of (1) and (2). (2). (2). An unfriendly action was carried out in the middle of a conversation, which was disrupted as a result. Even if the phrase is taken out of its original context, "rudeness proper" refers to an act of impoliteness that endangers the face of the person being insulted by the speaker.

Impoliteness Strategy

According to Culpeper (1996) there were five types of impoliteness strategies. There are bald on record strategy, positive impoliteness strategy, negative impoliteness strategy, mock politeness or sarcasm, and the last is withhold politeness strategy.

1. Bald on Record

In circumstances in which the significance of a person's appearance cannot be exaggerated or understated, the FTA can be carried out in a way that is straight, plain, unambiguous, and condensed. In certain circumstances, showing one's bald head on record could be considered an act of civility. It is allowed to use threatening language in situations in which the threat to the face of the hearer is minimal or in which the speaker is much stronger than the hearer. As is the case in each of the situations described previously, the speaker does not intend to offend the facial expressions of the listener.

2. Positive Impoliteness

According to Culpeper (1996), the implementation of this strategy involves the use of tactics that are designed to undermine the positive face demands of the addressee. That gave the impression that the speaker's behavior during the conversation was done on purpose with the intention of making the other person feel uneasy. There are many different routes that one can use to achieve this goal, including:

- To ignore or minimize the significance of another person's existence.
- A person should try to avoid engaging in any activity along with the other individual.
- Do not sit close to the other person, sever all links you have with

them, and refuse to acknowledge any commonalities or affinities.

- Adopt an attitude of apathy, thoughtlessness, and indifference toward everything in your environment.
- Make use of identifiers that aren't very effective.
- Speak in a manner that is difficult to decipher, such as slang or jargon.
- Determine a contentious matter that is currently being debated and focus on that.
- Strive to annoy or frustrate the other person.
- Use vulgar language, including cussing and other forms of abusive and disrespectful speech.
- Referring to the other person in a derogatory manner in one's speech.

3. Negative Impoliteness

The strategy was employed to inflict as much damage as possible on the recipient's desire to have a horrible look. This can be done in a variety of different methods, including the following:

- Instill terror in the other person, causing them to worry that something terrible will happen to them.
- If you want to prove that you are better than other people, treat them with contempt by making fun of them or insulting them. Put on an air of scorn. Consider the words made by the other person should be taken with a grain of salt. Make an effort to travel in the opposite direction (for example, by using diminutives).
- The space of the other person may be invaded, either literally or symbolically, in some way.
- Get closer to the other person than the connection permits (for example, by asking for or discussing information that is too intimate given the nature of the relationship).

When describing someone who possesses a bad quality, it is helpful to include the pronouns "I" and "you" in the description.

4. Sarcasm/Mock Politeness

The fourth one is acting rudely in a mocking manner. Culpeper (1996) explained that when used in the context of mock impoliteness, often known as "banter," the term refers to impolite behavior that is obviously not intended to offend the recipient. It creates the impression in the listeners' minds that the speaker is personable and eager to engage in conversation with them. When using this strategy in a conversation, the speaker will put on an act of friendliness toward the listener in order to gain the listener's trust.

5. Withhold Politeness

This refers to the lack of courtesy work being done at locations where it is expected to be done. Bousfield (2008) explores Culpeper's ways of impoliteness and expands on them with four different strategies. The following are the four different strategies:

- Criticize — humiliate the listener by pointing out any of their behaviors or omissions or any entity in which the listener has invested face
- In order to effectively enforce role reversal, it is necessary to both physically (by blocking passage) and communicatively (by refusing turn, halting) obstruct passage.
- Challenges

Conclusion

During the process of this research, a total of fifteen data containing impoliteness strategies have been gathered. After collecting the data, the researchers utilized Culpeper's theory (1996) to analyze each piece of data and categorize it in accordance with the strategies underlying the data being analyzed. Culpeper (1996) identified these strategies as bald-on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock impoliteness, and withhold politeness.

The movie contained all of the strategies of impoliteness. However. The characters tend to use bald on record impoliteness and positive impoliteness. Bald-on record impoliteness had 5 utterances and positive impoliteness had 4 utterances. Next was followed by negative impoliteness which had 3 utterances. The sarcasm/mock impoliteness contained 2 utterances. And withhold politeness only had 1 utterance.

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