



Impoliteness Strategies in the Comment Section of Donald Trump's Instagram Account

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Abstract

Impoliteness in digital communication often manifests through provocative remarks and direct attacks, particularly in political contexts. This study investigates impoliteness in the comment sections of Donald Trump's Instagram videos, focusing on the ways global audiences respond to his posts. The research aims to identify the types and functions of impoliteness expressed by users. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the study analyzes comments collected from one of Trump's Instagram videos using documentation and note-taking techniques. The data were examined through Culpeper's theory of impoliteness, which categorizes strategies based on their forms and functions. The findings reveal four types of impoliteness strategies: bald-on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock politeness. Notably, no evidence was found for the strategy of withholding politeness, which is typically observed in face-to-face communication but is less detectable in asynchronous platforms such as Instagram. In terms of functions, the analysis identified three distinct forms: affective impoliteness, coercive impoliteness, and entertaining impoliteness. This study demonstrates that impoliteness on social media is not merely a reflection of hostility but can also serve expressive, persuasive, and entertaining purposes. The findings highlight how global audiences employ impolite strategies to convey emotions, influence discourse, and engage with political figures. By situating impoliteness within digital political communication, this research contributes to the broader understanding of language use in online interaction and its impact on public perception of political leaders.

Keywords: Impoliteness Strategies, Social Media, Digital Communication

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INTRODUCTION

At present, individuals engage in communication via social media, both on an individual basis and within groups. Social media is an online platform that enables individuals to communicate, collaborate, share, and engage with others to establish virtual social connections (Siregar, 2022). They engage with the virtual realm to acquire information pertaining to relatives, friends, and the broader community, which is shaped by social media content (Mageto, 2019). Instagram remains one of the most popular social media platforms globally. As per Anna (2017), Instagram is a web and mobile social media application designed specifically for the uploading of images and photographs. Over time, the Instagram application has developed with enhanced features. In addition to uploading images and photographs, Instagram now offers the Reels feature, allowing videos of up to three minutes; the Stories feature, comprising images or videos lasting 15 to 60 seconds that remain active for 24 hours; the live streaming capability; the Notes feature for brief

messages; the Close Friends option; the Instagram Shop; and various supplementary functionalities. The comments section is a feature of Instagram that facilitates social interaction.

The comment section in the Instagram application allows users to reply to another user's post. This also constitutes a fundamental aspect of social interaction and communication. The comment section enables users to react to content, participate in discussions with others, and articulate their opinions or sentiments regarding the posted material. Public responses may manifest as praise, criticism, insults, and other forms, regardless of their politeness or impoliteness. Politeness pertains to an individual's conduct and communication characterized by respect, consideration, and empathy towards others. This seeks to preserve harmony and mutual respect across diverse social contexts. In the digital realm, politeness is termed netiquette, denoting language etiquette within the internet context (Yus, 2011). Social media etiquette encompasses various practices, including the use of courteous language, refraining from negative remarks and insults, respecting divergent viewpoints, and offering praise and support. Politeness on social media constitutes not only an ethical consideration but also a manifestation of social responsibility.

In practice, not everyone can conform to the principles of linguistic politeness. This is the reverse of politeness: impoliteness. Impoliteness can lead to conflicts, animosity, poor mental health, negative self-image or reputation, and an unpleasant digital environment. Similar to politeness, impoliteness has emerged as a significant concern, potentially even more prevalent (Laitinen, 2010). Yus (2011) cites Hauben & Hauben (1997), who demonstrate that individuals are more prone to impoliteness when not in direct contact with others, allowing them to express any sentiment freely via a computer. According to Suryani (2019), individuals are permitted to respond to any post, as they possess the freedom to share anything. The liberty of expression on social media frequently culminates in social discord or potential criminalization. The rising prominence of social media has rendered it a prevalent instrument for political interests, facilitating direct communication with the public, campaigning, and personal branding.

