



(Im)politeness Strategies Used in Vice-Presidential Candidates Debate between Mike Pence and Sen.

Kamala Harris

Nur Najibah Sukmawati¹, Lystiana Nurhayat Hakim², Tommy Hastomo³,
Purwanti Taman,⁴ Hana Lia⁵
dosen02032@unpam.ac.id

^{1,4,5}Faculty of Letters, Universitas Pamulang, Tangerang Selatan

²Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Perjuangan Tasikmalaya

³English Department, STKIP PGRI Bandar Lampung, Bandar Lampung

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Abstract

Politeness is necessary for the way people socialize. However, some people choose to communicate impolitely despite knowing that it's inappropriate. This study aims to find out how people use impoliteness strategies in communication, and identify the impoliteness strategies used in the Vice-Presidential United States of Amerika candidates debate between Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris on October 8th, 2020, while also figuring out the purpose of using these strategies in the debate. For this reason, to identify the use of impoliteness strategies, the researcher used Jonathan Culpeper's (2005) theory of impoliteness strategies and a qualitative approach to analyze the data. The data was taken from a YouTube video entitled "Full Debate: Vice President Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris | WSJ" posted by the Wall Street Journal on October 8, 2020. The results of this study revealed that four out of five impolite strategies were used, with negative impoliteness as the most commonly used strategy. The other four strategies are bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm and mock politeness. Meanwhile, withholding politeness was never used in the debate.

Keywords: communication; debate; impoliteness strategies

Introduction

People are social beings who live by interacting with one another. Human beings use language to communicate, share expression, ideas, and social control. In addition, people use language style or strategy to maintain their social relations, these are called politeness strategies. Politeness in social life is crucial because the misuse of language in communication can cause multiple problems in our social life, such as individuals, dissatisfaction, and indifference (Pishghadam & Navari, 2012). As a consequence, people will have different interpretations, which can ruin relationships. According to Brown & Levinson (1987), the concept of communication styles is called politeness strategies. The function of these politeness strategies is to maintain people's relationships through language.

On the other hand, some people prefer using language to attack the other person despite knowing it can ruin their relationship. These are called impoliteness strategies. According to Hammond & Rassul (2017), impoliteness is an abnormal communication method leading to social disharmony and outstanding realization. The concept of impoliteness strategies has different terms compared to politeness strategies. However, both strategies have similarities when it comes to their ideologies. It is how the speaker threatens the face of the receiver or interlocutor. Yule (2010) states that the face represents public self-image with an emotional sense of social relation and requires similar feedback.

Impoliteness is commonly done verbally. According to Homes et al. (2008), verbal impoliteness is a linguistic behavior that threatens the other face and is then interpreted by the listener as a threat to their face or social identity. Not only is the listener's face threatened but impoliteness is also categorized as an offensive act in certain norms and contexts, intentionally or not. Yule (2010) highlights that context is our mental representation of aspects that leads to an interpretation. Culpeper (2005) highlights that impoliteness occurs when (1) the speaker attacks the listener's face intentionally, or (2) the listener accepts or recognizes it as an intentional act or a combination of (1) and (2). Regarding both statements, it can be concluded that impoliteness is the intentional behavior of attacking the other face verbally, which the listener interprets as threatening. The theory of impoliteness strategies has five strategies; bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mocking politeness, and Withholding politeness. Impoliteness will cause conflict and disharmony in a social relationship (Culpeper, 2005). An example of impoliteness strategies implemented in society is ridiculing the other. Such as, in a meeting, and sometimes a debate between participants. However, when one of the participants tries to show the other person's mistake in front of the other participants. This action purposely ridicules or humiliates the other participant by attacking the other record. Consequently, the social harmony between the speaker and the listener can be ruined.

The study of impoliteness strategies in expressing people's emotions is essential

to analyze. Therefore, the writer chose the impoliteness strategies between Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris for analysis. This was part of the presidential debate held on October 8, 2020. It was broadcasted live from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. The purpose of the debate was to show both candidates' credibility as the next Vice President of the United States of America. It presented two influential public figures of the United States of America.

Both Vice Presidential candidates expressed their ideas and were both challenging each other, but they were both impolite. In the debate, both of them were required to show their plan and the credibility of their party's leader by comparing them to one another. In which, both competed to show the interlocutor's weakness and the strength of their presidential candidate. In that process, the use of impoliteness strategies was used. According to the explanation, the writer investigated the impoliteness strategies applied between Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris using the theory of impoliteness strategies (Culpeper 2005).

To conduct this study, three related studies were gathered to know the implementation of impoliteness strategies in the British Tv-Series Sherlock, Peter Rabbit Movie, and Online Comment in The idntimes.com Political Website in 2017.

