

# **Impoliteness in Children's Fiction: Linguistic and Cross-Cultural Aspects**

Dissertation

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## 1. Introduction

Impoliteness as an aspect of human communicative behaviour has been shown to be highly salient in society. This is evidenced, e.g., by the public outcry following actor Alec Baldwin's abusive phone call to his then-11-year-old daughter Ireland, or by the prevalence of several formats of exploitative TV shows that contain impolite behaviour. See, e.g., Anne Robinson's persona in the exploitative quiz show *The Weakest Link* (Culpeper 2005), the judges in the talent shows *The X Factor* and *American Idol* (Culpeper & Holmes 2013). This is not to say that impoliteness is a recent phenomenon, as, e.g., insults in Shakespearean plays such as Lady Macbeth's 'quite unmanned in folly' (Culpeper 1996; see also Rudanko 2006) prove evidence to the contrary.

Impoliteness, then, seems ubiquitous in the contemporary entertainment sector. It is not only present in the media, but also in fictional texts for diverse audiences, where it fulfils a variety of functions (Culpeper 1996; 1998). Behaviour that is open to an interpretation as impolite also occurs in entertainment for children, especially fictional texts for young readers. We can best illustrate this usage by looking at examples:

- (1)  
"What a bunch of nauseating little warts you are." (MA: 141)<sup>1</sup>
- (2)  
"you demented freak" (AF 1: 109)
- (3)  
"those repulsive orphans he had lying around the house" (Series 2: 92)
- (4)  
"Professor Snape is an ugly git" (HP 3: 287)

The usage of impoliteness in (1) – (4) is even more striking if we consider the context of the utterances in question: (1) is uttered by a teacher on first perceiving her new class of first-year students in elementary school. (2) is used as a personalised reference for the child protagonist, after he has suggested the adult main character open a suspicious package. In (3), the child protagonists are conceptualised in terms of unwanted possessions that one might keep in the house regardless, and (4) is directed at the adult main character. It stands to reason that readers of all ages will

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<sup>1</sup> Note that I use abbreviations for the texts in my corpus throughout this study; see the primary literature in my reference section.

recognise this behaviour as violating contextual expectations for the setting(s), even if they might not use the metalinguistic label ‘impoliteness’ to describe such behaviour. There is certain evidence that examples of conflictive discourse, such as the ones above, are prevalent in contemporary English-language children’s fiction (see, e.g., Loveday 2016; Pleyer 2015; 2016), much more so, it seems, than in naturally occurring dialogue. However, the question as to the usage and function of impoliteness in children’s fiction has not yet been a focus of research, despite the great relevance of the topic.

One of the reasons for this lack of research might be the understanding of impoliteness in the wider field of linguistic pragmatics. For much of the research history of impoliteness and its related field politeness, impoliteness was conceptualised as a communicative failure. For instance, Leech (1983: 105) claims that “conflictive illocutions tend, thankfully, to be rather marginal to human linguistic behaviour in normal circumstances.” Yet, impoliteness can be described as more than marginalised behaviour. Thus, starting with a first strategic paper in the 1980s (Lachenicht 1980), impoliteness research has sparked three waves of research focusing on theoretical notions (e.g. Culpeper 1996; Kienpointner 1997), on the one hand, and participant evaluations on the other (e.g. Watts 2003; Locher 2004). Recent publications also include analyses of impoliteness in a variety of contexts, such as different cultural settings (e.g. House 2005; Stewart 2005), online communication (e.g. Kleinke & Bös 2015), television discourse (e.g. Bousfield 2007a; 2008a; Culpeper 2005; Dynel 2012), and literary texts such as Early Modern (e.g. Bousfield 2007b; Rudanko 2006) and contemporary plays (e.g. Culpeper 1998). At the time of writing, a search for the keyword ‘impoliteness’ turns up over 400 research articles in the *Journal of Pragmatics* alone – this is surely a better picture than the low number of merely five papers Locher and Bousfield (2008: 2) refer to in their introduction. This further confirms the importance of understanding and describing impolite behaviours in a variety of contexts. In this light, one of the aims of my thesis is to further an understanding of impoliteness, both as a theoretical concept and as a tool to investigate a specific context. In doing so, I hope to help rectify “the enormous imbalance that exists between academic interest in politeness phenomena as opposed to impoliteness phenomena” (Locher & Bousfield 2008: 1).

A further reason for the lack of research into impoliteness in children's literature can be seen in the critical view researchers hold towards fiction for children. Its conceptualisation as a marginal phenomenon in the literary poly-system, as well as a supposed lack of quality, led to children's fiction not being investigated by neither linguistics nor literary studies. This is despite the fact that contemporary research has identified fictional texts as a data set in its own right regardless of its constructed nature (see, e.g., Jucker & Locher 2017). Research especially highlights the entertaining function of fictional texts (e.g. Culpeper 1998), and children's fiction in particular (e.g. Zipes 2005). The connection of impoliteness and plot construction and characterisation is further emphasised (e.g., Culpeper 1998), which also sheds light on the nature of fiction. Surprisingly, this connection has not yet been explicated for fiction for young readers.

The analysis of impoliteness in children's fiction is further relevant in that it can shed light on how impoliteness is used and conceptualised for a young audience who lack pragmatic abilities and contextual awareness, that is, an audience who needs to be socialised into their Community of Practice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992). Fictional texts have been shown to serve this function, which is even more pronounced in texts written for children (e.g. Metcalfe 2003). First, a simplified use of language in terms of syntax and lexis (e.g., Gamble & Yates 2002; Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999; Kullmann 2008; Stephens 2004; 2009) helps the child understand pragmatic strategies which, in addition, are commented on using impoliteness metalanguage. Second, the narration is set in special narrative spaces such as the school, or the family home (e.g., Alston 2000; Avery 2004; Grenby 2008; Ray 2004), in short, narrative spaces the child is familiar with from her own embodied experiences. These, then, are spaces whose norms the child is familiar with, so that violations of contextual expectations and thus an understanding of impolite language use are made easier for the reader. How exactly the use of both simplified language and narrative spaces further impoliteness has not yet been investigated.

In a globalised world, though, children's fiction is read not only in its country of origin, but popular books and series such as J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* are read widely in translation. The target culture(s) into which the series has been

translated, however, might not share the same communicative preferences as the British source culture. These differing preferences, such as different levels of directness in request formation, have been explicated in cross-cultural pragmatics (e.g. House 2005; 2010). Yet, while translation studies have focused on the translation of specific elements of children's fiction, such as the use of dialect or humour in translation (e.g. Davies 2003; Lathey 2005), the translation of impoliteness has so far remained a research desideratum.

From the above discussion follow two questions that have, so far, not been sufficiently answered in impoliteness research:

- (1) What is the nature and function of impoliteness in interactions in children's fiction?
- (2) How is impoliteness translated for a new target culture audience with differing pragmatic preferences?

Answering these questions necessitates an interdisciplinary approach, drawing together and adapting existing frameworks and models from different fields, i.e. linguistic pragmatics, literary studies, and translation studies; my study thus places itself firmly at the interface of three disciplines. In doing so, I attempt to do justice to impoliteness as a multifaceted field of study. This approach further highlights the important position of children's fiction as a data set, a position which has been previously ignored in research.

To be more precise, the objective of the present study is to analyse impoliteness in English-language children's fiction and German translations. To do so, I propose a descriptive qualitative model that contains three analytical steps:

- 1) an analysis of impoliteness strategies in children's fiction;
- 2) an analysis of impoliteness metalanguage surrounding conflictive discourse in children's fiction; and
- 3) a cross-cultural comparison of impoliteness in an English-language fictional text for children and its German translation.

In my application of analytical criteria of impoliteness to children's fiction I seek

- a) to fully understand impoliteness in this setting,
- b) to gain insights into the relationship of entertainment, plot construction, characterisation and impoliteness in children's fiction,

- c) to refine existing analytical criteria of linguistic impoliteness so that they can represent the full nature of fictional discourse, and
- d) to understand which types of impoliteness strategies are predominantly used and use these results to draw conclusions about the nature of the implied child reader and her preferences.

In my second analytical step, I seek to fill the gap of research into impoliteness metalanguage in fictional texts. I establish analytic criteria that are tailored to the data set at hand to understand how characters and the narrator comment on and evaluate impolite behaviour, in short, how they conceptualise impoliteness. Further, it is my aim to gain insights into how this metalanguage can help the reader understand how and why a given utterance is salient and open to an interpretation as impolite.

Third, I wish to further an understanding of how impoliteness is conceptualised in different speech communities. Focusing on translations allows me to show these different conceptualisations ‘in action;’ here, I investigate how different understandings of the implied child reader and her (linguistic and narrative) preferences can lead to changes in impolite usages in translated children’s fiction.

In conducting these three analytical steps and providing answers to the research desiderata postulated above, the present study will be a significant contribution to existing research on impoliteness.

The present study is organised in 13 chapters. Following this introduction, chapter 2 presents a close description of my data; I focus especially on the selection criteria and offer a brief summary of the texts that make up my corpus to illustrate the reasons for my choice.

In chapter 3 I explore the linguistic concept of ‘impoliteness.’ As the term has proven difficult to define (see, e.g., Culpeper 2011a), I establish a definition of the scientific term (ch. 3.1) by first looking into what impoliteness is not, i.e. it is not failed politeness, and not inherent in linguistic forms. The chapter ends with an in-depth discussion of how impoliteness has been conceptualised in first- and second-wave approaches. I then provide reasons for my own third-wave approach and

select a definition. Following this, I describe several aspects that influence a participant's understanding of impoliteness; these include contextual norms, intentionality, power, and identity (ch. 3.2). Finally, I investigate how impoliteness is acquired (ch. 3.3) to understand the linguistic abilities that young readers bring to their reading of fiction.

Chapter 4 addresses impoliteness in fiction. First, I discuss the validity of using fictional data for linguistic analyses, a point often criticised in older research (ch. 4.1). Then I explore the relationship between impoliteness and entertainment (ch. 4.2), as well as the link of impoliteness and character and plot development (ch. 4.3). Both these factors help explain why impoliteness is especially prevalent in modern (children's) fiction.

Chapter 5 concentrates on children's fiction as a special case of fiction. As the terms 'literature' and 'children' have proven conflictive in previous research, I will first approach a definition and give reasons for my use of the term 'children's fiction' instead of 'children's literature' (ch. 5.1). Then I focus on the characteristics of children's fiction, particularly on the shared experiences of its readers (ch. 5.2). I further discuss the language of children's fiction (ch. 5.3) and the setting in the fictional family and the fictional school (ch. 5.4); both aspects provide cues as to how and why impoliteness is used.

In preparation for the study of impoliteness in translation, the focus of chapter 6 is on the realisation of impoliteness in cross-cultural analyses. I especially address dimensions in which German and English impoliteness preferences can be contrasted (ch. 6.1) and how these different preferences are perceived by members of the other culture (ch. 6.2).

This leads me to chapter 7, which considers translations. In particular, I examine the translation process through which a text is made accessible to an audience with a different first language (ch. 7.1). I provide an in-depth discussion of translating for children (ch. 7.2) as its intended readers' preferences and social and linguistic knowledge differ from that of adult readers of fiction (ch. 7.2.1). I also comment on the two most used translation strategies or schools in children's fiction, foreignization and domestication, that describe the level of closeness between the



target and source text (ch. 7.2.2 and 7.2.3). The chapter concludes with remarks on the translation of impoliteness (ch. 7.3).

Chapter 8 remains in the field of translation studies and focuses on translating *Harry Potter* as a case study, with special emphasis on the translation process (ch. 8.1). It further considers research into the translation of individual phenomena, such as cultural artefacts, names, dialect and humour (ch. 8.2) that provide the basis for my own analysis in chapter 12.

Chapter 9 draws together the implications from the previous chapters; here, I present my methodology and discuss my research hypotheses.

Chapters 10 to 12 contain my analysis. Specifically, chapter 10 offers a detailed analysis and description of impoliteness strategies and related linguistic phenomena, such as polite and politic behaviour. I also comment on the structure or progression of conflictive discourse in children's fiction. In chapter 11 I present my analytical criteria for the analysis of impoliteness metalanguage in children's fiction; I comment on how metalanguage can help the child understand the usage of impoliteness. Chapter 12 focuses on a case study of impoliteness in the German translation of *Harry Potter*; here I show global translation tendencies and discuss how impoliteness is translated and conceptualised for a German audience. Finally, in the conclusion (ch. 13), I draw together insights from impoliteness research, research into the nature of children's fiction, and translation studies, and point out areas for future research.

A final remark on my use of language: whenever I refer to persons in the singular, such as 'the child,' 'the reader,' 'the speaker,' or 'the hearer,' I use the feminine 'she' as a generic pronoun.

## 2. Data

The data for this study consists of three contemporary English-language children's book series and one stand-alone book. I have included data from a number of English-language authors in order to increase the validity of my findings. The data were chosen by means of the following criteria:

- 1) number of impoliteness tokens
- 2) contemporary publication
- 3) age of readership
- 4) character maturation
- 5) character hierarchy
- 6) level of representativeness.

First, the data were selected because each of the books contains a remarkably high number of tokens of confrontational, verbally aggressive behaviour which appeared to be face-threatening to at least one of the interactants in question and was thus open to an interpretation as impolite. In all books, confrontational discourse plays a major role and, for selected conversations, is given precedence over utterances that can be described as context-appropriate, i.e. politic, or polite. This allows for a meaningful discussion of the use of impoliteness strategies both within books/book series as well as within the discourse medium of children's fiction.

Second, the present study is geared toward a synchronic description of impoliteness in children's fiction. Books/book series had to have a contemporary date of publication or, if that were not the case, they had to be detached from a particular historical time in such a way as to still be appealing to modern readers. The three book series were published between 1997 (the first *Harry Potter* volume) and 2013 (the final volume of *Series of Unfortunate Events*). With a publication date in 1988, Roald Dahl's *Matilda* is an exception; the book was included on the grounds that the story experienced a contemporary musical adaptation and, as a result, is read by contemporary young readers. The story is further not localised in a specific period and, finally, the subject matter of parental conflicts and teacher-student interaction makes this text quite accessible and relevant for contemporary readers.

One aim of the present study is to gain insight into the question of how fictional texts can help further young readers' pragmatic abilities, especially in regard

to their comprehension of impoliteness tokens and contexts in which these are likely to occur. As studies have shown that speakers' pragmatic abilities will not be fully formed until after age 12;0 (see ch.3.3), the critical period for the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge coincides with the target audience age range of 8-12 years, which includes texts such as *Harry Potter*. Hence, all books and book series that were chosen for the present study are recommended for the age group of 8-12 years.

For a deeper understanding of the interrelatedness of identity and impoliteness, it is important to analyse characters who are aware of and explore their identity and their position in their given Community of Practice,<sup>2</sup> and further, that this position changes (e.g. due to the character's coming-of-age in a longer series, or due to internal maturation processes in a shorter period of time). Character maturation was thus a further criterion for selection. All books/book series include either a longer time-span and detail the character's coming-of-age process, or focus on psychological maturation processes that induce a change in the character's identity expression.

Further, research has shown that the expression of impolite beliefs tends to be influenced by a speaker's power in a given context. To draw out how power influences impoliteness in fictional dialogue in children's fiction, I chose texts that included the conversational dyad adult – child. First, there is an age-related power imbalance, with adult speakers holding more social and conversational power, e.g. in that they can order the child to comply with a request, but not vice versa (if a child were to order the adult, this speech act would be open to an interpretation as impolite). Further, children's fiction tends to present the adult-child dyad in conversational settings that imbue the adult with power, mostly the school. As teachers, adults hold institutional power over students, in that talking back or disobedience can be punishable. On these grounds, all chosen books/book series include a 3<sup>rd</sup> person narrative with child protagonists as focal characters, as well as at least one adult antagonist.<sup>3</sup> Further, all narratives are set in the school (as well as partly in

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<sup>2</sup> I define a Community of Practice with Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992: 464) as “an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour.”

<sup>3</sup> Both male and female child protagonists and adult antagonists are included; the present study does not investigate the influence of gender on the impoliteness and power dynamic.

the home) and include adults in hierarchically higher and powerful roles (teachers, Heads of Houses, headmasters or headmistresses, parents or legal guardians, army generals). This allows for broad comparability between the books concerning the types of situations or frames that allow for the expression of impolite beliefs. To contrast these findings, one book series was included that contained a child – child dyad which tends to the expression of impolite beliefs; here, the existence of two speakers of equal power should allow for a different use of impoliteness strategies.

The books/book series were chosen on the grounds that the findings gleaned from them should be as representative as possible for the genre of children’s fiction. Hence, all books/book series chosen were highly successful and influential within their genre. Further, as listed above, these books/book series have many features in common which justifies making general statements about the use of impoliteness in the genre of contemporary children’s fiction as such.

After the final corpus selection process was concluded, it transpired that all chosen books/book series include – to some degree – a fantastic element; this was not a criterion for selection, but rather a by-product. By ‘fantastic element’ I mean a break with or deviation from one or more conventions or ‘rules’ of our accepted reality (Tabbert 2005: 188-191; see also Todorov 1975), such as Matilda’s supernatural ability of “pushing things with her eyes” (MA: 166), or the existence of fairies in *Artemis Fowl*. However, while the world of *Harry Potter*, for instance, allows more unconventional ways for conflict resolution,<sup>4</sup> the reasons for conflicts between students and teachers remain very much the same as in a non-magical school: mutual dislike, rivalry, bullying, and so forth.

It is not my intention to suggest that the expression of impolite beliefs in my data is the norm for the discourse types presented just because it seems that way from the scenes the author chose to publish – while it certainly is central (Culpeper et al. 2003) or prevalent in the discourse type, it does not constitute a norm or acceptable behaviour (Bousfield 2007a: 2189), as can be seen by character reactions to impolite behaviour.<sup>5</sup> As Bousfield (2007a: 2190) notes, if one were to exclude

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<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Prof. Moody’s unconventional intervention in a conflict between Harry Potter and Draco Malfoy, during which the latter is turned into a bouncing ferret (HP 4: 204; see also ch. 10.6).

<sup>5</sup> Also see Bousfield’s (2007a: 2188) discussion on impoliteness in British army training discourse, as well as Culpeper (1996) and Mills (2005) on whether impoliteness constitutes acceptable behaviour in army training and whether it is perceived by hearers as hurtful and impolite.

impolite behaviour from British army training, it would still constitute the activity type ‘army training’;<sup>6</sup> impoliteness therefore is not a normative part of this particular type of discourse. The same holds true for a fictional school setting: while teachers and students alike may use impolite discourse for a variety of reasons, this does in no way suggest that impolite discourse is the norm. In the following sub-chapters, I shall address each book/book series separately and discuss how it relates to the above criteria.

## **2.1 *Matilda***

*Matilda* is a fantastic children’s novel written in 1988 by British author Roald Dahl. A film version was released in 1996, as well as a musical adaptation in 2010, which makes the story relevant for a contemporary audience.

The protagonist Matilda Wormwood is a very gifted young child with magical abilities. Dahl describes an extreme form of a troubled working-class home, where Mr and Mrs Wormwood see their young daughter more as a nuisance – neither her wish for more intimate family activities nor her wish to read are accepted. Matilda finds herself in a precarious situation where she is clever enough to understand the shortcomings of her parents, but not old enough to argue her case. In this environment, which is very prone to conflicts, the characters often feel licenced to voice their anger at the other.

When Matilda starts school, she comes into conflict with headmistress Miss Trunchbull. As a self-professed hater of children (her ideal school would allow no children; MA: 141), Miss Trunchbull takes offence at nearly everything Matilda does – and even attributes actions to her over which Matilda has no control, such as Mr Wormwood selling Miss Trunchbull a faulty car. The fact that Matilda tries to defend herself against Miss Trunchbull’s accusations often leads to the expression of impolite beliefs on both sides.

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<sup>6</sup> Bousfield (2007a: 2190) compares the training in the British Army training to that in the German *Bundeswehr*, in which the use of impoliteness towards the recruits does not play a significant role. Despite this lack of impoliteness, the recruits are still trained to become soldiers. Hence impoliteness does not constitute a necessary part of army training.

## 2.2 *Harry Potter*

The seven books of the *Harry Potter* series, written by British author J.K. Rowling between 1997 and 2007, include elements of fantasy, coming-of-age fiction, and the British school story. While widely read by children and adults alike, the film adaptations produced between 2001 and 2011 made the magical world of *Harry Potter* known to an even wider audience.

Harry Potter is an English boy who, on his 11<sup>th</sup> birthday, learns that he is a wizard and is accepted as a student at prestigious Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Having been raised in a non-magical household, he is unaware of his magical talent and that he is famous for defeating the powerful dark wizard Lord Voldemort while he was still a baby. As a new student at Hogwarts, Harry thus does not only have to find his place, but his fame in the magical world makes this even more difficult.

At school, Harry meets two antagonistic characters: Prof. Snape and Draco Malfoy. Prof. Severus Snape teaches Potions and later Defence against the Dark Arts at Hogwarts and is Head of the rival House Slytherin (Harry, in contrast, is Sorted into Gryffindor). From the first meeting, Harry feels that Prof. Snape strongly dislikes him;<sup>7</sup> this is the start of a difficult teacher-student relationship.

In contrast, Harry's relationship with Draco Malfoy, a fellow Hogwarts student, begins as a conventional dislike between schoolboys. It is their differences in background that stir up the conflict. Stemming from a rich, pure-blood wizarding family, Draco despises Harry and his best friends – Ron's family is not well-off financially, and Hermione's parents are both not wizards. Needless to say, there is much scope for conflict. This sense of mutual dislike is even heightened when the boys play for opposite school Quidditch<sup>8</sup> teams.

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<sup>7</sup> The reader – and Harry – only learns later that the initial dislike was due to Prof. Snape's love for Harry's mother. For a detailed description of Prof. Snape's memories of Harry's mother, see *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (HP 7: 533-553). The chapter in question also reveals that Prof. Snape worked as a double agent, i.e. for both Prof. Dumbledore and Lord Voldemort, which puts his behaviour in previous books into perspective for Harry.

<sup>8</sup> The wizard sport, played on broomsticks with seven balls and seven team members each (see HP 2: 166-169 for a full explanation of the rules).

### **2.3 *A Series of Unfortunate Events***

The twelve books in the *A Series of Unfortunate Events* series were written between 1999 and 2006<sup>9</sup> by Lemony Snicket (the pen name of American author Daniel Handler); a film adaptation of the first three books titled *A Series of Unfortunate Events* was released in 2004, while a Netflix series premiered in early 2017.

Set in a pseudo-Victorian city, the series focuses on the three orphaned siblings Violet, Klaus and Sunny Baudelaire. They are placed in the care of Count Olaf, a distant relative, whose only interest is the large fortune of the Baudelaire family. While his attempts at gaining the fortune fail in the first book, in each new instalment Count Olaf disguises himself as a different persona and uses every means imaginable, from trying to marry Violet to murdering the children's other guardians, to claim the fortune. Needless to say, this poses great potential for conflict and for the use of impoliteness strategies.

### **2.4 *Artemis Fowl***

The *Artemis Fowl* series was written between 2001 and 2012 by Irish author Eoin Colfer. Due to a successful graphic novel adaptation and a planned film adaptation, the story has gained popularity with young readers.

The protagonist of this science fiction fantasy series is Artemis Fowl (male, despite the name), a 13-year-old genius master thief. Stealing an important fairy book and abducting a lieutenant of the LEP Recon unit<sup>10</sup> brings Artemis into conflict with LEP Commander Lucius Root, who is well-known for his bad temper. Root fears that through Artemis' intervention, humans will learn that fairies live in subterranean cities with superior technology; this threat to his world licenses the expression of impolite beliefs towards Artemis. Root's mistrust towards Artemis hardly changes even after this initial conflict is resolved, and he continues to voice controversial thoughts that are open to an interpretation as impolite on Artemis' part.

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<sup>9</sup> The series is analysed with the exception of most utterances in *The Hostile Hospital* (*A Series of Unfortunate Events* 8), as Count Olaf only communicates via intercom messages that do not have the children as individual addressees.

<sup>10</sup> Lower Earth Police Reconnaissance unit; the abbreviation LEP Recon brings to mind legendary Irish creatures, the Leprechauns. Fittingly enough, the members of the LEP are fairies.

For every book, I selected all conversations between the child protagonist and the adult antagonist(s) and, where applicable, all conversations between the child protagonist and a peer antagonist. This yielded the following conversations:

book title	interactants	no. of conversations
<i>Harry Potter</i>	Harry Potter – Prof. Severus Snape	72
	Harry Potter – Draco Malfoy	51
<i>Matilda</i>	Matilda – Miss Trunchbull	4
	Matilda – Mr and Mrs Wormwood	12
<i>A Series of Unfortunate Events</i>	Baudelaire children – Count Olaf	151
<i>Artemis Fowl</i>	Artemis Fowl – Commander Lucius Root	15
		295 total

Table 2.1: List of analysed conversations



### 3. Impoliteness

Potentially every speaker that has taken part in conversational interactions will, at one point in her life, have experienced discourse that was explicitly aimed at hurting her feelings, of disassociating from her, denying her identity (or forcing an unwanted identity ascription upon her), and/or of imposing on her. This hurtful behaviour shall be termed ‘impoliteness’ in the present study.

Politeness is only one side of the coin that makes up human interaction; that is, “politeness strategies are insufficient by themselves to give a realistic picture of human communication” (Rudanko 2006: 830). However, impoliteness has been neglected in much of the previous research into politeness (cf. e.g. Mills 2005: 264; Rudanko 2006: 829; Watts 2003: xi). This is criticised e.g. by Eelen, who notes that “[c]urrent theories of politeness manifest a triple conceptual bias: towards the polite side of the polite–impolite distinction, towards the speaker in the interactional dyad and towards the production of behaviour rather than its evaluation” (Eelen 2001: 119).

In recent years, pragmatics has seen an increased interest in impoliteness research. Apart from proposing models of linguistic impoliteness,<sup>11</sup> research has concentrated on studying impoliteness in varying contexts, such as TV shows (e.g. Culpeper 2005; Bousfield 2008a), computer-based discourse (e.g. Kleinke & Bös 2015), gender (e.g. Mills 2003; 2005), as well as various types of fictional texts (e.g. Brown & Gilman 1989; Loveday 2016; Pleyer 2015).

It is not my intention to discuss in detail the merits and disadvantages of all previous theoretical models on im/politeness; this work has been done, and in a very concise manner, by e.g. Culpeper (2011b); Eelen (2001), Watts (2003; for politeness theories), or Grainger (2011). Instead, my paper focuses on impoliteness and related concepts insofar as they are relevant and beneficial for an understanding of language use in contemporary children’s fiction.

First, this paper approaches a definition of impoliteness by discussing what impoliteness is not, thereby addressing lay misconceptions about the nature of impoliteness. Then, I concentrate on several factors that can contribute to whether an

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<sup>11</sup> See e.g. Culpeper (1996: 349–367). See also his revised models as well as Kienpointner (1997) and Lachenicht’s (1980) model, which is based on Brown/Levinson ([1978]1987) and was, in essence, overlooked by research.

utterance is perceived as impolite. In detail, these are the social context in which the utterance was produced, and whether or not the speaker had the intention to be impolite (or whether the hearer perceives this to be the case). Further, I investigate the connection of impoliteness and emotions, impoliteness and power, and impoliteness and identity.

### **3.1 Towards a Definition**

Impoliteness has been receiving scholarly interest since the 1980s. Early strategic models by Lachenicht (1980), Culpeper (1996) or Kienpointner (1997) sought to establish classifications of impoliteness strategies that a speaker can choose to commit intentional face-threat, basing their discussion on the five politeness strategies first proposed by Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987). Later discursive models such as the one by Watts (2003) describe politeness in terms of money in accordance with Simmel's (1900) *Philosophie des Geldes* in that both politeness and money are socially constructed, symbolic media (Werkhofer 1992). In this view, “[p]olitic behaviour consists in ‘paying’ with linguistic resources what is due in a socio-communicative verbal interaction. Politeness [...] is used to ‘pay’ more than would normally be required in the ritual exchange of speech acts” (Watts 2003: 115).

This brief discussion shows that very different understandings of the term ‘politeness’ co-exist in research; thus, im/politeness may be conceptualised as a fuzzy term that is in flux. To draw out the previous points of divergence in research, in the following I will address some key problems of im/politeness research. These contain, in detail, the understanding of impoliteness as failed politeness, as well as that of impoliteness as being inherent in linguistic forms. Finally, to come back to the above distinction, I will discuss research into impoliteness as a theoretical concept, discussing the benefits and drawbacks of previous models.

#### **3.1.1 Impoliteness is not Failed Politeness**

Bousfield (2008a: 71) notes that while many studies on politeness do comment on impolite language use, “in practice they all focus solidly on politeness, with the result that their comments on impoliteness are descriptively inadequate and often

conceptually biased.” Indeed, classical models of politeness tended to overlook impoliteness, as it were: the concept tends to be understood as failed politeness,<sup>12</sup> a lack of expectable politeness strategies (Lakoff 1989: 103), or simply behaviour that is not done (Eelen 2001: 118).

For Kasper (1990: 194), whose study is based on Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987), “communication is seen as a fundamentally dangerous and antagonistic endeavour.” Politeness is used to “disarm” this “potential for aggression” inherent in language (Brown & Levinson [1978] 1987: 1); that is, “politeness has to be communicated, and the absence of communicated politeness may, *ceteris paribus*, be taken as the absence of a polite attitude” (Brown & Levinson [1978] 1987: 5).<sup>13</sup>

According to Lakoff (1989: 102), “[p]oliteness can be defined as a means of minimizing the risk of confrontation in discourse – both the possibility of confrontation occurring at all, and the possibility that a confrontation will be perceived as threatening.” Here, she conceptualises confrontational discourse as behaviour to be avoided by interlocutors.<sup>14</sup> In a similar vein, Leech (1983: 105) notes that “conflictive illocutions tend, thankfully, to be rather marginal to human linguistic behaviour,” implying that this marginal feature is not ultimately relevant for analysis.

If a speaker does happen to use strategies which are open to an interpretation as impolite, she must have done so out of a lack of knowledge or a lack of ability to be polite; this applies, e.g., to children or foreigners who have yet to learn the politeness conventions of the given culture, or to persons who Lakoff (1989: 123) very unfortunately terms “lunatics.”

Watts (2003: 53) criticises early models on these grounds, stating that

[t]he idea of second-order politeness ‘instructing’ interactants to produce socially harmonious interaction also introduces elements of morality and the social-psychological development of children, thus providing further evidence of the prescriptive nature of concepts of politeness.

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<sup>12</sup> See e.g. Thomas (1983) on the notion of pragmatic failure, that is, failure to communicate in a pragmatically adequate manner in cross-cultural encounters where perceptions of what counts as im/polite may differ between participants of different cultural backgrounds.

<sup>13</sup> Kasper (1990: 194) criticises Brown and Levinson’s ([1978] 1987) view of communication as inherently antagonistic unless otherwise communicated and describes it as being “rather paranoid.”

<sup>14</sup> Also see a similar view expressed in an earlier publication, where Lakoff (1979: 64) views politeness as “a device used in order to reduce friction in personal interaction;” ‘friction’ is unwanted, which implies that non-politeness is likely to be viewed as unwanted behaviour, as well.

The above discussion shows that these early strategic models do not address the fact that a speaker may wish to intentionally communicate linguistic impoliteness (see e.g. Lachenicht 1980; Culpeper 1996). Brown and Gilman (1989: 161) note that “[p]oliteness means putting things in such a way as to take account of the feelings of the hearer.” I suggest that speakers wanting to be impolite take account of the hearer’s feelings, as well; however, they do so in a way as to intentionally hurt them and be offensive towards the hearer.

### **3.1.2 Impoliteness is not Inherent in Linguistic Forms**

Previous research has pointed out that “some illocutions (e.g. orders) are inherently impolite” (Leech 1983: 83) and that “it is intuitively the case that certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face” (Brown & Levinson [1978] 1987: 65). These statements can be read as implying that impoliteness is inherent in certain linguistic forms.

This approach has been criticised, e.g., by Fraser and Nolen (1981: 96), in whose view “no sentence is inherently polite or impolite. We often take certain expressions to be impolite, but it is not the expressions themselves but the conditions under which they are used that determine the judgment of politeness.” This means that an evaluation of an utterance as impolite does not depend on the linguistic expressions used, but on the interpretation of behaviour in a given social interaction (Watts 2003: 8). In a later publication, Leech (2014: 4-5) corroborates this assessment in noting that “there are gradations of im/polite behaviour.” See also Kienpointner (1997: 255), who stresses that in his view, rudeness is “inappropriateness of communicative behaviour relative to a particular context.” That is, linguistic forms are not inherently im/polite; instead, speakers use linguistic forms to be (intentionally or accidentally) rude in a given context. Note also that non-cooperative behaviour can be perceived as non-salient in a given context. A further argument for the view that impoliteness is not inherent in linguistic forms stems from diachronic studies into politeness. Consider Sell ([1992] 2005: 113), who notes that “[t]he varieties of human behaviour, and the meanings of the terms used to describe it, are for ever in transition.” That is, the norms of what constitutes im/polite behaviour in a given community or social situation are constantly in flux, which contradicts a view of a fixed form-meaning pairing for impolite utterances.

Consider, however, some cases of formulaic, ritualised utterances that are conventionalised, such as terms of address, speech acts like thanking, leave-taking, or semi-formulaic utterances, i.e. conventionalised indirect speech acts, such as hedges, solidarity markers, boosters, or modal verbs. These expressions are not understood by participants as being polite, that is, they are perceived as non-salient. However, they are evaluated as impolite when they are missing (Watts 2003: 168-169). This shows that there is some link between conventionalised linguistic forms and im/politeness. This is also taken up by Culpeper (2010; 2011a: 127), who discusses conventionalised linguistic expressions, i.e. expressions that regularly occur in impoliteness contexts and hence begin to be perceived as having a strong connection to impoliteness. However, even for these conventionalised forms, the context of usage determines whether the expression is perceived as hurtful.

I agree with Culpeper (2011a: 125) in that

[m]y own position is dualist in the sense that I see semantic (im)politeness and pragmatic (im)politeness as inter-dependent opposites on a scale. (Im)politeness can be more determined by a linguistic expression or can be more determined by context, but neither the expression nor the context guarantee an interpretation of (im)politeness: it is the interaction between the two that counts.

### 3.1.3 Impoliteness as a Theoretical Concept

Terkourafi (2011: 160) notes that there is “a disconnect between the use of the terms politeness and polite by speakers themselves, and the way these terms have been used in the linguistics literature.” This disconnect can be described in terms of scientific and spontaneous concepts (Eelen 2001: 33-34): on the one hand, one finds the spontaneous concept, i.e. speakers using language and evaluating language use, with strong inter-subject differences; this is termed im/politeness<sub>1</sub>.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the scientific concept, or im/politeness<sub>2</sub>, provides an explicit, stable definition and framework of the phenomenon (Terkourafi 2011: 161). This disconnect between these two types of concepts has sparked much research, which I will address in the following chapters. Note that while my discussion will include both politeness and impoliteness, the focus rests on the latter concept.

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<sup>15</sup> For the distinction between first-order and second-order im/politeness, see e.g. Watts et al. 1992, Eelen 2001, cf. Craig et al. 1986.

### 3.1.3.1 First-Wave Approaches to Im/Politeness

The first wave of im/politeness research, termed second-order im/politeness (Eelen 2001) or ‘Gricean approaches’ (Grainger 2011), understands im/politeness as a theoretical concept. Based on the works of Austin (1962) and Grice (e.g. 1975) and an understanding that communication is based on more than Grice’s maxims, researchers such as Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987), Leech (1983) and Lakoff (1973; 1989) seek to establish theoretical criteria of politeness. Brown and Levinson’s ([1978] 1987) model is the most influential of the three, and has been used as the basis of early impoliteness models, which is why I will discuss it here in more detail.

In Brown and Levinson’s ([1978] 1987) understanding, politeness is a universalistic, technical term. In short, their model presupposes that a rational Model Person chooses politeness strategies to mitigate face-threatening acts based on the weightiness of the imposition<sup>16</sup> in question.

The notion of face constitutes a key element of Brown and Levinson’s ([1978] 1987) theory. Goffman (1967: 5) defines face as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [sic] by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact.” Building on this, Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987: 61) see face as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself [sic]” and propose two types of face. Positive face is defined as “the positive consistent self-image or ‘personality’ (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants” (Brown & Levinson [1978] 1987: 61) with the corresponding “want of every member that his [sic] wants be desirable to at least some others” (Brown & Levinson [1978] 1987: 62). In turn, negative face is understood as “the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition” (Brown & Levinson [1978] 1987: 61), with the corresponding “want of every ‘competent adult member’ that his [sic] actions be unimpeded by others” (Brown & Levinson [1978] 1987: 62).

For Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987: 70), “certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face, namely those acts that by their nature run contrary to the face wants of the addressee.” Requests, for instance, threaten the hearer’s negative face,

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<sup>16</sup> For the weightiness formula, see ch. 3.2.4 on impoliteness and power below.

as her freedom of action is infringed upon.<sup>17</sup> To avoid these potentially face-threatening acts (FTAs) and keep social harmony intact, the speaker chooses one of five politeness strategies that is in line with the severity of the potential face threat.

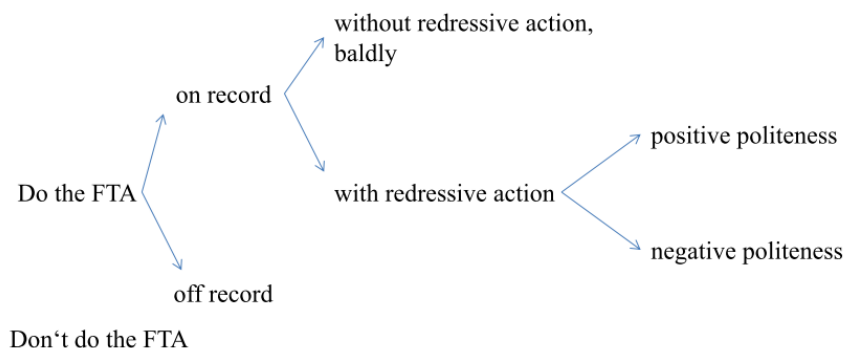


Fig. 3.1: Politeness strategies in Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987: 69)

First, the speaker may refrain from making an utterance, i.e. she does not do the FTA; however, it is debatable to what extent remaining silent can be considered a politeness strategy, as face-threat is not mitigated but omitted altogether.

Second, off-record implies the usage of vague strategies to create plausible deniability. That is, the speaker may give hints such as ‘it’s cold in here’ to get the hearer to comply with her indirect request of closing the window; however, as it is phrased indirectly, she may deny ever having had the wish of the window being closed, or seeking the hearer’s compliance.

Third, the speaker may choose to use bald on record politeness. This strategy contains direct, unmitigated utterances that are acceptable in three contexts: emergencies that leave no room for considerations of face, the utterance is in the interest of the hearer, or the speaker has a much higher social status than the hearer, such as in military contexts.

Finally, the speaker may choose one of two substrategies of doing the FTA with redressive action, i.e. she may opt to use either positive politeness or negative politeness. These strategies aim at mitigating threats to the hearer’s positive and negative face, respectively.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See lists of acts that threaten the hearer’s and speaker’s face in Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987: 65-68).

<sup>18</sup> It is not my intention here to discuss criticism of Brown and Levinson’s ([1978] 1987) approach, as my focus is on the impoliteness models sparked by their model. See ch. 3.1.3.2 for general criticism of first-wave approaches, and also see criticism by Werkhofer (1992), Arundale (2008), Culpeper (2011b), Watts (2003) and others.

As stated above, Brown and Levinson's ([1978] 1987) model forms the basis for early theoretical impoliteness models, four of which I will now discuss in some detail.

Lachenicht's (1980) model can be described as the first to discuss the concept of linguistic impoliteness in detail. In spite of this, it has hardly been recognised in pragmatics research, and to my knowledge, has not been applied to any linguistic data. Lachenicht (1980: 607) uses the term "aggravating language" to designate intentional and rational attempts to hurt the hearer's face. His model proposes four strategies of aggravation (Lachenicht 1980: 619), two of which are directly based on strategies by Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987):

- i. Off-record: the strategy includes ambiguous insults, insinuations, hints, and irony. It is conceptualised in a similar vein as the corresponding politeness strategy, and aims at enabling the speaker to assert they had no impolite intentions if attacked for their utterance.
- ii. Bald on Record: the strategy includes directly produced FTAs and impositions, such as 'Close that window', 'Be quiet!', etc.). Again, it is conceptually similar to the corresponding politeness strategy.
- iii. Positive aggravation: a strategy that is intended to show disregard to the hearer's positive face; that is, it shows the hearer that she is not appreciated or liked, and does not belong in the given social group;
- iv. Negative aggravation: a strategy that is intended to show disregard to the hearer's negative face; that is, to infringe upon the hearer's freedom of action and to impose on her.

While Lachenicht's model has certain benefits in that it allows for strategy mixing (see Lachenicht 1980: 633), a concept not addressed specifically in Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987), it suffers from drawbacks, as well. First, aggravation strategies and face-wants are mixed in his model without clearly explicating their relationship. A further drawback that also holds for early politeness models is that Lachenicht's data consist of constructed examples and anecdotal examples from e.g. fiction or insult dictionaries; as a consequence, the explanatory power of the model is questionable.



Sixteen years after Lachenicht, Culpeper (1996: 356-357) proposes five superstrategies of attacking face and causing disharmony, which are to be understood as ‘mirror images’ of Brown and Levinson’s ([1978] 1987) strategies.

- i. Bald on record: Bald on record impoliteness is typically deployed where there is much face at stake, and where there is an intention on the part of the speaker to attack the face of the hearer.
- ii. Positive impoliteness: Strategies are used with the aim of damaging the addressee’s positive face wants.<sup>19</sup>
- iii. Negative impoliteness: Strategies are used to damage the addressee’s negative face wants.
- iv. Sarcasm or mock politeness: The use of politeness strategies that are understood to be insincere, and thus remain surface realizations. Sarcasm (mock politeness for social disharmony) is clearly the opposite of banter (mock impoliteness for social harmony).
- v. Withhold politeness: Keeping silent or failing to act where politeness work is expected.

Culpeper (1996) applies his model to data from two fields: a fictional text and army training discourse; in doing so, he remedies the criticism levelled against first-wave approaches that constructed examples are used. The model has some drawbacks, however, in that sequencing of impolite events is not discussed: how and if a hearer reacts to an impolite event remains obscure. Culpeper et al. (2003) remedies this criticism in developing a reaction model to impoliteness. Their paper also goes into more detail on prosodic or non-verbal cues that speakers can draw on to either express an impolite belief or to understand that such has been expressed.

Previously, Austin’s (1990) paper on the ‘dark side of politeness’ developed a model that focused on the hearer and on how she perceives impoliteness:

What causes utterances to be interpreted on the dark side is the context in which they are produced. This crucially includes the hearer’s assumptions about the speaker’s values, opinions and intentions, as well as other discernible clues like the physical environment, visual and kinesic clues from the speaker or other audience members. (Austin 1990: 277)

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<sup>19</sup> Culpeper (1996: 357-358) states a list of possible positive and negative impoliteness output strategies, e.g. the positive impoliteness output strategies ‘ignore, snub the other,’ ‘exclude the other from the activity,’ ‘be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic,’ ‘use inappropriate identity markers,’ or the negative impoliteness output strategies ‘frighten,’ ‘condescend, scorn, or ridicule,’ ‘invade the other’s space,’ ‘explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect.’ Note that in his view, the list of possible output strategies is open-ended.

The obvious benefit of Austin's model is the importance of the hearer, and her inclusion of miscommunications, that is, unintentional threats of the hearer's face. However, her model has the serious drawback that the interpretations therein are as of yet untested.

Seven years later, Kienpointner (1997) proposes a theoretical model of what he terms 'rudeness.' Rudeness is understood as prototypically non-cooperative or competitive behaviour which destabilises personal relationships and which creates or maintains an emotional atmosphere of mutual irreverence and antipathy; it is established via verbal routines or via a context-dependent adaptation of strategies. Kienpointner addresses some of the shortcomings of earlier politeness models, e.g. that rudeness is more than failed politeness, the failure to include the context of utterances, and the failure to include longer stretches of discourse.

In Kienpointner's view, rudeness emphasises FTAs and withholds or weakens Face-Enhancing Acts, that is, acts that boost the hearer's face and do not contain an inherent threat, such as compliments. Rudeness is further negotiable in ongoing interactions. In this view, he anticipates Watts's (2003) second-wave model.

In his model, rudeness is understood as a scalar phenomenon, so that politeness and rudeness have fuzzy boundaries. While he proposes several types of rudeness,<sup>20</sup> only non-cooperative rudeness is explicated in detail, and the strategies speakers may use to express non-cooperative rudeness are those of Culpeper (1996).

What these first-wave impoliteness models have in common, then, is that they approach the concept from a theoretical point of view, seeking to establish analytical criteria or models which are then tested on linguistic data. While these models have the benefit of presenting a strong theoretical foundation for impoliteness research, several drawbacks have been pointed out in the literature, which I will discuss below.

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<sup>20</sup> On one end point of the scale, one finds cooperative politeness, i.e. speakers working together towards a common goal; the other end point is defined as non-cooperative rudeness, i.e. egocentric speakers who do not share a common goal. In the middle between these poles one finds over-politeness, i.e. a politeness usage that is exaggerated (his definition differs from that proposed in Watts 2003), and cooperative rudeness, i.e. mock-impoliteness, ritual insults, and banter, that is, rudeness strategies that are used 'insincerely' to strengthen the bonds between speakers.

### 3.1.3.2 Criticism of First-Wave Approaches

The above discussion of the early theoretical im/politeness models, i.e. of im/politeness as a scientific concept, has highlighted some of the criticism of these approaches:

First, these approaches tend to use examples which are decontextualised and/or constructed. This ignores the fact that meaning and pragmatic appropriateness can only be judged in sequences of utterances and in specific contexts. So, in using a second-order approach, a researcher might not capture what lay speakers perceive as im/polite.

In a similar vein, whether a particular speaker agrees that a given behaviour in a particular context can be labelled 'polite' becomes irrelevant in second-order approaches. In this regard, Watts (2003) discusses the importance of including metapragmatic comments. To use an example, the act of burping is generally considered a taboo behaviour in Western cultures (see e.g. Culpeper 2011a: 111), and could be open to an interpretation as impolite. However, if a speaker burps, and the hearer laughs while accepting her apology, classifying burping as impolite is at odds with speaker evaluations (Watts 2003: 2). That is, theories that do not consider specific conversational contexts cannot be predictive theories of im/politeness (Eelen 2001; Watts 2005; Locher 2006).

A further criticism is that first-wave approaches focus strongly on speaker intentions (Eelen 2001; Mills 2003; Arundale 2008). This is apparent, e.g., in Brown and Levinson's ([1978] 1987) Model Person, who rationally chooses strategies to avoid face-threats, as well as in Lakoff's (1973) discussion of the three Rules of Politeness that speakers adhere to in conversation. In addition to the above point, first-wave approaches tend to focus strongly on the analyst's interpretation of the data; however, it is not made explicit why the analyst's opinion is of more value than that of the participants (Eelen 2001; Mills 2003; Watts 2003, 2005; Locher 2006). This concern is expressed e.g. by Haugh (2010: 140), who notes that "if we as researchers do not consider the evaluations of ordinary speakers of particular interactions as 'polite' or 'offensive', among other things, then we are neglecting an area of very real concern to such speakers."

### 3.1.3.3 Second-Wave Approaches to Im/Politeness

In response to this criticism of these early im/politeness models, discursive or post-modern models of im/politeness were developed (see e.g. Grainger 2011). These second-wave approaches (e.g. Locher 2004; 2006; Locher & Watts 2005; Watts 2003; 2005) are not focussed on speaker intention; instead, meaning is seen as fluid and what counts as im/polite is constructed on-line in naturally-occurring dialogue. Judgments about behaviours and labels for these behaviours (*impolite*, *sarcastic*, *rude* etc.) are made by the social actors themselves, that is, language is evaluated by participants of a given interaction (see, e.g., the edited volume by Watts, Ide & Ehlich 2005).

Using Sperber and Wilson's (1995) Relevance Theory, Watts (2003) proposes an im/politeness model that is not intended to be predictive and culturally universal; instead, his is a dynamic, flexible and emergent model concerned with the ongoing evaluation and characterization of im/polite behaviour in social practice. In his view, social practice involves relational work and a latent struggle for power, which can only be perceived by members against the background of previous preconceptions of what forms of linguistic behaviour are appropriate in the social practice carried out. That is, a failure to abide by expectations of what is appropriate is open to an interpretation as impolite. Behaviours that are in excess of what is expectable are open to an interpretation as polite. Politeness conceptualisations in first-wave approaches, e.g. as ways to achieve comity, are concerned with relational work and therefore are aspects of politic behaviour. The predictability of politic behaviour, then, depends on the speaker's habitus and her face as attributed by the social group to the individual.

Second-wave approaches such as the one by Watts (2003) have certain advantages in that they consider both hearer and speaker evaluations: "in everyday practice im/politeness occurs not so much when the speaker produces behaviour but when the hearer evaluates that behaviour" (Eelen 2001: 109). This is relevant, for instance, if a hearer attributes a hurtful intention to the speaker, despite her not intending to commit an offence. Hence, these approaches consider the interactants' perceptions of a given utterance rather than the intentions themselves (Locher & Watts 2008: 80). Second, research began to focus on naturally occurring dialogue

in its context. See e.g. Culpeper's (2005) analysis of the use of impoliteness by a TV host, which also included a focus on prosodic elements which help classify an utterance as impolite.

However, discursive approaches have been criticised on several grounds. First, second-wave models attempt to account for concepts such as intention, or evaluation, which Arundale (2008: 229) sees as equally flawed and based on the same principles as Gricean models of encoding and decoding speaker messages.

Second, the strong focus on participant evaluations means that analyses are in danger of being reduced to which words speakers use in a given situation. Having conducted impoliteness<sub>1</sub> analyses, "[w]hat we are then left with are minute descriptions of individual encounters, but these do not in any way add up to an explanatory theory of the phenomena under study" (Terkourafi 2005: 245).

For example, Locher and Watts (2008:81-82) present a forum discussion, in which a participant expresses her uncertainty on whether a waiter's behaviour could be considered rude.<sup>21</sup> Further postings in the forum discussion revealed that commenters disagreed on whether the waiter's behaviour was rude or not (Locher & Watts 2008: 83). While on the one hand, this shows that within the frame of 'going to a restaurant,' there seems to be a disagreement on the appropriate norms of behaviour, on the other hand the example shows that it is unclear how researchers can generalise from particular instances of communication. This means that it is unclear whether the same discursive struggle will take place in other restaurant environments, with participants different from the original poster, or in other service encounter frames.

Further, when participants such as the original poster in the forum interaction above give post-hoc evaluations of specific impoliteness interactions, they essentially fulfil the role of analysts. This raises the question of the role of the linguist as an analyst, as the linguist is not part of the interaction herself. On this note,

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<sup>21</sup> In essence, the participant found the fork on her table to be dirty, and instead of alerting the waiting staff, took one from a neighbouring table. A waiter, having perceived her action, then proceeds to take a new fork from the service station, polishes it and replaces it on the neighbouring table. No verbal interaction took place between the guest and the waiter (cf. Locher & Watts 2008: 81-82).

Locher and Watts (2008: 99, footnote 4) acknowledge that participants' online evaluations do not necessarily have to match post-hoc evaluations, which raises the question of what exactly can be discovered using a discursive approach.

### **3.1.3.4 Third-Wave Approaches to Im/Politeness**

In my opinion, it follows from the above discussion that an ideal theory of linguistic im/politeness is one that is non-normative, non-prescriptive and largely independent of intersubjective changes in im/politeness evaluations. In essence: a theory that is based on speaker evaluations but that is stable enough to allow for cross-subject generalisations of im/politeness judgments.<sup>22</sup>

Third-wave approaches, i.e. sociological and interactional approaches to im/politeness (Grainger 2011: 171), approach this ideal in that they show overlaps with ideas from both first- and second-wave approaches. That is, many contemporary second-order theories are informed by first-order considerations (Bousfield 2008a; Culpeper 2011a; Kleinke & Bös 2015). In line with second-order approaches, third-wave approaches emphasise the context-sensitivity of utterances and the use of naturally occurring data, but retain a focus on im/politeness<sub>2</sub>. Studying data post-factum in the absence of lay speakers and their emergent evaluations of the data in question, researchers label a linguistic behaviour as (potentially) im/polite and observe negotiated meaning without having to recur to post-hoc participant evaluations (see Culpeper 2008: 21; Grainger 2011: 172). Scientific categories may be retained as there is a set of shared conventions that allows for (out-of-context) judgments speakers make about certain expressions, i.e. cross-context and cross-Community of Practice assumptions on what may in general terms be viewed as im/polite. These categories often coincide with categories in classical established models (im/politeness<sub>2</sub>) (see e.g. Kleinke & Bös 2015: 52).

Drawing on data from German and English online forum interactions, Kleinke and Bös (2015: 25)

assume that the participants in the two discussions have both a (quasi) second-order understanding of rudeness, resulting from their cultural and frame knowledge in the widest sense, and a first-order understanding, arising from their knowledge of the discursive, contextual

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<sup>22</sup> This research desideratum, i.e. a desideratum for second-order theories to be informed by first-order notions of im/politeness, has been pointed out by e.g. Bousfield (2008b: 128), Eelen (2001), Locher and Watts (2005), and Watts (2003).

level of situated discourse, both of which feed into their use and negotiation of rudeness token structures.

A similar, combined view is proposed in Culpeper (2011a), whose second-order model is informed by first-order notions. He derives impoliteness strategies from metadiscourse on ‘events that made the participant feel bad,’ thereby tapping into a first-order perspective. His categories thus capture a super-individual knowledge about what speakers from different cultural backgrounds will classify as ‘impolite.’ Hence, this is the model I shall use.

### **3.1.4 Definition**

If impoliteness is more than mere failed politeness, and not inherent in certain linguistic forms, then how is it conceptualised in current scientific discourse? Watts (2003: 9) comments on this question and notes that “(im)politeness is a term that is struggled over at present, has been struggled over in the past and will, in all probability, continue to be struggled over in the future.” Twelve years later, Kleinke and Bös (2015) agree in that the terms politeness and impoliteness are conceptualised as having fuzzy boundaries; they are themselves subject to discursive struggle.

Note that terminology is part of the discursive struggle over impoliteness (see e.g. Culpeper 2005: 63; Terkourafi 2008: 70). For instance, Kienpointer (1997) uses the term ‘rudeness’ to designate the linguistic concept that I have here termed ‘impoliteness.’ In contrast, in Terkourafi’s (2008) view, impoliteness is face-threatening behaviour in which the hearer understands the speaker to have had “no face-threatening intention” (Terkourafi 2008: 70). She contrasts this with “rudeness proper”, in which the hearer attributes “a face-threatening intention” to the speaker (Terkourafi 2008: 62). Hence she treats “rudeness proper” as “face-attack” (Terkourafi 2008: 63). On the contrary, Culpeper (2008: 31) and Bousfield (2010: 114) understand ‘impoliteness’ to mean intentional face damage and offence, and ‘rudeness’ to mean unintentional damage to a hearer’s face. However, while I agree that there are intentional and unintentional threats to face, I see the distinction as problematic in practice as access to speaker intention may not always be possible. Thus, in accordance with Culpeper (2011a) I prefer the term ‘impoliteness’ as it is used less often in lay discourse. Further, it resembles the term politeness, which makes it better suited as a term for the scientific concept (Culpeper 2011a: 24).

Concerning a definition of impoliteness, the base assumption underlying all definitions in Locher and Bousfield's edited volume *Impoliteness in Language* is that "impoliteness is behaviour that is face-aggravating in a particular context" (Locher & Bousfield 2008: 3); however, the authors themselves state that for most researchers, this definition is "ultimately insufficient" (Locher & Bousfield 2008: 3).

I will be basing my argument on the definition by Culpeper (2011a). Various other definitions beside Culpeper's (2011a), of course, have been put forward that are equally well-suited for analysis.<sup>23</sup> However, within recent research I believe this to be the most clearly articulated:

Impoliteness is a negative attitude towards specific behaviours occurring in specific contexts. It is sustained by expectations, and/or beliefs about social organisation, including, in particular, how a person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in interaction. Situated behaviours are viewed negatively – considered 'impolite' – when they conflict with how one expects them to be, how one wants them to be and/or how one thinks they ought to be. Such behaviours always have or are presumed to have emotional consequences for at least one participant, that is, they cause or are presumed to cause offence. Various factors can exacerbate how offensive an impolite behaviour is taken to be, including for example whether one understands a behaviour to be strongly intentional or not. (Culpeper 2011a: 23)

In essence, then, I define a given behaviour as open to an interpretation as impolite if it violates contextual norms or expectations that speakers have towards these norms, if it has negative emotional consequences for interlocutors, and if the behaviour is perceived as intended by the speaker. I further understand impoliteness as being strongly connected to an expression of power, as using impoliteness to me implies a disassociation from the speaker. Finally, I also understand impoliteness as being linked to the interlocutors' identity expression, in that impoliteness can be used to deny chosen identities or impress unwanted identities on the hearer.

### **3.2 Aspects of Impoliteness**

Culpeper's (2011a) definition, which I have discussed above, has shown that there are several key aspects that are connected to impoliteness. In detail, these include the relationship between

- 1) impoliteness and contextual norms
- 2) impoliteness and intentionality

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<sup>23</sup> See a list of definitions in Culpeper (2011a: 19-22). Key aspects of the quoted definitions include the notions of face, social norms, intentionality and emotions, all of which are integrated in Culpeper's own definition.



- 3) impoliteness and emotions, especially negative emotions.

To further clarify Culpeper's (2011a) definition and expound on my own understanding of impoliteness, I shall discuss these aspects in more detail below in the following chapters. Further, I will also concentrate on aspects that are not made explicit in Culpeper's definition. First, this concerns the connection between impoliteness and power, as discussed e.g. by Watts (2003). Second, I will also address the connection of impoliteness and identity, as stressed e.g. in Pleyer (2015; 2016). My aim in doing so is to provide a clearer picture of my own understanding of impoliteness, as well as to provide a baseline for the factors that influence impoliteness perception and expression in children's fiction (see below).

### **3.2.1 Impoliteness and Contextual Norms**

According to Watts (2003: 130), "we notice impoliteness when someone breaks out of line and does not abide by the interaction order of the social activity." In a similar manner, Mills (2005: 268) stresses that "[i]mpoliteness can be considered as any type of linguistic behaviour which is assessed as intending to threaten the hearer's face or social identity, or as transgressing the hypothesised Community of Practice's norms of appropriacy." This means that whether speakers evaluate an utterance or non-linguistic behaviour as impolite depends on the interactional context, i.e. on the norms a particular Community of Practice holds for a given situation or activity type (cf. Bousfield's (2008a: 44-45) notion of social norm politeness; see also Eelen 2001: 35; Haugh 2007: 313; Kienpointner 1997: 259; Locher & Watts 2005: 11; Terkourafi 2011: 176-177). I understand context as a holistic, dynamic construct that is comprised of a variety of interacting components, including linguistic context, cognitive context, and social and sociocultural context. Linguistic context refers to the actual language use in a communicative situation, but also to text type categories such as genre. Cognitive context refers to the types of knowledge, assumptions and frames evoked by and associated with particular communicative situations and texts. Social context includes components such as "participants, the immediate concrete, physical surroundings including time and location, and the macro contextual institutional and non-institutional domains" (Fetzer

2017: 272). It also includes sociocultural aspects, that is variables particular to particular cultures such as specific im/politeness norms and shared cultural knowledge (cf. Fetzer 2011: 34-36; Fetzer 2017: 268-274).

Research has shown that there are “discursive formats that have become institutionalised as expectable behaviour” (Watts 2003: 19). Speakers know before entering into an interaction what the appropriate behaviour will be, as they have constructed “cognitive conceptualisations of forms of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour [...] through their own histories of social practice” (Locher & Watts 2008: 78). So, any behaviour that goes beyond what is expectable in these formats or frames<sup>24</sup> and is open to a classification as negative can be described as potentially impolite (Watts 2003: 19-20) if it is paired with negative emotional consequences for at least one person participating in the interaction or activity.

For instance, shouting at an elderly person in the street and using offensive language towards her might be perceived as impolite, whereas shouting at the referee or players during a football match is much more acceptable (Culpeper 2011a: 22), or might even constitute desired behaviour for certain groups of fans. The use of swearwords shows a similar sensitivity to the context of utterance: The use of the words ‘Jesus Christ’ uttered in a church is acceptable, whereas in a locker room, they are likely to be understood as swearing (Jay 1992: 84). Linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour which breach expected norms in a given situation (Culpeper 2011a: 36; see also Mills 2005: 268) are thus very likely to be evaluated as impolite by participants, or in the very least these behaviours might cause communicative difficulties among participants (Culpeper 2008: 30; Locher & Watts 2008: 81).

Behaviour that does not conform to contextual expectations, i.e. behaviour that participants (or viewers and readers) perceive to be inadequate or not befitting the given social and interactional context, is seen as “negatively marked” and “inappropriate” (Watts 2005: xlii). In Kienpointner’s (1997: 255) view, “rudeness could be termed inappropriateness of communicative behaviour relative to a particular context,” and Culpeper (2015: 173) has proven that there is a strong link between the metalinguistic labels for impoliteness and those for inappropriateness.

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<sup>24</sup> I understand frames as a “structured mental representation of a conceptual category” (Kövecses 2006: 64) that may vary cross-culturally (see also ch. 6 on cross-cultural impoliteness).

Interactional norms may also influence a participant's behaviour as a member of a given group: Group membership requires each participant to adhere to group norms and expectations – a failure to do so, i.e. showing non-conforming behaviour – can raise questions of belonging (Culpeper 2010: 3239; Culpeper 2011a: 35). For instance, there are contexts where the use of dirty words is encouraged, such as the pub, or a sports arena (Jay 1992: 13). Non-participation in swearing, or actively discouraging others from doing so, could be perceived as inappropriate behaviour in these contexts, and could lead to one's group membership being questioned.

As the above discussion illustrates, norms are not stable entities, but instead, “the norms themselves are in flux, since they are shaped by the individuals who make up the discursive practice” (Locher & Bousfield 2008: 8).<sup>25</sup> This shows that there is a “pragmatic politeness spectrum in every milieu” (Sell [1992] 2005: 114),<sup>26</sup> and further, that impoliteness has fuzzy boundaries (Locher & Bousfield 2008: 7).

In Watts's (2003: 248) perspective, there are some discourses where impoliteness can now in fact be seen as the norm. This holds, for example, for radio phone-in programmes. Conflictive discourse can seem – or become – appropriate in discourse formats where it is perceived as beneficial by at least one participant (Lakoff 1989: 103). This further shows that if frames are subject to change and variation, and in-group norms are open to negotiation in every interaction, even if members have previously agreed on them, im/politeness can by definition not be inherent in language but must instead be context-dependent.

As Bousfield (2007a: 2189) stresses, there are certain preconditions for a behaviour to become the norm. The most important one is saliency. This means that it is not enough if a certain behaviour simply co-occurs together with a situation or activity; it also has to be a salient constitutive part of it: “‘Norms’ and ‘probable/possible occurrences’ are not the same animal at all” (Bousfield 2007a: 2190).

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<sup>25</sup> Considering impoliteness in context is also of importance as the nature of im/politeness may change in different historical periods (Sell [1992]2005). For instance, religiously motivated swear-words and curses such ‘damn you’ or ‘taking the Lord’s name in vain’ are generally not perceived as hurtful today as in the Victorian era, as they have lost impact with the receding power of religious institutions (Jay 1992: 3; 74-75).

<sup>26</sup> Here, Sell is echoing Watts's (2003) classification of polite – politic – impolite language.

### 3.2.2 Impoliteness and Intentionality

The above discussion has shown that speakers may intentionally violate contextual norms in a given interaction, i.e. they may intentionally choose to use impoliteness strategies to reach certain conversational goals (Mills 2005: 267). The notion of intentionality is thus important for analyses, as a hearer's understanding of and reaction to an utterance will change depending on whether she perceives face damage as having been caused intentionally or accidentally.

In general, the more likely the hearer is to attribute an intention to the utterance, the more licensed she will feel to retaliate in kind. In addition, the greater the damage done by a given act, the more licensed a hearer feels to utter an angry response and to retaliate with impoliteness (Bousfield 2007a: 2129, discussing Jay (1992)).

Hence, for impoliteness to be perceived as hurtful behaviour, i.e. for the utterance to be successful, a speaker has to act intentionally, with deliberate aggression, while a hearer has to understand and believe that in making the utterance, the speaker deliberately aimed at attacking her face (cf. Bousfield 2008a: 72; Culpeper 2005: 38; Terkourafi 2008: 56).

Bousfield (2008: 7) stresses that

impoliteness constitutes the communication of intentionally gratuitous and conflictive verbal face-threatening acts (FTAs) which are purposefully delivered:

- i. Unmitigated, in contexts where mitigation is required, and/or,
- ii. With deliberate aggression, that is, with the face threat exacerbated, 'boosted', or maximised in some way to heighten the face damage inflicted.

Furthermore, for impoliteness to be considered successful impoliteness, the intention of the speaker (or 'author') to 'offend' (threaten/damage face) must be understood by those in a receiver role.

Intonation is a further factor to gauge speaker intention as "the appropriate intonation can make 'son of a bitch' a term of endearment" (Jay 1992: 13). Uttering the term with falling intonation, and a loud tone of voice implies that a positive interpretation as a term of endearment is not intended. One may thus conclude that "[i]mpoliteness is in the eyes *and ears* of the beholder" (Culpeper 2011b: 394; my emphasis); this definition points towards prosody as an important marker of impoliteness judgment.

