Impoliteness Strategies in John Mulaney's Stand-Up Comedy

Zitta Arlivia, Thomas Joko Priyo Sembodo*
English Department, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: thomassembodo@ugm.ac.id

ABSTRACT

An analytical study on comedy provides significant insight into comedy as a complex and pervasive medium of expression penetrating everyday life. This study investigates the impoliteness strategies in John Mulaney's stand-up comedy and how the most frequently used strategy entertains the audience through five sources of pleasure. The data gathered are the utterances containing impoliteness strategies from John Mulaney's stand-up comedy specials: *New in Town* (2012), *The Comeback Kid* (2015), *Kid Gorgeous* (2018), and *Baby J* (2023). The impoliteness strategies found in the stand-up comedy were then classified using the theory of impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper (1996). The data containing the most frequently used impoliteness strategy are then classified based on Culpeper's (2011) theory of five sources of pleasure of entertaining impoliteness function. The result shows 344 impoliteness strategies, with the positive impoliteness strategy being the most frequently used, with 163 occurrences (47.4%). From the 163 occurrences of positive impoliteness strategies, 105 entertain the audience through emotional pleasure (64%), followed by the pleasure of being superior with 33 occurrences (20.1%), the pleasure of feeling secure with 14 occurrences (8.5%), voyeuristic pleasure with ten occurrences (6.1%), and aesthetic pleasure with two occurrences (1.2%). The findings indicated that throughout his stand-up comedy performances, John Mulaney employs various impoliteness strategies, especially positive impoliteness strategies, to entertain the audience, primarily by evoking their emotional pleasure.

Keywords: *impoliteness strategies; stand-up comedy; entertainment; John Mulaney.*

INTRODUCTION

Yule (1996) coined politeness as a strategy intended to show awareness of others' faces. Meanwhile, unlike the politeness strategy, the impoliteness strategy, according to Culpeper (1996), is a phenomenon in which the speaker attacks the face to generate social conflict and disharmony. Culpeper (2011) also stated that impoliteness is often employed in comedic situations to entertain others.

Lockyer et al. (2011) asserted that comedy is a vibrant and multifaceted linguistic phenomenon in which omnipresence is demonstrated through its different forms and various purposes. It is also emphasized that an analytical study on comedy provides significant insights into comedy as a complex and pervasive medium of expression that penetrates everyday life, yet despite its enduring popularity, interdisciplinary academic studies specifically addressing stand-up comedy performances are relatively sparse. Hence, the usage of impoliteness strategies in stand-up comedy is

worth analyzing, as it provides a comprehensive analysis of the ability of its execution to generate audience laughter rather than disharmony between the performer and the audience. This is achieved by taking a particular stand-up comedy performance by American comedian John Mulaney as a case study and applying the theory of impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper (1996).

John Mulaney was chosen as the stand-up comedian that would be the basis of this case study, as his comedy career spans over two decades and has a worldwide reputation. Mulaney's stand-up comedy specials have received critical acclaim and accolades, such as Primetime Emmy Awards (John Mulaney - IMDb, n.d.). In his stand-up comedy, Mulaney recounts his life experience and observations involving people and daily occurrences, often becoming the subject of his jokes. In making fun of them, Mulaney often employs impoliteness strategies to elevate its humor.

This research aims to identify the usage of impoliteness strategies by John Mulaney in his stand-up comedy, as well as describe how the impoliteness executed can entertain the audience instead of generating social conflict and disharmony.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been several studies conducted on impoliteness strategies in television shows and comedy. Toddington (2015) conducted research investigating impoliteness as a medium for humor in dramatic discourse by analyzing impoliteness in the film *As Good As It Gets* using Goffman's Facework theory (1967), Discourse Architecture (Short, 1996), and Culpeper's impoliteness theory (2011). The research focused on the relationship between impoliteness as a form of aggression and humor as a form of entertainment through the character Melvin Udall and concluded that fundamental proximity between aspects of humor theory, particularly incongruity and impoliteness, is what determines what is and is not funny about offensiveness-for-entertainments sake.