One of the political figures who incites conflict and disputes on the social media platform Instagram is the President of the United States, Donald Trump. Donald Trump often shares photos, short videos, and graphics related to his campaign and political policies. In February 2025, he shared a short video using AI technology depicting a luxurious futuristic vision of Gaza. The video was created as satire and then presented as a policy plan without clear context. As a result, uncontrolled interactions occurred in virtual communication known as flaming, such as destructive criticism, insults, provocative posts, and so on (Baron, 2008:28).

The impoliteness that appears in the comment sections of Donald Trump's social media often includes provocative statements and direct attacks. This reflects a controversial communication style. Such a communication style can have a significant impact on his political image and relations with various countries, including Indonesia, in terms of economics, diplomacy, and geopolitics.

Impoliteness in the comments section of Donald Trump's Instagram account can be observed through linguistic analysis within various social situational contexts. Therefore, this research focuses on the impoliteness found in the comment section of Donald Trump's Instagram videos made by the global community. The impoliteness in the comment section collected in this study is public, meaning it can be accessed by any Instagram user. Seeing how rudeness is becoming increasingly rampant on social media, it is certainly interesting to study it in more depth. This research not only uncovers and identifies the types of impoliteness but also describes the functions of impoliteness behavior in the comment section of Donald Trump's Instagram videos.

Studies on impoliteness on the Instagram social media platform have been extensively conducted, both on the Instagram accounts of political figures (Patimah et al., 2022; Subyantoro & Apriyanto, 2020; Suryani, 2019), entertainment figures (Apriliani, 2023; Kaulika et al., 2024; Siahaan, 2019; Subyantoro et al., 2023; Suganda et al., 2022), and major media accounts that post about policies (Mahayana et al., 2022; Diatma & Wijayanto, 2024).

Focusing on the object of this research, studies on American President Donald Trump have been extensively conducted, particularly regarding his controversies that encompass several aspects ranging from public policies, personal statements or opinions, leadership style, hatred, to the effects caused by Trump (Barnett, 2017; García, 2018; James, 2021; Piazza & Van Doren, 2023; Richardson, 2017; Schultz, 2022; Zheng & Zompetti, 2023). According to García (2018), Donald J. Trump is a "spectrum-defying" President who creates controversial headlines in media around the world. As in the case of the surge in anti-Asian hashtags after Donald Trump first linked COVID-19 to China on Twitter (Zheng & Zompetti, 2023). The anti-Asian rhetoric expressed on social media Twitter increased after Trump's tweet about the 'Chinese Virus', and the number of hate crimes against Chinese and other Asians grew exponentially. The study by Zheng & Zompetti (2023) highlights the importance of presidential rhetoric in influencing public opinion in the context of COVID-19 and hatred towards Asians.

This research aims to describe the types of impoliteness found in the comment section of Donald Trump's Instagram videos along with their functions. This research is expected to add information and knowledge about the phenomenon of impoliteness occurring on social media, especially Instagram. With this research, the researchers hope that the public can be more wise in communicating and commenting on social media by using more polite language. Therefore, this research uses the theory of impoliteness proposed by Culpeper. According to Culpeper (1996), impoliteness arises when someone deliberately violates the rules of politeness in social interactions with the intention of hurting others. For example, insults, mockery, excessive criticism, the use of harsh language, and so on.

Based on the problems that have been outlined, the issues are formulated into two questions: (1) What types of impoliteness are found in the comment section of Donald Trump's Instagram video? and (2) What is the function of the impoliteness found in the comment section of Donald Trump's Instagram video? Specific research examining impoliteness in the context of political figures on social media is still limited. Especially covering the use of impoliteness by political figure Donald Trump on the Instagram platform.

Therefore, this research aims to analyze the types and functions of impoliteness in the comment section of Donald Trump's Instagram videos, revealing how language use in digital political discourse reflects broader social, psychological, and ideological dynamics in online interactions.

