

# Hate Expression Found on Twitter as a Response to Meghan Markle

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## ABSTRACT

This study's purposes are to identify the categories of hate expressions, identify the strategies of hate expression, and describe the functions of hate expression used by Twitter users toward Meghan Markle as a response to the report that Meghan may run for US president. The objects used were hate expressions used by Twitter netizens. This study applied qualitative descriptive research as the method of research. The data were Twitter replies that contained hate towards Meghan Markle. This study used Mondal et al. (2017), Culpeper (1996), and Bebee (1995) theory for analyzing the data. The results showed that: (1) There are six categories of hate expression to Meghan Markle on Twitter, namely hate the expression of behavior, class, disability, ethnicity, religion, and gender (2) There are four types of strategies of hate expression, namely bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock politeness (3) There are four functions of hate expression that thrown by Twitter users, namely expressing unpleasant feelings, entertaining the target audience, mocking the figure, and expressing disagreement.

**Keywords:** Hate Expression, Impoliteness Strategy, Meghan Markle, Twitter

## INTRODUCTION

Language is one feature of communication in daily life. We cannot communicate without language. Language assists people in associating with others, and it also provides some information. Language has a vital role in human life. It is a crucial tool for constructing thought and disseminating information from one another. Many language phenomena can be observed from how people use language to communicate. Language is the principle of human nature, and linguistics is the systematized study of human language. Linguistics is a field of study that focuses on language and is carried out by linguists. Linguistics could be categorized into three types, i.e., the study about language meaning, the study about language context, and the study about language form. Linguistics has many branches, and one of them is pragmatics.

According to Levinson, as cited in Wiana (2019), pragmatics is the study of language use. The study of language use is the first step in comprehending language by studying the relationship between language and context. It includes the interpretation creations that link what is spoken, what is mutually suspected, or previously mentioned. Pragmatics can also determine the way out of the speaker and the hearer's problem, especially about point of view. The study of language meaning is concerned with establishing meaning and the assumption. In pragmatics, the hearer not only understands the meaning spoken by the speaker, but the listener also understands the context for interpreting an utterance. Pragmatics has discussed various

types, such as deixis and distance, reference and inference, presupposition and entailment, politeness and interaction, speech act, and event. However, the writer focuses solely on analyzing the speech act in this research.

According to Searle, as quoted in Wijaya and Helmie (2019), speech acts are the primary or minimum units of linguistic communication. Furthermore, as cited in Wijaya and Helmie (2019), Austin stated that speech acts refer to an utterance and the context in which the utterance is delivered. When people make utterances such as an apology, greeting, request, complaint, invitation, compliment, or denial, they engage in the speech act. As Al-Bantany (2013) quoted, Searle had proposed five basic kinds of acts that built up when speaking: assertive, directives, commissives, expressive, and declarations. In this study, the researcher focuses on the expressive speech act that contains hate expression. In this theory, hatred is included in expressive speech. Expressive speech acts usually argue either to express excellent or bad evaluations that are hearer-centered. Hate expression is included in inadequate evaluations because it disparages an individual or a group. According to El Sherif et al. (2018), hate speech or hate expression is rhetoric that can be used to slander others. In addition, hate expression is now expressed directly and indirectly. It also comes in various forms, including color, behavior, physicality, class, gender, nationality, religion, and disability. This research focuses on exploring hate expression and impoliteness strategy using Mondal et al.'s theory (2017), Culpeper (1996), and Bebee (1995).

People nowadays utilize social media to interact with one another. Several social media platforms may be utilized as communication tools, including WhatsApp (WA), Facebook (FB), Twitter, LINE, and Instagram. The number of social media users is so massive that the COVID-19 pandemic has spread widely until now. People who are forced to stay at home will be bored, so they mostly spend their time exploring social media. Social media has several functions: (1) As a place where people can interact with others from various societies. (2) As a place where people will get much information out of there. (3) As a place where people can watch and see many funny photos and videos to entertain them. (4) As a place where people can even be more creative. Social media provides two types of communication, namely private conversation, and media that can be reacted to by many people.

The advanced time brings people to have more concern on free speech. Twitter is the most pleasant platform for free speech. Twitter users are mostly more open-minded than users on another platform. We can see it through how Twitter users give their opinion. They usually arrange the words well, and their arguments are generally also based on fact. Furthermore, Twitter users speak their ideas according to the topic to avoid missing the point. Unfortunately, free speech rights have been mishandled by certain people for expressing hate to others.

