

**IMPOLITENESS AS A REFLECTION OF RACIAL
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AFRICAN FOOTBALLERS
ON SOCIAL MEDIA X**

THESIS

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
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THESIS

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MALANG**

2025

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled **“Impoliteness as a Reflection of Racial Discrimination Against African Footballers on Social Media X”** 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.

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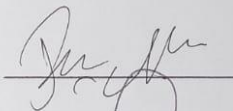
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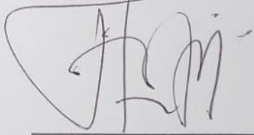
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MOTTO

“Don't let your heart leave you unless your mind grows legs and follows it.”

-Patrick Star

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the people who are part of my life: My parents, brother, family, friends, and lecturers who always pray for me, motivate me and support me in completing this thesis.

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Alhamdulillah rabbil 'aalamiin, with sincere gratitude to God Almighty, for all the abundance of grace, love, strength, and peace of mind that has accompanied every step in the long process of preparing this thesis. With His permission and will, I was able to complete this thesis as a condition for obtaining the degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S.) entitled “Impoliteness as a Reflection of Racial Discrimination Against African Footballers on Social Media X”.

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ABSTRACT

Pratama, Irwan Aditya (2025). Impoliteness as a Reflection of Racial Discrimination Against African Footballers on Social Media X. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature. Faculty of Humanities. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Abdul Aziz, M.Ed., Ph.D.

Keywords: Impoliteness, Critical Discourse Analysis, Racism, Social Media, Sports.

This research examines the phenomenon of hate speech containing racial discrimination against black footballers on social media X (previously known as Twitter). The background of the research is based on the rise of discriminatory speech directed at black footballers, especially on digital platforms that have developed massively. The research aims to analyze the types of impoliteness strategies in racial discrimination utterances based on impoliteness theory and examine the process of discrimination through these utterances with Fairclough's three-dimensional model Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. The qualitative method was used by collecting data in the form of netizen comments containing elements of impoliteness in the comments section of X accounts belonging to African footballers such as Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Junior, and Marcus Rashford. The results show that there are 29 impoliteness utterances in the form of racial discrimination which were two dominant impoliteness strategies, Positive Impoliteness and Bald on Record, each appearing 10 times. This was followed by sarcasm/mock politeness, which appeared 5 times, and negative impoliteness, which appeared 4 times. This research demonstrates that racism against Black footballers represents a systematic ideological and historical framework intersecting racial and national identity reflections, operating through strategies designed to undermine the legitimacy of Black players' presence in elite European football. Future research on racism in football discourse should be conducted longitudinally to observe changes in patterns of racism over time and players' experiences, and multimodal discourse analysis should be used to understand how racism is reflected through text, images, videos, and digital media.

ABSTRAK

Pratama, Irwan Aditya (2025). Impoliteness as a Reflection of Racial Discrimination Against African Footballers on Social Media X. Skripsi. Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Humaniora. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing: Abdul Aziz, M.Ed., Ph.D.

Keywords: Ketidaksopanan, Analisa Wacana Kritis, Rasisme, Media Sosial, Olahraga.

Penelitian ini mengkaji fenomena ujaran kebencian yang mengandung diskriminasi rasial terhadap pesepakbola berkulit hitam di media sosial X (sebelumnya dikenal dengan nama Twitter). Latar belakang penelitian didasari oleh maraknya ujaran diskriminatif yang ditujukan kepada pesepakbola berkulit hitam, terutama di platform digital yang telah berkembang secara masif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis jenis-jenis strategi impoliteness dalam ujaran diskriminasi rasial dan mengkaji proses terjadinya diskriminasi melalui ujaran-ujaran tersebut dengan pendekatan Analisis Wacana Kritis (Critical Discourse Analysis/CDA) model tiga dimensi dari Fairclough. Metode kualitatif digunakan dengan mengumpulkan data berupa komentar netizen yang mengandung unsur impoliteness di kolom komentar akun 'X' milik pesepakbola berkulit hitam keturunan Afrika seperti Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Junior, dan Marcus Rashford. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat 29 ungkapan ketidakramahan dalam bentuk diskriminasi rasial, yang merupakan dua strategi ketidakramahan dominan, yaitu Positive Impoliteness dan Bald on Record, masing-masing muncul 10 kali. Disusul oleh sarkasme/ketidakramahan palsu, yang muncul 5 kali, dan ketidakramahan negatif, yang muncul 4 kali. Penelitian ini juga menunjukkan bahwa rasisme terhadap pemain sepak bola kulit hitam mewakili kerangka ideologis dan historis sistematis yang memadukan konstruksi identitas rasial dan nasional, beroperasi melalui strategi-strategi yang dirancang untuk merusak legitimasi kehadiran pemain kulit hitam di sepak bola elit Eropa. Penelitian masa depan seharusnya tentang rasisme dalam wacana sepak bola perlu dilakukan secara longitudinal untuk melihat perubahan pola rasisme seiring waktu dan pengalaman pemain dan analisis wacana multimodal seharusnya digunakan untuk memahami bagaimana rasisme terefleksi melalui teks, gambar, video, dan media digital.

مُلَخَّص

براتاما، عروان أديتيا (2025). الوقاحة كأداة للتمييز ضد لاعبي كرة القدم السود من أصول أفريقية على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي. أطروحة جامعية. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي. كلية العلوم الإنسانية. جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف: عبد العزيز، ماجستير التربية، دكتوراه

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوقاحة، تحليل الخطاب النقدي، العنصرية، وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي، الرياضة

يدرس هذا البحث ظاهرة خطاب الكراهية المتضمن للتمييز العنصري ضد لاعبي كرة القدم السود على منصة التواصل الاجتماعي إكس (المعروفة سابقًا باسم تويتر). تستند خلفية البحث إلى تزايد الخطاب التمييزي الموجه ضد لاعبي كرة القدم السود، خاصة على المنصات الرقمية التي تطورت بشكل هائل. يهدف البحث إلى تحليل أنواع استراتيجيات الوقاحة في التصريحات ذات التمييز العنصري استنادًا إلى نظرية الوقاحة ثلاثي الأبعاد (CDA) ودراسة عملية التمييز من خلال هذه التصريحات باستخدام نهج تحليل الخطاب النقدي لفيركلوف. تم استخدام المنهج النوعي من خلال جمع البيانات في شكل تعليقات مستخدمي الإنترنت التي تحتوي على عناصر الوقاحة في أقسام التعليقات لحسابات منصة إكس الخاصة بلاعبي كرة القدم السود من أصول أفريقية مثل كيليان مبابي وفينيسيوس جونيور وماركوس راشفورد. تظهر النتائج وجود 29 تصريحًا غير مهذب في شكل تمييز عنصري بتفاصيل 10 وقاحة إيجابية، و4 وقاحة سلبية، و10 وقاحة صريحة، و5 سخرية/تهكم مهذب، ولم يتم العثور على حجب التهذيب. يكشف هذا التحليل أن تلك التصريحات تشكلت من خلال استمرارية تاريخية مع العنصرية الاستعمارية والعلمية، والتي تطورت وتكيفت مع سياقات اجتماعية جديدة. يدرس هذا البحث كيف أن تصريحات الوقاحة التي تبدو فردية مرتبطة في الواقع بأنماط أوسع من العنصرية التاريخية والأيدولوجية والمؤسسية. من خلال هذا التحليل، من المتوقع أن يقدم هذا البحث مساهمة عملية، وهي مكافحة التمييز وعدم التسامح في عالم الرياضة ووسائل التواصل الاجتماعي وتحسين فهمنا للتفاعلات المعقدة بين اللغة والهوية وعلاقات القوة في العصر الرقمي.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the background of the study, research questions, research significance, scope and limitations, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of The Study

Racial discrimination still often happens in sports, especially in football. This discrimination often takes the form of discrimination against a particular racial group. Not only in the real world, but much discrimination occurs on social media (Matamoros-Fernández & Farkas, 2021). Many football fans express disappointment or anger towards clubs or players by blaspheming without substance; sometimes, the blasphemy or hate speech leads to elements of racial discrimination that occur on social media (Akinmusuyi, 2023). According to the PFA (Professional Football Association), the association of professional footballers in England and Wales, on its website, 825,515 tweets were directed at the selected players two years ago, identifying over 3,000 explicitly abusive messages. 56% of all the discriminatory abuse identified during the study was racist, and the research was only conducted over a six-week period.

African footballers are often the target of such hate speech because of their ancestry. Almost all famous black players who play in Europe are people of African descent, as shown by data from reliable websites such as Transfermarkt. Famous players, such as Marcus Rashford, who has St. Kitts Nevis ancestors; Kylian Mbappe, of Cameroonian descent; and Vinícius Júnior, of tribal descent in

Cameroon; and many more African footballers, have been victims of hate speech on social media simply because of their performances on the pitch. The haters of this hate speech often take a cover behind the anonymity provided by the platform, allowing them the freedom to express hate speech without direct consequences (Davani et al., 2023). The massive social media presence today allows many people to talk about everything.

Hate speech against black players on social media shows that racial discrimination remains a significant problem in modern sports. These attacks are not only psychologically damaging to the targeted players but also affect the image of football (Kearns et al., 2023). Moreover, it shows how social media is a place where intolerance and inequality are still very much present, undermining football's efforts to create an inclusive and anti-discrimination environment. Therefore, everyone needs to use social media wisely. We must maintain a critical attitude and speak respectfully to make social media a welcoming place for everyone.

Hate speech by netizens on social media can be studied using a pragmatic approach. Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on language use in situational contexts and its relationship to communicative objectives and social interactions. According to Yule (1996), Pragmatics discusses how language is used in a social context, considering aspects such as purpose, context, social roles, shared knowledge, and the implications of language acts performed. Therefore, this research is suitable for the pragmatic approach.

The pragmatics approach in this article is crucial to understanding the function, meaning, process, and social impact of hate speech aimed at black football players on social media. Pragmatics reveals how hate speech violates politeness and enables it as a strategic tool for social discrimination (Culpeper et al., 2017). With its ability to explore social context, speaker intent, and recipient response, pragmatics provides deep insight into what language can contribute to social identity in a challenging digital environment.

In the study of pragmatics, Jonathan Culpeper's theory of impoliteness plays a vital role in understanding how utterances are used to verbally attack, demean, or hurt individuals. People use Impolite expressions when talking, but dirty words are used more frequently. Culpeper (1996) argues that impoliteness is a communication strategy designed to produce confrontation, with speakers intentionally violating politeness norms to threaten the target's honor and social identity. In contrast to politeness, which aims to maintain social harmony, impoliteness can ruin interpersonal relationships and create conflict in social interactions (Culpeper, 1996).

There are five types of impoliteness strategies. Culpeper (1996, 2005) identifies five impoliteness strategies such as bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm/mock politeness, and withhold politeness. Bald on record impoliteness is an expression of a threatening face done directly, clearly, and without ambiguity. Then, positive impoliteness is an expression intentionally intended to ruin the interlocutor's desire for acceptance and appreciation in a social context. In addition, negative impoliteness is an

impoliteness strategy that intentionally threatens a person's negative face, which is the basic desire to be free from interruptions and have personal autonomy. Then, sarcasm/mock politeness is an expression that explicitly shows politeness but with the opposite intention to attack or threaten the other person's face. Last, withhold politeness is indicated by the absence of expected politeness in social interactions, which can be interpreted as a deliberate sign of disrespect.

Social media has become a significant discursive arena in shaping public opinion about professional athletes, including African footballers. While these digital platforms offer democratic spaces for expression, they are also often places where racial stereotypes are reproduced and reinforced, leading to discrimination. Therefore, this research also uses the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework by Fairclough to examine how the process of racial discrimination and discrimination against African footballers is manifested on social media discourse.

In Fairclough's CDA (1992, 2013), there are three dimensions used to analyze a discourse. The approach offers a comprehensive analytical framework to unravel the complexity of the phenomenon of racial discrimination or discrimination on social media. First, the textual (micro) dimension allows us to examine linguistic features in netizen comments, such as word choice, syntactic structure, and rhetorical patterns that lead to the stigmatization of black footballers. Second, the discursive practice dimension (meso) helps identify the process of production, distribution, and consumption of racist discourse on social media. Third, the sociocultural practice (macro), which delves into the broader social and cultural context in which discourse occurs and scrutinizing how language both reflects and

shapes societal structures, power relations, and ideologies. Thus, this approach can reveal the linguistic and discursive mechanisms that enable the normalization and legitimization of discriminatory attitudes towards African footballers.

This study focused on social media because, with the development of the digital era, social media has become the main platform for various forms of social interaction. Social media interaction includes discussions about sports (Kearns et al., 2023). In this study, social media X (previously known as Twitter) was chosen as the main object to analyze hate speech against black football players, as this platform has unique characteristics that facilitate the spread of hate speech more intensively than other platforms. According to Maarouf (2024), X is the most frequently used platform to spread hate speech including racial discrimination against a person compared to other social media platforms. The characteristics of X that allow freedom of expression encourage users to use more direct and often abusive language, thus increasing the potential for spreading impoliteness (Farkas & Neumayer, 2020).

In addition, hate speech on social media, especially on X, occurs because it is easy to create an account on the application so that people who commit hate speech can easily access it. Ascher (2019) emphasizes that the anonymity offered by X, despite verification processes, still allows users to create accounts without a strictly verified identity, thus providing a ‘protection shield’ for hate speech perpetrators. Based on these considerations, X is seen as the most representative platform to analyze impoliteness strategies and racial identity discrimination of African footballers.

In this context, impolite speech or hate speech on social media becomes an effective utterance to discriminate the racial identity of African footballers. Both explicit and implicit hate speech aims to reinforce negative stereotypes and intensify social differences, thus worsening the process of racial discrimination (Vargas et al., 2023). Impolite speech (impoliteness) can be used to disrespect social identities, such as using inappropriate or insulting identity markers. (Culpeper, 2016). Impoliteness theory analyzes how hate speech is practiced, while critical discourse analysis offers a framework to understand about how discrimination against specific individuals or groups that appear in conversations on social media. In pragmatic analysis, impoliteness theory and critical discourse analysis can be combined for research effectiveness in analyzing how hate speech containing impoliteness elements on social media is used to discriminates the social identity of African footballers.

