



# An Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies Used by Wednesday Addams in Netflix's *Wednesday* Season 1

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## ABSTRACT

*In today's society, impoliteness in communication has become increasingly normalized, especially in the media. This study analyzes the types, functions, and contextual factors of impoliteness strategies used by Wednesday Addams, the main character in the Netflix series Wednesday Season 1. Employing Culpeper's (2011) impoliteness theory and a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected from selected dialogues that feature impolite language. The findings reveal that Wednesday uses all five impoliteness strategies such as bald on record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, off-record, and withhold politeness with positive impoliteness being the most frequent. Positive impoliteness emerges as the most frequently used strategy, as Wednesday often targets other's positive face to express her emotional detachment. These strategies serve primarily affective functions, expressing emotions such as irritation or detachment. The study also finds that Wednesday's impoliteness is influenced by contextual factors, particularly social norms, power relations, and situational context.*

## INTRODUCTION

In conversation, individuals need to choose a courteous language that is suitable for maintaining positive interactions. Using polite language helps ensure a pleasant interaction with others, while impolite language can create discomfort or social tension (Pardede et al., 2021). In the modern era, impoliteness in communication has become widespread in society, but many people assume that this is normal and part of communication. Young people are not bothered by the impoliteness of their peers, and they do not think the impoliteness is negative especially when it used humorously or playfully (Aijmer, 2015). According to Leech (2014) when two or more people are able to exchange insults and other impolite comments, yet regard them as lighthearted or even humorous, they are demonstrating a strong form of signaling mutual solidarity. The use of impoliteness really become a common habit in society across various situations or context, including informal and formal settings and across various forms of media (Sari et al., 2019) .

Impoliteness is one of significant aspects studied within the field of pragmatics. Pragmatics is the study of how a speaker conveys meaning and how a listener understands and interprets it (Hutahaeen et al., 2021). Pragmatics focuses not on the literal meaning of words, but on the speaker's intended purpose behind them. It also examines the relationship between language and the context in which it is used (Rovita & Gulö 2022). Therefore, pragmatics could help within identifying impoliteness which sometimes is applied by using sarcastic utterances. The purpose of studying it is to allow for an exploration of people's intended meanings, their assumptions, objectives or goals, and the types of actions that they carry out when they communicate. By understanding pragmatics, miscommunication can be avoided (Wahyu Permadi et al., 2022).

One aspect of language use that has gained increasing attention is impoliteness, particularly how it reflects power dynamics, emotions, and social norms. The phenomenon of impoliteness is observed in the Netflix series *Wednesday* (Season 1), which combines supernatural elements, mystery, and teenage drama. Released on November 23, 2022, the series is inspired by *The Addams Family*, originally created by Charles Addams. The story centers on Wednesday Addams, a teenager with unique abilities who is sent to a boarding school for students with supernatural traits. Throughout the series, Wednesday frequently uses sarcastic, blunt, and unconventional language, often defying social norms. These characteristics make her an intriguing subject for pragmatic analysis, particularly in the study of impoliteness strategies. Exploring impoliteness in media not only enhances character interpretation but also contributes to a deeper understanding of language use in social interaction and communication.

Impoliteness strategies have been widely explored across various contexts, such as political speeches, films, social media, and performance arts. Several studies have applied Culpeper's impoliteness framework to examine different functions and types of impolite speech. For instance, Sari et al. (2019) analyzed impoliteness in the *Peter Rabbit* movie, identifying *Bald on Record* as the most used strategy. Similarly, Hassan et al. (2023) explored impoliteness in Putin's annexation speech, highlighting the dominance of negative impoliteness to assert political power. Other studies investigated impoliteness in song lyrics (Sugawa et al., 2023), stand-up comedy (Shabrina & Pratama, 2023), and Instagram hate comments (Wikang et al., 2024), showing how impoliteness reflects emotion, social critique, or audience engagement. However, these studies tend to focus on political discourse, male-dominated characters, or public commentary. There is limited research on female protagonists in fictional, supernatural contexts, particularly how impoliteness contributes to character construction and narrative function.

This study addresses that gap by focusing on Wednesday Addams, the main character in *Wednesday* (2022), a Netflix series where impoliteness is a key aspect of her personality and communication style. Guided by Culpeper's (2011) theory, this study aims to identify the types and functions of impoliteness strategies used by Wednesday Addams. Analyze how contextual factors such as social norms, power relations, and situational context influence the use of these strategies. By exploring impoliteness in a female-



led supernatural series, this research contributes to the broader field of socio-pragmatics and enhances understanding of how language constructs identity, challenges norms, and entertains in media discourse.

Here the three main problems of this study:

1. What are the types of impoliteness strategies used by Wednesday Addams as the main character in the Netflix series Wednesday Season 1?
2. What are the functions of impoliteness strategies used by Wednesday Addams as a main character in Netflix series Wednesday Season 1?
3. How do the contexts influence the use of impoliteness by Wednesday Addams as the main character in the Netflix series Wednesday Season 1?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Impoliteness Strategies*

Culpeper (1996) developed a framework for impoliteness that relates to the politeness strategies outlined by Brown and Levinson (1987). He introduced a model featuring five impoliteness strategies with one revision developed in 2005, which are Bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, Off-record impoliteness, and withhold politeness.

### *Types of Impoliteness Strategies*

#### 1. Bald on Record Impoliteness

This strategy involves direct, clear, and unambiguous face-threatening acts (FTAs) in contexts where face concerns are relevant. Unlike Brown and Levinson's bald on record politeness (used in emergencies or power-unequal relationships), Culpeper's (1996) version is intentionally impolite and confrontational

#### 2. Positive Impoliteness

Designed to damage the addressee's positive face their desire to be liked and accepted this strategy includes ignoring others, using derogatory terms, showing disinterest, or excluding someone from a group (Culpeper, 2005).

#### 3. Negative Impoliteness

Targets the addressee's negative face, or their freedom of action. Tactics include belittling, mocking, invading personal space, and showing disrespect (Culpeper, 2005).

