

**Impoliteness Strategies in *The Daily Show*  
with Jon Stewart<sup>(\*)</sup>**

**Under the Supervision of  
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**Abstract**

In this paper, the researcher looked at how *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* employed impoliteness strategies to criticize the status quo in the United States. The researcher specifically analyzed episodes from April, May and June, 2013. Qualitative and quantitative analyses were used to decide on the most common kinds of impoliteness strategies. Culpepper's (1996, 2005) model of impoliteness was used and the results showed that only four superstrategies were used. The most common superstrategies were "bald-on-record" and "negative impoliteness" exemplified in "condescend, scorn or ridicule", and the least common were "positive impoliteness" and "off-record". This showed that Stewart did not care much about the feelings of people who were the targets of criticism since he wanted what was best for his country. The use of direct criticism and ridiculing the targets also showed how the media in the United States of America had a lot of power. The ability to openly criticize the presidents and politicians showed how much influence the media had over people.

**Keywords:** *media discourse, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, impoliteness*

**الملخص**

في هذه الورقة البحثية، تتناول الباحثة كيفية استخدام البرنامج اليومي مع جون ستوارت لاستراتيجيات اللاتأدب لنقد الأوضاع في البلاد، واستخدمت الباحثة حلقات في أبريل ومايو ويونيو ٢٠١٣، وتم استخدام نهج التصميم النوعي والكمي للإجابة عن السؤال التالي: ما الأنواع

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(\*)Impoliteness Strategies in *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, Vol.11, Issue No.1, January 2022, pp.7-38.

الأكثر شيوعاً من استراتيجيات اللاتأدب في برنامج جون ستيوارت؟ تم التحليل باستخدام نموذج كالبيير للاتأدب (١٩٩٦ و ٢٠٠٥). وأوضح التحليل أن أكثر الاستراتيجيات شيوعاً هي النقد المباشر واللاتأدب السلبي متمثلاً في السخرية، وأوضح التحليل أيضاً أن أقل الاستراتيجيات استخداماً هي اللاتأدب الإيجابي واللاتأدب الضمني. وهذا يوضح أن جون ستيوارت لم يكن يهتم كثيراً بمشاعر الأشخاص الذين كانوا هدفاً للنقد؛ لأنه أراد ما هو الأفضل لبلاده. كما أظهر استخدام النقد المباشر والسخرية كيف تتمتع وسائل الإعلام في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية بقوة كبيرة. وأظهرت القدرة على انتقاد الرؤساء والسياسيين بشكل علني، وهو ما يشير إلى مدى تأثير وسائل الإعلام على الشعب.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الخطاب الإعلامي، البرنامج اليومي مع جون ستيوارت، اللاتأدب.

## 1. Introduction

*The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* was always a popular television program in the United States because of how Stewart criticized the status quo of the country. The show was always described as a satirical television show that made use of laughter in order to highlight the faults of the government, president and senators. Even though Stewart's last episode was on August 6, 2015, the show is still popular today with its new host, Trevor Noah.

## 2. Purpose of the Study and Research Question

In this paper, the main concern is to discuss impoliteness in *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. The researcher aims to examine how impoliteness can reflect the degree of dissatisfaction of the citizens with the status quo of the country. The following research question is posed:

*What are the most common impoliteness strategies employed in The Daily Show with Jon Stewart?*

## 3. Literature Review

### 3.1 Impoliteness

Impoliteness was designed as a parallel model to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, but while politeness refers to how Face is maintained, impoliteness describes how the Face attacks are made. Culpepper, whose 1996/2005 and 2011 models are used by most

researchers, attempted to define politeness and impoliteness by stating the following:

Politeness involves (a) an attitude comprised of particular positive evaluative beliefs about particular behaviours in particular social contexts, (b) the activation of that attitude by those particular in-context-behaviours, and (c) the actual or potential description of those in-context-behaviours and/or the person who produced them as *polite, courteous, considerate*, etc.. Linguistic politeness refers to linguistic or behavioural material that is used to trigger politeness attitudes. Politeness strategies (plans of action for achieving politeness effects) and formulae (linguistic/behavioural forms for achieving politeness effects) are conventionally associated to some degree with contexts in which politeness attitudes are activated. Impoliteness, although its performance involves significant differences, can be defined along similar but contrary lines: it involves negative attitudes activated by in-context-behaviours which are associated, along with the person who gave rise to them, with impoliteness metalanguage (e.g. *impolite, rude, discourteous*, etc.). (2011a, p. 31)

Hence, politeness takes place when the two interactants care about each other's positive and negative face, whereas impoliteness takes place when one or both of the interactants disregard such needs as being admired or respected. It is a Face Threatening Act (FTA) that takes place because intentionality is there. Thus, how serious the offence is depends on "the degree of intentionality" (Culpeper, 2011a).

### **3.2 Model of Impoliteness**

One of the most used models of impoliteness is the one proposed by Culpeper (1996) and summarized in 2005:

*Bald on record impoliteness*: the FTA is performed in a direct, clear, unambiguous and concise way in circumstances where face is not irrelevant or minimized.

*Positive impoliteness*: the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's positive face wants, e. g., ignore the other, exclude the other from an activity, be disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic, use inappropriate identity markers, use obscure or secretive language, seek

disagreement, use taboo words, call the other names.

*Negative impoliteness*: the use of strategies designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants, e. g., frighten, condescend, scorn or ridicule, be contemptuous, do not treat the other seriously, belittle the other, invade the other's space (literally or metaphorically), explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect (personalize, use the pronouns "I" and "You"), put the other's indebtedness on record.

*Sarcasm or mock politeness*: the FTA is performed with the use of politeness strategies that are obviously insincere, and thus remain surface realisations.

*Withhold politeness*: the absence of politeness work where it would be expected. For example, failing to thank somebody for a present may be taken as deliberate impoliteness (Culpeper, 2005, p.41-42).

In addition to these five superstrategies, he added another one in 2005, which is the "off-record" impoliteness: "the FTA is performed by means of an implicature, but in such a way that one attributable intention clearly outweighs any others" (Culpeper, 2005, p.43). These are "rhetorical questions and metaphors ... These are off-record strategies expressing impolite beliefs- they are off-record impoliteness" (Culpeper, 2005, p. 51).

