CONVENTIONALISED IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES USED BY MAIN CHARACTERS ALONG WITH THEIR METAPRAGMATIC COMMENTS IN THE *INSTANT FAMILY* MOVIE

Binti Qani'ah*
Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum, Indonesia
bintiqaniah@fbs.unipdu.ac.id

Abstract: This study investigated the use of conventionalised impoliteness strategies and their metapragmatic comments employed by the main characters in the *Instant Family* (2018) movie. Using Culpeper's (2011) framework of impoliteness, the study identified nine types of conventionalised strategies and examined how hearers evaluated them through verbal and nonverbal metapragmatic responses. In addition, a descriptive qualitative method was applied to analyze the interactions among the Wagner family members, uncovering patterns of impolite utterances and their social dynamics. The result showed that the most frequently used conventionalised impoliteness strategies were direct insults, pointed criticisms, and unpalatable questions, which Ellie and Lizzy mainly employed. At the same time, Juan did not display any impoliteness, indicating a gender-based distribution. These strategies were responded to through various metapragmatic responses, including verbal forms such as denials, justifications, and counter-attacks, as well as nonverbal expressions. In conclusion, it highlighted the contextual nature of impoliteness and suggested that family-based narratives offered a rich foundation for examining pragmatic phenomena in everyday interactions.

Keywords: *conventionalised impoliteness, impoliteness, "instant family" movie, metapragmatic comments*

INTRODUCTION

Movies often depict verbal interactions that use expressions of impoliteness. The characters use these expressions as insults, sarcasm, or outright threats to strike the hearers in the face and trigger their response (Dunggio et al., 2024; Nasirli, 2021). The hearers' response to the expression of impoliteness is referred to as metapragmatic impoliteness comments (Culpeper, 2011). Furthermore, impoliteness metapragmatic comments always coexist in studies that identify impoliteness in movie conversations (Dewi & Skolastika, 2024; Dunggio et al., 2024; Djohan & Simatupang, 2022; Nasirli,

2021). However, none of these studies analyzed impoliteness metapragmatic comments in movies. In addition, comedy movies are rich in impoliteness utterances (Talebzadeh, 2023). Therefore, this study aims to analyze impoliteness and metapragmatic comments in comedy genre movies such as *Instant Family* (2018).

Instant Family (2018) is a fictional representation of the dynamics of a family formed through the adoption process. According to Putri (2023), this movie showcases different parenting styles, specifically authoritarian and democratic approaches, as they are adjusted to meet the unique needs of each child, namely Lita, Juan, and Linzy, who have distinct personalities and backgrounds. The story focuses on a married couple, Pete and Ellie, who decide to adopt three children at once. Together with their three adopted children, Lizzy, Juan, and Lita, 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 and both verbal and non-verbal responses. It is in line with Dewi & Skolastika (2024), the movie's dialogues mainly take place in casual contexts, using natural and familiar language that conveys the characters' emotions and relationships authentically. Therefore, this movie is suitable for analyzing impoliteness and metapragmatic comments.

Culpeper's (2011) theory of impoliteness is selected because it offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing forms of speech considered offensive to the face of the hearer. Culpeper (2011) states the division of impoliteness types is focused on two main types, namely 1) conventionalised impoliteness, and 2) non-conventionalised impoliteness. However, this study only focuses on conventionalised impoliteness. According to Culpeper (2011), a conventionalised impoliteness formula refers to a linguistic expression whose impoliteness effects have become conventionalised within specific contexts. Based on this concept, Culpeper (2011) identifies nine conventionalised impoliteness strategies, including, pointed criticisms or complaints, unpalatable questions or presuppositions, condescensions, message enforcers, dismissals, silencers, threats, and negative expressives. These strategies are recognisable and frequently used in real-life interactions to offend. Based on Culpeper's theory (2011) and Dewi & Skolastika's (2024) explanation about the *Instant Family* movie, communication by the main characters reflected 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 that can influence the response of the hearer.

