



Investigating Conventionalised Impoliteness Strategies Used by Main Characters in Instant Family

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Abstract

Comedy movies frequently present impolite utterances due to the emotional dynamics that color character interactions. This study aimed to identify and examine the types of conventionalised impoliteness strategies used by the main characters in the movie “Instant Family”. It adopted Culpeper’s (2011) theory of conventionalised impoliteness, which classifies nine commonly recognised types of offensive utterances. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the data were collected from the movie script and were analysed through categorisation and contextual interpretation. The findings revealed that all nine types of strategies appeared in the characters’ utterances, with pointed criticisms/complaints and insults being the most frequent. These results suggested that impoliteness strategies were influenced by the characters’ emotional roles and power dynamics within the family context. In sum, this study contributed to a better understanding of how conventionalised impoliteness functioned in fictional family discourse and expanded the application of interactional pragmatics in media-based studies.

Keywords: *conventionalized impoliteness strategies, impoliteness, “instant family” movie*

Abstrak

Film bergenre komedi kerap menampilkan tuturan tidak sopan sebagai akibat dari dinamika emosional yang mewarnai interaksi antar karakter. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan mengkaji jenis-jenis strategi ketidaksantunan yang dikonvensionalisasikan yang digunakan oleh tokoh utama dalam film Instant Family. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori ketidaksantunan yang dikonvensionalisasikan dari Culpeper (2011), yang mengklasifikasikan sembilan jenis ujaran ofensif yang umum dikenali. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan dari naskah film dan dianalisis melalui proses kategorisasi serta interpretasi kontekstual. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa kesembilan jenis strategi tersebut muncul dalam tuturan para tokoh, dengan kritik/keluhan tajam dan penghinaan sebagai bentuk yang paling dominan. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa strategi ketidaksantunan dipengaruhi oleh peran emosional serta dinamika kekuasaan antar karakter dalam konteks keluarga. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang bagaimana ketidaksantunan yang dikonvensionalisasikan berfungsi dalam wacana keluarga fiksi, serta memperluas penerapan pragmatik interaksional dalam kajian berbasis media.

Kata kunci: *strategi ketidaksantunan yang dikonvensionalisasikan, ketidaksantunan, film “Instant Family”*

Introduction

Not only do movie characters use politeness, but they also frequently employ impoliteness in their utterances. Politeness in characters' conversations serves to maintain the hearer's face and to create harmonious interaction (Febriani et al., 2024; Syifa et al., 2023). On the other hand, impoliteness is used to offend the hearer's face (Daffa & Johan, 2023; Nasirli, 2021). According to Culpeper (2011) in *Impoliteness – Using Language to Cause Offence*, offending the hearer's face involves direct utterances or words that are already commonly understood as impolite. He adds that such utterances are referred to as conventionalized impoliteness (Culpeper, 2011). To investigate conventionalised impoliteness in a movie, a comedy genre is considered suitable. Impolite utterances are often found in comedy movies (Arlivia & Sembodo, 2024; Fitriani & Mubarak, 2022; Talebzadeh, 2023). The most relevant movie is *Instant Family* (2018), which, according to Dewi & Skolastika (2024) and Putri (2023), is rich in casual language style and full of the tension of domestic conflicts developed from the parenting of adopted children. Therefore, this study aims to analyze impoliteness in the *Instant Family* movie.

Instant Family (2018) is based on a true story, which represents the dynamics of a family formed through the adoption process. According to Putri (2023) dan Erwhintiana & Hasaniyah (2019), this movie showcases different parenting styles, specifically authoritarian and democratic approaches, as Pete Wagner and Ellie Wagner adjust to meet the unique needs of each child, Lita, Juan, and Lizzy, who have distinct personalities and backgrounds. In addition, based on pre-observation, the story of this movie focuses on a married couple who decide to adopt three children at once. Together with their three adopted children, the family must face various conflicts to build stable emotional relationships amidst character differences. Furthermore, the conflicts that occur in this family are mostly shown through emotional dialogues that are full of tension and often feature impolite utterances. It is following Dewi & Skolastika's statement (2024), "Most of the dialogue in this movie occurs in the context of more informal social interactions, where the characters speak in a more relaxed and familiar language style. They use everyday language that reflects their emotions, relationships, and circumstances naturally and authentically" (p. 363). Therefore, these characters in "*Instant Family*" are appropriate as research subjects to analyze conventionalised impoliteness.

