Impoliteness Strategies Used by Sylvie Grateau toward Emily Cooper in *Emily in Paris Season One*

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ABSTRACT
This descriptive-quantitative study is aimed at finding out the types of impoliteness super-strategies used by Sylvie toward her employee, Emily, in *Emily in Paris* season one, as well as the most and least frequently used types. The main theory used is Culpeper's (1996, 2005) impoliteness strategy. The findings reveal that Sylvie has implemented all five types of impoliteness super-strategies. The most common is negative impoliteness which most likely occurs because Sylvie always opposes Emily on purposes despite knowing how much Emily wants to be professionally acknowledged at Savoir. The least frequently used is withhold politeness, which might happen because although Sylvie is a generally nice person, she uses clearer impolite strategies to Emily on purpose. The writers conclude that Sylvie purposefully uses impoliteness strategies and adds impolite gestures, to bring Emily down and to emphasize her power to get rid of Emily from Savoir.

Keywords: impoliteness; impoliteness strategy; status; utterance

INTRODUCTION

To accomplish certain goals, people use strategies, including communication strategies. Generally, the more polite someone appears to be, the more likely she or she gets his or her messages across. Interestingly, being impolite can also be used as a strategy to reach the communication goals. Impoliteness is a sensitive area where people tend to avoid, but it can make a considerable impact in everyday life, and it is used intentionally and unintentionally. In general, intentional impoliteness is used to attack someone's face wants, the desire for a certain self-image in society.

Considering that politeness and power are found closely linked in many studies (Schnurr, et al., 2008), and in line with Brown and Levinson's (as cited in Culpeper, 2011) claim that the more powerful the speaker, the less politeness is used, the writers are interested in investigating how impoliteness and status correlate in a workplace.

This study analyzed the impoliteness strategies implemented by a boss toward her employee through her utterances and gestures. The characters are from *Emily in Paris* season one. The subject of the study is Sylvie, as Emily's leader or boss. This study is also conducted from Sylvie's perspective, not from Emily's. The data is taken from Sylvie's utterances and gestures during her interaction with Emily on business topics only. Cultural context is excluded since there is a controversy about the stereotypes of French culture used in the series, so the writers want to focus on the workplace setting and power relation at work.

Emily in Paris season one is about a woman named Emily Cooper who works in a marketing company in Chicago, America, named Gilbert Group. As part of an expansion of its international portfolio, Gilbert Group purchases the French luxury marketing agency, Savoir. Emily is asked to move to Paris, in place of Madeline, her boss in Chicago who can speak French and is surprisingly pregnant.

In Paris, Emily's arrival is not responded warmly and is treated coldly by Sylvie Grateau, Julien, and Luc. Emily does not speak French and has hardly any preparation because of the

sudden move. According to the French characters in the series, Emily's confidence is taken as something thoughtless and rude. Furthermore, Emily carries out Madeline's request to change Savoir's working culture by proposing America's work culture even though Emily is just a newcomer. For those reasons, Sylvie, Julien, and Luc abominate her. Among the three characters from Savoir, Sylvie Grateau is the one who hates Emily the most. Knowing that the only way Emily will leave Savoir is if she decides to leave on her own, Sylvie does everything she can to make Emily go back to Chicago.

There are two research questions of this study, namely: 1) What are the types of impoliteness super-strategies used by Sylvie Grateau toward Emily Cooper, as her 'follower' at Savoir? and 2) What are the types of impoliteness super-strategies that Sylvie most frequently used and the least frequently used toward Emily?

In answering these questions, the writers used a theory of impoliteness strategy by Culpeper (1996, 2005). In his theory, Culpeper (1996, 2005) categorizes five types of impoliteness super-strategies. There are bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, off-record impoliteness, withhold politeness. Bald on record impoliteness is a direct, clear, brief, and done-intentionally type of impoliteness (Culpeper, 1996). Positive impoliteness is the type that is used to damage addressee's positive face wants (Culpeper, 1996). In contrast, negative impoliteness is used to damage addressee's negative face wants (Culpeper, 1996). Off-record impoliteness is the indirect type but has clear face threatening implication meaning (Culpeper, 2005). Withhold politeness is the absence of expected politeness in a normal interaction (Culpeper, 1996).

