

A Comparative Study of Gender-Based Impoliteness in Political Discourse on X Platform During the 2024 US Election

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ABSTRACT

The extensive use of social media in the digital era has greatly expanded the range of online communication and given people more means to participate in political discussion. This research looks at how impoliteness appears in political discussions online and how it differs for male users and female users. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative analysis of 20 selected tweets (10 from males and 10 from females) with a qualitative research design. Data reveal that male participants prefer to argue directly or use harsh language, whereas females tend to choose sarcasm and roundabout forms of aggression. The study concludes by emphasising the importance of understanding these gendered communication patterns to promote more inclusive and respectful political discourse, particularly during politically charged periods like elections. Further studies might broaden these results by using a larger collection of information from various political settings.

Keywords: Impoliteness, Political Discourse, Gender, US Election, Social Media.

INTRODUCTION

The extensive use of social media in the digital era has greatly expanded the range of online communication and given people more means to participate in political discussion. Many have been driven by this change to share their opinions, typically employing the anonymity that these platforms offer to voice ideas free from liability to themselves. Particularly during the 2024 US presidential race, where it hosted intense debates and exchanges, X (formerly Twitter) has become a major venue for political arguments. Politicians, the media, and the lament citizen serve to create the flow of ideas, updates, and live interactions. But given the fast open nature of communication on this platform and its significant user base, the environment allows for the dissemination of offensive language and impoliteness has been produced. Liu and Liang (2024) claim that the speed and visibility of communication on platforms like X have contributed to the spread of impolite language, thus influencing online political debates. As many people turned to insults and accusations over the election, polite political discourse grew more challenging.

Social media has shown that some impolite comments in political discussions mirror different forms of communication than those used by men and women. It has been widely noticed on social media that women and men discuss politics in different polite ways (Butterworth et al., 2019). This polarised environment offers a special chance to investigate gender-based impoliteness, which is the use of language or actions directed against people based on their gender. According to Setiawan et al. (2024), men in online political discussions are more likely than women to use negative words and harsh language. Emotional disinhibition and the desire for other people's attention are aspects that encourage this behavior in anonymous internet groups. On the contrary, there are occasions when women use swear words just to be funny, to make a point with an exaggerated example or to express satisfaction rather than to attempt to upset others.

It is worth noting that anonymity often empowers people to engage in hostile interactions that they might avoid in face-to-face environments, as anonymity on sites like X also significantly shapes online behaviour. Particularly in politically charged conversations, the belief that one is "hidden" behind a digital persona or username can lessen responsibility and encourage the use of profanity and negative language (Liu & Liang, 2024). These sites are used by people around the globe, which can quickly magnify their influence and support

a negative culture in online environments. As a result, it is important to grasping the bigger picture of gender-related behavior online relies on understanding the different ways people use impoliteness, especially men and women, during political debate on X. By studying these interchanges, the study seeks to contribute to the topic of gender-based impoliteness by showing how often and how much it affects people at a time of highly polarized elections.

Problem Statement

A variety in expressing emotions such as anger, frustration or support, may sometimes lead to impoliteness language in online political discourse. Platforms like X have fast-paced public, highly interactive features that makes language not only a tool for communication but also a means of assertiveness, expression of dissent, or reinforcement of political identities. The methods used in political communication are usually designed to impact how people think, gain backing or assault rivals. However, this can lead to harsh or aggressive arguments which makes it more and more difficult to remain polite in political discussions. The highly digitised 2024 US presidential debate provides an ideal opportunity to look at how language is being used in online politics and observe any differences between males and females. Above all, social media is now a main location where individuals and groups can express their ideas, form supportive bases and confront those they disagree with. Since these social media sites are focal points for political participation; their way of interaction greatly impacts political debates, both word selection and the methods used to be impolite depend on gender. Although both men and women engage in online political debate, their expressions of impoliteness might differ, which adds to the complexity of interactions and the possibility for misinterpretation.

Even though more people are looking into how impoliteness works online, few researchers have investigated how men and women use impolite language in political discussions that take place on the internet. While past studies considered impoliteness across many online environments, information about gendered impoliteness in political debates is still lacking. According to Karimi et al. (2021), men typically act impolitely by being sarcastic, using insults, or getting confrontational. Such impoliteness aims to prove control over others or to ridicule someone. Meanwhile, women may use less obvious forms of impoliteness, such as slipping in unwanted comments, communicating in ways that are not direct, or attempting to mask their criticism. When debating sensitive or controversial topics, such as how people become impolite, it can make it very hard to understand what they mean. Though the intention is not always to intensify the conflict, Blake et al. (2011) explain that when men and women do not understand each other's styles, a positive gesture may be perceived as a conflict. This means that studying the consequences of gendered communication online must consider how gender affects the way people communicate impolitely in political debates on sites like X. Although both sexes use the internet to communicate, their perceptions of social roles or society's expectations could modify how they use language in an impolite way.