METHOD

This section explains the steps taken by the researcher in conducting the research process on impoliteness in the comment section of Donald Trump's Instagram account. There are several steps outlined in the research method, namely: the type of research used, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques, and the results of the data analysis.

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with a pragmatic approach. The data in this study consists of texts containing impoliteness in the comment section of Donald Trump's Instagram social media account. Moleong, 2011) states that this qualitative descriptive method is a collection of data in the form of words, sentences, or images. He also added that qualitative research is conducted by understanding the

phenomena experienced by the research subjects, such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions, and so on. This type of research is used because it investigates a phenomenon occurring in the world of Instagram social media, namely the behavior of impoliteness in the comment section, which consists of written sequences of words and sentences. The researcher explains how the utterances can be categorized as strategies of impoliteness based on their form and function.

In this study, the data used consists of netizen comments on a video posted on President Donald Trump's Instagram account. The 33-second video uploaded on February 26, 2025, has been viewed by more than 64 million users and has over 70,000 comments. This controversial video uses AI technology to depict a futuristic Gaza. The video shows Gaza reconstructed into a luxury resort named "Trump Gaza," complete with skyscrapers, golden Trump statues, and an atmosphere reminiscent of the Mediterranean Riviera. The data collection techniques used in this research are documentation techniques and note-taking techniques. Data collection was carried out by randomly quoting available comments. The researcher sorted the data suspected of containing impoliteness strategies. This was followed by the documentation technique, which involved taking screenshots. Next, the note-taking technique was used to record the data containing impoliteness.

The next stage is data analysis techniques. According to Moleong (2007), data analysis techniques are part of the research conducted by digging into and interpreting each piece of data that has been collected by the researcher. The researcher conducts the data reduction process, which involves sorting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting complex data to make it easier to understand. The researcher selects data relevant to the impoliteness strategy and eliminates data that is not relevant to the impoliteness strategy. The researcher presents this qualitative study in the form of a descriptive narrative to uncover the meanings contained in the data. There are four stages of descriptive analysis, namely identifying data, classifying data, analyzing data, and concluding data. The data were analyzed using a theoretical approach, namely Culpeper's theory of impoliteness.

After the data was classified based on the forms and functions of impoliteness found in the comments section of Donald Trump's Instagram, the researchers presented the results in the form of a table accompanied by a brief description. Then, in the final stage, the researchers drew conclusions by interpreting and giving meaning to the analyzed data based on existing theories.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The types of impoliteness strategies

To analyze the types of impoliteness strategies found in the comment section of Donald Trump's Instagram account, the researcher uses Culpeper's impoliteness theory. According to (Culpeper, 1996), there are five types of impoliteness: bald-on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withhold politeness.

1. Bald-on Record Impoliteness

If the speaker wants to directly attack the face of the interlocutor in a straightforward, clear, unambiguous, and concise manner in a situation, it can be assured that the speaker is applying the Bald On Record Impoliteness strategy. Here is the data found in the comments section of Donald Trump's Instagram video post that falls under the category of Bald On Record Impoliteness.

Table 1. The type of bald-on record impoliteness

No.	Speaker	Data Code	Utterance
1.	@victoria.clamp	A1	<i>"So fucking disappointed"</i>
2.	@danielk017	A2	<i>"Stupidest shit I've ever seen in my life"</i>
3.	@canyouhannahthis	A3	<i>"WTF. THIS IS SHAMEFUL"</i>

The utterance “So fucking disappointed” in data A1 can be analyzed using the bald on record theory of impoliteness. The phrase “So fucking disappointed” is direct and does not have any form of politeness marker or mitigation. There is no attempt to soften the negative emotion expressed. The use of “so” intensifies the emotion, and “fucking” adds a high level of emphasis, which would be considered inappropriate or confrontational. The word “fucking” is a strong swear word used to emphasize the speaker's frustration or anger towards Donald Trump. In summary, “So fucking disappointed” is an example of bald on record incivility as it directly expresses a negative emotion without any mitigation or smoothing and uses strong swear words to emphasize the emotional weight of the statement. This can be considered confrontational or disrespectful in the context of comment speech on Donald Trump's Instagram social media account.

