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**Impoliteness Strategies: A Case Study of
the *South Park* Television Series**

Bachelor's Thesis

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(English for Community Interpreting and Translation)

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I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

In Olomouc,

Petra Kubičková

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List of Abbreviations

CP	Cooperative Principle
FTA	Face-threatening act
S	Self, speaker
O	Other (other than the speaker)
H	Hearer, i.e., addressee
PI	Positive impoliteness
NI	Negative impoliteness

The following abbreviations will be used to refer to the specific *South Park* episodes in the analytical part of the thesis:

S	Season (followed by the number of the given season)
E	Episode (followed by the number of the given episode)

For example, the abbreviation S01E01 stands for the first episode of the first season.

The terms mock impoliteness and banter are used interchangeably.

The thesis is written in American English, but the majority of the quoted authors use British English.

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Introduction

Although being impolite is something most people want to avoid in their lives, every citizen of the quiet mountain town of *South Park* seems to have impoliteness inherently built into their character. This animated sitcom, which is currently in its 25th season after 25 years of continuous broadcast, is notoriously indecent and shocking, which makes its content hilarious for some and preposterous for others. However, there is more to the show's content than inappropriate jokes and dealing with controversial issues in a ridiculous way. In addition to that, linguistic humor on the level of semantics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics is employed.

This thesis is concerned with the pragmatic phenomenon of impoliteness, which according to Jonathan Culpeper (2005, 38) occurs when the speaker's utterance or behavior is intentionally face-attacking, or is perceived to be intentionally face-attacking by the hearer, or a combination of both.

While politeness is one of the popular areas of pragmatics, its opposite, impoliteness, is one of the less explored topics to this day. Culpeper (2011, 3) advocates for a complex approach to the study of impoliteness as it is a multidisciplinary field covering a wide range of disciplines from sociology (verbal abuse) to media studies (exploitative TV programs). The reason for conducting this case study is that, to my knowledge, the use of impoliteness strategies in *South Park* has not been examined yet, nor have I seen a study focusing on whether the use of impoliteness developed within one long-running TV show.

This thesis aims to analyze the use of impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper (see Culpeper 1996 and 2005) in the TV series *South Park* and determine in conclusion whether its oldest (1997) and recent (2019) episodes differ in this respect. *South Park* is popular for its problematic and offensive language, but the question prevails: Does impoliteness in this series change with time, or not?

The hypotheses are that the show creators distribute the impoliteness strategies more equally in the recent episodes to avoid repetition and simplicity, while the oldest episodes' content is primarily based on the *Call the other names* and *Use taboo words* positive impoliteness strategies since the show was notorious mainly for its profanities use at the time. Withhold politeness will presumably be the least represented impoliteness superstrategy in the data for its non-humorous nature in most contexts.

When it comes to investigating the use of impoliteness strategies, this situation comedy provides numerous examples to evaluate. To analyze their occurrences in the series, a corpus of the transcribed conversations from the selected episodes will be created and subsequently explored in the analytical part of the thesis.

The theoretical part will be focused on defining the theories and models relevant to impoliteness strategies as proposed by Grice, Brown and Levinson, Lachenicht, Culpeper, and Bousfield. Although the thesis is not primarily dealing with politeness, its specification is necessary since the linguistic impoliteness was based on it.

The criticism of the models' applicability will be also provided. For example, Bousfield notes that Culpeper's model of impoliteness strategies can be tested across various discourses (2008, 90) and is sturdy enough to withstand linguistic changes over time (2008, 91). Its robustness will be thus tested on the *South Park* episodes that were made 22 years apart in this thesis. The changes in Culpeper's approach to impoliteness and the revision of his 1996 model will be considered as well.

1 Politeness

Politeness has been a popular topic in pragmatics and sociolinguistics for nearly 50 years.¹ Leech (2014, 3) defines it as “a form of communicative behavior found very generally in human languages and among human cultures”. Politeness is a phenomenon conditioned by language users, which influences their linguistic choices with regard to the situational context and their relationship with the addressee in order to reach their communicative goals.

Leech (2014, 219) notes that prior to defining impoliteness it is wise to “build on a theory of politeness, which is clearly a related phenomenon, in fact the polar opposite of politeness.” This chapter thus deals with providing a brief overview of Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies, since Culpeper’s impoliteness strategies introduced in 1996 were their mirrored version. As many politeness theories took a Gricean perspective, Grice’s Cooperative Principle and maxims need to be included in this chapter as well.

1.1 Grice’s Cooperative Principle and maxims

The concepts of implicature, the Cooperative Principle, and maxims of conversation were first introduced by H. Paul Grice in 1967 and have been highly influential in pragmatics since then.

According to Grice ([1975] 1989, 25), implicature is the implicit, underlying meaning of the utterance, representing the difference between what the speaker says and what he means to communicate. Implicatures can be classified as either conventional or conversational, the former being context-independent and the latter being always connected to the context of a specific discourse (25-26). The extra-linguistic knowledge of the participants, time, and circumstances of the utterance is essential in order to infer what is implied (25). The concept of implicature is crucial for defining phenomena such as sarcasm and off-record impoliteness, which will be later used in the analysis.

As one of the general features of a successful conversation is cooperation, Grice proposes the Cooperative Principle (CP) and defines it as follows: “Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (Grice [1975] 1989, 26).

1. The first person to study politeness in the pragmatic sense was Robin Lakoff in 1973. She based her views on Grice’s Cooperative Principle and proposed three rules of politeness to ensure that the conversation is cooperative and successful: Do not impose, Give options, and Make the addressee feel good – be friendly (Lakoff 1973, 298).

The Cooperative Principle itself, however, is not sufficient in making the conversation successful. Grice thus postulates four categories of maxims to complement the CP, namely:

Maxims of Quantity

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required [...].
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Maxims of Quality

Supermaxim: "Try to make your contribution one that is true."

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Maxim of Relation

1. Be relevant.

Maxims of Manner

Supermaxim: "Be perspicuous."

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief [...].
4. Be orderly.

(Grice [1975] 1989, 26-27)

The first category of maxims is concerned with the amount of information provided in the conversation, while the second category deals with their truthfulness. Ideally, the speaker should not provide information that is either misleading, not verified, or untrue. The third category deals with the relation to the topic under discussion and the last category deals with the speaker's way of providing information, which should not be confusing, ambiguous, or verbose.

All of these maxims should be ideally adhered to by the interactants; however, failing to observe them is common. Grice ([1975] 1989, 30) distinguishes four ways of non-observing the maxims: *violation* (violating the maxims quietly by misleading and lying), *opting out* (by refusing to cooperate), *clash* (the speaker is unable to fulfill one maxim without infringing the other), and *flouting* (blatantly failing to fulfill the maxims, also known as exploitation), which elicits a conversational implicature. Maxim non-observance and exploitation can be used for entertainment purposes.

1.2 Brown and Levinson's politeness theory

Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson based their politeness theory (1987) on the Gricean grounds. They suppose that politeness, or cooperation based on the interactants' mutual vulnerability of face, is universal, which means that every language and culture has ways of expressing this feature (Brown and Levinson 1987, 61-62). However, this notion has been criticized for not taking cultural differences into account.

Central to their theory is the concept of face, which is defined as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself," which "can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Brown and Levinson 1987, 61). Furthermore, they claim that everyone has positive and negative face: positive face is the desire to be appreciated and approved of, to be a member of a group, whereas negative face is the desire for freedom of action and from imposition (62). These two opposing tendencies result in two types of politeness superstrategies, positive and negative politeness. Brown and Levinson claim that "positive and negative politeness are, to a large extent at any rate, mutually exclusive strategies" (270), and yet it is possible to attack both positive and negative face at once. Furthermore, various strategies are often combined in interaction.

Their theory was mainly focused on the face-threatening acts (FTAs) and the politeness strategies used to avoid or minimize the potential threat: the face-saving acts. Before performing an FTA, the speaker can decide which of these five superstrategies to use:

1. Bald on record (without redressive action)
2. Positive politeness
3. Negative politeness
4. Off record politeness
5. Don't do the FTA

(Brown and Levinson 1987, 60).

The above-mentioned superstrategies are ordered according to the estimated risk of face loss from the highest to the lowest. The first three are direct (on-record), whereas the last two are indirect (off-record). To choose the most suitable strategy, the speaker has to assess the risk of the given FTA, which can be calculated with respect to these three components: social distance, power, and rank (Brown and Levinson 1987, 74).

1.2.1 Politeness strategies

1.2.1.1 Bald on record politeness

Bald on record is a strategy for doing acts “in the most direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way possible” (Brown and Levinson 1987, 69). It ignores both the speaker’s and the addressee’s face, for it is used in situations of emergency and desperation, or when the relationship between the interactants is rather close or, on the contrary, asymmetrical (69). In other words, the speaker is behaving slightly impolitely, not trying to minimize the weightiness of the FTA whatsoever, because the situation permits it. The next two superstrategies, positive and negative politeness, are used with redressive action: the intention of lessening the face-threatening aspect.

1.2.1.2 Positive politeness

Positive politeness is “approach-based”: it is used to minimize the distance between interactants within the same social group (Brown and Levinson 1987, 70). This type of politeness is oriented towards the addressee’s positive face by treating him as a valuable member of a group whose wishes are appreciated and shared by the others (70).

Notice, attend to H is a strategy for showing that the speaker acknowledges the addressee’s interests, wants, and changes in appearance (Brown and Levinson 1987, 103). It is also common to exaggerate interest and sympathy with the addressee via prosodic features. *Use of in-group identity markers* is an output strategy comprised of certain address forms, dialects, and slang (107). Typical of positive politeness is to use inclusive *we* form (including *let’s*) and to joke. One can seek agreement by introducing safe topics to the conversation (112) and avoid disagreement by hedging and pseudo-agreements (113-116). It is possible to claim common ground and make the other feel comfortable by presupposing familiarity, or by employing small talk (117).

1.2.1.3 Negative politeness

Negative politeness is, on the contrary, “avoidance-based”: it is used to maintain social distance in asymmetrical relationships (Brown and Levinson 1987, 70). It is oriented towards the addressee’s negative face by appeasing and respecting his freedom of action and wishes to be unimpeded (70).

Characteristic of this superstrategy is the use of honorifics,² hedges,³ which are a principal method of lessening the interactional threats (Brown and Levinson 1987, 146), passive constructions, modal verbs, and pre-sequences so that the speakers can deflect themselves from the act and the addressees are given options (70).

2. Honorifics are understood as “direct grammatical encodings of relative social status between participants” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, 179).

3. “[A] hedge is a particle, word, or phrase that modifies the degree of membership of a predicate or noun phrase in a set” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, 145).

Typical of negative politeness is to be conventionally indirect as in *Can you please pass the salt?* (Brown and Levinson 1987, 133) instead of saying *Give me the salt*. Speakers can also apologize for doing an FTA beforehand and beg forgiveness, as in *Excuse me, but...* (189), or impersonalize utterances by avoiding pronouns *I* and *you*, since *Go* is more polite than *You, go* (191). It is also negatively polite to express indebtedness to the addressee (210).

1.2.1.4 Off record politeness

By performing this superstrategy, the speaker avoids taking the responsibility for the potential FTA and leaves the utterance open to interpretation (Brown and Levinson 1987, 73). Off-record politeness is purposely ambiguous, and it deliberately violates the maxims, which gives rise to conversational implicatures.

The speaker violates the Relevance maxim by giving hints and presupposing. The Quantity maxim is violated when producing tautologies and understating or overstating by using scalar implicatures.⁴ When it comes to violating the Quality maxim, the speaker can use contradictions, metaphors, rhetorical questions, and be ironic. Lastly, off-record strategies violating the Manner maxim are characteristic for their vagueness and ambiguity in a way that the speaker's intentions stay unclear (Brown and Levinson 1987, 225).

