



An Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies in *Turning Red* Based on Culpeper's Theory of Pragmatics

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Abstract

The pragmatic analysis has become progressively noteworthy in understanding impoliteness strategy in recent years, especially in the movie pragmatics analysis. This study aims to examine the types of impoliteness strategies used in the movie *Turning Red*. The method of qualitative design is qualified to deal with it. The data was collected by watching the movie repeatedly and taking notes during the conversation. The data were analyzed using impoliteness strategies in the Culpeper framework. The result showed that there were thirteen utterances that consisted of three utterances of baldness on record, four utterances of positive impoliteness, five utterances of negative impoliteness, and one utterance identified as sarcasm or mock politeness. However, there is one strategy that is not found in the movie: withhold politeness. It means that this movie is intended to show the negative facial desires and put the environment in negative situations, interfering with their freedom of action and humiliation.

Introduction

The field of pragmatics has ended up progressively noteworthy in understanding how dialect capacities in social settings from time to time. Pragmatics emphasizes the study of how people convey meaning through their speech or writing and how others understand the meaning. Rather than just focusing on the literal meaning or phrasing, pragmatics also studies people's expressions focusing on what the speaker is trying to convey (Taiwo et al., 2021). In essence, pragmatics emphasizes interpreting the speaker's utterances (Yule, 1996). Along similar lines, Leech argues that pragmatics can be practically sharp as the study of how utterances have meanings in situations (Geoffrey N. Leech, 1983). Pragmatics can also refer to polite and impoliteness utterances that often occur in everyday life intentionally or unintentionally, concerning politeness and impoliteness procedures utilized in different shapes of communication. There are three main arguments that can be advanced to support the theories of politeness by Lakoff, Brown and Levinson, which are regarded as the most impactful contributions in this field of study. Lakoff emphasized the crucial role of politeness in maintaining social relationships and effectively managing interpersonal interactions (Lakoff, 1973). Brown and Levinson argue that compromising the hearer's need for self-esteem and respect is referred to as "Face-Threatening Acts" or FTA and how politeness strategies are used to manage FTA (Brown, P., & Levinson, 1987). Both theories recognize the importance of politeness in maintaining. These theories inherently focus on using communication strategies to maintain and promote interactions and harmony in specific societies. Moreover, Studies have been focusing on a newly revised approach to the matter, including the concept of impoliteness. Impoliteness can be described as a disapproving stance towards particular behaviours that manifest within certain situations. It

thrives on the anticipation, wishes, and/or convictions regarding social dynamics, wherein individuals' or groups' identities are influenced by others during interactions (Culpeper & Ravassat, 2011)

There are several conditions required for an utterance to be categorized as impoliteness. Impoliteness arises when a person tends to offend the interlocutor. However, it can also appear unintentionally without the speaker realizing it (Ahmed & Hussein, 2024; Culpeper, 1996; Kharlova, 2015; Sari et al., 2019). To give an illustration study of impoliteness use Culpeper's theoretical framework. There is a study by Ardhy Meylana, Issy Yuliasri, and Fahrur Rozi with movie entitled *The Simpsons Movie* with the analysis of seventy-seven utterances, the results of the analysis are categorized as follows: eleven bald on record, thirty-two positive impoliteness, twenty-five negative impoliteness, six sarcasm or mock politeness, and three withhold politeness (Meylana et al., 2024). As you can see from the results, positive impoliteness is the most frequently used strategy in *The Simpsons Movie*. Another example is the analysis of *Easy A* movie by Simanjuntak and Ambaligen. This study also examines impoliteness strategies using Culpeper's theory. The difference here is that the movie analyzed by researchers is not animated. The result of the analysis obtained by the researcher found sixteen utterances which were divided into five strategies, namely four utterances of bald on record, five utterances of positive impoliteness, four utterances of negative impoliteness, two utterances of sarcasm or mock politeness, and one utterance of withhold politeness (Simanjuntak & Ambaligen, 2022). This study shows more positive impoliteness in *Easy A* movie.