Research Questions

The research questions discussed in this section are designed to understand how the gender-related aspects of impolite speech among users engaging in the 2024 US election campaigns. It will examine how impolite different approaches can be for men and women in political discussion. The following study questions arise from this research:

1. What impoliteness strategies do males use on X in online political discourse during the 2024 US election?
2. What impoliteness strategies do females use on X in online political discourse during the 2024 US election?
3. Which gender demonstrates a higher level of impoliteness on X in the online political discourse during the 2024 US election?

2.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language Impoliteness Used on Social Media

Anwar et al. (2021) examined the topic of impoliteness in Indonesians' tweets and found that more impoliteness occurs on Twitter (known as X) in political environments. According to the authors, more people using social

media have transformed the news-forming and sharing process, which now invites individuals to share their thoughts and take part in public discussion. Due to the social, political, religious, and ethnic conflicts, this setting has resulted in a lot of impolite language. It draws attention to how social status determines who can be harsh towards whom online, since those in dominant groups often take advantage by speaking in a hurtful way to others. The paper points out that impoliteness in online social media is often the result of the speaker's powerful position and their belief system. Political debates are a common place where people use impolite language to damage their rivals' reputations or show power. Such interactions allow offensive language to be shared since the unjustified power and anonymity of the internet play a big role. This approach is closely tied with the researchers' study, which is to explore gendered impoliteness during the online politics of the 2024 US election.

Another study conducted by Ambarita et al. (2023) investigated the linguistic features of impoliteness used in political comments found on social media. The researchers highlight that online political discussion depends on both language and non-language elements, where each plays a role in conveying the meaning, sentiment, and significance of online political discourse. The authors explain that the words and structure of a post, along with things like images and emoticons, help readers better get a sense of the speaker's feelings and attitudes. These features, visual as well as tone, reveal more about the messages concealed by political comments than a written text can.

The findings show that people often use direct attacks, mockery, sarcasm, and derogatory language in political comments. These comments are usually used to threaten or discredit political opponents. Research also explains that some rude comments are camouflaged with jokes or made more extreme, making them not so direct but nonetheless powerful. The authors explain that impolite language when people comment politically is usually closely linked to their political views, symbolizing larger conflicts in society. Such remarks often attack opposite political views by speaking impolitely, hurling insults or making jokes to ridicule the other side. The study shows that knowing both language and non-verbal communication is needed to fully understand when impoliteness appears in political discussions.

Gender Usage of Impoliteness Language

The study by Rababa'h and Rabab'ah (2021) investigates how culture and gender affect the way impoliteness is used in sitcoms from Jordan and America. The analysis encompasses 30 episodes from the Jordanian sitcom and 20 episodes from *The Big Bang Theory*. It uncovers different ways people from different cultures and genders use impolite strategies. The results demonstrate that male characters in both cultures used impolite strategies more often than female characters did. It confirms the notion that men may use rude expressions to establish themselves and push boundaries, which occurs often in both cultures. Results suggest that Jordanian characters use impoliteness more often, which is probably due to their collectivist culture. When people live in collectivist cultures, they often notice social norms more, which results in using impolite behavior more often to deal with others. Because American culture is individualistic, people tend to use fewer rude comments and choose a clearer way of speaking in discourse. Additionally, the analysis further points out that females used significantly fewer impolite ways of acting than males in both cultures. This is consistent with earlier studies, which concluded that women talk more politely, mainly to maintain smooth relationships.

Although the study examines differences between cultures and the way gender affects impolite behavior on the internet, the study uses examples from TV sitcoms to show how people use impoliteness in everyday life, and it provides an insightful context for understanding the use of impoliteness. Both qualitative methods and quantitative statistical tests are used to demonstrate a clearer picture of what influences impoliteness strategies. The authors explain the effects of culture and gender on how communication in the media takes place.

