

**POLITENESS VIOLATIONS AND IMPOLITENESS  
STRATEGIES IN NETIZEN COMMENTS ON DONALD  
TRUMP'S INSTAGRAM DURING 2024 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL  
CAMPAIGNS**

**THESIS**

By:

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM  
MALANG  
2025**

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**THESIS**

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S)

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MALANG  
2025**

## STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled **“Politeness Violations and Impoliteness Strategies in Netizen Comments on Donald Trump’s Instagram During 2024 U.S. Presidential Campaigns”** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, June 20<sup>th</sup> 2025

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## APPROVAL SHEET

This to certify that Rohmatul Ummah's thesis entitled **Politeness Violations and Impoliteness Strategies in Netizen Comments on Donald Trump's Instagram During 2024 U.S. Presidential Campaigns** has been approved for thesis examination at Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as one of the requirements for the degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S.).

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## MOTTO

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

*“And as for those who strive for Us, We will guide them in Our ways. And Allah is with the doers of good.”*

(QS. Al – Ankabut: 69)

## **DEDICATION**

I proudly dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents, Mukhamad Maki and Nurul Hidayati. Also, my younger sister Khoirin Najiyyah. Your love, support, and prayers have always been my motivation every single time, especially in writing my thesis. I will never forget all the struggles of *ayah* and *ibuk* for me. I am very grateful to be a part of your lives. Thank you for always being a home for me.

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I am able to accomplish this thesis successfully due to some talented as well as inspired people who always give me advice, guidance, critique in order to improve this thesis. In this occasion, I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation for their help, direction and insight to:

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3. Dr. M. Faisol, M.Ag. as Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

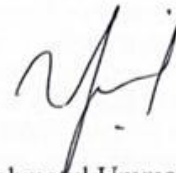


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The author is aware that this thesis is still far from perfection due to have weakness in several aspects. Therefore, criticism and suggestion

are welcomed for the improvement if this work. Hopefully, this thesis would give significant benefits either for the researcher and redears.

Malang, June 20<sup>th</sup> 2025



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## ABSTRACT

**Ummah, Rohmatul** (2025). Politeness Violations and Impoliteness Strategies in Netizen Comments on Donald Trump's Instagram During 2024 U.S. Presidential Campaigns. Thesis. English Letters Department. Faculty of Humanities. Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang. Advisor: Prof. Dr. Mudjia Rahardjo, M.Si.

**Keywords:** *Donald Trump, Instagram, Politeness Violations, Impoliteness Strategies*

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In recent years, political discourse on social media platforms has been marked by heightened verbal aggression, especially in online comment sections. As public figures increasingly use platforms like Instagram to campaign, user responses have become a reflection of public sentiment often manifesting in harsh, impolite language that challenges traditional norms of polite interaction. Despite a growing body of studies on political discourse, few have specifically addressed the way impoliteness unfolds in user-generated content during high-stakes electoral events, particularly in visual-based platforms like Instagram. This study aims to investigate how impoliteness strategies are linguistically performed and how they reflect political stance and aggression in user comments directed at Donald Trump on Instagram during the 2024 presidential campaigns. This study is based on quasi-qualitative data drawn from 42 user comments selected for their relevance to politeness violations and impoliteness strategies. The data were analyzed interpretively using politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and impoliteness theory (Culpeper, 2011). The results of this study show that 37 comments contain impoliteness strategies, with 11 comments using bald on-record impoliteness, 14 comments containing positive impoliteness, and 6 comments containing negative impoliteness. In addition, sarcasm and mock politeness were found in 4 comments, while withholding politeness was identified in 2 comments. Furthermore, 5 comments indicated politeness violations, among which 3 comments used positive face and 2 comments used negative face. These findings indicate that impoliteness is often used by netizens as a form of ideological criticism against Trump's policies and character, employing direct attack strategies and subtle insults to undermine his position as a political leader. The research finds that online users employ language not only to violate politeness norms but also to perform deliberate face attacks, reinforcing Instagram as a hostile discursive space during political campaigns. These findings call for further studies on political impoliteness using multimodal or corpus-based approaches.

## ABSTRAK

**Ummah, Rohmatul** (2025). Pelanggaran Kesopanan dan Strategi Ketidaksopanan dalam Komentar Netizen di Instagram Donald Trump Selama Kampanye Presiden AS 2024. Jurusan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Humaniora. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Dosen Pembimbing: Prof. Dr. H. Mudjia Rahardjo, M.Si.

**Kata Kunci:** *Donald Trump, Instagram, Pelanggaran Kesopanan, Strategi Ketidaksopanan*

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Dalam beberapa tahun terakhir, wacana politik di platform media sosial ditandai dengan peningkatan agresi verbal, terutama di bagian komentar online. Ketika tokoh publik semakin sering menggunakan platform seperti Instagram untuk berkampanye, tanggapan pengguna menjadi cerminan dari sentimen publik yang sering kali muncul dalam bahasa yang kasar dan tidak sopan yang menantang norma tradisional interaksi yang sopan. Meskipun ada sejumlah studi yang berkembang mengenai wacana politik, hanya sedikit yang secara khusus membahas cara ketidak sopanan terjadi dalam konten yang dihasilkan pengguna selama acara pemilihan yang penuh tekanan, terutama di platform berbasis visual seperti Instagram. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki bagaimana strategi ketidak sopanan dilaksanakan secara linguistik dan bagaimana mereka mencerminkan sikap politik dan agresi dalam komentar pengguna yang ditujukan kepada Donald Trump di Instagram selama kampanye presiden 2024. Studi ini didasarkan pada data kuasi-kualitatif yang diambil dari 42 komentar pengguna yang dipilih karena relevansinya dengan pelanggaran kesopanan dan strategi ketidaksopanan. Data tersebut dianalisis secara interpretatif menggunakan teori kesopanan (Brown & Levinson, 1987) dan teori ketidaksopanan (Culpeper, 2011). Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa 37 komentar mengandung impoliteness strategies, dengan 11 komentar menggunakan *bald on-record impoliteness*, 14 komentar mengandung *positive impoliteness*, dan 6 komentar mengandung *negative impoliteness*. Selain itu, *sarcasm* dan *mock politeness* ditemukan dalam 4 komentar, sementara *withholding politeness* teridentifikasi dalam 2 komentar. serta 5 komentar terindikasi *politeness violations* diantaranya 3 komentar menggunakan *positive face* dan 2 komentar menggunakan *negative face*. Temuan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa impoliteness sering kali digunakan oleh netizen sebagai bentuk kritik ideologis terhadap kebijakan dan karakter Trump, menggunakan *strategi bald on record* dan *positive impoliteness* untuk merendahkan posisinya sebagai pemimpin politik. Studi ini menemukan bahwa pengguna online menggunakan bahasa tidak hanya untuk melanggar norma kesopanan tetapi juga untuk melakukan serangan langsung terhadap wajah, yang memperkuat Instagram sebagai ruang diskursif yang hostile selama kampanye politik. Temuan ini meminta studi lebih lanjut tentang ketidaksopanan politik menggunakan pendekatan multimodal atau berbasis korpus.

## مستخلص البحث

الأمة، رحمة. (2025) انتهاكات الأدب واستراتيجيات الوقاية في تعليقات مستخدمي الإنترنت على إنستغرام دونالد ترامب خلال حملة الانتخابات الرئاسية الأمريكية لعام 2024. بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية لكلية العلوم الإنسانية بجامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية بمالنج. المشرف: الدكتور موجيا راهرجو الماجستير.

الكلمات المفتاحية: دونالد ترامب، إنستغرام، انتهاكات الأدب، استراتيجيات عدم الأدب.

في السنوات الأخيرة، أصبح الخطاب السياسي على منصات التواصل الاجتماعي يتميز بزيادة في العدوانية اللفظية، وخاصة في قسم التعليقات على الإنترنت. ومع الاستخدام المتزايد لهذه المنصات، مثل إنستغرام، من قبل الشخصيات العامة لأغراض الحملة الانتخابية، أصبحت ردود فعل المستخدمين تعكس المشاعر العامة، وغالبًا ما تظهر بلغة قاسية وغير مهذبة تتحدى المعايير التقليدية للتفاعل المهذب. وعلى الرغم من وجود عدد متزايد من الدراسات حول الخطاب السياسي، إلا أن القليل منها فقط تناول بشكل خاص كيفية حدوث الوقاحة في المحتوى الذي ينتجه المستخدمون خلال الفعاليات الانتخابية المشحونة، خاصة على المنصات البصرية مثل إنستغرام. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في كيفية تنفيذ استراتيجيات الوقاحة من الناحية اللغوية، وكيف تعكس هذه الاستراتيجيات المواقف السياسية والعدوانية في تعليقات المستخدمين الموجهة إلى دونالد ترامب على إنستغرام خلال حملة الانتخابات الرئاسية لعام 2024. تستند هذه الدراسة إلى بيانات شبه نوعية تم جمعها من 42 تعليقًا للمستخدمين تم اختيارها بناءً على صلتها بانتهاكات الأدب واستراتيجيات الوقاحة. تم تحليل البيانات بشكل تفسيري باستخدام نظرية الأدب لبراون وليفسون (1987)، ونظرية الوقاحة لكولبير (2011). ظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن 37 تعليقًا تحتوي على استراتيجيات عدم الأدب، منها 11 تعليقًا تستخدم bald on-record impoliteness، و 14 تعليقًا تحتوي على positive impoliteness، و 6 تعليقات تحتوي على negative impoliteness بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم العثور على sarcasm و mock politeness في 4 تعليقات، بينما تم تحديد withholding politeness في 5 تعليقات تم تحديدها على أنها politeness violations، منها 3 تعليقات تستخدم positive face و 2 تعليقات تستخدم negative face. تشير هذه النتائج إلى أن عدم الأدب يُستخدم غالبًا من قبل المستخدمين كأداة انتقاد أيديولوجي تجاه سياسات دونالد ترامب وشخصيته، باستخدام استراتيجيات bald on-record و positive impoliteness لتقليل مكانته كزعيم سياسي. تجد هذه الدراسة أن المستخدمين عبر الإنترنت يستخدمون اللغة ليس فقط لخرق معايير الأدب ولكن أيضًا لشن هجمات مباشرة على الوجه وقد كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن مستخدمي الإنترنت لا يستخدمون اللغة فقط لانتهاك معايير الأدب، بل أيضًا لشن هجمات مباشرة على "الوجه" (الاعتبار الاجتماعي)، مما يعزز من اعتبار إنستغرام مساحة خطابية عدائية خلال الحملات السياسية. وتشير هذه النتائج إلى ضرورة إجراء دراسات مستقبلية حول الوقاحة السياسية باستخدام مناهج متعددة الوسائط أو قائمة على تحليل المدونات النصية (كوربوس).

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

The 2024 United States presidential election has revealed not only sharp political polarization but also an alarming rise in hostile communication on social media. Instagram, a platform initially known for visual content sharing, has increasingly become a site for political confrontation. Under posts related to Donald Trump's campaign, thousands of users engage in emotionally charged exchanges where sarcasm, mockery, and overt verbal attacks dominate the comment sections (Jovanović, 2024; Nick, 2018). These comments are not merely expressions of disagreement but represent a broader erosion of civility in public discourse, where digital platforms serve as spaces for conflict, performance, and identity assertion. As the boundaries of acceptable communication shift, particularly during election periods, social media becomes not just a space for information sharing but a battleground of linguistic aggression.

The rapid growth of digital communication technology has fundamentally changed the way people interact, and social media now serves as one of the most prominent platforms for public engagement (Prayitno et al., 2019). Instagram stands out due to its unique combination of visual storytelling and user-generated commentary, making it an increasingly important arena for political dialogue (Suganda et al., 2022).



During highly significant political events, such as presidential elections, Instagram allows people from various backgrounds to share their opinions in real-time, often resulting in polarized or even aggressive interactions. Donald Trump's Instagram account, in particular, has become a focal point for such interactions. Known for his assertive and often controversial communication style, Trump routinely posts politically charged content that triggers a wide range of responses, from enthusiastic support to sharp personal criticism (Ammaida, 2020). Many of these comments reflect not only rude behavior but also the strategic use of language aimed at humiliating, mocking, or discrediting the candidate.

To better understand these discursive patterns, this study employs Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, which explains how individuals manage face needs (positive and negative) through language, and Culpeper's (2011) theory of impoliteness, which focuses on intentional face-threatening acts, including verbal attacks, sarcasm, and mock politeness. These two theoretical frameworks complement one another: while Brown and Levinson (1987) help us detect politeness violations (often unintentional), Culpeper's (2011) work reveals deliberate strategies used to attack or embarrass others. Applying both theories enables a comprehensive analysis of how language is used to express political identity, disagreement, or hostility in the comment sections of Trump's Instagram posts.

Several previous studies have employed Brown and Levinson's theory to examine how public figures manage politeness in sensitive political contexts. Hansson (2024) explores how government officials use politeness to avoid negative reactions when discussing controversial policies. However, most of these studies focus on formal political speeches, rather than spontaneous interactions by users on social media. Meanwhile, a number of emerging studies are applying Culpeper's theory of impoliteness to the digital space. Theresia and Nisa (2024) analyze impolite speech in films, while Diatma and Wijayanto (2024) study comments on FIFA's Instagram page. Nick (2018) investigates hate speech in a political context and its real-world consequences, emphasizing the dangers of uncontrolled impoliteness during campaigns. Subyantoro and Apriyanto (2019) investigated hate speech on Indonesian political Instagram accounts, highlighting recurring patterns of digital verbal abuse.

A few studies have attempted to bridge the theory of politeness and impoliteness in political discourse. For example, Saz-Rubio (2023) examined responses to the prime minister's greeting and how they triggered impolite feedback. Björkenfeldt and Gustafsson (2023) analyzed digital harassment targeting Swedish journalists, combining Culpeper's theory of impoliteness with the concept of social control. Asri et al. (2020) explored online responses to tweets by Trump and Jokowi, identifying the use of strategic direct impoliteness and complex audience

reactions. However, despite these contributions, there is still limited research that explicitly combines both the frameworks of politeness and impoliteness in the context of high-conflict political campaigns and real-time interactions on Instagram. Most previous research has focused on structured content or platforms like Twitter, leaving a gap in our understanding of how users utilize language tools in direct digital interactions on visual-based platforms.

In line with that, this research addresses the gap by analyzing how politeness violations and impoliteness strategies emerge in public comments on Donald Trump's Instagram posts during the 2024 U.S. presidential campaign, specifically from January to November. Unlike previous works, this study focuses on authentic discourse produced by users reflecting real-time political engagement and emotional responses. The novelty of this research lies in the combination of two theoretical perspectives by Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and Culpeper's (2011) impoliteness theory, which are applied simultaneously to analyze both implicit violations and explicit attacks. It also highlights how language is used as a tool in the digital space, not only for expression but also for conflict, identity presentation, and ideological assertion.

Through this dual-theoretical lens, the research aims to map the linguistic patterns of face threats, identify the types of impoliteness strategies used, and understand how politeness violations and impoliteness strategies coordinate in a polarized political context.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the emerging field of digital discourse analysis by providing insights into the evolving nature of political communication and the role of language in shaping public opinion in the digital age.

## **B. Research Questions**

The background above has encouraged researcher to conduct further research, so the researcher asked the following research questions:

1. What politeness violation strategies were used in Donald Trump's Instagram comments in the 2024 presidential campaigns?
2. What types of impoliteness strategies are reflected in those comments?
3. How do the comments that violate politeness principles also align with impoliteness strategies?

## **C. Research Objectives**

Based on the research questions that have been described, the following are the appropriate research objectives:

1. Identify the politeness violation strategies employed in the comments on Donald Trump's Instagram posts in the 2024 presidential campaigns.
2. Examine the types of impoliteness strategies reflected in those violations.
3. Explore how politeness violations correspond with impoliteness strategies in user comments.

#### **D. Significance of Study**

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it adds to the literature on politeness and impoliteness by applying Brown and Levinson's (1987) and Culpeper's (2011) frameworks to a new context—political discourse on Instagram. Practically, the study helps readers and future researchers better understand the distinction between politeness violations and impoliteness, particularly in digital interactions. Furthermore, the findings may encourage social media users to communicate more thoughtfully, recognizing how impolite language can foster misunderstanding and disrupt social harmony. This study also aims to enrich the understanding of impoliteness as a concept within the field of pragmatics.

#### **E. Scope and Limitation**

This study falls within the scope of pragmatics, specifically focusing on impolite language use in digital communication. It explores politeness violations and impoliteness strategies found in Instagram comments on Donald Trump's posts during the 2024 U.S. presidential campaigns. The analysis is based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness and Culpeper's (2011) theory of impoliteness as the analytical frameworks.

The study is limited to the comments section of Donald Trump's Instagram posts between January and November 2024, aligning with the official campaign period. It excludes interactions on other platforms such as

Twitter or Facebook, and does not examine comments involving politicians other than Donald Trump. Additionally, this study does not incorporate broader political communication theories.