#### 4. Off-Record Impoliteness

Revised from the earlier sarcasm strategy, off-record impoliteness involves indirect offense through implicature. Though the statement is ambiguous, its impolite intention remains clear (Culpeper, 2005).

## 5. Withhold Politeness

This strategy involves the deliberate omission of expected polite behaviour. Examples include failing to greet, thank, or respond, especially in contexts where such acts are socially expected. It signals emotional detachment or disapproval (Culpeper, 2005).

### *The Functions of Impoliteness Strategies.*

Although impoliteness has been widely studied from a linguistic perspective, limited efforts have been made to explore its underlying purposes. Culpeper (2011) categorizes the functions of impoliteness into three main types: affective impoliteness, coercive impoliteness, and entertaining impoliteness. Each function serves a distinct communicative role, which will be elaborated upon in the following sections.

#### 1. Affective Impoliteness

The first function of impoliteness is known as affective impoliteness. This function involves an emotional outburst that occurs during a conversation between the speaker of impoliteness and the target of impoliteness. According to Culpeper (2011) Affective impoliteness is defined as the deliberate expressing of strong emotions, most commonly rage, implying that the target is to blame for generating that negative emotional response.

#### 2. Coercive impoliteness

Coercive impoliteness refers to attempts to realign values between the producer and the target in a way that benefits the producer or preserves their existing advantages. This sort of impoliteness includes activities that are detrimental to the target's interests, limiting the target's options and creating a conflict of interest (Culpeper, 2011). The terms "producer" and "target" might refer to individuals, groups, or institutions. This function entails coercive action, which is described by Tedeschi and Felson (in Culpeper, 2011, 226) as an action intended to cause harm to another person or to coerce an agreement. In accordance with Culpeper (2011, 252), this function appears to arise in contexts characterized by differing social structural power or social status.

#### 3. Entertaining Impoliteness

The last function of impoliteness is entertaining impoliteness. Culpeper (2011) state about more specific characterization of this impoliteness function is that it entails exploitative entertainment, where the enjoyment is derived at the target's expense. This function serves to amuse an audience sometimes including the speaker at the expense of a target. It may involve mockery or jokes, where the target might be real or fictional, and not always aware of being targeted (Culpeper, 2011).

### *The Influences of Context in Impoliteness*

Culpeper (2011) emphasizes the significant influence of contextual background on the use and interpretation of impoliteness. In particular, he notes that in certain event contexts where impoliteness is habitual or normalized, its impact may be considerably diminished. Individuals immersed in such environments may perceive impolite acts as weak or less offensive, although alternative perspectives of the same event can still be recognized. Moreover, Culpeper highlights those social norms and cultural ideologies such as machismo mediate the value systems that underlie face concerns. These dominant ideologies serve to sustain, normalize, and legitimize particular behavioral patterns, including those considered impolite in other contexts. Such behaviors often function to maintain power hierarchies, where insults may act as tools for social control and group dominance. Consequently, what is frequently labeled as impoliteness is closely related to abuses of power, where one individual or group exerts influence over another beyond socially accepted limits. The situational context also plays a crucial role in activating specific face components and social norms during interactions. The salience of particular face needs and the degree of their public exposure influence the potential for face-threatening acts. Language itself helps establish thresholds of politeness and impoliteness, shaping how subsequent interactions unfold (Culpeper 2011).

## METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach to analyse the impoliteness strategies used by the main character, Wednesday Addams, in the Netflix series Wednesday Season 1. The aim is to identify the types and functions of impoliteness strategies and examine how context influences their use. According to Creswell et al. (2018), qualitative research is useful for understanding meaning within social or human issues, focusing on descriptive rather than numerical data. The data comprises utterances by Wednesday Addams collected from the series' transcripts, sourced from <https://8flix.com/transcripts/>. The series consists of one season with eight episodes, each approximately 55 minutes long. The data collection was conducted through documentation, involving four steps: (1) watching all eight episodes, (2) downloading the transcripts, (3) rewatching the series to check transcript accuracy, and (4) coding impolite utterances and organizing them in a Microsoft Word table.

For analysis, a pragmatic approach is adopted, focusing on how language conveys meaning in specific contexts (Yule, 1996). The utterances are analyzed using Culpeper's (2005, 2011) impoliteness theory to classify the types and determine their functions affective, coercive, or entertaining. Additionally, contextual influences such as power dynamics, social norms, and situational settings are examined. The results are interpreted to understand how impoliteness constructs character identity and interpersonal interaction, followed by drawing conclusions based on the findings.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data collected from transcript of Wednesday dialogues were systemically categorized according to the specific research objective. These objectives include identify and describing the various types and functions of impoliteness. According to Culpeper 2011 theory, the author categorized or classified the data into five types of impoliteness method, which are Bald on Record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, off-record impoliteness, withhold politeness. Furthermore, the author also categories the function of impoliteness, based on Culpeper theory there are three functions of impoliteness include affective impoliteness, coercive impoliteness and entertaining impoliteness. There are 102 data found in this research that are shown in Table 4.1 the frequency and percentage of impoliteness.

**Table 1. Frequency of Occurrence the Type and Function of impoliteness strategies used by Wednesday Addams**

No			Types of Impoliteness					Total	Percentage (%)
			BR	PI	NI	OR	WP		
	Function	Affective	9	29	8	8	7	61	59.8
		Coercive	0	5	13	0	0	18	17.65
		Entertaining	0	7	4	12	0	23	22.55
		Total	9	41	25	20	7	102	100%
		Percentage (%)	08.9	40.2	24.5	19.6	06.8	204	

**Note:**

**BR** : Bald on record impoliteness

**PI** : Positive impoliteness

**NI** : Negative impoliteness

**OR** : Off-record impoliteness

**WP** : Withhold Politeness

According to the table 1 above, it shows that all of the types impoliteness were used by the main character Wednesday series which is Wednesday Addams. According to Culpeper's (2011) framework. These strategies are into five types which are Bald on Record (BR), Positive Impoliteness (PI), Negative Impoliteness (NI), Off-Record (OR), and Withhold Politeness (WP), other than there is classification based on their communication function namely Affective impoliteness, Coercive impoliteness and Entertaining Impoliteness. From the total of 102 data impolite that was found in the series, the most frequently used strategy is Positive Impoliteness, which occurred 41 times and account for 40.2% all instances. Following

this, Negative Impoliteness was the second most frequently used strategy, with 25 instances occurrences and represented (24.5%) of the total. Then there is Off-Record impoliteness strategy comes at the third place appeared in 20 instances or (19.6%). Off-Record impoliteness strategy is followed by Bald on record impoliteness which at fourth place with 9 instances or (08.8%). Lastly, the least strategy used is Withhold Politeness appear in 7 instances, which constitutes (06.9%) of the total data. Withhold Politeness was identified as the least commonly occur among all the types of impoliteness strategies analysed.