Nevertheless, a hearer might also feel offended even if no intentional face-damage can be detected for the speaker, i.e. accidental face-damage is possible (Terkourafi 2008: 61-62), for instance when a speaker lacks certain cultural or

frame-based knowledge. Impoliteness can also arise if “the hearer perceives and/or constructs behavior as intentionally face-attacking” (Culpeper 2005: 38), even when they are aware that the speaker might not have intended their behaviour to be harmful (Culpeper 2010: 3233, footnote 1), e.g. if a speaker asks a hearer when the baby is due, despite the hearer not being pregnant (see Culpeper 2011a: 51). Accidental face-damage to the hearer might also occur as a ‘side-effect’ of an utterance or action (Bousfield 2008a: 69), for example in giving criticism or feedback on student performance. On perceiving a threat to face, a hearer will typically show negative emotions, such as feeling angry at self or other, feeling ashamed, or feeling upset (Culpeper 2011a: 1; see ch. 3.2.3 below). One also has to take into account that if an utterance was intended to be face-damaging, but is not perceived as such by the hearer, it will not be understood as being truly impolite (Bousfield 2008a: 72-73; Culpeper 2005: 39).

Further, a speaker will be likely to use impoliteness structures when she feels provoked either during or prior to a given interaction. This means that a speaker’s attack on the hearer is often caused by an offending situation or event. This can lead to conflict spirals in a conversation if the response to an attack itself becomes a new offending event that is responded to in turn. As Culpeper (2011a: 204) states, encountering impolite behaviour directed towards them makes people tend to retaliate in kind.

A hearer, however, also has the option of not responding to the impolite utterance. She can have several reasons for doing so (see Bousfield 2007a: 2196-2197):

- a) she may remain silent as she accepts the damage to her face;
- b) she uses silence to defend her own face, as retaliating could cause further face damage;<sup>27</sup>
- c) she may use silence as an impoliteness strategy and not take a turn when it is expected of her;
- d) she may simply not have understood or heard the speaker’s utterance, and

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<sup>27</sup> See e.g. the use of silence by Japanese students in Australian university classes (Nakane 2006). As giving a potentially incorrect answer in class is perceived as a threat to one’s own face, Japanese students opt for silence; to Japanese speakers, silence is thus understood as a politeness strategy.

- e) she might be momentarily lost for words or is still thinking about how to retaliate.

Hence, analysts and conversational partners have to take contextual factors into account in correctly interpreting the use of silence in conversation (Bousfield 2008a: 189).

### 3.2.3 Impoliteness and Emotions

Culpeper's (2011a: 23) definition of impoliteness holds that impolite behaviours can have "emotional consequences for at least one participant." The exact nature of these emotional consequences is not made explicit in this definition, however. Earlier research, especially research into the relational aspects of politeness, has also pointed out the relevance of emotions for impoliteness. Early politeness models, for instance, made this connection implicitly, e.g., by discussing politeness in terms of disarming aggression (Brown & Levinson [1978] 1987: 1), minimising confrontation (Lakoff 1989: 102) or by referring to politeness in terms of friendliness (Leech 1983: 82). What these early models have in common is that politeness is framed in terms of positive emotions and/or the avoidance of aggressive, confrontative behaviours and corresponding negative emotions. Goffman (1967: 6-8) goes further in that he addresses both positive and negative feelings that are connected to one's face, e.g. feeling good, or feeling sad or embarrassed.

However, these observations have sparked surprisingly little research in that politeness research usually does not make the connection to emotion explicit, with the notable exception of Arndt and Janney (1985; 1987), for whom politeness involves emotional support.

Shaver et al. (1987) have proposed a framework for conceptualising speakers' knowledge about emotions, which can be connected to the study of impoliteness. Based on, e.g., Rosch's (1978) prototype theory, Shaver et al. discuss emotions from a prototype perspective and establish a list of five basic emotions: love, joy, anger, sadness and fear (Shaver et al. 1987: 1067).<sup>28</sup> Three of these emotions

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<sup>28</sup> Lists with more detailed subordinate emotion names and descriptions of feelings and behaviours connected to these negative emotions can be found in Culpeper (2011a: 63-65) and Shaver et al. (1987: 1067-1076).

are negatively connoted and are likely to co-occur in contexts that have a high likelihood of impoliteness structures to be used. See e.g. Violet experiencing terror, a subordinate level emotion of the basic level emotion fear, after having been threatened<sup>29</sup> by Count Olaf:

[situation: after Count Olaf's arrest, the lights go off. Violet is about to switch them back on.]

Then, just as she had reached the switch, Violet felt a hand on her shoulder. A figure leaned in to whisper into her ear.

"I'll get my hands on your fortune if it's the last thing I do," the voice hissed. "And when I have it, I'll kill you and your siblings with my own two hands."

Violet gave a little cry of terror, but flicked the switch on. (Series 1: 157-158)

The above discussion implies that impoliteness is a phenomenon distinct from banter, where these negative emotions or evaluations are lacking: Banter or 'mock impoliteness' is "impoliteness that remains on the surface, since it is understood that it is not intended to cause offence" (Culpeper 1996: 352). For instance, if I were to utter "A fine friend you are" after my friend had accidentally passed the ball to the opposing team in our weekly football game, my friend would interpret the utterance thus (see Leech 1983: 145):

- (i) H is a fine friend (face-value)
- (ii) By which S means that H is *not* a fine friend (Irony Principle)
- (iii) But actually, S and H are aware that H is S's friend, and to show this, S is being impolite (Banter Principle).

Leech's (1983) Banter Principle means, then, that

[i]n order to show solidarity with h, say something which is (i) obviously untrue, and (ii) obviously impolite to h" [and this will give rise to an interpretation such that] "what s says is impolite to h and is clearly untrue. Therefore what s means is polite to h and true (Leech 1983: 144).

Banter thus has the opposite function from true impoliteness in that it fosters social intimacy. The implication is that the more familiar the speaker and the hearer are, the less politeness is needed; superficial impoliteness can thus promote closeness. Obviously this only applies in contexts where this impoliteness is understood by all participants to be a surface realisation; however, Leech fails to specify the nature of the contexts in which impoliteness is clearly understood to be untrue (see Culpeper 1996: 352).

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<sup>29</sup> This threat is understood as a conventionalised impoliteness formula; see ch. 10.1.3 below for a discussion of threats and further examples.

Kienpointner (1997) further stresses the interpersonal effect of using strategies that can be evaluated as impolite. For him,

[r]udeness is a kind of prototypically non-cooperative or competitive communicative behaviour which destabilizes the personal relationships of the interacting individuals and [...] creates or maintains an emotional atmosphere of mutual irreverence and antipathy, which primarily serves egocentric interests (1997: 259).

In contrast to banter, which stabilises social relationships, impoliteness destabilises the relationships of the participants. This is of special interest for intimate relationships: one knows the areas of the hearer's face that are particularly sensitive to attack, and thus, one has more scope for impoliteness (Culpeper 1996: 354). This is of course not to say that impoliteness is a necessary by-product of all close relationships.

Emotionality is also relevant for understanding impoliteness in the context of fictional texts: 11-year-old children come fully equipped to understand emotion scripts, i.e. to infer others' emotional states from script elements, such as facial expressions, situational information, history, or prior experience with the interactant(s) (Saarni 2011).

At around 2;0 years, children start to talk systematically about emotions, differentiating between positive emotional states, i.e. feeling happy/good, laughing, or feeling loved, and negative emotional states, such as feeling angry, frightened, or sad/crying (Harris, de Rosnay & Pons 2016: 294).<sup>30</sup> This conforms to the broad-to-differentiation hypothesis, according to which emotions are first classed as binary opposites (positive-negative), which are then expanded to fully adult-like emotion scripts (Widen 2016). Around the age of 2;0, children also begin to attribute emotional states to inanimate objects, such as dolls, stuffed toys, or fictional characters (Harris, de Rosnay & Pons 2016: 294), which can be seen as one of the bases for understanding emotional states in children's fiction. Longitudinal tests have also shown that children can reactivate past emotional experiences (Lagattuta & Wellman 2001), which is a prerequisite to understanding what a character in a book is feeling and to emotionally connect to them.

Children aged 6;0 and older can correctly attribute emotions to story characters and also report on their mistaken emotions. For instance, younger children

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<sup>30</sup> Even before 2;0, in their preverbal stage, children can use gestures to express and comment on emotion; see e.g. Vallotton (2008).



report that Little Red Riding Hood feels afraid upon entering Grandma's house despite realising that she does not yet know that the wolf in disguise is waiting for her (Ronfard & Harris 2014).

Further, the more children are given opportunities to communicate about emotions, the more accurate and comprehensive their understanding of their own emotions and that of others (Harris, de Rosnay & Pons 2016: 293). This most likely holds, as well, for engaging in reading activities that highlight the emotional states of actors in the fictional world. Knowing about character emotions can thus help understand how characters might perceive utterances that are open to an interpretation as impolite.

### 3.2.4 Impoliteness and Power

A further important aspect that may influence whether and how a hearer will react to an utterance that she perceived as potentially impolite is the notion of power.

The connection of impoliteness and power has proven to be an important factor in contemporary research (Bousfield 2008a; Locher & Bousfield 2008; Locher 2004; Terkourafi 2008), and it has been noted that "power and politeness are closely related" (Lakoff 1989: 127). Similar to rights and obligations, power is inherent in the social roles speakers claim for themselves in a given interaction or activity type (Bousfield 2008a: 174).

Power is one of the variables in Brown and Levinson's ([1978] 1987: 76) formula to compute the weightiness ( $W_x$ ) of a given face-threatening action (FTA<sub>x</sub>):

$$W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$$

Here,  $D$  measures the social distance between  $S$  and  $H$ ,  $P$  measures the respective power that  $H$  has over  $S$ , and  $R_x$  measures the degree to which the FTA is rated an imposition in the given culture.

Commenting on this formula, Brown and Gilman (1989: 165) note that

- Politeness increases as Distance goes up.
- Politeness increases as Power of  $H$  over  $S$  increases.
- Politeness increases as Risk of imposition goes up.

This means that a powerful speaker is less in need of using politeness strategies to redress potential FTAs, while a less powerful speaker will have to make use of them to avoid being perceived as impolite.

While the formula has been heavily criticised,<sup>31</sup> an interlocutor's power can influence how speakers react towards her, i.e. whether or not they feel they are licensed to use impoliteness strategies towards her. This does not preclude, however, that power is a dynamic concept, and that speakers may intentionally choose to use impoliteness strategies to gain social power in an interaction (see below).

Commenting on the relation of impoliteness and power, Locher and Bousfield (2008: 8) stress that "impoliteness is an exercise of power as it has arguably always in some way *an effect* on one's addressees in that it alters the future action-environment of one's interlocutors." The following chapters will show how the action-environment of the interlocutors can be influenced by the use of impoliteness in specific settings. In detail, I will investigate the relationship of impoliteness and power in institutional settings in general, and specifically in the settings of the army and the school.

#### **3.2.4.1 Institutional Power**

For my analysis, the power relations inherent in institutions are of special importance. Watts (2003: 213) notes that "[i]n terms of network theory, 'power over'<sup>32</sup> is held by complex, institutionalised latent networks such as school, family, local and national government, in some instances the church, financial institutions, etc."

From this follows, first, that members of these institutions, such as teachers, parents, or government officials, are imbued with institutional power. If these members engage in conversations with non-members, an asymmetric power relation arises. Second, it follows that members of an institution may use impoliteness strategies "to serve the interests of public institutions by attacking the positive or negative face of individuals who have to submit themselves to the representatives of the institutions and their procedures" (Kienpointner 1997: 271).<sup>33</sup> That is, participants

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<sup>31</sup> See e.g. Watts (2003: 96-97), who criticises the variables on the grounds of their interdependence; for instance, to be able to appropriately judge the value for P, one would have to take into account the distance D between speaker and hearer, and vice versa.

<sup>32</sup> Drawing on Wartenberg (1991), Watts defines 'power to' in the following manner: "An individual A possesses power if s/he has the freedom of action to achieve the goals s/he has set her/himself, regardless of whether or not this involves the potential to impose A's will on others to carry out actions that are in A's interests" (Watts 1991: 60). 'Power over,' on the other hand, means that "A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's perceived interests, regardless of whether [or not] B later comes to accept the desirability of A's actions" (Watts 1991: 61).

<sup>33</sup> This strategy is termed "strategic rudeness in public institutions" in Kienpointner's (1997: 271) approach.

who hold institutional power are licensed or supported by the institutional structure to use impoliteness towards others (Culpeper 2011a: 245).

Situations with asymmetric power relations are predisposed to impoliteness in that

[a] powerful participant has more freedom to be impolite, because he or she can (a) reduce the ability of the less powerful participant to retaliate with impoliteness (e.g. through the denial of speaking rights), and (b) threaten more severe retaliation should the less powerful participant be impolite (Culpeper 1996: 354).

This means that the participatory options for less powerful participants are institutionally sanctioned, especially where impolite counter-reactions by the hearer are concerned. For example, Kasper (1990: 210) maintains that the institution of the courtroom has asymmetrical participation rights for interactants which do not allow the defendant to retaliate against impoliteness use by the prosecutor. Hence, “[i]nstitutional power structures [...] give rise to dominant ideologies by which impoliteness is legitimated and (typically) unchallenged” (Culpeper 2011a: 245).

In a setting with a power imbalance, a less powerful participant will be more restricted in whether and how she can counter impoliteness: “Aggravation strategies are also sensitive to social factors. A very powerful person will probably be attacked only by off-record means” (Lachenicht 1980: 619). Participants who do not hold institutional power are sanctioned from using impoliteness, or from retaliating against impoliteness (Culpeper 2011a: 245) as they might fear repercussions, either of a personal or of an institutional kind, such as an official reprimand.

An interlocutor whose face is damaged finds herself with very restricted response options; Culpeper (2008) presents an analogy with a bank robbery to illustrate how impoliteness restricts the hearer’s freedom of action:

An assailant brandishes a gun (produces some communicative behaviour), symbolic of their power, with the intention, as you understand it, of getting money from you the bank clerk (to damage your face). Assuming the gun is real and loaded (you evaluate the face-attack as impoliteness and not, for example, banter or failed politeness), your actions are restricted. [...] You thus choose amongst: (1) doing nothing (risk loss of face), (2) handing over the money (accept the face loss), (3) trying to negotiate (defend your face, e.g. abrogate responsibility), or (4) getting your own gun out from underneath the counter (counter with face-attack) (Culpeper 2008: 36-37).<sup>34</sup>

Essentially, what Culpeper describes is a situation with a power imbalance in which the hearer has to decide which options are open to her and whether she wants to

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<sup>34</sup> Note that the assumed responses of the hypothetical bank clerk correspond to the response strategies to impoliteness as proposed in Culpeper et al. (2003).

accept any potential consequences arising from her choice. This implies that the less powerful participant in institutional settings may use impoliteness towards more powerful hearers for any of the following reasons (Beebe 1995: 159-163):

- (1) S wants to appear superior: for instance, a student might challenge a teacher by using impolite structures so as to gain power and status within her peer group (Culpeper 2011a: 245);
- (2) S wants to get power over actions: S wants to get H to do something, or to avoid doing it herself;
- (3) S wants power in interaction, i.e. conversational management.

This shows that power can also be created online in on-going interactions. House (2010), however, notes that this is not true for all interactions. In her opinion,

power is not necessarily negotiable. Sometimes institutionally sanctioned asymmetrical power relationships between interactants prior to and ensuing the interactional encounter on hand may prove to be immune to challenge and supposedly impolite face threat. In such instances consideration of politeness and impoliteness may indeed turn out to be of secondary importance (House 2010: 565).

Further, one has to bear in mind that when a member of an institution exercises her power, it does not necessarily imply that she is impolite. Rather, where a speaker uses or defends herself against impoliteness, she is using power or challenging existing power relations (cf. Bousfield 2008b: 152, footnote 13). Culpeper agrees in that

in a position of power someone can perform face-attacking acts with less fear of retribution. However, if the power is perceived to be socially legitimate, that will make it less likely to be perceived as impolite. It is whether the exercise of power is perceived to be an abuse of power, and not simply whether one has power or not, that heavily determines the judgment of impoliteness in this kind of context (Culpeper 2011a: 181).

Hence, the personal relationship that holds between interactants, the concrete social setting, and notions of norms and appropriateness in these settings will have to be taken into account to establish whether a member of an institution is abusing her power and whether her use of impoliteness may be seen as justified in any given interaction.

In the following, I will describe two institutional settings in more detail: On the one hand, I will focus on the army, an institution with rigid hierarchical structures which has been investigated in previous impoliteness research (e.g. Bousfield 2008a; 2008b; Culpeper 1996). Second, I will investigate the school, focusing on

how members of this institution can use impoliteness to either gain institutional power or to demonstrate that they are imbued with it.

#### **3.2.4.2 Power and Impoliteness in the Army**

The army, and more explicitly the training of new recruits, has been identified as an institutional setting with a great power imbalance: Army recruits have less power than higher-ranking officers, and ranks within the army are clearly structured and imbued with different levels of power (Bousfield 2008a; 2008b; Culpeper 1996). This rigid power structure restrains the recruit from complaining to her superiors about the use of impoliteness strategies in the course of her training. One can contrast this with a setting which perceives itself as equally strict, e.g. a British university. Here, a lower-ranking member of staff would have the power to make a formal complaint if she were insulted by a higher-ranking member (see Bousfield 2008a: 145; 153, footnote 19).

Research has shown that impoliteness is prevalent in army training. As it is the aim of training to depersonalise the recruits, and mould them into ‘perfect soldiers’ (Culpeper 1996: 359), impoliteness is used with a specific function that is beneficial not to the individual, but to the institution.

As impoliteness is this prevalent, researchers such as Mills (2005) have questioned if conflictive talk is inevitably perceived as impolite and hurtful by participants if it constitutes a norm or is regularly used in a given Community of Practice. In a similar vein, Watts (2003: 131-132) stresses that

certain social interaction types have interaction orders with lines<sup>35</sup> that sanction or neutralise face-threatening or face-damaging acts, e. g., interaction between family members or among close friends, competitive forms of interaction such as political debate, rigidly hierarchised forms of interaction, e. g., in the military services.

Mills (2005: 270) believes that interactants in army training discourse are not likely to conceptualise conflictive discourse as impolite. As its use is ritualised, it is assumed to be perceived as the norm by participants, who might be affected by it but who would not use the label ‘impoliteness’ to describe this type of discourse. Culpeper (1996) cites an example of sergeants using various impoliteness strategies in an interview with a female recruit who has consistently performed badly in train-

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<sup>35</sup> ‘Lines’ are to be understood here in the sense of Goffman’s (1967: 5) facework.

ing. Discussing the interview with a friend later, “only the ‘screaming’ of the sergeants and the fact that they get ‘up close’ are mentioned [by the recruit; MP] as aspects that ‘get to a person’” (Culpeper 1996: 363); the behaviour is not described as ‘impolite.’

Bousfield (2007a: 2189) disagrees with Mills’s (2005) view, however. In his view, if impoliteness were the norm in this interaction type, it would be unmarked and have little effect on participants. While the recruit above does not use the metalinguistic labels ‘impolite’ or ‘rude,’ she clearly found the sergeants’ behaviour noteworthy and hurtful, i.e. it ‘got to her.’ From this one may conclude that she does not perceive this behaviour to be the norm.

Bousfield (2007a: 2190) further raises the question why impoliteness should be used in the army if it were the norm and it went unnoticed. For instance, German army training does not use impoliteness to such a high degree, and the key features of army training, such as physical fitness, would still be reached without using impoliteness.

Further support for Bousfield’s (2007a) argument comes from a different setting: that of the conflictive TV show. Culpeper (2005: 69) notes that the “high salience of impoliteness behaviour makes it very difficult for targets to neutralize them by factoring in context.” This means that if a behaviour is particularly salient it is not perceived to be the norm; in these settings impoliteness always has a certain function, but is not perceived as neutral.

#### **3.2.4.3 Power and Impoliteness in the School**

The school is another place where institutional power relations hold. In many institutional settings, the interaction order is perceived as given prior to the interaction (Watts 2003: 135). This is also true for the school in that children entering higher grades are aware of the norms and rules that are in operation inside and outside the classroom.

Commenting on these norms, Jay (1992: 33) stresses that “there are strict rules of conduct and behaviour administered by the teachers and staff at the school.” Members of the teaching body can enforce school rules, and set punishments if students fail to adhere to these rules. Thus, a teacher or professor holds more (insti-

tutional) power<sup>36</sup> than the student, which makes their relationship inherently unequal. Jay (1992: 33) notes one problem that arises from this for the student: “[the student’s] role is very ambiguous. The child should act like a polite adult but is not treated with the same respect or given adult freedoms.”

This lack of freedom can be seen e.g. in student-teacher interaction within the context of a lesson, where an inherently asymmetric turn-taking system is in operation. Generally, the teacher decides when and in which format a student may contribute to the lesson, and whether student self-selected turns are acceptable. A student self-selecting her turn when this is not explicitly allowed by the teacher can be construed as a threat to the teacher’s face. On the other hand, being selected when the student did not wish to contribute may be perceived as threatening the student’s negative face (see Nakane 2006).

Less powerful participants usually avoid using impoliteness (Terkourafi 2008: 69) as they might fear sanctions, such as detentions in the case of school interactions. However, they might opt to attack a more powerful participant, i.e. a teacher, if this allows the less powerful participants to gain certain social benefits, such as status and/or respect by one’s peer group (Culpeper 2008: 39). In this sense, students may conceptualise their membership in the student body as participation in an in-group that is set against the teaching body as an out-group, which is then challenged for more power.<sup>37</sup> This shows that even in institutional settings, “power is not static; rather, power is highly dynamic, fluid and negotiable” (Locher & Bousfield 2008: 9).

One has to be aware that in this particular setting, power may also be used to benefit the less powerful participant. For instance, teachers may exercise power over a student to ensure the student’s improvement in class. While the student might feel that her face is threatened in these situations, committing FTAs is not the primary goal of student-teacher interactions (Culpeper 2005: 36-37; 2008: 35). Impoliteness also seems to be secondary to some institutional exchanges. House (2010:

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<sup>36</sup> I have used brackets here, as teachers are also imbued with more power due to their age: in most societies, adults are perceived as more capable than children. Especially for older students who want to escape the role of ‘the child’ this might create certain conflicts and struggles for power in the classroom.

<sup>37</sup> This discussion does not mean to exclude the existence of different groups within the student in-group, whose members may use impoliteness to distance themselves from each other.

582-585) cites a conversation between a university professor and an assistant, in which the assistant tended to interrupt or reformulate the professor's utterances without having been prompted to do so. This behaviour could be open to an interpretation as impolite, but according to House, the professor did not perceive this to be the case: Due to his pre-existing higher position in the academic context he did not feel threatened by the assistant's utterances. Thus, an analysis will have to establish whether the use of a speaker's power ranges within acceptable and expectable notions for the given interaction type, such as 'giving criticism', or whether the teacher abuses her power. It is only in the latter case that one might speak of the occurrence of true impoliteness (Culpeper 2011a: 181).

### **3.2.5 Impoliteness and Identity**

Culpeper's (2011a: 23) definition of impoliteness stresses the connection of impolite behaviour and identity in that "it is sustained by expectations, and/or beliefs about social organisation, including, in particular, how a person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in interaction." A similar point is made by Mills (2005: 268), who notes that

accusations of impoliteness are concerned with problems of agreement over the assessment of the social standing of individuals in relation to one another [...]. Accusations of impoliteness generally signal to participants that there has been a mismatch in the judgment of status, role or familiarity and thus perhaps also a mismatch in their assessment of their position in the particular Community of Practice.

Research has shown that speakers can use impolite structures to position themselves relative to others in an ongoing interaction.<sup>38</sup> In this regard, language does not only reflect who we are and how we want to be seen, but effectively makes us who we are (Joseph 2010: 9).

In my opinion, identity is best understood as "the active negotiation of an individual's relationship with larger social constructs, in so far as this negotiation is signalled through language and other semiotic means" (Mendoza-Denton 2003: 475). This means that a speaker instead co-constructs multiple identities in interactions with other participants. In Bucholtz and Hall's view (2005: 588; see also Joseph 2010: 14), "identity is best viewed as the emergent product rather than the pre-

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<sup>38</sup> This discussion is published in similar form in Pleyer (2015; 2016; 2017).



existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices.” In other words, “identities are selves enacted by behaviours in particular situations” (Culpeper 2011a: 13). This implies that identities can be conceptualised as a language-based process that is located in concrete, specific interactions and that consists of processes of negotiation, contextualisation, choices, adoption and restatements. Hence identities are not possessions that remain constant, but instead are seen as being in flux (De Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg 2006: 2; Joseph 2004: 81; Litosseliti 2006: 63).

Young children show an emerging understanding of the fact that identities, social roles and power are constructed in language, and that one has to use different ways of speaking towards persons in different roles. For instance, at age 9;0, children show an awareness of different social roles in request formation (Becker Bryant 2009: 346; Axia & Baroni 1985: 923; see also ch. 3.3 on the acquisition of im/politeness).

As identities are co-constructed and (re-)negotiated with others in specific interactions, however, how a speaker and her language use is perceived not only depends on the speaker’s presentation of self, but on the hearer’s view and acceptance of this presentation. This means that a hearer may deny certain expression of a speaker’s identity or social positioning (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, Bou-Franch & Lorenzo-Dus 2013: 100), e.g. she may not accept the speaker in her construction as the hearer’s superior, or may ascribe unwanted aspects of an identity or role, such as ascribing arrogance or incompetence to a person in power to deny her a certain status. A lack of acceptance of a speaker’s identity or facets thereof can be seen as a violation of the speaker’s face and rights (e.g. Spencer-Oatey 2000 for aspects of speaker rights) and thus be open to an interpretation as impolite. On the other hand, the speaker may also challenge and/or deny unwanted ascriptions of her identity by the hearer. Impoliteness thus has the function of confirming or refusing specific identities or aspects thereof (Culpeper 2011a: 252).]

Note here that one’s identity may include aspects close to self, such as one’s outer appearance, one’s preferences (e.g. taste in music or fashion), or one’s abilities (e.g. a specific talent in sports). It may further stretch to include larger groups of persons or Communities of Practice the speaker is invested in, such as one’s

family, one's school, sports team, etc. The aspects that the speaker is most emotionally invested in are most sensitive to offence (Culpeper 2011a: 25), so that for a speaker who is very fashion-conscious, criticism of her hat may cause a strong offence, while other speakers may not have strong emotional reactions towards this criticism. Likewise, for a speaker who does not perceive herself to be part of e.g. a group of football fans, criticism of fan behaviour will have a lesser effect on her than for a speaker who is an avid supporter of a certain club.

Note here also that which behaviours are perceived as challenging or impolite differs in every Community of Practice, and in different cultures<sup>39</sup> (see, for example, Culpeper 2011a for comparative research on impoliteness perceptions in Finland, Germany, Japan, Turkey and the UK, and also see ch. 6 below). Especially where different cultures are concerned, im/politeness expressions and perceptions have been shown to vary considerably (see, for example, House 2006).

### **3.2.5.1 Face**

Face is a problematic notion in itself (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2013). Some researchers advocate for a return to a Goffmanian notion of face (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003; Locher & Watts 2005); some seek to reconceptualise, simplify or elaborate on Brown and Levinson's ([1978] 1987) culture-specific notion of positive and negative face (Bousfield 2008; O'Driscoll 1996; Sifianou 1992), while others have posited new, social-constructivist approaches to face (O'Driscoll 2011; Sifianou 2011).

As Goffman (1967: 5) originally suggested, 'face' is understood to mean "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [sic] by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact;" 'line' here refers to the speakers' own evaluation of the interaction and of all participants, including themselves (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003: 1458). In other words, a speaker's face is a 'mask' worn for the duration of an interaction. Face is on loan from society, not an attribute of a person in isolation. Consequently, "there is no faceless communication" (Scollon & Scollon 1995: 38).

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<sup>39</sup> I am aware that national identities should not be conflated with geographical borders, as members of a given (sub-)culture might explicitly disassociate from the communicative preferences of the majority.

Feelings about self, then, depend on how others see self and what self can expect from others (Culpeper 2011a: 25). Linguistic strategies which are open to an interpretation as impolite thus have the potential to threaten the hearer's face, as they imply that the hearer is viewed negatively.

### **3.2.5.2 Familiarity**

Whether a speaker decides to use linguistic structures that are open to an interpretation as impolite might also depend on how well she knows her interlocutor, i.e. on the familiarity between speakers.

Culpeper (1996: 354) notes that “[i]n a familiar relationship one has more scope for impoliteness,” i.e. the more familiar the speaker is with the hearer, the easier it is for her to attack the points of the hearer's face that are particularly sensitive (e.g. certain physical characteristics, certain behaviours, attitudes or beliefs that the hearer holds). For instance, using derogatory terms to disparage the hearer's sports team that she strongly identifies with could be very hurtful, while a comment on the colour of her trousers might be less so, provided she is not very invested in appearing fashionable.

The hearer might also evaluate or perceive a speaker's utterances differently depending on what type of person she believes the speaker to be. In Infante and Wigley's (1986) view, for instance, the use of verbally aggressive behaviour is understood as a personality trait, which leads Culpeper (1996: 355) to state that “some people are predisposed towards confrontation.” One might assume, then, that utterances made by a speaker who is seen as predisposed towards conflicts might be perceived as more open to interpretation as impolite than with a speaker who is generally not inclined towards conflictive behaviour.

In arguments between participants who are familiar with each other and who have a history of conflicts and impoliteness use, conflict spirals may arise as speakers try to ‘win’ the argument by putting the other down (Kienpointner 1997: 271). Kienpointner (1997: 271) terms this behaviour “competitive rudeness in private conversations,” and describes it as occurring between persons who are friends or related; however, a very close relationship that habitually uses impoliteness structures might also pertain between non-related persons, e.g. between students and teachers (see Pleyer 2015).

Further, impoliteness can be used as a method of in-group management (Kleinke & Bös 2015) in that it can be “an important means of enhancing the in-group’s stability so that the respective out-group is systematically treated in a very rude way. This type I call ‘competitive rudeness in inter-group confrontation’” (Kienpointner 1997: 271). This means that impoliteness can be used to mark one’s identity, to present oneself as an in-group member and to characterise oneself against an out-group, which may then feed into power relations, e.g. majority vs minority groups (see also Kleinke & Bös 2015). The emergence of impoliteness might be related back to in-group and resource management in early humans (Pleyer & Pleyer 2016).<sup>40</sup>

### **3.3 The Acquisition of Impoliteness**

The previous chapter discussed children and their understanding of appropriateness in conversations with different interlocutors. There is evidence that politeness skills as a social ‘tool’ have to be acquired by the child in interaction (Watts 2003: 9; Watts 2005: xxxix) and that “[p]erforming in a polite way is a complex ability which requires acquisition of a combination of linguistic, non-linguistic, and social skills” (Sifianou 2000: 78). That is, the child undergoes a process of socialization, which we can define as the process “whereby naive individuals are taught the skills, behavior patterns, values, and motivations needed for competent functioning in the culture in which the child is growing up” (Maccoby 2015: 3). It includes “the acquisition of rules, roles, standards, and values across the social, emotional, cognitive, and personal domains” through the complex interaction of biological and sociocultural factors (Grusec & Hastings 2015: xi).

In general, contemporary research into language acquisition has shown that shared intentionality is the key factor that is necessary for engaging in uniquely human forms of collaborative activities in which a plural subject ‘we’ is involved: joint goals, joint intentions, mutual knowledge, shared beliefs (Tomasello 2008: 6-7). This is hinted at by Ervin-Tripp, Guo, and Lampert (1990), who note that politeness is first apparent in social indexing, which further develops into social tactics or strategic politeness in later developmental stages.

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<sup>40</sup> From an evolutionary perspective, seeing the evolution of impoliteness merely as disgust management (see e.g. Vogel 2015) is not tenable. See also ch.11.2.2 on emotions.

Three caveats have to be borne in mind when assessing the acquisition of politeness, however: First, a high percentage of studies focusses on the acquisition of politeness strategies in young children, i.e. from around 2;0 years of age up to entering primary school; the pragmatic abilities of older children or pre-teens are described less often.<sup>41</sup> See, however, promising studies by, e.g., Garton and Pratt (1990), who discuss the emergence of pragmatic abilities in request formulations of 8-12-year-old children, and the development of intonation in speakers up to age 15;0 (Wells, Peppé & Goulandris 2004). Second, politeness tends to be studied mainly in terms of certain speech acts, most often the act of requesting. And finally, the acquisition of impoliteness proper remains a research desideratum.

Older research, such as a study by Baroni and Axia (1989), has pointed out how children learn to distinguish between polite and impolite requests. Bates (1976) shows that 2;6-year-olds can mitigate requests when their first request was unsuccessful. As children also start using ‘please’ around the same time, there seems to be some evidence that around this age, “basic interactional competence” (Kecskes, Sanders & Pomerantz 2018: 89) develops, i.e. that some understanding of politeness and of perspective-taking arises in children.

Contemporary research supports these findings in that it has been shown that preschoolers show a better request performance in familiar situations. Indirect requests are understood as requests for action, and pre-schoolers know the conditions under which requesting is appropriate. This is not difficult for them as some types of indirect requests are fairly common in child-directed speech, e.g. ‘lunch time’ is understood as a request to wash one’s hands and come to the table (Becker Bryant 2009: 344-345). In request productions, children use semantic aggravators with participants of a lower status, and mitigators with participants of a higher status. This shows some awareness of the relationship between politeness, impoliteness and social position or power even in young speakers. This is especially so as the same behavioural patterns are also produced in a play situation with puppets (Becker Bryant 2009: 346).

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<sup>41</sup> See also a review of literature on the development of pragmatics (Ninio & Snow 1999), which focuses on politeness as a theory of social interaction. Also see an edited volume by Matthews (2014), which addresses several key aspects of the pragmatic development in first language acquisition.

The evidence of such an awareness seems to contradict or at least put into question earlier research e.g. by Greif and Gleason (1980) or Gleason and Weintraub (1976), who noted that spontaneous production of politeness such as leave-taking and greeting formulae is rare in young children, as explicit teaching by caregivers focuses only on the forms used, not on securing the child's understanding of what the form means. In contrast, Becker Bryant (2009) shows that children are very much aware of the appropriateness of politeness forms in different social settings. This shows that

[o]ne learns not only when to be polite but what degree of politeness is warranted in a given social setting. Learning to use dirty words should also operate similarly to learning to be polite. The child learns the proper way to curse, the proper place and how to change the style of cursing in context (Jay 1992: 30).<sup>42</sup>

Hence, acquiring a language implies that speakers do not only acquire language competence but also sociolinguistic competence, i.e. an understanding of the norms of their society, such as which (groups of) people have a higher social status, or which discourse strategies to use for requesting. It is in failing to adhere to these norms that a lack of politeness may be ascribed to the speaker (Sifianou 2000: 203). Just as a child is reprimanded when forgetting to be polite or, in Watts's (2003) terms, showing politic behaviour, the child's behaviour will be sanctioned if they are perceived as impolite in a context that does not warrant impoliteness. Hence, there is a certain etiquette of being impolite (Jay 1992: 30), i.e. the child acquires knowledge in which contexts and settings being impolite is allowed (Jay 1992: 31). This sociolinguistic competence is acquired through the child's interaction with peers. A limited background knowledge of interlocutors require the child to design her contribution to be maximally clear and effective; hence frequent and emotionally engaging conversations with peers provide the child with an environment that promotes pragmatic skills (Becker Bryant 2009: 351-52).<sup>43</sup> See also Bourdieu

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<sup>42</sup> However, Stivers and colleagues (2018) show that school-age children show a lack of reflexive awareness of the underlying conversational norms in question-response sequences; they "propose that it is children's turn designs that lead child interaction to feel distinctive because children at these ages are not differentiating their norm-following from norm-departing responses" (Stivers, Sidnell & Bergen 2018: 14).

<sup>43</sup> There is also some evidence that pragmatic skills can be explicitly taught. For instance, Tsakona (2016) proposes a multiliteracies model with which politeness strategies in service encounters can be taught in kindergarten to raise or enhance children's awareness of social aspects of politeness. However, most research on teaching politeness focuses on a foreign-language teaching context; see e.g. Taguchi (2011), who presents a review of literature on teaching pragmatics in the L2 classroom,

(1986: 248), who notes that cultural capital, i.e. the speaker's cultural knowledge, is acquired in places where the child is in contact with peers, such as the school, or a sports club. Thus, children's habitus<sup>44</sup> and their perceptions of impoliteness are likely to be guided by their knowledge of and experiences with other people in their respective nations (e.g. teachers, people on TV, families, friends and classmates) (cf. Culpeper 2011a: 14).

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and Ogiermann (2010: 117), who discusses a lack of L2 learner awareness on which communicative functions can be fulfilled with grammatically well-formed sentences.

<sup>44</sup> I understand the term to mean a set of dispositions to behave appropriately, i.e. consistent with dispositions in accordance with situational features of social interactions.

#### 4. Impoliteness in Fiction

Im/politeness in fiction has been a concern for pragmatics and stylistics since the late 1980s (see, for instance, early studies by Brown & Gilman 1989, Simpson 1989, Sell 1992[2005] and Leech 1992). Culpeper's (1996) seminal paper on im/politeness also constitutes the first study to systematically describe im/politeness in a fictional text, in his case Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. He justifies his decision to analyse fiction by discussing the role of im/politeness in plot and character construction. As his study shows, im/politeness in fiction proves a fruitful avenue of research. Therefore, in this chapter, I will examine the function of im/politeness in contemporary prose fiction, focusing on the links of linguistic im/politeness with reader entertainment, characterisation and plot.

Culpeper (2013: 3) stresses the importance of such analyses in that “[f]rom a descriptive point of view, im/politeness plays a central role in many discourses (from military recruit training to exploitative TV shows), yet those discourses are rarely described in detail.” Impoliteness in fiction for children, especially, is one of these under-researched areas.<sup>45</sup>

In the following discussion, I use the term ‘fiction’ for several reasons. First, ‘fiction’ encompasses all media dealing with fictitious characters and their actions, i.e. with characters and events that do not have an existence in the real world (Klauk & Köppe 2014).<sup>46</sup> This definition, then, includes such diverse media as drama, film, TV series or prose texts. The importance of im/politeness for these media has been identified in previous research (see e.g. Culpeper 1996, 1998; Dynel 2012; McIntyre & Bousfield 2017). Many of the findings related to drama, TV and film discourse are also valid for im/politeness in fictional prose texts; hence I hold that it is beneficial to use ‘fiction’ as an umbrella term. Second, I follow Sunderland (2011: 4) in referring to prose fiction for children instead of using the term ‘children’s literature.’ In doing so, I stress that my emphasis does not rest on canonical texts alone, as the latter term has come to suggest.

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<sup>45</sup> To my knowledge, the only papers on im/politeness in contemporary English-language children’s fiction are Pleyer (2015; 2016; 2017) and Loveday (2016).

<sup>46</sup> For a more exhaustive discussion of the terms ‘fiction’ and ‘fictionality’ see Klauk and Köppe (2014).



#### 4.1 Analysing Impoliteness in Fictional Data

Previous research has often shown a gross neglect of fictional data; as fictional dialogue is composed by an author, it was considered artificial and therefore not worthy of linguistic attention (Jucker & Locher 2017: 4; 8).<sup>47</sup> If analysed at all, its difference to naturally-occurring speech is highlighted. For instance, Tannen (1990: 261) observes a marked difference of fictional dialogue to transcripts of naturally-occurring speech. She concludes that the former strikes speakers as realistic and, while constructed, must have some “symbolic significance” that makes it appeal to readers. However, she does not discuss any consequences the analyst should draw from this.

Echoing this sentiment, Sunderland is of the opinion that

naturally-occurring talk is *very different* from speech representation in fiction. In fiction, the author selects what words are spoken by a character (usually, by characters in dialogue from a pool of what logically could have been selected). Talk in fiction cannot thus be analysed in the same way as naturally-occurring talk (Sunderland 2011: 63; my emphasis).

While Sunderland is certainly correct in her assessment of the different nature of the communicative situation in fictional prose and naturally-occurring dialogue, she does not address any other ways in which fictional and non-fictional speech differ, nor does she give reasons why these differences do not allow for an analysis of fictional speech using the same analytic criteria as for non-fiction.

In contrast to her opinion, Culpeper (2011a: 233-34) notes that it is not relevant that, in the case of fictional texts, the target of impoliteness is a fictional entity; what is relevant, however, is that others can understand the emotional effects impoliteness has on the target. Other studies have also pointed out a lack of differences between fictional and non-fictional language. The main argument in this view is that fictional and non-fictional dialogues follow the same rules, so that “the language of literature cannot be understood without a proper appreciation of how ordinary language works” (Leech & Short 1981: 150). Jucker and Locher (2017: 2-3) agree in that the same inferential processes that are at work in the interpretation of fictional texts are also used more generally for (poetic) utterance interpretation, hence no special tools are needed to analyse non-fictional language; instead, the same analytic criteria can be applied to both fictional and non-fictional language.

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<sup>47</sup> For a review of previous stances to using fictional texts as data see Jucker and Locher (2017).

Here, they echo an earlier statement by Searle ([1979] 1981: 64-65), who claims that fictive utterances are meaningful according to the rules of non-fictional human discourse. In his view, fiction can and should be analysed pragmatically because it is a fictive representation of human communication; this is why fictive utterances function and are understood ‘as if’ they were real utterances.

Concerning the related issue of understanding fictional characters, Culpeper and Fernandez-Quintanilla (2017: 95) make the point that there is “empirical evidence that the mental representation of the goals, motives, beliefs, traits and emotions of fictional characters proceeds in much the same way as for real people.” For instance, Gernsbacher et al. (1992) show that readers mentally represent the emotional states of characters in quite lifelike, explicit ways as a natural part of their reading comprehension. See also Graesser et al. (1994) on how adult readers generate inferences when reading narrative texts, and Zunshine’s (2006) monograph on why readers read fiction.

Hence, one may conclude that there are no strong dissimilarities between fictional and non-fictional dialogues. Fictional language gives readers the illusion of perceiving real language. It does so and gains credibility by conforming to our schematic expectations of real-life events and naturally-occurring speech (Leech 1992; Leech & Short 1981; Yos 1996).

Language in fiction is described as less ‘messy’ than transcribed naturally-occurring conversations, as “features of normal non-fluency” (Leech & Short 1981: 161) such as false starts, hesitation pauses, or syntactic anomalies tend to be absent from fictional language. These features impede our understanding of transcribed dialogue, and tend to be overlooked in everyday communication (Leech & Short 1981: 164-165; see Yos 1996: 182-183 and Tannen 1990: 261 for a similar point). Readers are thus presented with “an idealised picture of the coherence of conversation” (Leech & Short 1981: 164). Jucker and Locher further corroborate the similarities of fictional and non-fictional language in noting that apart from terms denoting fantastical beings or objects, “there is nothing in the syntax or morphology of a sentence or in the choice of vocabulary which systematically differentiates between fictional texts and other texts” (Jucker & Locher 2017: 4). They come to the conclusion that “[t]he boundaries between fictional and non-fictional language are,

by any account, fuzzy and slippery” (Jucker & Locher 2017: 5). Culpeper also points out the necessity of analysing fictional discourse within im/politeness studies in that “[a]nalyzing how *characters, or indeed people*, perform their speech acts tells us much about their goals, how they perceive interpersonal relationships, and how they manage the social context” (Culpeper 2001: 237; my emphasis). Note here how characters are equated with real human beings, as their motivations are understood through the same mental processes.

The above similarities do not mean, however, that the specific context in which fictional language occurs can be ignored in analysis. While language always has to be analysed in context, an analysis of fiction will have to address the particularities of the fictional nature of the material. That is, any analysis will have to take into account the context of communication “both at the level of the extradiegetic communication between the creator of a fictional text and its recipients, and at the level of the intradiegetic communication between the characters depicted in fictional texts” (Jucker & Locher 2017: 1).

In light of the specific communicative situation, it is clear that we cannot generalise from the fictional discourse of particular groups of people (e.g. students and their teachers) to naturally-occurring discourse of members of the same group (i.e. ‘real’ students and their teachers), and, indeed, this is not my aim. Im/politeness researchers are aware of this problem: commenting on confrontational television discourse, Culpeper and colleagues emphasise that

we have to remember that one of the likely goals of the television series is to entertain the viewing public. Thus, it is likely that the BBC have biased their selection of scenes for inclusion in the documentary series towards the more confrontational scenes. As a consequence, one cannot draw inferences about the norms of interaction between parking officials and car owners” (Culpeper et al. 2003: 1547; see also a very similar comment by Bousfield 2008: 13).

The same holds true in prose fiction in that an author will select only those scenes that are entertaining to the viewer, i.e. those scenes that contain a high amount of impoliteness tokens (see below). From this follows that quantitative approaches are rendered “virtually nonsensical” (Bousfield 2008a: 13) for any type of fictional discourse (see also Dynel 2012; 2016).<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> However, a high number of impoliteness strategies in a certain character’s speech might give hints as to how the author wants this character to be perceived; see ch. 4.3 below, and see also Pleyer (2015; 2016) and Lorenzo-Dus (2009a; 2009b).

Despite these caveats, the language of various fictional discourses is studied widely in contemporary im/politeness research. Fictional language is today seen as one among many varieties that deserve to be studied in its own right, as evidenced by the twelfth volume of the Handbooks of Pragmatics series entitled *Pragmatics of Fiction* (Jucker & Locher 2017). The editors note in their introduction that “a pragmatic perspective opens interesting avenues of investigating both the techniques of fiction and how they pattern as well as the unique communication situation into which readers/viewers enter when engaging with fictional texts” (Jucker & Locher 2017: 1). Elsewhere, as well, researchers unapologetically use fictional data: see e.g. Bousfield (2010: 102), who mentions the study of fiction as one field of pragmatic research among others, such as media discourse or political discourse. Sifianou agrees with the importance of using contemporary fiction as data, as

[m]odern literature is a mirror of society and as such it reflects and portrays a great variety of people from different social backgrounds. Not only does it reveal their use of language in a variety of situations given in context, but also their attitudes and values about language itself. (Sifianou 2000: 5)

Additionally, the study of fictional texts is relevant for corpus linguistics, as fictional texts must be included for a balanced view of language (Jucker & Locher 2017: 4).

Since this paradigm shift of using fictional discourse as data in their own right, various benefits of using fictional texts as a data set have been identified, the first of which concerns the availability of the data, as well as the ease of data collection (Jucker & Locher 2017: 4; McIntyre & Bousfield 2017: 760).

Bousfield (2008: 7) makes a case for ‘fly-on-the-wall’ documentaries in that they are readily available, that is, they can be video-taped or bought. The researcher has no difficulties in accessing the data; the same holds true for any fictional prose. An added benefit here is data permanence in that the data can be re-accessed and re-analysed at a later date. This is also of value as the same data sets are available for other researchers, and any results obtained can be reanalysed and reproduced.

Further, any fictional text constitutes a limited data set which is available in full. This might sound trivial at first, but consider that in naturally occurring conversations, not all relevant data might be accessible: McIntyre and Bousfield (2017: 762) cite the case of boardroom discussions which might well encompass several meetings, not all of which might be available for the analyst. Additionally, fictional

character behaviours are complete: all utterances of a character constitute the entire behavioural set of this particular character. This is to be contrasted with real human beings, as they will continue to produce linguistic utterances after having taken part in or having been observed for a particular survey (Culpeper & Fernandez-Quintanilla 2017: 96).

The ease of data collection is especially relevant for researchers interested in im/politeness in historical periods, as other historical data might be difficult to obtain (see Kizelbach 2017 for an overview of studies on im/politeness in Early Modern English, the ‘long 18<sup>th</sup> century,’ and contemporary fiction). From a historical linguistic perspective, fictional texts can offer insights into what naturally occurring conversation might have been like at some earlier historic point in time. In their study on politeness in Early Modern English plays, Brown and Gilman (1989: 159) note that “dramatic texts provide the best information on colloquial speech of the period.” In their view, it is only dramatic texts that provide any cues as to how colloquial speech might have sounded, as all other sources from the period, such as letters, have a higher level of formality. The use of Shakespeare plays seems to be prevalent here (see e.g. the studies by Bousfield 2007b, Kopytko 1995, or Rudanko 2006) since it is assumed that Shakespeare, as a skilled playwright, will have produced quite authentic-sounding dialogues (Brown & Gilman 1989: 170).<sup>49</sup>

The use of fictional data also forgoes some of the common methodological problems of linguistic data collection. Especially in studies on impolite behaviour, using a corpus of fictional texts can forego the so-called Observer’s Paradox: Participants might be inclined to act in a non-natural manner if they are aware that their impolite linguistic output is being documented (Bousfield 2008a: 7; Culpeper 2013: 3). The presence of a camera in fly-on-the-wall documentaries could influence the persons being recorded to act in a less conflictive manner than they would have otherwise, i.e. without any recording equipment present.

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<sup>49</sup> ‘Authentic’ in this context means that the language of the stage comes closer to spoken colloquial language of the time than, say, letters. I do not mean to imply that it was common in Elizabethan England to speak in iambic pentameter. It is, however, questionable whether playwrights such as Shakespeare had the aim of composing authentic texts instead of aesthetic ones, that is, whether the reproduction of authentic, naturalistic dialogues was intended.

Also, especially in research into children and children's language, using fictional sources foregoes some of the ethically problematic experiments in early research, which did not attempt to observe conflicts as they occurred, but instead to generate them. For instance, Brenneis and Lein (1977) and Lein and Brenneis (1978) asked children to role-play arguments, such as 'whose ball is this.' While the researchers claimed that children 'slipped into their roles,' in my view the data still are not naturally occurring, but rather, artificially induced. In a similar vein, Camras (1977) aimed at creating genuine conflict between participants. In her experiments, two children were presented with a gerbil that only one was allowed to play with at any given time. This method is fraught with ethical problems as Camras did not merely observe any conflict that naturally arose after presenting children with the animal; instead, she deliberately set up the experiment in such a way that children were very likely to engage in conflictive behaviour (Bousfield 2008a: 15).

Apart from these ethical considerations, fictional data often have the benefit of allowing the researcher access to character thoughts and motivations or, in short, to all information that is relevant to correctly identify a sender's intentions behind any given utterance. In analysing naturally-occurring speech, an analyst usually tends not to have much access to speaker intentions or hearer perceptions of a given utterance (Dynel 2012: 176; McIntyre & Bousfield 2017: 763) apart from visual or prosodic cues, unless, of course, participants metapragmatically express these. These intentions are presented in fictional texts, however, by narrating what characters are thinking prior, during or after an impolite event (see Dynel 2016).<sup>50</sup> Fictionalised contexts can, then, reveal speakers' thought processes more clearly than real-life contexts. Thus, it is "precisely by focusing on these contexts that we may gain access to aspects of impoliteness not easily revealed elsewhere" (Lorenzo-Dus 2009a: 166).

Fiction can be used to test impoliteness models. It has been shown that authors design fictional dialogue to violate certain basic aspects of interactions; this

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<sup>50</sup> Prosodic cues tend to be important for an understanding of potentially impolite utterances as hearers tend to often not be offended by the semantic content of the message, but by phonetic features, such as voice quality or intonation (see Culpeper 2005: 36). While these are unavailable in fictional (i.e. written) dialogue, they can be indicated by various graphological markers (Leech & Short 1981: 309; see also ch. 11 below).

can then tell us how interactions work. These insights can help us reassess pragmatic frameworks (Hess-Lüttich 2007: 1361; McIntyre & Bousfield 2017: 759-760) and make claims on “various linguistic or interactional phenomena whose mechanics are not affected by the fact that fictional discourse is prefabricated and ‘tidied up’” (Dynel 2016: 119).

Previous research has also identified key factors for the use of impoliteness in fiction. These are an entertaining function of impoliteness, and the contribution of impoliteness to character and plot development. I will first turn to the connection of impoliteness and entertainment and discuss the ways in which impolite discourse can be pleasurable for an audience. Then I will elaborate on the ways in which impoliteness helps to construe round characters and to further the plot.

#### **4.2 Impoliteness and Entertainment in Fiction**

In addition to the benefits discussed above, it has been shown that fictional texts contain a high number of tokens that are open to an interpretation as impolite. This high number of tokens has been linked to impoliteness as a form of entertainment (Pleyer 2015; 2016).

Lorenzo-Dus notes an increase of what she terms “confrontainment” (2009a: 166) and “‘spectacular incivility’ – [...] incivility-as-spectacle” (2009b: 100) in the media. She understands this to mean a rise in communicative processes that explicitly perform aggravation for its own sake, i.e. for entertainment purposes (Lorenzo-Dus 2009b: 187).<sup>51</sup> A possible explanation for this increase is that on the one hand, “verbal aggression and impoliteness are effective attention-grabbing devices” (Lorenzo-Dus et al. 2013: 202). On the other hand, impoliteness “is made intriguing by the fact that generally it is – thankfully – fairly rare and by the fact that it is socially outlawed (the compulsive desire of children to do what they have been told not to is evidence of how what is forbidden attracts interest)” (Culpeper 1998: 86).

It has been posited that impoliteness as a form of aggression is entertaining<sup>52</sup> to a viewing or reading audience. Culpeper explicates this link and postulates five

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<sup>51</sup> See also Garcés-Conejos Blitvich et al. (2010: 695-697), who make a similar point in their discussion of the performativity of impoliteness in TV talk shows.

<sup>52</sup> Sell ([1992]2005: 117-118) addresses the fact that literary texts themselves can be im/polite, noting that if these texts strictly adhered to politeness norms, much of the pleasure of reading (i.e. irony

generic factors that connect impoliteness and entertainment (Culpeper 2011: 234-235; Culpeper 2005: 45):

1. Emotional pleasure, termed ‘intrinsic pleasure’ in Culpeper (2005), denotes that the mere suggestion of violence leads to a state of pleasurable arousal in the audience and thus holds intrinsic pleasure. That means that the mere verbal threat of a fist-fight is as entertaining for the audience as if this fist-fight were to actually happen.
2. Aesthetic pleasure, a category added in Culpeper (2011), links impoliteness and creativity in that in competitive activities such as sounding, superior insults are characterised by a more creative use of language, which is pleasurable to an audience from an aesthetic point of view. However, while a creative use of impoliteness strategies often occurs in a playful context, not all instances of creative impoliteness constitute banter (see the discussion in Culpeper 2013).
3. Voyeuristic pleasure describes the audience’s feeling of pleasure on perceiving the exploitation of human weakness, or the making public of private parts of the speaker’s identity (see a similar argument in Lorenzo-Dus 2009a: 162-163). This goes in line with Lorenzo-Dus and colleagues’ argument that audiences “can satiate their need for vindication through viewing [reality TV shows]” (Lorenzo-Dus et al. 2013: 201).
4. The pleasure of being superior links impoliteness to superiority theories of humour. Audiences feel superior when watching others who are worse off than themselves, e.g. by being made the ‘butt’ of a joke, or by being humiliated in exploitative TV shows. Dynel (2012: 174) notes that while the feeling of being superior is central to humour, this only holds if the audience feels safe, which leads to Culpeper’s final factor.
5. The pleasure of feeling secure describes that the audience will draw pleasure from impolite exchanges if they are not directly involved in them, or run the risk of becoming involved; Culpeper likens this to the pleasure

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or satire) would be lacking, thereby indirectly noting that a) linguistic features that tend to be associated with impoliteness seem to be central to fictional texts, and b) that these are, to some degree, interesting and enjoyable to the audience. This extradiegetic level will not be a part of my analysis, however.



one perceives on watching a fight scene on TV, vs. being present during an actual fist-fight (see also Dynel 2012: 175).

Culpeper's fifth point highlights that entertaining impoliteness is often of an exploitative nature (Culpeper 2011a: 233) in that it involves some sort of victim (which, in the case of fictional texts, happens to be fictional). Fictional impoliteness is generally designed in such a way that an audience can recognise and understand the probable impoliteness effects on the target, and further, that these effects cause humour and entertainment for the audience; Culpeper compares this phenomenon to Romans enjoying gladiator fights, or modern-day audiences enjoying a boxing match (Culpeper 2011a: 234). This allows considerations on the communicative setting of fictional discourse. While impolite linguistic behaviour takes place on the intradiegetic level, i.e. in discourse between different characters, it is used for the benefit and enjoyment of the viewing audience.<sup>53</sup> Hence for fictional discourse, the real-world audience (i.e., the readers) has to be understood as the main addressee. What is relevant is that the audience understands the humour in the scene and takes pleasure from it. It is not necessary to show how characters react to humorous exchanges (and, it stands to reason, impolite ones), and indeed, their reactions tend to be not shown often (Dynel 2016: 123).

### **4.3 Impoliteness in Character and Plot Development**

While entertainment is one key factor for the use of impoliteness in drama, it is by far not the only reason for its use. Culpeper (1998: 86) notes that “[i]n drama, impoliteness is not thrown in haphazardly for audience entertainment: it serves other purposes.” Two of these functions will be discussed in detail, namely character and plot development.

Concerning the plot of dramatic fictional texts, it has been observed that “the prototypical plot is constructed by means of a movement from a situation of equilibrium, through a situation of disequilibrium, to the re-establishment of equilibrium” (Culpeper 1996: 364; see a similar comment in Culpeper 1998: 87). To

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<sup>53</sup> This point has been elaborated on for non-literary media; see e.g. Dynel (2012) for participant roles in film discourse and Scannell (1991) for interaction formats in broadcast talk.

illustrate this, I shall consider the basic plot outline of books 2-13<sup>54</sup> in Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (Fig. 4.1):

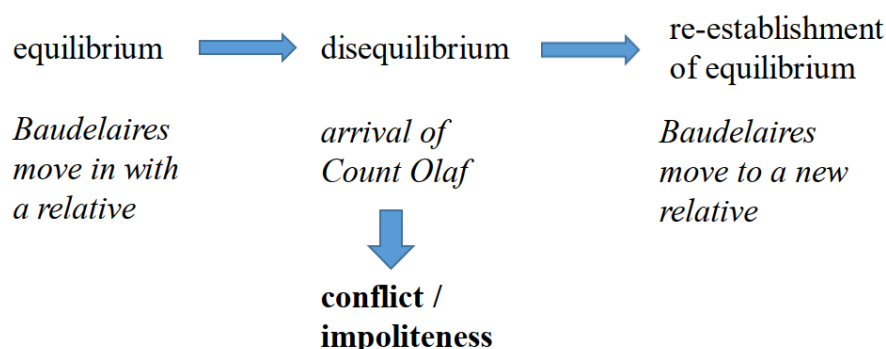


Fig. 4.1: Equilibrium and disequilibrium in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*

The Baudelaire children are placed in foster care with a different relative at the beginning of each instalment of the series. They experience a brief period of balance, or equilibrium, in which they become accustomed to their new surroundings and their foster parent, hoping to have escaped Count Olaf, the series' main antagonist. A situation of disequilibrium arises when Count Olaf discovers the children's new residence and starts a scheme to gain access to their inheritance.<sup>55</sup> This leads to negative emotions on the children's part, and to conflict.

Conflict has the tendency to co-occur with the expressions of impolite beliefs and the usage of token structures that are open to an interpretation as impolite. Also, "the key 'dramatic' points often occur at times of interactional conflict" (Culpeper 1998: 84); in this case, conflict is what moves the story forward (e.g. the children's attempts at thwarting Count Olaf). Equilibrium is re-instated by the end of each instalment, in that Count Olaf flees from the children's life and they are placed with another foster parent. Certainly, this balance only holds to a degree, as the children can only hope to be free of Count Olaf from this point onwards.

The choice of topic or scenes also influence the plot and the expression of impoliteness in prose fiction. Garcés-Conejos Blitvich et al. (2010: 697) stress that

<sup>54</sup> The first book of the series, *A Bad Beginning* (Series 1), presents the set-up for the following storylines. Here, the Baudelaire siblings lose their parents in a tragic house fire and are placed in foster care with Count Olaf, a distant relative. They eventually escape his attempts at stealing their inheritance, and are placed with a different relative by the end of the story.

<sup>55</sup> These include, e.g. applying to assist the Baudelaire's uncle, a hepterologist, under a false name (Series 2), pretending to be their new guardian's long-lost acquaintance (Series 3), or dressing in drag and pretending to be a receptionist at an ophthalmologist's practice the children attend regularly (Series 4).

in broadcast contexts, “[c]onfrontation and polarization constraints, too, drive the selection of topics for discussion in these shows—namely topics likely to result in conflict talk.” The same holds for fictional texts in that the choice of scenes presented by the author is influenced by how well they further the plot, i.e. the author will be more inclined to create scenes that are likely to result in conflict.

Concerning the link between impoliteness and character construction, Culpeper (1996: 364) notes that

conflict [is associated] with well-developed, complex characters – or, in E.M. Forster’s (1987) terminology, with ‘round’ characters. ‘Flat’ characters tend to be relatively static. They are not buffeted by conflict and thus not put in a position where they have to change in order to resolve a conflict.

This is why a change in character is associated with conflict and conflict resolution in drama (Culpeper 1998: 87). Previous research has demonstrated this link; for instance, Culpeper (1998) discusses the characterisation in the film *Scent of a Woman*. He specifically focuses on the characterisation of Charlie. Culpeper shows that while Charlie is introduced as a polite character, he uses impoliteness strategies at the end of the film for an ulterior motive, i.e. to save the Colonel’s life.

Pleyer (2015) provides an analysis of impoliteness in J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series. Using Culpeper’s (2011a) impoliteness framework, she illustrates how the use of different impoliteness triggers is ultimately connected to a character’s identity expression. On the example of the character of Harry Potter, she shows that the use of impoliteness triggers changes over the course of the series, with Harry using more productive strategies and starting conflicts once he has reached adulthood and with it, his place in the magical community of Hogwarts. The fact that specific characters may predominantly use particular impoliteness strategies (as evidenced, for example, in the character of Prof. Severus Snape) can give insights as to how a character is to be perceived.<sup>56</sup> Hence “any character behaviour is not just determined by the fictional personality that gave rise to it, but is also the *motivated choice* of the writer” (Culpeper 1998: 87; emphasis in original). Authors

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<sup>56</sup> “There seems to be good grounds for suspecting that particular individuals may favour particular [aggravation] strategies. [...] Some ‘hotheads’ make abundant use of positive aggravation; some dangerous individuals habitually employ negative aggravation, particularly those in authority in total institutions [...]. The acquisition of these strategies, then, must be at least partly linked to general social and personality development” (Lachenicht 1980: 682-683).

thus use impoliteness strategies to show, for instance, whether a character is to be understood as a protagonist or antagonist (see ch. 10 below).

In this view, an impoliteness framework is helpful in that it allows us to make inferences about

(1) how characters position themselves relative to other characters, (2) how they manipulate others in pursuit of their goals and (3) how the plot is pushed forward. Such a framework will allow us to describe systematically, for example, how one character might ingratiate himself with another or how one character might offend another (Culpeper 1998: 83).

The following chapters will further explicate this connection of impoliteness and plot, focussing more centrally on the specifics of children's fiction, to show how central impolite discourse is to narratives for young readers.

## 5. Children's Fiction: A Special Case of Fiction?

In the *Norton Anthology of Children's Literature*, Zipes (2005: xxxii) remarks that “[t]ypically, the term *literature* has excluded children's literature – that is, children's literature has generally been marked as separate from ‘real literature.’” In this chapter, I will illustrate the key aspects that lead to children's fiction's difference from adult fiction. As ‘children's fiction’ is difficult to define, I first offer an attempt at a definition. Then I will explicate the special characteristics of children's fiction that make it suitable for young readers, and finally, opening up a connection to impoliteness, I will show how specific settings of children's fiction can promote the expression of impolite beliefs.

The difference of children's fiction to adult fiction is highlighted and remarked on in many publications on the subject (see e.g. Hunt 2009: 3). Reasons for these dissimilarities include that writing for children implies writing for a special target group, i.e. writing for young readers whose pragmatic abilities have not yet fully developed (see ch. 3.3). The development of young readers' pragmatic abilities is highlighted e.g. in research by Kümmerling-Meibauer (1999b), in which she investigates children's growing understanding of irony in the relation between text and image in picture books. This developmental aspect, in turn, influences the choice of topics or plot lines, the setting, as well as the language used.

Second, a special communicative situation is noted that differs from the adult literary market in that “the history of texts for children, whether ‘didactic’ or ‘literary’ or both, is a history of tension between the desire to teach children and the desire to please them” (Stahl et al. 2007: 3).

Polysystem theory proves fruitful in describing this special position of children's fiction in the literary market. Polysystem theory was developed by Even-Zohar between the 1970s and 1990s. He sees a polysystem as “a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are interdependent” (Even-Zohar 1990: 11). Hence a polysystem considers not merely the text, but the whole literary system that surrounds it.

In contrast to adult fiction, writing for children can be described as belonging to two such systems:

Children's literature belongs simultaneously to the literary system and the social- educational system, i.e. it is not only read for entertainment, recreation and literary experience but also used as a tool for education and socialisation. This dual character affects both the writing and the translation of children's literature (Puurtinen 1994: 17).

Today, the main aim of children's fiction is to amuse and interest readers (see also ch. 4.2 above on the entertaining function of impoliteness in fiction). Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>57</sup> though, children's fiction also had a clear didactic focus in that it aimed at educating its readers and/or at teaching morals<sup>58</sup> (Lesnik-Oberstein 1999: 21; see also Darton 1932/1982).