1.2.1.5 Don't do the FTA

The final superstrategy poses little or no risk of face loss but is not efficient in reaching one's aims (Brown and Levinson 1987, 72). The speaker's motivation for not choosing the safer off-record strategies at all times is that they are less effective than on-record strategies, which are in turn riskier with regard to face loss and require more time and effort (74).

4. Scalar implicatures are produced by picking a word from the scale of values that is either below or above the actual state of affairs, implying either all the higher or lower values respectively (Brown and Levinson 1987, 217-219).

2 Impoliteness

Leech (2014, 216) mentions four types of phenomena opposite to politeness: nonpoliteness (the lack of politeness), impoliteness (the inverse of politeness), irony (or sarcasm), and banter (both being exploitations of politeness differing in their overt and covert meaning). Evaluating what is impolite seems to be more complex than understanding politeness. Impoliteness can be a desired or even required part of the interaction, it can be a norm in some settings, it can be deliberate or accidental, and it can signal not only hatred or ignorance, but also intimacy. Contextual knowledge is crucial for assessing impoliteness; many factors influence whether the act is perceived as impolite, for example, setting, situation, relationships, and culture.

Leech (2014, 219) notes that impolite behavior has been perceived as marked and salient during research. On the other hand, there are various discourses and settings where impoliteness is presupposed and desirable, as in exploitative TV shows or army training. Various linguists have even described impoliteness as a strategic, systematic, sophisticated, and ubiquitous practice used on a daily basis in various discourses (Culpeper 2011, 6).

Jonathan Culpeper is among those who focused much of their research on impoliteness.⁵ Culpeper (2005, 38) initially defines impoliteness as a communicative behavior characterized by the intentional use of impolite forms and deliberate face-attack. However, Culpeper's understanding of impoliteness has changed over the years from the strategies used to cause "social disruption" (1996, 350) to a broader view that accounts for situational contexts, social norms, and how individuals mediate their identities in interaction, as his extended definition of impoliteness shows (Culpeper 2011, 23):

Impoliteness is a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, desires and/or beliefs about social organisation, including [...] how one person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviours are viewed negatively – considered 'impolite' – when they conflict with how one expects them to be [...]. Such behaviours always have or are presumed to have emotional consequences for at least one participant, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence. Various factors can exacerbate how offensive an impolite behaviour is taken to be, including for example whether one understands a behaviour to be strongly intentional or not.

While impoliteness is often linked to an intentional face-attack, rudeness, on the other hand, is "associated with strong hostile or threatening emotions, especially anger, and ha[s] iconic characteristics close to physical violence, as with the raising of the voice to high pitch (close to yelling, screaming)" (Leech 2014, 232).

5. See, for example, Culpeper 1996, 2005, 2011, 2018, and Culpeper et al. 2003.

By producing an impolite utterance, the speaker does not threaten the hearer's face only, but poses a threat to his face as well, since impolite behavior is usually not tolerated and can lead to a conflict. This notion was scrutinized by Bousfield (2008), who proposed a framework for responses to impoliteness.

Culpeper's model of impoliteness strategies will be the main focus of this chapter, as it will be used for the data analysis later in the thesis. Lachenicht's aggravation framework and Bousfield's findings on strategy mixing will be briefly touched upon as well.

2.1 Lachenicht's aggravation framework

Lachenicht's paper on aggravating language was probably the first study focusing on the opposite of politeness, defining aggravation "as a rational attempt to hurt or damage the addressee" (Lachenicht 1980, 607). His framework is an extension of Brown and Levinson's model and offers four aggravation strategies arranged in order of the potential face-threat as follows:

- (i) Off Record: ambiguous insults, insinuations, hints, and irony. [...]
- (ii) Bald on Record: directly produced FTAs and impositions. [...]
- (iii) Positive aggravation: [...] is designed to show the addressee that he is not approved of, is not esteemed, does not belong, and will not receive cooperation.
- (iv) Negative aggravation: [...] is designed to impose on the addressee, to interfere with his freedom of action, and to attack his social position and the basis of his social action.

(Lachenicht 1980, 619)

Lachenicht (1980, 619) claims that aggravation strategies should be used in accordance with whom the speaker wants to attack: a powerful person will be most likely attacked by off-record means, friends by positive aggravation, and socially distant individuals by negative aggravation.

Unlike Culpeper, Lachenicht does not consider withholding politeness a strategy. On the other hand, he notes that the sub-strategies⁶ may be combined within utterances (Lachenicht 1980, 635). He also argues that "[s]wearing is probably the most common means of wounding someone's sensibilities" (641), and notes that verbal attacks are largely excremental and sexual, but can be also oriented towards the addressee's intelligence and hygiene (642-643).

6. The complete list of Lachenicht's aggravation sub-strategies may be found in Lachenicht 1980, p. 634 (positive aggravation) and p. 658 (negative aggravation).

2.2 Culpeper's notion of impoliteness

2.2.1 *Inherent and mock impoliteness*

Culpeper (1996) first considers inherent and mock impoliteness. Taking the sentence *Do you think you could possibly not pick your nose?* as an example, an inherently impolite act cannot be tempered by any polite beliefs, because its very performance is offensive, as it typically draws attention to the hearer's incompetence or anti-social behavior (Culpeper 1996, 351).

Mock impoliteness, or banter, is only superficially impolite and should not cause offense; on the contrary, it is associated with intimacy and solidarity (Culpeper 1996, 352). According to Leech (2014, 239), banter is achieved by using familiar linguistic forms, nicknames, and swear words by people from the same in-group who treat mutual insults as humorous, while the same realizations would cause serious offense in distant relationships. The relationships of the *South Park* characters have to be considered when analyzing the tokens of impoliteness in the series because, as Leech (1983, 144) points out, the importance of being polite lowers with familiarity.

2.2.2 *Impoliteness strategies*

Unaware of Lachenicht's framework at the time (Bousfield 2008, 83), Culpeper (1996, 356) proposes a parallel structure to Brown and Levinson's model explaining that "[i]nstead of enhancing or supporting face, impoliteness strategies are a means of attacking face". His first model of impoliteness strategies contains these superstrategies (1996, 356-357):

- (1) Bald on record impoliteness – the FTA is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimised. [...]
- (2) Positive impoliteness – the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants.
- (3) Negative impoliteness – the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants.
- (4) Sarcasm or mock politeness – the FTA is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remain surface realisations. [...]
- (5) Withhold politeness – the absence of politeness work where it would be expected.

These strategies are not essentially impolite; they might be appropriate in some situations. Evaluating whether the act is impolite or not always depends on the hearer's interpretation in that specific context. Culpeper (1996, 363) also acknowledges that

paralinguistic and non-verbal features like shouting or avoiding eye contact can intensify impoliteness.

Positive impoliteness and Negative impoliteness are performed via corresponding output strategies for attacking someone's positive and negative face respectively. However, the list of the output strategies is, as Culpeper (1996, 357) puts it, "not exhaustive". In other words, new output strategies can arise in specific contexts and discourses over time. Bousfield (2008, 91) considers the dynamic nature of the model to be its weakness, as it might become rather superfluous if new strategies were to be added constantly.

Culpeper (2005, 36) later suggests a shift from Brown and Levinson's model to Helen Spencer-Oatey's rapport management approach (2002). He also replaces the fourth superstrategy, Sarcasm or mock politeness (from that point on referred to as a meta-strategy), with a new superstrategy (2005, 44):

Off-record impoliteness: the FTA is performed by means of an implicature but in such a way that one attributable intention clearly outweighs any others.

Culpeper later provides examples of the new impoliteness strategies (Culpeper 2011, 256) based on Spencer-Oatey's framework, which not only includes the notion of face but also takes social norms into account (47). Her framework thus seems to be more suitable for the reinvented definition of impoliteness than Brown and Levinson's model.

2.2.2.1 *Bald on record impoliteness*

Unlike Brown and Levinson's Bald on record politeness, which is typically used when face is irrelevant, Culpeper's Bald on record impoliteness directly and unambiguously affects the hearer's face when it is important.

This superstrategy seems a bit problematic, as only one instance of it was said to be found in Culpeper et al.'s research: *[S]hut up and act like a parking attendant* (Culpeper et al. 2003, 1556). Moreover, the line between Bald on record politeness and impoliteness seems quite thin at times. Taking the 2003 example, *Shut up* might be taken as Bald on record politeness in specific contexts. Contemplating Culpeper's definition, the only difference between them would be the importance of face at the moment of utterance. For its unclarity, Bald on record impoliteness will be predictably problematic in the data analysis.

Bousfield (2008, 95) suggests abolishing the positive and negative dichotomy altogether and treating all direct strategies designed to explicitly attack face and deny face wants as Bald on record.

The two following superstrategies, Positive and Negative impoliteness, are represented by open-ended lists of output strategies, some of them being the direct opposites of those from Brown and Levinson's list.⁷

7. For example *Use of in-group identity markers* (Positive politeness) and *Use inappropriate identity markers* (Positive impoliteness).

2.2.2.2 Positive impoliteness

This superstrategy is intended as a deliberate attack on the hearer's positive face, his desire to be appreciated and treated as a group member. Culpeper proposes ten positive impoliteness output strategies:

Ignore, snub the other – fail to acknowledge the other's presence.

Exclude the other from an activity

Disassociate from the other – for example, deny association or common ground with the other; avoid sitting together.

Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic

Use inappropriate identity markers – for example, use title and surname when a close relationship pertains, or a nickname when a distant relationship pertains.

Use obscure or secretive language – for example, mystify the other with jargon, or use a code known to others in the group, but not the target.

Seek disagreement – select a sensitive topic.

Make the other feel uncomfortable – for example, do not avoid silence, joke, or use small talk.

Use taboo words – swear, or use abusive or profane language.

Call the other names – use derogatory nominations.

(Culpeper 1996, 357-358)

The main *South Park* characters are four schoolboys from the same in-group. It is thus highly probable that the threats to positive face will be prevalent among them. For that reason, Positive impoliteness will probably be the most represented impoliteness superstrategy in the data.

Despite Brown and Levinson's resentment towards strategy mixing, output strategies are likely to combine in interaction. According to Culpeper et al. (2003, 1561), the *Use taboo words* strategy seems to combine with other strategies the most. Culpeper (2018, 12) explains that aside from their ability to combine with other strategies, taboo words express the speaker's negative attitude and act as an intensifier when causing offense. Since *South Park* is notorious for its frequent use of profanities, the *Use taboo words* strategy will presumably occur in the data both on its own and in combination with other strategies frequently.

2.2.2.3 Negative impoliteness

This superstrategy is intended as a deliberate attack on the hearer's negative face, his wishes for freedom of action and from imposition. Culpeper proposes five negative impoliteness output strategies:

Frighten – instill a belief that action detrimental to the other will occur.

Condescend, scorn or ridicule – emphasize your relative power. Be contemptuous. Do not treat the other seriously. Belittle the other (e.g. use diminutives).

Invade the other's space – literally (e.g. position yourself closer to the other than the relationship permits) or metaphorically (e.g. ask for or speak about information which is too intimate given the relationship).

Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect – personalize, use the pronouns 'I' and 'you'.

Put the other's indebtedness on record

(Culpeper 1996, 358)

Using these output strategies violates the norm more noticeably than positive impoliteness strategies; these attack the hearer's freedom and disrupt his desired physical and metaphorical distance, which is arguably more serious than not being appreciated.

