

**AN ANALYSIS OF RAPPORT MANAGEMENT IN SOCIAL
MEDIA INTERACTIONS: A CYBERPRAGMATICS
APPROACH**

RESKI



**SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITAS HASANUDDIN
MAKASSAR
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INTERACTIONS: A CYBERPRAGMATICS APPROACH**

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DISSERTATION

**AN ANALYSIS OF RAPPORT MANAGEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA
INTERACTIONS: A CYBERPRAGMATICS APPROACH**

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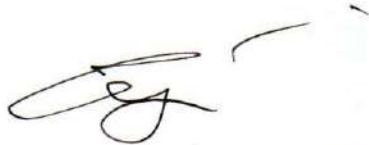
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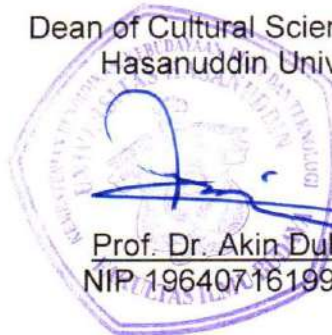
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States truthfully that this DOCTORAL THESIS is my own work and it is not the work of others. If it is proven later that either some or entire part of this thesis belongs to others, I will be willing to accept any sanctions for my dishonesty.

Makassar, 4 September 2023



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ABSTRACT

Reski. *An Analysis of Rapport Threats in Social Media Interactions: a Cyberpragmatics Approach* (Supervised by Nasmilah, Abidin Pammu, and Harlinah Sahib).

This research examines the rapport management in social media interactions with a focus on identifying the types of rapport threats, the responses to the threats, the strategies, and the effectiveness of the strategies to mitigate the rapport threats in social media interactions by considering the Cyberpragmatics components. The data of the research were obtained from social media interactions of two social media platforms which were Facebook and Instagram. The data were collected by taking the screenshots of forty interactions from the two social media platforms and by interviewing some social media users to ask their perception about the interaction on social media. The descriptive qualitative method and exploratory study were used for this research. The data obtained from the social media interactions were then transcribed and extracted into several parts to be analyzed. The analysis indicates that there are nineteen types of rapport threats that cause quarrels or debates which may disharmonize the social media interactions. The research also finds there are several expressions made by social media users to respond to these threats, from negative ones to some polite responses. The analysis further reveals that the social media users apply a number of strategies to mitigate the rapport-threatening situation caused by the rapport threats. The strategies are grouped into six different types or domains namely *Illocutionary domain strategies, non-verbal domain strategies, discourse domain strategies, stylistic domain strategies, ending confrontational frame strategies, and preventive and excessive strategies*. The strategies are proven to be quite effective to mitigate the rapport threats since they can end the verbal conflicts caused by the threats.

Keywords: social media interactions, rapport management, rapport threats, cyberpragmatics



ABSTRAK

Reski. *Analisis mengenai Ancaman Rapport dalam Interaksi Media Sosial: Pendekatan Siberpragmatik* (Dibimbing oleh Nasmilah, Abidin Pammu, dan Harlinah Sahib).

Penelitian ini menguji manajemen *rapport* pada interaksi media sosial dengan berfokus kepada identifikasi jenis-jenis ancaman terhadap *rapport*, respon yang muncul dari ancaman tersebut, strategi dan keefektifan dari strategi yang dimaksud dalam mengurangi ancaman-ancaman terhadap *rapport* pada interaksi media sosial dengan mempertimbangkan komponen yang ada pada teori Siberpragmatik. Data penelitian ini didapatkan dari interaksi pada dua platform media sosial yaitu Facebook dan Instagram. Data dikumpulkan dengan mengambil tangkapan layar dari empat puluh interaksi dari dua platform media sosial tersebut dan dengan mewawancarai beberapa pengguna media sosial aktif untuk menanyakan persepsi mereka mengenai pengalaman mereka selama berinteraksi melalui media sosial. Data interaksi dan wawancara yang didapatkan kemudian ditranskripsikan dan diekstraksi ke dalam beberapa bagian untuk analisis. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa terdapat sembilan belas jenis ancaman terhadap *rapport* yang dapat menyebabkan pertengkaran ataupun debat yang dapat mengganggu keharmonisan interaksi pada media sosial. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa terdapat beberapa tanggapan dari ancaman-ancaman terhadap *rapport* tersebut, mulai dari tanggapan negating sampai respon yang bersifat positif. Analisis dari penelitian ini juga mengungkap bahwa pengguna media sosial menerapkan sejumlah strategi untuk mengurangi atau mencegah situasi interaksi yang mengancam *rapport*. Strategi tersebut terbagi dalam enam jenis kelompok yaitu strategi ilokusi, strategi non-verbal, strategi diskursus, strategi stilistika, strategi mengakhiri konfrontasi, dan strategi preventif dan eksekutif. Strategi-strategi ini terbukti efektif dalam mengurangi ancaman terhadap *rapport* karena strategi-strategi tersebut dapat meredam dan mengakhiri konflik verbal dalam interaksi media sosial.

Kata kunci: interaksi media sosial, manajemen *rapport*, ancaman *rapport*, siberpragmatik.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations/symbols	Meaning and description
FB	Facebook
IG	Instagram
TS	Thread Starter
U1	User 1
U2	User 2
U3	User 3
U4	User 4
U5	User 5
U6	User 6
U7	User 7
U8	User 8, and so forth
U?	Unknown User

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Internet mediated communication has played a vital role notably because social media almost influence the way people perform social interactions. Taking into account, the importance of quality and relevance of making personal interactions either by means of verbal or social media interaction the current study will be focused on cyberpragmatics approach particularly social media interaction.