## **F. Definition of Key Terms**

The researcher explains to clarify some of the terms used in this research:

1. **Politeness Violation:** The act of breaching politeness principles, wherein a speaker fails to maintain the self-image (face) of others in communication.
2. **Impoliteness:** According to Culpeper (2011), impoliteness refers to behavior or language that expresses a negative attitude in a specific context, often driven by certain beliefs or desires, with the intent to harm social harmony or offend others.
3. **Donald Trump:** The 45th President of the United States (2017–2021), currently running as a candidate in the 2024 presidential election and actively campaigning via his Instagram account.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **A. Pragmatics**

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on how language is used in real communication, especially in relation to the context of the utterance and the intentions of the speaker. According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and the users of those forms, meaning that pragmatics explores how people use language to achieve specific communicative goals. Meanwhile, Levinson (1983) defines pragmatics as the study of the ability of language users to pair sentences with contexts in which they would be appropriate. These definitions emphasize that language meaning is not only derived from the literal meaning of words or semantics, but also from how, when, where, and to whom the language is used. Thus, pragmatics allows us to explore beyond what is explicitly said, by understanding the implied or hidden meanings in conversation.

One of the main focuses of pragmatics is on implied meaning or implicature, speech acts, contextual understanding, and social relationships between speakers and listeners. Pragmatics looks at how utterances function in interaction, not just what they say, but what they do. For instance, saying “Can you open the door?” is not merely a question about ability, but a polite request. This shows how pragmatics examines not only language structure but its function in communication.

In social and political contexts, these dimensions are crucial for interpreting the communicative intentions behind statements, criticisms, or expressions of support. Speech act theory, deixis, presupposition, and conversational implicature are some of the tools used within pragmatics to interpret such expressions.

Pragmatics is also closely related to face theory, which was popularized by Goffman (1967) and later developed by Brown and Levinson (1987) into politeness theory. The concept of face refers to a person's public self-image, which can be supported, threatened, or attacked through language. Politeness strategies are used to maintain this face, while impoliteness involves intentional damage to it. Therefore, pragmatics provides the conceptual foundation for analyzing politeness and impoliteness, particularly in how speakers manage face in social interaction. Through pragmatic analysis, we can understand whether a speaker's comment was meant to support, challenge, or attack another person's social identity.

In the context of this research, pragmatics plays a central theoretical role because the object of study, comments on Donald Trump's Instagram during the 2024 presidential campaign, is a real example of social interaction, albeit in a digital form. This interaction involves complex pragmatic strategies, particularly in how users express political positions, mock, support, or criticize Trump. Comments on social media can contain face-threatening acts either directly or indirectly, and analyzing this



requires an understanding of the relationship between language, intent, and context. Therefore, this research is deeply rooted in pragmatics, especially in facework analysis, which involves strategies of politeness and impoliteness. The digital setting adds a unique layer, where anonymity, timeliness, and ease of sharing shape how face is negotiated, protected, or attacked online. Therefore, pragmatics becomes the lens through which digital political communication can be studied systematically.

## **B. Theories of Politeness and Face Management**

Brown and Levinson (1987) developed a comprehensive theory of politeness that began with the concept of “face”, which is fundamental to understanding how individuals manage their self-esteem and social values during interactions. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the face represents a self-image in the public that the individual tries to maintain well in a social context. This is influenced by situational, cultural, and relational factors. Politeness, within this framework, uses strategies to preserve face and minimize the impact of communicative actions that have the potential to damage self-image, known as Threatening Actions (FTAs). FTAs occur when a speaker’s actions or words challenge the listener’s social values, making politeness strategies necessary to reduce the potential for damage to individual relationships with each other.

## 1. Face and Politeness Strategies

The concept of the face is divided into two types, namely positive faces and negative faces. A positive face reflects a person's desire to be liked, admired, and appreciated by others. This shows the need for social acceptance and ownership. The negative face, on the other hand, reflects the desire to maintain a certain power, freedom from coercion, and independence. Politeness strategies are created to overcome this dual aspect of the face, either by strengthening social relationships (positive faces) or by respecting one's personal boundaries (negative faces).

Brown and Levinson (1987) propose four primary strategies that speakers use to manage face and navigate FTAs, each varying in directness and degree of mitigation:

### a. Bald on Record

This strategy involves direct and clear communication without any attempt to soften the impact of FTAs. This strategy is used in situations where efficiency and clarity are prioritized over politeness, such as emergencies or when there is a close relationship between the speaker and the listener. For example, saying “*Turn on the lights!*” is a bald-on-record command that prioritizes the act over face concerns.

### **b. Positive Politeness**

Positive politeness aims to appeal to the listener's positive face by showing appreciation, solidarity, or familiarity. Strategies include using compliments, jokes, or inclusive language to make the listener feel valued and connected. For instance, "*You're so good at organizing things—could you help me with this?*" combines a compliment with a request, mitigating the imposition by reinforcing the relationship.

### **c. Negative Politeness**

Negative politeness focuses on minimizing the imposition on the listener's negative face by showing deference, using hedges, or employing indirect language. Apologies, modal verbs like "*could*" or "*might*," and respectful phrasing are common in this strategy. For example, "*I'm sorry to bother you, but could you please pass the salt?*" reduces the impact of the request by acknowledging the listener's autonomy.

### **d. Off-Record**

Off-record strategies rely on indirectness, allowing the speaker to imply meaning without explicitly stating it. This strategy gives the listener room to interpret the message and avoid confrontation. For example, instead of directly asking for help, a speaker might say, "*I can't seem to figure this out,*" implying the need for assistance without directly imposing on the listener.

On the other hand, politeness violations occur when a speaker fails to use a strategy that protects the face of his interlocutor. These violations ignore the social norms of interaction and often result in violations or conflicts. politeness violations can take several forms, including:

- a. **Acts that threaten positive face (Ignoring Positive Face):** a situation when someone speaks or acts in a way that makes others feel unappreciated, disliked, or belittled. This can occur when someone criticizes, rejects, mocks, or ignores their conversation partner without showing respect or consideration. Since everyone wants to feel accepted and valued, such actions can make them feel offended or embarrassed.
- b. **Acts that threaten negative face (Ignoring Negative Face):** This happens when someone imposes their will or disrupts another person's freedom to choose and act for themselves. It can be in the form of commands, urgent requests, interrupting conversations, or making others feel pressured. Because everyone wants to have space and control over themselves, such actions can make them feel uncomfortable or disturbed.

In the realm of social media, where communication often occurs in public places, politeness strategies are often ignored, or violated outright. Social media platforms like Instagram create a

unique dynamic, as interactions are visible to a wide audience, and anonymity or distance can reduce one's politeness. This makes social media a fertile ground for politeness and disrespect. This is more common in political contexts, especially during elections.

In politically charged discussions, such as those surrounding the 2024 US presidential campaigns, politeness violations are often encountered. Figures in the U.S. such as Donald Trump, known for their polarizing rhetoric, often draw comments that deviate from traditional norms of politeness. Comments on Trump's Instagram posts can directly challenge his views, question his actions, or criticize his character. For example, critics may use bald on record strategies to express disapproval, such as “Here's why you are not worthy of office!” or use derogatory language that ignores positive and negative faces. This reflects the emotions of commentators in Donald Trump's Instagram comment column during the presidential election.

The emotional nature of political discourse on social media makes politeness theory a useful framework for analyzing user interactions in social media. Supporters can use positive politeness strategies to build solidarity, such as giving compliments or expressing approval. However, opponents may use disrespectful tactics or politeness violations outright to voice disagreements. Negative politeness can also arise in more measured criticism that acknowledges the interlocutor's freedom while still expressing disagreement.

In line with that, Brown and Levinson's (1987) theories can help provide the strategic choices that individuals make in their comments and the social dynamics that these choices reflect. By studying politeness and its violations in the context of Donald Trump's Instagram posts, researcher can better understand how political discourse is shaped by the affordability of digital platforms and the tension between keeping face and engaging in confrontational rhetoric.

### **C. Theories of Impoliteness in Communication**

Culpeper (2011) developed a theory of impoliteness that focuses on communicative behavior that is deliberately intended to offend, hurt, or threaten the face of others. In contrast to the strategy of politeness, which aims to maintain harmony and meet interpersonal needs, the strategy of impoliteness actively violates these norms. Impoliteness is often characterized by its deliberate nature and its capacity to provoke emotional responses such as anger, frustration, or embarrassment. The Culpeper framework (2011) is very useful in analyzing hostile interactions in various communicative contexts, including digital platforms such as social media specifically Instagram.

## 1. Types of Impoliteness Strategies

Culpeper (2011) identifies five primary strategies of impoliteness, each designed to harm the netizen's face in specific ways:

### a. Bald On-Record Impoliteness

This strategy involves direct and unmitigated offensive acts that are deliberately confrontational. The speaker makes no effort to soften the impact of their words or actions. For instance, a comment like *"You're completely incompetent"* directly insults the target without regard for maintaining decorum or politeness. On social media, this type of impoliteness often appears in harsh criticism, name-calling, or blunt dismissals of another's viewpoint.

### b. Positive Impoliteness

Positive impoliteness strategies aim to damage a person's positive face by undermining their need for approval or respect. Techniques include mocking, insulting, ignoring, or excluding the interlocutor. For example, a sarcastic comment such as *"Well, that's a brilliant idea, if you're trying to fail!"* belittles the target's intelligence or contribution. On Instagram, this might manifest in users ridiculing a political figure or dismissing their supporters' arguments with derision.

### c. Negative Impoliteness

Negative impoliteness strategies attack a person's negative face by threatening their autonomy, imposing on them, or asserting dominance. This can include issuing threats, using intimidating language, or making demands without consideration. For example, comments like "*You should just quit and disappear forever*" encroach on the individual's sense of freedom and personal agency. In digital interactions, this is often seen in aggressive or domineering comments directed at public figures or users with opposing opinions.

### d. Sarcasm/Mock Politeness

Sarcasm, or mock politeness, involves using seemingly polite language to deliver a veiled insult or ridicule. It relies on tone, context, and implied meaning to achieve its effect. For example, a sarcastic remark like "*Oh, of course, you're an expert on this topic!*" suggests the opposite of the literal statement, undermining the target's credibility. In social media discourse, sarcasm is a common tool for criticizing political figures while maintaining a thin veneer of politeness.

### e. Withholding Politeness

Withholding politeness occurs when a speaker fails to use expected politeness strategies in situations where they are socially required, such as not saying thank you, apologizing, or



acknowledging someone's contribution. This omission can be perceived as dismissive or disrespectful. On Instagram, users might withhold acknowledgment of positive aspects of a statement or proposal, emphasizing only criticisms instead.

## **2. Impoliteness in Political Discourse**

Impoliteness is a very common part of political discourse, especially due to the competitive, emotional, and often provocative nature of political communication. Political discourse, particularly on social media, provides ample space for the expression of strong emotions such as anger, frustration, and hatred. Social media platforms like Instagram enhance impolite expression due to three main factors: anonymity, public accessibility, and minimal direct social sanctions. This allows users to freely express harsh opinions, even openly attacking public figures.

In the context of the 2024 United States presidential campaign, impoliteness is clearly evident in the comments on Donald Trump's posts. Some comments use a bald on-record strategy, such as "Loser" which is an open insult. Other comments employ mock politeness, for instance, "You are a felon, sir" which disguises the insult under a polite address. The increasingly heated political situation and the polarization of public opinion encourage forms of language that are not only rude but also rhetorically crafted to embarrass and challenge Donald Trump's legitimacy.

The study of impoliteness strategies in digital political discourse is essential to understand how society expresses disagreement, rejection, or support through language. In this regard, Culpeper's theory (2011) provides a strong framework for analyzing how such utterances not only represent violations of politeness norms but also serve as forms of political and social action. By analyzing comments on Donald Trump's Instagram account, this research aims to demonstrate how impoliteness becomes a space or tool used by the public to express their political attitudes both directly and indirectly.

#### **D. Politeness and Impoliteness in the Digital Era**

In the digital communication landscape, politeness and impoliteness have gained renewed relevance due to the widespread use of social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook (Oktaviabri & Degaf, 2023; Rohmatullah & Degaf, 2025). These platforms have become arenas where users' express opinions, emotions, and judgments through comment sections and direct interactions, as demonstrated in the analysis by Darmawan et al. (2025). Numerous studies have explored how linguistic strategies of politeness and impoliteness evolve within such online interactions. To provide a structured overview, the following review organizes the literature thematically into political, non-political, and cross-cultural or multimodal domains.

In the political domain, Nick (2018) investigated anonymous threatening communications during the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

The findings showed that impoliteness often manifested through hate speech and direct threats based on race or ideology, indicating that political polarization intensifies verbal hostility. Similarly, Asri et al. (2020) compared impoliteness strategies in tweets directed at Donald Trump and Joko Widodo during the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on Culpeper's model, they found that bald-on-record and mock politeness were dominant strategies, particularly in Trump-related tweets, reflecting a tendency toward more confrontational styles in Western contexts. Expanding on this, Jovanović (2024) examined online criticism toward the coronation of King Charles III. The analysis revealed that Spanish users preferred sarcasm and indirect impoliteness more than their English counterparts, underscoring cultural distinctions in expressing political dissent.

In non-political contexts, Theresia and Nisa (2024) utilized Culpeper's (2011) framework to analyze the impoliteness strategies used by the character Otto in *A Man Called Otto*. Their findings indicated that Otto's impolite speech stemmed from emotional trauma and social isolation, frequently employing withholding politeness and negative impoliteness. Similarly, Diatma and Wijayanto (2024) examined Instagram comments criticizing FIFA's decisions. Users predominantly employed bald-on-record strategies, suggesting that sports controversies, like political discourse, often provoke unfiltered and aggressive responses.

Cross-cultural and multimodal analyses further enrich this discussion. Saz-Rubio (2023) explored citizen responses to holiday greetings posted by the UK and Spanish prime ministers on Twitter. Her findings indicated a preference for direct impoliteness in both contexts, with British users favoring sarcasm and Spanish users opting for personal insults. Meanwhile, Björkenfeldt and Gustafsson (2023) investigated online harassment toward Swedish journalists. By combining Culpeper's model with ideological and moral frameworks, they revealed how impoliteness functioned as a mechanism of informal social control shaped by populist sentiment and media distrust.

Complementing these studies, Khodijah et al. (2022) analyzed politeness in the film *Crazy Rich Asians*, focusing on how social inequality influences communicative strategies. Their research found that most characters employed bald-on-record politeness due to entrenched social hierarchies and racial tension. The study highlights how class-based discrimination affects linguistic expression, adding a socio-economic layer to our understanding of impoliteness.

Additionally, Zelianti et al. (2024) examined humorous interactions in Deddy Corbuzier's *Close the Door* podcast episode featuring Komeng. Although primarily focused on humor, their analysis revealed strategic flouting of conversational maxims—particularly relevance and quantity—as a means of audience engagement. While their findings center on entertainment, the use of deliberate norm violation to generate

emotional responses parallels strategies of impoliteness in political and social media discourse, where communicative maxims are also flouted for impact, alignment, or disruption. This suggests that the boundaries between humor and impoliteness may be fluid, particularly in digital media where users often navigate between playful and confrontational tones.

While this body of research has contributed significantly to the field, much of it focuses on scripted discourse (e.g., speeches or films), text-based platforms such as Twitter, or specific cultural settings. Very few studies have explored how politeness violations and impoliteness strategies co-occur in real-time, user-generated comments on visual platforms like Instagram, especially during highly politicized events. Addressing this gap, the present study examines public comments on Donald Trump's Instagram posts during the 2024 U.S. presidential election. Using Brown and Levinson's (1987) and Culpeper's (2011) frameworks, the study seeks to uncover the interplay of politeness and impoliteness in digital political discourse.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this study, the researcher will discuss 6 aspects of research methods. Including research paradigm, research approach, research method, research techniques, data analysis, and research instrument.

#### **A. Research Paradigm**

This research uses a post-positivist paradigm. According to Rahardjo (2023), this paradigm sees that truth is not singular and absolute, but rather influenced by social, cultural, and specific situational contexts. Unlike the positivist paradigm, which considers reality to be fixed and objective, post-positivists believe that reality is also shaped by human experiences and perspectives. In this research, the post-positivist paradigm helps the researcher view the comment section on Donald Trump's Instagram not just as a space for people to express opinions, but as a social space full of meaning. The comments that emerged during the campaign period from January to November 2024 reflect social interactions influenced by political situations, group identities, cultural aspects in social media, and how people communicate within it. Furthermore, platforms like Instagram sometimes encourage the use of harsh language as it can make comments more visible or viral.

This paradigm also helps researcher to view politeness violations and impoliteness strategies not only from the side of the words used, but

also as part of social conflicts, political views, and how people communicate in digital interactions. In this research, various forms of insults, sarcasm, and attacking comments are not only seen as politeness violations but also as a way for people to express political attitudes, dissatisfaction, or even seek attention. Therefore, impoliteness here is understood as part of a communication strategy that reflects the current social and political situations, such as polarization, populism, and how people present themselves on social media. This paradigm is in line with Rahardjo's (2023) view that post-positivism helps researchers understand the relationship between language and the social context underlying it.

