

# ***Impolite Discourse Practices in the Digital Media Context: A Case Study of Weibo Comments on the “Shenzhen Japanese School” Incident***

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**Abstract:** This study focuses on the Sina Weibo comments of the "Shenzhen Japanese School Incident" and explores the practice of impolite language in the context of digital media. Using qualitative discourse analysis combined with frequency statistics, and based on theories such as the Rachnicht's impoliteness strategy model, 186 core impoliteness comments were selected for analysis from 519 comments related to Sina News. The results showed that "blunt rudeness" (42%) and "positive rudeness" (37%) accounted for a high proportion of rude strategies, mostly involving direct emotional release and denial of group legitimacy; Functionally, "emotional release," "group attack," and "satire and ridicule" account for nearly 90%, and are tools for users to release emotions, strengthen group identity, and participate in public opinion. The algorithm of Weibo platform tends to recommend implicit and impolite expressions, suppress intense and direct content, and affect the dissemination of discourse. In addition, rude language often constructs narratives through historical memory, linking the logic of "historical trauma national identity". The study supplemented the empirical sample of impolite language research, but also had limitations such as a single corpus and insufficient quantification.

## **1. Introduction**

Against the backdrop of the growing popularity of digital media, social media has evolved beyond a mere communication tool; it has become a crucial arena for the public to express emotions, construct identities, disseminate opinions, and shape public opinion. In this context, impolite language—a pragmatic phenomenon of expressive nature—tends to converge in comments on sudden public incidents. Such language is not a simplistic form of "cyberbullying" but a complex phenomenon intertwined with emotional politics, group identity, and social division.[1] [2]

In September 2024, a vicious assault on a minor occurred at a Japanese school in Shenzhen. Due to its sensitive undertones related to ethnicity, diplomacy, and history, the incident quickly garnered

widespread attention in both Chinese and Japanese societies. On platforms such as Weibo and WeChat Official Accounts, comments on the incident proliferated rapidly, forming an intense public opinion sphere. A large number of these comments contained impolite expressions, including emotional outbursts, ethnic resentment, identity denial, and political satire.

Sina Weibo is a highly influential social media platform in China, boasting a massive user base that includes numerous news organizations such as People's Daily and CCTV News. As a key vehicle for news dissemination, news-related Weibo posts often attract a deluge of comments, in which impolite phenomena are relatively common [3]. However, existing research specifically focusing on impoliteness in comments under news-related Weibo posts remains scarce.

In the social practice of digital media, language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a mechanism of power and an ideological tool. As Fairclough (1989) [4] argued, discourse constitutes a form of social practice that participates in the reproduction of ideology. In this study, impolite language is precisely the practical means through which users construct ethnic positions and power boundaries in digital media, embodying a distinct function of reflecting social structures.

As early as 1980, scholar Lachenicht proposed a pioneering framework of impoliteness strategies based on existing research on politeness [5]. This theory drew on the core insights of Brown & Levinson's politeness strategy framework, in which the key concept of "Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs)" was put forward (see Table 1) [6]. In the same year, Lachenicht categorized impoliteness strategies into four types, ordered by the increasing degree of face threat they pose: indirect strategies (subtle and veiled sarcasm), direct impoliteness principles (overt derogation that disregards face), positive impoliteness strategies (active aggression toward the other party), and negative impoliteness strategies (cold indifference toward the other party) [5]. Recent studies have applied and refined this framework in the context of Chinese social media, demonstrating its continued relevance for analyzing impoliteness in digitally-mediated public discourse. By taking into account the social relationship between interlocutors and their face needs, Lachenicht's strategy framework demonstrates greater practicality in analyzing impolite behaviors in specific real-life contexts.

From a pragmatic perspective, this study conceptualizes impolite language in online comments as context-specific Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs). Drawing on Lachenicht's (1980) four-type impoliteness strategy model and using comments under Sina News Weibo posts about the aforementioned incident as the corpus, this research aims to: explore the types, characteristics, and causes of impoliteness strategies in comments under news-related Weibo posts; examine the types, functions, and social implications of impolite expressions in online comments; uncover the discursive practice mechanism of impoliteness strategies in the construction of collective emotions and the structure of public opinion; provide a new analytical perspective for the study of impoliteness in online communication; and investigate how users employ impoliteness strategies in sudden ethnic incidents within the digital media context, along with an analysis of their underlying pragmatic functions and emotional orientations.

