

(Im)Politeness: A Cyberpragmatic Study of Social Media Discourse on the Kominfo Data Breach



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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the (im)politeness strategies employed by social media users in response to the Kominfo data breach, with a focus on how TikTok and Instagram commenters utilize politeness, impoliteness, humor, and sarcasm as tools of critique. Employing a qualitative method and drawing on Cyberpragmatics (Yus, 2011), Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987), and Culpeper's Impoliteness Theory (2011), the study analyzes 126 user comments (52 from Instagram, 74 from TikTok) related to the incident. Results reveal that impoliteness overwhelmingly dominates the discursive landscape, appearing in 97 comments. The most frequent form is Sarcasm or Mock Politeness (58 instances), often employing irony and rhetorical devices to mask criticism within superficially polite language. Bald-on-Record Impoliteness appears in 27 comments, marked by unmitigated face attacks, while Positive Impoliteness (7 instances) involves exclusionary or derogatory language aimed at government figures. Notably, no instances of Negative Impoliteness or Withholding Politeness were observed, suggesting a preference for direct engagement over indirect or silent protest. These findings underscore the role of digital platforms as arenas for socio-pragmatic resistance, where (im)politeness strategies function not merely as expressions of sentiment, but as mechanisms of accountability. The study contributes to the field of cyberpragmatics by illustrating how digital discourse practices reflect shifting norms of public trust, transparency, and civic participation in cybersecurity governance. By addressing a significant gap in current literature on (im)politeness in reactions to governmental data breaches, this research offers theoretical and practical implications for understanding online civic engagement.

KEYWORDS: Cyberpragmatics, (im)politeness strategies, sarcasm, Kominfo data breach.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an indispensable tool in modern communication ecosystems, playing a critical role in shaping public discourse, particularly in times of crisis. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and more recently TikTok, have evolved beyond their original function as networking spaces, becoming sites for real-time information dissemination, public deliberation, and government accountability. In the context of cybersecurity crises, these platforms provide a dynamic interface where citizens actively engage in discussions, express opinions, share personal experiences, and participate in shaping collective narratives about institutional performance. The influence of social media in crisis communication has been widely acknowledged in studies related to natural disasters, political unrest, and health emergencies, but its role in cybersecurity discourse—particularly from a linguistic perspective—remains comparatively underexplored.

In Indonesia, the significance of social media as a space for public expression has become increasingly evident amid escalating cybersecurity incidents. A particularly notable case was the cyberattack on the Temporary National Data Centre (PDNS) on June 20, 2024. This attack, executed using the LockBit 3.0 ransomware, severely disrupted essential public services, including immigration systems and national databases. The scale and impact of the breach exposed significant vulnerabilities in the country's digital infrastructure. Moreover, prior attacks by the hacker group Bjorka in 2022 and 2023—including unauthorized access to data held by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo)—have intensified public concern about data protection and institutional competence. These events not only triggered operational crises but also shaped widespread public discourse questioning the efficacy of government cybersecurity policy.

Statistical data reinforce the urgency of the issue. As of April 2022, Indonesia recorded over 100 million cyberattacks targeting various public and private institutions. Compared to nations like Japan and Malaysia, Indonesia's data protection framework is perceived as less robust, a sentiment echoed in both local and international policy analyses (Putra, 2022). Public trust in government institutions responsible for data security appears to be eroding, exacerbated by repeated failures to prevent or mitigate breaches. Social media has emerged as the primary venue for expressing these concerns. Studies show that Indonesians frequently

(Im)Politeness: A Cyberpragmatic Study of Social Media Discourse on the Kominfo Data Breach

use platforms like Instagram and TikTok to voice dissatisfaction, raise questions, and engage in collective critique of governmental responses to cybersecurity threats (Ernawati et al., 2022).