The first study is a thesis entitled "A Pragmatics Analysis of impoliteness strategies in British Tv-Series Sherlock" conducted by Joan Lucky B. from Yogyakarta State University (2015). It analyzed the type and function of impoliteness strategies. In addition, it also analyzed the responses to the impoliteness strategies. The study used qualitative research and descriptive methods to analyze the data collection of the study. It used Culpeper's theory about impoliteness strategies for the study's theoretical framework. The study involves bald on-record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and Withholding politeness. The study had three results. The First one is that all the types of impoliteness strategies were used with negative impoliteness being the most common. The second is that the characters in Sherlock combine impoliteness strategies with coercive impoliteness functions. The last one is whenever they respond to impoliteness strategies; the characters used defensive strategies most of the time.

The second is a study entitled "Impoliteness Strategies in Peter Rabbit Movie" conducted by Indah Permata sari, Nuri Emmiyati, and Sardian Maharani at Alauddin State Islamic University (2019). This study sought to find the use of impoliteness strategies and the response towards that strategy. It analyzed and described the data using the descriptive qualitative method and Culpeper's theory of impoliteness strategies (1996). The study's results show that the characters use 75 impoliteness strategies, with bald on the record being the most commonly used strategy and the other four response strategies. The responses were accepting face attack, offensive countering, defensive countering, and no response. Moreover, the impoliteness

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strategies were motivated by the different cultural backgrounds of the characters.

The last study is "Impoliteness Strategies Used on Online Comment in The idntimes.com Political Website in 2017" conducted by Maharani from the University of Graha Nusantara, Padangsidempuan. It analyzed the variety of impoliteness strategies used in the online comments at idntimes.com. Similarly, regarding the method and theoretical framework, the researcher used the theory as it was in the two previous studies. The results of the study showed that there were four strategies used by the viewer: bald on record, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock impoliteness. Following this, it was found that negative impoliteness was the most commonly used strategy.

The three previous studies had used a similar theory yet have different situational objects in conducting the study. The theory that all previous studies used was Culpeper's theory of impoliteness strategies (2005). Although all of the studies have used a similar theory, the three previous studies focused on the informal source of study. Furthermore, the study's objects are the statements of ordinary people and they were not required to be polite in communication. However, for this study, the researcher analyzed the impoliteness strategies in formal situations. This meant that the people are supposed to be polite. However, despite knowing the situation, they decided to be impolite. The data was taken from the spoken word debate of the Vice Presidential candidates Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris.

Method

The writer used a qualitative and descriptive approach since the data was gathered from the natural human utterance in society in spoken form with no numeric analysis data. Impoliteness is a phenomenon of communication strategies in human society that occurs naturally. Creswell (2014) highlights that the qualitative approach is designed to analyze human phenomena in society, which analyses the human experiential problem in the natural setting of communication and situation.

Based on Creswell's explanation (2014), the qualitative approach is appropriate for analyzing the problem of impoliteness is one of the phenomena in human society that occurs naturally and is related to human culture. The design of this study is content analysis to make the task reliable and replicable. Krippendorff (2004) explains that content analysis is a scientific tool to do research. It is valid and replicable. It involves a specific research method with a procedure that can be studied by the researcher and divided from the researcher's authority. Thus, the research result has no bias and gives the researcher new knowledge, improves the researcher's understanding of analyzed phenomena, and informs practical actions.

The data was taken from a Youtube video entitled "Full Debate: Vice President Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris | WSJ" posted by the Wall Street Journal on October 8, 2020. It contains the conversation between Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala

Harris in the presidential campaign election of America in 2020. Moreover, the data was gathered through content analysis, transcribing the video of Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris into a written script to make it easier to analyze then from the script, the impoliteness strategies were listed and divided into five categories in an excel table. The categories are bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withholding politeness.

The data categorized on the excel list was filtered and analyzed using Culpeper's theory of impoliteness strategies. Therefore, all of the data was counted to know the number of every strategy used in the debate and then from the number of strategies used, the study's conclusion was made. The numbers showed the frequency of the impoliteness strategies used in the Vice Presidential Candidates Debate: Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris, additionally the purpose of using impoliteness strategies in the debate were listed as well.

Results and Discussion

Findings

This section explains the results of impoliteness strategies used in the debate between Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris. The data was taken from both participants' spoken words then it was categorized into five types. As a result, there were 136 data found in the object of analysis consisting of five types of impoliteness strategies presented in a Table. 1. The table shows the frequency of impoliteness strategies used in the debate. More importantly, it also shows the most used strategies in the debate.

Table 1. Frequency of the five types of impoliteness strategies used in the Vice Presidential Candidates Debate: Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris

No.	Impoliteness Strategies Type	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Bald on Record Impoliteness	13	9,56%
2.	Positive Impoliteness	43	31,62%
3.	Negative Impoliteness	72	52,94%
4.	Sarcasm or Mock Politeness	8	5,88%
5.	Withholding Politeness	0	0%
Total		136	100%

Note :

The frequency represents the number of acts

Table 1 above shows five impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper (2005). They are bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness,

sarcasm or mock politeness, and withholding politeness. According to table 1, four types of impoliteness strategies are used in the debate. They are bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm, or mock politeness. While the most commonly used strategy was negative impoliteness with 72 data or 52,94% . Then it was followed by positive impoliteness with 43 data, or 31,62% acts, bald on record impoliteness with 13 data or 9,56% , and sarcasm or mock politeness with 8 data or 5,88%. On the other hand, the withholding politeness strategy was never used in the debate.