Additionally, in analyzing the response of the hearer, the concept of impoliteness metapragmatic comments from Culpeper (2011) are selected. According to Culpeper (2011), examining utterances that are explicitly referred to as ''impolite'' by the hearer involves impoliteness metapragmatic comments. In this concept, the hearer of impoliteness is categorized as a participant role (Culpeper, 2011). In other words, the analysis of metapragmatic comments allows researchers to identify forms of impoliteness based on the perception and evaluation of the hearer in the interaction. It is particularly relevant in *Instant Family* movie contexts, where characters not only produce offensive utterances but also elicit verbal or nonverbal reactions that reflect judgments of impoliteness.

Overall, this study can fill the gap of some previous studies. Previous research by Qaniah (2025) examined the use of conventionalised impoliteness strategies by the main characters in *Instant Family* from a general pragmatic perspective, with a primary focus on the speakers' production of impolite utterances. However, that study did not explore how such impolite acts are explicitly evaluated or responded to by other participants through metapragmatic comments. In addition, Dewi and Skolastika's (2024) study analyzed language styles in the *Instant Family*, but did not explore aspects of impoliteness or responses to it in the form of metapragmatic comments. Meanwhile, Djohan and Simatupang's (2022) study used Culpeper's impoliteness theory from a journal article published in 2005 to identify five types of impoliteness strategies in Cruella but it did not touch on the conventionalised impoliteness strategy specifically and did not analyze the metapragmatic comments of the hearers. On the other hand, Tsoumou (2023) conducted a metapragmatic comments study but the context was limited to political interactions on social media, not to utterances in works of fiction or movies. In other words, there is no previous study that specifically examines conventionalised impoliteness strategies and metapragmatic comments in the interaction of characters in a family comedy genre such as *Instant Family* (2018). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the forms of conventionalised impoliteness strategies used by the main characters, and to explain how the hearer evaluates them based on metapragmatic comments.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Impoliteness

The impoliteness strategies first developed in 1996 were bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm/mock politeness, and withhold politeness (Culpeper, 1996). In addition, each of the strategies has been widely found in the analysis of movie utterances, especially in genres laden with social conflict or emotional tension. The bald on record impoliteness strategy is characterized using direct speech without mitigation, such as "Shut up!" or "Don't act smart," which is commonly used by characters with dominant personalities in biographical or social movies, as seen in *The Dirty Picture* movie (Yadav, 2022). Meanwhile, positive impoliteness strategy, which attacks the desire for social acceptance, tends to appear in the teen drama genre, where emotional relationships between characters are emphasized. In *The Edge of Seventeen* movie, characters convey insults or disinterest, as in "You're always judging me," to express personal conflict and relationship sensitivity (Suhandoko et al., 2021). In contrast to previous concepts, the impoliteness theory by Culpeper (2011) develops an approach that is more applicable to the context of interaction. In this model, impoliteness is divided into two main categories. One of them is conventionalised impoliteness.

Conventionalised Impoliteness Strategies

According to Culpeper (2011), conventionalised impoliteness is a language expression that is socially recognized as a form of verbal or non-verbal insult or aggression and is conventionally understood as impolite. This formula has linguistic forms, such as rude commands, direct insults, and cornering questions. Moreover, Culpeper (2011, p. 135-136) identifies nine types of conventionalised impoliteness strategies: 1) Insults: "You are fucking moron!", "You disgust me." 2) Pointed criticisms/complaints: "That was absolutely terrible.", "This is rubbish!," 3) Unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions: "Which lie are you telling me?", "Why do you make my life impossible?," 4) Condescensions: "Don't be childish.", "That's being babyish," 5) Message enforcers: "Do you understand me?", "You got that?," 6) Dismissals: "Get lost!", "Go away, " 7) Silencers: "Shut it!", "Shut the fuck up!," 8) Threats: "I'll smash your face in.", "Do it before I hit you," 9) Negative expressives: "Damn you!", "Go to hell!". Each of these types will certainly get a response from speech partners when used

in verbal and non-verbal forms. The concept of responding to impoliteness speech is termed as impoliteness metapragmatic comments.

