



**IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES PORTRAYED
BY KEVIN'S FAMILY RELATIONSHIP
IN *WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT KEVIN* (2011) MOVIE**

A THESIS

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for S-1 Degree Majoring Linguistics in English Department
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

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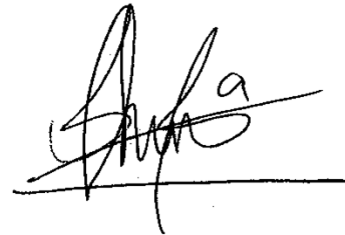
**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
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SEMARANG**

2022

PRONOUNCEMENT

I honestly state that this thesis was written entirely by myself without taking any work from other researchers in diploma degrees, S-1, S-2, or S-3 degrees from any university. I also ascertain that I do not take any material from other works other than those cited in the references.

Semarang, 08 December 2022

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Sinta Novina Putri

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass

Psalm 37:5

At our own pace

Jeon Wonwoo

This thesis is dedicated to

My family and myself

APPROVAL

**IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES PORTRAYED
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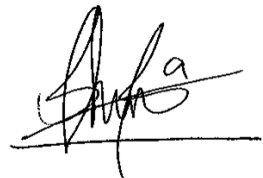
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This thesis is far from perfect and needs to be improved. Thus, any constructive suggestions are always welcomed and appreciated. Finally, I hope that this thesis would be helpful.

Semarang, 08 December 2022

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Sinta Novina Putri

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ABSTRACT

In establishing a harmonious social relationship, people should be aware of their language and behavior to avoid the social conflict that may affect the relationship between both parties. A study in pragmatics, impoliteness strategies derived by Culpeper (1996), shows that being impolite could harm a relationship as someone might threaten another's face. Employing the impoliteness strategy, this study aims to examine the impoliteness strategies portrayed in a movie titled *We Need to Talk About Kevin* (2011). Using the descriptive-qualitative and referential methods, it can be found that there are twenty utterances indicating the use of impoliteness strategies. The characters are using bald of record four times, positive impoliteness ten times, negative impoliteness three times, withhold impoliteness once, and sarcasm or mock impoliteness twice. In responding the Face Threatening Act, the addressees are accepting it fifteen times, countering it by being offensive once, defensive once, and ignoring it twice. The impoliteness strategies used by the characters have affected their behavior and strained their family relationship because they threaten each other face.

Keywords: pragmatic; impoliteness strategies; face threatening act; culpeper; we need to talk about kevin

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Language plays an essential role in society, especially in communication, to help people convey their intended meaning properly. To acquire a meaningful and beneficial conversation, the speaker needs to speak clearly and pay attention to their words to make the hearer understand the utterances and feel comfortable. Nevertheless, sometimes people do not talk or behave politely due to differences in background, interest, and opinion. As the speaker is not polite, the hearer might feel uncomfortable and social conflict will happen among both parties, resulting in disharmony in social relationship.

Culpeper (1996) defined this phenomenon as impoliteness, in which people threaten or attack another person's face. In pragmatics, the face is defined as "a person's prestige, reputation, and self-image" (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Furthermore, the act of threatening or attacking another person's face is introduced by Brown and Levinson as Face Threatening Act (FTA).

The impolite behaviors occur in any conversation, including in movies where the characters communicate through dialogue. I decided to analyze the 2011

psychological-thriller movie directed by Lynne Ramsay titled *We Need to Talk About Kevin*. This movie, which won the Evening Standard British Film Award for Best Film in 2012, was adapted from a novel with the same title written by Lionel Shriver in 2003. *We Need to Talk About Kevin* tells a story about Eva's struggle to connect with her son, Kevin, who acts strangely as he grows up and how Eva is forced to deal with the aftermath of a horrific event caused by Kevin.

I chose the *We Need to Talk about Kevin* movie as the research object because it emphasizes that impoliteness is the primary cause of social discord. The term "family" is frequently associated with love, support, and children's respectful behaviors toward their parents. However, the family portrayed in this movie tends to threaten each other's faces due to the mother and the son's stormy relationship, which later harms the entire family relationship. Using Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies, this research aims to analyze the cause of Kevin's disharmony family relationship in the *We Need to Talk about Kevin* movie.

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the background of the study, I conducted three research questions as follows:

1. What types of impoliteness strategies were used by Kevin's family members in the *We Need to Talk About Kevin* movie?

2. How do Kevin's family members respond to the Face Threatening Act addressed to them in the *We Need to Talk about Kevin* movie?
3. How do the impoliteness strategies cause Kevin's disharmony family relationship in the *We Need to Talk about Kevin* movie?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

By following the research questions, I conducted three purposes of this research as follows:

1. To identify the various types of impoliteness strategies used by Kevin's family members in the *We Need to Talk About Kevin* movie.
2. To analyze Kevin's family member's response to the Face Threatening Act addressed to them in the *We Need to Talk about Kevin* movie.
3. To explain the cause of Kevin's disharmony family relationship through impoliteness perspectives in the *We Need to Talk about Kevin* movie.

1.4 Previous Studies

I collected ten previous studies to enrich my insight in conducting this research. The previous studies included seven previous studies related to the Culpeper's (1996) Impoliteness Strategies, and three previous studies related to the *We Need to Talk About Kevin* movie. The studies come from several sources such as journals, articles, and thesis.

