

## An Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies in “The Devil Wears Prada” Movie

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### Abstract

This research analyzes the impoliteness strategies used in “The Devil Wears Prada” movie, focusing on how these strategies reflect the power dynamics and emotional tensions between characters. By exploring examples of bald-on-record impoliteness, positive and negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withholding politeness, the study intends to reveal the implications of these strategies on the characters’ interactions, self-perception, and the overarching themes of ambition and identity in the film. This research utilized a descriptive qualitative method. Data was collected through observational and non-participatory techniques. The researcher observed the dialogue from the movie “The Devil Wears Prada” and recorded the data using note-taking. The non-participatory technique was employed because the researcher did not directly engage as a participant in the conversations. The analysis was conducted using the pragmatics identity method. 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 withheld politeness. In examining the impoliteness strategies utilized in “The Devil Wears Prada”, it becomes clear that the characters often employ various methods to exert power and control in their interactions. Miranda Priestly, in particular, uses direct insults, sarcasm, and dismissive remarks to establish her dominance and reinforce the existing social hierarchies within the workplace. Furthermore, the film demonstrates that these strategies highlight the ruthless nature of the fashion industry and influence character development and audience interpretation. Ultimately, the dynamics of impoliteness enhance the film’s themes of ambition, sacrifice, and the ethical dilemmas found in professional settings.

**Keywords:** Impoliteness; Movie; Pragmatics.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language is an extremely potent instrument for influencing interpersonal interactions, and it is frequently used not simply to communicate but also to assert power, preserve status, and impose control over others. Impoliteness strategies are an important notion in pragmatics because they explain how speakers can actively threaten the faces of others in order to attain specific social or personal aims. These methods, which range from blatant insults to more nuanced kinds of faux politeness, are particularly common in workplaces characterized by power imbalances and hierarchical structures (Liu et al., 2024; Pan, 2024).

Communication is the foundation of human connection, necessary for navigating social institutions, developing relationships, and expressing oneself. In today's diverse culture, where people originate from various social levels, statuses, and age groups, language has become the fundamental tool for engaging and asserting one's identity. Language represents identity, but it also influences power dynamics and social recognition. People change their communication style to obtain respect, assert authority, or promote harmony. Furthermore, communication overcomes gaps, promoting understanding and inclusiveness, making it a potent cultural force in changing societal interactions (Kim & Angouri, 2022; Malyuga, 2024; Wilmot, 2017).

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 film "The Devil Wears Prada," which offers clear examples of impoliteness strategies. Directed by David Frankel, this film features several interactions that highlight impolite behavior. A key example is the negative impoliteness displayed by the character Miranda Priestly. The dialogue throughout the film includes instances of impolite language, as shown below:

- Miranda : "I don't understand why it's so difficult to confirm the appointment."  
Emily : "I'm sorry, Miranda. I confirmed last night, but—"  
Miranda : "**The details of your incompetence do not interest me.**"

Miranda's statement exemplifies bald on-record impoliteness. This strategy entails delivering a face-threatening act (FTA) in a direct and clear manner. Miranda's comment is unambiguous and straightforward, leaving no possibility for misinterpretation; she openly expresses her contempt for Emily's performance without any politeness or softening language. This method is notably aggressive, as it ignores Emily's feelings and reinforces Miranda's authoritative position.

Communication dynamics in professional settings can greatly affect interpersonal relationships and individual self-perception. In the film "The Devil Wears Prada," different characters use impoliteness strategies that not only reveal their personalities but also underscore the power imbalances and emotional tensions in their interactions. However, there is a lack of scholarly analysis examining the specific types of impoliteness strategies employed in this film and their effects on character development and social dynamics. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring how these strategies appear in dialogue and their influence on character relationships and self-esteem.

Impoliteness, according to Bousfield and Locher (2008), is defined as behavior that negatively affects someone's face in a particular situation. Such impolite behavior includes actions that are meant to harm or challenge another person's face. This can be expressed through various means like insults, dismissive comments, or contemptuous language, and it can occur in both informal and formal settings. For example, a sarcastic remark may belittle someone's ideas, while public criticism can damage an individual's reputation. The intention behind impolite actions is significant, as they often aim to assert power, express disagreement, or elicit a particular reaction, showcasing the complex dynamics of social relationships and power. To fully grasp the concept of impoliteness, one must consider the context, the relationships between individuals, and the cultural norms that influence what is deemed acceptable behavior, offering valuable insights into its role in communication.