Furthermore, data A2 with the comment “Stupidest shit I've ever seen in my life” is bald on record impoliteness because this speech conveys a strong, direct, and unmitigated negative judgment. It is a face-threatening action that attacks Trump's face for his uploaded video, so according to Culpeper's theory it falls into bald on record impoliteness. The lack of mitigation makes the communication style very direct, blunt, and potentially offensive.

In the next data there is a comment “WTF. THIS IS SHAMEFUL” which falls into the bald on record category because it is direct, harsh, and without trying to soften it. This sentence is addressed to Trump and his uploaded AI video to demean and insult Trump's actions. @canyouhannahthis's speech does not care about the impact it can have. The word “WTF” stands for “what the fuck” which is a direct, harsh and sharp expression. While the word “shameful” is used by speakers to attack Trump's positive face because he is considered to have committed bad, dishonorable, and socially unacceptable actions.

2. Positive Impoliteness

This strategy is used to undermine the positive face desire of others (Culpeper, 2005). A person's positive face reflects the desire to be appreciated, liked, and accepted by others (Yule, 1996). As a result of this strategy, the individual feels belittled or unappreciated. According to Culpeper (1996), positive impoliteness strategies include ignoring or disregarding others, excluding others from activities, separating oneself from others, being indifferent, uninterested, or unsympathetic, using inappropriate identity markers, using vague or secretive language, seeking disagreement, making others uncomfortable, using taboo words, and addressing others by name.

Table 2. The type of positive impoliteness

No.	Speaker	Data Code	Utterance
1.	@peamla234	B1	<i>“U are a killer”</i>
2.	@lynnquinn007_	B2	<i>“If narcissism was a person”</i>
3.	@jr_ro.bin20	B3	<i>“Shame on you”</i>

“U are a killer” in data B1 is an example of positive impoliteness because this comment attacks Trump's identity. By calling Trump a “killer”, the speaker @peamla234, directly accuses Trump of being a murderer. The word “killer” is a severe and negative accusation. Comments like this aim to undermine Trump's self-esteem and can damage his reputation. In addition, this speech can also cause Trump to feel humiliated and insulted. This “murderer” accusation attacks Trump's positive identity so that the speech can be categorized as positive impoliteness.

The comment in data B2 shows positive impoliteness because the comment attacks Trump's positive face in a subtle, clear, and hurtful way. The comment “If narcissism was a person” is a comment that indirectly describes Trump as an example of

narcissistic behavior. This is an attack on Trump's identity and character, in other words, the speech of the account owner @lynnquinn007_ implies that Trump has extreme narcissistic traits that can damage his image and reputation.

Data B3 shows a comment from the account owner @jr_ro.bin20 that says "Shame on you". This implies that Trump is very shameful and has done something wrong and dishonorable. The speaker directly attacks Trump's positive face to express his disappointment but he also gives a social judgment on Trump that can damage his reputation. This speech directly attacks Trump's reputation in a way that insults and demeans him so it can be categorized as positive impoliteness.

3. Negative Impoliteness

This strategy aims to attack the interlocutor's negative face desire. Someone's negative face is the need for independence, to not be forced by others, and to act freely (Yule, 1996). According to Culpeper (1996), the consequences of negative impoliteness strategies include intimidating, belittling, mocking, or insulting others, invading their personal space, explicitly associating others with negative aspects, and reminding others of their debts.

