



Digital Hate Narratives: A Pragmatic Study of Insulting Comments across Social Media

Nila Kencana

Universitas Prof. Dr. Hazairin SH, Bengkulu, Indonesia
nilakencana1974@gmail.com

Elva Utami

Universitas Prof. Dr. Hazairin SH, Bengkulu, Indonesia
utamielva80@gmail.com

Dewi Sartika

Universitas Islam OKI, Kayu Agung, Indonesia
dewisartika@uniski.ac.id

Eka Nurdianty Anwar

Akademi Analis Kesehatan Harapan Bangsa, Bengkulu, Indonesia
eccka101083@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the pragmatic strategies used by netizens to construct insulting comments across three major social media platforms: Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram. Employing a qualitative research design, the study analyzes 60 publicly available comments collected from viral posts related to public figures and controversial topics. Using theoretical frameworks from speech act theory, impoliteness theory, and Gricean pragmatics, the research identifies multiple forms of verbal aggression, including bald-on-record insults, sarcasm, mock politeness, and presupposition-based attacks. The findings reveal that each platform exhibits distinct patterns of linguistic hostility shaped by its design, user culture, and interactional norms. Facebook fosters extended and confrontational discourse, TikTok promotes brief and performative sarcasm, while Instagram favors stylized and indirect expressions. Additionally, the study demonstrates that insults in digital contexts function not only as expressions of offense but also as performative acts of identity, judgment, and group alignment. This research contributes to digital pragmatics by showing how classical linguistic theories operate in technologically mediated environments. It also offers practical insights for content moderation, digital literacy, and ethical communication in online spaces.

Keywords: digital pragmatics, impoliteness, speech acts, insults, social media, online discourse

Introduction

In the age of digital communication, social media platforms have become powerful spaces for both personal expression and public discourse. While these platforms enable new opportunities for community-building and the exchange of ideas, they have simultaneously become fertile grounds for toxic interactions, including hate speech, verbal aggression, and insulting comments. The accessibility, immediacy, and anonymity afforded by digital media provide users with the freedom to communicate without the same constraints found in face-to-face interactions. As a result, hostile language practices proliferate, posing new challenges not only for policymakers and practitioners but also for linguistic scholars, especially those working in the field of pragmatics.

Insulting language on social media should not be understood merely as offensive expression; it often functions as a performative act with specific pragmatic intentions. These utterances are deeply embedded in cultural, ideological, and power-laden contexts. They reflect speakers' stances, emotions, and strategies for positioning themselves within public debates. A pragmatic lens allows scholars to analyze not only the literal meaning of online insults but also the intended implications, presuppositions, and the broader social functions these utterances fulfill. Understanding how insults operate in digital settings is therefore critical for uncovering patterns of online hostility and for developing strategies to promote healthier and more ethical digital interactions.

Some researchers have investigated hate speech and insulting language from various perspectives. For instance, (Bączkowska, 2021) analyzed impoliteness and mockery in online discussions, while (McCambridge, 2022) explored the pragmatics of political insults. More recently, studies such as (Vásquez, 2021) and (Abdel-Raheem, 2022) have examined the relationship between impoliteness and social identity on digital platforms. These studies have laid a theoretical foundation for understanding verbal aggression, but many are centered on specific events, communities, or text-based forums such as Reddit and Twitter.

Although these studies are valuable, they often overlook the diversity of digital environments where insults are performed. Social media platforms differ not only in their technological features but also in the cultures of interaction they cultivate. TikTok's short-form video format, Instagram's visual aesthetics, and Facebook's threaded discussions all provide distinct communicative affordances that shape how insults are expressed, interpreted, and circulated. Focusing on only one platform risks ignoring these contextual variations and the broader narratives of hostility that transcend individual digital spaces.

In addition, many previous studies have concentrated on overt hate speech while paying less attention to subtler pragmatic strategies such as sarcasm, presupposition, and mock politeness. These indirect forms of insult are highly prevalent in online discourse, where ambiguity allows speakers to veil hostility while still delivering face-threatening acts. The lack of empirical attention to such implicit strategies represents a critical gap in the current literature. To advance digital pragmatics, it is necessary to consider not only explicit verbal aggression but also the nuanced ways in which hostility is encoded in context-dependent and multimodal forms.