Culpeper (2005) emphasized the fact that the superstrategies do not occur in isolation and there is usually a mixture of more than one strategy. In his analysis of *The Weakest Link*, an entertainment game show, Culpeper (2005) clarified that though all the superstrategies mirror those of the politeness framework, "sarcasm" or "mock politeness" is not the counterpart of Brown and Levinson's off-record strategy. It is a metastrategy that uses "politeness for impoliteness" (Culpeper, 2005, p. 42). Culpeper used Leech's (1983) example to clarify this concept. When someone says, "DO help yourself (won't you?), it is a polite expression. However, if this person is already helping himself/herself, then it is "sarcasm" (Culpeper, 2005, p. 42). Culpeper, Bousfield, and Wichmann (2003) also believed that the prosodic features, like "pitch (intonation), loudness, speed and voice quality" (p.1568), help in understanding impoliteness.

In spite of the presence of some of the superstrategies, Culpeper (2005) argued that they do not necessarily mean that there is

impoliteness, which is usually clear from the context. If the hearer acts in a defensive manner, then this should act as impoliteness, which, in general, is very salient in nature. In this show, which is a game show, certain utterances should not have been expected to be related to impoliteness, but people's reactions are the ones that deemed them so. Hence, the targets of impoliteness do not seem to be able to neutralize their reactions, which render a certain phrase "impolite" (p. 67).

It is worth mentioning that Culpeper (2011b) proposed an alternative model to the one he proposed in 1996 and 2005. The new alternative included triggers rather than superstrategies: insults, pointed criticisms and complaints, unpalatable questions, condescensions, message enforcers, dismissals, silencers, threats and negative expressions (Culpeper, 2011b, p.135-136).

### **3.3. Impoliteness and Research**

Many research papers and studies used Culpeper's model of impoliteness. Mohammed and Abbas (2015) analyzed an extract from *Pygmalion*, by George Bernard Shaw. They used Culpeper's (2011) three types of impoliteness and Segarra's (2007) types of rudeness. They concluded that rudeness is always intentional, while impoliteness could be either intentional or unintentional.

Mirhosseini, Mardanshahi and Dowlatabadi (2017) compared the use of impoliteness strategies by the male and female characters in the Iranian movie, *Mother*, by Ali Hatami. They used Culpeper's 1996 model and the results showed that the male character used much more impoliteness strategies than the female character. This might reflect how the Iranian society is more of a masculine patriarchal society. However, the researchers indicated that a lot of the superstrategies overlapped and that Culpeper's model did not account for self-insults.

Hammod and Abdul-Rassul (2017) compared impoliteness strategies between English and Arabic comments from three English web pages and three Arabic web pages. Results showed that all comments used the "bald on criticism", "positive impoliteness", "negative impoliteness" and "sarcasm/mock impoliteness", but "withdraw impoliteness" was totally unemployed. "Positive" and "negative

impoliteness” strategies were the most frequent; however, the topics that caused these strategies to be used were different.

#### **4. Methodology**

The data for analysis was taken from different episodes covering the span of three months: April, May and June, 2013 and have a total of 121 minutes. In order to answer the research question, both qualitative and quantitative analyses were used. The qualitative analysis was done using Culpeper’s model of impoliteness (1996, 2005) and frequency counts were also used to decide on the most common strategies.

#### **5. Results and Discussion**

In this section, impoliteness superstrategies and output strategies are analyzed in light of the episodes chosen. Each example is given and then explained in order to highlight the strategy under discussion (See Appendix for a summary of results).

##### **5.1 Bald on Record (Direct Criticism) (35%)**

*Stewart: Hi! Welcome to the Daily show. How are you? My name is Jon Stewart. We have a program for you tonight that I think you’re gonna find top notch, our guest, CNN Correspondent (Sarcastic and Enthusiastic tone) Christine Amanpour (making fun). (In a funny tone). Oh, CNN Correspondent. I can’t wait to see how they (laughter) would ruin her.*

Stewart, in this example, made a direct criticism to the press who would find fault with any celebrity who appeared on television, even if this celebrity was Christian Amanpour, from CNN. Stewart wondered how they would “ruin” such a character, but he was sure that they would do their best. This sent a message that the press was not always neutral and fair in what they chose to write about.

*A commentary voice in piece of news: hospitals when they decide what to charge outside of their medicare structure rely on the ..a double secret pricey menu called the charge master and basically the prices they charge are just whimsical.*

*Stewart: (Audience bursts into laughter and John is mocking the word whimsical) whimsical..ehhh...that’s the word that pops into mind*

*of a family bankrupted by hospital bills. What's it like? It is like us.*

In this example, Stewart made fun of the use of the “whimsical” prices since it was unacceptable for any hospital to charge patients differently or based, as the commentator said, on a secret, expensive menu. Just because some services do not fall under the medicare structure does not mean that hospitals take advantage of the situation and charge patients as they wish. There should always be a system that protects the rights of these patients to have a good service for a fair price. Stewart further made fun of this incompetence by asking the audience which pace maker they would love to have. This is not, of course, a question to be asked since all patients should receive the best treatment available regardless of how rich or poor they are.

**Stewart:** *Of course, the Arab Spring, the flourishing of democracy in the Middle East, countries formerly run by dictatorship, that the US mostly supported. Eeh!*

In this example, Stewart seized the opportunity that there was an Arab Spring, where a lot of Arab countries revolted against their presidents, and made fun of the administration that supported it. That is because it also supported the same leaders before the revolutions started.

**Stewart [talking to former President Morsi]:** *What are you worried about? You are the president of Egypt, you have an army. He's got puns in a show, you have tanks and planes. We should know. We still have the receipts.*

Stewart, in this example, elaborated on the fact the USA provided the Arab countries with weapons. Thus, he addressed Morsi and criticized him for issuing an arrest warrant against Youssef. Stewart believed that Youssef was only a comedian who made people laugh at his puns, but Morsi was in charge of a country and an army. He was thus more powerful than Youssef. He then elaborated on how well equipped he was by stating that the USA had the receipts of the tanks and planes that Morsi paid for.

