

**تتبع استراتيجيات الفظاظة والقوة  
الاجتماعية في عدد من النصوص  
الادبية الانكليزية: دراسة تداولية**

**م. رجاء حامد صالح**

**متوسطة الوفاق للبنين**

**المديرية العامة لتربية الانبار**

**Investigating Impoliteness Strategies and  
Power in a number of English Literary  
Texts: A pragmatic Study**

**Rajaa Hamid Salih**

**rajaahamid333@gmail.com**

ركزت الكثير من الدراسات على دراسة ظاهرة الفظاظة من دون الاخذ بنظر الاعتبار استراتيجيات الفظاظة بصفتها ظاهرة تداولية. لذلك الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تناول الفظاظة من جانب تداولي لبعض المسرحيات الانكليزية باستخدام نظرية كليبير (٢٠٠٥) لبيان انواع استراتيجيات الفظاظة والطرق التي يستخدمها الشخصيات مع قوتهم الاجتماعية للإساءة للأخرين لفظيا للوصول الى اهدافهم. تتعامل هذه الدراسة مع الفظاظة تعاملًا كميًا ونوعيًا كونها تعد ظاهرة تداولية. تشير النتائج ان ردود الشخصيات على استراتيجيات الفظاظة التي يستخدمها المستمع ضد المتكلمين بأسلوب فظ على انها تعتمد على السياق اللغوي بالإضافة الى القوة التي يتمتع بها المستمع للرد على مستخدم الاسلوب الفظ.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** علم التداولية القوة الاجتماعية , الفظاظة, انظر وراءك بغضب, حفلة عيد الميلاد.

### Abstract

Many pragmatic studies have looked at impoliteness in general, but it appears that the impoliteness strategies as a pragmatic phenomenon has been overlooked. As a result, using Culpeper's (2010) model of impoliteness strategies, this paper deals with impoliteness in English literary texts to examine the types of strategies of impoliteness. In addition, the ways in which characters utilize their social power to use impolite acts to attack others in order to reach their aims. It is important to note that this paper takes qualitative and quantitative approaches to the strategies since it describes unique pragmatic phenomenon known as impoliteness. The study demonstrates that in English contexts the characters use impoliteness strategies according to social power and context.

**Key Words:** Pragmatics; Power; Impoliteness; The Birthday Party(BP), Look Back in Anger (LBA)

### 1. Introduction

A number of research studies on politeness have been conducted, according to Culpeper (2011, p. 6). This may be observed in the classic politeness theories of Brown and Levinson (hereinafter B&L) (1987 [1978]) and Leech (1983), where the emphasis was on 'harmonious encounters,' and impoliteness was ignored. Furthermore, Eelen (2001, pp. 98–100) shows that these academics consider impoliteness as something which is not worth to spend efforts to investigate because it is some sort of a pragmatic failure.

There is a partial response to this viewpoint in pragmatic debates of impoliteness. In contrast, Lakoff (1989), Kasper (1990), Beebe (1995), and Kienpointner (1997) claim and illustrate that there are systematic and sophisticated techniques for impoliteness. According to Culpeper et al. (2003), impoliteness occurrences and verbal contacts that lead to conflict are not aberrant behaviors since they represent a type of language interaction that may be experienced in a variety of contexts. The strategies of impoliteness vary according to the culture, context and the participants' social power. Therefore, this paper deals with impoliteness strategies in selected English plays from a pragmatic angle to show how the characters use the impoliteness strategies and demonstrate the types of strategies which are the most prominent in these plays.

### 2. Impoliteness

According to Levinson (2001, p.6), "pragmatics examines the use of language in human communication as dictated by societal conditions," whereas sociolinguistics analyzes the influence of societal factors such as cultural norms, expectations, and context on how language is used (Trudgill, 2000, p.32). "The major domain for impoliteness research findings is socio-pragmatics," according to Culpeper (2011, p.5). This is because it considered as a branch of linguistic pragmatics which is related to other fields of research whose primary focus include interactional sociolinguistics as well as communication the studies. Because socio-pragmatics is considered as an acceptable instrument for examining the bulk of studies on politeness, it may also be utilized to deal with the impoliteness phenomenon's "apparent antithesis." More importantly, impoliteness is a strong candidate for research in the field of socio-pragmatics. Tracy (1998, p.227) defines impoliteness differently. Impoliteness, according to her, is communicative activities which are considered by members of a social group (and commonly undertaken by Ss) to be deliberately provocative behavioral. Culpeper's points out (1996) two most well-known conceptions of impoliteness. First is as the employment of methods meant to target face which causes face to be offended. He explains it in further detail in (2005). He believes that "impoliteness arises when: (1) the addresser deliberately conveys a notion of face-attack, or (2) the addressee either interprets or develops behaviour as deliberate face attack, or it can be a mixture of (1) and (2)." Ruhi and Aksan, 2015, p. 41, cite this source. Second,

