

A Pragmatic Analysis of Impoliteness in Selected British Social Interviews

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Abstract: *This research investigates impoliteness employed in selected British social interviews using pragmatic approach. It aims at identifying the pragmatic structure of the phenomenon of impoliteness when dealing with it in selected British social interviews, pinpointing the most common pragmatic strategies of being impolite in those interviews and showing the types of being impoliteness in it. The research employed qualitative method. The data to be analysed in this study are British social interviews where there are two participants or more directing their words to an audience or hearers/ readers. The data of this work are in the form of script even those that are taken from video-recorded. The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one presents the problem, aims, hypotheses, procedures, limits, and value of the study. Chapter two is intended to show the literature review of impoliteness: its definitions, types and history of impoliteness. Chapter three is devoted for data collection and developing the model of analysis. Chapter four is specified for analyzing the data under study. Chapter five is introduced to show the results of the analysis done. The results of this research have described as follows. First, Impoliteness in selected British social interviews is a process structured of three stages. Second, four types of impoliteness strategies occur in this data. They are bald on record strategy, positive impoliteness strategy, negative impoliteness strategy and sarcasm or mock impoliteness. Positive impoliteness strategy becomes the most dominant type used in British social interviews. Meanwhile, withhold impoliteness does not exist in the data under this study. Third, all the types of being impolite are used in British social interviews. Those are affective, coercive and entertaining impoliteness. The most utilized type in this study is entertaining impoliteness. It is employed to amuse the speaker or other people by making the hearer the object of entertaining. Finally, the model used in analysis the data of the present study is workable*

Keywords: Pragmatics, Impoliteness, Types, Strategies

1. Introduction

There are many rules that control communication through language. Politeness is one of these rules. Ample attention should be given to this phenomenon in communication because it makes people produce a good kind of communication. Politeness can be defined as certain strategies utilized to save public self-image. It is also considered as conflict voidness. Politeness has a great role in social interaction in that it creates a successful communication; it can convey meaning and interpret it in an appropriate way; and it strengthens the relationship between people as well as maintaining social harmony [1].

Sometimes, however, people intend to be *impolite* by saying or doing something wrong due to different reasons such as: First, they may be stimulated by certain motivation, so they have the intention to damage the others' face [2]. Second, sometimes being impolite is a reflection to one's psychological state like feeling angry [3]. Third, people may intend to be impolite for the sake of entertainment [3]. Fourth, people sometimes intend to be impolite to get power via language [3].

1.1 The Problem

Impoliteness has not obtained much attention as being the opposite phenomenon to politeness. In pragmatics, some scholars made certain attempts to deal with the phenomenon of linguistic impoliteness in their studies. Yet, it is only recently that impoliteness as a linguistic phenomenon has been given its due attention.

Certain efforts have been made to understand impoliteness. Some linguists think that impoliteness is an inappropriate linguistic behavior [4]. Others shed light on it from the angle of rude behavior [5] or from the angle of face threatening acts [1]. Yet, impoliteness as a separate phenomenon has not been given its own characteristics, rules and strategies. In the first model of impoliteness, the term aggravation language is used instead of the term impoliteness [6]. Later, impoliteness has been dealt with as a separate phenomenon but still treated by scholars as a subcategory that emerges from politeness [7].

After that, impoliteness has been given its own systematic framework, and introduced as certain strategies used to damage face and cause disharmony [8]. Moreover, impoliteness has been linked with the intention of the speaker and the comprehension of the hearer [9].

Basing on Culpeper's (1996, 2005) model of impoliteness, another model of impoliteness is introduced in which impoliteness is regarded as being a behaviour that aims at attacking face in a particular context [2]. He also declares that impoliteness should be triggered by some offending events and that it encompasses several stages in its production.

Since social interviews can be regarded as a process consisting of several stages, impoliteness can be detected in one of the stages of this process in terms of certain strategies triggered by some offending events. Accordingly, the researcher endeavors to augment the number of researches that deal with linguistic impoliteness to see how this phenomenon is enacted in social interviews.

In other words, the researcher sets herself the task of establishing a pragmatic perspective of the phenomenon of impoliteness in an attempt to fill the gaps mentioned above through investigating the use of such phenomenon in social interviews.