Table 3. The type of negative impoliteness

No.	Speaker	Data Code	Utterance
1.	@pistolwhipbuck	C1	<i>"LOL this guy has truly lost his mind"</i>
2.	@dreamsofhazy	C2	<i>"I cant believe that this is still up on the account"</i>
3.	@loveslifeliterally	C3	<i>"Stop sending money to Israel and weapons to genocide an entire country!!!!"</i>

Data C1 involves an action that ignores Trump's face or dignity. The line "LOL this guy has truly lost his mind" mocks and belittles Trump in relation to the AI Gaza video by saying that Trump has "lost his mind". This implies a lack of rationality or mental stability which is a direct attack on Trump's competence and mental state. Furthermore, the use of "LOL" adds a layer of mockery that further emphasizes the dismissive and insulting tone. It shows no respect for Trump's position or arguments and instead mocks him. Therefore, this comment in data C1 is an example of a comment categorized as negative impoliteness because it attacks Trump's mental state and demeans his dignity.

The comment "I cant believe that this is still up on the account" can be categorized as negative impoliteness because it is a direct expression of distrust and disappointment. The @dreamsofhazy account can be considered to ignore Trump as the account owner. The use of the word "can't believe" shows that the speaker feels disappointed with the uploads that he considers should not be worth sharing but are still on the account. This can demean and challenge the account owner's decision, namely Trump. Data C2 can be categorized as negative impoliteness because the speech ignores Trump's desire to keep uploading the AI Gaza video content. There is no direct attack in this speech, but the disbelief can be interpreted as a form of rejection of Trump's decision and shows disappointment with the choices made.

Furthermore, the utterance "Stop sending money to Israel and weapons to genocide an entire country!!!!" in data C3 is also included in negative impoliteness. This is because the speech ignores Trump's wishes as a policy manager. The owner of the @loveslifeliterally Instagram account attacks or criticizes Trump's policies in a harsh way without trying to maintain good social relations. The use of the word "genocide" is aimed at the allegations of massive massacres committed by Trump against the national group of Gaza, Palestine. This comment attacks the negative face of the parties involved in the

remittance and arms policy, and this comment is provocative indicating that Trump's policy is wrong, cruel and immoral.

4. Sarcasm/Mock Politeness

This strategy is used when someone makes an FTA that appears polite but is actually insincere. For example, someone may pretend to give a compliment while actually being sarcastic. So politeness is only a cover for the true intention to offend or attack.

Table 4. The type of sarcasm/mock politeness

No.	Speaker	Data Code	Utterance
1.	@silvy.nona	D1	<i>"I love your sense of humor"</i>
2.	@rocklicker8	D2	<i>"I will be attending trump Gaza promptly"</i>
3.	@abdullahalrabbat	D3	<i>"It's free to dream"</i>

Data D1 "I love your sense of humor" shows a sentence containing sarcasm. This sentence is used to satirize the humor of the AI Gaza video which is considered sensitive and inappropriate. @silvy.nona's words are considered sarcasm because they literally seem to give praise to the content, but in reality it is used as a form of satire, ridicule, and criticism of the humor in the video which is considered inappropriate with the current situation in Gaza.

The comment from the account owner @rocklicker8 in data D2 belongs to the sarcasm/mock politeness category. His words "I will be attending trump Gaza promptly" seem neutral and ordinary. However, the speech intends to mock the content of the AI Gaza video uploaded by Trump. The speaker pretends as if "Trump Gaza" is real that he wants to go to, when in reality there are no places and buildings as depicted in the AI video. This false sincerity is used to mock Trump's video and is supported by a sarcastic tone, making this speech fall into the sarcasm/mock politeness category.

The owner of the Instagram account @abdullahalrabbat commented on a video post of Donald Trump by saying "it's free to dream." This statement falls into the category of sarcasm/mock politeness because it sounds like a compliment or a positive statement, while it actually has the opposite meaning, which is to convey criticism and mockery. The speaker does not really want to say that dreams are free, which is a good thing, but intends to mock the AI video content of Gaza Trump, which is considered unrealistic and impossible. By saying "it's free to dream" in the D3 data, @abdullahalrabbat implies that dreams are good, easy, and free. However, according to the speaker in this context, that will not become a reality, so this sentence is used to mock and belittle the content shared by Trump.

