

## Rapport-Threatening Behaviors in Instagram Interactions

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### ABSTRAK

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#### Keywords:

Social media, rapport-threatening behaviors, interpersonal rapport, social media interaction.

Social media has been widely used by many people nowadays. Chatting, playing games, calling friends and relatives, and even making an appointment for a date or reunion with some old friends can now easily be organized in social media. With those many uses, each social media platform has some community standards to regulate the interaction to avoid any violation or offence that may threaten the harmonious atmosphere in the interaction. Despite that, some harsh words, rude comments, and negative attitudes can still be easily found in social media interactions. This research investigates those rapport-threatening behaviors by analyzing how they are expressed and whether they are threatening the social media users' rapport or not. The research finds that there are several rapport-threatening behaviors in the interactions on Instagram which are sarcasm, insult, criticism, profanity, challenge, and even emoji use.

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### PENDAHULUAN

The advancement of technology in communication has made a tremendous increase in cross-countries or global communication among people from around the world. The technological advancement has impacted the way people communicate drastically (Subramanian, 2018). In the old days, attending seminars or classes, chit-chatting with friends, having a discussion or meeting are done directly where the interactants or the participants are seeing and talking to one another without using any devices or media to assist them in those interactions. Today, people can now also do all of the things like attending seminars and so on through internet-mediated communications like social media or any other online applications that help the users communicate to one another.

Interactions in social media are significantly increasing in these past ten years. There are about 4.74 billion social media users around the world, and it is more than a half of the total population of the world. In Indonesia, there were about 191.4 million social media users in Indonesia in January 2022 (Morgül et al., 2022) and the number is increased by 21 million between 2021 and 2022. This statistical number shows a significant increase of social media users. The effect of the increase is surely the increasing number of social media interactions. Making an appointment with friends, commenting on certain posts made by other people, stating an opinion about certain news posted on a social media page have now been daily activities for social media users. However, interactions in social media may also lead to some inconvenience that we call rapport-threatening behaviors, such as insulting, trash talking, humiliating and/or embarrassing one another. These situations can be threats to people or the social media users' rapport because these rapport-threatening behaviors may infringe and even ruin the harmonious atmosphere in the social media interactions (Reski, 2022). In order to analyze this online or social media interactions and why this phenomenon (the rapport-threatening behaviors in social media interactions), we need a new approach that covers the linguistic point of view particularly the pragmatics point of view for such interactions. Cyberpragmatics offers the analysis of how information is produced and interpreted within the internet environment (Yus, 2011) and by combining it with rapport management (Spencer-Oatey, 2000), we should see what behaviors may threaten the harmonious atmosphere or the rapport in the social media interactions.

#### Rapport Management

Rapport Management is a notion that governs the management of social relations (Spencer-Oatey, 2000) that covers three interconnected bases. The first base is Face Management. Face comprises several notions, from esteem to dignity, and it also refers to what people claim and protect in a communicative circumstance

(Robinson et al., 2015). Sociality Rights and Obligations are the second base. Sociality Rights and Obligations are what people regard themselves to have in relation to other people based on several factors which are social expectancies, people's concerns over fairness, consideration, and behavioral appropriateness (Culpeper, 2011). The third base of rapport is Interactional Goals. Interactional goals are the purposes that people want to achieve in their interactions with other people in their social lives. These interactional goals can be relational and transactional (Reski, 2018).

### Cyberpragmatics

The term cyberpragmatics was firstly initiated by (Yus, 2011). He defines Cyberpragmatics as the applying of pragmatics to internet users' interactions, specifically cognitive pragmatics and, within that, relevance theory (Yus, 2011). Cyberpragmatics mainly analyzes the production and interpretation of information within the internet environment. It analyzes the way the internet users access contextual information in order to fill in the informative gaps between what users type on the keyboard and what they really intend to communicate. One of the important keys in cyberpragmatics is the use of context which according to Yus plays a major role both in the production and interpretation of information on the net, in the same way as in face-to-face interactions.