Two previous studies are related to impoliteness strategies and examined the types of impoliteness strategies. Dhorifah (2016), in her thesis, concluded that the children in the *Boyhood* movie primarily used positive impoliteness, while the parents primarily used positive impoliteness and bald on record as different power levels influenced the parents to be more impolite to their children. While an article written by Ayu Ratri and Priyatno Ardi (2019) analyzed the impoliteness in *The Devil Wears Prada* movie, resulting in negative impoliteness as the strategies with highest frequent.

The other five previous studies are examined the hearer's response to the FTA addressed to them. Danti Yaniar (2017) concluded that the characters in *Pitch Perfect* movie mainly performed positive impoliteness, and the hearer responding the FTA by counter back. Similarly, Favian Reswara Sani and Suhandoko (2020) concluded that the characters in *Hancock* movie mostly used positive impoliteness and responding the FTA by countering it. In a thesis written by Renita Rosa (2017), the characters in *The Fault in Our Stars* movie also performed positive impoliteness; however, the hearer responded by defending their face. In addition, M. Syahrul Faruq Aziz (2021) concluded that the character in *Deadpool* movie mostly used positive impoliteness and being defensive is mainly done by the characters in responding the FTA. In contrast, Enggita Aprilika Yustian (2019) examined the impoliteness strategies addressed to Bianca in *The Duff* movie,

resulting in calling with other names as the sub-strategy that mainly addressed to Bianca, and she responded it by staying silent.

The last three previous studies were examined the *We Need to Talk About Kevin* movie from different perspectives. From a psychological perspective, Rinda Pratiwi (2017) concluded that Kevin was raised using the authoritarian style by his mother and the permissive style by his father which influenced Kevin in developing self-rejection, leading him to become cruel, evil, and duplicitous. From the “new momism” perspective, Sue Thornham (2015) concluded that Kevin’s mother has fractured subjectivity, hate, and sense of guilt in this movie. In contrast with the previous study, Amy Smialek (2016) concluded that Eva is not an ambivalent mother and is still taking care of Kevin conventionally.

Based on the ten previous studies above, it can be seen that there have been many studies on analyzing a movie using impoliteness strategies. However, no study examines the *We Need to Talk About Kevin* movie from a pragmatics perspective. Therefore, I decided to analyze the cause of Kevin’s disharmony family relationship from impoliteness strategies perspectives in the *We Need to Talk About Kevin* movie.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The main focus of this study is to analyze Kevin’s disharmony family relationship through impoliteness strategies perspectives. Therefore, I limit the data

by taking the utterances spoken only by Kevin's family members, including Franklin, Eva, Kevin, and Celia. Moreover, I will use Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness super strategies, and impoliteness response options to analyze the utterances spoken by selected characters.

1.6 Writing Organization

To make this thesis systematic and easy to read, I organized it into four chapters as describe below:

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief explanation of the thesis. It consists of background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, previous studies, scope of the study, and writing organization.

CHAPTER II THEORY AND METHOD

This chapter explains the theory and the methods used to analyze the object. It provides a theoretical framework, type of research, data population and sample, method of collecting data, and method of analyzing data.

CHAPTER III RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter describes the analysis of the data that has been obtained using specific theories.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the conclusion that can be drawn from this thesis.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

2.1 Impoliteness

Impoliteness is associated with rudeness or negative attitudes that may offend others. In pragmatics, impoliteness is when the speaker maximizes or worsens the face damage when FTA occurs, whether by the speaker who communicates it intentionally, the hearer who perceives the utterances as FTA, or both (Culpeper, 2005: 38). Culpeper first proposed the impoliteness strategies in 1996, which parallel with politeness strategies by Brown and Levinson as both have the same concern but in the opposite way. As a result, Culpeper's impoliteness strategies is identical with Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies by employing the same face concept and super strategies output despite having a different aim. According to Culpeper, five super strategies the speaker used to maximize the FTA are:

2.1.1 Bald on Record Impoliteness

Bald on record impoliteness performed FTA in the most direct and clear way possible to maximize efficiency without even attempting to minimize threats to the hearer's face. For example, "Stop crying! It won't bring him back!" here, the

speaker asks the hearer to stop crying and states a painful fact without attempting to moderate the utterance to lessen the face damage.

2.1.2 Positive Impoliteness

A positive face reflects an individual's desire to be liked, respected, and appreciated. Positive impoliteness is a strategy to worsen the damage of the hearer's positive face through several sub-strategies as follows:

- a) Ignore the hearer – A: “I know I am wrong, but –” B: “I don't have time for this”
- b) Exclude the hearer from an activity – “I don't think Brad understands football.”
- c) Be disinterested, unconcerned, and unsympathetic with the hearer – “Come on, it is not that hurt. Stop exaggerating.”
- d) Use inappropriate identity markers to the hearer – “Hey, Ms. A straight, come here.”
- e) Use obscure or secretive language – “Yeah, she is studigipidigid (stupid).”
- f) Seek for disagreement – “Well, I don't think your decision will turn out well.”
- g) Use taboo words – “That was pretty dumb.”
- h) Call the hearer with other names – “Hey, nerd.”