This study is limited to politeness, particularly the politeness in internet mediated communication, specifically the interactions on social media. Politeness has been an object of research since long time ago. There are many prominent researchers and linguists that have conducted research in politeness. Among them is Erving Goffman who proposes politeness as a universal norm governing language use motivated by attention to face (Goffman, 1967). The other researchers look politeness in their own approaches or perspectives, for example, maxim approach that was proposed by Grice and Leech or face management by Brown and Levinson on their renowned Politeness Theory

Those researchers and linguists have formulated politeness through their theories and approaches. Starting with Grice (1967) with his Cooperative Principles in which he elaborates politeness into

maxims of cooperation that should be obeyed by speakers in order to construct meaningful conversation. There are four maxims that Grice formulates for the interlocutors of social interaction to have a successful and effective conversational communication in social interaction. The four maxims are maxim of quantity that demands the speaker to be informative but not more informative than is required. Then, there is maxim of quality which demands the speaker of a social interaction to be true and to not say something that he believes to be false. The third maxim is maxim of relation that urges the speaker to be relevant and the fourth or final maxim is maxim of manner that requires the speaker to be brief and orderly, and to avoid obscurity and ambiguity in his/her expression or utterance. Adopting Grice's Cooperative Principles, Geoffrey Leech (1983) elaborated more and created his own principles and maxims. Different from Grice and Leech, Brown and Levinson see politeness in terms of face management. Brown and Levinson introduce the notion of 'face' in order to illustrate politeness in the broad sense meaning that all people who interact have an interest to maintain their face that is divided by Brown and Levinson into two categories namely 'positive face' and 'negative face'. Brown and Levinson define positive face as the positive and consistent image people have of themselves, and their desire of approval. On the other hand, negative face is "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves and right to non-distraction" (Brown and Levinson, 1987).

However, despite being widely acknowledged, Brown and

Levinson's theory has met some opposition since it attracts considerable criticisms. Helen Spencer-Oatey argues that the notion of face in Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is too self-centered. That is why she tries to propose her own theory, the rapport management that is based on Brown and Levinson's. Spencer-Oatey argues that "The term 'face' seems to focus on concerns for self, whereas rapport management suggests a greater balance between self and other" (Spencer-Oatey, 2008). In her theory, Spencer-Oatey tries to improve Brown and Levinson's by not only coping the face management but also including the management of sociality rights and obligations, and the management of interactional goals. These three managements are formulated as the integrated components of rapport, and they make rapport management theory more complex than the one proposed by Brown and Levinson.

Managing rapport is expected to harmonize social interactions of people in their daily life. However, social interactions are not always going on harmoniously. Agreement and disagreement between speaker and hearer frequently occur. A hearer may agree or disagree with a speaker and the other way around. These agreement and disagreement can be found in daily conversations made by people, and they have considerable effects on the people's social interactions. People can frequently hear others talking about how a simple conversation causes quarrels or debates among interactants.

These kinds of quarrels or debates seem to escalate in social media interactions. We can often see social media users debating on their

social media pages about many things, from something very trivial like video game to sensitive issues like politics and religions. This problem can be conspicuously seen because billions of people are now using social media in their daily life which consequently increase the number of social media interactions where these quarrels and debates are frequently found. Based on the data from Datareportal, a global statistics web page, there is an increasing number of social media users in the world. There is an estimated number of 4 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 170 million social media users in Indonesia in January 2021 (Kemp, 2021) and the number increased by 10 million between 2020 and 2021. This indicates that there is a significant increase in the number of social media users every year. The increasing number of social media users automatically increases the social media interactions as well. It is a common activity now for many people to interact in social media. Unfortunately, as previously stated, the interactions in social media sometimes bring about quarrels and debates that sometimes make the users insult, trash talk, humiliate and/or embarrass one another. These situations can be threats to people or the social media users' interpersonal rapport because this kind of interaction can lead to rapport threatening behavior that may infringe and even ruin the harmonious atmosphere in the social media interactions. In order to analyze this online or social media interactions and the reason of this phenomenon (the increasing number of quarrels and debates in social

media interactions), it is necessary to have 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, 2017 pp?) and by taking this into consideration, this study is expected to give the solutions to the problems that cause people to easily say something bad, insult and embarrass one another on social media. The researcher also expects to figure out how rapport management, incorporated with Cyberpragmatics, can reveal this problem, and finally mitigate the threats caused by such acts. By incorporating the two theories, the researcher also finds that managing rapport in internet-mediated communication such as social media interaction has somewhat different configurations to its direct counterparts. Context and relevance are needed in order to avoid misunderstandings that may lead to disharmonious situation in the interaction. Another urgent matter that is revealed is that social media users need to control their behaviors in social media interaction, thus, the researcher proposes another type of management to enrich the rapport management theory. The new management is management of self-control in borderless online society. This management outlines how people should behave in internet-mediated communication that is expected to result in successful and harmonious interactions on the net, particularly on social media.

Considering the increasing numbers of social media users and the

interactions on social media which are sometimes threatening to the users' interpersonal rapport, in this thesis, the researcher identifies and analyzes the ways of how rapport management becomes the solution to mitigate the threats that are brought about by the intense interactions on social media based on Yus' Cyberpragmatics theory. Specifically, the researcher analyzes the types of offenses or rapport threats that may cause a quarrel or a debate in social media, what aspects of rapport management can be the way to mitigate the threats and the ways those aspects become the solution or strategies to mitigate and even avoid such quarrels in social media interactions.