2.2.2.4 Sarcasm and Off-record impoliteness

Sarcasm (or conversational irony in Leech's terms) is performed by seemingly polite utterances intended to attack one's face. The realizations of such politeness strategies are obviously insincere and give rise to conversational implicatures, which enable the speaker to cause offense indirectly.

Sarcasm is often recognizable by prosodic features like marked intonation and pitch. Culpeper (2011, 174) also refers to verbal formula mismatch being a trigger for sarcasm and supports his claim with a sentence *Could you just fuck off?* which represents a clash between the overt polite meaning and covert impolite meaning co-occurring in the same text. According to Leech (2014, 237), another such trigger is an understatement, which violates the Quantity maxim by providing insufficient conversational contribution.

Leech (2014, 235) notes that sarcasm is often funnier and more entertaining than direct impolite acts, as it not only attacks the hearer but also bolsters the speaker's face. Many TV programs employ sarcasm as a means of entertainment and its use in *South Park* is likely for its humorous effect.

As mentioned in subchapter 2.2.2, the status of this superstrategy was changed in Culpeper's 2005 model to a meta-strategy. Culpeper does not provide his explanation of

the term apart from saying that it means “using politeness for impoliteness” (Culpeper 2005, 42). Assumingly, the “meta-strategic” nature of sarcasm stands for its ability to be present in all the impoliteness superstrategies’ realizations.

The strategy was then replaced by Off-record impoliteness performed via implicatures (by flouting Grice’s maxims). For example, rhetorical questions and metaphors flout the Quality maxim and thus belong to this category (Culpeper 2005, 51). In contrast to sarcasm, off-record impolite acts are not superficially polite. Culpeper (2005, 44) argues that off-record impoliteness should not be taken as less face-threatening than on-record impoliteness, on the contrary, it might be even perceived as more offensive.

2.2.2.5 *Withhold politeness*

As Brown and Levinson (1987, 5) claim that “politeness has to be communicated, and the absence of communicated politeness may [...] be taken as the absence of a polite attitude,” Culpeper (1996, 357) includes a strategy for withholding politeness in his model and explains that the face-attack is in this case realized by not being polite when it is expected, for example, not thanking someone for a gift.

This strategy will predictably be the least used one in the data for its non-humorous nature in most contexts. Its use in interaction does not say much about its interlocutor, except that he is either ill-mannered, ignorant, or lost in his thoughts at the moment. Nevertheless, it can still harm the addressee in a similar fashion as Positive impoliteness would since it can make him feel unappreciated and ignored.

2.3 Bousfield’s contribution to the field

Multiple strategies use proved to be prominent in Culpeper and Bousfield’s data.⁸ Repeating certain strategies or a combination of them can even result in parallelism, as in *what the fuck you doing*⁹ followed by *what are you fucking doing* used for the cumulative effect of strategies to cause more offense (Culpeper et al. 2003, 1561).

As mentioned in subchapter 2.2.2.1, Bousfield calls for a dissolution of the positive/negative dichotomy. To support his claims, he provides an example of a multi-faced FTA: *Derek, I’m really sorry to bother you but I need a little help and advice and I don’t know who else could help* uttered by a student entering his office outside of his office hours (Bousfield 2008, 94). He explains that the majority of utterances might implicate both polarities of face at some point and that positive and negative output strategies tend to be habitually combined in interaction (94). He thus proposes only two superstrategies: On-record impoliteness comprising all direct impolite acts and Off-record impoliteness covering strategies performed indirectly via

8. At the time, Jonathan Culpeper was a lecturer and Derek Bousfield was a PhD student and a teaching assistant in the Department of Linguistics and Modern English Language at Lancaster University, UK.

9. *Challenge* (multi-faced) with *Use taboo words* (positive impoliteness).

implicature, sarcasm, and withholding politeness (95). However, this simplified model does not grant mutual exclusivity either, as several FTAs within a discourse might be a mixture of on/off-record (im)polite realizations (96).

Bousfield (2008, 126-132) also proposes new impoliteness strategies which were recurrent in his data, despite being absent from Culpeper's model:

1. *Criticise* – dispraise h, some action or inaction by h, or some entity in which h has invested face
2. *Hinder/block* – physically (block passage), communicatively (deny turn, interrupt)
3. *Enforce role shift* – by forcing the intended recipient out of one social and/or discursal role and into another
4. *Challenge* – ask h a challenging question, question h's position, stance, beliefs, assumed power, rights, obligations, ethics, etc.

Bousfield (2008) explains that if he were to use Culpeper's model, *Criticise* would be a positive impoliteness strategy (126), whereas *Hinder/block* and *Enforce role shift* would be treated as negative impoliteness strategies (131). *Challenge* would be a multi-faced strategy because it is both used to elicit a self-damaging reaction and to criticize the hearer (132-133).

Unlike Culpeper, Lachenicht (1980, 634 and 658) includes some of these strategies in his framework and considers challenging questions to be a big part of negative aggravation.

Since the research on impoliteness was insufficient concerning the reactions of the recipients (Culpeper et al. 2003, 1562), Bousfield considered this issue in his research as well.¹⁰ To briefly summarize his findings (1562-1568), the recipient of the impoliteness act can either respond to it or not. If he decides to respond, he can accept the FTA by apologizing or assuming responsibility, or counter it with offensive or defensive strategies. Offensive strategies are used to attack the other's face, whereas defensive strategies are used to defend one's face via face-saving acts like explaining, pleading, or opting out.

10. See Culpeper et al. 2003, 1562-1568, and Bousfield 2008, 187-206.

3 Impoliteness in Television

As the animated TV series *South Park* was chosen to supply data for this case study, it is crucial to discuss the genre of situation comedy and its humorous nature, which is sometimes built on impoliteness. This chapter will also introduce this specific show and provide reasons why its content is “meaning-bearing, complex, socially significant, and worthy of analysis” (Weinstock 2008, 6).

One of the definitions of humor says that it is “something that makes a person laugh or smile” (Ross 1998, 1). Humor can be achieved diversely since it is dependent on personal taste and both situational and linguistic context. There are thus at least two things humor has in common with impoliteness: The context is a crucial element for humor, as it hinges on the setting, culture, attitude, and intentions of the interactants (2), and it can be used as a form of attack (61).

Leech (2014, 220) acknowledges that impoliteness can be very amusing to watch, which inevitably results in many exploitative and crude TV programs being made. Leech (2014, 224) also notes that certain TV activity types are pervasively impolite.¹¹ Culpeper (2005, 45) argues that there is a connection between impoliteness and entertainment and proposes factors explaining why: the intrinsic and voyeuristic pleasure, and because the audience is superior and safe. In other words, watchers enjoy impoliteness and underlying violence for the thrill and because seeing someone more unfortunate makes them feel better.

3.1 Situation comedy

Sitcoms are characterized by a range of distinctive character types who interact and clash with each other in everyday situations (Ross 1998, 92). Situation comedies may be also defined by their structure, length, and setting. Their main purpose is to amuse watchers with jokes, puns, and extreme scenarios. The constructed interactions between the fictitious personalities are expectably exaggerated in comparison to the real-life ones, for all the reactions are written by screenwriters.

This very nature of the genre permitted and thrived on portraying impolite behavior; some of the popular situation comedies of the 1980s and 1990s reveled in taboo topics, offensive attitudes, behavior, and language (Tueth 2005, 26). Tueth (26) continues by stating that the looser TV regulations “ha[ve] resulted in bold new comedy that dares to offend, transgressive comedy that revels in shock and tastelessness.” One example of such offensive comedy designed to shock the viewers and push the boundaries is none other than Comedy Central’s biggest success, *South Park*, which has been broadcasted since 1997.

11. For example, *Pop Idol* (Culpeper 2011), *The Weakest Link* (Culpeper 2005), and *The Clampers* (Culpeper et al. 2003) have been all used as data for research on impoliteness.

Taboo words are used in various discourses for their directness and immediate response, which is often laughter (Ross 1998, 63). According to Ross (63-68), some of the common taboo areas that make people laugh are sex and excreta, death, and religion. *South Park* employs these taboos (among others) on an episode basis. Undoubtedly, situation comedies provide data worth investigating in terms of impoliteness, with *South Park* being one of the most offensive ones.

3.2 South Park

South Park creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone met at the University of Colorado and later relocated to Los Angeles to pursue a career in the movie industry; upon making a sketch series *The Spirit of Christmas* (1995), which featured the four main *South Park* characters: Eric, Stan, Kyle, and Kenny, they eventually decided to sign with Comedy Central TV Network to produce a cartoon series (Weinstock 2008, 148-149).

South Park premiered on August 13, 1997, with the episode “Cartman Gets an Anal Probe”, warranting the first TV-MA¹² rating for a television cartoon (Weinstock 2008, 7). *South Park* soon became notorious for being crude, offensive, and potentially dangerous (113). On the other hand, its creators reckon on the watchers’ background knowledge and presume that they are mature and aware of all the presented stereotypes.

Impoliteness in this series is not only intratextual (between the characters on-screen), but also extratextual (between the show’s creators and its watchers). Weinstock (2008, 13) refers to the phenomenon of “inclusivity via mockery”: an all-or-nothing approach embodying that “either everything is available for mockery or nothing is.” Viewers are thus permitted to laugh at the politically incorrect humor the show provides knowing that nobody and nothing is safe from being ridiculed. Weinstock (99) explains that “its [*South Park*’s] humor is generated by saying what you are not supposed to say”.

South Park is notoriously known for its excessive use of profanities. In the episode “It Hits the Fan”, the variants of the word *shit* occurred uncensored 162 times (Weinstock 2008, 11), and the feature film *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut* (1999) has a record in the *2001 Guinness Book of World Records* for containing the most swear words in an animated film with 399 profanities and 128 offensive gestures (Thompson 2014, 257). According to Weinstock (2008, 11), *South Park* even contributed to the looser regulations that govern cable television programming.

As of this writing, *South Park* has surpassed the number of 315 episodes and is currently in its 25th season after 25 years of continuous broadcast. Parker and Stone have written and directed all the episodes since then, and even voiced the major characters throughout. Thanks to the show’s simple animations, usage of cutouts, and a six-day production schedule, the creators are able to address current events in society

12. Content for mature audiences.

and respond to them almost immediately, allowing *South Park* to achieve a level of topicality and immediacy similar to a newscast (Weinstock 2008, 14).

Although *South Park* was regarded as an influential and offensive show already at the time of its premiere in 1997, the show was still underdeveloped, and the creators were inexperienced; the humor was juvenile and simple, being based primarily on excessive swearing, running gags, and catchphrases. It is expected that the data analysis will support this claim.

Over the 25 years, the show has evolved into a sophisticated satirical show which provides a biting social commentary and reacts to current topics predominantly relevant to the viewers from the USA. Considering that Parker and Stone's writing skills must have developed over time, it is likely that the employed impoliteness strategies will be more equally distributed throughout the recent episodes to avoid repetition and simplicity of depending solely on taboo words as a way of attracting and retaining viewers.

4 Methodology

For the analysis of impoliteness strategies use in the animated sitcom *South Park*, Culpeper's model from 2005 was chosen because it accounts for more means of a face-attack. Instances of the five superstrategies, positive and negative impoliteness output strategies, the Sarcasm meta-strategy, and the strategies proposed by Bousfield will be recorded. Data will be collected by analyzing the transcripts¹³ of the four oldest (1st season, 1997) and four recent¹⁴ (23rd season, 2019) *South Park* episodes upon watching them. The corpus of the transcribed dialogues containing all the found occurrences will be supplied with the thesis.