Previous research on impoliteness and discrimination on social media can be classified into several groups. The first group includes articles that address the phenomenon of impoliteness on social media, which is further subdivided into two sub-groups: articles that examine impoliteness in the context of sports (Akinmusuyi, 2023; Ginting & Fitriany, 2025; Rosén, 2023; Wikang et al., 2024), and articles that explore impoliteness in the context of non-sports (Bustan & Alakrash, 2020; Salimi & Mortazavi, 2024). Meanwhile, the second group consists of articles focusing on the phenomenon of discrimination in in the context of sports (Almuslehi, 2023; Ash et al., 2023; Manning et al., 2021; Penfold & Cleland, 2022; Petersen & Wichmann, 2021; Raheem et al., 2024; Utych, 2022; Van Lienden &

van Sterkenburg, 2022). The third group consists of articles focusing on constructing racial discrimination (Césaire, 2023; Haslam et al., 2019; C. L. Ortiz, 2024; S. M. Ortiz, 2021; Pfeiffer & Hu, 2024).

Previous studies collectively employed systematic analytical approaches to examine impoliteness, hate speech, and discrimination across digital and sports contexts. Researchers primarily used established theoretical frameworks Culpeper's impoliteness strategies and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze social media comments, tweets, and media commentary (Akinmusuyi, 2023; Almuslehi, 2023; Ash et al., 2023; Bustan & Alakrash, 2020; Diatma & Wijayanto, 2024; Ginting & Fitriany, 2025; Manning et al., 2021; Salimi & Mortazavi, 2024). They collected substantial datasets samples from platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Several studies conducted comparative analyses across demographic lines, examining how race and gender influence the nature and reception of hostile language (Utych, 2022; Van Lienden & van Sterkenburg, 2022). Additionally, researchers analyzed traditional media through Polish football commentary and beauty product advertisements to understand how discriminatory ideologies are reflected and perpetuated in mainstream discourse (Raheem et al., 2024; Van Lienden & van Sterkenburg, 2022).

Several studies consistently identified dominant impoliteness strategies, with bald on record impoliteness (direct, unambiguous hostility) and positive impoliteness (attacks on identity and dignity) appearing most frequently across studies (Akinmusuyi, 2023; Bustan & Alakrash, 2020; Diatma & Wijayanto, 2024; Rosén, 2023; Salimi & Mortazavi, 2024). Racial bias emerged as a significant

factor, with studies revealing that dehumanizing language reduces support for Black athletes' protests but has no effect when directed at White athletes (Utych, 2022), while Polish football commentary perpetuated "Black Brawn–White Brain" stereotypes (Van Lienden & van Sterkenburg, 2022). Gender differences appeared in NBA/WNBA comparisons, showing distinct patterns of abuse directed at female versus male athletes (Manning et al., 2021; Rosén, 2023). Previous studies also found that online hostility often reflects broader sociocultural tensions, with beauty advertisements reinforcing white supremacist ideologies and Middle Eastern-directed tweets employing systematic derogatory language (Almuslehi, 2023; Raheem et al., 2024).

Despite valuable contributions, previous studies share significant limitations that restrict their broader applicability and impact. Most critically, researchers have not examined the psychological impact on targeted individuals or proposed concrete intervention strategies beyond general calls for collective action. The studies lack diversity in scope, typically focusing on single platforms, specific events, or limited timeframes, which restricts generalizability. Researchers have not conducted audience reception studies to understand how viewers interpret or internalize discriminatory messages, nor have they explored the motivations behind commenters' hostile behavior. Cross-cultural comparisons remain largely absent, with most studies confined to specific national or linguistic contexts. Additionally, researchers have not addressed intersectionality comprehensively, often focusing on single identity markers (race or gender) rather than examining how multiple factors interact.

Although many studies have analyzed impoliteness in various online contexts, there still needs to be a significant gap in the relationship between racial discrimination reflection and sports in impoliteness studies, especially on social media. Previous studies have primarily not focused on how impoliteness strategies are specifically used to discriminate social identities in sports discourse. This neglect is seen in the context of football, where black footballers are often subjected to racial abuse online (Cable et al., 2022). Furthermore, although social identity theory has been applied in various communication studies, its relationship with impoliteness theory examines the discrimination of particular social identities, specifically racial identities, in sports, which remains unexplored.

This research examines this gap by taking a racially focused view and specifically examining impoliteness directed towards black footballers on social media platforms. By combining Impoliteness theory and Critical Discourse Analysis, this research offers a new perspective on how language discriminates African footballers in online spaces. As such, this research contributes to our knowledge of impoliteness based on forms in sports contexts and provides insights into the broader mechanisms of social identity discrimination in online spaces through linguistic ways.

A discussion about the discrimination of African footballers is relevant and unique because black football players, as public figures with global influence, are often targets of racial discrimination, exposing the complex relationship between popularity and their vulnerability towards attacks based on identity (Glynn & Brown, 2023). The uniqueness of this topic is in the focus on how impoliteness not

only functions as a concept to recognize impolite actions linguistically but can also be used to emphasize social and racial hierarchies in the digital space. This research is expected to reveal how discriminatory utterances are reflected through hate speech on social media, specifically against black football players.

This research is based on the assumption that the interaction of the digital world is very vulnerable to the existence of racial discrimination through hate speech. The following assumption is that on social media, netizens often discriminate social identities because they feel protected by the anonymity provided by the platform. The last assumption is that pragmatic analysis will be able to reveal what impoliteness strategies in hate speech or impolite speech by netizens discriminate a particular social identity on social media.

This study aims to identify and analyze the types of impoliteness used on social media to discriminate black football players with impoliteness theory. Impoliteness theory shown through hate speech often serves not only as a personal attack but also to discriminate of an individual's social identity based on their race (Culpeper, 2016). In addition, this study will also examine racial discriminations are reflected through impoliteness strategies against african footballers footballers on social media with three-dimensional approach by Fairclough.

B. Research Questions

1. What types of impoliteness strategies used on social media to discriminate against African footballers?
2. How are the impoliteness strategies reflected racial discrimination of African footballers on social media conversations?

C. Significance of The Study

This research contributes substantially to advancing our understanding of the intersections between linguistic, social identity, and racial discrimination in the context of sports and social media. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach that combines impoliteness theory with critical discourse analysis, the results of this study have the potential to make practical contributions that is to seeks to combat discrimination and intolerance in the world of sports and social media, as well as enhance our understanding of the complex interactions between language, identity, and power in the digital age.

D. Scope and Limitations

This research focuses on the impoliteness used by netizens to discriminate against African footballers in the comments section of the X accounts of several black footballers who are often the object of racial discrimination, such as Vinicius Junior, Kylian This, and Marcus Rashford. The researcher chose these footballers because they are the top 3 black footballers with the most followers on social media per November 2024. These followers combine three major social media platforms: X, Instagram, and Facebook. This research will use the framework of Culpeper's theory of impoliteness (1996) and Fairclough's CDA (Fairclough, 1992a, 2013a) to analyze data in the form of texts that are indicated to discriminate the racial identity of black footballers on social media.

However, this research has some limitations. First, the data was only collected in the comments section of posts uploaded after the player had just lost a match, had a significant performance shown by contributing several goals and assists in a match, and had just won an individual or team title. Secondly, this research is limited to textual analysis and does not include visual or multimodal analysis of social media content. Lastly, this study focuses on English utterances.

E. Definition of Key Terms

1. **Pragmatics** is the study of how context affects meaning in communication on social media.
2. **Impoliteness** is an act of communication by netizens that intentionally attacks black football players, either in direct or indirect ways.
3. **Critical discourse analysis** is analytical approach that examines how discriminatory discourses African footballers are manifested, normalized, and reproduced on social media.
4. **Racial discrimination** is a social process in African footballers being discriminated because of their race.
5. **African footballers** is a term that refers to football players who have an African ethnic background and darker skin.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter contains the related literature review of the research topic which are pragmatics, impoliteness, critical discourse analysis, and racism.

A. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on language use in situational contexts and its relationship to communicative objectives and social interactions. According to Yule (1996), pragmatics focuses on how meaning is conveyed by speakers and interpreted by listeners in specific situations. O’Keeffe, Clancy, and Adolphs (2019) states that pragmatics is a language study that identifies language as dependent on context. This means that everything depends on the speaker’s or listener’s point of view. The speaker’s point of view will be related to what is in someone’s mind. Violations of pragmatic rules also lead to communication errors (Scollon et al., 2011). Because of this, pragmatism can be concluded as having a crucial role, as people can misunderstand the speaker’s intention if the rules are violated.

There are some fundamental principles in pragmatics, such as the concept of conversational implicature introduced by the philosopher H.P. Grice (1975). Grice proposed that in conversation, speakers and listeners follow a set of cooperative principles and maxims that allow them to infer meaning beyond the literal, semantic meaning of the words used (Grice, 1975). Pragmatic studies have also explored the role of speech acts, which are the actions performed by the utterance of certain kinds

of utterances (Austin, 1975; Searle, 1969). In addition, pragmatics considers the influence of politeness, face-saving strategies, and the role of context in shaping the meaning and interpretation of language (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Culpeper then developed it into an impoliteness strategy to analyze utterances that violate politeness norms.

Racial discrimination on social media platforms presents a complex pragmatic phenomenon where the contextual nature of language use becomes critically important in understanding both the perpetration and interpretation of discriminatory communication. The digital context fundamentally alters the pragmatic landscape, as the what Culpeper's impoliteness strategies would classify as deliberate face-threatening acts targeting racial and ethnic groups. The pragmatic challenge lies in the fact that meaning interpretation becomes heavily dependent on the cultural and ideological positioning of both the speaker and the audience. This contextual dependency, as noted by O'Keeffe, Clancy, and Adolphs, means that the same utterance can function as harmless content to some users while serving as a tool for racial harassment to others, highlighting the critical need for platform moderation policies that account for pragmatic context rather than relying solely on semantic analysis of individual words or phrases.

B. Impoliteness

People use Impolite expressions when talking, but dirty words are used more frequently. In contrast to politeness, which aims to maintain social harmony, impoliteness can ruin interpersonal relationships and create conflict in social interactions (Culpeper, 1996). Bousfield and Locher (2008) argue that impoliteness

is an attitude that aggravates the face in a particular situation. Culpeper (2011) defines impoliteness as negative attitudes and behaviors that occur in specific contexts and are perceived as violating social expectations, beliefs, and feelings about how one should be treated in an interaction.

Culpeper (1996, 2005) identifies five impoliteness strategies such as bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm/mock politeness, and withhold politeness:

1. Bald On-Record Impoliteness

Bald On Record Impoliteness is an expression of a threatening face done directly, clearly, and without ambiguity. This strategy is a face-threatening act done directly, clearly, and without ambiguity in situations where the interlocutor's face is vulnerable to attack (Culpeper, 2005). Bald on-record impoliteness often appears without politeness markers and often uses taboo words and explicit insults. Bousfield (2008) explains that the main characteristic of this strategy is intentionality in ruining the face of the interlocutor, which is characterized by using clear and unambiguous language in conveying harmful intent (Culpeper, 2011). For Example, *"You are so stupid!"*. This utterance is face-threatening and is made directly and clearly.

2. Positive Impoliteness

Positive impoliteness is one of the impoliteness strategies specifically designed to ruin the positive face of the interlocutor. Culpeper (1996) defines this strategy as an expression intentionally intended to ruin the interlocutor's desire for acceptance

and appreciation in a social context. Positive impoliteness often involves more subtle but still ruining expressions, such as ignoring, excluding, or refusing to recognize the existence and value of the interlocutor in social interaction. Culpeper (2011) describes that this strategy can appear in various forms, including ignoring or not acknowledging the presence of the interlocutor, excluding someone from the activity, showing disinterest, separating oneself, using inappropriate identity markers, seeking disagreement, and making others feel uncomfortable. Culpeper (1996, 2005) categorizes the positive impoliteness strategy into several forms, such as:

1. Ignoring

For Example, *"If I pretend to not see him that means I can ignore him ever."*

This sentence shows the ignorance of someone

2. Excluding someone from the activity

For Example, *"You do not need to attend to this meeting"*. This sentence shows the exclusion of someone from an activity.

3. Showing disinterest

For example, *"Whatever, I do not care"*. This sentence shows disinterest in something or someone.

4. Separating oneself from someone

For example, *"I do not want to be in a group with him."* This sentence shows a refusal to associate with someone.

5. Using inappropriate identity markers

For example, "*What a bitch you are*". This sentence uses an inappropriate nickname.

6. Seeking disagreement

For example, "*Your religion is wrong, my religion is right.*" This sentence shows disagreement with someone's opinion.

7. Making others feel uncomfortable

For Example, "*How smelly is your body?*" This sentence makes others uncomfortable because it is too direct and lacks a preamble.

3. **Negative Impoliteness**

Negative impoliteness is the opposite of positive impoliteness. Culpeper (1996) explains that negative impoliteness is an impoliteness strategy that intentionally threatens a person's "negative face" - the basic desire to be free from interruptions and have personal autonomy. Negative impoliteness includes threatening or frightening, demeaning, invading personal space verbally or physically, and associating others with negative aspects.

1. Frightening

For example, "*If you do not follow my instructions, you will run into trouble.*". This sentence aims to frighten someone.

2. Demeaning

For example, “*You are foolish if you do not understand basic instructions.*” This sentence aims to demean someone.

3. Invading personal space verbally

For example, “*Can't you step back a little? We are too close.*” This sentence shows where someone is talking or being with another person at a distance that is too close, making the person feel uncomfortable.

4. Associating with Negative Aspects

For example, “You never seem to learn from your mistakes, do you? Everyone knows how sloppy you are.” The sentence shows how someone directly associates the other with negative traits or behaviors, which demeans their self-image.

4. Sarcasm/Mock Politeness

Sarcasm or mock politeness is one of the impoliteness strategies identified by Jonathan Culpeper in his study of social interaction. Mock politeness occurs when a speaker uses utterances that appear polite but are insincere and serve to attack or demean others (Culpeper, 1996). According to Culpeper (2005), this strategy involves using expressions that explicitly show politeness but with the opposite intention: to attack or threaten the other person's "face". For Example, someone might say, "Oh, of course, you awe'tre so smart," with a tone that indicates that they doubt the person's intelligence.

5. Withhold Politeness

Withhold politeness is indicated by the absence of expected politeness in social interactions, which can be interpreted as a deliberate sign of disrespect (Culpeper, 1996). An example is when someone does not thank another who has given a gift. This expression can make the giver feel unappreciated and disrespected.

