



PRAGMATICS ANALYSIS OF IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES IN CNN INSTAGRAM COMMENTS: DONALD TRUMP'S SPEECH ABOUT RETAKEING CONTROL OF THE PANAMA CANAL

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the intention of the impoliteness utterances and identify then categorize the types of impoliteness strategies used in CNN Instagram comment on Donald Trump's Speech: Retaking control of Panama Canal according to Jonathan Culpeper Theory. This research used qualitative descriptive methods. The data consist of utterances containing impoliteness, collected from Instagram comments as primary data, supported by relevant literature on pragmatics and impoliteness as secondary data. Data were gathered through observation and documentation techniques, including systematically reviewing comments, capturing screenshots, and filtering data based on criteria such as language (English), originality, and relevance to impoliteness and then analyzed using the theory from Jonathan Culpeper (1996). The result, seven types of impoliteness intentions and five impoliteness strategies were identified. Regarding impoliteness intentions, there were 5 data that related to Criticizing, 5 data Mocking, 2 data Teasing, 7 data Insulting, 1 data Threatening, 5 data Discrediting, and 4 data of Expressing Anger. Additionally, the following impoliteness strategies were identified: 5 data that related to Bald On Record Impoliteness, 8 data of Positive Impoliteness, 4 data of Negative Impoliteness, 3 data of Sarcasm/Mock Politeness, and only 1 data related to Withhold Politeness. These results demonstrate how netizens employ various linguistic strategies to express attitudes and emotions in online discourse.

Keywords: Comments, Impoliteness, Impoliteness Strategies, Instagram, Pragmatics

1) INTRODUCTION

The presence of cyber media can facilitate access to news anywhere and anytime, cyber media is a new media that affects people's communication to be more flexible, fast and able to reach information as a whole. By doing so, people will be able to access information more easily and comment or give feedback more freely. One example of cyber media that is growing and easily to access is Instagram. Instagram is a social media that is generally used to update about daily life and as a means of connecting with friends and family but with the

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influence of cyber media now Instagram has evolved into a means of information sources such as news, beauty, health and much more in contrast to conventional media Instagram offers easy access to news that is not bound by time and place, with attractive facilities making news platforms begin to move into social media, especially Instagram, with the aim that news can be directly accessed by the public both personally and impersonally through the comment, share and save features.

With the facilities offered by Instagram, which is one of the cyber media, the famous news channel CNN utilizes Instagram cyber media to provide real-time information. CNN began to be active on Instagram in 2012, sharing news, photos and videos relevant to its audience. There are many branches of CNN accounts on Instagram such as, CNN from various countries, CNN Sports, CNN Politics, and so on, grouping news branches can make it easier for people to access news that suits their interests. In addition, the feature of Instagram can make the audience respond directly through comments is one of the very useful features where people can directly voice what is happening. One of the news that became the talk of CNN's Instagram was about US President Donald Trump's speech on December 23, 2024 regarding regaining control of the Panama Canal. The Panama Canal is a waterway that connects the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, which since its opening in 1914 until 1979 the Panama Canal was fully controlled by the United States and then transferred to the Panama Canal Commission on December 31, 1999. That way Donald Trump's statement caused a variety of responses from various parties ranging from positive responses to negative responses.

Based on the responses given by netizens, the researcher is interested in examining the impoliteness found in Instagram comments on CNN posts related to Donald Trump's speech about retaking control of the Panama Canal. As a well-known president and political figure, Donald Trump often becomes the subject of global discussion. Consequently, his statements tend to generate both support and opposition, which are frequently expressed through comments containing impoliteness.

In linguistic analysis theory, pragmatics is generally the study of language meaning based on the context of its use in communication, such as who is speaking, to whom, in what situation, and for what purpose. According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is more comprehensively defined as "the study of the relationship between linguistic forms and the users of those forms." In his theory, it is emphasized that pragmatics is the study of the meaning conveyed by the speaker or writer and

then interpreted by the listener or reader. According to these two experts, pragmatics examines how context and the speaker's intent can influence communication, going beyond the literal meaning of words.

Pragmatics is related to aspects of meaning that depend on or originate from the way words and sentences are used. In linguistics, pragmatics has several areas of focus, such as deixis, implicature, speech acts, presupposition, and reference. However, this study specifically focuses on speech acts and impoliteness, as these are more relevant to analyzing how meaning and intention are conveyed in online comments. Austin (1959), speech acts are utterances that are spoken and then followed by actions based on those utterances. Therefore, speech acts are not just utterances but also actions. For example, when someone says, "I promise I will come," based on their utterance, it is not just an utterance but also an action of promising. Austin divides Speech Acts into three categories locutionary Acts, illocutionary Acts, and perlocutionary Acts.