**Table 2. Frequency of factors of context influence the use of impoliteness strategies used by Wednesday Addams**

No.	Context factors	Data	Percentage
1.	Social Norm	48	47
2.	Power Relation	21	20,6
3.	Situational Context/ Activity Type	33	32,4
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>

The analysis reveals that all categories function of impoliteness which are Affective, Coercive and Entertaining are used by Wednesday Addams. The most frequently of impoliteness strategies were used Affective impoliteness which for affective purposes with total 61 instances or (59.8). On the other hand, the second most common function is the entertaining impoliteness. It was found to occur with 23 instances, representing (22.55%) of the total. This function is particularly fitting for Wednesday's use of humor especially dark humor and sarcasm to entertain either herself or the audience. In many cases, her witty and morbid remark not serve to genuinely offend but to amuse or showcase her cleverness and personality. According to the data, this function is strongly associated with off-record impoliteness. Meanwhile coercive impoliteness is less frequently with only appear 18 instances or (17.65%). Coercive impoliteness is used to dominate, control, or manipulate the interlocutor and is most often realized through negative impoliteness strategies. This reflects her tendency to resist power structures and maintain control over situations.

Furthermore, for the last research objective identifying how context influence the use of impoliteness. according to table 4.2 above, it shows the contextual factor influencing the use of impoliteness by Wednesday Addams. The analysis reveal that social norms represent the most significant contextual factor with total instances 48 out of 102 or (47%). This indicates that many of Wednesday's impolite utterances are closely tied to her deliberate deviation from conventional social expectations and norms, which aligns with her rebellious and non-conformist personality. The second most prominent factor is situational context or activity type which comprises 32.4% of data or 33 instances. This suggests that the specific situations or types of interaction such as confrontational dialogues or moment of social tension, substantially contribute to the emergence of impoliteness. Lastly, power relation influence 20.6% or 21 instances of the occurrences,



showing that hierarchical dynamics such as authority figure or peer relationship also play a notable role in shaping Wednesday Addams use of impoliteness.

### Types of Impoliteness Strategies used by Wednesday Addams in Wednesday series

There are five types of impoliteness strategies was found that used by Wednesday Addams. These strategies consist of Bald on record impoliteness, Positive impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness, Off-Record impoliteness and Withhold politeness.

#### 1. Bald on Record Impoliteness

Bald on Record impoliteness refers to form of communication in which a face-threatening act (FTA) is operates in straightforward and unambiguous manner. It generally used in situations where the speaker purposefully aims to damage the hearer's face, especially when then social stakes are high (Culpeper et al.,2003, 1554). According to Culpeper (2005) bald on record impoliteness is marked by its lack of mitigation or softening, the utterance confronts the hearer directly deliberately avoiding any politeness strategies or softening.

##### Excerpt 1

**Scene:** Morticia is Wednesday's mother, she gives Wednesday a necklace made of obsidian, symbolizing a bond between them. The gift is sentimental, showing Morticia's emotional connection. However, Wednesday sharply reject what it represents love, family and tradition.

Morticia : (giving necklace with their initials) Our initials. It's made of obsidian. I tis symbol of our connection.

Wednesday : which one your spirits suggested this toe-curling tchotcke? **I'm not you mother, I will never fall in love or be a housewife or have a family!**

Morticia : I'm told girls your age says hurt things, and I shouldn't take it to heart.

From conversation above, Wednesday utterance can be categorized as an instance of bald on record impoliteness, based on the proposed by Culpeper, Bald on record occurs when the speaker performs a face-threatening act in a direct, clear and unambiguous with the intention to directly threaten the hearer's face and without any attempt to mitigate or soften the threat. Wednesday states bluntly, *"I'm not you, mother. I will never fall in love or be a housewife or have a family."* Which reflect a direct rejection of her mother's values and life choices. Wednesday delivers this rejection without any softening or politeness strategy. It making the face attack explicit and unambiguous. In the case Wednesday utterance, her response demonstrates a clear emotional detachment and a desire to assert her personal identity through a blunt dismissal of family expectations. The absence of empathy and overt bluntness in her speech serve primary characteristics of bald on record.



## Excerpt 2

**Scene:** In the scene Wednesday Addams is in a mandatory therapy session with dr. Kinbott, a psychiatrist assigned to help Wednesday's social adjustment and address her behavior issues at Nevermore Academy. Dr. Kinbott adopt a warm, therapeutic tone, attempting to connect with Wednesday by validating her emotional, a standard approach aimed to building trust and emotional openness. However, Wednesday receive this supportive as manipulative, responding with immediate suspicion, hostility, accusatory and confrontational remark.

Psychiatrist : It is okay to be confused about things.

**Wednesday : Don't try and lure me into one of your psychological traps!!!**

Psychiatrist : No one is trying to trap you. I'm here to help you process your emotions.

From Wednesday's utterance is definitely Bald on Record impoliteness. It can be shown because Wednesday delivers her response with directness, unsoftened, bluntly and confrontationally. Wednesday's response reflects of defensiveness and emotional detachment. It gives signal of rejection of both therapeutic authority and internal connection. Her blunt and confrontational tone align with Culpeper's types of impoliteness theory which is Bald on Record impoliteness, it emphasizes the speaker's deliberate choice to perform a Face Threatening Act openly without regard for politeness or social norm.

