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# IMPOLITENESS STRATEGIES IN JOE BIDEN'S INSTAGRAM COMMENT SECTION

**PROCEEDING**

REINFORCING EDUCATION,  
LANGUAGE, AND SOCIO-  
CULTURE

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Through the analysis of impoliteness strategies proposed by Jonathan Culpeper, this study investigates linguistic impoliteness found in Joe Biden's Instagram comment section. The current study aims to investigate the various impoliteness strategies employed by commenters in Joe Biden's Instagram comment section. The descriptive qualitative method is used in the study. The data was gathered using a documentary technique, in which only data that supported the research question were used. This study's analysis was carried out by interpreting the collected data. According to the findings, four out of five types of impoliteness strategies are used by commenters in Joe Biden's Instagram comment section. The strategy of withholding politeness was not found in the comments because it is more common in the process of spoken interaction.*

***Keywords :** Impoliteness strategies, Instagram, Comment section*

## **INTRODUCTION**

People nowadays communicate with one another through social media platforms. Individuals and groups who connect to the internet to learn more about their relatives, friends, and the general public are impacted by social media information (Mageto, 2019). Instagram is one of the world's most popular social media platforms, especially among people who want to communicate with others. Blair claims that (2014:3). Instagram is a social networking platform that allows users to share photos and fifteen-second videos that may be shared on other platforms. This application is mostly used by public figures such as politicians to share their daily activity by posted a photo and video on their pages so that politicians will keep their connection with their supporters and get easily promote their up-and-coming event or campaign.

Instagram has a variety of interesting features that can be used to communicate, one of which is a feature where other Instagram users can comment on someone's post. Normally, people will choose their words wisely and use polite language when they communicated to one another especially with famous figures and they are not directly saying what is on their mind to avoid disapproval or punishment. Since politeness is involved in social phenomena that play significant roles in our communication. But, there are some people who do not care about an individual's feelings so they ended up giving hurtful or negative comments to others. This behavior happened because communicating in an online platform such as Instagram makes them brave to speak out or behave inappropriately since they do not see each other, whereby it facilitates the occurrence of impoliteness. Furthermore, the researcher chooses Joe Biden as the subject of the study by

considering that he is one of the most controversial politicians who has many haters because of his winning on the presidential election and also he also been criticized for making disparaging remarks about women's physical appearance on the campaign trail and for hesitating to express regret for his actions

Based on the explanation above, this impoliteness study is noteworthy to be conducted concerning the various events that occurred lately due to the news of impoliteness causing problems in the community. As we can see that language impoliteness occur in any aspect of life, one example is in social networking site like Instagram. Frequently, they use improper words and sentences to express their opinion. Thus, It is important for students to increase their awareness of this social phenomenon so that they know how to overcome this situation when it occurs and they can be careful when to say something unless they will cause a problem and know how to overcome this situation when its occur.

Therefore, this study will examine the phenomenon of impoliteness by investigating what are the types of impoliteness strategies use by commenters in Joe Biden's Instagram post using a model of impoliteness proposed by Culpeper (2005), namely Bald on Record Impoliteness, Positive Impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness, Off-record Impoliteness, and Withhold Politeness.

In social interaction, there is normal phenomenon called politeness which means maintaining harmony in communication, besides showing respect to others. On the opposite, impoliteness also becomes prominent and abnormal behavior that may cause conflict or social disharmony. The phenomenon of impoliteness is to do how the offense is communicated and taken. Therefore, the basic concept of impoliteness is defined differently by some researchers or language experts based on their point of view. According to Bousfield (2008), impoliteness is an act that is consciously planned and aimed to attack somebody's identity or rights. In addition, Culpeper (2011) proposed impoliteness as negative attitude towards specific behaviors occurring in specific contexts and this behavior always has emotional consequences or presumed to cause offense. It is sustained by expectations, desires, and/or beliefs about social organization, including, in particular, how one person's or group's identities are mediated by others in interaction.

This study will use the classification of impoliteness strategy proposed by Culpeper (2005) which describes the type of impoliteness in five super-strategies which are Bald on Record Impoliteness, Positive Impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness, Off-record Impoliteness, Withhold Politeness.