Another study by Prananta (2016) examined the reconstruction of impoliteness strategies in the subtitle of *The Big Bang Theory* as a characterization device as well as its translation quality. The study highlighted that the shifts of impoliteness strategies in the data are the shift from swearing positive impoliteness to no face-threatening act and the shift from sarcasm off-record impoliteness to positive impoliteness. This study also concluded that the omission of those shifts negatively impacts the translation quality.

Furthermore, a study by Sunday and Bamgbose (2021) examined the pragmatic function of humor strategies used in the first five seasons of the Nigerian sitcoms *Jenifa's Diary and Professor John Bull* using Culpeper's (1996) theory of impoliteness strategies. The result revealed that impoliteness strategies help evoke humor by teasing and distorting collective knowledge of people and shared cultural knowledge. Similarly, a study by Yuanita (2019) examined the impoliteness of the language used by comedians in the Indonesian TV Program *Stand-up Comedy Academy* (SUCA) II using Culpeper's (1996) theory. The research indicated that comedians mostly use negative impoliteness strategies followed by positive impoliteness strategies. Negative impoliteness strategies are employed to insult and negatively associate the subject of the comedy, whereas positive impoliteness strategies can be found in the use of curses and insulting nicknames.

Another study by Ogoanah and Blessing (2020) investigated how the usage of verbal aggression in stand-up comedy provides humor and entertainment using Culpeper's theory of impoliteness (2011) The study identified that the creative use of impoliteness enables the comedians to achieve their rhetorical and entertaining purposes while at the expense of the entities they denigrate. Similarly, Hafisa and Hanidar (2021) in their study focused on identifying the impoliteness strategies found in a stand-up comedy show and its function using Culpeper's (1996) theory. This study discovered that the 105 instances of impoliteness strategies found in the show cover all five of the strategies proposed by Culpeper. The most frequently used strategy is negative impoliteness, which accounts for 40% of the whole data and is used to entertain the audience by amusing them by ridiculing someone.

Due to the lack of pragmatic studies investigating stand-up comedy as pointed out by Lockyer, Mills, and Peacock (2011), the present

research aims to fill the existing gap by examining a similar subject, that is, impoliteness strategies uttered in a stand-up comedy performance. However, the research differs in terms of data sources. The present research seeks to examine the impoliteness strategies uttered by John Mulaney in not only one but four stand-up comedy specials using the impoliteness strategies taxonomy by Culpeper (1996). Furthermore, the present research also investigates how the most frequent impoliteness strategy fits into Culpeper's (2011) definition of entertaining impoliteness and five sources of pleasure, which has never been done before. Therefore, it can be concluded that the present research is different from the previous research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Brown and Levinson (1987) defined "face" as an individual's perception of self-image and reputation that everyone has and expects others to recognize. This concept of face consists of two aspects: 1) negative face, which entails the basic claim to personal boundaries, freedom of action, and freedom from imposition; and 2) positive face, the desire to maintain one's self-image and its approval by others. In every conversation, the face can be either enhanced or damaged by threatening, commanding, warning, asking, etc. Brown and Levinson (1987) explained that some acts deliberately threaten the face and are unavoidable.

Face-threatening act (FTA) is an act intended to challenge the face wants of an interlocutor. There are specific circumstances that call for FTA or emphasize the face threat of an act, namely impoliteness. According to Culpeper (1996), the term impoliteness refers to communicative strategies that are deliberately intended to attack face and consequently cause social conflict and disharmony. While Culpeper's theory is derived from Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies, Culpeper's impoliteness strategies have contrasting orientations, as they were intended to attack rather than maintain face.

Impoliteness Strategies

Culpeper (1996) classified impoliteness strategies into five types as follows:

1. Bald on Record Impoliteness: This strategy is intended to attack someone's face deliberately and is executed unambiguously and concisely.

2. Positive Impoliteness: This strategy is used to attack the hearer's positive face, which can be performed in ways such as (1) ignore, snub the others, (2) exclude the others from an activity, (3) disassociate from the other, (4) be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic, (5) use inappropriate identity marker, (6) use obscure or secretive language, (7) seek disagreement (8) make others feel uncomfortable, (9) use taboo words, and (10) call the other names.

3. Negative Impoliteness: This strategy is used to attack the hearer's negative face, which can be performed in ways such as (1) frightened, (2) condescending, scorn or ridicule, (3) invading the other's space, (4) explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect, and (5) putting the other's indebtedness on record.

