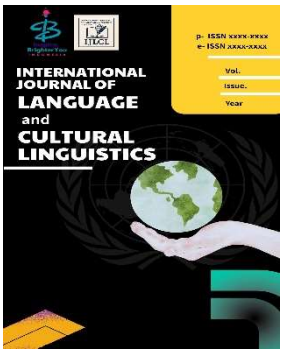
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An Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies in "Superwog Miniseries Episode 4: "The Jacket." Youtube Video

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Abstract:
This study analyzes impoliteness strategies employed by the characters in Superwog Miniseries Episode 4: The Jacket, a popular Australian comedy web series. Using Culpeper's (1996, 2005) Impoliteness Theory as the theoretical framework, this research identifies and classifies utterances from the episode into five categories: Bald-on-Record Impoliteness, Positive Impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness, Sarcasm or Mock Politeness, and Withhold Politeness. A descriptive qualitative method was employed, with data collected through non-participatory observation of the episode's dialogues. The findings reveal that Bald-on-Record Impoliteness is the most dominant strategy, followed by Positive Impoliteness, reflecting the comedic and confrontational dynamics between the characters Theo, Johnny, Squeegee Guy, and other minor characters. Furthermore, this study examines how impoliteness strategies affect the emotional state of the main characters, demonstrating that such strategies generate frustration, humiliation, and escalating conflict. The results contribute to pragmatics research in digital media and comedy discourse analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is the study of the meaning that speakers intend to convey, focusing on analyzing the intended meaning behind a speaker's utterance and how the hearer interprets that message. The main goal of pragmatics in communication is to effectively convey meaning from one person to another. It goes beyond the literal meanings of words and considers the context of communication, including social dynamics, cultural norms, and situational factors. For example, the same phrase may have different interpretations based on the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, the conversation setting, and non-verbal cues.

The researchers in this study found the issue in the Superwog Miniseries Episode 4: "The Jacket," which offers clear examples of impoliteness strategies. Directed by Theodore Saidden

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& Nathan Saidden, this episode features several interactions that highlight impolite behavior. A key example is the bald on record impoliteness displayed by the character Theo. The dialogue throughout the episode includes instances of impolite language, as shown below:

Theo : “Get lost!” 0:35

Theo : “I said keep f*ckin walking!” 2:55 Theo : “I don’t care, get out of here!” 0:38

Theo’s statements exemplifies bald on-record impoliteness. This strategy entails delivering a face threatening act (FTA) in a direct and clear manner. Theo’s comment is unambiguous and straightforward, leaving no possibility for misinterpretation; he openly expresses his anger toward others without any politeness or softening language. This method is notably aggressive, as it ignores the other character’s feeling, reinforcing Theo’s carelessness and his usage of freedom of speech.

Communication dynamics in professional settings can greatly affect interpersonal relationships and individual self-perception. In the Superwog Miniseries Episode 4: “The Jacket”, different characters use impoliteness strategies that not only reveal their personalities but also creates emotional tensions in their interactions. However, there is a lack of analysis examining how impoliteness strategies affect the emotional state of the characters and types of impoliteness strategies that are employed by the characters in the episode. This study seeks types of impoliteness strategies that are employed by the characters in the Superwog Miniseries Episode 4: “The Jacket”, and how it affects each scene that they are used in.

According to Culpeper (2003), explain that impoliteness is deliberately targets and damages a person's public self-image ("face"), which can spark interpersonal conflicts and eventually destroy relationships. Employing a specific impoliteness strategy clearly signals a speaker's intent to threaten or challenge the listener's face. Building on his original 1996 framework, Culpeper revised his model in 2005 to distinguish five distinct types of impoliteness: bald-on-record, positive, negative, off-record, and the withholding of politeness. These five strategies are employed to analyze utterances that exhibit impoliteness strategies used by the characters during conversations in the Superwog Miniseries Episode 4: “The Jacket”.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is grounded in Jonathan Culpeper’s Impoliteness Theory, originally introduced in 1996 and revised in 2005, which provides the conceptual lens for identifying and classifying impolite utterances in Superwog Miniseries Episode 4: “The Jacket.” The framework offers a structured way to move from raw dialogue to systematic classification, allowing the researchers to connect specific linguistic choices to their interpersonal effects.

