

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is the introductory part of this research. It presents an overview of the research, which consists of sub-chapters including research background, previous studies, statement of problem, purposes of the research, research significance, conceptual framework, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Research

In social life, humans inevitably encounter a range of issues, whether they occur in localized environments or explode into significant problems within broader society. The subject of transgender individuals remains unresolved and causes considerable debate, resulting in conflict. LGBT communities are considered a minority group with an abnormally high sexual orientation, as it violates the morals and traditions of society (Afif, 2019). Transgender refers to those who change their gender identity from male to female or vice versa. In the broader culture, transgender individuals are regarded as forbidden, provoking varied public responses that encompass acceptance, resistance, or neutrality. Consequently, this topic is articulated through both verbal and non-verbal communication, which are integral components of language.

Language is a communication tool that all individuals utilize daily to convey information and arguments to others. Language is essential in the broader community, serving as a primary means of communication and interaction. Without language, individuals would struggle to communicate effectively. The capacity for interaction between people enables our ability to live in society. Individuals or groups may support or oppose specific interactions directly or indirectly, based on statements from different perspectives regarding specific issues. According to Salim M (2023), verbal and non-verbal communication can be broadly classified into two categories. Verbal communication employs human language as a symbolic system, which can be conveyed through oral or written media, addressing sensitive issues.

In contrast, non-verbal communication relies on non-verbal methods, such as facial expressions, body language, and gestures. Both have the same purpose, which is to convey an idea. Therefore, the idea can serve as a means to convey messages, sensitive issues, and social norms that can be effectively expressed through social media.

Communication is a cooperative activity between two or more people in which all those actors construct the meanings of each transaction engaged in reciprocally attending to the other communicants' words. In essence, communication is an integral part of social interaction, whether it occurs virtually or physically. Consequently, written and spoken communication represent the two principal forms of communication. Both forms of communication facilitate interaction and the exchange of information with others. Nevertheless, the impact of social media on individuals is not always beneficial. The role of social media in society is complex, with both positive and negative implications (Wilson & Stock, 2021). This quotation shows that social media has two distinct aspects: beneficial and harmful. Thus, it gives rise to various opinions regarding the factors that trigger both phenomena.

Social media platforms, such as Instagram, are particularly effective in facilitating rapid access to the specific content individuals seek. This aligns with Leaver et al. (2020) those who state that Instagram is a platform for understanding and mapping visual social media culture. This understanding can be applied to Instagram itself and the various ways in which the material world has become Instagram-worthy, including redesigning practices, cultural institutions, and material spaces. This is the reason that Instagram has become one of the most popular and widely used social media platforms, influencing individuals' opinions and character. The platform serves various purposes: promotion, opinion formation, image creation, and more. Instagram offers a variety of features, including social structure, social tagging, and media sharing. The social interaction network among users exhibits various dynamic behaviors, including those related to followers and following relationships, as well as user communication through posts and comments.

To discover the purpose of an utterance on Instagram, it is possible to employ pragmatics, which involves studying how context affects the interpretation of language. In another definition, pragmatics is the study of the meaning attributed to speech utterances by a person, sentences used in communication, and the meaning conveyed in language interactions between speakers and listeners. It also provides insight into what people say explicitly and implicitly. When an actor gives an utterance, it always has another meaning. This meaning can be different from the literal meaning. Thus, the utterance can contain the meaning of impoliteness or even vice versa.

Bousfield (2010) defines impoliteness as a negative attitude or behaviour in certain situations. The specific problem that triggers this impoliteness can vary, whether it is due to social, political, or religious issues. These impolite utterances will manifest if the speaker disagrees with what they see or hear. The advent of this impoliteness, manifested in the form of emotional expression through abusive language, can precipitate conflict. Impoliteness can also be defined as rude behaviour that ignores the expected politeness strategies. Consequently, the emerging expressions cannot be regarded as anything other than deliberate and oppositional. It is reasonable to posit that an expression of impoliteness likely accompanies an act of rudeness. However, the situation is distinct when we consider the comments made by commentators on Joe Biden's Instagram post regarding "Transgender Day of Visibility." The distinction lies in the fact that the impolite behaviour referenced in Bousfield's quote is not immediately apparent, whereas the comments made by the commenters are. These behaviours are manifested in the form of utterances containing impoliteness.

After understanding the strategies of impoliteness, the functions of impoliteness reveal the rationale behind the use of discourteous, impolite, or offensive language in communicative interactions. This impoliteness is not merely regarded as a violation of social norms; instead, it is often employed with a specific and deliberate intention, dependent on the context of communication. Hence, the impoliteness function justifies the commenter's impolite utterance directed at Joe Biden's "Transgender Day of Visibility" post.

The researcher identified several previous studies that served as references for this research. The researcher refers to several previous studies that have the same domain in discussing impoliteness but differ in terms of objects and problem formulations.