More precisely, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the pragmatic structure of impoliteness as used in social interviews?
- 2) What are the most common pragmatic strategies of being impolite in social interviews?
- 3) What are the types of impoliteness strategies in social interviews?

1.2 The Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

- 1) In social interviews, impoliteness is a process of stages.
- 2) Social interviews prefer to use particular strategies to express their being impolite.
- 3) There are different types of impoliteness in social interviews.

1.3 The Scope and limitation of the Study

This study is limited to pragmatically investigating impoliteness in selected British social interviews. It concentrates on the pragmatic analysis of impoliteness, and it focused on investigating the structure, strategies and the types of impoliteness.

2. Pragmatics: The Concept

This subfield of linguistics is introduced for the first time, as a branch of linguistics that deals with the investigation of the relationship of signs to interpreters [10].

Later, different definitions have been given to the term pragmatics. In relation to the context, pragmatics is defined as the study of how utterances have meaning in situations [11]. This definition means that pragmatics distinguishes between the real meaning of the sentences and the intend meaning of the speaker in relation to the situation. Pragmatics is also presented as the study of people's comprehension and production of linguistic action in context [12]. So, pragmatics studies how people comprehend and produce a communicative act or speech act in a conversation. Like the previous definitions, pragmatics is regarded as the study of meaning as connected by speaker (or writer) and construed by listener (or reader) [13]. Pragmatics is considered as one of ways to study language in relation to the contextual background features [14]. In the same line, pragmatics is the study of language in relation to the context [15]. Pragmatics may be roughly defined as the study of language use in context-as compared with semantics, which is the study of literal meaning independent of context [16].

Another concept to pragmatics is that it is the study of those context- dependent aspects of meaning which are systematically abstracted away from in the construction of content or logical form [17].

From the point of view of usage, pragmatics is introduced as the branch of linguistics that dealt with language use, and unlike syntax and semantics, which concern with the form and meaning of sentences respectively [18]. Similar to the previous view, pragmatics is a shift from the paradigm of theoretical grammar in particular syntax, to the paradigm of the language users in human communication as determined by the conditions of the society [19]. Finally, pragmatics has been employed to study language according to the user's opinion in social interaction [20].

All these definitions involve the study of human communication and its meaning in certain circumstances. Pragmatics deals with different fields and theories like: speech act theory, conversational analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, politeness and impoliteness [21]. The fundamental approach to pragmatics taken in this study is: the pragmatic analysis of impoliteness, in selected British social interviews, which will be the core of the present study.

2.1 Impoliteness Definitions

In past, impoliteness was neglected and had not been given its own right. It was referred to as absence or failed politeness or deviation from politeness [22]. Later, researchers inform that traditional theories failed to account for both politeness and impoliteness. Thus, they try to develop alternative models.

Politeness is introduced as any behavior that attempts to protect the face of the addressee; therefore, any behavior that attacks the face of the addressee is impolite [1]. However, the notion of impoliteness has been defined in different ways.

Adapting Brown and Levinson's (1987) notion of politeness theory, impoliteness is defined as "communicative strategies designed to attack face, and thereby cause social conflict and disharmony" [8]. This means that impoliteness is regarded as the use of communicative strategies directed towards mobbing the hearer and reasoning in dis-harmony.

Impoliteness is also considered as a complement to politeness field theory and also a revision of parts of it as well as it should not be considered as failed politeness since there is a clear relationship between them [23].

In relation to intention, "impoliteness comes about when: (1) the speaker communicates a face- attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behavior as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2)" [9].

It is difficult to give a precise definition to impoliteness since it is related to the context as well as the social values because some verbal behaviors are interpreted to be polite in one situation and impolite behavior in another situation [3]. In this case, impoliteness concept is based on the hearer's perception of what the speaker does, more than the speaker's actual behavior.

Impoliteness is also described as attacking of face whose offense has been caused as a result of its transgression of socially accepted norms of behavior in interaction[24]. Impoliteness is not the absence of politeness, but it is the face threat which has been suggested [25].

On the other hand, in any language behavior there are two sides: positive (politeness) and negative (impoliteness) [22]. Impoliteness is not the opposite of politeness because both politeness and impoliteness can be employed by using the same analytical concepts and accordingly impoliteness is not the opposite of politeness [26]. Impoliteness is an unfavourable attitude towards a particular manner occurring in particular contexts [27].