All utterances or actions which were intentionally face-attacking or caused offense will be regarded as an impoliteness strategy, which corresponds to Culpeper's definition of impoliteness provided with the reinvented model in 2005. The strategies will be classified in accordance with their definitions from Culpeper 1996 and 2005. The use of the individual strategies within the transcribed dialogues will be highlighted in bold. The context of the unit under analysis will be provided in brackets.

The research questions are whether the oldest and the recent *South Park* episodes differ with respect to impoliteness strategies use¹⁵ and which strategies combine with the *Use taboo words* output strategy the most in these episodes, as it is assumed to be the most common strategy to be combined. Thus, apart from classifying the tokens of impoliteness strategies, the focus will be also on the output strategies and their combinations.

The hypotheses were that the impoliteness strategies would be distributed more or less equally in the recent and thus more developed episodes, Positive impoliteness would be pervasive in the first season with *Use taboo words* being one of the most frequent output strategies, and that Withhold politeness would be the least represented superstrategy in the data, as its use is hardly ever humorous. The applicability of Culpeper's model will be critically evaluated as well.

13. The transcripts can be accessed from <https://southpark.fandom.com/wiki/Portal:Scripts>. They were modified only if they contained typographical errors or if there were discrepancies in the form of the explanatory notes provided in square brackets.

14. The 23rd season is the most recent complete season containing several episodes. The 24th season (2020) consisted of four episodes only and the 25th season (2022) started to air amid writing this thesis.

15. The significance tests will be carried out via the Corpus Frequency Test Wizard available at <http://sigil.collocations.de/wizard.html>.

5 Analysis

In the eight *South Park* episodes under analysis, 645 occurrences of impoliteness strategies have been found in total. Their distribution may be seen in Table 1.

	On-record	Positive	Negative	Off-record	Withhold politeness	Sarcasm	Bousfield's strategies	Total
The oldest episodes (S01E01-04)	19	163	44	38	7	38	80	389
The recent episodes (S23E01-04)	11	67	26	53	6	16	77	256

Table 1: Impoliteness superstrategies and Bousfield's strategies use in the oldest and the recent *South Park* episodes

5.1 Bald on record impoliteness

It was expected that this superstrategy would be hard to classify for its unclarity and only a few documented examples in Culpeper's and Bousfield's data. Luckily, this show provided face-threatening imperatives such as *shut up*, *fuck you*, *screw you*, and others, which are patently tokens of on-record impoliteness, for they all were performed directly and clearly when face was relevant.

- (1) (Cartman is telling a story about "Scuzzlebutt", the creature who lives in the forest, weaves baskets, and has a celery hand. Suddenly the nearby volcano rumbles.)

Kyle: What is that?

Stan: Maybe it's Scuzzlebutt coming to weave us into wicker baskets.

Cartman: Hey, it might be!

Kyle: Gosh, I hope he doesn't cut me with his celery hand.

[the others laugh]

Cartman: **Screw you guys! Go to hell!**

(S01E03)

In example (1), the boys mock Cartman for telling them a ridiculous story by being sarcastic. This poses a threat to Cartman's face because he is being criticized off-record. He even tries to defend himself at first, but when Kyle joins Stan, he opts to offend the boys on-record instead with an unambiguous FTA, which was further intensified by the repetition of the same strategy.

- (2) (The local rancher is angry at Randy for producing popular plant-based burgers and putting his cow farm out of business as a result.)

Rancher: I got 300 cows that the world suddenly decided they got no use fer! What am I supposed to do with them?! Put them in a zoo?! What they gonna do now? Go start some cow circus?! Go make some cow TV show?! You are single-handedly making cows extinct! You got a plan for ‘em all? Fine! Come on! [cows emerge from the field and gather outside the front door] Come on! Yeah, come on! Mr. Plant-based Burgers here is gonna take care of you now! Yeah, don’t worry. He cares about the environment, so he could figure out what to do with you.

Randy: Uh ho, hehey, **fuck you!**

Rancher: No, **fuck you**, sumbitch! They’re your problem now!

(S23E04)

Example (2) shows the use of this superstrategy by adults. The rancher first questions Randy’s stance and criticizes him. He is also sarcastic throughout, which only intensifies the caused offense, and he does not give Randy a chance to defend himself. Randy’s face is obviously at stake, so he reacts with a clear on-record FTA. The rancher, however, reacts in the same manner and moreover uses a derogatory nomination. Bald on record impoliteness has combined exclusively with positive impoliteness output strategies in the data, predominantly with *Call the other names* for intensifying offense.

The difference between the oldest and the recent episodes regarding the use of this superstrategy was insignificant, in fact, the figures were almost the same: 4.9% and 4.3% respectively. Nevertheless, one difference was found. In the oldest episodes, the predominant on-record FTA was *shut up*, whereas in the recent episodes it was *fuck you*. The latter is indisputably more offensive than the former, which means that a tendency to cause more offense on-record over time may be observed.

5.2 Positive impoliteness

Positive impoliteness was the most frequently used superstrategy in the sample. Taking *South Park’s* nature into account, this fact is not surprising. The data analysis moreover supported the hypothesis; its use was indeed significantly higher in the oldest episodes (41.9%) than in the recent episodes (26.2%). As expected, the constituent output strategies were spread more equally in the recent episodes than in the oldest ones, showing more variety of means of a face-attack with time to engage more viewers. The figures depicting the distribution of the individual positive impoliteness output strategies may be found in Appendix.

5.2.1 *Ignore, snub the other*

Failing to acknowledge the other person is positively impolite since it attacks his desire to be appreciated and treated as a group member. Situations in which the speaker completely snubs someone else, opts out from the conversation, or does not react despite being explicitly addressed were taken as examples of this strategy. It was one of the least common positive impoliteness strategies.

- (3) (Stan's uncle Jimbo and his friend Ned are about to take the boys hunting. Liane Cartman is getting her son ready for the trip while the others sit in Jimbo's car.)

Liane: Here hon, I packed you some cheesy poofs and happy tarts.

Jimbo: Don't worry Mrs. Cartman, we'll take good care of him. I brought my old war buddy Ned to keep things safe.

Ned: Hello, Mrs. Cartman. How are you today?

Liane: **Be sure to use lots of bug spray, and if you have to poo-poo, don't wipe with poison ivy.**

(S01E03)

In example (3), Liane Cartman snubs both Jimbo and Ned, who not only addressed her but also asked her a question, by talking to her son only. She threatened their positive face with her behavior and possibly disrupted their authority in front of the boys, who were expected to obey them on the trip. Her utterance may be also taken as an example of Withhold politeness for failing to communicate politeness by not reciprocating Ned's greetings or as the *Make the other feel uncomfortable* output strategy for avoiding small talk. Unfortunately, Culpeper's definitions of the individual strategies are not clear enough to classify all the FTAs found in the data indisputably.

5.2.2 *Exclude the other from an activity*

Positive face can be described as one's desire to be accepted and included in the activities the group partakes in. Denying someone this option is thus a case of Positive impoliteness. This output strategy has been found in the oldest episodes only, being one of the least used positive impoliteness strategies overall.

- (4) (Stan is aiming to shoot an animal to please his uncle Jimbo, despite being against the idea.)

Stan: Ah, damn it, I can't do it!

[Jimbo swats Stan behind the head]

Jimbo: You pansy! **Give me that gun.**

(S01E03)

Jimbo's utterance in example (4) represents a threat to Stan's positive face by using two positive impoliteness strategies in succession. Stan's uncle Jimbo showed his disapproval of him non-verbally by swatting Stan and also verbally by calling him a *pansy*. Jimbo then excluded Stan from the activity by ordering him to return the gun, since hunting is nearly impossible without one.

5.2.3 *Disassociate from the other*

Another way of attacking someone's positive face is by denying association with him either verbally or by avoiding him. It was the only positive impoliteness output strategy with a significant difference in use between the oldest and the recent episodes, where it was more common.

In the following example, Cartman "disowns" his mother and urges her to live somewhere else, by which he expresses his desire not to be associated with her anymore:

(5) (Cartman is angry at his mother Liane for trying to vaccinate him in his sleep.)

Cartman: **This is goodbye, mom! I can't live with you anymore!**

...

Liane: Sweetie, you can't live on your own.

Cartman: That isn't gonna work this time, Mom! **I don't want to be around you anymore!** [marches over to the front door and opens it] So I don't know where you're gonna stay, but you'll just have to figure it out! I've already packed your things.

(S23E03)

Cartman's utterances in example (5) are not impolite for their use of *Disassociate from the other* strategy only, but also because Cartman ridicules Liane by ordering her out of her own house, which harms her negative face – her desire not to be imposed upon. He does not allow her to defend herself, which only emphasizes his relative power as he assumes that her obeying him is not controversial.

5.2.4 *Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic*

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, 103), the main mechanism of positive politeness strategies is showing interest and approval to the hearer. This strategy aims to do the exact opposite. Quite surprisingly, it was the predominant positive impoliteness output strategy in the recent episodes sample. Cases in which the speaker did not share the hearer's concerns and beliefs, did not show him interest and sympathy, or was reluctant to help him were all taken as examples of this output strategy.

(6) (Kyle begs Stan to help him find his little brother Ike upon Kenny's demise.)

Kyle: You're all I have left, Stan.

Stan: **Sorry, dude. I gotta go meet Wendy Testaburger.**

Kyle: You can't! Poor Ike must be so scared, up there all alone. You gotta help me, dude!

Stan: **Dude, like Chef says, I've gotta get a piece of lovin' while the gettin's hot. [he hurries away]**

(S01E01)

In example (6), Stan shows no sympathy and opts to go on a date with Wendy instead, which threatens Kyle's positive face, for his desire to be accepted and have his concerns or opinions shared by the others is not fulfilled.

However, Kyle is impolite too since he is attacking Stan's negative face – his desire not to be imposed upon – by insisting on him. Instances of such a strategy have been found in the data despite being absent from Culpeper's model.

5.2.5 Use inappropriate identity markers

The essence of this output strategy is either using titles and surnames when addressing close individuals or using nicknames for distant individuals. It was one of the less common strategies in the sample and appeared difficult to classify, as other output strategies dealing with addressing forms also seemed to be an option in some cases. Examples in which the addressing forms seemed inappropriate or surprising given the relationship of the interactants were regarded as tokens of this strategy.

(7) (The mayor's assistant Johnson corrected her in front of her guests already once that day for mistaking a geologist for a gynecologist.)

Mayor McDaniels: Just send in the geometrist.

Johnson: Geologist...

Mayor McDaniels: You are fired, **buddy!**

(S01E02)

Johnson insults the mayor by pointing out her mistake once more in example (7). This poses a serious threat to the mayor's face since she is a person of a certain status and wants to sustain her image in front of the guests. She uses an offensive strategy to counter the attack and emphasizes her power by making Johnson redundant and calling him a *buddy*, which is an inappropriate identity marker given that their relationship is asymmetrical.

However, her utterance could be also regarded as *Condescend, scorn or ridicule* negative impoliteness strategy for belittling Johnson by emphasizing her power. This shows that the line between the individual strategies, as well as face orientation, is

sometimes thin and that the classification of strategies tends to be subjective and complex at times because of the way they were defined in Culpeper's work.

5.2.6 Use obscure or secretive language

This positive impoliteness output strategy was the least used one in the sample. Only two instances of someone mystifying the other with jargon have been found, both being interactions between Stan and the school bus driver Ms. Crabtree in the very first episode of the show.

(8) (Stan and Kyle are standing on the seats to have a better view.)

Ms. Crabtree: SIT DOWN BACK THERE! AAAAAAH!

Stan: Yeah, whatever, ya fat bitch.

Ms. Crabtree: WHAT DID YOU SAY?

Stan: **I said I have a bad itch.**

Ms. Crabtree: [calmly] Oh.