What makes these online responses particularly noteworthy is their reliance on linguistic strategies that blend critique with creativity—such as sarcasm, irony, humor, and various forms of (im)politeness. These discursive tools are not merely expressive; they also function as mechanisms of accountability and resistance. The use of memes, satirical captions, hashtags, and comments reflecting indignation or ridicule indicates a sophisticated layer of public discourse in digital spaces. For example, a comment like “The government is busy making new rules, but can’t keep our data safe” illustrates a direct form of impoliteness strategy that simultaneously conveys frustration and demands action. Although reactions to other incidents, such as the 2023 cyberattack on Bank Syariah Indonesia, were relatively moderate, they still reflect growing public anxiety about data governance.

Despite the prevalence of such linguistic phenomena, much of the existing literature has focused on the psychological or technological dimensions of cybersecurity and public response. While these areas are undeniably important, they leave a notable gap in understanding how language mediates public perception and government legitimacy. Specifically, few studies have explored how (im)politeness, sarcasm, and humor are used to negotiate power relations, express social criticism, and construct public opinion in digital contexts. Even fewer have examined how digital affordances—such as emojis, hashtags, or platform-specific features—amplify the pragmatic impact of these linguistic strategies.

To address this research gap, this study draws on the framework of Cyberpragmatics as developed by Francisco Yus (2011). Cyberpragmatics extends traditional pragmatic analysis into digital environments, offering a nuanced understanding of how online contexts shape meaning, intention, and reception. By accounting for the interplay between language, platform, and audience, Cyberpragmatics allows researchers to investigate not only what is said, but how and why it is said in digitally mediated settings. This framework is particularly suitable for analyzing public reactions to high-stakes incidents like the Kominfo data breach, where the convergence of technical failure, institutional responsibility, and citizen engagement is most pronounced.

Previous research has demonstrated the relevance of Cyberpragmatics in analyzing online discourse. For instance, Rahardi (2020) applied a cyberpragmatic lens to explore how Indonesian social media users clarified misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic, revealing the strategic use of language to correct public misunderstanding. Building on this precedent, the current study explores how linguistic and digital resources—such as sarcasm, humor, and impoliteness—are mobilized to express critique, construct social meaning, and perform resistance.

This research focuses specifically on user-generated comments on TikTok and Instagram concerning the Kominfo data breach. These two platforms are chosen due to their high levels of user engagement and their distinct communicative features: TikTok with its short-form videos and comment threads, and Instagram with its image-caption-comment format. Through qualitative analysis of 126 comments (52 from Instagram and 74 from TikTok), this study investigates the (im)politeness strategies that emerge in the digital discourse surrounding this cybersecurity crisis.

By integrating Cyberpragmatics with theories of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and impoliteness (Culpeper, 2011), this study aims to make both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it advances our understanding of how linguistic strategies operate within platform-specific constraints to shape public discourse on government accountability. Practically, it offers insights for policymakers and digital communication strategists on how to interpret and respond to citizen sentiment in times of digital crisis. Ultimately, this research highlights the discursive power of social media as a site where language becomes both a mirror and a catalyst of public trust and institutional critique.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach that is particularly suited to investigating how language is used in digital environments, especially where meaning is co-constructed through multimodal interactions. Qualitative research, as defined by Creswell (2014), focuses on exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human issues. This approach involves collecting data in a naturalistic setting and analyzing it inductively to identify emerging themes and patterns. In the context of this study, such an approach allows for a detailed examination of the linguistic strategies—especially (im)politeness, sarcasm, irony, and humor—employed by social media users in their responses to the Kominfo data breach. Through this method, the study aims to capture the nuanced ways in which public discourse reflects evaluations of government accountability and digital governance in Indonesia.