**Stewart:** *For someone...For someone who spent time in jail yourself under Mubarak, you seem awfully eager to send other people there for the same non-crimes! And just like you, they will only emerge*

*from prison stronger and more determined, so all sending comedians and bloggers to prison accomplishes is, lowering the quality of prison-yard athletics.*

Stewart addressed Morsi saying that he should be more supportive of people in his country and never threaten to send opponents to prison because an incident like this would just make them stronger. Stewart referred to the fact that Morsi spent time in prison when Mubarak was president, so he should not repeat the same mistake of being a dictator. Being against the president should not be a crime that people should be sent to prison for.

*Speaker/anchor from April 12: Abandoned for being too complicated and for helping almost no one.*

*Stewart: which is coincidentally the OCC's motto.*

Stewart criticized the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) for always failing to do what is right or fix what is wrong. When the Mortgage Electronic Registration System (MERS) was adopted, so many mistakes were committed and could not be fixed. The whole criticism was based on the fact that the OCC could not track the files of some people, which was not a good excuse to give because it led to the wrongful foreclosure of 4 million homes. Hence, it was much better to leave the old mortgage system because mistakes could have been tracked and fixed instead of this wrongful foreclosure of people's homes.

*Stewart: They pull trillions out of the economy and they went to jail... what I meant was that they went to the Caribbean...they went to the Caribbean after paying an inadequate and completely arbitrary settlement of 9 billion dollars s...no ...seriously, they admitted it was completely arbitrary.*

Stewart then criticized the fact that all those responsible for the wrongful foreclosures never went to jail. Instead, they could have been enjoying their time on the Caribbean, which sent a message that some people were "too big to jail".

*Anchor: The internal revenue service admitted today that some of its employees targeted conservative political groups.*

.....



***Stewart: It's It's gonna be OK and s..our form of government is bigger than these issues this storm will pass. It's just ..really (holding his earpiece) right now?***

***Just in CNN live a piece of news on the screen: Alright we're just getting into this into the situation room calling it a (prop inaudible) massive and unprecedented intrusion the associated press now saying the Justice Dept. secretly obtained two months of phone records of its reporters and editors.***

***Stewart: Mother ... (Beep) we'll be right back.***

Stewart also criticized the Internal Revenue System (IRS) for targeting conservative groups, which the IRS admitted. Even when Stewart pretended that it was a mistake and that they would not do that forever, he got a call saying that the Justice Department got two-months phone records of editors working for CNN. This sent a message that certain groups would always be targeted for different reasons.

***Stewart: Because they think we're fucking idiots!***

Stewart accused Disney of underestimating people's intelligence when they said that the new Merida of the movie *Brave* would be different in the sequel because she just wanted to dress up for her coronation ceremony, denying the fact that Disney wanted the character to be another Disney princess with the typical emphasis on dress and make up. This criticism was because Stewart was against stereotyping girls and making them believe that the role of the innocent and helpless princess was better than being independent and strong, which was depicted in the original character, Merida.

***Stewart: I was aa.. talking about Congress's ongoing freak out and I happen to cite a university of Maryland study that in Bush years the US diplomatic targets were attacked with 13 American deaths. Did those situations suffer from the same poor interagency communication substandard security measures or general lack of accountability as the Benghazi situation? (in a low voice) Who ...knows? Because for all 45 instances, there were only 3 congressional hearings...***

Stewart made a direct criticism of some politicians who wanted to criticize Obama. That was because when Bush was president, there were 45 attacks made on American targets leaving behind 13 deaths and only 3

congressional hearings. In contrast, when Obama was president, there were less attacks, in relation to the Benghazi attacks, and only 4 deaths; however, there were 9 congressional hearings- including one closed hearing. Thus, there were double standards in the way politicians dealt with the same problem, which reflected prejudice against President Obama.

***Stewart: Yes! If! And if Dingle berries were diamonds I can open a Kay Jewelers in my pants! If! If!.... Not that you've necessarily blown things out of proportion with this president or created highly emotional narratives concerning this president.***

Another criticism was made towards American politicians, especially conservatives, when they tried to blame Obama and his administration for the death of Americans in Benghazi, Libya. Stewart's criticism was based on the fact that there was no solid proof against Obama and his administration. This made Stewart say that all of this could be dealt with only "if" those accusations were to be proven and in that case Obama was to be blamed for the death of those Americans.

***Rep. Steve King: If you had Watergate and Iran-Contra together and multiply it by TEN or so, you'll get in the zone of what Benghazi is.***

***Stewart: Holy (Bleep). Watergate plus Iran-Contra Time.***

In this example, Stewart was surprised that some politicians could exaggerate the presence of a scandal, referring to Obama lying about Benghazi. Comparing such a scandal, which was not a scandal yet, to Watergate, which was one of the biggest scandals in US history, was exaggerated because there was no evidence against Obama.

***Stewart: The Obama administration made a promise in April of 2009 that they would create a seamless computerized veterans' health record system, costs be damned! Critics said it couldn't be done. Four years and one billion dollars later, it turns out ..yeah they were right it couldn't be done.***

This criticism was directed at the American administration and how Obama promised to have a "computerized veterans' health records system" which he could not do. Critics said that it could not be done and after spending one billion dollars, the administration admitted, after four

years and a half, that it could not be done. Thus, Stewart highlighted the issue because the administration should have listened to the critics or at least considered what they said.

***Chunk Todd: The Obama administration has prosecuted more government officials for alleged leaks than any other administration before it.***

***Stewart: So he did believe in freedom of the press just not freedom of speech for people who might talk to the press.***

Stewart brought clips of Obama talking about the importance of transparency and fairness; however, it was then shown that his administration contradicted everything that was said. He spoke about the importance of fairness and freedom of the press, but then his administration was believed to have prosecuted so many officials for “alleged” leaks. This made Stewart and others believe that freedom of the press was not properly exercised.