Other scholars think of impoliteness as an unfavourable behavior that may occur in particular context [4]. It can be viewed as a communicative behaviour whose goal is to hinder interpersonal relationship [28]. However, impoliteness is an affected phenomenon that should be studied thoroughly [29].

It sounds that impoliteness has been studied by various researchers in attempts to define it, as well as provide theories of how to employ it in one's speech yet, there is no solid agreement as to what is impoliteness [3]. However, due to the fact that even the definitions of impoliteness are very diverse, it is expected that theories will also vary depending on the author's approach.

The current study adapts the definitions of impoliteness which proposed by Culpeper 1996, 2005 to investigate the types of impoliteness strategies in the data of this study.

2.2 The Nature of the Present Study

The present study is characterized by being surveying-analytical study. It surveys the history about impoliteness, taking into consideration what scholars have written about impoliteness and selecting what adapts to the data scrutinized. Based on these studies the researcher develops the models of analysis.

Impoliteness is studied here in relation to the context as it is a pragmatic study. Contextual factors play a great role in controlling the strategies and types of impoliteness chosen by the participants in the data under study. This is because: First, "In order to understand any social phenomenon as a whole entity, it should be studied in relation to its context as well as other aspects of this phenomenon" [30]. Second, a great account should be given to the context if a study relates to pragmatics [14]. In other words, who is speaking, to whom, where, when and why should be taken into consideration.

In the present study, the researcher depends on descriptive qualitative method of analysis because the study is after getting description to the strategies of impoliteness.

3. Developing the Models of Analysis

This section is devoted for developing the pragmatic models that are followed in the analysis of the data.

3.1 The Pragmatic Structure of impoliteness

Before setting out to develop a model for analyzing the pragmatic structure of impoliteness in the data scrutinized, the following notions need to be clarified:

3.2 Stages of Issuing Impoliteness

Basing on Culpeper's (1996) model of impoliteness, another model of analysis is introduced and treated as adaptable adjunct to the existing model of face. In this model, impoliteness is defined as an intentional threat to the recipient social face and that it has to be caused by some offending event [2]. This leads to examine the impoliteness structure and the way it pans out to form the whole impoliteness process. In this model, impoliteness consists of three stages[2]. The explanation of these stages is shown in table 1:

Table 1: Bousfield's (2008) stages of impoliteness

No.	Elucidation
1. First stage	It establishes the abasement event that stimulates the expression of impoliteness beliefs.
2. Second stage	It presents any reaction to an abasement event.
3. Third stage	It refers to the end of impoliteness process.

The present study adapted Bousfield's(2008) model of the dynamics of impoliteness since it can be applied literally to the data under analysis. This model is shown in figure 1:

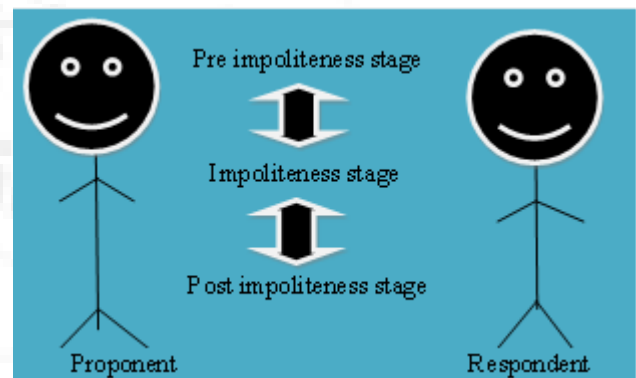


Figure 1: Bousfield's model of the dynamics of Impoliteness

3.3 The Pragmatic Strategies of Impoliteness

Each stage of impoliteness development is realized by certain strategies that are utilized to accomplish impoliteness process.

3.3.1 Strategies of the Pre impoliteness stage

In this regard Grice's (1975) model of the cooperative principle is made use of at this stage. To be linguistically cooperative is the starting point of communication so lack of social cooperation means the beginning of impoliteness [31]. Impolite speakers often start their speech with violating the cooperative principle maxims [2]. Before elaborating on this stage, an account of Grice's maxims is of value, especially to the readers of impoliteness.