This study seeks to address these limitations by providing a cross-platform pragmatic analysis of insulting comments in digital communication. By examining user-generated comments from Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram, the research aims to identify both commonalities and differences in the pragmatic strategies used to convey insults. Specifically, it explores face-threatening acts, implicatures, presuppositions, and other pragmatic mechanisms that reveal how insults function as speech acts in technologically mediated environments.

The significance of this research lies not only in its theoretical contribution to pragmatics but also in its practical relevance for understanding digital culture. By uncovering patterns of digital hate

narratives, the study offers insights into how linguistic hostility is shaped by platform design, user norms, and socio-cultural dynamics. These findings are expected to inform ongoing discussions about digital literacy, online civility, and ethical communication. Moreover, the research may support efforts in content moderation and educational initiatives aimed at fostering critical awareness of language use in online spaces.

Ultimately, this study underscores the need for pragmatic inquiry that is sensitive to the complexities of digital interaction. By situating online insults within broader cultural and technological contexts, the research aims to contribute to both scholarly debates and practical solutions. In doing so, it highlights the role of language not only as a tool of expression but also as a site of contestation, identity performance, and social alignment in the digital age.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design within the framework of pragmatic analysis. A qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows for an in-depth exploration of language use in its natural digital context, focusing on meaning-making practices, speaker intention, and context-dependent interpretations. As the study seeks to uncover how netizens construct and perform verbal insults on social media, it requires a design that can capture the subtleties of linguistic strategies, contextual cues, and interactional patterns.

In particular, this research is situated within *pragmatic discourse analysis*, combining theories from politeness, impoliteness, and speech act analysis to interpret insulting comments as contextually embedded communicative acts. The study does not aim to quantify hate speech or measure its frequency, but rather to understand how it functions, is realized, and interpreted in real-world digital interactions. This approach emphasizes not just *what* is said, but *how*, *why*, and *under what circumstances* it is said.

The study also takes a cross-platform perspective, analyzing comments from multiple social media platforms to identify recurring pragmatic patterns and context-specific variations. This design allows the research to explore whether different platforms, due to their technical affordances, user norms, and moderation policies-shape the forms and strategies of verbal insults differently.

Data Source and Data Collection (Revised)

The data for this study consists of publicly accessible user comments obtained from Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram-three of the most widely used social media platforms in Indonesia and globally. These platforms were selected because they represent diverse communication formats and user demographics: Facebook is known for threaded discussions and public group interactions; TikTok emphasizes short-form video content with high-volume comment sections; and Instagram blends visual content with concise caption-based interactions. This selection allows for a

broader comparative understanding of how insults are constructed and received across different digital environments.

Using purposive sampling, the researcher will collect insulting or verbally aggressive comments from selected public posts that have triggered significant interaction—such as viral videos, controversial uploads, or public discussions involving influencers or topical issues. Posts will be identified through targeted searches using keywords and hashtags related to contentious topics or popular figures. Only comments from public pages or accounts will be included, and user identities will be anonymized to maintain ethical standards.

A total of approximately 200–300 comments containing clear markers of insulting or hostile language will be compiled. The sample will be distributed across the three platforms to allow comparative analysis—ideally with balanced representation (e.g., 70–100 comments per platform). Each comment will be documented with contextual metadata such as the platform, the type of post it responded to, engagement levels (likes, replies), and timestamp. This metadata is essential for capturing the pragmatic context of the utterances.

Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis will adopt a comparative pragmatic framework to identify and interpret the linguistic strategies and contextual functions of insults across Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram. The first step involves classifying comments based on impoliteness strategies (Vásquez, 2021), such as bald-on-record insults, sarcasm, mock politeness, presupposition, and implicature. In addition, speech act theory (Siregar & Suprayetno, 2024) will be applied to identify the illocutionary force of the insults—whether they function as blaming, accusing, ridiculing, dismissing, or threatening.

The second layer of analysis focuses on the pragmatic intentions and contextual dynamics of each platform. Facebook's threaded format, for example, may promote prolonged back-and-forth arguments, while TikTok's fleeting comment visibility and algorithm-driven engagement may encourage punchy, viral insults. Instagram, with its visual-centric design, may combine textual aggression with visual cues like emojis or GIFs. The analysis will explore how these platform-specific features influence both the form and function of insulting language.