Considering those reasons, this study is expected to contribute to the study of Politeness and Rapport Management by providing the types of rapport threats in social media interactions and the strategies to mitigate the threats with the expectation to create a harmonious atmosphere in social media interactions. **Kenapa RM masih relevan dan penting dilakukan. Adakah keunikan yang perlu ditegaskan?** Dalam pendekatan hukum dala

1.2 Research Questions

In order to analyze the management of rapport in social media interactions, the researcher tried to figure out the answers for the following research questions;

1. What are the types of rapport threats that can cause quarrels or debates in social media?

2. How do social media users respond to these threats?
3. What strategies would social media users apply to mitigate the rapport threats in social media?
4. How effective are these strategies to mitigate the rapport threats?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

To sum up the analysis of management of rapport in social media interactions, the researcher formulated the objectives of the research as follows;

1. To identify what types of rapport threats that can cause quarrels or debates in social media.
2. To examine the responses that social media users have on the rapport threats from online social interactions.
3. To verify the strategies that social media users apply to mitigate the rapport threats in social media.
4. To assess how effective the strategies are to mitigate the rapport threats in social media interactions

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE RIVIEW

2.1 Previous Studies

Rapport Management and Cyberpragmatics have revolved around social media interaction in this modern times. As such, a number of studies have been undertaken to venture into this communication system and they almost came up with fresh novelties. Isik (2003) for example conducted a study on Face Threatening Act by applying Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and Spencer-Oatey's Rapport Management theory. In his thesis, Isik investigates self-guiding Sociopragmatic interactional principles (SIP) in communication and choice of linguistic strategies of politeness during service encounters in Turkish and English. Despite using Brown and Levinson's term, the Face Threatening Act, Isik considers that Spencer-Oatey's theory is much broader than Brown and Levinson's regarding with face management since Spencer-Oatey does not only include face management in her theory, but she also includes the sociality rights management that is not covered in Brown and Levinson's.

Lopez (2008) also applies Rapport Management in writing her

article 'Affiliative Strategies to Manage Rapport in British and Spanish Medical Consultations'. Lopez examines the strategies developed in medical consultations in Spain and England which enhance doctor-patient relationship by making Rapport Management and SIP as the frame of her study. The study finds that there are two main affiliative strategies in medical consultations in Spain and England which are humor and small talk.

In addition, Aoki (2010) applies Rapport Management to analyze the social talk in Thai and Japanese during group discussions. Aoki focuses on how speaker of Japanese and Thai present themselves and construct rapport in casual group talk. She compares the application of the elements of Rapport Management which are face management, management of sociality rights and management of interactional goals in both Thai and Japanese casual group talk. The study finds that there are three major distinctions between speakers of Japanese and Thai when they construct rapport in casual group talk.

Besides, Zhu (2012) discusses and compares the way that members of three discourse communities in Britain and China manage harmonious relationships with one another by managing rapport and doing relational work in making upward requests through e-mails and he finds that the three discourse communities differ from each other in terms of their cultural and linguistic composition.

Similarly, Sampietro (2019) explores the function of emoji in a corpus of WhatsApp chats written in Spanish. Drawing on Spencer

Oatey's (2000, 2005) rapport management framework, she finds that emoji are used across different domains in the corpus where these emoji can upgrade, and downgrade different speech acts and they can also contribute to the achievement of successful interactions when they are used as signals for closing sections as well as ways to negotiate openings in the WhatsApp chats.

In Cyberpragmatics, Karimi (2013) uses the theory to see the positive and negative effects of web mediated communications. He finds that the positive effects of web mediated communications like social media are that social media helps people to make new friends, find old friends and classmates while providing an opportunity to build new friendships. He also finds that web mediated communication technology empowers people to collaborate in making some contents to be published on the web or on their social media page. The negative effects that he finds are the substitution of physical encounters by virtual ones that weakens friendship bond, identity theft and worm attacks that may threaten users' privacy and security.

Another researcher, Rahardi (2020), sees the pragmatics context in cyberpragmatics perspective in which he finds that various pragmatic contexts are found in Yus' cyberpragmatics. The various contexts are social context, societal context, cultural context, and situational context. He further postulates that there will be a shift and change in the elements and functions of the context which consequently will also change the meaning in cyberpragmatics.

All of the previous studies on Rapport Management utilize the Rapport Management to figure out how it works in certain social interactions in various contexts, while the studies on Cyberpragmatics focus on the pragmatics context of cyberpragmatics and the effects of web mediated communications. This study however analysed how managing rapport works to mitigate rapport threats or all the things that may cause offenses in interactions in social media and how cyberpragmatics strengthen the importance of context in those social media interactions so misunderstanding that may lead to rapport threats can also be mitigated. Zhu and Sampietro also make use of internet and social media interactions as the objects of their studies, but they only take one particular social media platform or online media for their research.

2.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Review

This study was primarily driven by arguably the latest research trend of cross-cultural pragmatics. However, this study excluded the cross-cultural aspect since the data were taken from social media without particularly considering the cultural background of the respondents and the cultural content of their social media interactions. Thus, the research focused on the pragmatics aspect particularly in politeness theories.

Theories of politeness in pragmatics have attracted a number of linguists to do their research on this topic. However, despite a huge number of research on politeness, there is no standard definition of politeness since the linguists doing the research on this topic have compelling yet somewhat different arguments from the other researchers.

One of the most prominent politeness theories is the one formulated by Brown and Levinson (1987) in which they analyze politeness in terms of face. In their theory, they consider face to be the main factor of politeness and this face consists of two related types which are positive face and negative face. Positive face is a speaker's need or want to be approved or appreciated by his or her hearer(s) while negative face is a speaker's want to be free to act without any imposition by others. These two types of face can be threatened by all the acts that they formulate as FTA, Face-Threatening Acts and speakers should use politeness to mitigate these face-threatening acts. Other linguist such as Leech (1983) proposes a set of maxims to explain politeness, while Locher and Watts (2005) argue that politeness is appropriate but marked behavior.

Spencer-Oatey points out that despite the differences, all of these definitions of politeness have one thing in common in which they all concern about harmonious and/or disharmonious relations between or among speakers and hearers. She labels these harmonious and disharmonious relations as rapport and the rapport management as the

way to maintain the harmonious relations or to avoid disharmonious relations among the participants of social interactions.