In pragmatic studies, impoliteness falls under the subcategory of politeness theory within sociopragmatics. According to Culpeper (1996), impoliteness consists of communicative strategies designed to attack face, thereby causing social conflict and disharmony. Bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or pretend politeness, and withhold politeness are some of the impoliteness tactics that Culpeper suggests. However, recognizing the linguistic techniques alone should not be the only step in comprehending rudeness in social media conversation. Since commentators may use rude language for a variety of reasons, including criticizing, mocking, insulting, threatening, discrediting, or expressing rage, it is also vital to determine the communication intents underlying those statements. Therefore, a richer understanding of how verbal aggression is formed in online political encounters is possible by integrating the research of impolite intentions with impoliteness methods.

Therefore, researchers with this research novelty from previous research, namely in the object of research where this post is a new post and of course no one has examined it before. The previous studies which have mostly relation to this current study.

The controversy that arose after Schnapp openly supported Zionism triggered a flood of hate comments from netizens. The research used Jonathan Culpeper's theory of impoliteness to identify five types of impoliteness strategies: negative impoliteness, bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withhold politeness. As a result, out of 30 data analyzed, the negative impoliteness strategy was the most dominant (15 data), followed by

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bald on record (7 data), sarcasm or mock politeness (4 data), and positive impoliteness (4 data), while withhold politeness was not found. In terms of function, most of the comments reflect affective functions (16 data), which show emotional outbursts such as anger or disappointment, followed by coercive functions (9 data), and entertainment functions (5 data). (Kalya Kaulika et al., 2024)

The proliferation of Korean culture, particularly K-pop music, has significantly influenced various aspects of daily life in Indonesia, especially among the youth. However, this cultural phenomenon has also elicited negative reactions from some individuals, resulting in hate comments on social media platforms like Instagram. This study aims to identify the types and functions of impoliteness strategies employed by netizens when commenting on K-Pop. The analysis was guided by Culpeper's (1996) framework for impoliteness strategies and his (2011) framework for the functions of impoliteness. The findings reveal that netizens predominantly employed four impoliteness strategies: bald on-record impoliteness (11 instances), positive impoliteness (12 instances), negative impoliteness (5 instances), and sarcasm or mock politeness (9 instances). Among these, positive impoliteness was the most frequently utilized strategy. (Khairun Nisa et al., 2024)

The research used a qualitative method. The data were the BBC News Comments. The data were analyzed by the theory of Culpeper. Based on the data analysis found that the data of impoliteness strategy consisted of fifty responses, such as positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm and mock, and bald on record. Positive impoliteness strategy gained 26 utterances (54%) which contained 7 utterances (14%) for inappropriate identity markers, 6 (12%) for ignorance, 4 (8%) utterances for discussing a sensitive topic, 2 utterances (4%) for each secretive language and taboo words, and only one (2%) utterance for disinterested. Then, it was followed by a negative impoliteness strategy that gained 16 utterances (30%), which contained 8 utterances (16%) for condescending, 5 utterances (10%) for explicitly associating, and 2 utterances (4%) for frightened. While, sarcasm and mock gained 6 utterances (12%), and bald on record only gained 2 utterances (4%) for dismissal. (SUHAILA, 2022)

This study aimed to find out the types of impoliteness strategies based on Jonathan Culpeper theory, and the dominant impoliteness strategies that used by the netizen on Nadiem Makarim's Instagram post about online policy. The results of this research showed that there are four impoliteness are used, which are Bald on Record, Positive Impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness,

and Sarcasm/Mock Politeness. There were 80 comments. In total there are 4 comments on Bald on Record (5%), 36 comments on Positive Impoliteness (45%), 28 comments on Negative Impoliteness (35%) and 12 comments on Sarcasm/Mock Politeness (15%). (Siahaan et al., 2023)

Based on this research gap, the present study investigates the impolite comments produced by netizens in response to CNN's Instagram post about Donald Trump's speech on retaking control of the Panama Canal. Specifically, this study aims to identify the types of impolite intentions employed by the commenters and to analyze the impoliteness strategies used to realize those intentions by applying Culpeper's theoretical framework. Accordingly, this study addresses two research questions: (1) what types of impolite intentions are employed by netizens in CNN's Instagram comments, and (2) what impoliteness strategies are used in expressing those intentions? By answering these questions, this study is expected to enrich pragmatic studies on impoliteness and contribute to a broader understanding of how political hostility is linguistically manifested in contemporary social media discourse.