2.1.3 Negative Impoliteness

A negative face reflects an individual's desire to be unimpeded by others. Negative impoliteness aims to worsen the FTA of the hearer's negative face through the following sub-strategies:

- a) Frighten the hearer – “If you keep texting me, I will tell the entire school about this”
- b) Condescend, scorn, or ridicule the hearer – “So you bought 8 muffins for 10 people? How do we suppose to share it?”
- c) Invade the hearer space (literally or metaphorically) – “No way. You staying at home on Saturday night? You have no fun. I will pick you up in 10 minutes.”
- d) Associate the hearer with a negative aspect – “You already forgot about your punishment for cheating?”
- e) Put the hearer's indebtedness on record – “Where is the cheesecake you promised me yesterday?”
- f) Challenging the hearer – “Go try it yourself if you think drawing is easy.”
- g) Prevent or block the hearer – “Well, the leader replaced your position with Karen.”

2.1.4 Withhold Impoliteness

This strategy refers to the absence of politeness where it would be expected. For example, failing to congratulate someone on graduation may be considered impolite.

2.1.5 Sarcasm or Mock Impoliteness

This strategy performs FTA by using politeness strategies but in an insincere way. For example: “Nice perfume. Did you use it for bath?” here, the speaker compliments the hearer first by saying, “Nice perfume.” However, it is followed by “Did you use it for bath?” implying that the speaker mocks the hearer for using too much perfume until it smells too strong.

2.2 Power and Impoliteness

Brown and Levinson (1987) believed that the more powerful a person is, the more they have opportunities to deliver impoliteness and receive politeness. Another relevant theory regarding the relation of power and impoliteness was formulated by Timothy Jay, who proposed the “Offending Event” to explain the triggers someone do impoliteness. Bousfield (2008) explained that the “Offending Event” could be the person and/or the event that triggers the verbal impoliteness as response.

2.2.1 The Offender

There are certain aspects that can trigger the impoliteness strategies:

1. Age; the younger speakers tend to be more offensive than the older speakers.
2. Sex; using sex insult can damage the face of certain addressee according to their sexuality.
3. Status; the unequal status including social status, economic status, and educational status might trigger someone to do impoliteness. The lower and the less status someone have, the more offensive they can be.
4. Physical appearance; the insult can happen with the trigger of the physical appearance.
5. Social distant; stranger who addressed the impoliteness would be more offensive than the relative one.

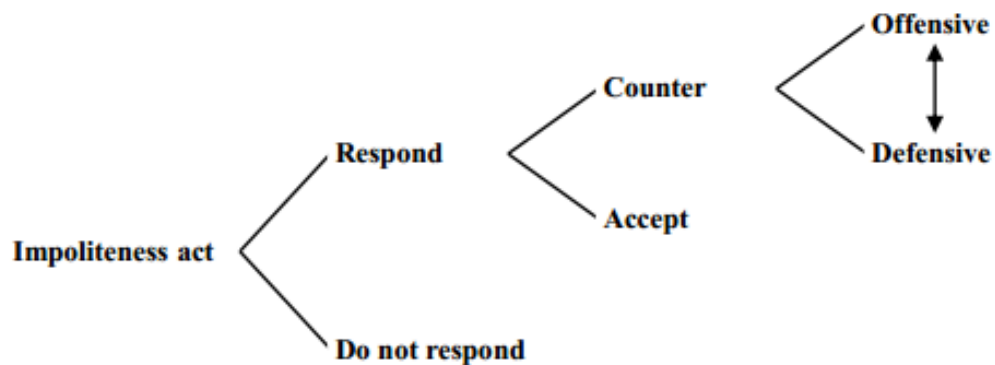
2.2.2 The Event

The features that can trigger verbal impoliteness are:

1. Behavior; unexpected and bad-mannered action could trigger someone to addressed impoliteness.
2. Language; the word choice and language used by the speaker could trigger the hearer.
3. Intentionality; the intentional impoliteness could trigger the addressee more than the unintentional one.

2.3 Impoliteness Response Options

When the hearer receives a face attack, two options can be done by the addressee: ignoring it or responding to it. Culpeper (2003) proposed the typology of impoliteness response options as follows:



2.3.1 Evaluating FTA with Response

When the hearer perceives the FTA and decides to respond to it, they have a choice to accept or counter the FTA. Accepting the FTA means the hearer agrees with the insult and increases the possibility of face loss. On the other hand, to save the hearer's face, they can counter the FTA by being offensive or defensive. Being offensive can be accomplished by delivering impoliteness strategies to return damaging the speaker's face. While being defensive means the hearer defends their face by providing reasons. For example,

A: "Heard you got C on your English exam."

B: "Yeah, right." (**Accepting**)

B: "And you got D on math exam." (**Being offensive**)

B: "I spent the entire day caring for my nephew and had no time to study" (**Being defensive**)

2.3.2 Evaluating FTA without Response

The hearer might decide not to respond to the FTA by ignoring it and stay silent after receiving the FTA instead of accepting or countering the FTA because it will increase the face loss and cause trouble for both parties.