*Table 1 Types of Face in Brown & Levinson's Politeness Theory*

Face Type	Meaning
Positive Face	The desire to be liked, recognized, and respected

Negative Face	The desire for one's freedom of action to remain undisturbed
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## 2. Analytical Framework

Research in the context of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) has unfolded in two waves. The first wave focused on the linguistic characteristics and strategies of new media; the second wave, influenced by pragmatics and other disciplines, emphasizes the contextualized use and diversity of language.

As a common linguistic phenomenon in communication, impoliteness strategies have gradually become a research focus in academia in recent years, with numerous scholars conducting in-depth investigations from various perspectives. The study of impoliteness first emerged in Lachenicht's (1980) research on face-aggravating language, in which he published one of the earliest international studies on impolite discourse [5]. Culpeper (1996) explicitly distinguished "politeness" and "impoliteness" as two independent dimensions rather than simple opposites, and established a framework of five types of impoliteness strategies [7] (see Table 2). Leech (2014) further proposed macro-impoliteness strategies [8]; Watts (2003) argued that "impoliteness" is a contested term [9]; and Culpeper (2011) further defined impoliteness as "a negative attitude towards specific behaviors in specific contexts," emphasizing that from the perspective of "cognitive pragmatics," impoliteness is not merely a linguistic form but also a face threat perceived by the hearer [10].

In the study of linguistic power and ideology, Fairclough (1989) proposed the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, emphasizing that language not only reflects social reality but also participates in the construction and reproduction of social structures [4]. He put forward a three-level analytical model encompassing text, discursive practice, and social practice to reveal the role of language in the operation of power relations and ideology. This framework has provided a theoretical foundation for subsequent linguistic studies on social linguistic phenomena, and is particularly applicable to the examination of power relations in media discourse. From a discourse-centered approach, Gee (2003) emphasized that language serves as a "tool for identity construction." He argued that discourse not only functions at the expressive level but also constitutes discursive communities, social positions, and role identities in practice [11].

Domestic scholars began researching impoliteness phenomena over a decade ago. Yang Zi and Yu Guodong (2007) defined verbal impoliteness as discourse that directly or indirectly damages others' face [12]. With the advancement of research, domestic scholars have achieved considerable results in the field of impoliteness strategy studies in recent years. By analyzing the TV drama Happy Family (Le Huo Jia Ting), Wu Sisi (2017) identified unique impoliteness strategies in Chinese, such as "using prosody" and "topic shifting," and pointed out that these strategies play a positive role in creating a humorous atmosphere and embodying intimate relationships [13]. Xie Laixiang (2022) combined Culpeper's impoliteness theory with Chen Xinren's pragmatic identity theory to compare similarities and differences in the use of impoliteness strategies by Chinese and American parents in family communication, and also explored how impolite discourse constructs different pragmatic identities [14]. Niu Junrui (2022) focused on response strategies to impolite discourse in online news comments, and found that netizens often adopt response, counterattack, and confirmation strategies, supplemented by auxiliary means such as emojis [15]. Another scholar, Xiang Hui (2023), based on Bousfield's impoliteness theory, analyzed impoliteness strategies in parent-child conflict discourse in Modern Family and discussed their linguistic functions [16].

With the popularization of digital media, impoliteness phenomena in online communication have

gradually become a focus of linguistic research. Li An and Yan Minfen (2021) took comments under news-related Weibo posts as the research object, and based on Bousfield's impoliteness model, systematically analyzed the types, characteristics, and causes of online impoliteness strategies. They revealed that the expression of negative emotions and specific contexts (such as the background of negative news, and the virtuality and equality of online communication) are the two core drivers of impolite discourse. This study provides an important reference for understanding online discourse conflicts in public incidents [17].