Culpeper believes that intentionality and impoliteness are intertwined since interlocutors engage in impolite conduct deliberately.

### 3. Power

According to Brown and Gilman (1972:179), power occurs when one person has a certain social authority over another in the sense that she can influence her or his conduct. Power is defined as a non-reciprocal connection between at least two people. These two people cannot have the same degree of power as long. Thompson (1995, p. 14) defines power as having four sources: economic, coercive, political, and symbolic. The ownership of riches is referred to as economic power. Political power is defined as the influence of people who have the capacity to make decisions and are elected or appointed to positions of power. Coercive power is the tangible utilization of power. Finally, through the production and transmission of symbolic forms, metaphorical power may be characterized as "the potential to interfere in the course of events, to influence the actions of others, and even to create events. (Thompson) (1995, p. 17).

Bousfield and Locher (2008, p. 8) explain that power plays an essential role in the ongoing process of impoliteness inasmuch as impoliteness could be regarded as a form of power. Culpeper (1996, p. 354) believes that there is an obviously strong connection between power and the use of impoliteness when he explains that that impoliteness strategies are clearly seen when the addresser has a more powerful authority than the other addressee, so s/he can behave impolitely a) to limit the less powerful person's ability to reply in an unpleasant manner (e.g., by withholding speaking privileges), and b) to threaten more severe punishment if the less prominent individual is impolite.

### 4. Culpeper's (1996, 2005) Model of Impoliteness Strategies

Walaszewska & Piskorska, (2012, p. 246) see that it is important to note that Culpeper developed the most well-known approach for dealing with the impoliteness problem in 1996. Impoliteness, according to him, is the source of social discord amongst members of a society when they interact.

According to (Mullany and Stockwell, 2010p. 72), to measure how effectively his impoliteness model works, Culpeper uses data from the media in general, and data from television shows in particular. Because there is continual disagreement between participants and impoliteness is depicted in numerous ways, Culpeper's favourite data sources include films, documentaries, and game shows, making it easier to analyze the impolite actions from different perspectives. Furthermore, as compared to other models, Culpeper's model has a significant advantage because it is based on real-world data. It deals with many sorts of conversations, such as rude behaviors in an American Army training speech and children's speech in a bilingual Spanish/English context.

It is crucial to note that Lachenicht (1980) and Culpeper (1996) have three characteristics. First, both rely on Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory as a foundation for developing their own models (Bousfield, 2008: 83). Furthermore, Lachenicht and Culpeper focus on the speaker's function, whereas Austin (1990) focuses on the hearer's. To elaborate, Austin addresses the listener's interpretation of the statements as rude, and she disregards the speaker's role (Jucker, 2009, p.164). Finally, impoliteness is defined by Lachenicht and Culpeper as the use of a deliberate verbal conduct with the goal of assaulting the hearer's face and causing social discord (ibid).

In 2005, Culpeper updates his (1996) model so that he may move the emphasis from deliberate face-attack to impoliteness within a cultural context. Culpeper's (2005) approach is still heavily influenced by Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1996,p.91). Culpeper's (1996-2005) model of impoliteness is comprised of five methods, which are discussed more below.

#### 4.1 Bald on record impoliteness

Gus: "He doesn't seem to bother much about our comfort these days."

Ben: " **When you are going to stop jabbering ?**" ( I,ii, p.135).

An example of bald on record impoliteness can be seen when Ben's is conducting a direct attack to offend Gus.

#### 4.2 Positive impoliteness

Aston: "What happened when you got there, then?"

Davies: "**You know what that bastard monk said to me ?**" (I, ii, p.62)

Davies does not appear to accept unpleasant conduct directed at him, therefore he employs a positive impoliteness approach by employing the "calling the other names" sub-strategy "bastard monk" to insult that man.