Children's fiction also differs from adult fiction in that it shows asymmetry in communication (O'Sullivan 2000: 16): there is a power imbalance that holds between the adult writer and the child reader. This includes, on the one hand, 'writing down' to the child:

Whenever a writer shows consciousness of an immature audience, in the sense of adapting the material of the story or the techniques of the discourse for the benefit of child readers, that writer might be said to be writing down, that is, acknowledging that there is a difference in the skills, interests and frame of reference of children and adults (Wall 1991: 15).

A power imbalance also holds between the child and other adult persons who are connected to the literary market. Books written for children as a target audience also have to appeal to adults buying the book, as well as institutions such as schools and libraries acquiring the books for child readers, or advertising it on the children's bestseller list; in this sense, texts are assigned to children by adults (O'Sullivan 2000: 111). Double marketing for two audiences is common, which is one reason why children's fiction is perceived as having a lower status than adult fiction (Nikolajeva 2006: 133).

While Hazard's (1932) *Les livres, les enfants et les hommes* was the first survey of European and American children's fiction, the low status of children's fiction prevented much research to be carried out, which leads Meek (2004: 9) to conclude that "[a]cademic research in children's literature is still a novelty if it is not psychological, historical or bibliographical."

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<sup>57</sup> For a history of children's fiction, see e.g. Stevenson (2011).

<sup>58</sup> This is especially true for works published when children's fiction was first established as a genre; see, for instance, Nikolajeva (1996: 9) for a discussion of early religious writings with moral endings; but see also ch. 3.3 above on how a child may draw on children's fiction as one tool for her socialisation.

## 5.1 Children's Fiction: Towards a Definition

The terms children's fiction or children's literature are inherently problematic to define<sup>59</sup> such that much scholarly work on the subject seems to either take the terms for granted instead of providing a (working) definition, or approach the issue by posing a series of questions which, however, tend not to be explicitly answered (see e.g. O'Sullivan 2004; Zipes 2005). The issue is further complicated as the terms encompass the notions of 'child', 'literature' and 'fiction', which are problematic in themselves.

The notion of 'literature for children' is inherently problematic in that 'literature' is often taken as a normative term so that it only encompasses those works that have been canonised. In this view, 'children's literature' would include only those works that are distinguished in the literature of a country or linguistic community, that show an exceptional literary or aesthetic quality, are innovative in some regard, or are representative of a given epoch (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999a: xi).<sup>60</sup> To counter these prescriptive notions, Sunderland (2011) suggests the term 'children's fiction' as a neutral, descriptive alternative, which I adopt here.

Defining children's fiction by genre is also difficult in that "the subject [children's fiction; MP] encompasses everything from the earliest literature such as myths, legends, folk and fairy tales to the latest work for teenage readers" (Reynolds 2005: 2). This means that various genres, such as the adventure story, the school story, or fantasy stories, which have little in common thematically, tend to be subsumed under the heading 'children's fiction' (Sunderland 2011: 3).<sup>61</sup>

A definition by reader characteristics proves no less problematic in that children do not only read age-appropriate books. This is why research has questioned whether texts for adults, or abridged versions and adaptations of these texts, that are

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<sup>59</sup> My argumentation in the following is to be understood as referring to European, specifically British and German children's fiction. Non-Western nations are influenced by factors like colonialism that do not have a bearing on European stories at all, or if so, not to the same degree (see O'Sullivan 2004: 14-15).

<sup>60</sup> In this view, Shavit (1981: 172) compares children's fiction and non-canonised adult fiction. Both, to her, are secondary systems, as they are perceived as having less literary merit. She sees similarities in that both are divided by reader characteristics (books for boys and girls, respectively) and by topic (adventure stories, school stories, etc., similar to adult crime novels, horror novels etc.).

<sup>61</sup> Nikolajeva (2006: 133) sees a thematic connection in children's fiction: she discusses topics that are commonly excluded, such as adultery, sexuality, or parenthood, as these concepts are mostly irrelevant at the target audience's stage of life.

being read by children, should be included in a definition of children's fiction (Sunderland 2011: 3).<sup>62</sup> Researchers also debate about the inclusion of crossover fiction like the *Harry Potter* series, which is read by adults and children alike, i.e. it has two target audiences (Lathey 2009: 31).<sup>63</sup> Further, the question has been raised whether any definition of children's fiction should also encompass fiction for teenagers (see e.g. Klingberg 1986: 9), or Young Adult fiction (O'Sullivan 2000: 19; Zipes 2005: xxx). Often, authors also do not make explicit which type of audience is included in their definition of children's fiction. For instance, Oittinen (2006: 35) claims that "children's books are often illustrated and often meant to be read aloud," however this only holds for books for younger readers, or even pre-literate children, and certainly does not subsume all texts one can classify as children's fiction.<sup>64</sup>

The notion of 'the child' is also problematic in two further ways. First, the concept of 'childhood' is a relatively recent historical development whose origins, in Ariés' (1962) view, can be found in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Romantic tradition of 'la république universelle de l'enfance' (Hazard 1944) sees childhood as a primitive state that is distinct from adulthood, with children as innocent, imaginative readers.<sup>65</sup> Second, the term 'child' today subsumes readers with very different characteristics, i.e. different genders, social classes, ethnicities, and so forth (Lesnik-Oberstein 1999: 17; Nikolajeva 2006: 113). As a consequence, the 'child' of children's fiction is to be understood as a construct, that is, an idealised implied reader, rather than as an observable, objective entity (Lesnik-Oberstein 1999: 17). It is assumed that this idealised reader has certain competencies and needs, such as a need for greater linguistic simplicity. Authors tend to employ certain (linguistic) strategies to show "consideration of [...] the supposed interests, needs, reactions,

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<sup>62</sup> Here, consider the problem of cross-writing, i.e. re-writing a text for a new target audience, e.g. Jonathan Swift's satire *Gulliver's Travels*, which was originally intended as a parody on human life and travel literature of the time, exists as an abridged version for a child audience. Naturally, while having major consequences for the literary text and how it is read, it also opens up the borders between children's and adult fiction.

<sup>63</sup> See also Wall (1991) on a distinction between dual audience and dual address of children's fiction.

<sup>64</sup> While Oittinen's claims on the nature of children's fiction read like generalisations on texts for all readers, she makes it clear quite late in her essay that "[i]n my own research I am primarily speaking of children who do not yet read, i.e., children below school age (seven years in Finland)" (Oittinen 2006: 41).

<sup>65</sup> See also Jenkins (1998) and O'Sullivan (2000) on different constructions of the child and of childhood throughout history.



knowledge, reading ability and so on of the intended readers” (Klingberg 1986: 10). I discuss this consideration in more detail below.

Considering the broad spectrum of content as well as the proposed age span of readers, the following definitions seem the most inclusive of the greatest span of texts. Knowles and Malmkjær (1996: 2) see children’s fiction as “any narrative written and published for children,” and, stressing the problematics of defining children’s fiction, Stevenson (2011) comments: “let’s assume a highly imperfect working definition of *books associated with children and important in their reading history*” (Stevenson 2011: 180; emphasis in original).

I shall understand the term ‘child’ in the definition of the Oxford English Dictionary as “a young person of either sex, usually one below the age of puberty; a boy or girl” (OED OnLine 2018).<sup>66</sup> I shall further understand a child to mean a speaker whose pragmatic abilities have not fully formed, as research in language acquisition and developmental psychology has provided evidence that certain pragmatic abilities are not fully mastered before the age of 13;0 (see ch. 3.3 above).

The definitions of children’s fiction, then, include all books written for an intended audience below teenage age, but exclude those written for an adult one, as what marks children’s fiction out as being ‘for children’ are specific topics and a linguistic style that is normally not found in adult fiction.

## **5.2 Children’s Fiction: Shared Experiences**

Children’s fiction is also special in that it is a type of fiction that allows readers to gain an understanding of what fictional texts are; it can therefore be seen as a type of ‘beginner’s fiction’ that aims at bridging the distance between children’s and adults’ knowledge (see O’Sullivan 2000: 114-117).

Sell (2006: 284), writing on native and foreign-language children’s fiction, notes that readers draw on fictional texts to experience and make sense of certain cultural phenomena, as they relate the narrated events back to their own cultural knowledge. Oittinen (1993: 24) notes that “children strengthen their identities through books [...]. When children watch a film or read a book, they compare themselves with the characters in the media: ‘I’m like that;’ ‘I’m not like that;’ ‘That’s

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<sup>66</sup> I am aware that this definition is problematic in that it excludes, e.g., intersex persons and transgender persons.

how I'd like to be.'" Children's fiction thus allows readers to relate their own experiences to that of others, and thereby share experiences with characters (Stephens 2009: 74). Stephens (2009: 75) explicitly names 'conflicts' as one of these shared experiences and stresses that readers can use these shared experiences to define their own selves in relation to them. Children's fiction thus constitutes one way for children to gain cultural capital (Bourdieu 1990: 125) and to be introduced to the norms that are in operation in their culture.<sup>67</sup>

It stands to reason that children will draw on children's fiction, among other things, to acquire and consolidate their pragmatic knowledge.<sup>68</sup> This holds especially in the area of impoliteness, which has been identified as rarely observable in everyday contexts (Leech 1992). As it is children's fiction's "mission to socialize young readers into the thought patterns, codes, norms, values, and habits of a specific culture" (Metcalf 2003: 323), language and settings will be chosen in such a way as to allow a successful socialisation process.

### **5.3 Impoliteness in Children's Fiction: The Language of Children's Fiction**

Research into children's fiction has been prolific from the 1970s on (Zipes 2005: xxvii), but language did not use to be the focus of research. In 1991, Hunt (1991: 102) comments on "a neglect of language itself" in children's fiction criticism, and Walsh (2003: 26) objects that instead of descriptive studies on the nature of language in children's fiction, the topic is very often approached in terms of language that is 'appropriate' or 'suitable' for readers. It is only in recent years that analyses emerged that study children's fiction from a linguistic perspective (Knowles & Malmkjær 1996: 1).

There is a growing body of research into the language use in particular genres, such as the school story. This approach seems to be profitable in that genre fiction uses some readily identifiable registers (see Stephens 2004). Questions of this approach concern e.g., which impact linguistic structures have on the child

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<sup>67</sup> Children's fiction not only allows children to gain knowledge about their own culture, but, e.g. in the case of translations, to gain information about 'how things are done with words' in a different cultural setting, or in a specific Community of Practice, such as a specific school in a specific children's book.

<sup>68</sup> "Through reading an entertaining story, children can 'test the water', learn how people may react in specific situations and see what lies ahead" (Ray 2004: 467).

reader, and tend to focus on the use of grammatical elements such as cohesion (see Gamble & Yates 2002).

Another avenue of research is found in content analysis, which provides valuable insights into the language used to describe characters in children's fiction, e.g., in regard to gender roles and relations, as well as gender stereotypes (see Sunderland 2011 and references therein). While these studies are certainly beneficial in that they call out sexism and marginalisation of female characters using linguistic frameworks,<sup>69</sup> little attention is paid to the language used by the characters. This is despite the fact that the expression of character identity by the characters themselves can lend important insights into their thoughts and the author's assumptions on certain aspects of child culture (see Pleyer 2015).

Research into the language that is used on the intradiegetic level, that is, by the characters themselves, remains a research desideratum, especially in regard to the use of politeness and impoliteness strategies. While, e.g., Stephens (2009: 83-84) briefly addresses politeness in children's fiction, his analysis remains very much on the surface; he equates a character's interruption with impoliteness without making clear what the phenomenon 'impoliteness' implies for him. Fludernik (1993) also briefly comments on the relationship of conventionally polite utterances and directness in Japanese literature, the politeness of T/V address systems, and the relationship of politeness and formality, again without giving a concise definition of what she understands by the term 'polite.' A notable exception here is Loveday's (2016) paper on sarcasm and impoliteness in the speech of *Peter Pan*'s villain Captain Hook. He demonstrates a long-standing connection between sarcasm, villainy and British upper-class speech, and shows how Hook flouts Gricean maxims and uses sarcasm to disassociate himself from the villainous acts he commits.

Current research is further impeded by the fact that studies tend to focus only on books for younger children, as illustrated in a study on the language of children's fiction by Kuskin (1980: 215), in whose view "it will help [...] to limit a definition of children's literature to picture and story books." Thus, comprehensive

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<sup>69</sup> Just consider the fact that in most anthropomorphic children's books, female characters are consistently presented wearing an apron and working in the kitchen, while male counterparts are shown in more active outdoor activities (Sunderland 2011).

descriptions of the language of children's fiction still remains an objective for further research. One reason given by Stephens (2009: 73) is that "[b]ecause the contexts in which children's literature is produced and disseminated are usually dominated by a focus on content and theme, the language of children's literature receives little explicit attention."

This fact is criticised by Kullmann (2008: 232): he views children's fiction as less complex than adult fiction, which to him makes it a better data set to study linguistic questions. However, while it is often claimed that the language of children's fiction is simplified or less complex, researchers tend to not state whether this holds true for children's fiction globally, only for texts written for certain age groups, or only for certain genres.

There is certain evidence that in children's fiction, linguistic structures are presented in a clear, easily comprehensible format. Children's fiction tends to imitate children's speech, and prefers an oral style of narration (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999a: xiii-xiv). This shows that authors take into account that a child reader has limited prior knowledge of literary conventions and various literary styles, as well as limited knowledge of the world (Gamble & Yates 2002: 124; House 2004: 683), and that the child's cognitive and pragmatic development is still in progress.

This can be seen in that authors tend to use basic vocabulary and refrain from using loanwords. While *Harry Potter* does include technical terms the reader is unfamiliar with, such as words for spells, or neologisms like *Muggle* (Kullmann 2008: 52-55), the reader is introduced to the magical world together with Harry, who has no knowledge of these terms himself, so an explanation is usually provided.

A similar pattern is found in other children's fiction, as well. In *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, Klaus is a very well-read person; he will engage adult characters in definitions or negotiations of word meanings:

"I've been up all night," he [Klaus; MP] said, "reading this book." He put the book out on the table so Olaf could see it. "It's called *Nuptial Law*," Klaus said, "and I learned many interesting things while reading it."

Count Olaf had taken out a bottle of wine to pour himself some breakfast, but when he saw the book he stopped, and sat down.

"The word 'nuptial,'" Klaus said, "means 'relating to marriage.'"

"I *know* what the word means," Count Olaf growled. (Series 1: 96)

In this instance, the reader can use Klaus's definition to learn the meaning of a word previously unknown to her. As the book's plot includes Count Olaf trying to marry the oldest sibling, Klaus having understood the word 'nuptial' indicates that he has seen through Olaf's plan. So even provided a reader is familiar with the word meaning, she can still gain humour from this excerpt.

It has also been noted that children's fiction tends to have a relatively simple syntax, i.e. to have shorter sentences, and to prefer a paratactic structure (Kullmann 2008: 52-55; Metcalf 2003: 323). Compare the first sentence of *A Series of Unfortunate Events: A Bad Beginning*:

Violet, Klaus, and Sunny Baudelaire were intelligent children, and they were charming, and resourceful, and had pleasant facial features, but they were extremely unlucky, and most everything that happened to them was rife with misfortune, misery, and despair. (Series 1: 1)<sup>70</sup>

In this sense, one may claim that the language in children's fiction is indeed of a greater simplicity than the language of adult fiction. It stands to reason that impoliteness strategies, when they occur, should also follow this basic principle of a greater simplicity and hence be easily understandable and accessible to the reader.

A final point that distinguishes children's fiction from adult fiction is its strong focus on direct speech. Stephens (2009: 82) notes that "more attention needs to be paid to direct speech dialogue, both because it exists in a higher proportion and because of the general principle that the narrator in the text appears to have less control over point of view in dialogue." Not only does this dialogic nature of fiction allow for the expression of a wide range of character voices or points of view, which are discursively negotiated (Sunderland 2011: 2). It also allows for a feeling of immediacy for the reader, who is invited to engage with the different viewpoints brought forward; the dialogic nature thus allows for stronger reader participation (Yos 1996: 181).

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<sup>70</sup> But compare, for instance, criticism by Babbitt (1973: 157): "A children's book uses simple vocabulary geared to the untrained mind? Compare a little Kipling to a little Hemingway and think again. Opening sentence of *A Farewell to Arms*: 'Now in the fall the trees were all bare and the roads were muddy'. Opening sentence of *How the Rhinoceros Got His Skin*: 'Once upon a time, on an uninhabited island on the shores of the Red Sea, there lived a Parsee from whose hat the rays of the sun were reflected in more-than-oriental splendour'. So much for that!" However, Babbitt's evidence is anecdotal and does not constitute proof of the general nature of language in children's fiction.

While it is true that “large portions of almost any novel consist of talk between characters” (Leech & Short 1981: 288), in children’s fiction dialogues are considered the dominant narrative format, even more so than in adult texts. Complex plot developments are also made accessible to the reader in dialogues. For instance, the first chapter of the *Harry Potter* series (HP 1: 9-17) presents the reader with a conversation between Prof. Dumbledore, Prof. McGonagall, and Rubeus Hagrid that details Harry’s complex history, as well as its relevance for the plot and the characters’ emotional involvement (Kullmann 2008: 53-55). Dialogues thus allow the reader access to characters’ emotions, opinions and thought processes, which is necessary to gauge whether a character took offence and hence, whether impoliteness might have taken place.<sup>71</sup>

#### **5.4 Impoliteness in Children’s Fiction: The Setting**

Concerning the setting of children’s fiction, it has been noted that narrative spaces that conflicts occur in are restricted to those the child is intimately familiar with from her own life (Kümmerling-Meibauer 1999a: xiii). This allows the child to judge character interactions against norms and discern their acceptability as she has an intimate knowledge of the appropriate discursive practices in these settings (see Watts 2003: 20).<sup>72</sup> Two of the most common ones of these narrative spaces are the school and the family home.

In the following sections, I describe the nature of these common narrative spaces and explicate how they can maximise the potential for face-damage. Further, I comment on the power dynamics that hold within these contexts, i.e. adult characters (teachers and parents) holding social and institutional power over the child characters, and how these settings can exacerbate the use of impolite linguistic structures.

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<sup>71</sup> Similar points have been made for soliloquies in dramatic texts as they provide the inner life of a character that Brown and Gilman (1989: 159) deem necessary for a proper understanding of im/politeness strategies (Brown & Gilman 1989: 159; Rudanko 2006: 831).

<sup>72</sup> See also Leech & Short (1981: 309-310) and Stephens (2009: 82) on fiction, and also Culpeper’s (2011a: 23) definition of impoliteness.

### 5.4.1 Impoliteness in the Fictional Family

Contemporary children's fiction follows a trend that started in the 1970s. In a discontinuation of Victorian family values, it tends to show problematic, dysfunctional families, i.e. it presents the home as a place where conflicts are carried out (Alston 2000: 59; Avery 2004: 454). The term 'dysfunctional' here can refer both to instances of abuse through parental figures, but also to families that lack one or both parents, either through death, divorce or another form of absence. See for instance *Artemis Fowl*, whose father is described as missing in the first instalment, and whose mother does not take an active part in his life. The Baudelaire siblings in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* are one example of orphan narratives, which show disadvantaged children. They not only carry reader sympathy, but are interesting because of their independence and outsider role (Kullmann 2008: 122).

In *Matilda* and *Harry Potter*, the Wormwoods' and the Dursleys' homes are equally depicted as initially dysfunctional, bad homes (Alston 2000: 75): Harry is made to live in a cupboard under the stairs and mistreated in ways that resemble fairy tales such as *Cinderella* (Tucker 1999: 226-228), while Matilda's wishes for education and time spent with the family are neglected:

"Mummy," Matilda said, "would you mind if I ate my supper in the dining-room so I could read my book?"

The father glanced up sharply. "I would mind!" he snapped. "Supper is a family gathering and no one leaves the table till it's over!"

"But we're not at the table," Matilda said. "We never are. We're always eating off our knees and watching the telly."

"What's wrong with watching the telly, may I ask?" the father said. His voice had suddenly become soft and dangerous.

Matilda didn't trust herself to answer him, so she kept quiet. (MA: 28)

Most readers will be familiar with the dinner frame as implying eating at the table instead of watching TV.<sup>73</sup> The family is dysfunctional not by having different conventions for dinnertime, but for their dynamics: the father<sup>74</sup> snaps at Matilda, and his voice is 'dangerous' after receiving criticism.

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<sup>73</sup> Readers, especially adults, will be aware of Dahl's use of irony here in that the frame of parents forbidding children to watch TV while eating seems to be the more common one. This is especially true since the father's admonishment is a commonly heard one, which he himself does not follow, though – one will thus have to have schematic knowledge of a typical family dinner situation to understand how Dahl subverts and ironically twists the schema here.

<sup>74</sup> Incidentally, the father is only referred to as 'the father' or 'Mr Wormwood' by the narrator, thereby introducing a distancing element that invites the reader to hold a more critical view of the family.

Culpeper indicates that “[i]n a familiar relationship one has more scope for impoliteness” (1996: 354) in that speakers are aware which aspects of face a hearer is particularly invested in, and attacks to which will be perceived as extremely hurtful. In the dysfunctional families of contemporary children’s fiction, where the relationship between family members is often not one of mutual appreciation, one may also assume less concern for the other’s face and hence more attacks to face and a higher use of impoliteness tokens by characters.<sup>75</sup>

#### 5.4.2 Impoliteness in the Fictional School

In the course of the beginning of compulsory schooling in Europe,<sup>76</sup> the school story emerged as one of the influential genres of the ‘Golden Age’ of children’s fiction and counts among the first writings for the child’s entertainment (Zipes 2005: xxviii). The school story has been called an inherently British genre (Ray 2004), in which the school essentially functions as a character in itself in that the majority of the action is set in and around the school (Grenby 2008: 87; Ray 2004: 467). *Harry Potter*’s Hogwarts, for instance, serves as a mirror image of the traditional British public schools of children’s fiction (Galway 2012).

The type of school most often referenced in children’s fiction is that of the boarding school,<sup>77</sup> such as Thomas Hughes’ (1857) novel *Tom Brown's School Days*, *What Katy Did at School* (1873) by Susan Coolidge, or J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series. In these novels, the boarding school comprises an autonomous micro-society in an often isolated setting. The school thus functions as a Community of Practice, with often very specific behavioural rules imposed on the students. In Hogwarts, this system is exacerbated by Houses, or rather, Houses intrinsically structure students’ life to promote rivalries (see Eccleshare 2002).

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<sup>75</sup> See e.g. Slugoski and Turnbull (1988) on face concerns in relationships characterised by mutual dislike.

<sup>76</sup> Compulsory education is found in England and Wales since 1870 with the Elementary Education Act (Education in England. n.d.), and in Germany since the Weimar Constitution of 1919 (article 145): “Es besteht allgemeine Schulpflicht. Ihrer Erfüllung dient grundsätzlich die Volksschule mit mindestens acht Schuljahren und die anschließende Fortbildungsschule bis zum vollendeten achtzehnten Lebensjahre. Der Unterricht und die Lernmittel in den Volksschulen und Fortbildungsschulen sind unentgeltlich“ (Verfassungen der Welt. n.d.).

<sup>77</sup> For a discussion of the differences between the traditional girls’ and boys’ school story see e.g. Ray (2004).



New students in Harry's first year – and with him, the readers – are introduced to the House system with the following words by Prof. McGonagall:

[W]hile you are here, your House will be something like your family within Hogwarts. You will have classes with the rest of your House, sleep in your House dormitory, and spend free time in your House common room. [...] While you are at Hogwarts, your triumphs will earn your House points, while any rule-breaking will lose House points. At the end of the year, the House with the most points is awarded the House cup, a great honour. I hope each of you will be a credit to whichever House becomes yours. (HP 1: 114)

In this excerpt, Rowling equates belonging to one's House with family relations. In this regard, participation in a House has certain similarities to collectivist societies (Nwoye 1992) in that beneficial actions of any individual student enhance the House members' group face, while detrimental actions cause loss of group face and also have real-life consequences. For instance, causing one's House to lose the House cup would constitute a serious face threat.

With different common rooms, lessons with House mates etc. Houses essentially function as micro Communities of Practice within the macro Community of Practice of the school; while this structure can enforce a group face for members of the same House, it also implies a potential of othering students of different Houses that can open interactions to conflicts.

Boarding-school stories, especially, drive the plot forward by introducing rule-breaking behaviour as a key narrative element. For instance, characters are shown not to observe curfew, e.g. by holding midnight feasts, or going on night-time wanderings (Grenby 2008: 90-96). Two scenes from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* illustrate how students can be involved in a conflict if caught out of bed at night:

The first excerpt illustrates a conflict between students of the same House.

[situation: Harry, Ron and Hermione are caught by Neville, a fellow student, as they are trying to leave the Gryffindor common room at night]

"You can't go out," said Neville, "you'll be caught again. Gryffindor will be in even more trouble."

"You don't understand," said Harry, "this is important."

But Neville was clearly steeling himself to do something desperate.

"I won't let you do it," he said, hurrying to stand in front of the portrait hole. "I'll — I'll fight you!"

"Neville," Ron exploded, "get away from that hole and don't be an idiot —" (HP 1: 272)

Ron's comment shows that the conflictive issue of whether or not to leave one's common room escalates and leads to an expression of impolite beliefs and, in the further course of the conversation, to threats to physical harm. This shows not only

the strong identification of students with their Houses, but also, in Neville's first utterance, a criticism of the individualistic tendencies which endanger the Gryffindor group face. Further, this scene shows plot and character development in that Neville, a character previously described as meek and polite, feels licensed to use impoliteness to achieve a goal he deems beneficial to Harry, Ron and Hermione.<sup>78</sup>

The second example concerns a conflict between students and teachers, which in itself is a common narrative topic of the school story:

[situation: students of Gryffindor House are caught out of bed at night]  
[Prof. McGonagall] looked more likely to breathe fire than Norbert [a dragon; MP] as she towered over the three of them.  
"I would never have believed it of any of you. Mr. Filch says you were up in the Astronomy Tower. It's one o'clock in the morning. *Explain yourselves.*"  
[...]  
"I'm disgusted," said Professor McGonagall. "Four students out of bed in one night! I've never heard of such a thing before! You, Miss Granger, I thought you had more sense. As for you, Mr. Potter, I thought Gryffindor meant more to you than this. All three of you will receive detentions — yes, you too, Mr. Longbottom, nothing gives you the right to walk around school at night, especially these days, it's very dangerous — and fifty points will be taken from Gryffindor." (HP 1: 243)

The notion of group face is also active here in that Prof. McGonagall is Head of Gryffindor House. Hence she might feel more licensed to express her anger – as evidenced through her being likened to a fire-breathing dragon – as she has to punish her own students and, by doing so, also hurt her own face. Concerning the plot, this scene and the resulting detention in the Forbidden Forest allow for Harry Potter to witness Lord Voldemort's return and thus create the plot for the remainder of the book.

Other conflict-inducing behaviour of the school story concerns the rivalry between the 'New Kid,' i.e. a character who has just started attending a particular school, and the 'Bully,' usually a character whose dominance at the school in question is established (Grenby 2008: 94). This rivalry can be taken over into other areas of school life, such as lessons in which students try to outsmart each other, or students playing for opposing sports teams. Again, in the *Harry Potter* series, this conflict can be exacerbated by the House structure.

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<sup>78</sup> Compare Charlie's change in character in *Scent of a Woman* (Culpeper 1998) for a use of impoliteness strategies where personal safety instead of face is foregrounded.

A further conflict-inducing behaviour is found in the struggle for power between teachers and students. This conflict can happen twofold: On the one hand, conflicts can arise due to common events in the life at school, e.g. in situations such as the one detailed above (punishment for rule-breaking), or within lessons (Kullmann 2008: 116). In the latter case, readers also often encounter the stereotype of the mean teacher.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, conflicts arise due to students coming of age, finding their place and identity, and questioning school hierarchies (see Pleyer 2015).

These hierarchies and the power invested in social roles within the school can also be cause for conflict. Traditionally, teachers are perceived as enemies who unfairly use the power they hold over students (Grenby 2008: 95-96). Similarly, we find conflicts between junior and senior students (Ray 2004: 468).<sup>80</sup> A younger student will be less able to express impolite beliefs without consequences, as teachers and older students invested with institutional power (Culpeper 2011a) can threaten retaliation, e.g., in the form of detentions. Further, “[a] powerful participant has more freedom to be impolite” (Culpeper 1996: 354) in that a teacher may use impoliteness towards a student without having to fear repercussions.

The above discussion has shown that the setting and the traditional stock characters of children’s fiction in the family home and in the school can promote the use of impoliteness strategies to further the plot and to entertain the child. Further, power relations that hold in these settings can exacerbate impoliteness use for adult characters – any reaction by the child character thus contributes to creating an engaging plot.

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<sup>79</sup> See Culpeper’s (1996) notion that some people are predisposed for conflict.

<sup>80</sup> In Hogwarts, older students can become Prefects and later Headboy/Headgirl, roles invested with limited power to ensue order among (younger) students; *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* also introduces Prof. Umbridge’s Inquisitorial Squad, which has students in roles of greater power (HP 5). This power, needless to say, can also be misused by characters, which can open interactions for conflicts.

## 6. Cross-Cultural Im/Politeness

In light of a globalised world, which brings with it a stronger emphasis on communication between different cultural groups, pragmatics has been faced with a new avenue of research: the understanding of how different cultures ‘do pragmatics’ (Trosborg 2010: 1) and the question “if and to what extent globalisation affects the expression of politeness and impoliteness” (Sifianou 2013: 86).

Research has shown that while im/politeness is not inherent in linguistic expressions (see ch. 3.1.2 above), every linguistic community does have culture-specific ways of expressing im/politeness, for instance, culture-specific formulae for carrying out certain communicative functions, such as requests; these differences can best be studied through comparisons with other cultures (Escandell-Vidal 1996: 643; Ogiermann 2009: 190). Further, in their criticism of universalist theories of im/politeness, Culpeper and colleagues (2010: 598) observe that these cultural differences can “help define impoliteness, rather than let a definition of impoliteness obscure variation.”

These culture-specific ways of doing im/politeness show that “cultures cannot be reasonably and objectively assessed as more or less polite than others, but polite in different ways” (Sifianou 2000: 218). The view that certain nations are less polite than others is based on certain behavioural norms or notions of appropriateness that one holds as a member of one’s own culture. That is, one bases one’s judgments of others’ intellect etc. on the adherence to these implicit norms (Sifianou 2000: 13).

Lakoff (1973: 303-304) can be seen as one of the first researchers to describe politeness as a phenomenon along which cultures can be classified. In specific cultures, a different rule of her three Rules of Politeness will be given precedence. So, for instance, for a middle-class British culture, Rule 1 (“Don’t impose”) would take precedence, while in Australian English, one finds an emphasis on camaraderie and hence a precedence of Rule 3 (“Make A feel good – be friendly”).

Contrasting Lakoff’s rules for German and English, House (2010: 572) observes that

[w]ithin Lakoff’s (1973) frame of reference, it seems to be the case that all of her three rules of politeness are interpreted differently in the German and Anglophone linguacultures: The politeness rule, “Don’t impose,” is given different values in German due to a preference for higher directness levels in the performance of certain speech acts. The rule “Give Options”

is also interpreted differently due to a preference for higher directness levels and explicitness of content in German. The rule, “Be friendly,” in particular is interpreted and realized differently in the German linguaculture, given a preference for (explicated) content over a concern for addressees, self-referencing over other-referencing, reduced reliance on conversational routines, and generally greater directness in speech-act performance.

A similar view is expressed in Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987: 253). In their view, their “model of the universals in linguistic politeness” can be employed “to characterise the cross-cultural differences in ethos, the general tone of social interaction in different societies.” This implies that some cultures may be described as adhering more to either positive or negative politeness so that one can speak of positive or negative politeness cultures (Brown & Levinson [1978] 1987: 245; see also Stewart 2005: 117 for an explication of the “paranoid” view of interaction of some British cultures, i.e. their adherence to negative politeness norms).

Their view is problematic, however, in that the notion of ‘culture’ should not be equated with ‘nation states,’ as any nation consists of a variety of different groups of people who may not share values and norms (see, e.g., Culpeper 2011a: 12-13).<sup>81</sup> For instance, only a specific part of British culture, namely the middle class, can accurately be described as a negative politeness culture; working-class communities would not fall under this umbrella.<sup>82</sup>

The discursive view of culture, as well, stresses the representation of dominant norms in a given culture:

the relationship between culture and politeness can in fact be studied but should be approached with some caution. We believe that it is possible to critically study politeness in [cultural; MP] settings, provided that one refrains from generalising statements based on the language practices of certain dominant groups or stereotypes of those groups. In other words, the dominant politeness norms of these areas can be faithfully represented as long as it is not claimed that they are absolute norms, and as long as other ‘norms’ are discussed in relation to them. (Mills & Kádár 2011: 44)

This shows that “[l]ingua-cultures can never be taken as homogenous wholes, and assessments of impoliteness in interactants’ behavior can only be made for particular situations in particular cultural contexts” (House 2010: 562).

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<sup>81</sup> See also Bencze (2005), whose research into language use in Hungary shows that even within a given nation, cross-cultural miscommunication is possible in light of the differing norms and values between more modern speakers and speakers who value tradition.

<sup>82</sup> See also criticism in Mills (2009: 1048), who states that “it is very difficult to make [...] assertions about whole cultures tending towards either positive or negative politeness, particularly if we bear in mind that positive and negative politeness do not have the same function or meaning in different cultures.”

In this view, im/politeness as a universal notion, as proposed by Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987), cannot be maintained (see also research into non-Western cultures by e.g. Gu 1990; Ide 1989; Matsumoto 1988; Nwoye 1992)<sup>83</sup> – instead, linguistic structures must be regarded in their cultural context to determine whether they can be open to an understanding as im/polite.

This discussion highlights the problematic notion of ‘culture.’ Like politeness and impoliteness, ‘culture’ is also a term with fuzzy boundaries for which no universally accepted definition exists: “in the practice of reasoning and exemplifying, the notion of “‘culture’” tends to become rather blurred. [...] A notion that can simultaneously denote any group of people based on any (combination of) characteristic(s) loses its operational value” (Eelen 2001: 173).

For Spencer-Oatey (2000: 4), “[c]ulture is a fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioral conventions, and basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member’s behavior and each member’s interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behaviour.”

In light of the above discussion, I shall use an extensive definition of ‘culture’ provided by Thomas (2011: 100), in whose view

Kultur ist ein universell verbreitetes, für eine Nation, eine Gesellschaft, eine Organisation, eine Gruppe, also für jedes soziale Gebilde, zu denen Menschen sich zugehörig fühlen, sehr spezifisches, typisches und identitätsstiftendes Orientierungssystem. Dieses Orientierungssystem manifestiert sich in spezifischen Symbolen (z.B. Sprache, nichtsprachlichen Symbolen, Gestik, Mimik, Etiketten, Sitten, Gebräuchen, Werten, Normen, Verhaltensregeln, Verhaltensskripts) und wird in der jeweiligen sozialen Gemeinschaft über den Prozess der Sozialisation und der Enkulturation tradiert. Das kulturspezifische Orientierungssystem beeinflusst die Wahrnehmung, das Denken, Werten, Urteilen, die emotionalen und motivationalen Prozesse und das Handeln aller Mitglieder der Gemeinschaft und definiert somit deren Zugehörigkeit (identitätsstiftende Funktion) zur jeweiligen sozialen Gemeinschaft.

That is, the notion of culture implies “how an individual thinks, acts and feels as member of a group and in relation to other members of that same group” (Trosborg 2010: 2), e.g., in one’s circle of friends, clubs etc., and further, “culture explains the pattern of assumptions and behavior formulated by human systems in response to their environment” (Trosborg 2010: 2).

Concerning comparisons of the pragmatics of different cultures, the terms ‘cross-cultural’ and ‘intercultural’ may be used interchangeably in the literature. I

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<sup>83</sup> But see also Fukushima (2000: 61), who maintains that the features of Japanese and Chinese mentioned by the above researchers are not pragmatically significant, as they are mainly derived from sociolinguistic features.

follow Haugh (2010: 139-140) and understand the term ‘cross-cultural’ to designate comparative studies where data have been obtained separately for the languages in question, and ‘intercultural’ to designate studies of politeness in intercultural interactions where data are gathered while speakers from different backgrounds communicate directly.

In the following, I discuss research on the former of these terms, i.e. cross-cultural research, and contrast German and English ways of ‘doing im/politeness.’

### **6.1 German vs English Im/Politeness**

The majority of studies on im/politeness and culture first conduct an intracultural study of one language and then compare the results with how strategies and perceptions differ in another language, i.e. these are cross-cultural im/politeness studies (Haugh 2010: 139). In Haugh’s (2010: 140-141) view, this is due to two factors. First, the theory of intercultural politeness has not been explicated satisfactorily, and theories of related areas such as rapport management or face negotiation can only inform intercultural politeness theories, as they do not aim at explaining politeness itself. Second, it is generally assumed that in order to understand how im/politeness arises in intercultural settings, one has to have a firm knowledge of intracultural impoliteness.

This chapter will contribute to this avenue of research and present evidence for cross-cultural preferences in im/politeness structures or ‘doing im/politeness’ in German and English as “[t]he assumption is that, through contrast, linguistic and cultural characteristics of politeness can be better described and explained” (House 2010: 568). In light of my above observations on (national) cultures I am aware that the findings I present here will not necessarily be true for all members of ‘German’ or ‘English’ culture, and that some might even actively resist the view of German or English im/politeness presented here.

To begin my discussion, let me present some anecdotal evidence of German politeness: The website “How to be German in 20 easy steps” lists 20 things an English person would have to know or do to ‘pass’ as a German, such as eating sauerkraut or having mixed feelings about Berlin. Item #14 on this list, titled “Say what you mean” – and, incidentally, the only item on the list that deals with linguistics –, informs the reader that to be German is to be direct:

English is not about what you say, but how you say it. German is both, but more the former. Since what Germans say tends to be direct and prepared with minimal ambiguity. Ruthlessly efficient, if you will. In English, for example, if you want something to do something for you, you do not merely go up to that person and ask them to do something for you. Oh no. That would be a large faux pas of the social variety. Instead you must first enquire about their health, their families health, their children's health, the weather, the activities of the previous weekend, the plans of the upcoming weekend, the joy or ecstasy related to the outcome of the most recent televised football match, then, finally, you can say "by the way", after which you begin the actual point of the conversation, before reinforcing that you feel guilty for having to ask, and only if it's no trouble, but would they be so kind as to possibly do this little thing for you. You will be eternally grateful.

Germans do not dance around the point in such elaborate, transparent displays of faux-friendship, they just say "I need this, do it, by this date. Alles klar?" Then walk off. Once you've practiced regularly getting to the point, you may find the way to be short but very enjoyable.

As for saying what you mean, Germans have rightly realised that sugar coating is best reserved for cakes. If I'm having one of my momentary delusions of grandeur I know I can rely on my German girlfriend to bring me swiftly back down to reality by saying something like "get over yourself, we're all born naked and shit in the toilet." (Fletcher 2012)

This anecdote comments on the stereotype of German speakers being very or even overly direct in that they do not engage in phatic communication, e.g., on performing a request, which differs from the English norm. Previous research has shown that there is some truth to these observations as "Germans prefer more direct expressions when complaining or making a request" (House 2005: 21). For the British, on the other hand, Stewart (2005: 128) has noted that "to be British a healthy degree of paranoia can help," thereby placing British speakers on the other end of the directness continuum. Sifianou (2000: 214-216) also notes further differences in German and English politeness. In her opinion, German can be described as a positive politeness culture in that one finds a higher use of positive politeness strategies in request formation, such as in-group markers and direct patterns. In contrast, English adheres more to a use of negative politeness strategies and has a narrower conceptualisation of politeness.

This discussion shows that differences in communicative styles may also occur between Western languages that are typologically closely related. For instance, English has a more linear pattern of argumentation than German, which is why the German pattern is seen as digressive. These culture-specific styles are also found in academic writing, where failures to adhere to common norms might be attributed to a lack of intelligence or academic competence of the writer (Sifianou 2000: 50-51).



To further draw out the differences between German and English communicative preferences, research interest in cross-cultural comparisons in pragmatics has centred on two dominant areas, i.e. on speech act theory, such as the cross-cultural speech act realization project (CCSARP) by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989), and on politeness, especially Brown and Levinson's ([1978] 1987) model (Trosborg 2010: 3).

Most often, requests<sup>84</sup> are used as a means of comparison (see, e.g., Ogiermann 2009), but research into other acts, such as giving and receiving compliments (e.g. Golato 2002), has also proven to give relevant insights.<sup>85</sup> I will now discuss some of the relevant findings of this avenue of research, which I will tie in with research by House (e.g. 2004; 2005; 2006; 2010) on linguistic parameters that German and English differ in. Finally, I will discuss how German speakers perceive (English) im/politeness and vice versa.

In her research, House

adopts a sociocognitive rather than a purely social approach and espouses a [...] view of culture as a collective, supra-individual, phenomenon, similar to a number of recent approaches to politeness which have sought to cast it within a Relevance-Theoretic perspective (Hickey & Stewart 2005: 4).

In her view, German and English differ on four cross-cultural dimensions (e.g. House 2010: 571), which is shown in Fig. 6.1:

German	English
Directness	indirectness
Orientation towards self	Orientation towards other
Orientation towards content	Orientation towards addressee
Explicitness	implicitness

Fig. 6.1: Cross-cultural dimensions after House (2010)

<sup>84</sup> Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987) see requests as inherently face-threatening, however this does not hold for all situational contexts. They are, e.g., an integral part of service encounters, such as in product requests in butcher shops (Gagne 2018); here, they are not perceived as inherently face-threatening.

<sup>85</sup> Much of the data in research into requests has been compiled using discourse completion tests (e.g. Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper 1989; Ogiermann 2009). Gagne (2018: 2) criticises this method, stating that “[w]hile this method allows gathering of a lot of data and lends itself well to quantitative research, its authenticity and applicability to everyday life situations can be questioned.”

In the following, I discuss these dimensions in more detail, i.e. I present House's views on the dimensions and support her arguments with other research. However, in my view it is unclear in which way House's levels of 'explicitness' and 'directness' differ. House (2010: 571) links her dimension of explicitness to Hofstede's (e.g. 1980) parameter 'reduction of uncertainty' in that expressing oneself explicitly reduces uncertainty in the speaker. However, being very direct and not resorting to indirect formulae (i.e. being on the directness dimension) also reduces uncertainty. So, in my opinion the difference between explicitness and directness has not been explained satisfactorily, which is why I have chosen to conflate the two dimensions in my discussion.

### **6.1.1 Directness/Explicitness vs Indirectness/Implicitness**

Research has shown that German and English speakers show a difference in their preferred level of directness. While it is true that in comparison with Eastern European languages such as Polish and Russian, "English and German show a strong preference for conventional indirectness" (Ogiermann 2009: 193), there are some differences between these two typologically close languages in that Germans, in contrast, prefer greater levels of directness than English speakers.

Criticising Brown and Levinson's ([1978] 1987) view that politeness can be equated with indirectness, researchers note that "some cultures appreciate pragmatic clarity while associating directness with honesty" (Ogiermann 2009: 191) and that "one cannot simply equate indirectness with politeness regardless of the linguistic-cultural context. This also means that German speakers' directness cannot be (mis)interpreted as impoliteness; it is just a culture- and language-specific convention" (House 2010: 572).

English shows a preference for off-record politeness (Brown & Levinson [1978] 1987: 211), that is, a face-threat is performed with the use of an implicature (Grice 1975). This leads to the fact that "there is more than one unambiguously attributable intention so that the actor cannot be held to have committed himself to one particular intent" (Brown & Levinson [1978] 1987: 69). Stewart (2005: 118) notes that this strategy is "not exclusive to British English, but yet exploited widely." Germans, in contrast, prefer greater levels of explicitness or directness. For instance, in analysing family discourse in a British and a Swiss-German setting,

Watts (1989) presents evidence for a difference in the use of interventions. They are seen as competitive behaviour which endangers interpersonal relationships in the British data, but are perceived as acceptable in German (Watts 1989: 159-160).

British speakers who belong to the Southern middle class favour deictic displacement such as ‘I was wondering if...’ as an example of conventional indirectness in request formulation; this is evidence of a negative politeness culture (Stewart 2005: 124). Off-record politeness strategies may place an imposition on the hearer in that the intended utterance meaning has to be inferred; on the other hand, indirectness may be perceived as indicating intimacy and shared understanding (Stewart 2005: 127-128). This shows that even typologically close languages may differ in their preference for directness in discourse.

### **6.1.2 Orientation to Self vs. Orientation towards Other**

The second of House’s four dimensions describes whether speakers orient towards self or towards other in discourse. House (2005: 20) notes that Germans prefer moves which include an explicit reference to self, as in e.g. ‘Kann ich...’ (‘Can I...’) instead of ‘Would you like me to...’. In contrast, British speakers prefer to orient towards the hearer, using the second-person pronoun instead of focusing on the self. Hence, there is a greater distancing from the self as the focus of the utterance (Stewart 2005: 125). This orientation towards the other can also be seen in apologies. British speakers tend to “give lengthy explanations; and they show a clear need to redress the addressee’s negative face” (Stewart 2005: 117).

Consultative devices such as ‘Do you think I could copy your notes’ are negative politeness strategies, thus their high occurrence in English is unsurprising; however, they are fairly rare in German (Ogiermann 2009: 202). But see Ogiermann’s (2009: 201) analysis of requests in the two languages. Her research shows that while English has a preference for speaker-oriented requests (76 vs. 18 hearer-oriented with N = 100), the German data hardly differ (63 vs. 35). So one might question how much variation there is in the orientation dimension: in conversational repairs, Rieger (2003: 47) shows that German-English bilinguals “repeat more pronoun-verb combinations, more personal pronouns, and more prepositions

in English than in German, and they recycle more demonstrative pronouns in German than in English,” which she claims is due to structural differences in English and German.

### **6.1.3 Orientation towards Content vs. Orientation towards Addressee**

On the scale of orientation towards content vs. towards the addressee, House (2005: 20) notes that German speakers prefer to use content-oriented strategies. This means that there is a preference for an explicit introduction of topics, with a relatively low use of interpersonal strategies, such as anticipatory moves like availability checks. This preference for information versus interpersonal strategies is described by Byrnes (1986: 200-201):

Such an orientation is concerned more with facts and truth-values, and in their service seeks, or at least should not shy away from, overt disagreement and confrontation. In fact, disagreement and confrontation are valued, and have become ritualized, in that they are deemed to further the process of establishing truth. Perhaps in its own way, it becomes a form of social bonding for those who customarily engage in it.

The difference between German and English can also be found in pragmatic markers. In an analysis of the distribution and function of a group of highly formulaic pragmatic expressions in English and German recorded spoken interaction, Overstreet (2005) shows that German general extenders exhibit close formal similarity to their English counterparts, and can be used to mark politeness, but differences were noted in the variability of form and the overall frequency of usage, both of which are higher in English. This ties in with House’s (2005: 20) remark that “there is more ad hoc formulation in German and more reliance on conversational routines in English.” This is further evidenced by German not even having an expression for ‘small talk’ (House 2005: 20). House (2005: 23) further notes that “German speakers in certain discourse environments tend (still) to underuse phatic small talk.” However, she does not comment on the types of discourse environments where this occurs, nor in comparison to which types of speakers we can talk about an ‘underuse.’

Commenting on orientation towards the other, House (2010: 574) cites the case of an exchange student in Germany, who claims that

in interactions with German friends he often felt that they did not want to, or were unable to, engage in “harmless” small talk. He had got the impression that it often happened in German conversations that the topic was more important than the human beings discussing it, and that discussions therefore often turned out to be serious, “deep,” controversial.

She further cites a case of an office-hour consultation between an English-speaking exchange student and a German university professor (House 2010: 575-578). On being asked exam-related questions by the student, the professor provides information on the content of the exam. Post-factum interviews revealed, however, that the student was looking for an interpersonal connection and for the professor to help assuage her exam-related fears. In contrast, the professor confessed his belief that the student wanted to gain information on the question content. This shows that different conversational preferences hold, and that an awareness of differing pragmatic norms does not seem to be a given even for very educated persons.<sup>86</sup>

## **6.2 Im/Politeness Perceptions in German and English**

The above discussion has shown that speakers of different speech communities have different conversational norms. I now focus on how Germans perceive English impoliteness and vice versa. The results of this investigation will be relevant for my below discussion of the translation of English-language fiction into German.

For instance, Schauer (2017) provides an analysis of young German and English native speakers' perceptions of impoliteness. Using a questionnaire of 20 authentic events reported in Culpeper et al.'s (2010; 2014) cross-cultural impoliteness project (CCIP), she shows that while speakers from the two cultures agree on whether an utterance is appropriate and/or polite, they disagree on how severe they rate utterances on inappropriateness.

Using Spencer-Oatey's (2000; 2002; 2005; 2008) rapport management framework, the cross-cultural impoliteness project (CCIP) (Culpeper et al. 2010) showed the violation of which aspect of a speaker's face or rights is seen as most hurtful in a given culture. First, the notion of quality face has shown to be more relevant in the English data, and less so for the German one (Culpeper et al. 2010: 617). Quality face describes speakers' "fundamental desire for people to evaluate us positively in terms of our personal qualities, e.g., our confidence, abilities, appearance etc." (Spencer-Oatey 2002: 540).

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<sup>86</sup> Unfortunately, House (2010) does not comment on the subject(s) the professor taught, nor on his level of English; both factors might influence to what extent it is expectable of a speaker to be aware of the differing pragmatic norms of international students.

The violation of association rights is perceived as most hurtful in the German data, i.e. violations of our “fundamental belief that we are entitled to social involvement with others, in keeping with the type of relationship that we have with them” (Spencer-Oatey 2008: 16). This might be due to the different conceptualisations of friendship in German versus Anglo-American cultures: Germans tend to conceptualise ‘friendship’ as a tighter network of few close friends, hence violations are perceived as more hurtful (Culpeper et al. 2010: 619).

Culpeper and colleagues further showed an importance of social identity face for the English data. Social identity face is understood as “a fundamental desire for people to acknowledge and uphold our social identities or roles” (Spencer-Oatey 2002: 540); its importance is evidenced in public life in England, which prohibits the use of swearing, e.g., through the use of explicit signs, or codes of conduct (Culpeper 2011a: 103-108).

One has to bear in mind, however, that knowledge of different communicative norms does not prevent miscommunication. This means that even if the hearer is aware that the speaker might adhere to different norms, she might still experience the speaker’s communicative behaviour as inappropriate or impolite (House 2010: 575). Mugford (2012: 195) makes a similar comment in that in his view, “[s]ociocultural and linguistic misunderstandings often mean that FL [foreign language; MP] users misconstrue speaker intention and wrongly judge a given interaction to be either polite or face-threatening.” Especially in foreign-language learning settings, communication may break down as learners use pragmatic strategies from their L1 in an L2 setting; however, Golato (2002: 568) observes that

second language speakers [rarely] get overtly corrected. So, how are these phenomena acquired? How are they acquired in immersion situations and in the classroom? Are there particular stages learners go through? All of these are areas of further inquiry.

One problematic aspect is that pragmatic aspects of language use are seldom taught in schools. In her analysis of requests, complaints and apologies in the Green Line New books for German learners of English, Ogiermann (2010: 119) shows that “[d]espite the increasing focus on communicative competence, English lessons at German schools are still organised around the transmission of information rather than interpersonal communication.” For instance, the answer “No, that’s wrong” is taught as a way of negating factual statements; this level of directness is likely to

be perceived as impolite by a British speaker (Ogiermann 2010: 122). This shows that “(im)politeness, like other sociopragmatic aspects of language usage, is seldom, insufficiently or inefficiently taught” (Rieger 2017: 347).

This means that when German speakers enter intercultural interactions, which are characterised by a lack of contextual support as compared to L1 communication (Kecskes 2015: 45), they might not be aware that the L2 (English) has different norms. For instance, Ogiermann (2010: 129) has shown “that even learners as advanced as university students of English philology transfer pragmatic features from their L1 and use a limited range of speech act strategies.” This shows that raising awareness of these differing norms in the classroom is still very much a desideratum.

The differing communicative conceptions discussed above might lead to a frame conflict (Goffman 1981: 230-231) and might have interpersonal consequences, i.e. they might lead to an ascription of inappropriateness or even impoliteness of German speakers by members of an Anglo-Saxon culture (House 2010: 579; 590). These differences are also relevant in applied fields such as translations, as the pragmatic preferences of two linguistic communities will have to be taken into account.

## 7. Translations

In 1976, the International Research Society for Children's Literature (IRSCL) held a conference which focused on translations and a cultural exchange of children's fiction. For Lathey (2006: 1), this marks the beginning of critical research into the translation of fiction for children.

Yet nearly twenty years later, Oittinen (1993: 11) remarks that "as to translation of children's literature and its theoretical basis, little research has been conducted on the subject worldwide." This is echoed by O'Sullivan (2013: 451), who remarks that "serious critical interest in the subject of translating children's literature is a relatively recent phenomenon." This lack of research is surprising considering House's (2004: 683) claim that

[t]he translation of children's books is a particularly fruitful field for the linguistic analysis of cross-cultural differences in communicative preferences and textual conventions, as this genre is often a mirror of the everyday life and culture of the language community in which it originates.

The following chapter thus describes research into children's fiction in translation and details the translation process. First, I will give a definition of my understanding of the translation process, drawing on the works of Toury (1980a; 1980b; 1980c; 1995) and Even-Zohar (1990). Then I will discuss translating for children and focus on two relevant translation strategies for children's fiction, i.e. foreignization and domestication. Finally, I will describe research on pragmatics in translation, focusing especially on how the translation of impolite events is handled in the two translation strategies mentioned above, and how different ways of doing im/politeness are accommodated in translated texts for children.

### 7.1 The Translation Process

Oittinen (1993: 18) defines "translation for children [...] as communication between children and adults." In this chapter, I discuss what I mean by the term 'translation' and how this communication process works.

My basis for the following discussion is Toury's (1980a; 1995) Descriptive Translation Studies model, an empirical, descriptive model whose theoretical foundations are grounded in Even-Zohar's (e.g. 1990) polysystems theory. Even-Zohar (1978: 15) advocates for the inclusion of translated fiction in that



it is necessary to include translated literature in the polysystem. This is rarely done, but no observer of the history of any literature can avoid recognising as an important fact the impact of translations and their role in the synchrony and diachrony of a certain literature.

In the act of translating, a text that originated in a particular cultural setting (“source text” and “source culture; see Fig. 7.1) is translated for a new audience in a different cultural setting (“target culture”, the resulting text is referred to as a “target text”). In this sense, translation can be understood as “cross-cultural communication” (Oittinen 2000: 6), or as a form of mediation between the source culture and target culture that takes into account notions such as age appropriateness or ideological interests (Kerchy 2018: 4).

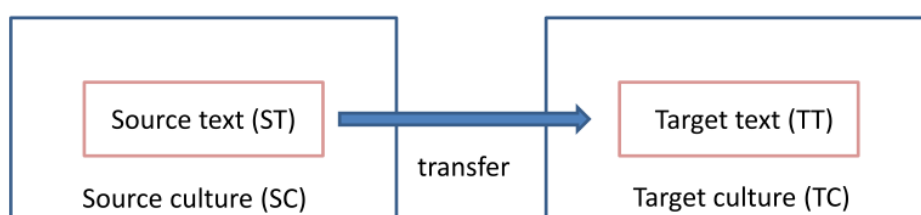


Fig. 7.1: The translation process

In Toury’s (1995) Descriptive Translation Studies model, texts are viewed as equivalent in that there is some sort of assumed relationship between the source and target text; this relationship can be described through empirical research (Toury 1995: 35-39).

The questions of what was translated when, where, how, and why, in Toury’s view, are decided due to underlying norms (Toury 1980a); these are *preliminary norms*, *initial norms* and *operational norms*.

*Preliminary norms* are concerned with the questions of what and why, that is, which text is chosen for translation and for what reason. Paratexts, such as introductions or book jackets, can give answers to these questions. Ben Ari (1992: 223) shows this in the jackets of French and British translations of Erich Kästner’s (1949) *Das doppelte Lottchen*: While the French pocket book edition from 1979 presents an author vita emphasizing his anti-Fascist position, the British Puffin edition (1980) describes the book as a mystery novel in Blyton’s tradition.

*Operational norms* refer to the person for whom a text is translated; this guides the actual translation process. They concern the “direct actual decisions made during the translation process itself. They affect the matrix of the text, that is,

the modes of distributing linguistic material (especially of larger units) in the text, and the actual verbal formulation of the text” (Toury 1980a: 54).

*Initial norms* refer to a translator’s choice in the translation process: she can either orient towards the source text in “the pursuit of an adequate translation” (Toury 1980a: 55). Alternatively, she can orient towards the target culture and what Toury refers to as acceptability; this influences the text’s position in the polysystem (Toury 1995: 56). Toury’s own position tends towards the second of these options. A translation is always somewhere between these two poles:

Every actual translation [...] occupies a certain position with respect to both adequacy and acceptability, and exhibits some mixture of these two extremes. This position *cannot* be defined in advance, much less so to serve as a basic assumption for translation studies (Toury 1980b: 29; emphasis in original).<sup>87</sup>

Shavit (1981) discusses how the translation of children’s fiction depends on its peripheral position in the literary polysystem, thus translators are relatively free in introducing changes to the source text, making it fit established literary models in the target culture. Texts can be manipulated as long as translators adhere to the principles of appropriateness (i.e. what is seen as ‘good’ for the child), and take into account the child’s cognitive development and reading skills (Shavit 1981: 171-172).

The following chapter is concerned with translating for children specifically. With regard to its peripheral position, I detail several reasons why changes are made to children’s fiction in translation and shed light on two translation strategies, i.e. foreignization and domestication. Second, I address the role that pragmatics plays in translated children’s fiction, focusing especially on how impolite utterances are translated from English source texts to German target texts. Finally, in ch. 8 I discuss a specific case of an English children’s book in a German translation and detail research into the translation of J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series.

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<sup>87</sup> I will not use the notion of equivalence in the sense as it is employed by researchers such as Vermeer (1996), that is, with the implication of some sense of sameness between the ST and TT.

## 7.2 Translating for Children

In their preface on their volume on children's fiction in translation, Van Coillie and Verschueren (2014: v) specify that "translating for children does not differ in kind from translating for adults, but simply in the extent to which it necessitates or allows forms of textual manipulation."<sup>88</sup>

Stolze (2003: 209) also believes that translating for children works according to the same principles as translating for adults. She concedes that in actual translations, texts are very often simplified as adults assume children to possess only limited cognitive capacities. In her view, this is unnecessary as the text has already been adapted to a child's lack of knowledge and world view by the source text author.<sup>89</sup>

In contrast, Lathey (2006: 9) states that "translating prose for the child up to the age of twelve or thereabouts diverges most markedly from translation for adults." Children's fiction presents a special case of translation as different power dynamics are in operation: adults translate what an adult has written for children, with other adults (parents, editors, publishers etc.) having an influence on the process (House 2004: 685-686). In Oittinen's (2014: 36) words,

[c]hildren's books need to conform to adult tastes and likes and dislikes: to put it explicitly, the adults are the producers and the children the consumers of children's literature. The situation becomes even more complicated with children's books in translation. Even though translators need to translate for children, it is the adults who select the books that need to be translated; it is the adults who translate them and buy the translations for children.

Thus, the addressee of children's fiction is only indirectly a child. As a result, translated children's fiction can be described as an 'adaptation of an adaptation' (O'Sullivan 2000: 249). Children's fiction is adapted to the child's cognitive capacities, and in translation, a text is again adapted to target culture children and their perceived abilities.

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<sup>88</sup> "Textual manipulation" here is not meant in the sense of 'belonging to the Manipulative School' (see e.g. Hermans 1985). Instead, here it means how many and which types of changes are made in the translated text.

<sup>89</sup> Yet, analysing several German translations of *Pinocchio* that could be read to the child, she critically comments on the use of words "that are probably beyond childrens [sic] language" (Stolze 2003: 213), which leads one to believe that Stolze's implied child reader is one that would profit from simplification.

Another factor that concerns the translation of children's fiction is the perceived low status of this type of fiction. The low status, different cultural constructions of childhood and different notions of what is appropriate or 'good' for the child have led to radical censorship and abridgement (Lathey 2009; Shavit 1986), which House (2004: 684) rather dramatically titles "a lack of respect for children's literature." For example, Maria Litvinova, the translator of the second and third *Harry Potter* books into Russian, added new passages,<sup>90</sup> which Lathey (2005: 145) refers to as "tampering" with the source text. While Van Coillie and Verschueren (2014: vi) note a shift towards descriptivism and away from the prescriptivism of the 1960s, Lathey's comment shows that contemporary research on children's fiction in translation is not void of prescriptive notions.

Further, there is usually little awareness in the child reader that she is reading a translation (O'Sullivan 2000: 234). On the one hand, this can be related to the child's lack of interest regarding translations: "the reader usually reads translations in the same way as she/he reads any other books. When a child reads a story, she/he is not really interested in whether she/he is reading a translation or not: she/he experiences it, interprets it, and new meanings arise" (Oittinen 1993: 78). In House's (2004) view, children also usually do not pay attention to the author's name and use it to draw cues about nationality. Unfortunately, she does not specify whether this holds true for all age groups, or whether this assumption is still valid in a globalised world. For instance, Lathey (2016: 10) stresses that "children do sometimes deliberately seek out translations, for example the latest *Harry Potter* volume in countries around the world." The perceived lack of interest in the translation as such can also be found throughout history. Lathey (2014:1) notes that historically, translators tended not to be accredited in the book, i.e. their name is often not given. Even today, texts are often not marketed as translations, that is, 'covert' translations of children's books are the norm. Thus, the reader is unaware of the existence of a source text. House (2004) claims that this could contribute to often drastic changes in the target text.

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<sup>90</sup> Lathey refers here to a July 2003 review of *Harry Potter* translations on the Publishers Weekly website; she unfortunately does not state where in the novel the scenes were added, nor what they contained.

Nikolajeva (2011: 414) lists a further reason why changes are made in translations for children. In her view, “translations are frequently more explicit in their didactic and artistic purposes than original texts.” There are various examples to show that didactic interventions are very common in the translation of children’s fiction. For instance, House (2004: 684) cites the case of a text by Astrid Lindgren: a passage about a snot-filled child’s nose is omitted in the American translation as it is felt to be improper.<sup>91</sup> In another of Lindgren’s works, *Pippi Långstrump* from 1945, Pippi Longstocking’s behaviour is toned down in translations (Lathey 2009: 32). The Swedish original shows Pippi and her friends playing with pistols. In the German translation, Pippi puts the pistols back, stating that they are not for children (see O’Sullivan 2000: 197-198).<sup>92</sup> The reason for this change is most likely a pedagogical or moral one: the German text seeks to instruct readers to behave in more prudent ways, and to eliminate the danger of children imitating Pippi’s recklessness.

Pedagogical concerns may also be in operation in cases of the translation of slang or dialect, which is transformed into a standard variety in translation. This is especially important in light of the high proportion of dialogue in children’s fiction (see e.g. Hagrid, the Hogwarts groundskeeper, speaking standard German; Lathey 2009: 32, and ch. 8.2.3 below).

Changes may also be ideologically motivated, which was especially the case in translations in the GDR (Lathey 2009: 33). Children’s fiction, as all art, was used as a tool for indoctrination. Stories for children were to promote socialism and give evidence of the class struggle. As a result, only those books were translated that supported these ideologies, that is, mostly Soviet books (Thomson-Wohlgemuth 2003; see a similar point made for the Soviet-Russian literary polysystem in Inggs 2003: 287). Ben-Ari (1992) analyses ideologically motivated changes in Hebrew translations of German texts. The change from bacon to veal is religiously motivated; other changes follow politically and religiously motivated reasons: German cultural artefacts tend to be eliminated from Israeli narratives after World War II.

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<sup>91</sup> House unfortunately does not state the title of the Lindgren book the passage stems from; it might be *Karlsson på taket*.

<sup>92</sup> In the translation, the children also stop playing that they are *ett rövaband* (bandits) and continue to pretend they are pirates, a change not motivated by the source text.

Culture-specific notions of childhood and what a child is, e.g. her cognitive abilities, and what she enjoys reading, also play into translations and the construction of the implied reader (Panaou & Tsilimeni 2011: 421). For instance, Stolze (2003: 209) claims that especially newer German translations have a tendency to simplify and explicate the source text; this could hint at a changing image of the child in Germany. Panaou and Tsilimeni (2011: 424) echo this changing image of the reader in their research on picture books in English and Greek translations. They note that the images tend to be described in more detail in the Greek translation, as a different view of the child dominates in Greek culture: she is seen as needing more support than an English child of the same age. In a similar vein, explanations are added in a picture book about a grandfather's death. Here, the notion of what is 'good' and appropriate for the child's emotional development or well-being seems to have been taken into account. The child is seen as too sensitive as to be left to her own devices with a subject matter that is perceived as emotionally challenging (O'Sullivan 2000).

On the other hand, the comical in children's fiction might also be subject to change. Especially humour revolving around bodily functions and associated body parts is altered as it is perceived as inappropriate by adults involved in the translation and production process (O'Sullivan 2000: 203).

Changes also occur in translation where rude expressions and insults are concerned: Fernández López (2006) discusses cases of deletion and toning down of insults in a translation of Enid Blyton into Spanish. The source text describes a character as a pig while eating. This is changed to referring to them as gluttonous in the translation as 'pig' is perceived to be a strong insult in Spain (Fernández López 2006: 45). This change is interesting as Spanish translations are usually very faithful to the source text, but didactic concerns may override this (Fernández López 2006: 49). In these cases, the deletion of whole chapters is not uncommon (O'Sullivan 2000: 212).