Racial discrimination on social media can be systematically analyzed through Culpeper's framework of impoliteness strategies, revealing what types the impoliteness utterances which used to discriminate individuals based on their racial identity on social media. Bald on-record impoliteness manifests in explicitly racist comments, slurs, and direct verbal attacks. Positive impoliteness strategies are particularly prevalent in social media discrimination, where perpetrators systematically ignore contributions from racial minorities. Negative impoliteness appears through threats and intimidation tactics, and invasion of personal digital spaces. Sarcasm and mock politeness allow discriminatory actors to maintain plausible deniability while delivering racist messages through seemingly polite language. Withhold politeness is evident when users deliberately fail to acknowledge the achievements or contributions of racial minorities. This analysis demonstrates how social media platforms can serve as venues for sophisticated forms of racial discrimination on social media that operate through strategic violations of politeness norms, creating hostile digital environments that potentially amplify real-world racial tensions.

C. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach that explores how language, power, and ideology interact in social contexts (Ghanizadeh et al., 2020). Often seen as the pioneer of CDA, Norman Fairclough has played a key role in shaping this field (Roscoe, 2019). CDA aims to systematically explore, often investigating, how these practices are reflected by power relations (Ghanizadeh et al., 2020). Fairclough's contributions have been especially influential in connecting linguistic analysis with the workings of contemporary capitalist societies, highlighting how language both reflects and reinforces social inequalities (Poole, 2010). Moreover, CDA has evolved into a robust discipline that not only integrates insights from social theory but also promotes active social engagement and advocacy through critical research (Roscoe, 2019).

Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) integrates linguistic, interpretative, and sociological traditions to examine texts in their broader social and political contexts (Poole, 2010). The approach employs a three-dimensional model encompassing text, discourse practice, and social practice, with each dimension having its own area, process, and analysis model (Roscoe, 2019). This model enables researchers to connect detailed textual analysis (the micro-level) with broader societal structures and power dynamics (the macro-level), using tools from systemic functional linguistics and critical social theory (Ghanizadeh et al., 2020). Core to Fairclough's framework are the concepts of intertextuality, ideology, and hegemony. These ideas help explain how texts are reflected by other discourses, and more importantly, how language plays a key role in sustaining power structures by embedding ideologies that legitimize social inequalities (Poole, 2010).

1. Textual (Micro) Dimension

The textual dimension represents the foundational level of Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis framework. This dimension treats language not just as a tool for communication, but as a social practice, it is something that both reflects and influences the society in which it is used (Fairclough, 2013a). It focuses on the micro-level, where texts are closely examined to uncover the subtle ways in which language can carry and reproduce power and ideology (Roscoe, 2019). It provides the empirical foundation upon which the other dimensions of analysis can build.

The textual dimension examines vocabulary choices and patterns. This includes studying the connotations of specific words, identifying overlexicalization (an overuse of synonyms that may suggest an obsession or bias toward a particular idea), recognizing how reality is categorized through classification schemes, spotting evaluative language that implies judgments, and exploring metaphors that frame topics in specific ideological ways (Fairclough, 2013a). These lexical elements reveal implicit ideologies and power relations embedded in seemingly neutral language.

Grammatical analysis forms another crucial component of the textual dimension. Fairclough (1992) emphasizes examining transitivity patterns (types of processes represented and how participant roles are assigned), modality expressions (indicators of certainty, obligation, or permission), nominalization processes (converting actions into nouns, often removing agency), voice choices (active

versus passive reflections and their implications for responsibility attribution), and pronoun usage patterns that create inclusion or exclusion dynamics. These grammatical features often naturalize power relations and ideological positions in subtle ways.

Beyond vocabulary and grammar, the textual dimension also examines broader textual structures. This includes how information is emphasized or downplayed (thematic structure), how ideas are connected (cohesion), and how speech or viewpoints are represented. These elements influence not just what is communicated, but how it is understood and interpreted by readers (Ghanizadeh et al., 2020). When applying the textual dimension to media discourse, CDA methodically examines specific terms used to describe players of different races, identifies grammatical patterns that might subtly dehumanize or discriminate, analyzes how the agency is attributed differently in success versus failure scenarios, detects stereotypical language or coded terms, identify patterns of foregrounding racial identity over professional abilities, and uncover implicit assumptions about racial characteristics (Zahoor, 2021).

2. Discursive Practice

The discursive practice dimension in Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) focuses on how texts are produced, distributed, and understood within particular social and cultural settings. This dimension scrutinizes how texts are generated and interpreted within specific sociocultural contexts, emphasizing the dialectical relationship between language and social structures (Fairclough,

1992). Discursive practices encompass the ways in which texts draw upon extant discourses, ideologies, and power relations during their creation and interpretation (Fairclough, 1992a). For instance, authors may appropriate elements from other discourses or embed ideological constructs into their texts, while audiences interpret these texts based on their own sociocultural positions and experiential frameworks.

a) Text Production

The process of text production involves various aspects, such as the institutional position of the text producer, production routines, reference frameworks, and available resources. Text producers – whether individuals or institutions – hold specific social positions that shape their perspectives, access to discourse, and authority in producing texts (Fairclough, 2013a). Fairclough (2013a) also emphasizes that text production is often a collaborative process involving multiple actors with different roles. Moreover, text production is influenced by broader sociohistorical conditions. The role of ideology in text production is significant, as dominant societal values and assumptions are often internalized by text producers and reflected in the content they create, even unconsciously (Zahoor, 2021). The process also entails various decisions – both conscious and unconscious – about what content is included or excluded, which perspective is adopted, and what linguistic choices are made to convey specific messages (Zahoor, 2021).

b) Distribution Patterns

Fairclough (2013a) argues that patterns of text distribution are not neutral; instead, they reflect and reinforce existing social structures and power relations. Text distribution channels include various media such as print, broadcasting, digital

platforms, and interpersonal communication, each with different characteristics and reach. Disparities in access to these distribution channels reflect power inequalities in society – dominant groups typically have greater access to disseminate their discourse to broader audiences (Fairclough, 2013a). Texts follow different distribution pathways, which Fairclough refers to as intertextual chains. In this concept, texts often undergo transformation as they move from one context to another. The stability of texts during distribution is also a concern for Fairclough (Poole, 2010). Some texts, such as legal documents or religious texts, are distributed in ways that minimize change and maximize authority, while others may be distributed in ways that encourage adaptation and transformation.

c) Consumption and Interpretation

An essential aspect of discursive practice in Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is how texts are consumed and interpreted by audiences. This dimension looks closely at how people make sense of what they read, hear, or see within different social and cultural contexts. According to Fairclough (2013a), reading or engaging with a text isn't a passive act, it's an active and dynamic process. People don't just absorb information; they interpret it based on their own background, experiences, values, and worldviews (Poole, 2010). This interpretive process operates on multiple levels, ranging from a literal understanding of what is stated in the text to a deeper comprehension of the implications, assumptions, and underlying ideologies. Fairclough (1992) identifies that text interpretation involves the application of interpretive resources possessed by members of society, including language knowledge, beliefs about the social world, values, and assumptions.

d) Interdiscursivity

Interdiscursivity refers to how texts are reflected by blending elements from different discourses, genres, styles, or communicative practices. Interdiscursivity operates at a deeper and often less visible level, involving the blending of different discursive elements to create new texts (Zahoor, 2021). An important example of interdiscursivity is the commercialization of public discourse, where discursive conventions from the market domain (such as marketing language, consumer concepts, and service orientation) migrate into previously non-commercial domains, such as higher education or healthcare services. This shift reflects broader changes in society, particularly the neo-liberal transformation of public sectors, where institutions are expected to behave more like businesses. By understanding how different discourses are combined, we gain insight into how language evolves and how it responds to changing social, political, and economic conditions (Zahoor, 2021).

3. Sociocultural Practice

The sociocultural practice concept is a pivotal component of Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This dimension delves into the broader social and cultural context in which discourse occurs, scrutinizing how language both reflects and shapes societal structures, power relations, and ideologies (Roscoe, 2019).

a) Sociocultural structures and ideologies

Societal structures and ideologies are seen as powerful, macro-level forces that both shape and are reflected by language and discourse. These structures represent

the enduring institutional arrangements, hierarchical systems, and established social orders that organize society (Ghanizadeh et al., 2020). Ideologies are understood as deeply embedded belief systems which is sets of values, assumptions, and representations that serve to justify and maintain social inequalities, particularly in terms of power (Fairclough, 2013a). When applying this lens to issues like racism, CDA encourages us to look at how modern discourse is rooted in historical systems of racial classification that trace back to colonial times (Ghanizadeh et al., 2020). These historical structures established racial hierarchies that continue to shape contemporary discourse.

Fairclough (2013a) argues that these structures and ideologies are not fixed or unchangeable. Instead, they are constantly reinforced or occasionally challenged through discourse. In other words, the way we speak and write doesn't just reflect the world around us; it actively shapes and constructs it. This dynamic is what Fairclough calls a dialectical relationship: discourse and social structures are intertwined, each affecting the other (Roscoe, 2019). These subtle patterns in everyday language help keep old ideologies of racial difference alive, often without people realizing it. CDA helps uncover these hidden assumptions and exposes how deeply embedded power dynamics operate through language.

b) Power Relations

Power relations occupy a pivotal position in Fairclough's sociocultural practice dimension. Unlike traditional linguistic approaches that treat language as neutral, Fairclough's CDA explicitly examines how discourse reflects, constructs, and legitimizes asymmetrical power arrangements between social groups (Poole, 2010). Power is conceptualized not simply as coercive force but as operating

through consent, representation, and knowledge reflection (Fairclough, 2013a). In analyzing discourse about discrimination, this component examines how language practices construct relationships of dominance and subordination. This includes analyzing how majorities perspectives are positioned as the unmarked norm against which minorities are evaluated, how minorities voices and perspectives are included or excluded from discourse, and how language attributes different kinds of agency to different minorities groups.

c) Hegemonic Processes

CDA aims to systematically explore the often-opaque relationships between discursive practices and broader social structures, investigating how these practices are reflected by power relations and contribute to maintaining hegemony (Hallinan & Judd, 2017). According to Fairclough (1992b), hegemony involves the processes by which dominant groups secure their position partially through establishing their worldview as natural, inevitable, or universally beneficial. Hegemonic analysis examines how certain frames of racial understanding become accepted as common sense even by those they disadvantage (Roscoe, 2019). This might involve when media discourse establishes "acceptable" ways of discussing racial differences that appear neutral while reinforcing hierarchies, how alternative interpretations are discriminated as political or oversensitive, and how apparently inclusive discourse can still maintain fundamental power imbalances through subtle linguistic features.

d) Ideological Effects

Ideological effects focus on how discourse works to position subjects, construct social identities, and shape understanding in ways that often serve dominant interests (Fairclough, 2013a). Fairclough's approach examines how

ideological assumptions are embedded within discourse structures themselves, often operating below the level of conscious awareness. This component examines how language constructs subject positions, establishes relations between subjects, and builds coherent narratives that normalize specific perspectives (Roscoe, 2019). Fairclough (2013) emphasizes that ideological effects are most potent when they are invisible—when ideologically charged representations appear as neutral descriptions of reality. This explains why overtly racist language has been replaced mainly by coded language that performs similar ideological work while maintaining plausible deniability.

The reflection of racial discrimination on social media can be comprehensively understood through Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis helps us understand how social media spreads racial discrimination. At the text level, posts use crime-related words, euphemisms, and grammar that hide bias and shift blame onto minorities. In how content is made and shared, creators rely on racist stereotypes, while algorithms boost such posts, and audiences interpret them based on their own views. Users mix news, entertainment, and personal stories to make biased content seem real. On a bigger scale, these online conversations mirror and strengthen long-standing racial inequalities, with dominant groups controlling the narrative and minority voices often sidelined. Social media normalizes these harmful views, making them seem natural. Often, discrimination hides in coded language, working subtly to keep racial hierarchies intact while appearing neutral and innocent in everyday digital talk.

D. Racism

Racist discourse refers to the ways racism is expressed and reinforced through language, whether in conversation, media, or institutional communication. It plays a key role in upholding racial inequalities, contributing to the ongoing reproduction of racism as a system of ethnic or racial dominance. In recent years, scholars have moved beyond seeing racism as just a matter of personal prejudice. Instead, they understand it as a deeply embedded social construct that operates through everyday practices and institutional structures. According to S. M. Ortiz (2021) racism doesn't just live in hateful remarks or discriminatory acts, it is continually reproduced through daily interactions, public policies, and cultural narratives. These often normalize advantages for white individuals while marginalizing people of color. This approach emphasizes how racism operates as a system of meaning-making that assigns differential value to human lives based on racial categories that have no biological reality but profound social consequences.

In addition, some research explores how 'colorblind' discourse which is a language that pretends not to see race helps mask the reality of systemic racism while silently reinforcing it. Fanon (2023) sheds light on this through the concept of white fragility which is a term that describes the defensive reactions some white individuals have when racism is discussed. These emotional responses often derail conversations and shift the focus away from confronting racial injustice, reinforcing the power structures being challenged. Bonilla-Silva (2021) also offers a framework that challenges the idea of neutrality. He argues there is no such thing as being 'not racist' policies and practices either uphold or dismantle racial inequality. This

perspective urges us to look beyond obvious acts of discrimination and instead examine how seemingly neutral language, institutional policies, or social norms can continue to perpetuate racial hierarchies, even in a society that claims to be post-racial.

Social media is a powerful space where racism is both challenged and quietly reinforced. Beyond obvious hate speech, everyday language, algorithms, and platform rules often favor certain racial views while sidelining others. People use “colorblind” language that seems neutral but hides bias, and discussions about race are frequently shut down through defensive reactions or accusations of “reverse racism.” Platforms’ moderation and trending systems can either fight racism or unknowingly amplify dominant voices, often drowning out people of color. Racism online also shows up in subtle ways like memes, microaggressions, and false comparisons that blur the line between real criticism and hate speech. These hidden patterns make it hard to see how systemic racial inequality is reproduced, keeping unfair power structures intact while pretending everything is fair and balanced.

E. Social Media Conversation

Social media platforms have become powerful spaces where public understanding of complex social issues is continuously reflected. Unlike traditional media, these platforms don’t just passively transmit information, they’re dynamic ecosystems where users frame narratives, argue interpretations, and contest meanings. As Matamoros-Fernández & Farkas (2021) explain that digital platforms

are not neutral. They are active spaces of discursive struggle, where ideas are reflected and rereflected through user interaction. Noble (2018) point out that platform design, such as algorithmic curation, likes, shares, and moderation systems plays a significant role in determining which perspectives are amplified and which are buried. These systems often promote content that is emotionally charged, sensational, or polarizing, simply because it drives more engagement.