2) METHODS

This research was structured using qualitative descriptive method to analyze impoliteness strategies and their intention found in netizen comments on CNN's Instagram post regarding Donald Trump's speech about retaking control of the Panama Canal. The study was focused on the field of pragmatics, particularly on how impoliteness was expressed through written digital discourse. The object of this research were the impoliteness strategies and their underlying intentions which were examined to explain how impoliteness was expressed and what purposes were behind each utterance. The types of intentions considered in this study included criticizing (expressing disapproval toward someone's behavior, opinions, or character), mocking (ridiculing others to embarrass or belittle them), teasing (making offensive jokes), insulting (directly attacking someone's self-esteem), threatening (intimidating others to control behavior), discrediting (damaging someone's reputation), and expressing anger or frustration (conveying negative emotions).

The data of this research were impoliteness utterances written by netizens as responses to Trump's speech on retaking control of the Panama Canal. The data source was the comment section of CNN's Instagram post published at the following link : <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DD5z8ioCBNb/?igsh=MW1ibDJmZGVxYWZidw==>. The

data were collected through observation and documentation techniques. First, the comments on CNN's Instagram post related to Donald Trump's speech were observed. Second, documentation was conducted by taking screenshots of comments that contained impoliteness. Third, the comments were filtered based on inclusion criteria, namely comments written in English, containing impoliteness, and identified as original comments rather than spam.

The data were analyzed using several steps. First, the intentions of impoliteness in the comments were analyzed using the theory of speech acts proposed by J. L. Austin (1959), in order to identify the speaker's intention behind each utterance. Second, the impoliteness strategies found in the comments were analyzed using the theory proposed by Jonathan Culpeper (1996, 2005). Through these analyses, the study aimed to reveal how impoliteness is expressed and what intentions underlie such expressions in online communication.

3) RESULTS

The data were collected using one main instrument, namely documentation of comments from CNN's Instagram post regarding Donald Trump's speech about retaking control of the Panama Canal. The research findings show the results of the study based on the collected data. The information was obtained from the comments written by netizens, and it concerns how impoliteness strategies and their intentions are used in responding to the issue.

Table 1. Frequency of Type Intentions of Impoliteness

No	Type of Intentions Impoliteness	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Criticizing	5	17%
2.	Mocking	5	17%
3.	Teasing	2	7%
4.	Insulting	7	24%
5.	Threatening	1	3%
6.	Discrediting	5	17%
7.	Expressing Anger	4	14%
Mean		29	100%

Table 2. Frequency of Type Impoliteness Strategies

No	Type of Impoliteness Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Bald on Record Impoliteness	5	24%
2.	Positive Impoliteness	8	33%
3.	Negative Impoliteness	4	19%
4.	Sarcasm/Mock Politeness	3	14%
5.	Withhold Politeness	1	5%
Mean		21	100%