***Stewart (with USA priorities back on the screen): What The (bleep)? So that’s what the D.O.J. is up to? They’re going after pot heads and hackers. ...***

***Stewart: Alright so at this point...(applause)....at this point...administration priorities seem to be tilted towards unusually harsh punishments for individuals whose crimes don’t really seem to merit them...have they had anything to offer on slightly larger fish.***

Stewart criticized the Department of Justice (DOJ) for going after hackers and potheads, while those who were supposed to be prosecuted or at least asked about their deeds, in relation to the financial crisis of 2008, were never asked. Thus, there was a huge discrepancy between what actually happened and what was supposed to take place. Stewart thus made it very clear that the DOJ did not go after “big fish” because of how influential they were, and, instead, made the public busy by going after potheads.

***Stewart: The idea of New Yorkers sharing anything but sexually transmitted diseases is a wack-a-doo.***

Stewart made a clear accusation of New Yorkers as people with

sexually transmitted diseases. He also believed that the idea of Citi bikes would not really be a great success because of the nature of New Yorkers being thieves; thus, the bikes would be stolen and never shared.

*Voice Over: Not everyone knows how to ride. That's why volunteers are running free workshops like this one Helmets are encouraged but not required.*

*Stewart (whispering): A lot of people are going to die.*

Stewart showed how officials made a bad decision by allowing bicyclists to drive in New York even though they were not skilled at all. The problem was not making wearing a helmet mandatory, which made Stewart say that there would be a lot of deaths.

*Stewart: We used to say the same thing about the Irish..look at them now; they're running the joint.*

Another criticism was made to the American citizens for finding faults with the new Citi Bikes system to the extent that they said things that were invalid. For example, one person said, "Doesn't accept our credit card" and another said, "We want the bike-shared program but we want less heavy-handed placement of these racks". This made Stewart make a comparison between how dissatisfied people were with Citi bikes and how they were dissatisfied with the Irish a long time ago. However, the Irish, despite being unwelcomed in the United States, proved to be very successful later on. Stewart wanted the Americans to be more objective when voicing out their opinion and to give a chance for the newly implemented idea.

*Dorothy Rabinowitz from Wall Street Editorial Board: Do not ask me to enter the mind of the totalitarians running this government of the city. This means something more than the specifics of this dreadful program. ..*

*Stewart: Just f\*\*\*\* bikes, lady! Slow down lady Hungergames.*

Stewart also criticized well-educated people, like Ms. Rabinowitz from Wall Street editorial board, for believing that Citi bikes were related to a conspiracy theory. He then compared her to a character from the dystopic novel/movie *Hunger Games* in an attempt to highlight how pessimistic she was. Giving too much weight for a piece of news was

blown out of proportion and should not be how intellectuals think.

*Stewart: Who does that? The Audacity of something even resembling a news organization to pretend that a correspondent is in an entirely different location when in fact that correspondent is standing no more than no more than a few feet away. Maybe in the very same studio for all we know.*

*Stewart: Pretty shameful...Andy Co... (for Anderson Cooper).. Couldn't the two of them just shared one box?*

Stewart directly sent a message to Anderson Cooper, head of CNN, saying that it was quite shameful for CNN to put on such an act of having two correspondents in two different states, when the backdrop behind them made it very clear that they were standing in the same spot, hence the name of the segment *Standlot*. This happened when two correspondents pretended to be standing in two different states while talking about the trial of Jodi Arias, the one who killed her boyfriend.

*News video: ABC news trumpeted an exclusive story that purported to reveal emails proving that the White House had meddled with the Benghazi talking points last September.*

*News video from Reliable sources: part of the story turned out to have been based on an inaccurate summary of emails that made things look worse for the White House.*

*Stewart (covering his face with his blue papers): can anybody do their jobs in that town?*

This criticism was about how officials in the White House preached what they did not do. The Obama administration made it clear that they were for freedom of expression; however, it was believed that they interfered with the Benghazi hearings. Unfortunately, there was even inaccurate information given to the ones involved because of an inaccurate summary of emails. This made Stewart criticize them by saying that they were not doing their job.

## **5.2. Positive Impoliteness (23.3%)**

### **5.2.1 Use inappropriate identity markers like titles (7.1%)**

*Stewart: And the truth is, look, come here. (audience chuckles).*

***Boobie. What are you worried about, Mr. President of Egypt? The power of satire to overthrow the status quo? I've been doing this crapfest for 15 years.***

Stewart addressed Morsi and told him that he should never be afraid of a comedian to the extent of arresting him and in doing so, he addressed him as “boobie”, which was an inappropriate title to address a president with. The use of this word can have multiple meanings, but the one that Stewart most probably meant was of such a foolish, weak person who would actually believe that a comedian had the power to change the status quo. There was a huge contrast between the use of the word “boobie” and “Mr. President of Egypt” to further enhance the message that the president’s actions reflected how weak and incompetent he was.

### **5.2.2 Use taboo words like swearing (57.1%)**

***Rick Perry (at a podium on TV): Well, let's see ...I can't...ah..the third one I can't ...oops***

***Stewart: I swear these conservative guys are like carneys upon the sausage and pepper trucks at street fairs.....you think wow ..what a special festival this is then you go to upper Broadway harvest festival and and you're like...hey look ...it's the same f\*\*\* sausage and pepper guy (laughter) and you go to the Puerto Rico Day and Saint Patrik's day parade and Chinese new year any New York cultural event you go to you're gonna see the same sausage truck.***

Stewart used the “F Word” to describe his frustration with conservatives at the 142<sup>nd</sup> National Rifle Association (NRA) annual meeting. He believed that they were like carneys upon the sausage and pepper trucks. They say the same thing wherever they go, even at Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC).

***Sen. Ted Cruz: That bill got fifty-two votes in the US Senate including nine democrats and what happened? Harry Reid and the rest of the democrats filibustered the bill and killed it demanding sixty votes.***

***Stewart (his hands over his right face, feeling confused amongst laughs from the people): You know it's the same "F-beep" thing, right?***

Stewart used the “F word” to show his frustration with the

conservatives who just wanted to criticize the democrats. Senator Ted Cruz said that it was because there was a demand of 60 votes, instead of 52, that his bill for gun rights got rejected. The truth was that whether it was 52 or 60, this was more than 50% of the votes, which meant that it was rejected anyway.