## Excerpt 3

**Scene:** In this scene, Wednesday is engaged in a conversation with Mrs. Thornhill, a teacher and dorm mother at Nevermore Academy. Mrs. Thornhill attempt to build a personal connection by saying she was looking out for Wednesday's best interests and suggesting that they are similar. However, Wednesday sharply reject. Known for Wednesday emotionally detached, mistrust and fiercely independent personality. Wednesday attempt to distances herself from any perceived emotional intimacy or vulnerability.

Wednesday : So, you are only looking out for my best interests?

Mrs. Thornhill : Always, I think we're a lot alike.

**Wednesday : We aren't. I don't need your help or your pity. I already have a mother and a therapist, that's enough torture even for me.**

From Wednesday's response exemplifies type Bald on record impoliteness, as defined by Culpeper theory. Her statement is delivered blunt without any attempt to mitigate the offense or soften the impact. Wednesday directly challenges Mrs. Thornhill's claim of emotional closeness and support by sharply rejecting her offer of help. Wednesday's language is unfiltered, emotionally detached and clearly intended to create social distance. Her utterance aligns precisely with the characteristics of Bald on record

impoliteness, an unambiguous, unsoftened and face-threatening act aimed at delivering offense toward the addressee.

## 2. Positive Impoliteness

Positive impoliteness is utilized to damage the addressee's positive face. This strategy involves undermining the individual's desire to be liked or accepted by others. According to Culpeper (2005,41) there are several specific techniques associated with this strategy, such as ignoring person, excluding person from a group or activity, showing disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic, using inappropriate identity markers, using obscure or secretive language, seeking disagreement, using taboo words and calling the other names in negative designation.

### Excerpt 1

**Scene:** Wednesday is being driven to Nevermore Academy, a boarding school for outcast by her parent (Gomez Addams, Morticia) and along with their butler, Lurch. During the trip, Morticia attempts to engage Wednesday in conversation, but Wednesday disinterested to respond to her parent's words because she is upset about being move to her new school.

Mom (Morticia) : Darling, how long do you intend on giving us the cold shoulder?

**Wednesday : Lurch, please remind my parents that I am no longer speaking to them**

Dad : I promise you, my little viper, you will love Nevermore

The utterance of Wednesday from conversation above is a clear example of positive impoliteness. Wednesday as an intentional rejection on her parent's attempt at communication, she is threatening their positive face. She deliberately not replying Morticia directly instead of instructing Lurch to communicate on her behalf, she excludes her parent from direct interaction and demonstrate that she is emotionally detached and disinterested in her parents' attempts to connect. By saying "I am not longer speaking to them", this illustrated that she being disinterested and unconcerned.

### Excerpt 2

**Scene:** Wednesday Addams is introduced to her new roommate Enid Sinclair at her new school, Nevermore Academy. Enid who is cheerful and outgoing try to establish a friend connection with Wednesday by commenting on the limited online presence surrounding.

Enid : It's a small school, there wasn't much online about you. You should really get on Insta, Snapchat and Tiktok.

**Wednesday : I find social media to be a soul-sucking void of meaningless affirmation.**

The response of Wednesday is illustrated instance of positive impoliteness. It attacks Enid's positive face by rejecting her effort to form a friendly connection. Wednesday employs negative and demeaning language

to describe something Enid values and enjoys. This act aligns to the positive impoliteness strategy of seeking disagreement and displaying disinterested, unconcerned and unsympathetic. Instead of acknowledging or engaging with Enid's interests in polite or respectful manner, Wednesday dismisses it and implying that it is superficial and worthless.

### Excerpt 3

**Scene:** During conversation between Enid and Wednesday, they engage in a brief argument that reveal their contrasting and highly opposed personalities.

Enid : I write in my voice. It is my truth. It is what my followers love.

**Wednesday : Your followers are clearly imbeciles. They respond to your stories with insipid little pictures.**

Enid : you mean emojis? It's how people express their feelings. I realize that's a foreign concept to you.

Wednesday's utterance through conversation above employs form of positive impoliteness. By calling Enid's followers "imbeciles" Wednesday deliver a personal attack that questions the intelligence of the people who support Enid's work. This not only undermines the credibility of Enid's audience but also devalues Enid's work, which Enid believe is valued by her followers. Moreover, Wednesday use of phrase "insipid little pictures" serve as derogatory toward emoji that a common form of digital emotional expression. Through this phrase, Wednesday trivializes and of Enid's communication style and creative output, implying that both format and content are worthless and superficial. Therefore, Wednesday's utterance exemplifies positive impoliteness by openly demeaning, disagreement, disinterested toward Enid's social identity.

### 3. Negative Impoliteness

Negative impoliteness strategy refers to communicative aimed at threatening an individual's freedom of action. According to Culpeper (2005) negative impoliteness is utilized to attack the addressee's negative face want, desire not to be imposed or restricted. The example of this strategy includes frightening people, condescending, scorning or ridiculing being contemptuous, refusing to treat the other with seriousness, belittling or demeaning the other, invading other's space, explicitly associating the other with a negative aspect and openly putting the other's indebtedness on record.

### Excerpt 1

**Scene:** Conversation between Wednesday and her younger brother, Pugsley. Pugsley got bullied and physically harmed by unknown assailant, and Wednesday demands to know who had done it all.

Wednesday : I want names  
 Pugsley : I don't know who they were, honest.  
 Wednesday : It happened so fast, Pugsley, emotion equals weakness  
 Pugsley : (whimpers)  
**Wednesday : NOW!!!**

From this dialog of the scene reflects of negative impoliteness strategy. Wednesday's utterance "I want name" constitutes a direct imposition on Pugsley's freedom of response. Wednesday does not make a request or ask politely but instead demands compliance, thereby threatening his negative face. This is emphasized by the emphatic command "NOW" which signal a strong sense of urgency and an unwillingness to accept hesitation or refusal. Therefore, Wednesday behavior damage Pugsley's negative face by removing his freedom to respond without pressure and diminishing his emotional experience. This strategy reflect Wednesday's broader personality as emotionally detached, dominant, and intolerant of vulnerability trait that appear throughout the series.

