

# Politeness and Impoliteness Strategies of IG Netizens' Comments on the Government Policy on Restrictions towards Community Activities (PPKM)

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## ABSTRACT

Indonesians is well-known for being friendly and polite as a cultural feature of eastern people in speaking. This research aims at investigating how much the netizens use politeness and impoliteness strategies and determining what types of politeness and impoliteness strategies they use in response to the government's official stance on community activity restrictions (PPKM) due to the Covid-19 outbreak in President' official Instagram. The method used in this qualitative research is the descriptive method aimed at giving a systematic, factual, and accurate description of language phenomena that happened in our society and represented in language use in social media, Instagram. The sample date of this research consists of 100 pros and cons of netizens' comments on the government's policies regarding the implementation and extension of PPKM from stages 1 to 4 applied to Java and Bali Islands. Those data are then analyzed, classified, and coded based on the theories of politeness by Brown and Levinson and impoliteness by of Culpeper. The results of the research show that from the 100 obtained data on netizens' comments on presidential decree dealing with the implementation or extension of the PPKM program from stage 1 to 4, they used 2 main strategies i.e. politeness strategies

(77%) and impoliteness strategies (23%), and the types of politeness strategies used are follows 7 data (9%) on bold-on record strategy, 41 data (53%) on positive strategy, 9 data (12%) on negative strategy, and 20 data (26%); whereas, the types of impoliteness strategies used are 9 (39%) data on bold-on record impoliteness strategies, 4 (18%) data on positive impoliteness strategies, 4 (17%) negative impoliteness strategies, 6 (26%) data on Sarcasm / Mock impoliteness strategies, and 0 (0%) data on withholding and off-record impoliteness strategies.

**Keywords:** politeness, impoliteness, strategy, netizen, official Instagram

## INTRODUCTION

The government implemented restrictions on community activities so-called PPKM after a sharp spike in Covid-19 cases, and this activity has been in place since early July 2021. However, these restrictions on community activities are still not effective enough and have not shown a decrease in active cases or death rates due to Covid-19. For this reason, the government also extended the Emergency PPKM, which was subsequently changed to PPKM level 1 to level 4 in accordance with the dynamics of the Covid-19 condition nationally.

In the community, the extension of the implementation of the emergency PPKM raises pros and cons. The pro groups generally support the government's policy to extend the implementation of the emergency PPKM to further suppress the spike inactive cases and deaths due to Covid-19, but on the other hand, those who are against the government's policy generally argue that the extension of the emergency PPKM makes it difficult for people to carry out their activities. impact on the community's economy.

The announcement of the extension of the emergency PPKM, especially in Java and Bali, which was announced through official government media including Instagram was delivered directly by Joko Widodo, the President of the Republic of Indonesia. The announcement immediately received a response in the form of pro and con comments from netizens.

In this era of openness, expressing opinions including commenting on government policies is protected by the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia including the law on Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE). In conveying their comments, some netizens used a politeness strategy by considering that the speech was conveyed via Instagram directly to the President of the Republic of Indonesia, but there were also those who did not consider this meaning that they use impoliteness strategies in expressing their opinions.

This research aims at finding out how much the netizens use politeness and impoliteness strategies and determining what types of politeness and impoliteness strategies they use in response to the government's official stance on community activity restrictions (PPKM) due to the Covid-19 outbreak in President' official Instagram. [1, 2] politeness modal and [3] impoliteness model are both reviewed in the literature on politeness and impoliteness strategies.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

[1] devised the core concept of politeness, which was used in this study (1987). They believe that each individual is born with a face, which may be divided into two types: negative and positive. Claims to regions, freedom of action, and freedom from imposition are all part of one's negative face. The need for social approval, or the want to be regarded as attractive by at least some others, is part of one's positive face. It is founded on the assumption that, as part of a strategy for keeping their own face, participants in a conversation have a reciprocal interest in keeping their faces hidden from others. Therefore, in order to get a positive response from hearer's,

humans require a politeness technique when communicating. Being polite, according to [4], entails responding to others correctly in light of their relationship to us, comprehending a society's social standards, and recognizing the dimension of formality. The notions of the face-threatening act, politeness model, impoliteness model, and certain literature regarding politeness in the legal context make up this part in terms of politeness and impoliteness. [1] politeness theory and [3, 5] impoliteness theory are the foundations of this research (1996), among other works of literature.