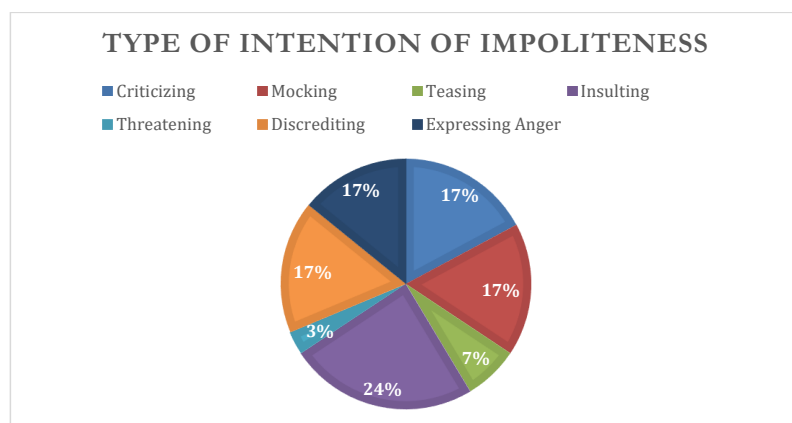


Figure 1. Percentage of Type Intention Impoliteness

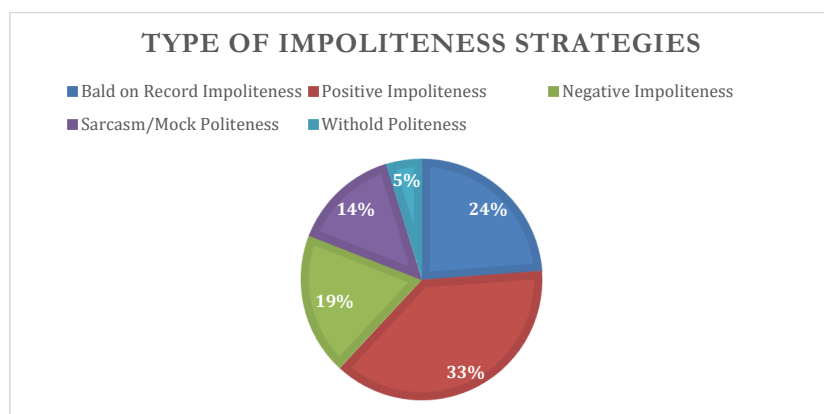


Figure 2. Percentage of Type Impoliteness Strategies

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The tables above show the various types of impolite intentions and strategies found in CNN's Instagram comments. According to Table 1, insulting intentions were the most common, occurring 7 data (24%), followed by criticizing, mocking, and discrediting, each occurring 5 data (17%); expressing anger occurred 4 data (14%); and teasing occurred 2 data (7%). Threatening intentions were the least common, occurring only once (3%). A total of 29 instances of impolite intentions were found, indicating that netizens tended to communicate their negative opinions mostly .

The table above shows the various types of impoliteness strategies found in CNN's Instagram comments. According to Table 2, positive impoliteness was the most common strategy, occurring 8 data (33%), followed by bald on record impoliteness occurring 5 data (24%), and negative impoliteness occurring 4 data (19%). Meanwhile, sarcasm/mock politeness occurred 3 data (14%), while withhold politeness was the least common strategy, occurring only 1 data (5%). A total of 21 instances of impoliteness strategies were found, indicating that netizens tended to deliver their negative opinions mostly by attacking the addressee's positive face through unpleasant, insulting, and excluding expressions.

4) DISCUSSION

According to this study, when replying to CNN's Instagram post regarding Donald Trump's address on regaining control of the Panama Canal, online users used a variety of rude motives and tactics. Seven intentions of impoliteness—criticizing, mocking, teasing, insulting, threatening, discrediting, and showing anger—were found based on the results. Among those intentions, insulting appeared as the most dominant with 7 data (24%), while threatening became the least frequent with only 1 data (3%). In addition, this study also identified five impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper, namely bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withhold politeness. Among these strategies, positive impoliteness was the most dominant strategy with 8 data (33%), whereas withhold politeness was the least frequent with only 1 data (5%). Among those intentions, insulting appeared as the most dominant with 7 data (24%), while threatening became the least frequent with only 1 data (3%). In addition, this study also identified five impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper, namely bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withhold politeness. Among these strategies, positive impoliteness was the most

dominant strategy with 8 data (33%), whereas withhold politeness was the least frequent with only 1 data (5%) among those intentions, insulting appeared as the most dominant with 7 data (24%), while threatening became the least frequent with only 1 data (3%). In addition, this study also identified five impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper, namely bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withhold politeness. Among these strategies, positive impoliteness was the most dominant strategy with 8 data (33%), whereas withhold politeness was the least frequent with only 1 data (5%).

The dominance of insulting as the highest intention indicates that the majority of netizens were not merely attempting to express disagreement toward Donald Trump's political statement, but rather intended to directly attack his self-image, dignity, and personal credibility. Most comments used degrading labels, offensive evaluations, and humiliating expressions which positioned Donald Trump as an unworthy and incompetent political figure. This suggests that in political discourse on social media, commenters tend to shift from issue-based criticism into personal verbal aggression. Instead of discussing the substance of Trump's statement about the Panama Canal, many users focused on attacking his personality and intelligence. Such a finding reflects that impoliteness in digital communication is often emotionally driven and highly personalized.

Furthermore, criticizing, mocking, and discrediting also appeared in relatively high frequencies. This shows that impoliteness was not only used to insult, but also to reject political ideas, ridicule the speaker, and damage his public reputation. Criticizing comments generally attacked the irrationality of Trump's proposal, while mocking comments used laughter, irony, and humorous ridicule to make him appear absurd. Meanwhile, discrediting comments questioned his competence as a leader and attempted to weaken his legitimacy as a future president. This variation demonstrates that netizens employed impoliteness not simply as spontaneous rude language, but as a pragmatic tool to express political opposition, distrust, and emotional dissatisfaction.