### Social Media

Internet has been an integrated part of modern people's daily life. Internet connects the people to everywhere virtually by linking them to a mass network called 'web'. There are a number of internet uses that people access every day from search engines like Google and Yahoo web if the users would like to find some information on almost everything they want to know, online entertainment platforms like Netflix, Hulu, etc. which provide their viewers with lots of movies, series, and even cartoons, online streaming applications like YouTube which has a huge number of videos uploaded by many people around the world, to social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and many more on which people can be the users to interact with their friends, relatives, and even strangers from around the world. Social media is an online platform which people use to build social networks or social relations with other people (Akram & Kumar, 2017). People in modern life have used a number of social media platforms to interact virtually with either the people that they know or with strangers from other parts of the world.

### METODE

The descriptive qualitative method and exploratory study of research were used for this study. The researcher used this kind of research to obtain first hand data from the social media users on what behaviors that they showcased which were categorized as rapport-threatening behaviors in social media interactions and what motivated them to perform such behaviors. Meanwhile, exploratory study is a method that was used to analyse events, find new concepts and the development in a new context (Robson, 2016). This method is useful when the research problem is unclear, or the problem is new. The researcher chose this research approach because the researcher expected to find new concepts in online social media interactions which are relatively new. The data for the research were taken from twenty Instagram interactions in Bahasa Indonesia and English. The interactions should be the ones where the users were quarrelling or displaying some negative attitudes in order to see what kinds of rapport-threatening behaviors that they would express in the interactions.

### HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

From the data taken from twenty Instagram interactions, there are eight speech acts that can be categorized as rapport-threatening behaviors in social media interactions. These rapport-threatening behaviors have the potential to threaten the interpersonal rapport of social media users that can lead to inharmonious situation of the social media interactions. The eight rapport-threatening behaviors are sarcasm, insult, mockery, order and request, profanity, apology, emoji use, and threat as shown in the following table.

Table 1. Types of Possible Rapport Threats

No	Types of Rapport Threats	Interaction Number	Total Interactions
I	Sarcasm	INSTAG 1, INSTAG 5, INSTAG 6, INSTAG 7, INSTAG 8, INSTAG 11, INSTAG 14, INSTAG 16, INSTAG 17, INSTAG 18, INSTAG 19, INSTAG 20	12

2	Insult	INSTAG 1, INSTAG 2, INSTAG 3, INSTAG 6, INSTAG 8, INSTAG 9, INSTAG 11, INSTAG 12, INSTAG 15, INSTAG 16, INSTAG 17	11
3	Mockery	INSTAG 1, INSTAG 2, INSTAG 8, INSTAG 9, INSTAG 10, INSTAG 11, INSTAG 17.	7
4	Order and Request	INSTAG 4, INSTAG 6, INSTAG 7, INSTAG 12, INSTAG 16.	5
5	Profanity	INSTAG 4, INSTAG 13, INSTAG 14.	3
6	Apology	INSTAG 11, INSTAG 19, INSTAG 20.	3
7	Emoji use	INSTAG 3.	1
8	Accusation	INSTAG 15	1

The table shows that the rapport-threatening behavior that is applied most frequently by social media users is sarcasm, whereas accusation is the least applied threatening behavior with only one interaction where it is found. However, sarcasm, insult, and the other types of speech acts listed on the table are not always rapport threatening. This is the reason why Spencer-Oatey states that rapport threatening is a subjective evaluation. It depends not only on the content of the message, but on people's interpretations and reactions to who says what under what circumstances (Spencer-Oatey, 2000). For example, in the following extracted interactions taken from Instag 01, Instag 07, and Instag 05 respectively show how a sarcasm can be rapport-threatening and how it is a non-rapport-threatening.

Extracted interaction #1

TS: Pemimpin kok mentalnya lemah, harus banyak belajar ke negeri Wakanda, dmn pemimpinnnya sudah gagal malah minta tambah periode.

