

Netizen's Impudent Strategy to Gibran Rakabuming's Reels About Flooding on Instagram

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Abstract

Instagram social media has become a digital public space that enables direct interaction between public figures and the community, especially in responding to sensitive issues such as flooding. These interactions often give rise to impolite language practices as a form of public criticism and dissatisfaction. This study aims to analyze the types and strategies of impoliteness used by netizens in responding to Gibran Rakabuming's Instagram Reels posts related to the flood issue. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with pragmatic analysis based on Culpeper's impoliteness theory. The research data consists of 40 netizen comments containing elements of impoliteness, collected through documentation techniques and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model. The results show that positive impoliteness is the most dominant strategy used by netizens, followed by bald on record impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, off-record impoliteness, and negative impoliteness. These strategies are used to attack the self-image, credibility, and legitimacy of public figures through insults, ridicule, delegitimization, and direct verbal attacks. These findings indicate that the emergence of impoliteness is influenced by public dissatisfaction with the symbolic responses of political figures, perceptions of a lack of empathy for disaster victims, and the characteristics of social media that allow for free emotional expression. This study contributes to pragmatic and digital discourse studies by emphasizing impoliteness as a form of social criticism in political communication on social media.

Keywords: *impoliteness, pragmatics, Instagram Reels, political discourse, netizen comments*

Introduction

Social Media has become a very central space of public communication in the life of modern society, especially in the context of political discourse. Platforms like Instagram allow for direct interaction between public figures and the public without the intermediary of formal institutions. Through uploads, live broadcasts, and Comment columns, citizens can spontaneously convey opinions, evaluations, and emotional responses to various social and political issues. The comments column in social media serves as an open public arena that reflects the dynamics of attitudes, ideologies, and power relations between authority holders and the community. When political content touches on a sensitive issue, such as a natural disaster, the response that emerges tends to be emotional and characterized by high linguistic intensity.

In November 2025, several areas in Sumatra experienced major floods that caused significant social and economic impacts for the affected communities. In that

situation, Gibran Rakabuming as a public figure and political actor uploaded some Instagram Reels content related to flood conditions. The Upload not only serves as a means of conveying information, but also triggers a wide reaction from netizens. Many of the comments that appear actually contain abusive speech, innuendo, and verbal attacks that violate the norms of language politeness. From a pragmatic perspective, this phenomenon can be understood as a form of impoliteness (impoliteness), which is a linguistic action that attacks the face, social identity, or legitimacy of the speech partner, either intentionally or unintentionally.

Theoretically, language impoliteness is an important concept in pragmatic studies used to explain confrontational, evaluative, and power-relational communication practices. Culpeper viewed irreverence as a discursive strategy that not only violates the norms of politeness, but also serves to express criticism, conflict, as well as social resistance. In the context of digital political discourse, impoliteness is often used by netizens as a means of conveying dissatisfaction, disappointment, and demands for accountability towards public figures. However, the application of Culpeper's impolite framework to short-lived audiovisual-based political content such as Instagram Reels is still relatively rare.

A number of recent studies have examined the phenomenon of politeness and non-politeness of language in social media discourse, especially in political contexts. Amalia and Sirulhaq (2025) found that the comment column of the Instagram account @gibran_rakabuming was dominated by a strategy of direct irreverence and sarcasm, especially when the content uploaded was related to political and public policy issues. This finding shows that netizens tend to use personally offensive language as a form of criticism of political figures. Correspondingly, Usman and Chaidir (2025) reported that comments on President Joko Widodo's Instagram account also showed the use of a high strategy of impoliteness, especially in issues that trigger public dissatisfaction.

Other research highlights the role of sarcasm and mock politeness as dominant strategies in online political communication. Irawati, Sujatna, and Yuliawati (2023) point out that sarcastic irreverence in Ganjar Pranowo's Instagram comments serves as a form of indirect criticism that remains effective in attacking the image and legitimacy of political figures. In addition, studies on other platforms such as YouTube and TikTok confirm that impoliteness is a consistent characteristic in digital political discourse in Indonesia. Rasmiah and Idris (2025) found high levels of disrespectful speech in political debate comments on YouTube, while Aulia et al. (2025) identified the dominance of sarcasm and offensive speech in political commentary on TikTok.