### **Face Theory**

Erving Goffman, an American sociologist, coined the term "face" in the late 1960s. Goffman defines it as a self-image that is influenced by both the laws and ideals of a given culture as well as the context in which the social interaction takes place. As a result, it reflects how a person wants to be viewed by others in his immediate environment. Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, sociolinguists, used Goffman's face theory as a foundation for describing human interactions centered on politeness. While developing politeness theory, they enlarged and contributed to face theory, claiming that face is divided into two types: one based on a need for approval and acceptance from others (positive face), and the other based on a desire to move forward without being slowed down (negative face) [1]. [1, 6] also stated that a person's face is emotionally invested, that it can be lost, preserved, or enhanced, that it must be constantly paid attention to in a conversation, and that any actions that have the potential to harm the other person's face (a speaker or a listener) can lead to Face Threatening Acts (FTA).

### **Face Threatening Acts**

Acts of threatening face, according to [1], are characterized as actions that, by their very nature, go against the addressee's and/or speaker's face desires. To put it another way, threatening the face involves hurting the face of the person being addressed or the speaker against the other person's will. Face-threatening acts can be verbal (using words/language), paraverbal (conveyed through speech qualities such as tone, etc.), or nonverbal (facial expressions, etc.). Under the terms of the conversation in social interactions, FTA is sometimes unavoidable due to the conditions of conversation in social interaction. At least one of the FTAs must be associated with speech. It is possible for multiple actions to work within a single utterance.

### **Politeness Strategies**

Politeness is an expression of the speaker's desire to reduce the dangers that certain activities offer to his or her face. that threaten the listener's face, and it is a common concept that has created controversy among scholars [1]. Meanwhile, [7] defined politeness as a form of behavior that builds and maintains respect. It deals with the ability of a speaker and speech partner in a social interaction to create a harmonious atmosphere in interaction; therefore, to keep the hearer's good face, politeness tactics are utilized to design messages. when an action threatens the face that cannot be avoided or desired. Similarly, Politeness can be characterized as a strategy for reducing the likelihood of confrontation in a conversation, as well as the likelihood that a confrontation will be viewed as threatening. [8] The following are Brown and Levinson formulated four politeness strategies, namely: a bald on-record strategy, a positive politeness strategy, a negative politeness strategy, and an off-record strategy as formulated by [1, 9].

### Bald On-Record Strategy

Bald on-record or on record strategy does not strive to confine the danger to the hearer's face although there are several techniques this strategy can be used to lessen implicit facial threatening acts, such as delivering advice in a non-manipulative style. This straight politeness strategy is used in situations where maximum efficiency is critical and no action is taken to reduce threats to the interlocutor's face. Due to hurry or desperation, efficiency, task-oriented, little or no desire to retain someone's face, and the hearer's interest, bold on-the-record methods are frequently used. Besides, different from the previous situations where the act of threatening faces was not minimized, conversely, in this situation the speaker paid more attention to the face of the other person such as welcoming, farewells, and offers.