It might be enough to recall that his CP consists of a set of maxims subsumed under the categories of quantity, quality,

relation and manner maxim [31]. To be impolite and aggressive towards the recipient is one of the reasons behind violating the cooperative maxims [31]. So depending on the data under study, one can say that the main strategies of the pre impoliteness stage are:

- 1) Violating the quality maxim (Don't say what you believe to be false,
Don't say things for which you lack evidence).
- 2) Violating the quantity maxim (Say no less than the conversation requires.
Say no more than the conversation requires).
- 3) Violating the relevance maxim (be relevant).
- 4) Violating the manner maxim (Don't be obscure, Don't be ambiguous, Be brief, Be orderly).

3.3.2 Strategies of the Impoliteness Stage

It is at this stage that the utterance of impoliteness occurs as a result of what happens at the pre impoliteness stage. Culpeper's (1996, 2005) model of impoliteness is used to develop the model utilized in analyzing the data under study. A review to Culpeper's impoliteness strategies can be displayed in table 2:

Table 2: Culpeper's (1996) Impoliteness Strategies

No. Strategy	Explanation
1. Bald on record impoliteness	It is actualized when the speaker attacks the addressee's face in a direct, unambiguous and brief way in a situation where the face is at stake.
2. Positive impoliteness	It is realized by damaging the addressee's positive face wants. A person's positive face is shown in his desire to be liked and respected by the other.
3. Negative impoliteness	It is designed to damage the addressee's negative face. A person's negative face is shown through his desire not to be imposed
4. Sarcasm	This strategy is actualized through using politeness strategy insincerely. It can be used to express the opposite meaning of what has been said.
5. Withhold politeness	It can be realized if someone being silent or failing to thank when a polite act is hoped to be performed.

3.3.3 Strategies of the Post Impoliteness Stage

At this stage comes the end of the impolite conflict. Thus, the present study can make use of Vuchinich's (1990) conflict termination model to develop the pragmatic model of analysis.

There are five types of conflict termination [32] as shown in table 3:

Table 3: Types of conflict termination

No. Type	Explanation
1. Submission to opponent	One of the operatives gives up and takes the opponent's position.
2. Dominant third party intervention	A third party comes and puts an end to the impolite exchange.
3. Compromise	It occurs when the participants make a discussion between each other's position.
4. Stand-Off	It takes place where the participants change the topic of the speech activity.
5. Withdrawal	It happens where one participant stands down from the speech activity or physically departs

	the area.
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4. Types of impoliteness

There are three types of impoliteness. Each type has its own function. These types are affective impoliteness, entertaining impoliteness and coercive impoliteness [3]. The researcher will employ Culpeper's (2011) types of impoliteness to develop the model of analysis.

4.1 Affective Impoliteness

Affective impoliteness is used by the speaker to display the negative emotional state such as anger in contexts where the target is responsible for this negative feeling. In other words, it displays the producer's negative psychological state because of the guilt that has been done by the target [3]. The following example below shows how (A) expresses anger and negative emotional state blaming (B) for what has happened to his car.

- You little silly! What happened to my car?
- I'm sorry.

4.2 Entertaining impoliteness

Entertaining impoliteness is used by the speaker who makes the target the object of entertainment. The purpose of this type is to amuse the speaker or other people by utilizing impolite strategy towards the target. It occurs between two or more than two participants [3]. The example below shows how the entertaining impoliteness is used by the speaker:

- Wow! Your room is so amazing!
- Thank you. I made it myself.
- Really? I want one for my dog.

Here the speaker uses entertaining impoliteness to entertain not only the speaker or the target but also the other people around them.

4.3 Coercive impoliteness

Coercive impoliteness is used by the speaker who intends to show power and social status which is higher than the hearer. In other words, the purpose behind coercive impoliteness is to display the imbalanced power between not only individuals, but also to institutions or groups [3]. It reflects a great distance of social power, although it may be used among friends so as to obtain power via language [3]. The example below shows how coercive impoliteness is used to show that the position of the speaker is higher than the hearer.

- Can you clean this room?
- Yes, sir, but let me finish my work.
- I don't care whether you finish your work or not.