*An announcer in a piece of news on CBS NEWS channel is saying May 10: The Internal Revenue Service admitted today that some of its employees targeted conservative political groups for extra scrutiny in violation of its own policy and despite its earlier denials.*

*Stewart (Screaming and swearing): Mother F .... (Bleep), ahhhh...son of a bitch, no Mother F\*\*\*\*... what ...what did you do?*

In this example, Stewart expressed his frustration with the IRS when it was mentioned that they particularly targeted tea party members. He used the “F Word” and another obscene expression to show how disappointed he was. He believed that all politicians should be treated fairly.

*Stewart: Just in (CNN live a piece of news on the screen). Alright we're just getting into this into the situation room calling it a (prop inaudible) massive and unprecedented intrusion the associated press now saying the Justice Department secretly obtained two months of phone records of its reporters and editors.*

*Stewart: Mother ... (Bleep) we'll be right back.*

Youssef used the “F Word” again in this example to show that it was hopeless; Associated Press said the Justice Department obtained phone records of its employees which meant that everybody was targeted and there was no privacy.

*Stewart: CNN just runs from town to town, (audience laughing) doing crazy (Beep) things for a Giant Novelty Paycheck. But I'll give this to CNN.*

In their coverage of Jodi Arias murder, CNN was accused of excessive coverage to the extent that two reporters pretended to be talking to each other from different states, while, in fact, they were in the same parking lot. This made Stewart say that they do crazy things and, of

course, added the “F Word” to show that CNN did not need to lie about reporting some news.

***Stewart: I'm explaining this because we have so many rabbis in our audience tonight. Yeah ..yeah..the thing I'm trying to explain to the rabbis is Christians give chocolate, gifts and (bleep) for like 30 days straight even when they're dealing with the crucification.. .It's really just... it's all about candy, whereas Jews, even when we are freed, they're like, "have some bitter herbs" you know I know .. All right.***

When Chuck Hagel, Secretary of Defense, did not give an answer, after one month of waiting, regarding when the two computer systems of the ALTA and VISTA of the Department of Defense (DOD) and Veterans Affairs (VA) would be merged, Stewart made a comparison between the Christians and Rabbis. He said that the Christians could eat chocolates for 30 days, while the Rabbis would never do so. Thus, Stewart compared Hagel to a Rabbi who was not generous with his chocolates or answers.

***Stewart: Mother f\*\*\*. You could clear up this V.A. thing in a month ..clearly the lesson appears to be if we can take the same urgency, enthusiasm and clarity of vision you need to get elected to government and apply those to governing ...can we fix some problems? Yes we mother f...can! (logo of "Yes, We Can" appears on the screen).***

Stewart criticized Obama when he knew that his electoral campaign was able to reach millions of people over a weekend to meet the needs of his campaigns. However, he did not try to exert the same effort to collect information about the veterans in order to finalize the veterans' health record system. Accordingly, Stewart made fun of Obama's campaign slogan “Yes, We Can” by adding the “F Word” to it. He wanted to send the message that if Obama wanted to finalize the system, he could have done it. It was all about willingness.

***News video: I don't think we know what the facts are.***

***Stewart: How do I know..I just know we're bad...ahhh...life and death...arrogant....bad targeting cluster ...but the facts.. I don't F\*\*\* know...***

In this example, Stewart used the “F Word” when a video on TV



showed an official saying that they did not know what the facts in relation to the Benghazi killings were. Unfortunately, even though nobody was able to prove that Obama's administration was guilty, conservatives put all the blame on him. This made Stewart make fun of them because of all their efforts to wrongfully blame Obama's administration.

### **5.2.3 Call the other names (35.7%)**

*Stewart: I bet if I'm not mistaken, that right now Wesley snipes feels like a real ass ... (Bleep).*

Stewart used an obscene expression in this example after the IRS director apologized for targeting tea party members and said that it was a mistake. Stewart said that Wesley Snipes, the famous actor, must have felt like an "asshole" (an obscene word) because it was well-known that he was accused of tax fraud and had to spend three years in prison. Stewart wanted to say that the solution was in the apology. Hence, he could have just apologized and avoided all problems.

*Root (shown from shoulders upwards): I think the IRS scandal is one of the biggest scandals in modern American political history. Maybe in all time political history. If you speak out against Obama, you are ordered to be persecuted.*

*Jones: See normally I would love to say "Yaaaa, you're such a stupid idiot", but I can't because they targeted conservative groups.*

Jones wanted to express his frustration with Root for believing that the IRS scandal was the biggest in American history. Root's point was to show that Obama's administration was not a democratic one. Since Jones knew that Root was exaggerating, he wanted to call him names, but he said that he could not do so because he was indeed a victim of the IRS.

*Morsi (from September 23, 2010): The Zionists, these bloodsuckers, these warmongers, the descendants of apes and pigs.*

*Stewart: Okay, okay, two things! On the descendant from apes front, I've got some bad news for you.(audience laughs). It turns out it's more common than you might think.*

In this instant, when Morsi was shown calling the Jews names and

preaching what he did not do, Stewart started calling him names as well. Although this example could be categorized as an inference, it was obvious that Stewart was also alluding to the fact that Morsi was a descendent of apes himself. This could be in relation to all human beings or because of Morsi's physical appearance.

***Sandstrom: I was called a traitor, a Latino lover, one person said I was an escreman that should be flushed down the toilet..I don't want to use the real word..***

***Williams: doogy, doodoo, feces, (yeah ...basically..yeah) kakak, doogy head . .(yeah you got it)...doogy man***

When Jessica Williams, Stewart's reporter, made an episode about Stephen Sandstrom and how he changed his convictions regarding immigrants, she made fun of him because all politicians seemed to have no empathy. For Sandstrom to be empathetic and start accepting immigrants was difficult to conceive. Sandstrom made it clear that all citizens against Latinos and immigrants called him names for becoming a supporter of immigrants. Williams then added another list of inappropriate insults, just to render the message clear. Even though it seemed that she was insulting Sandstrom herself, the point was to show that when politicians try to do the right thing, they become criticized for it, which could refrain a lot of politicians from changing their points of view for fear of public criticism.

***Stewart: CNN just runs from town to town, (audience laughing) doing crazy (Beep) things for a Giant Novelty Paycheck. But I'll give this to CNN.***

As mentioned above, in their coverage of Jodi Arias murder, CNN was accused of excessive coverage to the extent that two reporters pretended to be talking to each other from different states, while, in fact, they were in the same parking lot. This made Stewart say that they do crazy things because there was no need to lie about reporting news.