Foundational Concept: Face and Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs)

Culpeper’s theory builds on the politeness and face tradition established by Goffman and later Brown and Levinson, in which face refers to a person’s public self-image — the identity they present to and want acknowledged by others. Impoliteness occurs when a speaker

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deliberately performs a Face-Threatening Act (FTA), an utterance designed to damage the hearer's face rather than protect it.

As Culpeper (2003) explains, impoliteness deliberately targets and damages a person's public self-image, which can spark interpersonal conflict and, over time, damage or destroy relationships. The choice of a specific impoliteness strategy is not incidental: it signals the speaker's intent to threaten or challenge the listener's face, making strategy selection itself a meaningful object of analysis.

The Five Impoliteness Super-Strategies (Culpeper, 1996, 2005)

Building on his original 1996 framework, Culpeper's 2005 revision distinguishes five categories of impoliteness. These five strategies form the coding scheme used to classify every utterance identified in the episode's dialogue.

Table 1. The Five Impoliteness Super-Strategies

Strategy	Core Definition	Mechanism
Bald-on-Record Impoliteness	Direct, unambiguous FTA delivered with no softening	Maximum face damage delivered clearly and concisely; typically used when the speaker has confidence, holds higher status, or perceives the relationship as permitting such directness
Positive Impoliteness	Attacks the hearer's positive face (desire to be liked, approved of, included)	Disregarding or ignoring the hearer, or using inappropriate identity markers — e.g., insults, slurs, name-calling
Negative Impoliteness	Attacks the hearer's negative face (desire for autonomy and freedom from imposition)	Frightening, humiliating, condescending toward, or aggressively restricting the hearer's freedom of action
Sarcasm / Mock Politeness	Surface-level politeness markers used insincerely	An FTA performed through forms of politeness used insincerely, so as to communicate the opposite of what is apparently expressed, producing a mocking or critical effect
Withhold Politeness	Absence of politeness that is socially expected	Failure to perform conventionally required politeness work — e.g., no greeting, no thanks, remaining silent when politeness is socially required

Operationalization for Analysis

To apply this framework to the data, the study follows a consistent analytical procedure:

- Unit of analysis: individual utterances and exchanges drawn from the episode's dialogue, each identified with a timestamp.
- Classification procedure: each utterance is matched against the defining criteria of the five categories above — assessing directness versus indirectness, the type of face targeted (positive or negative), and the presence or absence of expected politeness.
- Supplementary lens — Pragmatic Identity Method: applied alongside the categorization to connect each impoliteness strategy to character identity construction

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and its emotional consequences (frustration, humiliation, escalating conflict), linking linguistic form to interpersonal effect.

Theoretical Rationale for the Data

The framework assumes that impoliteness is strategic and intentional, rather than accidental rudeness: speakers select a particular strategy to achieve a communicative goal, such as asserting dominance, mocking, refusing, or expressing anger. This assumption justifies treating comedic, scripted dialogue — in this case, a YouTube web series — as legitimate data for pragmatic analysis. Even within a fictional or comedic register, the strategies employed mirror real-world patterns of face-threat, which supports the framework's applicability to media and comedy discourse analysis more broadly.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method according to Creswell and Guetterman (2019). Data information Source: Superwog Miniseries Episode 4: The Jacket, a youtube, short-form comedy video, data were collected through non-participatory observation where the researcher observed the episode and transcribed dialogues without engagement as a participant in these conversations. The data were collected in 3 steps: (1) watching the episode multiple times to transcribe accurately; (2) spotting utterances that show features of impoliteness; and (3) categorizing those utterances based on Culpeper's (1996, 2005) five strategies of impoliteness. The analysis was conducted using the pragmatics identity method, focusing on how the main character emotions. Out of all 9 Episodes that the Superwog Miniseries has to offer, this specific episode was selected based on the researcher's preference, as it contains a high concentration of the specific behaviors being studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The author begins with an introduction summarizing the background of the problem, identifies the issues, states the objectives, and organizes the writing. The research methodology is then described, outlining the approach used based on expert recommendations. Subsequently, the author analyzes the types of impoliteness strategies observed in the Superwog Miniseries Episode 4: "The Jacket." The analysis reveals two instances of bald on record impoliteness, two instances of positive impoliteness, two instances of negative impoliteness, two instances of sarcasm or mock politeness, and one instance of withhold politeness.

