

Impoliteness Strategies Used by the Baroness in the Movie *Cruella*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the types of impoliteness strategies and the similarities and differences of the impoliteness strategies used by the Baroness, an antagonistic character with an impressive background, toward Estella and Cruella in the movie *Cruella*. The theoretical framework used is Culpeper's (1996, 2005) and Bousfield's (2008) impoliteness strategy. This study employed a qualitative approach. The writers collected and analyzed the Baroness' utterances to her subordinate, Estella, and to her business rival, Cruella, during the business scenes. The Baroness used all six types of impoliteness strategies to Estella, namely: bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm/mock politeness, withhold politeness, and off-record impoliteness. On the contrary, the Baroness only used four out of six types of impoliteness strategies to Cruella, specifically excluding: negative impoliteness and withhold politeness. The Baroness' background and personality, as well as the interlocutor's own background, might have influenced the findings of the study.

Keywords: business scenes, impoliteness strategies, utterances

INTRODUCTION

Humans and communication are two things that cannot be separated. People communicate to inform their needs, to acquire or give information, to make or break relationships, or simply to socialize with other people. In communicating with others, people can choose to be polite or impolite to deliver their message. In general, people usually opt to be polite to avoid conflict with their peers. However, there are people that choose to be impolite, whether it is intentional or unintentional. Hence, the writers want to observe the Baroness for her study because the Baroness is a character that has an absolute disregard for anyone who is not herself, taking other people's ideas without their consent, and treating everyone around her horribly (Edwards, 2021). With the way the Baroness is depicted in the movie *Cruella*, this study attempted to analyze the impoliteness strategies used by the Baroness to her subordinate, Estella, and to her business rival, Cruella. Therefore, the research questions of this study are: (1) What types of impoliteness strategies are used by the Baroness toward Estella and Cruella? (2) What are the similarities and differences between the impoliteness strategies used by the Baroness to Estella and Cruella?

The main theory of this study is the impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper (1996, 2005) and Bousfield (2008). Impoliteness is the utilization of strategies that are intended to cause social distress (Culpeper, 1996). Furthermore, Culpeper (2005) categorizes impoliteness strategies into six types, namely: bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, withhold politeness, and off-record impoliteness. Culpeper (2005, p. 41) defines bald on record impoliteness as a strategy that is executed in a "direct, clear, unambiguous, and concise" manner, in which the hearer's face is not minimized. Positive impoliteness hurts the positive face of the recipient (Culpeper, 2005). Contrarily, negative impoliteness damages the recipient's negative face (Culpeper, 2005). Sarcasm or mock politeness is the use of insincere politeness, merely being polite superficially (Culpeper, 2005). Withhold politeness is not showing politeness when it is expected by the

hearer (Culpeper, 2005). Off-record impoliteness is an implicature but the intention of the speaker obviously weighs more than any other attribute (Culpeper, 2005).

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach. The source of data was the Baroness' utterances toward Estella and Cruella as shown in the movie *Cruella*, which was taken from a streaming website called *Disney+ Hotstar*. The data that was analyzed was the Baroness' utterances that contained impoliteness strategies when communicating with Estella and Cruella. The data was limited solely on interaction between the Baroness with Estella and Cruella on scenes related to the Baroness' business. There were several steps to collect the data. First, the writers watched the movie *Cruella*. After that, the writers picked out the scenes related to the Baroness' business. The writers downloaded the movie transcript consisting of utterances that the Baroness said during the scenes related to the Baroness' business. The transcript was downloaded from the website called *Scraps from the Loft (Cruella, (2021) - transcript, 2021)*. The writers rechecked the transcript with the movie to make sure the downloaded transcription is correct. Next, the writers solely selected the Baroness' utterances from the scenes related to the Baroness' business. The utterances collected were put inside a table using the two-digit numbering system to differentiate and to number each data. Afterward, the data was analyzed using Culpeper's (1996, 2005) and Bousfield's (2008) impoliteness strategies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section elaborates the findings of the writers' study. There are two main parts in this section, which are divided into further sections to provide an in-depth discussion of the analysis: (1) The types of impoliteness strategies used by the Baroness (2) The similarities and differences between the impoliteness strategies used by the Baroness to Estella and Cruella. The overall summary of the impoliteness strategies used by the Baroness toward Estella and Cruella during the scenes related to the Baroness' business is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Summary of the Findings

No.	Impoliteness Strategies	To Estella (times)	To Cruella (times)
1.	Bald on Record Impoliteness	✓ (3)	✓ (2)
2.	Positive Impoliteness	✓ (15)	✓ (5)
3.	Negative Impoliteness	✓ (6)	-
4.	Sarcasm or Mock Politeness	✓ (1)	✓ (2)
5.	Withhold Politeness	✓ (9)	-
6.	Off-Record Impoliteness	✓ (10)	✓ (6)

The Types of Impoliteness Strategies Used by the Baroness

The findings show that the Baroness utilized all six types of impoliteness strategies toward her subordinate, Estella, namely: bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness,

negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, withhold politeness, and off-record impoliteness. Interestingly, the Baroness did not utilize negative impoliteness and withhold politeness to her rival, Cruella. It results in the Baroness' use of only four out of six types of impoliteness strategies; specifically, bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and off-record impoliteness.