Another study reported by Suhandoko et al. (2021) where the researchers analyzed the way impolite behaviors are expressed by the female main character, Nadine, and by male characters interacting with her in *The Edge of Seventeen*. Researchers look into how both women and men use impoliteness strategies to gain control and shape their social identity. The analysis reveals that both males and females use impoliteness. The only difference is the strategies each gender relies upon. Mostly, women rely on positive impoliteness to maintain connections, due to their orientation toward maintaining social relationships, whereas men generally use negative impoliteness to show authority and influence. The findings show that men and women use impoliteness to achieve different power outcomes, each in a manner that is typical of their gender in the culture. This study uses

the same theoretical approach as Suhandoko et al. (2021) by looking at impoliteness strategies using Culpeper's (1996) theory. The analysis challenges the assumption that women are inherently more polite or less assertive in their use of language, demonstrating that women, like men, can use impoliteness strategically. For men, being impolite often allows them to take charge and control people or situations, but for women, it tends to be a way to deal with social challenges and protect their social face. As a result of this distinction, impolite language can play a role in asserting and changing one's gender identity and social power. The study adds to gender discourse by looking at strategies of impoliteness that are based on gender in The Edge of Seventeen. The research gives the researchers useful insights into the influence of gender on how power and identity are presented in language.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Culpeper's (1996) Politeness Theory by focusing on the Politeness Taxonomy of Impoliteness Strategies. With Culpeper's guidelines, the researchers can better see how people depend on impoliteness to challenge, contradict, or cause reactions from others. The approach explains that impoliteness includes certain techniques that speakers use to erode another person's social face for their ends, particularly in contentious contexts such as political discourse on X. Culpeper's Politeness Taxonomy highlights five ways people use impolite expressions:

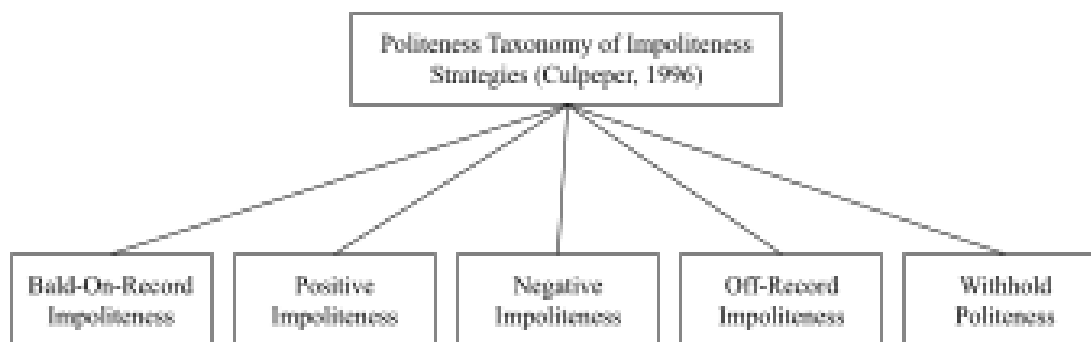


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework Sources: Culpeper (1996)

Bald-On-Record Impoliteness involve directly and openly attacking the person one is speaking to, without any attempt to mitigate the impact of the speech act. It is often heard in circumstances that are not focused on showing respect or maintaining relationships. When the individuals use Positive Impoliteness, they pay attention to the other's wish to be valued and included. Ignoring, excluding, or insulting the target is a strategy for Negative Impoliteness as it is intended to reduce a person's social importance or position among others. In addition, Negative Impoliteness aims to evade someone's negative face, which reflects their wish to be separate from obligations. Under this strategy, individuals use threats, disrupt the target, and act in ways that encroach on their freedom in order to get them to obey the speaker's wishes. On the other hand, Off-Record Impoliteness is where the speaker tries to upset the target by speaking vaguely or without threatening their face directly. Oftentimes, Off-Record Impoliteness happens when a person makes jokes, suggests something, or gives hints, and this helps them to avoid confrontation yet successfully provoke the other person. When kindness is denied, such as when the speaker fails to indicate awareness of the presence or worth of the listener, it is referred to as Withhold Politeness, whereas purposefully not behaving politely causes the listener to feel uncomfortable or offended.

