



## **THE FUNCTIONS OF IMPOLITENESS ON ASIA'S LEADING AIRLINE INSTAGRAM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The research aims to investigate the Impoliteness Strategies used in customers complaint on Asia's leading airline official Instagram account. The objective of this research is to elucidate the functions of Impoliteness Strategies used by customers of Asia's leading airline in giving online complaints on Instagram. This research employed descriptive qualitative research. The sources of data were taken from 52 customers impolite utterances posted on Asia's leading airline official Instagram account. The result of this research shows three functions of impoliteness strategies found, Affective Impoliteness (62%), Entertaining Impoliteness (21%), Coercive Impoliteness (17%). The most dominant function used by the customers is Affective Impoliteness which earns 62%. Affective impoliteness is the targeted exhibition of strongly elevated emotion, such as rage or anger, implying that the target is responsible for the bad emotional state. Thirty-three affective impoliteness functions were identified on this airline's official Instagram comments performed in increased emotion, such as anger, which implicates the production of negative emotions.

***Keywords:*** *Impoliteness, Customers, Affective, Coercive, Entertaining*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Human life is not completed without language since it connects interlocutors in a dynamic interaction. Language is used by speakers to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. People follow cultural standards in communication to demonstrate that they are skilled speakers. Language cannot be disconnected from human existence since it is a vital instrument used to develop ideas and transfer information from one another. According to

Lakoff (1989:116), there are two basic norms of pragmatic competence: be clear and polite. Ideally, the speakers must meet both requirements, although the rules sometimes clash. When it comes to civility, it cannot be divorced from the culture issue. The usage of an utterance determines whether it is polite or impolite. Impoliteness has various synonyms in the English language, and they all connect to the judgment of bad behavior (Culpeper, 2011), since it attacks someone's identity or rights and causes certain emotional reactions (e.g., hurt, and anger). It has been closely linked to the speaker's objectives and the hearer's perceptions.

People nowadays utilize social media to interact with one another. Social media sites like Instagram, Facebook (FB), Twitter, and others can be used as communication tools. On social media, people may freely share their opinions and get responses from others. Most people use social media to connect with others and make friends without having to worry about distance. Private conversations and media that can be reacted by a wide number of people can both be served by social media. Instagram is the most popular and well-liked social networking platform. In 2010, Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger founded Instagram. People are free to upload pictures and fifteen-second videos and enable people to comment on them.

Since it's easier to perform direct customer surveys on social media and gain immediate feedback from customers, social media can help businesses become more efficient by decreasing the burden of communication expenditures. In addition, Airlines also use several social media platforms at the same time to get feedback from their customers, and in this case, the writer focuses on the Instagram of a leading airline in Asia for comments made by the public and customers on several posts from the airline's official Instagram and analyzes them from the point of the impoliteness strategy as the domain of pragmatic studies. According to Culpeper (2011), Impoliteness is a bad attitude about a particular behavior that takes place in a particular situation. Expectations, intentions, and/or theories about social structure, such as how one person's or a group's identities are mediated by others in contact. Impoliteness is described as expressing words or acting in a way that is unfavorable in a particular situation. They are disliked because they violate someone's rights or identity. They cause diverse emotional reactions like hurt and fury. There are at least three functions of impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper (2011), they are : Affective Impoliteness, Coercive Impoliteness, Entertaining Impoliteness, for knowing which functions impoliteness strategies are used by most of customers on giving online comments.

Asia's leading Airline is chosen to analyze the complaint comments from the customers on the company's official Instagram. As the complaint comments from the public or customers, it is related to the numbers of flight cancellations due to the non-normal flight operations caused

by the covid 19 pandemic and also the problem of money refunds that customers feel have not gone well.

## METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative descriptive methodology to investigate the functions of impoliteness strategies used by customers or prospective customers on Asia's Leading Airline's Official Instagram. According to Bodgan and Biklen (1992:29), qualitative research is a direct source of data, with the researcher as the essential tool. Qualitative research seeks to discover how a theory applies in diverse phenomena, with data collected in the form of words rather than numbers.

The data for this study were the sentences consisting of Impoliteness Strategies made by customers of Asia's Leading Airlines from January to February 2023. The sample taken was 100% of the total number of impoliteness comments in the period of January and February 2023. The data were gathered by utilizing the documentary method, in which only the data that supported the research question were used. This research's data came from a screenshot, photographs, and comments from Asia's Leading Airline's Official Instagram account.