2.4 Type of Research

This research is counted as descriptive-qualitative research, in which Sudaryanto defined it as a method based solely on facts, with data in the form of words and phrases (1993:62). This study will use a descriptive-qualitative method to describe Kevin's family's relationship by analyzing the utterances spoken by selected characters in the *We Need to Talk About Kevin* movie with Culpeper's impoliteness strategies.

2.5 Data, Population, and Sample

The data used for this research are taken from the utterances spoken throughout the *We Need to Talk About Kevin* movie by Lynne Ramsay. The population of this research is the utterances spoken by Kevin, Eva, Franklin, and Celia. However, some of the utterances spoken by selected characters will be irrelevant as not all the dialogues contain impoliteness strategies. Therefore, the purposive sampling technique will be applied to limit the data by considering the aim of this study. Hence, the sample of this research will be the utterances spoken by Kevin, Eva, Franklin, and Celia that indicate the use of impoliteness strategies.

2.6 Method of Collecting Data

In this study, non-participant observation and note-taking method are used to collect data. According to Sudaryanto (1993), non-participant observation is a method whereby the researcher observes the participants with their knowledge without being involved or participating in the activities. I used non-participant observation because I only watched and observed the dialogues uttered by the characters without directly participating in the conversation. Furthermore, a note-taking method is when the researcher wrote down some notes immediately after observing the utterances in collecting the data (Sudaryanto, 1993: 135). To collect the data, I downloaded the movie and watched it to fully understand its context. After that, I took notes of the utterances spoken by selected characters that indicate

the use of impoliteness strategies by writing down the English subtitle used in the movie to copy the exact words because the movie's script is not available on the internet.

2.7 Method of Analyzing Data

This research will be analyzed using a referential method that analyzes the data using other aspects than the language studied (Sudaryanto, 1993). I used the referential method because this study will focus on the context of the utterances and analyze the characters' impoliteness strategies. Thus, after collecting the data, I analyze the utterances by paying attention to the context of the utterances and categorize it into the impoliteness sub-strategies that fit the utterances. Using the same data, I will also analyze the character's response toward the FTA and categorize it into responding or not responding. For the final step, I will describe Kevin's family relationship and draw a conclusion based on the data that has been classified according to the impoliteness strategies.

CHAPTER III

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

The research data are collected from utterances spoken by Franklin, Eva, Kevin, and Celia in the *We Need to Talk About Kevin* movie. Culpeper's impoliteness strategies were used to analyze the utterances, and 27 of them indicate the use of the strategies. As a result, I will summarize the findings in the table below.

**Table 1. Data of Impoliteness Strategies Employed by Selected Characters
in the *We Need to Talk About Kevin* movie.**

No	Impoliteness Strategy	Sub-Strategies	Frequency
1.	Bald on Record	-	4
2.	Positive Impoliteness	Be disinterested, unconcerned, and unsympathetic with the hearer	3
		Ignore the hearer	1
		Seek for disagreement	1
		Use taboo words	4

		Use inappropriate identity markers to the hearer	1
Total Positive Impoliteness			10
3.	Negative Impoliteness	Frighten the hearer	1
		Challenging the hearer	1
		Associate the hearer with a negative aspect	1
Total Negative Impoliteness			3
4.	Withhold impoliteness		1
5.	Sarcasm or mock impoliteness		2
Total Impoliteness Strategies			20

Table 1 presents the occurrences of impoliteness strategies spoken by selected members. Positive impoliteness was used ten times to worsen the face threatening act, followed by bald on record four times, negative impoliteness three times, sarcasm or mock impoliteness twice, and withhold impoliteness once. Five out of eight sub-strategies were used for positive impoliteness, while three out of seven sub-strategies were used for negative impoliteness.

Table 2. Data of The Character's Response Towards Face Threatening Act

No	Response Towards Face Threatening Act	Sub-Response	Frequency
1.	Accepting the face threatening act		15
2.	Countering the face threatening act	Countering by being offensive	1
		Countering by being defensive	1
3.	Ignore the face threatening act		2

Table 2 presents how the characters react to the face-threatening act addressed to them. They mostly accept the face-threatening act, which they performed fifteen times, countering it by being offensive once and being defensive once, and ignoring it twice.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Bald on Record

Datum A1

Context: Eva had a happy life as a young woman who enjoys traveling, and have a lovely boyfriend, Franklin. However, when she discovered her pregnancy, she knew her happy life would not last long because she was not ready to give up her life.

00.32.31-00.32.40

Eva : Mommy was happy before widdle Kevin came along, you know that? Now mommy wakes up every morning and wishes she was in France (**Bald on record impoliteness**)

Kevin : *Cries* (**Accepting FTA**)

The participants in this conversation are Eva and Kevin and they had unequal status as Eva has more power than Kevin because Eva is Kevin's mother. Eva utterances included as bald on record impoliteness because Eva explicitly said she was happy before Kevin came along, implying that she is not pleased being a mother. Even though Eva has higher status than Kevin, she was intentionally worse Kevin's face damage, therefore this utterance is included as impolite. In responding the FTA, Kevin cannot do anything except cry and accept his mother's hatred because he cannot speak yet. Eva's impoliteness causes a stormy relationship between the mother and son because Eva hates having a baby and Kevin does not feel loved by his mother.