### Positive Politeness Strategy

Positive politeness strategies aim to reduce the risk of the hearer's positive face being harmed. These are intended to make the listener feel good about themselves, their interests, or their belongings, and are most commonly utilized in settings where the audience is reasonably well acquainted with one another or where an individual's positive face needs, or self-worth, must be addressed. Positive politeness methods include declarations of friendliness, solidarity, and praises, in addition to hedging and attempts to avoid conflict. [1, 10]

Some situations and examples of the politeness strategies are 1. attending to H's interests, needs, wants e.g. *You look terrible. Is there anything I can do?* 2. exaggerating interest in H and his interests as in *That's a nice T-shirt; where did you buy it?* 3. intensifying interest to H by showing his/her common goal with the H, e.g. *You'll never believe what John did last night* 4. using solidarity markers of in-group identity as in *Heh, dude, can you give me a dollar?* 5. Seeking agreement as in *I agree or you can say that again.* 6. avoiding disagreement, for example, *Yes, it's true; she looks good.* 7. Presupposing/raising/asserting/ common ground e.g. *People like you and me, do not like that, why don't you complain?* 8. Joke as in *Wow, that's a whopper!* 9. Presupposing or asserting S's concern for and knowledge of H's wants as in *I know you like that new novel, I'll bring it to you tomorrow.* 10. offering or promising, e.g. *If you vacuum the floor wash, I'll the dishes,* 11. being optimistic, e.g. *I know you can make it.* 12. including both S and H in the activity as in *Let's do it!* 13. giving or asking for reasons e.g. *You looks so pale, why don't you take a rest.* 14. assuming or asserting reciprocity by showing cooperation between S and H as in *If you help me, I'll take you there.* and 15. giving gifts (goods, sympathy, understanding, and cooperation) to H as in *Have a cup of coffee, Jim.*

### Negative Politeness Strategy

These strategies emphasize avoiding imposition on the hearer and are geared at the hearer's negative face. The chance of the hearer's face being threatened is decreased by seeking to avoid imposition from the speaker. Those methods assume the speaker will be intruding on the listener, and there is a greater risk of awkwardness or shame than with blatant on record and positive politeness strategies. Negative politeness strategies are used due to the following situations and examples; 1. being direct as in *Where is the post office?* 2. using questions or hedges, e.g. *Perhaps, she might have done it,* . 3. being pessimistic, for example,

*He couldn't lend you some money, could he?* 4. reducing the imposition, as in, *It's only a few blocks away.* 5. employ obviating constructs such as nominalizations, passives, or general rule declarations, such as *I hope no offense is taken.* 6. apologetic, as in *I'm sorry; I know it's a big request, but could you lend me some money?* 7. plural pronouns such as "We", as in *We regret to notify you.*

### **Off-Record Politeness Strategy**

Brown and Levinson's final politeness strategy is the indirect strategy, which employs indirect language to remove the speaker's potential for being oppressive. The practice of speaking off-the-cuff to convey something general or different than the speaker's genuine meaning, relying on the listener's interpretation to convey the speaker's intent. The speaker can be praised for not imposing on the listener or for allowing the listener to be helpful and generous. In order to avoid losing face, this strategy based heavily on pragmatics to convey the implied meaning while retaining the semantic meaning. Off-the-record politeness strategies include: 1. decreasing threats to the 2. reducing threats to the H's freedom, as in *Is there a seat available over there?* H: *Of course there is. (take a seat for the S)* 2. Allowing the listener to demonstrate a loving attitude by caring about others, e.g. S: *I've got headaches.* H: *Oh, I'll fetch you some pain relievers.*

### **Impoliteness Strategies**

[3, 11], and slightly revised proposes impoliteness strategy is the opposite idea of the politeness strategy proposed by [1]. Generally speaking, politeness strategy is intended to save face, while impoliteness strategy is targeted to attack face whether intentionally or not. According to Culpeper, the phenomena of impoliteness have to do with how the offense is expressed [11] and taken, and it is planned as a communicative strategy to target face, causing social friction and discord [11, 12] defines impoliteness as a negative attitude toward certain acts occurring in specific settings, according to him. Expectations, wants, and/or ideas about social organization, particularly how one person's or a group's identities are mediated by others through contact, keep it going [12].

### **Bald-on Record Impoliteness Strategy**

When there is a lot of face attack and the speaker intends to target the hearer's face, Bald-on record impoliteness strategy is usually used. In situations where the face is not irrelevant or downplayed, the face-threatening act is executed in a straightforward, clear, unambiguous, and to-the-point manner [11].