2.2.1 Rapport Management

Helen Spencer-Oatey has done a number of research on this particular topic and has formulated the theory of rapport management that she points out to be the management of harmonious and/or disharmonious relations in social interaction. Her framework of rapport management follows Goffman's notion of face as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume that he has taken during a particular contact (Goffman, 1972).

a. Interconnected Rapport Management Components

There are three main interconnected components entailing the rapport management. The three main interconnected components are the management of face, the management of sociality rights and obligations and the management of interactional goals as shown in the following figure:

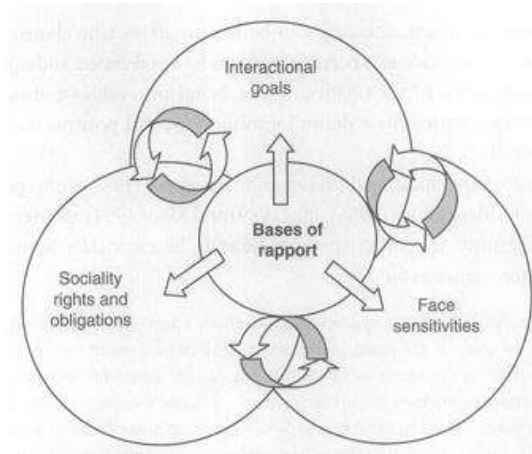


Figure 2.1. The Bases of Rapport

The followings are the detail description about the three interconnected components of rapport based on Figure 01 on the previous page.

1) Face

Face is a concept that is related to notions such as esteem, regard, worth and dignity and is what is claimed or protected by a person in a communicative act (Robinson et al, 2015). From Spencer-Oatey's work (2008), Face comprises three identities, individual identity, group or collective identity and relational identity. In those three identities, people consider themselves to have certain characteristics, such as personality qualities, physical characteristics, beliefs and so on. These characteristics are either perceived positively (talented, smart), negatively (uninteresting, ugly) or neutrally. In most circumstances, people want others to perceive their characteristics or attributes positively and avoid having a negative perception on their

qualities. Face is associated with these affectively sensitive attributes (Spencer-Oatey, 2008).

2) Sociality Rights and Obligation

The second factor that can influence interpersonal rapport is perceived sociality rights and obligations. Sociality rights and obligations are what people perceive to have in relation to other people. Sociality rights and obligations are concerned with social expectancies and reflect people's concerns over fairness, consideration, and behavioral appropriateness (Culpeper, 2011).

. In other words, people typically believe about a set of principles that they should concern in their social interactions. Spencer-Oatey labels these principles as sociopragmatic interactional principles (SIPs) (Spencer-Oatey and Jiang 2003) by pointing out the two fundamental ones which are equity and association.

- **Equity:** Equity is a belief that people have that they are entitled to personal consideration from others so that they are treated fairly and are not imposed upon, that they are fairly ordered about and that they are not used or exploited. This equity entitlement has two components; the notion of cost benefit and the related issue of autonomy-imposition. The notion of cost-benefit is the extent to which people or social interactants are exploited or disadvantaged and the belief that costs and benefits should be kept roughly in balance through the principle of reciprocity. The autonomy-imposition is the extent to which people control others or impose on them.

- Association: Association is the fundamental belief that people exclusively have social involvement with others. These association rights relate partly to interactional involvement - detachment (the extent to which we associate with people, or dissociate ourselves from them), so that we feel, for example, that we are entitled to an appropriate amount of conversational interaction and social chit-chat with others (e.g. not ignored on the one hand, but not overwhelmed on the other). They also relate to affective involvement- detachment (the extent to which we share concerns, feelings and interests). Naturally, what counts as 'an appropriate amount' varies according to the nature of the relationship, as well as sociocultural norms and personal preferences.

3) Sociality Rights and Obligation

The third factor that can influence interpersonal rapport is interactional goals. People often (although not always) have specific goals when they interact with others. These can be relational as well as transactional (i.e. task-focused) in nature. These 'wants' can significantly affect their perceptions of rapport because any failure to achieve them can cause frustration and annoyance.

There can be contextual, individual and cultural differences in the emphases that people give to these various components of rapport management. For example, some interactions are more goal-driven than others, and some people may be more face-sensitive over certain issues than other people are. In addition, there can be significant

differences in the ways in which people conceptualize the components. For example, Spencer-Oatey (1997) reports differences in British and Chinese conceptualizations of the tutor-student role relationship, and hence of the sociality rights associated with the role relationship.

b. Rapport Threatening Behaviour

In a social interaction, people do not always get what they expect from others. Other people may criticize them, mock and even insult them and when these are things are done, those who are addressed with such treatment will feel embarrassed, humiliated and uncomfortable. Brown and Levinson (1987) and Spencer-Oatey (2000) propose certain notions for this phenomenon. While Brown and Levinson propose the notion of face-threatening acts, Spencer-Oatey has rapport-threatening behaviour. They claim that certain acts or behaviour may threaten the face needs or interpersonal rapport of the interlocutors of social interaction. Furthermore, Spencer-Oatey suggests that there are three main ways in which the interpersonal rapport or the harmony between people can be threatened. The three main ways are face-threatening behaviour, rights-threatening obligation-omission behaviour and through goal-threatening behaviour.