(How could be a leader so mentally weak? He should learn much from Wakanda where the leader has sadly failed but ironically asks for an extension of his reign.)

U1: @TS beda bos, disana politiknya GK stabil, beda disini politiknya stabil di DPR, tekanan apa yg mau buat mundur, baca dulu jgn nyerocos dulu, sabar 2024 Ndak lama lagi

(It's different, boss. It's politically unstable there. Different from here where we have stable political situation between legislative and executive. Our president does not get any pressure to step back from his leadership. Read more, talk less and be patient, 2024 is coming.)

TS: @U1 wkwkwk sok tau politik di Malaysia. Banyakin baca berita di Indonesia juga bosss, biar tau kondisi nasional, ga tersandera kesan bagus si baju putih.

(Wkwkwk (laughs) mr. smartass thinks that he knows so much about political situation in Malaysia. Read more news in Indonesia, boss, so you know our national condition and so you will not be easily deceived by his good impression.)

U1: @TS ente yg banyak baca biar GK nyocot

(It is you who should read more so you would be less sassy.)

TS: @U1 gblk kok gasss

(Idiot but fussy)

U1: @TS ha ha ha nyocot kok goblok

(Ha ha ha (laugh) sassy and idiot)

Sarcasm refers to the use of words that mean the opposite of what you really want to say, especially in order to insult someone, or to show irritation, or just to be funny (Merriam-Webster, 2008). The bold typed comment, which is the first comment made by the Thread Starter, is the comment with sarcasm. The first comment sarcastically criticizes the president of his country by saying, "harus banyak belajar ke negeri

Wakanda". The Thread Starter does not really urge that the leader of his neighboring country should learn from Wakanda which is a fictional state. He implies that the leader of the neighboring country is a wise leader, unlike the president in his country whom he thinks wants to have an extra period for his presidency. This sarcasm is considered rapport-threatening because it brings about some negative responses from another user (U1/User 1) who cynically criticizes, mocks, and even insults the thread starter who then reacts to those things by also criticizing, mocking, and insulting User 1. This proves that sarcasm is a serious threat to other people's rapport because as shown in the extracted interaction, the sarcasm is responded with criticism by another user who reads the sarcastic comment despite the fact that the sarcasm is not directly addressed to the user (User 1). In other interactions where the sarcasm is not made in the very first comment but as a response to another comment, the sarcasm can also be rapport-threatening as shown in the following extracted interaction where the thread starter makes a comment by asking certain question then it is responded by other users and one of them responds sarcastically. The extracted interaction is taken from Instag 07.

#### Extracted Interaction #2

TS: Astaghfirullah. Dmn kejadiannya ini min..

God show your mercy. Where does this happen?

U1: @TS astaghfirullah. fokus tsaaaayyyyyy  
God show your mercy. Be focused, dear.

U2: @TS baca caption  
Read the caption

U3: @TS Netizen indonesia kerisis membaca kyakNya seperti kau ini, Atau jgn2 buta huruf kahh bro diriMu ini..?!?!

Indonesian netizens seriously need to read more, especially you. I'm even afraid that you are illiterate..?!?

TS: oh ok bang..sy ndk buta huruf terkadang orng bertanya Krn tdk tau, tdk fokus dll .jadi jawabnya cukuplah dgn y baik2..kan sama2 jaki orang Indonesia. Jadi santuy mq..Aman n terkendali...ok

Okay, bro. I can read well. Sometimes people ask because they don't know or don't pay attention, and so on. So, just answer it nicely without being rude. We are all Indonesians so don't be too serious, ok

TS: @U1 ok mksh infonya  
Ok thanks for the info

TS: @U2 ok bang .  
Ok, bro

The comment made by user 3 that sarcastically responds to the thread starter's comment is a rapport threat because the thread starter looks a bit irritated in her reply to the sarcasm. It is proven when she requests the user 3 to just respond to her comment nicely. In addition, this rapport-threatening situation is caused by the thread starter who does not notice the context of the post which is clearly stated in the caption. This also proves that context, without which the interaction will be at loss and confusing (Yus, 2011), plays a vital role in social media interaction.