To support this study, the writers also used a theory of status by Gould (2002) to divide the group of status. Gould (2002) categorizes three basic groups of status in hierarchy as "a leader, one or two mid-level individuals, and a set of followers" (p. 1144). Based on Gould's (2002) classification, Sylvie is the leader while Emily is the follower.

METHODS

The writers used a descriptive quantitative approach for this study. The source of data is from all of Sylvie's utterances and gestures in all ten episodes of *Emily in Paris* season one. The data were taken from both Sylvie's utterances and impolite gestures addressed to Emily when discussing business-related topics.

In collecting the data, the writers watched the series several times while paying attention to the impoliteness strategy in Sylvie's utterances and gestures. Then, they transcribed the dialogues by directly copying the official English subtitles from Netflix. Afterwards, they gave numbers on Sylvie's utterances and gestures that contain impoliteness strategies when talking about business-related topics with to Emily. Then, the writers copied the transcribed dialogue into the table of analysis and analyzed the data using Culpeper's (1996, 2005) impoliteness strategies theory. The underlined words are the keywords of the strategies used.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the writers discuss their findings in answering the research questions. There are two research questions discussed in each sub-heading below.

The Types of Impoliteness Super-strategies Used by Sylvie Grateau towards Emily Cooper
Below are the five types of impoliteness super-strategies by Culpeper (1996, 2005) found in Sylvie's utterances and gestures.

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- **Bald On Record Impoliteness**

Example 1

EMILY: I know you're about to launch, and you're keeping me out of the loop.
SYLVIE: <u>True</u>.

One of the purposes of sending Emily from Chicago to Paris is to give American points of
views on the marketing projects at Savoir. However, apparently Sylvie never invites Emily to
discuss business project. In addition, Sylvie also expresses her disinterest when Emily is talking
by not looking directly to Emily's eyes. Emily realizes that her presence is not welcomed at
Savoir, especially by Sylvie; so, she tells Sylvie about it. However, Sylvie directly and clearly
affirms that she ignores and excludes Emily from Savoir's activities. Excluding someone from
an activity is one of the output strategies of positive impoliteness.

- **Positive Impoliteness**

Example 2

SYLVIE: <u>Are you crazy</u>? You don't talk about work at a party.
EMILY: He asked me.
SYLVIE: Well, then you change the subject. You know, we're at a soiree, not a conference call.
<u>Oh, mon Dieu</u>!

In this scene, Emily comes to a party where she meets Antoine, Savoir's client. Antoine's wife
asks Emily about her purpose of visit to Paris. Afterwards, Antoine asks Emily about her
opinion about marketing and stuff in which Emily gives a lengthy explanation. However, in the
French working culture, as mentioned in *Emily in Paris*, people do not talk about business
outside the office, especially at a party. Positive impoliteness is used in the first underlined
utterance in which Sylvie uses abusive language by saying, "Are you crazy?". Thus, the first
underlined utterance is categorized as positive impoliteness. Then, she also uses taboo-profane
language, "Oh, mon Dieu!" which has a literal meaning of "Oh, my God." Using profane words
as negative expressions is categorized as swear words (Batistella, 2005, as cited in Esterika,
2016). These taboo words and the tone used might probably be used to imply as if Emily cannot
not think of any simple ideas, such as changing the subject. Both data belong to positive
impoliteness. When Emily wants to be heard and accepted in the group, Sylvie counteracts her
actions.

- **Negative Impoliteness**

Example 3

EMILY: Did you ever have one? Bobbi Brown? Laura Mercier? Durée?
SYLVIE: (<u>glares at Emily</u>) A representative from Hästens Luxury Beds is coming in tomorrow,
and I expect you to have great campaign ideas.

In this scene, Emily is invited to Duree's gathering. Julien tells Emily that Duree used to be a
client, so people at Savoir do not want to talk about Duree anymore. Emily comes to Sylvie's
room asking if Savoir has cosmetic companies as the clients. Responding to this, Sylvie simply
uses a gesture, that is glaring, to perform negative impoliteness. The output strategy is to invade
Emily's space (metaphorically) in talking about Duree. It is also supported by Sylvie's next
utterance by switching to a different topic.