## **B. Research Approach**

This research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of interaction patterns on social media in specific political situations, particularly during the 2024 United States political campaign. The approach used in this research is a quasi-qualitative approach, which still requires theory from the outset to help identify linguistic patterns in Instagram comments. This approach was chosen so that the researcher could understand how politeness violations and impoliteness strategies appear in netizens' comments. This research departs from the issue that many comments on Donald Trump's Instagram account during the campaign contain forms of language that are impolite. Therefore, the researcher uses Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, as well as Culpeper's (2011) theory of impoliteness to analyze how

impoliteness strategies are employed and what the underlying social-political context is.

The steps taken in this research begin with identifying the problem, reviewing relevant theories, establishing a theoretical framework, and formulating research questions that guide the objectives and methods of the research. Data were collected from comments on Donald Trump's Instagram from January to November 2024, and then gathered through documentation and analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The researcher filtered, categorized, and interpreted the data based on the types of politeness violations and impoliteness strategies identified. The results were compared to the theories established from the outset to ensure consistency. This research ultimately produces a report in the form of a journal as an academic responsibility of the researcher to the public, as well as providing new understanding of how politeness violations can be seen as part of impoliteness strategies in political digital communication.

### **C. Research Instrument**

The main instrument in this research is the researcher themselves. In this research, the researcher created a manual coding sheet based on the politeness theory by Brown and Levinson (1987) and the impoliteness theory by Culpeper (2011). This coding sheet contains clear indicators to identify politeness violations (such as ignoring 'positive face' or 'negative face', as well as using offensive or derogatory language) and



various forms of impoliteness strategies such as bald on-record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, mock politeness, and withholding politeness. This sheet helps the researcher to consistently classify linguistic patterns in the analyzed comments.

Data was collected manually through documentation techniques by tracing the comment section on Donald Trump's official Instagram posts during the US presidential campaign from January to November 2024. Comments related to political issues such as debates, policies, and campaign messages were selected and analyzed one by one. Relevant comments were screen captured (screenshots) and recorded in a data table containing the date, content of the comment, and initial code. With this format, researchers can more easily compare and analyze themes. To ensure data accuracy, the collected comments were rechecked to ensure they truly matched the context of the campaign. Researcher also compared comments from various posts to see if impoliteness strategies and politeness violations reappeared. In this way, the code sheets not only serve as tools for data collection but also form a strong foundation for identifying linguistic behavior in digital political discourse.

#### **D. Data & Data Source**

The data used in this study is sourced from Donald Trump's official Instagram account during the US presidential campaign from January to November 2024. The researcher selected data in the form of

comments containing politeness violations and impoliteness strategies, as these two elements are important to understand how digital interaction occurs in a political context. The researcher has purposively selected 42 comments for analysis. These comments reflect various forms of criticism towards Trump that involve violations of politeness norms and the use of impoliteness strategies in communication. After analyzing 42 comments, there are 5 comments that contain politeness violations, with details of 3 comments that ignore positive face (disregarding the need for appreciation) and 2 comments that ignore negative face (disregarding the need to be free from constraints). Meanwhile, for impoliteness strategies, there are 37 comments, consisting of 11 bald on record comments (direct attacks without preamble), 14 positive impoliteness comments (belittling or mocking the interlocutor), 6 negative impoliteness comments (threatening or forcing others to accept a certain viewpoint), 4 sarcasm or mock politeness comments (the use of sarcasm or jokes to belittle), and 2 withholding politeness comments (ignoring expected politeness).

This research relies on two theoretical frameworks to analyze the data, namely the Politeness Theory by Brown & Levinson (1987) to understand how politeness violations occur in comments that disregard positive face and negative face. Additionally, Culpeper's (2011) Impoliteness Theory is used to analyze various impoliteness strategies, such as bald on record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness,

sarcasm, and withholding politeness. By using both theories, this research aims to provide deeper insights into how political communication on social media expresses disagreement towards political figures and how netizens use language as a tool to attack or criticize political figures like Donald Trump.

#### **E. Data Collection Method**

The researcher has collected the data before conducting a deeper analysis. The steps taken in the data collection process are as follows. The first step is to determine the data source, which is Donald Trump's official Instagram account, with a time range from January to November 2024, the campaign period for the United States presidential campaign. The researcher then selected posts related to political debates, campaign policies, and public reactions to political opponents. From these posts, comments that potentially contain politeness violations or impoliteness strategies were manually selected and collected by taking screenshots. Each comment was recorded complete with the date, content of the comment, and initial indications of politeness violations or impoliteness strategies.

After that, the researcher filtered the data and coded it based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory for politeness violations, and Culpeper's (2011) theory for impoliteness strategies such as bald on-record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, mock politeness, and withholding politeness. The coded comments were then categorized

into two main categories, namely politeness violations and impoliteness strategies. The researcher carefully read each comment to identify keywords, the tone of the comments, and contextual clues that indicated specific linguistic patterns in conveying sarcasm, criticism, or hostility in a politically charged digital space. Through this procedure, the study successfully identified linguistic patterns that reflect forms of politeness violations and impoliteness strategies in netizens' comments during the 2024 presidential election campaign, producing neat, structured data ready for further analysis.

#### **F. Data Analysis**

This research has used thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a research method that aims to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns in text data. According to Rahardjo (2018), this method has allowed researcher to explore hidden meanings in texts and understand how those meanings have been constructed in social and cultural contexts. Using this method, the researcher read all the comments collected from Donald Trump's Instagram posts during the campaign (January–November 2024), and then coded the comments that contained politeness violations and impoliteness strategies. The researcher used Brown and Levinson's theory (1987) to detect violations of positive face and negative, as well as Culpeper's theory (2011) to analyze impoliteness strategies such as bald on-record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm, and withholding politeness. In producing a more comprehensive

understanding in data analysis especially in coded the data, researcher has been assisted and supported by software that has improved the accuracy and reliability of qualitative research, namely ChatGPT (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

After the coding process is complete, the researcher analyze the relationship between politeness violations and impoliteness strategies by observing the patterns that emerge repeatedly. The results indicate that netizens' comments not only use harsh words directly but also convey sarcasm or mockery as a form of dissatisfaction with Trump. The researcher organize the results into a narrative that illustrates how these comments reflect public opinion, ideological criticism, and forms of resistance against political figures. All comments are given a unique code, for example, DT/C.1/23.5.2024 where DT stands for Donald Trump as the subject, C.1 as the first comment analyzed, and 23.5.2024 as the date the comment was posted. The thematic analysis in this research helps answer three main questions. Thus, this research provides a clearer representation of how impoliteness strategies on social media reflect the social and ideological expressions of society towards power.

### **G. Triangulation**

In this research, the researcher follows the theoretical triangulation concept proposed by Rahardjo (2020). This approach involves analyzing phenomena from various theoretical perspectives to deepen understanding and reduce researcher bias. For this purpose, the

researcher uses two main theories: the politeness theory by Brown & Levinson (1987) to analyze politeness violations and the impoliteness theory by Culpeper (2011) to analyze impoliteness strategies found in Instagram comments regarding Donald Trump during the 2024 presidential campaign.

Furthermore, to ensure the credibility and reliability of the analysis results, the researcher also applies expert triangulation for data validation. Expert triangulation, according to Rahardjo (2020), is an approach that involves the opinion of an expert or specialist in the related field to ensure that the interpretations and findings generated in the research align with the accepted scientific principles in that field. In this case, the researcher sought validation from a linguistics expert, namely Prof. Dr. Mudjia Rahardjo, M.Si., who is also the researcher's thesis supervisor. He acted as a checking point to ensure that the application of theories and thematic interpretations carried out by the researcher is in accordance with established linguistic principles. The validation from the expert strengthens the methodological rigor and analytical reliability of this research, ensuring that the results of the analysis have undergone a triangulation process involving expert perspectives in the relevant field. By combining theoretical triangulation and expert triangulation, this research reduces potential bias and enhances the accuracy of the analysis in understanding

politeness violations and impoliteness strategies in political interactions  
on social media.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

In this chapter, the researcher presents data analysis structured based on 3 research questions. This section consists of two sub sections, there are findings and discussion.

#### **A. Findings**

These findings of the research on politeness violations and impoliteness strategies in Donald Trump's Instagram comments in the 2024 Presidential Campaigns is based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory and Culpeper's (2011) Impoliteness Theory. A thematic analysis was applied to categorize the recurring patterns of politeness violations and impoliteness strategies in the comments.

To distinguish between mere politeness violations and intended impoliteness, the researcher applied linguistic and contextual indicators. These included the use of offensive language (e.g., swear words, derogatory labels), intensified expressions (e.g., repetition, capital letters, exclamation marks), and syntactic choices (e.g., imperatives, accusations without justification). Contextual elements such as anonymity, public figure status, and platform norms were also considered to assess likely communicative intent. Comments lacking mitigation but containing aggressive markers were classified as



impoliteness, whereas direct but neutral utterances were treated as politeness violations.

## 1. Politeness Violations Strategies in Instagram Comments

Politeness violations occur when a speaker is unable to recognize or respect the social needs of other, either by attacking their positive face (the need for approval and appreciation) or their negative face (the need for autonomy and freedom from imposition). Below are examples of politeness violations found in the dataset, analyzed based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework.

### A. Ignoring Positive Face

This type of ignoring a positive face occurs when people who comment on Donald Trump's Instagram account posts during the campaigns period refuse to acknowledge Trump's need for recognition or social respect, this violation occurs in the form of criticism and ridicule.

**Datum 1:** *"Oh no Trump is sooo weird"*  
(DT/C.1/28.8.2024)

This comment is a clear example of a *politeness violation* that targets the positive face of the hearer, in this case, Donald Trump. As defined by Brown and Levinson (1987), positive face refers to an individual's desire to be approved of and appreciated by others. The utterance *"Oh no Trump is sooo weird"* refuses to acknowledge this

desire by expressing a strong negative evaluation of Trump's persona in a public setting.

The use of the intensifier "*sooo*" exaggerates the adjective "*weird*," indicating an emotional tone and heightened disapproval. The term "*weird*" itself is a socially marked expression that implies abnormality or deviation from expected norms, especially when referring to public figures. The exclamatory interjection "*Oh no*" further frames the statement within a mock-dramatic tone, making it sound performative rather than rationally critical.

From the perspective of politeness theory, this comment shows no attempt to soften the disapproval (e.g., through hedging or justification), and instead delivers a straightforward expression of ridicule. The speaker does not engage in redressive action, such as using mitigating language or presenting the criticism as a personal opinion "I think Trump seems a bit strange" that might lessen the threat to face. As such, the comment is an unambiguous Face-Threatening Act (FTA) against Trump's positive face.

In addition, using Culpeper's (2011) theory of impoliteness, this utterance also aligns with the strategy of positive impoliteness. Positive impoliteness refers to the use of language that attacks the hearer's positive face wants such as the need to be liked, admired, or included. The sarcastic tone, emotional exaggeration, and choice of

derogatory adjective are indicative of an intention to undermine Trump's public image and social approval.

While the comment does not employ profanity or overt threats, the mocking tone and dismissive language function as a form of socially aggressive behavior common in online political discourse. It lacks engagement with any substantive political issue and instead targets the personal identity of the speaker, making it a socially salient act of verbal aggression.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face is disregarded, no attempt to respect Trump's desire for approval.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Positive impoliteness, the utterance intentionally demeans the hearer's social identity through ridicule and sarcasm.

**Linguistic Indicators:** Use of intensifier ("sooo"), derogatory adjective ("weird"), mocking tone, absence of mitigation.

**Datum 2:** *"It's going to be empty"*  
(DT/C.2/15.10.2024)

This comment is an example of a politeness violation that targets the positive face of Donald Trump. Positive face, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), is the desire to be approved of and appreciated by others. The comment "It's going to be empty" undermines this desire by implying that Trump's event will lack

support or interest. This assessment is clearly a direct attack on his public image, dismissing any possible appreciation his followers might have had for his rally at Madison Square Garden.

The comment contains no mitigation or hedging, making it a straightforward statement of disapproval. The absence of any softening language like “I think” or “maybe” emphasizes the forcefulness of the judgment. The use of “empty” as a derogatory descriptor implies that Trump’s rally would be a failure, which adds to the directness of the attack on his event.

From a social context perspective, the comment is made in response to a public post, emphasizing a criticism of Trump’s public persona and the support he gathers. Given that the comment was made in a space meant for public engagement, it reflects a disregard for Trump’s positive face needs, as it suggests his event is unworthy of attention.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face is violated as the comment dismisses Trump’s social approval and public support.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Positive impoliteness, the speaker attacks Trump’s social image by claiming the event will be unsuccessful.

**Linguistic Indicators:** Direct statement “It’s going to be empty,” lack of mitigation, and derogatory implication.

**Datum 3:** *“Trump lost in 2020 and will lose again in 2024!”*

(DT/C.3/18.10.2024)

This comment violates Donald Trump’s positive face by reinforcing a negative public image and casting doubt on his future political success. Positive face, as explained by Brown and Levinson (1987), is the desire for approval from others, and this statement directly undermines that by suggesting Trump’s loss is inevitable. The comment “will lose again in 2024” is a clear prediction meant to discredit Trump’s ability to win future elections, attacking his public credibility and the political support he may rely on.

The phrase “Trump lost in 2020” serves as a reminder of his previous failure, and by stating that he will lose again, it serves as an attempt to further tarnish his reputation. This is done without any hedging or neutral language, showcasing an intent to make a forceful, negative statement.

In terms of social context, the comment is made publicly, which amplifies the personal attack on Trump, especially when it’s tied to the previous statement about his 2020 loss. This makes it an even stronger attack on his positive face, as it publicly questions his abilities and future prospects.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face is disregarded as the comment undermines Trump’s future electoral potential and reputation.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Positive impoliteness, the comment publicly discredits Trump's chances of winning again.

**Linguistic Indicators:** Strong, direct statement, absence of mitigation, and negative forecast of future success.

### **B. Ignoring Negative Face**

This type of violation is an act when the person who comments on the post of Donald Trump's Instagram account imposes his views and actions on Trump without considering his autonomy. In situations like this, people commenting tend to ignore Trump's wants, opinions, or needs. So that it reduces or even eliminates the personal freedom that should be valued in every social interaction.

**Datum 4:** " *I hope he's going to jail* "

(DT/C.4/12.10.2024)

This comment clearly violates Trump's negative face, which refers to an individual's desire to have their freedom of action unimpeded, as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987). The phrase "I hope he's going to jail" expresses a desire for Trump to lose his personal freedom, a direct attack on his autonomy and a violation of his negative face needs.

The comment is a direct and forceful expression of the speaker's opinion, with no mitigation or softening language. There is no hedging or qualification such as "I think" or "perhaps," making

the statement sound definitive and assertive. The lack of any effort to soften the message or consider Trump's right to freedom adds to the impolite nature of the comment.

From a social context perspective, this comment was made in response to a public post by Trump, and its forceful tone highlights the degree of opposition the speaker has towards Trump. By publicly expressing this opinion, the speaker's comment serves as a direct challenge to Trump's freedom and is a clear violation of his negative face.

**Politeness Violation:** Negative face is violated as the speaker expresses a desire to restrict Trump's autonomy.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Negative impoliteness, the speaker directly threatens Trump's personal freedom by wishing for his imprisonment.

**Linguistic Indicators:** Direct statement "I hope he's going to jail," lack of mitigation.

**Datum 5:** *"Just step down from the election now! Don't wait until tomorrow!"*

(DT/C.5/21.8.2024)

This comment targets Trump's negative face by urging him to withdraw from the election immediately. Negative face refers to an individual's need for autonomy, and this statement disregards that

need by forcefully telling Trump to step down without any regard for his personal choice. The speaker's directness, combined with the urgency of the language ("now" and "Don't wait"), creates an aggressive tone, urging Trump to relinquish his political autonomy.

The comment is an imperative, commanding Trump to step down, which clearly violates his negative face. The language is not mitigated in any way; instead, it is assertive and direct, showing an intention to impose the speaker's will on Trump.

From a social context perspective, the comment is made publicly in response to Trump's post, making the demand even more forceful as it is stated in a performative space. This type of impolite strategy ignores Trump's right to act according to his own will and suggests he should step down, disregarding his personal and political agency.

**Politeness Violation:** Negative face is violated as the speaker imposes a demand on Trump's autonomy.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Negative impoliteness, the speaker demands Trump to step down, disregarding his autonomy.

**Linguistic Indicators:** Imperative language, absence of mitigation, urgency expressed with "now" and "Don't wait."



## **2. Impoliteness Strategies in Instagram Comments**

Culpeper (2011) explains that impoliteness occurs when a person uses language that deliberately offends, hurts, or demeans others. Both verbally and non-verbally, in the context of communication. Not only does it show disrespect, but it involves the intention to damage the face or social reputation of the interlocutor. In this case, the researcher found some data in the comment column on Donald Trump's Instagram account posts during the 2024 election campaigns which are indicated by 6 types in the impoliteness theory by Culpeper (2011), including bald on-record (commenters directly attack Trump without warning), positive impoliteness (commenters ignore Trump's need to be appreciated or accepted), negative impoliteness (commenters ignore Trump's need for autonomy and personal freedom), sarcasm or mock-politeness (commentators use impoliteness to satirize or demean Trump directly), and withholding politeness (the commentator deliberately does not show the politeness expected in a context).