Impoliteness Metapragmatic Comments

According to Culpeper (2011), impoliteness metapragmatic comments refer to comments, reactions, or evaluations that explicitly or implicitly identify an utterance as impolite. In addition, Culpeper (2011) explains that metapragmatic comments can come from various positions of participants in the interaction, both directly and indirectly involved. Based on the narrative description in his book, these positions can be summarized into five forms, namely: 1) the target, 2) the second speaker, 3) the third speaker, 4) the overhearer, and 5) the observer. Each of these positions has the potential to provide metapragmatic comments on acts of impoliteness, both verbally and nonverbally. The following are concrete examples of metapragmatic comments based on five participant positions in impoliteness interactions.

The target

Metapragmatic comment by the target occurs when the recipient of the impolite utterance responds explicitly or implicitly to the attack directed at him or her (Culpeper, 2011). For example, in a study by (Liu, 2023), a participant in the show "Roast!" showed facial expressions and body language that indicated discomfort when subjected to impolite comments. Although not always verbal comments, these non-verbal forms are still indicators of metapragmatic evaluation by the target of the impolite utterance.

The second speaker

This position refers to individuals who directly reply to the impolite speech they receive (Culpeper, 2011). For example, in an online context, such as a Facebook thread about Rudy Giuliani (Tsoumou, 2023) a user responded to another comment by expressing displeasure by saying "Laughing about someone being sick. I feel sorry for you..." as a form of judgment against the previous comment.

The third speaker

It is another participant who is neither the main actor nor the target but provides evaluative comments on the interaction (Culpeper, 2011). For example, a comment from James in Tsoumou's (2023) study such as "How can you people be so callous..." indicates an evaluation of a group of users laughing at someone's illness. He is neither the direct

target nor the recipient of the utterance but acts as a moral commentator criticizing other participants from a third-person perspective.

Overhearers

Although not directly involved, they can form evaluations and express comments, either on the spot or afterward (Culpeper, 2011). In Kleinke and Bös' (2015) study, the results found that in online forums many metapragmatic comments came from participants who only observed the discussion without being the main actors but still made judgments on the language style or content of the posts by referring to other comments as "vitriol and hate."

Observers

Observers are external parties, such as viewers or passive users, who evaluate interactions as part of social construction (Culpeper, 2011). For example, Liu's (2023) study noted that comments from Danmaku users on "Roast!" were a form of evaluation by observers as they responded to the show without being directly involved in the interaction between the actors. They make social judgments such as calling roasters "shameless" based on instructions or collective consensus.

Furthermore, although Culpeper (2011) focuses on participant positions in metapragmatic commenting, this study synthesizes a functional typology of metapragmatic comments based on their pragmatic purposes. These include "verbal denial" (e.g., "I'm not"), "justification" (explaining the intent of the impolite utterance), "counter-attacks" (responding with impoliteness), "labelling" (e.g., "That's rude"), and "nonverbal expressions" (e.g., eye-rolling, silence, facial tension). This synthesis is drawn from Culpeper's examples and supported by recent studies. For instance, Liu (2023) identified several nonverbal forms of metapragmatic evaluation in the show "Roast!", while Tsoumou (2023) and Kleinke and Bös (2015) noted the presence of evaluative comments in online discourse that functioned as labelling or moral judgment. These forms enrich the analytical framework and allow for more nuanced identification of responses in character interactions, such as those found in *Instant Family*. Overall, these five participant roles demonstrate that impoliteness metapragmatic comments are not only reactive to offensive utterances but also reflect the social roles, participation, and positionality of each speaker within an interaction.

Instant Family Movie

The *Instant Family* (2018) highlighted the emotional dynamics of the adoption process of three siblings by a married couple, Pete Wagner, and Ellie Wagner. Initially, their decision to adopt children arose from a personal desire to share love and care but the situation became more complex when they met Lizzy Wagner, a teenage girl, along with her two younger siblings: Juan Wagner and Lita Wagner. Throughout the adaptation process, the family faced various challenges, ranging from emotional conflicts and communicative awkwardness to behavioural dynamics of the children who were still affected by past trauma. Several scenes, such as a dinner moment that escalated into an argument, household accidents, and conflicts with the surrounding environment, illustrated how the process of building a family did not always run smoothly. Nevertheless, the movie also portrays the development of relationships among the characters. Their bond evolved from distant and strained to warmer, culminating in both emotional and legal acceptance as a complete family.