- **Off-Record Impoliteness**

Example 4

LUC: Ah. You would like to destroy our French soul!
SYLVIE: <u>Well done, Emily</u>. [<u>Smirks</u>]

In this scene, Luc rushes to Emily after finding a paper of corporate commandments from Emily, sent from the Chicago office. Emily is a newcomer at Savoir and she tries to apply the Chicago corporate commandments at Savoir. Sylvie's response implies that she is challenging Emily. Emily wants to implement the corporate rules and Sylvie responds by saying, "Well done, Emily." This seems to convey a positive meaning, but it actually has a clear sarcastic meaning. It is also supported by Sylvie's gesture, a smirk, when Sylvie says her utterance and leaves Emily alone. The smirk might be used purposely by Sylvie to show Emily that Sylvie is so happy that Emily makes a huge mistake that her team members hate Emily too.

- **Withhold Politeness**

Example 5
EMILY: These are for you. Happy Tuesday
SYLVIE: [slight and quick forced smile] Mm-hmm.
ANTOINE: Smart girl
SYLVIE: [exhales cigarette smoke and shakes her head]

In this example, when Emily gives her a flower bouquet as a present, Sylvie does not respond with typical expected politeness actions, such as thanking the giver. Instead, Sylvie simply gives a slight and quick forced smile, which indicates insincerity, and says, "Mm-hm." This strategy might be used to imply that Sylvie does not appreciate what Emily has done.

The Most and The Least Frequently Used Impoliteness Super-Strategies
In the analysis, the writers found the type of impoliteness super-strategies commonly used and rarely used by Sylvie when talking about business topics with Emily. They identified thirty-five groups of data from Sylvie's utterances and gestures that use impoliteness super-strategies. Each group of data consists of one dialogue. In several groups of data, there are more than one utterance and gesture that contain different types of impoliteness strategies. Therefore, they divided the data into parts to make it easier for the readers to follow each analysis. In one group of data, one type of impoliteness super-strategy may be used more than once. The table below showcases the writers' findings on the frequency of Sylvie's impoliteness strategies when talking to Emily about business, in relation to power relations.

Table of Findings

No	Impoliteness Super-strategies	Number of Frequency
1.	Bald on record impoliteness	9
2.	Positive impoliteness	18
3.	Negative impoliteness	30
4.	Off-record impoliteness	17
5.	Withhold politeness	3

The Most Frequently Used Impoliteness Super-Strategies

The findings reveal that the negative impoliteness super-strategy is the most frequently used strategy by Sylvie (thirty times), as indicated by Sylvie's utterances and gestures. Among five output strategies of negative impoliteness, the writers found three that Sylvie commonly uses,

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namely (a) condescend, scorn, or ridicule, (b) explicitly associate the other with negative aspects, and (c) frighten.

The first output strategies (condescend, scorn, or ridicule) are in line with the co-text of power. Sylvie mostly emphasizes her status and power as Emily's boss and belittles Emily's idea as an employee from Chicago. This corroborates the writers' finding that Sylvie always brings up Emily's nationality to dissociate Emily from others. Emily's behaviour and way of thinking are different from most of the people at Savoir. Thus, Sylvie repeatedly ridicules Emily for being different, as shown in the following example.

Example 6:
LUC: What's the brand identity?
EMILY: I… I don't know.
SYLVIE: [Scoffs and throws the paper on table] Do you know anything about them?
EMILY: My friend's parents own it, and she asked me to consider them as a client.

The parents of Emily's friend, Camille, own a champagne company. Camille wants Savoir to handle the marketing, but Emily does not know a lot about the industry. This conversation takes place when Emily talks to Sylvie, Julien, and Luc about Camille's family's champagne. Here, Sylvie ridicules Emily because Emily is the one who deals with the champagne industry but knows nothing about it. Sylvie's utterance and body language clearly shows how Sylvie wants to ridicule Emily.

The second output strategy that is commonly used by Sylvie is to explicitly associate Emily with negative aspects. This might take place be because Sylvie tries to make Emily feel guilty by indicating how Emily brings negative influence on the company, as shown in the following example.

Example 7:
EMILY: Oh, I could help with the Fourtier flagship party this week.
SYLVIE: Oh no, no, no, no. I don't need another problem right now.