## Excerpt 2

**Scene:** Wednesday speak to Thing. Thing is a disembodied hand who acts as her confidant and helper. She told thing about her strategy to reveal the mystery in Nevermore.

Wednesday : I can't let it happen. That's why I need to find out the truth. **Breath a word of this to anyone and I will end you. (Taking to Thing)**

The threatening phrase "Breathe a word a word of this to anyone and I will end you." This utterance portrays a clear case of negative impoliteness as theorized of Culpeper which involve the utilize of this strategy designed to damage the hearer's negative face their desire for autonomy and freedom from imposition. The phrase "I will end you" serve as an intensified example of frightening. It imposes a direct threat to Thing's personal safety. Even though Thing does not communicate verbally. Wednesday still asserts her authority by exerting control and demanding obedience through coercion. By forbidding Thing from revealing any information and pairing this demand with threat of harm, Wednesday restricts Thing's freedom of action and signals that any defiance or noncompliance will result in severe consequences.

## Excerpt 3

**Scene:** The conversation between Wednesday and Eugene, one of her friends at Nevermore Academy. Wednesday warns Eugene against venturing into the forest by himself to investigate a mystery.

Eugene : Sure, I get it. Guess I will check out the woods myself.

**Wednesday : Don't go alone!!!! It is too dangerous, stand down.**

Wednesday's command "don't go alone! It is too dangerous, stand down," clearly exemplifies of negative impoliteness. The command targets to damage Eugene's negative face want which are the personal freedom, autonomy and the right not to be imposed. The phrase serves as a form of imposition that limit Eugene's autonomy and his ability to make independent decisions. It invades Eugene's autonomy by attempting to control Eugene's actions. Although Wednesday's concern for Eugene's safety is obvious, the way she expresses it is abrupt and forceful.

#### 4. Off-Record Impoliteness

Off-record impoliteness was introduced by Culpeper (2005,43-44) as a refinement of the earlier classification of sarcasm. This strategy involves delivering offence or impolite message in an indirect manner typically through implicature. Although the off-record impoliteness is characterized in more indirect expression, it should not be taken as any less offensive or impolite than the other strategies of impoliteness.

##### Excerpt 1

**Scene:** Wednesday Addams is introduced to Principal Weems, the Headmistress of Nevermore Academy. During conversation was interviewed regarding to her education and her transfer background. But, at the moment also Weems attempt to create a connection by mentioning that she and Wednesday's mother, Morticia were once roommates at Nevermore Academy.

Principal Weems : Did your mother tell you we were roommates back in the day?

**Wednesday : And you graduated with your sanity intact? Impressive**

In this example, Wednesday's utterance carries an implicit insult. It implies that enduring her mother's presence as a roommate would be psychologically damage. By saying with the sarcastic praise "impressive" subtly undermines both her mother Morticia and Principal Weems without directly accusing or insulting either of them. Therefore, this is a typically the feature of Off-record impoliteness where the speaker which is Wednesday intentionally communicates a critical or negative judgement while disguising it with politeness.

##### Excerpt 2

**Scene:** Ms. Thornhill is a teacher in Nevermore. Ms. Thornhill initiates a light, friendly conversation with Wednesday by asking if Enid which is her roommates has extended a warm welcome at Nevermore Academy.

Ms. Thornhill : I trust Enid has given you the old nevermore welcome.

**Wednesday : She is been smothering me with hospitality, I hope to return the favor in her sleep**

Wednesday's utterance portrays the feature of Off-record impoliteness. The offense is indirectly expressed, but the implicated negative judgement of Enid's behavior is clearly understood by the hearer. The phrase "return the favor in her sleep" implies a dark, possibly harmful intention. Yet it is framed within a humorous ambiguous tone. Although the comment is delivered with a hint of humor, the highlight message devalues Enid's kindness by portraying it as intrusive or overwhelming. By veiling her offensive negative judgement in a sarcastic form, Wednesday avoids a direct confrontation but still conveys her annoyance and emotional detachment.

### Excerpt 3

**Scene:** Principal Weems escorts Wednesday to attend her therapy session. Principal Weems confronts Wednesday regarding her presumed intent to run away from Nevermore Academy, an assumption based on her previous actions. Weems attempt to establish authority by stating her intention to prevent any such escape attempt. Then Wednesday response it with a flat tone following by slamming the car door.

Weems : given your history, I am sure you are intent on running away. I am here to prevent that from happening.

**Wednesday : I wish you luck (saying with flat face and slam the car's door)**

Based on the conversation above, Wednesday's utterances exemplify Off-record impoliteness, where the speaker which is Wednesday in this dialog, communicate offensive indirectly which involves sarcasm implicature. The phrase "I wish you luck" as a sarcastic expression that implying Weems's effort to control Wednesday are likely to fail and futile also that she underestimates Wednesday's autonomy. The flat tone and with the non-verbal action of slamming the car door reinforce the dismissive and defiant of the utterance. Rather than confronting in direct verbal, Wednesday uses irony to subtly challenge Weems's authority and express resistance.

## 5. Withhold Impoliteness

Withhold politeness happened when someone choose to silent or fail to act where politeness work is expected. This strategy is the last type proposed by Culpeper.

### Excerpt 1

**Scene:** Wednesday Addams arrives as Nevermore. She is assigned to share a room in Ophelia Hall with Enid Sinclair, a cheerful and extroverted werewolf student who warmly greet her roommate. Enid intends to give a hug as sign of welcome.

Enid : Welcome to Ophelia Hall  
 (Giving a hug to Wednesday)  
**Wednesday : .... (No Response and avoid the hug)**

In this scene, Wednesday's reaction is a clear of Withhold impoliteness. Enid performs a socially positive and friendly act by welcoming Wednesday and initiating physical contact through a hug action typically intended to establish friendship and solidarity. In social norm would predict some form of polite response such as spoken expression of gratitude like "Thank You", Nice to meet you" or at least non-verbal sign like a smile and nod. Instead, Wednesday pointedly remains silent and avoids the hug, signaling disinterest and rejection of Enid's attempt at social bonding.