These two notions from Brown and Levinson, and Spencer-Oatey seem pretty similar to one another but there are some differences or contradictions between them, as in Brown and Levinson (1987) designation of orders and requests as inherently face-threatening but in Spencer Oatey's (2000) rapport management perspective, the orders

and requests are not necessarily face-threatening. They may be face-threatening but they do not need always be. For example, if someone is ordered to do something, they may feel devalued, thus, this situation is face-threatening but other may feel pleased or honoured if someone asks them for help, feeling that it shows them trust in their abilities.

c. Rapport Management Strategies

The use of rapport management framework in this study hopefully contributes to a better understanding of what strategies the social media users apply and how these strategies work to mitigate some rapport threatening behaviors in social media interactions. As Spencer-Oatey (2008) points out, politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) mainly concern the speech act, particularly the illocutionary domain. The illocutionary domain, which is based on Spencer-Oatey and Xing (1998, 2004) in their analysis of authentic interactions between British and Chinese business people, is one of the five domains that may be considered to be the strategies to manage rapport in social interactions. The five domains are:

1) Illocutionary domain

Illocutionary domain involves the use of speech acts such as compliments, requests, apologies and so on. These speech acts should be handled appropriately so they can be applied as strategies to manage rapport that consequently can harmonize the relations of the social interactants.

2) Discourse domain

Discourse domain involves the structure and content of any interactional discourse such as topic choice and topic management, the organization and sequencing of utterances in social interaction, and the inclusion or exclusion of certain personal topic. For this study, it involves the topic choice of the social media users in their social media interactions and how they manage their comments to avoid some threats that can be caused by what they express in social media.

3) Participation domain

Participation domain involves the procedural aspects of an interaction such as turn-taking (that includes overlaps, interruptions, turn-taking rights and obligations, and pauses), the inclusion or exclusion of certain people and the use or non-use of verbal responses. In this study, this type of domain will not be likely applied by social media users since there is no clear participation sequencing like turn-takings, pauses, or overlaps in social media interactions where people can interact anytime they want and whenever they are online.

4) Stylistic domain

Stylistic domain concerns the stylistic aspects of interaction such as choices of tones like whether the interactants choose to be serious or joking in conveying their messages, and the use of address terms and honorifics. These stylistic aspects when managed appropriately can be strategies to manage rapport and/or avoid the rapport threatening behaviours in social media interactions.

5) Non-verbal domain

Non-verbal domain relates to non-verbal aspects of an interaction such as proxemics, gestures, eye contact and other body movements. These non-verbal aspects need to be concerned in order to make a harmonious relation in an interaction. However, since gestures, eye contact and other body movements cannot be clearly seen in social media interaction, this domain will not be applied as a strategy in social media interaction.

d. Rapport Management Orientation

Rapport orientation is a key factor to the rapport management. There are two fundamental orientations that have to be noticed: support of one's own face needs, sociality rights and interactional goals, and support of the other person's. Spencer-Oatey suggests that speakers can hold any of the following four types of rapport orientation that she proposes:

- 1) Rapport enhancement orientation: a desire to strengthen or enhance harmonious relations between the interlocutors.
- 2) Rapport maintenance orientation: a desire to maintain or protect harmonious relations between the interlocutors.
- 3) Rapport neglect orientation: a lack of concern or interest in the quality of relations between the interlocutors (perhaps because a focus on self).
- 4) Rapport challenge orientation: a desire to challenge or impair harmonious relations between the interlocutors.

The rapport orientation is important when analyzing the strategies in managing rapport because it determines whether the participants of an interaction will do rapport threatening behavior or will apply rapport management strategies to mitigate the rapport threat.

2.2.2 Cyberpragmatics and Social Media

a. Cyberpragmatics

The term cyberpragmatics was firstly initiated by Yus in 2001. He defines Cyberpragmatics as the application of pragmatics on the internet users' interactions, specifically cognitive pragmatics and, within that, relevance theory (Yus, 2011). Cyberpragmatics' main interest is the analysis of how information is produced and interpreted within the internet environment. It is also interested in how 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 (Yus, 2017). 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. It is further classified that foundations of cyberpragmatics are made up of the following hypotheses:

1. On the internet, the 'addresser users' have communicative intentions and devise their utterances with the expectation that these intentions

will end up being relevant to the other users and that their utterances will be interpreted correctly.

2. Internet users use inferential strategies when they interpret messages on the net, and these do not differ from the ones used for the comprehension of utterances in oral conversations shaped by physical co-presence.

3. Internet users expect their interlocutors to be able to access the necessary amount of contextual information that will allow them to arrive at a correct interpretation of their utterances.

4. The attribute of the different cyber media (chat rooms, e-mail, messenger, web pages, social networking sites and so on) influence the quality of the user's access to contextual information, the amount of information obtained, the interpretation selected, the cognitive effects derived, and the mental effort involved in obtaining these effects (Yus, 2017, p. 14). The following figure summarizes these hypothesis/claims;