Culpeper states, "a conventionalised impoliteness formula is a form of language in which context-specific impoliteness effects are conventionalised" (2011, p. 153). Based on this concept, Culpeper (2011) classifies nine conventionalised impoliteness strategies. They are recognisable and frequently used in real-life interactions to offend, including 1) insults (e.g., "You are fuck*ng moron!"), 2) pointed criticisms or complaints (e.g., "That was absolutely terrible"), 3) unpalatable questions or presuppositions (e.g., "Which lie are you telling me?"), 4) condescensions (e.g., "Don't be childish"), 5) message enforcers (e.g., "Do you understand me?"), 6) dismissals (e.g., "Get lost!"), 7) silencers (e.g., "Shut the fu*k up!"), 8) threats (e.g., "I'll smash your face in"), and 9) negative expressives (e.g., "Damn you!") (Culpeper, 2011, pp. 135–136). Based on Culpeper's (2011), Dewi & Skolastika's (2024), and Putri's (2023) explanations about the "*Instant Family*" movie, communication by the main characters reflects the reality of family

interactions involving utterances that have been recognized as impolite. Therefore, the selection of this theory is considered most appropriate to the context of the movie because these strategies appear in the form of explicit utterances.

Additionally, this study can fill the gaps from several previous studies. Dewi and Skolastika's (2024) study analyzed language styles in the movie "Instant Family," but did not explore aspects of impoliteness. Meanwhile, Djohan and Simatupang's (2022) and Tandiono & Tjitrakusuma's (2023) studies used Culpeper's impoliteness theory from a journal article published in 2005, which follows Culpeper's (1996) concept, to identify five types of impoliteness strategies in the Cruella movie. Tandiono & Tjitrakusuma (2023) focused on analyzing impoliteness by one character (Baroness) towards two characters, while Djohan and Simatupang's (2022) article analyzed the impoliteness of all characters. On the other hand, this current study uses Culpeper's (2011) concept to analyze the "Instant Family" movie. In addition, Yadav's (2022) study analyzed the implications of impoliteness using Culpeper (1996) on interpersonal relationships in "The Dirty Picture," and this differs from the current study, which focuses on conventionalised impoliteness in interpersonal reactions within the main character's family in the "Instant Family" movie.

Overall, there are two research questions in this current study. Firstly, what are the types of conventionalised impoliteness strategies used by the main character in the "Instant Family" movie? Secondly, how do those main characters use conventionalised impoliteness strategies in their utterances?

Method

Based on the objectives, this study uses a descriptive qualitative research design. Qualitative research design typically adopts an inductive approach to generate insights and collect rich, descriptive data (Leavy, 2017; Podesva & Sharma, 2013). This design is appropriate for this study as it allows the researcher to explore and interpret naturally occurring language in the context of a family-centered film. In qualitative research, sources of data may include people, groups, written texts, or visual and audio materials that serve as the basis from which researchers obtain relevant information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Milles et al., 2014). The data source of this study is the Instant Family (2018) movie, particularly the utterances of the Pate Wagner family. In this study, "data" are defined as verbal utterances that realise conventionalised impoliteness strategies. Since the movie itself represents naturally occurring interactions in a family context, each utterance is interpreted within its situational context as part of the pragmatic analysis.