### **7.2.1 The Intended Reader**

As discussed in ch. 5, children's fiction is often defined in terms of reader characteristics, that is, it denotes fiction for younger readers who lack some of the cognitive capacities and world knowledge of adults. This can be seen, for instance, in the

tendency to trivialise and to introduce adult sentimentalities in a translated text (Lathey 2016: 7). Oittinen offers a reason for these choices:

children's literature tends to be adapted to a particular image of childhood. This is important from the viewpoint of translating for children: we need to pay more attention to what readers actually do with the books. This is why I prefer to speak of translating for an audience (children) rather than translating certain types of book (children's literature) (Oittinen 2014: 41).

This "particular image of childhood" that Oittinen mentions is relevant for translation: the intended reader of the translation might not be identical with the intended reader of the original in terms of her cognitive abilities and socialisation (O'Sullivan 2000: 222-223). So, depending on which view of the child holds in a given target culture, the translator might choose a different translation strategy.

Previous research discusses two opposing macro strategies of translation for children: foreignization and domestication.<sup>93</sup> These are also referred to as equivalence theory and dialogical translation, respectively. In summary, "when a reader is taken to the foreign text, the translation strategy in question is called foreignization, whereas when the text is accommodated to the reader, it is domesticated" (Paloposki & Oittinen 2001, quoted in Oittinen 2014: 42). This shows that the strategies are strongly connected to the motivation behind the translation process: if the translation aims at educating the reader about new cultures, a foreignization strategy will be chosen, whereas if the aim is for the child to simply enjoy her reading experience, domestication will be the strategy of choice (Asiain 2016: 49). Ultimately, "[w]hatever the strategies chosen, they reflect the adults' views about children and childhood" (Oittinen 2014: 43). That is, which strategy is chosen depends on how the child reader is seen in the target culture and to what extent she can accept and understand new, unfamiliar aspects of culture, fictional texts, and/or language (O'Sullivan 2000: 170).

The following chapters discuss these two strategies in more detail, focusing on the background assumptions behind each strategy, and discussing potential problems.

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<sup>93</sup> See Lathey (2009) for a brief discussion of the history of previous research into the translation of children's fiction.

### 7.2.2 Foreignization

The foreignization strategy is advocated by Klingberg (1986), one of the founding fathers of research into the translation of children's fiction. In his view, children's fiction is a didactic medium aimed at teaching the child (moral) values; therefore, foreignisation and the retaining of cultural differences are of utmost importance. In his ground-breaking volume on *Children's Fiction in the Hands of the Translators* (1986), Klingberg offers a systematic classification of cultural and linguistic artefacts that could lead to deviations from the source text, using a corpus of translations from Swedish into English and vice versa that was compiled in the 1970s.

The term 'foreignization' describes the translator's choice to retain what is often referred to as the 'couleur locale' (e.g. Desmidt 2014: 90). That is, foreign personal or place names, cultural artefacts, or customs are retained to impress upon the reader that the narrative is set in a foreign culture. The strategy thus aims at creating awareness for different cultures. In following a foreignization strategy, Klingberg advocates for retaining closeness to the source culture and the source text. In his view, the integrity of the source text has to be kept as intact as possible (Klingberg 1986: 17). In its orientation to the source language and the source text, this stance differs from that of Toury and Even-Zohar, which I have explicated above.

Klingberg (1986: 14) is of the opinion that

there are strong reasons why a translation should be a word for word translation. Thus it could be held that the translator has no right to alter the author's text. Even if this ethical aspect is set aside, a changed text will easily lose something which is important to the book – its character, its atmosphere.

So, following Klingberg's argument, translated children's fiction plays a "dual role [...] both in shaping the child's cultural identity and world-view, and in broadening the child's knowledge and understanding of other cultures" (Inggs 2003: 285). In staying 'faithful' to the source text, translations can help children understand foreign cultures and learn to extend tolerance to cultural differences, which can help "further the international outlook" (Klingberg 1986: 14).

Panaou and Tsilimeni (2011: 426) are equally of the opinion that "young readers should be allowed to experience other cultures than their own, through the reading of translated literature," and Stolze (2003: 209) questions "whether we are



not looking down on our children with our opinion that they cannot understand many things,” thus also advocating against changes.

Klingberg strongly urges for changing as little as possible, as to him, one aim of translations is “to make more literature available to the readers, and so nothing less than what really could be said to be the original in translation should be presented” (Klingberg 1986: 14).

For Kümmerling-Meibauer (1999a: xxii), as well, translations are a means of transferring knowledge about a different culture, so she is likewise of the opinion that an adaptation to the target culture’s customs can have serious consequences, so that one cannot speak of a translation that is true to the original (although Kümmerling-Meibauer fails to explicate what ‘true to the original’ means for her). These changes can include e.g. the shortening of passages, the deletion of taboo topics, an adaptation to stylistic norms or ‘Germanised’ names so as to bridge the cultural distance. Klingberg, as well, sees adaptation<sup>94</sup> as negative: a translation should have the same level of difficulty as the source text; anything else is manipulation, used here in the sense of ‘a dishonest treatment of the source text’ (Klingberg 1986: 85-86).

The only changes to the source text that Klingberg does accept are so-called “cultural context adaptations” without which the text would be difficult to understand for target culture readers. If a cultural detail is significant for an understanding of the text, but is unknown to target culture readers, changes are acceptable in order to retain the same degree of adaptation as in the original (Klingberg 1986: 11-12). For instance, in a Bible translation for the Inuit, Jesus is not described as the Lamb of God. While a lamb is a common animal for source culture audiences and carries certain cultural associations, such as docility, this is not the case for the Inuit. The translation substitutes the lamb with an animal common to the target culture and refers to God’s seal cub (Nikolajeva 2011: 410). This change allows target culture readers to understand the intended message in much the same way as source culture

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<sup>94</sup> “As a rule (although not always) children’s literature is produced with a special regard for the (supposed) interests, needs, reactions, knowledge, reading ability and so on of the intended readers. An author’s or a publisher’s consideration of this type and its results are termed adaptation here” (Klingberg 1986: 11).

readers. Cultural context adaptations, or localization, are also acceptable if a book's main objective are characters or psychology (Klingberg 1986: 16).

While translators could opt for certain other resources of translation in cases like the Inuit Bible above, such as footnotes, or an introduction by the translator, they are generally not used in children's fiction. It is assumed that the child will find these resources alienating or will simply ignore them (Lathey 2016: 23). They may, however, be used in cultures where these resources form part of an established literary tradition, see e.g. Davies's (2003) discussion on the use of footnotes in Chinese translations for children.

The foreignization strategy has been criticised on several grounds. First, Klingberg's theory is a strongly prescriptive and normative one; he presents arguments for "how they [children's books] *should be* translated" (Klingberg 1986: 7; my emphasis). Further, the notion of foreignization itself can present problems in that it pedagogises children's fiction – instead of focusing on a child enjoying her reading, a text is reduced to a teachable moment. In addition, not all readers can cope equally well with foreign elements. O'Sullivan (2000: 235) argues that this strategy might not be applicable for very young readers, as unknown elements will disrupt the child's reading experience.

### **7.2.3 Domestication**

In her dissertation *I am Me, I am Other*, published seven years after Klingberg (1986), Oittinen (1993) discusses the domestication strategy of translating for children. Based on Bakhtin's (e.g. 1990) dialogism, which sees reading as a dialogic activity, and Rosenblatt's (1978) theory on reading as 'coming-together,'<sup>95</sup> Oittinen (1993) develops a functionalist translation concept that allows the translation to have the same function as the source text.

This means, in more detail, that she sees translating as "a dialogic relationship that ultimately involves readers, the author, the illustrator, the translator, and the publisher" (Oittinen 1993: 3). In the centre of Oittinen's approach stands not the source text, but the child reader in the target culture. In her view, children lack the world knowledge of adults, i.e. they will have less awareness of other cultures,

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<sup>95</sup> In Oittinen's (2000: 4) view, children's fiction is "read silently by children and aloud to children." Reading in this sense is a shared activity that allows children and caregivers to 'come together.'

or that they are reading a translation (Nikolajeva 2011: 410). A translator will have to take this lack of knowledge into account and support the reader in her understanding of the text (Oittinen 1993: 79). To secure the child's understanding, elements of the source text that could prove difficult for the child will be brought 'closer' to the child, as it were. Foreign concepts, e.g. food, clothing, or currency are replaced by an equivalent item from the target culture that is more familiar to the reader (Nikolajeva 2011: 409). This is referred to as domestication. A domesticated text has "the ability to arouse in the reader the same feelings, thoughts and associations experienced by readers of the source text" (Nikolajeva 1996: 28).

Consider, for instance, the following description of Harry Potter's first Christmas dinner in Hogwarts:

Harry had never in all his life had such a Christmas dinner. A hundred fat, roast turkeys, mountains of roast and boiled potatoes, platters of fat chipolatas, tureens of buttered peas, silver boats of thick, rich gravy and cranberry sauce – and stacks of wizard crackers every few feet along the table... Flaming Christmas puddings followed the turkey. Percy nearly broke his teeth on a silver Sickle embedded in his slice. (HP 1: 150)

Food plays an important role in Rowling's descriptions. Here, the dishes brought out for the students not only symbolise a plentiful meal, the likes of which are unknown to Harry from his life with the Dursleys. The foods further are familiar staple dishes for Christmas dinners in England that most source culture readers will know and love. One highlight of the meal is the Christmas pudding.

The German translator translates most of the dishes, using a domestication strategy in some cases to create the same cosy, Christmassy feeling for his readers:

Harry hatte noch nie in seinem Leben ein solches Weihnachtsmahl verspeist. Hundert fette gebratene Truthähne, Berge von Brat- und Pellkartoffeln, Platten voll niedlicher Cocktailwürstchen, Schüsseln voll Buttererbsen, Silberterrinen voll dicken, sahnigen Bratensafts und Preiselbeersauce – und, über den Tisch verteilt, stapelweise Zauber-Knallbonbons. Diese phantastischen Knallbonbons waren nichts gegen die schwächlichen der Muggel, wie sie die Dursleys kauften, mit dem kleinen Plastikspielkram und den knittrigen Papierhütchen. (HP 1-G: 222)

In the German paragraph, *chipolatas*, little veal sausages, become *Cocktailwürstchen* (*cocktail sausages*), a less sophisticated, non-roasted type of sausage. Both terms thus designate smallish sausages, but the German term will be more familiar to German children, hence positive associations towards the dish will likely be kept intact. Most other dishes are translated directly.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> One might argue, though, whether *Bratensauce* might have been a better term to describe thick *gravy* to German readers.

The most striking change concerns the Christmas pudding. This dish, a staple on British Christmas day, contains dried fruit, nuts, and suet. German Christmas culture does not have Christmas puddings, or any other dish that is similar in composition and association,<sup>97</sup> so the translator here opts to omit the pudding, as well as Percy's reaction to it. Keeping the foreign dish, e.g. as a *Weihnachtspudding*, would have been confusing for the child, or she would not have associated the same positive feelings with it as the source culture reader.<sup>98</sup> Instead, the translator then places his focus on the wizard crackers. Christmas crackers are familiar to British children, so the connection with wizard crackers that contain live mice, among other things (HP 1: 151), will be an easy one to make. German culture, however, does not know these types of crackers, so the translator opts for a lengthy explanation, stating that these crackers are fantastic, and better than the Muggle crackers bought by the Dursleys that only contain plastic toys and crumple paper hats. In doing so, the translator manages to give the child both an explanation of traditional Christmas crackers, and show at the same time how the ones used in Hogwarts are superior. In focusing on the child and her cultural background, he manages to create a similar, enjoyable reading experience.

This excerpt also shows Oittinen's (1993: 69) understanding of the role of a translator. To her, the translator has a mediating role between source and target culture. Like Klingberg (1986), she calls translating an inherently ethical endeavour, but for very different reasons. Translating is ethical to her as the translator is responsible for decoding the source text's message and bringing it across to target culture readers (Oittinen 2014).

The above excerpt further shows that "anything can be domesticated: names, the setting, genres, historical events, cultural or religious rites and beliefs" (Oittinen 2014: 42-43). Foreignness is, then, a feature of the text better to be avoided. Oittinen

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<sup>97</sup> Technically, the translator could have opted for the term *Serviettenkloß*, which describes a German dish that is roughly similar in preparation, although children will most likely not be familiar with this term, nor will it hold for them the same positive associations than a Christmas pudding has for English readers.

<sup>98</sup> In the Russian translation, the translator chose not to omit the Christmas pudding, despite it being unknown in Russia, as well. Instead, it was replaced by a celebratory sweet the child is familiar with, in this case a birthday cake. Inggs (2003: 294) humorously questions the translator's choice in this case, noting that "[i]t is difficult to account for the transformation of Christmas puddings into birthdaycakes. Such a rendering may confuse and mislead Russian readers, although Christmas does after all celebrate a birthday."

(2000: xiv) goes so far as to claim that “all translation *is* to some extent domestication” (emphasis in original).

The domestication of given names is especially common. Paloposki and Oittinen (2001: 378) see an underlying “desire to make the names easier to understand and pronounce (for children; for audiences unaccustomed to foreign names).” Similarly, Nord (1991) sees a trend towards domestication in contemporary German translations of children’s fiction: names and culture-specific references tend to be replaced with ones the child is familiar with. To her, this trend does not hold for the translation of adult fiction, where foreignization is used, i.e. foreign names and cultural artefacts are not adapted towards the target culture. Apart from wanting to make a text easier to understand for the child reader, further reasons for domestication can include political pressures, censorship, or different moral values in source and target culture (Oittinen 2014: 42).

The aim of any translation is that the target text should be accepted by the child reader (Oittinen 1993: 95); this is referred to by the notion of readability (Oittinen 2000: 5). In excluding foreign elements and domesticating the text, it is made easier to read for the child: “If we stress the importance of, for instance, the ‘readability’ of the target-language text [...] we give priority to the child as a reader” (Oittinen 1993: 4). This view is supported by Kontoleon, who works both as a fiction writer and as a translator. He notes that reader enjoyment and comprehensibility, especially with texts aimed at younger audiences, are the main objectives in translating a text (Kontoleon 2011: 429).

Oittinen’s theory can be criticised, though, on the grounds of generalisations she makes on the nature of children’s fiction. She states that

[s]ince I deal mainly with the translation of illustrated stories for children (e.g., picture books), I am referring to children under school age (seven in Finland). However, childhood is a fluid concept, so many of my observations about translating for children under school age apply to translating for older children as well (Oittinen 2000: 4).

Here, she assumes a homogeneity in children’s fiction that is not necessarily given (O’Sullivan 2000: 189).

So, in summary, Klingberg’s foreignization strategy advocates for a strong equivalence or faithfulness to the source text. This faithfulness results from an understanding of the source text as a closed system with permanent meanings. Hence,

adaptations are understood as unnecessary interference with the source text and are perceived as negative; instead, a translation with as little changes as possible and an invisible translator is favoured.

Oittinen's dialogic translation, on the other hand, assumes that all translation involves some degree of adaptation, thus the authority of the source text is not a given for her. Using a visible translator, every translation adapts the source text for a new audience or reading situation, incorporating changes where necessary to make the text accessible to these new audiences. Consequently, her focus is not on the faithfulness towards the source text, but on the faithfulness towards readers and on the translator-as-reader in an open, dialogic situation.

### **7.3 Translating Im/Politeness**

Translations can also further cross-cultural research in that it can shed light on how pragmatic units that are understood to be im/polite in a given culture can be translated for speakers from a different cultural background. Research into translations of impoliteness can also contribute to alleviating research desiderata pointed out by McIntyre and Bousfield (2017: 780), who call for research that addresses im/politeness in fiction in languages other than English.

I have chosen to investigate how impoliteness is translated into German from English sources. One reason for this choice is that there are fewer translations of children's fiction into English than from English to other languages (Lathey 2009: 33). Translations generally number less than 5% of books produced each year in English-speaking countries such as the USA or Great Britain (Nikolajeva 2011: 405; O'Sullivan 2004: 22).<sup>99</sup>

Research has identified several reasons for this lack of translations: First, English-speaking countries tend to produce so many fictional texts that the market is satiated. For instance, in 2009, over 21,000 new children's books were published in the USA (American Library Association 2010). Hence, to warrant translation,

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<sup>99</sup> The numbers given differ considerably: Nikolajeva (2011) speaks of translations making up less than 1% of the book publications of English-speaking countries, whereas O'Sullivan (2004) rates them between 1% (for the USA) and 3% (for Great Britain). In any case, the number is significantly lower than in European countries like Germany or the Netherlands, where between 30-50% of all books are translations. House (2004: 684) claims a 60% translation rate for Germany, and Jobe (2001: 782-783) goes so far as to claim that in some countries, up to 70% of books are translations.

the foreign text must be perceived to hold exceptional merit for the English-language audience. This is especially so as the translation process is time-consuming and expensive, specifically since US-American editors often do not speak many foreign languages (see O'Sullivan 2000: 167 on this problem). Ghesquiere (2014: 20) thus is of the opinion that whether or not a text is translated is related to cultural dominance and power. Further, translations are more difficult to market than books produced in the target culture (Chace 2011: 417; Jobe 2001: 782-783). As a result, continental European children are more likely to read a translated text from an English-speaking country than vice versa.<sup>100</sup> The *Harry Potter* series counts among these (see ch. 8 below).

This results in two avenues of research: on the one hand, one can investigate which types of texts are translated into English. This is especially interesting as English children's fiction tends to export more texts than it imports into its own literary system (Ghesquiere 2014: 27). For instance, Beauvais (2018) investigates contemporary children's fiction in the UK. She uncovers a 'difference thinking' that she relates back to socio-political factors that influenced the Brexit movement.<sup>101</sup> On the other hand, another avenue of research is to analyse English books in translation into other languages to understand how texts are perceived in the target culture, which is also the focus of my study. A framework for such an analysis is offered e.g. in House (2004). House's (2004: 688) approach to analysing translations is conducted on three levels:

- (1) a linguistic level, on which the linguistic systems of source and target language are contrasted;
- (2) a socio-cultural level, on which the differing socio-cultural and pragmatic norms of source and target culture are negotiated, and
- (3) an ideological level, which concerns individual beliefs of the translator.

In her view, it is the second level that provides the most interesting insights. House (2004: 684) goes on to claim that

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<sup>100</sup> Beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, German children's fiction was influential and was widely read in continental Europe, but soon lost out to English-language books (Ghesquiere 2014: 26; Lathey 2010: 4).

<sup>101</sup> Beauvais (2018: 11) notes that only about 4% of all published children's fiction in the UK are translations, which for her gives evidence that Britain perceives itself as fundamentally different from continental Europe.

such an approach – rooted as it is in empirical cross-cultural research – is preferable to the analyses and generalisations presented in the literature reviewed for the following three reasons: (1) it adds systematicity to the description and evaluation of translations of children's books in that it differentiates global notions of 'additions', 'omissions' and 'mis-translations', (2) it facilitates the discovery of certain patterns in seemingly random shifts recognizable in the translations, and (3) it suggests an explanation for the addition, omission or changes occurring in certain elements in a given translation.

Two problems have to be borne in mind, though: On the one hand, in practice, texts are often adjusted according to the target culture's understanding of the child and of childhood, for instance by deleting material that is understood as offensive or merely too advanced; i.e. the original text is altered, sometimes drastically so (Nikolajeva 2011: 405). To what extent this is true for the translation of impoliteness has not been researched in-depth (but see Pleyer 2017).

On the other hand, some changes in the translation are due to the production process. A translation must be quickly available for a globalised market.<sup>102</sup> Tight deadlines are difficult to keep, and translations are often handed in late due to difficulties of the text or a generally high level of workload. Quoting a representative of a German publishing house, Chace (2011: 417) claims that about 30% of translations are unusable because they are too close to the original and thus unintelligible.

Previous research has established some tendencies of translation preferences of pragmatic phenomena in children's fiction, which however do not provide a clear picture or a complete set of analytical criteria. For instance, Baker's (2011) course book on translation has a section on pragmatic equivalence; yet it only addresses coherence and implicatures, not im/politeness. This shows that as of yet, translating impoliteness does not seem to factor into translator education. Im/politeness is discussed to some degree in House's (2005; 2006) work on translated children's fiction. She notes that first, phatic communication seems to be a dispreferred style of communication in German speakers; instead, German speakers prefer direct, explicit communication (House 2006: 252), that is, "Germans [...] 'say what they mean'" (House 2005: 22–23), which might carry evaluations of rudeness by British speakers (see e.g. Watts 1989). Due to the preferred direct style of communication,

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<sup>102</sup> See e.g. Jensen and Jakobsen (1998) for a combined qualitative and quantitative study (key-log and thinking aloud) on identifying problem-solving strategies in translating journalistic texts under time-pressure.



situations that contain phatic communication, such as characters greeting each other and asking about health, tends to be omitted in translation, so in *A Bear Called Paddington* (House 2006: 250), or in *Winnie the Pooh* (O’Sullivan 2000: 262).

According to House, “it is undeniably true [...] that books for children and books for adults are more strictly separated in Germany than is the case in Anglo-American cultures” (House 2004: 685); she speculates whether this might be due to a more authoritarian style of raising children that clearly separates child and adult spaces in German culture.

A further aspect that is loosely connected to impoliteness in translation is that of humour. For instance, Germany is less accepting of British tendencies to include black humour in children’s fiction, as it is perceived as tasteless or even dangerous for children (see O’Sullivan 2000: 69). House (2004: 689-690 and further) discusses the loss of humour in the German translation of *Paddington Bear*, in which the politeness strategies with which the bear is addressed are omitted. Commenting on translation strategies for humour, Hickey (1998: 230) recommends that in dealing with a joke, the translator “should extricate the underlying formula on which the potential effect is based and thereupon generate another, new, text or joke in the target language, keeping as close as possible, or relevant, to the propositional content of the original.” A similar point is made by Lathey (2005: 147), who notes that

[w]here a cultural reference, a joke, or a pun in the original is lost, reference at another point in the text to a similar setting in the target culture, or the introduction of wordplay in the target language, create on balance a tone and style which match those of the original.

This means that in an ideal case, a translator establishes a global strategy of how humour is used in the source text. Instead of, e.g., translating all puns as they occur in the source text, the translator can opt to translate only those that are also humorous in the target language. She may then insert additional ones in the target text to create the same global effect. That is, the translator can aim for overall equivalence (see Davies 2003: 95-96). In my opinion, a similar strategy is expected to hold for the translation of impoliteness, especially when used with a humorous effect.

## 8. Translating *Harry Potter*

J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series has now reached the status as the most sold books after the Bible (Karg & Mende 2010: 16); after the publication of the first volume in 1997, it has now been translated into 63 languages.<sup>103</sup>

This wide spread of the *Harry Potter* books is especially interesting since House (2004: 685) claims that the books most widely translated are those that are 'neutral' in respect to their cultural setting, i.e those that are not strongly set in a specific culture with its cultural artefacts. For Rowling's series, however, Davies (2003: 66-67) claims that the British cultural setting of the *Harry Potter* books is so strongly ingrained in the story that she assumes it to have been intended as an intracultural artefact. In her view, Rowling would have expected her readers to be familiar with many references to the British tradition of the school story and other aspects of British culture to the point that Davies assumes Rowling had not aimed the series at world-wide marketing, or a translation for other cultures.

Whatever reasons one might assume for Rowling's writing choices, part of the success of the *Harry Potter* series might have been due to the effectiveness of global marketing (see Lathey 2005). The series is unique, especially in contrast to other popular children's fiction, in that Rowling's fictional world is accessible through different, connected media channels,<sup>104</sup> such as films, computer games, the Pottermore website<sup>105</sup> (Kerchy 2018: 4), or even a play currently running in London's West End, in New York, and Melbourne.<sup>106</sup> For the German context, the series' attractiveness might also be based on the popularity of British boarding-school stories in the 1960s and 1970s (Ray 2004: 478).

### 8.1 The Translation Process of *Harry Potter*

The globalization of the children's book market with its rapid distribution and marketing events, as well as *Harry Potter's* world-wide fame require the books to be available in foreign languages soon after the release of the English original (Lathey

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<sup>103</sup> Information according to the website of the German publishing house Carlsen (Carlsen, n. d.).

<sup>104</sup> Paloposki and Oittinen (2001) see the creation of a story for a different medium, such as a *Harry Potter* film, as a form of domestication.

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.pottermore.com/> allows a fan to recreate some key points of the book, such as being Sorted into a Hogwarts House, choosing a wand, or learning about one's Patronus.

<sup>106</sup> See <https://www.harrypottertheplay.com/>

2005: 141-142.). Lathey (2009: 33) also notes that the interval between the publication of the English source texts in the *Harry Potter* series and their translation into various target languages decreased rapidly over time.

Table 8.1 shows that the time-span between the release dates of the original English text in the UK and the release date of the translation in Germany becomes progressively shorter. While the first book was available as a translation more than a year after the release of the source text, the second book was translated in only eight months, and from the fourth book on, all German translations were published in the same year as the original, with roughly three months between release dates.

order	English title (Bloomsbury)	release date	German title (Carlsen)	release date
1	<i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone</i>	26-06-1997	<i>Harry Potter und der Stein der Weisen</i>	21-07-1998
2	<i>Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets</i>	2-07-1998	<i>Harry Potter und die Kammer des Schreckens</i>	03-1999
3	<i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</i>	8-07-1999	<i>Harry Potter und der Gefangene von Azkaban</i>	08-1999
4	<i>Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire</i>	8-07-2000	<i>Harry Potter und der Feuerkelch</i>	14-10-2000
5	<i>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix</i>	21-06-2003	<i>Harry Potter und der Orden des Phönix</i>	8-11-2003
6	<i>Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince</i>	16-07-2005	<i>Harry Potter und der Halbblutprinz</i>	1-10-2005
7	<i>Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows</i>	21-07-2007	<i>Harry Potter und die Heiligtümer des Todes</i>	27-10-2007

Table 8.1: Titles and release dates of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series

Commenting on the production process of translations for children, Lathey (2005: 143) remarks that “[t]here is little time to match text carefully to translator, and collaboration between editor and translator is compromised.” This can also be noted for the German translation, which was translated by Klaus Fritz for Carlsen Verlag between 1998 and 2007. For Fritz, who does not hold a degree in translation, the *Harry Potter* series marks his first time translating a fictional text. Fritz's situation is not an uncommon one: Many translators are ‘amateurs’ in the sense that the translation of children's fiction is not their regular profession (Desmidt 2014: 89).

Wyler (2003: 6) claims that the production process may lead to a “mutilation” of the source text; she states several reasons of how the process contributes to

grave changes in the target text: short deadlines for both the translator and the proof-reader, long hours, and poor knowledge of the source or target language (see also Lathey 2005: 143). In an interview in 2003, Fritz states that while working on *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, his daily workload was ten pages of translation, which he describes as stressful (Osberghaus 2003). O’Connell (2006: 20) criticises these working conditions, calling them “a vicious circle in which publishers are often presented with what they deserve, namely, translated work which could be a good deal better,” and advocating “to improve the skills (and thus the professional confidence) of those who translate children’s fiction.”

Fritz’s translation has indeed been criticised in terms of its quality. For instance, a German-language website collects inconsistencies in Fritz’s translation sent in by fans, here termed ‘Gurke’ (a dialect expression for an inconsistency or error). According to the website’s description (Harry Potter Xperts. n.d.), its aim is not to criticise the translator or give evidence of mistakes, but instead to shed light on differences between source and target text, as well as to point out features of the source text that might be difficult to translate. However, as contributors have established 499 inconsistencies for *Harry Potter und der Feuerkelch* alone, one might doubt the accuracy of this claim.

## **8.2 Translating Individual Phenomena**

Previous research into the translation of *Harry Potter* has provided insights into individual phenomena, such as culture-specific items, names, dialects or humour. In the following subchapters, I highlight some of the findings on these specific phenomena. This will help establish which translation strategy Fritz employed, and provide a basis for the analysis of impoliteness in translation in ch. 12.

I focus on the translation of culture-specific items, strategies of translating names of persons, objects and magical animals, characters’ dialect and register in translation, as well as humour and wordplay.

### 8.2.1 Translating Culture-Specific Items

Davies (2003) analyses the translation of culture-specific items in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and its French and German translations. She understands the term to mean items such as foodstuffs, artefacts, or certain norms that are central to or familiar in a given source culture.

In *Harry Potter*, clearly recognisable British everyday life items such as food, or school conventions serve as a backdrop and grounding device for the magical society (Davies 2003: 89-90) in that they allow Rowling to show how and in which ways the magical society differs from the everyday life the reader is familiar with.

The translation of some of these cultural artefacts may cause problems. First, British holidays might pose problems for readers, especially when the target culture does not celebrate the same holiday, such as Bonfire Night. A news presenter commenting on an inappropriate use of fireworks in October assumes that “people have been celebrating Bonfire Night early” (HP 1: 6). The German translation has the presenter refer to New Year's Eve, with the added comment that “das ist noch eine Weile hin, meine Damen und Herren!” (HP 1-G: 11).<sup>107</sup>

Second, British place names can cause translation difficulties, especially when their location is made relevant. Privet Drive, where Harry grows up, is translated as *Ligusterweg*, which loses the British connotations. On the other hand, a letter is addressed to Harry in the following manner, retaining the English place name. Note also the incongruity of the place name and the hotel name.

Mr. H. Potter  
Zimmer 17  
Hotel zum Bahnblick  
Cokeworth<sup>108</sup> (HP 1-G: 50)

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<sup>107</sup> Bonfire Night is celebrated on November 5<sup>th</sup>, which places the events at the beginning of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* around Halloween. The time difference between Halloween and New Year's Eve in the German translation seems overly large, which leads one to question the translator's choice.

<sup>108</sup> Cokeworth is a fictional town that is believed to be located in the midlands (Harry Potter Wiki, n.d.).

Third, research has concentrated on the translation of British foods. The problem here is that if a dish such as baked beans is replaced with a target culture food that is similar in taste or ingredients, the connotations of ‘simple food that is liked by children’ are lost (Davies 2003: 67).

Davies (2003: 92) criticises the translation choices for these items: “The overall impression is very much of a haphazard treatment, where each reference seems to be dealt with in an ad hoc fashion without any clear underlying strategy.” As culture-specific items are perceived as mere background details by translators, they are translated on a case-by-case basis; a global strategy is not developed in HP 1-G.

Wylter (2003: 8), the translator of *Harry Potter* into Portuguese, describes her translation as “preserving British customs, humor, formality and their manifestations,” and Fritz also claims to have tried to preserve the British nature of the source text (Die Welt 2005; Osberghaus 2003). Lathey (2005), however, comments on the German translation’s ‘loss of Britishness.’ Rowling draws heavily on the British boarding school experience; especially the story’s ironic tone and style, which is close to spoken language, require very close attention when translating (Lathey 2005: 145). Lathey assumes that a notion of Britishness is already lost in the first paragraph:

“Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much” (7). A tag taken from spoken language that emphasizes the Dursleys’ smugness – a reader can picture the pair of them saying “thank you very much” with their noses in the air – is typical of the effect Rowling creates by using such idiomatic phrases. In his translation, Fritz replaces “thank you” with an intensifier, “sehr stolz sogar” (very proud indeed). [...] [A]s a result of this and other changes “the flavor of the original is gone.” (Lathey 2005: 146)

### **8.2.2 Translating Names**

The translation of names for persons, animals and magical objects also proves a challenging topic. Davies (2003: 71-72) notes that the distinctly British names of certain characters carry certain cultural associations for British readers. Harry’s classmate Seamus Finnegan will be clearly marked as a character with an Irish background, while Millicent Bultstrode’s name will elucidate certain associations with social class. While German readers will recognise the Britishness of these names, the associations will be lost for those readers who are not deeply familiar with the British social context.

In several interviews, Fritz has addressed his choices for the translation of names. Telling names for animals and objects were translated into German (e.g. Osberghaus 2003), thus an *escapator* (the term Mr Weasley uses for escalators) became a *Trolltreppe* (lit: *troll staircase*). His aim was to retain both the sound and the semantic content of a word.

The story's 'British atmosphere,' as Fritz himself put it, was to be kept intact. Hence Fritz decided to not translate the names of the main characters, the school or its Houses (Die Welt 2005). Translations were only employed in two cases: on the one hand, Hermione Granger became Hermine in German as the English spelling is uncommon in German. Using a domestication strategy here might add to reader enjoyment as the change eases pronunciation of her name for German readers. On the other hand, Fritz opted for a translation of the names of secondary characters, so that Sirius Black became Sirius Schwarz in the first edition of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Die Welt 2005), possibly to allow the German reader to better understand the connotations of his last name. On realising that Black played a major role in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, the name was changed to Black in the German target text, as well as in all new editions of previous *Harry Potter* books.

### 8.2.3 Dialect and Register

Research (e.g. Lathey 2005) has also concentrated on the use of dialect and register in the source and target text. The character that is focused on in most publication is Rubeus Hagrid, the gamekeeper and Keeper of Keys and Grounds at Hogwarts. Hagrid is portrayed as having a West country accent<sup>109</sup> in the English source text, as can be seen, for instance, in his first encounter with Harry:

“Couldn’t make us a cup o’ tea, could yeh? It’s not been an easy journey...”  
He strode over to the sofa where Dudley sat frozen with fear.  
“Budge up, yeh great lump,” said the stranger.  
Dudley squeaked and ran to hide behind his mother, who was crouching, terrified, behind Uncle Vernon.  
“An’ here’s Harry!” said the giant.  
Harry looked up into the fierce, wild, shadowy face and saw that the beetle eyes were crinkled in a smile.  
“Las’ time I saw you, you was only a baby,” said the giant. “Yeh look a lot like yer dad, but yeh’ve got yer mom’s eyes.” (HP 1: 47)

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<sup>109</sup> In an interview in 2001, Rowling confirmed that Hagrid spoke with a West country accent, that is, the same accent that she herself has (Accio Quote. n.d.).

In Hagrid's utterances, 'yeh' replaces the standard 'you,' 'yer' is used instead of 'your.' He shows a preference for the deletion of word-final dental plosives (an', las'), and uses a regularized be-paradigm ('you was,' cf. Wagner 2004: 172).

The German translator has given Hagrid a standard accent; Fritz stresses that he decided against using a German dialect for the character (Die Welt 2005).

Compare:

„Könnte 'ne Tasse Tee vertragen. War keine leichte Reise...“  
Er schritt hinüber zum Sofa, auf dem der vor Angst versteinerte Dudley saß.  
„Beweg dich, Klops“, sagte der Fremde.  
Dudley quiekte und rannte hinter den Rücken seiner Mutter, die sich voller Angst hinter Onkel Vernon zusammenkauerte.  
„Und hier ist Harry“, sagte der Riese.  
Harry blickte hinauf in sein grimmiges, wildes Gesicht und sah, dass sich die Fältchen um seine Käferaugen zu einem Lächeln gekräuselt hatten.  
„Letztes Mal, als ich dich gesehen hab, warst du noch 'n Baby“, sagte der Riese. „Du siehst deinem Vater mächtig ähnlich, aber die Augen hast du von deiner Mum.“ (HP 1-G: 54-55)

Hagrid uses some features of colloquial speech, such as omitting the personal pronoun in his utterances, or using 'n as an abbreviation of the indefinite article, but strong dialectal features are absent.

Researchers have assumed several reasons for this change. First, didactic concerns might have played a role, as parents might object to non-standard forms. Second, there is no readily available non-standard idiom that holds the same connotations in the target language. In addition, using a strong German dialect such as Bavarian or Swabian might run the risk of making Hagrid's character sound ridiculous (Lathey 2005: 148-149; see also Davies 2003 for a description of Hagrid's use of impeccable standard grammar in French).

#### **8.2.4 Humour, Puns and Wordplay**

Davies (2003: 94-95) discusses humour, puns and wordplay in translations and the difficulties of keeping them intact. For example, the word *Muggle*, a wizard word referring to non-magical persons, has certain connotations of stupidity: compare the British English term *mug*, which can mean *idiot* (Inggs 2003: 294). The implicit notion that wizards believe non-magical people to be less bright is not present in the German translation *Muggel*; the translation thus cannot reproduce the same pejorative meaning as the English term.



Inggs (2003: 295) also notes that “[m]any comments in the dialogue are ironic or sarcastic understatements typical of English humour, and often unrecognised in other cultures.” This can be illustrated by a word play on the name of the planet Uranus; this joke is repeated throughout the series. See, for instance, an utterance by Ron when the topic of planets is discussed:

“Harry, we saw Uranus up close!” said Ron, still giggling feebly.  
“Get it, Harry? We saw Uranus — ha ha ha —” (HP 6: 795)

Here, Ron – and the reader – will find humour in the fact that the planet’s name has certain phonological similarities to a person’s body part; Ron even metapragmatically expresses that he has made a joke by asking Harry whether he “got it.” For the German reader, Ron’s question of whether Harry got the joke is confusing, at best, as there is none:

„Harry, wir haben Uranus von ganz nah gesehen!“, sagte Ron und kicherte immer noch schwach. „Kapiert, Harry? Wir haben Uranus gesehen – hahaha...“ (HP 6-G: 857)

A German reader will have to assume that Ron, who has been hit by a spell prior to his utterance, just stopped making particular sense here.<sup>110</sup>

Inggs (2003: 295) also believes that the fact that these sarcastic instances are not included in the film version is evidence that they are difficult to understand in other cultures. This shows that the translation of humour can be problematic in that direct translations will be difficult to decipher for the child reader; thus, translators have to opt for other, global translation strategies (see also ch. 7.3 on the translation of impoliteness which can be used for humorous purposes).

In conclusion, Fritz tends to use the domestication strategy, that is, an adaptation of British cultural items towards items the German target culture is familiar with; however, he seems to have made translation choices on a case-by-case basis. Consider, for instance, the translation of names: Usually, character names (of both protagonists and secondary characters) are retained, however Sirius Black’s family name is translated. While Fritz justifies this decision with Black being a telling name (Die Welt 2005), other telling names, such as werewolf Fenrir Greyback, or Bellatrix Lestrange, are not translated. In a similar vein, place names and names of holidays are usually also retained where it does not hinder reader understanding or

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<sup>110</sup> For a similar word play that only works well in the source culture, see also O’Sullivan (2000: 251-252). She reports a wordplay on *Compline*, the Night Prayer in monasteries, and *Complan*, a brand of powdered drink; the scene is deleted in the translation.

enjoyment (see the above discussion of 'Ligusterweg' and the retaining of Cokeworth). Despite Fritz's professed aims of retaining the Britishness of the original, research into his translation strategies shows instead a loss of Britishness, and an adaptation to the German target culture.

## 9. Methodology and Hypotheses

In light of the above discussion, I have opted for the following, three-step method to understand impoliteness in English and translated children's fiction.

As a first step, I conducted an analysis of impoliteness token structures in the selected conversations I described in ch. 2 above. The conversations were uploaded and tagged in MAXQDA. I tagged the data twice at two distinct points in time to guarantee validity of my classification. I used Culpeper's (2011a) categories for conventionalised and implicational impoliteness, which I will describe in detail below. His model proves the most fruitful for my analytical aim, as the analytical criteria are derived from impoliteness<sub>1</sub> evaluations of participants in a diary report study; hence his impoliteness<sub>2</sub> categories should coincide with what lay-speakers perceive as impoliteness (see Kleinke & Bös 2015). It follows that an analysis using these categories can give us a comprehensive understanding as to what most participants would evaluate as impolite in a given context. To take into account the special features of the data set, i.e. written fictional texts, wherever necessary I have supplemented Culpeper's (2011a) categories with my own. Finally, to further an understanding of how conflictive discourses begin and terminate (see Bousfield 2007a), I have conducted a study into strategic conversation beginnings and into conflict termination strategies (based on Vuchinich 1990) to gain an understanding of the natural progression of conflictive discourse in children's fiction.

To further validate the outcome of this first step, in a second analytical step I have conducted an analysis of the metalanguage used by characters and the narrator to conceptualise and evaluate impoliteness events (ch. 11). Here, I have developed my own classificatory system of text-internal and text-external comments, i.e. metalanguage on the level of the characters, and metalanguage as used by the narrator, who is not part of the narrated world.<sup>111</sup> In doing so, I include a further impoliteness<sub>1</sub> perspective of the characters. This is of relevance as metalanguage clarifies to an outsider of the narrated Community of Practice, i.e. a reader or analyst, which (linguistic) behaviours are appropriate in a given conversational setting, and which

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<sup>111</sup> Note that this distinction holds for the texts in my corpus which, like most fictional texts for children, follow a third-person narration. The classification might not be applicable in first- or second-person narration, as e.g. in first-person narration, the protagonist and narrator are the same person.

behaviours constitute violations of norms, i.e. are open to an interpretation as impolite.

As a third step, I conducted an explorative comparative study of the first and sixth instalment of the *Harry Potter* series using Toury's (1980a) Descriptive Translation Studies analysis (ch. 12) to gain insights into how impoliteness is treated in a translation for an audience in a different cultural setting. Due to the differing communicative preferences in German and English, and a lack of education on these pragmatic differences in educated speakers of both languages, global changes in e.g. level of directness are expected.

The above discussion on impoliteness, children's fiction and translation further results in the following hypotheses on the use of impoliteness in (translated) children's fiction:

- 1) The more powerful participant will use more impoliteness strategies than the less powerful participant because the latter cannot retaliate in kind; this will hold especially in institutional settings;
- 2) in addition, and for the same reasons, the more powerful participant will begin more conflicts than the less powerful participant.
- 3) Concerning the use of impoliteness strategies, the more contextual knowledge is needed to conceptualise that impoliteness has taken place in a given situation, the less the strategy will be used in children's fiction.
- 4) Impoliteness metalanguage will clarify the use of impoliteness and signal that impoliteness has taken place, especially in cases where much contextual knowledge is needed for an understanding of the utterance in question.
- 5) Concerning the translation of impoliteness, the target text will orient more to the target culture and its norms. Due to a lack of awareness of the different communicative norms in English and German, I also expect a loss of impoliteness in some cases.

## 10. Analysing Impoliteness Token Structures in Children's Fiction

In this section, I present a comprehensive description of how conflictive discourse progresses in interactions between protagonist and antagonist in children's fiction; my corpus of 295 interactions as presented in Table 2.1 forms the basis of this description. I use Culpeper's (2011a) impoliteness strategies as analytical criteria; where needed, I have supplemented them with my own strategies.

In the following chapters, all strategies or triggers will be described in detail. In ch. 10.1, I discuss conventionalised impoliteness formulae, paying attention to instances of usage that are specific to the fictional world (10.1.1 and 10.1.2), as well as giving a subclassification of different types of formulae (10.1.3-10.1.9). This is followed by a discussion of implicational impoliteness (10.2), in detail: form-driven impoliteness (10.2.1), convention-driven impoliteness (10.2.2), and context-driven impoliteness (10.2.3). I will also focus on instances of non-conflictive discourse and describe in which situations speakers in children's fiction use politic behaviour (e.g. Watts 1989; 2003; see ch. 10.3), and comment on instances in which polite behaviour occurs (ch. 10.4). Finally, I address the beginnings (ch. 10.5) and terminations (ch. 10.6) of conflictive discourse.

The corpus contains 2215 instances of impoliteness strategies, i.e. linguistic strategies that are classifiable as containing language use that is open to an interpretation as impolite. Figure 10.1 provides an overview of the distribution of impoliteness strategies as defined by Culpeper (2011a). I am aware that in a qualitative study such as mine, complete objectivity in categorising linguistic examples is impossible to achieve, and that certain examples may be classified in a different manner by other researchers.

Note that form-driven impoliteness, i.e. the strategy used most often, and conventionalised impoliteness formulae make up roughly half of all instances of impoliteness strategies in my data, i.e. 51% of all tokens belong to these two categories. With 461 and 393 instances of usage, internal convention-driven impoliteness and unmarked context-driven impoliteness, respectively, are also fairly prominent. Contrast this with external convention-driven impoliteness and context-driven impoliteness: absence of behaviour, which together make up only 10 % of

all utterances that contain impoliteness strategies. The data thus show a clear preference for strategies in which unmitigated impoliteness is used.

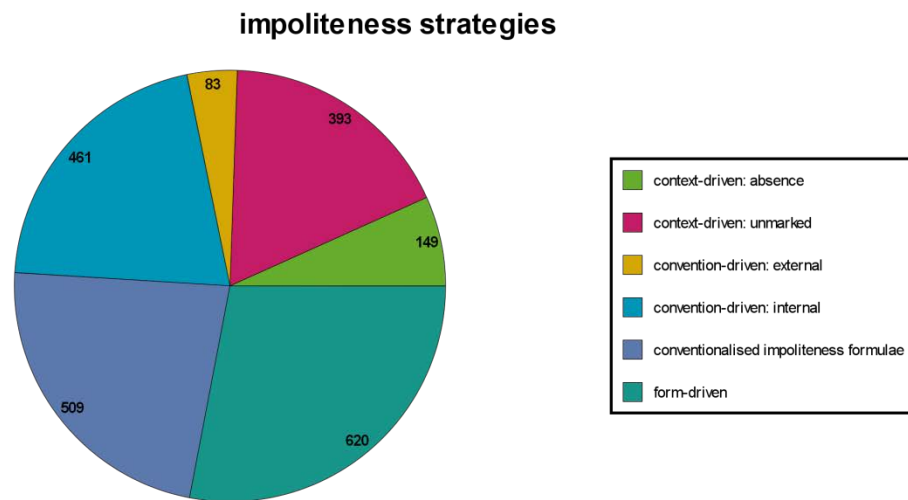


Fig. 10.1: Distribution of impoliteness strategies in children's fiction

Note that it is my understanding of Culpeper's (2011a) strategies that strategy mixing is possible, i.e. that a single utterance can contain more than one impoliteness strategy. Hence, I have allowed for multiple tagging, as I am convinced that the complexity of utterances is represented best in this way (see Kleinke & Bös 2015: 61). This procedure necessitates that the number of impoliteness strategies exceeds the number of utterances in the data set.

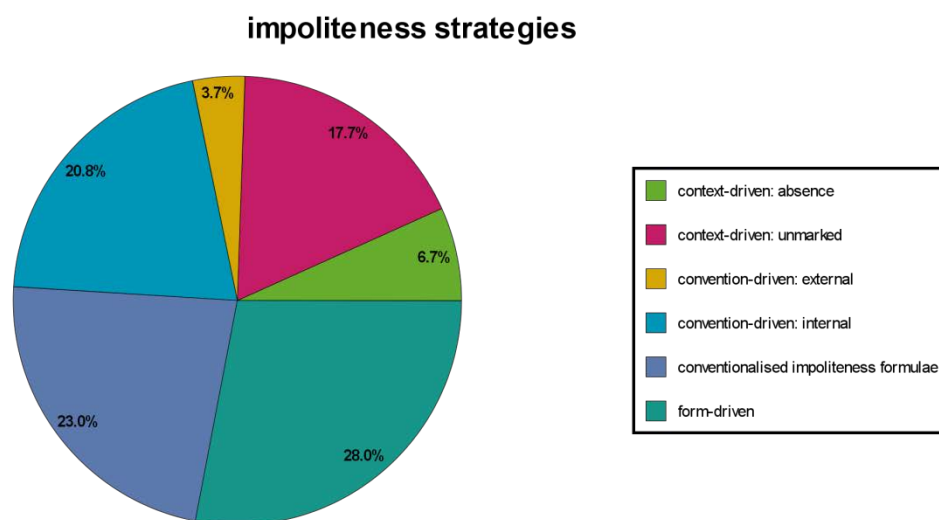


Fig. 10.2: Frequency of impoliteness strategies in children's fiction

## 10.1 Conventionalised Impoliteness Formulae

This section investigates how many and which types of conventionalised impoliteness formulae are preferred in conversations in children's fiction. Building on Leech's (2005) pragmalinguistic or semantic im/politeness, this category includes triggers that are commonly associated with impoliteness and thus come to be perceived as impolite in almost every context of use, i.e., they become conventionalised. Examples are verbal features, such as dismissals ("get lost"), pointed criticisms ("that is absolutely rubbish"), or personalised negative assertions ("you make me sick"), as well as non-verbal features (e.g. spitting, sticking out one's tongue, or turning away).<sup>112</sup> Non-verbal features are included here as they function in a similar manner as verbal features. Lakoff, noting that covering one's mouth when coughing is perceived as polite, suggests "that the rules of language and the rules for other types of cooperative human transactions are all parts of the same system: it is futile to set linguistic behavior apart from other forms of behaviour" (Lakoff 1973: 303).

However, it is the interaction between context and linguistic expressions that clearly classifies an utterance as impolite: while the word "cunt" alone can be a positive attribute among a group of close friends, the utterance "you cunt" with falling intonation and a facial expression of disgust is less likely to be interpreted positively (Culpeper 2011a: 117; 125). Conventionalised impoliteness formulae thus require certain prosodic and non-verbal signals to count as truly impolite (Culpeper 2011a: 135-136).<sup>113</sup>

To understand which types of conventionalised impoliteness formulae are predominantly used in children's fiction, I tagged occurrences in my data according to a list of impoliteness formulae as proposed in Culpeper (2011a: 135-136). Note that this list is not to be understood as containing all possible conventionalised impoliteness formulae of English; however, it should capture the most common formulae (Culpeper 2011a: 136).

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<sup>112</sup> For a more extensive list, see Culpeper (2011a: 135-36). See also Culpeper's (1996: 358) positive impoliteness output strategy 'Use taboo words – swear, or use abusive or profane language.'

<sup>113</sup> Most researchers criticise this category, however, and believe that impoliteness is not an inherent feature of utterances. See e.g. Bousfield (2008: 136), though he acknowledges that some expressions might be less neutral than others; Kienpointner (1997: 225), who extends the claim to paralinguistic and non-verbal features; and also Mills (2005: 265) and Locher and Watts (2005: 151-52) (for politeness).

The results of my study are depicted in Fig. 10.3 below. With 509 tokens, conventionalised impoliteness formulae form the second most frequent category for impoliteness triggers in my corpus. Fig. 10.3 further shows that while examples of all formulae as established in Culpeper (2011a) are found in my data, personalised negative vocatives and threats are the preferred choice of conventionalised impoliteness formulae.

If two conventionalised impoliteness formulae occurred in the same utterance, only the first occurrence is counted in Fig. 10.3 below. Further, of all 509 tokens of conventionalised impoliteness formulae in my data, 31 tokens, or 6% of tokens, did not fall into the formulae categories as discussed by Culpeper (2011a). A further subclassification of these 31 tokens did not prove to be of explanatory value.

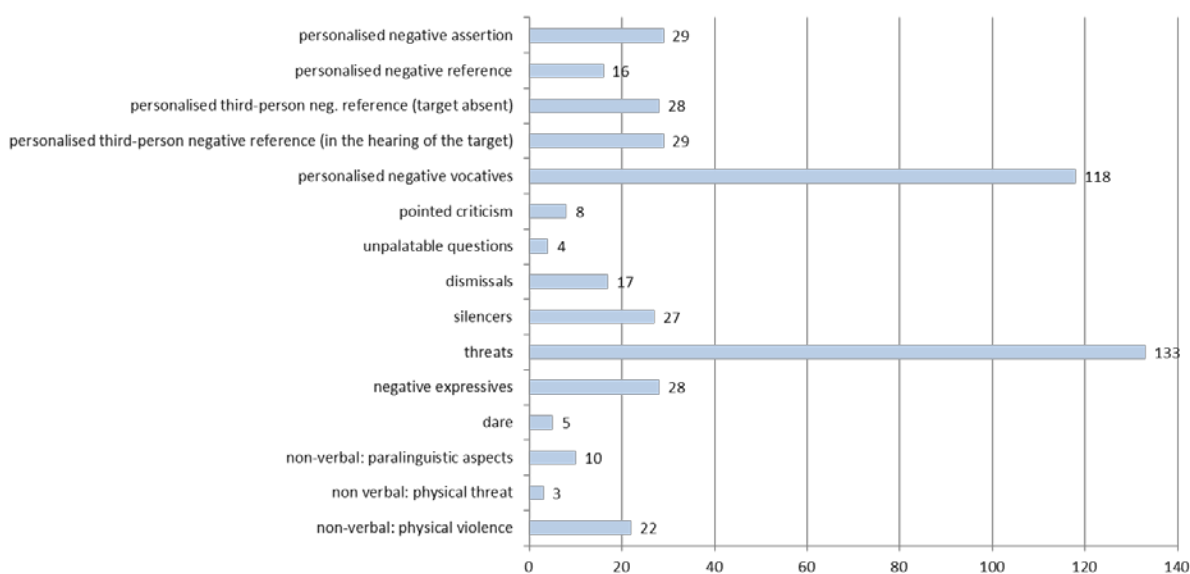


Fig. 10.3: Categories of conventionalised impoliteness formulae

In the following, I will discuss examples of each of the impoliteness formulae in Fig. 10.3. Before going into detail on the usage of these formulae, however, one has to be aware that in children's fiction, certain formulae occur that are not understood as having an impolite connotation in naturally-occurring conversation. Note that the 28 token structures of negative expressives are discussed below in the sections on world-specific formulae and curses.



### 10.1.1 World- and Setting-Specific Conventionalised Impoliteness Formulae

In some of the texts in my corpus, certain phrases are used that are not commonly associated with impoliteness in almost all contexts of use in naturally occurring conversations, but that are clearly marked as conventionalised impoliteness formulae either via character reactions, explanations of the term by a character, or explanations by the narrator.

A term that is specific to the world of *Harry Potter* is that of “Muggle.” It is used by witches and wizards to designate persons from non-magical families that do not have any magical abilities. While it can be used as a neutral term,<sup>114</sup> its occurrence with a falling intonation and a facial expression of disgust allows it to be used as an insult, as in (1):

(1)

[situation: Hagrid, the Hogwarts gamekeeper, has come to deliver Harry’s school acceptance letter; Harry’s uncle attempts to stop Harry from receiving it and attending Hogwarts school]

“I’d like ter see a great Muggle like you stop him,” [Hagrid] said.

“A what?” said Harry, interested.

“A Muggle,” said Hagrid, “it’s what we call nonmagic folk like them. An’ it’s your bad luck you grew up in a family o’ the biggest Muggles I ever laid eyes on.” (HP 1: 53)

Here, Hagrid employs the term “Muggle” as a negative personal vocative to express a contrast between himself, a person from the magical world, and Harry’s uncle. Being non-magical and being unaccepting of magic carries strong negative associations for Hagrid, which is why one can categorise his use of “Muggle” as an impoliteness formula.

Further, in the *Harry Potter* series, the term “Mudblood” is a derogatory term to refer to a child of non-magical parents, and is used by some “pure-blood” wizards to designate those they perceive to be of lower social standing. The fact that the term is seen as derogatory and open to an interpretation as impolite is clarified by character reactions and narrator comments after it has been used by Draco Malfoy against Hermione Granger, a fellow student whose parents are of non-magical origin:<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Note, however, the possible allusion to *mug* in the sense of *idiot* (Inggs 2003: 294; see ch. 8.2.4).

<sup>115</sup> It is likely, though, that even without these explanations, readers may understand the term to be offensive due to the element *mud*, which holds negative connotations in context with blood.

(2)

[situation: Draco has called Hermione a “Mudblood” after she has criticised his introduction into the Quidditch team]

Harry knew at once that Malfoy had said something really bad because there was an instant uproar at his words. Flint had to dive in front of Malfoy to stop Fred and George jumping on him, Alicia shrieked, “How dare you!”, and Ron plunged his hand into his robes, pulled out his wand, yelling, “You’ll pay for that one, Malfoy!” and pointed it furiously under Flint’s arm at Malfoy’s face. (HP 2: 112).

The term is explained in detail later in the scene by Ron Weasley, who stems from a “pure-blood” family himself:

(3)

[situation: Ron explains the usage of the term “Mudblood” to Harry. Note that Ron is being sick while talking]

“It’s about the most insulting thing he could think of,” gasped Ron, coming back up. “Mudblood’s a really foul name for someone who is Muggle-born – you know, non-magic parents. There are some wizards – like Malfoy’s family – who think they’re better than everyone else because they’re what people call pure-blood.” (HP 2: 115-116)

Ron here uses the word “insulting” to metapragmatically label Draco’s behaviour, which is intensified by the word “most.” The descriptor “really foul” evaluates Draco’s linguistic behaviour as unacceptable. Ron further utters both explicit (“they think they are better than others,” form-driven) and implicit criticism (“your family background does not determine your worth as a person”) of Draco’s standpoint. In doing so, Ron offers social criticism of an inherently racist remark.

The term “Mudblood” is reused in later books of the *Harry Potter* series with the rise of power of Lord Voldemort and his Death Eaters, an organisation which, for the well-read reader, will hold certain parallels to Adolf Hitler’s Schutzstaffel (SS) in the Third Reich. For instance, it is used by Draco in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* during an attack of the Death Eaters on non-magical people:

(4)

[situation: Draco has threatened Hermione, implying that if she does not leave, she could be hurt in the Death Eater attack for being non-magical; Harry has countered these allegations, stating that Hermione’s origin does not determine her status as a witch]

“If you think they [the Death Eaters; MP] can’t spot a Mudblood, stay where you are.”

“You watch your mouth!” shouted Ron. Everybody present knew that “Mudblood” was a very offensive term for a witch or wizard of Muggle parentage. (HP 4: 122)

Here, the narration serves the dual purpose of clarifying the term for new readers, as well as reminding readers of previous books of its implications. The insult is used again in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, when Lord Voldemort has risen to power; as in the previous instances it is directed at Hermione: “‘If you’re wondering what the smell is, Mother, a Mudblood just walked in,’ said Draco Malfoy.”

(HP 6: 110). With the use of this particular insult Rowling comments on racist ideologies in the magical community.

“Mud” as a derogatory term is also of importance in the *Artemis Fowl* series: The terms “Mud Boy,” “Mud Man,” and “Mud People”<sup>116</sup> are used throughout the series as derogatory fairy terminology for humans:

(5)

“Freeze, Mud Boy,” droned a helmet-filtered voice. It was a serious-looking gun, liquid coolant bubbled along its length. “Just give me a reason.” (AF 1: 78)

Character comments illustrate that in the world of *Artemis Fowl*, “Mud People” is a conventionalised impoliteness formula with strong historical roots. It is implied that fairies – who have longer life spans than humans – will easily remember the times when humans lived as cavemen, being perceived by fairies to be creatures who are not very intelligent,<sup>117</sup> sometimes dangerous, and tending to destroy their environment.<sup>118</sup> The terms thus express prejudices surrounding humans, who fairies do not typically engage with.

It is interesting to note that while the term “Mud Boy” is used often in reference to Artemis in the beginning of the *Artemis Fowl* series, it does not occur in conversation between Artemis and Commander Root in the third book, *The Eternity Code*. This change is evident even in scenes from *The Arctic Incident*, the second book of the series:

(6)

[situation: Artemis expresses doubts about a military strategy proposed by Commander Root]

Root did not appreciate being lectured by a Mud Boy. Especially this particular Mud Boy. “Look, Fowl, you’ve done what we asked.” (AF 2: 103)

While Commander Root still thinks the conventionalised impoliteness formula “Mud Boy,” he does not verbalise it; instead, the family name Fowl is used. The family name designates a certain distance between the characters, however in a military operation this seems politic as Artemis does not hold any rank by which he could have been addressed. Finally, as evidenced by scenes from *The Eternity Code*,

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<sup>116</sup> It is interesting from a gender perspective that the terms “Mud Girl” or “Mud Woman” do not occur in my corpus; *Artemis Fowl*’s world does not seem to be inhabited by female humans.

<sup>117</sup> See e.g.: “There was an age when you could throw a blanket stoppage over a whole country and the Mud People would simply think the gods were angry.” (AF 1: 82); “Some people never learn. Usually Mud People.” (AF 1: 111).

<sup>118</sup> On destroying nature and endangering animals, see e.g. AF 1: 40; 42.

even in situations of anger, the insult “Mud Boy” is no longer employed; instead, Artemis’s first name is used:

(7)

[situation: Commander Root and Artemis discuss a military strategy with Mulch Diggums, here referred to as “the convict”]

Root’s complexion went from rose to full-bodied red. “Well, Artemis? Do you plan on using the convict?”

“That depends.” (AF 3: 154)

The example shows that the closer Commander Root and Artemis work together and the better they are acquainted, the less Root conceptualises Artemis as a member of the human out-group who can be designated with insults.

*Artemis Fowl* further has a specific term that is unique to this series. “D’arvit!” is an Irish Gaelic-sounding swearword uttered by Commander Root and other faeries, which is never translated into English:

(8)

“D’Arvit,” swore the commander. (AF 2: 183)

The descriptor “swore” clearly marks the term as a swearword, even if one is not given the precise meaning of the term.<sup>119</sup> The narrator further remarks in several instances that there is no use in translating the term “as it would have to be censored,” thereby clearly marking it as an impolite term.

(9)

“D’Arvit!” growled Root. (There is no point translating that word as it would have to be censored.) (AF 1: 62)

In this example, Root “growls,” which hints at his angry state of mind; the narrator comment further exemplifies the usage of the term “D’arvit!” in context. The child reader is thus invited to substitute one of the terms known to her in her culture to fill this lexical gap.

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<sup>119</sup> The term does, however, have certain phonetic similarities with the English swearword “damn it!”, which could be a possible origin of Colfer’s phrase.

### 10.1.2 Magical Curses as Conventionalised Impoliteness Formulae

The world of *Harry Potter* is one where magic is real, i.e. it entails the use of magic and curses by the characters. For instance, spells can be used for benign reasons, such as to fetch items,<sup>120</sup> to fix a broken item,<sup>121</sup> or to light a fire.<sup>122</sup>

In this paper, magical curses are understood as conventionalised impoliteness formulae, more specifically as negative expressives, when they are used with the intention of harming the opponent. Here, the aim of the curse is not to express some negative belief about the target (and thereby cause potential psychological harm in the target), but to bring about a state in the target, e.g. disarm them (“Expelliarmus!”), stun them (“Stupefy!”), or cause them physical harm (“Crucio!”).<sup>123</sup> On these grounds, I have chosen to treat them as separate from e.g. insults such as ‘D’arvit,’ i.e. mere linguistic strategies that are specific to a given fictional setting.

One further reason for treating magical curses as conventionalised impoliteness formulae is that they tend to be employed after characters have already used linguistic impoliteness strategies, much like a fist-fight breaking out after a verbal argument in a bar, as in (10):

- (10)  
[situation: Draco presents a button that says “Potter stinks”]  
Some of the anger Harry had been feeling for days and days seemed to burst through a dam in his chest. He had reached for his wand before he’d thought what he was doing. People all around them scrambled out of the way, backing down the corridor.  
“Harry!” Hermione said warningly.  
“Go on, then, Potter,” Malfoy said quietly, drawing out his own wand. “Moody’s not here to look after you now — do it, if you’ve got the guts —”  
For a split second, they looked into each other’s eyes, then, at exactly the same time, both acted.  
“Furnunculus!”<sup>124</sup> Harry yelled.  
“Densaugeo!”<sup>125</sup> screamed Malfoy.  
Jets of light shot from both wands, hit each other in midair, and ricocheted off at angles.  
(HP 4: 298-299)

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<sup>120</sup> “‘Accio Dictionary!’ The heavy book soared out of Hermione’s hand, flew across the room, and Harry caught it” (HP 4: 547).

<sup>121</sup> “[Hermione] pulled out her wand, muttered ‘Reparo!’ and the glass shards flew back into a single pane and back into the door” (HP 4: 169).

<sup>122</sup> “[Hermione] whipped out her wand, waved it, muttered something, and sent a jet of the same bluebell flames she had used on Snape at the plant” (HP 1: 278).

<sup>123</sup> Crucio is one of the three Unforgivable Curses, i.e. curses against which no cure exists and whose use can put the user in prison (HP 4: 217).

<sup>124</sup> “The Pimple Jinx (*Furnunculus*) is a jinx that causes a person to break out in boils when it comes in contact with their skin” (Harry Potter Wiki. n.d.).

<sup>125</sup> “*Densaugeo* is a hex which causes the teeth to elongate at a grotesque, alarming rate” (Harry Potter Wiki. n.d.).

In (10), the curses used by both interactants are comparatively harmless in terms of physical risks and reversibility. One can class Harry's reaction as affective impoliteness: he is described as having felt angry for a longer stretch of time. Draco's button is an offending event to him; thus, Harry feels licensed to use impoliteness and curses towards him. It is to be noted here that in a comparable situation in a real-world school, the interactants would have been likely to use verbal insults (which might or might not transform into a physical fight). The characters in *Harry Potter*, however, have magic at their disposal to use as a weapon, which makes it reasonable to treat curses as conventionalised impoliteness formulae.

### 10.1.3 Insults

In this chapter, I analyse the usage of conventionalised impoliteness formulae in children's fiction globally, i.e. I focus on usages that are not of a magical nature or that are specific to the fictional world. Culpeper's (2011a: 135) classification includes four types of insults, which I will expound below. In detail, these are:

- (1) personalised negative vocatives,
- (2) personalised negative assertions,
- (3) personalised negative references, and
- (4) personalised third-person negative references (in the hearing of the target).

My data include 29 tokens of the category of personalised negative assertion. Note that personalised negative assertions tend to be uttered in children's fiction when there is much at stake, such as in (11), uttered when the speaker's baby sister has been unjustly imprisoned by the addressee. Consider also (12), uttered when the speaker tries to defend a person from being sentenced for crimes they did not commit.

(11)  
[situation: Count Olaf has imprisoned Sunny, the youngest Baudelaire sibling]  
"You're a terrible man," Klaus spat out. (Series 1: 110)

(12)  
[situation: an argument between Harry and Prof. Snape about Harry's godfather Sirius Black]  
"YOU'RE PATHETIC!" Harry yelled. (HP 3: 361)

Personalised negative references are used 16 times in my data. Here, an aspect or characteristic feature of the person, most often their body, is referred to or commented on in a negative way. Consider (13), in which Draco negatively refers to Hermione's curly hair:

(13)  
"Keep that big bushy head down, Granger," sneered Malfoy. (HP 4: 123)

My data further include 29 tokens of personalised third-person negative references (in the hearing of the target), such as (14). Note that the label 'those repulsive orphans' is used within hearing distance of the Baudelaires; the structure of the formula is similar to the one proposed in Culpeper (2011a): [demonstrative] [adjective] [negatively connoted noun].