### **Positive Impoliteness Strategy**

Positive impoliteness, according to [3], is the use of methods intended to harm the addressee positive someone who wants to be accepted as a member of society. A positive face in this context denotes a person's desire to be recognized and needed by others. [3] goes on to say that positive politeness strategies include: 1. Ignore and snub the other; fail to acknowledge the presence of the other. 2. refuse to participate in an activity with the other. 3. dissociate from the other, such as by denying association or common ground with others, or by avoiding sitting together. 4. be careless, uncaring, and unkind 5. make use of improper identity indicators, such as title and family name when referring to a close friendship, or a nickname when

referring to a distant relationship 6. Use cryptic or secretive language, such as jargon to mystify the other or a code known to the rest of the group but not the target. 7. Seek out disagreement on a controversial subject. 8. make the other feel uncomfortable, such as by avoiding quiet, making jokes, or engaging in small chat. 9. shout out the other people's names 10. Use forbidden words, such as swearing or harsh or obscene language.

### **Negative Impoliteness Strategy**

Negative hate speech, according to [3], is the use of strategies to harm the addressee's negative face desires. Negative face desires refer to a person's wish to be left alone. Negative face is the inability of every competent adult member to function without interference from others. It also refers to a wish to act freely. Negative impoliteness methods include the following [3]: 1. Create fear by instilling the belief that something bad will happen to someone else. 2. Demonstrate your relative power by condescending, scorning, or ridiculing others. Make a mockery of yourself. Do not make a genuine threat to the other. Make fun of the other (e.g. use diminutives). 3. Invade the other's space, either physically (by moving closer to the other than the relationship allows) or symbolically (by moving closer to the other than the relationship allows) (e.g. ask for or speak about information that is too intimate given the relationship). 4. Use the pronouns "I" and "you" to explicitly identify the other with the bad element. 5. Document the indebtedness of the other.

### **Sarcasm or Mock Politeness Strategy**

Banter is plainly the polar opposite of sarcasm (mock politeness for social discord) (mock hate speech for social harmony). Sarcasm is a face-threatening conduct that is perpetrated by employing a false politeness technique [3]. Someone can use sarcasm to express their opposing feelings, which is not the true meaning of what they say. It might be inferred that sarcasm or mock hate speech is realized through false politeness. [13] uses an example of sarcasm from an excerpt from *The Clampers* to demonstrate sarcasm. A construction worker returns to his illegally parked automobile. His car is clamped by the clumper, he discovers. Then he adds, "Have a nice day!" to the clumper. In reality, the man sarcastically expresses the polar opposite of his feelings. He believes he is having a bad day [14-17].

### **Withhold Politeness Strategy**

Withhold politeness is the lack of politeness in situations where it is expected. As [11] pointed out, omitting to thank someone for a gift can be interpreted as a purposeful lack of politeness. Furthermore, withholding politeness is a method for not performing as required in politeness. The listener is prone to remaining mute in response to the speaker's words. In this instance, he fails to be courteous. The realization of withholding politeness, according to [3], is being silent and failing to thank.

### **Off-Record Impoliteness Strategy**

In off-record impoliteness strategy, the FTA is carried out by an implicature, but only in such a way that one traceable intention clearly surpasses the others.