In data collecting steps, according to Creswell & Creswell (2018) and Milles et al (2014), it refers to systematic procedures for establishing study boundaries, collecting data from appropriate sources (such as documents or visual materials). In this study, several steps were implemented: (1) watching the Instant Family (2018) movie, (2) obtaining and reading the movie script, and (3) coding and categorizing utterances that reflect conventionalised impoliteness strategies. The table below shows the terms and their abbreviations used in this study. By doing so, the

researcher could create a code system to structurally categorize each strategy in the analysis section.

In data analysis steps, qualitative data analysis involves organizing and making sense of the data by identifying patterns, themes, and categories that help answer the research questions. In this study, the analysis process was implemented in three structured steps. To analyze the data, this study follows several steps: 1) identifying the types of conventionalised impoliteness strategies by main characters, 2) examining how the strategies are realized by the main characters, 3) validating the categorization by cross-checking with Culpeper's (2011) framework and examples in previous studies, and 4) interpreting the data to draw conclusions relevant to the interactional dynamics among the characters. By following these sequential steps, this study ensures both analytical rigor and contextual sensitivity.

Result and Discussion

The table below displays the frequency of use of Conventionalised Impoliteness Strategies (CIS) types used by Pete Wagner (PW), Ellie Wagner (EW), Lizzy (LZ), Juan (JN), and Lita (LT). The CIS are used, including Insults (C1), Pointed criticisms/complaints (C2), Unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions (C3), Condescensions (C4), Message enforcers (C5), Dismissals (C6), Silencers (C7), Threats (C8), and Negative Expressives (C9). These types were found from the beginning of the movie until minute 01:25:12, despite the duration of the movie being up to two hours. In addition, the total datum found is 59 data based on utterance. However, there are some utterances that have two types of CIS. That is why the total number of CIS reached 70.

Table 1. The Frequency of CIS Types

CIS	PW	EW	LZ	LT	JN	Total
C1	3	3	5	4	0	15
C2	5	9	3	1	0	18
C3	3	6	5	2	0	16
C4	1	0	0	1	0	2
C5	1	1	0	2	0	4
C6	0	1	0	0	0	1
C7	0	1	0	0	0	1
C8	0	0	1	1	0	2
C9	3	0	3	5	0	11
Total	16	21	17	16	0	70

In the table above, LZ uses C1 most often, followed by LT. In C2, EW uses it the most, followed by PW. Furthermore, EW still dominates the use of C3, and LZ follows closely behind. In C4, the frequency of using CIS began to decline, where there was only a total of 2 types of CIS used by the characters. Not much improved, C5 only gained 2 lifts, making a total of 4 findings, which were used the most by LT. For C6 and C7, only EW used them once each. For C8, there is an increase in usage, although only by one number. The last type, C9, is dominated by LT's speech. Although the movie is very long, JN does not use any disrespectful words at all in

this movie. Below is the representation of each strategy used by PW, EW, LZ, and LT.

Insult

The Insult strategy (C1) in this context pertains to statements that openly demean another individual’s character, identity, or sense of self-worth. Such utterances typically occur during heightened conflicts, particularly in confrontations between adoptive parents and their children. The following are some examples of the findings.

Lizzy

Datum: 48/LZ/C1/C3/EW

Context:

At 59:08, there was an argument between Lizzy and Ellie. It was because Ellie and Pete punished Lizzy to lock herself up at home, but Lizzy's friends secretly entered Lizzy's bedroom through the window. As a result, Ellie banished Lizzy's friends. Hence, Lizzy was so angry with Ellie that she accused her carelessly.

Utterance: “You're just another **white lady** who wants to adopt little charity orphans to make you feel good about yourself.”

Lizzy attacks Ellie's personal identity and motivations by framing her as a “**white lady**” who wants to adopt orphans just for the sake of self-image. This utterance is not only racially and personally insulting but also questions Ellie's sincerity as a parent. It is an explicit insult to Ellie's character and morality, which belongs to category C1. In addition, because it touches on issues of racial identity and social class, this utterance can also be categorized as C3, because Lizzy conveys a harsh assessment of Ellie's intentions, not just expressing emotions.