(S01E01)

Stan mystifying Ms. Crabtree to make her think that she just misheard him is one of the show's running gags. In example (8), Ms. Crabtree emphasizes her relative power by ordering the boys to sit down to which Stan responds with a sarcastic remark and uses a derogatory term. Upon being challenged by her, Stan mystifies her with an obscure statement to ridicule her in front of the kids and to save his face.

5.2.7 Seek disagreement

Although this was not explicitly stated in Culpeper's 1996 paper, it is supposed that *Seek disagreement* is a reversal of two positive politeness strategies from Brown and Levinson (1987): *Seek agreement* and *Avoid disagreement*. To do their opposite, one can either select an unsafe topic of conversation or explicitly disagree with the hearer to attack his desire to be appreciated. Both variants have been found in the data. This strategy represented 21.3% of Positive impoliteness overall.

(9) (Liane visits Randy after an argument with her son Eric. Randy is dealing with some family issues as well.)

Randy: And I get it from both sides, because my family's pissed off at me too.

Liane: ...I understand.

Randy: **No, you don't!**

Liane: Yes, I do.

Randy: [garbled] **No, you don't! Nobody understands.**

(S23E03)

Randy's reactions in example (9) are impolite because he does not try to mitigate his disagreement and somehow belittles Liane's problems by saying that she does not understand his, which patently attacks her positive face. By repeating the same strategy, he intensifies the caused offense and attacks her defense. The following example (10) illustrates introducing a sensitive topic to the conversation:

(10) (The boys mock Cartman upon hearing his mother talking to him.)

Kyle: [in a slight falsetto] Don't get scared up in the mountains Cartman.

Cartman: Shut up, I'm not scared of nothing.

Stan: **Maybe your mom can give me a kiss too, Cartman.**

Kenny: **Maybe she'll suck my dick.**

Jimbo: Oh, ho, that's disgusting.

Cartman: You piece of crap, I'll kill you!

(S01E03)

The boys tease Cartman by imitating his mother and sexualizing her. This topic of conversation caused a serious offense to Cartman, which is proved by his rapid reaction. To counter the attack, he chose a combination of offensive strategies consisting of positive impoliteness strategy *Call the other names* and negative impoliteness strategy *Frighten*, which contradicts Brown and Levinson's claims about the mutual exclusivity of acts oriented to positive and negative face.

5.2.8 Make the other feel uncomfortable

According to Brown and Levinson (1987, 117), one can please the hearer's positive face by employing small talk and filling the silence. This impoliteness strategy was designed to attack someone's desire to be accepted by refusing to partake in such habitual practices of a smooth conversation. It was one of the least represented strategies in the data, but it is important to mention that classifying this strategy was hard, for its features are similar to those of Withhold politeness.

(11) (Cartman comes back to school after suffering a heart attack. Unbeknownst to him, the meat served in the cafeteria is now plant-based. The others are worried about his reaction.)

[Cartman enters the cafeteria using a walker. He's in his hospital gown.

He sees all the other students staring at him.]

Cartman: [walks past Mr. Mackey] Mr. Mackey.

Mr. Mackey: [**nervously**] **Wuhuhuhu... hello, Eric.**

Cartman: What's goin' on, Butters? It's taco Tuesday.

Butters: [weakly] **It's taco Tuesday...** [Turns and walks forward. He gets his lunch, looks back at Eric, and heads for the boys' table.]

...

[Cartman joins the other boys at the table. **He looks around and the other students turn back to their meals. Nobody is talking.**]

(S23E04)

Discomfort lingers throughout the whole interaction featured in example (11). Despite Cartman's return to school, no one shows interest in him or tries to make him feel comfortable. The others just stare at him, they do not try to fill the awkward silence, nor do they initiate small talk, and they respond rather vaguely when addressed. Although these actions were not intentionally face-attacking, they were taken as an absence of formal polite behavior by Cartman and possibly made him feel uneasy.

5.2.9 Use taboo words

Even though there were many instances of swearing and profane language in the data, only cases in which the speaker communicated an intentional face-attack and/or the hearer took offense were taken as examples of this strategy. Many *South Park* characters are inherently foul-mouthed, but that does not necessarily make them impolite, as impoliteness is sensitive to context.

It was predicted that *Use taboo words* would be the most frequent strategy in the data, but it came second after *Call the other names*. Although it was one of the most represented strategies in both the oldest and the recent episodes, it surprisingly was not the dominant one in either sample. Its use in the oldest episodes was higher but the difference was not significant.

According to Culpeper et al. (2003, 1561), this strategy seems to combine with other strategies the most. This claim was supported by the data, as it was combined in 67.4% of cases, which was the highest figure among the strategies. It was combined with various strategies of both polarities of face, for example with Bousfield's strategies *Challenge* and *Criticise*, with *Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect*, or with *Call the other names*.

(12) (Mickey Mouse is frantic upon finding out that someone from his company has criticized the Chinese government.)

Thor: Well, it is true, sir. The Chinese seem to exploit their own people in forced labor cam-

Mickey: SHUT THE **FUCK** UP, THOR! You're here to flex and not speak, you **fucking** bitch!

(S23E02)

In example (12), Mickey Mouse uses the taboo word *fuck* as an intensifier twice. He is impolite on-record by urging Thor to stop talking, denies him his turn, ridicules him by reminding him what his place in the company is, and uses a derogatory nomination when addressing him. Even that alone makes Mickey's utterance indisputably face-attacking but the above-mentioned taboo word further intensifies its impolite force. Probably the crudest FTA in the data was the one illustrated in example (13):

(13) (Not even Kyle's emotional monologue convinced the aliens to give his little brother back, which makes him furious.)

Kyle: Hey, you scrawny-eyed shits, what the **fuck** is wrong with you?! You must be some kind of **fucking** asshole to be able to ignore a crying child!

Stan: Whoa, dude!

Kyle: You know what you fuckers like? You like to **fuck**! And **shit**! And **fuck**! And **fuck**! And **fuck**!

(S01E01)

Kyle combines and repeats various positive impoliteness strategies and Bousfield's strategies for their cumulative effect to cause more offense. He uses the taboo word *fuck* as an intensifier, adjective, verb, and derogatory name. The two last functions are also carried by another taboo word, *shit*. The combination of taboo words with challenging questions was the most frequent in the data. All the found counterparts of this strategy may be seen in Table 2 in chapter 5.8.

5.2.10 *Call the other names*

Using a derogatory nomination when addressing someone is the exact opposite of showing him appreciation and acceptance.¹⁶ Derogatory nominations used among either distant or close individuals seeking to attack the other's face were taken as examples of this output strategy, which was the most common positive impoliteness strategy in the data overall and the second most combined one.

Interestingly, it combined the most with other superstrategies (Bald on record, Sarcasm) and not as much with other output strategies, in which case positive impoliteness strategies were more common. All the found counterparts of this strategy may be seen in Table 2 in chapter 5.8.

Even though its use in the oldest episodes was higher, the difference was not significant. Some of the offensive names used in the oldest episodes were quite original, while those in the recent episodes were usually the more traditional ones.

16. Unless the relationship is close enough to classify it as banter, in which case derogatory nominations can mark solidarity between the interactants.

(14) (Kyle's brother Ike is following the boys to school.)

Kyle: Ike, you can't come to school with me.

Cartman: Yeah, go home **you little dildo!**

...

(15) (Kyle is using Cartman's ear to communicate with the aliens.)

Kyle: -bring me back my little brother, God damnit!

Cartman: Ow! That hurts, **you buttlicker!**

(S01E01)

Both of the derogatory nominations used in the examples above were intentionally face-threatening. Cartman shows his disdain towards Ike by belittling him and using a nontraditional derogatory name in (14) and communicates his disapproval of Kyle's actions by using an offensive address form in (15). The same strategy was also used in the following example, which was taken from the recent episode:

(16) (The local rancher comes to Randy's farm to confront him.)

Rancher: What'r you doin' you **sonofabitch?**

Randy: Excuse me?

Rancher: I'm the biggest cattle rancher in South Park. I made ma livin' 62-odd years before you fancy plant growers done showed up and put me out of a job!

Randy: Well I'm sorry, **Mr. Cow Killer**, but this is called "evolution".

(S23E04)

The rancher begins the whole conversation on an impolite note by questioning Randy's stance and using a common offensive term to attack his positive face. Then he goes on to insult Randy's business practices off-record. Randy counters the attack by being sarcastic and calling the rancher *Mr. Cow Killer* to attack his ethics in response.

5.3 Negative impoliteness

There were no significant differences in the use of Negative impoliteness as a whole between the oldest and the recent episodes, on the contrary, the figures were almost the same: 11.3% and 10.2% respectively. The constituent output strategies, however, seem to be spread more equally in the recent episodes than in the older episodes.

5.3.1 *Frighten*

Frighten was one of the most common negative impoliteness strategies. This strategy attacks the hearer's negative face by stating that something harmful will happen to him.

- (17) (Stan does not want to shoot animals during a hunting trip. His uncle reprimands him for this in front of the boys and Cartman joins in.)

Cartman: Yeah hippie, go back to Woodstock if you can't shoot anything.

Stan: **I can shoot you, fat ass!**

Cartman: **I can shoot you too!**

Stan: **I'll kill you!**

Cartman: **I'll fill you full of lead!**

(S01E03)

Cartman threatens Stan's positive face at first by excluding him from the activity in example (17). Stan responds with a combination of offensive strategies with opposite polarities, attacking Cartman's desire to be appreciated by calling him a *fat ass* and also his freedom by threatening him. The same strategy is repeated by them both to intensify caused offense. Example (18) was taken from an interaction between adults:

- (18) (Randy visits Stephen to sell him "Tegridy weed" from his farm only to find out that both Stephen and Mr. Mackey prefer to grow their own marihuana now.)

Randy: [sticks up both middle fingers to Stephen and Mr. Mackey] **FUCK YOU GUYS!** [turns to Stephen] **I'll get you for this, Stephen! You mess with my Tegridy, and I'm gonna mess with you!** [leaves the yard]

(S23E01)

Randy feels like his business, in which he invested face, might be at risk because of the home-growers and gets angry. He is impolite on-record at first but then resorts to threatening Stephen, which attacks his negative face. Randy leaves before anyone can react to his outburst of anger. The overall impoliteness of the FTA is intensified by paralinguistic and non-verbal features such as yelling, glaring, and using offensive gestures.

Frighten has been found in combinations exclusively with positive impoliteness strategies in the sample, which again confirms that an FTA can be oriented to both positive and negative face at once.

5.3.2 *Condescend, scorn or ridicule*

Condescend, scorn or ridicule was the most commonly used negative impoliteness strategy in the data. Typical of this strategy is to be contemptuous and emphasize one's relative power, as shown in example (19):

- (19) (Johnson, the assistant, is talking to the mayor via intercom while she is having guests in her office.)

Johnson: Mayor, the geologist is here to see you.

Mayor McDaniels: My geologist? Now? Tell him the infection is fine and I don't need another check-up.

Johnson: No mayor, that's a gynecologist. A geologist studies the earth.

Mayor McDaniels: Don't you think I know that? **How dare you insult my intellect, I went to Princeton for God's sake! You get out of my office!**

(S01E03)

Johnson insults the mayor off-record by pointing out her mistake, which poses a threat to her face, given that her guests are listening to their interaction. To counter the attack, the mayor questions Johnson's beliefs and ridicules him by stressing her higher social rank. To emphasize her power, she orders him to leave, using the pronoun *you* to boost the impolite force of the imperative. Not treating the other seriously is also characteristic of this strategy, which is illustrated in example (20):

- (20) (Farmer Carl is informing the officer Barbrady that something strange is happening in South Park.)