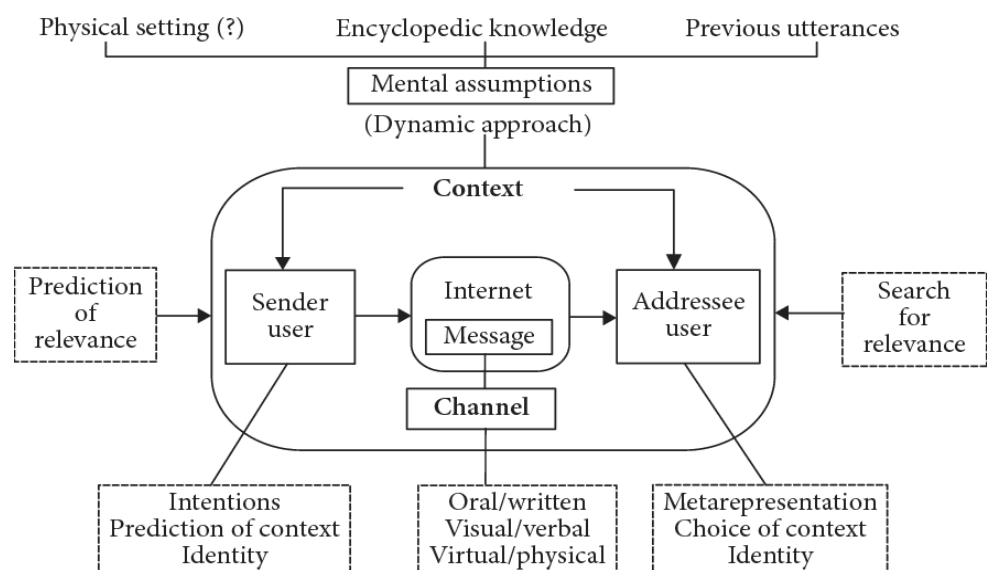


Figure 2.2. Internet-mediated communication according to Cyberpragmatics

The figure shows that communicative exchanges that take place among internet users using various media available are analyzed in cyberpragmatics. It further shows that sender user has prediction that his or her interlocutor(s) will draw relevant conclusions by having the necessary contextual information and at the same time, addressee user should search for relevance in the utterances (in form of messages, comments, videos, pictures, etc.) that they read, listen, or watch. Thus, we can see that context has an important role in the production and interpretation of information in online interactions. However, considering the social media interactions that are accessed by a number of people from different background, various cultural upbringing, different attitudes, different perspective on a number of things, these hypotheses can be either correct or vague since sometimes people post something on their social media to get attention by other users and to get likes and/or responses from others in the form of emoji or comments replying to the post. But other times, people just say something or post anything on the internet without considering whether their messages are interpreted correctly by others because all they need is their post to be seen or read by their social media friends and other people (if they set it to 'public') to get some likes or to puzzle the readers so they can interpret it based on their own preference. Sometimes this kind of post is just trivial things and useless information. In order to avoid this, Yus

argues that there are several contextual constraints to take into account when discussing user to user communication as follows:

1. Degree of mutual knowledge existing between interlocutors
2. Known addressee vs anonymous addressee and casual conversation vs topic-focused conversations
3. Familiarity with topics, jargons and expected background knowledge of topics
4. Reason for the act of communication
5. Personal traits, personality and sociality.

b. 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 everyday with some of them are as follows:

- Social media and online networking have changed the traditional way of communicating in social interaction to the social activities that are brought to the web.
- Online entertainment such as gaming, video and music streaming, video and photo sharing, and online dating have been accessed by people particularly the youth.
- Online marketing has increased significantly as internet is the most vital part of today's business activities, e.g. advertising is shown a

big growth as more business people allocate their budget to boost their business on the web.

- Immense information exchange via internet and big growth of consumer accessibility to the information has changed the traditional business activities where both companies and consumers meet their needs through online activity.
- The immense use of mobile devices such as mobile phones and computer tablets increases the number of mobile connection and online interactions on the web.

Social media is one of the most used features in this online or web-based application on internet. Social media in today's electronic media empowers individuals by using internet and web-based applications to connect and interact in a new and easy way which facilitates the formation of big virtual communities which were impossible before (Weaver and Morrison, 2008).

However, social media is changing our concept of the word 'friend' by affecting our interpersonal interactions even though the people's concept of 'friend' might not have changed a lot. Social media is restructuring our thoughts of relationships. It is criticized that might have a long list of friends in social media who have never met or may never meet them, however he/she believes that this virtual and distant friendship can serve many functions (Karimi, 2013).

The advancement of technology and the evolution of internet web systems have further improved and sustained social relationships

through social community systems by the use of social media. People, as the social media users, have lots of necessities and activities that they feel to be important to be satisfied and done by making use of social media. This diversity of users' needs in social media cannot be easily fulfilled. Low connection, old fashioned devices and outdated applications, irresponsible users, and the unguaranteed privacy and trust can be some problems for those needs to be fulfilled. Thus, Tolstrup and Skouby (2017) list some important elements of social media as follows;

- The system quality: Underlying technology which facilitates interpersonal interactions and transparency of data flow,
- A full infrastructure: available applications and services on popular devices and different networks,
- Rich user experience: The users' control on content, fun interaction mechanisms and the value added by the system,
- Privacy and trust: users need to interact in an environment which promise privacy and provide a trustful information flow.

By having this set of elements, it is expected that people's needs in social media uses can be satisfyingly fulfilled.

b.1. Popular Social Media Applications or Web Pages

There are a number of social media websites and applications for mobile devices that people can freely download to use and access

without any extra payment. This service increases every year as the increase of the number of social media users. Social media users access these applications or websites with the same goals which are to meet new people who share the same idea and interest and to make new connections with other people or other social groups from other places in the same or different city and even those from different countries. The most popular social media applications and websites that mostly accessed by the users are as follows:

Facebook

Facebook is a social media website created by Mark Zuckerberg. It was officially launched in February 2004 and has been gaining popularity faster than other social media services. Facebook until this dissertation is written is still the most widely used social media platform with 2.853 billion active users as of July 2021 (Kemp on Datareportal.com, 2021). The top four countries with the most users of the platform are Brazil, Indonesia, United States and India with more than 100 million Facebook users. Facebook is accessed daily by its users with their personal computer, computer tablet and even smartphone with internet connection. The users can post their pictures, photos, videos or post their statuses, share some stories, articles, news, etc and these posts can be seen by the users' friends and other

Facebook users which in turn can comment or give some responses to the posts.

However, we can still see that there are a number of debates, hate speeches, and insults made by the users which are addressed to others. For this reason, Facebook has set some rules for their users in order to keep the conversation taken place on the platform to be well conducted. This set of rules is what they call Facebook community standards. The community standards are the guide for the users on what is allowed and what is not on Facebook. The policy to issue these community standards are based on the feedback from their community and the experts of related fields.