Digital anonymity has emerged as a double-edged phenomenon with significant social consequences. Thomas et al. (2017) note, anonymity can be empowering. It can level the playing field, allowing people who might otherwise feel silenced due to their identity, status, or location to participate in public discourse without fear. That same anonymity can also reduce a sense of accountability. When people don't feel personally responsible for their words, the social cost of being hostile or offensive drops dramatically. Ascher (2019) explores how anonymous and pseudonymous interactions frequently amplify polarization through affective othering processes whereby outgroup members are dehumanized, and complex issues are reduced to moral binaries. this appears because of what Cheung et al. (2021) means as online disinhibition, which is people say things online they might never say face-to-face. This disinhibition can turn online spaces into hostile environments where incivility, trolling, and toxic rhetoric thrive.

Racial discrimination on social media is shaped by how platforms, algorithms, and users interact. Algorithms often boost emotional and divisive racial content, overshadowing deeper conversations about racism. These systems can unintentionally promote bias, silencing voices of color and reinforcing racial

inequalities. Anonymity online has a double edge: it lets marginalized people share their experiences safely but also allows racist harassment to spread with little consequence. This anonymity can create safe spaces but also enable hate groups to organize. Online disinhibition leads people to use racial slurs and stereotypes they wouldn't in person, fueling dehumanization and reducing complex racial issues to simple, polarizing arguments. This toxic mix makes it hard to have honest, productive talks about racial justice, allowing harmful racial attitudes to thrive unchecked in digital spaces.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter introduces the research methodology, which consists of research design, data source, data collection, and data analysis.

A. Research Design

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze impoliteness strategies and racial discrimination on social media comments directed at black football players. The qualitative method is chosen because it allows for in-depth analysis of linguistic phenomena within their social context and helps reveal the complex relationships between language use, social identity, and discrimination in online spaces (Morison et al., 2015). This approach is suitable for examining how language is used to express impoliteness to discriminate African footballers on social media.

B. Data and Data Sources

The data sources for this research are netizen comments from verified accounts of selected black footballers, namely Vinicius Junior, Kylian Mbappe, and Marcus Rashford, on X. The verified accounts that are used as research objects are @vinijr, @KMbappe, @MarcusRashford. The researcher chose these footballers because they are the top 3 black footballers with the most followers on social media per November 2024. The period to be studied is from 2023 to 2024. Then, this research only takes data in the form of texts in English.

C. Data Collection

The data collection process involves several systematic steps. Firstly, the researcher looked for verified accounts of selected black footballers on X that are used as the object of research. Secondly, the researcher collected netizen utterances in the comments section of verified accounts of selected black footballers, which were uploaded after the player had just lost a match, had a significant performance indicated by the contribution of several goals and assists in a game, and had just won an individual or team title in 2023 - 2024. Then, the researcher classified data based on words or phrases that contain racial discrimination. Data that does not contain racial discrimination will be reduced.

D. Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher used several steps to analyze the data. First, after collecting the data, the researcher determined which impolite utterances were used for discrimination based on the theory of impoliteness (Culpeper, 1996) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992, 2013). The second step was to categorize the utterances according to the types of impoliteness strategies based on the theory of impoliteness (Culpeper, 1996). Then, the researcher analyzed how these utterances are reflected on social media based on three-dimensional concept of Fairclough's CDA (Fairclough, 1992, 2013). Then, the researcher integrated findings from the three dimensions of analysis and explained the process of constructing discriminatory speech from a linguistic and social context.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents findings and a discussion that presents all research information. The research findings are taken from netizen comments from verified accounts of selected black footballers, Vinicius Junior, Kylian Mbappe, and Marcus Rashford, on social media X. The findings and discussion section describes the impoliteness strategies used by netizens to discriminate against African footballers and explains how discrimination comments against African footballers are reflected on social media X.

A. Findings

This sub-chapter analyzes netizen comments in the comment section of some African footballers X account. Those footballers are Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Jr., and Marcus Rashford. The comments appeared from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024, in posts uploaded after the player had just lost a match, had a significant performance shown by contributing several goals and assists in a match, and had just won an individual or team title at which time there were many cases of racial discrimination against footballers. In the comment section analyzed, impoliteness strategies that contain racial discrimination were found, as how racial discriminations are reflected on social media. This study found 29 strategies for discriminating against African footballers. It was found that there were two dominant impoliteness strategies used in the context of racial discrimination against African footballers, that were Positive Impoliteness and Bald on Record, each appearing 10 times. This was followed by sarcasm/mock politeness, which appeared 5 times, and negative impoliteness, which appeared 4 times.

1. Positive impoliteness

Positive impoliteness is one of the impoliteness strategies specifically designed to ruin the positive face of the interlocutor. Culpeper (1996) defines this strategy as an expression intentionally intended to ruin the interlocutor's desire for acceptance and appreciation in a social context. Positive impoliteness appeared 10 times, making it the most frequently used strategy by perpetrators of racial discrimination, alongside bald on record impoliteness. The dominance of Positive Impoliteness in these findings can be explained by the characteristics of this strategy, which focuses on attacking the positive face or positive image of individuals. In the context of racial discrimination, perpetrators tend to use this strategy to demean the dignity of African footballers by insulting their physical appearance, intellectual abilities, or cultural characteristics.

Datum 1



Figure 1.

This kind of comment appeared after a perceived poor performance by Marcus Rashford during Manchester United versus Arsenal match. Rashford made a fatal mistake that led to Arsenal scoring in the final minutes. Frustrated fans or trolls use deeply racist language to demean the player's ability and origin, reflecting

a long history of racial abuse targeted at Black players in football. This comment appears on Rashford's posts, especially after matches where he or his team underperform.

The utterance "You're useless! Just go back to the jungle where you came from" is a clear example of positive impoliteness. This positive impoliteness is evident through the harsh adjective "useless," which directly undermines a footballer's (Rashford) competence as a football player. The imperative command "Just go back" conveys outright rejection of his presence, while the racist phrase "jungle where you came from" dehumanizes and animalizes him based on his ethnic background, making the insult even more severe.

The "jungle" metaphor creating a semantic field that positions Africa as a space of wilderness and chaos. The specific references to "jungle" create a hierarchical geography that positions Africa as a space of either primitive wilderness or urban decay, contrasted with the implied sophistication. The colonial discourse strategy demonstrates the remarkable persistence of 19th-century imperial ideologies in contemporary digital spaces. The use of "jungle" draws directly from colonial-era geographical imaginations that reflected Africa as a space of wilderness requiring European civilization and control. The directive "go back to where you came from", establishing a fundamental principle that African players are spatial interlopers whose presence in European football represents a violation of natural order. These phrases contain territorial exclusion that affirms unsuitability with absolute certainty and implies the existence of different and separate places of origin.

Datum 2



Figure 2.

This kind of comment appeared after a perceived poor performance by Marcus Rashford during Manchester United versus Arsenal match. Rashford made a fatal mistake that led to Arsenal scoring in the final minutes. Frustrated fans or trolls use deeply racist language to demean the player's ability and origin, reflecting a long history of racial abuse targeted at Black players in football. This comment appears on Rashford's posts, especially after matches where he or his team underperform.

The utterance "This just proves Rashford doesn't actually have the brains to play at this level" is a clear example of positive impoliteness. In this utterance, positive impoliteness is evident in how the speaker explicitly attacks Rashford's intellectual capacity by claiming that he "doesn't have the brains" to play at a certain level. This utterance directly challenges Rashford's professional competence and degrades his cognitive ability, which is an integral part of the positive image every individual seeks to maintain. By asserting that there is proof of this intellectual

limitation, the utterance further strengthens the attack on Rashford's self-esteem and professional competence, reinforcing the elements of positive impoliteness.

The phrase "doesn't have the brains", establish a fundamental cognitive deficit that supposedly characterizes all African players, regardless of their demonstrated tactical awareness, decision-making abilities, or leadership qualities on the pitch. The intellectual diminishment strategy operates through a consistent denial of cognitive capabilities that serves to maintain white supremacist hierarchies even in the face of obvious African sporting success. This discourse draws on historical pseudoscientific racism that positioned intelligence as an exclusively European trait while attributing African capabilities to purely physical characteristics. The strategy becomes particularly sophisticated in how it handles the obvious contradiction between claiming cognitive inferiority and witnessing successful performance.

Datum 3



Figure 3.

This kind of comment appeared after a perceived poor performance by Marcus Rashford during Manchester United versus Arsenal match. Rashford made a fatal mistake that led to Arsenal scoring in the final minutes. Frustrated fans or

trolls use deeply racist language to demean the player's ability and origin, reflecting a long history of racial abuse targeted at Black players in football. This comment appears on Rashford's posts, especially after matches where he or his team underperform.

The utterance "Rashford doesn't belong in an elite club black people don't have a brain" is a clear example of positive impoliteness. In this utterance, positive impoliteness manifests through the explicit rejection of Rashford's worthiness to belong to an elite club ("doesn't belong in an elite club"), directly undermining his achievements and abilities as a professional athlete. Furthermore, the utterance continues with an extreme racist generalization ("black people don't have a brain"), which not only attacks Rashford's racial identity but dehumanizes the entire Black community by denying their intellectual capacity which is an act of blatant and demeaning dehumanization. This strategy overtly rejects the basic human need to be recognized as competent, intelligent, and valuable.

The institutional gatekeeping strategy operates through explicit challenges to African players' legitimacy within elite football spaces, reflecting broader patterns of racial exclusion from prestigious institutions across society. The phrase "doesn't belong in an elite club" establishes a fundamental principle that elite status and African identity are mutually exclusive categories. This reflection draws on historical patterns of exclusion from elite educational institutions, professional organizations, and social clubs that maintained white supremacy through restricted access to advancement opportunities.

Datum 4



Figure 4.

This comment appeared under celebratory posts featuring Rashford holding FA cup trophy. He posted the photo after winning the final against Manchester City. This comment appeared less than 24 hours after the trophy photo was posted on social media. It combines racist animalistic slurs with the insinuation that Rashford lacks understanding or appreciation of his achievements, a tactic used to dehumanize and belittle Black players.

The utterance "Rashford's just posing with that trophy lil monkey doesn't even get what real achievement means" is positive impoliteness. In this utterance, positive impoliteness is evident through several reinforcing elements. First, "just posing" trivializes and delegitimizes Rashford's accomplishment, implying that his presence with the trophy is mere pretense, lacking authenticity. Second, the derogatory and deeply racist term "lil monkey" directly dehumanizes Rashford by associating him with primates which is a historically racist slur used to demean Black individuals. Third, the explicit claim that Rashford "doesn't even get what real achievement means" attacks his cognitive ability and understanding of success. These elements constitute a comprehensive assault on Rashford's positive image,

rejecting the legitimacy of his success, demeaning his racial identity, and undermining his intellectual capacity which is all clear markers of positive impoliteness.

The use of “monkey” serves multiple ideological functions beyond simple insult. This dehumanizing language strategy operates through a deliberate reflection of African players as fundamentally non-human entities. Historically, the ape-human comparison has been central to white supremacist discourse since the colonial period, drawing on pseudo-scientific racial hierarchies that positioned Africans as evolutionary intermediates between animals and civilized humans. In the football context, this dehumanization serves to strip African players of their individual agency and athletic intelligence, reducing them to mere physical specimens.

Datum 5

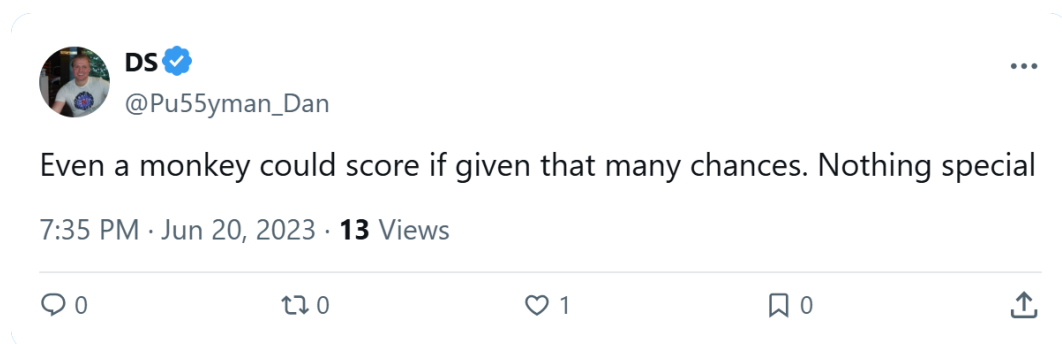


Figure 5.

This comment found in the comment section of Kylian Mbappé’s posts, after PSG versus Brest match where he scores multiple goals or is heavily involved in the game. During the match, he was considered to have celebrated excessively in

front of the away fans. This comment uses racist animal comparisons to undermine his skill and suggest his success is due to luck or opportunity rather than talent.

The utterance "Even a monkey could score if given that many chances. Nothing special" is a clear example of explicit positive impoliteness. In this utterance, positive impoliteness is manifested through two main mechanisms: first, the dehumanization of a footballer (which in this context is Mbappe) by comparing him to a "monkey," implicitly diminishing his abilities and evoking racial stereotypes; second, the explicit denial of Mbappé's uniqueness ("Nothing special"), directly rejecting acknowledgment of his talent, hard work, and achievements as a professional footballer. The phrase "even a monkey could score" minimizes the skill required to score goals under Mbappé's circumstances, suggesting his success is due solely to the abundance of opportunities rather than intrinsic ability.

The use of "monkey" serves multiple ideological functions beyond simple insult. This dehumanizing language strategy operates through a deliberate reflection of African players as fundamentally non-human entities. Historically, the ape-human comparison has been central to white supremacist discourse since the colonial period, drawing on pseudo-scientific racial hierarchies that positioned Africans as evolutionary intermediates between animals and civilized humans. In the football context, this dehumanization serves to strip African players of their individual agency and athletic intelligence, reducing them to mere physical specimens.

Datum 6



Figure 6.

This comment appeared after Mbappé win an individual trophy. This comment came at the same time as Ligue 1 and PSG took a strong stance against racism to protect Mbappe, leading some people to believe that this was not purely due to skill. It reflects resentment towards diversity initiatives and racial equality efforts in sports.