In terms of impoliteness strategies, positive impoliteness became the most dominant strategy. According to Culpeper, positive impoliteness refers to linguistic behavior intended to damage the hearer's positive face, namely the desire to be liked, appreciated, and accepted socially. In this study, many comments were realized through direct insults, use of inappropriate identity markers, condescending labels, and expressions of exclusion that made Donald Trump appear foolish, childish, or socially unacceptable. This indicates that netizens preferred to attack Trump's

social value and personal image rather than merely challenge his ideas politely. The high use of positive impoliteness also suggests that Instagram comment sections provide a space where users feel free to express face-attacking utterances openly because there is minimal social control and no direct interpersonal confrontation.

The second dominant strategy, bald on record impoliteness, also strengthens this interpretation. This strategy shows that many comments were delivered in a straightforward and explicit way without any attempt to soften the attack. Netizens openly used blunt rejection, harsh commands, and rude direct statements. This directness indicates that online political communication tends to ignore conventional politeness norms because users prioritize speed, emotional release, and strong opinion delivery. In contrast, sarcasm/mock politeness and withhold politeness were less dominant because indirect forms of impoliteness require more contextual subtlety, whereas political anger in comment sections is more often expressed directly and aggressively.

Moreover, this study also supports Culpeper's (1996, 2005, 2011) view that impoliteness is a communicative strategy designed to attack face and create social disharmony. The data prove that the impolite comments were intentionally produced not only to convey opinions, but to humiliate, embarrass, and delegitimize the public figure being discussed. However, this study has a different contribution from previous studies because the object analyzed is a contemporary political issue from an international news Instagram account. Most previous studies focused on celebrities, movies, songs, or entertainment accounts, while this study shows that political news discourse can trigger stronger face attacks because it involves ideological conflict, nationalism, and public dissatisfaction.

However, this study still has several limitations. First, the data were taken only from one CNN Instagram post discussing one specific political event, so the findings cannot represent the overall pattern of impoliteness on all political news comments. Different political issues may generate different linguistic responses. Second, the number of comments analyzed was limited to selected comments containing impoliteness, which means that not all audience responses were covered. Third, this study only focused on textual comments and did not include multimodal elements such as emojis, GIFs, repeated punctuation, or meme language that may also intensify impoliteness meaning in social media communication. In addition, this study only analyzed the data from a pragmatic perspective and did not examine sociopolitical variables such as political

ideology, nationality, or cultural background of the commenters, which may strongly influence why impoliteness emerges.

Based on those limitations, future researchers are suggested to conduct broader studies using larger amounts of data from several CNN political posts or from other international news accounts in order to compare the consistency of impoliteness patterns. Future studies may also investigate multimodal impoliteness by including emojis, internet slang, hashtags, and visual responses as part of the analysis. Besides that, it is also recommended for future research to combine pragmatic analysis with critical discourse analysis or sociolinguistic perspectives in order to reveal the relationship between impoliteness, ideology, and political polarization in online communication. Therefore, future research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how impoliteness reflects not only linguistic aggression but also wider social tensions in digital society.

5) CONCLUSION

This study concludes that impoliteness is strongly present in netizens' responses to CNN's Instagram post about Donald Trump's speech on retaking control of the Panama Canal. Based on the analysis, seven types of impolite intentions were identified, namely criticizing, mocking, teasing, insulting, threatening, discrediting, and expressing anger. Among these, insulting was found to be the most dominant intention, which indicates that most commenters tended to express their disagreement by directly attacking Donald Trump's dignity, self-image, and personal credibility rather than focusing only on the political issue itself. This finding shows that online political discussions often shift into personal verbal aggression.

The result, seven types of impoliteness intentions and five impoliteness strategies were identified. Regarding impoliteness intentions, there were 5 data that related to Criticizing, 5 data Mocking, 2 data Teasing, 7 data Insulting, 1 data Threatening, 5 data Discrediting, and 4 data of Expressing Anger. Additionally, the following impoliteness strategies were identified: 5 data that related to Bald On Record Impoliteness, 8 data of Positive Impoliteness, 4 data of Negative Impoliteness, 3 data of Sarcasm/Mock Politeness, and only 1 data related to Withhold Politeness. These results demonstrate how netizens employ various linguistic strategies to express attitudes and emotions in online discourse. Among these strategies, positive impoliteness became the most frequently used strategy, which means that netizens mostly attacked the addressee's positive face through insulting, humiliating, and excluding utterances. This demonstrates that social media users



prefer direct face-threatening expressions to show political hostility, emotional dissatisfaction, and rejection.

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