(14)  
"You—" Violet began to say, but her throat fluttered, as if the fact of Uncle Monty's death were food that tasted terrible. "You—" she said again.  
Stephano took no notice. "Of course, after they discover that Dr. Montgomery is dead, they'll wonder what became of those repulsive orphans he had lying around the house. But they'll be long gone." (Series 2: 92)

I further propose an additional category of personalised third-person negative references, in which the target of the insult is absent; my data include 28 occurrences. Consider (15), in which a personalised third-person negative reference is not used to designate the addressee, but a person close to her; thus, it is assumed that she will take offence. (16) is similar in that a personalised third-person negative reference is used to designate Hagrid, a teacher that the addressee in question is friends with. Again, the assumption holds that while the target of the insult is not present in the interaction, the addressee will take offence on the target's behalf.

(15)  
[situation: Miss Trunchbull tells Matilda about her anger towards Matilda's father]  
"The man's a thief and a robber! I'll have his skin for sausages, you see if I don't!" (MA: 158)

(16)  
[situation: Harry wonders why Hagrid, the teacher, is not present for the lesson]  
"Oh he hasn't been attacked, Potter, if that's what you're thinking," said Malfoy softly.  
"No, he's just too ashamed to show his big, ugly face." (HP 4: 437)

Considering personalised negative vocatives, my data showed 118 tokens, which is why I subclassified them further. Fig. 10.4 shows five clusters, or constructions, of personalised negative vocatives according to the structure of the insult.

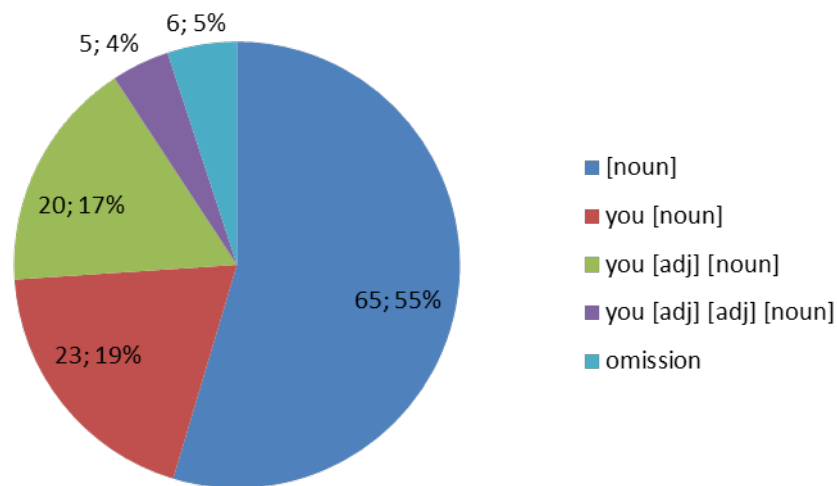


Fig. 10.4: Clusters of personalised negative vocatives

The structure [noun] occurs 65 times in my data.<sup>126</sup> In *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, the preferred insults of this structure are ‘orphan(s)’ (17) and ‘freak(s)’ (18). While ‘orphan’ is not commonly understood as a conventionalised impoliteness formula in naturally occurring conversations, note that in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, it very often occurs in impoliteness contexts and is exclusively used by the antagonist to refer to the Baudelaires, who have lost both parents at the beginning of the narrative. Thus, it is assumed that the noun will carry negative associations for the characters.

(17)  
 “Be quiet, orphan,” Captain Sham snapped. [...] “The adults are talking.” (Series 3: 198)

(18)  
 “We want all you freaks assembled for the choosing ceremony.” (Series 9: 215)

The usage of (modified) character names as an insult is also common. Consider (19), in which the speaker uses a modified version of the Baudelaire family name to designate the children. See also (20), in which the speaker uses negatively connoted nouns that share some phonetic similarities with the character names Potter and Weasley as terms of address.

(19)  
 “Say bye-bye to your sister, Baudebrats!” (Series 9: 280)

(20)  
 “Well, look who it is,” said Malfoy in his usual lazy drawl, pulling open the compartment door. “Potty and the Weasel.” (HP 3: 80)

<sup>126</sup> The terms ‘Mud Man’/‘Mud Boy’ and ‘Mudblood’ are also included in this cluster; they are discussed separately above in ch. 10.1.1.



Insults may also include a reference to certain physical characteristics that the speaker finds remarkable, such as ‘toothy’ (21) or ‘four-eyes’ (22), references to the addressee’s favourite pastimes (23), as well as what I call ‘traditional’ insults such as ‘liar’ (24):

(21)

“Listen, toothy,” Olaf said, taking his eyes off the road to glare at Sunny. “If you don’t stop crying, I’ll give you something to cry about.” (Series 10: 49)

(22)

“Get out of the way, four-eyes!” (uttered by Count Olaf) (Series 12: 108)

(23)

“Silence, bookworm!” Olaf ordered. “Children should not speak while adults are arguing! Hand over the orphans, adults!” (Series 12: 208)

(24)

“I — read about it somewhere.”

“Where?”

“It was — a library book,” Harry invented wildly. “I can’t remember what it was call —“

“Liar,” said Snape. (HP 6: 490)

The cluster ‘you [noun]’ occurs 23 times in my data, most of which stem from *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, such as ‘you orphans’ (25), ‘you brats’ (26) or ‘you freaks.’

(25)

He [Count Olaf; MP] leaned forward so he was right in the Baudelaires’ faces, and the children could smell his sour breath as he continued talking. “You orphans are not smart enough to know what the word ‘accomplice’ means, but it means ‘helper of murderers.’” (Series 7: 38)

(26)

“Ha!” Count Olaf said. “You can’t rely on associates. More comrades have failed me than I can count. Why, Hooky and Fiona double-crossed me just yesterday, and let you brats escape! Then they double-crossed me again and stole my submarine!” (Series 12: 209)

*Harry Potter* constitutes an interesting case as Prof. Snape’s preferred usage of this personalised negative vocative cluster is ‘you – Potter’; that is, the character family name ‘Potter’ carries negative associations and is used as an insult, as in (27):

(27)

[situation: Prof. Snape assumes that Harry is responsible for a classmate’s mistakes in his Potions class]

“You — Potter — why didn’t you tell him not to add the quills? Thought he’d make you look good if he got it wrong, did you? That’s another point you’ve lost for Gryffindor.” (HP 1: 139)

The cluster with the structure ‘you [adj] [noun]’ occurs 20 times in my data. See (28), in which the adjective ‘little’ is used to belittle the addressee. Consider further (29), in which a more creative pattern is used; here, Count Olaf expresses the impolite belief that science is not an endeavour that implies intelligence, thus insulting the addressee who the reader knows to be well-read.

(28)

[situation: Mr Wormwood has set Matilda a complicated mathematical task and is annoyed to find that she has solved it]

“You... you little cheat!” the father suddenly shouted, pointing at her with his finger. (MA: 54)

(29)

[situation: Count Olaf proposes a plan that involves the use of weapons]

“I have the only weapon that can threaten Ishmael and his supporters,” Count Olaf said.

“The harpoon gun?” Klaus said. “Omeros took that away.”

“Not the harpoon gun, you scholarly moron,” Count Olaf said contemptuously. (Series 13: 155-156)

Finally, the cluster with the structure ‘you [adj] [adj] [noun]’ is a dispreferred option in children’s fiction with only five occurrences in my data. The preferred usage is illustrated in (30); the structure ‘you [disgusting / filthy] [little] [noun]’ expresses condescension and is used in situations in which a character experiences revulsion:

(30)

[situation: Miss Trunchbull has discovered a newt in her water and is under the impression that Matilda is responsible]

“Stand up at once, you filthy little maggot!” (MA: 161)

A further 6 tokens of personalised negative vocatives have been classified as containing an omission, such as (31). Here, the final slot in the structure ‘you [adj] [noun]’ is unrealised. As the utterance occurs during a fight, one might assume that the speaker might not have had time to utter the personalised negative vocative of his choice, or that none occurred to him in the situation.

(31)

“Fight back!” Harry screamed at him. “Fight back, you cowardly –“ (HP 6: 562)

Omissions are also used in situations of shock, such as in (32). Here, the assumption is that the final slot in the structure ‘you [noun]’ is not realised as Violet is too shocked to think of a word at all, or that she cannot find one that appropriately designates the nature of Count Olaf’s crime.

(32)

[situation: the Baudelaires have just discovered that Count Olaf has murdered their uncle]

“You –” Violet began to say, but her throat fluttered, as if the fact of Uncle Monty’s death were food that tasted terrible. “You –” she said again. (Series 2: 92)

#### 10.1.4 Pointed Criticism and Unpalatable Questions

With only 8 occurrences, pointed criticisms such as ‘that is rubbish’ (Culpeper 2011a: 135) are a dispreferred option of conventionalised impoliteness formulae in children’s fiction. Consider (33), in which the speaker expresses her personal opinion on her father’s decisions, which she deems immoral; it is unclear in the given

situation whether the speaker's primary goal is to hurt the addressee, or whether she merely aims at voicing her outrage and accepts any accidental face-threat that may occur.

(33)

[situation: Matilda expresses her opinion on her father's practice of selling second-hand cars with sawdust in the tank]

"It's disgusting. You're cheating people who trust you." (MA: 25)

With a mere 4 instances of usage, unpalatable questions such as 'Why do you make my life impossible?' (Culpeper 2011a: 135) also constitute a dispreferred category of conventionalised impoliteness formulae. In (34), Miss Trunchbull utters an unpalatable question, presupposing an impolite belief held by the hearer, Matilda.

(34)

[situation: in a lesson, an argument ensues as to whether or not Matilda has indeed read Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*]

"You must take me for a fool. Do you take me for a fool, child?" (MA: 156)

It is interesting to note that the narration shows that this belief is indeed held by Matilda (35), but that she understands the social conventions and power dynamics that hold in the given situation.

(35)

"Well..." Matilda said, then she hesitated. She would like to have said, "Yes, I jolly well do," but that would have been suicide. (MA: 156)

Thus, (35) shows a character carefully weighing her conversational options and being aware of the potential consequences of conflictive utterances.

### 10.1.5 Dismissals

Dismissals such as 'go away' or 'get lost' (Culpeper 2011a: 135) occur 17 times in my data. See (36), in which Mr Wormwood uses a conventionalised impoliteness formula to inform Matilda that her family is leaving her.

(36)

[situation: Mr Wormwood tells Matilda that the family is moving to Spain without Matilda]

"Now beat it! I'm busy!" (MA: 233)

The dismissals in my data occur almost exclusively in *Harry Potter*, such as in (37). Here, note that the student's arrival and a subsequent discussion as to whether Harry indeed has to attend the event are disruptive for Prof. Snape's lesson. This may constitute an offending event for him and explain the use of the conventionalised impoliteness formula instead of, say, a politic dismissal such as 'you are excused.'

(37)

[situation: a student fetches Harry from Prof. Snape's Potions class as he is to attend a Triwizard Tournament event]

"Potter – take your bag and get out of my sight!" (HP 4: 301)

It is interesting to note that for both (36) and (37), the addressees give no verbal response to the dismissal. Instead, both are shown to leave the conversational space; also, no non-verbal reaction is specified that could hint at them having taken offence. This might be due to power dynamics: in both conversations, the dismissal is uttered by the older, more powerful participant (a parent, and a teacher, respectively); a reaction by the less powerful participant might include negative consequences, such as detentions in the school setting. See also ch. 10.6 on conflict termination strategies.

Consider also (38), in which Ron uses a dismissal. In the *Harry Potter* series, Ron is shown as the character who uses dismissals most often; they are thus used to characterise him as a speaker.

(38)

[situation: Draco has made fun of Harry for fainting after seeing a Dementor]  
“Shove off, Malfoy,” said Ron, whose jaw was clenched. (HP 3: 88)

### 10.1.6 Silencers

Silencers are used 27 times in my data. The preferred silencer that occurred in most instances of usage is ‘shut up;’ it usually occurs in utterances that demonstrate a character’s annoyance with the addressee. In Culpeper’s (2011a: 134) data, the formula ‘shut the fuck up’ occurred more often than the structure excluding the swearword; however, it is reasonable to assume that ‘fuck’ is not a common word for children’s texts.

Consider (39), in which Count Olaf expresses his annoyance at Sunny, who is little and cannot yet talk. In (40), Hermione uses the formula to silence Draco, who expresses negative beliefs about Harry and Ron; one may assume that she also feels annoyed in the given setting. Finally, in (41), Harry uses the formula to silence Prof. Snape, who expresses impolite beliefs about Harry’s late father; here, the narration specifies that strong negative emotions are connected to, and might be the reason for, Harry’s usage of the silencer.

(39)

“Shut up!” Count Olaf roared. “Shut up and get cooking!” (Series 10: 107)

(40)

[situation: Ron has been made Prefect, not Harry]  
“Tell me, how does it feel being second-best to Weasley, Potter?” he [Draco; MP] asked.  
“Shut up, Malfoy,” said Hermione sharply.

(41)

“Your father didn’t set much store by rules either,” Snape went on, pressing his advantage, his thin face full of malice. “Rules were for lesser mortals, not Quidditch Cup-winners. His head was so swollen —”

“SHUT UP!”

Harry was suddenly on his feet. Rage such as he had not felt since his last night in Privet Drive was coursing through him. He didn’t care that Snape’s face had gone rigid, the black eyes flashing dangerously.

“What did you say to me, Potter?”

“I told you to shut up about my dad!” Harry yelled. (HP 3: 284-285)

### 10.1.7 Threats

Threats are one of the preferred options of conventionalised impoliteness formulae in my data, which is evidenced by 133 tokens. Fig. 10.5 shows a subclassification into different types of threat according to which aspect of a character’s life is being endangered. These different types of threats, then, range from serious threats to one’s life and physical safety, to threats related to school life, such as loss of certain privileges or the threat of being expelled, and finally to threats with unspecified consequences.

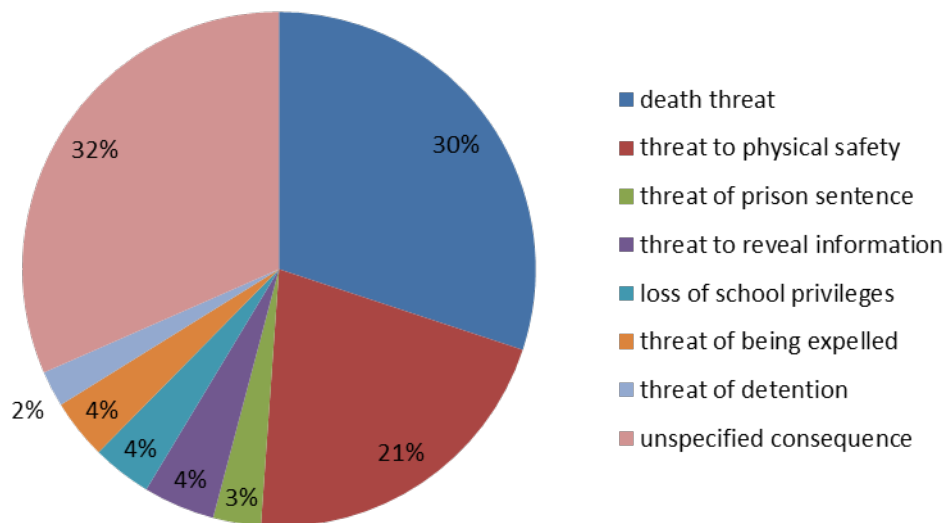


Fig. 10.5: Types of threats in children’s fiction

With 40 tokens, death threats form the preferred option of threatening another character; this high number might be related to narrative functions. Consider (42), in which Commander Root's threat furthers the plot in that Artemis is given two options for action, i.e. returning the prisoner or finding a way to escape certain death. This quandary is entertaining for the reader, who will feel with the protagonist, but who has no fear for her own safety (Culpeper 2005: 45).

(42)

[situation: Commander Root negotiates with Artemis about the return of a prisoner]

"Either you give us back Captain Short or we will be forced to kill you all." (AF 1: 154)

A similar case is found in (43), where the speaker threatens to use a weapon towards the hearer if she does not accommodate his wishes; it is implied that the use of the weapon is likely to result in great physical damage, if not death.

(43)

[situation: Count Olaf attempts to make a girl named Friday bow to him]

"If you don't bow before me, Friday, I'll fire this harpoon gun at you!" (Series 13: 41)

Threats to the character's physical safety are also used often in children's fiction; they are uttered with the implication that bodily harm will ensue if the hearer fails to comply with the speaker's wishes. See e.g. (44), in which failure to comply with Harry's order is linked to physical harm to Draco; one may assume that being dropped from a great height during flight will result in severe injuries.

(44)

[situation: Draco has stolen an object and attempts to hide it in a tree crown; Harry chases him]

"Give it here," Harry called, "or I'll knock you off that broom!" (HP 2: 149)

Note that in (45), the threat is explicitly linked to impolite language use. Count Olaf conceptualises the use of impoliteness as an offending event, due to which he feels licensed to use affective impoliteness (Culpeper 2011a); however, his suggestion of physical violence goes beyond what is commonly understood to be impolite behaviour.

(45)

[situation: the Baudelaires refuse to address Count Olaf as 'Shirley,' i.e. his newest disguise]

Count Olaf shook his head. "But if you do something impolite to me," he said, "then I might do something impolite to you, like for instance tearing your hair out with my bare hands." (Series 4: 118)

A further subgroup of threats to physical safety consists of threats that the hearer will be imprisoned if she continues a given behaviour (4x), such as in (46):

(46)

[situation: Klaus informs Count Olaf that his plot to steal the Baudelaire family fortune has been uncovered]

“But when I show this information to Mr. Poe, your play<sup>127</sup> will not be performed, and you will go to jail!” (Series 1: 98)

Here, Count Olaf’s negative face is threatened as Klaus’s utterance infringes upon his freedom of action; further, the utterance constitutes a threat to his positive face as causing another to be imprisoned implies that one wishes not to associate with him and does not in fact admire or like the person.

Another type of threat involves a character who threatens to reveal sensitive information, which would have negative consequences to the addressee (6x). In (47), it is implied that revealing the Baudelaire’s location is a dispreferred choice, as actions detrimental to their well-being may occur if they are discovered. Further, the narration explains that Count Olaf’s utterance, which follows the pattern [if you do not x] [then y], is to be understood as a threat. This helps the reader to gain an understanding of the dynamics of the scene.

(47)

[situation: Count Olaf is attempting to enter an elevator; the Baudelaires have blocked the door. Note that further antagonistic characters are looking for the Baudelaires as the interaction happens.]

“Let me go,” he whispered threateningly, “or I’ll announce to everyone where you are.” (Series 12: 301)

In ch. 5.4.2 I have discussed that the school is one of the narrative spaces that is predominantly used in children’s fiction, as the reader is intimately familiar with it from her own experiences. Correspondingly, a cluster of threats is school-related and focus on consequences within the school, such as a loss of privileges within the school as in (48) (5 occurrences), the threat of being expelled (5 occurrences) (49), or the threat of receiving detention (3 occurrences) (50).

(48)

[situation: Mr Filch’s cat, Mrs Norris, is found Petrified in an upstairs corridor. Prof. Snape believes Harry to be responsible]

“I suggest, Headmaster, that Potter is not being entirely truthful,” he [Prof. Snape] said. “It might be a good idea if he were deprived of certain privileges until he is ready to tell us the whole story. I personally feel he should be taken off the Gryffindor Quidditch team until he is ready to be honest.” (HP 2: 144)

(49)

[situation: Prof. Snape utters a warning; previously, Harry has been caught out of bed after curfew]

“Be warned, Potter – any more nighttime wanderings and I will personally make sure you are expelled.” (HP 1: 269)

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<sup>127</sup> Note that Count Olaf planned to marry the eldest Baudelaire, Violet, in the context of a theatrical performance; this is what Klaus alludes to here.

(50)

[situation: Draco enters Harry's compartment on the school train]

"What?" he [Harry; MP] said aggressively, before Malfoy could open his mouth.

"Manners, Potter, or I'll have to give you a detention," drawled Malfoy. (HP 5: 194)

All instances of school-related threats appeal to the hearer to attend to some behavioural standards. These may be implied moral standards, such as always being truthful (48), or explicit rules, such as not leaving one's dorm after lights out (49). It is further obvious that the severity of the threatened consequences does not match the student's rule violation. For instance, in (48), Prof. Snape is merely of the opinion that Harry is not being truthful; revoking the privilege of participating in the school sports team seems a comparatively severe punishment which may not be justifiable by institutional power. This opens the utterance to an interpretation as intentionally impolite.

Concerning normative behaviour, in (50), some conversational norm is evoked that Harry has violated; this is hinted at in the narration describing his utterance as 'aggressive.' The phrasing 'I'll have to' in Draco's utterance implies that Draco is required to use his institutional power as a newly-assigned Prefect (HP 5: 194); however, no codes of conduct between students have been specified in the book series, which also opens Draco's utterance to an interpretation as intentionally impolite.

Finally, the data contain 42 instances of threats for which the consequences of non-compliance with the speaker's wishes remain unspecified, such as in (51). Here, 'being sorry' could entail a variety of punishments that range from being grounded to physical punishment.

(51)

[situation: the Baudelaires refuse to address Count Olaf using his new alias 'Gunther']

"You and your siblings will call this man Gunther," she [the Baudelaire guardian; MP] ordered, "or you will make me very, very sorry I took you into my glamorous home." (Series 6: 67)

(52)

[situation: Harry and Draco have a heated argument; Harry has previously given evidence which has caused the imprisonment of Draco's father]

"You wait. I'll have you. You can't land my father in prison –" (HP 5: 851)

In (52), the phrasing 'I'll have you' is equally unspecific. It is implied that there will be some sort of punishment for causing Mr Malfoy's imprisonment, but the exact nature of this punishment remains obscure. This obscurity may exacerbate the threat, as it is impossible for the addressee to weigh his reactional options.



Of the threats with unspecified consequences, four are school-related. Consider (53):

(53)

[situation: Prof. Snape gives Harry a list of tasks to practice]

“And be warned, Potter... I shall know if you have not practiced...” (HP 5: 538)

Here, the consequences of not practicing are not specified; yet it is implied that consequences will occur, as Prof. Snape will be able to tell whether the addressee has indeed practiced. As a teacher, the repertoire of consequences that Prof. Snape has available include e.g. the taking of House points, giving detention, or giving additional homework or practice. Considering the relationship between the two interactants, consequences may also be of a more personal or more severe nature.

As the discussion above has shown, a variety of threats are used in children’s fiction. Interestingly, the majority of threats are either of an unspecified nature and thus invite the imagination of the reader, or they concern a character’s physical well-being and safety. This might be due to the nature of fictional discourse: the bigger the threat, the more entertaining it is for the reader.

### **10.1.8 Dares**

In addition to threats as specified in Culpeper (2011a: 136), my data showed instances (5x) of characters daring an interlocutor to exhibit a certain behaviour. I understand dares as inherently impolite as these linguistic actions intrinsically threaten the hearer’s face: In complying with the dare and fulfilling the speaker’s wish, the hearer’s freedom of action is impinged upon and her negative face is threatened. In refusing to comply, the hearer risks a loss of positive face in that the speaker might express dislike or negative emotions towards her.

In terms of classification, dares differ from threats on two accounts. First, the prototypical structure does not follow that of a threat, such as [if you do not x] [then y]; instead, it can be read as [do x]. Second, and closely connected to the first point, no consequences for non-compliance are specified nor implied. In (54), Harry is dared to retrieve an item. There are no consequences specified for any non-compliance with Draco’s demand. However, the reader may draw on her own experience here to understand that non-compliance might potentially result in, e.g., an ascription of cowardice that the addressee might wish to avoid.

(54)

[situation: Draco dares Harry to retrieve an item that Draco has taken from a fellow student]  
“Come and get it, Potter!” (HP 2: 148)

In (55), Ron dares Draco to repeat an insult to his family. It is implied that Ron wishes to have further proof for Draco’s negative attitude, after which he would feel licensed to retaliate in kind, or by using paralinguistic conventionalised impoliteness formulae (see below).

(55)

[situation: Draco has insulted Ron’s family after he and Harry have refused his offer of friendship]

“Say that again,” Ron said, his face as red as his hair. (HP 1: 109)

Examples such as (54) and (55) suggest that dares can be used as a plot device that furthers character development and the progression of the narrative. This can be seen by the narrative following (54), as Harry indeed complies with Draco’s dare, which results in an important narrative point, i.e. Harry being appointed the Gryffindor Seeker (HP 1: 151-152).<sup>128</sup>

#### **10.1.9 Non-Verbal Conventionalised Impoliteness Formulae**

I further included paralinguistic conventionalised impoliteness formulae in my analysis. Culpeper (2011a: 136) specifies some conventionalised non-verbal visual impoliteness behaviours that are situated in British culture, but that only rarely occurred in his data, such as spitting, sticking out one’s tongue, or turning one’s back.

My data show some occurrences of these paralinguistic impoliteness formulae. While these amount to only 7% of all conventionalised impoliteness formulae, and can thus be described as rare, they nevertheless give insights into how interpersonal relationships are conceptualised in children’s fiction.

I have grouped the 35 tokens of conventionalised non-verbal visual impoliteness into three cluster groups. The first group (10 tokens) contains conventionalised paralinguistic impoliteness formulae tokens such as the ones specified by Culpeper (2011a). Consider (56), an instance of pointing at the other, and (57), an instance of disassociating from the other by turning one’s back and physically leaving the interactional space.

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<sup>128</sup> A Seeker is a position in the wizard sport, Quidditch; see a description of the further positions and the rules in HP 1: 167-169.

(56)

[situation: Harry is on his way to the Quidditch stadium]

Harry saw Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle, laughing and pointing at him from under an enormous umbrella on their way to the stadium. (HP 3: 175)

(57)

[situation: Count Olaf in disguise insists on being called 'Stephano']

Stephano opened his mouth to say something, but Violet was not interested in continuing the conversation. She turned on her heel and marched primly through the enormous door of the Reptile Room, followed by her siblings. (Series 2: 50)

A further cluster involves physical threats (3x), which show the speaker leaning down towards the hearer, as in (58). Here, an adult character physically intimidates and threatens the child protagonist, thereby seeking compliance.

(58)

[situation: Count Olaf has accused the Baudelaires of being accomplices to murder; he bends towards them for the explanation of the word 'accomplice']

He leaned forward so he was right in the Baudelaires' faces, and the children could smell his sour breath as he continued talking. (Series 7: 38)

The final cluster of conventionalised non-verbal visual impoliteness includes not just the mere threat, but the execution of physical violence (22x). Consider (59), in which Draco intentionally walks into Ron on exiting the shop. Note here that the interaction is preceded by a verbal exchange that involved the use of conventionalised impoliteness formulae; thus, in my understanding, the use of physical violence is to be seen as an extension of the verbal impoliteness.

(59)

[situation: after having an argument with Harry and friends in a shop, Draco and his mother leave]

And with that, the pair of them strode out of the shop, Malfoy taking care to bang as hard as he could into Ron on the way out. (HP 6: 112)

## 10.2 Implicational Impoliteness

The above discussion has shown that conventionalised impoliteness formulae are prevalent in children's fiction; however, this does not suggest that these formulae occur in all impoliteness events. Instead, certain behaviours may trigger attributions of impoliteness in a given context even if these utterances or behaviours are not "pre-loaded for impoliteness" (Culpeper 2011a: 155). That is, a speaker may opt for non-conventional strategies of impoliteness, of which Culpeper (2011a: 156) distinguishes three types: form-driven impoliteness, convention-driven impoliteness, and context-driven impoliteness; these are realised via implication and cover deviations from pragmatic principles.

In other words, “what counts as the impolite behaviour and what counts as relevant in understanding it is designated by the informant” (Culpeper 2011a: 155, commenting on his diary report study). Regarding children’s fiction, what counts as the impolite behaviour and what counts as relevant in understanding it is designated by the focal character, potential bystanders, and/or the narrator. This implies that perspectivation is relevant as the author chooses from which perspective to present an impoliteness event. The following excerpt (1) exemplifies how focalisation and an ascription of impoliteness can co-occur:

- (1)  
[situation: Harry and Draco have just met for the first time in a clothing store. Draco has been asking Harry many questions about Hogwarts school, all of which Harry has been unable to answer]  
“I say, look at *that man!*” said the boy suddenly, nodding toward the front window. Hagrid was standing there, grinning at Harry and pointing at two large ice creams to show he couldn’t come in.  
“That’s Hagrid,” said Harry, pleased to know something the boy didn’t. “He works at Hogwarts.”  
“Oh,” said the boy, “I’ve heard of him. He’s a sort of servant, isn’t he?”  
“He’s the gamekeeper,” said Harry. He was liking the boy less and less every second. (HP 1: 78)

The scene is described with Harry as the focal character. Thus, the reader is invited to perceive Draco’s utterances as context-driven unmarked impoliteness. The noun phrase “that man” implies distance from the speaker, i.e. the man outside the window belongs to an out-group that the speaker does not perceive himself and Harry to be part of. Further, the phrase “a sort of servant” implies not only a menial position of the man, but that he may not hold a proper servant’s position. Finally, the utterance “I’ve heard of him” may imply that the speaker has not necessarily heard good things about this man. While none of these utterances are impolite in that they are considered such in all or most possible contexts of use, in the given situational context they are perceived by the focal character as such, or at the very least as open to an interpretation as impolite.

Harry’s information on the identity of the person outside the window can be read as politic, as he treats Draco’s utterance as a request for information and answers accordingly.<sup>129</sup> From Harry’s perspective, it is Draco who uses impoliteness,

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<sup>129</sup> However, as the narrator states that Harry is “pleased to know” something Draco does not, his utterance could be open to an interpretation as impolite. The reader could thus imagine Harry gleefully stressing that he does in fact know something about the wizard world, which allows him to gain the upper hand in this conversation.

as the reader is aware that Harry has met and come to like Hagrid. However, if one takes Draco's perspective, a different picture emerges. Consider the situation from the perspective of a new student who meets a fellow student of his school, tries to find common ground by asking about school life, and attempts to befriend Harry. Note here the dialogue uttered prior to the above exchange:

(2)

"Have you got your own broom?" the boy went on.

"No," said Harry.

"Play Quidditch at all?"

"No," Harry said again, wondering what on earth Quidditch could be.

"I do — Father says it's a crime if I'm not picked to play for my House, and I must say, I agree. Know what House you'll be in yet?"

"No," said Harry, feeling more stupid by the minute.

"Well, no one really knows until they get there, do they, but I know I'll be in Slytherin, all our family have been — imagine being in Hufflepuff, I think I'd leave, wouldn't you?"

"Mmm," said Harry, wishing he could say something a bit more interesting. (HP 1: 77-78)

Here, it is implied that Draco is unaware that he is talking to Harry Potter, and instead assumes his interactant to be a person from the wizard world who knows about Quidditch, Houses, etc. In this light, it is Harry whose utterances are open to an interpretation as impolite: His usage of 'no' and conversational gambits such as 'mmm' could be read as an unwillingness to participate in the conversation.

Examples such as (2) suggest that what is perceived as a potentially impolite strategy in children's fiction depends on the perspective the reader is invited to share; in most cases, she will be evaluating character behaviour on the grounds of the perspective of the protagonist. This is also evident in (3), which shows a meeting between the Baudelaire children and Count Olaf in disguise:

(3)

[situation: Count Olaf, disguised as Captain Sham, introduces himself to the Baudelaire children and their aunt]

"My name is Captain Sham, and I have a new business renting sailboats out on Damocles Dock. I am happy to make your acquaintance, Miss—?"

"I am Josephine Anwhistle," Aunt Josephine said. "And these are Violet, Klaus, and little Sunny Baudelaire."

"Little Sunny," Captain Sham repeated, sounding as if he were eating Sunny rather than greeting her. "It's a pleasure to meet all of you. Perhaps someday I can take you out on the lake for a little boat ride." (Series 3: 46)

The interaction is likely to be perceived as politic by Aunt Josephine, who has not yet met Count Olaf and therefore does not share the children's history with him. This is evident e.g. in her politic introduction of the children and herself. For the Baudelaires, however, the interaction is open to an interpretation as impolite as both the children and the reader are aware that Captain Sham is merely a disguise (as

evidenced by the name). Captain Sham's introduction and subsequent statement of pleasure on making the acquaintance of the aunt may be read as ironic; previous readers will be aware that Count Olaf will again attempt to steal the Baudelaire family fortune, for which the aunt proves to be an obstacle.

As stated above, Culpeper's proposed classification of implicational impoliteness contains three groups:

- (1) Form-driven impoliteness: an utterance shows a marked surface form or semantic content; marked is used here in the sense of a deviation from Grice's (1975) conversational principle.
- (2) Convention-driven impoliteness:
  - a. Internal: an utterance shows a mismatch between parts of the message
  - b. External: an utterance shows a mismatch between the (non-)verbal behaviour and the context
- (3) Context-driven:
  - a. Unmarked: an unmarked and unconventionalised behaviour mismatches the context
  - b. Absence: the absence of (expected) behaviour mismatches the context (Culpeper 2011a: 155-156)

One could classify these strategies along a scale of conventionalisation, running from the more semantic to the more contextual. Culpeper himself (2011a: 156) argues against such a classification. I am, however, of the opinion that conventionalised impoliteness strategies as well as form-driven impoliteness might be relatively easy to understand for young children. In both cases, an impolite implication is relatively obvious. Either the expressions are conventionalised and thus likely known to the child, or, in the case of form-driven impoliteness, there is a marked surface form which does not allow for a polite interpretation of the utterance. Contextual features, on the other hand, might be harder to conceptualise. A judgment of impoliteness occurring might be even harder for contexts young readers are not intimately familiar with. Thus, one might expect young speakers not to use these strategies in abundance. In the following, the three strategies will be discussed in detail.

### 10.2.1 Form-Driven Impoliteness

An utterance that can be classified as form-driven implicational impoliteness shows a marked surface form or semantic content of a behaviour. The category thus comprises linguistic strategies which can be described by “everyday terms such as ‘insinuation’, ‘innuendo’, ‘casting aspersions’, ‘digs’, ‘snide comments/ remarks’” (Culpeper 2011a: 156). What these diffuse phenomena have in common is that they all “refer to implicit messages which are triggered by formal surface or semantic aspects of a behaviour and which have negative consequences for certain individuals” (Culpeper 2011a: 156-157).

Utterances that contain form-driven impoliteness are “almost always addressed to the person for whom the consequences of the behaviour are negative” (Culpeper 2011a: 157). However, the utterance addressee and the target of utterance do not necessarily have to be the same person, which can be clarified e.g. by looking at the intended target (see Culpeper 2011a: 160).<sup>130</sup>

The strategy of form-driven impoliteness is the one with the most tokens of usage in my data (620 tokens, or 28% of all impoliteness tokens). Thus, in the following, I will discuss a subclassification of tokens of this category according to which aspects of the addressee are criticised and what types of impolite beliefs are expressed. First, however, I will address echoes and mimicry, which Culpeper (2011a) has highlighted as key features of form-driven impoliteness.

Echoes are a distinct case of form-driven impoliteness. With echoes, a speaker not only quotes the interlocutor’s statement, but also imitates characteristic prosodic or dialectal features to express her derogatory opinion. This caricatured repetition of a person’s utterance can be represented by typographic elements in children’s fiction. Consider (1):

- (1)  
[situation: the Baudelaire children inform Vice Principal Nero about Count Olaf]  
Klaus: “[Count Olaf] was the cause of all the trouble with our guardians.”  
“*He was the cause of all the trouble with our guardians,*” Nero said in his nasty, mimicking way. (Series 5: 20)

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<sup>130</sup> Also see the metapragmatic category ‘Target of Utterance’ below, where these cases are discussed in detail.

Vice Principal Nero's utterance is doubly marked as mimicking Klaus's: first, italics are used as a quotative device. A further comment by the narrator explicitly mentions mimicry and marks it as "nasty," i.e. as inappropriate and negatively marked, that is, open to an interpretation as impolite. Considering the context of the Baudelaires recounting their personal problems, Nero's comment is insensitive and cannot be interpreted as having any positive connotation for the hearer, Klaus.

The mimicry strategy is used by Prof. Snape, as well. In (2), Harry was asked by Prof. Snape to elaborate on the difference between an Inferius, that is, "a corpse that has been reanimated by a Dark wizard's spells" (HP 6: 431), and a ghost:

(2)

"Er – well – ghosts are transparent –" he [Harry; MP] said.

"Oh, very good," interrupted Snape, his lip curling. "Yes, it is easy to see that nearly six years of magical education have not been wasted on you, Potter. '*Ghosts are transparent.*'" (HP 6: 430-431)

Here, the echoed behaviour is Harry's utterance "Ghosts are transparent." Prof. Snape repeats this statement; the use of italics typographically marks it as a quote. Not only is the statement attributed to Harry, but to an implied identity characteristic, i.e. his perceived lack of intelligence. This holds especially following Prof. Snape's sarcastic remark questioning Harry's education. Echoes thus express a negative attitude of the echoer towards the echoed: Prof. Snape implies that in terms of intelligence, there is a vast discrepancy between him as the teacher and Harry as the student. Further, there is also an implied discrepancy between Harry and other students of his level, as he did apparently not profit from education. Here, Prof. Snape uses *power over* Harry (Watts 1991), in that his utterance affects Harry in a manner contrary to his perceived interests.

Having discussed echoes and mimicry, I now focus on other cases of form-driven impoliteness. Table 10.1 shows a subclassification according to which aspects of a character are predominantly attacked using this strategy, as well as the key impolite beliefs that are implied in form-driven impoliteness utterances.

First, speakers in children's fiction may use form-driven impoliteness to criticise or express a negative opinion on a character's behaviour. See (3), in which Prof. Snape suggests that aspects of Harry's behaviour are intolerable; note further the mention of a 'fan club,' which ridicules Harry's popularity with other teachers.



(3)

[situation: Prof. Snape accuses Harry of having broken into his office]

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Harry lied coldly.

“You were out of bed on the night my office was broken into!” Snape hissed. “I know it, Potter! Now, Mad-Eye Moody might have joined your fan club, but I will not tolerate your behaviour!” (HP 4: 516)

Further, a speaker may choose to express a derogatory opinion on an object in the character’s possession, as in (4):

(4)

[situation: Mr Wormwood comes home from work to find Matilda reading]

“Don’t you *ever* stop reading?” he snapped at her.

“Oh, hello daddy,” she said pleasantly. “Did you have a good day?”

“What is this trash?” he said, snatching the book from her hands. (MA: 39)

Here, the book the addressee is reading is conceptualised as trash, i.e. as worthless and unworthy of the addressee’s interest; as her father is described as both snapping at the addressee and as taking the book from her, an interpretation of the exchange as banter is highly unlikely; thus, no positive interpretation of the exchange is possible here.

Form-driven impoliteness is also used in children’s fiction to express criticism on an opinion held by the addressee which the speaker deems inappropriate or false. Consider (5), in which Harry uses a rhetorical question to express his derogatory view of Prof. Snape’s opinion of Prof. Lupin:

(5)

[situation: Harry defends his teacher Prof. Lupin against Prof. Snape’s criticism]

“Professor Lupin could have killed me about a hundred times this year,” Harry said. “I’ve been alone with him loads of times, having defense lessons against the dementors. If he was helping Black, why didn’t he just finish me off then?”

“Don’t ask me to fathom the way a werewolf’s mind works,” hissed Snape. (HP 3: 360)

Here, note that Harry first offers an explanation of his views, i.e. that Prof. Lupin would have had ample chance to hurt him had this been his aim. Hence, the following rhetorical question can only be read as a criticism of Prof. Snape’s opinion.

A speaker may further use form-driven impoliteness strategies to criticise a person. By this I mean that the speaker does not focus her negative opinion on specific behavioural or physical characteristics of the target, but instead presents the target as having no redeeming qualities. Consider (6), in which Prof. Snape’s utterance implies a strong derogatory opinion on James Potter, Harry’s late father:

(6)

[situation: a conversation between Harry and Prof. Snape in which the latter tries to provoke Harry]

“How extraordinarily like your father you are, Potter,” Snape said suddenly, his eyes glinting. “He too was exceedingly arrogant. A small amount of talent on the Quidditch field

made him think he was a cut above the rest of us too. Strutting around the place with his friends and admirers... The resemblance between you is uncanny.”

“My dad didn’t strut,” said Harry, before he could stop himself.

“And neither do I.” (HP 3: 284)

Harry here reacts using unmitigated disagreement in stating “My dad didn’t strut.”

character aspects attacked	criticising behaviour	Root leaned forward until the tip of his cigar was centimetres from Artemis’s nose. “This is an entirely different case, Mud Boy. So don’t give me the innocent act.” (AF 2: 63)
	criticising possession	“Weasley, you weren’t thinking of wearing these [robes; MP], were you? I mean — they were very fashionable in about eighteen ninety...” (HP 4: 168)
	criticising an opinion	“Why, Klaus, I’m surprised at you!” Jerome said. “A well-read person such as yourself should know he made a few grammatical errors.” (Series 6: 65)
	criticising the person	“You are lazy and sloppy, Potter, it is small wonder that the Dark Lord —” (HP: 593)
	unmitigated disagreement	“I see that little Sunny here still has nine toes instead of ten.” [...] “What are you talking about?” Klaus said impatiently. “She has ten toes, just like everybody else.” (Series 2: 48)
	unmitigated orders	“Hurry up, you two-headed freak!” (Series 9: 272)
	unmitigated direct questions	“Tell me, how does it feel being second-best to Weasley, Potter?” he [Draco; MP] asked. (HP 5: 194)
impolite beliefs	arrogance	“All this press attention seems to have inflated your already over-large head, Potter,” said Snape quietly. (HP 4: 515)
	lack of intelligence	“Surely even you could have worked that out by now, Potter?” (HP 5: 530)
	lack of morality	“But that’s dishonest, daddy,” Matilda said. “It’s cheating.” (MA: 23)
	lack of other abilities	“Your brother can’t do anything!” Shirley said, giggling in a most annoying way. (Series 4: 168)
	inability to follow social conventions	“I told you,” said Snape, rigid in his chair, his eyes slits, “to call me ‘sir.’” (HP 5: 533)
	lack of appropriate family background	“And there’s a picture, Weasley!” said Malfoy, flipping the paper over and holding it up. “A picture of your parents outside their house — if you can call it a house! Your mother could do with losing a bit of weight, couldn’t she?” (HP 4: 204)

Table 10.1: Character aspects and impolite beliefs addressed with form-driven impoliteness

As shown in the example in Table 10.1 above, disagreement that is not mitigated tends to co-occur with impoliteness. Note also that the narration states that Harry had not intended to make the utterance. This implies that had he taken some time to consider how to phrase his utterance, he might have opted to remain silent and not commit a face-threat, or used some mitigating strategies to express his disagreement.

Different strategies may also be used within the same message, as shown in (7). Here, Count Olaf uses unmitigated criticism to express his disagreement with Klaus on what constitutes ‘interesting questions’ and on their relevance in the context. The utterance occurs in combination with an order:

- (7)  
[situation: Klaus has just found a question in a volume by American author Richard Wright. This question has to be typed into a mechanism that opens a safe.]  
“I found it,” he said quietly. “It’s quite an interesting question, actually.”  
“No one cares about interesting questions!” Olaf said. “Type it in this instant!” (Series 12: 310)

Form-driven impoliteness may also often take the form of questions, such as in (8):

- (8)  
[situation: Draco has pointed out a newspaper article about Ron’s father that includes a picture of the family; Harry has just tried to diffuse the situation]  
“Oh yeah, you were staying with them this summer, weren’t you, Potter?” sneered Malfoy. “So tell me, is his mother really that porky, or is it just the picture?”  
“You know your mother, Malfoy?” said Harry — both he and Hermione had grabbed the back of Ron’s robes to stop him from launching himself at Malfoy — “that expression she’s got, like she’s got dung under her nose? Has she always looked like that, or was it just because you were with her?” (HP 4: 204)

It is clear from Ron’s reaction that Draco’s question is not to be understood as a genuine request for information on Mrs Weasley; instead, he attempts to express the impolite belief that Mrs Weasley is overweight and resembles a pig. Note that Harry responds using the same strategy, i.e. a question that aims at hurting the interlocutor’s face instead of requesting information, in implying that Mrs Malfoy’s facial expression of disgust is due to her son. This example shows that different types of impolite beliefs may be expressed using form-driven impoliteness; here, this concerns impolite beliefs regarding one’s family background, as well as personal characteristics of the interlocutors’ mothers. Note further that while insults towards one’s mother may be used in ritualised insult games such as sounding or ‘playing the dozens’ (see Labov 1972), character reactions demonstrate that these insults here are not understood as banter.

Another impolite belief that is predominantly expressed in children's fiction is the lack of a hearer's intelligence. Consider (9), in which Artemis expresses the unmitigated impolite belief that Commander Root is not intelligent enough to negotiate with him. Artemis's 'hardened face' further evidences his anger at Commander Root.

(9)

[situation: Commander Root and Artemis have just begun negotiations to return a prisoner of war; the exchange takes place by Artemis's front door]

Root decided to chance his arm. "Step outside then. Where I can see you."

Artemis's face hardened. "Have you learned nothing from my demonstrations? The ship? Your commandos? Do I need to kill someone?"

"No," said Root hurriedly. "I only —"

"You only meant to lure me outside, where I could be snatched and used to trade. Please, Commander Root, raise your game or send someone intelligent." (AF 1: 153)

A speaker may also use form-driven impoliteness to express the impolite belief that the addressee is unable to follow social conventions, as in (10).

(10)

[situation: the lesson is interrupted because Harry was late]

"As I was saying before Potter interrupted, Professor Lupin has not left any record of the topics you have covered so far —" (HP 3: 170)

Here, a politic option of continuing the lesson could have contained the phrase 'as I was saying,' which is conventionally associated with the speaker coming back to a certain train of thought, especially after an interruption. Directly referencing both the fact of having been interrupted as well as naming the interrupting person can be read as form-driven impoliteness in that no positive interpretation of this remark is possible for Harry.

One's family background may also be criticised using form-driven impoliteness strategies, such as in (11). Here, Draco expresses the impolite belief that both the Weasley and Potter family households resemble a pigsty, and that Harry enjoys the smells commonly associated with animals crammed together. In connection with Draco's facial expression, i.e. 'leering,' it is clear to the reader that his utterance is not to be understood as containing banter, such as a humorous comment on households that are slightly untidy.

(11)

[situation: Draco and Harry have begun an argument about the Weasley family, who Draco heavily criticises]

"Or perhaps," said Malfoy, leering as he backed away, "you can remember what your mother's house stank like, Potter, and Weasley's pigsty reminds you of it —" (HP 5: 413)

A further impolite belief that is predominantly expressed in children's fiction, most often in interactions between Harry and Prof. Snape in the *Harry Potter* series, is that of the addressee's arrogance. Consider (12), in which Prof. Snape labels Harry as delusional and uses the conventionalised impoliteness formula 'nasty little boy' to impress upon him the impolite belief that he is too arrogant and thinks too highly of himself to consider adhering to rules.

(12)

[situation: Harry has been caught reading an article about himself in class. Prof. Snape has made him work at a table directly next to him]

"You might be labouring under the delusion that the entire wizarding world is impressed with you," Snape went on, so quietly that no one else could hear him (Harry continued to pound his scarab beetles, even though he had already reduced them to a very fine powder), "but I don't care how many times your picture appears in the papers. To me, Potter, you are nothing but a nasty little boy who considers rules to be beneath him." (HP 4: 516)

Note here that Snape's low voice exacerbates the impoliteness (see ch. 11.2.3 below); it further prevents Harry from retaliating in that he has no bystanders who can prove the comment was made. Also note Harry's reaction, which shows that impoliteness has taken place: he continues to use force on the scarab beetles despite it no longer being necessary.

Likewise, a character's supposed lack of intelligence is commented on using form-driven impoliteness. See e.g. an utterance by Miss Trunchbull (13):

(13)

[situation: Miss Trunchbull explains her view on children, using Charles Dickens's works as an example]

"Read *Nicholas Nickleby*, Miss Honey, by Mr Dickens. [Miss Trunchbull discusses the book's content; MP] But I don't suppose this bunch of morons we've got here will ever read it because by the look of them they are never going to learn to read anything!" (MA: 156)

Here, she expresses the impolite belief that the students in her class are stupid and silly, which will keep them from ever mastering the ability to read. Note here the utterance's context: the comment is made in Miss Trunchbull's very first lesson in her primary school class. This means that the students have not yet been given a chance to master any reading skills. The utterance is thus classified as form-driven impoliteness.

Characters may also use form-driven impoliteness strategies to comment on the hearer's perceived lack of morality. Consider (14):

(14)

[situation: Matilda has taken offence at her father's practice of putting sawdust in the tanks of the second-hand cars he sells]

"It's dirty money," Matilda said. "I hate it."

Two red spots appeared on the father's cheeks.

“Who the heck do you think you are,” he shouted, “the Archbishop of Canterbury or something, preaching to me about honesty? You’re just an ignorant little squirt who hasn’t the foggiest idea what you’re talking about!” (MA: 25-26)

Here, Matilda expresses the impolite belief that her father uses unlawful means to gain money, which she conceptualised as ‘dirty.’ Mr Wormwood makes the connection to morality more explicit in comparing his daughter to a religious figure and using the word ‘honesty.’

Further instances in my data show that more than one impolite belief may be expressed in the same message. See e.g. (15), in which Draco’s utterance expresses impolite beliefs towards Ron’s abilities as a Keeper, as well as impolite beliefs towards his family background.

(15)

[situation: Gryffindor has won the match by Harry catching the Snitch mere seconds before Draco. Ron’s bad performance as Keeper, therefore, does not play a role considering the final score. <sup>131</sup>]

Harry heard a snort from behind him and turned around, still holding the Snitch tightly in his hand: Draco Malfoy had landed close by; white-faced with fury, he was still managing to sneer.

“Saved Weasley’s neck, haven’t you?” he said to Harry. “I’ve never seen a worse Keeper... but then he was born in a bin... Did you like my lyrics, Potter?”<sup>132</sup> (HP 5: 412)

A combination of impolite beliefs is also expressed in (16). Here, Draco expresses his derogatory opinion on a physical attribute of Harry’s, which he labels ‘foul;’ further, he expresses the impolite belief that Harry believes himself to be special due to very mundane circumstances.<sup>133</sup>

(16)

[situation: a student named Colin has taken Harry’s photo; Draco announces that Harry is now about to hand out signed photos]

“You’re just jealous,” piped up Colin, whose entire body was about as thick as Crabbe’s neck.

“Jealous?” said Malfoy, who didn’t need to shout anymore: Half the courtyard was listening in. “Of what? I don’t want a foul scar right across my head, thanks. I don’t think getting your head cut open makes you that special, myself.” (HP 2: 97)

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<sup>131</sup> A Keeper is one of the seven players in a Quidditch team, similar to a goalkeeper in football. A Snitch is one of three types of ball that one uses to play the game. For the full set of rules see HP 1: 166-169.

<sup>132</sup> The “lyrics” here refer to a song that Draco has created to mock Ron’s abilities on the Quidditch field; among others, it includes the following lines:

“Weasley was born in a bin,  
He always lets the Quaffle in,  
Weasley will make sure we win,  
Weasley is our King.” (HP 5: 470)

<sup>133</sup> The avid reader of the series will be aware that Harry received his scar as he was almost killed by Lord Voldemort (HP 1: 15); hence Draco’s description implies a further downplaying of this life event.

The above discussion has shown that form-driven impoliteness is used to express a variety of impolite beliefs on the actors in the fictional world. One potential reason for its predominant use in children's fiction might be that hardly any contextual features are needed to understand the intended impoliteness of the message, as the surface form is marked. Hence, young readers may find this impoliteness strategy easier to grasp than those that involve a greater understanding of social conventions. I discuss strategies that involve this understanding below.

### 10.2.2 Convention-Driven Impoliteness

Speakers may also perceive utterances as impolite if they violate certain conventions. This means that parts of a certain behaviour mismatch in a given context or that a given behaviour mismatches the context. These substrategies are termed *internal convention-driven impoliteness* and *external convention-driven impoliteness*, respectively. The category thus includes instances of mixed messages, i.e. messages that contain features that lean towards a polite interpretation as well as features that lean towards an impolite interpretation. Culpeper (2011a: 166) focuses on these instances “where the mixed behavioural trigger plus the context lead to an impolite interpretation.” Lay terms used for this kind of linguistic behaviour are “sarcasm,” “teasing,” or “[harsh/bitter] jokes/humour” (Culpeper 2011a: 165).

It is important to note here that “sarcasm is inherently disparaging and impolite [...] but can, and frequently does, carry humour for the individuals who are not the butts” (Dynel 2016: 139). Consider e.g. (1). Here, Harry is the butt of the joke, while the scene carries humour for other participants that are present in the scene, as evidenced by the stifled laughter of Harry’s classmates.

- (1)  
[situation: In the first Potions lesson, Prof. Snape reads out the names of all attending students]  
Snape, like Flitwick, started the class by taking the roll call, and like Flitwick, he paused at Harry’s name.  
“Ah, yes,” he said softly, “Harry Potter. Our new — *celebrity*.” Draco Malfoy and his friends Crabbe and Goyle sniggered behind their hands. (HP 1: 136)

Note also that italics are used to indicate that the word ‘celebrity’ is uttered with a marked prosody, which guides the reader’s interpretation of the scene.

#### 10.2.2.1 Convention-Driven: Internal

The category of convention-driven impoliteness comprises messages that contain a mismatch of verbal, oral and visual elements (Culpeper 2011a: 169). Research has shown that certain visual cues can exacerbate the perceived impoliteness of a message in that

- [n]on-verbal cues such as the absence of touch, lowered eyebrows, unpleasant facial expression, expansive gestures, indirect bodily orientation and a loud voice “communicate greater rudeness or a lack of concern for face” (Trees and Manusov 1998: 578), regardless of how polite criticism is linguistically (Cupach 2007: 152).

Here, impoliteness is not attributed to the message due to the fact that these features are present, but due to the way they mismatch the rest of the message.



In his discussion, Culpeper concentrates on prosodic mismatches “not least of all because prosody was clearly flagged up in my report data (visual aspects rarely were)” (Culpeper 2011a: 169). Due to the nature of written fictional texts, prosody is difficult to convey; as shown above in (1), typographical features are used to express the same function in the written medium.

Verbal formula mismatches are a central aspect of internal convention-driven impoliteness. Here, a conventionalised politeness formula is used in a context of a conventionalised impoliteness formula or in a context that is otherwise open to an interpretation as impolite, e.g. “Could you just fuck off?” Further strategies include expressions such as “I hate to be rude (but)...”, “no offence” or “with respect.” These strategies imply a mitigation of a negative statement that is to follow, which however remains a surface realisation, since if the speaker wanted to avoid potential face-threat, she would refrain from uttering the impolite statement (Culpeper 2011a: 174-176).

Previous research has raised the question whether mixed messages are more hurtful than a conventionalised impoliteness formula. The degree of perceived hurtfulness depends on the message’s context of use and on the salience of the im/polite message. It has been shown that some of the ways of mixing messages can themselves become conventional (Culpeper 2011a: 177), see e.g. Simon Cowell’s mixing of messages in *The X Factor* and *Britain’s Got Talent*:

You are gorgeous, but your voice isn’t.  
That was extraordinary. Unfortunately, extraordinarily bad.

The first part of the message can be described as conventional praise, which elicits positive emotions in the hearer. The second part of the utterance mismatches the first in that it negates the positive interpretation, and implies negative emotions.

My data showed 461 tokens of internal convention-driven impoliteness strategies. These are further subcategorised in Fig. 10.6 and subsequently discussed in terms of the different types of mismatches that are possible. In detail, multimodal mismatches may occur within the verbal message, between verbal and aural parts of the message, or between verbal and visual aspects. I further include a category of mismatch between verbal and physical elements that I explain in detail below.

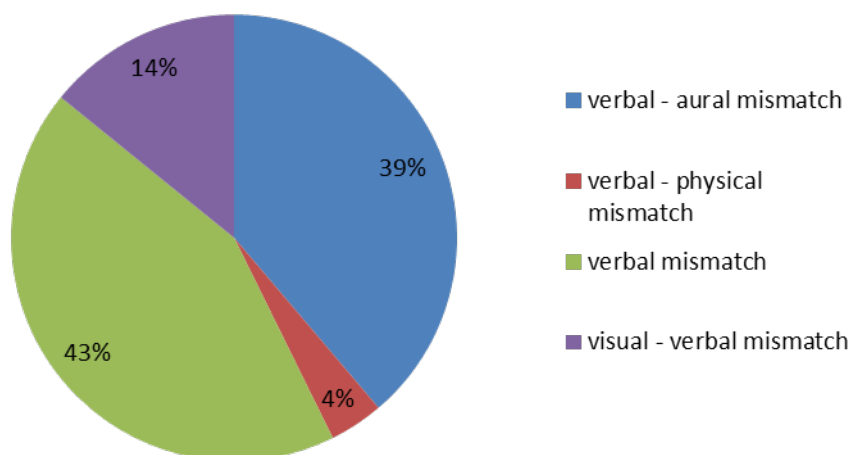


Fig. 10.6: Subcategories of the convention-driven: internal impoliteness strategy

A mismatch between verbal and aural parts of the message occurs in 39% of all internal convention-driven impoliteness tokens, i.e. there are 178 tokens of this category in my data. In (2), this mismatch is made explicit by the narration. The beginning of Draco's utterance is a conventionalised formula that may precede the head act when a speaker wishes to express regrets, e.g. because she cannot comply with a request. Draco's regret here is insincere, as evidenced by the narration ('a tone of mock sorrow'); thus, the content of the message mismatches the prosodic delivery and is open to an interpretation as sarcastic.

(2)

[situation: Draco has been injured in a class taught by Hagrid, who is now suspended]  
 "I'm afraid he won't be a teacher much longer," said Malfoy in a tone of mock sorrow.  
 "Father's not very happy about my injury —"  
 "Keep talking, Malfoy, and I'll give you a real injury," snarled Ron. (HP 3: 125)

In (2), note that a character reaction is specified, i.e. Ron's use of a conventionalised impoliteness formula: threat, combined with prosodic cues ('he snarled'). This further hints at Draco's utterance being open to an interpretation as impolite.

Contrast this with (3), in which reactions to the speaker's utterance remain unspecified. Here, Hermione utters superficial praise of Draco's badges, referring to them as 'funny' and 'witty.' The narration marks this praise as insincere, as the utterance is made 'sarcastically;' the reader is invited to imagine a certain (exaggerated) prosody. As no reactions by other participants are specified, one cannot be certain whether the sarcasm has not registered with the hearers, or whether they chose to remain silent, or ignore the utterance altogether.

(3)

[situation: Draco presents badges that say 'POTTER STINKS']

"Oh very funny," Hermione said sarcastically to Pansy Parkinson and her gang of Slytherin girls, who were laughing harder than anyone, "really witty." (HP 4: 298)

The next cluster I wish to discuss is that of a verbal-visual mismatch, which occurred 65 times in my data; this amounts to 43%. I understand this category to include only those instances where a given facial expression mismatches the verbal message, such as (4). Here, Artemis offers a smile, which conventionally indicates a speaker's positive attitude towards the addressee or the topic of conversation. As Artemis's utterance contains the impolite belief that Commander Root is unfit as a negotiator, the smile mismatches the verbal content of the message.

(4)

[situation: negotiations between Artemis Fowl and Commander Root. Previously, Artemis has criticised Root's approach]

Root felt the blood pump through his cheeks.

"Now you just listen to me, you young ..."

Artemis smiled, in command again. "Not very good negotiation techniques, Commander, to lose your cool before we even get to the table." (AF 1: 153)

Consider a similar usage of a smile in (5).

(5)

[situation: Count Olaf has locked the Baudelaires in a cell]

"Don't worry," he said in his wheezy voice. "You won't be burned at the stake – not all of you, at least. Tomorrow afternoon, one of you will make a miraculous escape – if you consider being smuggled out of V.F.D. by one of my assistants to be an escape. The other two will burn at the stake as planned. You bratty orphans are too stupid to realize it, but a genius like me knows that it may take a village to raise a child, but it only takes one child to inherit a fortune." The villain laughed a loud and rude laugh, and began to shut the door of the cell. "But I don't want to be cruel," he said, smiling to indicate that he really wanted to be as cruel as possible. "I'll let you three decide who gets the honour of spending the rest of their puny life with me, and who gets to burn at the stake. I'll be back at lunchtime for your decision." (Series 7: 39)

Smiles tend to be associated with pleasant situations, which mismatches the content of the utterance, i.e. a discussion of two of the siblings dying a painful death. This is also metapragmatically commented on by the narrator.

A preferred option in children's fiction of using verbal-visual mismatches is by offering insincere praise. Consider (6), which shows Harry giving an answer in class that Prof. Snape deems insufficient.

(6)

[situation: Harry has not been listening in class and is asked a question by Prof. Snape]

"Let us ask Potter how we would tell the difference between an Inferius and a ghost."

The whole class looked round at Harry, who hastily tried to recall what Dumbledore had told him the night that they had gone to visit Slughorn.

"Er — well — ghosts are transparent —" he said.

"Oh, very good," interrupted Snape, his lip curling. (HP 6: 430)

The phrasing ‘very good’ is commonly associated with giving praise to the other. As it is combined with a ‘curling lip’ here, it is implied that the praise remains a surface realisation and is understood to be insincere. This is especially so as the reader of the series will identify the facial expression as a sneer, a description that is commonly used to designate Prof. Snape’s negative emotional state (see also below on impoliteness metalanguage).

In my analysis I included the category of a verbal and physical mismatch to supplement the verbal-visual mismatch category. There are 18 tokens of this category in my data. I understand this category to include a mismatch between verbal parts of the message as well as gestures and physical movement that go beyond the visual aspects such as raised eyebrows specified in Culpeper (2011a). See e.g. (7), in which Count Olaf offers superficial thanks for information on a grammatical error. This is paired with visual cues (‘a terrible smile’), which marks the thanks as insincere. Moreover, the character is shown to physically intimidate the addressee in stepping towards her, which further solidifies the mismatch.

(7)

[situation: Aunt Josephine has pointed out a grammatical error in ‘Captain Sham’s’ utterance.]

Captain Sham’s one shiny eye blinked, and his mouth curled up in a terrible smile.

“Thank you for pointing that out,” he said, and took one last step toward Aunt Josephine.

(Series 3: 190)

Physical threats are used in (8), as well. Here, Prof. Snape’s politic enquiry about Harry’s enjoyment of certain information remains a surface realisation. This is evident by him applying physical force towards Harry. The interpretation as a mismatch is further supported by Prof. Snape’s emotions as shown by his ‘shaking lips,’ ‘white face’ and ‘bared teeth,’ which can be read as physical expressions of the emotion of anger (see also ch. 11.2.2 below). Prof. Snape’s second utterance in the scene constitutes the same sort of mismatch. Here, a politic utterance, which in other contexts could be read as praise of Harry’s father and his antics, mismatches the application of physical force, i.e. being shaken.

(8)

[situation: Harry has been caught accessing sensitive information in Prof. Snape’s office]

“So,” said Snape, gripping Harry’s arm so tightly Harry’s hand was starting to feel numb.

“So . . . been enjoying yourself, Potter?”

“N-no . . .” said Harry, trying to free his arm.

It was scary: Snape’s lips were shaking, his face was white, his teeth were bared.

“Amusing man, your father, wasn’t he?” said Snape, shaking Harry so hard that his glasses slipped down his nose. (HP 5: 649)

A similar occurrence of the application of physical force can be found in (9). Here, Mr Wormwood's politic suggestion on what to do when a library book is destroyed mismatches his action, i.e. his being the cause of the destruction.

(9)

[situation: Mr Wormwood has taken offence at Matilda spending most of her time reading; he has just taken her current book and has started to destroy it]

"That's a *library* book!" Matilda cried. "It doesn't belong to me! I have to return it to Mrs Phelps!"

"Then you'll have to buy another one, won't you?" the father said, still tearing out pages.

(MA: 41)

Further, my data showed two instances of a mismatch within a non-verbal message.

Consider (10):

(10)

[situation: Prof. Umbridge has taken offence at Prof. Snape]

"You are on probation!" shrieked Professor Umbridge, and Snape looked back at her, his eyebrows slightly raised. "You are being deliberately unhelpful! I expected better, Lucius Malfoy always speaks most highly of you! Now get out of my office!"

Snape gave her an ironic bow and turned to leave. (HP 5: 745)

Here, the narration specifies that Prof. Snape's bow, which in other contexts may be used as a sign of respect for the other, is used in an ironic manner. The reader may e.g. imagine a greater flourish than appropriate when bowing. It is implied that Prof. Snape wishes to show disrespect to the other in using this gesture. Further, the irony is exacerbated as bowing is salient in Hogwarts; no other conversation ends with one or both interactants bowing to signal their respect.

The final category of internal convention-driven impoliteness is that of a verbal mismatch, i.e. a mismatch within parts of the verbal message. There are 198 tokens in my data, which amounts to 43% of internal convention-driven impoliteness; the strategy is used globally in all books and book series. Consider e.g. (11):

(11)

[situation: Harry's godfather Sirius has taken offence that Prof. Snape will be giving Harry extra Occlumency lessons]

"Why can't Dumbledore teach Harry?" asked Sirius aggressively. "Why you?"