The utterance "You didn't deserve that trophy. Black players always get special treatment 'cause of the whole racism issue" is a clear example of positive impoliteness. In this utterance, positive impoliteness is manifested through two main aspects: first, the explicit rejection of a footballer's (Mbappe) worthiness to receive the trophy ("didn't deserve that trophy"), which directly attacks the legitimacy of his achievement, denying acknowledgment of his hard work and talent; and second, the utterance not only targets Mbappé individually but also generalizes an entire group "black players" claiming that they receive "special treatment" not based on merit but merely because of racial issues. This utterance systematically undermines the positive image of Mbappé and Black athletes in general by delegitimizing their accomplishments and implying that their successes are not based on merit but are the result of preferential treatment driven by concerns about racism.

This utterance uses the explicit negation structure “didn't deserve,” which directly delegitimizes the achievement. The lexical choice of “Black players” categorizes based on race, while “always” indicates excessive generalization. This statement uses the discourse of reverse racism, which claims that anti-discrimination efforts create discrimination against white players. Intertextuality is evident in the use of the discourse merit-based, which asserts that success should be based solely on ability. On social media, this statement functions as an act of delegitimization that shapes the identity of the in-group/out-group. This statement reflects a white supremacist ideology that maintains racial hierarchies by questioning the legitimacy of Black success. Historically, this echoes colonial patterns that deny the agency of Black individuals.

Datum 7



Figure 7.

This highly offensive comment posted in response to Mbappé's performance, combining racial slurs and derogatory references to African heritage. This comments spike after controversial moments involving Mbappé. Mbappe failed to score from the penalty spot, causing his team to lose. Not only that,

Mbappe also received a red card at the end of the match due to his frustration with the opposing defender.

The utterance "Kylian, that's what happens when you rely on an African monkey. Just head back to the jungle!" represents a highly explicit of positive impoliteness. In this case, the utterance not only criticizes an athlete's performance but directly assaults Kylian Mbappé's personal and ethnic identity through language historically and socially burdened by racist ideology. The use of dehumanizing metaphors like "monkey" and stereotypical references to the "jungle" illustrates how positive impoliteness manifests through lexical choices explicitly designed to hurt, degrade, and exclude individuals from the realm of full humanity.

The "jungle" metaphor creating a semantic field that positions Africa as a space of wilderness and chaos. The specific references to "jungle" create a hierarchical geography that positions Africa as a space of either primitive wilderness or urban decay, contrasted with the implied sophistication. The colonial discourse strategy demonstrates the remarkable persistence of 19th-century imperial ideologies in contemporary digital spaces. The use of "jungle" draws directly from colonial-era geographical imaginations that reflected Africa as a space of wilderness requiring European civilization and control. The directive "Just head back to the jungle", establishing a fundamental principle that African players are spatial interlopers whose presence in European football represents a violation of natural order. This language draws territorial racism which is the idea that certain spaces inherently belong to racial groups and that crossing these boundaries constitutes transgression.

Datum 8



Figure 8.

This comment appeared under celebratory posts featuring Rashford holding FA cup trophy. He posted the photo after winning the final against Manchester City. This comment appeared less than 24 hours after the trophy photo was posted on social media. It combines racist animalistic slurs with the insinuation that Rashford lacks understanding or appreciation of his achievements, a tactic used to dehumanize and belittle Black players.

The utterance "That trophy should go to a player with actual skill, not someone just relying on brute strength like some wild niggas" directed at Marcus Rashford is a clear example of positive impoliteness. In this case, the speaker explicitly discredits Rashford's abilities by degradingly contrasting "actual skill" with "brute strength", denying acknowledgment of his achievements. Moreover, the use of a highly offensive racial slur (wild niggas) aggressively targets Rashford's racial identity. This strategy denies any sense of common ground, expresses overt disinterest, and employs deeply inappropriate and demeaning identity markers.

The phrase “like some wild niggas” draws directly from colonial-era geographical imaginations that reflected Africa as a space of wilderness requiring European civilization and control. These terms carry embedded assumptions about social organization, technological capacity, and cultural sophistication that automatically position African footballers as representatives of supposedly primitive societies.

Datum 9



Figure 9.

This comment found in the comment section of Kylian Mbappé’s posts, after PSG versus Brest match where he scores multiple goals or is heavily involved in the game. During the match, he was considered to have celebrated excessively in front of the away fans. This comment uses racist animal comparisons to undermine his skill and suggest his success is due to luck or opportunity rather than talent.

The utterance "He's not as good as people say, but if he's a black player, he'll be praised," directed at Vinicius Jr., represents a clear manifestation of positive impoliteness in social interaction. In this context, the utterance systematically undermines Vinicius Jr.'s positive face through two main mechanisms: first, by

delegitimizing his professional skills and abilities as a football player (not as good as people say); and second, by implying that any recognition he receives is not based on merit or true talent but solely on his racial identity. This impoliteness strategy directly attacks Vinicius Jr.'s fundamental need to be perceived as a competent individual respected for personal achievements rather than ascriptive characteristics.

Datum 10



Figure 10.

This comment mocks Vinicius' speed and goal-scoring ability by invoking racist stereotypes about African ancestry and animalistic behavior. It appeared after posting a victory against Barcelona, and in that match, Vinicius scored a goal with a sprint from the center of the field. Many people consider this to be nothing special for Africans.

This utterance, directed at Vinicius Jr., is a clear example of positive impoliteness. This utterance directly assaults Vinicius Jr.'s positive face by delegitimizing his athletic achievements and reducing his identity to a demeaning racial stereotype. The mechanism of positive impoliteness here operates by

explicitly refusing to recognize his professional skills and instead attributing his success solely to luck ("outta luck") and stigmatized biological traits tied to reductive stereotypes about African ancestry. This strategy intentionally denies the professional identity Vinicius Jr. seeks to project as a skilled athlete, replacing it with a degraded identity rooted in racial essentialism.

The word "ancestors running from lions" reveals the sophisticated intertextual nature of this dehumanizing discourse. It connects contemporary African footballers to colonial-era representations of Africa as a land of dangerous wildlife and primitive survival, suggesting that current athletic ability is merely a continuation of ancestral flight responses rather than developed sporting excellence. This temporal connection serves to deny any notion of progress, civilization, or individual achievement, maintaining Africans in a permanent state of primitiveness regardless of their actual accomplishments.

The colonial discourse strategy demonstrates the remarkable persistence of 19th-century imperial ideologies in contemporary digital spaces. The word "savanna" draws directly from colonial-era geographical imaginations that reflected Africa as a space of wilderness requiring European civilization and control. These terms carry embedded assumptions about social organization, technological capacity, and cultural sophistication that automatically position African footballers as representatives of supposedly primitive societies. The most sophisticated aspect of this colonial discourse reproduction is how it adapts historical justifications for exploitation to contemporary contexts. Just as colonial discourse justified European extraction of African resources and labor through narratives of civilization and development, contemporary racist football discourse justifies the consumption of African athletic labor while denying full membership in football communities.

2. Bald On Record Impoliteness

Bald On Record Impoliteness is an expression of a threatening face done directly, clearly, and without ambiguity. This strategy is a face-threatening act done directly, clearly, and without ambiguity in situations where the interlocutor's face is vulnerable to attack (Culpeper, 2005). Bald On Record impoliteness appeared 10 times, making it the most frequently used strategy by perpetrators of racial discrimination, alongside positive impoliteness. The high frequency of Bald on Record reflects the tendency of perpetrators of discrimination to express racist remarks openly without attempting to soften or disguise their intentions. In the context of social media, which provides anonymity and physical distance, perpetrators feel freer to express their racial prejudices explicitly.

Datum 11



Figure 11.

This comment appeared on Rashford's post after he suffered a defeat with his club, Manchester United, causing the club to fall to the bottom of the table. It is possible that such comments appeared due to fans' frustration with Rashford's inability to improve his performance. some people resorting to explicit racial slurs to express their frustration and to exclude Black players from belonging in elite football

"You're trash! Just like all those niggas who don't belong here" shows highly explicit bald-on-record impoliteness. This comment directly attacks the athlete's positive face without attempting to mitigate the insult. The use of the word "trash" is a bluntly degrading judgment, while the use of an extremely offensive racial slur indicates deliberate and undisguised impoliteness. The sentence structure is designed to deliver a categorical rejection of the player's presence and that of his entire racial group, with the phrase "don't belong here" explicitly conveying the desire for exclusion.

The phrase "just like all those niggas" reveals the essentializing function of this discourse which is individual African players are never allowed to transcend racial categorization, and any cognitive abilities they display are either ignored or explained away. This systematic denial serves crucial ideological work in maintaining white intellectual supremacy narratives that have historically justified exclusion from educational institutions, professional positions, and leadership roles. In the football context, it allows for the simultaneous consumption of African athletic entertainment while maintaining hierarchical beliefs about cognitive capacity and decision-making authority.

Datum 12



Figure 12.

This comment found in the comment section of Kylian Mbappé's posts, after PSG versus Brest match where he scores multiple goals or is heavily involved in the game. During the match, he was considered to have celebrated excessively in front of the away fans. This comment uses racist animal comparisons to undermine his skill and suggest his success is due to luck or opportunity rather than talent.

"One goal doesn't change the fact that you are just another overrated monkey" is a clear example of bald on record impoliteness through direct dehumanization with no attempt to disguise the intent to insult. This comment openly uses the highly racist animal metaphor "monkey" as a blatant and deliberate racial slur. The sentence starts with a direct denial of the player's achievement ("One goal doesn't change"), followed by a claim that there is an unchangeable fact about the player's inferiority. Using "just" and "another" further diminishes the player, implying he is merely one of many individuals with no unique value.

The dehumanizing language strategy operates through a deliberate reflection of African players as fundamentally non-human entities. The repeated use of "monkey" serves multiple ideological functions beyond simple insult. Historically, the ape-human comparison has been central to white supremacist

discourse since the colonial period, drawing on pseudo-scientific racial hierarchies that positioned Africans as evolutionary intermediates between animals and "civilized" humans. In the football context, this dehumanization serves to strip African players of their individual agency and athletic intelligence, reducing them to mere physical specimens.

Datum 13



Figure 13.

This comment appeared under celebratory posts featuring Rashford holding FA cup trophy. He posted the photo after winning the final against Manchester City. This comment appeared less than 24 hours after the trophy photo was posted on social media. It combines racist animalistic slurs with the insinuation that Rashford lacks understanding or appreciation of his achievements, a tactic used to dehumanize and belittle Black players.

"Rashford only won that trophy 'cause of his skin color!" displays bald on record impoliteness through a direct accusation that explicitly undermines the player's achievement. This comment uses a strategy of direct insult without linguistic cushioning or mitigation. The word "only" is a clear reductive tactic limiting the player's achievement to a single factor. This utterance is designed to destroy the legitimacy of the athlete's success by suggesting it was not earned

through ability but due to an uncontrollable external factor—namely, his racial characteristics.

The explicit dichotomy “cause of his skin color” creates a false binary opposition between racial identity and ability. This contrastive structure implies that the two factors are mutually exclusive. The use of “only” further reduces the complexity of selection and success in professional sports. This statement uses the controversial discourse of affirmative action, adapting it to the context of sports. It demonstrates the interdiscursivity between political, legal, and sports discourses. This speech act serves to question the legitimacy of a selection system that is considered to favor black players. Ideologically, this utterance operates on the logic of white supremacy, which assumes that white achievement is the normative standard. In an institutional context, it reflects resistance to social change and efforts toward racial equality. The impact is to perpetuate the myth that diversity in sports is the result of artificial intervention rather than a reflection of ability.

Datum 14



Figure 14.

The comments appeared when Vinicius Jr. posted that he had won the “Player of the Season” award in the Spanish league. Many people commented that Vinicius did not deserve to win the award because there was a perception that other

players were more deserving. Such remarks often appear reinforcing negative stereotypes based on his racial.

"It's normal, black players often get too much hype without any real prove," contains bald on record impoliteness disguised as objective observation but is a direct attack. The comment uses a normalization strategy ("It's normal") to present racial prejudice as an accepted truth. The use of generalization ("black players often") makes a universal claim about an entire racial group without exception or nuance. The phrase "too much hype" is a direct negative judgment implying that recognition of Black players is inherently excessive. At the same time, the final clause ("without any real prove") is a total denial of actual achievements. Even though the tone is calmer than in some of the previous examples, this utterance still constitutes bald on record impoliteness because it uses direct language to convey racial bias without attempting to soften the impact.

The generalization "black players often" creates widespread racial stereotypes. The phrase "too much hype" implies that attention to black players is excessive. This statement uses media discourse and sports journalism about "hype" to legitimize racist views. The normalization strategy makes discrimination appear to be an objective observation. On social media, this functions as a dog whistle—a covert signal to individuals with similar views without using explicitly racist language. This statement reflects a historical pattern where Black achievements are minimized, or their legitimacy questioned. In the context of sports media, this operates confirmation bias where evidence of success is ignored to maintain negative stereotypes.

Datum 15

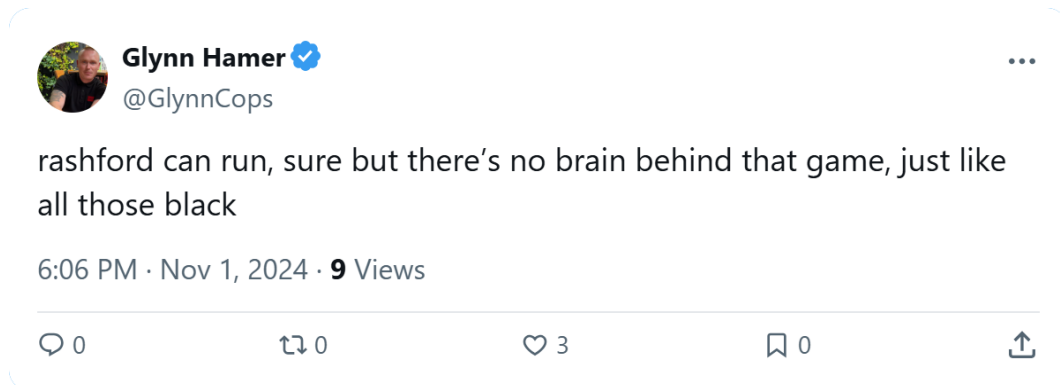


Figure 15.

The comment came after Rashford played poorly against Chelsea, resulting in his team losing 2-1 and he considered not to be following the coach's tactics. All the players played badly, but Rashford was often criticized because of racial sentiment. This comment reflects a persistent stereotype about Black athletes, reducing their abilities to physicality while questioning their intelligence.