Culpeper et al. (2003) explain that impoliteness is aimed at undermining someone's face, potentially leading to conflicts between individuals that can ultimately disrupt relationships. It becomes evident that an individual intends to challenge the listener's face when they choose to employ an impoliteness strategy. In 2005, Culpeper presented a model featuring five impoliteness strategies as an update to his 1996 theory. He differentiates between Bald-on-Record Impoliteness, Positive Impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness, Off-Record Impoliteness, and Withhold Politeness. These five strategies are employed to analyze utterances that exhibit impoliteness strategies

used by the main character during conversations in the movie “The Devil Wears Prada.” The impoliteness strategies are outlined as follows:

This research aims to analyze the impoliteness strategies used in “The Devil Wears Prada,” emphasizing how these strategies mirror the power dynamics and emotional tensions among characters. By exploring examples of bald-on-record impoliteness, positive and negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withholding politeness, the study intends to reveal the implications of these strategies on the characters’ interactions, self-perception, and the overarching themes of ambition and identity in the film.

There were various studies that were similar to the present study. A relevant prior study was conducted by Ratri and Ardi (2019), entitled “*Power and Impoliteness in The Devil Wears Prada Movie*”. This study primarily focused on analyzing the impoliteness strategies employed by the two central characters, Miranda and Emily, and how these strategies were utilized to assert power within a workplace context. Using qualitative content analysis, the study identified various types of impoliteness, including bald-on-record impoliteness, positive and negative impoliteness, and sarcasm. The findings underscore the role these strategies play in reinforcing power dynamics and social hierarchies. In contrast, the present study broadens the scope by not only examining power dynamics but also investigating the emotional tensions and self-perception of the characters. By considering a more extensive range of impoliteness strategies, including withholding politeness, and analyzing their effects on themes such as ambition and identity, this research offers a more nuanced understanding of how these strategies influence character development and audience interpretation. Furthermore, while Ratri and Ardi concentrated on the functional use of impoliteness to establish authority, the current study also delves into how these strategies reflect broader ethical dilemmas and the sacrifices associated with professional environments.

The second was written by Djohan and Simatupang (2022) entitled “*Impoliteness Strategies in Cruella Movie: Pragmatics Study*.” The purpose of this study is to examine and highlight the various forms of impoliteness strategies and their significance that the characters in the film *Cruella* employ. This research has examined impoliteness strategies in film using a descriptive qualitative approach, yet with varying emphases and analytical scopes. The study on *Cruella* identified five types of impoliteness strategies—bald on record, positive, negative, off-record, and withhold politeness—analyzing them primarily through their frequency and categorizing them based on literal and non-literal meanings. In contrast, the present study explores similar categories of impoliteness but extends the analysis by examining their functions in reflecting power dynamics, emotional tension, and character development. While the *Cruella* study centers on classification and quantitative distribution, this research emphasizes the broader thematic implications of impoliteness, particularly in relation to ambition, identity, and ethical dilemmas within a professional environment.

The third was written Abimanto et al. (2023) by entitled “*Characters’ Impoliteness In Paranorman Movie*”. Both studies look at how impoliteness is portrayed in movies, with special attention to bald-on-record, positive, negative, and sarcastic or mock politeness. Nevertheless, this study includes an analysis of how characters respond to impoliteness—categorized as no response, acceptance, or counteraction (further split into offensive and defensive types)—whereas the current study centers on how impoliteness reflects emotional tension and power relations, without detailing specific response types. Methodologically, both adopt qualitative approaches and use note-taking for data collection. This research draws data from the script and the film, emphasizing utterance analysis, while the current study employs observational and non-participatory methods to explore how impoliteness influences interpersonal dynamics, character identity, and thematic elements such as ambition.