*Table 2 Impoliteness Strategies*

Impoliteness Strategy	Definition	Example
On-record Impoliteness	Explicitly expressing impoliteness to directly attack the other party's face	Saying: "You are so stupid"
Off-record Impoliteness	Expressing impoliteness in an implicit manner, such as through veiled criticism or insinuation	Saying: "That's really an interesting idea" (with sarcastic intent)
Positive Impoliteness	Attacking the other party's positive face by questioning or belittling their character or abilities	Saying: "No one would like someone like you"
Negative Impoliteness	Attacking the other party's negative face by restricting or depriving them of their freedom or rights	Saying: "You have no right to express your opinion" (denying the other party's right to speak)
Withholding Politeness	Deliberately refraining from using polite forms to show indifference or disrespect to the other party	Deliberately not saying "thank you" when gratitude is expected (showing disregard for the other party)

This study focuses on social media comments regarding the "Shenzhen Japanese School Incident" to explore the manifestations and social functions of impolite language in real public opinion

contexts. It adopts the four-type impoliteness strategy framework proposed by Lachenicht (1980) as the main analytical framework (see Table 3) [5], while introducing Androutsopoulos' discourse-centered approach as a supplement.[18] This approach takes discourse as the core and regards language use as behavior within specific sociocultural and interactive contexts. It argues that language is not only a tool for expressing meaning but also an important means of social interaction and identity construction.

*Table 3 Classification and Illustrations of Impoliteness Strategies*

Strategy Type	Description	Example
Off-record Impoliteness	Expressing attacks in an implicit or vague manner to avoid direct responsibility	"Some people just pretend to know what they don't."
Bald on Record Impoliteness	Directly revealing aggressive intent without any modification or mitigation	"Shut up! What do you know!"
Positive Impoliteness	Attacking the other party's positive face, such as through insult or denial of belonging	"Who would like someone like you?"
Negative Impoliteness	Violating the other party's negative face, such as through interruption, threat, or privacy infringement	"You are not qualified to raise this question."

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

This study adopts Qualitative Discourse Analysis combined with basic frequency statistics. From a linguistic perspective, it focuses on how online users use impolite language strategies to participate in social discourse construction in the context of real sudden incidents. The analytical framework is based on Lachenicht's four-type impoliteness strategy model, and integrates Androutsopoulos' "discourse-centered approach" to examine language practice within digital media interactions. The aim is to reveal the expressive logic, pragmatic functions, and social significance of impolite discourse under the dual influence of platform mechanisms and social emotions.

To explore the strategic use and functional mechanisms of impolite language in the digital media context, this study proposes the following four specific research questions:

1. What are the main types of impolite language strategies in Weibo comments, and what are the characteristics of their distribution?
2. What are the purposes or discursive functions of users' adoption of different impolite strategies?
3. How do the digital communication mechanisms and public opinion atmosphere of the Weibo platform influence the selection and expressive style of impolite strategies?
4. How do these impolite expressions construct collective emotions and social positions in the discourse of the incident?

### 3.1.1. Corpus Source

Weibo is one of the most influential social media platforms for public opinion in China, with a broad user base and an open discussion mechanism. Particularly in public incidents, it often serves as the primary site for the fermentation of public opinion. As an authoritative news release account under Sina Group, "Sina News" has over 100 million followers. Its published content has high credibility and strong dissemination power, and can quickly attract users from different social groups to participate in comments and express their positions.

The report selected in this study was published during the "golden window period" of public opinion immediately after the incident. The comment section contains a sufficient number of messages, and the corpus reflects strong emotions and clear positions, making it of significant analytical value.

The corpus used in this study consists of user comments under a report on the "Shenzhen Japanese School Incident" published by the official "Sina News" account on Sina Weibo on September 19, 2024. This post gained a large number of reposts and interactions in a short period of time, and is one of the earliest media updates that triggered widespread public opinion on the incident on social media platforms.

### 3.1.2. Corpus Screening

The corpus was collected through web crawling via the "Ba Zhua Yu" (Octopus) tool and supplemented by manual screening. The author collected all 519 comments under the "Sina News" report and conducted preliminary cleaning based on the following criteria:

1. Removing irrelevant corpus (e.g., pure emojis, content unrelated to the incident);
2. Removing polite comments and information-retelling statements;
3. Retaining typical impolite comments that express opinions and carry emotional overtones.

Finally, 186 impolite comments with analytical value were selected, forming the core corpus of this study.