## METHOD

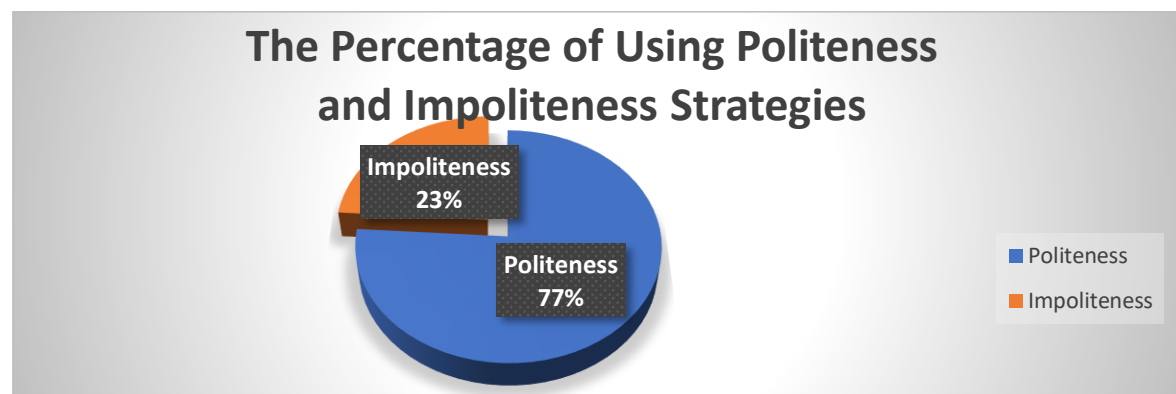
This qualitative research uses the descriptive analysis method. [18] believe that qualitative research is about meaning because it appears to be such., whereas the descriptive analysis method used in this research to define and provide a larger image of the researched object using the data or sample as it is [19]; therefore, the goal of this qualitative descriptive research is to give a systematic, factual, and accurate description, image, or depiction of each research subject's facts, natures, and relationships.

The object of this research is the comments of netizens on the government's policies regarding the implementation and extension of PPKM from stages 1 to 4 applied to Java and Bali Islands. The announcement of implementation and extension of PPKM is delivered by the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Mr. Jokowi via his official Instagram from July to August 2021. The total number of research population taken from the comments of netizens is 216 comments; however, the number of research samples obtained by using the technique of probability random sampling is 100 netizens' comments. These data are then evaluated, coded and categorized using [1]politeness theory and Culpeper's impoliteness theory [3, 11, 12]

## FINDING AND RESULT

The government's policy regarding the implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) which was conveyed through the government's official Instagram channel reaped the pros and cons in the community. In general, those who are pro-government policies consider that what the government decides is solely for the benefit of the community, so that the spread of the covid-19 virus does not expand further, meanwhile for those who are against it, argue that the policy is miserable for the community, especially people who do not have a fixed income because it limits their activities to earn a living. Responses or comments from the community can be seen from those of netizens, both pro, and contra on government policies, to enforce or extend PPKM. The comments from netizens were then analyzed using a pragmatic approach, especially the use of politeness and impoliteness strategies for the community (netizens) in responding to the implementation or extension of the PPKM program from stage 1 to 4.

Accumulatively, from the 100 data randomly obtained and analyzed, generally speaking, it can be seen that the netizens used politeness strategies (77%) and impoliteness strategies (23%) in delivering their comments on presidential decree dealing with the implementation or extension of the PPKM program from stage 1 to 4 as shown in the following pie chart:



The following are a few examples of the analyzed data on politeness strategies

1. An example of Bold-on Record Politeness Strategy

*“(Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat//PPKM) Nggak efektif pak, malah tambah sengsara..susah kerja.”*

*“(The implementation of Community Activity Restrictions/PPKM) It's not effective, sir, it's even more miserable. it's hard to work.”*

*(Source: PPKM2/D4/IG:indah.aira)*

Bold-on record politeness strategy or direct politeness strategy is commonly used and happened when the speaker thinks that maximum efficiency is very important, as a result, there is no need to minimize threats to the face of the interlocutor or hearer. In other words, based on the netizen's comment above, the government does not have to announce PPKM anymore as it does not work well and makes society get worse and harder to find jobs.