Datum A2

Context: Eva is teaching Kevin to count, but he is not paying attention and indicating that the lesson is boring. Feeling offended, Eva challenged Kevin to do the mathematical problem in which Kevin failed.

00.42.56-00.44.00

Eva : Okay, let's work on our counting. What comes after three?

Kevin : Nine

Eva : What comes after seven?

Kevin : Seventy one

Kevin : *Counts 1 to 50* now can we quit?

Eva : *Give mathematical problem* There, you can add that together since you think you are so smart

Kevin : *Throw the paper*

Kevin : *Poop on his diaper intentionally* (**Bald on record impoliteness**)

Kevin : Heh *smirking and laughing*

Eva : Ugh. You did not *Changing the diaper* (**Accepting the FTA**)

The participants in this conversation are Eva and Kevin and they had unequal status because Eva is Kevin's mother. Kevin performed bald on record impoliteness by intentionally pooping on his diaper. Even though Kevin is still a child, he is fully aware of what he did, as shown by his smirk and laughs after pooping. This action is considered impolite because Kevin has less power than Eva and intentionally performed the FTA. Eva responding the FTA by accepting it and change Kevin's diaper. This action will impact Kevin's behavior; he is determined to do whatever he wants and no one can stop him.

Datum A3

Context: Kevin was sick and rest in his room. Then Franklin came to checked on Kevin's condition, but Kevin asked him to leave.

00.56.47-00.56.56

Franklin : Hey, champ. How you doing? Feeling better?

Kevin : Go away I'm tired (**Bald on record impoliteness**)

Franklin : Oh? Okay. Sure thing, buddy. You just get some rest, okay?

(Accepting FTA)

The participants in this conversation are Franklin and Kevin and they had unequal status because Franklin is Kevin's father. Kevin performed bald on record impoliteness because he told his father to go away without even attempting to refine the utterance. This utterance considered impolite because the son, who has less power and used impolite words, performed verbal impoliteness to his father. Even though it threatens Franklin's face, he responded the FTA by accepting it and leave Kevin's room. How Kevin's easily told his father to go and how his father responded to it show that Kevin is used to being rude to his parents. This behavior will affect Kevin for continuing to be disrespectful to his parents, knowing that his parents were doing nothing and did not scold him for being rude.

Datum A4

Context: Eva and Kevin are having their first fine dining experience in a restaurant. It was Eva's idea to fix their relationship by spending a quality time with Kevin for a day.

01.12.05-01.13.10

Eva : So, how's school going?

Kevin : It's going. You want my course schedule?

- Eva : How about your teachers? Are there any who are–
- Kevin : Well, well. What band am I listening to these days, right? Next you can wheedle about whether there isn't some cute little cunt in the front row who's got me itchy. That way, you can segue into how it's all up to me, of course, but before balling the chick in the hallway, I might decide to wait until I'm ready. Right around dessert, you can ask about drugs. Real careful, cause you don't want to scare me into lying my head off, so you have to say how you've experimented. Then once you've sucked up that entire bottle of wine, you can go all gooey-eyed and say how nice it is to spend quality time together. You can scooch over and put your arm around my shoulder, give it a little squeeze. **(Bald on record impoliteness)**
- Eva : *Stay silent* **(Accepting FTA)**

The participants in this conversation are Eva and Kevin and they had unequal status. Kevin, who has less power than Eva, performed bald on record impoliteness by rejecting and mocking Eva by saying things she might want to say. Kevin was not welcoming Eva's attempt to mend their relationship, and Eva accepted the face attack by staying silent, stunned by her son's response. Kevin's impoliteness would lead Eva to believe that she would never be able to repair their relationship and that theirs would always be a stormy one. Eva and Kevin's relationship is the primary cause of the disharmony in Kevin's family, and since they are unable to fix their relationship, the entire family relationship will suffer as well.

3.2.2 Positive Impoliteness

Datum B1

Context: Eva is having difficulty caring for baby Kevin because he keeps crying the whole night and both of them fall asleep in the late morning. But Franklin woke Kevin up without knowing that Eva did not sleep at night, and now she had to take care of baby Kevin as a result of Franklin's action.

00.22.49-00.23.18

Franklin : *To baby Kevin* "Good morning"

Eva : "Hey, don't, don't, please don't pick him up. I've just put him down, Franklin"

Franklin : *Picks up the baby* "Hi, hi. There he is. You wanna play?"
(Positive impoliteness, be disinterested, unconcerned, and unsympathetic)

Eva : *Exhaling breath* **(Accepting FTA)**

Franklin : He is alright. You've got to rock him a little bit. He is alright. **(Positive impoliteness, be disinterested, unconcerned, and unsympathetic)**

Eva : Do you think I'm exaggerating? **(Countering FTA by being defensive)**

The participants in this conversation are Franklin and Eva and they had equal status because they are a couple of husband and wife. Franklin performed positive impoliteness and has no sympathy for Eva's feelings and effort to make Kevin sleep. Even though they had equal status and Franklin used polite words, it is still impolite utterance because Franklin implied that Eva did not work hard enough in taking care of Kevin and make Eva feel offended by Franklin's statement. In responding Franklin FTA, Eva defends herself by claiming that it is tiring her out and that she is not exaggerating. Franklin's statement will make Eva feel

unappreciated by her husband and will give an impact on their relationship because there is no support and love between them in raising their child.