### **A. Bald On-Record Impoliteness**

According to the impoliteness theory by Culpeper (2011) there are 6 main types, one of the types is the type of bald on-record impoliteness. Bald on-record impoliteness occurs when a person delivers hate speech directly and with the intent to hurt, humiliate,

or attack the interlocutor. Bald on-record impoliteness usually appears in emotionally charged situations, where the speaker wants to show power or dominance without caring about the feelings of others. This form is considered rude because there is no effort to maintain harmony in communication.

In this case, researcher found some data that showed that people who commented on Donald Trump's Instagram account posts during the 2024 election campaigns wrote hate comments directly for Trump regardless of how they felt. The following include:

**Datum 6:** *“You are the disaster”*

(DT/C.6/18.10.2024)

This utterance is a clear instance of bald on record impoliteness, as defined by Culpeper (2011), where a speaker performs a Face-Threatening Act (FTA) without any attempt at mitigation, softening, or redressive action. Bald on record impoliteness is marked by its directness and its intention to cause offense, typically functioning without regard to social harmony or the maintenance of face.

In the context of Donald Trump’s post, where he attempts to criticize or discredit Kamala Harris, the comment “You are the disaster” functions as a rhetorical reversal redirecting the accusation back onto Trump. The utterance dismisses Trump’s authority, judgment, and legitimacy in a succinct yet powerful form. By

employing a second-person pronoun “you”, the commenter targets Trump directly and personally. The noun “disaster” is a highly negative evaluative term that implies failure, destruction, and incompetence. It is often used in political discourse to disqualify the effectiveness of a leader or to signal crisis.

From the perspective of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, this utterance represents a violation of Trump’s positive face, which involves his desire to be admired, respected, and approved of by others. There is no hedging (e.g., “I think,” “maybe”), no justification, and no framing that might soften the disapproval. Rather, the directness of the statement reinforces the impolite intent. It fails to observe any redressive action typically associated with politeness, such as acknowledgment of the hearer’s autonomy or perspective. Instead, the comment constitutes a Face-Threatening Act (FTA) of the most direct type.

Culpeper (2011) adds that impoliteness in online spaces, particularly those involving anonymous users and public figures often assumes an exaggerated and confrontational tone. Social media platforms like Instagram provide fertile ground for impoliteness due to their public visibility and limited social consequences for the commenter. Here, the speaker uses a compact but damaging utterance to signal disapproval not just of Trump’s message, but of his persona. The phrase “You are the disaster”

carries a judgmental tone that offers no room for dialogue or interpretation, thus functioning as a performative act of public shaming.

In terms of communicative intent, the user's goal appears to be deliberate offense rather than cooperative engagement. The impoliteness is an act of commission rather than omission. The speaker chooses to articulate their disapproval aggressively and publicly. This reflects a broader trend in political social media discourse, where users express hostility toward public figures with minimal linguistic restraint.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face (Trump's desire for approval and respect)

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Bald on record impoliteness

**Linguistic Indicators:** Use of second-person pronoun "you", unmitigated derogatory noun "disaster", absence of hedging or politeness markers, assertive declarative syntax.

**Datum 7:** "*LOSER MAN.*"

(DT/C.7/31.8.2024)

This comment represents an explicit case of bald on record impoliteness, marked by its confrontational and emotionally charged language. The compound phrase "LOSER MAN" is a compounded insult aimed at delegitimizing Donald Trump's identity by branding

him as a failure, both personally and politically. With no attempt at redressive action, the commenter uses this phrase to mock and belittle the former president in a public and unambiguous way.

Linguistically, the use of capital letters suggests shouting and emotional intensity, common features of online aggression. The phrase “loser man” lacks any syntactic framing there are no verbs, hedges, or subjectivity markers. This syntactic minimalism contributes to its brutality. The word “loser” alone is already a strong negative judgment, but adding “man” creates a patronizing and dismissive tone, implying not just failure but incompetence in a gendered, masculine context, which may be especially pointed given Trump’s public image as a powerful male figure.

In terms of facework, this utterance violates positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987), as it attacks Trump’s desire for approval and affirmation from the public. There is no room left for interpretation, no ambiguity or conditionality only blunt ridicule. According to Culpeper (2011), this is a classic example of affective impoliteness, where the speaker expresses contempt with the intent to provoke or degrade, especially in a performative online space.

The comment reflects an act of commission, with clear intent to offend rather than participate in rational discourse. The brevity and

emotional force behind the statement make it a prime example of how digital impoliteness sacrifices civility for rhetorical impact.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the insult attacks Trump's public identity and undermines his perceived competence and social worth.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Bald on record impoliteness, the speaker uses a direct and unqualified insult with no mitigation or explanation.

**Linguistic indicators:** Use of capital letters "LOSER MAN", compounded insult, lack of syntactic structure or hedging, aggressive tone

**Datum 8:** "*A FELON A RAPIST A PREDATOR*"  
(DT/C.8/18.10.2024)

This comment is a severe and highly aggressive form of bald on record impoliteness, as it levies criminal accusations against Donald Trump without mitigation or evidence. Found under a post referencing the slogan "Too Big To Rig" and showing Trump supporters with a "Joe Biden You Are Fired" poster, this utterance seeks to counter that pro-Trump sentiment by painting Trump as morally and legally reprehensible.

Linguistically, the comment is structured as a repetition of accusatory noun phrases, each lacking a verb or syntactic

explanation. The repetition builds intensity and emphasis, while the capital letters create the effect of shouting or declarative certainty. Terms such as “felon,” “rapist,” and “predator” carry not just legal but also moral condemnation. Their unqualified use indicates that the speaker is not attempting dialogue or critique, but open defamation and social exclusion.

This constitutes an extreme violation of positive face, as it completely strips Trump of respect, legitimacy, and moral standing. The accusation format assumes guilt and frames Trump as a threat to society. According to Culpeper (2011), this is not only impolite but socially aggressive, as it violates taboos and escalates the conflict beyond ideological disagreement into moral warfare.

The comment reflects an intentional act of offense, capitalizing on the public and viral nature of social media. It is designed not only to insult but to provoke others, signal group alignment, and diminish Trump’s public image in the harshest possible terms.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the utterance undermines Trump’s moral character and demolishes any claim to social or political legitimacy.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Bald on record impoliteness, the accusation is made bluntly, without redressive elements, and aims to shame and alienate.

**Linguistic indicators:** Repetition of negative nouns “felon,” “rapist,” “predator”, all caps, absence of mitigation, moral and criminal labelling.

**Datum 9:** *“You’re weird.”*

(DT/C.9/23.10.2024)

This comment reflects a relatively milder but still direct form of bald on record impoliteness, targeting Donald Trump’s behavior and persona in a dismissive and informal tone. The post it responds to shows Trump participating in a campaign event for “Moms of Liberty,” and the comment “You’re weird” seems to reflect the speaker’s disapproval or discomfort with how Trump presents himself in that setting.

Syntactically, the comment is a complete sentence, but one that delivers a personal judgment without hedging. The adjective “weird” is socially evaluative and commonly used in casual derogatory contexts to suggest that someone is deviant, awkward, or inappropriate. The use of the second-person pronoun “you’re” indicates a direct address to Trump, reinforcing the personalized nature of the insult.

From a face theory perspective, the utterance violates positive face, as it directly challenges Trump’s image and social behavior, casting him as an object of strangeness or ridicule. Brown and



Levinson (1987) emphasize that politeness involves recognizing the hearer's desire to be liked and admired. This comment does the opposite it simplifies Trump's identity into a socially undesirable label. There is no attempt at engagement or explanation.

Culpeper's (2011) theory highlights that such low-effort but high-impact insults are typical in online settings, where communicative restraint is often overridden by expressive aggression. Even though the insult is brief, it contains all the markers of strategic impoliteness: evaluative, blunt, emotionally dismissive.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the utterance denies Trump's social acceptability and portrays him as deviant.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Bald on record impoliteness, the insult is stated plainly, with no politeness strategies to reduce the offense.

**Linguistic indicators:** Direct second-person pronoun "you're", negative evaluative adjective "weird", no hedging or mitigation, tone of casual ridicule

**Datum 10:** *"You're looking BAD!"*  
(DT/C.10/15.7.2024)

This utterance is a direct case of bald on record impoliteness, demonstrating overt rudeness with no attempt to mitigate its impact. The comment appears under an image of Donald Trump holding the American flag with the caption "Almost November", presumably in relation to the upcoming election. In this context, the phrase "You're

looking BAD!” directly targets Trump’s physical appearance or persona, and asserts a negative evaluation with high intensity.

The linguistic structure is complete but highly emotionally charged. The capitalized “BAD” intensifies the insult, making it feel like a shouted declaration rather than a comment. The verb phrase “looking bad” implies visual deterioration or unappealing presence, a particularly pointed insult for a public figure who relies heavily on image and media portrayal. The exclamation mark further enhances the aggressive and confrontational tone.

From Brown and Levinson’s (1987) framework, this comment violates positive face, as it conveys that the commentator does not approve of or admire Trump. The speaker provides no justification or framing, making the utterance entirely face-threatening. According to Culpeper (2011), such utterances fall into affective impoliteness, functioning to provoke emotional discomfort through highly negative evaluative language in a performative online context.

The communicative intention is not to engage with Trump’s message or political stance, but to attack his appearance or public image directly. The lack of mitigation and emotional heightening make this a clear act of aggressive public shaming.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the speaker expresses disapproval of Trump's physical presentation, which undermines his desire to be admired.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Bald on record impoliteness, a direct attack on image without any politeness markers or justification.

**Linguistic indicators:** Capitalization "BAD", direct address "you're", evaluative verb phrase "looking bad", exclamation mark, absence of mitigation

**Datum 11:** *"Smells like shit. It's Don's diapers."*  
(DT/C.11/8.6.2024)

This comment is a vivid and vulgar example of bald on record impoliteness, employing scatological imagery to ridicule Donald Trump in a highly offensive manner. The comment was made under an image of Trump beneath the U.S. flag, a setting meant to inspire patriotism. The comment's shocking content contrasts starkly with the intended dignity of the post.

Linguistically, the sentence is divided into two declarative clauses. The phrase "smells like shit" is an expressive metaphor implying filth, decay, or corruption, while "It's Don's diapers" infantilizes Trump by linking him to a soiled child. This combination uses crude humor and dehumanization to destroy Trump's credibility

and image. The use of “Don” as a diminutive further diminishes respect, suggesting ridicule rather than engagement.

The utterance is a full attack on positive face, portraying Trump as physically repulsive and incompetent. Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that such expressions of disapproval, especially when couched in vulgarity, are among the most threatening acts to a person’s social image. Culpeper (2011) identifies this type of impoliteness as contemptuous, often intensified by taboo language and exaggeration for dramatic effect.

The speaker’s communicative goal is clearly offensive: to mock Trump’s power and stature using grotesque imagery. It functions as a form of digital character assassination within a performative, anonymous, and highly charged political environment.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the utterance mocks Trump’s dignity, portraying him as physically offensive and childish.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Bald on record impoliteness, no softening, directly obscene, meant to provoke disgust and ridicule.

**Linguistic indicators:** Profanity “shit”, metaphorical insult “Don’s diapers”, crude humor, dehumanization, lack of mitigation

**Datum 12:** *“Trump you like a pig”*

(DT/C.12/15.7.2024)

This utterance exemplifies bald on record impoliteness, in which the speaker performs a face-threatening act (FTA) without any attempt at politeness or mitigation, as defined by Culpeper (2011). Although grammatically awkward, the comment is clearly intended as an insult most likely a misphrased version of “Trump, you are like a pig.” The structure directly targets Trump, using animal metaphor as a means of personal degradation.

In public discourse, especially political contexts, comparing a human being to a pig is a classic example of dehumanization. The pig metaphor carries highly negative connotations: pigs are commonly associated with filth, greed, and gluttony. In calling Trump “like a pig,” the speaker diminishes his moral and social status. The utterance implies not only that Trump lacks refinement but also that he is fundamentally unworthy of human regard or respect. The direct address “Trump” ensures the comment is unmistakably personal, and the simile “like a pig” serves to maximize insult with minimal linguistic effort.

From a Brown and Levinson (1987) perspective, the utterance represents a full-on attack on Trump’s positive face that is, his want to be appreciated, respected, and admired. There is no

hedging, no attempt to frame the insult as opinion, and no redressive action that might preserve social harmony. From Culpeper's (2011) impoliteness framework, this constitutes affective impoliteness aimed at provoking a negative emotional reaction rather than engaging in rational critique.

The broader context is a post where Trump promotes unity "Unite America!", which frames the insult as a deliberate subversion of the message. The commenter not only disregards the political content of the post but weaponizes the contrast between Trump's call for unity and the accusation of moral filth.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the comment denies Trump the respect and admiration typically afforded to public figures by likening him to a filthy animal, thereby undermining his dignity.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Bald on record impoliteness, the insult is direct, dehumanizing, and issued without any softening or social consideration.

**Linguistic indicators:** Direct address "Trump", dehumanizing metaphor "like a pig", absence of modal or hedging language, confrontational tone, lack of grammatical structure reinforcing casual aggression.

**Datum 13:** *“Trump is trash”*

(DT/C.13/18.10.2024)

The utterance “Trump is trash” is a paradigmatic instance of bald on record impoliteness, designed to offend without any attempt at politeness or indirectness. According to Culpeper (2011), this strategy is characterized by the absence of mitigation and a deliberate intent to damage the hearer’s face. In this case, the insult is explicit and stark, and leaves no room for alternative interpretation.

The sentence is syntactically simple: subject, copula and derogatory noun. The use of “trash” is a particularly strong linguistic choice it does not merely criticize Trump’s actions or beliefs but wholly rejects his personal and public worth. The noun “trash” connotes something disposable, filthy, and unworthy of preservation. It evokes imagery of waste and social contamination, aligning with common tropes in political discourse that aim to exclude the target from the realm of civic legitimacy.

Through the lens of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory, this is a direct violation of positive face, because it undermines Trump’s fundamental need to be seen as respectable or valuable. The comment dismisses him not as a flawed leader or controversial figure, but as someone with no inherent worth. From Culpeper’s

view, this also involves dismissive impoliteness, where the speaker signals that the target is beneath acknowledgment, unworthy of even basic civil discourse.

The contextual background, a Trump post declaring “Too Big To Rig” alongside his supporters’ slogans amplifies the aggression. The insult stands in direct opposition to the boastful tone of the post, suggesting that Trump’s perceived power is an illusion and that he is, in fact, worthless. The brevity and punch of the phrase increase its performativity in the online space, where visibility and impact matter more than elaboration.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the speaker disregards Trump’s desire to be valued, admired, and taken seriously in the public sphere, reducing him instead to something metaphorically disposable.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Bald on record impoliteness, the statement is direct, insulting, and unmitigated by any politeness markers.

**Linguistic indicators:** Simple declarative syntax “Trump is trash”, derogatory noun “trash”, absence of justification or hedging, dehumanizing metaphor, and complete lack of politeness strategy.



**Datum 14:** *“Loser.”*

(DT/C.14/17.6.2024)

This comment is a textbook example of bald on record impoliteness, as theorized by Culpeper (2011), which is characterized by its direct, unmitigated, and hostile language aimed at damaging the hearer’s face. The word “Loser” stands alone as a slur and is used with no hedging, justification, or attempt at politeness. In the context of Trump’s Instagram post where he declares, “I’m coming back to Butler,” the commenter uses this insult to publicly reject or mock Trump’s credibility and authority as a returning political actor.

From a linguistic perspective, “Loser” is a highly stigmatizing noun that carries strong social disapproval. The single-word format functions like a label, branding Trump with failure and ridicule. The absence of syntactic structure no subject or verb and lack of modal verbs or polite markers suggest a total rejection of communicative cooperation. The utterance is dismissive and derogatory, projecting the speaker’s judgment without openness to discourse.

This comment constitutes a clear violation of Trump’s positive face, as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987), which includes the desire to be liked, admired, and accepted by others. The

comment disrespects this desire entirely by reducing Trump to a caricature of failure, without regard for his intentions or achievements.

The impoliteness is an act of commission, where the speaker purposefully chooses to insult, utilizing minimal but potent linguistic force. Online platforms like Instagram allow such one-word attacks to be amplified in a public and performative space, often with social validation through likes or reposts, further incentivizing impoliteness.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the comment directly challenges Trump's need to be respected and admired, portraying him as a failure without room for rebuttal or dialogue.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Bald on record impoliteness, the insult is delivered bluntly, without any mitigation or redressive effort, fulfilling Culpeper's definition of direct impoliteness.

**Linguistic indicators:** Single derogatory noun "Loser", lack of subject/verb structure, absence of hedging or politeness markers, strong social insult

**Datum 15:** *"Fuck."*

(DT/C.15/12.10.2024)

This utterance exemplifies bald on record impoliteness through the use of explicit profanity with no syntactic or pragmatic

cushioning. It appears under a post of Donald Trump posing with the U.S. flag and the phrase “Almost November,” possibly a political nod to the upcoming election. The isolated profanity “Fuck” serves as a vehement rejection of either Trump’s persona, his political agenda, or the symbolism of the image.