Lastly, the study will compare cross-platform patterns to assess whether certain strategies are more prevalent or socially acceptable on one platform than another. For example, is sarcasm more common on TikTok? Is mock politeness more frequent on Facebook? Does Instagram favor passive-aggressive or ironic insults? These insights will be connected to broader theoretical concerns in digital pragmatics, including the role of medium, context collapse, and the performativity of online aggression.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What types of pragmatic strategies are used by netizens to express insulting comments on Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram?
2. How do pragmatic functions of insulting comments differ across social media platforms?

Findings and Discussion

Findings

Overview of the Data

This study collected a total of twenty comments drawn from three widely used social media platforms: Facebook (11 comments), TikTok (5 comments), and Instagram (4 comments). The data were gathered over the course of one week (4-11 July 2025) from public posts that attracted significant online attention. These posts were primarily related to controversial issues involving celebrities, religion, and public tragedies-contexts that are especially prone to attracting hostile commentary.

The selection of these platforms was deliberate, given their distinctive communicative affordances. Facebook, with its threaded comment sections and broad demographic reach, has long been associated with heated debates and moralizing discourse. TikTok, on the other hand, thrives on brevity, virality, and performativity, making its comment sections fast-paced and often saturated with exaggerated expressions. Instagram, while visually oriented, provides space for witty, stylized, and indirect commentary through captions and replies.

Each of the twenty comments analyzed contained clear elements of verbal aggression, whether direct (e.g., name-calling) or indirect (e.g., sarcasm or presuppositions). The analysis employed Culpeper's (2011) in (Vásquez, 2021) taxonomy of impoliteness strategies, Searle's (1969) in (Siagian & Sitorus, 2023) speech act theory, and Grice's (1975) in theory of implicature. This theoretical triangulation enabled the study to examine insults not only at the surface level but also in terms of their illocutionary force, pragmatic strategies, and contextual significance.

Identified Pragmatic Strategies of Insulting Language

a. Bald-on-Record Impoliteness

Bald-on-record insults represent the most unmitigated form of verbal aggression, where the speaker directly attacks the target with no attempt to soften or disguise hostility. Examples include:

- a. *"Orang gila lepas dari rumah sakit jiwa."* (TikTok, 8 July 2025)
- b. *"Ortunya tolol."* (TikTok, 10 July 2025)
- c. *"Mukak tua."* (Facebook, 8 July 2025)

These utterances exemplify explicit derogatory labeling, functioning as direct expressive acts that signal contempt or ridicule. Pragmatically, they demonstrate a complete disregard for the addressee's "face wants" (Brown & Levinson, 1987) in (Abdel-Raheem, 2022). Such unfiltered aggression is common in flame wars or viral debates, where emotional intensity overrides norms of politeness.

Interestingly, bald-on-record insults were particularly prominent on **Facebook** and **TikTok**, platforms that encourage quick, reactionary posts. On Facebook, the threaded format makes direct name-calling part of extended debates, whereas on TikTok, the brevity of comments incentivizes blunt, shocking statements designed for maximum visibility.

b. Sarcasm and Irony (Conventional Implicature)

Sarcasm and irony were frequently used to deliver indirect insults, allowing speakers to mock while maintaining plausible deniability. Examples include:

- a. “*Wah, pinter banget ya... sampai gak tau malu 😏*” (TikTok)
- b. “*Kayaknya isi otaknya cuma debu, bukan ide.*” (Facebook, 8 July 2025)
- c. “*Kayaknya kk n senang sekali dihujat, dh makanan favoritnya mungkin.*” (Instagram, 8 July 2025)

These examples rely on the violation of Grice’s maxim of quality, where the literal meaning contrasts with the intended insult. The use of emojis such as 😏 strengthens the sarcastic tone and signals to the audience that the insult should be interpreted ironically rather than literally.

Sarcasm is especially common on **TikTok**, where humor and exaggeration are central to the platform’s communicative culture. The performative nature of TikTok encourages sarcastic insults that are not only directed at individuals but also crafted for entertainment value in front of a wider audience.

c. Presupposition-Based Insults

Presuppositional insults embed hostile assumptions within the utterance, making them powerful because the offensive meaning is implied rather than explicitly stated. Examples include:

- a. “*Yg bilang cantik... mata nya pekok.*” (Instagram, 4 July 2025)
- b. “*Balikin aja anak model begitu aja, ceritanya simpang siur juga.*” (TikTok, 8 July 2025)
- c. “*Anak haram yg dibuang malah dipungut... jijiiikk.*” (Facebook, 7 July 2025)

In these examples, the insult is not presented as a debatable claim but as a presupposed truth. For instance, calling someone “*anak haram*” presupposes illegitimacy as a fact, leaving little room for contestation. This makes presuppositional insults difficult to counter without implicitly accepting the premise.