In gathering the facts some stages were used such as, documenting and screen shooting the complaint comment from customers or prospective customers to the Asia's leading airline official Instagram. The steps of data collection are firstly the complaint comments from the customers to be observed. Secondly, some notes were made while observing the complaint comment whether any impoliteness strategies occurred while the customers post the comment, and lastly classified of collected comments into fact pages.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

After deeply analyzing the data, this study came up with several findings.

The following are a description of them:

Table 1. The Function Impoliteness Strategies Used and percentages.

No.	Function	Total	Percentages (%)
1.	Affective Impoliteness	32	62
2.	Entertaining Impoliteness	11	21
3.	Coercive Impoliteness	9	17
	<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>

## 1. Affective Impoliteness

The first function of impoliteness is Affective Impoliteness. This action entails an emotional outburst that occurs during a dialogue between the impolite speaker and the impolite receiver. The thirty-two affective impoliteness functions were identified on this airline's official Instagram comments performed in increased emotion, such as anger, which implicates the production of negative emotions as shown below:

Data 1/RW: *"Every single AA social media platform is full of refund, delay, cancel,....."*

The comments above indicated that the customer was rage to this airline as he/she saw that almost every single its social media such as Instagram or Twitter is full of impolite comments caused by refund processes that are considered incomplete, delayed flight schedules, and even canceled.

Data 3/SD: *"Just contacted to one of your "All star customer service" gave my case number and explanation and all for refund and next thing you know CONVERSATION HAS TIMED OUT, like you dont understand the difficulty your passengers are facing. I am paranoid of using your airlines due to your poor refund policies."*

The bold words above showed that the customer was angry to this airline due to the poor refund process faced by this customer and the customer was afraid of using this airline again due to the airline's poor refund policies.

Data 5/FS: *"Rubbish, your chat bot doesn't solve any issue my refund still pending until now due to your cancelled flight. WHERE'S MY REFUND MONEY???"*

The data above obviously shows the anger of the passenger by expressing that the airline is "rubbish" and again due to a refund that has not been received by this customer. He/she already tried to contact this airline via the chatbot application as it's the only way to contact the airline they provide but the refund is still pending. The customer asked for a refund due to the flight was canceled.

Data 6/TL: *"Who is this ugly people. You all scammer"*

The comment in bold words typed by the customer above also shows the anger of the customer as so many issues such as flight cancellation and incomplete refunds perform by this airline. The customer accused this airline and all the staff are scammers.

Data 7/JM: *"Got sale because you guys make use of customer's non refunded money to sustain yourselves"*

The data above shows the anger of the customer still due to incomplete refund performed by this airline according to this customer. He/she accused this airline of not refunding the customer's money to survive during the very challenging time of the pandemic.

## 2. Entertaining Impoliteness

Entertaining Impoliteness is the second function of impoliteness. This function of impoliteness takes advantage of a target or potential target of impoliteness by providing entertainment at their expense. It is surprising that impoliteness can be entertaining even though it usually hurts or harm people.

The eleven entertaining impoliteness function found on Asia's leading airline official instagram comments that tends to harm people or make them angry, it can also be entertaining as shown in the following:

Data 2/PG: *"Lagi delay Singapore to Malaysia flight now **aduh ini A..Asia - new name DelayAsia**"*

It can be seen from the data above that the customer tried to condescend and harm this airline, as the flight was delayed, he/she tried to change AirAsia to DelayAsia by typing "aduh ini A..Asia – new name DelayAsia". The expression might hurt the airline but it was also entertaining to anyone who reads the comments.

Data 13/KR: *"**Debt is in the air**"* 🗨️

From the data above it can also be seen that the commenter tried to scorn and harm which is intended to this airline by typing "Debt is in the air" caused by so many refund issues faced by its customer. Otherwise, it also entertaining to anyone who reads the comments.

Data 14/YM: *"What's the point? Keep delay my flight. Then change my direct flight to transit flight. **Hello please la, is consumer just a tools to your tesla Tony?**"*

The data above typed by customer to express his/her disappointment as the flight was delay. Not only that, the flight was change from direct to transit flight which of course will take more time spent. The customer then expressed his/her disappointment by typing "Hello please la, is consumer just a tools to your tesla Tony?" The comment might hurt the airline or Tony as the owner but it was also entertaining to anyone who reads the comments.