A. The Baroness to Estella

This section specifically discusses the impoliteness strategies the Baroness used toward her subordinate, Estella, in scenes related to the Baroness' business. Further elaboration is written by the writers in the following sections.

- **Bald on Record Impoliteness**

(Data 1.1) BARONESS : “You. Grubby girl.”
ESTELLA : “Yes?”

The Baroness said the utterance above due to Estella's dirty and unkempt appearance. The Baroness could see the power difference between hers and Estella's from Estella's helper uniform. Thus, indicating that Estella works at *Liberty* department store as the cleaning service. Therefore, the Baroness knew that Estella was nothing compared to the Baroness, who was an icon in the London fashion industry. Despite that, the Baroness did acknowledge Estella's talent from the way she styled the mannequin displayed in front of *Liberty* department store. Due to that, the Baroness called Estella to hire her to work as a designer for the Baroness' own fashion label, *House of Baroness*.

Data 1.1 shows that the Baroness performed the FTA directly and clearly toward Estella. Grubby girl means dirty girl. The Baroness did not minimize the FTA, she did not care whether or not Estella's face was attacked, which can be seen in the way the Baroness described Estella's dirty and unkempt appearance right in front of Estella. To make her impoliteness delivered even more clearly, the Baroness made sure to address Estella using “You,” followed by a concise description of Estella's appearance albeit disrespectful. That way, Estella knew that the one being called “Grubby girl” by the Baroness was Estella herself. Therefore, the impoliteness was delivered unambiguously toward Estella.

- **Positive Impoliteness**

(Data 1.1) BARONESS : “You. Grubby girl.”
ESTELLA : “Yes?”

The utterance in Data 1.1 shares the same context written previously in the Bald on Record Impoliteness section. Moreover, Data 1.1 can also be categorized as positive impoliteness, due to the Baroness addressing Estella using a derogatory nomination “Grubby girl” (dirty girl). The Baroness attacked Estella's want to be approved of (positive face) by calling her inappropriately, especially since it was their first encounter with each other. Not only that, Estella, who has a passion in fashion, looked up to the Baroness due the Baroness being an icon in the fashion industry. Thus, it can be inferred that the Baroness was seen as an idol in the fashion world, including Estella who saw the Baroness as an idol. Unfortunately, during their first meeting, the Baroness definitely did not approve of Estella's appearance. Hence, the personal attack delivered to Estella's appearance using a derogatory nomination.

- **Negative Impoliteness**

ESTELLA : (GASPS)
(Data 12.1) BARONESS : “Why are you speaking?”
ESTELLA : “I think you nicked me.”

The Baroness said the utterance above to Estella gasping from shock and pain due to the Baroness accidentally nicking her arm with a knife, drawing blood in the process. This accident happened when the Baroness was cutting some fabrics from the dress that Estella had created during her first day working as a designer for the Baroness fashion label, *House of Baroness*. However, instead of acknowledging Estella, the Baroness just continued inspecting the dress that Estella had designed earlier and completely disregarded Estella's gasp of shock and pain.

The Baroness acted condescendingly by emphasizing her status of power to Estella, by insinuating that Estella was not allowed to speak if the Baroness was not asking for her opinion or was not in a conversation with her. Therefore, Estella's freedom of action (the freedom to express her feelings) was attacked by the Baroness. On top of that, the Baroness associates Estella with a negative aspect by using "You" to address Estella. In this particular situation, the word "You" refers to Estella, the subordinate, who was a nobody in the fashion industry compared to the Baroness' household reputation. Due to that reason, the Baroness associates Estella negatively with "You," since a lowly human such as Estella should not be speaking to the Baroness without permission.

- **Off-Record Impoliteness**

ESTELLA : (GASPS)

(Data 12.1) BARONESS : "Why are you speaking?"

ESTELLA : "I think you nicked me."