### **5.3 Negative Politeness (31.7%)**

#### **5.3.1 Condescend, scorn or ridicule (31.7%)**

In this section, the examples show how Stewart made fun of incidents that he deemed inappropriate. These incidents necessitated ridiculing officials who were responsible for these decisions.

***A Speaker to the NRA Convention: We will fight their tactics of fear; we will fight their tactics of darkness.***

***May 4 the video continues: The only difference between your mum and sister getting raped and them walking home unmolested is a Gun.***

***Stewart: You..you're aware that fear is an emotion, right?! I mean it's one of the big ones along with the..there's three of them I think ..guilt and a ..ahh...I forgot the third..oops.***

In this example, Stewart made fun of conservatives, who, during the NRA, believed that fear should not be used to convince people of gun control. However, they did the opposite of what they preached, and so Stewart made fun of their hypocrisy. Stewart pretended that he forgot one of the three emotions, ridiculing Rick Perry, a presidential candidate, who, during the presidential elections, forgot the third area of reform that he wanted to work on. Hence, Stewart used this opportunity to make fun of all conservatives, among whom was Rick Perry himself.

***Wayne Lapierre – Executive VP. NRA: Lying in wait right now is terrorist, a deranged school shooter, a kidnapper, a rapist, a murderer waiting and planning and plottin.***

***Stewart: Yeah he's talking about you people. Yup, there's a terrorist and criminals waiting and plotting, and because of this guy, they can get a gun on the internet with no background checks. You're welcome everybody.***

Stewart, in this example, made fun of how conservatives were preoccupied by trying to prove that the democrats were wrong in trying to have gun control because there were more pressing issues like having no background checks. This was actually very serious because a real criminal could actually buy a gun, which could increase the probability of having more criminals. Hence, Stewart addressed the American citizens and said that it was true that there were criminals and terrorists, and it was people's right to protect themselves against them. However, the problem was those criminals were also the ones, like all other citizens, who could easily buy guns because of having no background checks.

**Wayne Lاپierre – Executive VP. NRA: The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.**

**Stewart: I dunno about the only way, but even if that's right This is a question of how do you determine the bad guy and the good guy because the guy may be a good guy and then turns he turns into a bad guy but you've already given him or you know how do you know a bad guy won't become a good guy and then become a bad guy again he also has a gun..you've already given him a gun.....no gun {with an argumentative voice} (In a funny voice)**

**Stewart: So who are the bad guys?**

When conservatives talked about differentiating between “the good guys” and “the bad guys”, which could be very difficult to tell, Stewart said a long sentence which sounded like a tongue twister. The message was that a good person might later become a bad person and vice versa.

**Stewart: New Jersey Governor Chris Christie is losing weight!**

**Anchor 1: Chris Christie announcing that after struggling with obesity for years he revealed that he secretly had a lap band stomach surgery**

**Anchor 2: and some say it's a clear sign he'll run for president in 2016.**

**Stewart: Of course some say that! Some say that he's running for president it's a sure sign,(In a sarcastic tone) because why else would a 50-year-old man with young children and a loving family take steps to address obesity and extend his life (Laughing)! Why else?**

Stewart made fun of the press for deliberately trying to find a reason why Chris Christie, governor of New Jersey, lost weight. They concluded that this must be because of his intention to run for presidency in 2016. The idea of attributing a reason for any public figure who wanted to lose weight was not right.

**Anchor: A group of school children was visiting New Jersey governor Chris Christie when a spider crawled on his desk while he quickly squashed the problem.**

**Stewart: Only it wasn't an ordinary spider. It was the famous Dr.**

*Orangu (Not Clear) (Laughing) who was at this moment rushing to Christie's office to tell him about the cancer cure breakthrough that he had discovered (Laughing).*

In this example, there was a reference to the spider killed by Chris Christie when he was with the school children in his office. Stewart believed that the spider must have been a very important “spider”, thus the attention given by the press for a seemingly unimportant event.

*Stewart: The METs undefeated in first place.*

In this example, Stewart made a reference to the New York METs (New York Metropolitan Baseball Club Inc.) season and how in Spring 2013, they managed *not* to be defeated in first place. He was actually making fun of the fact that their performance was much better than expected. He was referring to how the METs were not performing at their best since 2008 and having been in fourth place since then. In 2013, they actually managed to finish third place in the National League East Division. This reference was clearly ridiculing the Mets for failing to fail one more time. Even though it was something that was worth rejoicing, Stewart made fun of it to highlight the unacceptable performance throughout the previous five years, which made this piece of news worth talking about. .

*Santorum: (talking angrily) Why are they going after the chaplains in the military saying they can't evangelize and proselytize?*

*Stewart: My guess is that word doesn't mean what I think it might mean. Again, it's very important. The war on Christians there. But getting back to guns.*

Stewart made fun of Senator Rick Santorum for talking about religion during the NRA convention. Since the convention was about gun control, the senator should not have talked about religion and why people in the military were not allowed to act as missionaries.

*Palin: The mayor of New York now wants to ban public displays of legal Tobacco products.*

*Stewart: (makes funny gestures as if there is a disaster) (laughter) Yes, yes, yes! I know how upset you get, Sarah Palin, when*

*you're in New York and-- (laughter) walk into a bodega and can't find your Philly blunts. (Laughter and applause)*

Stewart ridiculed Sarah Palin who was discrediting the fact that the mayor of New York City wanted to ban the display of tobacco products. Stewart then said that she could not live without her Philly blunts, which is a famous brand of affordable cigars. The point was how she believed that the decision was not a wise one, which was like her attitude regarding gun control. If she disagrees with the decision made, then it is the wrong decision. Besides, she was just supposed to express what she thought regarding gun control, at the 142<sup>nd</sup> NRA annual meeting, and not any other topic.

*Clip showing Ricky Perry shooting*

*Stewart: Wow! (Laughter) if that dude didn't have a C.M.T show by tomorrow.. Lock, Stock and umm...umm...*

Stewart pretended to forget the third word of the famous expression of lock, stock and barrel, which means "to shoot". This was because Rick Perry was one of the speakers at the 142<sup>nd</sup> NRA annual meeting. This was, again, to remind the audience of his famous mistake during the 2011 presidential elections. This was when he forgot the third area of reform he, as a presidential candidate, wanted to work on.

