



Do Indonesian Male and Female Express Different Impoliteness in Social Media? a Case Study of Vadel’s Issue in Instagram

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the expression of impoliteness strategies by Indonesian male and female netizens in the context of the Vadel issue on Instagram. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive method, the analysis focuses on comments gathered from the platform, applying Culpeper’s (1996) framework of impoliteness strategies. The findings reveal significant gender-based differences in how impoliteness is expressed. Female commenters often employed bald-on-record and negative impoliteness strategies, reflecting a tendency toward subtle, passive-aggressive communication. In contrast, male commenters frequently utilized positive impoliteness and sarcasm, showcasing a more overtly confrontational style. Despite these differences, both genders shared a preference for direct expressions of hostility, as withhold politeness was notably absent. These results contribute to a deeper understanding of gender dynamics in digital interactions, emphasizing the diverse ways impoliteness manifests in social media discourse.

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INTRODUCTION

The pervasiveness of social media has undeniably transformed communication patterns, creating new avenues for both positive and negative interactions. Within this digital landscape, impoliteness has emerged as a significant area of study, exploring how individuals utilize language to attack faces, disrupt social norms, and express disapproval or aggression. This study addresses the gap by investigating whether Indonesian males and females exhibit distinct impoliteness strategies on social media. Focusing on the case of Vadel’s issue on Instagram, analyzed netizen comments to identify and categorize the types of impoliteness strategies employed by both male and female users.

Pragmatics is the study of how individuals interpret and produce communicative or speech acts in real-life conversational contexts. George Yule

(1996) states that pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by the speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader), it deals with the contextual meaning and how listeners derive meaning from what is said. Therefore, it highlights the idea that meaning in communication is not just about the literal words used but also about the implied meaning, tone, intention, and situation. Furthermore, (Leech, 2016) explains that pragmatics is the study of how language is used in communication, particularly the relationship between sentences and their contexts of use. This is supported by (Jacob L. Mey, 2001) states that pragmatics is the study of the conditions of human language use as determined by the context of society.

Impoliteness theory is an extension of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. While politeness theory was first introduced by Leech (1983) and later explored by Watts (2003), Culpeper (1996) highlights that politeness has gained more prominence compared to impoliteness theory over time.

Culpeper (1996) differentiates politeness and impoliteness theories based on two key factors. Furthered explains in Culpeper (2005) that linguist and non-linguistic signs do not inherently convey impoliteness. Instead, impoliteness arises from external factors such as power dynamics, social relationships, and context beyond the linguistic domain.

However, Prosody plays a significant part in determining politeness and impoliteness. Impolite behavior can manifest through nonverbal signals on the face, hands, and other body parts, according to the speaker. Impolite behavior in social encounters can also be determined by paralinguistic factors (Pasaribu, 2021).

Culpeper (1996) defines impoliteness as a communication attitude that results in "face loss" for the hearer or target. Culpeper classifies impoliteness into five types. 1) Bald on record impoliteness, 2) positive impoliteness, 3) negative politeness, 4) sarcasm or mock impoliteness, and 5) withhold impoliteness.

Impoliteness communication is seen as a societal norm, affecting both informal and official interactions, as discussed in Dubrovskaya (Sari et al., 2019). Impoliteness behavior is aligned with Culpeper's (1996) idea of impoliteness strategy, which involves attacking or threatening other's faces. This method is based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory (1987). It was believed that impoliteness was a parasite of civility.

Numerous studies have explored impoliteness strategies on social media. For example (Karim et al., 2022) in comedic contexts, identify negative and positive impoliteness as strategies affecting social identity, with negative

impoliteness threatening autonomy through direct attacks and positive impoliteness targeting approval through sarcasm or dismissiveness. Putri, (2024) in the podcast, reveals that a greater number of impoliteness strategies were employed by women compared to men, challenging traditional gender perceptions by using them for both attack and defense, thereby reflecting dominance and complexity in interpersonal dynamics. The investigation of impoliteness in social media Facebook was presented by (Pasaribu, 2021), concluded that male netizens predominantly used bald-on-record strategies, characterized by harsh and direct expressions of hatred, while female netizens favored nuanced positive impoliteness strategies, demonstrating subtly communication styles influenced by gender.

This study focused on the expression of impoliteness strategy in social media by female and male netizens in the context of the Vadel issue on Instagram. Previous research suggests that men and women use different strategies to express impoliteness, with men being more direct and aggressive (Holmes Janet, 1995), while women may use more subtle or indirect forms (Kienpointner, 1997). However, Keong et al, (2012) on the other hand note that gender differences in the use of impoliteness are negligible. This ongoing debate underscores the need for further exploration of how gender shapes impoliteness in online communication. This paper aims to analyze the ways female and male netizens express impoliteness regarding the Vadel issues, contributing to a deeper understanding of gender dynamics in social media interactions.