Data 12.1 can also be classified as off-record impoliteness because the Baroness was implying that Estella should not have spoken; hence, the rhetorical question "Why are you speaking?" The question was asked not because the Baroness wanted to know the answer, but the question was used to make a point to Estella. In this case, the Baroness was making a point by implying that Estella, the subordinate, was not allowed to speak without the Baroness' permission or unless she was spoken to. Thus, the impoliteness strategy utilized by the Baroness was off-record impoliteness due to the implicature.

- **Sarcasm or Mock Politeness**

ESTELLA : "I thought maybe if you tighten the silhouette..."

(Data 34.1) BARONESS : "Oh, you thought, did you?"

ESTELLA : "I think it's better."

Upon examining the designs displayed, the Baroness stated that there was something missing from the designs and she always trusts her instincts. Hence, Estella expressed her own idea to improve the existing designs by suggesting to tighten the silhouette of the dress. Data 34.1 shows the Baroness mocking Estella by uttering a passive-aggressive remark toward her. The politeness of data 34.1 is actually insincere or only at the surface. The true meaning of the utterance is that the Baroness was mocking Estella who said "I thought..." as if the Baroness herself had not thought about ways to improve the designs herself. Hence, the Baroness opted to use sarcasm or mock politeness by replying "Oh, you thought, did you?" The Baroness might have also taken Estella's utterance personally by thinking that she insulted her by implying that the Baroness had not thought of various ways to improve the designs. Furthermore, the reason the Baroness might have taken Estella's utterance personally could be influenced by the fact that the Baroness was seen as an icon in the fashion industry. Correlating with the previous statement, Estella's utterance "I thought..." might have hit the Baroness' ego negatively.

- **Withhold Politeness**

(ESTELLA'S DESIGN CATCH THE ATTENTION OF THE BARONESS')

(Data 11.1) BARONESS : "Hmm."

The context transpires when the Baroness' designers displayed their completed designs for the Baroness to assess it. Out of all designs displayed, only Estella's design had managed to catch the attention of the Baroness'. However, instead of complimenting the design, the Baroness simply uttered a short "hmm." Data 11.1 is categorized as withholding politeness because the Baroness failed to show her politeness to Estella. The Baroness should at least acknowledge Estella's design by giving a compliment, especially since it was Estella's first day at work and she did amazingly well. However, the Baroness chose to withhold her politeness by deliberately opting not to compliment Estella. This phenomenon could also have occurred because the Baroness thought Estella was not worthy of her time and attention. In this case, the Baroness deemed Estella not worthy of receiving her acknowledgement (politeness).

B. The Baroness to Cruella

The impoliteness strategies the Baroness employed during the business scenes with her business rival, Cruella, is covered in this section. Further explanation is provided in the parts that follow.

- **Bald on Record Impoliteness**

BARONESS : "Let me give you some advice."

(Data 50.2) BARONESS : "If you need to talk about power, you don't have it."

CRUELLA : "Well, I don't have it, which is why I need to talk about it, which is why I'm here."

The utterance was made in the context of Cruella telling the Baroness on their first meeting at the Baroness' black-and-white ball, that Cruella aspires to be a very powerful woman just like her. However, the Baroness was unaware that Cruella was lying about her wanting to be like the Baroness. Therefore, Cruella, in the Baroness's eyes, was still someone who looked up to her. Nevertheless, the Baroness continued to be impolite to Cruella by using bald on record impoliteness as shown in data 50.2.

The Baroness did not hold back her impoliteness to Cruella by saying she was powerless directly to her face in a clear, unambiguous, and concise manner. The Baroness did not care if she had offended Cruella, who was a guest in her party at that time. Therefore, the Baroness viewed Cruella's face as unimportant, which was confirmed by the Baroness not minimizing or reducing her FTA to Cruella. The Baroness viewing Cruella's face as unimportant was also the Baroness' own way to assert her power against Cruella. Meaning, the Baroness did feel threatened by Cruella. The reason might be because Cruella's outfit looked absolutely divine and managed to catch everyone's attention at the ball. With that being the reason, the Baroness felt the need to assert her dominance upon Cruella to prove that she was still better than Cruella.

- **Positive Impoliteness**

BARONESS : "Let me give you some advice."

(Data 50.2) BARONESS : "If you need to talk about power, you don't have it."

CRUELLA : "Well, I don't have it, which is why I need to talk about it, which is why I'm here."