From a linguistic standpoint, the utterance is a standalone expletive, which in this context does not function as an intensifier or interjection within a longer sentence but as the full speech act itself. This gives it an aggressive, abrupt, and emotionally charged tone. There are no syntactic elements to mitigate the offensiveness—no pronouns, verbs, or context clues that might soften the blow. Its intentional vagueness amplifies its hostile potential, leaving the insult open to interpretation but emotionally potent.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), this is a violation of positive face, as it ignores the addressee’s need for approval and instead attacks it with linguistic violence. Culpeper (2011) argues that such forms of profanity in online platforms, particularly when used independently, are designed to convey affective impoliteness, where the emotional aggression takes precedence over meaning.

Given the communicative context public Instagram, anonymous or semi-anonymous users, and polarized political discourse this comment reflects a deliberate attempt to offend. It is

not merely a failure to be polite; it is the conscious enactment of hostility.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the use of uncontextualized profanity aggressively disregards Trump’s social identity and need for respect, replacing it with a raw, confrontational stance.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Bald on record impoliteness, there is no effort to mitigate or soften the offense; the utterance is terse and deliberately offensive.

**Linguistic indicators:** Use of standalone profanity “Fuck”, no syntactic framing, complete absence of mitigation, affective and emotional aggression.

**Datum 16:** “CLOWN!!!”

(DT/C.16/8.6.2024)

This comment qualifies as bald on record impoliteness, characterized by its unambiguous and exaggerated attack on Donald Trump’s credibility. Posted in response to Trump’s invitation to voters to take part in the upcoming election to make a difference, the comment “CLOWN!!!” undermines his authority and portrays him as foolish and unfit for leadership. The word “clown” is metaphorical but universally understood as derogatory, implying incompetence and lack of seriousness.

The linguistic structure is minimal but intensified through stylistic markers. The use of all capital letters (“CLOWN”) suggests shouting or increased emotional force in digital discourse. The triple exclamation marks further intensify the expression, adding dramatic and mocking overtones. The absence of modifiers, explanations, or syntactic framing marks it as a blunt insult rather than constructive criticism.

This constitutes an attack on positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987), since it insults Trump’s image, competence, and integrity all traits central to a public figure’s desired perception. The commenter does not attempt to argue against Trump’s ideas or engage in policy debate but chooses to attack his identity through ridicule.

Culpeper (2011) emphasizes that digital impoliteness often capitalizes on brevity and intensity. “CLOWN!!!” is emotionally charged, socially performative, and designed to trigger reactions, making it a paradigmatic example of how impoliteness is adapted to digital communication.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the term “clown” invalidates Trump’s dignity and public image by reducing him to a figure of ridicule and mockery.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Bald on record impoliteness, the insult is direct, forceful, and unmitigated, with added emotional cues such as capitalization and exclamation marks.

**Linguistic indicators:** Derogatory metaphor “clown”, all-caps, multiple exclamation points, absence of hedging, mocking tone.

## **B. Positive Impoliteness**

The type of positive impoliteness in the theory of impoliteness by Culpeper (2011) occurs when a person deliberately undermines or ignores the needs of others to feel valued, accepted, and respected in a social group. In positive impoliteness the speaker intends to keep the interlocutor away from the social environment or make him feel unworthy, unimportant, or unappreciated. In this case, researcher found some data that showed that people who commented on Donald Trump's Instagram account posts during the 2024 presidential campaigns showed hate speech to Trump in public spaces that contained insults, sarcasm, or other forms of verbal intent aimed at embarrassing, feeling excluded, or eliminating Trump's acceptance in public view, especially in the digital space.

**Datum 17:** “*Yup dumbest thing ever!*”  
(DT/C.17/31.7.2024)

This comment is a clear instance of positive impoliteness, a strategy that directly attacks the hearer’s positive face wants, the

desire to be liked, approved of, or admired as theorized by Culpeper (2011). Unlike bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness may use slightly indirect means but still conveys contempt, dismissal, or exclusion. In this case, the phrase “dumbest thing ever” does not provide constructive input but instead gives a general condemnation.

The utterance “Yup dumbest thing ever!” is emotionally charged and delivered in a mocking tone. The use of “Yup” as a casual interjection sets an ironic and dismissive tone, suggesting the speaker is not genuinely engaging but instead performing derision for an audience. The superlative “dumbest” intensifies the insult by not merely calling something dumb, but placing it at the absolute bottom of intellectual value. “Ever” adds further emphasis, universalizing the judgment and rejecting any nuance or context.

Viewed through the lens of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory, the comment is a direct violation of positive face, as it ridicules either Trump’s statement or action without acknowledgment or redress. There is no mitigation, such as “I think” or “perhaps,” that would allow the statement to be interpreted as a subjective opinion; instead, it is presented as an unequivocal truth. The social effect is to undermine Trump’s credibility and suggest that his behavior, ideas, or leadership lacks even basic intelligence.

In the Instagram context, where Trump often promotes his decisions or political narratives, such a comment functions as performative rejection. Rather than engage substantively, the user chooses a highly evaluative and sarcastic insult to publicly humiliate him. The insult is framed to entertain fellow users or to signal the speaker's allegiance to anti-Trump sentiment, characteristic of online disinhibition.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the comment ridicules Trump's intelligence and competence, denying him approval and appreciation from others.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Positive impoliteness, the speaker uses a harsh evaluative judgment to damage Trump's public image and mock his capabilities.

**Linguistic indicators:** Sarcastic interjection ("Yup"), extreme superlative ("dumbest"), intensifier ("ever"), absence of mitigation, emotionally dismissive tone.

**Datum 18:** *"Worst president in American history."*

(DT/C.18/27.1.2024)

This utterance exemplifies positive impoliteness, targeting the hearer's self-image and social worth. As explained by Culpeper (2011), positive impoliteness seeks to damage or deny the addressee's need to be appreciated and included. The comment



“Worst president in American history” is a severe evaluative insult that attacks Trump’s identity, legacy, and competence as a national leader.

The phrase constructs an absolute judgment through the use of the superlative “worst,” leaving no room for ambiguity or interpretation. The insult is contextualized in the broader frame of U.S. history, implying that Trump is not merely a bad leader in recent memory, but the lowest point in the country’s political legacy. This language strips away any potential for merit or accomplishment, framing his presidency as a historical failure.

From the lens of Brown and Levinson (1987), the utterance severely threatens Trump’s positive face, denying him approval and recognition for his public office. Unlike polite disagreement, this statement avoids any hedging, such as “Some people believe...” or “In my opinion...” and instead frames the insult as an objective historical truth. The omission of such politeness markers makes the attack more aggressive.

In the context of political discourse on Instagram, the comment functions as both a personal attack and a symbolic declaration. It does not engage with policy but with Trump’s entire political identity. The hyperbolic tone also fits well within the social media environment, where brief, punchy content tends to dominate

discourse. The claim thus works rhetorically as both condemnation and performance.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the statement aims to deny Trump any respect, recognition, or admiration associated with the office of the presidency.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Positive impoliteness, the speaker undermines Trump's public value by labeling him as the absolute worst in U.S. history.

**Linguistic indicators:** Superlative insult "worst", historical generalization "in American history", absence of personal hedging, declarative structure, harsh evaluative tone

**Datum 19:** *"Old man syndrome!"*  
(DT/C.19/4.10.2024)

This utterance represents positive impoliteness, as it ridicules and marginalizes the addressee (Donald Trump) by attacking his age and presumed declining mental or physical state. As Culpeper (2011) explains, positive impoliteness is realized through expressions that challenge one's identity, particularly their competence or social worth. The phrase "Old man syndrome" evokes a pejorative stereotype implying irrationality, cognitive decline, or irrelevance due to age.

Contextually, this comment is a direct response to Trump's post stating, "I'm coming back to Butler," which signifies his attempt to reassert political power. The commenter undermines that effort by reducing him to a caricature of elderly weakness, thereby attacking not only his political messaging but also his personhood. The term "syndrome" pathologizes his behavior, suggesting dysfunction or mental instability in a dismissive and derogatory way.

From a politeness theory perspective (Brown & Levinson, 1987), this violates positive face, as it denies Trump approval and dignity, reducing his leadership ambitions to a medicalized insult. No mitigating devices are present; the insult is brief, direct, and public. The communicative intent is clearly to shame and diminish, functioning as an act of commission, not omission. There is no invitation to discussion, the purpose is performative mockery.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the comment ridicules Trump's age and competence, denying respect and dignity.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Positive impoliteness, the speaker attacks the hearer's identity using ageist and derogatory stereotypes.

**Linguistic indicators:** Derogatory label "syndrome", age-related slur "old man", absence of mitigation, medicalization of persona, mocking tone

**Datum 20:** *“The clown and stupidement from USA”*

(DT/C.20/11.10.2024)

This comment employs positive impoliteness by mocking Donald Trump’s public image and intellectual credibility. The use of “clown” is a long-standing slur in political discourse, signaling that the target is foolish, unserious, or laughable. “Stupidement” appears to be a creative portmanteau of “stupid” and “government” or “statement,” implying a generalization of idiocy, either of Trump himself or his rhetoric.

The insult was posted in response to Trump’s nationalistic call, “We will never, ever surrender... our hearts bleed red, white and blue,” which was meant to inspire unity and patriotic resilience. Instead, the commenter delegitimizes the message by casting Trump as a national embarrassment. The derisive labeling neutralizes the grandeur of his statement and reframes it as theatrical nonsense.

From the perspective of Brown and Levinson (1987), the insult violates positive face as it mocks Trump’s desire for admiration, particularly within the patriotic frame he sets. Culpeper (2011) adds that impoliteness often uses symbolic degradation such as the image of a “clown” to delegitimize social actors in a public arena.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the comment belittles Trump's attempt to appear strong and admirable.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Positive impoliteness, degrading Trump's persona through ridicule and creative derogation.

**Linguistic indicators:** Labeling "clown", neologism "stupidement", ironic contrast with patriotic context, sarcastic tone, absence of politeness markers

**Datum 21:** "*34 stupid statements*"  
(DT/C.21/4.9.2024)

This utterance is an example of positive impoliteness, a strategy in which the speaker attacks the addressee's desire to be approved of, respected, or socially accepted. The comment "34 stupid statements" was made in response to Trump's post about "2024 CAMPAIGN INTERVIEWS," presumably a showcase of his political agenda or self-promotion. Instead of engaging with the content substantively, the commenter reduces the entire body of Trump's discourse into a quantified list of unintelligent utterances.

The inclusion of the number "34" attempts to lend credibility or specificity to the insult, suggesting a calculated, repeated pattern of foolishness. The adjective "stupid" is a strongly negative evaluative term that denotes intellectual inferiority, irrationality, or incompetence. Its blanket application across multiple statements

functions not merely as a critique, but as a total rejection of Trump's communicative worth. From Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, this utterance clearly threatens Trump's positive face, which is centered on being viewed as a competent, respectable political figure. The speaker makes no attempt to mitigate their judgment. There is no hedging, softening, or presentation of subjective opinion.

According to Culpeper (2011), this is a form of positive impoliteness via dismissal, whereby the speaker uses insulting evaluations to reject or mock the hearer's contributions entirely. The function here is not to engage, but to undermine and discredit Trump's rhetorical performance on a fundamental level. It is a performative act of public degradation, aligned with the norms of online impoliteness in political discourse.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the comment denies Trump respect, competence, and rhetorical credibility.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Positive impoliteness, through dismissive evaluation and unmitigated insult.

**Linguistic indicators:** Quantification "34", derogatory adjective "stupid", absence of modal hedges or justification, blunt declarative form, tone of intellectual contempt.

**Datum 22:** *"34 interviews full of bullshit and lies"*

(DT/C.22/4.9.2024)

This comment intensifies the previous datum through the use of explicit profanity and accusations of dishonesty, both of which are core tactics of positive impoliteness. Directed at Trump's "2024 CAMPAIGN INTERVIEWS," the utterance completely dismisses the content of those interviews as false and deceptive. The term "bullshit" is an expletive that conveys contempt, while "lies" directly challenges Trump's trustworthiness and moral character.

The repetition of "34" likely referencing the number of interviews or statements made attempts to add an aura of statistical credibility, suggesting systemic or habitual dishonesty. Rather than offer critique on any one point, the speaker lumps together all communicative acts into a singular, damning characterization. This aligns with Culpeper's (2011) notion of impoliteness through attribution of negative traits, particularly those that undermine one's perceived honesty or intelligence.

From the perspective of Brown and Levinson (1987), the utterance constitutes a direct attack on positive face, as it ridicules Trump's desire to be viewed as sincere and competent. The speaker uses vulgarity not as emphasis, but as a key linguistic device to assert moral and intellectual superiority while humiliating the addressee.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the comment attacks Trump's character, suggesting he is a habitual liar and unworthy of public trust.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Positive impoliteness, through vulgar dismissiveness and moral condemnation.

**Linguistic indicators:** Profanity "bullshit", direct accusation "lies", numerical generalization "34 interviews", lack of hedging or politeness markers, accusatory tone.

**Datum 23:** *"Desperate old man!"*  
(DT/C.23/8.6.2024)

This statement exemplifies positive impoliteness by fusing emotional and age-based derogation to diminish the target's social value and competence. The phrase "Desperate old man!" is short but heavily loaded. "Desperate" implies emotional instability, irrational decision-making, or frantic behavior particularly damaging traits in a political figure. "Old man" here is not a neutral term but an ageist insult, meant to imply frailty, irrelevance, or mental decline.

The comment is aimed at undermining Donald Trump's authority and image as a capable leader. It discredits his political comeback or messaging by reducing it to an irrational act driven by fear or narcissism. The utterance is delivered with no mitigation, no hedging ("maybe," "seems like"), and no effort to engage in debate



marking it clearly as a face-threatening act that targets Trump's positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

From Culpeper's (2011) view, this type of impoliteness is frequently found in political discourse, where attacking a leader's vitality and motivation serves to delegitimize their position. The insult reflects broader social stereotypes that equate age with incompetence, which, when coupled with emotional labels, create a highly toxic evaluative frame.

**Politeness Violations:** Positive face, the comment attacks Trump's dignity, emotional control, and social worth.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Positive impoliteness, by mocking age, desperation, and irrelevance.

**Linguistic indicators:** Ageist term "old man", emotionally loaded adjective "desperate", direct address, absence of redressive strategies, tone of contempt.

**Datum 24:** "*Grandpa is losing*"  
(DT/C.24/6.7.2024)

This utterance employs positive impoliteness by utilizing age-based condescension and indirect insult. Referring to Donald Trump as "Grandpa" reduces his status from a political leader to a stereotypical figure associated with physical and mental decline. The phrase "is losing" implies not only electoral defeat but also a broader

loss of relevance, control, or authority. The commenter uses diminutive, familial language “Grandpa” to infantilize Trump, suggesting he is out of touch or incapable of functioning in the high-stakes environment of politics.

Brown and Levinson’s (1987) concept of positive face the desire to be appreciated, admired, and respected is clearly violated here. The speaker offers no mitigation or softening devices; there is no modalizing language, hedging, or context that would indicate the comment is speculative or humorous. Instead, the utterance functions as a straightforward insult, delivered in a performative and public context.

From Culpeper’s (2011) perspective, this comment demonstrates positive impoliteness via mock politeness and identity targeting. By weaponizing age-based stereotypes, the speaker leverages cultural assumptions about aging to discredit Trump’s authority. The structure and tone carry an air of ridicule rather than argument, and the insult appears designed to amuse others in the online audience while humiliating the target.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, Trump’s desire to be respected as a capable leader is undermined by ageist diminishment.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Positive impoliteness, through age-based identity mockery and dismissiveness.

**Linguistic indicators:** Use of “Grandpa” (age diminishment), declarative tone (“is losing”), lack of politeness strategies, implication of decline or defeat.

**Datum 25:** *“To lie and bullshit about everything and anything”*  
(DT/C.25/17.6.2024)

This utterance constitutes a strong act of positive impoliteness, combining profanity, generalization, and moral accusation to attack Trump’s credibility and honesty. The infinitive verb phrase “To lie and bullshit” functions almost like a definition or label, suggesting that lying and deceiving are habitual or essential parts of Trump’s behavior. The extension “about everything and anything” intensifies the scope of the accusation implying that dishonesty is not occasional but pervasive.

Culpeper (2011) categorizes such language as explicit moral condemnation, a strategy of positive impoliteness that targets the hearer’s social identity and values. The comment implies that Trump lacks integrity and truthfulness, thereby attacking his positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987), particularly the desire to be seen as trustworthy and respectable. The word “bullshit” adds a layer of vulgar contempt that strips the comment of civility.

Linguistically, the utterance contains no redressive elements. It is constructed as a broad, unqualified assertion, making it a

maximally offensive form of communicative aggression. The performative tone, especially in a public forum like Instagram, underscores the speaker's intent not just to express disapproval but to delegitimize Trump's public persona entirely.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, the comment attacks Trump's honesty, morality, and credibility.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Positive impoliteness, via sweeping accusations, profanity, and ethical condemnation.

**Linguistic indicators:** Profanity "bullshit", sweeping generalization "everything and anything", use of infinitive verb form (acts as labeling), tone of moral outrage.

