

A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINING SPEECH ACTS IN INDONESIAN AND JAPANESE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

Today's digital communication enables individuals to easily express their opinions and thoughts, including lodging complaints via social media. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the differences in complaining speech acts between Japanese and Indonesian in digital communication. This study employed a qualitative approach with a contrastive analysis method. Data consisting of utterances containing complaining speech acts in Indonesian and Japanese were collected from the social media platform X. The findings indicate that although both Indonesia and Japan are classified as high-context cultures, Indonesian speakers tend to express complaints more directly and explicitly, often accompanied by emotional expressions. Conversely, Japanese speakers tend to utilize indirect complaining speech act strategies through implicit expressions. These differences reflect the distinct politeness norms and cultural values inherent in both languages. Consequently, it can be concluded that culture plays a vital role in shaping complaint strategies within digital communication.

Keywords: complaining speech acts, digital communication, pragmatics, contrastive analysis, Indonesian and Japanese languages

Introduction

The contemporary digital landscape has fundamentally altered the trajectory of human interaction. The proliferation of computer – mediated communication (CMC) including social networking sites, online forums, and instant messaging utilities—provides unprecedented avenues for individuals to articulate psychological states, manifest emotions, and seek expansive social support systems rapidly and globally (Turkle, 2011). Consequently, communicative dynamics once constrained by spatial and temporal parameters have intensified, engaging a broader and more heterogeneous audience. Within this evolving communicative ecology, language transcends its rudimentary transactional function, operating instead as a sophisticated mechanism for psychological catharsis and digital self-presentation.

In linguistics, the empirical manifestation of language within authentic communicative contexts falls under the purview of pragmatics. This discipline posits that the pragmatic weight of an utterance is determined not merely by its intrinsic syntactic structure, but is heavily contingent upon situational contexts, interpersonal dynamics, and overarching illocutionary objectives (Yule, 1996). A foundational pillar within this domain is speech act theory, which conceptualizes utterances as functional units of communication wherein actions are performed via speech (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). These illocutionary forces encompass a spectrum of expressive functions, ranging from apologies to complaints.

Among expressive speech acts, complaining is one of the most pervasive phenomena observable within virtual

spaces. Pragmatically, a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, resentment, or disapproval regarding an unfavorable state of affairs or an accountable agent (Trosborg, 1995). Depending on the social distance between interlocutors and the speaker's perceived degree of discursive freedom, complaints vary from direct to implicit strategies. Because complaining inherently functions as a face-threatening act (FTA), it carries a high potential to jeopardize the social face of the hearer and induce interpersonal friction (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The linguistic realization of grievances is therefore deeply socio-culturally conditioned, reflecting the normative constraints of the environment in which the speaker was socialized.

Socio-cultural frameworks dictate behavioral codes, modulating lexical selection and interactional styles. Hall (1976) dichotomized cultural communication into low-context and high-context typologies. In low-context orientations, information is embedded primarily in the explicit linguistic code. Conversely, high-context paradigms prioritize relational harmony, relying heavily on contextual cues and implicit utterances, even when expressing grievances. Structurally, Kaplan (1966) conceptualized low-context rhetoric as a linear progression, whereas high-context communication exhibits a spiral trajectory. Japan is widely documented as a prototypical high-context culture characterized by an inclination toward indirectness and ellipsis when managing complaints. Indonesia, while also valuing communal politeness, demonstrates greater pragmatic flexibility. These distinct cultural ethos are highly likely to differentiate the pragmatic choices made by both speech communities.

Beyond cultural determinants, the architecture of digital spaces exerts a profound influence on the externalization of thought. Virtual mediums afford a

liberated, disinhibited, and frequently anonymous environment, enabling speakers to employ complaint strategies that deviate significantly from face-to-face constraints (Turkle, 2011). Although certain online cohorts exhibit hyper-expressive or highly critical behaviors, traditional cultural values continuously undercurrent these digital interactional patterns. Examining the intersection of socio-cultural heritage and digital affordances in molding complaint speech acts thus constitutes a compelling locus of inquiry.

In her seminal treatise *Interlanguage Pragmatics*, Anna Trosborg (1995) operationalizes a complaint as an expressive act whereby a speaker conveys resentment or disapproval regarding an action or situation that negatively impacts their well-being. Trosborg systematizes complaints into a continuum of four primary analytical strategies predicated on the degree of directness: implicit complaints, expressions of annoyance, accusations, and blame.