Lita

Datum: 27/LT/C1/C2/EW

Context:

At 43:37, Lita threw a tantrum at the supermarket because she wanted a new doll, but Ellie would not let her, since she had already had one three weeks ago. Therefore, Lita insults the gift doll that Ellie had given her.

Utterance: "Santa got me a fat Barbie. I want a skinny Barbie!!!"

Lita's utterance shows a form of contempt for the gift she received earlier. By calling the doll “**fat**” in a derogatory manner and comparing it to a “**skinny Barbie**”, Lita expresses dissatisfaction in a rude and disrespectful manner. In other words, this utterance belongs to category C1 because it belittles the gifts of others in a rude tone.

Pointed criticisms/complaints

The Pointed Criticism or Complaint strategy (C2) involves directly addressing and expressing dissatisfaction with someone’s actions, attitudes, or choices. Within the data, this form of criticism commonly emerges in situations involving unequal roles, disagreements in parenting approaches, or contrasting perspectives between characters. This strategy is used by Pete, Ellie, Lizzy, and Lita. However, the following are some examples based on the highest strategy used.

Pete

Datum: 55/PW/C2/EW

Context:

At 01:18:23, Pete and Ellie felt disappointed because they assumed they had been babysitting for several months. It was happening when they took the children to meet the mother who had just gotten out of prison. Pete criticised their fate to Ellie while watching the children from a distance.

Utterance: "Like we've just been fricking babysitting for five months?"

Pete delivered a sharp criticism to Ellie regarding their emotional state as foster parents. The sentence "**Like we've just been fricking babysitting for five months?**" implies that Pete feels their role has been futile and not taken seriously by the children. The word "**babysitting**" implicitly denigrates the babysitting experience as meaningless, making it an explicit form of complaint. It falls into the C2 category because it contains a negative assessment of Ellie's situation and their family situation and is delivered in a frustrated tone.

Ellie

Datum: 32/EW/C2/PW

Context:

At 47:38, while in the foster parent class, it was Ellie and Pete's turn to discuss their family development. Ellie blamed Pete for being absent from parenting at home.

Utterance: "I am always the bad guy because you're never there."

Ellie complained directly to Pete because she felt that she always bore the burden of being "**the bad guy**" in parenting. The sentence "**I am always the bad guy because you're never there**" shows an explicit accusation of Pete's absence in the parenting role. This utterance is a form of sharp criticism as Ellie perceives an imbalance of responsibility in their household. Thus, it is a C2 strategy as it expresses dissatisfaction and verbally blames her partner in a public forum, which reinforces the impact of her impoliteness.

Unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions

Unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions (C3) function as impoliteness strategies that convey implicit accusations, biased assumptions, or negative inferences directed at the interlocutor. In this study, such utterances do not serve the purpose of genuine inquiry but are instead employed to provoke, humiliate, or subtly undermine the target. In addition, Ellie and Lizzy are the characters who are high-frequency users of this type.

Ellie

Datum: 52/EW/C3/LZ

Context:

At 01:08:00, Ellie commented on Lizzy's outfit for school because it was so sexy.

Utterance: "You're wearing that? Are you going to a strip club?"

Ellie's question alludes to the way Lizzy dresses. By saying, "**Are you going to a strip club?**", Ellie is not asking a sincere question, but rather judging that Lizzy's outfit is inappropriate and vulgar. This utterance serves to embarrass and disapprove of indirectly through the form of a rhetorical question. Therefore, it is a

C3 strategy because it contains an implied accusation and aims to make the hearer feel embarrassed.

Lizzy

Datum: 24/LZ/C3/EW

Context:

At 43:11, there was chaos at the family dinner. Lizzy was angry with Ellie for setting up poorly. Ellie gave the children drinks in glass cups, causing the cups to shatter during the chaos.

Utterance: “Why would you give a kid milk in a glass cup?”