Bald-on-Record Impoliteness

As Culpeper (1996) notes, bald-on-record impoliteness is often used when the speaker wants to cause maximum face damage. For instance, if someone bluntly states, "You're wrong," without softening the critique or considering the other person's feelings, they are employing bald-on-record impoliteness. This approach is often used when the speaker feels confident, holds a higher status, or believes that the relationship permits such directness.

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A. 00:02:50 ⇒ 00:02:53

Passerby: “What the hell are you doing?” Theo: “Keep walking D*ckhead!”

Theo and the passerby interaction demonstrates bald-on-record impoliteness. Theo makes a blunt and unambiguous order towards the passerby, He makes no attempt to soften his views. This order is a harsh command that attacks the hearer’s face directly, without any attempt to minimize the damage. According to Culpeper (2011), bald-on-record impoliteness frequently consists of direct FTAs (Face Threatening Acts) delivered in a clear, concise manner, as seen by Theo’s harsh command.

B. 00:03:20 ⇒ 00:03:25

Old Lady : “The collection drivers already came and collected it.” Theo : “Great.”

Old Lady: “Yeah? Now keep it down!”

Based on the conversation, the impoliteness strategy employed by The Old Lady is bald-on-record impoliteness. She expresses her annoyance towards Theo because of the noises that Theo made, in his attempt to recover his jacket that he inserted a while ago, inside the collection bin. This resulted in The Old Lady screaming a bald-on record command towards Theo, this act creates a Face Threatening Act (FTA) in a straightforward, unambiguous manner without making any effort to lessen the threat to the hearer’s face. Thus, highlighting its literal meaning and possibly offending or making people uncomfortable (Culpeper, 2011).

Positive Impoliteness

A. 00:00:25 ⇒ 00:00:27

Squeegee Guy : “Motioning his hands asking for money.” Theo: “I said no, you gronk!”

Based on the conversation, the impoliteness strategy employed is positive impoliteness. Theo’s comment, “I said no, you gronk!,” straightforwardly attacks the hearers positive face. Culpeper (2011) defines positive impoliteness strategies as "disregarding, ignoring, and using inappropriate identity markers" Which Theo’s statement appears when he used the word Gronk, an Australian slang, meaning an unintelligent or obnoxious person, in an attempt to insult the Hearer’s intelligent.

B. 00:05:03 ⇒ 00:05:15

Theo : “Runs away after he took the jacket.”

Squeegee Guy : “You fagg*t!” throws his wiper at Theo, hitting him and making him falls to the ground.

In this scene the impoliteness strategy used is positive impoliteness. Squeegee Guy immediately calling Theo "You Fagg*t!." This use of inappropriate markers threatens Theo’s positive face. Squeegee Guy's choice of words reveals his extreme dislike of Theo’s manner. Fagg*t, often shortened to fag, is a slur in the English language used to refer to gay men, usually used in a very offensive and disrespectful way. According to Culpeper (1996), positive

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impoliteness strategy damages the hearer's positive face. The speaker shows dislike, disrespect, and insulting the hearer's face intentionally.

Negative Impoliteness

A. 00:00:17 ⇒ 00:00:20

Squeegee Guy: "Forcefully wiping theo's cars windshield" Theo : "Stop it! Stop it!"