### **1. Bald on Record Impoliteness**

This type of impoliteness is done when the speaker performed face-threatening acts (FTAs) to speech partners directly, clearly, unambiguously, and concisely intend to ruin the hearer's face in contexts where the face is relevant and maximized.

### **2. Positive Impoliteness**

This strategy is designed to damage the hearer's positive face wants, the desire to be appreciated or approved by other people. There are many sub-strategies within this strategy, such as neglecting or snubbing others, excluding someone from an activity for no reason, being disinterested, unconcerned, unsympathetic and rejecting to be gathered with others, using inappropriate identity markers, making use of unclear language and slipping secret within the talk like jargon or uses a code known to others in the group but not the target addressee, selecting a sensitive topic

to be discussed that makes the target's addressee feel uncomfortable, making use of taboo words, also call the other names.

### **3. Negative Impoliteness**

These strategies are designed to damage the hearer's negative face wants. Aligned with positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness also has substrategies such as frighten, condescend, scorn or ridicule, be contemptuous, do not treat others seriously, underestimating the other, invade the hearer's space either literally or metaphorically, and interconnecting other with a negative aspect in explicitly way.

### **4. Off-record Impoliteness**

This strategies happen when the speaker does face-threatening acts (FTAs) by means of an implicature in such a way which the intention is clearly outweighed with any others. In other word, what speaker saying is the contrary of the actual meaning.

### **5. Withhold Politeness**

This strategies occur when there is no politeness work from the speaker which it supposed to be done. For example, says nothing to a partner who gives you a present or congratulations, it is interpreted as impoliteness.

## **METHOD**

The design will be utilized by using descriptive approach. This kind of approach is appropriate with the purpose of the study itself, which is analyzing the impoliteness strategies used by commenters in President Joe Biden's Instagram post. In accordance with Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun (2015) qualitative research is the research procedure that focuses on exploring a problem and developing a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon.

The data of this study were taken from Joe Biden's Instagram comment section. So, the data would be comments made by Instagram users which contain impoliteness in the form of words, phrases, and sentences. The researcher selected the latest 500 comments from Joe Biden's Instagram post which has the most comment beside other posts. Moreover, the data were gathered by using the documentary technique, in which only the data that support the research question are taken.

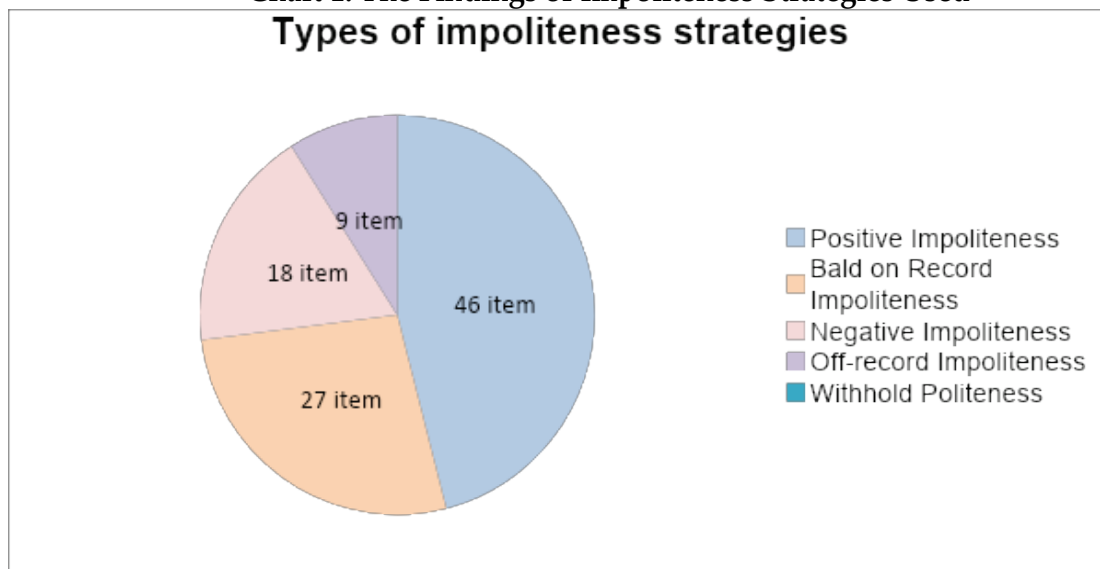
After collecting the data, the writer will be analyzed the data based on the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) with three concurrent flows of activity: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The result of data analysis will be interpreted as the data source. In this study, the researcher applied investigator triangulation to establish the validity and reliability of findings greatly in order to reduce bias in data collection, reporting, and analysis.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **FINDINGS**