The first research, provided by Hendar et al. (2022), is entitled “Impoliteness Strategies on Online Comments at Kompas TV YouTube Channel: A Pragmatic Analysis.” This study proposes an analysis of impoliteness strategies as first stated by Culpeper (2005). This research employed a descriptive qualitative method to present an analysis based on data collected from YouTube comments sourced from KOMPAS TV. The data from 100 comments containing impoliteness strategies on that video indicated that there were four categories of impoliteness, as identified by Culpeper (2005). The four categories of impoliteness identified include: 1) bald on record; 2) positive; 3) negative; and 4) sarcasm/mock. The analysis revealed that the majority, or 44%, of comments fell into the category of negative impoliteness. The positive impoliteness and bald on record were found in the same percentage, 19%, throughout the comments. In comparison, the other 18% of comments showed impoliteness in the form of sarcasm/mock. Impoliteness strategies can potentially appear in public settings, such as online comments responding to controversial content that triggers negative attitudes in viewers or readers. Apart from that, factors such as age, gender, and educational background may influence the use of impoliteness strategies and could be a focus for further studies.

The second research is “An Analysis of Impoliteness Strategies Performed by Donald Trump’s Tweets Addressing Middle East Countries” by Alakrash & Bustan (2020). In this paper, researchers have noted that most politicians now utilise social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, to disseminate their thoughts, plans, and messages. Additionally, it gains the attention and convenience of the audience through the dissemination of its ideology. This paper identifies the types of impoliteness strategies addressed by Donald Trump in his posts towards Middle Eastern countries (written text). The study adopted an entirely qualitative research design. The data collection period ranged from 2015 to 2019. The number

of tweets utilised in this study is 17. The study's findings revealed that only four impoliteness strategies are addressed in these tweets towards Middle Eastern countries: bald on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock politeness. On the other hand, impoliteness is not withheld in the tweets.

The last research is "Impoliteness Strategies in English and Arabic Facebook Comments" by Hammod & Abdul-Rassul (2017). In this research, the researcher analyses impoliteness strategies in English and Arabic Facebook comments. This study aims to describe the types of impoliteness strategies employed by Facebook users in online contexts and to identify the factors that may influence their use. As such, six pages are selected, and four strategies are found in Facebook contexts: bald-on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, sarcasm/mock politeness. Positive and negative impoliteness are the most frequent types, whereas withdrawal politeness is not commonly observed in online contexts. The findings reveal a similarity between English and Arabic data in the most frequently used strategies, but the topics that prompted the use of impoliteness differed.

This research is almost similar to previous studies, especially those focusing on utterances. However, there is something that distinguishes this research from earlier studies, namely, the addition of the function of impoliteness as insight and reinforcement. The selection of objects in the form of citizens' comments on Joe Biden's upload regarding "Transgender Day of Visibility" reflects the complexity of global socio-political dynamics that are embodied in digital space. The statement in the post triggered negative reactions because it deals with sensitive issues such as gender identity, the conflict between Israel and Palestine, and the religious matter of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, this case creates a discursive space where the practice of impoliteness is not only a spontaneous expression of one's emotions but also conveys deeper messages, as it is related to ideological values/viewpoints, resistance, and moral values. By taking citizens' comments as the primary lens, this research not only expands the understanding of the strategies and functions of

impoliteness in digital communication but also provides new insights into how global society responds to value tensions and ethical priorities in the actions of a world leader.

1.2 Statement of Problem

A content analysis of the comment section based on Joe Biden's Instagram account revealed many impolite comments directed at the "Transgender Day of Visibility" post. Therefore, this study is organised around two research questions relating to the impoliteness strategies and the functions of impoliteness:

1. How are impoliteness strategies used in the comments section of Joe Biden's Instagram about the "Transgender Day of Visibility" post?
2. What are the functions of impoliteness found in the comments section of Joe Biden's Instagram about the "Transgender Day of Visibility" post?

1.3 Research Purposes

According to the statement of the research question above, the purposes of this research are:

1. To analyse the types of impoliteness strategies employed in the comments section of Joe Biden's Instagram post about the "Transgender Day of Visibility."
2. To analyse the functions of impoliteness employed in the comments section of Joe Biden's Instagram post about the "Transgender Day of Visibility."

1.4 Research Significance

There are two research significances in this study, namely theoretical and practical. This research is designed to offer benefits to the readers. Therefore, the researcher hopes that the results of this study can provide various new lessons to readers. The following are the significant findings from the research:

1. Theoretical

This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of impoliteness strategies and the functions of impoliteness in online discourse, especially in the context of sensitive social issues such as transgender rights. By analysing the

comments on Joe Biden's Instagram posts, this study offers insights into the interaction between language and social dynamics, particularly on social media, thereby enriching the field of pragmatics and providing a framework for future research.