The utterances above share the same context with the context written in the Bald on Record Impoliteness section previously. Data 50.2, aside from being categorized as bald on record impoliteness, it is also a positive impoliteness because the Baroness attacked Cruella's want to be approved of. In this case, Cruella wanted to be approved by the Baroness. However, as seen in data 50.2, the Baroness did not approve Cruella by uttering Cruella did not have any power, indicating that the Baroness viewed Cruella as someone powerless and not in the same

level of power as the Baroness'. The Baroness' not approving of Cruella could also be because the Baroness saw the whole room's attention shifted to Cruella the moment she stepped into the ballroom. Therefore, the Baroness felt the need to assert her power to prove she was still better than Cruella. Furthermore, the Baroness' utterance could initiate conflict (seek disagreement) with Cruella, since saying someone is powerless right in front of their face might result in the other person's self-defense. Thus, conflict could arise between the speaker and the hearer.

- **Sarcasm or Mock Politeness**

CRUELLA : "It's a bit south, really, of north, which is basically west."

(Data 53.2) BARONESS : "All right, that's enough. I've loved our little chat, but I'm afraid that now I'm going to have to have you arrested, um, for trespassing."

The context of the utterance happened when Cruella was a guest at the Baroness' black-and-white ball. Cruella's confidence and outfit immediately caught the attention of everyone, including the Baroness herself. Feeling intrigued, the Baroness insisted that Cruella sit and have a chat with her. However, the conversation with Cruella did not end well since the Baroness ended it hastily and evicted Cruella from her party.

The Baroness utilized sarcasm or mock politeness toward Cruella as displayed in data 53.2, specifically by uttering "I've loved our little chat." The Baroness was being sarcastic to Cruella because the politeness of this utterance only stands on surface level. The Baroness actually felt the contrary of this utterance, she did not love the conversation with Cruella. Hence, the Baroness hastily ended the chat with Cruella the moment she realized she did not want to carry the conversation further. Moreover, the Baroness' eviction of Cruella, who was a guest at her party, further proves that the Baroness did not enjoy the chat at all. The Baroness' eviction of Cruella from her party could also indicate that the Baroness did not want to be outshined by Cruella, especially since the Baroness was seen as a fashion icon. It would tarnish the Baroness' reputation if someone else managed to steal the spotlight from the Baroness at her own ball.

- **Off-Record Impoliteness**

CRUELLA : "Black-and-White ball. I like to make an impact."

(Data 38.2) BARONESS : "Right."

The context behind this was that Cruella stated that she wanted to make an impact by attending a black-and-white ball while also sporting black-and-white colored hair, to which the Baroness responded with the utterance above. Data 38.2 is an off-record impoliteness because the implied meaning of the utterance is that the Baroness disagrees with Cruella stating that she was making an impact with her hair; hence, the short clipped response from the Baroness. If the Baroness had actually agreed with Cruella's statement regarding her hair, the Baroness would have responded in a much more positive manner. However, that was not the case as presented in data 38.2. Furthermore, considering that the Baroness was a notable figure in the fashion industry, it might hurt her own pride and ego if she admitted out loud that Cruella's hair was indeed a fashion statement. The fact that Cruella also successfully stole everyone's attention at the ball, might have already struck the Baroness' pride and ego negatively.

The Similarities and Differences between the Impoliteness Strategies Used by the Baroness to Estella and Cruella

This section discusses the in-depth analysis of the similarities and differences of the impoliteness strategies used by the Baroness to Estella and Cruella based on the Table 1:

Summary of the Findings. The possible reasons behind the findings can be found in the following discussion.

- **Bald on Record Impoliteness**

The Baroness employed bald on record impoliteness three times to her subordinate, Estella, and twice to her business rival, Cruella. Although the Baroness treated both Estella and Cruella in a similar impolite manner, the differences lies in the fact that the Baroness used bald on record impoliteness the most to Estella due to Estella's being powerless. The Baroness did not feel threatened by Estella at all. On the other hand, the Baroness could not treat Cruella the same way as she treated Estella, Cruella was someone who had power and might overthrow the Baroness from the fashion industry. In a way, the Baroness viewed Cruella as a formidable business rival. Thus, the Baroness treated Cruella with more respect than she did to her subordinate, Estella.

- **Positive Impoliteness**

The findings of positive impoliteness is quite interesting since the result stated that the Baroness utilized positive impoliteness fifteen times to her subordinate, Estella, and five times to her business rival, Cruella. The Baroness used positive impoliteness thrice the number to Estella, which is such a contrast compared to the number of positive impoliteness directed to Cruella. The explanation behind these stark differences might be due to Estella being a nobody in the fashion industry. Unlike Cruella, who was known by the media and even deemed as the next possible fashion icon, Estella was simply a nobody, who worked as the Baroness' fashion designer. Hence, despite the Baroness being impolite to both Estella and Cruella, there is a huge contrast between the Baroness' use of positive impoliteness to Estella and to Cruella due to their varying backgrounds.