#### 4.3 Negative impoliteness

Davies: "You ain't got no right to"

Mick: "You're an old robber."....."You're an old skate . (II, iii, p.109)

When Mick verbally confronts Davies, he utilizes the negative impoliteness technique, offending him using impolite acts.

#### 4.4 Sarcasm

Max: "It's funny you never got married , isn't it?"

Sam: "There's still time" (I, ii, p.61)

This is an example of sarcasm since Max's rude actions against Sam are sardonic in order to make others make fun of him.

#### 4.5 Withhold politeness

Molly introduces Sherlock to her lover, Jim. However, Sherlock's answer is inactive and he does not say anything, demonstrating a withhold politeness technique.

Jim: "So you're Sherlock Holmes. Molly's told me all about you.

Sherlock: *Silent* (Lucky,2005, p.52)

### 5. Methodology

This study is handled with both qualitatively and quantitatively since a qualitative analysis provides findings that represent the concerns of sociolinguistic variationists, whilst a quantitative analysis provides results that affect those who work with pragmatics. In characterizing the impolite instance(s) inside the selected excerpt, specific approaches are used, such as the application of models of analysis to study disrespectful acts within literary texts in order to get intelligible findings. (Ilie and Norrick, 2018,p.15) .

From a pragmatic standpoint, this study article discusses the impoliteness phenomena. As a result, it is sufficient to conduct qualitative and quantitative research on the selected plays. The plays *The Birthday Party* and *Look Back Anger* are examined in order to answer the concerns raised in this paper, such as What are the most prevalent impoliteness techniques within the English plays?, if the practices of rude acts in English plays are employed in the same way, and whether a speaker's social power influences his or her offensive behaviors.

### 6. Data Selection

Plays are seen to be the most appropriate literary works since they have a large number of interactions. The specifics of the selected plays are shown below. The English plays are Pinter's *The Birthday Party* (1968) and *Look Back in Anger* (1956) by Osborne.

**Table (1): Characters involved in the impoliteness strategies within *The Birthday Party* and *Look Back in Anger***

Play	Characters
<i>The Birthday Party</i> (BP) (1968)	Stanley Goldberg McCann Meg Lulu
<i>Look Back in Anger</i> (LBA) (1956)	Jimmy Cliff Alison Helena

#### 6.1. Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies in LBA

##### A. Bald on Record Impoliteness

Excerpt (1)

Jimmy: Do the Sunday papers make you feel ignorant?"

Cliff: Not 'art.

Jimmy: "Well, you are ignorant. You're just a peasant."(I,p. 2)

In the first instance of bald on record impoliteness, Jimmy brags about having read three articles on English literature before allowing Cliff a chance to react. Jimmy displays blatant on-the-record impoliteness when he criticizes Cliff directly, referring to him as a "ignorant" and a "peasant," as depicted above.

Excerpt (2)

Cliff: (To Alison.) "What about you? You're not a peasant are you?"

Jimmy: "I said do the papers make you feel you're not so brilliant after all?"(I,p. 12)

Cliff, for example, exhibits bald on-the-record impoliteness when he screams insults at his wife because she is unconcerned about the 'papers.' At the same time, because he is her spouse, he looks to have more social authority than she does.

## B. Positive Impoliteness

Excerpt (3)

Alison: "YOU know, I think he really means that."

Cliff: "He's just an old Puritan at heart.."

Jimmy: "**you both look pretty silly slobbering over each other.**"(I, i,p. 3) Jimmy verbally assaults his wife and Cliff with a positive impoliteness. He insults his wife and his buddy by calling them names and making personal bad references. He also searches out conflict and, as previously said, attempts to belittle her whenever he gets the opportunity.

Excerpt (4)

Alison: "(very quietly and earnestly). Jimmy, please— don't go on."

Jimmy: "**Your friends—there's a shower for you.**"(I,p. 7)

Alison's acquaintances, according to Jimmy, are "nasty folks." As a result, this rude conduct is an example of positive impoliteness, revealing Jimmy's lack of concern, attention, and empathy.

## C. Negative Impoliteness

Excerpt (5)

Jimmy: "Well, you *are* ignorant. You're just a peasant. (*To Alison.*) What about you?" "**You're not a peasant are you?** (I,p. 2)

Jimmy uses a negative impoliteness technique when he verbally disparages his wife for her casual attitude toward him during a chat with his wife. He always verbally insults his wife, and this time he utilizes some of the negative impoliteness output tactics, such as condescending, mocking, or scorning, as indicated in the passage below.