Farmer Carl: People been saying they've been seeing UFOs around.

Officer Barbrady: **UFOs? [laughs]**

Farmer Carl: Yeah, and black army CIA helicopters and trucks.

Officer Barbrady: **That is the silliest thing I've ever heard.**

(S01E01)

Officer Barbrady ridicules Carl twice by mocking him for his beliefs. He even laughs and uses the modifier *silly* to further accentuate his dissent and intensify the face-attack. When using this output strategy, one can also belittle the other by using diminutives, as example (21) shows:

- (21) (Mr. Garrison is planning to shoot his childhood enemy Kathie Lee Gifford, who is in the bulletproof protective bubble.)

Mr. Garrison: Come on you **little bitch**. You got to come out of your precious bubble sooner or later, **missy**.

(S01E02)

Not only does Mr. Garrison use the derogatory term *bitch*, but he also adds the modifier *little* and later addresses Kathie *missy* to indicate his disdain for her.

5.3.3 *Invade the other's place*

The cases of attacking someone's freedom by invading his space both literally and metaphorically have been found in the sample. The latter variant was more common in the data and is featured in example (22), in which Kenny asks an intimate question given the relationship of the interactants.

(22) (Chef was asked to sing at the ceremony, which Kathie Lee Gifford will attend as a special guest. The boys are curious if he will accept the request.)

Chef: Of course! Kathie Lee is a beautiful, sultry queen of sexual fantasy. And if I sing to her, maybe I can lure her into a night of exotic delectation.

Stan: Yeah, that'd be cool.

Kenny: **How big's your penis, Chef?**

Chef: Well, three times bigger than Frank Gifford's, anyway. [he giggles, somewhat embarrassed]

(S01E02)

Even though Chef is not portrayed as an authoritative figure in the series, it is inappropriate of Kenny to ask him such a question, given that the relationship is still asymmetrical. The uttered intimate question threatens Chef's negative face and makes him uncomfortable.

5.3.4 *Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect*

This output strategy is the opposite of the negative politeness strategy *Impersonalize*, since adding the pronouns *I* and *you* when producing an utterance, especially an imperative, makes it somewhat impolite.

Out of all the negative impoliteness output strategies, this one seems to combine with other strategies the most. It was combined mostly with *Use taboo words* positive impoliteness strategy, further proving that acts oriented to someone's positive and negative face at once are not only possible but also common.

(23) (Kyle is asking his teacher to be excused from class. The teacher insists him on asking his puppet "Mr. Hat" instead.)

Kyle: Mr. Hat, may I please be excused from class?

Mr. Hat: Well, Kyle, NO!! **You hear me?! You go to hell! You go to hell and you die!**

(S01E01)

The above-mentioned negative impoliteness strategy combines with Bald on record impoliteness in example (23). Adding the pronoun *you* before the on-record imperatives typically intensifies their impolite force, and so does the repetition of this combination. Example (24) features a combination of this strategy with *Use taboo words*, as the cook uses a vulgar alternative to the verb *complain* to boost the overall force of the FTA:

(24) (The boys are not happy upon finding out that they have fish for lunch instead of their favorite sandwich and complain.)

Butters: But, but this is Sloppy Joe day.

Cook: Yeah? Well, the menu's been changed. We had kids complainin' our food wasn't healthy or sustainable enough, so **don't you start bitchin'** about it now.

(S23E04)

5.3.5 *Put the other's indebtedness on record*

Disclaiming any indebtedness of the hearer is said to be negatively polite. This negative impoliteness strategy aiming to do the exact opposite was the least used one in the sample. Only two instances of its use were found in one recent episode.

(25) (Cartman calls Kyle by phone upon finding out that it is possible to report any family to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.)

Cartman: I want you to apologize for every time you've been a dick to me, Kyle.

Kyle: Fuck you.

Cartman: Oh! Are you sure you don't want to take that back? Uh-okay Kyle. **Just remember, I gave you a chance.** [the doorbell rings, the ICE officers enter]

(S23E01)

Cartman first imposes on Kyle to apologize alongside using pronouns *I* and *you* to attack his negative face in example (25). Cartman also uses a derogatory name, which in contrast attacks Kyle's positive face. Kyle responds with a clear, on-record FTA. Cartman questions his stance with a multi-faced challenging question and mentions that Kyle should be indebted to him because he gave him a chance to ponder over that decision again. This act once again attacks Kyle's negative face.

5.4 Off-record impoliteness

Off-record impoliteness is another superstrategy with a significantly different use in the oldest and the recent *South Park* episodes. It has been used more often in the recent episodes, where it represented 20.7% of all impolite acts. Its use was in general higher than that of its predecessor, Sarcasm or mock politeness. This means that the changes made in Culpeper's 2005 model were beneficial for the analysis of impoliteness, as the newer model caters to more ways of communicating a face-attack. Unlike sarcastic utterances, off-record impolite acts are not superficially polite.

This superstrategy is executed by flouting Grice's maxims. For example, metaphors and rhetorical questions flout the Quality maxim and can be thus taken as instances of Off-record impoliteness, as illustrated in example (26):

(26) (The producer is expressing interest in collaborating with Stan's band.)

Stan: You wanna sign us so we can make a record and I can move away from here?

Producer: Records? **What, are you, kids, from the 90s!?** There's no money in albums or singles or even tours anymore.

(S23E02)

No one expects an answer to the producer's rhetorical question, and it is evident that the children were not born in the 1990s. His utterance is obviously untrue, and its only aim is to attack the boys' faces by off-record means to point out that they are lagging behind current trends. Another maxim to be frequently flouted in the sample was Manner. Example (27) features Kyle producing a verbose and confusing insult:

(27) (The boys are discussing Cartman's recent weight gain.)

Cartman: I'm not fat! I'm getting in shape!

Kyle: **Cartman, you're such a fat ass that when you walk down the street people go "God damn it, that's a big fat ass!"**

(S01E02)

Instead of briefly and orderly telling Cartman that he is overweight, Kyle insults him off-record by joking about other people's hypothetical reactions to Cartman's weight. Although this might be an example of banter in some contexts, Cartman gets offended and later counters the attack. Kyle's utterance may be also classified as the Quantity maxim flouting since both categories deal with prolixity. Example (28) deals with Quantity's flouting; the utterance is more informative than required.

(28) (Cartman's mother comes home to find her son wanting to tell her that he feels betrayed and does not trust her anymore.)

Cartman: You read me a bedtime story. You tucked me in. And then you let half the town into my room to try and give me a shot against my will.

(S23E03)

Cartman insults his mother off-record by pointing out how elaborated and perfidious her plan to get him vaccinated was. This utterance shows how betrayed and disillusioned he feels, and its force is stronger than if Cartman had followed the CP and adhered to the maxims. The least represented maxim to be flouted in the sample was Relation; it was not common to insult someone by making an irrelevant conversational contribution.

(29) (Randy comes into Stan's room to call him downstairs.)

Randy: Stan! Family meeting! Get downstairs! [leaves]

Stan: **I'm writing a song, Dad.**

Randy: [returns] Nobody cares about that!

(S23E02)

What Stan actually means to communicate with his utterance in example (29) is that he is doing something more important at the moment and is not interested in partaking in a family meeting, which is by contrast important to his father. Randy degrades the importance of Stan's hobby and attacks his positive face as a response. However, this instance could be also regarded as an example of the *Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic* strategy, because Stan does not show interest in his father's request and is reluctant to cooperate.

5.5 Withhold politeness

The absence of communicated politeness may be taken as impoliteness. Withhold politeness might be both accidental and deliberate and it can represent a strong FTA. The most common way of withholding politeness in the sample was the lack of reciprocating greetings.

(30) (The boys are discussing Cartman's weight gain when Wendy approaches them.)

Wendy: Hi guys.

Cartman: **Oh look, another hippie.**

(S01E02)

Cartman's utterance in example (30) features an intentionally face-threatening token of Withhold politeness. He does not greet Wendy back when it is expected and furthermore intends to cause more offense by calling her a *hippie*, which is a derogatory term in Cartman's eyes. Another factor that intensifies offense in this example is the number of spectators, some of which are Wendy's friends.

(31) (Mr. Kim is ecstatic about the deal with Goo Man to carry his plant-based "incredible" meat but explains that fewer customers come to his restaurant since a new restaurant selling plant-based burgers opened.)

Mr. Kim: Yeah, here you look. Down the brock. [they walk to a window and look out] Most popular prace in town.

Goo Man: **Is that so?! [makes his way to the entrance and leaves]**

Mr. Kim: Hey! [follows him out] Hey, what about my incredibry City chicken?

(S23E04)

The Goo Man did not excuse himself nor said goodbye before he left Mr. Kim's restaurant in example (31). This posed a threat to Mr. Kim's face in a similar way as Positive impoliteness would since they were planning on collaborating prior to Goo Man's abrupt departure, which possibly made Mr. Kim feel unappreciated and overlooked. This FTA was probably unintentional but caused offense nevertheless, as Mr. Kim even followed Goo Man out to the street and insisted on concluding the deal.

This superstrategy proved to be the least represented one in the sample, having been used as a face-attack in only 2% of cases. However, there were instances in the data which might have been classified as either Positive impoliteness or Withhold politeness because of their vague definitions and similarities in the manner of realization. Such cases have been discussed in subchapters 5.2.1 and 5.2.8.

5.6 Meta-strategy: Sarcasm or mock politeness

Sarcasm was less common in the data than its 2005 superstrategy successor, Off-record impoliteness. Its meta-strategic nature assumingly stands for its ability to be present in the realizations of all the impoliteness strategies.

It has been found in combinations with *Call the other names* positive impoliteness strategy, but it is important to mention that it was often the derogatory nomination that made those utterances sarcastic since Sarcasm or mock politeness is realized by superficially polite utterances which are intentionally face-attacking.

(32) (Randy is discussing new ideas to get his marihuana business back on track with his family.)

Shelly: I hate marijuana.

Randy: **Nice attitude!** How do we sell more weed? Sharon?

Sharon: If you don't make commercials or do more parades for the town, we'd have more money.

Randy: **Right. Cut out all our marketing. That's Sharon's great idea, everyone.**

(S23E04)

Randy's utterances in example (32) are polite only on their surface; he seeks to communicate the exact opposite, attack the others' faces and simultaneously boost his own face. Furthermore, his unenthusiastic intonation patterns would be unusual for sincere compliments.

Sarcastic utterances often employ stereotypes. Their interpretation then depends on the extralinguistic knowledge of both the addressee and the audience.

(33) (Stan is worried about his homosexual dog Sparky's whereabouts.)

Stan: I don't know where Sparky is. He usually follows me to football practice.

Cartman: **Maybe he went shopping for some leather pants.**

(S01E04)

If the watchers are familiar with the stereotypical notion of homosexual men enjoying shopping and wearing leather pants, they might either laugh or get offended by Cartman's utterance provided in example (33). Stan took offense in this scene, as Cartman made fun of Sparky by bringing up his sexual orientation with a seemingly polite utterance.

One of the triggers for sarcasm mentioned by Culpeper (2011, 174) is a verbal formula mismatch – the clash of conventionally polite and impolite expressions within one text. This is illustrated in example (34):

(34) (Pip is asking Chef whether it always has to be him who will play football without a helmet.)

Chef: Yes, Pip, I'm afraid it does.

Pip: Oh.

Chef: **Sorry son, now get your ass in there.**

(S01E04)

5.7 Bousfield's strategies

Bousfield (2008, 126-132) proposes four impoliteness strategies which were recurrent in his data despite being absent from Culpeper's models. All of them have been found in the sample and proved to be useful for the analysis; without them, almost 25% of all the found impoliteness strategies would remain unclassified.