Presuppositional hostility appeared most frequently on **Facebook** and **Instagram**, where users often frame their moral judgments as “common sense truths.” Such constructions reflect how insults are embedded in broader cultural narratives, particularly around morality, family, and legitimacy.

d. Mock Politeness and Passive Aggression

Mock politeness occurs when superficially polite language is used to mask an underlying insult. Examples include:

- a. *“Makanya sekolah bener, biar gak ngelawak mulu.”* (Instagram)
- b. *“Laura dipelet sama Vadel... auranya kayak tukang sihir.”* (Instagram, 8 July 2025)

These utterances appear advisory or neutral but are pragmatically hostile. By presenting the insult as a suggestion or observation, the speaker hides aggression beneath a veneer of politeness. This double speech act—polite on the surface, insulting in intent—adds complexity to digital insults.

This strategy was more common on **Instagram**, where users often prefer indirect or stylized forms of expression. Mock politeness aligns with the platform’s culture of aesthetic presentation, allowing users to maintain an appearance of civility while still delivering hostile evaluations.

e. Performative Insults and Audience-Directed Aggression

Some comments functioned less as direct communication to the target and more as performative acts aimed at a wider audience. Examples include:

- a. *“Ssdh ini maunya Dewi Persik, Denis yg dipenjara... mulutnya koar-koar.”* (Facebook, 11 July 2025)
- b. *“Ortunya tolol.”* (TikTok)
- c. *“Ngak penting hadapin orang NPD toxic yg lagi tantrum.”* (Instagram)

These utterances often blended expressive acts (venting anger) with directive acts (shaping audience judgment). For instance, the Facebook comment about Dewi Persik not only attacks the celebrity but also seeks to rally others against her. This highlights the performative dimension of online insults, where the goal is less about the individual target and more about positioning oneself within a collective discourse.

Performative insults were particularly visible on Facebook and TikTok, platforms where public visibility and viral traction play central roles in shaping discourse.

3. Platform-Based Pragmatic Differences

A closer examination revealed that each platform fostered distinctive patterns of insulting discourse:

1. Facebook – Characterized by long, argumentative threads with high levels of directness. Bald-on-record insults and presuppositional hostility dominated, reflecting a culture of extended debate and moral policing. Insults often carried didactic tones, positioning the speaker as morally superior.
2. TikTok – Comments were short, sharp, and often humorous. Sarcasm and performativity were prevalent, with heavy use of emojis and hyperbolic expressions. The platform’s design

encourages comments that can stand alone as entertaining content, leading to a prevalence of witty but hostile one-liners.

- Instagram – Insults tended to be indirect, aestheticized, and sometimes cloaked in humor or mock politeness. Passive-aggressive remarks were common, often incorporating visual markers (e.g., emojis, line breaks) that softened the form while preserving hostility.

These findings demonstrate that insults are not merely individual choices but are shaped by the **interactional architecture and communicative culture** of each platform.

4. Summary and Emerging Patterns

Table 1: summarizes the main pragmatic strategies observed across platforms

Strategy Type	Example Quote (Anonymized)	Platform
Bald-on-Record	“Mukak tua.” / “Ortunya tolol.”	Facebook / TikTok
Sarcasm / Irony	“Isi otaknya cuma debu.” / “Senang dihujat, makanan favoritnya.”	Facebook / Instagram
Presupposition	“Anak haram yang dibuang malah dipungut.”	Facebook
Mock Politeness	“Makanya sekolah bener, biar gak ngelawak.”	Instagram
Performative / Audience Target	“Ssdh ini maunya Dewi Persik, Denis yg dipenjara.”	Facebook

The distribution suggests that bald-on-record and presuppositional insults are most typical of Facebook, where confrontation and moralizing dominate. TikTok favors sarcasm and performativity, aligning with its entertainment-driven design. Instagram tends toward indirectness and mock politeness, reflecting its emphasis on style and personal branding.

Implications of Findings

The findings highlight how insults on social media are not uniform but platform-dependent speech acts. The pragmatic strategies employed reflect both user intentions and the affordances of the platform. While Facebook enables extended hostility framed as moral argument, TikTok privileges performative one-liners, and Instagram blends aggression with aestheticized forms of communication.