"Rashford can run, sure but there's no brain behind that game, just like all those black" exemplifies bald on record impoliteness that directly attacks the player's intelligence and cognitive ability. The comment uses a "false concession" structure that begins with a minor acknowledgment of physical ability ("can run, sure") followed by a direct denial of intellectual capacity ("no brain"). The utterance does not attempt to disguise or reduce the insult. Instead, it uses direct negation ("no brain") and racist generalization ("just like all those black") to reinforce degrading stereotypes. The lack of proper plural nouns used after "black" further dehumanizes by reducing individuals to a single characteristic, treating them as a category rather than people.

The phrase "just like all those black" reveals the essentializing function of this discourse which individual African players are never allowed to transcend racial categorization, and any cognitive abilities they display are either ignored or explained away. This systematic denial serves crucial ideological work in maintaining white intellectual supremacy narratives that have historically justified exclusion from educational institutions, professional positions, and leadership roles. In the football context, it allows for the simultaneous consumption of African athletic entertainment while maintaining hierarchical beliefs about cognitive capacity and decision-making authority.

The phrase "doesn't have the brains" establish a fundamental cognitive deficit that supposedly characterizes all African players, regardless of their demonstrated tactical awareness, decision-making abilities, or leadership qualities on the pitch. The intellectual diminishment strategy operates through a consistent denial of cognitive capabilities that serves to maintain white supremacist hierarchies even in the face of obvious African sporting success. This discourse draws on historical pseudoscientific racism that positioned intelligence as an exclusively European trait while attributing African capabilities to purely physical characteristics. The strategy becomes particularly sophisticated in how it handles the obvious contradiction between claiming cognitive inferiority and witnessing successful performance.

Datum 16



Figure 16.

This kind of comment appeared after a perceived poor performance by Marcus Rashford during Manchester United versus Arsenal match. Rashford made a fatal mistake that led to Arsenal scoring in the final minutes. Frustrated fans or trolls use deeply racist language to demean the player's ability and origin, reflecting a long history of racial abuse targeted at Black players in football. This comment appears on Rashford's posts, especially after matches where he or his team underperform.

"Get out of our club now! We don't need lazy nigga like you!!" shows bald on record impoliteness through a combination of direct command and explicit racial insult. The comment starts with a confrontational imperative ("Get out"), reinforced by the time adverb "now" and exclamation marks to show urgency and intensity. Using the pronoun "our club" creates an insider-outsider dichotomy, explicitly expelling the player from the community. The following sentence uses a highly offensive racial slur alongside a negative stereotype about laziness, combining two distinct attacks in one sentence. The double exclamation marks reflect emotional

intensity and verbal aggression. Here, it seeks to create maximum confrontation and interpersonal harm without consideration for politeness or the target's positive face.

The phrase "We don't need lazy nigga like you" demonstrate how spatial exclusion intersects with possessive language. The binary opposition between "here" and "there" constructs European football spaces as naturally white territories where African presence requires constant justification. This spatial discourse serves broader ideological functions by maintaining the fiction that European cultural institutions are racially neutral while simultaneously marking African presence as inherently foreign and temporary. The use of explicit slurs, such as the word "nigga(s)," reinforces an exclusive and discriminatory social hierarchy. These expressions also convey negative stereotypes.

Datum 17



Figure 17.

This comment found in the comment section of Kylian Mbappé's posts, after PSG versus Brest match where he scores multiple goals or is heavily involved in the game. During the match, he was considered to have celebrated excessively in

front of the away fans. This comment uses racist animal comparisons to undermine his skill and suggest his success is due to luck or opportunity rather than talent.

"One goal but people like you don't belong here, the kind who come from the slums!" is an example of bald on record impoliteness that uses an explicit social class attack. The comment begins by dismissing the achievement ("One goal"), followed by a direct denial of the player's right to be in the sporting community ("don't belong here"). The use of "people like you" and "the kind who" are categorization strategies that explicitly create social distance and define the player as "other." The reference to "slums" creates stigmatization of socioeconomic background and explicitly connects an individual's value to their social origin.

The phrase "back to the slums" establishing a fundamental principle that African players are spatial interlopers whose presence in European football represents a violation of natural order. This language draws territorial racism which is the idea that certain spaces inherently belong to racial groups and that crossing these boundaries constitutes transgression. The references "slums" create a hierarchical geography that positions Africa as a space of either primitive wilderness or urban decay, contrasted with the implied sophistication and order of European football stadiums. The "slums" reference connects to contemporary African footballers to narratives of poverty and social dysfunction, suggesting that their success represents an illegitimate escape from their "natural" circumstances rather than earned achievement.

Datum 18

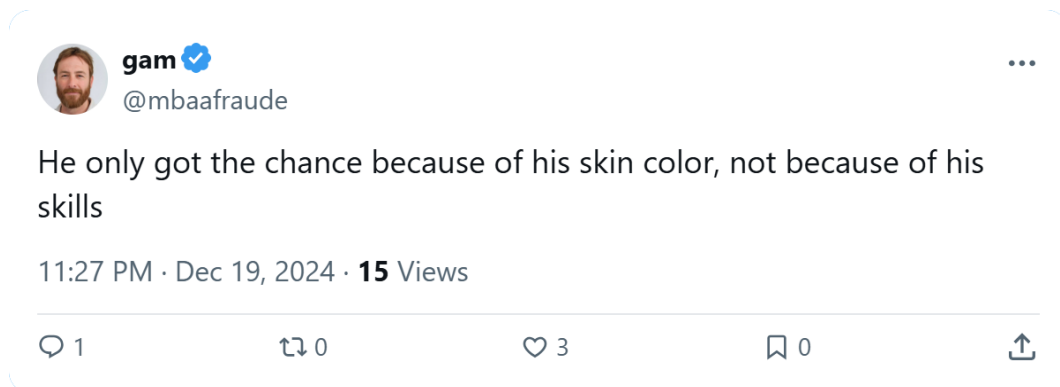


Figure 18.

Following the announcement of the Ballon d'Or nominations, this comment appeared when Vinicius was selected as a nominee for the award. Some people post comments accusing organizations of nominating Black players solely for diversity's sake. These comments are often found under posts celebrating player selections, and reflect resentment toward anti-racist initiatives.

"He only got the chance because of his skin color, not because of his skills" is an example of bald on record impoliteness that directly denies the player's merit and abilities. The comment uses a clear contrast structure to assert that the player's opportunity was based solely on racial characteristics rather than professional ability. The word "only" is a clear reductive strategy limiting the player's achievement to a single factor. The structure "not because of his skills" directly negates professional ability, denying the player's entire technical competence. The bald on record impoliteness here seeks to delegitimize the player's professional achievement and spread racial bias without filters, deliberately ignoring politeness norms.

The explicit dichotomy “because of his skin color, not because of his skills” creates a false binary opposition between racial identity and ability. This contrastive structure implies that the two factors are mutually exclusive. The use of “only” further reduces the complexity of selection and success in professional sports. This statement draws on the controversial discourse of affirmative action, adapting it to the sports context. This highlights the interdiscursivity between political, legal, and sports discourses. This speech act serves to question the legitimacy of a selection system that is perceived as favoring black players. Ideologically, this statement operates a logic of white supremacy that assumes white achievement as the normative standard. In an institutional context, it reflects resistance to social change and efforts toward racial equality.

Datum 19



Figure 19.

This comment appeared under celebratory posts featuring Rashford holding FA cup trophy. He posted the photo after winning the final against Manchester City. This comment appeared less than 24 hours after the trophy photo was posted on social media. It combines racist animalistic slurs with the insinuation that Rashford

lacks understanding or appreciation of his achievements, a tactic used to dehumanize and belittle Black players.

"There's nothing special about him, just the color of his skin" demonstrates bald on record impoliteness through a direct negation of the player's value and ability. The comment uses universal negation ("nothing special") to deny all the player's positive traits. The second part of the utterance uses "just" to reduce the player's identity to a single physical characteristic, implying that all the attention or recognition the player receives is completely unfounded. The bald on record impoliteness here seeks to eliminate the player's intrinsic value and brilliance, directly denying his achievements and professional abilities in the most explicit and unethical manner.

Datum 20



Figure 20.

This comment targets Vinicius' speed and athleticism, insinuating doping and using racist language to question his natural abilities. The comment came after he posted about his victory against Atletico Madrid, in which he scored three goals, or a hat-trick. Such accusations surface after standout performances by Black

athletes. Many people dislike his celebrations because they are often considered too arrogant.

"Freakin' monkey! Just go back to the jungle!" demonstrates extreme bald on record impoliteness through direct dehumanizing insults followed by a harsh expulsion command. This verbal attack uses a racist animal metaphor ("monkey"), reinforced by the emotive adjective "freakin'," creating a very striking and direct insult. The second part of the utterance contains an explicit imperative ("go back") expelling the player not just from sport but symbolically from society itself, with "jungle" functioning as a colonial racist metaphor. There is no attempt to mask or soften the insult; on the contrary, the double exclamation marks enhance the emotional intensity and verbal aggression.

The references to "jungle" create a hierarchical geography that positions Africa as a space of either primitive wilderness or urban decay, contrasted with the implied sophistication and order of European football stadiums. The "jungle" metaphor creating a semantic field that positions Africa as a space of wilderness and chaos, contrasted with the "civilized" space of European football. This binary reflection serves to naturalize exclusion which is if African players belong to the "jungle," then their presence in organized, professional football becomes inherently transgressive. The phrase "jungle" draws directly from colonial-era geographical imaginations that reflected Africa as a space of wilderness requiring European civilization and control. These terms carry embedded assumptions about social organization, technological capacity, and cultural sophistication that automatically position African footballers as representatives of supposedly primitive societies.

The repeated use of "monkey" serves multiple ideological functions beyond simple insult. The dehumanizing language strategy operates through a deliberate reflection of African players as fundamentally non-human entities. Historically, the ape-human comparison has been central to white supremacist discourse since the colonial period, drawing on pseudo-scientific racial hierarchies that positioned Africans as evolutionary intermediates between animals and "civilized" humans. In the football context, this dehumanization serves to strip African players of their individual agency and athletic intelligence, reducing them to mere physical specimens.

3. Sarcasm/Mock Politeness

Mock politeness occurs when a speaker uses utterances that appear polite but are insincere and serve to attack or demean others (Culpeper, 1996). According to Culpeper (2005), this strategy involves using expressions that explicitly show politeness but with the opposite intention: to attack or threaten the other person's "face". Sarcasm/Mock Politeness was found 5 times. This type has a relatively low frequency because it requires a higher level of linguistic sophistication and communication skills compared to other impoliteness strategies. The use of sarcasm or mock politeness in the context of racial discrimination requires the perpetrator to conceal their malicious intent behind a layer of irony or feigned politeness. This complexity makes this strategy less popular on social media, where users tend to prefer more direct and explicit communication approaches.

Datum 21

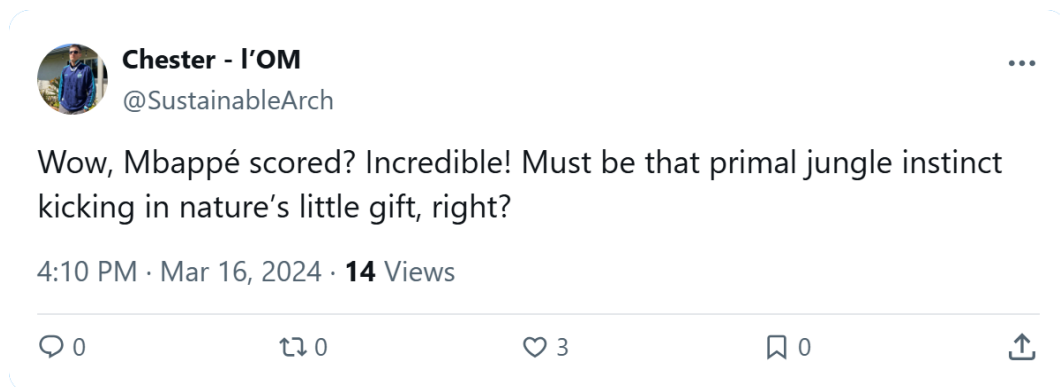


Figure 21.

Some people use racist tropes about African heritage and animalistic abilities to mock his success. This comment appeared under celebratory posts when he won against Marseille in Ligue 1 and made his club be a champion. This utterance aiming to diminish his skill by attributing it to racist caricatures

"Wow, Mbappé scored? Incredible! Must be that primal jungle instinct kicking in nature's little gift, right?" is a perfect example of sarcastic/mock politeness impoliteness. This comment begins with exaggerated admiration ("Wow" and "Incredible!") that superficially appears as praise but is quickly followed by a degrading racist explanation. The initial positive tone is deliberately undermined by the reference to "primal jungle instinct," a phrase that evokes colonial stereotypes and dehumanization. The sentence structure is intentionally crafted to contrast the initial compliment and the subsequent insult, producing a dissonance characteristic of sarcasm. The phrase "nature's little gift" functions as a belittling euphemism, implying that Mbappé's ability is not a result of training or skill but merely an innate primitive trait. The rhetorical question at the end ("right?") is designed to coerce agreement and reinforce the insult while pretending to seek confirmation.

The phrase "primal jungle instinct" demonstrates how this discourse attempts to explain African athletic success while simultaneously diminishing it which is success is attributed not to training, strategy, or skill, but to supposedly innate, animal-like qualities. The colonial discourse strategy demonstrates the remarkable persistence of 19th-century imperial ideologies in contemporary digital spaces. "Primal jungle instinct" represents perhaps the most sophisticated example of biological determinism in the dataset, as it attempts to naturalize African athletic ability through evolutionary discourse. This phrase suggests that contemporary African footballers are successful not because of training, coaching, or individual talent, but because of supposedly inherited survival mechanisms from ancestral environments. This explanation allows white supremacist discourse to account for African athletic dominance without acknowledging equal human capacity for skill development, strategic thinking, or cultural achievement.

The phrase "nature's little gift" reveals the patronizing dimension of biological determinism which is African athletic ability is reflected as a consolation prize from nature rather than the result of dedicated human effort and cultural development. This discourse draws on centuries of pseudoscientific racial theory that attributed different capabilities to different racial groups while maintaining overall white superiority. The strategy allows for the consumption and entertainment value of African athletic performance while preserving hierarchical beliefs about intelligence, leadership, and cultural sophistication that justify continued exclusion from decision-making positions within football institutions.

