

Types And Functions of Impoliteness Strategies In Netizens' Comments On Bonnie Blue's Tiktok Video Involving The Indonesian Flag: A Culpeper's Theory Analysis

Meyla Faiza¹, Diana Anggraeni², Rizky Arif Afandi³

^{1,2,3}Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Bangka Belitung, Bangka, Indonesia

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menjelaskan secara detail hasil analisis impoliteness pada komentar netizen di video TikTok Bonnie Blue yang melibatkan bendera Indonesia dengan menggunakan teori Culpeper (1996) dan Culpeper (2011). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Berdasarkan hasil analisis terhadap komentar netizen yang telah dipilih dan dianalisis, ditemukan lima jenis impoliteness berdasarkan teori Culpeper (1996), yaitu 10 data Bald on Record Impoliteness, 18 data Positive Impoliteness, 12 data Negative Impoliteness, 7 data Sarcasm or Mock Politeness, dan 5 data Withhold Politeness. Selain itu, ditemukan tiga fungsi impoliteness berdasarkan teori Culpeper (2011), yaitu 21 data Affective Function, 16 data Coercive Function, dan 15 data Entertaining Function. Positive Impoliteness memperoleh jumlah tertinggi dalam analisis jenis impoliteness, sedangkan Affective Function menjadi fungsi yang paling dominan. Sebagian besar komentar netizen menggunakan bahasa ketidaksopanan untuk mengekspresikan face (citra diri), norma sosial, rasa tersinggung, intensionalitas, dan emosi terhadap tindakan Bonnie Blue yang dianggap tidak menghormati simbol nasional Indonesia. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap kajian pragmatik dengan menggabungkan analisis strategi ketidaksopanan dan fungsinya dalam komentar TikTok.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explain the findings of the examination of impoliteness on social media, particularly regarding the comments on Bonnie Blue's TikTok video involving the Indonesian flag, utilizing Culpeper's theories (1996) and (2011). This research used the descriptive qualitative method. The analysis of selected netizens' comments revealed five types of impoliteness based on Culpeper's theory (1996): 10 data of Bald on Record Impoliteness, 18 data of Positive Impoliteness, 12 data of Negative Impoliteness, 7 data of Sarcasm or Mock Politeness, and 5 data of Withhold Politeness. Based on Culpeper's impoliteness functions theory (2011), three functions were identified: 21 data of Affective Function, 16 data of Coercive Function, and 15 data of Entertaining Function. Positive Impoliteness had the greatest frequency, while Affective Function was the dominant function. Most comments used impoliteness to express Face, Social Norms, Offence, Intentionality, and Emotion toward Bonnie Blue's action involving the Indonesian flag. This study contributes to pragmatic studies by combining the analysis of impoliteness strategies and their functions in TikTok comments.

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Corresponding Author:

Meyla Faiza
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Bangka Belitung
Bangka, Indonesia
Email: meylafaiza2204@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has expanded the space for language use in daily life, and many interactions that were once conducted face to face now take place through social media. In online communication, users can express opinions, criticism, and emotions without directly meeting the target, and this condition often produces language that does not follow politeness norms. Culpeper explains impoliteness as strategies that attack the hearer's face and create social disruption [1], while his later account emphasizes language that causes offence and must be interpreted in relation to context [2]. Impoliteness in online interaction therefore cannot be understood only from particular words, because participant relationships and communication situations also influence how an expression is evaluated.