The dataset comprises 126 public comments: 52 from Instagram and 74 from TikTok. These platforms were chosen due to their popularity in Indonesia, high user engagement, and their distinct affordances for multimodal communication. Instagram’s image-focused posts and emoticon-rich comment threads, alongside TikTok’s short-form videos accompanied by layered comment sections, provide rich contexts for studying how users express critique and emotions online. Comments were collected from verified news account posts reporting on the Kominfo data leak, ensuring that discussions were centered on the relevant cybersecurity incident. A purposive sampling method was applied to ensure that only comments directly addressing the incident were included. Selection criteria involved the presence of specific keywords such as “Kominfo,” “data breach,” “cybersecurity,”

(Im)Politeness: A Cyberpragmatic Study of Social Media Discourse on the Kominfo Data Breach

and “hack,” as well as high engagement indicators like likes, shares, and replies. This strategy was used to focus the analysis on comments that were not only topically relevant but also influential in shaping public discourse.

Data collection was conducted using documentation techniques, including manual note-taking, screenshot capture, and digital extraction tools when applicable. Screenshots were used to preserve the original structure of each comment, along with contextual features such as emojis, timestamps, and post visuals. In the case of TikTok, where comment sections are extensive and less stable over time, scraping tools were employed to collect data in bulk, allowing for more efficient organization and analysis. All data collected was publicly accessible and did not involve private messaging or user interactions. The data collection process was guided by ethical considerations, ensuring that no personally identifiable information was revealed. Usernames and profile pictures were anonymized, and quotes included in the study were paraphrased or altered slightly to protect user privacy while preserving the intended meaning.

The data analysis process followed a two-pronged framework combining Cyberpragmatics (Yus, 2011) with thematic analysis. Cyberpragmatics was used as the principal analytical lens, given its emphasis on how digital environments shape the construction and interpretation of meaning. This framework allows for the consideration of how platform-specific affordances—such as emoji use, hashtags, interaction patterns, and post formats—affect the production and reception of linguistic acts. Thematic analysis was applied to identify recurrent patterns in the data, focusing on linguistic strategies such as politeness, impoliteness, sarcasm, and irony. The process began with open coding to highlight relevant linguistic features in the comments. These codes were then grouped into broader categories reflecting the function and tone of the comment, such as expressions of ridicule, demands for accountability, or solidarity with other users. Themes were reviewed iteratively to ensure internal coherence and alignment with the research objectives.

To facilitate a systematic and transparent analysis, qualitative data analysis software was used to manage, organize, and code the dataset. While initial coding was performed manually, subsequent categorization and verification were supported by software to enhance reliability and traceability. Peer debriefing among researchers was conducted to ensure coding consistency and resolve interpretive ambiguities. The overall goal of the analysis was to understand how language operates as a vehicle for expressing public sentiment in response to cybersecurity failures, and how different platforms mediate this linguistic expression.

Instagram and TikTok were selected not only for their popularity but also for their distinct discursive styles, allowing for comparative insight into platform-based variations in linguistic strategies. Instagram, known for its visual focus and concise textual interactions, often encourages sarcasm and irony through comment brevity and emoji use. In contrast, TikTok supports more elaborate narrative-style comments due to its thread-based layout and younger demographic user base. These differences were considered during analysis to assess how users adapt their language use across platforms to achieve similar communicative goals.

The final stage of analysis focused on synthesizing findings into meaningful categories that reflect broader patterns in public discourse. Themes that emerged included direct criticism of government cybersecurity policies, distrust in institutional competence, use of humor and mock politeness as resistance, and collective calls for transparency. Examples from the data were selected to illustrate each theme, and findings were presented using descriptive narratives, tables, and visual representations where appropriate. These formats help contextualize the patterns found and highlight the multimodal nature of digital communication, especially where emojis, images, or memes reinforced textual meaning.

Because the research is based entirely on secondary data obtained from public digital platforms, no informed consent was required. However, the study adhered to ethical research practices by maintaining participant anonymity and avoiding any form of data manipulation. The methodological design ensures that findings are both valid and ethically sound, offering insights not only into language use but also into how digital platforms function as spaces for civic engagement and public critique during cybersecurity crises.