### Excerpt 2

**Scene:** Eugene is a member of the Hummers club at Nevermore Academy. Eugene extends a friendly invitation to Wednesday to join in a group photo.

Eugene : Hey, Wednesday, want to grab a hummers group photo?  
**Wednesday : ..... (no response, stay silence)**  
 Eugene : I guess not.

Wednesday's behavior in this scene qualifies as Withhold Impoliteness. In this instance, Eugene's friendly invitation reasonably call for at least a basic polite response from Wednesday such as a verbal reaction, a polite refusal or even a facial expression. However, Wednesday chooses to remain completely silent and unresponsive, violates social norms of politeness and signal disinterest or rejection. Her behavior implies a lack of regard for Eugene's attempt at friendliness and inclusion, ultimately threatening his positive face.

### Excerpt 3

**Scene:** Principal Weems and Wednesday Addams engage in brief interaction as their conversation concludes. Weems, clearly expressing her frustration to Wednesday behaviour.

Weems : You're Exhausting  
 Wednesday : I know  
 Weems : Good Night, Miss Addams.  
**Wednesday : (No response, leaving the room immediately)**

In this instance, Wednesday's failure to return Principal Weems's polite " Good Night" demonstrate Withhold politeness. Social interaction norm typically requires a courteous reply like reply "Good night" or at least a basic gesture of acknowledgment like a nod would be expected. However, Wednesday's intentional



silence and immediate exit reflect a disregard for those expectations of politeness and respect, signaling disrespect and emotional detachment, especially within a student and authority figure interaction.

### Function and Context of Impoliteness used by Wednesday Addams

Culpeper (2011) categorizes the function of impoliteness into three primary types, each serving a distinct communicative purpose within interpersonal interactions. These classifications include Affective impoliteness, Coercive impoliteness and entertaining impoliteness. While for the influence of context, Culpeper (2011) shows that the use of impoliteness depends heavily on context: in settings where rude behavior is habitual or culturally normalized, its perceived impact is muted. Applying his model to Wednesday Addams, author analyze the heroine's impolite strategies through three interlocking contextual lenses (1) the social norms and ideologies that define what counts as acceptable banter or unacceptable offence, (2) the power relations that condemn face-threatening acts, and (3) the situational setting or activity type that frames interactional expectations (Culpeper, 2011).

#### 1. Affective Impoliteness

Affective impoliteness refers to the use of impolite language or behavior as mean of expressing genuine emotion for instance anger, frustration or disdain often aimed conveying the speaker's emotional state.

#### Excerpt 1

**Context:** The scene happens inside the Addams family's black car. Wednesday Addams and her parents are having conversation as they prepare to transfer her to Nevermore Academy. Her father which is Gomez Addams begins nostalgic on his own story and experience at the school. He attempts to physically express the nostalgic memory with a romantic by leaning kiss to Wednesday's mother. Wednesday sits stiff and straight in her black uniform, arms folded. She watches the display, then says in a flat tone, "You guys are making me nauseous. Not in a good way."

Dad : Nevermore is like no other boarding school. It's a magical place. It is where I met your mother and we fell in love. (Trying to kiss)

**Wednesday : You guys are making me nauseous. Not in a good way**

Wednesday's response exemplifies as Affective impoliteness. It conveys her spontaneous emotional response toward her parents' affection. In this instance, Wednesday comment is emotionally loaded and dismissive. Her phrase "nauseous" communicates disgust toward her parents display of kiss affection in front of her. This reaction does not appear to serve a coercive and also not intended to amuse others. Instead, it serves to express her genuine annoyance and discomfort, thus aligning with affective impoliteness, which

Culpeper (2011) theory of function of impoliteness, it can serve to express personal feeling without necessarily aiming to influence the interlocutor.

From the context of the conversation, family norms show kissing affection during a farewell talk as sweet and harmonious. However, Wednesday following her own personal unique way of thinking which find open displays of romance unpleasant and distasteful. The class between these two values systems explain why she feel negative and why her comment breaks usual polite behavior expected from a child toward parents. Additionally power dynamic or relationship further intensifies the impoliteness, power relationship makes her comment even stronger. Normally, parents have authority over children, criticism from a child to parents is marked and face-threatening. Wednesday's bold comment toward her parents is seen much ruder than if it were directed at a peer. However, within The Addams family unique cultural context, which embraces gothic style includes dark humor and dislike for sentimental feeling. It makes her parents are used to Wednesday's blunt attitude. Her parents interpret the comment as routine rather than a serious insult. This shared family culture makes the comment less hurtful. Therefore, according to the explanation above, while Wednesday's utterance illustrates Affective impoliteness in term of her emotion driven, her annoyance, its interpretation id heavily influenced by contextual factors such as family culture, power roles help explaining why she reacts that way and why it is considered impolite. As Culpeper (2011) emphasizes, impoliteness is not just in the words themselves but in how those words are received and evaluated within specific social and relational context.

## Excerpt 2

**Context:** This scene takes place at Dr. Kinbott's office. Wednesday's parents, Gomez and Morticia, accompany her during a therapy session with the doctor. However, before the session is over, Gomez and Morticia share a romantic moment. Morticia makes a suggestive comment that reflects the strength of their bond. Wednesday observes her parents in an intimate moment of affection as they kiss passionately. She then suddenly interrupts them with a loud exclamation. This emotional reaction suggests that Wednesday has reached her limit not only because she is uncomfortable with her parents' romantic display, which she usually finds unpleasant, but also because she feels a deeper sense of betrayal. Her sudden shift from criticizing their affection to accusing them of hiding the truth suggests that she has either discovered something troubling or has been suspicious for some time.

Morticia : Nothing like a good stretch to bring out the best in each other.