The phenomenon is increasingly visible in digital communication. Social media provides space for users to openly address other users and public figures, including through negative comments, ridicule, sarcasm, verbal attacks, and other offensive expressions [3]. TikTok is one platform where users create, share, and respond to content through an interactive comment section; its interactive features enable users to share opinions and engage with other users [4]. The absence of face-to-face interaction may also encourage stronger expressions, a condition associated with the online disinhibition effect [5]. These characteristics make TikTok comments relevant data for the analysis of impoliteness. The present study focuses on a TikTok video uploaded by Bonnie Blue involving the Indonesian flag. The Red and White Flag has strong historical, ideological, and emotional value for Indonesian people, and actions considered to demean the national symbol can provoke strong public reactions. The comments on the video contained criticism, attacks, insults, ridicule, rejection, anger, and sarcastic expressions. In this study, the types of impoliteness refer to linguistic forms used to attack, criticize, or show disagreement, whereas the functions refer to purposes such as expressing emotion, influencing others, or creating entertainment. Culpeper's 1996 model is used to identify the types of impoliteness [1], and Culpeper's 2011 model is used to explain their functions [2].

Previous studies show that impoliteness appears across different communication settings. Cahyono analyzed impoliteness and power in Donald Trump's Twitter posts and reported the use of sarcasm, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and bald on record impoliteness [6]. Dafiqi, Sukarno, and Wahyuningsih analyzed the Carnage movie script and found bald on record impoliteness to be the dominant strategy, while withhold politeness was the least frequent [7]. Hammod examined English and Arabic Facebook comments and found positive and negative impoliteness to be dominant [8]. Mirhosseini, Mardanshahi, and Dowlatabadi analyzed gender differences in the movie Mother and linked impoliteness with gender and power [9]. These studies demonstrate that impoliteness may be examined in Twitter, Facebook, and film discourse, but they employ different objects and analytical emphases.

The thesis identifies a research gap in studies of impoliteness in digital communication: previous work has frequently focused on YouTube or Instagram comments, political issues, celebrities, influencers, or other public figures, while research combining the types and functions of impoliteness in TikTok comments remains limited. Research has also rarely addressed impoliteness arising in response to a foreign content creator's action that is considered to insult another country's national symbol. The present study therefore combines the analysis of impoliteness types and functions in one TikTok context, using Culpeper's two theoretical formulations [1], [2].

The objective of the study is to identify the types and functions of impoliteness strategies used by netizens in the comment section of Bonnie Blue's TikTok video involving the Indonesian flag. By examining both dimensions, the study describes how impoliteness is used in digital communication to convey reactions connected with national symbols, collective emotions, and national identity.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

Research method is the method or technique used to obtain data in a study [10]. This research applies a qualitative method because the data consist of descriptive phenomena in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and utterances. Qualitative research is used to explore, describe, and understand meanings attributed by individuals or groups to social and humanitarian problems [11]. The design was used to collect, analyze, and interpret English-language TikTok comments identified as containing impoliteness. The descriptive orientation is also consistent with research aimed at describing data types and analytical characteristics rather than producing overly broad generalizations [15].

2.2 Object of the Study

The object of the research is netizens' comments on Bonnie Blue's TikTok video involving the Indonesian flag. The video was posted on December 15, 2025, and elicited reactions particularly from Indonesian netizens. The primary data source was the comments, while the TikTok video served as the secondary data source. The comments contained forms such as insults, sharp criticism, threats, sarcasm, taboo expressions, and other offensive language directed at Bonnie Blue.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were collected by watching the video to understand its context, collecting comments posted from December 15 to December 31, 2025, and reading the comment section. A total of 1,070 comments were observed. The researcher then selected comments containing impoliteness related to the action shown in the video. Comments were excluded when they did not show impoliteness, used languages other than English, did not have a clear meaning, or consisted only of emojis, stickers, or symbols without words. This selection resulted in 52 English comments that met the research criteria.

2.4 Data Analysis

Only English comments that met the criteria were analyzed. Each selected comment was reviewed, classified by impoliteness type according to Culpeper's 1996 theory [1], and classified by function according to Culpeper's 2011 theory [2]. A combined analysis then related the identified type to its function in each comment before conclusions were drawn to answer the research question. The analysis follows the thesis's descriptive procedure: identifying categories, frequencies, and characteristics of the observed phenomenon [15].