RESEARCH METHODE

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive design to explore the differences in impoliteness expressions between Indonesian male and female users on social media, specifically on Instagram. According to Dornyei in (Sani, 2020), qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive. It indicates that the primary method of data analysis is interpretation, and it primarily refers to descriptive and verbal data utilized to address issues that come up. The researcher utilizes qualitative descriptive design since the data of the analysis consists of written text. Furthermore, gender differences in the use of impoliteness strategies are best explained by the qualitative method.

The study focuses on Vadel's issue on Instagram, which the data source can be found on (<https://shorturl.at/2bNtb>). Around 200 comments as data have been collected from Vadel's Instagram account. Comments were categorized based on the gender of the commentators (male and female). The documentary techniques were used to collect written materials through the

following steps: 1) Read netizen comments on Vadel's Instagram posts, 2) Take a screenshot of the netizen's comment, 3) Collecting data including bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withhold politeness from the netizen's comment. The analysis focused on examining netizens' comments to express their impoliteness toward Vadel based on Culpeper's theory. By identifying data containing impoliteness strategy, and then classifying the data into five impoliteness strategies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis, impoliteness strategies were found in the comment on Vadel's Instagram post including bald-on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock politeness. However, withhold politeness was not found in the comment. Following are the results of the impoliteness analysis data carried out on 200 netizen comments containing impoliteness strategies.

Table 1.
Types of impoliteness strategy in Vadel's Instagram

| No | Impoliteness Strategy | Female | | Male | |
|-------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | | frequency | percentage | frequency | percentage |
| 1. | Bald on Record impoliteness | 9 | 9% | 4 | 4% |
| 2. | Positive impoliteness | 24 | 24% | 30 | 30% |
| 3. | Negative impoliteness | 43 | 43% | 38 | 38% |
| 4. | Sarcasm or mock politeness | 24 | 24% | 28 | 28% |
| 5. | Withhold politeness | - | - | - | - |
| Total | | 100 | 100% | 100 | 100% |

Table 1 presents the types of impoliteness strategies observed on Vadel's Instagram account, categorized by female and male netizens. Negative impoliteness emerged as the most frequent strategy, observed in females with 43 comments (43%) and males with 38 comments (38%). This was followed by Positive impoliteness, which accounted for females 24 comments (24%) and males 30 comments (30%). Sarcasm or mock politeness was also prominent,

occurring in 24 comments (24%) for females and 28 comments (28%) for males. In contrast, Bald on-record impoliteness was the least frequent, identified in 9 comments (9%) of females and 4 comments (4%) of males.

The results highlight differences in the impoliteness strategies used by male and female netizens. These results indicate that negative impoliteness dominates, while direct strategies like bald on record are less prevalent. To better illustrate these differences, the following discussion provided a detailed explanation of the types of impoliteness strategies employed by both genders in expressing impoliteness strategies toward Vadel on his Instagram account.

1. Bald on Record Impoliteness

Bald on Record is one of the types of impoliteness strategy that the speaker's facial threatening action (FTA) methods for attacking the interlocutor's face in a direct, plain, explicit, and unambiguous manner.

Extract 1 (F): GK da gerakan lain pa selain jurus kesetrum kau itu (There's no other move besides your electric shock move)

This comment directly and outspokenly criticizes and questions Vadel's movement. Where his movement is monotone. There is no attempt to disguise the criticism, so it sounds harsh.

Extract 2 (M): gaada malu lo woy! (there's no shame in you woy!)

This netizen comment criticizes the listener (Vadel) directly and forcefully, as Vadel's dance is considered embarrassing and there is no attempt to hide or soften the message sent.

2. Positive Impoliteness

Positive impoliteness is a strategy designed to undermine another person's intended positive desires or wishes.

Extract 3 (M) "paansi" (what it is?) This comment creates an impression of ignoring or snubbing Vadel, highlighting a lack of interest or empathy.

The (F) comment "oh, begitu" (oh, like that) conveys indifference and detachment, reinforcing the feeling of alienation. The derogatory use of "perkedel" in place of Vadel's name serves to dehumanize and ridicule, employing obscure language that diminishes Vadel's identity.

And then the (F) comment "ka kpn sih gembel ini vadel pkai baju orens?" (sis, when will this vadel rubbish wear orange clothes?) uses ambiguous language like "gembel" (rubbish), implying coded insults that alienate and demean vadel further. This expression is categorized into the use of obscure or secretive language.