### 3.1.3. Analytical Process

With reference to the four types of impoliteness strategies proposed by Lachenicht, each comment in the corpus was coded and categorized to ensure that each comment has a clear impolite strategy attribute in terms of context and semantics. On the basis of strategy classification, the study further analyzed the pragmatic functional intentions of impolite discourse, dividing them into seven functional dimensions: emotional catharsis, group attack, sarcasm/ridicule, reality denial, humiliation/satire, self-aggrandizement, and freedom restriction. Finally, Excel was used for frequency statistics and cross-analysis of strategy distribution and functional intentions. Combined with discourse content and media context, the study explores the expressive mechanisms, usage trends, and social emotional orientations of these strategies.

The research and analytical process of this study aims to reveal the usage patterns of impolite expressions on digital platforms and their inherent social significance through systematic linguistic analysis methods.

### 3.2. Data Description

#### 3.2.1. Overview of Corpus Data

This study collected a total of 186 impolite corpus entries, all of which exhibit clear characteristics of impolite language. These entries were classified and analyzed based on Lachenicht's four-type impoliteness strategy model and Brown & Levinson's "Face-Threatening Acts (FTA)" theoretical framework.

#### 3.2.2. Distribution of Impoliteness Strategy Types

*Table 4 Frequency and Proportion of Different Impoliteness Strategy Types*

Impoliteness Strategy Type	Frequency (Entries)	Proportion (%)
Bald on Record Impoliteness	78	42%
Positive Impoliteness	69	37%
Off-record Impoliteness	30	16%
Negative Impoliteness	9	4.8%

*Table 5 Summary of Impoliteness Strategy Frequencies*

Category	Bald on Record Impoliteness	Positive Impoliteness	Off-record Impoliteness	Negative Impoliteness
Total	78	69	30	9

As shown in Table 4 and Table 5, "Bald on Record Impoliteness" accounts for the highest proportion (42%), manifested as direct emotional catharsis and highly aggressive language, such as "retribution," "serves you right," and "well done." This reflects that under the drive of strong emotions, users tend to adopt the most destructive verbal means. "Positive Impoliteness" follows closely (37%), mostly manifested as denying the legitimacy of groups and demeaning the other party's personality, such as "Why should Japanese people build schools in China?"—an act of systematically attacking positive face. "Off-record Impoliteness" accounts for 16%, often expressing doubt or derogation through rhetorical questions, sarcasm, and other means, which not

only allows users to express their positions but also retains room for semantic maneuvering. “Negative Impoliteness” accounts for only 4.8%, mainly manifested as restricting freedom of speech, with a relatively low frequency of occurrence.

In terms of context, the incident is a sudden campus assault case involving special subjects—it not only involves foreign minors but also occurred in the sensitive location of a “Japanese school,” which has aroused public resonance regarding Sino-Japanese historical trauma, national identity, and ethnic emotions. Against this background, users tend to adopt language styles with high emotional intensity and clear positions to express their attitudes and construct group belonging, which explains the concentrated use of “Bald on Record” and “Positive Impoliteness” strategies. “Off-record Impoliteness,” by virtue of its sarcastic nature and communicative advantages, has gained a secondary but stable expressive space in online discourse.

In summary, the distribution of impoliteness strategies not only reflects users’ choices of linguistic expressions but also embodies the influence of contextual factors on linguistic behavior. The high emotional salience of the incident reduces users’ motivation to adopt indirect or euphemistic expression strategies, while the pursuit of group identity and emotional resonance further strengthens the preference for direct and aggressive language.

### 3.2.3. Functional Distribution of Impoliteness Strategies

To further clarify the pragmatic intentions behind impolite language use, this study categorized the functional orientations of the 186 corpus entries into seven dimensions. The statistical results are presented in Table 6.

*Table 6 Frequency Statistics of Subdivided Functional Intentions*

Subcategories of Functional Intentions	Frequency
Emotional Catharsis	90
Group Aggression	83
Sarcasm, Ridicule or Satirical Humiliation	76
Freedom Restriction	33
Reality Denial	2



After completing the analysis of impoliteness strategy types, this study further categorized the corpus from the perspective of semantic functions, aiming to reveal the expressive intentions and social functions behind the impolite language used by Weibo users in their comments on this incident. Through manual annotation and pragmatic induction, the 186 pieces of impolite corpus were ultimately classified into five types of functional intentions.