Excerpt (6)

place out. "(*To Alison.*) Doesn't it smell awful?"

"Jimmy grabs the-matches, and lights up."

Alison: "I don't mind it. I've got used to it."

Jimmy: "**She's a great one for getting used to things**"(I,p. 5)

This is an example of negative actions. Jimmy reports on the conversation. He vocally criticizes his wife's sluggishness, shyness, fast adaptation, and openness to anything comes her way. As the excerpt shows, Jimmy is once again attempting to utilize some of the negative impoliteness output techniques of patronizing, mocking, and being disdainful.

## D. Sarcasm

Excerpt (7)

Cliff: "Yes, and uneducated. Now shut up, will you?"

Jimmy: "**Why don't you get my wife to explain it to you? She's educated.**"(I,pp. 2-3)

While Jimmy and Cliff are conversing, Jimmy acts impolitely by informing Cliff that he is uneducated. Then, Jimmy emphasizes the concept by implying sarcastically that Cliff cannot grasp what he reads in the papers.

Excerpt (8)

Cliff: "Well, you were all for it earlier on."

Jimmy: "**What does she want? What would make her ring up? It can't be for anything pleasant.**"(I,p. 15) As seen in the excerpt, Jimmy's rude conduct of using caustic words to express his dissatisfaction and disappointment with a friend of theirs, Helena, who is scheduled to arrive shortly.

## 6.2. Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies in BP

### A. Bold on Record Impoliteness

Excerpt (1)

Meg. "It's good tea. Good strong tea."

Stanley: "**Get out of it. You succulent old washing bag.**"(I, p.13)

Stanley mocks Meg as she prepares him tea and tells her that the tea is tasteless. Stanley taunts her by using taboo terms since she believes her tea is delicious. As a result, because Stanley makes a direct aggressive attack, this is an example of bold on-the-record impoliteness.

Stanley: "Air? Oh, I don't know about that."

Lulu: "**(rising). Come out and get a bit of air. You depress me, looking like that.**"(II,p. 15) Lulu informs Stanley that he is a terrible person, and she attacks him with a bold on-the-record impoliteness. She aggressively requests that he go outside and get some fresh air since he looks horrible and makes her unhappy.

### **B. Positive Impoliteness**

Excerpt (2)

Goldberg: "I beg your pardon?"

Stanley: "*(moving downstage)*. **We're booked out. You'll have to find somewhere else.**" (I,p. 22)

Stanley employs a method of positive impoliteness known as "seek disagreement." Stanley feels uncomfortable with Goldberg and McCann being in the house, so he engages in this rude conduct in order to encourage Goldberg to leave. Furthermore, because Goldberg is a newcomer to the house, he does not expect to be treated so rudely by Stanley. As shown in the extract below, Stanley believes he is more powerful than others.

### **C. Negative Impoliteness**

Excerpt (3)

Stanley: "*(ignoring hand)*. Perhaps you're deaf."

Goldberg: "**Your skin's crabby, you need a shave, your eyes are full of muck.**(I,p. 22)

While Goldberg and Stanley are conversing, Goldberg employs a negative impoliteness technique in an attempt to breach Stanley's territory and criticize his early morning routine. To put it another way, Goldberg verbally attacks Stanley by mocking him and directly connecting him with bad characteristics.

Excerpt (4)

Stanly: *(moving downstage)*. I'm afraid there's been a mistake. We're booked out. Your room is taken. Mrs Boles forgot to tell you. You'll have to find somewhere else.

Goldberg: "**Are you the manager here?**" (II,p. 22)

Through his sarcastic inquiry, Goldberg appears to be verbally abusive to Stanley, revealing Goldberg's intention to destroy Stanley's social identity and ruin his feeling of public value. In this approach, Goldberg allows Stanley to obliquely get to the offending purpose of his comment.