Extract 4 (F) "ga kebayang bau nya gimana 🤢" (I can't imagine how it smells) this netizen comment implicitly criticizes Vadel's body odor, intending

to provoke feelings of embarrassment or discomfort. This expression is categorized as making the other feel uncomfortable.

The (M) comment “babi lu tai lu f***k lug a tau mal ulu” (you pig, shit, f***k you, you shameless person) these comments are taboo words that are considered offensive in everyday conversation such as the word pig, shit, and f***k, which are designed to insult and demean Vadel openly, reflecting a blatant display of contempt aiming to make addresses offended or humiliated.

And then the (F) statement “no 1 orang paling gatau malu jatuh ke vadel 🤡🤡🤡🤡” (the most shameless person falls to Vadel) is a derogatory use of an epithet or label that the target wishes to impute. In this comment, the words are intended to demean and humiliate Vadel by referring to Vadel as the most shameless which is an insult to the person’s character or behaviour.

3. Negative Impoliteness

Negative impoliteness is a tactic used to assault the other person's negative facial desires and put them in a bad predicament.

Extract 5 (F) gapapa puas puasin aja dulu joget2nya, kan nanti mah gabisa kalo udah pake baju oren 😊” (it’s okay to just be satisfied with dancing first, you won’t be able to do it if you’re already wearing orange clothes) these netizen comment aims to frighten Vadel, who has been prosecuted by his girlfriend’s mother to court, who still looks busy making dancing content to immediately go to prison and wear orange prison clothes.

The (F) comment “lagu kemana dance kemana” (where the song, where the dance) this statement scorns and ridicules Vadel’s dance moves, suggesting they are poorly executed and out of sync with the music.

The (M) comment “kyk rombongan pencopet yaa” (looks like a group of pickpockets) explicitly associates Vadel and his friends with criminal behaviour, creating a negative and demeaning image.

And then, the comment “hutang lu bayar vadel, jgn kebanyakn gaya” (pay your debts Vadel, don’t be too stylish) this comment highlights Vadel’s indebtedness, intending to publicly shame him and emphasize his financial obligations.

4. Sarcasm or mock politeness

Mock politeness, often known as sarcasm, is a face-threatening approach that appears kind but serves a deceitful purpose by misinterpreting the speaker's intended meaning.

Extract 6 (F) Beneran kayak orang kesurupan 🤡 (Really like a trance person)

This netizen's comment suggests a sense of concern by adding a crying emoji (😭), when in fact it is meant to mock. This sentence implies that Vadel is behaving unnaturally or excessively, like a person “in a trance,” which is usually considered a strange or frightening behavior. Although on the surface it seems like a normal statement, the context and choice of words “like a trance” is actually an insinuation that trivializes Vadel's dance moves in an indirect but still offensive way.

Extract 7 (M) di jogetin dlu bang biar ga tegang klo besok di panggil lg (go dancing first bro so you do not get nervous if you get called again tomorrow)

This comment sounds like it's saying something seemingly caring, for Vadel to lighten up, but with a tone that is mocking. By suggesting “dancing first (jogetin dulu)”. The use of a nonsensical suggestion like “jogetin” shows an intention to make the person look silly.

CONCLUSION

The findings show distinct gender-based variations in impoliteness strategies on Vadel's Instagram. Females' higher use of bald-on-record impoliteness suggests a preference for expressing hostility directly, while males' frequent use of positive impoliteness indicates a confrontational style through derogatory remarks. Negative impoliteness is commonly employed by females, reflecting a tendency toward disinterest or rejection, demonstrating a more passive-aggressive approach. Both genders frequently utilize sarcasm or mock politeness, highlighting a shared preference for using ridicule to undermine others' self-esteem. The absence of withhold politeness suggests that active expressions of impoliteness are preferred in online interactions. Overall, males tend to favor more overt and confrontational strategies, while females lean toward more indirect and subtle forms of impoliteness, reflecting differing communication styles.

This study is limited by its focus on analyzing the impoliteness strategies in 200 comments from Vadel's Instagram account. Cultural and contextual limitations are evident, as the findings are specific to the Indonesian situation and Vadel-specific issues. The absence of “withhold impoliteness” among the analyzed comments indicates a contextual limitation.

In future research, it is recommended that future research include comments from different social media platforms to provide a broader perspective on incivility strategies across different contexts. The use of mixed methods is recommended to reduce bias and provide a more comprehensive analysis. Contextual factors, such as cultural settings or user demographics, should be examined to add depth to the findings. Lastly, the absence of

“withhold politeness” should be further investigated to determine whether it reflects contextual limitations or gaps in the data set.

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