Additionally, a previous study by Dewi and Skolastika (2024) noted that the main characters in the movie display diverse language styles. Pete used more casual and intimate styles, reflecting his role as a father who tries to create closeness. Ellie alternated between formal style when in official situations, such as the adoption court, and casual in domestic contexts. Lizzy, as a more introverted and critical teenager, used the formal style to maintain emotional distance but gradually exhibited the consultative style to build trust with her adoptive parents. Meanwhile, Juan and Lita, as younger children, predominantly utilized the intimate style, such as when they sought attention, and affection or called their adoptive parents with warm titles. Therefore, this movie provides an appropriate space to examine the forms of impoliteness strategies and metapragmatic comments in family interaction dynamics.

METHOD

Based on the objectives, this study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. Qualitative research typically adopts an inductive approach to generate insights and collect rich, descriptive data (Leavy, 2017). The data source of this study is the *Instant Family* movie (2018), particularly the utterances of the Wagner family. The data consisted of utterances that contained conventionalised impoliteness strategies as well as the

corresponding responses from the hearer, also known as impoliteness metapragmatic comments. The data are collected through the following steps: 1) watching the *Instant Family* (2018) movie, 2) obtaining and reading the script of the movie, 3) identifying and coding utterances that reflect conventionalised impoliteness strategies, and 4) noting hearer responses in the form of metapragmatic comments. To analyze the data, this study employs the following steps: 1) categorizing the utterances based on Culpeper's (2011) classification of conventionalised impoliteness strategies, 2) identifying the types and sources of metapragmatic comments, and 3) interpreting the data to conclude relevant to the interactional dynamics of the characters.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Conventionalised impoliteness strategies with their metapragmatic comments

Lizzy (LZ) most frequently employed insults, followed by Lita (LT), while pointed criticisms or complaints were predominantly used by Ellie Wagner (EW), with Paul Wagner (PW) as the next most frequent user. EW also continued to lead in the use of unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions, followed closely by LZ. In the categories of condescension and message enforcers, the use of incivility strategies declined significantly, with only limited variation and occurrences, although LT appeared to be the most active in these sections. Usage of dismissals and silencers was minimal and involved only EW. Threats showed a slight increase, although the overall contribution remained low. The final type, negative expressives, was largely dominated by LT's utterances. Throughout the movie, Juan (JN) did not produce any impolite expressions, while EW contributed the most impolite responses, followed by PW. In contrast, LZ rarely used them, and LT did not use them at all.

Insult

The Insult (C1) strategy in this data refers to utterances that explicitly insult the character, identity, or self-esteem of another participant. Insults usually arise in conditions of intense conflict, especially between adoptive parents and their children.

Datum 45/LZ/C1/EW/M1/M2/R3

Lizzy (LZ) insults (C1) Ellie (EW), who is the target (M1) and responds back as second speaker (M2) with R3 (counter-attack).

Context:

At 58:35 - 58:37, LZ uttered a direct insult to EW during an argument. EW responded with an emotional response that struck back.

> LZ: "You're literally crazy!"
> LW: "You're driving me crazy!"

LZ attacked EW's mental state directly. This utterance belongs to C1 because it leads to explicit personal insults. Then, EW replied in an equal tone, not defusing the conflict but prolonging it by blaming LZ, and this belongs to the R3 category.

Pointed criticism or complaint

The pointed criticism or complaint (C2) strategy is used when speakers directly complain or criticize others' behavior, attitudes, or decisions. In the data, this strategy often appears when there is role imbalance, parenting conflict, or differences in views between characters.

Datum 03/EW/C2/PW/M1/M2/R1

Ellie (EW) directly criticizes (C2) Pete (PW). PW becomes the target (M1) of the criticism as well as giving a direct response as the second speaker (M2) in the form of verbal denial (R1).

Context:

At minutes 10:57 - 11:00, in a conversation about adoption, EW complained about the comparison of children to pets. PW had previously likened the process of adopting a child to adopting a dog, which EW found highly inappropriate.

> EW: "Don't compare kids to dogs."
> PW: "I'm not."