The fourth was written by Yaseen Hassan et al. (2023) entitled “*Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies Used in Putin’s Speech at Annexation Ceremony*”. This study aims to examine the types of impoliteness strategies employed in Putin’s speech during the annexation ceremony. The data were gathered from the President of Russia, offering a substantial basis for examination. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were employed to achieve the study’s objectives: qualitative analysis examined the specific impoliteness strategies, while quantitative analysis assessed their frequency and distribution. The findings reveal that Putin primarily used negative impoliteness strategies, directly targeting the West and its policies, and asserting his authority over Kyiv and the West through insults and

accusations. He often employed “bald on record” strategies, communicating in a direct and clear manner when addressing the Ukrainian President and his officials. In contrast, positive and mock impoliteness strategies were rarely utilized. Overall, this research enhances understanding of the messages in Putin’s speeches and provides insights into the dynamics of impoliteness in political discourse, highlighting the strategic use of language by powerful figures. Its novelty lies in its focused exploration of impoliteness in Putin’s rhetoric, adding to the existing literature on politeness and impoliteness in communication.

The fifth was written by Wijaya et al. (2023) entitled “An Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies in Mobile Legends Bang Bang Player on Twitter @Mlbbfess Followers”. The aim of this study is to examine the impoliteness strategies used by followers of the Twitter account @mlbbfess. This research is based on Culpeper’s theory. The researchers employed quantitative analysis methods to assess impoliteness. They distributed a questionnaire to the followers of @mlbbfess via direct message. After collecting and analyzing the data, the researchers identified 11 utterances and found two types of impoliteness: 7 instances where the hearer perceives and constructs behavior as intentional face attacks and 4 instances of combinations. The perception of intentional face attacks by the hearer was the most frequently observed behavior in the data.

The sixth was written by Kelvin and Rudianto (2023) entitled “An Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies in ‘Can You Ever Forgive Me?’ Movie”. The objective was to identify the impoliteness strategies present in the movie’s conversations. The utterances were collected and analyzed using Culpeper (1996) theory as the data source. The focus of this research was on the strategies of impoliteness, drawing from the dialogues of the film’s characters. A descriptive qualitative research design was adopted to derive the research findings. The data were gathered using a non-participatory approach, meaning that no participants were involved during the data collection process. The results indicated that the film employed all types of impoliteness strategies: bald-on-record impoliteness appeared five times, positive impoliteness four times, negative impoliteness three times, sarcasm/mock impoliteness twice, and withhold politeness once.

The seventh was written by Khaqqi and Pradipta (2024) entitled “An analysis of impoliteness strategy used by the main character in A Man Called Otto Movie”. The aim of this study was to examine the use of impoliteness strategies in the movie, with a focus on character interactions and power relationships. This research identifies 63 instances of various impoliteness strategies, including bald-on-record, positive, negative, off-record, and withholding politeness. It explores how Otto’s emotional struggles and loneliness influence his impolite behavior, particularly through negative impoliteness and coercive actions. In contrast, the present study identifies fewer instances, focusing on bald-on-record, positive, and negative impoliteness, as well as sarcasm and withholding politeness. While the *A Man Called Otto* study examines Otto’s emotional growth and coercive actions, the *Devil Wears Prada* study emphasizes workplace power dynamics, particularly through Miranda’s authoritative role. Both studies employ a descriptive qualitative approach, but they differ in their data collection methods. The *A Man Called Otto* study relies on movie transcripts, while the present study uses observational and non-participatory techniques. Despite these differences, both studies aim to explore how impoliteness strategies reflect character development, power, and emotional tension within the narrative.

The eighth was written by Dunggio et al. (2024) entitled “Impoliteness Strategies Used in The Movie *Do Revenge*”. This study attempts to explain the employment of impoliteness strategies in the film *Do Revenge* by analyzing the words that the characters use when conversing with one another. This study identifies five types of impoliteness strategies—bald-on-record, positive and negative impoliteness, sarcasm, and withholding politeness—as well as four types of responses (accepting response, defensive countering, offensive countering, and no response). This study explores how these strategies affect characters’ relationships and self-perceptions. On the other hand, the present study emphasizes the connection between impoliteness strategies and power dynamics, specifically how these strategies reflect emotional tensions and themes of ambition and identity within a workplace. Both studies use qualitative methods, but this study applies a more general classification approach, while the present study employs a descriptive qualitative method with observational techniques. While both studies examine the role of impoliteness in reinforcing social hierarchies, this study focuses more on responses to impoliteness, whereas the

present study expands the analysis to include broader themes such as sacrifice and ethical dilemmas in professional settings.