While those studies have made important contributions, most still focus on text-based uploads or political content in general. Studies that specifically highlight Instagram Reels as a medium of political communication are still limited. In fact, Reels have unique characteristics in the form of a combination of visual, audio, and short narratives that have the potential to form different linguistic response patterns than static uploads. In addition, little research examines impoliteness in the context of crises, such as natural disasters, where public emotions, social expectations, and demands on political actors intertwine.

Thus, there is a significant research gap related to the analysis of language impoliteness in the Instagram Reels comment column, especially on political content related to natural disasters. Previous studies have not exhaustively explored how impolite strategies emerge in response to political communication in an ongoing crisis situation. Therefore, a pragmatic analysis focused on this context is needed to broaden the understanding of the dynamics of digital political discourse in Indonesia.

Based on the research gap, this study asked two research questions: (1) what types of impolite strategies were used by netizens in Gibran Rakabuming's reels Instagram comment column regarding the floods in Sumatra in November 2025, and (2) How were these impolite strategies realized linguistically in netizens' comments. In line with these questions, the purpose of this study is to identify and classify strategies of impoliteness based on the Culpeper framework and describe their linguistic forms in the context of disaster-based political communication on Instagram Reels.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on Instagram Reels as a multimodal political communication format as well as on the context of natural disasters as a trigger for the intensification of language impoliteness. By examining the linguistic responses of netizens to political Reels content in crisis situations, this research is expected to provide theoretical and empirical contributions to pragmatic studies, especially in the development of non-politeness studies and digital political discourse in Indonesia.

Method

This study was designed using a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of answering research questions regarding the types and strategies of impoliteness used by netizens in responding to Instagram Reels posts by political figures in the context of disaster issues. This research design is considered appropriate because it allows researchers to explore and describe linguistic phenomena in depth based on the context of speech, without intending to test hypotheses or measure cause-and-effect relationships statistically. The main focus of the research lies in the meaning of speech, pragmatic functions, and impoliteness strategies that arise in digital interactions.

The subjects of this study are netizen comments found in the comments section of Instagram Reels posts on the @gibran_rakabuming account discussing the issue of flooding. From the entire population of available comments, the researcher conducted purposive sampling, selecting comments that clearly contained elements of linguistic impoliteness. Based on these criteria, 40 comments were selected as research data. The selection of this amount of data was done by considering the representativeness of the variety of impoliteness strategies and the feasibility of in-depth qualitative analysis.

Data collection was carried out using documentation techniques. The data collection procedure began with identifying Instagram Reels posts relevant to the issue of flooding, then documenting all comments that appeared on these posts. Next, the researcher selected comments that contained elements of impoliteness by considering the clarity of the context, the completeness of the utterance, and its relevance to the focus of the study. Comments that were neutral, informative, or did not show impoliteness were not included as data. The main instrument in this study was the researcher himself, who observed, selected, and classified the data based on the theoretical framework used.

Data analysis was conducted with reference to Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which includes three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. In the data reduction stage, the comments that had been collected were selected and classified based on the type and strategy of impoliteness. The data presentation stage was carried out by compiling the data into an analysis table containing netizen comments, categories of impoliteness strategies, and reasons for classification based on pragmatic context. This presentation aimed to facilitate the identification of patterns and trends in impoliteness strategies that emerged. The final stage of drawing conclusions is carried out by comprehensively interpreting these patterns, accompanied by verification through consistency between

empirical data, impoliteness theory, and the socio-political context behind the emergence of speech.

Results

This section presents the results of an analysis of impoliteness Strategies found in 40 selected comments on reels Instagram account @gibran_rakabuming uploads related to flood issues. The Data were classified according to Culpeper's impoliteness strategy framework, which includes positive impoliteness, bald on record impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, off-record impoliteness, and negative impoliteness.

The results of the analysis showed that all five types of impoliteness strategies were found in the research data. The positive impoliteness strategy is the strategy most often used by netizens, followed by bald on record impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, off-record impoliteness, and negative impoliteness. The frequency distribution and percentage of each strategy are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. strategy of impoliteness

No	Strategi Impoliteness (Culpeper)	Frekuensi	Persentase
1	Positive Impoliteness	14	35%
2	Bald on Record Impoliteness	9	22,5%
3	Sarcasm / Mock Politeness	7	17,5%
4	Off-record Impoliteness	6	15%
5	Negative Impoliteness	4	10%
Total		40	100%

Overall, the table shows that positive impoliteness dominates the use of impoliteness strategies in netizens ' comments, while negative impoliteness is the least used strategy in the research data.