**Datum 26:** *"THE CLOWN IS COMING WITH HIS CIRCUS OF PAID FOOLS"*

(DT/C.26/17.6.2024)

This statement exemplifies an elaborate form of positive impoliteness that mixes sarcasm, metaphor, and ridicule to destroy the target's public persona. Referring to Trump as "THE CLOWN" aligns him with incompetence, theatrical absurdity, and lack of seriousness. The metaphor "circus of paid fools" further characterizes his political allies or supporters as complicit in stupidity, corruption, or delusion portraying the entire campaign as a farce.

The use of all capital letters intensifies the aggression, suggesting that the commenter is shouting or emphasizing disdain. According to Culpeper (2011), this is a classic example of mockery and derisive metaphor, where the speaker creates a performative insult that functions more as spectacle than argument. The phrase undermines Trump's authority, and by mocking his entire political movement, it expands the face threat beyond the individual to his entire platform.

From Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, the comment brutally threatens positive face, stripping Trump of respect, dignity, and competence. There is no attempt at politeness or moderation; the utterance is maximal in hostility, theatrical in tone, and structured for viral contempt.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face, Trump is stripped of competence, dignity, and respect through metaphorical ridicule.

**Impoliteness strategy:** Positive impoliteness, by metaphorically likening Trump to a clown and mocking his followers.

**Linguistic indicators:** Capitalization for emphasis, metaphor ("clown," "circus," "paid fools"), lack of mitigation, performative and public ridicule.

**Datum 27:** *“Your hair? Your ego? Your Depends? Slogan makes no sense”*

(DT/C.27/18.10.2024)

This comment targets Donald Trump’s positive face by ridiculing his physical appearance, personality, and political campaign slogan. Brown and Levinson (1987) define positive face as the desire for acceptance and admiration from others, and this comment directly undermines that. The speaker sarcastically questions Trump’s hair, ego, and even references “Depends,” a brand of adult diapers, to imply that Trump is old or decrepit, further diminishing his public image. The phrase “slogan makes no sense” directly mocks Trump’s political message, suggesting that his platform is not only unappealing but completely nonsensical.

The use of the repetition “Your” emphasizes the personal nature of the attack, which targets Trump’s identity and his public persona. Additionally, “Depends” is a direct insult, invoking a stereotype of aging and incontinence, further attacking his physical and mental vitality. The comment is devoid of any mitigation or hedging, with no qualifying language such as “I think” or “maybe,” which highlights the speaker's intent to deliver a harsh judgment.

The social context of the comment made in a public space like social media further amplifies its effect. Here, the speaker publicly attacks Trump’s image without concern for any mitigation,

making this a clear case of positive impoliteness where Trump's social approval and public image are under direct assault.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face is violated as the comment mocks Trump's image, personality, and political message.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Positive impoliteness, the speaker attacks Trump's social identity by ridiculing his appearance, ego, and political agenda.

**Key Linguistic Indicators:** Direct questions "Your hair? Your ego? Your Depends?" use of sarcasm, derogatory reference to "Depends," and absence of mitigation.

**Datum 28:** *"You don't know a damn thing about God"*  
(DT/C.28/20.8.2024)

This comment is a sharp example of positive impoliteness because it targets Donald Trump's moral or religious credibility, undermining his public persona. Positive face, as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987), is the desire to be admired and respected, which this comment directly attacks by accusing Trump of ignorance about God. The phrase "You don't know a damn thing" is a direct, harsh challenge to Trump's knowledge and public persona, implying that he is not only uninformed but also unqualified to speak on religious matters.

The use of profanity “damn thing” adds intensity to the insult, reinforcing the impolite nature of the comment. The speaker’s tone is unequivocally negative, leaving no room for softening or hedging. There is no qualification or nuance in the statement; it is a direct attack on Trump’s religious authority.

Socially, this comment functions as a public critique of Trump’s persona. The speaker challenges Trump’s ability to act as a moral or religious figure, which is especially potent given Trump’s own public association with religion during his political campaigns. The speaker’s direct and harsh language highlights their intent to discredit Trump’s moral standing and diminish his positive face.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face is violated by accusing Trump of ignorance about a sacred or moral issue, thus undermining his image.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Positive impoliteness, the speaker publicly discredits Trump’s knowledge and moral authority.

**Linguistic Indicators:** Direct insult “You don’t know a damn thing,” use of profanity, and lack of mitigation.

**Datum 29:** “*You mean destroy America!!!*”  
(DT/C.29/15.7.2024)

In this comment, the speaker uses positive impoliteness by accusing Trump of intending to harm the nation, which directly



undermines his positive face as a public figure. Positive face is defined by Brown and Levinson (1987) as the desire to be accepted and admired, which this comment challenges by implying that Trump's actions would have disastrous consequences for the country. The statement "destroy America" exaggerates the consequences of Trump's actions and frames them as harmful, which is an attack on his public image as a leader.

The use of the word "destroy" is a strong, emotional term that amplifies the accusation, making it a clear attack on Trump's political and moral identity. The multiple exclamation marks heighten the intensity, indicating the speaker's strong negative stance. This rhetorical technique is a form of verbal aggression, as it paints Trump as a threat to the nation's survival and public welfare.

The social context of this comment, likely within the framework of online political discourse, allows the speaker to voice strong criticism with little risk of facing personal consequences. The comment reflects the speaker's intent to undermine Trump's political authority by framing his actions as destructive, thus violating his positive face by publicly questioning his leadership.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face is violated by framing Trump's actions as destructive, challenging his leadership and moral authority.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Positive impoliteness, the speaker attacks Trump's image as a leader by exaggerating the harm he causes.

**Linguistic Indicators:** The strong word "destroy," multiple exclamation marks, and emotional intensity of the accusation.

**Datum 30:** *"I hope you lose"*  
(DT/C.30/25.6.2024)

This comment is a direct example of positive impoliteness because it openly expresses the speaker's wish for Trump's failure, which undermines his desire for success and admiration. Positive face, as Brown and Levinson (1987) define it, is about being liked and respected, and the speaker here explicitly wishes for Trump to fail, attacking his public image and political success. The directness of the statement, "I hope you lose," makes it clear that the speaker is not merely offering an opinion but actively hoping for Trump's failure.

The comment is forceful and unmitigated, lacking any softening language like "I think" or "perhaps," which would have made the statement less direct. Instead, it is a clear and hostile wish for Trump's loss, leaving no room for interpretation. The speaker's intent is not to express disagreement with Trump's policies but to personally undermine his chances of success.

In the context of political discourse, such a comment serves to challenge Trump's public image by wishing for his failure, further exacerbating the impoliteness. This is a clear attack on Trump's positive face, as it dismisses his ambitions and public support.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face is violated by wishing for Trump's failure, undermining his desire for success.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Positive impoliteness, the speaker attacks Trump's public persona by wishing for his failure.

**Linguistic Indicators:** Direct wish "I hope you lose," lack of mitigation, and hostile tone.

### **C. Negative Impoliteness**

The type of negative impoliteness in the theory of impoliteness by Culpeper (2011) occurs when a person deliberately violates or attacks the needs of others to have personal freedom, privacy, and not be disturbed. In this case, this type of impoliteness is often seen in comments that are personally offensive, rude, or angular without leaving room for an equal response.

**Datum 31:** *"Over you dead body."*

(DT/C.31/25.5.2024)

This comment is a direct example of negative impoliteness because it challenges Donald Trump's negative face, referring to his

desire to maintain autonomy and freedom from imposition. Negative face is violated here by using a forceful, aggressive statement that suggests Trump must die before his opponent's desire is fulfilled. The phrase "over your dead body" is a threat that directly opposes Trump's will to act as he pleases, implying that the speaker does not respect Trump's right to autonomy in political or public matters.

This aligns with Brown and Levinson's (1987) concept of negative face, as the speaker is violating Trump's desire to be free from imposition. The direct threat to Trump's autonomy highlights the aggressiveness of the comment, disregarding Trump's right to act without external pressure or interference, which directly challenges his negative face.

The use of the word "dead" is a highly intense and hostile way of expressing opposition, adding an element of aggression. This is a direct threat that leaves no room for softening or compromise, showing a complete disregard for Trump's freedom of action. The statement does not offer any form of mitigation, such as "I think" or "maybe," making it clear that the speaker intends to impose their will on Trump through a forceful, potentially violent metaphor.

Socially, the comment is likely made in a heated political discourse where strong opposition is common. By publicly declaring that Trump's autonomy would only be respected in the event of his

death, this comment aggressively challenges his authority and personal freedom.

**Politeness Violation:** Negative face is violated because the speaker threatens Trump's autonomy and freedom of action.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Negative impoliteness — the speaker uses a direct and hostile threat to impose their will on Trump.

**Linguistic Indicators:** The direct threat "over your dead body," the use of "dead," and lack of mitigation.

**Datum 32:** “Is this real? Like is he really trying to sell this shit? Flush him forever please #Harris2024”

(DT/C.32/28.8.2024)

This comment exemplifies negative impoliteness by attacking Trump's autonomy and public image, particularly in the context of his attempt to sell “digital trading cards.” Negative face refers to the desire to act without being imposed upon, and here the speaker challenges Trump's freedom to pursue such business ventures. The phrase “Flush him forever” is a strong directive, advocating for Trump to be eliminated or dismissed entirely, which is a direct attack on his autonomy and reputation.

The use of profanity “shit” and the imperative “Flush him forever” further intensify the disrespect towards Trump. The comment provides no softening language and instead expresses a

harsh, unmitigated desire to rid Trump of his public presence. The hashtag “#Harris2024” reinforces the speaker’s preference for an alternative political figure, making it clear that they want to erase Trump’s influence in favor of a new leader.

This aligns with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) definition of negative face, as the speaker imposes a demand for Trump’s removal, denying him the freedom to pursue his business ventures without public judgment. The harsh imperative “Flush him forever” disregards Trump’s right to autonomy and attempts to strip him of his public identity, challenging his negative face.

In this case, the social context of public political discourse amplifies the aggression of the statement, as the speaker is expressing disdain for Trump’s public actions and aiming to diminish his influence through verbal attack.

**Politeness Violation:** Negative face is violated because the speaker demands the elimination of Trump’s political and public persona.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Negative impoliteness, the speaker aggressively dismisses Trump’s autonomy and calls for his removal.

**Linguistic Indicators:** Use of profanity “shit”, the imperative “Flush him forever,” and lack of mitigation.

**Datum 33:** *“This is the dumbest shit, be professional at least.”*

(DT/C.33/23.5.2025)

This comment is an example of negative impoliteness, as it directly challenges Donald Trump’s autonomy and professionalism. Negative face refers to an individual's desire to be free from imposition, and this statement directly violates that by commanding Trump to be more professional. The phrase “the dumbest shit” is a strong, derogatory expression that dismisses Trump’s actions as not just wrong, but completely foolish, which disrespects his right to make decisions without harsh public judgment.

This statement directly violates negative face by Brown and Levinson (1987) because the speaker is imposing their own standards on Trump, commanding him to change his behavior without considering Trump’s right to act according to his own judgment. By ordering Trump to be “professional,” the speaker is imposing a demand that disregards Trump’s freedom to act freely, thus violating his negative face.

The phrase “be professional at least” is an imperative, a direct command, which imposes the speaker’s expectations onto Trump. This is a clear attempt to control Trump’s actions, showing disregard for his autonomy as a public figure. There is no mitigation,

such as softening language like “perhaps” or “maybe,” further emphasizing the hostility of the demand.

The social context of this comment, typically made in a public online forum, intensifies the verbal aggression. The speaker not only critiques Trump’s behavior but also publicly demands that he change, imposing the speaker’s standards of professionalism without consideration for Trump’s own agency.

**Politeness Violation:** Negative face is violated because the speaker imposes a directive for Trump to act differently, questioning his professionalism.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Negative impoliteness, the speaker directly attacks Trump’s behavior and demands a change in his conduct.

**Linguistic Indicators:** Use of profanity “dumbest shit”, direct imperative “be professional at least”, and lack of mitigation (no hedging).

**Datum 34:** *“Trump can go to hell.”*

(DT/C.34/11.10.2024)

This statement is a clear violation of negative face because it expresses a desire for Trump to suffer, wishing for his removal from public life. The phrase “go to hell” is a direct and forceful command, signaling a desire for Trump to be punished or removed from his political role, thereby stripping him of his freedom and autonomy.



Negative face is infringed because the speaker is imposing an aggressive wish for Trump to be condemned, showing no regard for his right to exist or act freely in the public sphere.

The phrase “go to hell” violates negative face by Brown and Levinson (1987) as it disregards Trump’s autonomy and freedom. The comment seeks to impose a punitive outcome on Trump without any softening or mitigation, further attacking his ability to act freely, thus infringing upon his negative face.

The use of the strong imperative “go to hell” is a blunt and hostile demand, with no attempt at softening or hedging. There’s no phrasing like “I think” or “maybe,” which would have made the statement less direct. The comment is straightforward and aggressive, showing an absolute desire for Trump to be punished, which violates his autonomy and right to act freely.

The social context of this comment, coming from a public discourse, emphasizes the aggressiveness of the statement. The speaker publicly dismisses Trump, wishing for his removal from any future political activities, thus attacking Trump’s negative face.

**Politeness Violation:** Negative face is violated by wishing for Trump’s removal and public punishment.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Negative impoliteness, the speaker directly wishes for Trump to suffer consequences, stripping him of autonomy.

**Linguistic Indicators:** Direct imperative “go to hell,” no hedging or mitigation, and hostile tone.

**Datum 35:** “*Throw him jail.*”  
(DT/C.35/30.8.2024)

This comment demonstrates negative impoliteness by calling for Trump’s imprisonment, directly challenging his personal freedom and autonomy. Negative face is violated here as the speaker demands a severe restriction on Trump’s freedom by suggesting that he should be thrown into jail. The phrase “Throw him jail” is a blunt, aggressive imperative that imposes a harsh consequence on Trump without any regard for his autonomy or rights.

This comment aligns with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) concept of negative face, as the speaker is disregarding Trump’s right to act freely. The forceful demand to imprison Trump undermines his negative face by stripping him of his autonomy, making it a direct imposition on his freedom.

There is no attempt at mitigating the force of this statement, such as through softer phrasing like “perhaps” or “maybe.” The language is direct and commanding, further reinforcing the

speaker's intent to strip Trump of his freedom. The speaker is imposing their will on Trump by demanding that he face legal consequences, thus disregarding Trump's autonomy and public freedom.

In a public social media context, this statement adds to the aggressiveness of the comment, as it is made publicly, stripping Trump of the right to act freely and openly demanding his confinement. This creates an aggressive environment where Trump's personal autonomy is publicly denied.

**Politeness Violation:** Negative face is violated because the speaker demands Trump's imprisonment, restricting his freedom.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Negative impoliteness — the speaker calls for a punitive action against Trump, disregarding his right to freedom.

**Linguistic Indicators:** The imperative "Throw him jail," direct command, and lack of mitigation.

**Datum 36:** "*JAIL JAIL JAIL JAIL JAIL JAIL JAIL PRISON BOUND that's where you will be going.*"

(DT/C.36/4.10.2024)

This comment is an extreme example of negative impoliteness. It uses repetition and the imperative to aggressively demand Trump's imprisonment, directly violating his negative face.

The repetition of the word “JAIL” increases the intensity of the attack on Trump’s freedom, making it clear that the speaker desires a complete loss of Trump’s autonomy. The phrase “PRISON BOUND” indicates an unyielding certainty about Trump’s fate, amplifying the demand for his punishment.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987) this comment represents a clear violation of negative face by wishing for Trump’s total loss of autonomy. The repetition of “JAIL” and the certainty in “PRISON BOUND” make it evident that the speaker wants to impose their will on Trump, stripping him of the right to act freely. This demand, with its aggressive tone and lack of mitigation, directly infringes on Trump’s negative face by denying his freedom.

The repetition here serves to emphasize the speaker’s hostility, making it an even more forceful imposition on Trump’s personal freedom. The lack of any hedging or mitigation further strengthens the aggressiveness of the comment. The speaker’s tone leaves no room for negotiation, showing a total disregard for Trump’s right to act freely.

In the public context, the repetition and harsh language intensify the impolite nature of the statement. The speaker is not just disagreeing with Trump’s actions but is publicly wishing for his

complete punishment, which is a direct violation of Trump's autonomy and negative face.

**Politeness Violation:** Negative face is violated by wishing for Trump's imprisonment and total loss of freedom.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Negative impoliteness, the speaker demands Trump's punishment through repetition and forceful language.

**Linguistic Indicators:** Repetition of "JAIL," the imperative "PRISON BOUND," and lack of mitigation.

#### **D. Sarcasm/Mock Politeness**

The type of sarcasm or mock politeness in the theory of impoliteness by Culpeper (2011) occurs when a person deliberately uses a form of language that seems polite but is actually intended to satirize, mock, or demean others. The use of sarcasm or mock-politeness attacks both the positive face (the need to be appreciated) and the negative face (the need not to be disturbed), because it conveys dislike by covering up the true intention.