All of the strategies have different ways to attack the interlocutor's face. The frequency of using impoliteness strategies in Table 1 supports the purpose of using impoliteness strategies in the debate. Both candidates attack the interlocutor's face to show their credibility and the other candidate's weakness by using impoliteness strategies. Therefore, the debate is dominated by negative impoliteness, with 52,94% acts that purposely attack the negative face of the interlocutor. In the debate process, both candidates also used positive impoliteness, with 31,62% at certain moments to defend against the attack. The purpose of positive impoliteness is to attack the positive face of the interlocutor. However, the positive politeness was done not only to both candidates but also to the debate presenter who overrules the debate, Susan Page. It was done by seeking disagreement from other candidates and ignoring reminders of Susan Page reminding them that their time to speak is up.

Furthermore, in the debate, two types of impoliteness strategies also appeared to have no significant number. They are bald on record impoliteness with 9,56% and sarcasm or mock politeness with 5,88%. Bald on record impoliteness appears in straightforward ways of impolite acts where face is not irrelevant or minimized. In contrast, sarcasm or mock politeness appears in polite ways, which need the listener's sensitivity to figure out the meaning behind it (Culpeper, 2005).

Discussion

Four strategies were used between the debate of Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris. The strategies were bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm and mock politeness. However, withholding politeness strategy was never used in the debate. From the four strategies that are used, they are dominated by negative impoliteness, with 72 data or 52,94%. Then it is followed by positive impoliteness with 43 data or 31,62%, bald on record impoliteness with 13 data or 9,56%, and sarcasm or mock politeness with 8 data or 5,88%.

The use of negative impoliteness as the dominant strategy in the debate could not be separated from the purpose of the discussion. The goal is to show each candidate's credibility through conversation, sharing their plans and capabilities in front of all the American people. However, they also performed negative impoliteness to attack the negative face of the interlocutor directly. It appeared as

humiliating, insulting, and underestimating each other in front of all people watching the debate, especially to the American people. All the acts match the theory proposed by Culpeper (2005). He states that negative impoliteness acts are threatening, humiliating, mocking, insulting, underestimating, intervening in the other's privacy, expressly partnering the other with a contrary viewpoint (customize, utilize the favorable to things "I" and "You"), but the other's obligation on record.

The resulting study has the opposite result of the study from the study of Shinta, Hamzah, & Wahyuni (2018). They stated that impoliteness might be triggered by face-to-face communication, and people tend to do impoliteness in online communication because people do not meet each other which makes them braver to being impolite. However, this study proves that Shinta, Hamzah, & Wahyuni's (2018) statement was not relevant. Impoliteness is triggered by the speaker's purpose of wanting to attack the other face and is not related to the form of communication. Tracy & Tracy (1998) define face attacks as the communication strategy with a particular purpose of offending the other face. Society has done this act, and the range of offensiveness starts from low to total humiliation. The statement of Tracy & Tracy (1998) supports the result of the study that people do impoliteness with a specific purpose to attack the interlocutor's face without considering the communication form. Moreover, the point of impoliteness performance is to break the interlocutor's face and is performed intentionally.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions in the previous chapter, there are two points to describe the result of the study. The object of the study is the debate between Mike Pence and Sen. Kamala Harris, held in 2020. The theoretical framework used to analyze the object was Culpeper's theory of impoliteness strategies (2005). The study used a qualitative method to analyze the data collection. There are five strategies that Culpeper (2005) proposed: bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withholding politeness. However, in the study's data, the impoliteness strategies used in the debate were only four strategies with different frequencies. The strategies are bald on record impoliteness with 13 data (9,56%), positive impoliteness with 43 data (31,62%), negative impoliteness with 72 data (52,94%), and sarcasm or mock politeness with 8 data (5,88%). According to the study's data, the strategies are dominated by negative impoliteness with 72 data (52,94%), and fewer strategies used are sarcasm or mock politeness with 7 data (5,88%). However, withholding politeness was never used in the debate.

Second, the negative impoliteness dominated the debate with 72 data (52,94%) which purposely attacks the negative face of the interlocutor. Yule (2010) states that

negative face concerns to be free from imposition and neutral as a social member. In addition, according to Culpeper (2005) negative impoliteness actions are threatening, humiliating, mocking, insulting, underestimating, intervening in the other's privacy, expressly partnering the other with a contrary viewpoint (customize, utilize the favorable to things "I" and "You"), but the other's obligation on record. According to the data and the statement, the purpose of using impoliteness is to humiliate the interlocutor's credibility by insulting, mocking, underestimating, humiliating, and intervening. All these things were purposely done to catch the attention of the American people and win the presidential election.

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