Data 18/KJ: *"Free Flight Delay Insurance..."Terms & Conditions Apply"..my .ssSsss" 🤔*

The comment above deliberately typed by customer to this airline toward the offering of free insurance for the flight delay but of course with terms and condition apply. The customer

then continues typed the impolite comment as shown in bold words above “my Ass” followed with laugh emoticon. The comment surely hurt the airline but it also entertaining to anyone who reads the comments.

Data 20/CW: **“King of Domestic Flight Delay! Malaysia greatest Airline”**

The next data above obviously condescend and harm which is intended to this airline for the delay performance which might be experienced by this customer. Otherwise, the expressions “King of Domestic Flight Delay!” also sounds funny and it also entertaining to anyone who reads the comments.

### **3. Coercive Impoliteness**

Coercive Impoliteness is the last function of impoliteness. It is impoliteness that seeks a rearrangement of values between the producer and the target in which the producer gets more benefit or gets their current benefits reinforced or protected, (Culpeper, 2011: 226). This function involves coercive action which intends to enforce harm on another person or to force upon an agreement.

The nine coercive impoliteness function found on Asia’s leading airline official Instagram comments that seeks a rearrangement of values between the producer and the target in which the producer gets more benefit or gets their current benefits reinforced as shown in the following:

Data 4/DM: **“Don’t book, they cancel the flight and no refund! And then using the Ai system Ask Bo to fool you”**

The comment typed by customer above indicate that the customer forced upon an agreement towards others who reads the comments not to book with this airline as the airline often cancel the flight and no refund. The customer also intended to harm this airline by stating that the “Ask Bo” chatbot platform made just to fool the customers.

Data 8/TK: **“This a..asia always chat with bo, their programmed robot which didn’t solve any issue at all”**

The data above expressed by customer intended to harm this airline by saying that their programmed robot or chatbot platform did not solve any issue experienced by the customer.

Data 11/DN: **“PAY OUR FULL CASH REFUNDS NOW!”**

The comment typed by customer above indicate that the customer forced upon an agreement towards this airline. The customer forced this airline to pay customer’s full cash refunds by sooner.

Data 15/SN: “**Return back my money..Please laa!!**”

The data above was similar with previous data which is the customer forced upon an agreement towards this airline. The customer asked this airline to return back his / her money right away immediately.

Data 28/RH: “*Thanks AVA, **YOU WON'T BE MISSED!***”

The data above expressed by customer intended to harm this airline’s chatbot platform which is AVA by expressing that this useless Chatbot AVA won’t be missed. The comment was typed by the customer when this this airline’s social media official staff posted the video of AVA farewell and will no longer be in charge of serving customer inquiries because it will be replaced by a new, better platform.

There are three functions of using Impoliteness strategies found in this study: Affective impoliteness, Coercive impoliteness, and Entertaining impoliteness. After analyzing the 52 data, the researcher found the highest function was Affective Impoliteness which reach (62%), followed by Entertaining Impoliteness (21%), and the last Coercive Impoliteness (17%). This finding was contradicting with relevant studies which Coercive Impoliteness was the highest function.

This study has some limitations towards the sources of the data. The data source was taken from one airline official Instagram account. If the research is conducted with more airline Instagram account, then the findings are potentially different. Besides, no interview conducted for the instrument of data collection. The data collection gathered from observation and documentation by screenshotting impoliteness utterances typed by customers on Asia’s leading Airline official Instagram account. The researcher made the delimitation to focus on the research. The writer suggested to other researchers that the study for the type of Impoliteness Strategies be further developed with more data source, elaborated, and investigated with Interviews as no interviews available in this research in order to contribute to the impoliteness theories, such as the use of impoliteness in different contexts as the finding may could differently depending on to the context.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study focused on the impolite language that customers of Asia's Leading Airline used when posted online comments on the airline’s official Instagram. The aims were to identify the functions of impoliteness strategies used by customers. There were three functions of using impoliteness strategies found namely Affective impoliteness, Coercive impoliteness, and Entertaining impoliteness. The highest function used was Affective Impoliteness.

Affective Impoliteness is tended to show the anger of the speakers to the addressee and most of the data available were tend to show the anger of the customers to the airline.

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