Gomez : Querida mia. (Gomez and Morticia was kissing passionately)

**Wednesday : ENOUGH!!! I think it is high time my parent faced the music. It seems they have been lying to me. Keeping secrets.**

Wednesday's utterance clearly exemplified of Affective impoliteness. Her response is emotionally charged and delivered with full of upset and frustration. By saying "Enough!!" as a signal emotional overwhelm at her parents' behavior. Wednesday's speech not aimed to entertain or persuasion but rather as an emotional outburst in response to the situation that she faces. This is aligned with outlined by Culpeper (2011) the function of impoliteness. Her phrase "it seems they have been lying to me, keeping secret." It is an accusatory statement that marks a shift in tone from annoyance to confrontation, further emphasizing the emotional drive behind her impoliteness. She does not attempt to manipulating her parents or gain dominance, instead, she is expressing betrayal and demanding emotional clarity.

Contextually, the impoliteness of Wednesday's response is intensified by the family setting, where respectful communication is typically expected especially from child toward parents. Wednesday's reaction disrupts social norm and hierarchical family roles, which makes her words more socially marked. According to Culpeper (2011) impoliteness is not only judged solely by linguistic form, but also by how it clashes with social norm expectation and relational dynamics. In this case, Wednesday's forceful interruption is face-threatening, as it challenges the moral standing of her parents and accuses them of deception. Additionally, the power asymmetry between child and parents makes her emotional outburst even more notable. In most families, children are expected to speak respectfully, especially during meaningful moment. Wednesday's bold and confrontational tone goes against this norm, which makes her impoliteness more salient and stand out. Therefore, Wednesday's utterance demonstrates affective of impoliteness driven by emotional and carrying personal meaning. Her impoliteness is shaped by her emotional state, the family's relation dynamics, and the cultural norms of both broader societies.

## 2. Coercive Impoliteness

According to Culpeper (2011) Coercive Impoliteness is occur when there is an imbalance of social structural power and utilize it to manipulate, dominate and control others by threatening their face. The speaker intentionally uses it to gain power, intimidate or force the hearer to act a certain way.

### Excerpt 1

**Context:** In this scene, Wednesday Addams and Eugene will investigate something suspicious, as part of their strategy and preparation, Wednesday studently demands Eugene to give his retainer. Eugene is initially confused and questions the reason behind the request. Pointing out that her teeth seem perfectly fine. However, Wednesday cut him off abruptly with forceful command.

Wednesday : Give me your retainer.

Eugene: What? Why? Your teeth are really good. Not as straight or white as Enid's but.....

**Wednesday : Hang it over!!!!**

From Wednesday's utterance "Hang it over!!!" exemplifies the function of Coercive impoliteness, as defined by Culpeper (2011). In this instance, Wednesday uses a commanding tone to intensify the force of her utterance. Rather than requesting politely typical social norm or offering an explanation, Wednesday signals that she expects immediate obedience. It pressuring Eugene to give his retainer without further protest. Furthermore, this is also reflecting a clear power asymmetry where Wednesday position herself as dominant and uses impoliteness as tool to achieve her goal through intimidation rather than negotiation or cooperation.

From a contextual perspective, in typical social norms or social setting, commanding someone without explanation especially in a peer relationship would be seen impolite. However, within Wednesday's personality that she often rejects conventional behavior and embraces a more assertive, even antisocial stance. Because of her communication style does not conform to typical polite standards, which changes how her impoliteness is perceived. Additionally in power relation although there is no formal hierarchy between Wednesday and Eugene, the power dynamic is made evident through her language. Wednesday take control of the situation and assumes authority by issuing direct commands. Her impoliteness is allowed and not strongly challenged because of her strong personality. Her role as the leader in their investigation, and Eugene more submissive and compliant role. And also, the situational setting in the context that show the urgency of the task they are about to perform investigating something possibly dangerous or secretive may also influence how her impoliteness is judged.

## Excerpt 2

**Context:** Wednesday and Eugene have a secret mission as part of their investigation into suspicious building in Pilgrims World Festival. While tension and focus are essential, Eugene expresses a lighthearted comment about the quality of the fudge serve in this place. Wednesday immediately cut him off with a sharp command.

Eugene : The Fudge is definitely the best thing about this place.

**Wednesday : Stop talking, keep watch!!!!**

Wednesday's utterance is a clear exemplifies of Coercive impoliteness, as described in Culpeper's (2011) theory of function of impoliteness. Wednesday gives two direct comments without softening her words or using polite expressions. The phrase "Stop talking dismisses Eugene's verbal expression while "Keep watch!!!" strongly instruct him to focus on their mission. The use of language demonstrates a power

move or taking control to Eugene and the situation by steering the conversation back to their investigation. With Eugene silence, reinforcing her position has power over Eugene in this situation.

From a contextual perspective, Culpeper (2011) emphasizes that impoliteness cannot be judged solely on the linguistics form of an utterance, it must be interpreted through contextual factor including social norm, power relations and situational context. In this scene the characters are engaged in high stakes secret investigation, an activity that demand seriousness, caution, and alertness. Eugene's casual comment an inappropriate tone for the situation. Then in power dynamics, while Eugene and Wednesday are technically peer, her assertiveness and leadership role in this investigation position her as the dominant figure. Her impolite response reflects this power hierarchy, where she assumes control in a situation requiring decisiveness. Eugene's lack of resistance reinforces her authority in the exchange. Additionally, in social norms like in normal conversation, sudden command like "stop talking would typically be seen as rude or face-threatening. Therefore, Wednesday's use of coercive impoliteness in this scene is shaped by the type of activity they are engaged in, her position as the one taking charge, and the pressing nature of the situation. Her sharp and commanding language is used to manage the situation and ensure Eugene follows her lead. This demonstrates how impoliteness can be used purposefully as a strategy, especially in situations that require quick decisions and clear authority.

### 3. Entertaining Impoliteness

According to Culpeper (2011,252), Entertaining impoliteness involves using someone as their target or subject of mockery or offense them for amusement purpose.

#### Excerpt 1

**Context:** In this scene take a place at public which is café. There is a group of boys dressed as pilgrims initially attempt to intimidate Wednesday Addams. However, Wednesday, known for her sharp wit and unshakable demeanor, does not respond with fear or submission. Instead, she replies with a mocking and sarcastic comment that escalates the situation into a physical confrontation.