Instagram

Instagram is a social media platform that provides photo and video sharing for its users. Instagram allows the users to post their photos and short videos and then they can edit them based on their preferences. Instagram is mainly accessed through mobile phones or computer tablets by installing the app to those devices. It can also be installed to personal computer, but most people access it through their mobile app. The users do not only post their photos or videos, but they can add some captions onto their posts or use hashtags to link their posts with other similar posts with the same hashtag. Other users who see or watch the posts can give some responses to the posts by commenting to the posts or giving likes by pressing the heart icon if they

like them. This social media platform was firstly started by Systrom and Krieger in October 2010 but was then bought by Facebook in 2012. As of July 2021, the users of Instagram are about one billion active users worldwide and it makes the social media platform become one of the most popular social media networks in the world. This social media platform is not only used for personal social media activity but now is used by a number of business platforms, by using Instagram for business, from small-scale business like home bakery to some bigger ones like minimarket or convenience store, restaurants and coffee shop, video streaming services and many more.

YouTube

YouTube is a video streaming platform that started their activities in 2005. As a video streaming service, YouTube allows people to watch a huge number of videos and clips. There is a lot of videos that people can find and watch on YouTube such as cartoons, nursery rhymes, movies, music clips, news, tutorial videos, and even reviews of products, services, household goods and appliances and many more. People can also download the videos from YouTube by using third party application and website, but it is not recommended and allowed by YouTube since it may infringe the copyright. However, YouTube allow people to download their videos to watch them offline, but the videos are stored in their YouTube library of their account and are not saved to their computer or smartphone. People can make an account so they can

upload their own videos to YouTube and can share the videos to others. Recently, many people choose to be a content creator on YouTube by uploading their videos and share them to get subscriptions and viewers. These content creators are better known as YouTubers who earn some money from YouTube based on the number of their subscribers and viewers of their videos.

Twitter

Twitter is micro blogging social media website that was established in July 2006 by Jack Dorsey. Twitter aimed to be the best real time information network connecting people to the information of common interest (Karimi, 2013). Twitter may not have as many users as other social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube but it is accessed by almost 400 million active users everyday making it one of the most popular social media platforms in the world. The shared information that the users post on Twitter is called Tweets and it should be less than 140 characters long and this makes the sharing information on Twitter is arguably quicker than any other social media platforms. Twitter is the first social media platform that popularizes the use of hashtag to specify certain content of phrase in their users' tweets. The users can give their posts the hashtag by adding a '#' symbol at the beginning of unbroken word or phrase. When this hashtag symbol is

used in a Tweet, it becomes linked to all of the other Tweets that include in it.

The followings are the tables showing the percentage of people using social media platforms in 2021;

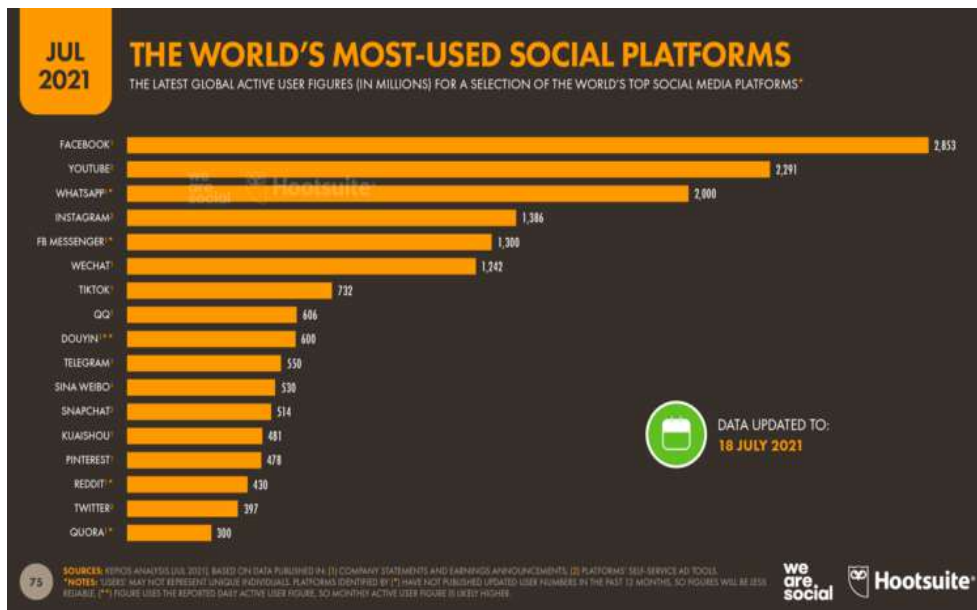


Figure 2.3. Percentage of people using social media in July 2021
 (Taken from <https://datareportal/social-media-users>)

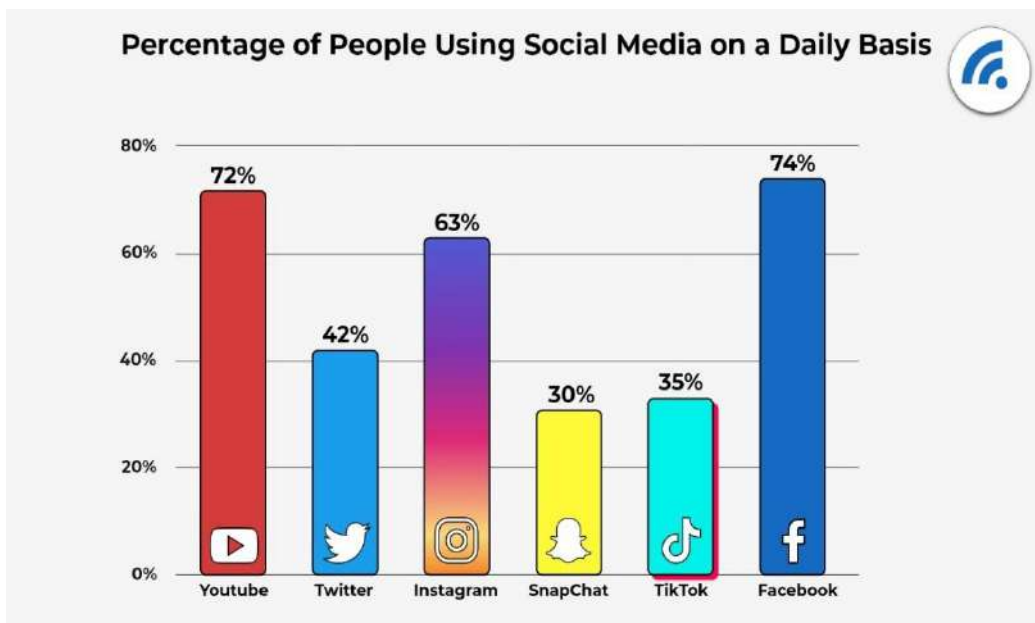


Figure 2.4. Percentage of people using social media in 2021 in America
 (Taken from <https://www.broadbandsearch.net/blog/social-media-facts-statistics>)