2. An example of Positive Strategy

*“Presiden kuuu terlihat jelas kurusan 😊 panjang umur, Sehat selalu pakde Bismillah kita bisa lalui ini semua” 😊😊*

*(My president looks so skinny 😊 live long, healthy always sir, Bismillah, we can get through this all 😊😊)*

*(Source:PPKM1/D1/IG: @hafida\_yossi)*

This utterance belongs to the positive politeness strategy especially the fifteenth strategy as she gives sympathy to the hearer, Mr. Jokowi, The President of the Republic of Indonesia. Knowing that President is very busy taking care of the Virus-19 outbreak, She is worried with his health and wishes the president to have a long life and stay healthy.

3. An example of negative strategy

*“Maaf bukan karena varian baru pak, tapi karena kelalaian kita akan protokol kesehatan dan kegagalan kita utk test tracing isolasi”.*

*“(Sorry, not because of the new variant, sir, but because of our negligence on the health protocol and our failure to test tracing isolation.)”*

*(Source:PPKM 1/D2/IG:drmuslimksim)*

From the comment above, it seems that the netizen used a negative politeness strategy to give his comment on the president's reasons for the enactment of PPKM by attempting to avoid imposition from the speaker by saying 'sorry' (the sixth strategy of negative strategy) so that the risk of face-threat to the hearer is reduced. In other words, The netizen had a different reason for why the enactment of PPKM had to be conducted, but since he spoke to his honorable president, he initiated his utterance by saying “sorry” to avoid imposition to his president.

4. An example of off-record politeness strategy

*Terimakasih pak dengan ini angka kemiskinan berhasil naik.”*

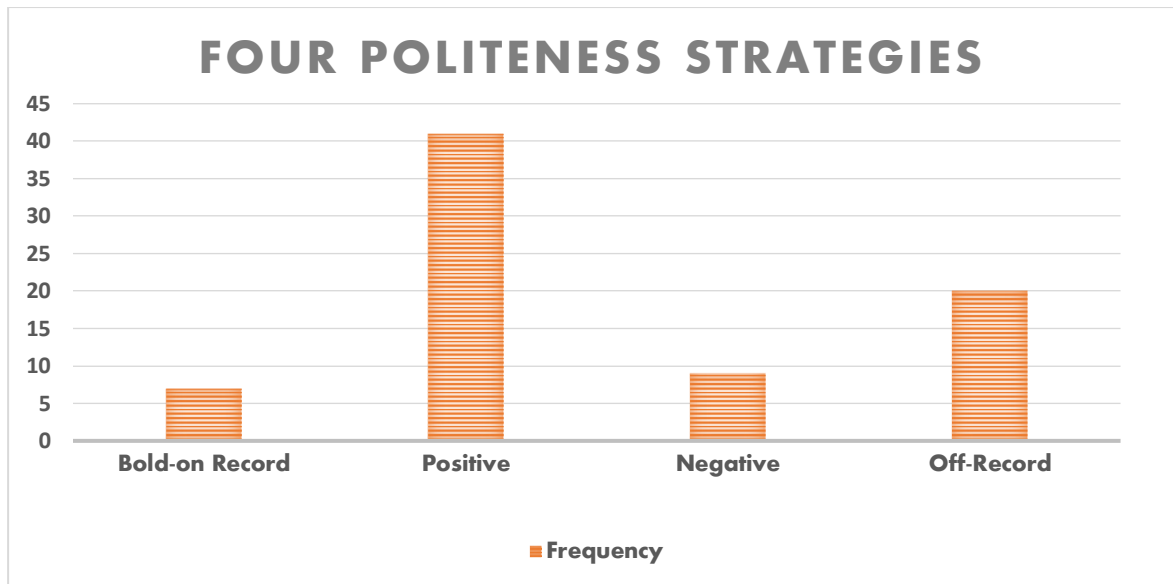
*“(Thank you, sir. With this (PPKM) the poverty rate has increased.)”*