Among them, the "Emotional Catharsis" category had the highest frequency, with 90 instances, accounting for 48.4%. Most of these corpus entries express intense anger, moral indignation, or vengeful sentiments, characterized by direct wording and fierce tone—such as "Deserved it" and "Well done". This phenomenon reflects how users regard public incidents as an outlet for emotions, utilizing impolite discourse to achieve moral catharsis and emotional release. As an emotion-driven platform, Weibo provides an amplifying effect for the dissemination of such linguistic expressions.

Ranking second, the "Group Aggression" category included 83 instances, representing 44.6% of the total. These expressions mostly manifest as derogation and exclusion targeting the Japanese group or the "other" identity, with examples like "All Japanese deserve to die" and "Little Japanese". Such language often constructs an "us-them" oppositional relationship through identity boundaries such as nationality and ethnicity, reflecting users' immediate responses to historical memories and national sentiments under the mobilization of collective emotions.

The "Sarcasm and Humiliation" category contained 76 corpus entries, accounting for 40.9%. Typical expressions include "This is already history; Japanese people should let go of this historical burden and move forward bravely" and "Just punish oneself by drinking three cups, and trivialize the major issue". This type of language usually achieves impolite purposes through irony, sarcasm, discourse appropriation, and other means. It possesses strong communicability and social manipulability, serving as a common form of "soft aggression" on social platforms.

In contrast, the "Freedom Restriction" category included 33 instances, accounting for 17.7%. These expressions mainly manifest as denying others' right to speak and right to exist, such as "If Japanese schools were moved away, this incident would not have happened", "Get out", and "Hurry up and ban Japanese schools". Although this category has a relatively low frequency of occurrence, it directly constitutes a derogation of positive face or a suppression of negative face.

The "Reality Denial" category had only 2 instances, with an extremely low proportion. Most of these expressions question the authenticity of reports and the stance of media, such as "How did this incident even make it to the trending list?" and "Is this another hype?". The low proportion of this category may be attributed to the concentrated direction of mainstream public opinion on the incident, its clear nature, and the high degree of consistency in users' attitudes.

In summary, Weibo users primarily realize impolite expressions through emotional release, group stance construction, and identity derogation in such incidents. This not only reflects the "functional overlapping" characteristic of impolite language online but also demonstrates its participatory mechanism in the expression of social identity and the competition for discourse power.

#### **3.2.4. The Impact of Platform Mechanisms on the Selection of Impoliteness Strategies**

To further examine the correlation between Sina Weibo's communication mechanisms and expression styles, as well as their influence on the dissemination of impoliteness strategies, the author selected 10 representative comment samples that had not been filtered or collapsed by the Weibo platform for qualitative style classification (see Table 6). These samples cover overt impoliteness, positive impoliteness, indirect impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and non-impolite expressions, with their popularity levels and dissemination data recorded.

*Table 6: Statistics on Comment Content Types and Popularity*

Comment No.	Comment Content	Type of Impoliteness Strategy	Featured Comment?	Popularity Level	Likes	Comments
1	Condemn all violent and homicidal acts	Non-impolite discourse	Yes	High	203	16
2	Can Japanese schools be demolished?	Negative impoliteness	Yes	High	130	132
3	Rest in peace, little one; the perpetrator deserves the death penalty	Non-impolite discourse	Yes	High	113	6
4	Under no circumstances should crimes against minors be tolerated	Non-impolite discourse	Yes	High	73	0
5	It's an ordinary case; stop over-politicizing it	Indirect impoliteness	Yes	Medium	46	7
6	Keeping a tiger is ultimately a source of trouble (metaphor for potential harm)	Positive impoliteness	No	Low	13	0
7	It is advisable for Japanese people to reflect	Indirect impoliteness	No	Low	1	7
8	Get out of China	Overt impoliteness	No	Low	1	0
9	Rest in peace, little devils (derogatory term for Japanese people)	Positive impoliteness	No	Low	2	0
10	Oh, it's Japanese people—then it's fine (sarcastic)	Positive impoliteness	No	Low	1	4

The analysis reveals that among all featured comments, two involve impoliteness strategies, and

their language is relatively restrained. Comment No. 2 adopts a "negative impoliteness" strategy expressed in the form of a question, while Comment No. 5 represents "indirect impoliteness" with a relatively moderate tone. In contrast, comments containing "overt" or "positive impoliteness" expressions were not recommended by the platform's algorithm, resulting in extremely low popularity—with fewer than 3 likes and zero or minimal comments.