Using Culpeper's 2005 model with these strategies made it possible to cover a wide range of face-threatening acts. Furthermore, two strategies, *Challenge* and *Criticise*, were often combined with Culpeper's strategies, and the former was surprisingly the most common strategy to be combined with *Use taboo words*.

The difference in their use in the oldest and the recent episodes was moreover significant, as these strategies covered 30% of all the impoliteness strategies found in the recent episodes sample, while it was only 20.6% in the oldest episodes.

5.7.1 Criticise

This strategy is oriented towards the hearer's positive face; it is used to dispraise him or his actions, as well as entities in which he invested face, which is the opposite of showing him appreciation. It was the second most represented Bousfield's strategy in the sample, and it combined exclusively with positive impoliteness strategies, predominantly with *Use taboo words*.

(35) (The mayor is devastated after the TV crew left the town and ruined her chances of becoming famous and leaving South Park.)

Mayor McDaniels: Nohoho nooo. **Now I'll be stuck in this Podunk town forever, with all these stupid hick, redneck, jobless, truck driving idiots!**

(S01E02)

The mayor eases her frustration by criticizing various aspects of the residents' lives as shown in example (35). She dispraises their intelligence, manners, status, and life choices. All of the pejorative attributes moreover modify the noun phrase's head *idiot*, which itself is a derogatory name. Expectably, everyone who heard her got offended.

5.7.2 Hinder/block

One can attack the hearer's negative face by blocking his passage or by denying his conversational turn. Both variants have been found in the sample, but the latter variant was the predominant one. It was the only Bousfield's strategy with a significant difference in use between the oldest and the recent episodes, where it was more frequent.

(36) (Wendy is convincing the children to start eating healthier during the lunch hour.)

Wendy: Without sustainable and ethical food choices now, we're proving to be no d-

Cartman: [leaves the table] **AAAH! GAAAH!** [in the middle of the cafeteria, to Wendy] **CAN I PLEASE JUST ENJOY MY LUNCH FOR FIVE GODDAMNED MINUTES?!**

(S23E04)

As illustrated in example (36), Cartman interrupts Wendy's turn by changing his body position and yelling, both being features that can intensify impoliteness. His utterance is sarcastic, as its overt polite and covert impolite meaning co-occur in it. The intensifier *goddamn* moreover boosts the impolite force of his request.

5.7.3 *Enforce role shift*

By using this strategy, the speaker coerces the hearer to change his social and/or discursal role, which attacks his desire for freedom of action and from imposition. It was the least used Bousfield's strategy in the data.

(37) (The parents discuss the fact that Liane's son Eric is not vaccinated.)

Sheila: Look, I don't know what kind of mother wouldn't vaccinate their child, but it's putting everyone in danger, and that's why-

Liane: **Then you try to catch him!** [stabs her index finger towards Sheila] **You try it! Don't you people criticize me until you've taken Eric to the doctor and you've tried to hold him down!** I'm a good mother! Don't you dare question if I care about my child!

(S23E03)

In example (37), Sheila insults Liane off-record by hinting that she is a bad mother. This infuriates Liane, who interrupts her turn and forces her to change perspective. Both actions intentionally attack Sheila's negative face. Liane then forces Sheila and the other parents out of their social roles to the role of Eric's mother. Lastly, she aims to attack their positive face by criticizing them for even casting doubt on her as a mother. Her utterances feature almost all of the strategies proposed by Bousfield, only *Challenge* is missing.

5.7.4 *Challenge*

Challenge was the most represented Bousfield's strategy in the sample. Surprisingly, this multi-faced strategy occurred in the data more frequently than some of Culpeper's superstrategies. It might be so common because of its versatility: the hearer's position, power, stance, ethics, beliefs, and more can be all questioned to attack his face.

Challenging questions are oriented to both polarities of face, as the following example illustrates:

(38) (The producer is forbidding the boys from mentioning Winnie the Pooh in their movie, as the Chinese censors would not approve of it.)

Stan: Oh, come on. That's ridiculous!

Producer: **Hey, you wanna move away from your family, right? You wanna be successful on your own, right?**

(S23E02)

In example (38), the producer is questioning Stan's attitude in front of his friends, the movie crew, and the Chinese censors. By uttering these challenging questions, he is not only threatening Stan's positive face by criticizing his remark, but also his negative face by compelling him to react in a face-damaging way; show everyone how desperate he is by eventually agreeing on everything.

This strategy was combined predominantly with *Use taboo words* and *Call the other names* positive impoliteness strategies to mark the speaker's negative attitude towards the hearer. In fact, *Use taboo words* with *Challenge* was the most frequent combination of strategies overall in the data. Some of the challenging questions found in the sample were also accompanied by Sarcasm or Off-record impoliteness as shown in example (39):

(39) (Farmer Carl is complaining about his cows' dying and disappearing. Officer Barbrady is belittling the problem, saying that there is nothing to worry about.)

Farmer Carl: **What am I supposed to do, Barbrady? Just stand here and watch my cattle get mutilated one by one?**

(S01E01)

The farmer challenges Barbrady's view and depreciation of the problem by uttering challenging questions, the second of which is moreover sarcastic. The utterance's covert and overt meaning clash, which is a trigger for sarcasm.

5.8 Combinations of impoliteness strategies

Three positive impoliteness strategies out of ten have been found in combinations, two of which were the prevalent strategies to be combined overall: *Use taboo words* and *Call the other names*. This was not surprising given that taboo words and derogatory nominations are probably the most common and easiest way of intensifying offense. These strategies were also combined together, as illustrated in examples (12) and (13) (e.g. "you fucking bitch!"). Their counterparts found in the data can be seen in Table 2.

Three negative impoliteness strategies that have been found in combinations were predominantly combined with the above-mentioned positive impoliteness strategies. This demonstrates that Culpeper’s model does not grant mutual exclusivity of Positive and Negative impoliteness, since it represents a parallel structure to Brown and Levinson’s model. The most frequently combined negative impoliteness strategy in the data was *Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect* comprising of adding pronouns *I* and *You* to the FTAs.

Bousfield’s strategy *Criticise* remained faithful to its polarity as it combined with Positive impoliteness only. *Challenge* has been predominantly found with positive impoliteness strategies and Sarcasm or Off-record impoliteness. The most frequent combination of strategies in the data was *Use taboo words* with *Challenge* (example (13), “*what the fuck is wrong with you?!?*”).

	<i>Use taboo words (PI)</i>	<i>Call the other names (PI)</i>
Bald on record impoliteness	2	5
<i>Exclude the other from an activity (PI)</i>		2
<i>Seek disagreement (PI)</i>	1	1
<i>Use taboo words (PI)</i>	–	5
<i>Call the other names (PI)</i>	5	–
<i>Frighten (NI)</i>	1	2
<i>Condescend, scorn or ridicule (NI)</i>	2	1
<i>Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect (NI)</i>	3	
Off-record	2	1
Sarcasm or mock politeness		4
<i>Criticise (PI)</i>	4	2
<i>Challenge (multi-faced)</i>	11	4
	31 out of 46 (67.4%)	27 out of 51 (52.9%)

Table 2: Positive impoliteness output strategies *Use taboo words* and *Call the other names* and their combinations found in the analyzed *South Park* episodes

Certain strategies are more likely to be combined given their nature; for instance, adding taboo words, derogatory names, or pronouns to the FTAs does not take much additional planning or effort and it moreover tends to be effective when causing offense.

On the other hand, combining the strategies which are similar to Withhold politeness would be impossible, as they are essentially based on not doing or saying something that is expected. For example, using another strategy would ruin the effect of ignoring someone or dissociating from them altogether.

6 Summary of the Analysis

In the eight selected *South Park* episodes, 645 instances of impoliteness strategies in total have been found. Taking the regular length of one *South Park* episode into account, this means that the episodes under analysis featured four occurrences of impoliteness strategies per minute on average. The oldest episodes sample contained 60% of all the found strategies.

The hypotheses, initially based on mere observations and reasoning, were supported by the data. Withhold politeness proved to be the least represented impoliteness superstrategy in the sample. The dialogues featuring its use were not as humorous, which is probably the main reason for its small employment in this sitcom. The most frequent way of withholding politeness was not reciprocating greetings. The impoliteness superstrategies and output strategies were distributed more evenly in the recent episodes than in the oldest episodes, where positive impoliteness strategies prevailed. The two samples, however, did not significantly differ regarding the use of the *Call the other names* and *Use taboo words* strategies, which was anticipated.

The *Use taboo words* strategy was said to be the most likely to combine, which also proved to be true: it was combined in 67.4% of cases and it indeed was one of the most represented positive impoliteness output strategies in the data. It was combined mostly with Bousfield's strategies *Challenge* and *Criticise* and the positive impoliteness strategy *Call the other names*, which was concurrently the most featured and the second most combined output strategy in the sample. Surprisingly, neither of the two was the predominant positive impoliteness strategy in the recent episodes sample, where the most common way of attacking one's positive face was to use the *Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic* strategy.

The analysis was useful for assessing the applicability of Culpeper's model to this type of discourse and for finding out whether it is robust enough to cover all the ways of attacking one's face throughout. Based on the analysis, the 2005 model was found to be more versatile as it also includes off-record impolite acts, which represented 20.7% of all the means of face-attack in the recent episodes sample. The reinvention of the 1996 model was thus a wise step. Nevertheless, the model might further benefit from having the strategies explained more clearly and from adopting the strategies proposed by Bousfield (2008), which represented almost 25% of all the recorded impoliteness strategies. Furthermore, the strategies often overlapped, which indicates that Culpeper's model does not guarantee indisputable classification.

The ways in which the strategies were combined show that it is indeed possible to attack someone's positive and negative face at once. This again disproves Brown and Levinson's claims about the mutual exclusivity of the two opposing tendencies. Furthermore, the multi-faced strategy *Challenge* proposed by Bousfield was represented in the data more than the majority of Culpeper's superstrategies, losing only to Positive and Off-record impoliteness.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to introduce the theoretical background of the pragmatic phenomenon of impoliteness with its respective strategies, which can be used for attacking one's face. Its second aim was to analyze the use of impoliteness strategies in the notoriously indecent long-running TV show *South Park* and to determine in conclusion whether the realizations of impoliteness in it developed with time.

The theoretical part was focused on providing a brief overview of the (im)politeness frameworks as proposed by Brown and Levinson, Lachenicht, Culpeper, and Bousfield, which were relevant for the subsequent analysis. The analytical part of the thesis consisted of investigating the occurrences of impoliteness strategies in the eight *South Park* episodes, which were chosen according to their year of production.

All the hypotheses were supported by the data, and it was concluded that impoliteness in *South Park* has changed in some respects. The impoliteness strategies were found to be distributed more evenly in the recent episodes. This makes the new episodes less repetitive and more engaging than the older ones, which are somewhat simple and predictable in terms of their plot. The use of Positive impoliteness was significantly higher in the oldest (1997) episodes, whereas the use of Off-record impoliteness was significantly higher in the recent (2019) episodes. There were also some qualitative differences, for example, a tendency to use cruder imperatives when being impolite on-record can be observed in the recent episodes.

The applicability of Culpeper's models was critically assessed and tested on the data. The shift to the 2005 model proved to be useful for the analysis of impoliteness, but a few observations were made regarding its improvement. Some instances were hard to classify because Culpeper (1996, 2005) does not provide clear definitions of the strategies and some of them unfortunately overlap, which makes indisputable classification of impolite acts nearly impossible. For example, it was discussed that withholding politeness overlaps with some positive impoliteness strategies. Similarly, the strategies dealing with offensive address forms oriented to both polarities of face were not defined clearly enough to classify them accordingly.