5. Withhold Politeness

Culpeper (1996) defines withholding politeness as the absence of politeness in situations where it is expected. For example, failing to express gratitude for a gift or assistance may be considered impolite. There is no data on Donald Trump's strategy of withholding politeness in his Instagram posts because it is frequently used in face-to-face interactions. Goffman (1967) explains that face is a social value that is emotionally invested in, which helps explain the outrage and mockery seen in digital political commentary. This aligns with Brown and Levinson's (1987) face theory, where impoliteness threatens either the positive or negative face of the addressee. Because communication on Instagram takes place asynchronously, the absence of politeness is frequently difficult to detect. This means that messages can be sent and received at different times, resulting in no direct interaction between sender and receiver. As a result,

the emotional context or original tone of the message may be lost, making it more difficult to identify strategies for withholding impoliteness.

The functions of impoliteness strategies

To analyze the function of impoliteness strategies found in the comment section of Donald Trump's Instagram account, the researcher uses Culpeper's (2011) impoliteness theory. According to Culpeper (2011), there are three distinct functional forms of impoliteness: affection impoliteness, coercive impoliteness, and entertaining impoliteness.

1. Affection Impoliteness

According to Culpeper (2011), affective impoliteness occurs when someone freely expresses their emotions in situations where it is typically inappropriate or prohibited. Someone may intentionally express strong emotions, such as anger, in order to blame others and make them feel responsible for their negative emotions. Communication on social media platforms such as Instagram allows users to freely express their anger or disappointment without facing significant social consequences. Individuals find it easier to express feelings of anger or frustration when there is no face-to-face interaction, regardless of social norms of politeness.

Table 5. The function of affection impoliteness

No.	Speaker	Utterance
1.	@victoria.clamp	<i>"So fucking disappointed"</i>
2.	@okii_frmn	<i>"I like America but not like you and Biden"</i>

"So fucking disappointed" and *"I like America but not like you and Biden"*

In the italicized sentence "So fucking disappointed" shows anger and disappointment towards Trump for his uploaded video. The word "fucking" is not used to attack the speaker, but is used to express deep disappointment more intensely and dramatically. This expression shows the speaker's heightened emotions after seeing Trump's AI video upload. This sentence also shows that the speaker's trust in Trump was damaged by the video upload. Furthermore, "I like America but not like you and Biden" shows the speaker's expression of anger and dislike towards Trump and Biden. This negative emotion is included in affective impoliteness because the speech emphasizes the speaker's disappointment and dislike for Trump's actions.

2. Coercive Impoliteness

Coercive impoliteness is most common in situations where there is a power imbalance, such as when someone who is socially stronger uses harsh words or threats to assert their superior position. However, it can also be used in equal relationships to increase social power.

Table 6. The function of coercive impoliteness

No	Speaker	Utterance
1.	@jr_ro.bin20	<i>"Shame on you"</i>
2.	@loveslifeliterally	<i>"Stop sending money to Israel and weapons to genocide an entire country!!!!"</i>

"Shame on you" and *"Stop sending money to Israel and weapons to genocide an entire country!!!!"*

The two pieces of data above fall into the category of coercive impoliteness. The sentence "Shame on you" is a form of direct criticism from the speaker to exert emotional pressure on Trump. The utterance contains elements of judgment to induce shame and undermine Trump's status. By commenting like this, the account owner @jr_ro.bin20 tries to dominate the situation by giving a negative judgment to Trump for his AI video upload. The sentence "Stop sending money to Israel and weapons to genocide an entire

country!!!!" also constitutes coercive impoliteness because it contains coercion. The utterance of @loveslifeliterally can be implemented as a command to Trump to stop sending money and weapons to Israel, and to accuse those actions as genocide. This coercion is also a form of aggressive criticism intended to specifically control Trump's actions, namely to stop sending money and weapons.