This indicates that under the regulation of platform mechanisms, Weibo tends to promote expressions that are rational in tone and ambiguous in discourse, while impolite language characterized by intense emotions and strong aggressiveness is suppressed by the algorithm. Influenced by this mechanism, some users have gradually tended to convey their attitudes through indirect and implicit means to reduce risks and increase visibility. Therefore, the platform not only affects the dissemination path of language but also profoundly shapes the expression style and selection tendency of impoliteness strategies. It should be noted, however, that metrics such as likes and featured comments are influenced by multiple factors, and short-term data may not fully reflect the dissemination trend.

### **3.25 Analysis of the Function of Impolite Expressions in Constructing Emotional Stances in the Discourse of This Incident**

Combined with the previous statistical analysis of functional intentions (see Table 5), it is evident that Weibo users extensively employed impolite language in their comments on the incident under study to quickly express their attitudes toward the incident and achieve emotional catharsis. Particularly in high-frequency intention categories such as "emotional catharsis," "group aggression," and "sarcasm and ridicule," impolite language not only conveys anger, denial, and hostility but also further constructs a clear "us vs. them" oppositional structure, serving as a crucial discursive tool for users to express their stances and strengthen their identity.

Overt and positive impoliteness expressions frequently appeared in the corpus, such as "Japanese people, get out of China," "little devils," and "deserved it." These expressions are not only emotional responses to the incident but also reaffirmations of national identity. Such language transforms individual anger into group identity and demarcates moral stances through linguistic means. Among sarcastic corpus entries, expressions like "Oh, it's Japanese people—then it's fine" and "Justice has arrived (sarcastic)" participate in the reconstruction of public opinion on the incident through irony and sarcasm, forming a "resonance field" for collective emotions.

It can thus be concluded that these impolite expressions are not merely venting remarks. Instead, in the context of social media, they constitute core discursive practices that participate in constructing the meaning of the incident, public opinion emotions, and social stances—reflecting the in-depth interactive relationship between language and identity, as well as between emotions and politics.

## **4. Research Findings**

Against the backdrop of the social news event "Vicious Assault on a Child at a Japanese School in Shenzhen", this study systematically annotated and categorized impolite language in user comments on the Sina Weibo platform, exploring its types of linguistic strategies, expressive functions, the impact of platform mechanisms, and its role in social discourse. By integrating Lachenicht's (1980) four types of impoliteness strategies, Androutsopoulos' (2008) discourse-centered approach, and introducing Fairclough's (1989) and Gee's (2003) theoretical

perspectives on language, social structure, and identity construction, the research findings are as follows:

#### **4.1 The Dominant Use of Impoliteness Strategies Reflects Emotional Polarization in the Digital Media Context**

According to statistical data, overt impoliteness (42%) and positive impoliteness (37%) are the dominant strategies, far exceeding indirect and negative impoliteness strategies. This tendency indicates that in sudden social incidents characterized by intense emotions and obvious positional confrontation, users are more inclined to express anger and denial in a direct and intense manner. Lachenicht (1980) pointed out that both overt and positive impoliteness strategies constitute strong attacks on "face"—in particular, the denial of positive face. As a high-frequency interactive platform, Weibo not only facilitates the rapid dissemination of information but also amplifies the immediacy of emotional expression. From the perspective of discourse analysis, such language is not merely an emotional response but also a visualization of social stances. Linguistic practice not only reflects social reality but also participates in its reproduction. In this study, impoliteness strategies manifest as the denial of the "Japanese" group (construed as the "other") and also reflect the active construction of users' collective identity.

#### **4.2 The Function of Impolite Expressions Lies Not Only in Aggression, but More in Identity Construction and Emotional Organization**

Through the classification of functional intentions in this study, it is found that three categories of corpus—"emotional catharsis", "group aggression", and "sarcasm and ridicule"—account for nearly 90% of the total. This indicates that impolite language has become a tool for users to express anger, demarcate boundaries, and organize stances. Among these, the frequent reference to "Japanese" as an identity label embodies the function of "language constructing group boundaries". Gee (2003) noted that discursive behavior is part of identity construction. By means of impolite expressions, users incorporate themselves into the semantic community of "we Chinese" and establish an opposition to the "other" group of "they Japanese". Such identity discourse not only reflects stances but also serves as an expression of collective identity. Meanwhile, the large number of "sarcastic and veiled" expressions in indirect impoliteness demonstrate a strategic linguistic style that engages in the reconstruction of public opinion through ambiguous expression.