From the figures, we can see that Facebook is the most used social media platform in United States of America and also the most popular social media in the world followed by YouTube, WhatsApp and Instagram respectively. Twitter, however, is quite popular in America but has less than 400 million active users worldwide indicating that it is not as popular in other countries as it is in America.

b.2. Community Standards set by the social media applications

The interactions in social media are openly going straightforward and explicit. People as the users can post some comments without any restraints and without considering whether they are appropriate or not. Thus, the social media services feel that they need to set certain rules for the users when they want to post or make some comments for certain posts. These rules are made to keep the interactions on the social media to be safe from anything that is harmful for the users such as hate speech, harassment, human rights violation and so on. These rules outline what is and is not allowed to be posted on the social media page. There are different terms of this set of rules for each social media service or application like community standards in Facebook, community guidelines in Instagram, community guidelines and policies in YouTube and The Twitter rules and policies in Twitter.

The social media services feel that it is important for them to make their pages to be a place where people feel safe to communicate

so they seriously concern with anything that may disrupt the harmony of the interactions on their services. For example, the community standards of Facebook require the posts and comments posted on the page to have the four values which are authenticity, safety, privacy, and dignity. The authenticity value urges the content of the posts to be authentic so those who post them really have to represent who they really are and what they are doing. The safety value requires the users to avoid expression that threatens people, has the potential to intimidate, exclude or silence others. Privacy gives the freedom to the users to be themselves and to choose how and when to share on Facebook and to connect more easily. The final value, dignity, expects that the users of Facebook to respect the dignity of others by not harassing or degrading others. The other social media services or applications have somewhat similar rules but with some specific regulations for their own services. For instance, since Instagram is a social media service that allows people to only post photos and videos, they urge the users not to post photos and videos that have nudity content and other inappropriate content. Another example is the content on YouTube where videos which show explicit nudity or sexual content will be taken down. Other contents that may be dangerous for those who see them like excessive violence, suicide, hate speech and even fraud and scam activities will be taken down as well as the videos that infringe copyright.

Despite the strict rules and the consequences to the users who violate them, unfortunately, these rules are sometimes ignored by social media users. There are still some contents and comments that harass other people or certain group of people or any other violation. This happens because sometimes the social media services need the users who feel offended or think certain contents to be inappropriate to report the contents so when this kind of content is not reported, it will stay on the page and can be seen or read by many people unless the content is extremely violating the community standards or guidelines like the contents with explicit nudity, suicide and excessive violence.

2.2.3 Conceptual Framework

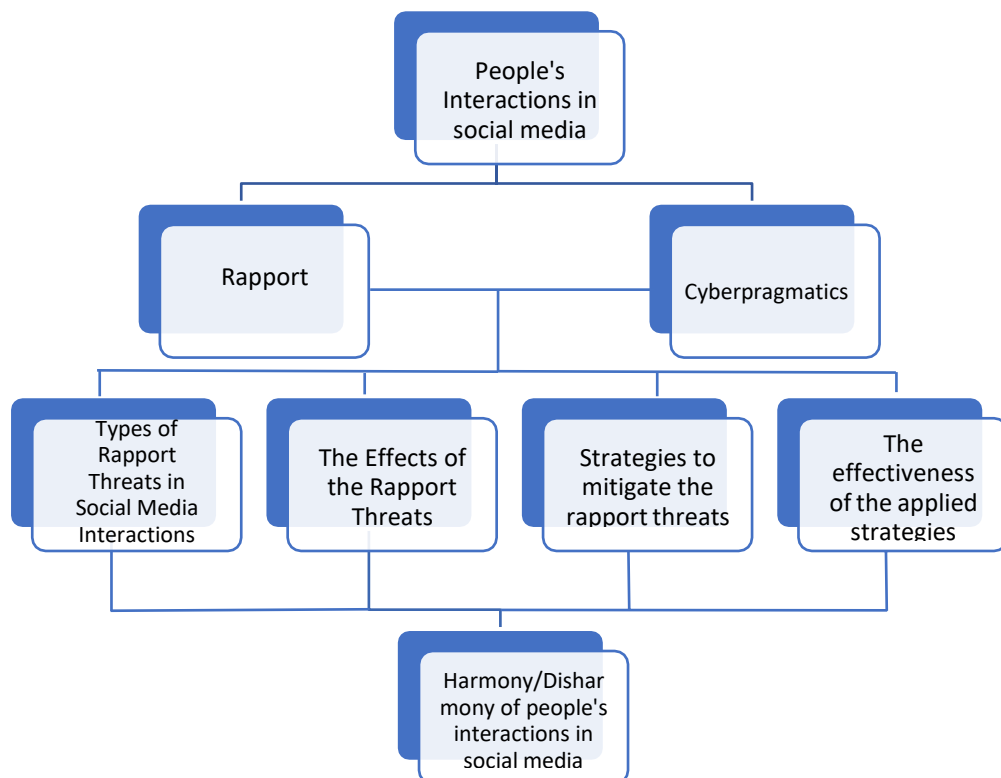


Figure 2.5. Conceptual Framework