2. Practical

The findings of this study are expected to facilitate comprehension among language learners and researchers of the employment of impoliteness strategies in digital communication. Moreover, this study can serve as a practical reference for future researchers, social media moderators, and policymakers in addressing online discourse and promoting positive and constructive communication in public forums.

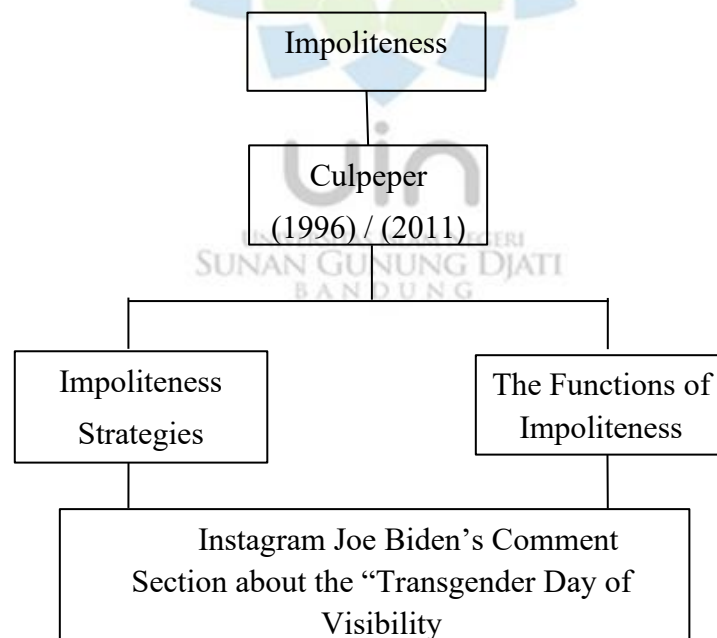
1.5 Conceptual Framework

Expressing opinions or forms of communication carried out in daily life is varied. The choice of form of communication depends on a person's preference; it can be delivered politely or even impolitely. The impolite delivery has a cause or trigger that results in a person's decision to utter an impolite utterance. In the study of Pragmatics, there are impoliteness strategies that are the opposite of politeness strategies. This strategy of impoliteness is a form of communication in a particular context. Additionally, these impoliteness strategies serve different functions. Concerning impoliteness, this research focuses on analysing impoliteness strategies and the functions of these strategies in Joe Biden's Instagram comment section regarding the post "Transgender Day of Visibility."

In this study, there are several theories related to impoliteness, especially on impoliteness strategies and the function of impoliteness strategies. To answer the first research question, that is, how are impoliteness strategies used in the comments section of Joe Biden's Instagram about the "Transgender Day of Visibility" post, this study uses a relevant theory, namely the theory of impoliteness strategies by Culpeper (1996), which has five strategies in its discussion. The five theories of impoliteness include bald on-record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, off-record impoliteness, and withhold politeness.

Meanwhile, to answer the second research question, that is, what are the functions of impoliteness found in the comments section of Joe Biden’s Instagram about the “Transgender Day of Visibility” post, this study uses the relevant theory from Culpeper (2011) regarding the functions of impoliteness. There are three functions involved: affective, coercive, and entertaining.

Therefore, this conceptual framework connects the strategies of impoliteness and the functions of impoliteness in online discourse about a sensitive social issue, specifically transgender existence. Each individual can strengthen their stance, allowing ideological differences in online interactions to be recognized. By examining the comments on Joe Biden’s Instagram posts, this research provides an overview of the interaction between language and social dynamics, particularly on social media platforms like Instagram, which facilitates the systematic interpretation of research results. The following is the conceptual framework of this study:



Pict 1.1 Conceptual Framework.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The key terms below are defined to give the reader a brief explanation of the terms used by the authors in this study.

a. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader). It is concerned with analysing the intended meaning of an utterance, as opposed to the literal or contextual meaning of the words or phrases that comprise that utterance (Yule, 1996).

b. Impoliteness

According to Lakoff (1989) & Penman (1990), the fact that impoliteness is more likely to occur in situations where there is an imbalance of power is reflected in its relatively frequent appearance in courtroom discourse (as cited in Culpeper, 1996). Consequently, it can be posited that impoliteness constitutes an act of rudeness that aims to humiliate others during a conversation and attack someone's face.

c. Impoliteness strategies

According to Culpeper (1996), impoliteness strategies intentionally attack someone's face. If a person succeeds in defending themselves to threaten the face of the interlocutor, then the person has shown that they are more powerful and influential.

d. Face

A face is a person's self-image or picture formed from socially accepted traits, which can be recognised by others (Goffman, 1967).

e. Instagram

Instagram is a social media platform used by more than one billion people worldwide. People use this platform to share photographs, videos, reels, comments, and messages.

f. Transgender Day of Visibility

Transgender Day of Visibility is an annual observance day that is celebrated on March 31 to raise awareness of the existence, achievements, and challenges faced by transgender individuals worldwide.