#### **4.3 Additionally, This Study Finds That Platform Mechanisms Influence the Expressive Patterns and Visibility of Impoliteness Strategies**

A qualitative comparison of featured comment corpus reveals that overt and positive impoliteness strategies—characterized by intense emotions and direct aggression—are less likely to receive algorithmic recommendations from the platform. In contrast, indirect expressions with moderate tones and implicit strategies are more likely to be promoted. This indicates that Weibo's algorithmic mechanisms and content governance rules exhibit a "selective preference" for expressive styles. Users are not entirely free in their expression; instead, they engage in strategic expression under media discipline. To gain greater communicative influence, users may opt for ambiguous expressions such as sarcasm, irony, and metonymy, forming an impolite discourse style with "communicative adaptability".

#### **4.4 Finally, Impolite Discursive Practices Construct Specific Historical Narratives and**

## Structures of National Sentiment

The corpus shows that users often draw on history, war, and national memory as contextual resources for impolite expressions. Such language is not merely linguistic violence but also a mechanism for the historical activation of social emotions. While expressing anger, these discourses also rely on language to restate the logical chain of "historical trauma → national identity → just stance". Fairclough (1989) emphasized the embeddedness of discourse and ideology, and Gee (2003) pointed out that linguistic behavior is underpinned by the reenactment of values within social discourse communities. In this study, these impolite expressions not only reflect immediate anger but also embody public recognition of national stances and sentiments, serving as a typical example of how language intervenes in the construction of social discourse and group emotions.

In summary, impoliteness strategies in the digital media context are not merely a form of expression, but a linguistic practice for social identity and ideological construction. From the micro-level of linguistic expression to pragmatic functions, platform regulation, and further to the construction of historical narratives and collective stances, impolite discourse demonstrates multi-level social functions in the field of digital communication. These findings not only supplement empirical samples for the study of impolite language but also illustrate the interactive logic between language and social structure from the perspective of discourse analysis.

## 5. Conclusion

Digital media has transformed the way language is expressed and reshaped the practical logic of impolite language. Based on the corpus of Weibo comments on the "Japanese School in Shenzhen" incident, this study attempts to reveal how impolite language—when entering a communication environment characterized by platformization, emotionalization, and fragmentation—is organized, strategically used, and undertakes functions beyond "offense" in collective expression.

In this study, impoliteness is no longer merely a linguistic deviation associated with "discourtesy" or "conflict", but a mediatized discursive strategy highly adaptable to communication mechanisms. In addition to responding to the emotional tension of specific incidents, it also presents the logical relationships between group stances, historical memory, and identity recognition. Impolite expressions in Weibo comments serve not only as a cathartic mechanism for social emotions but also as a way of participating in discourse power in the online era. While being articulated, they also construct the platform order defining "who is qualified to speak" and "for whom to speak".

This study combines classical linguistic frameworks with digital media research approaches, constructing a multi-dimensional analytical model of impolite language applicable to the public opinion field of digital media. By taking real Weibo comments as the corpus foundation and supplementing with observational analysis of the correlations between platform mechanisms, visibility of popularity, and expressive styles, it expands the explanatory power of discourse analysis in specific communication contexts. Through observing impolite discursive practices in ethno-sensitively charged incidents, this study reveals the role of impolite language in taking stances, mobilizing groups, and reproducing historical narratives within incident-related public opinion—filling the gap in understanding the "social functions of aggressive language" in the digital age. However, this study uses corpus from a single incident on the Weibo platform, resulting in certain limitations in the sample; moreover, the analysis is primarily qualitative, lacking quantitative support. Future research could expand to comparative studies across multiple platforms and incidents, and combine technical methods to explore the communication paths and emotional evolution of impolite discourse, so as to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of its social

functions.

"Impolite discursive practices in the digital media context" are no longer "linguistic trivialities", but a window where social emotions, the flow of public opinion, and identity politics converge. They remind us that every instance of linguistic "impoliteness" is not merely an outburst of verbal conflict, but may also be a negotiation over discourse power, the legitimacy of expression, and social values.

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