The last was written by Fatmawati et al. (2024) entitled “*Impoliteness Strategies Used In Coda Movie By Sian Heder*”. The objective of this study is to examine the types of impoliteness strategies and the factors that may influence impoliteness in the film *CODA*. Both studies employ a descriptive qualitative approach, concentrating on how impoliteness strategies affect character interactions and power dynamics within their respective storylines. However, the findings and focus of each study diverge considerably. This research identifies five distinct types of impoliteness strategies—bald on record, positive and negative impoliteness, sarcasm, and withholding politeness—and examines five factors that influence impoliteness, including power, anger, and intimacy. In contrast, the analysis of present research focuses on a more limited set of strategies (bald on record, positive and negative impoliteness, sarcasm, and withholding politeness) while highlighting the emotional tensions, self-perception, and themes of ambition and identity, rather than exploring external factors that shape impoliteness. Moreover, this study offers a detailed count of each type of impoliteness used, while the present study centres on how impoliteness serves to assert power and control within a workplace hierarchy. These distinctions reveal differences in the breadth of focus and methodology used to explore the same linguistic phenomenon in two different narrative settings.

This research provides a unique contribution to the understanding of impoliteness strategies by focusing on how these strategies reflect not only power dynamics but also the emotional and personal tensions between characters in *The Devil Wears Prada*. While existing studies have primarily examined power-related aspects of impoliteness, this study goes further by exploring the role of impoliteness in shaping the characters’ identities, self-esteem, and professional ambitions. Moreover, it extends the analysis by incorporating a wider range of impoliteness strategies, including the concept of withholding politeness, which has not been thoroughly addressed in previous research. This study also emphasizes the ethical dilemmas and sacrifices associated with professional environments, offering new insights into how impoliteness strategies can influence both interpersonal relationships and broader societal themes. Thus, the novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive approach to exploring the intersection of impoliteness, power, emotional conflict, and identity within a workplace setting, and its contribution to the theoretical development of pragmatics in film analysis.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research utilized a descriptive qualitative method by Creswell and Guetterman (2019). Data was collected through observational and non-participatory techniques. The researcher observed the dialogue from the movie “*The Devil Wears Prada*” and recorded the data using the note-taking method. The non-participatory technique was employed because the researcher did not directly engage as a participant in the conversations. The analysis was conducted using the pragmatics identity method. The data collection for the research involved several steps, starting with watching the movie and then downloading the transcripts. The subsequent step was to identify and highlight the impoliteness strategies used in the film. Finally, the researchers analyzed the different types of impoliteness strategies in the movie.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings are presented in both formal and informal methods. According to Sudaryanto (1993), informal data presentation involves words and sentences without signs or symbols, while formal data presentation includes signs and symbols. 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 film “*The Devil Wears Prada*”. 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.

### 3.1. Bald-on-Record Impoliteness

This refers to the execution of a face-threatening act (FTA) in a direct, clear, and unambiguous manner, particularly in contexts where the concept of "face" is minimized or irrelevant (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This strategy involves making straightforward statements that may come across as rude or confrontational, as it ignores the social norms that typically guide polite interactions. 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.

#### A. 00:08:55 ⇒ 00:09:05

Miranda : "And you have no style or sense of fashion."

Andy : "That depends on —"

Miranda : "That wasn't a question."

Miranda and Andy's interaction demonstrates bald-on-record impoliteness. Miranda makes a blunt and unambiguous comment criticizing Andy's fashion sense, adding, "You have no style or sense of fashion." She makes no attempt to soften her views. This comment is a harsh judgment that disregards social conventions and Andy's likely emotional response. Brown and Levinson (1987) state bald-on-record strategies are used when a speaker wants to perform a Face Threatening Act (FTA) with maximum efficiency, even if it means not satisfying the hearer's face. Miranda, wielding enormous impact in this situation, prefers directness over politeness.