Considering some examples of impoliteness strategies, the researchers intend to examine animation movies and use Culpeper's theory (1996), referring to the view of Culpeper, who views impoliteness as a multidisciplinary field of study approached from several different linguistics perspectives. As can be seen from the many humorous animations and heartfelt narratives, a set of linguistics exchanges illustrates various forms of impoliteness strategies. These strategies ranging from outright confrontation to subtle innuendo, serve the characters' intentions, power, and the unacceptability of change in the movie's fictional world. Culpeper stated that impoliteness is divided into five strategies, there are bald on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withhold politeness (Culpeper, 1996).

This research has some similarities with the previous research discussed above. However, this research highlights the impoliteness strategies in the movie entitled *Turning Red* as the data source. The purpose is to identify the impoliteness strategies uttered by the characters in the movie which adopt the teenage life. The questions underlying the study are firstly about the types of impoliteness strategies and secondly, the reason why the characters in the movie used those strategies. The analysis will mainly based on the theory of pragmatics by Culpeper.

Literature Review

Pragmatics focuses on examining the meaning conveyed by a speaker and understood by a listener (Cheng, 2023; Yule, 1996). This kind of investigation inherently entails understanding the meaning people convey within specific contexts and how those contexts shape their expressions, it involves examining how speakers tailor their messages based on factors like their audience, location, timing, and situations. Therefore, pragmatics focuses on exploring meaning within context (Yule, 1996). This approach also delves into how listeners can infer meanings beyond explicit words to grasp the speaker's intended message. It explores the recognition of implicit communication as a significant part of overall communication. We might describe it as an exploration of hidden meanings. Pragmatics is the study of how communication extends beyond explicit statements (Ilie & Norrick, 2018; Yule, 1996). Furthermore, this perspective prompts consideration of what influences the choice between explicit and implicit communication. The fundamental factors are physical, social, or conceptual, implying a shared understanding. It also depends on the perceived closeness or distance between the speaker and listener and decides the level of explicitness required (Bravo, 2022). Thus, it examines the expression of relational distance. However, Pragmatics is not only concerned with the explicit meaning conveyed by sentences, but it also delves into the implicit intentions of the speaker (Siddiqui, 2018). It can be said that pragmatics explores the unspoken aspects of communication.

Impoliteness is a bad attitude where different behavior occur within certain situations (Culpeper et al., 2011; Hassan et al., 2023; Muthi'ah et al., 2022). These behavior are based on desires, expectations, or social beliefs, specifically an individual's identity or a group's interactions in society (Esau, 2021; Taiwo et al., 2021; Wijayanti & Mubarak, 2020). Some behavior are considered bad when they conflict with the existing social environment.

Furthermore, according to Culpeper's theory written by Wendy & Rudianto, impoliteness is to attack someone's face or expression (Culpeper et al., 2021; Hanif et al., 2021; Wendy & Rudianto, 2022). The concept of impoliteness revolves around how the offense is expressed and received (Cornelia & Soelistyo, 2023; Culpeper, 2005; Shevchenko et al., 2021). Culpeper (2011) concluded that impoliteness occurs when the speaker directly expresses an attack on the face intentionally, or the listener understands the behavior as an intentional attack, or it could be a combination (Culpeper et al., 2011)

Furthermore, impoliteness strategies have five strategies, there are bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withhold politeness (Culpeper, 1996). These strategies affect both the speaker's face and the listener's response. From each of these points, the following explanation are: 1) Bald on record impoliteness shows the speaker attacking to ruin the face of the listener by saying it directly in a harsh, clear, and firm manner, for example, "shut up, don't talk to much" (Fitri, 2022); 2) Positive Impoliteness indicates the speaker tries to show the listener that they are not wanted or allowed in every situation which intends to undermine the positive face of the speaker, for example, "I don't care about you, What the fuck are you doing here." (Mohammed Hussein Ali & Muslih Shwaysh Ahmed, 2023); 3) Negative impoliteness occurs when the speaker intends to attack the negative facial desires of the listener clearly and put the environment in a negative situation, interfering with their freedom, actions and humiliating them, such as "When are you getting married?", "stop wearing these stupid clothes" (Ali & Ahmed, 2022); 4) Sarcasm or mock politeness is face-threatening treatment by using a strategy that is clearly insincere, which has the opposite meaning to what is said by the speaker, for example, someone is in an accident, and their friend says sarcastically: "may god bless you" (Ahmed & Hussein, 2024); 5) Withhold Politeness, in this case, the speaker does not perform polite behavior, which the listener expects; such as not saying "thank you" after receiving a gift or favor (Omer, 2022). From the detailed explanation related to impoliteness strategies suggested by Culpeper (1996), this paper aims to find out the analysis of these strategies that occur in the movie *Turning Red*.