From 500 comments that had been collected from Joe Biden's Instagram post, the writer found 100 comments which can be considered as impoliteness utterances. Based on the findings, there are only 4 types of impoliteness strategies found in Joe Biden's Instagram comment section which are Bald on Record impoliteness, Positive Impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness, and Off-Record impoliteness. Meanwhile, Withhold impoliteness was not found in Joe Biden's Instagram comment section. Positive impoliteness become the most strategy used by commenter on Joe Biden's Instagram comment section. In order to get a clear understanding of the findings, the categories were presented in Chart 1:

**Chart 1. The Findings of Impoliteness Strategies Used**



### **1. Positive Impoliteness**

This strategy is designed to damage the hearer's positive face wants, the desire to be appreciated or approved by other people (Culpeper, 2005). There are numerous substrategies within this strategy, such as ignoring the other, excluding the other from an activity, being indifferent, unconcerned, unsympathetic, use incorrect markers, using obscure or secretive language, seeking disagreement, using taboo words, and use derogatory remarks. Some of the following expressions this strategy found in Joe Biden's Instagram comment section will be discussed below:

● *Data 041/CGI41: We want Trump!*

As seen in the data above, this comment can be categorized as Positive Impoliteness. The utterance "*We want Trump!*" explicitly showed that the commenter is attacking the face of Joe Biden by snub and ignore his presence as a new president of the United State of America where the commenter prefer Trump than him. there are several comment which mentions his rival's name Trump-like in the comment "I love trump", "Where is Trump", etc.

● *Data 067/CGI67: It's a sad day America!*

From the data above, it can be seen that this comment is considered as Positive Impoliteness. The utterance "*It's a sad day America!*" showed that the commenter expressed disagreement with the appointment of Joe Biden as a new president of the United State of America where that day ought to be a new day of America. There are more than eight comments that used the word "Sad day" in the comment section. In this case, seeking disagreement is one form of Positive Impoliteness strategy.

### **2. Bald on Record Impoliteness**

This type of impoliteness is the most straightforward in addressing impoliteness to the face of the hearer. As Culpeper (2005) states that Bald on Record impoliteness is done when speaker performed face threatening acts (FTAs) to speech partner directly, clearly, unambiguously, and concisely intend to ruin the hearer's face in contexts where the face is

relevant and maximised. It was found that Bald on Record Impoliteness occurred in Joe Biden's Instagram comment section as can be seen in the following :

- *Data 009/CIG9: Too bad you're probably the worst person to represent America next to Trump.*

From the data above, it can be seen that commenters straightly attack the face of the addressees which is considered as a Bald on Record Impoliteness. The utterance "*Too bad you're probably the worst person to represent America next to Trump*" intelligibly directed that Joe Biden does not deserve the president position which the commenter even assume that he is the worst person to represent America. Therefore, this comment can be regarded as impolite behavior as involved in Bald on Record Impoliteness.

- *Data 024/CIG24: Hey Mr. Biden, you've made this country very sad with your stupid and idiotic behavior. I hope you get IMPEACHED by next year.*

From the data above, we can see that the commenter was delivered in a clear, unambiguous and direct way to damage the face of Joe Biden. This comment is considered as Bald on Record impoliteness because the commenter insults the addressee which is Joe Biden by saying that he has stupid and idiotic behavior.