## **6.3. Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies qualitatively used in LBA**

*Table (2): Impoliteness strategies that are used by the characters in LBA*

Strategies Employed	Frequency	Percent
Bold on Record Impoliteness Strategy	22	15.19
Positive Impoliteness Strategy	60	36.70
Negative Impoliteness Strategy	50	31
Sarcasm Strategy	27	17
Withhold Politeness Strategy	-	-
Total	158	100%

The positive impoliteness technique is the most popular in this game, with 60 and 36.70 percent usage, followed by the negative impoliteness strategy with 50 and 31 percent usage. They are utilized 22 times and 15.19 percent of the time for bold on record methods. With 27 and 17 percent, respectively, sarcasm is the least utilized approach, with no trace of the withhold impoliteness strategy.

## **6.4.A Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies qualitatively used in BP**

*Table (3): Impoliteness strategies are used by the characters in BP*

Strategies Employed	Frequency	Percent
Bold on Record Impoliteness Strategy	13	8.33
Positive Impoliteness Strategy	71	48.61

Negative Impoliteness Strategy	60	41.66
Sarcasm Strategy	02	1.38
Withhold Politeness Strategy	-	-
Total	144	100%

Positive impoliteness is the most frequent sort of impolite acts employed by the participants in BP, with 71 and percent 48.61 data. With 60 and 41.66 percent, negative impoliteness technique is adopted, followed by bold on record impoliteness with 13 and 8.33 percent. With 02 and 9.50 percent, sarcasm is employed extremely occasionally, and the withhold impoliteness strategy is never utilized.

**7. Results and Discussions** The aim of this section is to describe how a pragmatic investigation is used to evaluate impoliteness strategies in English plays in order to demonstrate how characters utilize their social power to attack others using diverse impoliteness strategies.

**7.1 A Pragmatic Analysis of BP** The characters in the English play use a variety of impoliteness strategies, as seen by their actions. They rely on positive and negative techniques more than any other type of strategy. Pinter tries to shed some light on the characters' interactions to impoliteness to show how they either try to defend their face to save their face or use nonverbal responses as a way of avoiding others' impoliteness actions to mitigate any face attack that may eventuate because the speaker has more power and influence, allowing him to boost his/her face attack whenever he/she wants.

**7.2 A Pragmatic Analysis of LBA** The LBA employs a number of impoliteness tactics. Because of the heated environment, which makes the situation somewhat contentious, the positive impoliteness technique is utilized most frequently. In addition, depending on the context and social relationship between them, the interlocutors utilize a variety of strategies. As a result, the characters devise methods to harm others while also preserving their own looks. The protagonists in LBA perform rude behaviors to improve their social image and to quiet those who accuse them of being ashamed.

**8. Conclusion** Impoliteness is an evident component of the language usage that the individuals in the plays employ strategically. The characters' sophisticated language conduct may be seen in the many strategies they use in their verbal engagement, such as bald on record, positive negative, and sarcasm. Impoliteness tactics are seen to be a pragmatic phenomenon because while evaluating impoliteness actions, other societal elements such as social power, language, and the degree of closeness between the speech participants must be taken into account. These acts of impoliteness are regarded as a pragmatic trend in which language exchange actors utilize unique strategies. It is obvious that the frequency of impoliteness techniques varies since the selected plays feature a diverse range of races and situations. Strategies to impoliteness, a component of Culpeper's (2005) model, may be used to deal with both plays. In the plays, the positive approach is the most prominent. As a result, reactions are complicated behaviors regardless of the language employed, and they are an important element of the linguistic interaction.

## 9. References

- Cornelia I& R. Neal (2018) *Pragmatics and its Interfaces*. John Benjamins Publishing company: Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
- Culpeper(1996). *Towards an Anatomy of Impoliteness*. Journal of Pragmatics.
- Culpeper, J. (2001). *Language and Characterisation: People in Plays and Other Texts*. New York, NY: Pearson Education Limited
- Culpeper, J. (2011). *Impoliteness: Using Language to cause Offence*. Cambridge, CBG: Cambridge University Press.
- Huang, Y. (2012). *The Oxford Dictionary of Pragmatics*. Oxford, OXF: Oxford University Press.
- Johanson, R. (1994). *Charles Dickens' Great Expectations: A Dramatization*. Woodstock: The Dramatic Publishing Company
- Lakoff, R. (1973b). *Language and Women's Place, Language in Society*. 2, 45-80.
- Lucky, B. (2015) *A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES IN BRITISH TV-SERIES SHERLOCK*. Yogyakarta State University.
- Pinter, Harold (1959). *The Birthday Party*. London: Eyre Methuen Ltd