Datum B2

Context: Kevin's family used to live in a small apartment in New York. As Kevin grows older, Franklin wants his family to leave New York and live in a house with a yard so that Kevin has a playground to play in. However, since New York is Eva's hometown, she does not want to leave the city.

00.33.09-00.33.19

Franklin : It's a matter of priorities, Eva. He is only gonna be a kid once

Eva : You can house-hunt all you want, I'm telling you I'm not leaving this city (**Positive impoliteness, seek for disagreement**)

Franklin : *Exhales breath* (**Accepting the FTA**)

The participants in this conversation are Franklin and Eva and they had equal status. Eva performed positive impoliteness by being disagree with Franklin's idea which threatening Franklin's positive face. This utterance included as impolite because Eva's behavior shows that she is prioritizing herself more than her son. Franklin responding Eva's FTA by accepting it because Franklin understands that New York is a special place for her. Eva's statement leads Franklin to believe that Eva is a selfish mother because she prioritizes her wish rather than agreeing with him for Kevin's good. However, in the end Franklin buys a new house because he prioritizes Kevin over Eva.

Datum B4

Context: Eva discovered her old belongings and decorated her room with maps and the things she treasured when she was young. When she was decorating her room, Kevin entered Eva's room.

00.39.09-00.39.47

- Kevin : These squiggly squares of paper.... they are dumb (**Positive impoliteness, using taboo words**)
- Eva : Everybody needs a room of their own, you have your room and this is mommy's room (**Countering FTA by being defensive**)
- Eva : I can help you make your room special, if you like
- Kevin : What do you mean "special"?
- Eva : Well, so it looks like your personality
- Kevin : What personality?
- Eva : I think you know what I mean
- Kevin : They are dumb (**Positive impoliteness, using taboo words**)
- Eva : *Leave the room* (**Ignoring the FTA**)

The participants in this conversation are Eva and Kevin and they had unequal status in which Eva has more power than Kevin. Eva was doing her favorite things and Kevin came saying rude things and using taboo words. Kevin's utterances are impolite because he has less power than Eva and he intentionally said that Eva's favorite things are dumb. Since her favorite things are being mocked, which is threatening Eva's positive face, she defends herself and gives understanding to Kevin. However, the second time Kevin uses the taboo words, Eva ignores the face-

threatening act by leaving the room. It is surprising that at such a young age, Kevin knows taboo words and uses it to mock his mother. Observing Kevin's act at mocking Eva by using taboo words, it will influence Kevin to use taboo words when speaking to others.

Datum B5

Context: Eva teaches Kevin how to count, but he answers carelessly and gives incorrect answers. Then Kevin starts counting from one to fifty, showing that he can count already and that he purposefully answered Eva incorrectly because he found it very boring.

00.42.56-00.43.48

Eva : Okay, let's work on our counting. What comes after three?

Kevin : Nine

Eva : What comes after seven?

Kevin : Seventy one

Kevin : *counts 1 to 50* now can we quit? (**Positive impoliteness, be disinterested, unconcerned, and unsympathetic**)

Eva : *Showing mathematical problem* there, you can add that together since you think you are so smart (**Countering by being offensive**)

The participants in this conversation are Eva and Kevin and they had unequal status. Kevin's attitude towards Eva is included as positive impoliteness because he is intentionally show that he can count by ridiculing her first. Feeling offended, Eva

countering the FTA by showing the mathematical problem to Kevin to save her face. Kevin's rudeness towards his mother indicates that he is likely to humiliate Eva. It will affect Kevin's growth as a person who is uninterested in things, does not appreciating people, and has arrogant behavior.

Datum B6

Context: Kevin was sick, so Eva checked him up to see his condition and asked for his breakfast. But Kevin's response to his mother is not as Eva expected.

00.58.57-00.59.07

Eva : Glad you're feeling better. You want some more of that chowder for lunch?

Kevin : Whatever (**Positive impoliteness, ignore the hearer**)

Eva : Or grilled cheese sandwich?

Kevin : I don't give a rat's ass (**Positive impoliteness, using taboo words**)

Eva : *Exhales and leave kevin's room* (**Accepting FTA**)

The participants in this conversation are Eva and Kevin and they had unequal status. This utterance included as a face-threatening act towards Eva's positive face because Kevin, who has less power than Eva, used taboo words to her. Eva responding Kevin's FTA by accepting it. Kevin's impoliteness and taboo words directed to Eva, as well as Eva's acceptance rather than scolding him show how bad their relationship is. Even though Kevin is still a child, he lacks of respect for his mother and continues to be impolite to Eva. If Kevin grows up with such

background, he will become a disrespectful person not only to his family but also to the society.

Datum B7

Context: Despite the fact that Celia is Kevin's younger sister, Kevin is rude and even plays pranks that could endanger her.