Furthermore, when Miranda interrupts with "That wasn't a question," she asserts her dominance in the conversation and denies Andy the opportunity to react, removing every indication of politeness. This interruption exacerbates the face-threatening behavior. 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 Miranda's harsh comment.

#### B. 00:31:28 ⇒ 00:31:34

Miranda : "I had hope. I always have hope. **But you're as disappointing as anyone else.**"

Andy : "I did everything I could think of—"

Based on the conversation, the impoliteness strategy employed by Miranda is bald-on-record impoliteness. She expresses her dissatisfaction in Andy in a straightforward and unassuming manner, saying, "you're as disappointing as anyone else." According to Brown and Levinson (1987), bald-on-record strategies involve conveying a Face Threatening Act (FTA) in a straightforward, unambiguous, and succinct manner without making any effort to lessen the threat to the hearer's face. Miranda's statement exhibits this by ignoring social etiquette and aggressively challenging Andy's ability and efforts without softening the criticism.

Brown and Levinson (1987) state the power dynamic between speakers influences the employment of bald-on-record strategies, with those in positions of authority being more likely to employ them. Miranda's position as Andy's boss permits her to be direct, even if it means hurting Andy's feelings. Miranda's straightforward remark emphasizes the power dynamics in their connection, putting Andy in a vulnerable position. Thus, this bald-on-record impoliteness is a face-threatening behavior that is carried out in a direct way, highlighting its literal meaning and possibly offending or making people uncomfortable (Culpeper, 2011).

### 3.2. Positive Impoliteness

This involves employing strategies aimed at undermining the addressee's positive face wants. This can manifest in various ways, such as ignoring the other person, excluding them from an activity, demonstrating a lack of interest or concern, and showing insensitivity. Additionally, it can include using inappropriate identity labels, employing obscure or secretive language, provoking disagreement, using taboo language, or insulting the other person with name-calling (Culpeper, 2011).

**A. 00:03:45 ⇒ 00:03:53**

Emily : "Andrea Sachs?"

Andy : "Yes."

Emily : "**Human Resources certainly has a bizarre sense of humor.**"

Based on the conversation, the impoliteness strategy employed is positive impoliteness. Emily's comment, "Human Resources certainly has a bizarre sense of humor," subtly undermines Andy's positive face. Brown and Levinson (1987) define positive face as an individual's desire to be liked, admired, and approved of by others. By implying that Human Resources' decision is humorous or nonsensical, Emily casts doubt on Andy's suitability for the job, thereby attacking her positive face. This is corresponding to positive impoliteness strategies, which, according to Culpeper (2011), include activities that disregard the hearer's demand for positive reinforcement.

Culpeper (2011) defines positive impoliteness strategies as "disregarding, ignoring, and excluding the other from an activity." While Emily's statement appears mild, it subtly excludes Andy by implying she is an object of ridicule or amusement for others. This conveys a sense of detachment and displeasure. Furthermore, the comment suggests a lack of regard for Andy's professional status by questioning the judgment of those who employed her. This impoliteness strategy produces a cutting critique that emphasizes the intricacies of social interactions, where seemingly innocent words can mask underlying hostility.

**B. 01:11:41 ⇒ 01:11:53**

Emily : "I don't care if she was going to fire you or beat you with a red-hot poker, you should have said no."

Andy : "I didn't have a choice. You know how she is."

Emily : "Oh, please. **That's a pathetic excuse.**"

Based on the conversation between Emily and Andy, the impoliteness strategy used is positive impoliteness. Emily immediately challenges Andy's argument, calling it "a pathetic excuse." This method threatens Andy's positive face, which is related to her self-esteem and self-worth, by disregarding her sentiments and reasoning in a manner that conveys disapproval. Emily's choice of words reveals her extreme dislike of Andy's point of view, implying that she lacks strength or agency in the circumstance, maintaining a power dynamic that harms Andy's self-esteem.