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Overall Findings

The analysis identified 52 English comments containing impoliteness. Five types were found: Bald on Record Impoliteness, Positive Impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness, Sarcasm or Mock Politeness, and Withhold Politeness. The complete coding data yield the distribution shown in Table 1. Positive Impoliteness is the most frequent type with 18 comments, followed by Negative Impoliteness with 12, Bald on Record with 10, Sarcasm or Mock Politeness with 7, and Withhold Politeness with 5.

Tabel 1. Types of Impoliteness Strategies

Type of Impoliteness	Frequency	Percentage
Bald on Record Impoliteness	10	19.23%
Positive Impoliteness	18	34.62%
Negative Impoliteness	12	23.08%
Sarcasm or Mock Politeness	7	13.46%
Withhold Politeness	5	9.62%
Total	52	100%

The analysis also identifies three functions: Affective, Coercive, and Entertaining. Affective Function is the most frequent with 21 comments. Coercive Function appears in 16 comments, while Entertaining Function appears in 15 comments, as summarized in Table 2. The distribution shows that impoliteness in the comment section was used not only to attack the target but also to express anger and disappointment, exert social pressure, and create entertainment for other readers.

Tabel 2. Functions of Impoliteness Strategies

Function of Impoliteness	Frequency	Percentage
Affective Function	21	40.38%
Coercive Function	16	30.77%
Entertaining Function	15	28.85%
Total	52	100%

3.2 Bald on Record Impoliteness

Bald on Record Impoliteness is performed directly and without mitigation, so the face attack is explicit [1]. In interaction, direct attacks can be used to display hostility and create interpersonal conflict [12]. One of the thesis data illustrates the combination of this type with an Affective Function:

"F4ckin bitj! Even \$lvt\$ have some worth, but you? Fvckin' trash, nobody would take you even for free."
(leo, December 24, 2025)

The comment directly attacks the target through insults without mitigation. In the thesis analysis, the direct form is classified as Bald on Record Impoliteness, while the intensity of the insults expresses strong anger and hatred. The function is therefore Affective because the comment primarily vents the writer's negative emotion [2].

3.3 Positive Impoliteness

Positive Impoliteness attacks the target's positive face, including the need for approval, recognition, and social acceptance [1]. It is the dominant type in the dataset. The following comment combines an attack on the target's social image with pressure for behavioral change:

"does this person really have no shame left? especially doing something like this in another persons country??? please stop embarrassing urself n repent before it is too late" (December 23, 2025)

The expression 'no shame left' gives a negative evaluation of the target and damages her social image, while 'stop embarrassing urself' and 'repent' pressure her to change her behavior. The thesis therefore classifies the comment as Positive Impoliteness with a Coercive Function. Coercive impoliteness is used when impolite language attempts to influence or control another person's behavior [2].

3.4 Negative Impoliteness

Negative Impoliteness attacks the target's negative face by restricting freedom or using threatening and frightening expressions [1]. The thesis includes a comment that combines this type with an Entertaining Function:

"You traveled all the way to Indonesia just for this kind of ridiculous stunt?? your passport should get a "NO WEIRD BEHAVIOR ALLOWED" stamp, then send you to a haunted island quarantine so you can't cause more chaos here 😊😂😂" (December 31, 2025).

The imagined passport stamp and haunted-island quarantine impose a fictional restriction and exclusion on the target. At the same time, the exaggerated scenario and emojis support a playful, humorous tone. The thesis classifies the comment as Negative Impoliteness with an Entertaining Function, where the attack also serves as entertainment for the wider audience [2].

3.5 Sarcasm or Mock Politeness

Sarcasm or Mock Politeness appears superficially polite but conveys an offensive meaning through insincere praise [1]. The thesis data include the following example:

"What an amazing talent 🙌🙌🙌 not everyone can create such a mess in such a short time. It's really a very very useless talent!!!!!" (December 30, 2025)

The opening phrase appears complimentary, but the subsequent statements reveal that the praise is insincere. Expressions such as 'create such a mess' and 'useless talent', reinforced by repeated punctuation, convert the apparent compliment into ridicule and convey anger and dislike. The thesis classifies this as Sarcasm or Mock Politeness with an Affective Function [1], [2].