3. Entertaining Impoliteness

The last is entertaining impoliteness. It is used to amuse others at the expense of the person who is the subject of the Impoliteness. Although impoliteness behaviour usually causes harm or suffering to others, it can also be entertaining (Anshari, 2023). Thus, this function has the potential to both benefit and harm others.

Table 7. The function of entertaining impoliteness

No	Speaker	Utterance
1	@turnmeupjosh1	<i>"This gives purely satanic vibes"</i>
2	@silvy.nona	<i>"I love your sense of humor"</i>

"This gives purely satanic vibes" and "I love your sense of humor"

"This gives purely satanic vibes" is likely to fall into the category of entertaining impoliteness. This utterance is a mockery intended to entertain other readers. There is no element of pressure in this utterance, but it is quite provocative with the aim of entertaining, attracting attention, and creating a controversial atmosphere among fellow Instagram users in the comments. Therefore, in this context, the utterance is considered impolite entertainment because the speaker provokes in a relaxed yet rude and mocking manner. The next data point, "I love your sense of humor," also tends to fall into the category of entertaining impoliteness. This casual comment contains a jab related to the controversial AI Gaza video. On social media, especially Instagram, comments like this are often used to react to a piece of content. Considering the context is the controversial AI Gaza video, the Instagram account owner @silvy.nona uses sarcasm as if she enjoys the entertainment from the video content. The speaker does not directly attack Trump, but their comments show provocation and disagreement wrapped in casual humor to attract the attention of other users.

DISCUSSION

This study found that all five impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper (1996)—bald-on record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm/mock politeness, and withhold politeness—were evident in the comment sections of Donald Trump's Instagram account, except for the last (withhold politeness), which was not found due to the asynchronous nature of Instagram communication. The data reveal that users predominantly employed bald-on record and positive impoliteness to express direct criticism, anger, and moral judgment, especially related to Trump's controversial AI-generated content on Gaza. Functionally, these impoliteness strategies were categorized into affective, coercive, and entertaining impoliteness (Culpeper, 2011), where users either expressed raw emotions, tried to influence or criticize power, or mocked Trump for public amusement.

Unlike previous research that mostly focused on face-to-face political discourse or televised debates (Harris, 2001; Lakoff, 2001), this study highlights the unique dynamics of impoliteness in asynchronous, anonymous, and emotionally charged online environments. Earlier studies such as Graham (2007) and Dynel (2015) analyzed online forums and YouTube, noting that impoliteness is often playful or context-bound, whereas in Trump's Instagram comments, impoliteness was often direct and ideologically charged.

Unlike earlier studies of impoliteness, which generally highlight indirectness, gradual escalation, and an overriding concern for relational maintenance, the present

research reveals an environment characterized by immediate, openly hostile exchanges that are largely unmitigated by conventional politeness strategies. Hoffmann's (2013) work on televised debates, for instance, foregrounds subtle mock politeness embedded within controlled broadcast formats, whereas Instagram commenters often begin with outright profanity and harsh denunciation, reflecting both the platform's lower entry barriers and the heightened affective climate surrounding Donald Trump. Similarly, Bousfield's (2008) notion that impoliteness progressively unfolds across turns in dialogue does not hold here: ideological disagreement sparks instant, standalone invective that bypasses collaborative face-threatening sequences. Terkourafi (2005) links politeness to community-specific norms, yet the norms observable in this Instagram corpus appear far more permissive of overt rudeness, especially toward polarizing political figures, suggesting that platform culture sometimes overrides broader social expectations.