This suggests that online insults must be understood not only as linguistic phenomena but also as sociotechnical practices shaped by digital architectures. They serve multiple functions: attacking individuals, entertaining audiences, reinforcing group identities, and performing social alignment.

Interpretation of Key Pragmatic Strategies

The findings of this study demonstrate that netizens rely on a range of pragmatic strategies to construct insulting comments in online contexts. Among these, bald-on-record impoliteness emerges as the most explicit form of verbal aggression. Comments such as “*Mukak tua*” or “*Ortunya tolol*” are stark in their directness, offering no attempt at mitigation or politeness. According to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory (Blackwell et al., 2002) of politeness, these utterances represent pure face-

threatening acts, where the speaker deliberately disregards the addressee's desire to maintain dignity or self-image. Such unfiltered insults are often deployed in emotionally charged debates, functioning not only to provoke but also to assert dominance in the interaction.

Yet, explicit insults are not the only strategy employed. A substantial portion of the data illustrates indirect forms of aggression, including sarcasm, irony, and presupposition. These align with (Bączkowska, 2021) classification of conventionalized impoliteness, where hostility is delivered through socially recognizable but indirect cues. For instance, *"Isi otaknya cuma debu"* superficially appears as a descriptive statement but pragmatically functions as a sarcastic attack that questions the addressee's intelligence. Similarly, *"Anak haram yang dibuang malah dipungut"* employs presupposition to present prejudice as unquestionable truth, leaving little room for rebuttal. Such strategies are powerful precisely because they embed hostility in ways that are less overt but equally, if not more, damaging.

Another significant strategy identified is mock politeness, where ostensibly constructive advice masks condescension or hostility. Comments like *"Makanya sekolah bener, biar gak ngelawak mulu"* demonstrate this dual function: on the surface, the utterance reads as advice, but pragmatically, it functions as mockery. This reflects a form of double speech act in which the ostensible illocutionary force (advice-giving) is overridden by the implied force (ridicule). Mock politeness reveals the multifunctional nature of digital insults, which often blur the boundaries between expressive, directive, and performative speech acts.

Finally, performative insults deserve special mention. Comments such as *"Ssdh ini maunya Dewi Persik, Denis yg dipenjara"* not only attack individuals but also invite broader audience participation. These utterances reflect a shift from dyadic communication to performative discourse aimed at collective judgment. In this sense, insults in social media are less about interpersonal hostility and more about aligning with in-group values, performing outrage, and participating in viral discursive practices.

Platform-Based Pragmatic Variation

One of the most salient contributions of this study is the observation that insulting strategies vary significantly across platforms, underscoring the importance of digital context in pragmatic analysis. Each platform cultivates its own communicative culture shaped by design features, audience expectations, and technical affordances.

Facebook promotes extended conversations through threaded comments, encouraging prolonged debates and confrontational exchanges. The platform's demographic diversity and emphasis on public discourse make it fertile ground for moralizing rhetoric and direct hostility. Insults such as *"Otopsi 50 kali lagi biar puas"* illustrate how users engage in exaggerated directives as a way of asserting authority. Here, insults are not simply emotional outbursts but perform as didactic acts where users assume the role of moral arbiters. This reflects what (Vásquez, 2021) describe as

“relational work,” in which speakers negotiate social norms and values through confrontational discourse (Çakir, 2006) .

TikTok, in contrast, is shaped by brevity, virality, and algorithmic amplification. The platform rewards witty, short, and emotionally charged comments that can attract attention quickly. Sarcasm and humor dominate, often reinforced with emojis to highlight ironic intent (e.g., “*Wah, pinter banget ya... 😏*”). (Green, 2024) concept of *context collapse* is particularly relevant here: users craft insults not only for the immediate addressee but also for a diverse, invisible audience. This leads to insults functioning as “content” in themselves, designed to accumulate likes, shares, and algorithmic visibility.

Instagram, while visually driven, fosters a more stylized form of interaction. The platform encourages self-branding and aesthetic presentation, which also shape how insults are delivered. Passive-aggressive comments and mock politeness, such as “*Laura dipelet sama Vadel, auranya kayak tukang sihir*”, reflect this stylistic orientation. Users often veil hostility in humor, gossip, or aesthetically curated language. The frequent use of emojis, line breaks, and informal typography indicates that aggression on Instagram is often coded and indirect, aligning with the platform’s emphasis on personal image and soft communication.