The target of hate expression is various. The target can be ordinary people or even famous people. Over time, the hate comment in social media users is terrifying. They express hatred of what people do and give body-shaming comments. An example of a famous person who got hate comments is Meghan Markle. The writer chooses Meghan Markle because she has been famous since marrying Prince Harry, the former of the British Royal Family. Meghan Markle has become controversial because she may run for US president because of the report. The report brings various comments from Twitter users. There are many responses from Twitter users that contain hate speech.

Some previous researchers conducted the same research that the topic is about hate expression with a different focus. Hamnö (2019), Subyantoro & Siroj (2019), Rangkuti et al. (2019), and Wiana (2019) have researched hate speech in social media on political scope. Sari et al. (2019), Hafisa & Hanidar (2020), and Kadhum (2021) observed hate speech that was viewed from an impoliteness strategy perspective that was found in movies. Subyantoro & Apriyantoro (2020) conducted research that focused on hate speech from an impoliteness strategy perspective found on Instagram. Nurhadi & Masykuri (2018) focused their research on hate speech from a pragmatic and Islamic perspective. In addition, Apriliyani et al. (2021) focused the research on identifying impoliteness strategies used by male and female haters toward Habib Rizieq and Felix Siauw.

This current study has a position in completing the previous study since the study researches Meghan Markle using a Twitter platform that is infrequently used. Moreover, this study also develops the previous research by augmenting studies' aspects. The current research analyzes categories of hate expression, strategies of hate expression, and functions of hate expression.

From the explanation above, the researcher decides to conduct a research entitled Hate Speech towards Meghan Markle on Twitter: A Pragmatic Study that uses Twitter comments as responses to the report Meghan Markle may run for US president using Mondal et al. theory (2017), Culpeper (1996) and Bebee (1995).

## **METHOD**

The researcher implemented qualitative descriptive research. The objects of research were hate expression and impoliteness strategies used by Twitter netizens. The data of this research were in the form of excerpts containing types of hate expression, type of impoliteness strategies, and functions of hate expression that were conveyed towards Meghan Markle on Twitter. The data source of this research was Twitter comments as a response to the report that Meghan Markle may run as US president. This study employed document analysis as the technique of data analyzing. In identifying the categories of hate expression, types of impoliteness strategy, and functions of impoliteness strategy, the researcher used Mondal, et al (2017), Culpeper (1977), and Bebee (1995) theory.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Categories of hate expression***

This study found six categories of hate expression to Meghan Markle on Twitter as a response to the report that Meghan may run for US president, namely hate the expression of behavior, class, disability, ethnicity, religion, and gender.

The recent study's result is not in line with Sari's (2020) result. Sari (2020) found eight categories of hate expression, namely hate expression of race, behavior, physical, class, gender, ethnicity, and religion. The hate expression of sexual orientation was not found in Sari (2020). The researcher assumes there are several functions that influence the incompatibility between the two studies' results. The first is the data source. Sari (2020) focused more on Facebook, while the recent study focused on Twitter. The second factor is the scope of the study. Sari (2020) identified hate expression as a response to Camilla and Prince Charles' past relationship, while the recent study observed hate expressions as a response to the report that Meghan Markle may run for US president.

The recent study is also not in line with the theory conveyed by Mondal et al. (2018). Mondal et al. (2018) found eight categories of hate expression, namely hate expression of race, behavior, physical, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, gender, and religion. Hate expression of race and sexual orientation is not included in the recent study. The researcher assumes that there are three reasons for the incompatibility. The first one is Mondal et.al. (2020) used two internet platforms, namely Whisper and Twitter, without any specific phenomena. Meanwhile, the recent study only used Twitter with Meghan Markle may run for US president as the phenomenon. Moreover, the researcher also assumes that the hate expression of race and sexual orientation was not found because the Twitter users are concerned about race and sexual orientation issues. Most of them respect privacy and minorities. Meghan Markle is identified as an Afro-American. Below is the categories of hate expression in the table data:

Table 1. Categories of hate expression

No	Categories of Hate Expression	Number of Cases	Percentage (%)
1	Behavior	12	42.8%
2	Class	5	18%
3	Disability	3	10.7%
4	Ethnicity	3	10.7%
5	Religion	4	14.3%
6	Gender	1	3.5%
	Total	28	100%

### ***The strategies of hate expression***

The researcher identified the strategies of hate expression using Culpeper's theory. There are four strategies used in the form of bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness and sarcasm or mock politeness.