Methodology

This study draws on a descriptive qualitative research design that tries to explain the object by following facts with accurate characteristics of the object (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The objects of this research are the utterances and the expressions. This research takes data in the form of conversation from the movie *Turning Red*, released in 2022. *Turning Red* is a teen fantasy animated movie produced by Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studio with a comedy-drama genre and has a duration of one hour and forty minutes. Directed by Domee Shi, the first female director to make Pixar's animated movie well, so the storyline and circumstances can relate to the situation of teenagers in general. The movie tells the journey of Mei Lee as a thirteen-year-old girl in search of her true self as a teenager while keeping a big secret passed down from her family. She turns into a giant red panda whenever she gets mad and has uncontrollable emotions. The movie takes us back to the early 2000s, which was characterized by school gangs and teenage life at that time. The presence of a boyband in the movie makes impoliteness strategies more related and supported because of the disagreement between the speaker and the listener.

In this study, researchers used a note-taking method to collect the data that researchers have carried out. Note-takers engage in the practice of taking notes to serve two primary purposes: recording information and facilitating reflection; a key objective of note-taking is to establish a stable external memory that can be utilized in the future (Boch & Piolat, 2005; Mosleh & Baba, 2013). Gathering the data is the first activity that researchers do because that makes it easier for researchers to finish the paper. Firstly, researchers watched the *Turning Red* movie repeatedly on Disney Hotstar and carefully watched the conversations that related to the theory manually into a book, wrote at what minutes the conversation could be used as data, and also noted the scene in the conversation to interpret each conversation. Secondly, researchers identify some parts again to make sure the conversations are related to the theory, then identify the data into several types of impoliteness strategies using Culpeper's theory.

Discussion and Analysis

In this section, the discussion will point to the result of the analysis and interpretation of the conversation from the movie. The researchers found thirteen impoliteness utterances used by the characters in *Turning Red*. The identified impoliteness strategies in the statements included three utterances of bald-on-record impoliteness, five

utterances of negative impoliteness, four utterances of positive impoliteness, and one utterance of sarcasm or mock politeness. However, researchers have not obtained data to identify withhold politeness because no data refers to withhold impoliteness in the conversation in *Turning Red* movie that can be described using Culpeper theory. The quantities of these impoliteness strategies are presented in the table provided as Table 1.

Table 1. Impoliteness Strategies in Turning Red Movie

Impoliteness Strategies	Frequency
Bald on Record Impoliteness	3
Positive Impoliteness	4
Negative Impoliteness	5
Sarcasm or Mock Politeness	1
Withhold Politeness	0
Total	13

Source: Fictitious data, for illustration purposes only

Bald on Record Impoliteness

This section explains the result of bald on-record impoliteness. Bald on record impoliteness occurs when the speaker attacks to ruin the listener's face by saying something directly in a harsh, clear, and firm manner (Culpeper, 1996; Fitri, 2022).

Data 1 was taken from minutes 08:22 until 08:39

Ming: Shoo-Shoo! You vandals!

Boys: Oh snap, They're coming.

The utterances explain the scene where Ming is cleaning the statue with his son in front of the temple and hears the sound of a group of boys who turn out to be vandals. So Ming chased away the children who did the vandals. Then spontaneously the boys said that. This condition can be indicated as bald on record strategies because the speaker spontaneously and firmly said "vandals" to the group of boys to ruin the listener's face. Vandalism manifests as the breaking of glass, the creation of graffiti, and the destruction of pre-existing objects. Additionally, it can cause significant damage to construction sites (Arthur-Aidoo et al., 2023)

Data 2 was taken from minutes 10:31 until 10:36

Mei: No, it's not. Will you just get out?

Ming: (Gasp) (shock)

In this scene, Mei yells at Ming and shocks her. Then, Ming's expression looks upset, so Ming is speechless because of her daughter. In this framework, bald on record impoliteness occurs when the speaker's intention to be rude or offensive is clear and direct. The intensity of Mei's reaction and its emotional impact on Ming highlight the impoliteness of the exchange, making it a clear example of this concept.