These variations highlight that pragmatic strategies are not merely personal choices but are technologically mediated. Platform affordances dictate what forms of aggression are visible, acceptable, and likely to circulate. Thus, insults are as much products of digital architecture as they are of individual intention.

Digital Insults as Performed Identity and Social Action

Beyond their immediate linguistic functions, insulting comments also serve as acts of identity performance and social alignment. In line with Butler’s (1997) theory of performativity, language does not merely describe identity but actively constitutes it. Online insults allow users to claim moral positions, align with communities, and signal in-group loyalty (Retta, 2023).

For example, calling someone “*anak haram*” does not only stigmatize the target but also reaffirms broader cultural narratives about family and legitimacy. Similarly, “*Ortunya tolol*” shifts the blame from an individual tragedy (a tourist’s death) to parental negligence, enabling the speaker to perform moral superiority and absolve systemic failures. These examples reveal that insults function as moralizing discourse, positioning speakers within social hierarchies of virtue and vice.

Moreover, insults can serve as forms of resistance and critique. In contexts where users feel disempowered or skeptical of authority, sarcasm and mockery become tools to challenge hypocrisy or express dissent. For instance, “*Senang dihujat, mungkin makanan favoritnya*” simultaneously mocks the individual and critiques the culture of public shaming. Insults in this sense are not only aggressive acts but also vehicles for negotiating power, exposing contradictions, and reclaiming agency.

Insults also function within broader emotional economies (Green, 2024), where emotions circulate collectively, binding users through shared outrage. In viral comment sections, insults become resources for community building, as users bond over shared expressions of anger, disgust, or ridicule. This collective dimension underscores that digital insults are not merely isolated speech acts but are embedded in larger cultural, emotional, and technological systems.

Implications for Digital Pragmatics and Social Media Research

The findings underscore that online insults must be understood as deeply pragmatic phenomena-intention-laden, context-specific, and shaped by digital infrastructures. Reducing them to mere “toxic speech” obscures their complexity as multifunctional speech acts.

Theoretically, the study points to the need for updated pragmatic models that account for digital-specific features such as anonymity, virality, multimodality, and audience multiplicity. While traditional frameworks like speech act theory (Searle, 1969), Grice’s maxims (Grice, 1975), and politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) remain useful, they must be adapted to capture layered meanings in online spaces. For example, emojis, memes, and GIFs can alter or intensify illocutionary force, requiring multimodal approaches to pragmatic analysis (Vásquez, 2021).

Practically, the study carries implications for moderation and digital literacy. Content moderation efforts must go beyond detecting offensive words and consider context, intention, and platform-specific norms. A sarcastic comment may appear harmless in isolation but can contribute to collective hostility in a given thread. Conversely, blanket censorship may suppress satire or ironic critique that plays a vital role in democratic discourse. Therefore, moderation systems should be context-aware and capable of distinguishing between harmful aggression and performative play.

Digital literacy education is equally crucial. By understanding how insults function pragmatically, users can become more critical of the language they encounter and produce online. Teaching users to recognize strategies such as mock politeness or presuppositional framing can foster more reflective participation and mitigate the circulation of hostility.

Finally, the study opens avenues for future research. Comparative studies across languages and cultural contexts are needed to explore how digital insults vary globally. Further attention should also be given to gendered hate speech, which often employs distinct pragmatic strategies, and to the role of platform algorithms, which may amplify impoliteness by privileging provocative content. These areas remain underexplored in Indonesian digital discourse and represent fertile ground for advancing digital pragmatics.

Conclusion

This study investigated the pragmatic strategies employed by netizens to express insulting comments across three major social media platforms: Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram. By applying frameworks from speech act theory, impoliteness theory, and pragmatic context analysis, the study

identified a range of linguistic mechanisms used to deliver verbal aggression, including bald-on-record insults, sarcasm, mock politeness, and presupposition-based attacks.

The data revealed that users strategically adapted their language to suit the norms and affordances of each platform. On Facebook, longer and confrontational comments were dominant; TikTok comments tended to be brief, performative, and sarcastic; while Instagram insults leaned toward indirect and stylized expressions. These findings underscore the influence of platform architecture and audience dynamics on digital communication.

Beyond their immediate offensive content, insulting comments were shown to serve social and discursive functions—from identity performance and group alignment to public moral positioning. Thus, insults in social media are not merely acts of individual hostility, but complex linguistic performances embedded in broader cultural and technological systems.

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