Discussion

Bald on Record Impoliteness: Direct Attacks Without Mitigation

The bald on record impoliteness strategy in this study is characterized by the use of harsh language, cursing, and direct commands without any attempt at softening or mitigation. This strategy demonstrates expressions of public anger that are conveyed openly and confrontational. These findings are in line with research by Amalia and Sirulhaq (2025), which found that netizens often use direct speech when assessing political figures who are considered unresponsive to the suffering of the people.

Data

fadil_wahky : Kerja bloook kerjaaa jangan konten mulu luuuu bloook

The comments above represent bald on record impoliteness strategy because it is delivered in a very direct, aggressive, and without mitigating politeness. This speech contains repetition of swear words and imperative forms that affirm anger and explicit demands for public figures to take concrete actions instead of simply building an image through social media content. In the context of Reels ' Instagram post about the flood, the comment shows that netizens are no longer trying to maintain norms of politeness, but are openly expressing frustration and urging accountability. This pattern can be understood as a form of offensive countering, which is an aggressive response to actions or representations of public figures that are considered inadequate, as explained by

Hanif (2022). A similar phenomenon is also found in digital political discourse on various other platforms such as TikTok and YouTube, which shows that the use of impoliteness is directly the main means for netizens to demand concrete action from political actors in crisis situations (Impoliteness Strategies in Online Political Discourse, 2024; Rasmiah & Idris, 2025).

Positive Impoliteness: Delegitimization of Identity and Self-Image

The positive impoliteness strategy was the most dominant strategy in this research data. This strategy was realized through personal insults, negative labeling, and the destruction of self-image and legitimacy of public figures. These findings support the research by Usman and Chaidir (2025), which shows that attacks on the positive face of political figures are a common practice in Instagram comment columns.

Data

Firdaazhary: Manusia terplanga-plongo

The comment above represents a strategy of positive impoliteness, because the speech directly attacks aspects of the identity and self-image of public figures as individuals. Instead of criticizing policies or concrete actions, these comments denigrate intellectual capacity and personal competence through negative labeling, thus serving to undermine the need for social acceptance and appreciation (positive face) of the targeted party. In the context of the Reels Instagram post about the flood, this speech shows that impoliteness is used as a means of symbolic delegitimization of political figures, by presenting them as incompetent or untrustworthy. This pattern is in line with the findings of Amalia and Sirulhaq (2025) which show that netizens' impoliteness is often oriented towards personal attacks rather than policy criticism, and serves as a form of social resistance to power relations, as also asserted by Rasmiah and Idris (2025) in a study of impoliteness in digital political discourse.

Negative Impoliteness: Pressure on Freedom of Action

Negative impoliteness strategies emerge in the form of pressure, demands, and restrictions on the freedom of action of public figures. This strategy focuses on violations of negative face, namely the individual's right to act freely without coercion. These findings are in line with Sulistianah, Nurhasanah, and Rohbiah (2025), who state that moral pressure is a form of impoliteness that often appears in online political comments.

Data

funfooddays: ngapain naik private jet! Mending duitnya disumbangin untuk korban bapakmu itu!

The comment above represents a strategy of negative impoliteness, especially in the form of pressure on freedom of action. This speech directly limits the public figure's range of motion by providing normative demands on how he should use personal resources, thus violating the negative face aspect, which is the individual's right to act without coercion. The imperative form and moral evaluation used Show netizens' efforts to control the behavior of public figures through coercive social pressure. In the context of the flood-related Instagram Reels post, these comments serve not only as criticism, but also as a means of enforcing public norms regarding empathy and social responsibility of political elites. This pattern is in line with the findings of Sulistianah, Nurhasanah, and Rohbiah (2025) who stated that moral pressure is a form of

impoliteness that often appears in online political comments, and supported the views of Usman and Chaidir (2025) that impoliteness in social media often serves as a social control tool to pressure public figures to act in accordance with public expectations.

Sarcasm or Mock Politeness: Criticism Through Irony

Netizens use sarcasm or mock politeness strategies to convey criticism indirectly through irony and sarcasm. This finding is consistent with the research by Irawati, Sujatna, and Yuliawati (2023), which confirms that sarcasm is the dominant strategy of discourtesy in political comments on Instagram.