Datum 22



Figure 22.

This comment mocks Vinicius' speed and goal-scoring ability by invoking racist stereotypes about African ancestry and animalistic behavior. It appeared after posting a victory against Barcelona, and in that match, Vinicius scored a goal with a sprint from the center of the field. Many people consider this to be nothing special for Africans.

"Looks like you finally got something to show off besides those 'special talents' from back where you came from" demonstrates sarcastic/mock politeness through a fake compliment followed by a veiled degrading reference. The comment starts with a seemingly positive acknowledgment of a recent achievement ("finally got something to show off") but implies that the player has had no significant accomplishments until now. The word "finally" acts as a sarcastic marker suggesting long-standing incompetence. The element of mock politeness is reinforced using quotation marks around "special talents," creating a layer of irony that turns the seemingly positive term into mockery. The phrase "back where you came from" activates a xenophobic discourse implying foreignness and inferiority.

The spatial exclusion language operates through a sophisticated geographical imagination that maps racial hierarchies onto physical spaces. The directive "where you came from" appears in multiple variations establishing a fundamental principle that African players are spatial interlopers whose presence in European football represents a violation of natural order. This language draws territorial racism the idea that certain spaces inherently belong to racial groups and that crossing these boundaries constitutes transgression. This spatial discourse serves broader ideological functions by maintaining the fiction that European cultural institutions are racially neutral while simultaneously marking African presence as inherently foreign and temporary.

Datum 23



Figure 23.

This comment found in the comment section of Kylian Mbappé's posts, after PSG versus Brest match where he scores multiple goals or is heavily involved in the game. During the match, he was considered to have celebrated excessively in front of the away fans. This comment uses racist animal comparisons to undermine his skill and suggest his success is due to luck or opportunity rather than talent

"Well done, Rashy! Doing the bare minimum really is a huge achievement... especially for someone from your nigga background" demonstrates sarcastic/mock politeness impoliteness through a blend of fake praise and explicit racism. The comment opens with seemingly genuine congratulations ("Well done, Rashy!") and uses a nickname to feign familiarity. The sarcastic structure is revealed in the next phrase, which blatantly downplays the player's performance as "bare minimum" while paradoxically calling it a "huge achievement." The word "really" acts as a sarcastic intensifier.

This utterance uses sarcastic irony through the false praise "Well done" contrasted with "bare minimum." The racial slur "nigga" is the culmination of the gradation of linguistic aggression in this utterance. This statement combines multiple discourses: false praise, sarcasm, and explicit hate speech. The use of racial slurs indicates an abandonment of coded language in favor of direct verbal aggression. On social media, this represents an escalation from microaggressions to explicit hate speech that may violate community guidelines. This statement represents the most explicit form of white supremacist discourse, combining the delegitimization of achievement with racial dehumanization. Historically, it echoes the tradition of lynch mob mentality, which uses language to create othering and justify symbolic violence. The traumatic impact on the target and the broader Black community cannot be ignored, as it contributes to the perpetuation of intergenerational racial trauma.

Datum 24



Figure 24.

"Big congrats to Mbappé for your hard work! Every great team needs a lazy monkey, right?" exemplifies sarcastic/mock politeness impoliteness through a direct contradiction within a single utterance. It begins with seemingly exaggerated praise ("Big congrats") and acknowledges "hard work," creating an expectation of positive communication. However, the next sentence directly contradicts the initial praise by labeling the player a "lazy monkey", which is a combination of racial stereotypes of laziness and dehumanization through primate comparison. The rhetorical question "right?" acts as a sarcastic intensifier seeking false agreement from the audience. This sentence structure is deliberately designed to produce cognitive dissonance by juxtaposing praise and insult.

The repeated use of "monkey" serves multiple ideological functions beyond simple insult. Historically, the ape-human comparison has been central to white supremacist discourse since the colonial period, drawing on pseudo-scientific racial hierarchies that positioned Africans as evolutionary intermediates between animals and "civilized" humans. The dehumanizing language strategy operates through a deliberate reflection of African players as fundamentally non-human entities. In the football context, this dehumanization serves to strip African players of their individual agency and athletic intelligence, reducing them to mere physical specimens.

Datum 25



Figure 25.

This comment appeared after Mbappé win an individual trophy. This comment came at the same time as Ligue 1 and PSG took a strong stance against racism to protect Mbappe, leading some people to believe that this was not purely due to skill. It reflects resentment towards diversity initiatives and racial equality efforts in sports

It was so 'touching' to see you lift the trophy. Now we all know why clubs spend so much money on 'quality players' like you because of your exotic background, not skill" demonstrates sarcastic/mock politeness impoliteness using quotation marks and deliberate contrast. The comment begins with a fabricated expression of positive emotion ("so 'touching'") with quotation marks functioning as visual sarcasm cues, indicating that the word should be interpreted with its opposite meaning. The second sentence implies a revelation of truth through the phrase "Now we all know why"—a common sarcastic tactic pretending to expose hidden motives. The quotation marks around "quality players" create a layer of irony that transforms positive terms into mockery.

The sarcastic reference to "clubs spend so much money on 'quality players'" demonstrates sophisticated resentment about African players' economic value within the transfer market. The quotation marks around "quality players" signal the speaker's rejection of market-based valuations that recognize African talent, suggesting instead that economic decisions are distorted by non-merit factors. This resentment reflects deeper anxieties about globalization processes that have created opportunities for African advancement while potentially limiting opportunities for European players, coaches, and other football industry participants.

4. Negative impoliteness

Negative impoliteness is the opposite of positive impoliteness. Culpeper (1996) explains that negative impoliteness is an impoliteness strategy that intentionally threatens a person's "negative face" - the basic desire to be free from interruptions and have personal autonomy. Negative impoliteness includes threatening or frightening, demeaning, invading personal space verbally or physically, and associating others with negative aspects. Negative impoliteness appeared four times. The low frequency of negative impoliteness can be explained by its basic nature, which focuses on restricting the victim's freedom or autonomy (negative face). In the context of racial discrimination against African footballers, perpetrators of discrimination are more interested in directly attacking the victim's identity and self-image than in restricting their freedom.

Datum 26



Figure 26.

This comment is a direct racial and xenophobic attack on Mbappé's right to play at the highest level, appeared after perceived underperformance or controversial moments. It questions his belonging and origin despite his French nationality and achievements. At that time, Mbappe played poorly in the UEFA Nations League semi-final match against Croatia.

The utterance "You need to quit football and go back to where you came from, Mbappé! This ain't your place!" is a clear example of negative impoliteness on social media interactions. In this context, the utterance directly undermines Kylian Mbappé's positive face through two main mechanisms: first, by explicitly rejecting his right and legitimacy to participate in his professional domain (need to quit football), and second, by delegitimizing his presence in a specific geographical and social context (go back to where you came from and this ain't your place!). This impoliteness strategy fundamentally disrupts Mbappé's basic need for recognition as a legitimate member of the football community and the society he inhabits, sending a clear message that he is neither accepted nor welcome.

The directive "go back to where you came from", establishing a fundamental principle that African players are spatial interlopers whose presence in European football represents a violation of natural order. The spatial exclusion language operates through a sophisticated geographical imagination that maps racial hierarchies onto physical spaces. This language draws territorial racism which is the idea that certain spaces inherently belong to racial groups and that crossing these boundaries constitutes transgression. Phrase "This ain't your place" demonstrate how spatial exclusion intersects with possessive language. The binary opposition between "here" and "there" constructs European football spaces as naturally white territories where African presence requires constant justification. These phrases contain territorial exclusion that affirms unsuitability with absolute certainty and implies the existence of different and separate places of origin.

Datum 27



Figure 27.

This comment disparaged Rashford's background and implies he does not deserve his professional status. It appeared When he posted a picture saying goodbye to his club, Manchester United, and moving to Aston Villa. Although it was only a loan, many fans regretted the decision.

“Rashford is lucky anyone pays a guy like him he should be grateful he's not back in the slums where he came from”, contains deeply negative impoliteness due to its direct denigration of the player's right to be valued based on professional merit. This comment employs a strategy of belittlement and mockery of Rashford's socioeconomic background through phrases like "a guy like him," which creates social distance, and "should be grateful," which positions him as inferior. The utterance implies that Rashford does not deserve his achievements and is merely “lucky” to have escaped poverty. This tactic that leverages class-based stereotypes to attack the legitimacy of his presence at the elite level. The effect is an attempt to limit the player's autonomy and portray him as someone who should remain in a lower social position.

The specific references to "slums" create a hierarchical geography that positions Africa as a space of either primitive wilderness or urban decay. The "slums" reference is particularly significant because it connects contemporary African footballers to narratives of poverty and social dysfunction, suggesting that their success represents an illegitimate escape from their "natural" circumstances rather than earned achievement. Then, the phrase "lucky anyone pays a guy like him" constructs African players as fundamentally undeserving of economic rewards, suggesting that their compensation represents charity rather than earned wages for valuable services. The economic resentment strategy reveals how racial discrimination intersects with anxieties about economic displacement and resource allocation within football's increasingly globalized marketplace. This discourse draws on broader white supremacist narratives about African economic dependency and inability to generate legitimate wealth through individual effort.

The directive "where he came from", establishing a fundamental principle that African players are spatial interlopers whose presence in European football represents a violation of natural order. This language draws territorial racism which is the idea that certain spaces inherently belong to racial groups and that crossing these boundaries constitutes transgression. This spatial discourse serves broader ideological functions by maintaining the fiction that European cultural institutions are racially neutral while simultaneously marking African presence as inherently foreign and temporary.

Datum 28



Figure 28.

This comment targets Vinicius' speed and athleticism, insinuating doping and using racist language to question his natural abilities. The comment came after he posted about his victory against Atletico Madrid, in which he scored three goals, or a hat-trick. Such accusations surface after standout performances by Black athletes.

"There's no way someone from the jungle runs that fast without some kind of chemical help" exemplifies negative impoliteness that denies the athlete's right

to fair and objective judgment. This comment employs racist, dehumanizing language ("from the jungle") combined with baseless accusations of drug use. Linguistically, the phrase "no way" serves as a categorical denial of the athlete's natural ability, while the metaphor "jungle" activates colonial associations that degrade people of color as primitive. The utterance implies that athletes from certain backgrounds cannot possess extraordinary natural talent, which is a strategy that seeks to deny legitimate recognition and spreads harmful racial stereotypes.

The word "jungle" creates a hierarchical geography that positions Africa as a space of either primitive wilderness or urban decay, contrasted with the implied sophistication and order of European football stadiums. The "jungle" metaphor creating a semantic field that positions Africa as a space of wilderness and chaos, contrasted with the civilized space of European football. This binary reflection serves to naturalize exclusion which is if African players belong to the "jungle," then their presence in organized, professional football becomes inherently transgressive. The word "jungle" draws directly from colonial-era geographical imaginations that reflected Africa as a space of wilderness requiring European civilization and control. These terms carry embedded assumptions about social organization, technological capacity, and cultural sophistication that automatically position African footballers as representatives of supposedly primitive societies.

Datum 29



Figure .

This comment targets Vinicius' speed and athleticism, insinuating doping and using racist language to question his natural abilities. The comment came after he posted about his victory against Atletico Madrid, in which he scored three goals, or a hat-trick. Such accusations surface after standout performances by Black athletes. Many people dislike his celebrations because they are often considered too arrogant.

“No one wants to see your face online or on the pitch. Save the showboating for your tribe back home” displays negative impoliteness by attacking the player's right to self-expression and public presence. This comment uses symbolic expulsion strategies ("no one wants") and overt racial insults. The generalization "no one" creates a false consensus claim, while the phrase "your tribe back home" invokes colonialist language designed to demean. The utterance implicitly asserts to Vinicius that he has no rightful place in the sport or broader society, activating xenophobic discourse with clearly racist undertones.

The directive "Save the showboating for your tribe back home", establishing a fundamental principle that African players are spatial interlopers whose presence in European football represents a violation of natural order. This language draws territorial racism which is the idea that certain spaces inherently belong to racial groups and that crossing these boundaries constitutes transgression. The reference to "tribe" connects individual players to colonial anthropological discourse that characterized African social organization as fundamentally different from and inferior to European nation-states. This terminology serves to deny African players full modernity which is they cannot simply be individuals or citizens but must always represent allegedly backward collective identities. The phrase "Save the showboating for your tribe back home" demonstrates how this colonial discourse operates to exclude African players from the supposedly universal, meritocratic space of professional football.

B. DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings of this study, which explored impoliteness strategies used on social media to discriminate against African footballers and examined how this discrimination is reflected on social media conversations. The discussion is organized to answer the research questions while connecting the findings to theoretical frameworks and previous research.

1. Impoliteness Strategies Used to Discriminate Against African Footballers

The first finding identifies positive impoliteness as the dominant strategy (Data 1–10), which targets the positive face or the need to be appreciated and

recognized (Culpeper, 1996, 2011). Its manifestations include dehumanization through primate metaphors (monkey, lil monkey), denial of intellectual competence (doesn't have the brains), delegitimization of achievements (only won out of pity, not skill), racist generalizations (black people don't have a brain), and rejection of capability and success based on race. This finding aligns with the study by Markowitz (2024), which identifies a 'denial-of-worth' pattern in football, where the abilities of Black athletes are systematically delegitimized.

Bald on record impoliteness emerges as the second type (Data 11–20), characterized by direct rudeness without any attempt at mitigation (Culpeper, 1996, 2011). Its manifestations include direct racist insults (You're trash!, and Freakin' monkey!), commands of expulsion (Get out of our club now!), an explicit denial of value (There's nothing special about him), and the use of explicit racial slurs (those niggas). Rosen (2023) observed that bald on record impoliteness in the context of sports racism is often used as a method to put athletes back in their place socially, particularly after significant accomplishments.

The third identified type is sarcasm/mock politeness (Data 21–25), which uses false praise to deliver insults (Culpeper, 1996, 2011). Manifestations include exaggerated compliments followed by racism (Wow, Mbappé scored? Incredible! Must be that primal jungle instinct), quotation marks to imply irony ('special talents'), and rhetorical questions seeking false affirmation (nature's little gift, right?). Ayala et al. (2021) observed a rise in sarcasm/mock politeness as a form of microaggression that appears subtler but is equally damaging to athletes from minority groups. It is worth noting that no instances of withhold politeness were found in the presented data.