- *Data 033/CIG33: Shutup honestly*

From the data above, it is clear that this comment belongs to Bald on Record Impoliteness. Where the commenter directly insult Joe Biden by asking him to be silent but in an inappropriate way. Therefore, the commenter do not try to save Joe Biden's face and refuses to maintain a good relation with him.

### **3. Negative Impoliteness**

This strategy is designed to damage the addressee's negative face wants. According to Culpeper (2005), negative impoliteness has sub-strategies such as frighten, condescend, scorn or ridicule, be contemptuous, do not treat others seriously, underestimating the other, invading the hearer's space either literally or metaphorically, and interconnecting other with a negative aspect in explicitly way. Some examples of negative impoliteness that were found in Joe Biden's Instagram comment section is shown below:

- *Data 027/CGI27: You actually post this. What a disgrace. America was not even allowed to participate. You put up razor wire & armed troops to keep us out. You & Your nasty Facist Party are the worst thing to happen to The World in The 21st Century*

Based on the data above, it can be seen that this comment considered as Negative Impoliteness because the commenter expressed his/her disappointment toward Joe Biden's action by saying "*What a disgrace*" which this remark is insulted and condescends the addressee who is Joe Biden in explicit way.

- *Data 006/CGI6: What a shit show*

Based on the data above, it was found that the commenter applied Negative Impoliteness. The utterance "*What a shit show*" was intentionally written to demeaning of Joe Biden's inauguration, where the commenters metaphorically compare his inauguration as a show. The word "shit" also appeared more than two times in the comment section.

- *Data 079/CGI79: F u Biden*

Based on the data above, we can see that this comment can be categorized as Negative Impoliteness. The commenter indirectly scorn Joe Biden by saying the "F" word which that is the abbreviation of the swear word *Fuck*. As we know that is an inappropriate word to say to Politicians.

#### 4. Off-record Impoliteness

This strategy is performed by the use of remarks which candidly mean the opposite of what they say, and which are made in order to hurt someone's feelings or to criticize something in either serious or humorous way. The examples of Off-Record Impoliteness will be discussed below:

- *Data 002/CGI2: ur so funny*

The data above showed that the commenter used Off-record Impoliteness to attack the face of Joe Biden. The utterance "*ur so funny*" does not directly state the real meaning. However, the commenter insincerely gives praise to Joe Biden but indirectly make fun of him.

- *Data 029/CGI29: New day for massive fuel price increases. Thanks, Sloppy Joe.*

The data above presented that the commenter's purposes is to damage Joe Biden's face using Off-record Impoliteness. We can see that the commenter complaining about the massive increase of fuel price and the commenter be grateful for that by saying "Thanks, Sloppy Joe." but mean insult, Joe Biden.

#### 5. Withhold Positive

This strategy occurs when there is no politeness work from the speaker in a situation it must be shown. In these findings, this strategy was not found in Joe Biden's Instagram comment section. It might be caused this strategy can only be used in face-to-face interaction. Since the data are comments from Instagram so that Withhold Politeness could not be performed.

### DISCUSSION

The research objective of this study is what are the types of impoliteness strategies used by commenters that found in Joe Biden's Instagram comment section. After discussed about the findings, the writer has obtained that from five strategies proposed by Culpeper (2005), only one type of impoliteness strategy that is Withhold Impoliteness which was not used at all. The possible reason could be that Withhold Impoliteness could not be performed in online interaction.

### CONCLUSION

The result of the findings show that there were four types of impoliteness strategies appeared in the Joe Biden's Instagram comment section, which are Positive Impoliteness, Bald on Record Impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness, and Off-record Impoliteness. However, withholding impoliteness could not be performed because this type of impoliteness commonly found in spoken communication.

Most commenters use Positive Impoliteness to express their thought about Joe Biden's Post, which means that they want to be approved by other people. Additionally, there is some characteristic of comment among the strategies such as many of commenters use the same words like "Sad day", "Worst day", and "Shit" to convey what is on their mind which we can assumed that the commenter tried to represent another American citizen's feeling. And they are also expressed their complaint by mentioning the name of Trump who is Joe Biden's rival on the election several times in the comment section. This kind of act obviously can spoil Joe Biden's face in front of his followers.

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