Data:

yohanez_mario: Tidur lagi mas, sudah terlanjur meninggal saudara kita

The comment above represents a strategy of sarcasm or mock politeness within the framework of Culpeper's impoliteness theory. Linguistically, this speech uses imperative forms that ironically resemble casual expressions or seem non-aggressive, but in the context of Instagram Reels posts that discuss flooding, the speech contains sharp criticism of the attitude of public figures who are perceived as slow, ignorant, or unresponsive to people's suffering. The sarcasm in these comments creates a contrast between the public's expectations of caring and quick action with the perceived reality of inadequacy, so that impoliteness is conveyed indirectly but has a strong pragmatic attack power. This strategy allows the speaker to express anger and disappointment without using explicit invective, while reinforcing the message of criticism through irony, as also found in the research of Aulia et al. (2025) which shows that sarcasm is becoming one of the dominant forms of verbal impolite in social media commentary on sensitive issues.

Off-record Impoliteness: Implicit and Ambiguous Criticism

The strategy of off-record impoliteness is realized through rhetorical questions and implicit sarcasm, which allow the speaker to avoid direct responsibility for verbal attacks. These findings are in line with Salsabil's (2023) research, which states that implicit criticism is often used in digital political discourse to maintain a safe distance from direct confrontation.

Data:

febryyfr: sampean nandi mas?

The comment above represents a strategy of off-record impoliteness because in form it is a simple question, but pragmatically It contains implicit criticism of the public figure discussed. In the context of Gibran Rakabuming's Instagram Reels post about the floods in Sumatra, this speech is not intended to obtain information, but rather implies absence, lack of empathy, or non-involvement of public figures in the conditions of the affected communities. The ambiguity of meaning in the question allows the speaker to express dissatisfaction without making a direct attack, so that criticism is conveyed in a non-explicit way but still attacks the image and legitimacy of the authority of the public figure. This strategy aligns with the concept of off-record impoliteness in Culpeper's theory, in which speakers utilize meaninglessness to maintain distance from speech responsibilities while maintaining pragmatic attack power. A similar pattern is also found in research on impoliteness in cross-platform online political discourse, which shows that netizens often use ambiguity as a means of covert criticism, especially in the

context of social crises or disasters (Impoliteness Strategies in Online Political Discourse, 2026).

Conclusion

This study aims to examine the types and strategies of impoliteness used by netizens in the Instagram Reels comment column of the @gibran_rakabuming account which discusses the issue of floods in Sumatra. Based on the analysis of 40 selected comments, the results showed that the practice of language impoliteness is a prominent phenomenon in digital political communication, especially when the content delivered is related to sensitive disaster issues and has a direct impact on people's lives.

The findings showed that all of the impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper were found in the data, namely bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and off-record impoliteness. Among the five strategies, positive impoliteness is the most dominant strategy used by netizens. This strategy is realized through personal insults, negative labeling, and delegitimizing the identity of public figures, which shows that netizens' criticism is more directed at destroying their self-image and personal credibility than substantive policy evaluations. This strategy is followed by bald on record impoliteness and sarcasm or mock politeness, which represent direct expression of anger as well as indirect criticism through irony and satire, respectively.

In addition, negative impoliteness and off-record impoliteness also appear as forms of moral pressure and implicit criticism. These two strategies show that netizens not only use language to verbally attack, but also to limit the freedom of action of public figures and express dissatisfaction ambiguously in order to avoid direct confrontation. Thus, the strategy of impoliteness in Instagram reels comments serves not only as an outlet for emotions, but also as a means of social control and demanding accountability for political figures.

Theoretically, this study confirms the relevance and flexibility of Culpeper's impoliteness theory in analyzing audiovisual-based digital political discourse such as Instagram Reels. The findings extend the impoliteness theory's previously more widely used application to written text, by showing that the short, visual, and narrative format of Reels is capable of triggering intense and confrontational linguistic responses. Empirically, this study contributes to the study of pragmatics and digital discourse in Indonesia by showing that language impoliteness is a strong form of social criticism in online political communication, especially in crisis situations such as natural disasters.

Nevertheless, the study has some limitations. The research Data only focused on one Instagram account and a relatively limited number of comments, so the results of the study cannot be generalized to the entire context of political communication on social media. In addition, this study has not analyzed in depth multimodal aspects such as visual, audio, and narrative in Reels that have the potential to affect netizens' interpretation and response.

Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the amount and variety of data, involve more accounts or other disaster issues, and integrate multimodal analysis to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of language impropriety in digital political communication. Thus, the study of impoliteness in social media can continue to be developed as an important part in understanding the relationship of language, power, and public criticism in the digital age.

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