"I suppose because it is a headmaster's privilege to delegate less enjoyable tasks," said Snape silkily. "I assure you I did not beg for the job." (HP 5: 519)

Sirius uses form-driven impoliteness here to express the impolite belief that Prof. Snape is unfit for some reason to teach Harry, or at least less fit to do so than the headmaster. Prof. Snape's utterance contains internal convention-driven impoliteness: He begins his turn with the formula 'I suppose,' which speakers use in non-impolite contexts to state potential reasons or opinions. Here, however, this formula

is followed by the expression of the impolite belief that teaching Harry is an unenjoyable task he would not have requested. In uttering this impolite belief, Prof. Snape disassociates from Harry. Note here that Harry is present during the exchange and might be the intended target of the utterance.

A mismatch can also be found in (12) in a conversation between Commander Root's soldier Foaly and Artemis Fowl's butler and henchman, appropriately named Butler. Here, the intended meaning of the utterance creating the mismatch is unclear. On the one hand, the speaker might intend to express sincere approval as Butler's abilities are helpful for the investigation at hand; in this case, no mismatch would be present. On the other hand, the more likely interpretation is that Foaly seeks to express disapproval of the criminal activities that got Butler noticed by the agencies; thus, the mentions would only be praised in a superficial manner, which opens the utterance to an interpretation as impolite.

(12)

[situation: Foaly reports on the state of the current investigation]

Foaly wiggled his fingers like a concert pianist. "I ran a search on my own intelligence files archives. I like to keep tabs on Mud People's so-called intelligence agencies. Quite a few mentions of you by the way, Butler." (AF 2: 106)

In (13), the verbal mismatch is present in Prof. Snape's second utterance. Here, the phrase 'nice of you to [x]' suggests praise of the other, while the second part of the message constitutes implicit criticism of Harry's outfit, as well as the impolite belief that Harry chose to be dressed in this manner due to arrogance.

(13)

[situation: Harry arrives late to the beginning of the school year. He is met at the school gates by Prof. Snape. Note that Harry is not wearing the customary wizard robes, but jeans and a sweater]

"Well, well, well," sneered Snape, taking out his wand and tapping the padlock once, so that the chains snaked backward and the gates creaked open. "Nice of you to turn up, Potter, although you have evidently decided that the wearing of school robes would detract from your appearance." (HP 6: 152)

It has become evident from the above discussion that internal convention-driven impoliteness is a prevalent strategy to communicate impolite beliefs in children's fiction. However, to understand the mismatches that occur within the verbal message or between the verbal content and further physical or aural features, the reader has to take into account the narration surrounding the utterance. How and in which manner the narrator may comment on these paralinguistic and non-verbal parts of

an utterance, and how they may help the reader in conceptualising linguistic impoliteness is discussed below in ch. 11.2.

### 10.2.2.2 Convention-Driven Impoliteness: External

The category of external convention-driven impoliteness involves instances where there is a “mismatch between expressed behaviour and the context” (Culpeper 2011a: 178). External convention-driven impoliteness can be brought about, for instance, by uttering a superficially polite statement after having insulted and/or threatened one’s interlocutor(s).<sup>134</sup> Consider (14), in which Harry uses a conventionally polite utterance after a stretch of conflictive discourse:

- (14)  
[situation: Harry and Ron are on the train to Hogwarts. They share a compartment with Professor Lupin, a new teacher. Draco and his friends Crabbe and Goyle enter the compartment.]  
“Well, look who it is,” said Malfoy in his usual lazy drawl, pulling open the compartment door. “Potty and the Weasel.”  
Crabbe and Goyle chuckled trollishly.  
“I heard your father finally got his hands on some gold this summer, Weasley,” said Malfoy.  
“Did your mother die of shock?”  
Ron stood up so quickly he knocked Crookshanks’s basket to the floor. Professor Lupin gave a snort.  
“Who’s that?” said Malfoy, taking an automatic step backward as he spotted Lupin.  
“New teacher,” said Harry, who got to his feet, too, in case he needed to hold Ron back.  
“What were you saying, Malfoy?” (HP 3: 80)

Harry’s utterance here is a conventionalised formulaic statement enquiring after Draco’s previous utterance. However, consider the context of the previous discourse, which involved conventionalised impoliteness formulae (name-calling; ‘Potty and the Weasel’) and insincere concern in discussing Ron’s family. In light of this context, Harry’s utterance is open to an interpretation as impolite, as Draco is invited to repeat his previous insults to the Weasley family. I see this as different from the category of dares above, as Harry uses a conventionalised formula that also occurs in non-impolite contexts to enquire about a previous utterance.

Culpeper (2011a: 179) notes that instances of external convention-driven impoliteness “are easier to find in written discourse” than those that contain a multimodal mismatch; however, my data show that for children’s fiction, this claim cannot be upheld. Compare 83 tokens for external convention-driven impoliteness

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<sup>134</sup> As Culpeper (2011a: 165-68; 170) has shown in his analysis of Simon Cowell’s strategies used in the exploitative TV show *X Factor*, external strategies can also become conventionalised if they are used often enough with the same intention and/or in the same situation or activity type.

to 461 tokens of internal convention-driven impoliteness. This difference might be due to the greater orality of children's fiction as compared to other written modes of communication (see ch. 5 above on the style of children's fiction). A further reason might be found in the fact that external convention-driven impoliteness tends to occur in or around conversation terminations, which tend not to be reported often in children's fiction (see ch. 10.6).

I have created clusters of situations in which external convention-driven impoliteness has proven to be the preferred option in my data. These include situations of greeting and leave-taking, which is also suggested by examples of leave-taking in *Clampers* (Culpeper et al. 2003: 1559), which are reanalysed as external convention-driven impoliteness in Culpeper (2011a: 178-179). Further, external convention-driven impoliteness tends to occur in situations where a character expresses insincere praise of or concern for another character or their achievements. I provide examples of each cluster in the following.

First, consider situations of interaction beginnings such as (15) and (16). In (15), the message begins with a greeting formula, albeit a slightly old-fashioned one. The reader is to imagine that the creator of the magical map has enchanted the map to greet the person opening it; hence the greeting formula is politic in the given context. The advice following the greeting constitutes a mismatch, as it expresses the impolite belief that Prof. Snape's hair is overly greasy and in need of a wash. Thus, the polite expectation frame that is opened by the greeting is violated by the second part of the message.

(15)

[situation: Prof. Snape is reading a magical map; writing appears on it]

"Mr. Wormtail bids Professor Snape good day, and advises him to wash his hair, the slime-ball." (HP 3: 287)

Consider also (16), which follows a similar pattern. The politic greeting formula 'good morning' is followed by a conventionalised impoliteness formula.<sup>135</sup> The reminder of the children's orphan status mismatches the greeting formula.

(16)

[situation: the Baudelaire children come to the kitchen to have breakfast]

"Good morning, orphans," he [Count Olaf; MP] said. (Series 1: 71)

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<sup>135</sup> I have explained above how Count Olaf's use of 'orphan' can be understood as a conventionalised impoliteness formula; see ch. 10.1.



The cluster of interaction terminations follows the same pattern as examples discussed in Culpeper (2011a: 179) in that a character utters a conventionalised politeness formula that is commonly associated with the termination of conversations, such as ‘Have a nice day,’ in contexts where it is unlikely that it is the speaker’s intention to sincerely wish the addressee a nice day. Consider (17), in which the conventionalised impoliteness formula of a threat (‘do X and you will be expelled’) is contrasted with a politeness formula wishing the addressee a good day:

(17)

[situation: Harry and friends have been caught inside the castle and have been threatened by Prof. Snape, as he believes they are about to engage in rule-breaking behaviour]  
“Be warned, Potter — any more nighttime wanderings and I will personally make sure you are expelled. Good day to you.” (HP 1: 269)

Here, it is likely that the prosody of the politeness formula that the reader is to imagine will constitute an internal mismatch, that is, the formula might be further marked as insincere or sarcastic. The same is true for Shirley’s utterance in (18):

(18)

[situation: Dr Orwell and receptionist ‘Shirley’ discuss the Baudelaires, who are about to leave the ophthalmologist’s practice]  
“They [the Baudelaires; MP] are stupid, aren’t they?” Dr. Orwell agreed, as though they were talking about the weather instead of insulting young children. “They must have very low self-esteem.”  
“I couldn’t agree more, Dr. Orwell,” Shirley said. [...]  
“Toodle-oo, orphans!” Shirley said. (Series 4: 122-123)

‘Toodle-oo’ is pragmatically acceptable as a conventionalised leave-taking formula directed towards young children, even in the context of a doctor-patient interaction; it sets up the conversational frame of friendly interactions between patient and receptionist against which the further messages can be judged. Note here on the one hand the mismatch between the interaction termination formula and the form of address, which is open to an interpretation as a conventionalised impoliteness formula. On the other hand, note the preceding conversation, in which Dr Orwell addresses an utterance containing form-driven impoliteness to Shirley; however, it is implied that the Baudelaire children are the target of the impolite message. This further exacerbates the mismatch in Shirley’s utterance.

The next cluster of external convention-driven impoliteness I wish to discuss is that of a character expressing insincere concern for others. See e.g. (19); in this situation, Harry has failed to answer any question posed to him in class, which has been criticised by Prof. Snape with utterances such as “Thought you wouldn’t

open a book before coming, eh, Potter?” (HP 1: 138). The phrase ‘for your information’ is to be understood as insincere; its function is not to give support and information to Harry, but to stress the impolite belief that Harry lacks essential knowledge of potion-making. Note further that this conversation occurs in the first Potions lesson in Harry’s first year at Hogwarts. This exacerbates the offence, as students are not expected to have any previous knowledge of magical topics.

(19)

[situation: Harry has failed to give correct answers in class; Prof. Snape now addresses the class]

“For your information, Potter, asphodel and wormwood make a sleeping potion so powerful it is known as the Draught of Living Death. A bezoar is a stone taken from the stomach of a goat and it will save you from most poisons. As for monkshood and wolfsbane, they are the same plant, which also goes by the name of aconite.” (HP 1: 138)

Prof. Snape is shown to predominantly use external convention-driven impoliteness. See e.g. (20), in which he offers condolences to Harry over the loss of his late father, as well as praise of the latter. However, it is clear that this offer of comfort remains a surface realisation as it is preceded by a lengthy description of James Potter’s misdemeanours, of which Harry will likely not be proud.

(20)

[situation: Harry has been assigned a task that involves copying misdemeanours of previous students onto new index cards]

He [Prof. Snape; MP] pulled out a card from one of the topmost boxes with a flourish and read, “James Potter and Sirius Black. Apprehended using an illegal hex upon Bertram Aubrey. Aubrey’s head twice normal size. Double detention.” Snape sneered. “It must be such a comforting thing that, though they are gone, a record of their great achievements remains.” (HP 6: 497-498)

Consider also an expression of insincere concern by Draco in (21). Here, Draco begins by using form-driven impoliteness to ridicule Harry’s fainting, which is further evidenced by his facial expression. In this context, his question to Ron can be read as external convention-driven impoliteness in that his concern for whether or not Ron fainted is insincere. Further, the example shows that strategy mixing is possible in that Draco uses child-like language which is neutral with regard to the surface form, but which mismatches the context; thus, the utterance also contains unmarked context-driven impoliteness (see ch. 10.2.3.1. below).

(21)

[situation: Harry has fainted prior to the interaction as he was scared by a Dementor]<sup>136</sup>

“You *fainted*, Potter? Is Longbottom telling the truth? You actually *fainted*?”

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<sup>136</sup> “A Dementor is a gliding, wraith-like Dark creature [...]. Dementors feed on human happiness and thus generate feelings of depression and despair in any person in close proximity to them” (Harry Potter Wiki, n.d.).

Malfoy elbowed past Hermione to block Harry's way up the stone steps to the castle, his face gleeful and his pale eyes glinting maliciously.

"Shove off, Malfoy," said Ron, whose jaw was clenched.

"Did you faint as well, Weasley?" said Malfoy loudly. "Did the scary old dementor frighten you too, Weasley?" (HP 3: 87-88)

The final cluster of external convention-driven impoliteness I wish to discuss is that of a character expressing insincere praise of others. See e.g. (22), in which Count Olaf in the disguise of Coach Genghis expresses praise of the Baudelaire's enthusiasm. This is followed by a critical statement about persons who 'lack brainpower,' which contains the strong implication that the Baudelaires are one of these 'certain cases.' The polite frame of reference opened with the first part of Count Olaf's message is to be understood as insincere and a surface realisation.

(22)

[situation: 'Coach Genghis' has assigned running exercises for the Baudelaires, about which they have expressed excitement]

"I'm glad you're so enthusiastic," Genghis said. "In certain cases, enthusiasm can make up for a lack of brainpower." (Series 5: 112)

Consider also (23), in which Prof. Snape's utterances constitute a mismatch. Describing a son as being 'extraordinarily' like his father tends to occur in situations where one wishes to praise certain features in which the two persons are alike, such as character traits or a striking similarity in outward appearance. This is followed by the unmitigated expression of the impolite belief that Harry's father was arrogant, which implies that Prof. Snape's praise of Harry remains a surface realisation. Instead, his first utterance is to be read as criticism of Harry, who resembles his father with respect to his arrogance.

(23)

[situation: Prof. Snape is trying to provoke Harry into admitting that he has illegally left the school grounds]

"How extraordinarily like your father you are, Potter," Snape said suddenly, his eyes glinting. "He too was exceedingly arrogant. A small amount of talent on the Quidditch field made him think he was a cut above the rest of us too. Strutting around the place with his friends and admirers . . . The resemblance between you is uncanny." (HP 3: 283)

As stated above, the category of external convention-driven impoliteness is not used very often in my data. Children's fiction seems to prefer instances of language use that are clearly marked as impolite. This might also be due to the fact that to successfully infer that impoliteness has taken place, a greater contextual knowledge is required.

### 10.2.3 Context-Driven Impoliteness

In the third and final category, impoliteness is ascribed due to participant expectations in a given context. This includes instances where the trigger is unmarked, and there is no mismatch with any politeness formulae; instead, the ascription of impoliteness arises due to contextual expectations of the participants (Culpeper 2011a: 180). The category is further subdivided into unmarked behaviour which triggers impoliteness, and the complete absence of (expected) behaviour.

#### 10.2.3.1 Context-Driven Impoliteness: Unmarked

The category of unmarked convention-driven impoliteness consists of formally unmarked linguistic behaviours which do not match the given context. This includes e.g. patronising behaviour, such as a mother talking to her grown-up daughter as if she were still a child. Hence, it implies “a display of power that infringes an understood power hierarchy” (Culpeper 2010: 3240). To illustrate the type of behaviour in question, consider a longer scene from *Harry Potter*:

(1)

[situation: Harry has borrowed Ron's copy of *Advanced Potion Making* and has hidden his own copy in the Room of Requirements]

Harry ran flat-out toward the bathroom on the floor below, cramming Ron's copy of *Advanced Potion-Making* into his bag as he did so. A minute later, he was back in front of Snape, who held out his hand wordlessly for Harry's schoolbag. Harry handed it over, panting, a searing pain in his chest, and waited.

One by one, Snape extracted Harry's books and examined them. Finally the only book left was the Potions book, which he looked at very carefully before speaking.

“This is your copy of *Advanced Potion-Making*, is it, Potter?”

“Yes,” said Harry, still breathing hard.

“You're quite sure of that, are you, Potter?”

“Yes,” said Harry, with a touch more defiance.

“This is the copy of *Advanced Potion-Making* that you purchased from Flourish and Blotts?”

“Yes,” said Harry firmly.

“Then why,” asked Snape, “does it have the name ‘Roonil Wazlib’ written inside the front cover?”

Harry's heart missed a beat. “That's my nickname,” he said. (HP 6: 493)

The questions and answers in this scene are not formally marked as containing impoliteness and could be read as politic. That is, a similar question-and-answer sequence could occur, e.g., in a situation where the speakers sincerely question which book is which, or one offers help in recalling whose book it is. Here, however, both the reader and the interactants are aware that Harry is lying about the nature of the copy of *Advanced Potion Making*, which opens the interaction to an interpretation as impolite.

My data contain 393 token structures of unmarked context-driven impoliteness, i.e. 18 % of utterances depend on contextual factors to understand their impoliteness content. As the utterances in this category are formally unmarked, attempts at a further subclassification proved not to offer any meaningful insights, however.

#### **10.2.3.2 Context-Driven Impoliteness: Absence of Behaviour**

The category of *absence of behaviour* involves cases in which participants expect the occurrence of certain behaviours which are then found to be missing; these expectations are triggered by certain contextual features, e.g., the withholding of polite behaviour where it would have been expected, such as failing to thank an addressee for a present (Culpeper 2011a: 182-183). This behaviour is commented on in Brown and Levinson ([1978] 1987: 5), who note that “politeness has to be communicated, and the absence of communicated politeness may, *ceteris paribus*, be taken as the absence of a polite attitude.” See also research by Watts (2003: 169; see also 131; 182), who shows that a lack of polite behaviour, that is an omission of expectable behaviour, is evaluated as equally reprehensible as behaviour that was intentionally designed to be impolite and cause harm to the addressee. The category thus involves cases such as (2):

- (2)  
[situation: a lesson. Miss Trunchbull has just informed the class of the values of reading *Nicholas Nickleby*]  
“I’ve read it,” Matilda said quietly.  
The Trunchbull flicked her head round and looked carefully at the small girl with dark hair and deep brown eyes sitting in the second row.  
“What did you say?” she asked sharply.  
“I said I’ve read it, Miss Trunchbull.”  
“Read what?”  
“*Nicholas Nickleby*, Miss Trunchbull.” (MA: 156)

Miss Trunchbull’s utterances demonstrate an absence of expectable polite behaviour. In the context of a lesson, a formula such as “excuse me”<sup>137</sup> constitutes an expectable and acceptable form of inquiry. Here, the reader is to draw the implication that Miss Trunchbull wishes to express her disbelief at a first-grader having read Dickens.

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<sup>137</sup> I am aware that, with a certain prosody, this formula could equally communicate impoliteness.

149 tokens, or 8 % of all impoliteness tokens in my data, contain an absence of expectable behaviour. In the following, I have grouped these instances of absence of behaviour into clusters.

The first cluster of absence of behaviour contains characters using ellipsis where a grammatically fully formed question would be considered more appropriate. A preferred strategy is the use of “What?”, which often implies an expression of disbelief. See e.g. Count Olaf expressing disbelief that there is spaghetti instead of roast beef for dinner (3), or his annoyance that his ploy to marry Violet has failed (4). Consider also Victoria’s disbelief at being ordered about (5), or Hermione’s disbelief that an Inquisitorial Squad has been set up at school (6).

(3)  
“What?” Count Olaf asked. “No roast beef?” (Series 1: 46)

(4)  
“*What?*” Count Olaf cried. (Series 1: 151)

(5)  
“What?” Violet said. (Series 5: 116)

(6)  
“The what?” said Hermione sharply. (HP 5: 626)

Ellipses are further used in situations where there is much at stake, such as in (7) and (8). Situations of this type are similar to Culpeper’s (1996: 356) strategy of bald on record impoliteness in which “the FTA is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimised.” See, e.g., (7), in which Root blames Artemis for an injury of his officer Holly; the impoliteness of his elliptic utterance is exacerbated by him ‘snapping,’ i.e. using a tone of voice that is associated with impolite language (see ch. 11 on metapragmatic comments below).

(7)  
[situation: Holly has been injured; Root attempts to save her]  
“How long?” he [Commander Root; MP] snapped.  
“What?”  
“How long ago did it happen?” (AF 2: 149-150)

Note that Culpeper’s (1996) strategy differs from Brown and Levinson’s ([1978] 1987: 69) bald on record politeness strategy. On their view, bald on record politeness may be used only in very specific circumstances where little face is at stake, such as emergencies, when there is a very small threat to the hearer’s face (e.g. “Have a seat!”), or when the speaker holds more power than the hearer (e.g. parent-child dyads). In these cases, the speaker does not intend

to attack the hearer's face. While in both (7) and (8), the speaker holds more institutional power than the hearer, much face is at stake: in (7), Artemis is made directly responsible for the potential loss of life of an officer, and in (8), Prof. Snape tries to save face when Harry discovers him in a private situation in his office.

(8)

[situation: Harry enters Prof. Snape's office to find him treating a wound<sup>138</sup> on his leg]

"POTTER!"

Snape's face was twisted with fury as he dropped his robes quickly to hide his leg. Harry gulped.

"I just wondered if I could have my book back."

"GET OUT! OUT!" (HP 1: 183)

Characters may also show an absence of expectable and appropriate behaviour in situations of disagreement. Here, disagreement is expressed without mitigation or the use of softeners to indicate that one holds a differing opinion, such as in (9). The impoliteness in the scene is further exacerbated by Matilda shouting and standing up; both behaviours violate the norms of behaviour that hold within a lesson.

(9)

[situation: Miss Trunchbull is of the opinion that Matilda has placed a newt in her drinking water and admonishes her for it]

"There is no worse crime in the world against a Headmistress! Now sit down and don't say a word!

Go on, sit down at once!"

"But I'm telling you..." Matilda shouted, refusing to sit down. (MA: 164)

Consider also (10), in which Violet starts a conversation with a question directed at Count Olaf; its accusatory nature is evidenced by her 'crying' as well as the use of italics for the question word, which makes the prosody salient. See also Klaus, whose final utterance in this excerpt uses the same strategies (italics for emphasis; absence of proper explanations).

(10)

[situation: The Quagmire triplets, who are friends of the Baudelaires, are missing. Violet is of the opinion that 'Coach Genghis' is responsible]

"*Where are they?*" Violet cried as Coach Genghis stepped into the shack. "What have you done with them?" Normally, of course, one should begin conversations with something more along the lines of "Hello, how are you," but the eldest Baudelaire was far too distressed to do so.

Genghis's eyes were shining as brightly as could be, but his voice was calm and pleasant.

"Here they are," he said, holding up the ribbon and glasses. "I thought you might be worried about them, so I brought them over first thing in the morning."

"*We don't mean these them!*" Klaus said, taking the items from Genghis's scraggly hands.

"*We mean them them!*" (Series 5: 197-198)

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<sup>138</sup> The reader is informed that Harry believes Prof. Snape to have received the wound in an attempt at stealing a magical artefact that is kept in the school (HP 1: 183).

The narrator in this scene metapragmatically discusses normative expectations on the social conventions that hold in beginning a conversation (here evidenced by the use of the modal 'should'), and offers an explanation as to why Violet does not follow it, i.e. due to distress. This also shows the link between emotions and impoliteness, which I illustrate below in ch. 11.2.2.

An absence of behaviour also occurs in situations where a speaker ignores the hearer and fails to show an appropriate reaction. I base this cluster on Culpeper's (1996: 357) positive impoliteness output strategy 'ignore, snub the other.' See e.g. (11), in which Count Olaf pretends not to have heard a question posed to him, or (12), in which Violet ignores Count Olaf. Note that the narrator's comment clarifies the reason for Violet showing absence of behaviour here, i.e., that one does not have to react to a blatant lie.

(11)

[situation: Violet and Klaus are looking for their sibling Sunny, who seems to be missing]  
"Yes," Count Olaf continued, "it certainly is strange to find a child missing. And one so small, and helpless."

"Where's Sunny?" Violet cried. "What have you done with her?"

Count Olaf continued to speak as if he had not heard Violet. "But then again, one sees strange things every day." (Series 1: 102)

(12)

[situation: 'Stephano' is accused of having murdered the Baudelaires' uncle, Dr Montgomery]

"But I loved Dr. Montgomery," Stephano said. "I would have had nothing to gain from his death."

Sometimes, when someone tells a ridiculous lie, it is best to ignore it entirely. "When I turn eighteen, as we all know," Violet continued, ignoring Stephano entirely. "I inherit the Baudelaire fortune, and Stephano intended to get that fortune for himself." (Series 2: 170-171)

A further cluster of absence of behaviour concerns characters showing greater levels of directness than are expectable in the given situation. Consider (13), which details a meeting between Harry and Draco:

(13)

[situation: Draco and Harry happen to meet in a hallway]

Malfoy stopped short at the sight of Harry, then gave a short, humourless laugh and continued walking.

"Where're you going?" Harry demanded. (HP 6: 386)

The absence of behaviour is found in Harry's utterance, in which no form of address or greeting formula is employed as would be politic in encountering a fellow student that one is on speaking terms with (see also the narrator explanation of how to begin a conversation in (10) above). Draco uses a non-verbal conventionalised impolite-



ness formula in laughing at Harry, which the latter might conceptualise as an offending event, due to which he feels licensed to forego the use of politeness markers.

A further case can be found in (14), which details the beginning of negotiations between Artemis Fowl and Commander Root.

(14)  
[situation: the first meeting between Artemis Fowl and Commander Root]  
“You’re Fowl?”  
“Artemis Fowl, at your service. And you are?”  
“LEP Commander Root. Right, we know each other’s names, so could we get on with this?”  
(AF1: 152)

It stands to reason that the child reader is not intimately familiar with military negotiation protocols. However, Artemis’ use of the formula ‘at your service’ deviates from the politeness level in Root’s final utterance in this excerpt. The utterance, then, is made salient as it contains less politeness than expectable in the given situation.

My data further include a cluster of instances in which it is the absence of acceptable non-verbal behaviour that is open to an interpretation as impolite. See (15), in which Draco attempts to befriend Harry, who shows an absence of behaviour in refusing to shake Draco’s offered hand. Harry might have perceived Draco’s previous utterance as offending, as it expresses negative beliefs about his new friend Ron, and thus felt licensed in reacting in an impolite manner.

(15)  
[situation: Draco speaks to Harry on the school train. He has criticised Harry’s new friend and travel companion, Ron, on account of his family]  
He [Draco; MP] turned back to Harry. “You’ll soon find out some wizarding families are much better than others, Potter. You don’t want to go making friends with the wrong sort. I can help you there.”  
He held out his hand to shake Harry’s, but Harry didn’t take it. (HP 1: 108)

Violet in (16) also shows absence of behaviour as she does not verbally react to Count Olaf’s impolite utterance and instead hangs up the phone. In doing so, she also ignores Count Olaf and disassociates from him; that is, in Culpeper’s (1996: 357) terms, she uses positive impoliteness.

(16)  
[situation: Count Olaf calls the Baudelaire house in his guise as ‘Captain Sham;’ Violet pretends that it is a wrong number]  
“Don’t play with me, you wretched girl—” Captain Sham started to say, but Violet hung up the phone. (Series 3: 59)

A further way for characters to use the absence of behaviour strategy is to remain silent when an answer or reaction is expected by the interlocutor. My data show that this seems to be the preferred strategy for Harry Potter, especially in conversations with Prof. Snape. Consider (17):

(17)

[situation: a conversation between Harry and Prof. Snape, who attempts to determine whether Harry has left the school grounds without permission]

“Mr. Malfoy has just been to see me with a strange story, Potter,” said Snape.

Harry didn’t say anything.

“He tells me that he was up by the Shrieking Shack when he ran into Weasley — apparently alone.”

Still, Harry didn’t speak. (HP 3: 282-283)

Note that the narrator specifies that Harry remains silent; it is implied that Prof. Snape allows for Harry to take a turn. In this conversation, the expectation of turn-taking behaviour is violated; one assumes that this is Harry’s intentional choice. This opens his silence to an interpretation of impoliteness by Prof. Snape. Consider also (18), a conversation between the same dyad:

(18)

[situation: Harry has been caught reading an article about himself in class; he is ordered to work next to Prof. Snape’s desk so as to hinder him from continuing to read]

“All this press attention seems to have inflated your already over-large head, Potter,” said Snape quietly, once the rest of the class had settled down again.

Harry didn’t answer. He knew Snape was trying to provoke him; he had done this before. (HP 4: 515)

Here, the narrator specifies that the conversation follows a pre-established pattern of Prof. Snape using impoliteness to provoke a reaction in Harry, and Harry not reacting to this provocation. Again, Harry’s strategy of remaining silent is an intentional choice, which might constitute an offending event for Prof. Snape, as his conversational goals are not met. Consider also (19), in which Harry uses the same strategy in combination with a non-verbal conventionalised impoliteness formula in turning away and disregarding the interactant.

(19)

[situation: Prof. Snape suspects Harry to have broken into his office and to have stolen potion ingredients; he threatens Harry to make him tell the truth]

Harry said nothing. He turned back to his ginger roots once more, picked up his knife, and started slicing them again. (HP 4: 517)

The final cluster of absence of behaviour concerns the speaker giving orders to the hearer. Orders are an imposition on the hearer’s freedom of action, and thus, they tend to be uttered using mitigating strategies. Here I am interested in instances in which no such mitigating strategies are used to secure the hearer’s compliance with

the order. My data show that this strategy is predominantly used by speakers in a position of power relative to the hearer; their power allows these speakers to utter commands that the hearer will have to follow if they do not want to risk repercussions.

(20)

[situation: the narrator explains Count Olaf's practice of leaving notes with tasks that the Baudelaire children are to accomplish during the day]

One morning his note read, "My theatre troupe will be coming for dinner before tonight's performance. Have dinner ready for all ten of them by the time they arrive at seven o'clock. Buy the food, prepare it, set the table, serve dinner, clean up afterwards, and stay out of our way." Below that there was the usual eye, and underneath the note was a small sum of money for the groceries. (Series 1: 30)

In (20), Count Olaf leaves a note for the children containing a lengthy list of commands. No conventional request formulae such as 'Could you' are used; further, any routine formula that is expectable on composing a note, such as a greeting or an offer of thanks on the completion of the request, are absent.

Similarly, in (21), Prof. Snape forgoes the usage of a non-salient invitation to enter. Instead, an unmitigated command is used, which might be due to a heightened emotional state. Further, pointing might be open to an interpretation as a non-verbal conventionalised impoliteness formula; it is unclear here whether Prof. Snape is pointing at or into the room, or at the interactants.

(21)

[situation: Harry and Ron are taken into Prof. Snape's office after having insulted him]

"In!" he [Prof. Snape; MP] said, opening a door halfway down the cold passageway and pointing. (HP 2: 78)

The strategy of absence of behaviour in issuing commands is a prevalent one for Prof. Snape. Consider (22), an unmitigated request for information, and (23), a request for the addressee to change his seating arrangement.

(22)

[situation: Harry and Draco have been fighting in the hallway in front of Prof. Snape's classroom]

"And what is all this noise about?" said a soft, deadly voice. Snape had arrived. The Slytherins clamoured to give their explanations; Snape pointed a long yellow finger at Malfoy and said, "Explain." (HP 4: 299)

(23)

[situation: Prof. Snape has caught Harry, Ron and Hermione reading a magazine in class]

"Well, I think I had better separate the three of you, so you can keep your minds on your potions rather than on your tangled love lives. Weasley, you stay here. Miss Granger, over there, beside Miss Parkinson. Potter — that table in front of my desk. Move. Now." (HP 4: 515)

The above discussion has shown that while the strategy of absence of behaviour is not used often in my data (8 % of all instances of impolite strategies), it may be used to characterise certain speakers' personalities or preferred interaction style, as shown in the examples of Harry Potter and Prof. Snape.

### 10.3 Politic Behaviour

Im/politeness has been described as a scalar phenomenon (see e.g. Culpeper et al. 2003; Leech 2014: 216-219) with a middle ground that is neither polite nor impolite. This middle ground has been designated with a variety of terms, such as “non-polite” (Kotthoff 1996), “non-impolite” (Haugh & Bousfield 2012), or “default politeness” (Usami 2002).

I shall use Watts's (2003) term “politic” to designate this middle range. In his view, politic behaviour comprises “[I]nguistic behaviour which is perceived to be appropriate to the social constraints of the ongoing interaction, i.e. as non-salient” (Watts 2003: 19). It is behaviour that is unmarked and therefore often goes unnoticed, aiming at creating or maintaining an equilibrium between interactants in specific conversations (Watts 1989: 134-135).

The data contain 859 utterances that can be classified as non-salient and appropriate for the given situation or activity type. Politic utterances tend to occur regularly in specific types of situations and activities. Table 10.2 shows the preferred contexts for politic utterances in my data.

Lesson procedures and tasks are described to give the reader an insight into school life and to make her feel part of the school experience, e.g. in (1), a situation that shows Harry taking one of his final exams:

(1)

[situation: the students are taking their OWLs (Ordinary Wizarding Levels) in Charms. Harry is called forward to perform a task while Draco is being tested close by.]

“Professor Tofty is free, Potter.” squeaked Professor Flitwick, who was standing just inside the door. He pointed Harry toward what looked like the very oldest and baldest examiner, who was sitting behind a small table in a far corner, a short distance from Professor Marchbanks, who was halfway through testing Draco Malfoy.

“Potter, is it?” said Professor Tofty, consulting his notes and peering over his pince-nez at Harry as he approached. “The famous Potter?”

Out of the corner of his eye, Harry distinctly saw Malfoy throw a scathing look over at him; the wine glass Malfoy had been levitating fell to the floor and smashed. Harry could not suppress a grin. Professor Tofty smiled back at him encouragingly.

“That's it,” he said in his quavery old voice, “no need to be nervous... Now, if I could ask you to take this eggcup and make it do some cartwheels for me...” (HP 5: 713)

context	examples
lessons: specifically, giving instructions	“Now, if I could ask you to take this eggcup and make it do some cartwheels for me...” (HP 5: 713)
organisation and description of procedures in fields unrelated to school	“We’ve still got the shuttle, provided it’s not wired. There’s a locker full of provisions. Atlantean food mostly, so get used to fish and squid.” (AF 2: 174)
giving information, such as a character’s backstory	“Eight times I nabbed old Mulch. The last one was for the Koboi Labs job. As I recall, Mulch and his cousin set up as building contractors. [...]” (AF 2: 182-183)
formulae for starting and terminating interactions	“My name is Matilda Wormwood, Miss Trunchbull.” (MA: 157)
conversations among children	“What happened?” said Hermione anxiously [...]. “Ron, where are you?” (HP 4: 121)

Table 10.2: Preferred contexts for politic utterances in children’s fiction

The excerpt in (1) contains many utterances which are commonly associated with examinations and which are perceived as non-salient by the reader, such as giving information as to which examiner is currently free, asking the examinee’s name, commenting on potential nervousness and giving instructions on the task to be performed. One might argue whether the question about Harry’s fame goes beyond what is appropriate and acceptable in this situation, however as the narrator does not report on any reaction by Harry, he seems to perceive this utterance as acceptable.

Situations in a teaching context that contain politic behaviour may also have the potential to include impoliteness, such as in (2):

- (2)  
[situation: Harry is late for a Defense against the Dark Arts class]  
Harry skidded to a halt outside the Defense Against the Dark Arts classroom, pulled the door open, and dashed inside.  
“Sorry I’m late, Professor Lupin, I—”  
But it wasn’t Professor Lupin who looked up at him from the teacher’s desk; it was Snape.  
“This lesson began ten minutes ago, Potter, so I think we’ll make it ten points from Gryffindor. Sit down.”  
But Harry didn’t move.  
“Where’s Professor Lupin?” he said. (HP 2: 191)

Harry shows appropriate behaviour for arriving late to a classroom. He utters an apology (“sorry I’m late”) and, one assumes, intends to give reasons for his late arrival before he is interrupted by the teacher.<sup>139</sup> Hogwarts School has a point system in operation that rewards good behaviour, such as knowing a difficult answer in class, and punishes bad behaviour, such as late-coming; thus, deducting points is an appropriate way for a teacher to deal with this interruption. The situation moves beyond what is acceptable and expectable for this situation type when Harry remains standing to enquire after the whereabouts of the original teacher of the class, Prof. Lupin. This behaviour further interrupts the lesson, and places the focus of Harry’s classmates on him instead of the content of the lesson. This disruptive behaviour may have been introduced as it furthers the plot, as well as the development of the relationship between the interactants. It stands to assume that an arrival followed by a politic apology and a continuation of the lesson would be less exciting for the reader.

The exchange in (3) is interesting as a complete situation is narrated that progresses using only politic strategies.<sup>140</sup>

(3)

[situation: Draco enters Prof. Snape’s office, where Harry is learning about Occlumency. They pretend that Harry is taking remedial potions, instead.]

Snape’s office door banged open and Draco Malfoy sped in.

“Professor Snape, sir — oh — sorry —”

Malfoy was looking at Snape and Harry in some surprise.

“It’s all right, Draco,” said Snape, lowering his wand. “Potter is here for a little Remedial Potions.”

Harry had not seen Malfoy look so gleeful since Umbridge had turned up to inspect Hagrid. “I didn’t know,” he said, leering at Harry, who knew his face was burning. He would have given a great deal to be able to shout the truth at Malfoy — or, even better, to hit him with a good curse.

“Well, Draco, what is it?” asked Snape.

“It’s Professor Umbridge, sir — she needs your help,” said Malfoy. “They’ve found Montague, sir. He’s turned up jammed inside a toilet on the fourth floor.”

“How did he get in there?” demanded Snape.

“I don’t know, sir, he’s a bit confused...”

“Very well, very well — Potter,” said Snape, “we shall resume this lesson tomorrow evening instead.” (HP 5: 638-639)

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<sup>139</sup> This interruption could be perceived as salient, i.e. non-politic, in the given interaction; on the other hand, one could argue that coming late to class is disruptive for the teacher who, by interrupting any lengthy apologies, tries to keep the disturbance to the lesson to a minimum.

<sup>140</sup> This excludes Draco’s utterance ‘I didn’t know’, which is unmarked convention-driven impoliteness uttered with Harry as the intended target.

Draco begins the conversation with a politic address in uttering the name of the teacher together with the address ‘sir,’ which is the required form of address for male teaching personnel in Hogwarts. This norm is made explicit e.g. in (4), where Harry fails to follow it:

- (4)  
[situation: Harry has made a mistake in class during the practice of nonverbal spells]  
“Do you remember me telling you we are practicing *nonverbal* spells, Potter?”  
“Yes,” said Harry stiffly.  
“Yes *sir*.”  
“There's no need to call me ‘sir,’ Professor.” (HP 6: 171)

Here, Harry’s utterance of ‘yes’ is commented on by Prof. Snape, who offers a correction; the use of italics indicates a certain prosodic element; it is assumed that the speaker emphasises the title ‘sir’ to indicate its absence in Harry’s utterance. Harry then pretends to understand Prof. Snape’s utterance not as a correction, but as addressing himself; this can be classified as impolite in that it implies the belief that Harry is the more powerful and superior speaker in this interaction. It further shows how impoliteness can be used to challenge existing power relations within an institution.

Returning to the discussion of (3), Draco’s address is followed by an apology on realising he is interrupting a conversation, which again constitutes appropriate behaviour. Prof. Snape offers an acceptance of this apology (‘It’s all right, Draco’) and gives reasons for why he is not alone.

The question “Well, Draco, what is it?” attempts to focus the conversation from Harry to the problem at hand; this is potentially open to an interpretation as impolite, as it could be used to express the belief that Draco is dawdling. However, there are no paralinguistic or nonverbal cues that support this view.

Draco then states his reason for calling on Prof. Snape, ending every sentence with ‘sir’ as the required form of address. The conversation continues using politic strategies as Prof. Snape asks for more information, which is given. Prof. Snape’s repetition of ‘very well’ in the final line seems to have no direct addressee, but might be uttered to express annoyance at having to deal with the situation as such. The final dismissal is also appropriate for a student-teacher interaction.

Apart from lessons, politic utterances in children's fiction also tend to occur in cases that show characters discussing organisational matters, or describing certain procedures to an interactant. See, e.g., the explanations of Count Olaf's plans in (5):

(5)  
[situation: Count Olaf reports his plans to the Baudelaires]  
"I have a few errands to run," Olaf said. "Ha! First I'm going down to the basement, to retrieve the sugar bowl. Ha! Then I'm going up to the roof, to retrieve the Medusoid Mycelium. Ha! Then I'm going down to the lobby, to expose the fungus to everyone in the lobby. Ha! And then, finally, I'm going up to the roof, to escape without being seen by the authorities." (Series 12: 302-303)

Here, Count Olaf reports on the steps he plans on taking to escape from the hotel he is currently staying in with the Baudelaires. His repeated use of the interjection 'Ha!' seems to designate that he is pleased with his plan and does not have a direct addressee.

See also a description of a procedure in (6), which shows Prof. Dumbledore explaining to the caretaker Mr Filch how his cat's life can be saved after an accident:

(6)  
[situation: Mr Filch requires that a potion be made to save his cat, Mrs Norris]  
"We will be able to cure her, Argus," said Dumbledore patiently.  
"Professor Sprout recently managed to procure some Mandrakes. As soon as they have reached their full size, I will have a potion made that will revive Mrs. Norris." (HP 2: 144)

Prof. Dumbledore's detailed description of the steps needed to create the potion together with his reassurance that the cat can indeed be saved is perceived as non-salient in this type of situation. His utterances do not contain any features that go beyond what is appropriate or expectable in the given context, which further mark them as politic.

Note that impolite utterances may occur within a conversation that is otherwise politic, as in (7). Here, Commander Root, Artemis and Holly are shown in a strategic conversation. All utterances are politic in that they contribute to the conversational goal of developing a plan to defeat the goblins. The fact that designated character reactions include agreeing and completing each other's thoughts further supports the view that this conversation contains acceptable, appropriate utterances.

(7)  
[situation: Commander Root, Holly and Artemis discuss a possible strategy on how to overpower the B'wa Kell goblin cell that has taken over the city, Haven]  
Root answered his own question. "We've still got the shuttle, provided it's not wired. There's a locker full of provisions. Atlantean food mostly, so get used to fish and squid."



“And what do we know?”

Artemis took over. “We know that the goblins have a source in the LER. We also know if they tried to take out the LEP’s head, Commander Root, then they must be after the body. Their best chance of success would be to mount both operations simultaneously.”

Holly chewed her lip. “So that means –”

“That means there is probably some kind of revolution going on below ground.”

“The B’wa Kell against the LEP?” scoffed Holly. “No problem.”

“Generally, that may be true,” agreed Artemis. “But if your weapons are out –”

“Then so are theirs,” completed Root, “in theory.” Artemis moved closer to the glow cube.

“Worst-case scenario: Haven has been taken by the B’wa Kell, and the Council members are either dead or imprisoned. Quite honestly, things look grim.” (AF 2: 174)

Note however Holly’s comment “The B’wa Kell against the LEP?”, which uses the tag ‘scoffed.’ This opens it up to an interpretation as ironic and possibly impolite, as it entails the impolite belief that the idea of a revolution is far-fetched or unfeasible to her. As my data showed several situations of Holly using sarcasm or irony in conversations that are otherwise politic or non-salient, this seems an attempt of the author to characterise her as a speaker.

Politic utterances also tend to be used in situations where a character (and, with her, the reader) has to be informed of events that happened prior to the beginning of the narrative. See e.g. (8), in which Commander Root explains to Artemis who Mulch Diggums is. Note that Artemis has not previously encountered the character in the series; hence the explanation of Mulch’s identity is necessary in the fictional world. It further serves as a reminder for the reader, who has encountered the character in the first *Artemis Fowl* novel.

(8)

[situation: Commander Root and Artemis are in a strategic meeting, attempting to develop a plan]

“D’Arvit,” swore the commander. “I never thought I’d say this, but there’s only one fairy for a job like this ...”

Holly nodded. “Mulch Diggums.”

“Diggums?”

“A dwarf. Career criminal. The only fairy ever to break into Koboï Laboratories and live. Unfortunately, we lost him last year. Tunnelling out of your manor as it happens.”

“I remember him,” said Butler. “Nearly took my head off. A slippery character.”

Root laughed softly. “Eight times I nabbed old Mulch. The last one was for the Koboï Labs job. As I recall, Mulch and his cousin set up as building contractors. A way to get plans for secure facilities. They got the Koboï contract. Mulch left himself a back door. Typical Diggums, he breaks into the most secure facility under the planet, then tries to sell an alchemy vat to one of my squeals.” (AF 2: 183-184)

Commander Root’s description is non-salient, thus it can be described as paying the appropriate amount of ‘politeness coins’ for the interaction (see Watts’s (2003: 115) discussion of the relation of politeness and money).

Politic utterances are also often used in situations of introductions, interaction starters and interaction terminations; here, the characters use formulaic utterances that are perceived as non-salient and as an acceptable and expectable part of the action of greeting and leave-taking. In (9), Matilda is asked to introduce herself; her statement of her full name together with a form of address of the teacher is appropriate for the given interaction type and perceived as non-salient by the reader. Miss Trunchbull's reply may also be read as politic in that it contains a request for information; the assumption here is that Wormwood Motors are known within the community, and Miss Trunchbull seeks confirmation that Matilda is related to the owner. However, note the usage of 'that man;' using the demonstrative 'that' instead of the definite article 'the' opens the utterance as implying a certain distance or dislike towards Mr Wormwood. This is especially so since Miss Trunchbull does not choose the option of enquiring e.g. 'so your father owns Wormwood Motors' or some similar strategy, which could have implied a lesser degree of distance between the speaker and the father.

(9)

[situation: following an argument in class on Matilda's first day of school, Miss Trunchbull asks Matilda's name]

Matilda stood up and said, "My name is Matilda Wormwood, Miss Trunchbull."

"Wormwood, is it?" the Trunchbull said. "In that case you must be the daughter of that man who owns Wormwood Motors?"

"Yes, Miss Trunchbull." (MA: 157-158)

Introductions are also used in (10), which shows the Baudelaires and their new friends meeting their new coach, which the reader recognises as Count Olaf in disguise. Note that the friends here use appropriate greeting formulae, while the Baudelaires refuse to do so. The Quagmires have never met Count Olaf in any of his various disguises and hence wonder why the Baudelaires do not perform according to social rules; implicitly, it is made clear to the reader that the appropriate and expectable behaviour on meeting a new person is to utilise some routine greeting formula.

(10)

[Principal Nero introduces the new sports coach 'Genghis' to the Baudelaire children and their new friends Duncan and Isadora Quagmire]

"Children," Nero said, "get up off of your hay and say hello to Coach Genghis."

"Hello, Coach Genghis," Duncan said.

"Hello, Coach Genghis," Isadora said.

The Quagmire triplets each shook Coach Genghis's bony hand and then turned and gave the Baudelaires a confused look. They were clearly surprised to see the three siblings still

sitting on the hay and staring up at Coach Genghis rather than obeying Nero's orders. (Series 5: 67)

(11) shows the context of a telephone conversation, which entails the use of routine greeting and interaction termination formulae.

(11)

[situation: during dinner, somebody calls Aunt Josephine's house]

Violet stood up and walked to the phone in time to answer it on the third ring.

"Hello?" she asked.

"Is this Mrs. Anwhistle?" a wheezy voice asked.

"No," Violet replied. "This is Violet Baudelaire. May I help you?"

"Put the old woman on the phone, orphan," the voice said, and Violet froze, realizing it was Captain Sham. Quickly, she stole a glance at Aunt Josephine, who was now watching Violet nervously.

"I'm sorry," Violet said into the phone. "You must have the wrong number."

"Don't play with me, you wretched girl—" Captain Sham started to say, but Violet hung up the phone, her heart pounding, and turned to Aunt Josephine.

"Someone was asking for the Hopalong Dancing School," she said, lying quickly. "I told them they had the wrong number." (Series 3: 58-59)

(11) is interesting in that to any party listening to Violet's side of the telephone conversation, it seems to progress in a non-salient manner: one hears a greeting formula, followed by an introduction of the speaker that, one might assume, is preceded by the other party having mistaken the speaker's identity, which is then followed by information on having the wrong number. As Count Olaf employs impoliteness strategies upon realising that he is speaking to Violet, this scene serves multiple purposes: Violet is shown as clever in that she invents a situation that allows her both to disengage from Count Olaf and to be considerate of her anxious aunt; second, she undermines Olaf's attempts at engaging her in an impolite discourse in denying any effect of his utterances on her – one could argue that in using a politic script for wrong number calls, she is using unmarked context-driven impoliteness.

The final cluster of politic behaviour concerns situations in which children are shown having conversations amongst themselves, i.e. without any adult characters present. Consider, e.g., (12):

(12)

[situation: Harry, Ron and Hermione are walking through a wooded area at night; no lights are present]

Then he [Harry; MP] heard Ron yell with pain.

"What happened?" said Hermione anxiously, stopping so abruptly that Harry walked into her. "Ron, where are you? Oh this is stupid — lumos!"

She illuminated her wand and directed its narrow beam across the path. Ron was lying sprawled on the ground.

"Tripped over a tree root," he said angrily, getting to his feet again. (HP 4: 121)

Hermione's and Ron's utterances are perceived as non-salient in the given context; they concern facts pertaining to the immediate situational context. Hermione's statement 'this is stupid' expresses her annoyance at the lack of light, and is equally appropriate in the context of a dark, wooded area.

A politic discussion among children is also shown in (13), in which the Baudelaires and a friend attempt to make plans to escape. Note here that Count Olaf interrupts the conversation; interruptions are a conversational strategy that is open to an interpretation as impolite as they restrict the other's freedom of action.

(13)

[situation: the Baudelaire children are captured on the submarine *Queequeg* with a girl named Fiona; they try to develop an escape plan.]

"I could race up the rope ladder," Violet murmured to the others, "and fire up the engines of the *Queequeg*."

"We can't take the submarine underwater with the window gone," Fiona said. "We'd drown."

Klaus put his ear to the diving helmet, and heard his sister whimper, and then cough. "But how can we save Sunny?" he asked. "Time is running out."

Fiona eyed the far corner of the room. "I'll take that book with me," she said, "and—"

"Hurry up!" Count Olaf cried. "I can't stand around all day! I have plenty of people to boss around!" (Series 10: 198-199)

The above discussion has shown that non-salient utterances occur in children's fiction in specific contexts; their function is mainly

- a) to show the appropriate way of doing things in the fictional world, against which deviations can be judged;
- b) to give information that is necessary for the reader to understand the plot, the setting, or the relationship between the characters.

Note that impoliteness may be used at any point in an otherwise politic situation to further both the plot and character development.

#### **10.4 Polite Behaviour**

In Watts's (2003: 19) view, politeness and impoliteness share certain similarities in that "[I]inguistic behaviour perceived to go beyond what is expectable, i.e. salient behaviour, should be called *polite* or *impolite* depending on whether the behaviour itself tends towards the negative or positive end of the spectrum of politeness." Politeness is thus "an explicitly marked, conventionally interpretable subset of politic verbal behaviour" (Watts 1989: 136) that is a) made salient in some manner, and b) appropriate to the given context but positively marked (see Locher & Watts 2008: 79). As polite behaviour is understood to be under the "appropriate" umbrella one

may question how the markedness of polite behaviour differs from appropriacy, or politic behaviour (Culpeper 2008: 23). The key here is that first, whether or not a given behaviour is polite or politic is not an absolute distinction but a matter of degree; politeness, just like impoliteness, can be described as having fuzzy boundaries. Second, while politic behaviour is non-salient and hence goes unnoticed, polite behaviour is associated with a positive evaluation, i.e. a positive emotional response of the interactant (Locher & Watts 2008: 79). In contrast to impoliteness, which I understand to be face-threatening behaviour, I further see politeness with Kienpointner (1997) as behaviour that is face-enhancing.

Instances of this type of behaviour are very rare in the corpus. This is unsurprising as the data were chosen on the grounds that it contains many impoliteness tokens. The only instances of polite behaviour were found in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*; as there are very few, in the following I will discuss them all in some detail.

The first instance of behaviour that is open to an interpretation as polite is (1), where Count Olaf utters a request for help with his luggage.

(1)

[situation: Count Olaf, in the disguise of Stephano, has arrived at the house of the Baudelaires' uncle]

“Perhaps one of you might carry my suitcase into my room,” he suggested in his wheezy voice. “The ride along that smelly road was dull and unpleasant and I am very tired.” (Series 2: 45)

Here, Count Olaf's question goes beyond linguistic behaviour that is expectable in the given situation. On asking a new acquaintance for help, the phrase “Can you help me [do x]?” is pragmatically just as acceptable. The use of the modal ‘might’ and ‘perhaps’ here might potentially open his utterance to an interpretation of being over-polite, or ironic as he attempts to make the children do work for him, as refusing the request could be understood as intentional impoliteness on the Baudelaires' part.

Further, the corpus shows some instances of face-enhancing behaviour between Count Olaf and his girlfriend Esmé Squalor, such as in (2):

(2)

[situation: the Baudelaire children and Count Olaf discover a brown stain on a map they are reading]

“This is a coded stain,” Count Olaf explained. “I was taught to use this on maps when I was a little boy. It's to mark a secret location without anyone else noticing.”

“Except a smashing genius,” Esmé said. “I guess we’re heading for the Valley of Four Drafts.” (Series 9: 267)

Olaf’s girlfriend Esmé here refers to him as “a smashing genius,” and the reader assumes her to be sincere in doing so. In giving this compliment, Esmé uses a strategy that enhances Olaf’s positive face, and which makes him feel liked and appreciated. This is also true for (3), in which Esmé uses a term of endearment (“honey”). This face-enhancing device might be used here to counter potential criticism, as putting Sunny in a casserole dish might cause her death and thwart the couple’s plans of stealing the Baudelaire fortune:

(3)

[situation: Count Olaf and Esmé discuss where to keep Sunny Baudelaire, whom they have abducted]

“Will she be safe in a casserole dish?” Esmé said. “Remember, Olaf honey, if she dies then we can’t get our hands on the fortune.” (Series 10: 62)

Further, (4) shows one instance of behaviour that is intended by the speaker to be face-enhancing but that might not be perceived as such by the addressee:

(4)

[situation: Count Olaf intends to shoot a person walking towards him from a distance. Violet intends to save the person and tries to dissuade Olaf from shooting]

“You don’t want to waste your last harpoon,” Violet said, thinking quickly. “Who knows where you’ll find another one?”

“That’s true,” Olaf admitted. “You’re becoming an excellent henchwoman.” (Series 13: 36)

Here, the assumption is that Violet’s thought process is perceived as clever by Count Olaf, who intends to compliment her on it. However, it is unlikely that Violet understands this as a compliment, as she has no intentions of being a villain’s henchwoman, and as a villainous nature is generally not among the things one compliments another person for.

Further interactions on the desert island in *A Series of Unfortunate Events: The End* also contain instances of polite behaviour, as evidenced in (5):

(5)

[situation: Olaf and the children encounter Friday, a girl who lives on the island they have been stranded on after a storm. They introduce themselves to her]

She turned reluctantly to Olaf, who was glaring at Friday suspiciously. “And this is—”

“I am your king!” Olaf announced in a grand voice. “Bow before me, Friday!”

“No, thank you,” Friday said politely. “Our colony is not a monarchy. You must be exhausted from the storm, Baudelaires. It looked so enormous from shore that we didn’t think there’d be any castaways this time. Why don’t you come with me, and you can have something to eat?”

“We’d be most grateful,” Klaus said. “Do castaways arrive on this island very often?”

“From time to time,” Friday said, with a small shrug. “It seems that everything eventually washes up on our shores.” (Series 13: 39-40)

Klaus's utterance goes beyond what is required in the situation. As the Baudelaires have been on the run for a long period of time prior to arriving on the island, being welcomed by a stranger is an unexpected occurrence, and Klaus uses his utterance to express his utter thankfulness. The second instance of politeness in this scene is interesting:

"No, thank you," Friday said politely.

Friday's utterance is accompanied by the description "politely." This is problematic insofar as the mere act of thanking would be classed as non-salient behaviour in Watts's (2003) sense. The narrator label "polite" might hint at a lay understanding of politeness of the author, Lemony Snicket. Alternatively, the description "politely" might have been intentionally chosen to indicate that Friday remains friendly even if impoliteness is used towards her. Consider (6), which contains a conventionalised politeness marker used by Friday:

(6)

[situation: Count Olaf attempts to take control of the desert island, of which Friday is an inhabitant]

Count Olaf gave Friday a terrible scowl, and he pointed his harpoon gun straight at the young girl. "If you don't bow before me, Friday, I'll fire this harpoon gun at you!"

The Baudelaires gasped, but Friday merely frowned at the villain. "In a few minutes," she said, "all the inhabitants of the island will be out storm scavenging. They'll see any act of violence you commit, and you won't be allowed on the island. Please point that weapon away from me." (Series 13: 41-42)

The use of the politeness marker is interesting here as it occurs directly following a threat with the structure [if you do not x] [then y], where [y] is detrimental to the hearer's wishes and well-being. Hence, in uttering 'please,' Friday gives more than required by the interaction. Possible explanations include an ironic usage of the politeness marker; however, this is not supported by other features of the message, such as Friday's frown. A more likely explanation might be that politeness is used to characterise Friday as she does not retaliate with impoliteness to Count Olaf's threat. Further, it might be the case that different politeness norms hold in the island community that Friday is a part of.

In all, however, politeness markers occur very rarely in the data, that is, in conversations between the protagonists and the antagonists of a children's book. This might be due to the nature of fictional discourse in that only conflictive discourse has the ability to further character development and plot. A high usage of politeness strategies would not allow the author to fulfil certain narrative functions.

Further, as shown above in ch. 4.2., impoliteness is entertaining for the reader for a variety of reasons. It stands to reason that reading about polite interactions would be less entertaining, which might further explain why so little politeness strategies are used.

### **10.5 Conflict Beginnings**

In his 2007 paper Bousfield (2007a: 2185) discusses “the triggering, progression and resolution of spoken interactional exchanges which contain impoliteness” using fly-on-the-wall television documentary shows as a data set. These shows tend to be semi-scripted, or at least contain an observer effect due to the presence of a camera team, and are thus semi-naturalistic in nature. In this manner, they are similar to the constructed nature of children’s fiction. The beginning of conflictive discourse in children’s fiction, however, has not yet been investigated in detail (for the progression and use of impoliteness strategies, see ch. 10). Bousfield notes that

[i]mpoliteness does not exist in a vacuum and it does not in normal circumstances just spring from ‘out of the blue’. The contexts in which impoliteness appears and is utilised strategically must have been previously invoked, that is, with all other things being equal, the interactant who utters impoliteness must have felt sufficiently provoked at some point prior to actually delivering the impoliteness (Bousfield 2007a: 2190).

That is, usually there is an ‘Offending Event’ (Jay 1992) which provokes the speaker into using linguistic strategies that are open to an interpretation as impolite. Jay (1992: 98-100) provides a list of offender and event characteristics as the most salient aspects of an offending event, such as the offender’s age, gender or nationality, and event characteristics such as unexpected behaviour, language use, or intentionality.

An analysis into these salient aspects in children’s fiction did not prove fruitful as especially in later volumes of book series, the antagonist begins a conflict without there having been an offending event apart from the mere existence of the protagonist.<sup>141</sup> See, on this note, ch. 11 on metapragmatic comments, where I show

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<sup>141</sup> Note that many interactions in my data are set in a school context and may be described as bullying, such as interactions between Draco and Harry. In many of these interactions, the offending event is the same, i.e. Harry’s (implied) characteristics, such as great arrogance. Consider e.g. “Malfoy was gloating at every possible opportunity. [...] ‘Missing the elephant man [Hagrid; MP]?’” (HP 4: 443), which shows that Draco’s utterances are unprovoked, i.e. are not made as a reaction to an offending event; instead, Draco intentionally aims at offending Harry.



that antagonists tend to express the same impolite belief towards the protagonist irrespective of the situation at hand.

However, to gain an insight into conflict beginnings, I investigated which character of the dyads in my data started the conflict. Note here that I use the term “antagonist” to refer to the main antagonist of the book or book series, i.e. Count Olaf, Prof. Snape, Draco Malfoy, Commander Root, Miss Trunchbull and Matilda’s parents Mr and Mrs Wormwood. The term also includes their associates who can start a conflict with the protagonist, such as Count Olaf’s girlfriend Esmé Squalor, Draco’s friends Crabbe and Goyle, or Commander Root’s subordinates, officers Holly and Foaly.

The same holds for the term “protagonist:” a conflict may be started by the protagonists themselves, i.e. the three Baudelaire children, Harry Potter, Artemis Fowl, or Matilda, as well as by their friends and associates, such as Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, Kit Snicket, or Mr Poe.

In the following, each book or book series is discussed in detail in terms of the number of conflicts begun by either party. Unclear cases will be discussed in detail, and cases in which the conflict is started by an associated character instead of the main protagonist or antagonist will be made explicit in the further description. Note that in the following tables, the mean percentage of conflicts started by the antagonist will be colour-coded (up to 75% of conflicts begun by the antagonist: light red; 75%-100% of conflicts begun by the antagonist: dark red).

	Mat-Trunchbull	Mat-parents
Protagonist	1	4
Antagonist	3	8
situations	4	12
% antagonist	75%	66,6%

Table 10.3: Conflicts in *Matilda*

In the data subset *Matilda – Miss Trunchbull*, Matilda does not verbally start any conflict. However, in the final conversation with Miss Trunchbull, she intentionally sets a live newt onto her teacher, which can be counted as an offending event (MA: 166). The majority of conflicts is begun by Miss Trunchbull, who accuses Matilda of events she had no control over, such as a newt that another student placed on her

desk, or that are commonly not understood to be offending events, such as attending a school as a student:

(1)

[situation: Miss Trunchbull enters the classroom]

Suddenly in marched the gigantic figure of the Headmistress in her belted smock and green breeches.

“Good afternoon, children,” she barked.

“Good afternoon, Miss Trunchbull,” they chirruped.

The Headmistress stood before the class, legs apart, hands on hips, glaring at the small boys and girls who sat nervously at their desks in front of her.

“Not a very pretty sight,” she said. Her expression was one of utter distaste, as though she were looking at something a dog had done in the middle of the floor. “What a bunch of nauseating little warts you are.” (MA: 141)

In the data set *Matilda – Parents*, Matilda starts roughly a third of all conflicts. Consider the reason for her doing so: she criticises her father’s illegal work practices (MA: 25), plays tricks on her family after having been hurt by them (e.g. MA: 29), and informs her family that she wants to live with Miss Honey (MA: 238). In short, a reader identifying with the protagonist will consider these ‘just causes.’

	HP-SN 1	HP-SN 2	HP-SN 3	HP-SN 4	HP-SN 5	HP-SN 6
Protago- n- ist	0	1	1	0	0	2
Antago- n- ist	6	4	8	7	11	10
situa- t- ions	6	5	9	7	12	12
% antag- o- n- ist	100%	80%	88,8%	100%	91,6%	83,3%

Table 10.4: Conflicts in the *Harry Potter* series subcorpus HP-SN

In the Harry – Prof. Snape subcorpus of the *Harry Potter* series (see Table 10.4), the majority of conflicts (> 80%) are begun by the antagonist. Some cases proved conflictive, e.g. a scene in HP 3 in which Harry is late for class and apologises, i.e. he is presenting politic behaviour. However, Prof. Snape sees his lateness as an offending event in that he feels interrupted in his teaching, and possibly not respected as an authority figure (HP 3: 170).<sup>142</sup> Further, one conflict in HP 1 constitutes an unclear situation: Prof. Snape informs Harry that he has broken a school rule in bringing a library book to the courtyard. However, Harry insists that there is

<sup>142</sup> See also a discussion of this example in ch. 10.3.

no such rule, which would render Prof. Snape's utterance illegitimate (HP 1: 181-182).

In most cases, an offending event cannot be identified. See, however, a situation in HP 5, in which Harry uses Prof. Snape's Pensieve<sup>143</sup> without permission and accesses some intimate memories (HP 5: 649). Further, Harry begins a conflict by attempting to use a magical curse on Prof. Snape; the offending event here was Harry witnessing Prof. Snape commit a murder.

Concerning conflicts begun by a third, associated party, the single conflict counted as "started by the protagonist" in HP 2 is begun by Ron, who insults Prof. Snape, unaware that the latter is standing behind him, i.e. (2) is an instance of accidental face-threat:

(2)

[situation: Harry and Ron wonder about Prof. Snape's whereabouts during the start of term banquet]

"Maybe he's ill!" said Ron hopefully.

"Maybe he's *left*," said Harry, "because he missed out on the Defence Against the Dark Arts job *again*!"

"Or he might have been *sacked*!" said Ron enthusiastically. "I mean, everyone hates him—"

"Or maybe," said a very cold voice right behind them, "he's waiting to hear why you two didn't arrive on the school train." (HP 2: 77-78)

Ron's embarrassed reactions during the remainder of the scene leads the reader to assume that he would not have made his utterance had he been aware that Prof. Snape could overhear it.

The single conflict counted as "started by the protagonist" in HP 5 is equally not begun by Harry, but by Sirius Black, in whose house Prof. Snape and Harry are meeting to discuss their Occlumency lessons (3).

(3)

[situation: Harry enters the kitchen to find Prof. Snape and Sirius sitting at the table, silently looking at each other]

"Er," said Harry to announce his presence.

Snape looked around at him, his face framed between curtains of greasy black hair.

"Sit down, Potter."

"You know," said Sirius loudly, leaning back on his rear chair legs and speaking to the ceiling, "I think I'd prefer it if you didn't give orders here, Snape. It's my house, you see."

(HP 5: 518)

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<sup>143</sup> A Pensieve is a device that allows one to store one's memories so that they can be accessed by oneself or others at a later date; it works much like an electronic data carrier.

In the HP-SN subcorpus, then, there is a tendency for the protagonist to start a conflict in situations of accidental face-threat, such as Ron’s utterance above, or in situations in which there is an offending event that is objectively problematic, such as the antagonist committing a crime.

As shown in Table 10.5, in the HP-DM subcorpus, Draco begins more conflicts than Harry, and for the majority of cases, no offending event can be identified. This contributes to the characterisation of Draco as an antagonist.