4. Sarcasm/Mock Politeness: This strategy is intended to threaten someone's face by insincere usage of politeness strategy.

5. Withhold Politeness: This impoliteness occurs when an act of politeness receives no response despite its expectation.

Impoliteness Strategies Function

Culpeper (2011) explained that impoliteness strategies serve functions such as:

1. Affective Impoliteness: This impoliteness function is intended to exhibit emotional outbursts toward the hearer as the output.

2. Coercive Impoliteness: This function seeks value realignment between the speaker, which benefits the speaker.

4. Entertaining Impoliteness: This function involves entertainment at the expense of the target of impoliteness. In observing impoliteness as entertainment, there are five sources of pleasure such as (1) emotional pleasure, (2) aesthetic pleasure, (3) voyeuristic pleasure, (4) the pleasure of being superior, and (5) the pleasure of feeling secure.

Stand-Up Comedy

Stand-up comedy is an encounter between a single person who performs comically and/or utter funny things directly toward an audience without the aid of a costume, props, setting, or dramatic vehicle (Mintz, 1985). A stand-up comedy performance is an interwoven series of "bits" (Brodie, 2009). Each bit consists of a set-up and punchline (Dean, 2000), and in performing them, comedians often use techniques such as comparisons, call back, act out, rule of three, and one-liners (Dean, 2023).

METHODS

Method of Data Collection

The data source of the research is four of John Mulaney's stand-up comedy specials: *New In Town* (2012) (accessed legally from https://cc/com), *The Comeback Kid* (2015), *Kid Gorgeous* (2018), and *Baby J* (2023) (accessed legally from https://netflix.com). For accuracy, this research also uses transcripts of the stand-up comedy from https://scrapsfromtheloft.com as well as subtitles from the website https://subdl.com. The data are utterances containing impoliteness strategies found in the stand-up comedy specials.

The first process of data collection was comprehensive observation of the specials. The next step is cross-checking the transcript to ensure it matches the utterances made by John Mulaney. Then, the transcript is reformatted with timestamps, titles of the bits, and labels to identify impersonations, utterance aspects, and non-verbal behavior. The next step was identifying the impoliteness strategies employed in the stand-up

comedy bits. In the discussion section, the data will be presented using the format below:

(1) [Are you going to talk the entire time?]^{FV}
CB/23/Lion King Broadway/NI#2
00:37:17,464 → 00:37:41,530

1	JM	:	My dad is cold-blooded.
2			He once shushed a kid during The Lion King on Broadway.
3	AU	:	((Laughter))
4	JM	:	That actually happened.
5			We were at Lion King on Broadway, and there was a five-year-old behind us going, {pointing at audience} [Look, it's Pumbaa! Look, it's Timon!]^{CV}
6			And my dad turned around and said, {facing back} [**Are you going to talk the entire time?**]^{FV}
7	AU	:	((Laughter))

In the example above, the number '1' at the utmost left indicates the order of the data presented. 'CB' indicates *The Comeback Kid*, the stand-up comedy special in which the data was found. The number '23' indicates the bit number in the order taken from the performance of John Mulaney in The Comeback Kid. "Lion King Broadway" is the title of the bit provided by the researcher to identify the topic. 'NI#2' marks the impoliteness strategy found in the data, negative impoliteness strategy, specifically the second sub-strategy, 'condescend, scorn, or ridicule.' In the section discussing how the impoliteness in John Mulaney's stand-up comedy entertains the audience, additional coding such as E#1, E#2, etc., marks the source of pleasure the data contains. The '00:37:17,464 → 00:37:41,530' marks the timestamp at which the utterances occur in the show. 'JM' and 'AU' are the abbreviations for John Mulaney and the audience, respectively, to mark the speaker of the utterances. The numbers 1-7 indicate the order of the utterances. Some orders of the utterance of the data presented in the discussion might not show numbers starting from 1, as some only show the excerpt of the bits, which might occur in the middle or the end of the bits. The sentence marked in bold shows the impoliteness strategy employed in the excerpt. The superscripted CV and FA indicate the people and/or accents John Mulaney imitated.