Pilgrim : my dad owns pilgrim world. Who you calling stupid?

**Wednesday : if the buckled shoe fits.**

In this instance, Wednesday's response exemplifies entertaining impoliteness, one of function of impoliteness outlined by Culpeper (2011). It combines sarcasm, mockery and humor to demean the pilgrim character in an amusing way. The humorous tone and witty structure of her response suggest that the primary function of the impoliteness is to entertain rather than harm. Importantly her utterance does not aim to control someone or to express strong emotions. Therefore, it aligns with Culpeper's (2011) theory which is

entertaining impoliteness that used for amusement purpose where the target becomes a source of amusement rather than object of emotional detachment.

For the contextual factor that influence the use of impoliteness according to Culpeper (2011) including the situational setting, power relation and social norms. In this instance, the situational setting takes place in a public, informal setting where playful banter or teasing is more acceptable than in formal environments. This setting allows for greater tolerance of humorous or sarcastic remarks, reducing the perceived severity of Wednesday's impoliteness. The context also positions her response as a defense mechanism rather than an unprovoked attack, reinforcing the entertaining purpose. Then power relation, while there is no clear formal power difference between Wednesday and the pilgrim boy, the boy attempt to assert dominance by referencing his father's ownership of Pilgrim World. Wednesday's sarcastic retort undermines his attempt at social superiority, flipping the power dynamic through verbal cleverness. Her impoliteness here functions as way to reclaim authority and resist intimidation.

### Excerpt 2

**Context:** In this scene, Enid as a Wednesday roommate who is cheerful, colorful and highly sociable. She playfully criticizes Wednesday's gloomy I by comparing it to something inspired by Ted Bundy Pinterest, a humorous exaggeration meant to tease Wednesday about her dark aesthetics.

Enid : When I suggested giving you of your room a makeover, I did not have Ten Bundy's Pinterest in mind.

**Wednesday : Still not as creepy as your stuffed unicorn collection.**

From Wednesday's utterance exemplifies function as entertaining impoliteness. Instead of responding with or emotional intensity, she humorously mocks Enid's preference for unicorns an interest that sharply opposes Wednesday's dark and gothic character. This utterance does not serve the purpose of expressing emotional detachment or compelling Enid to behave a certain way. However, her comment includes sarcasm and irony aiming to entertain both Enid and the audience with smart comeback. The use of humor and exaggeration makes the impoliteness feel playful, turning it into humor of entertainment rather than a serious insult.

From the contextual perspective in term of social norms, the scene takes place in the private setting of their shared dorm room, where informal, personal exchanges are expected. Within this environment, friendly teasing is more socially acceptable, especially between roommates who have developed a mutual understanding. While mocking someone's interests might typically be seen as rude, in this context it falls within the boundaries of playful banter. Wednesday's use of irony and sarcasm is part of her established character someone who consistently defies typical norms of politeness and embraces macabre humor. The

audience is already familiar with this behavior, which helps reframe the impoliteness as entertaining rather than genuinely offensive. Then in term of power relations, the relationship between Wednesday and Enid is relatively equal. Although they have opposite personalities, neither one holds power over the other. Their interactions are shaped by mutual respect and an emerging friendship. Because of this balance, Wednesday has room to use teasing and sarcasm without upsetting the relationship. The absence of a power struggle means that her impoliteness is less likely to be viewed as hostile and more likely to be taken as part of friendly banter.

## CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the impoliteness strategies used by Wednesday Addams as a main character in Netflix series Wednesday Season 1. The analysis was conducted using Culpeper's (2011) theory focusing on three research objectives which are to identify the types of impoliteness strategies, examining the function of impoliteness in communication, and exploring how contextual factors influence the use of impoliteness.

The findings reveal that all five types of impoliteness strategies identified by Culpeper (2011), such as Bald on record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, off-record, and withhold politeness were employed by Wednesday Addams throughout the series. Among these, Positive impoliteness was the most frequently used strategy, accounting for 40.2% of all instances. This indicates a dominant pattern of utterances where Wednesday intentionally undermines other's positive face often through mockery, criticism, or dismissive language. Negative Impoliteness and Off-record followed, suggesting her tendency to attack others' freedom of actions or express impoliteness indirectly. Meanwhile Bald on record and withhold politeness were used less frequently. It is relevant to her character's overall impolite persona.

In terms of functions, the study found that Wednesday's impoliteness served three communicative purposes which are affective, coercive and entertaining. The most prominent was affective impoliteness (59.8%), highlighting her use of impolite language to express emotions, such as irritation, disapproval, or disdain. Entertaining impoliteness was the second most frequent function (22.5%), which reflects her use of sarcasm and dark humor to amuse either herself or the audience. This function was closely associated with her wit and ironic demeanor. Coercive impoliteness (17.6%) appeared less often but still played a significant role, particularly in interactions where Wednesday sought to assert dominance or reject authority.

Then for identified context factors that influence the use of impoliteness. The most influential was social norms (47%), indicating that Wednesday often violates expected social behavior to assert her individuality and challenge conformity. Situational context or activity type with (32.4%) also played a major role, as impoliteness frequently occurred during confrontational or emotionally charged situations. Lastly,



power relation with (20.6) influenced the way Wednesday interacted with characters in positions of authority or those who attempted to control. Overall, this study demonstrates that Wednesday Addams' impolite behavior is not random or solely humorous, but rather a deliberate communicative strategy that reflects her personality, social resistance, and interactional goals. This research contributes to the study of impoliteness by showing how Culpeper's (2011) framework can be applied to a popular cultural text, thereby highlighting the relevance of impoliteness theory in analyzing fictional characters and media discourse. The findings also provide insights into how impoliteness functions not only as a tool for character development but also as a means of engaging the audience through humor, conflict, and emotional expression.

However, this study is limited to one season and one main character, which restricts the generalizability of the results. Future research could expand the scope by comparing multiple characters, examining other seasons or series, or analyzing how audiences perceive and respond to impoliteness in fictional narratives. Such studies would deepen the understanding of impoliteness as a communicative phenomenon that operates across different contexts, genres, and media.

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