While the literature on expressive speech acts boasts extensive documentation, contrastive cross-cultural studies focusing on spontaneous digital corpora remain sparse. For instance, Oktavia et al. (2026) conducted a contrastive pragmatic analysis between Japanese and a regional Indonesian language (the Rokan Hulu Malay dialect). Utilizing Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework, their study elucidated how cultural communication norms modulate the linguistic realization and politeness strategies of imperative speech acts in both languages. However, their research relied heavily on scripted cinematic dialogues. To date, empirical studies comparing the pragmatic strategies of complaining in Indonesian and Japanese utilizing authentic, spontaneous social media corpora remain severely underrepresented. Addressing this empirical void, this study formulates two primary objectives:

1. To identify and map the structural typologies of complaining speech acts utilized within computer-mediated communication in Japanese and Indonesian, evaluated through the theoretical lens of Trosborg's (1995) taxonomy.
2. To contrastively examine the cross-cultural similarities and divergences in the deployment of these complaint strategies between Japanese and Indonesian digital interlocutors.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a contrastive analysis design to compare complaint speech acts in Indonesian and Japanese digital communication. The research data consist of posts from the X platform that contain expressions of complaint, comprising 20 data points in Indonesian and 20 data points in Japanese. Data collection was conducted utilizing a documentation technique via searches with keywords relevant to expressions of complaint. The selected data consist of posts that demonstrate both explicit and implicit dissatisfaction.

The instrument utilized in this study is the human instrument. Data analysis was performed by identifying the forms and strategies of complaint speech acts based on Trosborg's (1995) theory, and subsequently comparing the strategic tendencies between the two languages. The results of the analysis are presented descriptively, emphasizing the differences and similarities in the complaint patterns found.

Results & Discussion

This section presents the findings and discussion of the complaint strategies used by Indonesian and Japanese netizens on social media. Based on Trosborg's (1995) framework, a total of 20 complaint tweets were analyzed. To answer the research objectives, the results are visualized in Figure 1, followed by a detailed analysis of

each complaint type, and a comprehensive comparison of their similarities and differences.

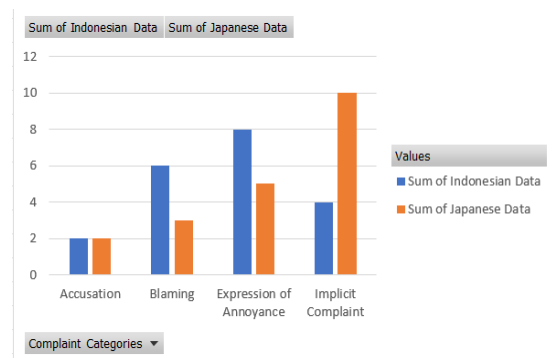


Figure 1. Distribution of Complaint Categories between Indonesian and Japanese Tweets

As shown in Figure 1, Trosborg's (1995) four main categories of complaint strategies appear in both datasets. However, their distributions show a striking contrast in how Indonesian and Japanese netizens express their dissatisfaction in the digital realm. Based on observations and the results of data collection from social media X, four types of complaints were found according to Trosborg's theory (1995) from both Japanese and Indonesian speakers, including:

No Explicit Reproach

According to Trosborg (1995), an no explicit reproach is a type of indirect complaint where the complainer does not directly mention that there is a problem or a guilty party. This strategy is used to preserve the listener's feelings. It usually takes the form of an indirect innuendo. The complainer implicitly conveys the discomfort they feel. Out of 20 Japanese data, there are 10 speakers (50%), while for Indonesian speakers, there are 4 speakers (20%).

a. Japanese Data

Data 1 (Tweet X, June 1, 2026)

くそ、台風6号の事を嵐日本縦断ツアーとか言うのズルいだろ (*Kuso, taifu 6-*

gō no koto o arashi nihonjūdan tsuā toka iu no zuru idaro; 'Damn, calling Typhoon No. 6 a storm tour across Japan vertically is totally unfair, isn't it?').

Analysis: The impending Typhoon No. 6 threatens Japan, yet the poster refrains from direct complaints like "Typhoons are scary." Instead, the user masks their anxiety using sarcasm and humor to avoid offending any party.