As for this study, the focus is on studying gendered impoliteness strategies in the context of X posts. The research will study ways male and female users use impoliteness strategies to mock, ridicule, or belittle their rivals. The research will investigate how sarcasm, irony, and highly polite expressions can be driven by X users to weaken their opponents and steer political talk. Culpeper's classification framework will help the researchers to observe how gender is linked to impolite communication on the social media platform X, during the 2024 US election.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, with a strong emphasis on quantitative research. The study aims to quantify the use of gendered impoliteness strategies in political discussion about the US 2024

election on X. Culpeper's (1996) theory of identifying impoliteness strategies will be used to determine how frequently male and female users choose impolite language in their postings. To further the analysis, qualitative methods will be applied to address the third research question, by exploring the similarities and differences in the way males and females use impoliteness.

In this study, the quantitative research design aims to quantify how gendered impoliteness appears in political conversations using Culpeper's (1996) theory for classifying impoliteness. For this step, the researchers will analyse 20 online postings of political posts produced by male and female users during the US 2024 campaign from October 2023 to November 2024. The researchers will look at how often each gender relies on sarcasm, irony, mockery, offensive language, or indirect aggression. By quantifying these strategies, the study will provide an empirical basis for comparing how male and female users express impoliteness in political discussions.

Sampling

The samples were selected through purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of postings that align with the research objectives. The sample was gathered this way to highlight tweets that fit with what the research was seeking to explore. The researchers narrowed down to tweets that best illustrate impoliteness in terms of political speech around the 2024 US election. Data were gathered only from posts during the period from the fourth quarter of 2023 until Election Month in November 2024, ensuring the data captured political discussions relevant to the election context.

Data Collection

The study will gather data by monitoring tweets on political discussion during the 2024 US election, from October 2023 through November 2024. The period is vital, as it involves the most important political activity just before the election. To make sure the researchers have an equal representation of men and women, 10 posts are selected equally from men and women. The content emphasizes posts that are chosen using purposive sampling to represent multiple political ideas and prevent the researcher's own biases. It is worth noting that all posts only present tweets that directly contain direct political discourse related to the election.

Data Analysis

Each post will be coded based on Culpeper's (1996) taxonomy of impoliteness strategies, which includes:

- Bald-on-record impoliteness
- Positive impoliteness
- Negative impoliteness
- Sarcasm/mock politeness
- Withhold politeness

A frequency count of these strategies will be conducted to determine the prevalence of each strategy in the posts made by male and female users. The aim is to discover how often each strategy appears by examining which strategies are used by men and women in their social media posts. Next, the study will look at how often impoliteness occurs in these social media posts to find common patterns. With this data, the researchers can determine whether women or men use impoliteness strategies more when discussing politics online. Additionally, qualitative analysis will reveal patterns to answer the third research question. The posts will be analyzed to find common themes in which various impoliteness strategies are used. With that, the researchers can discover which gender tends to use more impoliteness when talking about political issues on X.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethical integrity, all users will remain anonymous to respect their privacy. The data gathered does not contain any personal data from the users. All selected posts will be publicly available, and privacy is secured throughout the research. Posts will also be chosen through purposive sampling to ensure that the study does not show any researcher bias and reflects diverse views. Instead of looking at the users' features, the analysis will concentrate on what they post to respect the ethical standards in online research. The analysis approach covers both men and women and gives helpful insights into the ways impoliteness tactics are used in the 2024 US election.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's findings, mainly on how male and female users apply impoliteness strategies while discussing politics on X during the 2024 election. Examining 20 posts (with 10 from males and 10 from females) by numbers helped the researchers to discover the main themes, and further studying the patterns of how impoliteness is used on social platforms. The findings highlight the differences and similarities in how male and female users express impoliteness, shedding light on the gendered dynamics of political communication in online spaces.

Impoliteness strategies employed by male users on X in online political discourse during the 2024 US election.

Table 1: Impoliteness Frequency by Male Users on X During the 2024 US election

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Content Focus
Sarcasm	1	10	"Exaggerated emotional language mocking centrists."
Irony	0	0	N/A
Mockery	2	20	"Ridicule Christian conservatives for hypocrisy." "Using illness metaphors for MAGA supporters."
Offensive Language	5	50	"Demonizing Democrats." "Equating liberal policies with killing." "Using profane or aggressive language to attack ideology." "Condemning opposing voters as morally corrupt." "Using derogatory word to provoke reaction."
Indirect Aggression	2	20	"Urging Republicans to create disruptions at polling sites." "Implying Democrats use underhanded tactics."