The proposed theoretical framework is shown in figure 2:

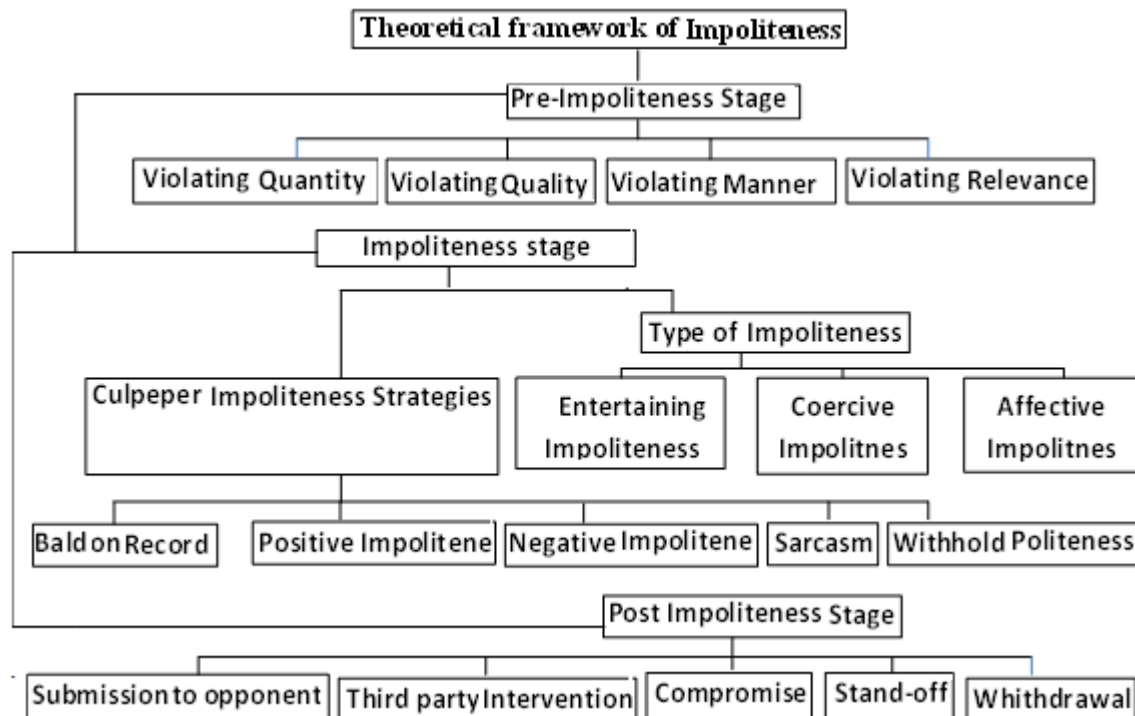


Figure 2: The proposed theoretical framework [adapted from Bousfield, 2008; Grice, 1975; Culpeper, 1996; 2005; 2011; Vnchinich, 1990]

5. Data Analysis

The data to be analyzed in this work are social interviews where there are two participants (interviewer and actor or actress) or more directing their words to an audience / hearers or readers.

5.1 The Selected Situation

Interviewer	<i>So... just going by your Twitter account alone, a lot of people just don't seem to get that Keith and Rosie are characters!</i>
Laura:	<i>Hehe, yeah! A lot of people just really have a brain block when it comes to this! (Giggles) Even people who have worked out that my name's Laura and I'm being Rosie in the show, many seem to think that I've simply changed my name and I'm just being myself in the show, or they think that I - Laura - am in a relationship with Leigh in real life, and we're both pretending in the show! I think that Leigh is Keith and that I'm just pretending! It's just... I mean... beyond... I can't, hehe, even now, I've said so many times that Rosie's not real. I've said it so many times on Twitter, but I got one even just this morning asking 'Are you and Keith really a couple?'. I'm like: 'No! You don't really believe that Dot Cotton's Dot Cotton! Why are we having such a problem with this?!'</i>
Interviewer	<i>You starred in two series of kids' series The Mysti Show, but probably first came to most peoples' attention in Teenage Kicks. What was that experience like? Would you do more studio sitcoms?</i>

Laura Aikman (personal communication, July 1, 2013)