The results of the recent study showed that there are four strategies of hate expression used as a response to the report that Meghan Markle may run for US president, namely Bald on Record Impoliteness, Positive Impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness, and Sarcasm or Mock Politeness. This results' study is in line with Pasaribu (2021), Shinta et. al. (2018), and Apriliyani et. al. (2019). The researcher assumes that they are compatible because they used the same theory and the same data source, i.e. social media. The three researchers mentioned did not find Withhold Politeness in their results. The researcher hypothesizes that no data refers to Withhold Politeness because the data source is social media, while Withhold Politeness is possible to happen in real life.

The recent study is not in accordance with Cullpeper's theory of impoliteness strategy (1996). Culpeper (1996) established five strategies of hate expression, namely Bald on Record Impoliteness, Positive Impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness, Sarcasm or Mock Politeness, and Withhold Politeness. Withhold Politeness is not included in the recent study. The researcher assumes that this is due to the data source and the scope of the study. Below is the strategies of hate expression in the table data:

Table 2. The Strategies of Hate Expression

No	Strategies of Hate Expression	Number of Cases	Percentage (%)
1	Bald on Record Impoliteness	22	32.8%
2	Positive Impoliteness	22	32.8%
3	Negative Impoliteness	15	22%
4	Sarcasm or Mock Politeness	8	12%
	Total	67	100%

***The functions of hate expression***

The recent study's results discovered four functions of impoliteness strategies used in throwing hate towards Meghan Markle as a response to the report that Meghan Markle may run for US president. They are expressing unpleasant feelings, entertaining the target audience, mocking the figure, and expressing disagreement.

The results' study are not in line with Kadhum & Abbas (2021), Siahaan et al. (2019), and Hamnö (2016). Kadhum & Abbas (2021) found affective impoliteness as the most function appeared, while Siahaan et al. (2019) found three impoliteness strategy functions: entertaining impoliteness, affective impoliteness, and coercive impoliteness. Furthermore, Hamnö (2016) revealed the function of impoliteness strategies, namely undermining the appearance and capabilities of his targets.

This recent study is also not in accordance with the theory conveyed by Beebe (1995). Beebe (1995) identified impoliteness strategies as expressing unpleasant emotions, getting power, entertaining the target audience, and other purposes. Getting power is not included in the recent study's result. The researcher assumes that the Twitter netizen threw hate towards Meghan Markle purely for expressing their opinions and feelings about the report that Meghan Markle may run for US president. Below is the functions of hate expression in the table data:

Table 3. The Functions of Hate Expression

No	Strategies of Hate Expression	Number of Cases	Percentage (%)
1	Expressing Unpleasant Feelings	27	33.3%
2	Entertaining the Target Audience	5	6.2%
3	Other Intentions (Mocking the Figure & Expressing Disagreement)	49	60.4%
Total		81	100%

**CONCLUSION**

The researcher identified categories of hate expression using Mondal et al.'s theory (2017). The researcher found six categories of hate expression: hate expression of behavior, class, hate expression of disability, hate expression of ethnicity, hate expression of religion, and hate expression of gender. From the twenty-eight data, hate expression of behavior was the category that found the most.

Furthermore, the researcher used Cullpeper's theory (1996) of impoliteness to analyze the strategy used in hate expression towards Meghan Markle. The researcher established that the Twitter users had five strategies for throwing hate towards Meghan Markle. On record, there are bald impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock politeness. Twitter users mostly used bald on record impoliteness and positive impoliteness strategies from the sixty-five data.

Moreover, the researcher analyzed the functions of impoliteness strategies using Beebe's theory (1995). The researcher found four functions: expressing unpleasant feelings,

entertaining the target audience, mocking the figure, and expressing disagreement. From the eighty-one data, the most dominant function found is mocking the figure.

In conclusion, Twitter users used various hate and strategies for expressing hate. They could utilize them well because they are native speakers.

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