It is important to mention though that Culpeper's model was based on Brown and Levinson's notion of face and politeness theory (1987) with all its weaknesses. Concurrently, what was acceptable for politeness in terms of the degree of face-threat and mutual exclusivity does not apply to the more complex phenomenon of impoliteness. However, there seems to be a tendency to move towards Spencer-Oatey's rapport management approach (2002) when accounting for impoliteness in its current sense, since the conception of (im)politeness is shifting from a mere method of maintaining or attacking face to a broader view linked to social relations.

The exact cumulative effects of combining the strategies, the relation of the impoliteness strategies to the degree of face-threat, and the applicability of the post-modern model of impoliteness to this discourse remain areas for future research.

Resumé

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo stručně představit některé zdvořilostní a nezdvořilostní modely a následně analyzovat využití nezdvořilostních strategií v animované situační komedii *Městečko South Park* z hlediska rozdílů mezi nejstaršími díly z roku 1997 a nejnovějšími díly z roku 2019.

První kapitola se zabývá zdvořilostí, jejíž pochopení je pro následné zabývání se nezdvořilostí nezbytné, protože se jedná o příbuzné jevy. Řada nezdvořilostních modelů navíc vychází z pojetí tváře a zdvořilosti Brownové a Levinsona (1987). Kapitola v krátkosti představí i Griceův kooperační princip a konverzační maximy (1975), které budou později využity při analýze jevů jako jsou sarkasmus či nepřímá nezdvořilost.

Druhá kapitola se již zabývá nezdvořilostí a jejími specifiky. Jelikož je práce zaměřena na nezdvořilostní strategie, v kapitole je nejdříve představen Lachenichtův model (1980). Ten totiž vůbec poprvé zmiňuje jednotlivé strategie, kterými lze dosáhnout útoku na adresátovu tvář. Nezávisle na něm uvádí Culpeper (1996) svůj model pěti základních nezdvořilostních strategií: přímá nezdvořilost, pozitivní nezdvořilost, negativní nezdvořilost, sarkasmus či předstíraná zdvořilost a odepřená zdvořilost. Pozitivní a negativní nezdvořilost se využívá pro útok na pozitivní či negativní tvář adresáta prostřednictvím přidružených strategií. V roce 2005 Culpeper svůj model pozměňuje a dosazuje na místo čtvrté strategie nepřímou nezdvořilost. Na základě analýzy dat v této práci lze jeho krok zhodnotit jako zdařilý. Do diskuse o nezdvořilosti a strategiích přispívá i jeho kolega Bousfield (2008) uvedením čtyř strategií, které nebyly součástí Culpeperova modelu, a postřehem, že se jednotlivé strategie navzájem často kombinují pro zesílení útoku na tvář adresáta.

Třetí kapitola se věnuje využití nezdvořilosti v televizních pořadech za účelem humoru a představení žánru situační komedie. Nezdvořilost a humor mají minimálně dva společné rysy, oba jevy jsou totiž citlivé na kontext a lze je využít k útoku na tvář. Některé situační komedie jsou svým vulgárním humorem a neslušnou mluvou dokonce charakteristické a *Městečko South Park* je jednou z nich. Kapitola se dále zaměřuje na rysy tohoto konkrétního seriálu a důvody, proč je hodný pozornosti a zkoumání nejen z hlediska nezdvořilosti.

V úvodu praktické části je definována metodologie výzkumu a specifika následné analýzy. Rovněž jsou zde zopakovány výzkumné otázky práce: zda se nezdvořilost v nejstarších a nejnovějších dílech seriálu *Městečko South Park* nějak liší a jaké strategie se nejčastěji kombinují se strategií pozitivní nezdvořilosti *Užij vulgarismy (Use taboo words)*. Tato kapitola připomíná i v úvodu zmíněné hypotézy: odepřená zdvořilost bude nejméně zastoupenou nezdvořilostní strategií v tomto seriálu a jednotlivé strategie budou v nových dílech zastoupeny více rovnoměrně než ve starších dílech. V těch bude převažovat pozitivní nezdvořilost v čele se strategií *Užij vulgarismy*, která bude navíc často užita v kombinacích s jinými strategiemi. Všechny tyto hypotézy byly na základě zpracování dat potvrzeny.

Při analýze výskytů přímé nezdvořilosti bylo zjištěno, že v novějších dílech seriálu jsou užity vulgárnější imperativy než v těch starších. Pozitivní nezdvořilost byla signifikantně častější ve starších dílech, kde reprezentovala více než třetinu všech nezdvořilostních aktů. Jednotlivé strategie pozitivní nezdvořilosti byly v novějších dílech zastoupeny více rovnoměrně. Příčinou této změny mohou například být letité zkušenosti tvůrců seriálu a také vyšší nároky diváků na kvalitu jednotlivých dílů, aby byli ochotní zůstat seriálu věrní i po více než 20 letech vysílání.

U strategie *Užij vulgarismy* se potvrdilo, že má největší tendenci k tomu být užita společně s jinými strategiemi, přičemž jejími nejčastějšími protějšky byly Bousfieldovy strategie *Zpochybni (Challenge)* a *Kritizuj (Criticise)*. Jednotlivé strategie se mezi sebou velmi často kombinovaly nehledě na jejich orientaci k pozitivní či negativní tváři, což vyvrací tvrzení Brownové a Levinsona o jejich vzájemné výlučnosti.

Nepřímá nezdvořilost, jež byla převážně uskutečněna porušením maximy kvality, byla signifikantně častější v nejnovějších dílech seriálu. Odepřená zdvořilost byla ve vzorku dat užita pouze ve 2 % případů, nejčastěji šlo o útok na adresátovu tvář neopětováním pozdravu. Tato hodnota by nicméně mohla být nepřesná kvůli podobnostem této strategie s pozitivní nezdvořilostí co se ignorování a projevování nezájmu o adresáta týče.

Bousfieldovy strategie zastupovaly čtvrtinu všech zdokumentovaných případů nezdvořilosti a samotná strategie *Zpochybni* se ve vzorku dat vyskytovala častěji než většina Culpeperových strategií, přičemž častější byla jen pozitivní a nepřímá nezdvořilost. Důvodem je zřejmě fakt, že tato strategie je orientovaná na pozitivní i negativní tvář adresáta zároveň, ale charakterem je spíše nepřímá.

Na základě výsledků analýzy dat došlo ke kritickému zhodnocení Culpeperova modelu nezdvořilostních strategií a byly navrženy způsoby, jak jej vylepšit. Je však nutno podotknout, že jeho model byl založen na práci Brownové a Levinsona, která má jisté nedostatky. Pojetí nezdvořilosti se však neustále mění a nezdvořilostní strategie se pravděpodobně budou ubírat spíše směrem pojetí tváře Spencer-Oateyové (2002) než Brownové a Levinsona.

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Anotace

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Název bakalářské práce: Nezdvořilostní strategie: Případová studie televizního seriálu *Městečko South Park*

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Markéta Janebová, Ph.D.

Rok obhajoby: 2022

Počet znaků: 94 788

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Cílem této bakalářské práce je představit nezdvořilostní strategie Jonathana Culpepera a následně analyzovat jejich využití v animované situační komedii *Městečko South Park* z hlediska rozdílů mezi nejstaršími díly z roku 1997 a novými díly z roku 2019. Teoretická část práce zahrnuje stručný přehled některých zdvořilostních a nezdvořilostních teorií a zabývá se následujícími tématy: Griceův kooperační princip a konverzační maximy, zdvořilostní teorie a koncept tváře Brownové a Levinsona, nezdvořilost a nezdvořilostní strategie podle Lachenichta, Culpepera a Bousfielda, žánr situační komedie, využití nezdvořilosti v televizních pořadech a specifika seriálu *Městečko South Park*. Praktickou část práce tvoří analýza a porovnání jednotlivých nezdvořilostních strategií a jejich kombinací užitých v nejstarších a nejnovějších dílech seriálu. Aplikovatelnost Culpeperova modelu nezdvořilostních strategií bude na základě výsledků analýzy dat kriticky zhodnocena.

Klíčová slova: zdvořilost, nezdvořilost, sarkasmus, nezdvořilostní strategie, tvář, situační komedie, *Městečko South Park*

Annotation

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Title of the bachelor thesis: Impoliteness Strategies: A Case Study of the *South Park* Television Series

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This bachelor thesis is focused on introducing the impoliteness strategies proposed by Jonathan Culpeper and the subsequent analysis of their use in the animated situation comedy *South Park* regarding the differences between the oldest episodes from 1997 and the recent episodes from 2019. The theoretical part provides a brief overview of some politeness and impoliteness theories and deals with the following topics: Grice's Cooperative Principle and maxims, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and the notion of face, impoliteness and the impoliteness strategies proposed by Lachenicht, Culpeper, and Bousfield, the genre of situation comedy, the use of impoliteness in television, and the specifics of the TV series *South Park*. The analytical part is comprised of the analysis and comparison of the individual impoliteness strategies and their combinations used in the oldest and the recent episodes of the series. The applicability of Culpeper's model of impoliteness strategies will be critically assessed on the basis of the data analysis and its results.

Keywords: politeness, impoliteness, sarcasm, impoliteness strategies, face, situation comedy, South Park

Appendix

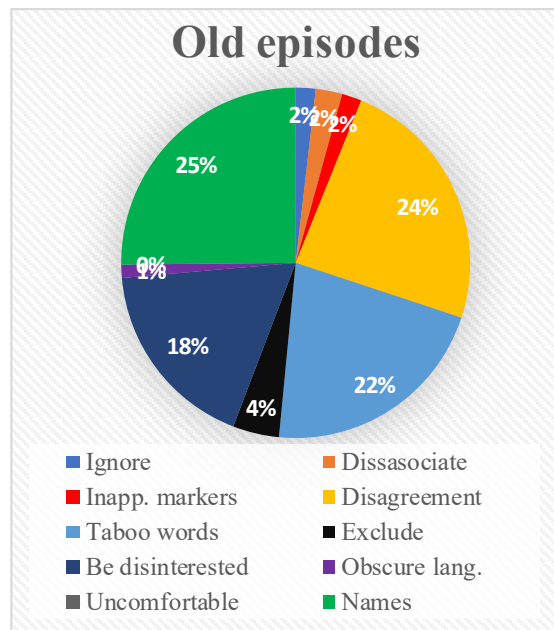


Figure 1: Positive impoliteness output strategies in the oldest *South Park* episodes

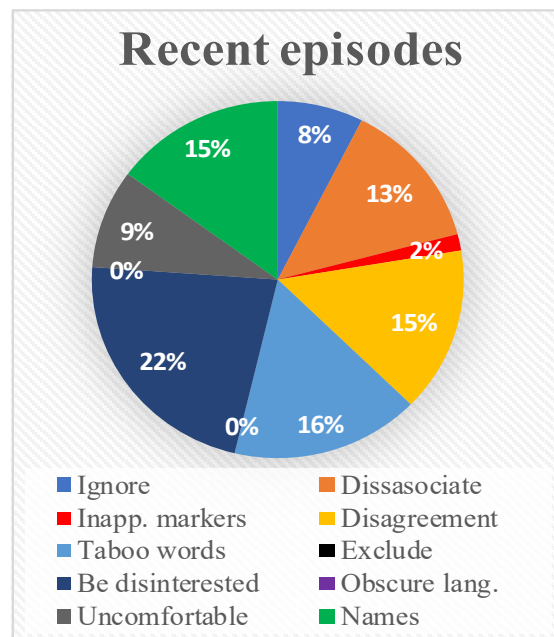


Figure 2: Positive impoliteness output strategies in the recent *South Park* episodes