In this case, the sarcasm/mock politeness strategy can be seen in sarcastic comments towards Trump's Instagram posts. These comments appear to be compliments, but their true meaning conveys subtle insults or disbelief. This strategy is crucial to analyze in political social media communication, as it shows how

commentators express their disagreement in alternative but still hurtful ways, reflecting the sharp yet concealed dynamics of public discourse in the digital realm.

**Datum 37:** *“Fake President.”*

(DT/C.37/11.10.2024)

This comment is an example of sarcasm or mock politeness, where the speaker sarcastically dismisses Donald Trump’s legitimacy as president. The phrase “Fake President” directly undermines Trump’s status, calling into question his authenticity as a leader. In the context of sarcasm, the speaker is using the word “Fake” to mock Trump’s authority, which implies that his leadership is illegitimate and not genuine.

The sarcasm is clear in the context of the statement, as it contrasts with the serious tone of Trump’s original statement: “we will never, ever surrender.” By calling Trump a “Fake President,” the speaker is using mock politeness to indirectly criticize Trump’s claim to leadership. The tone of the statement doesn’t offer any direct confrontation or aggression but instead uses mockery to belittle his position.

From the Culpeper (2011) perspective on positive impoliteness, this remark represents an attempt to damage Trump’s social identity by mocking his authority. Sarcasm is a key

impoliteness strategy used here, as it expresses a negative judgment without direct aggression. The use of “Fake” in a sarcastic tone indirectly undermines Trump’s social image, suggesting that his public role is illegitimate or deceptive.

This aligns with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) concept of positive face, as the sarcastic use of “Fake” directly challenges Trump’s desire to be respected and admired in his public role. By labeling him a “Fake President,” the comment undermines Trump’s social identity, attacking his legitimacy and the positive approval he seeks from others. The sarcasm functions as a face-threatening act, diminishing his public image and violating his positive face by suggesting his position is fraudulent or unworthy of respect.

The social context here especially in a public online space enhances the sarcastic tone, as such statements are common in politically charged discussions. The comment diminishes Trump’s public standing in a way that feels less like a direct attack and more like a dismissive or playful insult, thus fitting the category of mock politeness.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face is violated by mocking Trump’s legitimacy and public identity.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Sarcasm or mock politeness — the speaker mocks Trump’s status as president by calling him a “Fake President.”

**Linguistic Indicators:** The use of “Fake,” which is a sarcastic dismissal of Trump’s authority.

**Datum 38:** “*TRUMP UR FIRED.*”  
(DT/C.38/11.10.2024)

This comment employs sarcasm or mock politeness, as it sarcastically references a popular catchphrase associated with Trump’s own television show, *The Apprentice*. The phrase “TRUMP UR FIRED” is a mocking imitation of his role as a boss on the show, where he would often say “You’re fired.” This comment is not a direct insult but rather a sarcastic play on Trump’s own persona, using his own words to mock his political authority.

From the Culpeper (2011) perspective, sarcasm is being used as an impoliteness strategy to indirectly undermine Trump’s position. The sarcastic use of “You’re fired” contrasts Trump’s own public identity, reducing his political authority to a reality TV persona. This is mock politeness because it pretends to be polite and respectful by using a phrase that’s familiar to Trump’s brand, but instead, it is used to insult him in a roundabout manner.

From the Brown and Levinson (1987) perspective, this comment aligns with the violation of positive face, as it attacks Trump’s desire to be respected and admired. By using the phrase “You’re fired,” a phrase closely associated with Trump’s reality TV



persona, the speaker undermines his political authority, reducing him to a trivial, entertainment-based identity. This sarcasm undermines Trump's positive face by dismissing his legitimate public role and instead mocking him in a way that attacks his social identity and the admiration he seeks, fitting the definition of a face-threatening act.

Socially, this type of comment is typical in online discourse, where sarcasm is frequently used to mock political figures. It's a less direct form of criticism, designed to belittle Trump's authority without an overt attack.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face is violated by mocking Trump's political role and reducing it to a reality TV persona.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Sarcasm or mock politeness, the speaker mocks Trump's role and authority through a catchphrase from his TV show.

**Linguistic Indicators:** The use of "TRUMP UR FIRED," referencing his TV show catchphrase, which serves to mock his political role.

**Datum 39:** *“DonOld... is Taylor Swift in the room with you right now?”*

(DT/C.39/20.8.2024)

This comment employs sarcasm or mock politeness by addressing Trump as “DonOld,” which mocks his age and relevance, and sarcastically asks if Taylor Swift is in the room with him. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), positive face is violated because the speaker is dismissing Trump’s relevance and questioning his authority in a playful but derogatory manner. The sarcastic use of “DonOld” undermines Trump’s image by suggesting that he is outdated and irrelevant.

This comment is in alignment with the theories proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) and Culpeper (2011) as it simultaneously violates Trump’s positive face and utilizes sarcasm as a strategy of impoliteness. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), positive face involves the desire for approval and admiration from others, which is clearly disregarded in this comment. The sarcastic term “DonOld” and the question about Taylor Swift undermine Trump’s social image by questioning his relevance and portraying him as outdated. This aligns with Culpeper (2011)’s concept of sarcasm as a form of mock politeness, where the speaker uses seemingly polite language to mask a deeper insult. The use of “DonOld” and the rhetorical question about Taylor Swift both serve

to mock Trump in a manner that appears somewhat respectful but is actually demeaning, thus aligning with the strategies of sarcasm and mock politeness that undermine Trump's positive face.

The social context, likely within an online discussion, amplifies the mock politeness, as it's a common form of indirect critique used in public political discourse. The comment combines sarcasm with a slight hint of ridicule, questioning Trump's seriousness by invoking a celebrity known for opposing views.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face is violated by mocking Trump's persona and questioning his relevance.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Sarcasm or mock politeness — the speaker indirectly criticizes Trump by pairing him with an unrelated celebrity.

**Linguistic Indicators:** The sarcastic use of “DonOld” and the rhetorical question about Taylor Swift, which implies Trump's lack of relevance.

**Datum 40:** *“You are a felon, Sir”*  
(DT/C.40/25.6.2024)

This comment employs sarcasm or mock politeness by formally addressing Trump as “Sir” while accusing him of being a felon, which undermines his positive face. The formality of “Sir” contrasts sharply with the serious accusation, creating a mocking

tone. The speaker uses this formal address to add an ironic layer to the insult, making it sound overly polite while simultaneously attacking Trump's character.

The accusation of being a felon is a strong charge that directly attacks Trump's legitimacy and public persona. The mock politeness comes from the formal tone of "Sir," which is typically used to show respect, but here, it is used sarcastically to further diminish Trump's credibility and authority.

This type of comment is often seen in online discourse, where sarcasm and mock politeness are used to subtly undermine political figures. The speaker is not directly insulting Trump in a harsh way, but rather undermining his legitimacy through the use of formal language paired with a severe accusation.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face is violated by accusing Trump of criminal behavior in a way that diminishes his public persona.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Sarcasm or mock politeness — the speaker uses formal language ("Sir") to ironically undermine Trump while accusing him of being a felon.

**Linguistic Indicators:** The use of "Sir" in a sarcastic tone and the direct accusation of being a felon.

### **E. Withholding politeness**

Withholding politeness by Culpeper (2011) occurs when someone deliberately fails to display the expected forms of politeness in certain situations. This indicates that impoliteness arises not from harsh words, but from the absence or non-use of polite expressions, such as greetings, expressions of appreciation, or forms of communication that demonstrate respect. In social communication, especially in public spaces like social media, forms of politeness such as please, sir, or simply greeting neutrally are an important part of polite interaction.

In this case, withholding politeness appears in comments that do not convey insults directly, but disregard the politeness that should be afforded to Donald Trump. Comments filled with sarcasm without any form of greeting or questions indicate that the commenter not only wants to express disagreement but also wants to show that Trump is not worthy of respect. The absence of these forms of politeness reflects a rejection of Trump's social status or honor, and this is what makes it a true example of the withholding politeness strategy in digital political interactions.

**Datum 41:** *“Desperate. Sad. SCARED”*

(DT/C.41/16.8.2024)

This comment qualifies as withholding politeness, as it directly undermines Donald Trump’s positive face by offering no polite mitigation or softening language when labeling him. Culpeper (2011) explains that withholding politeness involves not making any attempt to reduce the potential threat to the addressee’s face, leading to a more forceful and direct attack. In this case, the speaker uses the negative adjectives “Desperate,” “Sad,” and “SCARED,” offering no softening hedges like “I think” or “maybe,” and instead presents these as definitive judgments on Trump’s emotional state. This makes the criticism even more blunt and unmitigated.

By directly stating that Trump is “Desperate,” “Sad,” and “SCARED,” the speaker strips Trump of any possibility of preserving a positive face, which involves being admired, approved of, or respected by others (as described by Brown and Levinson, 1987). This comment lacks any positive recognition or supportive language, making it an act of impoliteness that aggressively challenges Trump’s social identity and public image.

In digital discourse, such withholding politeness is often amplified by the platform's brevity and the speaker's intent to provoke reaction, which is a common feature in online political

exchanges. The bluntness of these negative adjectives highlights the speaker's intent to impose an attack rather than offer constructive criticism.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face is violated because the speaker offers no softening or mitigating language, directly labeling Trump with negative attributes.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Withholding politeness, the speaker offers a direct, unqualified insult without any attempt at mitigation.

**Linguistic Indicators:** The negative adjectives “Desperate,” “Sad,” “SCARED,” absence of mitigation or hedging.

**Datum 42:** *“There’s nothing good bout you”*  
(DT/C.42/27.8.2024)

This comment also exemplifies withholding politeness by completely dismissing Trump’s positive face and offering no positive acknowledgment or mitigating language. Culpeper (2011) notes that withholding politeness involves refraining from polite strategies, like softening criticism or providing any positive feedback. In this case, the speaker delivers a harsh, unqualified judgment of Trump, stating, “There’s nothing good bout you,” without providing any softening terms or qualifications that might ease the criticism.

The absence of any mitigating language or even a “in my opinion” further intensifies the insult, as the speaker presents their view as an absolute truth. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), positive face is violated because the comment directly attacks Trump’s desire to be respected and admired. The speaker does not engage with Trump’s ideas or policies, but instead makes a blanket statement about his character, dismissing him entirely.

Socially, this type of comment in a public digital space is part of the growing trend of harsh, unfiltered commentary. The withholding politeness strategy here serves to diminish Trump’s image without engaging in any form of dialogue or constructive critique, creating an impolite and dismissive tone that strips him of any positive social identity.

**Politeness Violation:** Positive face is violated by directly stating that Trump has “nothing good,” disregarding his desire for social approval.

**Impoliteness Strategy:** Withholding politeness, the speaker does not offer any softening or mitigating language, directly attacking Trump’s image.

**Linguistic Indicators:** The direct, unqualified statement “There’s nothing good bout you,” absence of hedging or positive reinforcement.



### 3. Alignment Between Politeness Violations and Impoliteness Strategies

Although politeness violation and impoliteness are theoretically distinct. The former may occur unintentionally, while the latter implies a deliberate attack. Online political discourse often reveals overlaps between these two concepts. Politeness violations typically refer to situations where social norms of respect and consideration are unintentionally breached, while impoliteness is a purposeful strategy intended to challenge or harm another's face. In the context of online political discussions, however, comments frequently disregard politeness norms while simultaneously employing deliberate impoliteness strategies, blurring these analytical boundaries. The following sections explore these overlaps by analyzing how online comments violate Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory while simultaneously employing Culpeper's (2011) impoliteness strategies to achieve various social and political effects.

#### A. Overlap Between *Positive Face* Violations and *Positive Impoliteness*

The relationship between positive face violations and positive impoliteness becomes evident when comments attack a person's social identity or public image. Positive face, as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987), refers to the desire to be liked

and admired by others. In online political discourse, remarks that disrespect or degrade a public figure's identity are often designed not just to criticize their actions but to challenge their worthiness and legitimacy (Locher & Watts, 2005). Culpeper (2011) highlights that positive impoliteness is used to directly harm an individual's public image by using language that dismisses their value. This combination of face violation and impoliteness allows for deeply personal attacks on individuals, such as political figures, by not only criticizing their policies but attacking their competence and social standing (Bousfield, 2008).

**Example:**     *“Oh no Trump is sooo weird”*  
                       *“Worst president in American history”*

These comments directly disregard Trump's positive face by attacking his credibility and leadership abilities. Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that positive face refers to the desire to be approved of and respected by others. Both comments violate this desire by labeling Trump as “weird” and “the worst president,” which tarnishes his image and reduces his social standing.

From Culpeper (2011)'s perspective on positive impoliteness, these remarks function as intentional attacks on Trump's social identity. The term “weird” is a derogatory

descriptor that not only criticizes Trump's actions but also suggests that he is outside the norm of what is expected from a leader. Similarly, the statement "Worst president in American history" is a hyperbolic insult that dismisses Trump's achievements and leadership, further damaging his public image.

### **Linguistic Analysis:**

Negative evaluative language: "weird" and "worst president" are terms that carry heavy negative connotations, directly attacking Trump's leadership and public image.

No mitigation: These statements offer no softening language, making the attack blunt and direct, reinforcing the impoliteness strategy.

Hyperbole: The use of "worst president" exaggerates the criticism, making it more forceful and insulting.

### **Social Context:**

These comments likely appear in online political discussions, where harsh and exaggerated criticism of public figures is common. The anonymity and brevity of online discourse make it easier for individuals to express strong opinions without any social consequences, often leading to direct face-threatening remarks.

Politeness Violation: Positive face is violated because the comments undermine Trump's public identity and leadership.

Impoliteness Strategy: Positive impoliteness, the speaker uses derogatory language to challenge Trump's competence and public standing.

Linguistic Indicators: Use of negative adjectives ("weird," "worst president"), hyperbole, and lack of mitigation or hedging.

#### **B. Link Between *Negative Face* Violations and *Negative Impoliteness***

Comments that violate negative face often involve imposing restrictions on an individual's freedom of action, leading to direct confrontations or threats. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative face is the desire to act freely without imposition. In online discourse, political attacks often take the form of demands or threats that impose restrictions on the individual's autonomy. Culpeper (2011) identifies negative impoliteness as an intentional strategy used to undermine a person's autonomy through aggressive, direct language. These comments are more than just critiques of an individual's actions, they aim to strip away their freedom and force them into

submission, often through highly aggressive demands that leave no room for negotiation.

**Example:** *“JAIL JAIL JAIL... that's where you will be going”*

This comment clearly violates Trump’s negative face, which involves the desire for freedom and autonomy. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative face is the desire to act freely without being imposed upon, and this statement imposes a restrictive outcome on Trump by demanding his imprisonment.

From Culpeper’s (2011) perspective, this statement qualifies as negative impoliteness due to its aggressive tone and threatening nature. The repetition of “JAIL” serves to intensify the demand, leaving no room for Trump to maintain his autonomy. The phrase “that's where you will be going” further reinforces the certainty of the threat, making the comment a bald on-record attack.

### **Linguistic Analysis:**

Repetition for emphasis: The word “JAIL” is repeated to increase the intensity of the demand for imprisonment.

Imperative structure: The phrase “that’s where you will be going” is a direct command, making the statement forceful and unambiguous.

No hedging: There is no softening language used, making the threat clear and direct.

**Social Context:**

In an online political discourse, where bold, unfiltered expressions are often used to provoke reactions, this comment uses repetition and forceful language to publicly attack Trump's negative face by imposing a severe restriction on his freedom.

Politeness Violation: Negative face is violated because the speaker demands Trump's imprisonment, removing his autonomy.

Impoliteness Strategy: Negative impoliteness — the speaker uses a threatening demand to impose a punitive consequence on Trump.

Linguistic Indicators: Repetition of "JAIL," imperative tone "will be going", no hedging.

**C. Use of *Mock Politeness* (Sarcasm) to Mask Face Attacks**

In political discourse, false politeness is often used as a subtle yet sharp tool to attack a person's public image. Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that positive face is violated when an individual's image or reputation is destroyed. In the context of seemingly false politeness, terms that appear polite on the surface, such as formal titles or polite language, are used

ironically to mask the underlying insult. Culpeper (2011) identifies false politeness as a strategy of impoliteness where language is used to pretend to show respect while simultaneously conveying a sharper insult. This combination of feigned politeness and sarcasm can be very effective in online political discourse, where public figures often become targets of mockery cloaked in formal or polite language, making the attacks more cutting while maintaining an impression of politeness.

**Example:** *“Fake President” and “You are a felon, Sir”*

Both comments superficially acknowledge Trump’s role (by addressing him as "President" or "Sir"), but they immediately undermine his legitimacy with sarcastic tones. Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that positive face is violated when a speaker undermines the desire for approval, and these remarks directly question Trump’s legitimacy and competence in his role.

According to Culpeper (2011), these examples represent mock politeness, where the speaker feigns politeness while delivering a cutting insult. The term “Fake President” diminishes Trump’s authority by suggesting that his position is

fraudulent, while “You are a felon, Sir” sarcastically uses a formal title to insult Trump’s character.

### **Linguistic Analysis:**

Sarcasm: The formal titles “President” and “Sir” are used sarcastically, undercutting the politeness usually associated with these terms.

Direct insult: The terms “Fake” and “felon” are derogatory, questioning Trump’s legitimacy and moral character.