5.1.1 Familiarizing the Selected Situation

This situation is taken from an interview with Laura Holly Aikman in London in July 2013. The interviewer is conversing with her about what would she say to a lot of people who think that she has a relationship with the

boyfriend character Keith Lemon. Table 4 shows the contextual factors of the interview analyzed:

Table 4: The Contextual Factors of the Selected Situation

Speaker	Hearer	Time	Place
Interviewer	Laura Aikman	July 2013	London

5.1.2 Analysing the Selected Situation

In this text, Impoliteness is developed over three stages namely: the pre impoliteness stage, the impoliteness stage and the post impoliteness stage. Table 5 shows the pragmatic structure of impoliteness in the selected situation:

Table 5: The Pragmatic Structure of Impoliteness in the Selected Situation

Pragmatic structure	Items	Producer
The first stage	<i>So... just going by your Twitter account alone, a lot of people just don't seem to get that Keith and Rosie are characters!</i>	Interviewer
The second stage	<i>Hehe, yeah! A lot of people just really have a brain block when it comes to this!</i>	Laura Aikman
The third stage	<i>You starred in two series of kids' series The Mysti Show, but probably first came to most peoples' attention in Teenage Kicks. What was that experience like? Would you do more studio sitcoms?</i>	Interviewer

The pre impoliteness stage is actualized by violating the cooperative maxims. The interviewer violates the quality maxim because he does not have evidence for what people claim when he says:

"So... just going by your Twitter account alone, a lot of people just don't seem to get that Keith and Rosie are characters!"

In the second stage of impoliteness comes the role of the interviewee, Laura Aikman, to the interviewer. An obvious impoliteness is done by Laura Aikman in the introduction of her speech represented by the word “*block*”.

This stage, the impoliteness stage, is actualized by positive impoliteness sub strategy called using obscure language when the actress uses the expression: “*Hehe, yeah!*” It is also realized by the strategy of positive impoliteness particularly calling the other names. Laura uses the word(*block*) to describe people who think she is in a relationship with her friend Leigh in real life. This sub strategy is used as a way to damage the hearer's face, but the interviewee is not being impolite for the purpose of scorning the interviewer, but she has made impolite answer to damage people's face who accused her of having intimate relationship with Leigh.

The third stage of impoliteness is actualized by conflict termination strategies i.e. the strategy of stand-off where the interviewer changes the topic they are talking about.

The analysis of this situation is shown in the table 6:

Table 6: Pragmatic Strategies and Sub-strategies of Each Stage in the Selected Situation

Pragmatic structure	Pragmatic strategies and sub strategies	Producer
Pre impoliteness stage	Violating the quality maxim	Interviewer
Impoliteness stage	Positive impoliteness : Using obscure language & Calling the other names	Laura Aikman
Post impoliteness stage	Standoff	Interviewer

5.1.3 Types of Impoliteness in the Selected Situation

The analysis of impoliteness in this situation shows that the affective impoliteness is used by the actress because she exposes her emotion by feeling angry towards the people and describing them as having brain (*block*). This strategy is used when the speaker reveal his negative feeling in contexts where it is not normal to the target [3].

6. Conclusions

This study has come up with the following conclusion

- 1) The first objective of the research is to identify the impoliteness structure in selected British social interviews. The researcher draws conclusion that is: Impoliteness in selected British social interviews is a process structured of three stages. The first stage is the pre impoliteness stage embraces violating the cooperative principle maxims. The second stage, the impoliteness stage, encompasses Culpeper's impoliteness strategies. The third stage, the post impoliteness stage, which is composed of the conflict termination.
- 2) The second objective is to pinpointing the most common pragmatic strategies of being impolite in selected British social interviews. The researcher finds out that some Culpeper's (1996, 2005) impoliteness strategies are utilized by the speakers in the second stage of impoliteness, they are: bald on record strategy, positive impoliteness strategy, negative impoliteness strategy and sarcasm or mock impoliteness strategy. Meanwhile,

withhold politeness strategy does not come to light in selected British social interviews.

- 3) The third objective of this study is to show the types of being impolite in selected British social interviews. From the three kinds of impoliteness, all of them are used. Those are: affective impoliteness, coercive and entertaining impoliteness. The most utilized type in this study is entertaining impoliteness. This type is used to amuse the speaker or other people by making the hearer his object of entertainment.

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