	HP-DM 1	HP-DM 2	HP-DM 3	HP-DM 4	HP-DM 5	HP-DM 6
Protagonist	0	1	2	0	3	0
Antagonist	6	9	14	14	18	4
situations	6	11	16	14	21	4
% antagonist	100%	81,8%	87,5%	100%	85,7%	100%

Table 10.5: Conflicts in the *Harry Potter* series subcorpus HP-DM

One impoliteness event in HP 1, which shows Draco introducing himself to Harry and his friends on the school train, has a clear offending event.

(4)

“And my names Malfoy, Draco Malfoy.”

Ron gave a slight cough, which might have been hiding a snigger.

“Think my name’s funny, do you? No need to ask who you are. My father told me all the Weasleys have red hair, freckles, and more children than they can afford.” (HP 1: 108)

Draco’s introduction is politic; Ron’s cough, which can be interpreted as a disguised laugh about Draco’s family name, is an offending event for Draco, who then feels licensed to use impoliteness towards Ron. A similar case is found in HP 6; here, Draco is the first speaker to use impoliteness, however he perceives Harry accidentally listening in on him as an offending event (HP 6: 488).

In HP 2, one situation is difficult to count, as Ron and Harry use a potion to transform themselves into Draco’s friends Crabbe and Goyle for an hour. During the conversation, Draco uses impoliteness strategies towards Harry and Ron, but is unaware he is speaking to them. Considering previous conversations between this pairing, however, leads the reader to believe that Draco would also have used impoliteness strategies had he been aware of the true identity of the hearers (HP 2:

220-224).

	AF-Root 1	AF-Root 2	AF-Root 3
Protagonist	1	3	0
Antagonist	2	6	2
situations	3	10 <sup>144</sup>	2
% antago- n-ist	66,6%	60%	100%

Table 10.6: Conflicts in the *Artemis Fowl* series

As shown in Table 10.6, the corpus Artemis – Commander Root provides a less clear-cut case. Artemis seems to be constructed as a more controversial character than Harry. Compare 66% of conflicts started by the antagonist in AF 1 with 80% as the lowest number of conflicts started by the antagonist for any book in the Harry – Prof. Snape subcorpus.

Note here that in AF 1 and AF 2, half of all conflicts are not begun by the antagonist himself, but by persons associated with him, i.e. subordinate soldiers such as Holly and Foaly. Also note that while in AF 3, the antagonist starts all conflicts, the total number of conflicts is very low (two conflicts, which is the lowest number of conflicts per book in my data). The fact that Artemis and Root have begun to work together and are becoming allies, if not friends reduces the number of conflicts. It further shows how impoliteness strategies can be used to characterise a change in character relationships; in this case: the closer the characters are, the less impoliteness is used or needed. In AF 1, Artemis seeks to steal fairy technical advances and thereby risks exposing the fairy world; in AF 3, this set-up no longer holds. Instead, fairies and humans are working together to prevent the discovery of the fairy world.

As Tables 10.6 and 10.7 show, in 12 of the 13 instalments of *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, more than 60% of all conflicts are begun by the antagonist. It is interesting to note that progressively more conflicts are begun by Count Olaf as the series continues.

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<sup>144</sup> Note here that AF 2 contains one situation that consists only of politic utterances.

	Series 1	Series 2	Series 3	Series 4	Series 5	Series 6	Series 7
Protagonist	1	5	4	1	1	2	0
Antagonist	12	10	8	5	4	3	4
situations	14	16	12	7	6	5	4
% antagonist	85,7%	62,5%	66,6%	71,4%	66,6%	60%	100%

Table 10.7: Conflicts in the *A Series of Unfortunate Events* series (1)

The protagonists in this series tend to begin conflicts to

- a) impress upon Count Olaf in disguise that they are aware of his true identity,
- b) convince other, often dominant third parties that the speaker in disguise is Count Olaf,
- c) to hinder Count Olaf at following through with a plan that would result in negative consequence for them, or
- d) express anger at Count Olaf for committing crimes.

That is, in all cases an offending event can be identified. In contrast, an offending event cannot be identified in all cases of the antagonist starting a conflict; instead, the mere presence of the Baudelaires seems to be offensive to Count Olaf, due to which he feels licensed to use impoliteness.

	Series 8	Series 9	Series 10	Series 11	Series 12	Series 13
Protagonist	0	1	4	0	2	6
Antagonist	9	12	20	6	6	7
situations	9	15	24	6	8	15
% antagonist	100%	80%	83,3%	100%	75%	46%

Table 10.8: Conflicts in the *A Series of Unfortunate Events* series (2)

For the whole corpus, the mean percentage of conversations started by the antagonist is 82,13%. One reason for this rather high percentage may be found in the power relations that pertain in the conversational dyads. The antagonist is usually

the more powerful person in the interaction, e.g., a teacher or headmistress, a parent or guardian, or military personnel, who uses power over the protagonist. The antagonists are imbued with institutional power and hence are licensed to use impoliteness. Further, they do not fear repercussions from the child, but instead may use their institutional power to punish the child for retaliating in kind.

The discussion further shows that conflict beginnings may be used to characterise a speaker as antagonistic: Antagonistic characters begin conflicts without an identifiable prior provocation; instead, the existence of the protagonist is seen as an offending event. Conflict beginnings may also be used to characterise the protagonist: Protagonists tend to begin conflicts to defend themselves or third parties who are perceived as being in need of help, or to gain power against an adult character in specific interactions.

### **10.6 Conflict Termination**

Writing on the structure of impolite discourse, Bousfield (2007a: 2202) notes that “[t]hus far, little attention has been given by researchers of (im)politeness to how the discourse is resolved.” Hence, it is one of my aims in this study to investigate how the termination of impolite exchanges is conceptualised in children’s fiction. Specifically, I investigate which strategies authors choose to report on conversation termination.

As the above quote by Bousfield implies, there is a dearth of analytical criteria for conflict termination. Vuchinich (1990) proves an exception; he proposes a classification of five types of conflict termination: (1) submission to opponent, (2) dominant third party intervention, (3) compromise, (4) stand-off, and (5) withdrawal. However, these strategies are only partially applicable to my data, as three of Vuchinich’s types of conflict termination do not occur. These are in detail:

- (1) submission to opponent, that is, the hearer accepting the speaker’s position,
- (3) compromise, i.e. the negotiation of a ‘middle ground,’ and
- (4) stand-off, i.e. speakers who refuse to either submit or compromise.

I therefore propose my own classification of conflict termination strategies in children’s fiction based on my corpus data. In total, there are nine strategies in my data that authors choose from to end scenes in which impolite behaviour is shown; these are presented in Fig. 10.7. I discuss each termination strategy in turn.

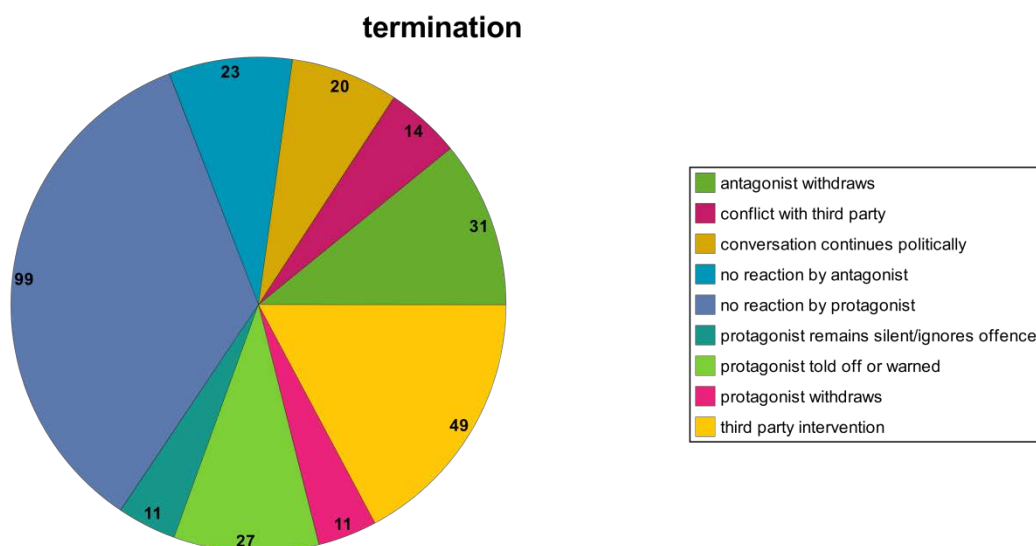


Fig. 10.7: Conflict termination strategies in children’s fiction

First, a speaker may withdraw from a conversation, e.g. by physically exiting the location in which the conversation occurs. My data include 31 instances of the antagonist withdrawing from a conflictive conversation (10,5%). The strategy is prevalent in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, as in (1):

- (1)  
[situation: Count Olaf gives orders to the Baudelaires, and attempts to take Sunny, who is disguised as ‘Chabo’]  
“Chabo would prefer to stay with us,” Violet said.  
“I couldn’t care less what Chabo would prefer,” Olaf snarled, and picked up the youngest Baudelaire as if she were a watermelon. “Now get busy.”  
Count Olaf and Esmé Squalor walked out of the tent with Chabo, leaving the elder Baudelaires alone with the flaming torch. (Series 9: 269)

After a conflict over the preferred whereabouts of ‘Chabo,’ Count Olaf withdraws; this is combined with a dismissal (‘get busy’). Here, the protagonists are unable to react or continue the conflict as the antagonists physically leave the location.

The strategy is often used by Count Olaf, especially in the ending of the narrative. All thirteen volumes of *A Series of Unfortunate Events* follow a similar structure in that the Baudelaires and/or associated adult characters uncover Count



Olaf's current disguise; the antagonist then flees, i.e. physically exits the conflict, to appear again in a different disguise in the next volume.

In a similar manner, the protagonist may withdraw from a conflictive conversation; this occurs 11 times in my data (3,7%). See e.g. (2), in which Violet makes her siblings withdraw after a disagreement:

(2)

[situation: the Baudelaires, Mr Poe, Count Olaf in the disguise of 'Stephano' and Dr Lucafont are discussing who rides in which car.]

"So it's very simple," Stephano said. "You and the corpse will go in Dr. Lucafont's car, and I will drive behind you with the children."

"No," Klaus said firmly.

"Baudelaires," Mr. Poe said, just as firmly, "will you three please excuse yourselves?"

"Afoop!" Sunny shrieked, which probably meant "No."

"Of course we will," Violet said, giving Klaus and Sunny a significant look, and taking her siblings' hands, she half-led them, half-dragged them out of the kitchen. (Series 2: 120)

My data also contain 20 instances of characters continuing a conversation politically after the use of impoliteness or conflictive discourse (6,7% of conflict terminations). This strategy is different from the 'compromise' discussed in Vuchinich (1990), as the characters do not attempt to resolve the conflict; instead, the use of impoliteness is ignored or not commented on and the conversation continues. This strategy is used most often in the *Artemis Fowl* series: Artemis and Commander Root are shown to continue conversations politically, especially when military strategies are discussed. See e.g. (3), in which officer Holly's sarcastic comment is ignored, and the conversation moves on to a discussion of the military options open to the interactants:

(3)

[situation: Artemis, Commander Root and his officer Holly discuss a military strategy; Artemis proposes a view on the situation]

"That means there is probably some kind of revolution going on below ground."

"The B'wa Kell against the LEP?" scoffed Holly. "No problem."

"Generally, that may be true," agreed Artemis. "But if your weapons are out –"

"Then so are theirs," completed Root, "in theory." Artemis moved closer to the glow cube.

"Worst-case scenario: Haven has been taken by the B'wa Kell, and the Council members are either dead or imprisoned. Quite honestly, things look grim." (AF 2: 174)

Conflicts may also be terminated by a strategy proposed in Vuchinich (1990), i.e. a (dominant) third party intervention; this occurs 49 times in my data (16,6%). Here, a third party intervenes and ends the conflict. Usually, the third party is an authority figure who has some sort of power over the participants. The strategy e.g. shows members of the teaching staff intervening and is prevalent in both *Harry Potter*

subcorpora, i.e. Harry – Prof. Snape and Harry – Draco. See e.g. (4), in which Prof. Moody ends a conflict between Harry and Draco:

(4)  
[situation: Draco and Harry have gotten into an argument]  
“Don’t you dare insult my mother, Potter.”  
“Keep your fat mouth shut, then,” said Harry, turning away.  
BANG!  
Several people screamed — Harry felt something white-hot graze the side of his face — he plunged his hand into his robes for his wand, but before he’d even touched it, he heard a second loud BANG, and a roar that echoed through the entrance hall.  
“OH NO YOU DON’T, LADDIE!”  
Harry spun around. Professor Moody was limping down the marble staircase. (HP 4: 204)

Prof. Moody ends the conflict by turning Draco into a ferret.<sup>145</sup>

The third party, however, need not be an authority figure. Friends or classmates may advise the protagonist to end the conflict, or physically restrain them.

See e.g. (5), which shows Ron giving Harry advice:

(5)  
[situation: The first Potions lesson. Harry’s classmate Neville has injured himself and is taken to the hospital wing]  
Then he [Prof. Snape; MP] rounded on Harry and Ron, who had been working next to Neville.  
“You — Potter — why didn’t you tell him not to add the quills? Thought he’d make you look good if he got it wrong, did you? That’s another point you’ve lost for Gryffindor.”  
This was so unfair that Harry opened his mouth to argue, but Ron kicked him behind their cauldron.  
“Don’t push it,” he muttered, “I’ve heard Snape can turn very nasty.” (HP 1: 139)

The narration shows that Harry believes Prof. Snape’s utterance to be ‘unfair,’ and that he wishes to argue the point, which could lead to a conflict. Harry’s classmate Ron advises against beginning a conflict as this will have unspecified negative consequences; the reader may assume that these could contain, e.g., a further loss of House points, detention, or merely having to experience an angry teacher.

While third parties usually tend to end the conflict between the protagonist and antagonist, 14 cases in my data (4,8%) show the antagonist transferring the conflict to the third party. This means that the protagonist is disregarded, and instead, impoliteness is used by the antagonist towards the intervening third party.

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<sup>145</sup> *Harry Potter* tends to include quite inventive third party conflict terminations, see e.g. nurse Madam Pomfrey, who intervenes in a conflict between Harry, Prof. Snape and the Minister of Magic:

“I’m not distressed, I’m trying to tell them what happened!” Harry said furiously. “If they’d just listen —”  
But Madam Pomfrey suddenly stuffed a large chunk of chocolate into Harry’s mouth; he choked, and she seized the opportunity to force him back onto the bed. (HP 3: 390)

See (6), in which Sirius intervenes on Harry's behalf; presumably he has taken offence at Prof. Snape's impolite belief that Harry's Potions skills are seriously lacking.

(6)

[situation: Prof. Snape has a conflictive discourse with Harry during which Harry is informed that he will be taking extra lessons with Prof. Snape; Harry's godfather Sirius Black is present during the conversation]

"I will expect you at six o'clock on Monday evening, Potter. My office. If anybody asks, you are taking Remedial Potions. Nobody who has seen you in my classes could deny you need them."

He turned to leave, his black traveling cloak billowing behind him.

"Wait a moment," said Sirius, sitting up straighter in his chair.

Snape turned back to face them, sneering.

"I am in rather a hurry, Black... unlike you, I do not have unlimited leisure time..." (HP 5: 519)

(6) is different from the (dominant) third party intervention strategy discussed above as the third party, in this case Sirius, does not end the conflict between Harry and Prof. Snape; the narration informs the reader that Prof. Snape was about to leave, hence Sirius's comment renews the conflict rather than attempting to terminate it. Note that Sirius is the intended recipient of Prof. Snape's final utterance, which reduces Harry to a bystander.

A protagonist may also intentionally choose to remain silent or to ignore an offence; this occurs 11 times in my data (3,7%). A speaker may choose to stay silent for several reasons. First, she may attempt to save or defend her own face by not replying to an impolite utterance. Further, she may act offensively in that she refuses to speak where an answer is expected, or refuses to be polite where such behaviour is expectable from the context. Staying silent may also be the only option for persons in a position of low power in conflictive discourse (Bousfield 2007a: 2196). This strategy is prevalent for Harry; see e.g. (7):

(7)

[situation: the students are going on a visit to Hogsmeade village. Since Harry did not receive written permission by his guardians, he has to remain in the school]

"Staying here, Potter?" shouted Malfoy, who was standing in line with Crabbe and Goyle.

"Scared of passing the dementors?"

Harry ignored him and made his solitary way up the marble staircase, through the deserted corridors, and back to Gryffindor Tower. (HP 3: 152)

The narrator here makes it explicit that Harry has perceived Draco's utterance and, one may assume, understood the impolite belief that he is too afraid to leave the school building. However, he chooses to ignore the utterance. We may exclude power relations and face-saving as reasons for staying silent as both participants are

of equal power, and as the impolite belief has already been uttered and perceived by bystanders. Instead, Harry may attempt to be offensive, as Draco expects a verbal reaction.

Further, the protagonist may stay silent for a different reason, i.e. as she is explicitly told to do so. The conflict termination strategy ‘the protagonist is told off or warned’ occurs 27 times (9,2%) in my data. It is a preferred strategy in *Matilda*, where the protagonist is told off or warned by Miss Trunchbull and her parents, that is, by persons with high (institutional) power. See (8), a dialogue between Matilda and her father:

(8)  
Matilda’s father had a fine crop of black hair which he parted in the middle and of which he was exceedingly proud. “Good strong hair,” he was fond of saying, “means there’s a good strong brain underneath.”  
“Like Shakespeare,” Matilda had once said to him.  
“Like who?”  
“Shakespeare, daddy.”  
“Was he brainy?”  
“Very, daddy.”  
“He had masses of hair, did he?”  
“He was bald, daddy.”  
To which the father had snapped, “If you can’t talk sense then shut up.” (MA: 56-57)

Here, Mr Wormwood is offended by Matilda’s use of irony, as she implies that having a ‘fine crop of black hair’ is not correlated with intelligence. His use of a conventionalised impoliteness formula (threat) as a conflict termination strategy expresses the impolite belief that Matilda is not very bright, and implies that she will face consequences if she continues talking.

The most prevalent conflict termination strategy in my data is, interestingly, a lack of conflict termination. In 99 cases, the conflict ends with an impolite utterance by the antagonist; no reaction by the protagonist, either verbal or non-verbal, is recorded. This amounts to 33,6% of all instances of conflict termination. See, e.g., (9), a stretch of conflictive discourse between Harry and Prof. Snape:

(9)  
[situation: Harry makes a mistake in a lesson on nonverbal spells]  
“Do you remember me telling you we are practicing *nonverbal* spells, Potter?”  
“Yes,” said Harry stiffly.  
“Yes *sir*.”  
“There’s no need to call me ‘sir,’ Professor.” The words had escaped him before he knew what he was saying. Several people gasped, including Hermione. Behind Snape, however, Ron, Dean and Seamus grinned appreciatively.  
“Detention, Saturday night, my office,” said Snape. “I do not take cheek from anyone, Potter... not even the *Chosen One*.” (HP 6: 171)

The situation ends after Prof. Snape's mention of Harry as the 'chosen one.' The author does not describe any reactions or emotional states of the protagonist; instead, the narration continues after the lesson with Ron praising Harry's reaction "once they were safely on their way to break a short while later" (HP 6: 171).

In 23 instances (7,8%), no reaction by the antagonist is described. This strategy is prevalent in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*; here conflicts often end with the Baudelaires' use of impoliteness, as in (10):

(10)

[situation: Count Olaf in the disguise of 'Stephano' tells the Baudelaires that their uncle Monty will not join them on their planned expedition to Peru]

"Don't be ridiculous," Klaus said. "Uncle Monty wouldn't miss this expedition for the world."

"Ask him," Stephano said, and the Baudelaires saw a familiar expression on his face. His mouth scarcely moved, but his eyes were shining as if he'd just told a joke. "Why don't you ask him? He's down in the Reptile Room."

"We *will* ask him," Violet said. "Uncle Monty has no intention of letting you take us to Peru alone." She rose from the bed, took the hands of her siblings, and walked quickly past Stephano who was smirking in the doorway.

"We *will* ask him," Violet said again, and Stephano gave a little bow as the children walked out of the room. (Series 2: 87-88)

Here, the situation is slightly atypical in that 'Stephano' does show a physical reaction to Violet's utterance, i.e. a bow. However, he does not verbally counter Violet's implication that he is lying about Uncle Monty's intentions.

I propose two reasons for the high use of the 'no (verbal) reaction' conflict termination strategy in my data:

First, in most conflictive interactions, the reactions to impoliteness by the specific interactant are made clear within the conversation, for instance by the protagonist countering with impoliteness, or by showing the protagonist's emotional reactions. Thus, the author may decide that restating any emotional reactions at the end of the exchange is redundant, as it does not add to the narrative.

Second, and tying in with the above observation, the strategy may be used for reasons of entertainment. As stressed in ch. 4.2, it is amusing for an audience to perceive others fight and use impoliteness. Reporting on the resolution of a conflict, i.e. the reinstatement of equilibrium, to use Culpeper's (1998) term, might be less so, especially since children's fiction contains a high number of conflictive conversations. Hence the author might opt to exclude conflict resolutions that do not add relevant plot points. See e.g. (3) in *Artemis Fowl* above: the politic conversation is necessary for the following plot, as e.g. strategies are discussed; this is interesting

and relevant for the reader. Phatic politic talk, such as discussing the weather, does not occur; I assume the relevance for the reader is less apparent. Further, what is relevant is that the audience understands and takes pleasure in the impoliteness used; showing the resolution of the conflict in all cases is not necessary.

### **10.7 Conclusion**

The above discussion has shown that all impoliteness strategies as proposed by Culpeper (2011a) are used in children's fiction. They are employed both by the antagonist and the protagonist for a variety of reasons: First, impoliteness strategies are used to express impolite beliefs about the other and frame the other as belonging to an out-group from which one wishes to disassociate; this shows the connection of impoliteness and identity. Second, they may be used by speakers to keep or to gain power in interaction. Third, the use of multiple impoliteness strategies may characterise a speaker as antagonistic. This brings me to my hypotheses, which I revisit here:

- 1) The more powerful participant will use more impoliteness strategies than the less powerful participant because the latter cannot retaliate in kind; this will hold especially in institutional settings.

This hypothesis can be substantiated, e.g., by the fact that in conflict terminations, protagonists tend to choose the 'do not respond' strategy, such as Harry. It can further be seen in the fact that responses to impolite interactions are seldom reported for the protagonist in conversation terminations. In conversation middles, however, the hypothesis only holds for the beginning of the books or series. This means that impoliteness is used by the protagonists when they a) grow older and hence have more social power, and b) when they feel more comfortable in the given social setting, as well as their identity. This, again, demonstrates the strong link between impoliteness and characterisation.

My second hypothesis was that

- 2) in addition, and for the same reasons, the more powerful participant will begin more conflicts than the less powerful participant.

This hypothesis, again, holds true as the mean percentage of conversations started by the antagonist is comparatively high (82,13%). However, one has to note that who begins a conflict is also used to characterise speakers. For instance, Artemis is

more likely than other protagonists to begin a conflict and to challenge existing power relations to construe himself as the dominant speaker in an interaction. This shows how strongly power and impoliteness are related.

My third hypothesis states that

- 3) [c]oncerning the use of impoliteness strategies, the more contextual knowledge is needed to conceptualise that impoliteness has taken place in a given situation, the less the strategy will be used in children's fiction.

This also holds true in that form-driven impoliteness is the strategy that occurs most often in my data. Together with conventionalised impoliteness formulae, it makes up roughly half of all instances of impoliteness strategies (51%). In contrast, strategies that require much knowledge of contextual features and situational norms to be understood are used less often. This can be seen in the fact that the strategies of context-driven impoliteness: absence of behaviour and external convention-driven impoliteness together make up only 10 % of all utterances that contain impoliteness strategies in my data. What is surprising is that internal convention-driven impoliteness and unmarked context-driven impoliteness are fairly prominent in my data. One reason might be their use in later instances of book series, especially *Harry Potter*; it is assumed that the reader matures along with the protagonist and hence will be able to conceptualise more complex impoliteness strategies in later volumes.

## 11. Analysing Impoliteness Metalanguage in Children's Fiction

In discussing her research into metapragmatic comments on conflictive situations, Spencer-Oatey (2011: 3569) notes that “[a] key principle of the ‘relational turn’ in pragmatics is that analyses of data should be grounded in the perspectives of the participants rather than those of the analysts.” These participant perspectives are gained through discourse, and they may “surface in interaction in the form of metapragmatic comments [...], or through paralinguistic or non-verbal cues” (Haugh 2010: 155). In the following chapters, I will introduce the second level of my analysis and adopt the same perspective, i.e. a relational or first-order one (Locher 2004; Locher & Watts 2005; Watts 2003), to investigate how characters in children's fiction metapragmatically comment on impolite linguistic behaviour.

I understand metapragmatics as “bearing on a reflexive relation to the pragmatic or indexical dimension of language” (Verschueren 2000: 442); hence “[m]etacommunication uncovers what participants subjectively expect from one another in a given context” (Weder 2009: 1448). My analysis focuses on metapragmatic utterances, i.e. “those elements that provide an assessment regarding the appropriateness of participants' communicative behaviour and/or feedback on the ongoing discussions as such” (Kleinke & Bös 2015: 58).

As a written medium, children's fiction is especially suitable for analysis. Commenting on computer-mediated communication (CMC), Herring and colleagues (2013: 8) have noted that it is CMC's “written, persistent nature [...] [that] makes language more available for metalinguistic reflection than in the case of speech;” I argue that the same holds for fictional written language.

Metapragmatic comments can occur in several formats, a common one of which is impoliteness metapragmatic rules, i.e. “an opinion, almost always expressed in imperative form or with authoritative modality, about what should – or more often should not – happen in a particular social context” (Culpeper 2011a: 104). These rules tend to occur in and be given authority by public institutions, such as the school, and are imposed by a reward and punishment system (Culpeper 2011a: 104).<sup>146</sup> Especially in the context of the (fictional) school, the reader might

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<sup>146</sup> See, e.g., the system of House points in *Harry Potter*, which constitutes one example of a punishment and reward system in a public institution.



expect explicit norms, that is, sets of rules that guide classroom interactions. However, no metapragmatic rules, or complete lists of rules, are given in any of the books or book series in my corpus. While Hogwarts in *Harry Potter* has certain school rules, e.g. that the Forbidden Forest is out-of-bounds for students (HP 1: 127), or that the use of magic is not allowed in the corridors (HP 2: 239), there is no extensive and explicit list of all offenses, especially linguistic ones, that could result in withdrawing House points; the same holds for actions and utterances Miss Trunchbull deems offensive in *Matilda*.

I have developed a classification of impoliteness metalanguage that is adjusted to the data set, i.e. fictional texts. The classification scheme is based on two main criteria, or analytical levels. One level concerns metapragmatic comments made by the social actors within the narrated world; I refer to this as the narratorial text-internal level. The second level, which I call the text-external level, concerns metapragmatic utterances by the narrator, i.e. a voice that does not inhabit the fictional world, but merely describes it. Table 11.1 illustrates the classification scheme and provides examples of the individual categories, which are discussed in-depth in the following chapters.

Note that in the following, I discuss character utterances as if these characters were real persons that were able to hold and express opinions on an interlocutor's language use. I am aware that these characters are constructed by an author to achieve certain goals, such as to further the plot, and do not have agency in the sense that actors in the non-fictional world do. However, I proceed from the assumption that readers will suspend their disbelief and read the fictional text as if it were reality.

In naturalistic interactions, speakers perceive many features simultaneously that may help them determine whether an utterance is open to an interpretation as impolite, such as gestures, facial expression, or paralinguistic features such as sound and loudness of voice. In children's fiction as a written medium, these paralinguistic or non-verbal features have to be specified, or metapragmatically marked, thus metapragmatic comments are of great relevance:

NARRATORIAL LEVEL	CATEGORY	EXAMPLE
text-internal comments	explicit mention	“I’ll tell you why I’m Shirley,” Count Olaf said. “I’m Shirley because I would like to be called Shirley, and <u>it is impolite not to do so.</u> ” (Series 4: 117)
	third-party evaluation	“ <u>I don't think there's any need for language like that!</u> ” said Madam Malkin [...] (HP 6: 110)
	tags	“What makes you think we need help from you, human?” <u>growled Root</u> around the butt of his cigar. (AF 2: 67)
text-external comments	explicit mention	“Now, get in the damn jeep.” <u>It is, as you know, very, very rude and usually unnecessary to use profanity,</u> but the Baudelaire orphans were too terrified to point this out to Stephano. (Series 2: 94)
	emotions	Harry felt as though <u>his body was generating waves of hatred</u> so powerful that it seemed incredible that Snape could not feel them burning him. (HP 6: 153)
	volume or tone	“Blah blah blah ha ha ha!” interrupted <u>a cruel, mocking voice.</u> (Series 11: 276)
	target of utterance	“Read <i>Nicholas Nickleby</i> , Miss Honey, by Mr Dickens. [...] A fine book, that. But I don't suppose <u>this bunch of morons we've got here</u> will ever read it because by the look of them they are never going to learn to read anything!” (MA: 156)

Table 11.1: Classification scheme of impoliteness metalanguage in children’s fiction

Typographical features may be used to indicate how a character is speaking, as is shown in (1):

- (1)  
 “YOU’RE PATHETIC!” Harry yelled. “JUST BECAUSE THEY MADE A FOOL OF YOU AT SCHOOL YOU WON’T EVEN LISTEN —” (HP 3: 361)

Harry’s utterances are rendered in capital letters, which indicates that he is shouting;<sup>147</sup> this can hint at him being angered in this situation, and him feeling strongly about the content of his statement. Further, the use of a conventionalised impoliteness formula and form-driven impoliteness (the first and second utterance, respectively) is intensified by his raised voice.

<sup>147</sup> In this particular excerpt, Harry’s raised voice is also indicated by the tag “Harry yelled.” This can help readers make the connection between a raised voice and the typographical way of realising it in a text. Also see ch. 11.1.3 on text-internal tags below.

Further, italics may be used in instances of an ironic comment on or a repetition of a character's utterance. Consider (2):

(2)

[situation: the Baudelaire children discuss Count Olaf with Vice Principal of Prufrock Preparatory School, Mr Nero]

[Klaus speaking] “[A] diversity means Count Olaf. He was the cause of all the trouble with our guardians.”

“*He was the cause of all the trouble with our guardians,*” Nero said in his nasty, mimicking way. (Series 5: 20)

Here, the narration clarifies that Nero's tone of voice is open to an interpretation as impolite; this is further supported by the use of italics for Nero's reproduction of Klaus's previous utterance. The child is invited to draw a connection between certain typographical features of a children's text and corresponding paralinguistic features, such as greater volume or a certain tone of voice that is associated with mimicry and form-driven impoliteness (see ch. 10.2.1 above).

### **11.1 Text-Internal Impoliteness Metalanguage**

The category of text-internal metapragmatic comments comprises utterances made on the narratorial level of the characters, that is, utterances made by inhabitants of the fictional world that comment on, describe or evaluate linguistic behaviour. Here, I take the first-order perspective of the characters to investigate which linguistic (and non-linguistic) behaviour is perceived to be appropriate, i.e. politic behaviour, in the fictional setting. The assumption is that behaviour that goes beyond politic utterances, i.e. behaviour that is marked, will be commented on and made salient by the characters. Further, the reader can draw on metapragmatic comments on the text-internal level to gain an understanding of the social norms that pertain in the fictional world; this is especially true for communicative contexts that the child is not familiar with from her own experience. I have established three subcategories of text-internal metapragmatic comments, which are distributed in the corpus as shown in figure 11.1.

With 1228 instances of tags, this category forms the preferred option in children's fiction to describe character utterances. This is unsurprising considering that tags are generally needed to specify the speaker in a fictional text. Due to the great number of tokens, the category is further subclassified in ch. 11.1.3 below.

### text-internal comments

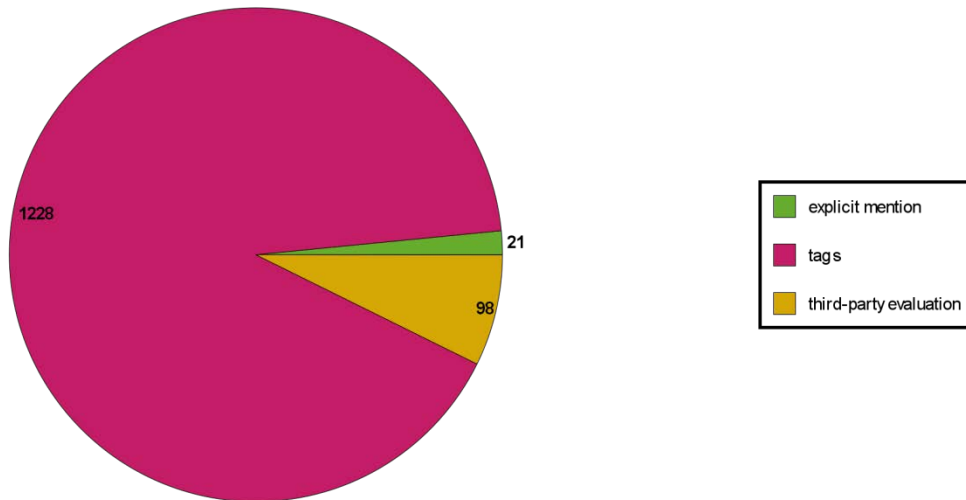


Fig. 11.1: Categories of text-internal comments in children's fiction

The categories of explicit mention and third-party evaluation only account for 8,9 % of all instances of text-internal comments (see Fig. 11.1). However, even despite the low number of tokens, the categories are helpful in giving the reader guidelines as to how to conceptualise a given scene, as I will describe in detail below.

### text-internal comments

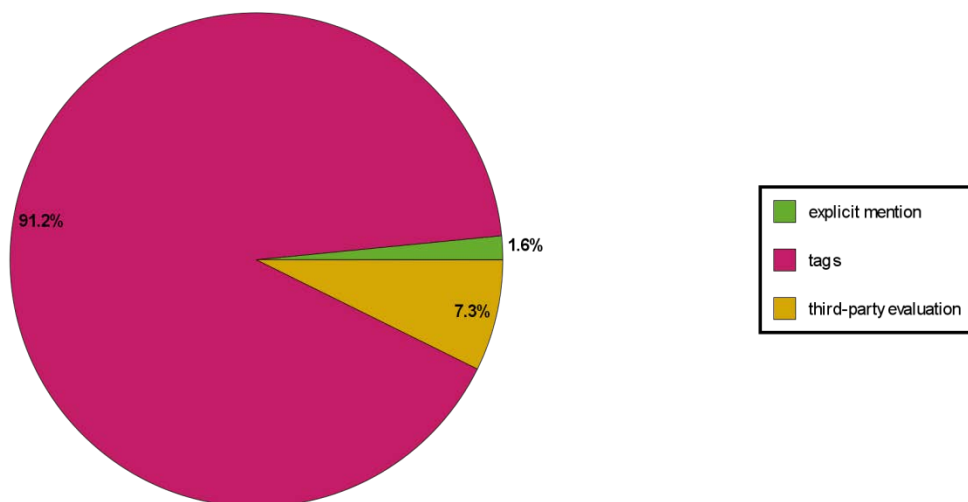


Fig. 11.2: Frequency of categories of text-internal comments in children's fiction

In the following I discuss the individual categories in detail, beginning with the category of ‘explicit mention.’

### 11.1.1 Explicit Mention

The category of ‘explicit mention’ allows one to investigate the metapragmatic negotiation of impoliteness and appropriateness. It comprises instances of a character using the impoliteness metalinguistic labels ‘polite,’ ‘impolite,’ or ‘rude,’ as well as synonyms for the latter two terms as collected from seven different thesauri (see Culpeper 2011a: 81).

The data show 21 occurrences of explicit im/politeness metalinguistic labels. Most of them follow the prototypical structure of impoliteness metapragmatic comments as delineated in Culpeper (2011a: 84): “[it / that] [is / [considered] [terribly / rather] *impolite* / *rude* [and disrespectful] [to stare / refuse / ask].” Note, however, that it is not my intention to precisely quantify how frequently which impoliteness metalinguistic label is used in my data, but to understand which labels are used in children’s fiction.

In (3), the metalinguistic label ‘rude’ is used to designate linguistic behaviour. Note here a deviation from the prototypical impoliteness metapragmatic comment structure as discussed above.

(3)

[situation: Count Olaf introduces himself as ‘Stephano;’ however, Violet recognises him and calls him out]

“[...] you are not Stephano. You are Count Olaf. You may have grown a beard and shaved your eyebrow, but you are still the same despicable person and we will not let you in this house.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said, “but if I did, and I were this Count Olaf you speak of, I would think that you were being very rude. And if I thought you were rude, I might get angry. And if I got angry, who knows what I would do?” (Series 2: 46)

The example details the connection of impoliteness and emotional reactions<sup>148</sup> in that Count Olaf uses affective impoliteness. He portrays Violet’s comment on his disguise and his character as an offending event that allows him to retaliate in kind; here, this retaliation is phrased as a threat: the usage of the verb “do” (instead of, for instance, “say”) leads the reader to assume that an action, i.e. physical retaliation, is implied.

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<sup>148</sup> See also ch. 11.2.2 below on impoliteness and emotions.

(4)

[situation: Count Olaf introduces himself as ‘Shirley,’ but the Baudelaires deny the existence of ‘Shirley’]

“I’ll tell you why I’m Shirley,” Count Olaf said. “I’m Shirley because I would like to be called Shirley, and it is impolite not to do so.” (Series 4: 117)

In (4), the label ‘impolite’ is used to address social conventions. Here, Count Olaf expresses the view that one accepts a person’s name and identity and uses it to address this person; failing to do so is open to an interpretation as (intentional) impoliteness.<sup>149</sup> Behaviour may also be metapragmatically labelled as ‘not polite,’ as in (5):

(5)

[situation: Draco tries to befriend Harry, stating that Harry should not spend time with his new friend Ron]

He held out his hand to shake Harry’s, but Harry didn’t take it. [...]

“I’d be careful if I were you, Potter,” he said slowly. “Unless you’re a bit politer you’ll go the same way as your parents. They didn’t know what was good for them, either. You hang around with riffraff like the Weasleys and that Hagrid, and it’ll rub off on you.” (HP 1: 108-109)

Here, Harry’s refusal to accept the handshake is an offending event for Draco; he metapragmatically labels Harry’s non-verbal behaviour and implies that there is a lack of politeness. The reader can glean from this scene that it is politic to shake a person’s hand; one’s refusal to do so can be perceived as impolite. It is also of note that Harry’s parents are both deceased; thus, the metapragmatic label is used not only to evaluate certain behaviours, but also to issue a warning or threat that serious consequences will occur should the interactant not follow certain social conventions.

In addition to ‘impolite,’ the metapragmatic label ‘not polite’ is used to describe and evaluate behaviours:

(6)

[situation: Mr Poe tries to establish whether ‘Shirley’ is indeed Count Olaf]

“I’m afraid that [showing a name-plate with the name ‘Shirley;’ MP] would not be sufficient,” Mr. Poe said. “Would you do us all the courtesy of showing us your left ankle?”

“Why, it’s not polite to look at a lady’s legs,” Shirley said. “Surely you know that.” (Series 4: 185)

In (6), a non-linguistic behaviour is labelled as ‘not polite,’ following the prototypical structure for metapragmatic impoliteness comments. Here, the social convention that one does not stare at another person, especially their body parts, is violated

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<sup>149</sup> This example is of special importance as Count Olaf is a man who requests being referred to by a female name. While I do not necessarily believe that child readers will arrive at this conclusion, the comment is very relevant for transgender persons or other persons who, for various reasons, do not use their birth name.

and metapragmatically commented on. However, this occurrence has to be understood in light of the fictional world: Count Olaf uses the metapragmatic label to detract from the tattoo on his left ankle that would clearly identify him to the other actors in the scene. Hence this shows that on the one hand, children's fiction may use explicit metapragmatic impoliteness labels such as 'rude' or 'impolite' to explicate socially accepted behaviours in given contexts. On the other hand, characters, especially antagonists, may use these labels for "local strategic purposes and meanings (e.g. telling somebody that they are 'polite' could be a strategy to ingratiate, or telling them that they are 'impolite' could be a strategy to antagonise)" (Culpeper 2011a: 74); this may then fulfil further narrative purposes, such as characterisation and plot. The high usage of 'rude' and 'impolite' in my fictional data may then be due to the fact that impoliteness is entertaining for the reader (Culpeper 2011a: 89).

### **11.1.2 Third-Party Evaluation**

In the previous chapter I have investigated which metapragmatic impoliteness labels characters use to evaluate linguistic behaviour. However, as Culpeper notes, "metapragmatic impoliteness comments need not contain a conventional metalinguistic impoliteness label" (Culpeper 2011a: 100); comments might take the form of e.g. "How could you say that!"

Spencer-Oatey notes that "valuable insights can be gained – and in fact are needed – by studying the fuller context, such as through (non)-participant observation" (2011: 3569). Hence, in the category 'third-party evaluation,' I analyse how a character comments on and evaluates the linguistic behaviour of another character without explicitly labelling the behaviour as 'polite,' 'impolite,' or any other related terms. The results demonstrate how members of a linguistic community comment on and mark as salient certain linguistic behaviours that constitute violations of pragmatic norms, and that are open to an interpretation as impolite. Further, it has been noted that studying metapragmatic awareness

is crucial to an understanding of verbal behavior because, like any other form of social action, language use is always interpreted, in the sense that the actors involved attach meaning to it, so that the actors' interpretations become part and parcel of what needs to be described and explained (Verschuere 2000: 445).

(7) shows a situation in *Harry Potter* that includes multiple characters evaluating a particular utterance:

(7)

[situation: Ron, Harry and Hermione enter Madam Malkin's robe shop, where Draco and his mother are just buying clothes]

"If you're wondering what the smell is, Mother, a Mudblood just walked in," said Draco Malfoy.

"I don't think there's any need for language like that!" said Madam Malkin, scurrying out from behind the clothes rack holding a tape measure and a wand. "And I don't want wands drawn in my shop either!" she added hastily, for a glance toward the door had shown her Harry and Ron both standing there with their wands out and pointing at Malfoy. Hermione, who was standing slightly behind them, whispered, "No, don't, honestly, it's not worth it." (HP 6: 110)

In this scene, Draco's reference to a 'Mudblood'<sup>150</sup> is metapragmatically marked as an offending event; three different evaluations of his verbal behaviour are presented, which shows the salience of his utterance. Madam Malkin explicitly comments on the language use, implying that the behaviour in question is inappropriate and undesirable. Harry and Ron both offer the same physical reaction to the utterance: a drawn wand implies a threat that the wizard is willing to carry out. This further emphasises that the utterance is perceived as inappropriate and hurtful. Hermione's utterance seeks to downplay the hurtfulness of Draco's utterance by stating that the comment is 'not worth it.' In doing so, she attempts to dissuade her friends from retaliating and starting a conflict spiral which might escalate.

A drawn wand is a preferred option in *Harry Potter* to demonstrate that a given behaviour is perceived as salient, and open to an interpretation as impolite. In the following scene, Harry tries to end a verbal sparring including insults to their respective families by using non-verbal conventionalised impoliteness, i.e. by turning away.

(8)

[situation: Draco has started an argument about Ron's family, in the course of which his own parents have been insulted]

Malfoy's pale face went slightly pink.

"Don't you dare insult my mother, Potter."

"Keep your fat mouth shut, then," said Harry, turning away.

BANG!

Several people screamed — Harry felt something white-hot graze the side of his face — he plunged his hand into his robes for his wand, but before he'd even touched it, he heard a second loud BANG, and a roar that echoed through the entrance hall.

"OH NO YOU DON'T, LADDIE!"

Harry spun around. Professor Moody was limping down the marble staircase. (HP 4: 204)<sup>151</sup>

<sup>150</sup> See also ch. 10.1.1 on world-specific insults, where I discuss the term 'Mudblood' in detail.

<sup>151</sup> See also my previous discussion of this example in ch. 10.6.



Draco here evaluates Harry's behaviour as hurtful, and reacts using a hex; the reader will likely be aware that "something white-hot" refers to a spell that barely misses Harry. It is unclear whether Draco takes offence at the verbal formula ("your fat mouth"), at the non-verbal action of turning away and disassociating from him, or a combination thereof.

Draco's misfired spell is, in turn, perceived as an offending event by Harry, who attempts to draw his wand. The situation has the potential of developing into a conflict spiral. The following utterance by Prof. Moody shows a general trend in children's fiction: in most cases, such as the present one, non-linguistic behaviour is commented on, labelled as inappropriate and thus made salient. An explicit evaluation of verbal behaviour, as in (7) above, is comparatively rare.

### 11.1.3 Tags

This category comprises instances of what Yos (1996) has termed "redenkennzeichnende Ausdrücke," i.e. expressions that emphasise a certain aspect of the character's communicative action. In naturalistic conversations, these are aspects that a hearer would focus on and would draw on to interpret a given utterance (Yos 1996: 181), e.g. 'contextualisation cues' such as prosody (Verschueren 2000: 447). Having access to paralinguistic features that a hearer would be privy to in a spoken conversation allows the reader to better imagine how a certain utterance was made and to draw conclusions as to whether it is open to an interpretation as impolite. See (9) for an illustration of the type of verbal behaviour I am interested in here:

- (9)  
[situation: the first Potions lesson with Prof. Snape]  
"What is the difference, Potter, between monkshood and wolfsbane?"  
At this, Hermione stood up, her hand stretching toward the dungeon ceiling.  
"I don't know," said Harry quietly. "I think Hermione does, though, why don't you try her?"  
A few people laughed; Harry caught Seamus's eye, and Seamus winked. Snape, however, was not pleased.  
"Sit down," he snapped at Hermione. (HP 1: 138)

Here, Prof. Snape feels his authority has been challenged: Harry expresses the impolite belief that Prof. Snape is unable to do his job, as he fails to see or acknowledge a student willing to give an answer. The laughs further exacerbate the offence. This, for Prof. Snape, can be described as an offending event.

Asking a student, here Hermione, to sit down is generally acceptable behaviour for a teacher in the context of the lesson. However, the tag “he snapped” marks his utterance as salient and as non-politic and thus open to an interpretation as impolite towards the addressee. Fig. 11.3 shows an overview over the different types of narratorial tags, which I discuss in detail below.

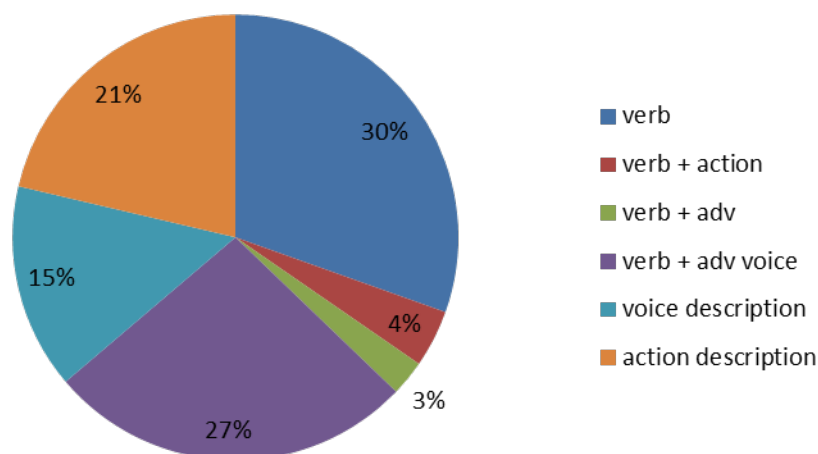


Fig. 11.3: Categories of tags in children's fiction

### 11.1.3.1 Verb

In this chapter, I am interested in verbs that designate specific types of verbal behaviour, such as ‘shout’ or ‘shriek.’ Note that I excluded the tag ‘said’ from the count as the verb merely designates that an utterance was made; however, it does not state how the reader should imagine it.

In total, 42 different verbs are used; in the following discussion, I focus only on the most frequent verbs, i.e. those that had 5 or more instances of usage in the data. Fig. 11.4 shows the number of occurrences of these 9 most frequent verbs.

There seems to be evidence for a gender-specific usage of certain verbs in my data;<sup>152</sup> further research would have to investigate whether these findings hold for larger corpora, as well. For female characters, the verbs ‘shriek’ and ‘cry’ are preferred; 87 % of occurrences of ‘shriek’ are used to designate utterances by female characters, most often Sunny Baudelaire (see 10).

<sup>152</sup> See also research on gender differences in metapragmatic *verba dicendi* in fictional dialogues (Kleinke 1998), especially for children (Kleinke 1997), and in newspapers (Kleinke 2000).

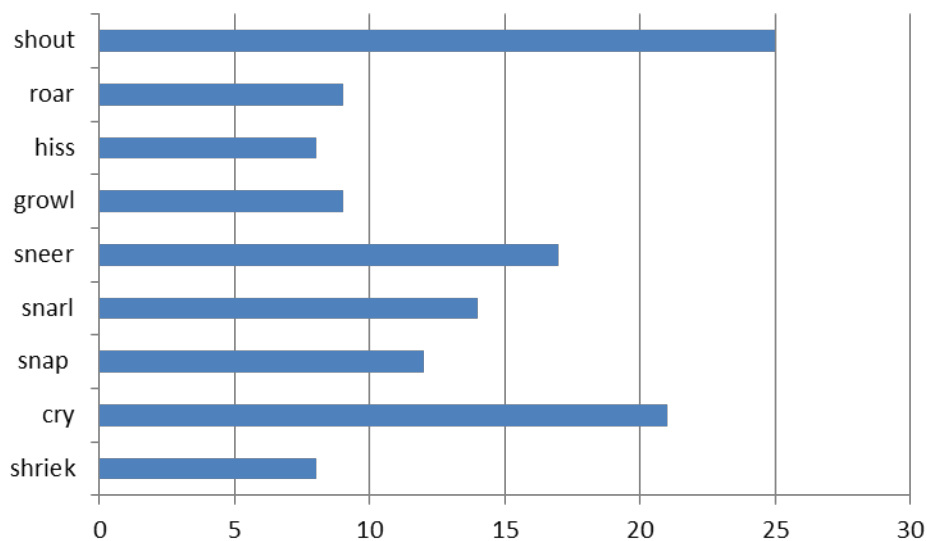


Fig. 11.4: Frequency of verbs used as tags in children's fiction

Of 21 occurrences of 'cry,' 10 are used for female speakers, while a further 9 are used to describe utterances by Klaus Baudelaire; thus 'crying' characterises his way of speaking and can help the reader imagine his character (see 11).

(10)

"Professor Snape!" shrieked Madam Pomfrey. "Control yourself!" (HP 3: 419)

(11)

"[...] What a ninny Josephine was!"

"She was not a ninny!" Klaus cried. "She was kind and sweet!" (Series 3: 206)

For male characters, the following verbs are preferred: 'snap' (12), 'snarl' (13) and 'sneer' (14); all denote sudden, aggressive ways of speaking. 92% of all instances of the usage of 'snap' are associated with male speech, as well as 93% of instances of 'snarl.' The verb 'sneer' is used exclusively for male, antagonistic characters (usages for Count Olaf (5x), Prof. Snape (5x) and Draco Malfoy (7x)) and can help characterise them.

(12)

Matilda happened to be curled up in an arm-chair in the corner, totally absorbed in a book.

[...]

"Don't you *ever* stop reading?" he [Mr Wormwood; MP] snapped at her. (MA: 38-39)

(13)

"What would your head have been doing in Hogsmeade, Potter?" said Snape softly. "Your head is not allowed in Hogsmeade. No part of your body has permission to be in Hogsmeade."

"I know that," said Harry, striving to keep his face free of guilt or fear. "It sounds like Malfoy's having hallucin —"

"Malfoy is not having hallucinations," snarled Snape, and he bent down, a hand on each arm of Harry's chair, so that their faces were a foot apart. "If your head was in Hogsmeade, so was the rest of you." (HP 3: 283)

(14)

“Ha!” he cried. “I knew I’d find you orphans again! Ha! And now you’re in my clutches! Ha!”

“We’re not in your clutches,” Violet said. “We just happen to be standing in the same room.”

“That’s what you think, orphan,” Olaf sneered. (Series 12: 206-207)

A further group of verbs that are preferred tags in children’s fiction concern what I refer to as animal sounds: character voices are described with the verbs ‘growl’ (15), ‘snarl’ (13 above), ‘hiss’ (16) or ‘roar’ (17 and 18).

The verb ‘growl’ can be classified as a threatening sound, such as one that an animal makes before attacking. It is used predominantly for utterances by Count Olaf (8 of 9 occurrences), and hence characterises his speech and, by extension, the person himself as aggressive and threatening.

(15)

Olaf strode over to the car and peered in at Sunny, who was still clutching the loaf of bread. “Hurry up, bigmouth,” he growled at Sunny. “I need a nice hot meal to take the chill out of the morning.” (Series 10: 111)

The verb ‘hiss’ is predominantly used for utterances of antagonistic characters (7 of 8 occurrences); it denotes an animalistic sound that is often associated with snakes, but that may also be used in contexts of anger, as is the case in (16).

(16)

“Professor Lupin could have killed me about a hundred times this year,” Harry said. “I’ve been alone with him loads of times, having defense lessons against the dementors. If he was helping Black, why didn’t he just finish me off then?”

“Don’t ask me to fathom the way a werewolf’s mind works,” hissed Snape. “Get out of the way, Potter.” (HP 3: 361)

The final verb in the animalistic group is ‘roar.’ It is interesting that it is the only one of the group which is also used for utterances by a female character, as 5 of 9 occurrences describe utterances by Miss Trunchbull (17). Further, it is a preferred option to denote instances of Harry Potter’s speech, especially in situations where he is angered. Consider (18), in which capital letters further make transparent the loudness of his voice.

(17)

“[...] Go on, sit down at once!”

“But I’m telling you... “ Matilda shouted, refusing to sit down.

“I am telling you to shut up!” the Trunchbull roared. “If you don’t shut up at once and sit down I shall remove my belt and let you have it with the end that has the buckle!” (MA: 164)

(18)

“YOU HAVEN’T!” Harry yelled. “YOU’VE GOT THE WRONG MAN!”

“Minister, listen, please,” Hermione said; she had hurried to Harry’s side and was gazing imploringly into Fudge’s face. “I saw him too. It was Ron’s rat, he’s an Animagus, Pettigrew, I mean, and —”

“You see, Minister?” said Snape. “Confunded, both of them... Black’s done a very good job on them...”

“WE’RE NOT CONFUNDED!” Harry roared. (HP 3: 389-390)

Finally, the verb ‘shout’ occurs most often (25 occurrences); it is used for all types of characters and shows a strong connection of impoliteness and anger, such as in (19):

(19)

“The children are upset and confused,” Captain Sham said, his eye shining. “As their father, I think they need a good night’s sleep.”

“He’s not our father!” Klaus shouted. “He’s Count Olaf, and he’s a murderer! Please, Mr. Poe, alert the police! We have to save Aunt Josephine!”(Series 3: 195)

### 11.1.3.2 Verb + Action

The category ‘verb + action’ only comprises 4% of all tag tokens. Here, a tag is combined with a further description of what a character does while making an utterance, such as shouting and glaring at the interlocutor, as in (20), or uttering a command while standing up, as in (21):

(20)

shout + glare: “You are lying to me, madam!” the Trunchbull shouted, glaring at Matilda. (MA: 156)

(21)

say + stand up: “Get out!” said Hermione, standing up. (HP 5: 194)

The combination of a tag with a further description allows the reader to better contextualise the verbal information. For instance, in (21), Hermione’s command receives more force by her standing up, that is, by her physically dominating the room, than had she uttered it sitting down.

### 11.1.3.3 Verb + Adverb

With a usage of 3% of all tags, the category ‘verb + adverb’ is a dispreferred option in my data. Here, I am interested in adverbs that do not specifically focus on paralinguistic features such as tone of voice or manner of articulation, but that encode the character’s intention behind the utterance, such as in (22).

(22)

“I don’t think you are in a position to give moral lectures to children, Olaf,” Mr. Poe said sternly. (Series 2: 179)

The adverb ‘sternly’ is the preferred option in this category and is used predominantly for utterances by adult characters who are associated with the child protagonists, and who criticise antagonistic characters or their behaviours on the child’s behalf.

#### 11.1.3.4 Verb + Adverb Voice / Manner of Articulation

In this section, I am interested in tags of the format ‘s/he said,’ followed by an adverb that more closely describes the voice or manner of articulation. The goal of the analysis is to understand which adverbs commonly occur in impoliteness contexts, as it has been shown that the impoliteness of an utterance can be exacerbated by the tone of voice used (Culpeper 2005: 36).

In all, 68 different adverbs are used in my data; hence, in Fig. 11.5, I restrict myself to the most common adverbs, i.e. those that had 5 or more instances of usage.

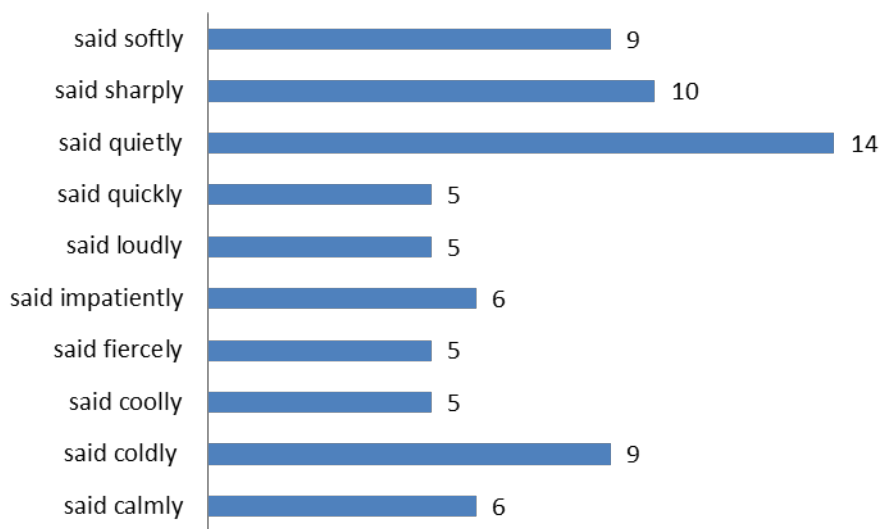


Fig. 11.5: Frequency of the most common structures of ‘said + adv. voice’

I suggest that the adverbs in Fig. 11.5 can be grouped in three clusters:

The first cluster, containing the adverbs ‘sharply,’ ‘loudly,’ ‘impatiently,’ ‘fiercely,’ ‘angrily,’ and ‘quickly,’ is associated with emotionality and violations of contextual norms. The adverbs tend to be used in contexts of high emotionality (such as with ‘angrily’), or designate that a certain conversational norm might have been violated (such as speaking very loudly or fiercely), which may be perceived as threatening by the addressee and which may open an utterance to an interpretation as impolite.

The second cluster contains the adverbs ‘softly,’ ‘quietly,’ and ‘calmly.’ While these adjectives seem neutral in respect to impoliteness, they tend to be used in a manner that is open to an interpretation as a threat, e.g. uttering a threat so quietly that only the addressee is privy to it.

The final cluster, containing the adverbs ‘coolly’ and ‘coldly,’ is used to deny association rights of the addressee (Spencer-Oatey 2002) and to attack the positive face wants of the addressee, i.e. the want to be liked and appreciated (Culpeper 1996: 350). The addressee is instead treated in a manner that implies the speaker wishes to keep a certain (emotional) distance from the addressee.

Consider (23), which shows multiple tags of the variety ‘said + adverb voice’, and which clarifies the connection of tone of voice and impoliteness.

(23)

[situation: Draco and Harry are having an argument in the entrance hall]

“Potter!”

The voice rang across the entrance hall; Snape had emerged from the staircase leading down to his office [...].

“What are you doing, Potter?” said Snape coldly as ever, as he strode over to the four of them.

“I’m trying to decide what curse to use on Malfoy, sir,” said Harry fiercely.

Snape stared at him.

“Put that wand away at once,” he said curtly. “Ten points from Gryff —”<sup>153</sup> (HP 5: 851-852)

In all, three tags are used in this scene. In all cases, the adverb following the tag ‘said’ support the reader’s assumption that impoliteness has taken place. In the first instance, the adverb ‘coldly’ suggests that Prof. Snape’s question is not intended to be understood as a politic or friendly enquiry about Harry’s actions; instead, the reading of Prof. Snape implying that Harry is doing something he should, in fact, not be doing, is open for the reader. In the second instance, the adverb ‘fiercely’ supports the understanding that Harry is sincere in his assertion that he intends to curse Draco instead of e.g. making a joke. In the third instance, while Prof. Snape has the institutional rights to order a student to stop fighting, the adverbs ‘curtly’ suggests that he might have used less politeness markers than appropriate in the given situation (see Watts’s 2003: 115 discussion on politeness as currency), thereby opening his utterance to an interpretation as impolite.

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<sup>153</sup> Note that Prof. Snape interrupts his own turn here.

### 11.1.3.5 Voice Description

In this section, I focus on the description of paralinguistic features of an utterance that go beyond tags such as ‘said’ plus a modifying adverb detailing the manner of speaking. I aim at furthering an understanding of which manners of speaking commonly occur in impoliteness contexts in children’s fiction. Fig. 11.6 shows clusters of voice descriptions.

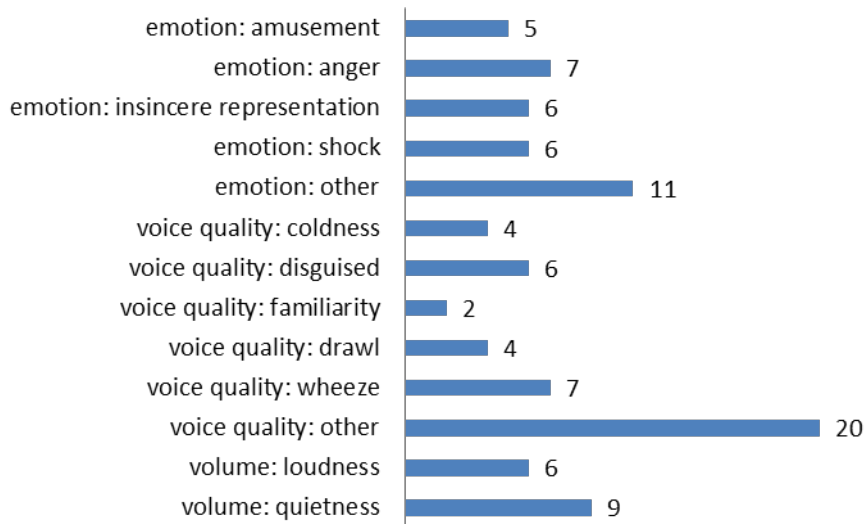


Fig. 11.6: Distribution of the description of voice

First, voice descriptions may be used to mark a character’s emotional state, e.g. anger (24), shock (25) or the insincerity of an emotion, such as mock sorrow (26). Note here the format of the tag, i.e. a verb of saying, accompanied by a further description (e.g. ‘asked’ plus ‘in horror’ in (25)).

(24)

Artemis fought against the train’s motion, climbing to his knees. “It can’t be anything serious. Just exhaustion, surely?”

And suddenly Root’s face was a centimetre from his own, his complexion rosy enough to generate heat. “Nothing serious!” spluttered the commander, barely able to get the words out in his rage. (AF 2: 148)

(25)

“I’ll change my name!” Aunt Josephine said. “I’ll dye my hair! I’ll wear colored contact lenses! And I’ll go very, very far away! Nobody will ever hear from me!”

“But what about us, Aunt Josephine?” Klaus asked in horror. “What about us?” (Series 3: 189)

(26)

“Seen your pal Hagrid lately?” he asked them quietly.

“None of your business,” said Ron jerkily, without looking up.

“I’m afraid he won’t be a teacher much longer,” said Malfoy in a tone of mock sorrow. “Father’s not very happy about my injury —” (HP 3: 125)



A further group of tags is concerned with an utterance's volume, detailing cases in which the volume mismatches the context. See (27) for an instance of great loudness; here, the volume is described as 'very loud,' which constitutes a mismatch in the context of showing a news item to a classmate. This shows that the utterance is not directed solely to Ron as the addressee, but to potential bystanders as well, which exacerbates the impoliteness of the following utterances, i.e. pointing out that the report details mistakes committed by Ron's father.

(27)

[situation: Harry, Ron and Hermione are halted by Draco and friends]

"Weasley! Hey, Weasley!"

Harry, Ron, and Hermione turned. Malfoy, Crabbe, and Goyle were standing there, each looking thoroughly pleased about something.

"What?" said Ron shortly.

"Your dad's in the paper, Weasley!" said Malfoy, brandishing a copy of the *Daily Prophet* and speaking very loudly, so that every-one in the packed entrance hall could hear. "Listen to this!

FURTHER MISTAKES AT THE MINISTRY OF MAGIC (HP 4: 202)

Contrast the above with (28), where a very low voice is used; here, a conventionalised impoliteness formula, i.e. a threat, is uttered so that only the addressee may perceive it. This exacerbates the threat on the one hand, as the speaker will have to be physically close to be understood, and further, it allows the speaker deniability, as the addressee may provide no witnesses to the threat.

(28)

Malfoy glanced around. Harry knew he was checking for signs of teachers. Then he looked back at Harry and said in a low voice,

"You're dead, Potter." (HP 5: 851)

Further, my data show that certain tags are used solely for a specific character. This allows the reader to remind herself of how she is to imagine the character's voice. The descriptors of a 'wheezy voice' or a 'wheezy whisper' only occur in connection with Count Olaf, such as in (29), while a 'drawling voice' is only used to designate utterances by Draco Malfoy (30). Note that both a 'wheezy voice' and a 'drawling voice' are not commonly associated with pleasantness; thus, the quality of a character's voice may be used to mark them as open to an understanding as the story's antagonist.