III. RESULT AND DISSCUSION

This section presents the (im)politeness strategies identified in social media discourse surrounding public reactions to the data breach involving Indonesia’s Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo). A total of 126 comments were analyzed from Instagram and TikTok, revealing that impoliteness strategies overwhelmingly dominated, occurring in 97 instances. This prevalence indicates a high level of public dissatisfaction and critical stance toward Kominfo’s perceived failure in managing cybersecurity. The dominant use of impoliteness—often realized through sarcasm, mock politeness, and bald-on-record criticism—reflects a discursive tendency to overtly challenge institutional authority and express frustration. In contrast, politeness strategies were observed in 29 comments, typically employing mitigation devices such as indirectness, appeals to solidarity, or rhetorical formulations. These strategies suggest an attempt to maintain social harmony or civility while still conveying critical perspectives. The contrast between these strategies illustrates the range of communicative resources used by social media users to negotiate criticism, with impoliteness serving as a direct form of resistance and politeness functioning as a face-saving mechanism within public discourse.

(Im)Politeness: A Cyberpragmatic Study of Social Media Discourse on the Kominfo Data Breach

The politeness strategies identified in the dataset were observed in 29 instances and typically manifested in the form of indirect requests, affiliative or solidarity-oriented language, and rhetorical criticism. Although these strategies occurred less frequently than impoliteness strategies, their presence reflects a segment of users who seek to maintain civility and mitigate face threats while articulating critique. In contrast, impoliteness strategies were substantially more prevalent, with 97 occurrences, indicating a dominant discursive pattern of direct and unmitigated dissatisfaction. These impoliteness acts often included sarcasm, mock politeness, and bald-on-record expressions, demonstrating users' willingness to challenge institutional authority without adherence to conventional politeness norms. This tendency may be influenced by the nature of digital platforms, which often facilitate anonymous or less socially constrained interaction, thereby reducing the pressure to uphold face-saving conventions typically observed in face-to-face communication. Nonetheless, the existence of politeness strategies suggests that not all online discourse is overtly confrontational; some users still employ mitigation and pragmatic sensitivity to express criticism, reflecting diverse communicative goals. This contrast highlights the dynamic nature of public discourse in cyberspace, where both solidarity and resistance co-exist as linguistic responses to perceived governmental failures.

3.1 Politeness Strategies

Based on the analysis of 126 comments from TikTok and Instagram discussing the Kominfo data leak, various politeness strategies were identified. These strategies are categorized using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and analyzed within the framework of Cyberpragmatics (Yus, 2011), alongside situational context functions as proposed by Rajiman (2020). The results show that bald-on-record politeness appeared once, characterized by a direct command or request without mitigation. Positive politeness was identified in three comments, displaying collective invitations, expressions of solidarity, and the use of inclusive language. Negative politeness also occurred three times, typically marked by indirect requests employing modal verbs such as "maybe" and "should." Off-record politeness was the most frequently used strategy, found in 22 instances, often relying on sarcasm, humor, and rhetorical questions to convey criticism indirectly. This analysis provides insight into how digital discourse encompasses both cooperative and confrontational communication styles. These patterns are shaped by factors such as hierarchical structures, user anonymity, and the dynamics of audience engagement in online discussions.

3.1.1. Bald On Record Politeness

Based on the data analysis, the Bald-on-Record politeness strategy was found in only 1 of the 126 comments analyzed. This strategy is characterized by a direct command or request delivered without mitigation, emphasizing clarity and assertiveness over interpersonal sensitivity. It is typically used when the speaker prioritizes urgency or transparency, with little concern for minimizing the face-threatening nature of the utterance.

Data 1	
Comment on Tiktok	Tolong para hecker indonesia semua perjudian on line di tutup...karena korban nya udh kepelosok desa

"Tolong para hacker Indonesia semua perjudian online ditutup... karena korbannya sudah sampai ke desa."
(*"Please, Indonesian hackers, shut down all online gambling... because the victims have reached the villages."*)

According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework, this utterance exemplifies a bald-on-record politeness strategy, as it involves a direct appeal to a specific group—hackers—without any hedging devices to mitigate the imposition. The imperative "Tolong..." is a straightforward call to action that lacks softeners, reinforcing the urgency and seriousness of the speaker's request.