Method of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using a qualitative approach to classify the impoliteness that occurs in the data, the result of which is presented in a table. Meanwhile, the descriptive approach was utilized to explain the impoliteness strategies in John Mulaney's stand-up comedy and their functions. The data collected were thoroughly classified according to Culpeper's impoliteness strategies taxonomy: bald-on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm/mock politeness, and withhold politeness (1996). After presenting the data, examples of each strategy were further analyzed. To fulfill the second research objective, each strategy was calculated to figure out the most frequently used strategy. Once discovered, their functions were further categorized and analyzed based on the context and Culpeper's theory of impoliteness function (2011), specifically entertaining impoliteness and five sources of pleasure related to impoliteness and entertainment to explain how the impoliteness entertains the audience. Then, a conclusion congruent with the findings of the research is made.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Impoliteness Strategies in John Mulaney's Stand-Up Comedy

All four of John Mulaney's stand-up comedy specials contain a total of 343 impoliteness strategies, which covers only four out of five impoliteness strategies.

As shown in Table 1, positive impoliteness strategy occurs 163 times, making up 47.5% of the data, making it the most frequent strategy. The most frequent sub-strategy within positive impoliteness is 'disassociate from the other,' which appears 42 times throughout all specials. This result is in line with Prananta's (2016) research on impoliteness strategies in situational comedy series, in which the majority of the impoliteness strategies found are positive impoliteness strategies. The second most frequent strategy is negative impoliteness, which appears 132 times and contributes to 38.5% of the data. Following next is sarcasm politeness, with 42 occurrences and a

percentage of 12.2%. Bald on-record impoliteness is the least frequent strategy, with only six occurrences and a percentage of 1.7%. Lastly, the withhold politeness strategy is nowhere to be found in the data. Within the most frequent strategy, positive impoliteness, 'Disassociate from the other' is the most frequent sub-strategy. However, 'Condescend, scorn, or ridicule' notably accounts for the most frequent sub-strategy overall.

Table 1. Frequency and Distribution of Impoliteness Strategies in John Mulaney's Stand-up Comedy

No.	Strategies	NIT	TCK	KG	BJ	Total	%
1.	Bald on Record	3	2	1	0	6	1.7
2.	Positive Impoliteness	32	43	52	36	163	47.5
	Ignore, Snub the other	1	2	1	1	5	1.5
	Exclude the other from an activity	3	2	4	4	13	3.8
	Disassociate from the other	9	8	16	9	42	12.2
	Be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic	4	8	9	6	27	7.8
	Use inappropriate identity markers	1	1	0	1	3	0.9
	Use obscure or secretive language	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Seek disagreement	4	10	9	3	26	7.6
	Make the other feel uncomfortable	0	2	2	4	8	2.3
	Use taboo words	6	5	8	5	25	7
	Call the other names	4	5	3	3	15	4.4
3.	Negative Impoliteness	28	46	37	21	132	38.5
	Frighten	1	2	6	1	10	2.9
	Condescend, scorn, or ridicule	26	36	29	17	108	31.4
	Invade the other's space	0	5	1	2	8	2.3
	Explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect	1	3	1	1	6	1.7
	Put the other's indebtedness on record	0	0	0	0	0	0
4.	Sarcasm/Mock Politeness	12	15	5	10	42	12.2
5.	Withhold Politeness	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	75	106	95	67	343	100.0

Notes:
NIT: New in Town   KG: Kid Gorgeous
TCK: The Comeback Kid   BJ: Baby J

The usage of the most frequent impoliteness strategy, positive impoliteness, in Mulaney's stand-up comedy can be seen in the example below:

(2) And they wear shirts that say "school" and it's like, look… if you're an adult still giving money to your college, college is a $120,000 hooker and you are an idiot who fell in love with her.
KG/11/College/PI#3
00:20:09,458 → 00:23:10,680

33	JM	:	I have friends I went to college with and they're like, [You should donate and be a good alumnus.]HMV
34			**And they wear shirts that say "school" and it's like, look… if you're an adult still giving money to your college, college is a $120,000 hooker and you are an idiot who fell in love with her.**
35			She's not going to do anything else for you.
36			It's done.
37			((Cheer))
38	AU	:	{Applause}