Lizzy questioned Ellie's decision sharply. Lizzy's question implies that Ellie did not think well before making her decision. Her question does not aim to understand Ellie's reasoning, but rather to blame and shame her. It makes the utterance a form of C3 because it contains negative prejudice against the opponent's actions.

Condescensions

Condescension (C4) involves utterances that signal the speaker's sense of superiority over the listener, either implicitly or explicitly. The findings reveal that these utterances are often sarcastic, patronizing, or used to pass judgment on the hearer's decisions without directly confronting them. Those who use this strategy are Pete and Lita.

Pete

Datum: 41/PW/C4/EW

Context:

At 55:47, Pete and Ellie were arguing over the chaos that came with adopting three children. Pete blamed Ellie for putting her down because of the child adoption issue.

Utterance: “Maybe we were spoiled... But you had to be a mommy.”

Pete's utterance implies that the decision to adopt a child is an impulsive and idealistic act driven by Ellie's desire, not the result of a joint decision. It also shows Pete's superiority, which seems more realistic and logical than Ellie's. The use of the sarcastic phrase “**you had to be a mommy**” sounds like a hidden reproof that belittles Ellie's role and intention as a mother. Therefore, this utterance is classified as a C4 strategy because it conveys an indirect and patronizing judgment.

Lita

Datum: 16/LT/C8/C4/EW

Context:

At 27:25, Ellie had just met Lita and was surprised to hear Lita's loud talking style to her dolls while playing. Lita yelled at her doll.

Utterance: “You better not embarrass me... Bad girl! Bad, bad, bad!”

Lita's utterance is spoken in a loud and authoritative tone, as if Lita is placing herself in a superior position to the object she controls. It shows that Lita, although still a child, imitates the condescending way of speaking that she most likely saw from her previous authority figure. In other words, this utterance is classified as a C4 strategy because it contains a patronizing tone and implies dominance over the other party.

Message enforcers

Message Enforcers (C5) refer to strategies used to strengthen the force of an utterance through intensification. It ensures that the message is not merely delivered but strongly impacts the hearer. In this study, such strategies are identified through repetition, forceful commands, or heightened emotional tone, all of which serve to assert conversational control or demonstrate dominance. In addition, Pete, Ellie, and Lita are the characters who use this strategy, but Lita is the highest.

Lita

Datum: 23/LT/C5/EW

Context:

At 41:50, Lita rebelled because she did not want to eat the cooked food but wanted to eat the snacks. Lita also threw the food.

Utterance: "I don't want this!!!"

Lita's utterance was delivered in a high tone and full of rejection. It is not just an expression of dislike, but a form of rebellion reinforced by shouting and throwing food. The emotional intensity in this utterance shows that Lita wants to impose her will and reject Ellie's authority. Therefore, this utterance belongs to strategy C5 because it contains a message assertion with high emotional power to dominate the situation.

Dismissals

Dismissals (C6) refer to impoliteness strategies characterized by a refusal to engage or a deliberate act of disregarding the interlocutor, often delivered in a condescending tone. In this study, such expressions are marked by a cold yet cutting quality, effectively shutting down further interaction. Moreover, it is only found in Ellie's utterance.

Ellie

Datum: 02/EW/C6

Context:

At 05:30, when Ellie planned to adopt a child, Pete did not agree. Therefore, Ellie closed the topic after Pete's insinuation with an unpleasant comment.

Utterance: "Whatever."

Ellie's "**Whatever**" is an explicit but short and cold refusal to continue the conversation. It is delivered in response to Pete's disapproval of the adoption plan and shows Ellie's reluctance to argue further. With a dismissive tone, Ellie chooses to end the topic and change the subject. Thus, this utterance is categorized as a C6 strategy because it functions as a unilateral break in the interaction, in a way that ignores the interlocutor's position and shows emotional superiority.