3.6 Withhold Politeness

Withhold Politeness occurs when an expected polite response, friendliness, or acceptance is deliberately withheld [1]. The following comment demonstrates how withholding can be combined with pressure on the target:

"No welcome from us until you apologize to Indonesia." (December 24, 2025)

The expression 'No welcome from us' withdraws friendliness, acceptance, and social recognition. The condition 'until you apologize to Indonesia' uses that rejection as pressure for a specific action. The thesis therefore classifies this comment as Withhold Politeness with a Coercive Function [2].

3.7 Functions of Impoliteness

Culpeper divides the functions used in this study into Affective, Coercive, and Entertaining Impoliteness [2]. Affective Impoliteness expresses negative emotions such as anger, disappointment, or dislike. Coercive Impoliteness attempts to influence or control the target's behavior, while Entertaining Impoliteness is oriented toward an audience and creates entertainment through mockery, sarcasm, or humorous attacks. The dominant Affective Function in the dataset indicates that many comments were written primarily as emotional reactions to behavior perceived as disrespectful toward the Indonesian flag. The analysis also shows that the same type of face attack can operate with different functions depending on the purpose and context of the comment, which is consistent with treating impoliteness as a socially evaluated practice rather than only a set of lexical forms [13].

3.8 Discussion with Previous Studies

The dominance of Positive Impoliteness in the present data resembles Hammod's finding that positive and negative impoliteness were the most dominant types in English and Arabic Facebook comments [8]. It differs from Dafiqi, Sukarno, and Wahyuningsih, whose analysis of the Carnage movie script found Bald on Record Impoliteness to be the dominant strategy [7]. Cahyono's Twitter study likewise showed several impoliteness types and connected their use with power [6], while Mirhosseini, Mardanshahi, and Dowlatabadi linked impoliteness with gender and power in film dialogue [9]. The present study differs in object and emphasis because it examines TikTok comments and combines the identification of types with the functions of impoliteness in one analysis.

The digital setting is also relevant to research on short videos and public comments. Gao and Liu examine the dynamics and evaluations of impoliteness in short videos of passenger disputes and accompanying public comments [14], while Dynel describes the broader landscape of impoliteness research in online interaction [3]. In the current dataset, the comments function as public reactions in which language is used to express disapproval, negative emotion, social pressure, and entertainment. This supports the thesis's position that the comment section provides a space where impoliteness is used to negotiate reactions to an issue considered sensitive in relation to national identity.

4. CONCLUSION

The study identified five types of impoliteness in 52 English comments on Bonnie Blue's TikTok video involving the Indonesian flag. Bald on Record Impoliteness appeared in 10 comments, Positive Impoliteness in 18, Negative Impoliteness in 12, Sarcasm or Mock Politeness in 7, and Withhold Politeness in 5. Positive Impoliteness was the most frequent type, indicating that many netizens expressed disagreement through insults, mockery, criticism, and disrespect that attacked the target's positive face. Three functions were identified: Affective Function in 21 comments, Coercive Function in 16, and Entertaining Function in 15. Affective Function was dominant because many comments expressed anger, disappointment, frustration, and resentment toward conduct considered disrespectful to the Indonesian flag.

The findings show that impoliteness in digital communication is not used only to attack others; it also becomes a way to express Face, Social Norms, Offence, Intentionality, and Emotion. In this case, netizens' comments function as tools to reject what they perceive as an inappropriate use of a national symbol in digital media. Future research, as suggested in the thesis, may examine impoliteness strategies and functions on other social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, X, or Facebook, or use different data sources and topics to broaden understanding of impoliteness in online interaction.

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