However, as previously stated, sarcasm is not always rapport-threatening. The following extracted interaction shows where a sarcasm is positively responded by an interactant who is addressed by another with the sarcasm. The extracted interaction is taken from Instag 05.

#### Extracted Interaction #3

TS: Charles is number 1 now

U1: @TS aged well...

TS: @U1 I still put him above khabib on lightweight goat list time to see what Islam can do

U1: @TS wdym to see what Islam can do, Islam beat him, he's better than Oliveira

The comment made by user 1 which responds to the thread starter's statement which has been proven wrong is a sarcasm because instead of saying 'did not age well' which means that the thread starter's claim is no longer a fact, he says it the other way around which implicitly says that it is wrong. However, this sarcasm is not a rapport threat because the thread starter replies to it quite nicely despite his ignorance to acknowledge the achievement of the other fighter who beat his favorite one. This proves that there are a few times when a sarcasm is not a rapport threat to interpersonal rapport of social media users in their interaction even though the data shows that it is more frequently a rapport threat than it is not.

Considering that a few of the acts are non-rapport-threatening, the following is the other table showing where the acts are rapport-threatening, and which are non-rapport-threatening. The acts are categorized as rapport-threatening behaviors based on the reactions and responses made by participants which are social media users who are involved in each interaction.

Table 2. Types of Rapport-threatening Behaviors

No	Types of Rapport-threatening Behaviors	Interaction Number		Total Interactions with Rapport-threatening Behaviors
		Rapport-threatening	Non-rapport-threatening	
1	Sarcasm	INSTAG 01, INSTAG 06, INSTAG 07, INSTAG 08, INSTAG 11, INSTAG 14, INSTAG 16, INSTAG 17, INSTAG 18, INSTAG 19, INSTAG 20.	INSTAG 05, INSTAG 17, INSTAG 18, INSTAG 19.	11
2	Insult	INSTAG 01, INSTAG 02, INSTAG 03, INSTAG 06, INSTAG 08, INSTAG 09, INSTAG 11, INSTAG 12, INSTAG 15, INSTAG 16, INSTAG 17.	-	11
3	Mockery	INSTAG 01, INSTAG 02, INSTAG 08, INSTAG 09, INSTAG 10, INSTAG 11, INSTAG 17.	-	7
4	Order and Request	INSTAG 04, INSTAG 06, INSTAG 07, INSTAG 12, INSTAG 16.	INSTAG 07	5
5	Profanity	INSTAG 04, INSTAG 13, INSTAG 14.	-	3
6	Apology	INSTAG 11, INSTAG 19, INSTAG 20.	-	3
7	Emoji use	INSTAG 03.	-	1
8	Accusation	INSTAG 15	-	1

From the table, it can be seen that most acts are rapport-threatening behaviors with only sarcasm, and order and request, which have a few non-rapport-threatening counterparts. The act is categorized as non-rapport threatening when it is not responded negatively by other users or when it does not cause any offense in the interactions as what has been shown from the sample extracted interactions.

## KESIMPULAN

It is shown from the data that there are several speech acts that can be a serious threat to social media users' interpersonal rapport. Therefore, the acts are rapport-threatening behaviors that may threaten the harmonious situation and atmosphere of social media interactions which in turn cause a quarrel or debate in the interactions. The rapport-threatening behaviors are sarcasm, insult, mockery, order and request, profanity, apology, emoji use, and accusation. Even though most of the speech acts are rapport-threatening, two of them have a few instances where they are non-rapport-threatening because they do not cause any offense to their addressees, and the social media users who read the comments do not respond negatively to them. The research also found that context has a very important role in social media interactions. The failure in understanding context of certain posts and comments causes some misunderstandings which lead to some rapport-threatening behaviors.

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