Brown and Levinson (1987) define positive impoliteness as expressing disapproval, employing banned terms, and remaining unsympathetic. Emily's statement: "Oh, please. "That's a pathetic excuse", clearly indicates displeasure with Andy's reasoning. It ignores Andy's reasoning for her conduct and undermines her feeling of self-worth. According to Culpeper (1996), positive impoliteness might include making "baldly unsympathetic assertions" and "disregarding or belittling the hearer's needs." Emily's answer fits this description, since she disregards Andy's feelings and dismisses her explanation as "pathetic." Thus, Andy's self-esteem and social standing are significantly impacted by this positive impoliteness. This form of impoliteness can harm the connection between the speaker and the hearer since it displays a lack of respect and consideration.

### **3.3. Negative Impoliteness**

Negative impoliteness, as conceptualized by Brown and Levinson (1987), involves strategies primarily aimed at interfering with an individual's negative face. This refers to the use of strategies aimed at hurting the other person's desire to maintain their independence and self-image. This can include actions like scaring someone, talking down to them, mocking or ridiculing them, showing disrespect, or not taking them seriously. It can also involve belittling the other person, invading their personal space (either physically or emotionally), making negative associations about them, and emphasizing their obligations or debts. Thus, negative impoliteness occurs when a speaker intentionally disregards or threatens this need for freedom and autonomy.

**A. 00:53:38 ⇒ 00:53:50**

Miranda : **“One copy? What are my twins supposed to do with that... share?”**

Andy : “Actually, I made two copies. And had them color-copied, reset and bound so they wouldn’t look like manuscripts.”

Based on that conversation, Miranda’s rhetorical question "One copy? What are my twins supposed to do with that... share?" This phrase implies a criticism of Andy’s efforts and indirectly calls into question her competency. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative impoliteness involves harming the addressee’s negative face, which represents their wish to be unhindered and free to act. Miranda’s question trespasses on Andy’s negative face by implying that Andy has failed to fully address her needs and those of her children. Miranda’s question is clearly intended to highlight what she perceives as a lack of consideration on Andy’s part. Consequently, this negative impoliteness escalates tension rather than encouraging a cooperative interaction. By questioning Andy’s actions in a dismissive manner, Miranda creates an atmosphere of confrontation and discomfort, highlighting the impact of her words on Andy’s self-esteem.

**B. 01:37:28 ⇒ 01:37:42**

Andy : “I couldn’t do what you did to Nigel, Miranda. There’s no way I could do something like that.”

Miranda : **“Of course you can. You already did. To Emily.”**

Based on the conversation, the impoliteness strategy used is negative impoliteness, where Miranda directly accuses Andy of hypocrisy and undermining her self-image and moral integrity, implying that she has behaved similarly toward Emily. This approach targets Andy’s positive face, which reflects her desire for approval and respect. As Brown and Levinson (1987) explain, positive face refers to an individual’s need to be liked, admired, and appreciated by others. By suggesting that Andy is hypocritical or fails to uphold her own moral standards, Miranda not only challenges his claim to moral superiority but also resorts to social aggression, leaving Andy feeling uncomfortable and defensive. This aligns with Culpeper (2011) definition of negative impoliteness, which includes actions that disregard the hearer’s need for freedom from imposition.

Therefore, the purpose of this impoliteness is to humiliate Andy and provoke a negative emotional response. Culpeper (2011) states that "putting the other person’s wants or needs down" is a sort of negative impoliteness. Miranda’s statement immediately opposes Andy’s proclaimed ideals and causes discomfort.

### **3.4. 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. 00:17:42 ⇒ 00:17:50**

Emily : “Did she say which skirts? What kind? Color? Shape? Fabric?”

Andy : “I tried to ask her, but—”

Emily : **“You never ask Miranda. Anything.”**

Based on the conversation, the impoliteness strategy employed is sarcasm or mock politeness, evident in Emily’s exaggerated questioning about Miranda’s skirts. By asking an array of overly specific questions—“What kind? Color? Shape? Fabric?”—Emily isn’t genuinely seeking answers; instead, she is mocking Andy for failing to

ask Miranda these details. This aligns with Leech's (2016) concept of the Irony Principle, where the speaker is outwardly polite but intends to convey an impolite meaning. Emily's exaggerated politeness reflects her frustration and emphasizes Andy's tendency to sidestep direct communication with Miranda, suggesting that he is either intimidated or reluctant to engage with her. Thus, this mock politeness functions as a subtle critique rather than a genuine inquiry.