01.03.28-01.03.52

Celia : Kevin, you're my friend. You're my friend

Kevin : Beat it, Celie. Go get me a soda

Celia brings the soda

Kevin : No, not that one, you retard. Get me a root beer. (**Positive impoliteness, Use inappropriate identity markers to the hearer**)

Celia brings the rootbeer (**Accepting the FTA**)

The participants in this conversation are Kevin and Celia and they had unequal status because Kevin is older than Celia. Even though Kevin is older than Celia and they are a sibling, the language that Kevin used to call Celia is inappropriate. Kevin refers to her sister as "retard" which means someone who is stupid or slow to understand. Celia's positive face may be threatened as a result of the inappropriate identity marker, but she accepts it and fulfills Kevin's wish. Using inappropriate identity markers will lead Celia to believe that she is stupid and would make her feel worthless. On the other hand, if Kevin is not stopped, he will continue to use inappropriate identity markers toward Celia, despite she is his little sister.

Datum B8

Context: Eva found a compact disc titled “I love you” in Kevin’s room. Eva brings it to her room and inserts it into her computer, thinking it contains information about Kevin’s relationship with his girlfriend. But instead of a photo of Kevin and his girlfriend, the compact disk contains a virus that destroys Eva’s computer.

01.15.13 – 01.15.25

Kevin : Your computer’s fucked, isn’t it? (**Positive impoliteness, using taboo words**)

Eva : Yeah, it’s fucked, and so are all the ones at work. I guess I deserved it (**Accepting FTA**)

The participants in this conversation are Eva and Kevin and they had unequal status. Kevin used the term “fucked” which is considered a taboo word to said to someone who has more power than him and he is intentionally mocked Eva for opening the disc. Kevin’s utterance is threatening Eva’s positive face, but Eva accepted it because it happened due to her fault. This conversation shows that Kevin and Eva are not close until Eva has to look for her son’s information secretly. Kevin’s statement implies that Eva should not seek information about him, leading both of them to believe that they are living an individual life although they are a family.

3.2.3 Negative Impoliteness

Datum C1

00.42.56-00.43.48

Eva : Okay, let's work on our counting. What comes after three?

Kevin : Nine

Eva : What comes after seven?

Kevin : Seventy one

Kevin : *counts 1 to 50* now can we quit?

Eva : *Showing mathematical problem* there, you can add that together since you think you are so smart (**Negative impoliteness, challenging the hearer**)

Kevin: *Throws the paper* (**Accepting the FTA**)

The participants in this conversation are Eva and Kevin and they had unequal status. Kevin's behavior for not take the counting lesson seriously and intentionally give incorrect answers are offending Eva. Kevin's arrogance trigger Eva in challenging Kevin with a mathematical problem. This action is considered impolite and threatens Kevin's negative face. Still, Kevin can only throw the paper and accept the FTA because he knows he cannot solve the mathematical problem. Eva's action is deeply regretted because it shows that she would never lose her ego to her son. It also humiliates Kevin and makes him believe that he is not all that smart.

Datum C3

Context: Eva unintentionally "threw" Kevin, causing Kevin to break his arm because he fell from the diaper changing table. Eva and Kevin went to the doctor for an arm operation, which resulted in Kevin's arm being stitched and requiring the use of an arm sling.

00.50.10-00.50.27

Eva : Honey, do you mind if I stop off at the store?

Kevin : I wanna go home

Eva : It's just that I need to pick up

Kevin : *touches the stitches* (**Negative impoliteness, associate the hearer with a negative aspect**)

Eva : Home it is (**Accepting FTA**)

The participants in this conversation are Eva and Kevin and they had unequal status. Kevin's action for touching the stitches considered impolite because Kevin has less power than Eva and he is intentionally make Eva feel guilty by associating his stiches with Eva's fault for breaking Kevin's arm. Even though Eva's negative face is threatened, she accepts Kevin's request to go home because she realizes it was her fault. This action shows that Kevin has been manipulative even since he was a child. Kevin might notice that he can control someone by finding their fault and manipulating them to obey him. This can affect Kevin for being a manipulator and harm people by gaslighting or blaming them. Eva, will always live with the guilt and need to obey Kevin for him not to tell Franklin about what actually happened.

3.2.4 Withhold Impoliteness**Datum D1**

Context: Eva just gave birth to her daughter, or in other words, Kevin's little sister.

Eva and Franklin asked Kevin to take a closer look at his little sister.

00.53.28 – 00.53.46

Franklin : Hey, kev, come on over here and meet your little sister

Eva : That's Kevin, that's your big brother

Kevin : *splashing water to the baby* (**Withhold politeness**)

Baby : *Cries* (**Accepting FTA**)

Eva : Kevin! Don't do that

Franklin : Okay that's it. Let's get some snack Kevin, come on.

The participants in this conversation are Kevin and baby Celia and they had unequal status because Kevin is older than Celia. But this action is counted as withhold impoliteness as Kevin is not welcoming and feels unhappy about having a new sister. Kevin splatters water on his little sister and she can only cry because she is a newborn. Kevin splashing water is a sign that he is jealous of his little sister who will take his place. Also, his mother seems to like her newborn baby, a different act from what Eva did when Kevin was born. Kevin's action will affect him in growing as a person who is always envious of other's happiness and does not appreciate things. On the other hand, Eva would love to protect Celia more now that she knows Kevin is a "dangerous" kid who dislikes Celia.