Silencers

Silencers (C7) are employed to abruptly halt or interrupt the hearer's speech, often through commanding expressions that leave little or no space for response. In this study, such a strategy was exclusively used by Ellie.

Ellie

Datum: 06/EW/C7/PW

Context:

At the 11:21 mark, Ellie interrupted Pete's snide comment on the adoption seminar with a stern command to stop talking.

Utterance: "Just stop it!"

The utterance "**Just stop it!**" shows a form of direct command that aims to stop Pete's snide comments abruptly. It is delivered in a firm tone and without giving Pete room to continue or respond. The command sentence is cutting and dominating, which indicates Ellie's desire to control the direction of the interaction. Therefore, this utterance is classified as a C7 strategy because it is explicitly used to silence the interlocutor through a short, loud, and uncompromising manner.

Threats

Threats (C8), as a form of impoliteness strategy, involve utterances that impose potential negative consequences on the hearer should they fail to comply or cease a particular action. In this study, such threats are expressed in a harsh, intimidating, or emotionally insensitive tone, indicating verbal aggression or emotional hostility. This strategy was employed by Lizzy and Lita.

Lizzy

Datum: 29/LZ/C8/LZ

Context:

At 43:57, Lizzy tried to stop Lita, who was having a tantrum at the supermarket when she wanted a new doll. Lizzy tried to stop Lita by threatening her directly.

Utterance: "Stop right now, or you're not getting lunch or dinner."

The above utterance is a form of direct threat directed by Lizzy to Lita. This threat states that Lita will lose her right to food if she does not obey Lizzy's orders. Although delivered by fellow children, this utterance still reflects verbal dominance and the use of emotional pressure to control behaviour. Therefore, this utterance is classified as a C8 strategy because it contains explicit negative consequences for non-compliance.

Lita

Datum: 16/LT/C8/C4/EW

Context:

At 27:25, when they first met, Lita invited Ellie to play cooking with her doll. Lita threatened her doll in front of Ellie so as not to embarrass Lita in front of their future adoptive mother.

Utterance: "You better not embarrass me... Bad girl! Bad, bad, bad!"

Although directed at her doll, Lita's utterance, "**You better not embarrass me...**," reflects a threat communication pattern that she has imitated from her daily interactions. The sentence "**You better not embarrass me**" is a warning with implicit negative consequences if a 'mistake' is made. The harsh and authoritative tone indicates an intention to control through intimidation. Therefore, this utterance is categorized as strategy C8 because it contains an implicit threat in the form of verbal pressure.

Negative Expressives

Negative Expressives (C9) refer to conventional impoliteness strategies in which speakers openly convey strong negative emotions such as anger, hatred, disgust, or frustration. These expressions are typically intended to offend, degrade, or signal intense disapproval toward a person or object. In this study, this strategy was employed by Pete, Lizzy, and Lita. However, Lita is the kid who always uses this strategy in her utterance.

Lita

Datum: 28/LT/C9/LZ

Context:

At 43:56, Lita snapped at Lizzy, who was trying to stop her because she was having a tantrum at the supermarket, because she wanted a new doll.

Utterance: "I want a Barbie!!!"

Although her request sounds simple, the intensity of her emotions and the height of her voice turn the statement into an explicit form of angry expression. Her tone of voice and manner of delivery signalled impatience and resistance to a situation that was not to her liking. Therefore, this utterance belongs to strategy C9 as it displays negative emotions openly as a form of emotional distress towards others.

Based on the result, the use of impoliteness varies depending on characters' roles, age, and emotional positioning within the family structure. Each strategy demonstrates different communicative purposes and emotional functions. Insults (C1), for example, often appear in emotionally heated exchanges, especially between Ellie and Lizzy. Compared to Tandiono & Tjitrakusuma's (2023) study on Cruella, which emphasized bald-on-record insults, this study found insults used within emotionally vulnerable contexts, particularly involving parenting conflict. Pointed Criticism or Complaints (C2) emerged as the most dominant strategy, often reflecting dissatisfaction in domestic situations, in line with Yadav's (2022) claim that impoliteness is a tool for asserting emotional pressure within close relationships. Unpalatable Questions (C3), especially by Lizzy and Ellie, revealed sarcastic and indirect blame patterns that support Culpeper's (2011) assertion that conventionalised impoliteness can appear in non-literal, presuppositional forms.