EW's utterance is C2 because it directly criticizes PW's utterance which is considered to equate children with dogs. This utterance is evaluative and delivered in a commanding tone that indicates EW's direct disagreement and objection. In response, PW said "I'm not.", which is a form of R1. PW denied the accusation without providing further justification as if trying to deny responsibility for the implications of his utterance.

Unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions

Unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions (C3) are impoliteness strategies that involve questions or statements that contain prejudice, implied accusations, or negative assumptions toward the hearer. In the findings, these questions are not asked to genuinely seek information but rather to corner, embarrass, or subtly attack.

Datum 01/PW/C3/EW/M1/M2/R4

Pete (PW) asks a sarcastic question containing C3 (unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions) to Ellie (EW), who becomes the target (M1) and gives an immediate response (M2) in the form of labeling (R4).

Context:

At minutes 05:28 - 05:30, when EW proposed the idea of adopting a child of a disaster victim, PW responded with a rhetorical question with a cynical tone, belittling EW's good intentions.

> PW: "What, like a dirty bomb?"
> EW: "Whatever."

PW's question is a form of C3, as it is prejudicial and contains a presupposition that EW's idea is dangerous or stupid. PW said this not for clarification but to insinuate and discredit. To this, EW responded with "Whatever," as part of R4, which is used to close the topic with an apathetic tone, as if labelling PW's utterance as not worthy of further response.

Condescensions

Condescensions (C4) refer to utterances that demean the hearer subtly or overtly, as if the speaker is smarter, better, or of higher status than the person being spoken to. In the findings, C4 is used through utterances that patronize the hearer with a superior tone and are often delivered sarcastically or blame the other party's personal decisions indirectly.

Datum 41/PW/C4/EW/M1/M2/R3

Lita (LT) uses threats (C8) and a condescending tone (C4) in her speech to her doll, with Ellie (EW) as the overhearer (M4) who gives a nonverbal expression (R5) in response.

Context:

At minutes 27:25 - 27:32, EW first saw LT playing with her doll. During the game, LT spoke loudly as if reprimanding her doll with authoritarian and threatening language.

> LT: "You better not embarrass me... Bad girl! Bad, bad, bad!!!"
>
> EW: (*looked surprised but said nothing.*)

Figure 1. EW Non-verbal Expression

"You better not embarrass me..." is a combination of C8 strategies through indirect threats, and "Bad girl! Bad, bad, bad!!!" is C4 with the use of derogatory judgment. Although directed at the doll, LT's style of speech resembles that of a human reprimanding loudly and offensively rather than as a child. EW heard as M4 but was not the direct target. She reacted with R5. She seemed very surprised and disturbed by LT's style of speech, which suggests that EW picked up a red flag in LT's behavior.

Message Enforcers

Message enforcers (C5) is a way of reinforcing or emphasizing an utterance with intensification, so that the message conveyed is not only heard but also "hit" to the hearer. In the findings, the C5 strategy plays a role in the form of message reinforcement done by repetition, strict orders, or emotional intensification to control the conversation or show dominance.

Datum 04/EW/C5/PW/M1/M2/R2

Ellie (EW) uses C5 (message enforcers) towards Pete (PW), who is the target (M1) and responds directly as second speaker (M2) with justification (R2).

Context:

At 11:05 - 11:07, while at the adoption seminar, EW reprimanded PW for using inappropriate diction, which could offend others in the forum. She issued an explicit warning and repeated it intensively to emphasize her message.

> EW: "Don't say 'pound,' don't say 'dog.' Just don't."
> PW: "Okay, no, that's not…"

EW's utterance is a C5 form because EW repeats the prohibition in a firm tone to reinforce the message and show control over the situation. This repetition and short command make it clear that EW felt the need to organize PW's utterances so as not to cause misunderstanding or commotion. PW then responded with R2 through the response "Okay, no, that's not...", which was an attempt to defend himself or explain the meaning of his previous utterance, although his utterance was truncated and not fully explicit.

Dismissals

Dismissals (C6) are a form of refusal to continue the interaction or ignoring the hearer in a condescending manner. In the findings, C6 is a form of impoliteness that is cold but sharp, and effective in stopping the interaction.

Datum 02/EW/C6

Ellie (EW) uses C6 (dismissals) in her response to the previous comment.