The fourth identified type is negative impoliteness (Data 26-29), which targets the ‘negative face’ or the desire to be free from imposition (Culpeper, 1996, 2011), with manifestations such as expulsion (go back to where you came from), restriction of legitimate presence (This ain't your place!), objectification (only keep players like you around for your body), and denial of the right to claim achievements (You didn't win that). Matamoros-Fernández and Farkas (2021) also identified racially based impoliteness on social media platforms that mirrors this category of negative impoliteness, where the right of athletes to exist in elite spaces is explicitly denied.

The findings reveal a comprehensive pattern of racist impoliteness strategies against of Black people, particularly in football contexts. The study identified four main types of linguistic strategies, which are positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, bald-on-record impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock politeness. These strategies show how language becomes a powerful weapon, used to question the dignity, downplay the achievements, and challenge the legitimacy of Black footballers competing at the highest levels. These are not just isolated insults or individual outbursts. Instead, they reveal a deeper layer of systemic racism, where language reinforces long-standing racial hierarchies even in spaces where Black people visibly popular.

2. The Reflection of Discrimination on social media Conversations

Textually, discriminatory utterances directed at Black footballers reveal a consistent pattern of racist lexicalization, notably through dehumanization via animal metaphors such as “monkey” which is a term that recurs frequently, and references to the “jungle” and “savanna”, which serve as discursive strategies to degrade the dignity of Black players. The use of explicit racial slurs like “nigga(s)”

appears in several instances, reinforcing an exclusive and discriminatory social hierarchy. Negative lexicalizations about intellectual capacities, such as “doesn’t actually have the brains” and “Black people don’t have a brain,” reflect longstanding stereotypes about the intellectual inferiority of Black athletes. Lienden (2022) argues that these textual practices construct an ontological hierarchy between dominant groups and racialized subjects, relegating Black footballers to an inferior position.

The discursive dimension reveals how contemporary racist discourse in European football is still heavily influenced by and reproduces historical power structures through three main frameworks. First, colonial discourse emerges through the use of terms such as “jungle,” “tribe,” and “savanna,” which evoke colonial imagery and position Africa as a region perceived as primitive and uncivilized, thereby creating a false dichotomy between European civilization and African backwardness; this shapes the narrative that the presence of black players in European football is an act of charity, not a recognition of equal participation rights. Storey (2020) explains that racial discrimination has become deeply entrenched in the European football industry, especially as the transfer of players from Africa and Asia to European leagues has increased, often viewed through stereotypical lenses and devalued in terms of identity.

Second, nationalist discourse is manifested through expressions such as “this ain’t your place” and “go back to where you came from,” which construct national identity in an exclusive and racist manner, thereby diminishing the legitimacy of black players as part of the nation's representation. Previous research

(Cable et al., 2022; Quansah & Amo-Agyei, 2022) have also shown that racism in European football does not only occur at the club level, but is also deeply rooted in broader social structures, where black players are often the target of discrimination, both verbal and physical.

Third, the discourse of meritocracy subtly uses language that questions whether players are truly “deserving” of success or “real” achievements, thereby obscuring racial bias within a narrative of objectivity; this discourse allows for plausible deniability while still undermining the achievements of Black players and perpetuating racial hierarchies in sports. Penfold & Cleland (2022) have highlighted that efforts to combat racism, such as those undertaken by the advocacy network Football Against Racism in Europe and UEFA, still face significant challenges because meritocratic norms and national exclusivity often serve as new justifications for covert racial bias.

Sociocultural analysis reveals that discriminatory discourse is rooted in two main ideological systems. First, the ideology of white supremacy consistently reduces the success of black athletes to attributes such as instinct, speed or evolutionary heritage, while questioning their intellectual capacity, reflecting a systematic ideology that pits white cognitive superiority against black physicality. Mouden (2021) emphasizes how in-group communities claim a monopoly on intelligence and cognitive abilities, while out-group communities are reduced to mere physicality. Second, colonial ideology consistently portrays European football as a civilized space that generously accepts African players, using terms like “grateful” and references to “slums” to construct a narrative that black players

should be thankful for their inclusion, not recognized for their contributions to the. Previous studies have also shown how this narrative reinforces the subordinate and marginalized position of black players in social and sporting contexts(Akinmusuyi, 2023).

This analysis also demonstrates how discriminatory discourse functions to maintain racial hierarchies through various mechanisms of power, such as territorial control that asserts who is entitled to be in the football space and who must leave, setting racial boundaries within that space; epistemic authority that claims intelligence and cleverness as attributes of the superior in-group, thereby entitling them to judge out-group members; and definitional power that controls what is considered “real achievement” or worthy success, thereby maintaining control over recognition and legitimacy (Fairclough, 2013). Thus, this discourse not only reproduces stereotypes and discrimination but also reinforces power structures that hinder full recognition of Black players in professional football.

In conclusion, the analysis reveals that discrimination against African footballers is primarily reflected through systematic dehumanization processes. The dehumanization operates through what can be termed evolutionary regression discourse where Black players are linguistically positioned as less evolved or civilized (Utych, 2022). This reflection is not accidental but represents a deliberate strategy to undermine the legitimacy of Black players' presence in elite European football spaces. The other reflection mechanism involves territorial exclusion through assertions about legitimate belonging. The discourse repeatedly instructs Black players to "go back to where you came from," "return to the jungle," or leave

"our club." This reflection operates through what the analysis terms possessive territoriality, which is the assertion of ownership over football spaces by those claiming racial authenticity. This territorial exclusion reveals the intersection of racial and national identity reflections, where European football spaces are claimed as naturally belonging to specific racial groups.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents the conclusions and suggestions drawn from the research on Impoliteness strategies used to discriminate African footballers on social media X. The suggestions from this research are expected to help future researchers who are interested in similar research.

A. Conclusion

This study found 29 utterances of impoliteness used on social media to discriminate against black football players, which were two dominant impoliteness strategies, Positive Impoliteness and Bald on Record, each appearing 10 times. This was followed by sarcasm/mock politeness, which appeared 5 times, and negative impoliteness, which appeared 4 times, and did not find withhold politeness. The findings reveal a comprehensive pattern of racist impoliteness strategies against of Black people, particularly in football contexts. These strategies show how language becomes a powerful weapon, used to question the dignity, downplay the achievements, and challenge the legitimacy of Black footballers competing at the highest levels.

This study also explains the process of discrimination through impoliteness utterances against black footballers on social media. The findings point out how seemingly individual instances of impoliteness connect to broader historical, ideological, and institutional patterns of racism. This comprehensive analysis demonstrates that racism against Black footballers represents a systematic

ideological framework intersecting racial and national identity reflections, operating through deliberate strategies designed to undermine the legitimacy of Black players' presence in elite European football while maintaining power structures that prevent full recognition and equality in professional football contexts. In conclusion, this study answers the research questions: What are the types of impoliteness utterances used to discriminate against African footballers on social media and how those utterances are reflected.

B. Suggestion

This study, while providing valuable insights into racist discourse targeting Black footballers, presents several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study's scope is restricted to 29 racist utterances focusing specifically on three prominent players (Rashford, Mbappé, and Vinícius), which may not fully capture the breadth and diversity of racist discourse across different contexts. The limited sample size, while sufficient for in-depth qualitative analysis, constrains the generalizability of findings to the broader phenomenon of racism in European football. Second, the analysis primarily focuses on explicit racist language and may not adequately capture more subtle forms of coded racism or microaggressions that operate through seemingly neutral language but carry discriminatory undertones. Third, the study examines racist utterances without considering the broader communicative context, including audience responses, or platform dynamics, which could provide additional layers of meaning and understanding about how racist discourse is received, challenged, or amplified.

Based on these limitations, several suggestions for future research emerge that could significantly advance our understanding of racism in football discourse. First, longitudinal studies should be conducted to examine how racist discourse evolves over time, particularly investigating whether patterns change in response to anti-racism campaigns, major incidents, or shifts in social consciousness, while also exploring how individual players experience different intensities of racist targeting throughout their career progression. Second, comparative cross-cultural research is needed to analyze racist discourse patterns across different European leagues, countries, and cultural contexts to identify both universal and context-specific manifestations of racism. Third, multimodal discourse analysis should be employed to examine how racist meanings are reflected through the interaction of text, images, videos, and other media formats, particularly investigating how digital platforms facilitate the creation and circulation of racist content through memes, edited images, or viral videos.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



Irwan Aditya Pratama was born in Malang on June 22, 2003. He graduated from SMK Muhammadiyah 1 Kepanjen in 2021. He entered started his education at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang majoring in English Literature in 2021. During his studies, He volunteered in several departmental events. He is also active in religious activities outside of campus.

APPENDIX

Positive Impoliteness

1.

 **Glynn Hamer** 
@GlynnCops

you're useless! Just go back to the jungle where you came from

2:56 PM · May 28, 2024 · 8 Views

0 0 0 0

2.

 **A**
@aliftbll

This just proves Rashford doesn't actually have the brains to play at this level

9:21 AM · May 26, 2024 · 24 Views

0 0 1 0

3.

 **Maurice Kilbride** 
@MauriceK1421

Rashford doesn't belong in an elite club black people don't have a brain.

7:19 PM · May 26, 2023 · 14 Views

1 0 1 0

4.

 **Liam M**
@7kingsmanchest5

Rashford's just posing with that trophy lil monkey doesn't even get what real achievement means

3:17 PM · May 30, 2023 · 19 Views

0 1 4 0

5.

 **DS** 
@Pu55yman_Dan

Even a monkey could score if given that many chances. Nothing special

7:35 PM · Jun 20, 2023 · 13 Views

0 0 1 0

6.

 **Dani Cuevas** 
@DaniCuevasLpz

you didn't deserve that trophy. black players always get special treatment 'cause of the whole racism issue

8:15 PM · Dec 18, 2024 · 24 Views

2 3 8 0

7.

**Moha.** ✓
@LeVraiMoha

...

Kylian, that's what happens when you rely on an African monkey. Just head back to the jungle

9:54 PM · Jun 13, 2023 · **13** Views



0



0



2



0



8.

**John Briceno**
@jbricenot

...

That trophy should go to a player with actual skill, not someone just relying on brute strength like some wild niggas

10:14 PM · May 30, 2023 · **21** Views



0



3



5



0



9.

**Tyler Huband**
@Tylerhuband

...

He's not as good as people say, but if he's a black player, he'll be praised.

7:35 PM · Jun 20, 2023 · **16** Views



0



1



4



0



10.

**Moha.** ✓
@LeVraiMoha

...

Scored outta luck. Just happened to be fast like your ancestors running from lions on the savanna

1:23 PM · Nov 19, 2023 · **7** Views



0



0



0



0



Bald on Record Impoliteness

11.  **Davion Dare**
@officialdaviond ...
- You're trash! Just like all those niggas who don't belong here
- 11:51 PM · May 5, 2023 · 9 Views
- 0 0 3 0
12.  **lizzy clark**
@lizzyxclark ...
- One goal doesn't change the fact that u r just another overrated monkey
- 10:47 PM · Jun 20, 2023 · 23 Views
- 1 4 2 0
13.  **Shaun**
@LfcShaunjudge ...
- Rashford only won that trophy 'cause of his skin color
- 8:31 PM · May 30, 2023 · 15 Views
- 2 0 5 0
14.  **lara**
@laralfc ...
- It's normal, black players often get too much hype without any real prove
- 10:49 AM · Aug 5, 2023 · 10 Views
- 0 0 3 0

15.  **Glynn Hamer** ✓
@GlynnCops ...
- rashford can run, sure but there's no brain behind that game, just like all those black
- 6:06 PM · Nov 1, 2024 · 9 Views
- 0 0 3 0
16.  **Rhys Smith**
@napper_abbie ...
- Get out of our club now! We don't need lazy nigga like you!!
- 7:10 AM · May 26, 2024 · 11 Views
- 0 1 3 0
17.  **Raymond Cooke**
@RaymondC ...
- One goal but people like you don't belong here, the kind who come from the slums
- 3:17 PM · Jun 20, 2023 · 8 Views
- 0 0 2 0
18.  **gam** ✓
@mbaafraude ...
- He only got the chance because of his skin color, not because of his skills
- 11:27 PM · Dec 19, 2024 · 15 Views
- 1 0 3 0

19.



Alex
@dualecs

...

There's nothing special about him, just the color of his skin

8:10 AM · May 29, 2023 · **28** Views

1 1 4 0

20.



Prince
@MCL_Prince

...

Freakin' monkey! Just go back to the jungle

10:57 AM · Mar 2, 2024 · **29** Views

0 0 3 0

Sarcasm/Mock Politeness

21.



Chester - l'OM
@SustainableArch

...

Wow, Mbappé scored? Incredible! Must be that primal jungle instinct kicking in nature's little gift, right?

4:10 PM · Mar 16, 2024 · **14** Views

0 0 3 0

22.



Davion Dare
@officialdaviond

...

Looks like you finally got something to show off besides those 'special talents' from back where you came from.

8:19 PM · Nov 28, 2023 · **19** Views

1 1 6 0

23.



Shaun
@LfcShaunjudge

...

Well done, Rashie! Doing the bare minimum really is a huge achievement... especially for someone from your nigga background

12:12 PM · Jun 20, 2023 · **12** Views

1 0 4 0

24.



joel
@AyetlsJoel

...

Big congrats to Mbappé for your hard work! Every great team needs a lazy monkey, right?

1:10 PM · Nov 12, 2023 · **16** Views

0 0 2 0

25.

**Pablo Mendonca22**
@Pablomendonca5

...

It was so 'touching' to see you lift the trophy. Now we all know why clubs spend so much money on 'quality players' like you because of your exotic background

9:51 PM · Dec 28, 2024 · 9 Views



Negative Impoliteness

26.

**DS** ✓
@Pu55yman_Dan

...

You need to quit football and go back to where you came from, Mbappé! This ain't your place!"

4:23 PM · Jun 17, 2023 · 25 Views



27.

**Gerry EM** ✓
@DrRekkless

...

Rashford is lucky anyone pays a guy like him he should be grateful he's not back in the slums where he came from

10:09 AM · Aug 18, 2024 · 25 Views



28.

**kitoz**
@kitozFN

...

There's no way someone from the jungle runs that fast without some kind of chemical help

7:54 AM · Feb 12, 2024 · 12 Views



29.

**Prince**
@MCI_Prince

...

no one wants to see your face online or on the pitch. Save the showboating for your tribe back home

12:38 PM · Feb 12, 2024 · 37 Views