3.2.5 Sarcasm or Mock Impoliteness**Datum E1**

Context: Eva was visiting Kevin in jail as her weekly routine. When they meet, Kevin touches the stitches on his arm, made by Eva, who broke Kevin's arm when he was a kid by "throwing" him off the diaper changing table.

00.42.29-00.42.35

Eva : Do you remember how you got that?

Kevin : The most honest thing you ever did (**Sarcasm or mock politeness**)

Eva : *Stay silent* (**Accepting FTA**)

The participants in this conversation are Eva and Kevin and they had unequal status. Kevin's sarcasm utterances indicate that Eva only pretends to love him as her son and when Eva threw him off the diaper-changing table, Kevin called it as the most honest thing that Eva ever did. The intentionality Kevin gave to make Eva feel guilty is considered impolite even though the event happened due to Eva's fault. Eva remained silent in response to the sarcastic utterances, indicating that it might be true. Kevin sarcasm will not let Eva forget that she is the cause of the incident and will forever make her live with the guilt.

Datum E2

Context: Eva was telling Kevin that he would have a new little sister. However, Kevin was not excited about it and even said that he would not like his little sister.

00.52.55-00.53.20

Eva : Well, haven't you ever wished you had somebody else around to play with?

- Kevin : No
- Eva : You might like it
- Kevin : What if I don't like it?
- Eva : Then you get used to it
- Kevin : Just because you're used to something, doesn't mean you like it. You're used to me (**Sarcasm or mock politeness**)
- Eva : Yes... Well, in a few months we are all gonna get used to somebody new (**Ignoring the FTA**)

The participants in this conversation are Eva and Kevin and they had unequal status. Kevin performed sarcasm or mock impoliteness by sarcastically stated he is aware that his mother dislikes him; she just used to have Kevin as her son. Kevin's statement threatens Eva's face and because Eva understands what Kevin's utterances mean, she ignores it and changes the topic. Kevin's sarcasm led Eva to believe that his son had noticed her behavior toward Kevin, shown by the fact that she paused for a second, shocked by her little son's response.

3.2.6 The Impact of Impoliteness in Kevin's Family Relationship

According to the explanation above, the twenty utterances were spoken by Franklin, Eva, and Kevin. It means that three out of four people in the family have addressed the impoliteness strategies and threats each face, except Celia, who received the FTA but never addressed it to anyone. It results in a lack of communication among the family members because the utterances or the responses

are inappropriate. Through the impoliteness strategies, it is gradually affecting each of the characters differently.

Kevin, is a helpless baby born to a mother who does not want him. He grew up without affection and receiving hatred from his mother, raising him as a person with rude, arrogant, and selfish behavior. Eva becomes a mother forced by the circumstances when she is not even ready. In her denial and depression, she has to care for her baby without any support from her husband. Eva raised Kevin by witnessing his disrespectful behavior and impolite words, which grew her hatred for him and unable to deal with him as he grew older. Franklin as a husband did not help Eva in caring for Kevin, instead, he blaming Eva for several times and not appreciating her as a mother, creating a space between Franklin and Eva although they have their first child. He failed as a father who was supposed to lead and educate his son. The lack of communication, the characters who threats each other, and the impolite utterances that affected each of the family members led to the disharmony family relationship in Kevin's family.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

According to the findings and discussions, each of the characters in the movie *We Need to Talk About Kevin* has addressed Face Threatening Act towards each other. The impoliteness strategies were done twenty times, with positive impoliteness as the most used strategy for ten times, followed by bald on record four times, negative impoliteness three times, sarcasm or mock impoliteness twice, and withhold impoliteness once. Kevin was the one who mostly used the impoliteness strategy to his family, which he did twenty-one times. He mostly used bald on record impoliteness, which means that he performed FTA straightforwardly without even attempting to minimize threats to the hearer's face.

In responding to the FTA, they mostly accepted it, which they performed fifteen times, countering it by being offensive once times, defensive once, and ignoring it twice. Accepting the FTA, despite it worsen the face damage, it indicates that the family did not want to make the matters worse.

It is deeply regretted that the one who performed impoliteness strategies the most is Kevin, the child of the family, and the addressee has done nothing about it. Toddler Kevin did not know whether his actions were good or bad; therefore, the more he addressed the impoliteness, the more he believed it was acceptable to behave in such manner, until it became his behavior; a rude person who has no

respect for people and is willing to do whatever he want. It also affects Eva and Franklin, who are hesitant and awkward around Kevin because he always responds rudely to his parents and does not allow their parents get to know him

Aside from Kevin, Eva may not use impoliteness strategies as frequently. However, she was the first who started the impolite language in the family, stating that she was not happy being Kevin's mother. Not only does it affect her to turn into a mother who hates her child, but it also has a negative impact on Kevin. Kevin was growing up as a child craving for his mother's love, but he could sense that his mother did not want him since he was a baby. Kevin was vengeful and envious of his mother preferences for loving her hobby and her daughter over him. As a result, he made the situation worse by being rude, using offensive language, and inappropriately.

Thus, the disharmony in Kevin's family happened. Starting with the impoliteness directed at each other followed by a lack of behavior education from the parents, it gradually affects each of the characters, resulting to lack of communication, love, and support in the family as it should be.

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