Context:

At 05:30, after PW responded to EW's proposal about adoption with a sarcastic question ("What, like a dirty bomb?"), EW gave a brief response without continuing the conversation, indicating a refusal to engage further on the topic.

> EW: "Whatever."

"Whatever" is a classic form of C6, which is a conventional impoliteness strategy used to close the conversation unilaterally, without an evaluative response, and without making room for the hearer's argument. In other words, PW showed a silent alignment response. It indicates that EW is not interested in further discussing EW's snide response and chooses to verbally ignore it.

Silencers

Silencers (C7) is used to stop, interrupt, or silence another person's speech directly, usually in a commanding, cutting, or shushing tone, and often without leaving room for the hearer's response.

Datum 06/EW/C7/PW/M1/M2/R2

Ellie (EW) uses C7 (silencers) towards Pete (PW), who is the target (M1) and gives a direct response as second speaker (M2) in the form of justification (R2).

Context:

At 11:21 - 11:22, in an adoption seminar session that was tense due to PW's snide remarks, EW finally interrupted with a stern command to stop her remarks. PW immediately responded by trying to calm the situation defensively.

> EW: "Just stop it!"
> PW: "Alright…"

The utterance "Just stop it!" is a form of C7 because EW deliberately interrupted PW's speech in an emphatic and imperative manner, indicating that EW wanted to silence or stop PW's snide remarks directly. PW, as M1, responded with "Alright...", an R2 form that implied compliance but also showed that he had no intention of prolonging the

conflict. This passive tone reflects a subtle form of defense or indirect acknowledgement of EW's attitude.

Threats

Threats (C8) in the context of impoliteness strategies refer to utterances that threaten someone with negative consequences if they do not do (or stop) something. In the findings, C8 is delivered in a harsh, intimidating, or insensitive tone, reflecting incivility and potential verbal/emotional violence.

Datum 29/LZ/C8/EW/M3/R2

Lizzy (LZ) uses C8 (threats) towards Lita (implicitly), in a situation that is also heard by Ellie (EW), who plays the role of the third speaker (M3) and responds with justification (R2).

Context:

At 43:57 - 43:59, LZ was trying to stop LT's tantrum in the supermarket by making clear threats. EW, who was accompanying them, immediately responded to EW's threat with an objection because she felt the approach was too harsh.

> LZ: "Stop right now, or you're not getting lunch or dinner."
> EW: "We're not starving people here, okay! I have this under control."

LZ's utterance is a form of C8 because LZ used negative consequences as a means of control, namely the threat of not being fed. Then, EW, as M3 who heard and felt the need to intervene, responded with R2 by saying "We're not starving people here, okay! I have this under control." This utterance contained a defence of a more empathic parenting approach and reaffirmed EW's authority in the situation.

Negative expressives

Negative expressives (C9) are conventional impoliteness strategies that are direct expressions of negative emotions, such as hatred, disgust, anger, or frustration, which aim to hurt, humiliate, or show strong dislike for someone or something.

Datum 43/PW/C9/EW/M1/M2

Pete (PW) expresses C9 (negative expressives) towards their children in an extreme manner, and Ellie (EW) becomes the target of the utterance (M1) as well as the second speaker in the interaction (M2). However, EW responds with an affiliative response, by agreeing with PW's impoliteness.

Context:

At 56:12 - 56:15, after an exhausting conflict with their adopted children, PW vented her emotions in the form of explicit expressions of hate. EW responded in an agreeing tone, suggesting that she was also experiencing the same emotional distress.

> PW: "I hate them so much."
> EW: "Me too. They're the worst."

"I hate them so much." is a form of C9 because it contains a blatant, uncensored and emotionally charged expression of hatred. It is the most direct form of impoliteness, not directed as an argument or criticism but as an outlet. EW as M2 responded in a similar tone: "Me too. They're the worst.", which although not coded as a specific response (R1-R5), is essentially a reinforcement of the negative expression, not a denial or justification. However, it can be termed an affirmative response as both agree with each other's expressions of hatred towards their children, indicating high levels of emotional exhaustion and internal conflict.