According to Culpeper (1996), impoliteness strategies effectively challenge and criticize within a communication in a way that can either happen intentionally or unintentionally. It remains to be seen whether its usage changes based on the speaker's gender, since language is inherently tied to our moral values, thus inevitably altering the way people communicate. Therefore, this study analyzes the frequency of impoliteness strategies used by males and females within a social media platform during the 2024 US election, where emotional aggression is at its highest point. Going into the 2024 US election period, X has become one of the most debated platforms for citizens to speak their voice towards the government.

Impoliteness strategies employed by female users on X in online political discourse during the 2024 US election.

Table 2: Impoliteness frequency by female users on X during the 2024 US election

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Content Focus
Sarcasm	1	10	"After him, every candidate will be SELECTED."
Irony	2	20	"I've learned the word soon could to as long as seven years." "What a contrast to 2020."
Mockery	2	20	"These cheating clowns will do anything." "Vote for integrity over felony."
Offensive Language	0	-	-
Indirect Aggression	5	50	"It's something so fishy about this." "Happy one year to the day that cause us the 2024 election." "as Joe Biden lost support after an embarrassing debate." "and campaign as the reluctant savior." "AND HIS TRIBE OF RUSSIAN BACKED FASCISTS!"

In the analysis, it was found that female users recorded the highest frequency at around 50% of the tweets for indirect aggression, pointing to a more civilized way of impoliteness, especially in pointing out politicians. Tweets that are often posted by female users tend to be more indirect and sarcastic in attacking the political situation by comparing it and withholding from mentioning the target, such as “tribe of Russian fascists” and “something fishy about this,” which avoids naming the politician directly. The female users relate the past failure by politicians using subtle language, “Happy one year,” “embarrassing debate,” and “reluctant savior,” turning the indirect aggression into a way that they can express political opinions without outright confrontations. This impoliteness tactic, according to Culpeper (1996), is useful for subtly and implicitly attacking someone’s public image while remaining concealed in the language, lowering the risk of self-harm. Secondly, the mockery and irony strategies share a similar pattern at 20% frequency by females, as they are often educated to avoid direct conflict, leading them to express dissent in more subtle ways. This mirrors the usage of mockery and irony by female protagonists in movies to assert and establish themselves in the social order that keeps a certain amount of discretion while adhering to the power dynamics (Suhandoko et al., 2021). For example, the tweets emphasized insincere language like “cheating clowns,” “integrity over felony,” and “what a contrast to 2020” that delineate passive-aggressive remarks intended to provoke the political status quo.

Nevertheless, sarcasm was recorded at the lowest frequency, at only 10%, and the female tweets lacked offensive language because using profanity or other taboo words could raise negative reactions. Similar to how Nadine, the female protagonist in *The Edge of Seventeen*, uses positive impoliteness to define herself in a way that is cognizant of social relationships, females are increasingly using sarcasm as a form of protection within language disputes that allow them to challenge the conversational topic due to a gendered expectation that they should be polite and non-confrontational in communication (Suhandoko et al., 2021). Thus, it can be noted that the pattern of impoliteness strategies for females about the 2024 US election debates on X pertains to indirect aggression, irony, and mockery that are considered more discreet methods for women to engage in political arguments while minimizing direct retraction. People are emotionally challenged during political times, as even females reflect their thoughts and opinions to challenge the injustice while maintaining their traditional values that do not violate the societal expectations of gender, demonstrating how they strategically employ rudeness to steer political discourse (Ibrahim, 2020).

Gender comparison of impoliteness on X in the online political discourse on X during the 2024 US election.

Table 3: Comparison of Impoliteness Strategies by Gender on X during the 2024 US election

Strategy	Male Frequency	Male Percentage	Female Frequency	Female Percentage	Notable Examples
Offensive Language	5	50%	0	0%	“Satan is for sure a Democrat” (Male)
Mockery	2	20%	2	20%	“Vote for integrity over felony” (Female); “MAGA cancer” (Male)
Indirect Aggression	2	20%	5	50%	“Make a scene at polling stations” (Male); “Something so fishy about this” (Female)
Sarcasm	1	10%	1	10%	“Both sides suck!” (Male); “After him, every candidate will be SELECTED” (Female)
Irony	0	0%	2	20%	“I’ve learned the word soon could to as long as seven years.” “What a contrast to 2020.” (Female)