Data 3 was taken from minutes 13:27 until 13:42

Ming's Mother: Jin. Help clean the table!

Jin: Uh-huh.

In this scene, Ming's mother loudly and unambiguously commands Jin to help clean the table because she notices that Jin is not assisting. Her directive, "Jin. Help clean the table!" is straightforward and leaves no room for ambiguity, reflecting a sense of urgency or frustration. Jin's minimal response, "Uh-huh," indicates a lack of enthusiasm or engagement, which likely prompts the directness of Ming's mother's command. According to Jonathan Culpeper's theory of "bald on record" impoliteness, this interaction exemplifies the concept as Ming's mother delivers her order directly and without any mitigating language. The clear of her speech act demonstrates an unmitigated and direct approach, fitting the criteria for bald on record impoliteness.

Positive Impoliteness

This part can be identified as positive impoliteness. Positive Impoliteness indicates that the speaker tries to show the listener that they are not wanted or allowed in every situation, which intends to undermine the positive face of the speaker (Culpeper, 1996).

Data 1 was taken from minutes 39:01 until 39:08

Ming: What was that?

Jin:

Ming: Am I the only one who sees the danger here?

In this scene, Ming complains about her daughter's treatment and pours out her frustration to herself. When Jin is about to answer, Ming ignores Jin by closing his mouth, and then Ming continues to express her frustration. Those utterances are related to positive impoliteness, which is relevant to the concept of Culpeper (1996), where the speaker's actions diminish the listener's sense of being valued or respected in the interaction. Ming expresses her frustration by saying, "What was that?" and continues with, "Am I the only one who sees the danger here?" This indicates dissatisfaction and a sense of urgency. Jin is about to respond, but Ming interrupts and ignores him. Ming's actions complaining, interrupting, and ignoring Jin undermine Jin sense of being valued and respected. By not allowing Jin to participate in the conversation, Ming diminishes Jin positive face needs, which aligns with Culpeper's concept of positive impoliteness. Therefore, this interaction demonstrates positive impoliteness, as Ming's behavior reduces Jin's feelings of being appreciated and respected in the conversation.

Data 2 was taken from minutes 39:22 until 39:24

Ming: I'm not here.

Jin: (gives the phone call)

Ming looks surprised when Jin says her mother is calling, and Ming tries to avoid her mother's call. But Jin still gives the phone call to Ming. By giving Ming the phone call despite her attempt to avoid it, Jin demonstrates a positive impoliteness strategy by asserting control over the situation and undermining Ming's positive face. Therefore, this interaction can be classified as an example of positive impoliteness strategies, as Jin's behavior attempts to assert dominance over the situation and undermine Ming's positive face.

Data 3 was taken from minutes 42:13 until 42:16

Mei: Ah. Go away!

In this scene, Mei is shocked because her friends see her as a red panda. So Mei immediately goes into the toilet to hide and ignore her friends. This utterance refers to positive impoliteness because Mei effectively separates herself from her friends and ignores their existence. By effectively separating herself from her friends and ignoring their presence, Mei exhibits a positive impoliteness strategy that undermines their positive face. Her actions convey a lack of concern for their feelings or desires to be included, leading to their sense of rejection or being unwanted. Therefore, this interaction aligns with Culpeper's concept of positive impoliteness, as Mei's behavior damages the positive face of her friends by effectively rejecting their presence and ignoring their existence.

Data 4 was taken from minutes 53:01 until 53:04

The Classmate: This sucks.

Miriam: Just wait, she'll be here.

The classmate is having a party at Tyler's house and waiting for Mei to come, but she hasn't arrived, and the party gets boring. The scene aims to be positive impoliteness because the speaker shows indifference and does not provide emotional support to his Friend. Positive impoliteness occurs when the speaker tries to make the listener feel unwanted or excluded in various situations, aiming to damage the listener's positive face.

Negative Impoliteness

The speaker aims to clearly attack the listener's negative facial desires and create a negative environment that interferes with their freedom and humiliates them. Along similar lines, negative impoliteness can also be described as initiating any conversation that leads of negative emotions (Culpeper, 1996, 2021)

Data 1 was taken from minutes 10:31 until 10:36

Mei: Some of the kids at school like them. Ming: You mean Miriam? That girl is odd.