No mitigation: These comments lack any hedging or softening, making them direct insults despite the formal language used.

### **Social Context:**

In online political discourse, sarcastic comments are often used to ridicule public figures while maintaining a veneer of politeness. The sarcasm allows the speaker to attack Trump’s legitimacy without being overtly rude, instead using formal titles to disguise the insult.

Politeness Violation: Positive face is violated because the speaker undermines Trump’s legitimacy and social identity with sarcastic titles.

Impoliteness Strategy: Mock politeness, the speaker feigns politeness by using formal titles but delivers a sharp insult.



Linguistic Indicators: Sarcastic use of formal titles “President,” “Sir”, derogatory labels “Fake,” “felon”, no softening or mitigation.

#### **D. Combination of Multiple Impoliteness Strategies in Single Comments**

Many online political attacks do not rely on a single strategy, but rather combine various forms of impoliteness to enhance the impact of the message. For example, a comment can simultaneously use positive impoliteness (personal attacks) and direct impoliteness (clear and blunt insults). Culpeper (2011) suggested that direct impoliteness is characterized by a lack of mitigation, where the speaker makes a firm and unambiguous statement. When combined with positive impoliteness, these attacks become multidimensional, targeting both the individual's social identity and directly insulting their competence. This mixing of strategies increases the potential of the attacks, ensuring that they personally target the individual and publicly demean their status.

#### **Example: “*Trump is trash*”**

This comment merges positive impoliteness with bald on-record impoliteness. The use of “trash” is a dehumanizing label that reduces Trump to an object of contempt, thus attacking his

positive face by stripping him of any positive social identity. The lack of mitigation or explanation makes the comment a bald on-record insult, as defined by Culpeper (2011).

### **Linguistic Analysis:**

Derogatory metaphor: “Trash” reduces Trump’s social identity to something worthless, attacking his positive face.

Bald on-record insult: The direct, unhedged use of “trash” makes the attack blunt and unambiguous.

No mitigation: There is no softening language, making the insult harsh and direct.

### **Social Context:**

Online comments often rely on bald on-record impoliteness because of the anonymity and brevity afforded by digital platforms. This allows for direct insults without concern for social repercussions.

Politeness Violation: Positive face is violated because Trump is reduced to an object of contempt, with no positive recognition.

Impoliteness Strategy: Positive impoliteness and bald on-record impoliteness. The speaker directly insults Trump’s worth without any hedging.

Linguistic Indicators: The metaphor “trash,” directness, and lack of mitigation.

### **E. Escalation from Criticism to Hostility**

What begins as mild criticism in online political discourse can quickly escalate into overt hostility, particularly when politeness violations transition into impoliteness. Brown and Levinson (1987) describe negative face violations as instances where an individual’s autonomy is compromised through direct or implied impositions. Over time, these violations can intensify as language becomes more aggressive, shifting from neutral criticism to hostility. Culpeper (2011) identifies that impoliteness strategies escalate by adding forceful language, threats, or accusations, transitioning from a simple critique to a full-blown attack. This escalation is particularly common in digital political spaces, where the lack of face-to-face interaction enables more extreme expressions of hostility that would likely be mitigated in person.

**Example:** *“I hope he’s going to jail”*

This statement, though indirect, functions as negative impoliteness by psychologically pressuring Trump. The phrase “I hope” softens the desire for Trump’s punishment but still

conveys an aggressive wish for his removal from the public sphere.

### **Linguistic Analysis:**

Indirect statement: “I hope” introduces some mitigation, but the implied desire for Trump’s punishment is clear.

Psychological pressure: The comment places the desire for Trump’s jail sentence on record, pressuring the recipient to acknowledge it.

### **Social Context:**

Indirect statements like this are common in online discourse, where users may not want to openly express hostility but still wish to influence others' views about public figures.

Politeness Violation: Negative face is violated by pressuring Trump into a position where he must confront the possibility of legal consequences.

Impoliteness Strategy: Negative impoliteness, the speaker indirectly pressures Trump with their wish for his imprisonment.

Linguistic Indicators: The phrase “I hope,” which softens but does not eliminate the aggressive desire for punishment.

## **F. Strategic Use of Linguistic Aggression in Political Discourse**

Linguistic aggression in online political discourse is a deliberate strategy that combines politeness violations with impoliteness strategies to maximize the emotional and social impact of the message. Brown and Levinson (1987) discuss how individuals often violate politeness norms, both intentionally and unintentionally, but in political discourse, these violations are often strategic. Culpeper (2011) outlines how impoliteness strategies, such as bald on record, mock politeness, and withholding politeness, are used not only to criticize but also to shame, disturb, and discredit individuals. The strategic use of such impoliteness is common in online political discussions, where social norms of politeness are often ignored in favor of more aggressive and attention-grabbing language intended to provoke strong reactions from the audience and public figures (Locher & Watts, 2005).

**Example:** Online political attacks often combine disregard for politeness norms (Brown & Levinson, 1987) with deliberate impoliteness strategies (Culpeper, 2011) to maximize humiliation. Bald on-record impoliteness, mock politeness, and withholding politeness all serve to escalate the verbal aggression in digital spaces. These techniques are strategically used to blur

the line between criticism and outright hostility, particularly in politically charged contexts.

The findings demonstrate that online political communication often blends politeness violations with impoliteness strategies to achieve maximum emotional impact. The strategic use of linguistic aggression, from mock politeness to bald on-record impoliteness, allows individuals to not only criticize but humiliate and attack political figures, leveraging the anonymity and brevity of digital discourse to intensify the impoliteness.

## **B. Discussion**

This research examines netizen comments about Donald Trump on Instagram during the 2024 presidential campaign. The analysis results indicate that there are politeness violations and impoliteness strategies that appear simultaneously, showing that these comments not only disregard politeness norms, but also actively target and attack the public figure. Out of 42 comments analyzed, 37 comments exhibited the use of impoliteness strategies, while the other 5 fell into the category of politeness violations. The most dominant strategy is positive impoliteness, which is used to attack Trump's social image and credibility as a leader, with the use of derogatory labels such as “clown” and “worst president in American history”.

This finding shows how social platforms like Instagram provide a space for forms of linguistic aggression, which are often anonymous and allow interaction with a wide audience (Ambarita et al., 2023). This encourages netizens to not hesitate to use aggressive strategies such as bald on-record and mock politeness. In a politically charged context, these linguistic strategies are motivated by the urgency to express dislike towards controversial figures, such as Trump. Furthermore, these comments are often used to defend the political identity and moral values of netizens, leading to symbolic resistance against figures of power (Culpeper, 2011).

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the strategies of impoliteness employed by netizens are not merely forms of hate speech but also a symbolic resistance that contains ideological expressions against Trump as a figure of power (Patimah et al., 2022). These harsh comments are often used as tools for negotiating social identity and the political position of netizens (Situmorang et al., 2024). Harsh comments are not only personal expressions but also ideological discourses that reflect distrust towards the power represented by Trump. This also indicates a crisis of trust in political institutions and national leaders (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

The results of this research are in line with findings in previous research, such as Asri, Adrianis, and Revita (2020) in their research on impoliteness strategies in Twitter comments about Trump and Jokowi

found that impoliteness in political comments is often used to belittle public figures. This study reinforces that finding by demonstrating that sarcasm and mock politeness are dominant strategies on Instagram, similar to what was found by Hansson (2024) in his analysis of sarcasm as a rhetorical strategy in political social media. However, this study expands previous findings by identifying that sarcasm is used more explicitly to criticize policies rather than just to attack individuals.

From the perspective of bald on-record impoliteness, this study is consistent with Diatma & Wijayanto (2024) who found the use of bald on-record impoliteness in political interactions on social media, as seen in comments that lead to direct attacks on Trump without any mitigation efforts. However, unlike the findings of Diatma & Wijayanto (2024), which focused more on interactions in the sports world (comments on social media related to FIFA), this study shows that attacks on Trump are more related to ideological criticism involving controversial political policies.

Meanwhile, Subyantoro & Apriyanto (2019) identified that in the context of Indonesian politics, comments that use positive impoliteness are often used to mock political figures. This finding is similar to the results of this research which shows that comments directed at Trump often use positive impoliteness to undermine his political image, as observed in 14 comments that indicated this strategy. This research also notes that negative impoliteness found in 6 comments is not only



aggressive but also threatening, which aligns with findings from Nick (2018) that also highlighted the use of threatening language in political discourse on social media, although the context differs in the political campaign in the United States.

In terms of withholding politeness, this research confirms the findings by Theresia & Nisa (2024) which show how withholding politeness is used in political comments to diminish respect towards public figures. This finding enriches the literature by demonstrating that the strategy of withholding politeness is also explicitly used in Trump's campaign, particularly in comments aimed at challenging authority or policies without showing respect.

There is previous research that also examines the use of impoliteness in digital communication, especially focusing on public figures. For example, research by Björkenfeldt and Gustafsson (2023) analyzes the use of morality and impoliteness as tools of social control in online harassment of journalists on Twitter. Their study also looks at how impoliteness strategies are used in political contexts, particularly concerning anti-press rhetoric and populism. Although there are similarities in the use of impoliteness to attack public figures, this research focuses on comments directed at Donald Trump on Instagram during the 2024 presidential campaign, which is more related to critiques of political policies and Trump's personality, rather than just attacks on press freedom. So, although there are similarities in the use of impoliteness, the

political context is different. This research emphasizes how comments on social media can serve as a tool to criticize political policies and political figures without directly attacking media freedom.

Meanwhile, Jovanović's (2024) research on strategies of impoliteness in Instagram comments regarding the coronation of King Charles III aligns with the findings in this research, particularly in the use of sarcasm or mock politeness. Jovanović (2024) found that Spanish-speaking commentators used sarcasm more frequently than English-speaking commentators, indicating a cultural difference in impoliteness strategies. In this study, although sarcasm and mock politeness were found to be used to attack Trump, the researcher observed that comments in English utilized a greater combination of various impoliteness strategies, such as bald on-record and positive impoliteness. This indicates that English comments employed more strategies that were explicit and direct in attacking Trump's political policies.

There is also a reasearch by Saz-Rubio (2023) that analyzes impolite language in response to holiday greetings from the Prime Ministers of Spain and the UK on Twitter. Both studies use Culpeper's (1996, 2011) theory of Impoliteness to categorize and analyze the impoliteness strategies used in digital comments. Saz-Rubio shows that in these comments, direct impoliteness strategies are used more frequently than indirect ones. The researcher also found in this study that impoliteness strategies towards Trump are more often in the form of direct

attacks such as bald on-record and positive impoliteness. However, Saz-Rubio's (2023) research examines comments on international political figures, while this research focuses on Trump's digital political campaign that is more related to domestic politics in the United States. Additionally, Saz-Rubio (2023) found that sarcastic comments are more frequently used by British netizens, while this study shows that bald-on record and positive impoliteness are more frequently used to attack Trump.

In another research by Suganda, Yuliawati, & Darmayanti (2022) that also used Culpeper's (1996) theory of Impoliteness to examine the use of coarse language in Instagram comments in Indonesia, they found that abusive language is often used in comments that refer to characteristics, activities, and professions. The results of this research indicate that impoliteness in Indonesia often involves the misuse of social and cultural norms that are harsher and more direct, which aligns with the findings in some comments that use profanity to attack Trump. However, the research by Suganda, Yuliawati, & Darmayanti (2022) emphasizes the cultural context of Indonesia, while this research focuses on criticism of political figures in the United States in the context of the 2024 presidential campaign and tends to involve a more diverse and structured array of impoliteness strategies.

This research reinforces the relevance of Culpeper's (2011) theory of impoliteness in the context of digital politics. However, these findings also indicate that ideological context and the character of public figures

significantly determine the linguistic strategies chosen by users. In addition, politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) suggests that violations of these social norms are often intentional in contexts filled with political tension.

This research also opens opportunities for the development of digital impoliteness categorization methods, taking into account visual elements such as the use of emojis, caps lock, and repeated exclamation marks as indicators of rudeness in digital text. This makes an important contribution to the methodology of speech analysis on social media.

The findings from this research can be used as a basis for the development of digital literacy and content moderation policies, particularly in recognizing hate speech that camouflages itself as sarcasm or political humor. At the academic level, these results can also serve as important educational material for digital pragmatics to understand the dynamics of communication in the political context.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

In this chapter, the researcher presents the conclusion and suggestions based on the findings and discussion of the analysis regarding politeness violations and impoliteness strategies in Donald Trump's Instagram comments during the 2024 presidential campaigns. The conclusion summarizes the key results drawn from the research, while the suggestions provide recommendations for future researchers who are interested in discussing politeness violations and impoliteness strategies in the digital realm.

#### **A. Conclusion**

This research was conducted to identify the forms of politeness violations and impoliteness strategies found in netizens' comments on Donald Trump's Instagram posts during the 2024 United States presidential campaign. The analysis of 42 selected comments revealed that social media users frequently violated politeness principles, particularly by ignoring both positive and negative face. These violations were evident through direct criticism, harsh language, and expressions that disregarded the dignity and autonomy of the addressee. Such findings reinforce the idea that social media platforms have become a public space where individuals feel increasingly free to express themselves without concern for conventional politeness norms.

Surprisingly, the most dominant forms of attack found in these comments were not overtly vulgar or explicitly aggressive. Instead, strategies such as sarcasm, mock politeness, and indirect face threats were far more common. This finding challenges the widespread assumption that online political hostility is always expressed through direct and explicit insults. In fact, indirect impoliteness especially when masked through sarcasm or rhetorical phrasing proved to be more psychologically piercing and socially effective. This suggests that digital users often rely on subtle yet strategic language choices to express political disapproval, mockery, or disdain in a way that is both powerful and contextually adaptive.

In addition, this research found that politeness violations and impoliteness strategies often co-occur within the same utterance. Many comments began with a violation of positive or negative face and simultaneously employed specific impoliteness strategies such as bald on-record insults, sarcasm, or rhetorical exaggeration to amplify their impact. This pattern shows that impoliteness is not merely a failure to be polite, but rather a deliberate linguistic performance designed to degrade or provoke. In online political spaces like Instagram, language is no longer used solely to inform or debate, but also to attack, shame, and reinforce group identities.

This research contributes to the field of pragmatics and digital discourse analysis by offering a more nuanced understanding of how

impoliteness operates in social media-based political communication. Specifically, it extends Culpeper's (2011) theory of impoliteness into the Instagram platform, an environment that is rich in visual and rhetorical performance. The findings reveal that mock politeness and sarcastic framing are not peripheral strategies, but central tools used by users to express ideological disagreement and political stance. Furthermore, by demonstrating that politeness violations and impoliteness strategies frequently intersect, this study challenges the conventional view that these are separate phenomena. In doing so, it opens the door to rethinking how face, intention, and rhetorical force function in online political discourse.

## **B. Suggestion**

This research acknowledges several limitations that offer opportunities for refinement in future studies. The dataset consists of only 42 Instagram comments, which limits the scope of linguistic variation captured. The analysis also focuses solely on one political figure, Donald Trump, narrowing the exploration of impoliteness strategies that might differ across other personalities. Furthermore, the study is restricted to a single platform, Instagram, without comparison to comment behavior on other social media platforms such as Twitter or TikTok, which may exhibit different communicative norms. The direction of analysis is one-sided, focusing only on users' comments without considering how political figures or their supporters respond.

In terms of methodology, the use of a quasi-qualitative approach allows for rich interpretation but lacks statistical generalizability.

To address these limitations, future research could expand the dataset to include multiple social media platforms and a greater number of user interactions. Analyzing cross-platform patterns would help identify whether specific impoliteness strategies are shaped by platform design or user communities. Including other political figures such as Kamala Harris or Joe Biden may also reveal how gender, ideology, and public perception influence linguistic behavior. Methodologically, employing a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative discourse analysis with quantitative coding could enhance the reliability of findings. A longitudinal perspective comparing data across different election periods may further uncover how digital political discourse evolves over time.

In addition, examining reciprocal interactions between users and public figures would enrich the understanding of how impoliteness operates not only as a mode of expression but also as a catalyst for engagement, defense, or conflict escalation. Attention should also be given to the broader social and ethical implications, such as the potential for impolite discourse to intensify polarization, reduce public trust, or affect voter attitudes. Exploring these areas would contribute to a more comprehensive and responsible interpretation of political communication in today's digital environment.



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## CURRICULUM VITAE



**Rohmatul Ummah** was born in Sidoarjo on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2003. She graduated from MAN 3 Tambakberas, Jombang. During her study in Senior High School, she actively participated in ESO (Excellent Student Organization's). She graduated from the school and continued her higher education in 2021 at the English Literature Department of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. During her study at the university, she deepened her interest in media and language through internship and organizational involvement. She further explored her passion for journalism and broadcasting through an internship at Times Indonesia Network and RRI Surakarta. She also activated in some organizations such as *Himpunan Mahasiswa Program Studi* (HMPS) in vice chief of secretary (2022) and *Himpunan Mahasiswa Malang Alumni Bahrul Ulum* (HIMMABA) in secretary (2024 - 2025). This has been very helpful for her in gaining new insights, valuable experiences, and in developing critical thinking skills to prepare her for future challenges after graduating from this university.