The excerpt above is an instance of the positive impoliteness sub-strategy, namely 'Disassociate from the other,' in which the speaker denies association or common ground with the other (Culpeper, 1996). In line with the findings of Hafisa and Hanidar (2021) on impoliteness strategies in stand-up comedy, Mulaney uses this sub-strategy to attack a certain individual or community using their stereotypical traits or peculiar behaviors. In the bit above, Mulaney expresses his annoyance about how college would demand donations from him years after he graduated and mimics how his former college friends persuaded him to be a good alumnus by donating. He then states that donating to college as a graduated adult is like someone who falls in love with a prostitute after the transaction is done. In this bit, Mulaney denies associating with his college friends and distinguishes the lack of common ground between him and other alumni who donate, hence categorized as the 'Disassociate from the other' sub-strategy.

From all five negative impoliteness sub-strategies, John Mulaney only uses four sub-strategies in all his stand-up comedies as the sub-strategy 'put the other's indebtedness on record' is nowhere to be found. Overall, 'condescend, scorn, or ridicule' is the most frequent sub-strategy found in John Mulaney's stand-up comedy (31.4%), whereas 'explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect' is the least frequent sub-strategy (1.7%). Previous research on impoliteness in stand-up comedy by Yuanita (2019), as well as Hafisa and Hanidar (2021) shows contrasting results, as in both research, negative impoliteness strategy is found to be the most frequent in their data. However, Hafisa and Hanidar (2021) found 'Condescend, scorn, or ridicule' to be the most frequent sub-strategy and contribute to 30.5% of the overall data, similar to the present research. Yuanita (2019) also found that the negative impoliteness identified in the data mostly consists of the 'Condescend, scorn, or ridicule' sub-strategy, which is congruent with the present research. Below is an example of a negative impoliteness strategy in John Mulaney's stand-up comedy:

(3) Like, when the Chinese food delivery guy comes, we don't let him hang out after he's delivered the Chinese food.
TCK/25/Weed Dealer/NI#2
00:39:44,278 → 00:40:38,665

4	JM	:	I more feel bad for weed dealers 'cause they're about to find out that we only showed them a certain amount of politeness because they had an illegal product.
5			And we don't show that same politeness to people who deliver legal products.
6			**Like, when the Chinese food delivery guy comes, we don't let him hang out after he's delivered the Chinese food.**
7	AU	:	((Laughter))
8	JM	:	**And we don't look the other way when he says weird shit to the girls we're hanging out with… to try to preserve the relationship.**

9   **And we definitely don't give him some of the Chinese food.**

10   AU   :   ((Laughter))

The excerpt above exemplifies the use of the 'Condescend, scorn, or ridicule' sub-strategy, in which the speaker emphasizes their relative power, belittles the hearer, does not take the hearer seriously, or is contemptuous towards the hearer (Culpeper, 1996). In the example above, Mulaney sarcastically ridicules weed dealers by comparing them to Chinese food delivery. In line 6, Mulaney tells the audience that people would normally not let the delivery guy stay after delivering the food. Then, in lines 8 and 9, he continues by saying that normally, people also don't try hard to build rapport with the delivery guy, even letting them have some of the food. In these lines, Mulaney compares the difference between how people treat people who deliver legal and illegal products differently to highlight the bizarreness of weed dealers and ridicule them, thus deliberately attacking their negative face.

On the other hand, sarcasm/mock politeness accounts for 12.2% of the overall data. Culpeper (1996) described sarcasm politeness, or alternatively mock politeness, as a strategy intended to threaten one's face by insincere use of politeness strategy, meaning using politeness strategy without the implication of its truth. Similar to Hafisa and Hanidar's (2021) findings, this strategy is the third most frequently found in the data. The use of sarcasm politeness in John Mulaney's stand-up comedy can be seen in the bit below:

(4)   You know I don't want to name any actual airline so let's just make one up and so let's just call it "Delta Airlines."
NIT/18/Delta Airlines/SR
00:19:30.201 → 00:21:06.064