In this scene, Ming's response about Miriam being odd makes Mei feel demeaned, especially since Miriam is Mei's best friend. This comment does not respect Mei's feelings about her friend and imposes a negative judgment on someone Mei cares about, which can be perceived as an attack on Mei's negative face. Therefore, this interaction exemplifies negative impoliteness because Ming's response attacks Mei's respect and imposes an unsolicited negative judgment, making Mei feel demeaned.

Data 2 was taken from minutes 13:27-13:42

Ming: She's just a sweet, innocent child. How dare you take advantage of her!

Mei: Mom! No! (echoes)

Devon: What? (All mourning)

Tyler: What a weirdo.

Ming's public accusation and the exposure of Mei's private matters in front of others, including her friends, violate Mei's and Devon's negative face needs. This public exposure and humiliation fulfill the criteria for negative impoliteness, as they impose on their personal space and make them feel cornered and humiliated. Therefore, this scene exemplifies negative impoliteness because it involves actions that publicly humiliate and impose on the personal boundaries of both Mei and Devon, making them feel exposed and demeaned.

Data 3 was taken from minutes 17:35-17:38

Miriam: Tyler keeps putting these up. Knock it off, butthead.

Mei: (Angry) (Growl)

Abby: Not funny, Tyler!

Tyler: Devon, my precious manly man.

Tyler's actions and comments humiliate Mei by exposing her to ridicule and embarrassing her in public school. Tyler's behavior imposes on Mei's personal boundaries and respect, causing her to feel cornered and demeaned. Therefore, this interaction can be identified as negative impoliteness because Tyler's actions and comments publicly humiliate Mei, violating her negative face by imposing on her personal space and making her feel embarrassed and disrespected.

Data 4 was taken from minutes 59:22-59:30

Tyler: Fine, get out of here! Go back to your psycho mom and your creepy temple, you freak!

Mei: Shove your deal!

In this scene, Tyler screams at Mei when Mei announces that she cannot join the party again because the Red Panda ritual coincides with her favorite boyband concert. Tyler's words make Mei very angry. Tyler attacks Mei's negative face by imposing his aggression on her, making her feel humiliated and disrespected. This scene can be identified as negative impoliteness due to the speaker screaming at the hearer and attacking the hearer's personal space, disrespecting and making her feel cornered and demeaned.

Data 5 was taken from minutes 40:32-40:36

Tyler: Little momma's girl. (Laugh)

No wonder Mei is such a loser. (Laughter)

Mei: (growl)

In this scene, Tyler is demeaning Mei by shouting at her in the middle of the field during school sports, making Mei feel humiliated and angry. This public shaming and derogatory treatment are characteristic of negative impoliteness, as described by Culpeper. Therefore, this interaction is a clear example of negative impoliteness, where Tyler's actions aim to damage Mei's negative face by publicly humiliating her and imposing derogatory judgments on her.

Sarcasm or Mock Politeness

Sarcasm or mock politeness is face-threatening treatment by using a strategy that is clearly insincere, which has the opposite meaning to what is said by the speaker (Culpeper, 1996, 2021)

Data 1 was taken from minutes 48:36-48:44

Mei-Mei: Wow! Yeah, but it'll be super boring. Wouldn't you rather hang out with dad?

Ming: (take a look at Jin)

In this scene, Ming wants to join the group study class with Mei but Mei calling the activity ‘very boring’ is an example of sarcasm. Mei is subtly implying that Ming should not join her without directly saying so. This indirect way of communicating her true intent falls into the category of sarcasm or feigned impoliteness. Therefore, this interaction is an example of sarcasm or feigned incivility as defined by Culpeper, where the speaker uses irony and exaggeration to convey a message that subtly insults or discourages the listener.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the researchers put forward the claim that the movie *Turning Red* has indicated by Culpeper's theory with the results: three utterances of bald on record impoliteness, four utterances of positive impoliteness, five utterances of negative impoliteness, and one utterance of sarcasm and mock politeness, which means that this movie has a significant influence in the area of linguistic research, which can be part of the research contribution in linguistic studies. However, there are still areas of research focus that have not been explained, namely withhold politeness. For future researchers, they are expected to be able to research more deeply about the withhold politeness strategies so that there are no mistakes in the future.

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