From the comparison table above, there are several things found from the differences in impoliteness between males and females. First, males tend to be overt and confrontational. Male X users tend to be more direct and confrontational in discussing political discourse. Tweets often appear with harsh language, labeling, and insulting ideology and religion. These findings are in accordance with Culpeper’s (1996) theory regarding the

strategy of impoliteness and offensive language, namely that tweets like this aim to directly eliminate the good social image of political opponents. Offensive language tweets that often appear in line with increasingly polarized political choices. The nuance used by male X users using harsh language is in line with the communication style of male politicians, who are also more direct, often confrontational, and use insults, according to Hargrave and Langengen (2021). In line with Ibrahim (2020), male politicians tend to use direct insults because they deliberately provoke and expect a reaction. The difference in political choices makes each party's supporters feel that their moralistic terms are superior to the moral values of their opponents, so that they try to delegitimize their opponents' choices. This type of communication model is indeed intended to provoke verbal conflict.

The next finding is that females prefer indirect and covert attacks. Although there are males who use indirect aggression, this strategy appears more often in females. Females choose a more subtle and indirect way. The impoliteness that appears from females is not explicit, but tends to use ambiguous and vague words. The words chosen are indeed intentionally creating insinuations or allusions so that people speculate in accusing. This shows what Culpeper calls "off-record" impoliteness, giving criticism without providing a clear explanation. This strategy allows females to express their feelings while maintaining great plausible deniability. This strategy is in line with societal pressures that require females to be more reserved and polite in public spaces. So that subtlety can help females manage risks that can endanger them in the midst of hostile political discourse. This has also been stated by Stone and Can (2021), where there is a pattern in public discourse that shows that women often use less confrontational language.

In addition, the findings on female users' tweets are that only female users use irony. As much as 20% of findings from female users use irony, while 0% are from male users. Irony requires rhetorical skills; besides that, irony also requires subtlety, just like indirect aggression. From these findings, it is increasingly clear that in expressing impoliteness, female users are more careful and look for ways to express themselves without feeling vulgar and confrontational. This finding also confirms that there is a gendered expectation in communication between genders where women are more expected to be polite, so that irony becomes an acceptable tool in conveying impoliteness without having to be rude and directly confrontational.

The last finding is that mockery and sarcasm are used equally by both genders. Both genders have the same percentage for mockery (20%) and sarcasm (10%). However, although statistically the same, in the findings at the tweet level, there is a slight difference in the style of mockery and sarcasm. Females tend to do mockery and sarcasm on broad targets, such as questioning the integrity of voting or hypocritical policies. Meanwhile, sarcasm and mockery carried out by males tend to be aimed at individuals such as figures involved in conservative or liberal politics. So, although the frequency is the same, the way the strategy is used can be seen differently between genders.

CONCLUSIONS

From the study of gender-based impoliteness in political discourse on the X platform during the 2024 US election, using Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies as the primary analytical framework, it was found that there are clear differences between male and female users in their strategies for expressing impoliteness. Male users often use impoliteness using offensive language strategies and provide a direct and to-the-point impoliteness style. Male users also often use harsh words and labeling, and attack the moral choices and political values of people who are considered opponents. In contrast, this direct thing does not happen to female users. In female users, indirect impoliteness appears more often. Ambiguous, covert, and vague language is preferred by female users. Female users prefer indirect aggression. This finding suggests that there is a gendered norm in expressing language in how political disagreement is expressed on social media. The finding is aligned with Chen-Xia et al. (2022), that there are social expectations that often dictate women to be more polite and reserved in public discourse. This makes females prefer ambiguous and subtle language styles, while males are more socially allowed to say harsh things.

The results gathered in this study brought various implications, especially in the fields of research and politics. One of the key insights deciphered from this study is that impoliteness is affected by power dynamics, where there are unequal gendered expectations in the realm of communication, henceforth increasing the necessity to

understand the angle of unequal power between males and females in impoliteness. To further research in this area, future scholars developed further with a wider dataset or used research on examples of countries or political affiliations to see whether this pattern is consistent or exclusive as a characteristic of the impoliteness strategy in the 2024 US election only. It can interpret the level of power dynamics that are heightened during political campaigns, which may either exacerbate or mitigate the disproportionate hierarchy of power in gender. Moreover, the results derived from the data showcase the necessity to understand the existence of gender discourse in political communication. By knowing different communication styles, it is hoped that communicators can create more inclusive messages and avoid escalation and alienation, especially during hot times such as election season. It would be worthwhile for future educational research to investigate the bias and implicitness of political discourse to help readers comprehend the rhetorical tactics used to influence others during the campaign period leading up to the election, in particular, learners from the field of Language and Communication.

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