In this scene, Squeegee guy forcefully wipes and cleans Theo's car windshield although he doesnt want it to be cleaned. Because of that Theo then orders the squeegee guy to stop cleaning withan aggressive manner that attacks the squeegee guy's positive face. According to culpeper (1996), This strategy attacks the hearer's negative face (restricts freedom to do something directly.) The speaker frightens, humiliates, or ordering aggressively.

B. 00:00:45 ⇒ 00:00:48

Theo: You're not even doing anything, look.

Theo: "No one needs your sh*tty squeegee wipe bro!"

Based on this scene, the impoliteness strategy used is negative impoliteness, where Theo directly denies the value of the service dismissing it as completely useless. by using the word "Sh*tty" and the dismissive "bro" turns a standard refusal into an active face threatening attack. This aligns with Culpeper (1996) definition of negative impoliteness, Condescending (humiliates the hearer).

Sarcasm or Mock Politeness

This is a communication style where the speaker uses polite-sounding words that actually convey the opposite meaning, often for humorous or critical effect. For example, saying "Oh, great job on that project!" in a sarcastic tone highlights a poor performance, revealing the contrast between the statement and the speaker's true feelings. The effectiveness of sarcasm relies on the listener's ability to detect the insincerity behind the words, often indicated by tone or exaggeration. While it can add humor or express frustration, sarcasm may lead to misunderstandings if the listener misinterprets the tone, and it can create tension in relationships if perceived as passive-aggressive. Understanding sarcasm requires careful attention to tone, context, and the relationship dynamics between the speaker and listener. As Culpeper (2011) notes, sarcasm often involves "the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, so as to communicate the opposite of what is apparently expressed."

A. 00:00:40 ⇒00:00:50

Squeegee Guy : "F*ckin D*ickhead."

Theo :"Me d*ckhead? Go get a real job bro!"

In this scene, Theo is shown using the Sarcasm or mock politeness strategy, based on what he said, it can be interpreted as him mocking the Squeegee Guy to get an actual job, instead of just wiping car windshield for coins, even though it may seem obvious that the Squeegee Guy is not doing this job because he wants to, but maybe because of his situation

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preventing him to get an actual and respectable job. Even though it is obvious, Theo is shown to humiliate him even further, making use of sarcasm and mock politeness strategy, to mock the Squeegee Guy's situation even further.

B. 00:04:24 ⇒ 00:04:28

Theo : "Alright, wait! Please! Look, I own that jacket." Jacket Buyer : "Does it look like I care?"

Based on what happened in this scene, the Jacket Buyer's reply to what Theo said, is a clear example of sarcasm or mock politeness. Because even if the Jacket Buyer didn't say his line, Theo can already tell that he doesn't care, judging from his disinterested face, but the fact that he said his line, added with his disinterested face and tone, it further emphasize on his usage of sarcasm or mock politeness.

Withhold Politeness

A. 00:02:00 ⇒ 00:02:05

Based on this scene Theo is showing impolite strategies of withhold politeness. Theo does not greet the clothing store worker before asking his question and goes straight to asking the worker without any greeting, catching him in surprise. According to culpeper (1996) Impoliteness can also happen when expected politeness is absent. The speaker intentionally fails to provide polite behavior. not saying "thank you" , refusing greetings, remaining silent when politeness is socially required.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the impoliteness strategies used in the Superwog Miniseries Episode 4: "The Jacket.", focusing on how these strategies reflect power dynamics and emotional tensions between characters. The analysis includes five types of impoliteness strategies: bald-on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withholding politeness. A descriptive qualitative method was used, with data collected through non-participatory observation of the film's dialogues and recorded using note-taking. The analysis was conducted using the pragmatic identity method. The findings reveal two instances of bald-on-record impoliteness, two of positive impoliteness, two of negative impoliteness, two of sarcasm or mock politeness, and one instance of withholding politeness. These strategies are shown to be tools for characters, particularly Theo to exert control, establish authority, and maintain and further emphasize his disrespectful behaviour within the scenes.

These impoliteness strategies also contribute to the character's emotion and reinforce themes of ambition, identity, and ethical conflict.

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