- **Negative Impoliteness**

The Baroness used negative impoliteness six times to her subordinate, Estella. Surprisingly, the findings show that the Baroness did not utilize negative impoliteness at all toward her business rival, Cruella. The explanation behind these differences might be because Estella was the Baroness' subordinate. Thus, as Estella's superior, the Baroness had control over Estella; to which the Baroness did abuse her power by often attacking Estella's freedom of action. On the other hand, Cruella was not the Baroness' subordinate, her position in the fashion industry was more or less similar to the Baroness'. That is why the Baroness was not able to control Cruella's freedom; in this case, Cruella's freedom to express her feelings, thoughts, and more importantly, Cruella's freedom to create fashion that ultimately ended up threatening the Baroness' status. However, with the case of the Baroness to Estella, the Baroness had a huge amount of control over her and she abused that said power repeatedly over Estella. These phenomena resulted in the differences of the Baroness' opting to utilize negative impoliteness to Estella, but used none to Cruella.

- **Sarcasm or Mock Politeness**

All of the impoliteness strategies findings presented more numbers on Estella's side. However, particularly on sarcasm or mock politeness, the Baroness only used it once toward her subordinate, Estella, and used it twice to her business rival, Cruella. This means the Baroness utilized the sarcasm or mock politeness strategy the most to Cruella. The reason behind the finding's differences is because the Baroness, as Estella's superior, did not have any reason to be polite to her subordinate, Estella. Even if the politeness was merely on the superficial level, the Baroness could always simply opt to use impoliteness directly to Estella. On the other hand, the Baroness' using pretense politeness to Cruella was because Cruella had more or less an equal footing with the Baroness, making Cruella a formidable business rival. Therefore, despite being impolite to both Estella and Cruella, the Baroness could not simply use impoliteness strategies

to Cruella as she pleased. That is why the Baroness opted to utilize sarcasm or mock politeness the most toward Cruella, rather than to her subordinate, Estella.

- **Withhold Politeness**

The findings stated that the Baroness used withhold politeness nine times to Estella, her subordinate. On the contrary, the Baroness did not employ withhold politeness to her business rival, Cruella. The possible explanation behind this had something to do with the Baroness not approving of Estella; hence, the Baroness would rather withhold her politeness rather than give it to a nobody like Estella. On the other hand, the Baroness viewed Cruella as a formidable business rival. Meaning, the Baroness thought that Cruella had more or less the same power level as the Baroness'. It was also the reason why the Baroness felt threatened by Cruella's existence in the fashion industry. Moreover, the Baroness admitted that Cruella was good, bold, and brilliant. The Baroness did not withhold her politeness toward Cruella, instead she gave the credit to Cruella. So, the Baroness viewed Cruella as someone worthy of her time and deserving of her politeness; to which this resulted in the apparent differences in the findings.

- **Off-Record Impoliteness**

The Baroness used off-record impoliteness to her subordinate, Estella, for ten times, and utilized off-record impoliteness to her business rival, Cruella, for six times. The differences in the findings displayed that the Baroness employed off-record impoliteness strategy the most to Estella. It can be pointed out that the Baroness used off-record impoliteness to put Estella in her place, and that is being the Baroness' subordinate. Meanwhile, with Cruella, the Baroness used this strategy to subtly mock her or to assert dominance upon her. The reason behind this was because the Baroness felt threatened by Cruella. Therefore, the Baroness must have felt as if she needed to assert her place as the fashion icon to show Cruella that the Baroness was always better than Cruella. Therefore, despite using the same strategy to Estella and Cruella, the Baroness' deliverance of impoliteness is way different due to their backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

The writers' findings lead to the conclusion that the Baroness' personality and prestigious background had influenced the way the Baroness treated Estella, especially since the Baroness had much higher power level compared to her subordinate, Estella. Simultaneously, the Baroness' personality and background compared to Cruella's own background, who was closer in terms of power with the Baroness, had also affected the Baroness' manner to her business rival, Cruella. The Baroness' successful background and in general awful personality had played a huge role in how she acted toward others. In this case, the Baroness purposely attacked Estella and Cruella's face to cause social disruption.

This study has its limitations; hence, it is recommended that other researchers would do further research on a larger scale on the movie Cruella that involves the Baroness' interactions with more interlocutors with varying backgrounds. Research in other movies or TV series in which the subject has a similar background with the same or opposite personality as the Baroness' would also be an interesting area to conduct a study of impoliteness strategies too. Despite the present study's limitations, it is expected that the research findings would contribute to a better comprehension of impoliteness strategies used in a business context, especially by someone who has an impressive background as the Baroness.

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