**B. 01:15:55 ⇒ 01:16:00**

Andy : "Okay. I get it, you're mad because I work late all the time, because I missed your birthday party—"

Nate : "Oh, come on. **What am I, four?**"

Based on the conversation, Nate's reply in the conversation is a clear example of sarcasm or mock politeness. He pretends to be polite while actually dismissing Andy's feelings about working late and missing his birthday. Instead of acknowledging Andy's concerns, Nate uses a rhetorical question that makes them seem silly, suggesting Andy is acting immature. This is a textbook case of mock politeness, where someone uses polite words to hide a critical and uncaring attitude (G. Leech, 2014).

Moreover, according to Culpeper (2011), being impolite often means using tactics to undermine someone's self-image. Nate's sarcasm does this by attacking Andy's "positive face," suggesting his feelings are unnecessary and immature. This hurts Andy's self-esteem and could harm their relationship. Nate's response deflects blame from himself and makes fun of Andy's emotions, revealing a big difference between genuine communication and fake politeness, where the polite words hide a disrespectful attitude.

**3.5. Withhold Politeness**

This refers to the intentional decision to refrain from demonstrating courtesy or consideration in situations where it is usually expected. This strategy violates social norms and expectations for politeness. As Brown and Levinson (1987) explain, politeness is a crucial aspect of maintaining social harmony, and withholding it can be interpreted as a deliberate act of impoliteness. This can occur in various social scenarios, such as not thanking someone for a gift, neglecting to greet a friend, or failing to recognize someone's efforts. Culpeper (1996) argues that impoliteness is often used strategically to cause offense or assert power, and withholding politeness is one such strategy. Such failures to act politely are often seen as deliberate rudeness, as they violate social norms that promote gratitude and acknowledgment.

**A. 00:43:08 ⇒ 00:43:15**

Christian : "You're smart, you're nice, you have a point of view. You can't do that job."

Andy : "**I have to go.**"

Based on the conversation between Christian and Andy, Christian uses the impoliteness strategy of withholding politeness. While he does recognize Andy's good qualities—like intelligence, kindness, and his point of view—he ends up making a direct and negative comment about Andy's ability to do a particular job. Because he doesn't use any softening words or diplomatic language, his comment comes across as harsh and dismissive. It's missing the normal politeness strategies that would usually make criticism easier to hear. G. N. Leech (2016) politeness principle says that people should try to avoid expressing impolite opinions. Christian goes against this principle by not softening his negative opinion. Andy's quick "I have to go" shows she's uncomfortable and wants to escape the awkward situation, highlighting that Christian's comment was not just mean but also lacked the consideration expected for Andy's feelings. This aligns with Culpeper (2011) assertion that impoliteness often leads to negative emotional and relational consequences. Therefore, Christian's withholding of politeness creates a face-threatening act (FTA) that impacts Andy's sense of self-worth and competence.

Overall, the findings of this study reveal that impoliteness strategies in *The Devil Wears Prada* not only reflect power dynamics but also highlight emotional tension and the characters' struggles with identity. This research goes beyond previous studies that focused solely on classifying types or frequency of impoliteness strategies. By

exploring the relationship between impoliteness, ambition, professional pressure, and ethical dilemmas, the study provides a deeper insight into the pragmatic use of language in cinematic contexts. While the findings align with earlier research—particularly in showing how impoliteness strategies help maintain dominance—this study also introduces a new perspective by emphasizing how these strategies influence character development and audience interpretation. Therefore, the study serves both as a complement to and an expansion of existing literature on impoliteness in film.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the impoliteness strategies used in the film *The Devil Wears Prada*, 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 Miranda Priestly, to exert control, establish authority, and maintain social hierarchies within the workplace. In addition to highlighting the competitive and hierarchical nature of the fashion industry, these impoliteness strategies also contribute to character development and reinforce themes of ambition, identity, sacrifice, and ethical conflict in professional life.

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