Condescensions (C4) were rare but significant, especially in Pete's remarks that undermined Ellie's parenting role. This aligns with Yadav (2022), who observed power-based superiority as a motive in condescending expressions. Message Enforcers (C5) appeared through repetition, raised tone, or commanding speech, as shown in both Ellie's and Lita's emotional expressions. Compared to Djohan and Simatupang's (2022) findings in Cruella, where message enforcers were delivered through direct instructions, this study found more emotionally charged forms, especially from younger characters. Dismissals (C6) and Silencers (C7) were exclusively used by Ellie, illustrating her role as an authoritative enforcer in the family, echoing Culpeper's (2011) idea that short dismissive utterances can powerfully shut down interactions. Threats (C8) were found in Lizzy's and Lita's utterances, indicating that even children use verbal threats as a means of controlling behavior in emotionally charged settings. Lastly, Negative Expressives (C9) were

performed through emotionally explosive utterances, especially from Pete and Lita. These expressions conveyed anger and rejection without mitigation, which confirms Yadav's (2022) observation about affective collapse in hostile interpersonal situations.

Overall, this study expands the application of Culpeper's (2011) framework by showing that CIS can be observed not only in adults but also in children's speech, particularly in emotionally driven family conflicts. This differs from several previous studies that relied on Culpeper's earlier model (1996 or 2005), which focused on broader impoliteness strategies. The use of the 2011 framework allowed this study to classify more nuanced, repetitive, and recognizable forms of impoliteness that occur in real-life emotional discourse. Furthermore, this study suggests that emotional proximity, not only power distance, can trigger the use of impoliteness, which adds a new layer of interpretation to existing pragmatics.

Conclusion

This study investigated the types and realizations of conventionalised impoliteness strategies used by the main characters in *Instant Family* (2018). The findings revealed that all nine types of strategies proposed by Culpeper (2011) were employed, with Pointed Criticisms/Complaints (C2) and Insults (C1) being the most frequent. These strategies appeared in emotionally charged interactions, especially during moments of conflict between adoptive parents and children. Furthermore, the strategies were realized differently depending on each character's age, role, and emotional state, adults often used sarcasm and dominance-related language, while children expressed impoliteness more directly through emotional outbursts or refusal to comply. These results demonstrate that conventionalised impoliteness functions not only as a linguistic act but also as a reflection of social positioning, emotional tension, and power dynamics within the adoptive family context, aligning with Culpeper's framework and extending insights from previous studies on impoliteness in a fictional context.

The findings of this study carry important implications within the field of pragmatics. First, this study demonstrates how conventionalised impoliteness strategies (CIS) function not merely as face-threatening acts, but as expressive tools embedded in emotionally complex interactions. Moreover, the use of CIS by both adults and children in *Instant Family* highlights the dynamic nature of impoliteness as a social practice that intersects with emotion, power, and interpersonal proximity. While the study is limited to a single movie and does not claim broad generalization, it nonetheless illustrates how fictional family interactions can reflect recognizable pragmatic practices. Future studies may extend this focus by examining diverse genres or naturally occurring conversations to broaden the scope of analysis.

Overall, the identification of all nine types of CIS in a single movie script contributes to a richer understanding of impoliteness typology in naturalistic dialogue. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing repetition, emotional intensity, and familiar phrasing as key features of conventionalisation. This study offers fresh empirical data to support the evolving understanding of impoliteness as a multifaceted linguistic phenomenon limited to American movie culture. Thus, future

research may address this gap by applying the same framework to family-centered movies from different cultural settings.

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