From the perspective of Cyberpragmatics (Yus, 2011), the comment reflects a reconfiguration of traditional power dynamics in digital contexts. Instead of appealing to formal authorities such as law enforcement, the speaker addresses hackers as potential enforcers of moral justice, recognizing their technological agency and the decentralized nature of digital influence.

Drawing from Rajiman's (2020) notion of situational context, this comment functions not as defiance but as an appeal to collective moral responsibility. The emotional charge embedded in "karena korbannya sudah sampai ke desa" (because the victims have reached the villages) transforms the command into a social plea, aligning the hacker community with communal protection rather than opposition to institutional authority. The absence of irony or satire further underscores the comment's sincerity and directive intent.

3.1.2 Positive Politeness

Based on the data analysis, the Positive Politeness strategy was identified three times out of 126 comments analyzed. This strategy is characterized by collective invitations, expressions of solidarity, and inclusive language that aim to foster social cohesion between speakers and listeners. It serves to maintain politeness and promote a friendly communicative atmosphere, even within contexts of critique or serious discussion. An illustrative example of this strategy is presented below:

Data 1

(Im)Politeness: A Cyberpragmatic Study of Social Media Discourse on the Kominfo Data Breach

Comment on Tiktok	gimana dong akun Hero Pointblank gw, ada senjata permanen banyak 😭
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"Gimana dong akun Hero Pointblank gw, ada senjata permanen banyak 😭" ("What should I do about my Hero Pointblank account? It has a lot of permanent weapons 😭")

According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework, this utterance reflects positive politeness through the use of informal, emotionally expressive language that builds rapport with the audience. The expression "Gimana dong" signals shared frustration, while the crying emoji enhances the emotional resonance of the comment. The inclusion of a question invites interaction, encouraging others to empathize or share their experiences, thereby fostering a sense of group solidarity.

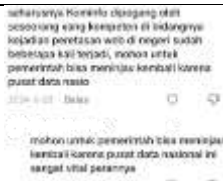
From a Cyberpragmatics perspective (Yus, 2011), this utterance exemplifies multimodal communication, combining text and visual symbols to co-construct meaning. The use of the crying emoji (😭) intensifies the emotional appeal, making the post more engaging and contextually resonant. Additionally, the comment exemplifies the phenomenon of power redirection, wherein a user brings personal experience into a broader digital conversation about systemic issues. While most comments address national-level concerns, this example shifts the focus to individual loss, thereby grounding the discourse in personal narrative.

Drawing on Rajiman's (2020) situational context theory, the comment performs both expressive and relational functions. Expressively, it conveys frustration over a compromised gaming account. Relationally, it invites solidarity from fellow gamers who may have encountered similar issues, thus reinforcing social bonds within the online community. By embedding personal distress into a wider public discussion, the speaker contributes to the collective negotiation of meaning in digital spaces.

A notable linguistic element is the use of the informal pronoun "gw," a contracted form of "gua" (meaning "I" or "me"). Phonologically, this contraction reflects vowel omission, reducing the original form while retaining its initial and final consonants (/g/ and /w/). This form is typical in casual online interaction and reflects an ingroup linguistic identity, particularly among younger users and gaming communities. Its usage signals informality, peer alignment, and a flattened social hierarchy, reinforcing the positive politeness tone of the comment.

3.1.3 Negative Politeness

Negative politeness strategies are typically employed in comments that contain requests or critiques delivered in an indirect and respectful manner, aiming to minimize the threat to the interlocutor's face. In the present study, three instances of negative politeness were identified. An illustrative example is presented below:

Data 1	
Comment on Tiktok	

This comment exemplifies the use of Negative Politeness as theorized by Brown and Levinson (1987). The speaker conveys criticism through mitigated expressions, using the modal "should," the respectful term "please," and the suggestive verb "review." These linguistic elements function to soften the force of the Face-Threatening Act (FTA), acknowledging the authority of the government while preserving social distance. Rather than issuing direct demands, the speaker frames criticism as a suggestion, reducing imposition while still expressing concern.