*May 10: A commentary voice of Lois Lerner IRS Director of Exempt organizations says: That was wrong. The IRS would like to apologize for that.*

*Stewart: Ohwowoo , Okay thank you I apprecia, ... wait a minute. I didn't realize apologies were sufficient in IRS related issues. (audience laughing) II... hold one minute, I bet.. I bet if I'm not mistaken, that right now Wesley Snipes feels like a real ass ... (Beep). Wait all I had to say say was I'm sorry...*

Another incident that Stewart made fun of was the apology Lois Lerner, director of Exempt organizations, made in public, for targeting tea party members. However, the apology did not seem to be appropriate since the drawbacks were very serious. Besides, Stewart said that Wesley Snipes, who had to go prison for tax fraud, could have just apologized and the problem would have been over.

***Tom Costello from NBS News (phone): Ok, sorry. Thank you for the clarification. But that would be a quarter of the 300 then so we are talking 75 or so?***

***Lois Lerner (phone): That's correct. Is that a quarter? That's correct. Thank you. I am not good at math.***

When Lois Lerner, IRS director of Exempt Organization, said that she was not good at math, this made Stewart make fun of her because an official in an organization that deals with numbers should be good at math in order to be accurate with all calculations. Hence, saying this on TV was not well received by the public, especially since it was a very simple calculation of deciding on the quarter of 300.

***A commentary voice in piece of news: ... and basically the prices they charge are just whimsical.***

...

***Stewart: (Wearing a hat of a wizard on his head as if he is making a spell) They gather on the full moon of the year to bury the carcass of a suckling pig.. Preferably the cross roads and then after a fortnight they exhume the bones which which are then cast into a cleromantic ritual and read by the town elders...then and only then do they ignore that number and charge whatever seems most profitable.***

When Stewart criticized the fact that hospitals in the same state charged patients different amounts of money for the same kind of medical care, he made fun of them. He said that it seemed to be whimsical and for that reason he pretended to be casting a spell that will make everyone know how those hospitals decided on those huge amounts of money.

***Another clip from May 9 on CNN live: treating a heart attack with no complications ..at a hospital in Danville, Arkanso, that will cost you 3000 \$ in Modesto, California at least it will cost you \$ 92000.***

***Stewart: (comically imitating the video) Nuhh no eee no uhhhh, to be fair, the 90000 extra is because they replace your heart with the heart of the ocean from Titanic.***

Similarly, when a report revealed that there was a difference of

more than \$6000 in treating a heart attack, Stewart explained that it must be because they were giving the patient the “Heart of the Ocean”, which was an expensive diamond in the movie *Titanic*. Only a heart like that diamond could explain the discrepancy in treating a heart attack.

***Sandstrom: This is about human beings. This is about people’s lives.***

***Williams: How are you feeling? You’ve got a fever?***

Stewart made fun of politicians who changed their points of view. Williams, Stewart’s reporter, believed that Stephen Sandstrom, governor of Utah, was sick because of changing his point of view in relation to immigrants. This happened when he listened to the story of a girl called Sara with whom he sympathized. Having politicians who are empathetic was usually unexpected, which made Williams pretend to be worried that the governor must have had a fever.

***Stewart: Really, people were angry that Disney was trying to trademark the holiday on which they pray for the souls of their dead family and friends. It’s not like Disney wasn’t going to let them honor the dead. It’s just that whenever they did, they would have to pay, you know, their own royalties.***

Stewart criticized Disney for wanting to trademark “Dia De los Muertos” or “The Day of the Dead”. He explained that the practice of honoring the dead would never stop, but Disney might want money for the trademark that it would own. This was a clear criticism of how Disney was trying to trademark a famous cultural heritage, which was totally unacceptable by the Latinos.

***Daniel Pfeiffer (senior advisor to the president):....there the IRS is an agency that has a... has a.... historical independence ..... for very good reasons in this town...the we the ..the white house and the state is far away from IRS and let them do their their business. Cardinal rule is you don’t get involved in independent investigations ..***

***Stewart: You sweet, sweet boy... (blowing a kiss). I know the cardinal rule is you don’t get involved. But the problem here is the gap between involved in and aware of..ahhh... it’s like your kids want to make dinner for you; you don’t have to be involved buuutt you should***



*be aware that they're doing it or you get stuck explaining why your house burned down and ahh.*

When the scandal of the IRS, related to targeting conservatives, became well-known, there was a lot of media coverage. In one of the interviews, Dan Pfeiffer, senior advisor to the president, said that the White House was not supposed to get involved. Stewart made fun of this comment by saying that the White House might not get involved but it should supervise what the IRS was doing. He compared the IRS to children and the government to parents who might not make all the decisions needed but at least would supervise what their children were doing to prevent any disaster from taking place.

*Stewart: That's it? That's the leak they needed to quash? North Korea to answer sanctions with more nuclear tests? North Korea answers everything with more nuclear ..what... that's ...they have a nuclear-test based economy (laughter) (and on the left appears a headline from "The Daily Times" that reads "North Korea to answer sanction with Nuke Test")*

*What are the big James Rosen scoops are threatening national security? Turkey the country different from Turkey the bird (in a sarcastic tone) and the headline changes on the screen as well. (Laughter)*

Stewart also made fun of the administration for accusing a reporter called Rosen for leaking very sensitive information and for swearing to protect his source. The reason for poking fun at the American administration was the nature of the leak, which was related to the intention of North Korea to use more nuclear tests. Since this was a well-known fact to everybody, Stewart criticized their lack of good judgement. He added it was as though they could not differentiate between Turkey, the country and Turkey, the bird. He also added that he was Jewish, which was a well-known fact. Hence, leaking information should be about secrets or threats to the national security but well-known facts should be treated differently.

*Stewart: First of all (covering his right eye and looking at the picture that is now on the top left corner in disappointment) I am sorry*

*that you had to leave your prom to come to do this (laughter).*

Stewart made fun of how the anchor/reporter was dressed on national television, especially that he was wearing a bowtie. A reporter wearing a bowtie was not very common, and this made Stewart say that he must have left his prom to do that report.