This example illustrates how Sylvie uses negative impoliteness super-strategy by explicitly associating Emily with negative aspects, in which Emily is associated with 'problem'. This strategy might be implemented to show that most of the jobs that Emily has done so far are problematic for Sylvie.

The third output strategy is named frighten. This instills a belief to the addressee that the action detrimental to the other will occur (Culpeper, 1996). In relation to the previous output strategy, this output strategy is used by Sylvie probably because Sylvie wants to limit what Emily can do, as illustrated by the following example.

Example 8
SYLVIE: Do you have any idea of what you have done? [Glares at Emily]
EMILY: Me?

Here, Sylvie applies negative impoliteness in her utterance. She uses 'frighten' as the output strategy to put a lot of pressure on Emily. Sylvie also shows this through her gesture to support the impoliteness strategy by glaring at Emily as she asks Emily. After the conversation is over, Sylvie slams her room's door. The way she glares at Emily and slams the door after talking also highlights how bad the situation is and thus, giving more pressure to Emily. Additionally, there is an implication of blaming Emily for what has happened.

The use of negative impoliteness, which is mostly used, might be to emphasize Sylvie's power over Emily and makes Emily feel guilty. The desired output from Sylvie's point of view might be to make Emily feel uncomfortable and thereafter, making her go back to Chicago. Furthermore, Sylvie knows how much Emily would like to be acknowledged for her competency in marketing. That is why, to add more damaging effects, Sylvie does the opposite of what Emily face wants.

The Least Frequently Used Impoliteness Super-Strategies
The findings also reveal that withhold politeness super-strategy is the least frequently used type of impoliteness super-strategies when Sylvie is talking to Emily. Among seventy-seven data from thirty-five groups of data, withhold politeness super-strategy is only used thrice. Below is an example of Sylvie's utterance that applies withhold politeness.

Example 9
EMILY: True. But Americans invented it, which is why I hope to become a valuable member of your team by adding an American point of view to your fabulous French clients.
SYLVIE: [silent]
JULIEN: It's a disaster.

This example shows how Sylvie does not perform any expected politeness actions as the leader of Savoir. Usually, a leader is expected to welcome his or her new staff especially since the new staff is sent to contribute to the company. However, Sylvie does not like Emily because Emily does not speak French, so Sylvie remains silent. This strategy is probably used to show Emily that Sylvie indeed does not welcome Emily at Savoir. The type of withhold politeness super-strategy occurs the least in Sylvie's utterances and gestures. This might happen because Sylvie's character is portrayed as someone who is nice and polite, but sometimes she intentionally uses impoliteness strategies, just like what she does to Emily. Thus, instead of not performing expected politeness in a normal interaction, Sylvie shows her feelings toward Emily in clearer attitudes and thus, more damaging to Emily's face wants.

CONCLUSION
There are several findings corresponding to the first question. The first finding is in line with the statement by Culpeper et al. (2003) that the super-strategies often occur mixed. The next finding is that the impoliteness strategy can also be in the forms of non-verbal communication with the same amount of face threat to the addressee. The writers also learnt that the application of impoliteness strategy can also be expressed by not being directly directed to the addressee. The third finding is that Sylvie often uses gestures when communicating with an off-record impoliteness super-strategy. This strategy of adding gestures might be used to indicate that it has deeper meanings for Emily to imply. The fourth finding in this section is Sylvie brings up Emily's background as an American, although when talking about business, to disassociate her from others and make her feel uncomfortable.

In conclusion, there is indeed the application of impoliteness when someone has more power than others, just like what is mentioned by Brown and Levinson (1987, as cited in Culpeper, 2011). The most used type of impoliteness super-strategy is negative impoliteness, whilst the least frequently used is withhold politeness. These two types of impoliteness super-strategies might occur as the most and least used because Sylvie knows exactly Emily's face-wants and purposefully fails Emily's desire, and Sylvie uses clearer impoliteness strategy to show Sylvie's hatred toward Emily. The writers conclude that Sylvie purposefully uses a clear impoliteness strategy, and adds impolite gestures, to disacknowledge Emily and to emphasize power, to get rid of Emily from Savoir.

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