*(Source: PPKM2/D3/IG:putrahellcrust)*

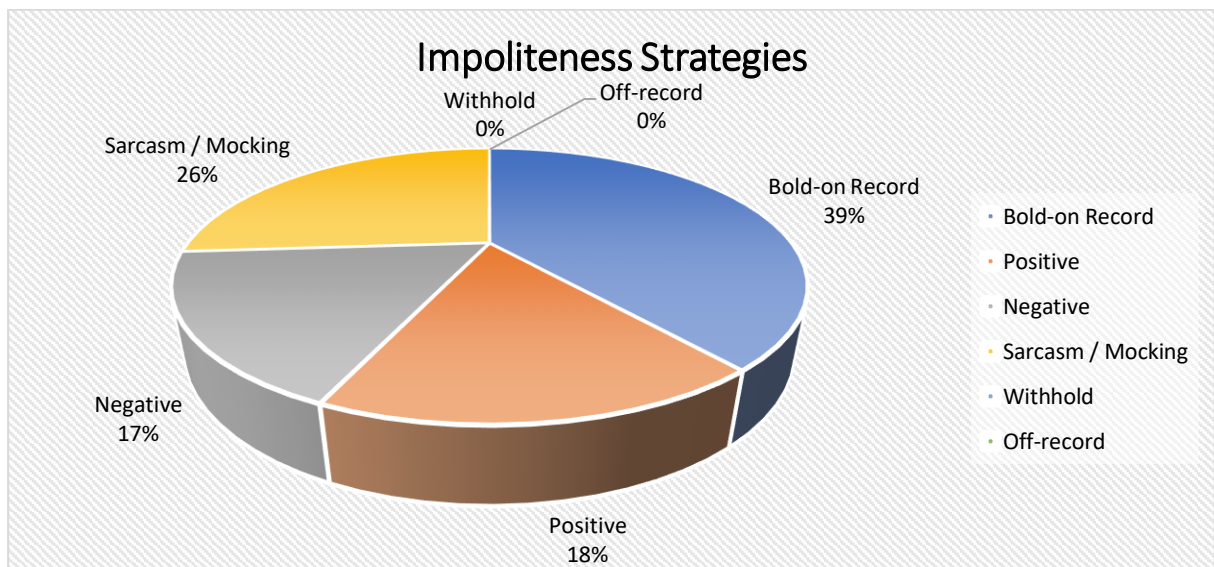
The off-the-record politeness strategy employs indirect language to keep the speaker from appearing obnoxious. Off-record communication entails expressing something general or distinct from the speaker's genuine meaning, with the meaning of the speech relying on the hearer's interpretation to convey the speaker's intent. As a matter of fact, netizen objects to the implementation of PPKM as it causes poverty rate, but he uses indirect language.

The overall data on politeness strategies used by netizens based on the politeness theory proposed by [1] can be explained respectively as follows: 7 data (9%) on bold-on record strategy, 41 data (53%) on positive strategy, 9 data (12%) on negative strategy, and 20 data (26%) on off-record strategy as observed below:





Data on impoliteness strategies are broken down respectively as follows: 9 (39%) data on bold-on record impoliteness strategies, 4 (18%) data on positive impoliteness strategies, 4 (17%) negative impoliteness strategies, 6 (26%) data on Sarcasm / Mock impoliteness strategies, and 0 (0%) data on withhold and off-record impoliteness strategies as clearly seen in the following pie chart.



Here are a few examples of the analyzed data on impoliteness strategies

1. Bold-on record impoliteness strategy  
*“Saya harap anda mundur jd presiden.”*  
 (“I hope you step down as a president.”)  
 (PPKM1/D13/IG: jaguar5040)

As [11]states that when there is a lot of face attack and the speaker intends to target the hearer’s face, bold-on record impoliteness strategy is usually used. In situations where the face is not irrelevant or downplayed, the face threatening act is executed in a straightforward, clear, unambiguous, and to-the-point manner. The utterance above clearly shows netizen’s disapproval of the PPKM program, and he asks President to step down in a straightforward, clear, unambiguous, and to-the-point manner.