*{Again, Stewart appears, ironically imitating Nancy Grace, as if pressing the earphone by his hand, with an image on the background of Nancy Grace pressing the earphone by her hand}*

*Stewart: I'm sorry. Actually I can't hear you. There's this lady jabbering ...It's very hard for me to hear you. She's just NA-BA-BA-BA-BA ...Here's an idea if you have trouble hearing, take your finger out of your (Beep) ear (audience laughing) because she's right there. (Jon turning to the image on the background, shouting). You can just do this. What?? What did you say? Is anybody at CNN allowed indoors anymore?*

Stewart ridiculed CNN for their excessive coverage of the trial of Jodi Arias, as mentioned above, to the extent of having to cover for a lot of other crimes as well. This led to CNN having two presenters pretend to be in two different states at the same time, while in fact they were just a few meters away from each other. Thus, Stewart pretended to be one of the reporters and asked the other one to stop pretending not hearing the other one because she was next to her.

#### **5.4 Off-record (with inference) (10%)**

*Stewart: 6000 shining new bikes..guess what? By tomorrow it's 3000. You know what I'm talking about.*

Stewart referred to how New York was known to have a high crime rate. This was made clear when he believed that the 600 Citi bikes were expected to be 300 the following day because New Yorkers would most probably steal them.

*Williams (as voiceover): these people were bumming me out ...what's worse what I thought was the beer line turned out to be something called Votar. Clearly these people had a lot to learn about the American holiday of Cinco de Mayo..I took a few of these party poopers with me to show them the true meaning of the day..*

Jessica Williams, Stewart's reporter made fun of how the American government and citizens ignored the Latinos' demands for immigration reform and pretended that *Cinco de Mayo* was just a day to party. Stewart's show was trying to shed light on how the American administration sometimes purposefully did not attend to pressing issues because they were not considered a priority. This was clear when Williams, representing the American government, ignored all signs of dissatisfaction on the part of the Latinos and believed that they were just full of negativity. Thus, instead of looking into the problem, she just labeled them.

***Voiceover: Since the revolution, we've seen tourism drop annually about \$4 billion.***

***Reporter: The huge spike in sexual assaults against women.***

***Stewart: Okay, I'm gonna put you down for work in progress.***

Stewart then commented on how Egypt had a long way to go in terms of economic and social reform. He believed that Egypt is a country that was working towards making a progress, but he was surprised to know, from America Live on Fox News, that there were so many aspects where the country was not doing well. Thus, people could understand how the revolution was a beginning, but there were a lot of areas that needed to be reformed. Stewart's comment of "work in progress" was actually a straightforward description of how devastating things seemed to be with unemployment, sexual assaults, etc.

***Stewart: Okay, okay, two things! On the descendant from apes front, I've got some bad news for you.(audience laughs).***

When Morsi was shown calling the Jews names and preaching what he did not do by arresting Youssef for the same crime, Stewart called him names as well, but in an indirect way. To clarify, when Morsi said that the Jews were the descendants of apes and pigs, Stewart started poking fun at the president. Stewart said he had bad news for the president, which was related to looking like an ape himself.

***Stewart: It's like promising a 3-minute eternity- ladies!***

Stewart also made fun of how exaggerated some claims could be.

This happened when people were trying to promote the idea of Citi bikes in New York. They said that bicyclists could have an unlimited 45-minute ride, which seemed contradictory. The word “unlimited” did not match having 45 minutes. This made Stewart make a sexual connotation in relation to erection and said that they promised women that their partners would have a 3-minute “eternity”, which was also contradictory.

*(President Obama appears squashing a fly on video with a caption that reads fly swatter-in-chief - from the program The Kudlow Report)*

*Anchor: This is Nice!*

*President Obama: Now where were we?*

*(Continuous laughing) Stewart: Of course obviously now that job would be handled by drones (Laughing) (Cheers).*

*Stewart: yeah yeah yeah ..I'm making that up yeah (Laughing). That what makes a president, Christie.*

When talking about Chris Christie and how he lost a lot of weight, Stewart, sarcastically, started talking about the qualifications of those who were and would be presidents. One of the qualifications seemed to be squashing flies and insects since Obama was shown squashing a fly and Christie squashing a spider. Stewart then said that this job would most probably be done with drones. Everybody could relate to Obama and how he used drones, which, to Stewart, was a new qualification to add to newly elected presidents.

## **6. Conclusion**

There were only four superstrategies used in the show. The most used superstrategy was “bald on criticism” (35%) and the least used was the “off-record” superstrategy (10%). This showed that Stewart was very direct and did not fear the administration or being put in prison. He did not need to resort to implicature and criticized his targets openly. As for “positive impoliteness”, it was mainly about “condescend, scorn or ridicule” (31.7%). This also showed how Stewart did not fear criticizing the status quo and how he enjoyed some freedom of speech to the extent of making fun of public figures on television. As for “negative impoliteness” (23.3%), Stewart mainly used “taboo words” (57.1%),

especially the “F Word”, and “calling names” (35.7%). This reiterated the idea of freedom of speech as well; he was not afraid of using the “F Word” on television because he assumed great power. He wanted to expose his targets because his main concern was what was best for his country. Thus, Stewart’s show reflected how the media in the United States had a lot of power and had the ability of exposing any corrupt leader or politician.

## **7. Recommendations for Future Research**

Since a lot of the superstrategies overlapped, I suggest that Culpeper’s (2011) model be used in order to see how the triggers, rather than strategies, could help interpret the data. I also suggest using prosodic features (Culpeper, Bousfield, & Wichmann, 2003) in the analysis since they add a lot to the context and, hence, could help interpret the data differently.

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## Appendix

Strategy	Sub-strategy	Frequency Count	Percentage
Bald on Criticism (35%)		21	35%
Positive Politeness (23.3%)	Use inappropriate identity markers like titles	1	7.1%
	Use taboo words like swearing	8	57.1%
	Calling the other names	5	35.7%
Negative Politeness (31.7%)	Condescend, scorn or ridicule	19	31.7%
Off-record (with inference) (10 %)		6	10%
		60	100%