Other scholars focused on subtler manifestations now seem too conservative when applied to this context. Kienpointner (2018) documented indirect sarcasm in online newspaper comments, but in this dataset sarcasm tends to be aggressively explicit—users layer ridicule and personal mockery to signal ideological distance with minimal interpretive effort. Likewise, Shum and Lee (2013) viewed political humor on social media primarily as entertainment; here, humor operates as an affective weapon, sharpening criticism while maintaining a veneer of playfulness that makes hostile stances socially shareable. Anthonissen's (2008) concern that political impoliteness threatens social cohesion finds partial echo, yet Instagram seems to function less as a cohesive public sphere and more as a cathartic outlet where users vent frustrations en masse. Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2014) emphasize relational work on Facebook, but the current findings indicate that in this arena relational considerations are subordinated to ideological performance and identity signaling. Finally, while Kádár and Haugh (2013) argue that impoliteness is co-constructed through interaction, the asynchronous, comment-thread architecture of Instagram fosters fragmented, often monologic outbursts in which users rarely revisit or collaboratively develop prior insults.

Taken together, these contrasts suggest that Instagram's affordances—algorithmic amplification, rapid audience feedback, and minimal turn-taking constraints—create a communicative milieu where immediacy, emotional intensity, and ideological polarization trump the face-sensitive dynamics described in earlier research. Fairclough (2001) notes that discourse both reflects and constitutes power structures, which supports the interpretation that Instagram comment sections are ideological battlegrounds. Consequently, impoliteness in this space is less about negotiated social meaning and more about swift affective display, reinforcing in-group solidarity among like-minded users while publicly delegitimizing the targeted political figure.

This study underscores the transformative nature of political discourse in digital spaces, revealing how impoliteness becomes a form of public expression, resistance, and emotional catharsis. The findings highlight how online platforms foster a different form of democratic engagement, where power relations are constantly contested through discourse. Moreover, these expressions of impoliteness contribute to the shaping of public opinion and political identity. For researchers in digital communication, political science, and sociolinguistics, the study shows that impoliteness should not only be seen as a breakdown of civility but also as a strategic and functional discourse tool used by ordinary citizens to influence narratives and challenge authority (van Dijk, 2006). Baym (2015) emphasizes that digital communication is shaped not only by technology but also by evolving interpersonal norms, which is evident in the emotionally charged yet fragmented dialogues on Trump's Instagram.

One major limitation lies in the contextual ambiguity of online communication. Without knowing the intentions, tone, or background of commenters, it is difficult to fully

interpret the pragmatic force behind each comment. Additionally, the lack of dialogic interaction (i.e., no reply chains analyzed) limits the understanding of how impoliteness is responded to or escalated. Another limitation is that the analysis was confined to a single platform (Instagram) and a specific political figure, which may restrict generalizability. The absence of quantitative support—such as frequency analysis or broader sentiment measurement—also limits the empirical weight of the conclusions. Lastly, withhold politeness, a key element in Culpeper's model, could not be observed, indicating a methodological gap in applying the theory to asynchronous, non-conversational contexts.

Future studies could explore cross-platform analysis (e.g., comparing Instagram, Twitter/X, TikTok, and Facebook) to examine how platform architecture influences the form and function of impoliteness. Another important area would be longitudinal research on the evolution of impolite discourse during major political events (e.g., elections, conflicts). Integrating quantitative sentiment analysis or corpus linguistics methods would enrich the understanding of frequency and patterns. Furthermore, expanding the focus to include response dynamics (comment-reply chains) could help examine how impoliteness is negotiated or reinforced socially. Finally, research could investigate how impoliteness affects political engagement, trust, and polarization, especially among younger social media users who rely heavily on digital platforms for political information.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the impoliteness strategies in the comment section of an AI video in Donald Trump's Instagram account using Culpeper's theory of impoliteness. From the five forms of impoliteness, four forms were found in the comment section of the AI Gaza video uploaded by Trump, including bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm/mock politeness. Strategy of withholding politeness was not found in this study because it is frequently used in face-to-face interactions. The three functions of impoliteness were also found in this study. Research development on incivility is highly anticipated by researchers, especially regarding public responses to posts by influential major politicians who are active on social media. The hope is that society can become wiser in communicating and commenting on social media by using more polite language. Also this research is expected to add information and knowledge about the phenomenon of impoliteness occurring on social media, especially Instagram.

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