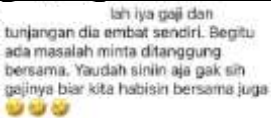
From a cyberpragmatic standpoint (Yus, 2011), the comment reflects awareness of the digital context's power asymmetries. The government occupies a high-power position (P), and the speaker maintains formal distance (D) by avoiding colloquial language or humor. The rank of imposition (R) is considerable, as the comment refers to policy-level change. However, the use of polite, indirect language and the absence of emotive or multimodal features (e.g., emojis) emphasize the seriousness and formality of the request, aligning with the expectations of deference in digital discourse.

According to Rajiman's (2020) situational framework, the utterance reinforces a vertical communicative relationship between citizens and institutional authority. The lexical choices—"should," "please," "revisit"—suggest that the speaker is navigating a communication system that values politeness, hierarchy, and restraint. The tone is formal and devoid of humor or satire, indicating a sincere appeal for governmental reform. Thus, this comment represents Negative Politeness by virtue of its mitigative language, maintenance of social distance, and avoidance of confrontation, reflecting a discourse strategy that simultaneously communicates critique and respect.

(Im)Politeness: A Cyberpragmatic Study of Social Media Discourse on the Kominfo Data Breach

3.1.4 Off Record Politeness

Based on the analysis of 126 comments collected from Instagram and TikTok, Off-Record Politeness strategies were identified in 22 instances among the total politeness strategies. This strategy is characterized by sarcasm, humor, and rhetorical questions—forms of indirect critique designed to reduce confrontation and ambiguity of interpretation. Emojis and irony serve as multimodal reinforcements that contribute to a satirical tone, allowing the message to remain flexible in meaning. This aligns with broader findings in which politeness strategies appeared 29 times, often employing indirect requests, affiliative language, and rhetorical formulations to express opinions within a polite communicative frame. An illustrative example of Off-Record Politeness is presented below.

Data 1	
Comment on Instagram	

This comment exemplifies Off-Record Politeness as described by Brown and Levinson (1987). The speaker indirectly criticizes officials perceived as benefiting from their position, using humor and sarcasm instead of direct accusation. The statement “let us just leave the salary here...” is deliberately ambiguous, open to interpretation as either a joke or subtle protest. This ambiguity allows the speaker to express dissatisfaction while avoiding direct confrontation or full responsibility for the critique.

From a cyberpragmatic perspective (Yus, 2011), this comment demonstrates the shifting dynamics of power (P) in digital interactions. Although officials traditionally occupy positions of authority, the speaker's use of humor and sarcasm within a public forum reflects a redistribution of expressive agency. Social distance (D) between the speaker and target remains, yet relational proximity is built with fellow netizens. The Rank of Imposition (R) is relatively low, as the comment makes no explicit demands but rather functions as a humorous social evaluation. The use of laughing emojis (😂😂😂) acts as a multimodal device to reduce the harshness of criticism and reinforce its humorous intent.

According to Rajiman's (2020) situational framework, this comment reflects a hierarchical relationship between the public and government officials. However, the tension inherent in that relationship is eased through informal language and humor, signaling a shift from formal critique to socially acceptable ridicule. Informal expressions build solidarity with the audience, while the humorous tone reframes political critique into a more digestible, relatable format.

Thus, this comment qualifies as Off-Record Politeness due to its use of indirect allusions, humor, and multimodal cues that balance criticism with ambiguity, allowing the speaker to engage in resistance while maintaining plausible deniability and social decorum.