Discussion

From the result interpretation, three unique phenomena emerge. The first is the tendency of female characters to be more impolite in their speech. The second is that impolite utterances only appear from the opening to the climax but disappear in the anti-climax of the *Instant Family*. The third is the presence of additional types of responses that expand the theoretical framework of metapragmatic comments.

Female characters, especially Ellie and Lizzy, use impoliteness more frequently. This gender-based finding aligns with the study by Djohan and Simatupang (2022) on Cruella, as well as analyzed by Tandiono and Tjitrakusuma (2023), where female characters, such as the Baroness, predominantly use impoliteness strategies as a form of authority and emotional control. It is also consistent with Mulyadi et al. (2024) in their analysis of the *Family Guy series*, which found that female characters tend to be more explicit in using impoliteness strategies than male characters in certain situations. This study also complements the study by Dewi and Skolastika (2024), which highlights the dominance of formal language style in public interactions in *Instant Family*. While this study reveals that impoliteness strategies are more likely to appear in private spaces such as the family, reflecting emotional tension and internal conflict among characters.

In addition, the absence of impoliteness after the movie's climax contrasts with the findings of Sabatini et al. (2023) on *Enola Holmes 2*, which identified various

impoliteness strategies occurring throughout the entire narrative. In this context, Dewi and Skolastika's (2024) study on formal language style in *Instant Family* becomes an important complement, as it shows that in public spaces like courtrooms or adoption seminars, characters tend to use formal and polite language. Conversely, this study highlights that impoliteness strategies are employed in private domains such as home and family interaction, thus reflecting a duality of language style based on the social domain within the same movie.

Besides the two unique phenomena above, there is also a notable finding related to the types of metapragmatic responses in *Instant Family*. It should be clarified that the types of metapragmatic comments identified in this study are not directly adopted as fixed categories from Culpeper (2011). Rather, they are the result of a theoretically informed synthesis between Culpeper's discussion of the characteristics and functions of impoliteness and metapragmatic evaluation, and the empirical patterns observed in the data. While Culpeper (2011) outlines how impoliteness may be explicitly recognised, evaluated, and commented on by participants, he does not propose a rigid typology of metapragmatic comments. Building on these theoretical insights, the present study inductively categorises the metapragmatic comments found in the interactions of the characters.

Additionally, this study identifies five main response types: verbal denial, justification, counter-attacks, labelling, and nonverbal expressions. However, the analysis of this movie also reveals additional response patterns that expand the existing theoretical framework. One of them is an affiliative impoliteness response, in which characters show agreement or solidarity with impolite remarks, for instance, by verbally supporting hateful expressions. Another is a silent alignment response, which refers to passive support through gestures, facial expressions, or non-response, indicating tacit acceptance of impoliteness. These patterns have not been widely discussed in classical typologies such as Culpeper's, but they align with Liu's (2023) observations on nonverbal metapragmatic acts and Tsoumou's (2023) study on implicit evaluations in discourse. This underscores the need for a more flexible and context-sensitive approach to analyzing interpersonal dynamics in narrative movie.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

This study aims to identify the forms of conventionalised impoliteness strategies used by the main characters in the *Instant Family* movie as well as to explain how hearers evaluate these strategies through metapragmatic comments. The analysis reveals that the most frequently used impoliteness strategies include direct insults, pointed criticisms, and unpalatable questions. These strategies are predominantly employed by female characters, particularly Ellie and Lizzy, who verbally express emotional tension within the family dynamic. In contrast, male characters such as Juan show no signs of impoliteness at all, indicating a gender-based pattern in the distribution of these strategies. Furthermore, hearers' evaluations of the impoliteness are reflected in various metapragmatic responses, both verbal, such as denials, justifications, and counterattacks, and nonverbal. In other words, the findings demonstrate that impoliteness in movie discourse is complex and contextual, requiring an analytical framework that is sensitive to the dynamics of character relationships.

Suggestions

The recommendations from this study cover three aspects: theoretical, practical, and future study. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of impoliteness and metapragmatic studies by highlighting types of responses that have not yet been covered in classical theoretical frameworks. This finding may enrich the field of pragmatics. Practically, in the field of language, the results can be applied in the teaching of pragmatics and discourse analysis, particularly in fostering awareness of impoliteness strategies and ways to evaluate them in everyday communication. For future studies, it is recommended to analyze impoliteness strategies and metapragmatic comments among supporting characters, especially in interactions between Ellie and Pete, to explore their role in conflict resolution and the rebuilding of relationships within the movie's narrative.