(29)

"Hello hello hello," Count Olaf said in a wheezy whisper. (Series 1: 22)

(30)

"Well, look who it is," said Malfoy in his usual lazy drawl, pulling open the compartment door. (HP 2: 80)

The narrator may also draw on the connections between characters and their associated tags and address that utterances were made in a ‘familiar voice,’ i.e. the voice belongs to a character that the reader is already familiar with. See (31), in which the description ‘a voice [he] had no trouble recognising’ marks the utterance as having been made by either Prof. Snape or Draco, as these are the only two characters whose voices are commonly described with the same tags.

(31)

[situation: Harry has been gifted with a set of school books; the event has been photographed for the newspaper]

“Bet you loved that, didn’t you, Potter?” said a voice Harry had no trouble recognizing. He straightened up and found himself face-to-face with Draco Malfoy, who was wearing his usual sneer. (HP 2: 61)

In a similar manner, a narrator may comment on a ‘disguised voice’ by describing how a familiar character’s voice is changed (32). Note that this description is used in contexts of Count Olaf being in disguise.

(32)

“I’m not a man,” Olaf insisted in his disguised voice. “I’m a lady with a baby inside her.”

“Pellucid theatrics,” Sunny said.

“My sister’s right,” Violet said. “Your disguise isn’t working.”

“Oh, I don’t think you’d want me to stop pretending,” the villain said. He was still talking in his ridiculous high-pitched voice, but his eyes shone brightly from behind his seaweed bangs. (Series 13: 121)

#### 11.1.3.6 Action Description

Here, I investigate the description of certain actions, gestures or facial expressions that accompany an utterance and that can help guide the reader’s interpretation of the utterance in question. Fig. 11.7 provides an overview over the types of actions, gestures and facial expressions used in my data.

The cluster of facial expressions shows that sneers and smiles are a preferred option of facial expressions that accompany impolite utterances. Note here that these facial expressions tend to be marked as negative, such as in (33), where a sneer is described as ‘unpleasant.’ These tags may also commonly co-occur with specific characters, such as the description of Prof. Snape’s ‘familiar’ sneer (34).

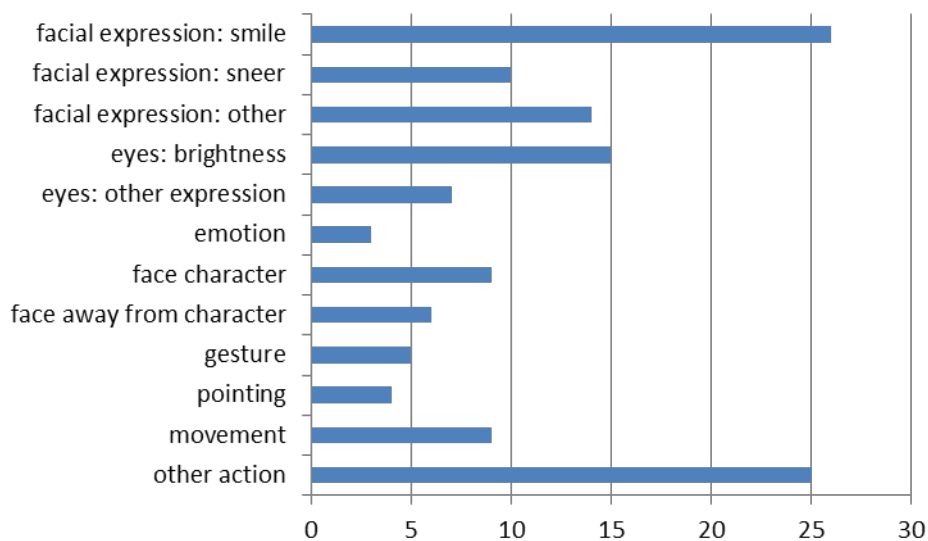


Fig. 11.7: Distribution of action descriptions

Further, other facial expressions are found that are marked as negative, but that remain unspecified, such as in (35); this details the connection of impoliteness and negative emotions or consequences for participants (Culpeper 2011a: 23).

(33)

“I need to see Professor Dumbledore!” said Harry, running back up the corridor and skidding to a standstill in front of Snape instead. [...]

“The headmaster is busy, Potter,” said Snape, his thin mouth curling into an unpleasant smile. (HP 4: 557-558)

(34)

Harry sat down in a chair beside Sirius, facing Snape across the table.

“I was supposed to see you alone, Potter,” said Snape, the familiar sneer curling his mouth, “but Black —”

“I’m his godfather,” said Sirius, louder than ever. (HP 5: 518)

(35)

“What’s wrong with him [Prof. Lupin; MP]?”

Snape’s black eyes glittered.

“Nothing life-threatening,” he said, looking as though he wished it were. (HP 3: 170)

The expressions of characters’ eyes form a separate cluster, as in my data, a strong focus is placed on describing character eye expressions in connection with impolite utterances. Note that here, as well, certain descriptors tend to co-occur with certain characters, e.g. Count Olaf is predominantly described as having ‘shiny, bright eyes.’ While shining eyes tend to be generally associated with a character’s emotional state and are used to represent anger, the description is of special importance for *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. Count Olaf is often depicted in disguise, and the description of his eyes helps the Baudelaire children (and the reader) recognise him in disguise.

(36)

“Well,” Count Olaf said, his eyes shining brightly, “the play is called *The Marvelous Marriage*, and it is written by the great playwright Al Funcoot. We will give only one performance, on this Friday night. It is about a man who is very brave and intelligent, played by me. In the finale, he marries the young, beautiful woman he loves, in front of a crowd of cheering people. You, Klaus, and you, Sunny, will play some of the cheering people in the crowd.” (Series 1: 75-76)

(37)

“Oh, he’ll hand you over to me soon enough,” Shirley said, her eyes shining brightly. (Series 4: 120)

(38)

“Well, if you find it so interesting,” Genghis said, his eyes looking as luminous as the paint, “you can be in charge of the brush.” (Series 5: 112)

(39)

“See you later, please,” Gunther said to the children, his eyes shining brightly, and gave them a little wave as he followed Esmé down the hallway. (Series 6: 69)

The category of ‘other eye expressions’ includes expressions such as dangerous glitters, etc. that can hint at anger or, in the case of (40), at a character’s annoyance:

(40)

“First you complain that Gunther is an impostor, then you complain about your suits,” Esmé said, rolling her eyes. (Series 6: 69)

Further descriptions of emotions can occur that are not discernible from facial features alone, such as a physical experience in (41); the reader will know from her own embodied experience that a racing heart occurs in moments of great stress or, in this case, a heightened state of fear.

(41)

[situation: Harry and friends are caught wandering the castle when they should have attended a feast]

“But why not join the feast afterward?” said Snape, his black eyes glittering in the candlelight. “Why go up to that corridor?”

Ron and Hermione looked at Harry.

“Because — because —” Harry said, his heart thumping very fast; something told him it would sound very far-fetched if he told them he had been led there by a bodiless voice no one but he could hear, “because we were tired and wanted to go to bed,” he said. (HP2: 149)

A further cluster concerns descriptions of whether a character faces away from or towards the hearer. Directly looking at the addressee, as in (42), might exacerbate the perceived offence of denying to have played a trick on the teacher. On the other hand, looking away from the addressee, as in (43), is used as an attempt to retain the politic nature of the situation. Here, glaring at one’s teacher may be perceived as impolite, which might escalate the situation; glaring at an eel instead saves both interactants’ faces.

(42)

[situation: Matilda is accused of having dropped a newt in Miss Trunchbull's water]  
Matilda looked right back into the flashing eyes of this infuriated female giant and said with total calmness, "I have not moved away from my desk, Miss Trunchbull, since the lesson began. I can say no more." (MA: 168)

(43)

[situation: Harry is studying Occlumency with Prof. Snape; he makes mistakes during the lesson]

"Remind me why we are here, Potter."

"So I can learn Occlumency," said Harry, now glaring at a dead eel. (HP 5: 590-591)

Moreover, a cluster of tags includes descriptions of gestures that accompany the utterance, especially pointing. Not only does this type of tag help the reader imagine the conversation, such as in (44), but it also furthers an understanding of the utterance. Consider (45), where the statement of a character's identity is accompanied by a pointing gesture. Note that this does not merely serve to identify the target, but that it is done in an 'accusatory' manner, thus implying that the target has certain undesirable characteristics.

(44)

"I've burned down the Hotel Denouement," Olaf cried, gesturing dramatically, "and destroyed V.F.D.<sup>154</sup> once and for all!" (Series 13: 6)

(45)

"That's Olaf!" Friday cried, pointing an accusatory finger at the villain. "Why is he dressed as a pregnant woman?" (Series 13: 116)

In a similar manner, tags that describe movement that accompanies the utterance, here especially a character moving through a room, can help the reader imagine the situational context. Further, it may offer contextual cues, as in (46); here, Prof. Snape's movement towards the addressee may be perceived as threatening in combination with a 'cold' voice and an enquiry as to Harry's plans.

(46)

"What are you doing, Potter?" said Snape coldly as ever, as he strode over to the four of them. (HP 5: 852)

Finally, tags may describe other, unclassified actions that can accompany the utterance. Again, these tags help the reader imagine the scene in question, and help clarify whether a particular situation is one in which verbal or physical violence is to be expected. Consider (47), where the taunt might incite the diary's owner to apply physical force to receive the possession back.

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<sup>154</sup> The Volunteer Fire Department, abbreviated V.F.D., is a secret society in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* (Lemony Snicket Wiki, n.d.).

(47)  
 [situation: Draco has taken a diary that belongs to Harry and wants to read it]  
 “Hand it over, Malfoy,” said Percy sternly.  
 “When I’ve had a look,” said Malfoy, waving the diary tauntingly at Harry. (HP 2: 239)

In all, tags that describe character actions may be used to guide the reader’s imagination of a given communicative scenario, as well as to support any interpretation of scenes as potentially open to an understanding as impolite.

### 11.2 Text-External Impoliteness Metalanguage

The aim of this section is to investigate impoliteness metalanguage as it occurs on the text-external narratorial level. This means that I am concerned with metapragmatic comments on the narrative level of the narrator, who comments on the action and on the linguistic behaviour of the characters, and describes and labels character behaviour. The four subcategories of text-external comments and their distribution in my data are summarised in Fig. 11.8.

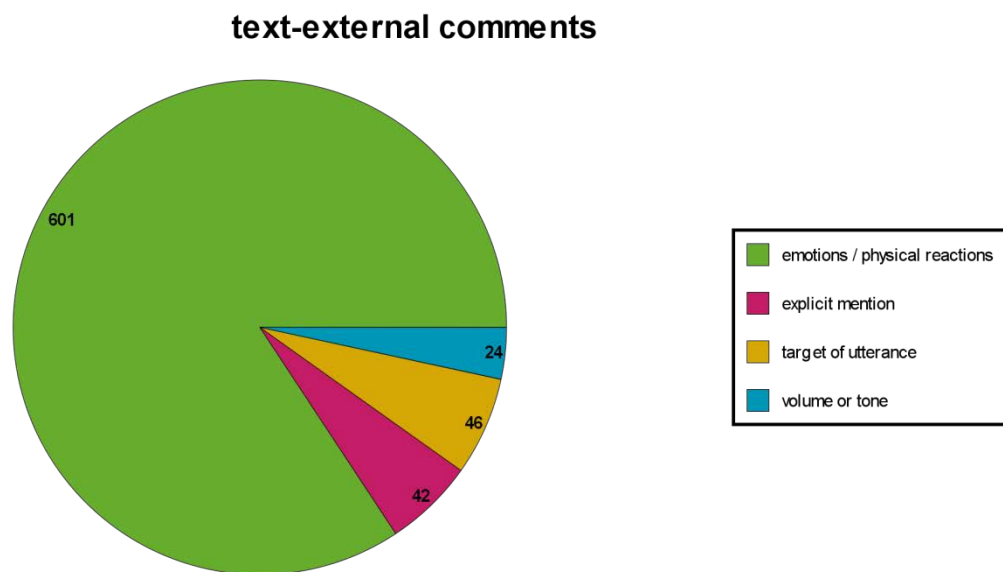


Fig. 11.8: Categories of text-external comments in children’s fiction

Fig. 11.8 shows that with 601 token structures, the labelling and description of character emotions and related physical expressions are the preferred category.

Note that there are more tokens in the category of ‘explicit mention’ here than on the text-internal level; for my data, the preferred option is for the narrator to use ‘impolite’ and related labels to describe behaviours.

With only 24 tokens, ‘volume or tone’ is a dispreferred strategy to comment on character utterances. While ‘target of utterance’ is not very strongly represented with 46 tokens, I argue below that it nonetheless offers an important way for the reader to decode impolite utterances. In all, though, the final three categories make up less than  $\frac{1}{5}$  of all text-external comments (Fig. 11.9) Hence in ch. 11.2.2 below, emotions are further discussed in detail, and a subclassification is introduced.

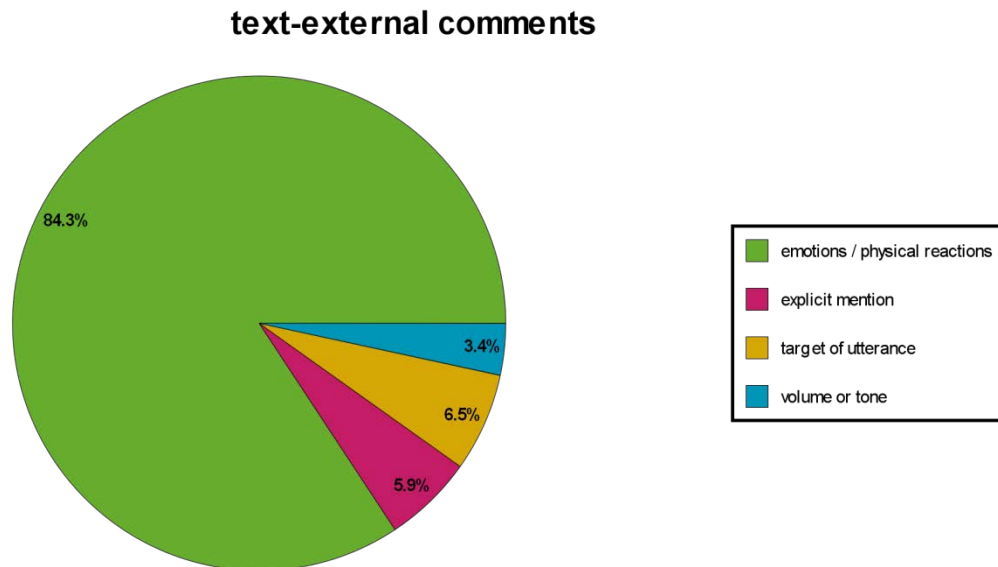


Fig. 11.9: Frequency of categories of text-external comments in children's fiction

### 11.2.1 Explicit Mention

The category of text-external explicit mentions is similar to that of text-internal explicit mentions as it includes the usage of the metalinguistic labels ‘polite,’ ‘impolite,’ or related expressions to describe a given (non-)linguistic behaviour. Here, I am interested in instances of the narrator using these labels to evaluate character behaviours. This means that the category comprises instances of a metapragmatic negotiation of the appropriateness of a given linguistic behaviour uttered in an authoritative voice.

The category can best be exemplified by tokens from one of the longest conversations between Harry and Prof. Snape; their discussion centres on Harry failing to understand why he will have to learn a certain magical craft named Occlumency, and Prof. Snape stressing the opinion that Harry is too inept to accomplish it.

(48)

[situation: Prof. Snape explains Occlumency to Harry]

“You have no subtlety, Potter,” said Snape, his dark eyes glittering.

“You do not understand fine distinctions. It is one of the shortcomings that makes you such a lamentable potion-maker.”

Snape paused for a moment, apparently to savour the pleasure of insulting Harry, before continuing, “Only Muggles talk of ‘mind reading.’ The mind is not a book, to be opened at will and examined at leisure.” (HP 5: 530)

Here, Prof. Snape’s utterances can be classified as form-driven impoliteness; the impolite belief that Harry is incapable of understanding certain subject matters and performing well in others is uttered directly and without mitigation. This linguistic behaviour is made salient by the narrator, who metapragmatically comments on it and describes it as ‘insulting,’ i.e. stating that it is non-politic and negatively marked.

A further conversation between the same interactants shows the use of the metapragmatic label ‘politeness:’

(49)

[situation: Harry’s first Occlumency session. An argument about the usefulness of Occlumency ensues]

“I just wanted to know,” Harry began again, forcing his voice back to politeness, “why—” (HP 5: 532)

The narrator comments on Harry’s tone of voice by labelling it as ‘polite.’ This comment implies that there is a certain tone of voice that is appropriate for conversations that Harry intends to use here. Associations with a certain volume and tone of voice, such as calmness, are possible, but not made explicit. It is likely in this case that the label ‘politeness’ is used in Watts’s (2003) sense of politic behaviour, i.e. a tone of voice that is appropriate and acceptable for student-teacher-interactions, instead of one that exceeds non-salient, appropriate behaviour.

The label ‘insulted’ is also used in *Artemis Fowl*:

(50)

[situation: Artemis calls Commander Root to reinstate negotiations]

“Is that the commander?”

A noise filtered through the black gauze. It sounded like a whinny.

“No. This is not the commander. This is Foaly, the centaur. Is that the kidnapping lowlife human?”

It took Artemis a moment to process the fact that he’d been insulted. (AF 1: 242)

In detailing Artemis’s reaction, the narrator clarifies that “the kidnapping lowlife human” is not only used as an insult, i.e. a conventionalised impoliteness formula, but one that is directed at Artemis. This shows that narrator comments can help the child to understand interactions; in this specific case, the reader is allowed to learn



about the insult together with the focal character if its meaning and addressee has not been processed immediately.

(51) shows a different usage of narrator comments; here, the narrator labels behaviour using implicit means, which allows the child to use her pragmatic knowledge to fill a narratorial gap.

(51)

[situation: Draco has observed Ron stumbling, and has commented on it]

Ron told Malfoy to do something that Harry knew he would never have dared say in front of Mrs. Weasley. (HP 4: 121)

The reader is invited here to insert a word or phrase that she knows she would not use in the context of speaking to her own parent. This shows the underlying assumption that the reader is pragmatically aware of which utterances are appropriate for parent-child interactions. The narrator comment thus serves the dual purpose of not having to directly state an offensive word or phrase, and allowing the reader to think of (and enjoy) the usage of offensive terms.

### 11.2.2 Emotions

Culpeper's (2011a: 23) impoliteness definition discusses the link between impoliteness and emotions, stating that impolite "behaviours always have or are presumed to have emotional consequences for at least one participant." This implies that "[p]eople feel hurt when someone else says or does something that they perceive emotionally injured them or when they perceive someone's failure to say or do something emotionally injures them" (Vangelisti 2007: 139).

In this chapter, my aim is to further clarify this link of impoliteness and emotions. To understand which emotions are connected to impoliteness in children's fiction, I tagged basic level negative emotions as per Shaver et al. (1987) that occurred in close proximity to language use that I have tagged as impolite.

Emotion labels are used on the text-external narratorial level, that is, the narrator describes or labels the emotional state of a character in a given situation. There are three ways that the narrator may metapragmatically label a given emotional state of a character:

- (1) the emotion may be named directly: 'she was angry;'
- (2) the emotion may be named indirectly through descriptions of the physical manifestations of the emotions: 'her face was red;'

(3) or through metaphorical realisations: ‘she was about to explode.’

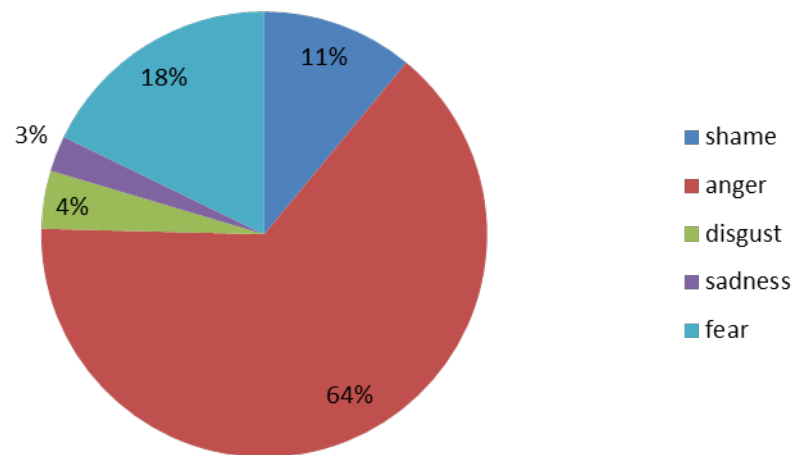


Fig. 11.10: Emotion categories in children's fiction

Fig. 11.10 shows the distribution of metapragmatic comments on five negative character emotions. These are the basic level emotions anger, sadness and fear, plus two subordinate negative emotions, disgust and shame, that occurred in my data in connection to impolite language use. In addition, my data included instances of non-negative emotions, i.e. 1 instance of relief and 13 codings of the emotion of surprise. However, these shall not be discussed in detail as my focus is on the relationship between negative emotions and impoliteness.

For my data, disgust and sadness are rarely connected with impolite utterances (4 % and 3 % of all emotion labels). With 64 % of emotion labels, anger is shown to be the predominant emotion that is connected to impoliteness in children's fiction, while fear (18 %) and shame (11 %) are also of importance.

### 11.2.2.1 Disgust

A preferred way to clarify that a character is disgusted and thus feels licensed to use impoliteness is by referring to excrement: a natural reaction to perceiving excrement is disgust. Consider (52):

(52)

[situation: the beginning of Miss Trunchbull's first lesson in Matilda's class]

“Good afternoon, children,” she barked.

“Good afternoon, Miss Trunchbull,” they chirruped.

The Headmistress stood before the class, legs apart, hands on hips, glaring at the small boys and girls who sat nervously at their desks in front of her.

“Not a very pretty sight,” she said. Her expression was one of utter distaste, as though she were looking at something a dog had done in the middle of the floor. “What a bunch of nauseating little warts you are.” (MA: 141)

Here, the students in Miss Trunchbull’s class are equated with excrement. This exacerbates the impoliteness of her utterance and shows that for her, children are an offending event merely by virtue of existing. As the reader first encounters the character in this scene, she will be likely to characterise Miss Trunchbull as the antagonist, especially since a child reader will share Matilda’s perspective.

In a similar manner, Draco is associated with excrement; it is implied that the mere act of seeing him is an offending event to Ron in (53):

(53)

[situation: Ron and Hermione encounter Draco in a bookstore]

Ron and Hermione fought their way over, both clutching stacks of Lockhart’s books.

“Oh, it’s you,” said Ron, looking at Malfoy as if he were something unpleasant on the sole of his shoe. (HP 2: 61)

However, as there are only comparatively few instances in my data, the emotion of disgust seems to be less strongly connected to impoliteness than other negative emotions; this also allows one to question the evolutionary origin of impoliteness as disgust management as proposed e.g. by Vogel (2015).<sup>155</sup>

### 11.2.2.2 Shame

In my data, 11% of emotion labels are related to the expression of shame. Thus, shame seems to be less strongly connected to impoliteness than other negative emotions. Consider (54), in which Mrs Wormwood’s face takes on a hue commonly associated with a person that feels ashamed or embarrassed:

(54)

[situation: Mrs Wormwood criticises a boy that was caught picking his nose]

“Serves him right,” Mrs Wormwood said. “He shouldn’t have put his finger up there in the first place. It’s a nasty habit. If all children had Superglue put on their fingers they’d soon stop doing it.”

Matilda said, “Grown-ups do it too, mummy. I saw you doing it yesterday in the kitchen.”

“That’s quite enough from you,” Mrs Wormwood said, turning pink. (MA: 34)

The character feels shame as Matilda points out that she has shown a common children’s behaviour that she herself has just criticised, i.e. picking her nose. As the reader herself may have been admonished for a similar behaviour, she is likely to connect the facial hue and the emotion. Also consider (55), in which the connection

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<sup>155</sup> See Pleyer and Pleyer (2016) for an alternate proposal.

between embarrassment or shame and the physical reaction, i.e. blushing or a red face, is further explicated:

(55)

[situation: Prof. Snape catches Harry reading a magazine article about himself in class]

To Harry's fury, he began to read the article aloud.

“‘Harry Potter's Secret Heartache’... dear, dear, Potter, what's ailing you now? ‘A boy like no other, perhaps...’”

Harry could feel his face burning. Snape was pausing at the end of every sentence to allow the Slytherins a hearty laugh. The article sounded ten times worse when read by Snape. Even Hermione was blushing scarlet now. (HP 4: 515)

Note here also that Prof. Snape pauses to allow for student reactions, which exacerbates the offence and, correspondingly, the embarrassment felt by Harry and Hermione, who are both described as having strong physical reactions.

In (56), a physical reaction is detailed that is connected to feeling shame or embarrassment; further, an emotion label is used (‘feeling guilty’). It is made explicit that Klaus is not proud, or ashamed, of the behaviour he exhibits, i.e. referring to Count Olaf as an ‘intelligent man.’

(56)

[situation: the Baudelaires were not given cutlery to eat dinner with, and hence ate with their hands]

“If you were smart,” Genghis said, “you would have borrowed the silverware of one of your friends.”

“We never thought of that,” Klaus said. When one is forced to tell atrocious lies, one often feels a guilty flutter in one's stomach, and Klaus felt such a flutter now. “You certainly are an intelligent man,” he continued. (Series 5: 111)

The above discussion shows that characters feel ashamed for two main reasons. On the one hand, they are forced to exhibit, or are caught exhibiting, behaviours that are socially sanctioned behaviours, such as telling lies or picking one's nose. These tend to be behaviours that young children are often told off for, so a young reader will be likely to have internalised the connection between these behaviours and feeling shame. On the other hand, characters are ashamed when they are put on the spot, as in (55).

### 11.2.2.3 Fear

18% of occurrences of emotion labels are linked to the emotion of fear. Characters predominantly feel fear in situations where they expect negative physical (57) or verbal consequences (58):

(57)

“Lately,” Count Olaf said, “I have been very nervous about my performances with the theatre troupe, and I'm afraid I may have acted a bit standoffish.”

The word “standoffish” is a wonderful one, but it does not describe Count Olaf’s behaviour toward the children. It means “reluctant to associate with others,” and it might describe somebody who, during a party, would stand in a corner and not talk to anyone. It would not describe somebody who provides one bed for three people to sleep in, forces them to do horrible chores, and strikes them across the face. There are many words for people like that, but “standoffish” is not one of them.

Klaus knew the word “standoffish” and almost laughed out loud at Olaf’s incorrect use of it. But his face still had a bruise on it, so Klaus remained silent. (Series 1: 74-75)

Note that the fear of further physical violence stops Klaus from commenting on Count Olaf’s explanation. The narrator stresses that Count Olaf might perceive a laugh as an offending event, which would give him cause to react in a manner detrimental to Klaus’s well-being. A similar sense of dread is expressed in (58), where the narrator uses a synonym to express Harry’s sense of fear.

(58)

[situation: Mr Filch’s cat, Mrs Norris, is found Petrified in an upstairs corridor. Harry is believed to be responsible.]

“If I might speak, Headmaster,” said Snape from the shadows, and Harry’s sense of foreboding increased; he was sure nothing Snape had to say was going to do him any good. (HP 2: 143)

Note here that this scene stems from the second book in the *Harry Potter* series; the reader is aware of a shared history between the characters. There is thus an understandable reason for Harry’s fear that Prof. Snape’s utterance might have negative consequences.

#### 11.2.2.4 Sadness

Only 3 % of emotion labels in my data are related to the emotion of sadness; for my data, the relation of impolite behaviour and sadness as a resulting emotion is not overly strong. Consider (59), in which a physical manifestation of sadness, i.e. tears, are discussed as a physical reaction towards impolite behaviour:

(59)

[situation: Esmé is unhappy about having to stay in a tent on top of a freezing mountain]

“But what about tonight?” Esmé Squalor said. “It is definitely *not* in for me to set up tents in the freezing cold.”

Count Olaf looked at his girlfriend and began to laugh, and Sunny could smell the foul breath of his nasty giggles.

“Don’t be silly,” the villain said finally. “*You’re* not going to set up the tents, Esmé. You’re going to stay nice and toasty in the car. The bucktoothed baby will set up the tents for us.”

Now Olaf’s entire troupe laughed, and the car filled with the stench of so many villains’ bad breath. Sunny felt a few more tears roll down her face, and turned to the window so no one would see. (Series 10: 55-56)

Here, Count Olaf uses a conventionalised impoliteness formula, more precisely a personalised third-person negative references (in the hearing of the target) as he refers to Sunny as a ‘bucktoothed baby.’ She is further laughed at, and is forced to

do physical labour. While it is not made explicit that the impolite linguistic behaviour is the cause of Sunny's sadness, it will at the very least contribute to her negative feelings. The connection between impolite language use and sadness is made explicit, however, in (60):

(60)

[situation: Ron points out to Prof. Snape that Hermione has been hexed with a teeth-growing hex by Draco]

"Malfoy got Hermione!" Ron said. "Look!"

He forced Hermione to show Snape her teeth — she was doing her best to hide them with her hands, though this was difficult as they had now grown down past her collar. Pansy Parkinson and the other Slytherin girls were doubled up with silent giggles, pointing at Hermione from behind Snape's back.

Snape looked coldly at Hermione, then said, "I see no difference."

Hermione let out a whimper; her eyes filled with tears, she turned on her heel and ran, ran all the way up the corridor and out of sight. (HP 4: 299-300)

The given situation is hurtful to Hermione: Her teeth keep growing due to the hex, which is embarrassing to her, as evidenced by her trying to hide them. Further, other students exhibit paralinguistic conventionalised impoliteness formulae in laughing and pointing at her. Prof. Snape uses form-driven impoliteness to state the impolite belief that Hermione's teeth had always been exceptionally huge. The narration here implies that it is Prof. Snape's utterance that is perceived as hurtful and sadness-inducing as Hermione whimpers and starts crying after the utterance has been made.

#### 11.2.2.5 Anger

With 64 % of all emotion labels, anger forms the predominant emotion that is connected with impoliteness in my data. It occurs in every book and book series, and is an emotion felt by both protagonist and antagonist. The emotion may be named directly, as in (61), where the narrator uses the synonym 'rage' to designate the emotional state of Miss Trunchbull:

(61)

[situation: Miss Trunchbull believes Matilda to have placed a newt in her water jug]

"You are a vile, repulsive, repellent, malicious little brute!" the Trunchbull was shouting.

"You are not fit to be in this school! You ought to be behind bars, that's where you ought to be! I shall have you drummed out of this establishment in utter disgrace! I shall have the prefects chase you down the corridor and out of the front-door with hockey-sticks! I shall have the staff escort you home under armed guard! And then I shall make absolutely sure you are sent to a reformatory for delinquent girls for the minimum of forty years!"

The Trunchbull was in such a rage that her face had taken on a boiled colour and little flecks of froth were gathering at the corners of her mouth. (MA: 162)

Here, Miss Trunchbull operates under the belief that Matilda has committed an offending event, i.e. placing a newt in her drinking water, and thus she feels licensed to retaliate using verbal impoliteness. Her emotional state is further signalled by physical reactions such as spit flying from her mouth, and by allusions to the conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HEAT IN A CONTAINER,<sup>156</sup> as evidenced by the ‘boiled colour’ of her face.

In (62), as well, the emotion is named directly, and physical manifestations are stated.

(62)

[situation: Artemis and Commander Root are negotiating]

Artemis jotted a note on the pad. “Let’s save some time here. I grow weary of your clumsy bluffs.

In the case of an abduction, the LEP will first send a crack Retrieval team to get back what has been lost. You have done so. Excuse me while I titter. Crack team? Honestly. A Cub-Scout patrol armed with water pistols could have defeated them.”

Root fumed silently, taking out his anger on the cigar butt. (AF 1: 154)

Here, Artemis’s use of impoliteness to ridicule Commander Root’s tactical approach results in Root feeling angered. The emotion label ‘anger’ is used, and the narrator describes related behavioural patterns such as biting down hard on the cigarette. Note again the use of the metaphor ANGER IS HEAT IN A CONTAINER in that Commander Root is described as ‘fuming.’

Note also the types of offence that may cause a participant to feel angered, such as contradicting someone in (63):

(63)

[situation: Count Olaf is introduced to the Baudelaires as ‘Gunther.’ The Baudelaires recognise him and refuse to accept the disguise]

“It is O.K., please,” Count Olaf said. “The children are confused.”

“We’re not confused, Olaf,” Violet said.

Esmé turned to Violet and gave her an angry glare. “You and your siblings will call this man Gunther,” she ordered, “or you will make me very, very sorry I took you into my glamorous home.” (Series 6: 67)

Here, Violet contradicting Count Olaf is perceived by Esmé as an offending event, that is, the utterance causes her anger. This leads her to retaliate and to utter a threat following the conventionalised impoliteness formula “[if you do not] [X] [then] [Y]” (see Culpeper 2011a: 136).

The data also include cases of speakers being unable to keep their emotions in check (64), as well as cases of speakers being able to manage their emotions (65).

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<sup>156</sup> See an in-depth discussion of this conceptual metaphor in Kövecses (2010: 123-126).

(64)

[situation: Harry and Prof. Snape discuss mysterious dreams that Harry has been having]  
“Perhaps,” said Snape, his dark, cold eyes narrowing slightly, “perhaps you actually enjoy having these visions and dreams, Potter. Maybe they make you feel special — important?”  
“No, they don’t,” said Harry, his jaw set and his fingers clenched tightly around the handle of his wand.  
“That is just as well, Potter,” said Snape coldly, “because you are neither special nor important, and it is not up to you to find out what the Dark Lord is saying to his Death Eaters.”  
“No — that’s your job, isn’t it?” Harry shot at him.  
He had not meant to say it; it had burst out of him in temper. For a long moment they stared at each other, Harry convinced he had gone too far. (HP 5: 591)

In (64), the narration shows that Harry has been angered by Prof. Snape’s insinuation that having dreams make him feel special, as physical manifestations of anger such as a set jaw, or clenched fingers are described. After Prof. Snape utters a form-driven impoliteness statement (“you are neither special nor important”), Harry speaks out of anger, here referred to as ‘temper;’ it is made explicit that his utterance was made unintentionally and was caused by his strong negative emotion. Contrast this with (65), which shows a growth in Harry’s character:

(65)

[situation: Harry is late for the start of term banquet]  
“Fifty points from Gryffindor for lateness, I think,” said Snape. “And, let me see, another twenty for your Muggle attire. You know, I don’t believe any House has ever been in negative figures this early in the term: We haven’t even started pudding. You might have set a record, Potter.”  
The fury and hatred bubbling inside Harry seemed to blaze white-hot, but he would rather have been immobilised all the way back to London than tell Snape why he was late. (HP 6: 153-154)

In this excerpt, Harry is older, and is able to remain calm in spite of his anger. His emotion here is expressed by the ANGER IS HEAT IN A CONTAINER metaphor, as the emotion is connected to a liquid in a container that is bubbling and in danger of boiling over.

### 11.2.3 Volume or Tone

My concern in this section is descriptions of paralinguistic features of character utterances. Here, I am interested in descriptions that go beyond what I have classified as tags on the text-internal analytical level. That is, I investigate instances in which the narrator describes the intensity of a message, especially whether a greater volume was used than appropriate for a given context, or whether a tone of voice was used that is commonly associated with impoliteness. Consider the following example:

(66)



[situation: a first-year student named Colin wants to take Harry's picture to prove to his brother that he has met him. The encounter is witnessed by Draco]  
"Signed photos? You're giving out signed photos, Potter?"  
Loud and scathing, Draco Malfoy's voice echoed around the courtyard. He had stopped right behind Colin, flanked, as he always was at Hogwarts, by his large and thuggish cronies, Crabbe and Goyle. (HP 2: 97)

Here, the narrator stresses that Draco's utterance is intensified using two different paralinguistic strategies – his voice is described as having great volume, and a certain tone that is open to an interpretation as impolite. This description goes beyond a tag or "red kennzeichnenden Ausdruck" (Yos 1996: 181). Note here that the implication of vanity is impolite to Harry; allowing other students to listen in exacerbates this impoliteness, as well as any potential embarrassment to Harry and Colin, who had no intention of handing out photos.

Also consider (67):

(67)  
[situation: Artemis has received a text message on an unlisted number]  
"Text message," he said, navigating through the mobile phone's menu. "No one has this number except Butler."  
Holly folded her arms. "Obviously someone has."  
Artemis ignored her tone. "It must be Foaly. He's been monitoring my wireless communications for months. Either he's using my computer, or he's found a way to unify our platforms." (AF 2: 181)

Here, the narrator clarifies that Holly's comment is not to be understood as neutral, i.e. a politic utterance merely stating a fact, or a concern. Instead, the reader is invited to read her utterance using a certain critical tone implying that Artemis was not careful with this particular number. Hence, her utterance is potentially open to an interpretation as impolite.

#### 11.2.4 Target of Utterance

The point of this section is to investigate instances of the narrator specifying the target of an impolite utterance, i.e. the narrator explicitly names a character the utterance is directed at. These comments tend to occur in dyads or group situations and detail impolite language use directed at interlocutors who are not part of the original conversation. This category is similar to Culpeper's (2011a: 135) conventionalised impoliteness category 'personalised third-person negative references (in the hearing of the target),' in that a speaker makes negative assertions about a third person; however, the present category refers only to instances of non-conventionalised impoliteness. Consider (68):

(68)

[situation: Prof. Snape discusses spell-casting with another professor while Harry is standing by]

“Yes, those who progress in using magic without shouting incantations gain an element of surprise in their spell-casting. Not all wizards can do this, of course; it is a question of concentration and mind power which some” – his gaze lingered maliciously upon Harry once more – “lack.”

Harry knew Snape was thinking of their disastrous Occlumency lessons of the previous year. He refused to drop his gaze, but glowered at Snape until Snape looked away. (HP 6: 170)

In the example, Prof. Snape’s statement that not all students are capable of using non-verbal spells cannot be classified as impolite as such, as there is no addressee that the comment is explicitly directed at. However, the narratorial description that Prof. Snape ‘was looking at Harry’ marks him as the intended addressee of Prof. Snape’s utterance, with the impolite belief that it is Harry who is incapable of mastering this area of magic. This strategy is preferred by the narrator for Prof. Snape:

(69)

[situation: the new Potions teacher Slughorn praises Harry’s potion-making abilities to Prof. Snape]

“Stop skulking and come and join us, Severus!” hiccuped Slughorn happily. “I was just talking about Harry’s exceptional potion-making! Some credit must go to you, of course, you taught him for five years!”

Trapped, with Slughorn’s arm around his shoulders, Snape looked down his hooked nose at Harry, his black eyes narrowed. “Funny, I never had the impression that I managed to teach Potter anything at all.”

“Well, then, it’s natural ability!” shouted Slughorn. (HP 6: 299)

Examples such as (68) and (69) suggest that the narrator’s voice is preferred in cases where the addressee of an utterance containing non-conventionalised impoliteness structures is made explicit e.g. by pointing or looking at them. These are instances of the narrator describing visual cues that an observer in a naturalistic conversation would be privy to; they thus help the child reader to understand that impoliteness has taken place.

### 11.3 Conclusion

The above discussion has shown that metapragmatic impoliteness labels and metapragmatic impoliteness comments are used in children’s fiction for a variety of reasons.

- 1) Explicit mentions of the terms ‘rude,’ ‘impolite,’ or ‘polite’ are used to clarify which behaviours are perceived as salient and non-politic in the fictional world. They also allow the reader to draw inferences to the pragmatic norms in the world that she inhabits in that some of these norms may overlap with those in the fictional setting.

- 2) Tags and descriptions are used to give the reader further information as to how utterances are to be imagined; this allows her to understand whether or not a given behaviour is open to an interpretation as impolite. It further allows her to infer links between certain paralinguistic and non-verbal features and impoliteness, e.g. that utterances made with a loud voice and a frown are more likely to be associated with impoliteness than those where these features are lacking.
- 3) Metapragmatic utterances allow for the giving of information that would otherwise be lacking, such as who an utterance is directed to. This helps the reader gain access to contextual information that she would be able to observe in naturalistic conversations. Further, in describing the emotional state of characters and associated physical reactions, metapragmatic comments help the reader explicate the connection between impoliteness events and negative emotions.

Metapragmatic impoliteness labels and metapragmatic impoliteness comments thus help in creating a rich image of the fictional world and the norms and conventions that hold within it. My fourth hypothesis, i.e. that impoliteness metalanguage will clarify the use of impoliteness and signal that impoliteness has taken place, especially in cases where much contextual knowledge is needed for an understanding of the utterance in question, has thus been substantiated.

## 12. Analysing Impoliteness in German Translations: A Case Study

The point of this chapter is to understand how English-language impoliteness token structures are translated into German. This is relatively unexplored territory in impoliteness studies.<sup>157</sup>

The *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling was chosen as a data set for this case study as it has attracted a large global audience, nonetheless through media surrounding the series (see also ch. 8 above). In this case study, I focus on conversations between Harry Potter and Prof. Snape in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (HP 1) and *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (HP 6). The reason is that in HP 6, Harry shows a more varied use of impoliteness strategies than in HP 1 (Pleyer 2015), and also starts conflicts with Prof. Snape (see ch. 10.5 above). Hence, a contrast in the translation of impoliteness in HP 1 and HP 6 is expected.

I conducted a qualitative, descriptive analysis, using Toury's (1980a) Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) as an analytic framework. Descriptive Translation Studies understands translations as a cultural, norm-governed activity, in the sense that it transfers a literary product across the literary polysystems of different linguistic communities. In this line of thinking, even translations themselves make up a subsystem within a given culture's literary polysystem (Even-Zohar 1978: 117-118).

In the first instance, I conducted an analysis of the initial norms. Initial norms, in Toury's theory, refer to the translator's choice between adhering to the source text or the target language (Toury 1995: 56). The translator's choice is in part influenced by the position of the text in the literary system of the target culture. Further, I analysed operational norms in relation to the actual translation process. Here, the basic questions are whether the formal structure of the source text has been observed and whether it is translated fully, as well as what stylistic decisions have been made. This reveals whether the target text adequately adheres to norms of the source culture or whether it conforms more to the target culture's linguistic and literary system (Toury 1980a: 55).

For an analysis of translated impoliteness, the following five translation strategies have been chosen (Toury 1980a: 54):

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<sup>157</sup> See, however, a paper by Pleyer (2017).

- 1) Omission includes instances of deleting parts of the source text for an easier understanding.
- 2) Purification is similar to omission in that it concerns all omissions for reasons of inappropriateness, i.e. for reasons of censoring.
- 3) Substitution is used to make a text easier to consume for its readership. Here, a cultural artefact of the source culture that target culture readers might not be familiar with is replaced.
- 4) Explication concerns instances of rewording, as well as instances of added information, such as paratextual explanations, or footnotes.
- 5) Simplification concerns changes on both the macro-structural and the micro-structural level. On the macro-structural level, the source text's genre, structure, or chapter organisation is modified; while on the micro-structural level, modifications concern sentence length, concrete for abstract language, weakening irony etc.

As one of the functions of impoliteness in (children's) fiction is to entertain the reader (e.g. Culpeper 1998, see also ch. 4.2 above), omission and purification might not be the preferred strategies in a translation of a text containing a high number of impolite token structures. British speakers generally prefer more indirect communication strategies (Stewart 2005: 117-118); hence a greater level of directness might be seen by British speakers to be open to an interpretation as impolite. For German speakers, who prefer direct communication, a literal translation might lack impoliteness. Hence, substitution is expected to occur to adequately express impoliteness in the translation.

## **12.1 Results**

In the translation of *Harry Potter*, the target text tends to orient more towards the target culture, that is, a global trend towards domestication is recognisable. Names, objects and artefacts are translated or even substituted with ones that are bound to be more recognisable to German readers in order to achieve a greater familiarisation of the readership with the fictional world.

As expected, omission and purification strategies are rarely used. See, for instance, the omission of pauses in the English source text. Here, Prof. Snape pre-

fers to use pauses to either express or exacerbate an impolite belief. See, for instance, his reaction on seeing Harry's name on the class list: "Ah, *yes*," he said softly, "Harry Potter. Our new — *celebrity*." (HP 1: 136). The pause emphasises the word 'celebrity,' stressing how Prof. Snape views Harry's role in the school, as well as the latter's supposed unwillingness to put in any hard work. Some of these pauses are omitted in the target text, which could lessen the impact of impoliteness for the hearer. However, in other instances the translator inserted pauses where none were present in the source text (see, e.g., (1)) so that globally, roughly the same amount of pauses is found in Prof. Snape's speech.

(1)

Source text: "A ghost, as I trust that you are all aware by now, is the imprint of a departed soul left upon the earth, and of course, as Potter so wisely tells us, *transparent*." (HP 6: 431)

German translation: "Ein Gespenst, und ich hoffe, das ist Ihnen inzwischen allen klar, ist die Spur, die eine verstorbene Seele auf der Erde hinterlässt... und natürlich, wie Potter uns so weise mitteilt, *durchsichtig*." (HP 6-G: 416)

Again, the pause between the factual information on the nature of ghosts and the following insult to Harry's knowledge exacerbates the impoliteness.

Instances of substitution are found, for example, in the translation of character names. Hermione Granger's first name is domesticated to the spelling *Hermine*. This German version of the name, albeit slightly old-fashioned, is easier for young readers to recognise and to pronounce. The family name of Harry's godfather Sirius is likewise substituted from 'Black' to the German word 'Schwarz,' possibly to ease reader understanding.<sup>158</sup>

Simplification is fairly common in the translation of the *Harry Potter* series. Sentences are shortened, and paratactic structures are used even in cases where the German syntax could allow for a mirroring of the more complex source text format. Utterances and descriptions are thus rendered in a more child-like manner, at times with the addition of explanatory comments.

Considering explication, the strategy is used mostly in the first volume, where explanations are added to further clarify some action, and especially when and where it took place. Compare, for example,

(2)

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<sup>158</sup> Note that this translation is retracted in later editions – commenting on his choice in interviews, Fritz admitted he would not have opted for this translation had he been aware that Black would become one of the main characters in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. So some tendency for foreignization is recognisable.

Source text: “What’s that you’ve got there, Potter?” (HP 1: 180)

German translation: “Was hast du da in der Hand, Potter?” (HP 1-G: 199)  
‘What’s that you’ve got in your hand, Potter?’

The narration prior to this incident shows Harry reading a book in the school courtyard, so the referent of the ‘that’ in Prof. Snape’s utterance is clear to the reader. Explicating the exact location of the book is not necessary for an understanding of the scene. The fact that the translator saw the need to disambiguate the book’s position shows a greater need for clarification for German readers. This might possibly be due to a different view of the reader as one that lacks imagination.

The addition of politeness markers is of interest for character identity, as in (3):

(3)

Source text: “if you will all open your books on page [...]” (HP 6: 129)

German translation: “Schlagen Sie bitte Ihre Bücher auf Seite [...]” (HP 6-G: 417)  
‘if you would please open your books on page [...]’

German ‘bitte’ (‘please’) is commonly associated with the expression of politeness. A translation excluding the politeness marker would have rendered an acceptable utterance that is politic in a lesson. As it is, Prof. Snape can be seen as being polite; this does not match his character as presented in the English source text.

Especially where Prof. Snape’s language use is concerned, substitution is not only the strategy used most often in the series, but also the one that has the strongest impact on impoliteness and character construction. First and foremost – and quite expectably – the strategy is used in cases of cultural artefacts and measurements unknown to a German audience, since presumably the ease of understanding adds to the reader enjoyment of the target text.

Concerning impoliteness, a different level of immediacy is used in the German translation. See e.g. a stretch of conflictive discourse between Harry and Prof. Snape in the school courtyard:

(4)

Source text:

“What’s that you’ve got there, Potter?”

It was *Quidditch Through the Ages*. Harry showed him.

“Library books are not to be taken outside the school,” said Snape. “Give it to me. Five points from Gryffindor.”

“He’s just made that rule up,” Harry muttered angrily as Snape limped away. (HP 1: 181-182)

German translation:

„Was hast du da in der Hand, Potter?“

Es war Quidditch im Wandel der Zeiten. Harry zeigte es ihm.

„Bücher aus der Bibliothek dürfen nicht nach draußen genommen werden“, sagte Snape.  
„Gib es mir. Fünf Punkte Abzug für Gryffindor“.  
„Diese Regel hat er gerade erfunden“, zischte Harry wütend, als Snape fortgehinkt war. (HP 1-G: 199-200)  
(lit.: “as Snape had limped away”)

In the English source text, Harry utters a potential face-threat while Prof. Snape is in the process of leaving; thus, there is a chance for the latter to overhear the utterance. This, in turn, could result in more negative consequences for Harry, such as the loss of additional House points, further conflict, or detention. In the German target text, the conflictive utterance is made after Prof. Snape’s departure; any potential for him overhearing the utterance, and with it any possible consequences from the utterance, can be ruled out. Clearly, more is at stake for Harry in the source text as being overheard could lead to repercussions.

Tags and discourse markers are translated in all cases, despite them not being idiomatic in colloquial German. See, e.g., the case of the discourse marker ‘well,’ which is translated as ‘nun gut.’ While starting a sentence with ‘nun gut’ is idiomatic in standard German, it is a less common alternative than English ‘well,’ and might be perceived by some speakers as being of a more formal register. Nevertheless, ‘nun gut’ is often used as a translation of ‘well,’ e.g. in the speech of Hagrid (HP 1-G: 253), Mr Ollivander (HP 1-G: 94), Mrs Weasley (HP 1-G: 107), and other characters. Since Prof. Snape also commonly uses ‘well’ to begin impolite utterances directed at Harry, his language use in the target text might come across as stilted and potentially less impolite rather than as an exacerbation of impolite beliefs. See e.g. the following situation, in which his triple use of ‘well’ is translated by an equally non-idiomatic triple repetition of ‘schön:’

(5)

Source text:

“Well, well, well,” sneered Snape, taking out his wand and tapping the padlock once, so that the chains snaked backward and the gates creaked open. “Nice of you to turn up, Potter, although you have evidently decided that the wearing of school robes would detract from your appearance.” (HP 6: 152)

German translation:

„Schön, schön, schön“, sagte Snape höhnisch, zog seinen Zauberstab hervor und tippte einmal gegen das Vorhängeschloss, worauf die Ketten zurückschlängelten und die Torflügel quietschend aufgingen. „Nett von Ihnen, hier aufzutauchen, Potter, auch wenn Sie offenbar der Meinung sind, dass das Tragen eines Schulumhangs von Ihrer Erscheinung ablenken würde.“ (HP 6-G: 145)



It stands to reason that substitution in the cases above might have been used to achieve closeness to the language used in other boarding school novels, which have been and are read widely in Germany (see ch. 5); thus the translator might have wished to appeal more to the young target readers.

Even in a conflictive classroom situation in HP 1, Prof. Snape's 'well,' which is obviously used to criticise the students' inaction, is rendered as '*Noch Fragen?*' ('any further questions?') in the German translation, leading to the conceptualisation of Snape as a teacher who is more concerned rather than critical (6):

(6)

Source text:

"Well? Why aren't you all copying that down?" (HP 1: 138)

German translation:

„Noch Fragen? Und warum schreibt ihr euch das nicht auf?“ (HP 1-G: 152)

Substitution is also used, albeit not often, to exacerbate threats to the speaker's identity, see e.g. (7). The utterance follows a stretch of conflictive discourse in the classroom.

(7)

Source text: "And a point will be taken from Gryffindor House for your cheek, Potter" (HP 1: 138)

German translation: "Und Gryffindor wird ein Punkt abgezogen, wegen dir, Potter" (HP 1-G: 153)

In (7), in the source text Harry is given direct information as to which behaviour has led to the deduction of points, i.e. his being cheeky. In the target text, however, the deduction is presented as being independent of some explicit behaviour. Rather, points are deducted 'because of' Harry, in an expression that poses a greater threat to his identity.

Another aspect that is striking in the context of substitution is the use of address forms. German, in contrast to English, uses a T/V system, with *Sie* as the default for adults and strangers, and *du* for familiarity. *Sie* remains the default way of addressing professors throughout the series. Note also that in Hogwarts, it is politic to address students by their last name. This implies a different level of formality and distance in comparison to German schools, where a first-name basis is common. In HP 1, teachers use *du* to address students, possibly to retain the atmosphere of a German school, while in HP6 *Sie* is used with students who have reached maturity. Still, (8) shows that in his final conversation and conflict with Harry in HP 6, Prof. Snape explicitly deviates from this pattern:

(8)

[situation: Harry and Prof. Snape are fighting during a battle in Hogwarts after Harry has witnessed Prof. Snape commit a murder]

Source text:

“No Unforgivable Curses from you, Potter!” he [Prof. Snape; MP] shouted over the rushing of the flames, Hagrid’s yells, and the wild yelping of the trapped Fang. “You haven’t got the nerve or the ability –”.

“Incarc–” Harry roared, but Snape deflected the spell with an almost lazy flick of his arm. “Fight back!” Harry screamed at him. “Fight back, you cowardly–” (HP 6: 562)

German translation:

„Keine Unverzeihlichen Flüche von dir, Potter!“ rief er [Prof. Snape; MP] durch das Tosen der Flammen, Hagrids Schreie und das wilde Jaulen von Fang, der in der Falle saß.

„Du hast weder den Mut noch die Fähigkeit –”

„Incarc–“, brüllte Harry, aber Snape lenkte den Fluch mit einem geradezu lässigen Schlenker seines Arms ab.

„Wehr dich!“, schrie Harry ihn an. „Wehr dich, du feiger –“ (HP 6-G: 545-546)

Before Prof. Snape’s utterance in (8), Harry had attempted to curse him. Hence, Prof. Snape feels physically threatened and thus licensed to both express anger and to deviate from the politic form of address. Likewise, in a situation of high emotional stress, Harry also feels licensed to deviate from the formal form of address, as seen in his final utterance of this excerpt. His impolite beliefs towards Prof. Snape are thus exacerbated, and their mutual loss of respect is even more transparent for a German audience.

Finally, while the source text tends to use language to characterise a speaker as stemming from a certain social background, the target text rarely utilises language in this way. Harry’s classmate Ron Weasley, who in the source text is characterised as a working-class speaker, uses standard forms in the German translation. In a similar manner, Hagrid’s dialect is adapted to standard German. On the other hand, colloquialisms are added in utterances by and descriptions of both Harry and, strikingly, Prof. Snape. Consider the colloquialism in (9):

(9)

Source text: “Snape’s pale face [...] was suffused with hatred just as it had been before he had cursed Dumbledore.” (HP 6: 563)

German translation: “Snapes bleiches Gesicht [...] war von Hass gezeichnet wie zuvor, als er Dumbledore den Fluch auf den Hals gejagt hatte.” (HP 6-G: 547)

The German expression ‘jm. etw. auf den Hals jagen’ is quite colloquial for committing an action or causing something to happen that is undesirable for the recipient. The use of this expression here lends an almost ironic tone to the action of cursing – and thereby murdering – Prof. Dumbledore.

## 12.2 Discussion

The above analysis has shown that the translator chose to use the strategy of substitution to achieve a greater orientation of the target text towards the target culture. This tendency towards a domestication strategy implies an avoidance of textual features that could pose problems for the child and that could generate misunderstandings.

As retaining foreign elements might lessen reader enjoyment, substitution is used to make the text more accessible and to support the reader in her understanding. In domesticating the British cultural setting, the translator however disallows the child to gain knowledge about other cultures. This raises the question whether in domesticating and simplifying, one is not looking down on the target culture child. In another view, simplification seems to be a preferred German tendency (e.g. Stolze 2003). So, one may question whether the translation strategies in *Harry Potter* reflect this ideology, or whether they are the specific translator's choice, especially since *Harry Potter* is the first children's book he translated.

Generally, it has been shown that the translation strategies used in HP 1-G and HP 6-G can influence characterisation and how the reader conceptualises certain characters. Generally, Prof. Snape's speech in the translation is globally more direct and colloquial than its English equivalent. On the one hand, using greater directness in Prof. Snape's speech conforms to the German target audience preference for directness. On the other hand, being direct in German might not be as strongly associated with impoliteness than in a negative politeness culture such as England. Thus, Prof. Snape's direct utterances in HP 1 and HP 6, which might be open to an interpretation as impolite due to their high level of directness, might not be perceived as impolite in HP 1-G and HP 6-G, that is, by target culture readers who show a preference for directness. Further, the simplification of Prof. Snape's language could affect the readers' perception of him as an antagonistic character. Interestingly, this strategy is found in both HP 1-G and HP 6-G. The translator thus seems to have disregarded the final three novels' double address; that is, his translation seems to focus on the child reader while disregarding the adult readership. One may also question whether the comparatively quick translation process for HP

6 (3 months; compare ch. 8) is responsible for the greater simplicity as the translator might not have had time to deeply engage with the source material.

### 13. Conclusion

In this chapter, I first summarise and review my findings as discussed in chapters 2 to 12. I then discuss some of the limitations of my study, which leads me to identify promising areas for future research.

What I hope to have achieved in this study is a concise analysis of the use of impoliteness strategies and impoliteness metalanguage in contemporary English-language children's fiction and its German translation, with regard to power relations, identity constructions of the participants, and taking into account the special features of constructed written fictional dialogue. I have done so by drawing together research from multiple disciplines beyond that of linguistic im/politeness, and I have included findings from general pragmatics, first language acquisition, psychology, literary studies, and translation studies.

On the basis of my discussion of previous research into impoliteness, children's fiction, and translations, I have formulated five hypotheses, which I restate here for ease of reference:

- 1) The more powerful participant will use more impoliteness strategies than the less powerful participant because the latter cannot retaliate in kind; this will hold especially in institutional settings;
- 2) in addition, and for the same reasons, the more powerful participant will begin more conflicts than the less powerful participant.
- 3) Concerning the use of impoliteness strategies, the more contextual knowledge is needed to conceptualise that impoliteness has taken place in a given situation, the less the strategy will be used in children's fiction.
- 4) Impoliteness metalanguage will clarify the use of impoliteness and signal that impoliteness has taken place, especially in cases where much contextual knowledge is needed for an understanding of the utterance in question.
- 5) Concerning the translation of impoliteness, the target text will orient more to the target culture and its norms. Due to a lack of awareness of the different communicative norms in English and German, I also expect a loss of impoliteness in some cases.

As evidenced in chapters 10.7 on impoliteness strategies, 11.3 on impoliteness metalanguage, and 12.2 on impoliteness in translation, these hypotheses could be supported. Beyond successfully supporting these hypotheses, this study also makes a number of further contributions:

First, my research fills a gap within the study of linguistic impoliteness in that I offer a detailed description of impoliteness in a genre that had not previously been analysed. I showed that analytical criteria from a third-wave impoliteness approach can be productively used to investigate impoliteness in fictional discourse. My analysis showed that impoliteness strategies that are more direct are used most often: conventionalised impoliteness formulae and form-driven impoliteness was used in more than half of all instances of impoliteness strategies in my data. In light of this finding, I suggest in opposition to Culpeper (2011a) that a ranking of impoliteness strategies according to conventionalisation could be profitable. Additionally, criteria for which much contextual knowledge is needed are not used as often, such as convention-driven external impoliteness. If these strategies are used, they are supplemented with metalanguage that clarifies the use of impoliteness for the child.

Further, I offered a refinement of Culpeper's (2011a) analytical criteria, e.g., in the area of conventionalised impoliteness formulae, to support existing criteria and to present a fuller picture of the types of impoliteness strategies in children's fiction. For instance, I added the category of 'conventionalised impoliteness formulae: magical curses' to account for the specifics of the setting in my data. I further added categories of physical components that may threaten the hearer or exacerbate the impoliteness. Here, I argument with Lakoff (1973) that the same principles or rules are at work for non-verbal and verbal im/politeness. It would be interesting to see if other fictional worlds necessitate other conventionalised formulae, such as 'D'arvit!', that help the reader gain a better picture of the type of culture described.

I also illustrated the connection between impoliteness, entertainment, and plot and character construction for a young readership. I showed that the use of impoliteness strategies and of beginning conflictive discourses is deeply related to narrative roles. Here, the antagonist starts most conflicts, especially without any

prior provocation apart from the mere existence of the protagonist; thus, she is characterised as an antagonistic figure. Beginning conflictive discourse may also be used to characterise the protagonist, as e.g. Artemis in the *Artemis Fowl* series globally starts more conflicts than other child protagonists; he thus challenges existing power relations more often. This finding further exemplifies the strong connection of impoliteness and power.

Having also investigated instances of politic and polite discourse in Watts's (2003) sense, I found that politic utterances are only used in very specific circumstances, e.g. for giving information to other characters or to the reader, and in conversations among children. Politeness is hardly ever used, which can be explained in terms of plot construction – the reinstatement or presence of a state of equilibrium (Culpeper 1998) might not be as interesting or entertaining to the reader as conflict, as it furthers neither the plot nor the development of characters. From this follows that politeness strategies are only used for subordinate, flat characters in a very specific narrative setting.

I also fulfilled a research goal posed by Bousfield (2007a) in that I investigated conversation terminations, extending a classification provided by Vuchinich (1990) to fit the fictional data set at hand. It shows that predominantly, no reaction by the protagonist is specified at the end of conflictive discourse; I proposed several reasons for this, for instance that it might be less entertaining to the reader to be told about politic apologies. Here, it would be interesting to see if this trend also holds in other narratives for young children.

Moreover, I established new analytical criteria to describe impoliteness metalanguage that are tailored to fictional discourse. While classifications of metalanguage exist, for instance, in the area of computer-mediated communication, these analytical criteria had to be adapted and expanded to adequately capture impoliteness in fictional discourse. To adequately capture impoliteness metalanguage in fiction, I established criteria for metalanguage on the level of the narrator (text-external) and on the level of the characters (text-internal) in third-person narration.

I used these criteria to show how characters and the narrator use metalanguage to comment on and evaluate language use that is open to an interpretation as impolite. I could show that contrary to expectations, the terms 'impolite,' 'rude,'

and related terms are hardly ever used; instead, on the text-internal level, tags such as ‘she roared’ are used to describe an utterance and make clear that impoliteness may have taken place. These tags may further be used to characterise speakers and their mannerisms, as, e.g., ‘he sneered’ is only used for Prof. Snape in the *Harry Potter* series.

On the text-external level, most narrator comments focus on the description of character emotions, especially the negative emotion of anger. Here, a further investigation would be of interest: A linguistic study combined with further psychological studies in the vein of Shaver et al. (1987) could shed light on the question if anger is the basic negative emotion most easily recognised by children, e.g. by presenting visual cues for basic emotions. This, then, could further explain the predominant use of anger in children’s narratives.

I further demonstrated how readers can draw on this metalanguage to understand impoliteness, e.g., in cases where metalanguage is used to identify the intended target of a message, or where insults unknown to the child are explicated. Here, impoliteness metalanguage fulfils the same function as e.g. visual cues, such as looking at the intended addressee, in naturally occurring conversation. I thus see children’s fiction as supporting the growing pragmatic abilities of young readers as it is constructed in such a way as to allow readers to gain cultural capital and to support their inclusion into the impoliteness use of their surroundings.

Taking a cross-cultural approach, I also showed how German and English speech communities differ in their communicative preferences, especially in the area of linguistic im/politeness, with an awareness that cultures, nation states and languages are not to be equated. Here, especially, research has shown a greater preference for directness and the self in German data (House 2010; Ogiermann 2009), which influences how certain pragmatic features are translated.

In a case study of the *Harry Potter* source text and the German target text, I further demonstrated that there is a different understanding of the implied reader and her role in translated children’s fiction. Conceptualising the intended reader as needing more support in understanding and relating to the fictional world leads to the choice of a domesticating translation strategy, which in turn necessitates a change in the description of impoliteness events. This, then, influences how readers



perceive certain characters. Here, a follow-up study should investigate whether this preference for German target-culture norms is a global German phenomenon, or whether this merely marks the choice of Fritz, the *Harry Potter* translator.

There are some limitations to the present study which require reflection here. First, my study is limited to a relatively small data set; thus, generalisations about children's fiction as a whole are not easy to make. Hence, a research goal concerns the augmentation of the data to include a greater variety of authors and genres. This, then, will help answer the question of whether the findings of the present analysis hold for

- a) fiction by authors other than the ones used here;
- b) fictional texts for a different readership that has different cognitive prerequisites, e.g., books for beginning readers, or Young Adult fiction;
- c) fictional texts of different genres.

I assume that e.g. in fantasy, science fiction or historical fiction, different conversational norms might be in operation, which would imply a different usage of impoliteness strategies.

Further, three aspects were not taken into account in the present study, the first one of which is the diachronic one. Research (e.g. Jay 1992; Sell 1992) has shown that what is perceived as insulting changes throughout history, such as religious curses. Thus, it would be profitable to conduct an analysis of how impoliteness is expressed, especially in terms of conventionalised impoliteness formulae, in older texts of the school genre, or whether these differ in school stories for boys and girls.

Second, I have excluded the aspect of gender in my study. A contrastive analysis of the use of impoliteness strategies by male and female protagonists and antagonists could shed light on the question if, and to what extent, impoliteness is gendered in children's fiction.

Third and finally, a study into the perceptions of target age group readers would answer a research goal posed e.g. by Lathey (2005). In taking a first-order perspective and investigating reader evaluations of impolite discourse in children's fiction, the second-order analysis of impoliteness conducted here could be further validated or, if necessary, refined.

As my analysis of impoliteness in translations was of an exploratory nature, it is further of interest to conduct a study of impoliteness in translated children's fiction with a broader data set; here, I am especially concerned with the choice of translation strategies by translators other than Fritz, who had never translated children's fiction before *Harry Potter*. In this light, I hope for the present study to have demonstrated a great need for the inclusion of pragmatics in translation and in general language teaching. As such, I understand my work as a contribution to the wider society.

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