3.2 Impoliteness Strategy

This section presents the linguistic strategies identified in social media comments responding to the public discourse surrounding the data leak involving the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo). An analysis of 126 comments collected from Instagram and TikTok revealed that impoliteness strategies were predominantly employed, with a total of 97 occurrences. The results indicate that bald-on-record impoliteness appeared 27 times, characterized by direct, unmitigated face attacks, typically in the form of blunt criticism or commands. Positive impoliteness was found in 7 comments, marked by exclusion, insults, or dismissive language that threatened the hearer's positive face. Negative impoliteness was absent from the dataset, suggesting a lack of attacks targeting the hearer's autonomy or freedom of action. The most frequently occurring strategy was sarcasm/mock politeness, appearing in 58 instances, utilizing irony, rhetorical questions, and sarcastic tones to veil criticism under the guise of politeness. Withholding politeness was also not observed, indicating that users chose to express evaluations directly rather than avoiding engagement or opting for silence.

This analysis highlights how digital discourse accommodates both explicit and indirect confrontational styles. These patterns are shaped by platform-specific dynamics, including power asymmetries, perceived anonymity, and the performative nature of audience engagement in online interactions.

3.2.1 Bald on Record Impoliteness

The bald-on-record impoliteness strategy was identified in 27 out of 126 comments analyzed. This strategy is characterized by direct, unmitigated face-attacks, typically in the form of blunt criticisms or commands, with no concern for minimizing the social impact. Such linguistic behavior reflects the speaker's deliberate intention to confront, criticize, or insult the target directly. The following example illustrates this strategy:

Data 1	
Comment on Instagram	Mmg kntl, dia yg bikin kesalahan tapi ga mau tanggung jawab sendiri

This comment exemplifies bald-on-record impoliteness as defined by Culpeper (1996, 2011). The statement attacks the face of the target directly and unapologetically, without any attempt to mitigate its impact. The inclusion of the swear word “kntl”—a vulgar term in Indonesian—serves as an explicit insult, intensifying the aggressive and derogatory tone. The comment's structure, which includes additional statements emphasizing irresponsibility, reinforces its function as a clear, unambiguous expression of public condemnation.

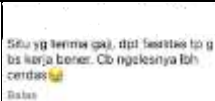
From a cyberpragmatic perspective (Yus, 2011), this comment reflects the reconfiguration of power dynamics in digital discourse. Although traditionally the government occupies a higher power position (P), the affordances of online platforms reduce the constraints of formal communication, enabling users to express criticism more freely. Social distance (D) is still maintained, as the target remains an institutional figure, but the medium allows for heightened directness. The rank of imposition (R) is high, given that the comment not only criticizes but demands accountability, using insulting language that aims to shame and confront.

Furthermore, the absence of multimodal features such as emojis or humorous elements underscores the comment's serious and confrontational tone. Unlike comments that blend critique with humor or irony, this one is emotionally charged and devoid of softening devices. According to Rajiman's (2020) situational framework, the comment reflects a tense social dynamic between the public and state officials. The use of harsh, informal language, including profanity, reveals deep disappointment and public outrage directed at perceived governmental irresponsibility. There is no evidence of code-switching, hedging, or humor to diffuse the communicative force; rather, the speaker engages in full-frontal verbal aggression.

Therefore, this comment can be categorized as an instance of bald-on-record impoliteness, as it constitutes an open, unmitigated attack on the target's face through explicit insults and direct critique. It reflects not only linguistic hostility but also a broader expression of public frustration and demand for accountability.

3.2.2 Positive Impoliteness

In addition to politeness strategies, an analysis of 126 comments revealed that seven employed the Positive Impoliteness strategy. This strategy is characterized by exclusion, insults, and dismissive language aimed at damaging the hearer's positive face, typically expressing dissatisfaction and criticism toward the government's handling of the Kominfo data breach. An illustrative example is provided below:

Data 1	
Comment on Instagram	

This comment exemplifies Positive Impoliteness, as described by Culpeper (1996, 2011). It attacks the hearer's positive face by highlighting incompetence despite receiving benefits. The statement "can't work properly" is a direct devaluation of officials' ability, while "Please avoid it smarter" employs sarcasm, suggesting the official's arguments are illogical or unintelligent. The comment lacks any mitigating language, and its tone leans toward disdain, prioritizing public shaming over constructive critique.