### Positive impoliteness strategy

*“Tolong bapak yg terhormat liat seluruh rakyatmu sedang menderita bahkan tukang beca sampe bunuh temannya sendiri karna uang receh !!! karna ekonomi yg sangat sulit ini . tp anda seolah tutup mata dengan semua yg terjadi anda agung agungkan orang asing sedang saudaramu sedang kelaparan di tanah air sendiri!”*

(“Dear sir, please see that all your people are suffering, even the pedicab driver killed his own friend because of change!!! because of this very difficult economy. But you seem to close your eyes to everything that is happening. You are exalting foreigners while your brother is starving in your own homeland!”)

(PPKM1/D8/IG: dianoctoria\_\_)

Positive impoliteness, according to [3], is the adoption of methods intended to harm the addressee who wants to be recognized, respected, and needed by others as a member of society. The utterance above shows netizens’ disapproval of the implementation of PPKM announced by Jokowi, the President of the Republic of Indonesia that makes the Indonesian people suffer and starve in their own land. He/she does not respect clearly the president as a state’s symbol appointed by most of Indonesian people.

### 3. Negative impoliteness strategy

*“Udah pak turun aja janji2mu palsu semua”*

(“Sir, you have stepped down from the presidency, all your promises are fake.”)

(PPKM1/D7/IG: slamet\_s1967)

Negative hate speech, according to [3], is the use of methods to harm the addressee’s negative face desires. Negative face desires refer to a person’s wish to be left alone, and not to be disturbed. The netizen’s disapproval of the PPKM implantation by seeing disagreement as one characteristic of negative impoliteness strategies, with all president’s program.

#### 4. Sarcasm / mock impoliteness strategy

*“Muak saya pak!”*

(“I am sick of you”)

(PPKM 1/D10/IG: mertayasa999)

The sarcastic utterance above shows the netizen’s anger with the policies especially dealing with PPKM program announced by the president; therefore, his/her utterance is far from being polite. The aim of his/her impoliteness strategy is to damage the president’s face.

Withholding Impoliteness strategy as the strategy used by the hearer to keep silent in responding to the speaker (president) utterances and Off-record impoliteness strategy showing FTA by means of an implicature are not found in all netizens’ comments in responding to the announcement of the implementation and extension of PPKM from stages 1 to 4 applied to Java and Bali Islands.

From few data analyzed, it can be observed that in this digital era, communication can be effectively conducted through social media by using some technological devices such as handphones or cellular phones; however, the effectiveness of using gadgets to communicate is not always in line with politeness as proven in this research that some netizens used impoliteness strategies (23%) in responding to president’s announcement on the implementation of PPKM from stage 1 to 4. A president as a state’s symbol must be respected and cherished as protected by laws, besides he is chosen by the majority of Indonesian people; however, a few netizens do not respect their own president as shown in the result of this research.

## CONCLUSION

This research is mostly based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and Culpeper's impoliteness theory tries to find out whether the netizens use politeness or impoliteness strategies and to determine the types of politeness and impoliteness strategies they use in response to the government's official stance on community activity restrictions (PPKM) from stage 1 to 4 due to the Covid-19 outbreak in President' official Instagram. Based on the obtained data on 100 netizens' comments on presidential decree dealing with the implementation or extension of the PPKM program, all netizens use politeness strategies (77%) and impoliteness strategies (23%), and each type of politeness strategy used are following 7 data (9%) on bold-on record strategy, 41 data (53%) on positive strategy, 9 data (12%) on negative strategy, and 20 data (26%); meanwhile, the types of impoliteness strategies used are 9 (39%) data on bold-on record impoliteness strategies, 4 (18%) data on positive impoliteness strategies, 4 (17%) negative impoliteness strategies, 6 (26%) data on Sarcasm/Mock impoliteness strategies, and 0 (0%) data on withholding and off-record impoliteness strategies. The result of this research shows that a few netizens use impoliteness strategies (23%) even to their own president. This is really something that worries all of us as Indonesians who live in a country that values politeness as a cultural feature of eastern people in speaking. It is hoped that it will inspire researchers to do more research about it.

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