REFERENCES

Culpeper, J. (1996). Towards an anatomy of impoliteness. *Journal of Pragmatics, 25*(3), 349-367. https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(95)00014-3

Culpeper, J. (2011). *Impoliteness: Using language to cause offence.* Cambridge University Press.

Dewi, N. K., & Skolastika, I. M. (2024). An analysis of language styles in the movie "Instant Family". *RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa, 10*(1), 360-367. https://doi.org/10.55637/jr.10.2.8109.360-367

Djohan, M. S., & Simatupang, E. C. (2022). Impoliteness strategies in Cruella movie: Pragmatics study. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal, 5*(3), 18931-18938. https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v5i3.5898

Dunggio, A. S., Bay, I. W., & Ali, S. W. (2024). Impoliteness strategies used in the movie Do Revenge. *Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya, 14*(3), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.37905/jbsb.v14i3.28894

Kleinke, S., & Bös, B. (2015). Intergroup rudeness and the metapragmatics of its negotiation in online discussion Fora. *Pragmatics. Quarterly Publication of the International Pragmatics Association, 25*, 47-71. https://doi.org/10.1075/PRAG.25.1.03KLE

Leavy, P. (2017). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches.* The Guilford Press.

Liu, S. (2023). You're so mean but I like it: Metapragmatic evaluation of mock impoliteness in Danmaku comments. *Discourse, Context & Media, 53*, 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2023.100700

Mulyadi, F. P., Setyowati, R., & Rozzaqwijaya, R. K. (2024). Impoliteness and gender: An analysis of animation series Family Guy Season 20th. *Publikasi Para ahli Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris, 2*(5), 320–331. https://doi.org/10.61132/sintaksis.v2i5.1096

Nasirli, A. (2021). An analysis of linguistic impoliteness in the selected American movies. *Dünya Dilleri, Edebiyatları Ve Çeviri Çalışmaları Dergisi, 2*(1), 11-31. https://izlik.org/JA48WT59KF

Putri, M. T. (2023). Analisis film "Instant Family" dalam kaitannya dengan pola asuh orang tua dan pendidikan anak usia dini. *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, 4*(1), 152-165. https://doi.org/10.53515/cej.v4i1.5029

Qaniah, B. (2025). Investigating Conventionalised impoliteness strategies used by main characters in Instant Family. *SPHOTA: Jurnal Linguistik dan Sastra, 17*(2), 143-155. https://doi.org/10.36733/sphota.v17i2.12265

Sabatini, M., Ambarwati, R., & Vendityaningtyas, V. (2023). Impoliteness strategy used by the main character in "Enola Holmes 2 (2022)". *Linguista: Jurnal Ilmiah Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pembelajarannya, 7*(3), 69-77. https://doi.org/10.25273/linguista.v7i2.19467

Suhandoko, S., Lyatin, U., & Ningrum, D. R. (2021). Impoliteness and gender differences in "The Edge of Seventeen" movie. *NOBEL: Journal of Literature and Language Teaching, 12*(2), 228-242. http://dx.doi.org/10.15642/NOBEL.2021.12.2.227-242

Talebzadeh, H. (2023). "You can f*** get lost already": (Responding to) Impoliteness in the (In-)authentic discourse of comedy and crime TV series and movies. *Journal of Politeness Research, 19*(2), 485-520. https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2021-0010

Tandiono, A., & Tjitrakusuma, N. I. (2023). Impoliteness strategies used by the Baroness in the Movie Cruella. *Journal of Language, Literature, and Teaching (Kata Kita), 11*(3), 425-433. https://doi.org/10.9744/katakita.11.3.425-433

Tsoumou, J. M. (2023). An examination of metapragmatic comments on Facebook. *IntechOpen*, 1-16. http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.1002861

Yadav, J. K. (2022). Implications of impoliteness strategies on interpersonal relations: An analysis of The Dirty Picture. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences, 7*(3), 178-186. https://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijels.73.25