1   JM   :   And now when I'm not with my girlfriend you can still do anything to me.

2   I can tolerate any treatment.

3   Like I try to travel alone sometimes you know and I'll put up with anything.

4   Like I'll book a ticket on some garbage airline.

5   **You know I don't want to name any actual airline so let's just make one up and so let's just call it "Delta Airlines."**

6   AU   :   ((Laughter))

In the example above, Mulaney tells the audience how naïve and compliant he is when he's alone. To back up this statement, he narrates his experience of traveling alone. He tells how he would book a ticket on a horrible airline and proceeds to say that he's making up an alias and calling it "Delta Airlines" instead. This is sarcasm politeness, as Mulaney pretends to protect the anonymity of the airline he's criticizing by making up a name, despite the fact that the made-up name he's using is the name of an actual American airline notorious for its bad service, hence attacking the negative face wants of the airline.

Lastly, bald on record impoliteness is used six times, making up only 2% of the data. The use of bald-on-record strategies in John Mulaney's stand-up comedy can be seen as follows:

(5)   We go, "Hey, you're bad at being a dog."
TCK/9/Alpha/BR
00:15:06,134 → 00:18:27,752

12   JM   :   Petunia… ((chuckles)) Petunia is my best friend in the world.

13   I give her a million kisses a day.

14   She does not like me, and barks at me and bites me all day long.

15   We had to get a dog trainer into the apartment because Petunia is a bad dog.

16   We tell her that every day.

17   **We go, "Hey, you're bad at being a dog."**

18   AU   :   ((Laughter))

In the example above, Mulaney talks about his pet dog, Petunia. He reveals to the audience that Petunia barks and bites him every day, hence warranting the need to call a dog trainer. Mulaney then states that Petunia is a bad dog, and he would often tell her directly that she is a bad dog. In this case, Mulaney intentionally attacks the face wants of

Petunia by bluntly telling her that she is a bad dog, hence executing bald-on-record impoliteness.

Entertaining Functions of the Most Frequent Impoliteness Strategies in John Mulaney's Stand-up Comedy

Previous research on the functions of impoliteness strategies by Hafisa and Hanidar (2021) has attempted to elaborate on the most frequent impoliteness strategy and how it fits Culpeper's (2011) entertaining impoliteness functions. Similarly, this section aims to reveal how the execution of impoliteness strategies in John Mulaney's stand-up comedy serves as entertaining impoliteness and entertains the audience, rather than generating social conflict and disharmony, by identifying how impoliteness in stand-up comedy caters to all five sources of pleasures as theorized by Culpeper (2011). In John Mulaney's stand-up comedy, positive impoliteness is the most frequently used strategy, accounting for 47.7% of the data. Hence, this section will analyze how impoliteness in John Mulaney's stand-up comedy entertains the audience through entertaining impoliteness sources of pleasure on data containing positive impoliteness strategies. Table 2 below shows the frequency of entertaining impoliteness sources of pleasure in John Mulaney's stand-up comedy.

Table 2. Frequency and distribution of entertaining functions of positive impoliteness strategies in John Mulaney's stand-up comedy

No.	Entertaining Functions	NIT	TCK	KG	BJ	Total	%
1.	Emotional pleasure	6	27	28	11	72	44.2
2.	Aesthetic pleasure	0	0	1	1	2	1.2
3.	Voyeuristic pleasure	3	1	2	6	12	7.4
4.	The pleasure of being superior	16	11	11	13	51	31.3
5.	The pleasure of feeling secure	7	4	10	5	26	16.0
	Total	32	43	52	36	163	100.0

From 163 occurrences of positive impoliteness strategies, it is found that 72 entertain the audience through emotional pleasure, which accounts for 44.2% of the data. The pleasure of being superior is the second most frequent source of pleasure, with 51 occurrences (31.3%), followed by the pleasure of

feeling secure with 26 occurrences (16%), voyeuristic pleasure with 12 occurrences (7.4%), and aesthetic pleasure with two occurrences (1.2%). The usage of the most frequent source of pleasure, emotional pleasure, in Mulaney's stand-up comedy can be seen in the example below:

(6) Tell him we're here.
KG/4/Zoo/PI#4/E#1
00:07:16,227 → 00:07:50,052

11	JM	:	You don't always get to see the things that you paid to see.
12			Ever been to the goddamn zoo?
13	AU	:	((Laughter))
14	JM	:	Those guys are never where they're supposed to be.
15			Every time I go to the zoo I'm like, "Hey, where's the jaguar?"
16			And the zoo guy is like, [He must be in the inside part.]
			HMV
17			The inside part?
18			**Tell him we're here.**
19	AU	:	((Laughter))

The bit above is an example of how a positive impoliteness strategy is executed to evoke emotional pleasure. Culpeper (2011) states that observing impoliteness evokes arousal from the observer's perspective, which can be pleasurable. In this bit, Mulaney states that there are times when one does not get to see something they paid to see and takes the zoo as an example. Mulaney then acts out a scenario as a zoo visitor asking the zookeeper about the whereabouts of the animal and mimics a heavy male voice to impersonate the zookeeper, saying that the animal is in the inside part. In line 18, Mulaney then attacks the positive face wants of the zookeeper by unsympathetically asking for the animal to appear. This act of impoliteness elicits laughter from the audience, as it arouses emotional pleasure through expressing a cathartic annoyance towards a common unpleasant experience.

The second most common source of pleasure found is the pleasure of being superior. It is developed in humor theory that observing someone in a worse state than oneself elicits a self-reflexive

pleasure, hence entertaining the observant by making them feel superior (Bergson in Culpeper, 2011). The excerpt below is an example:

(7) That's just like hiring a slightly bigger child.
NIT/3/Babysitter/PI#10/E#4
00:01:45.871 → 00:02:48.534

4	JM	:	And in my head, when I was a little kid, I thought that Veronica was like 25, 30 years old.
5			I was just talking to my mom the other week, I found out that when I was 10 Veronica was 13.
6	AU	:	((Laughter))
7	JM	:	So why was she in charge?
8			All she could do was dial the telephone a little better than I could.
9			13 when I'm 10?
10			**That's just like hiring a slightly bigger child.**
11			That would be like if you're going out of town for the week and you paid a horse to watch your dog.
12	AU	:	((Laughter))

In this example, Mulaney tells the audience about the babysitter he used to have named Veronica, who Mulaney thought was an adult when he was a kid. He found out recently that Veronica was 13 years old when Mulaney was 10, which perplexed Mulaney. He then questions Veronica's credibility as a babysitter and calls her 'a slightly bigger child'. This impoliteness act of calling Veronica names arouses the pleasure of being superior from the audience, as it highlights Veronica's lack of credibility as someone who is supposed to take care of a child.

CONCLUSION

This research investigates the use of impoliteness strategies in John Mulaney's stand-up comedy and how it entertains the audience. From 122 bits analyzed throughout the specials, it is found that John Mulaney uses only four types of impoliteness

strategies: bald-on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock politeness. Of the 344 occurrences of impoliteness strategies, the positive impoliteness strategy is the most frequently used strategy, with 163 occurrences accounting for 47.4% of the data. As the most frequently used strategy, positive impoliteness strategies found in John Mulaney's stand-up comedy are further identified based on their entertaining function according to Culpeper's theory of impoliteness strategies function (2011). Specifically, this research investigates how the executed impoliteness entertains the audience through entertaining impoliteness sources of pleasure on data containing positive impoliteness strategy. From the classified 163 occurrences of positive impoliteness strategies, 105 entertain the audience through emotional pleasure, which accounts for 64% of the data, followed by the pleasure of being superior with 33 occurrences (20.1%), the pleasure of feeling secure with 14 occurrences (8.5%), voyeuristic pleasure with ten occurrences (6.1%), and aesthetic pleasure with two occurrences (1.2%). The findings implicate that throughout his stand-up comedy performances, John Mulaney employs various impoliteness strategies, especially positive impoliteness strategies, to entertain the audience, mostly by evoking their emotional pleasure.

Although the findings of this research differ from previous studies (Hafisa and Hanidar, 2021; Prananta, 2016; Sunday and Bamgbose, 2021; Toddington, 2015; Yuanita, 2019) in terms of the distribution and functions of impoliteness strategies, this study offers new perspectives on the how the execution of impoliteness strategies by a comedian might vary within each work, as well as specifically what sources of pleasure entertains the audience from observing the impoliteness in stand-up comedy.

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