From a cyberpragmatic perspective (Yus, 2011), the comment reflects the redistribution of expressive power (P) within the digital sphere, where users feel empowered to openly criticize authority. Although social distance (D) remains, social media facilitates a perceived closeness that allows criticism to be expressed more freely. The rank of imposition (R) is high, as the comment questions both performance and intellectual competence.

In terms of multimodality, the crying emoji (😭) reinforces the ironic tone, functioning as a paralinguistic cue that either intensifies frustration or underscores mockery. The use of informal phrasing—such as "can't work properly" and "avoid it smarter"—adds to the aggressive and sarcastic tone of the comment.

According to Rajiman's (2020) situational framework, the comment reflects unequal social relations in which the public claims the right to criticize officials deemed irresponsible. The absence of hedging, humor, or invitations to dialogue signals that the purpose of this utterance is not to foster constructive discussion, but rather to ridicule and express dissatisfaction. The comment thus constitutes an act of Positive Impoliteness through unmitigated mockery, sarcastic language, and explicit rejection of the hearer's competence and credibility.

3.3.3. Mock / Sarcasm Politeness

In addition to politeness strategies, analysis of the 126 comments revealed that 58 comments employed the Sarcasm/Mock Politeness strategy. This strategy is characterized by the use of irony, sarcasm, or rhetorical questions to convey criticism indirectly, often with sharp undertones. It reflects heightened dissatisfaction with the data breach and disapproval of the government's response. An illustrative example is as follows:

(Im)Politeness: A Cyberpragmatic Study of Social Media Discourse on the Kominfo Data Breach

Data 1		
Comment	on	Kominfo isinya kakek kakek semua 🙄
Instagram		

This comment exemplifies sarcasm/mock politeness, as outlined by Culpeper (2011) and Brown and Levinson (1987). While the statement may appear neutral on the surface, it embeds a sarcastic critique aimed at Kominfo officials. The term “grandpas” constructs a stereotype that associates age with technological incompetence, delivering a face-threatening act disguised as humor. It avoids explicit insults yet invokes ageist assumptions to undermine credibility, functioning as indirect derision.

From a cyberpragmatic perspective (Yus, 2011), this comment illustrates how social media flattens traditional power hierarchies (P), enabling users to ridicule institutions with minimal consequences. While Distance (D) between officials and citizens remains, digital platforms foster a sense of proximity and community among users, which encourages candid criticism. The Rank of Imposition (R) in this case is low, as no specific demand is issued; instead, the utterance serves to mock and delegitimize.

Although the comment lacks multimodal elements such as emojis or visual indicators of humor, its satirical tone relies on shared sociocultural understandings. According to Rajiman (2020), the use of informal lexical choices like “grandpas” reflects generational tension, where technologically literate youth express disillusionment with an aging bureaucracy. The code choice positions the speaker in alignment with fellow users while marginalizing the target group through indirect ridicule. The comment thus serves not to initiate dialogue but to articulate collective dissatisfaction in a socially acceptable, humorous frame.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of linguistic strategies in social media comments related to the Kominfo data leak shows that impoliteness strategies were more prevalent than politeness strategies. Among the politeness types, Off-Record Politeness was the most frequently identified, followed by Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Bald-on-Record Politeness. Within the impoliteness category, Sarcasm/Mock Politeness appeared most often, followed by Bald-on-Record Impoliteness and Positive Impoliteness. Negative Impoliteness and Withholding Politeness were not identified in the dataset.

These findings indicate that in digital public discourse, especially in contexts involving criticism of government institutions, users tend to favor expressive strategies that emphasize sarcasm, irony, and directness rather than conventional politeness. This pattern aligns with Cyberpragmatics (Yus, 2011), which highlights the ways in which online users exploit multimodal tools and contextual cues to convey critique while navigating the constraints of digital platforms. The findings also reveal that impoliteness, especially in its sarcastic and ironic forms, functions as a discursive strategy for expressing frustration, constructing solidarity among users, and challenging perceived institutional failures.

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