Data 2 (Tweet X, June 2, 2026)

仕事で一回のミスで色んな人に迷惑かけたくないから、逐一確認取るようにしてる。これって上の立場の方から見れば何回も確認とってきて面倒くさい奴って思われてるのかな... (*Shigoto de ikkai no misu de iron'na hito ni meiwaku kaketakunaikara, chikuichi kakunin toru yō ni shi teru. Kore tte ue no tachiba no kata kara mireba nankai mo kakunin totte kite mendōkusai yatsu tte omowa re teru no ka na...*; 'I try to double-check everything at work so I don't cause trouble... I wonder if higher-ups think I'm an annoying person who keeps confirming things...'). **Analysis:** The poster focuses on internal anxiety regarding a workplace dilemma—wanting to be meticulous but fearing being perceived as a nuisance. This stress is conveyed subtly through a rhetorical question, implicitly communicating that the environment is mentally exhausting.

Data 3 (Tweet X, June 5, 2026)

え.....どうしよう..... がうは椎茸を生で食べてしまった.....あとから調べたらやばいらしいトラ.....ふえ..... (*E...dōshi-yō..... ga u wa shītake o namade tabeteshimatta..... ato kara shirabetara yabairashī tora..... fu ~e.....*; 'Uh... what should I do... Oh no, I ended up eating raw shiitake... After checking, it turns out to be really dangerous... Fweh...'). **Analysis:** This tweet expresses panic and regret over consuming raw shiitake mushrooms. Lacking an external target, this self-disappointment qualifies as an implicit complaint, masking potential physical

discomfort behind the sudden realization of the food's danger.

b. Indonesian Data

Data 1 (Tweet X, June 5, 2026)

"Tiap hari anak tetangga main kerumah sampe malem, anaknya 3. Katanya dirumah gak punya tv, suka curhat katanya kalo sekolah suka nggak bekel, kadang makan sama garem. kadang suka kesel tiap hari disini tapi kasian" ('Every day the neighbor's three kids play at my house until late... Sometimes it gets annoying, but I feel sorry for them'). **Analysis:** The core disruption of neighbors staying late is communicated vaguely. The writer avoids framing this as an outright violation of boundaries and deliberately softens the complaint by expressing empathy at the end.

Data 2 (Tweet X, May 24, 2026)

"Kenalan banyak, tp kagak punya temen, pahamkan lu pada" ('Have a lot of acquaintances, but no friends, you all get it, right?').

Analysis: The poster encapsulates social dissatisfaction within the paradox of having acquaintances but no friends. Instead of an overt declaration of loneliness, the user challenges the readers to deduce the situation indirectly without blaming any external entity.

Data 3 (Tweet X, June 4, 2026)

"Lahir di keluarga yang nggak pernah ngajarin buat bisa terbuka ataupun ngeluh, ga disupport, ga punya tempat buat cerita, sampe sekarang semuanya dipendam sendiri, kadang sakit pun ga berani ngomong is another level of pain." ('Being born into a family that never taught me to be open... keeping everything to myself... is another level of pain.'). **Analysis:** Rather than expressing outward resentment, the author presents the complaint as a profound reflection. While "family" is mentioned, the writer leaves them anonymous, implicitly

critiquing the restrictive environment they had to survive in.

Expression of Annoyance

According to Trosborg (1995), an expression of annoyance is a complaint uttered by someone experiencing disappointment, dissatisfaction, or discomfort regarding their surrounding situation without directly blaming another individual. Out of 20 Japanese data, 5 speakers (25%) utilized this strategy, whereas 8 Indonesian speakers (40%) opted for it.

a. Japanese Data

Data 1 (Tweet X, June 2, 2026)

なんで半年経たないと有給もらえないんですか!? (*Nande hantoshi tatanaito yūkyū moraenai ndesu ka!?*; 'Why do I have to wait six months just to get paid leave?!').

Analysis: The poster explicitly identifies the source of irritation: the regulation requiring six months of employment before receiving annual leave. Despite the harsh tone, the complaint does not directly point at or blame a specific party.

Data 2 (Tweet X, May 28, 2026)

ガチ働きたくない まじで何とかしてネットで金稼ぎたいガチで

(*Gachi hatarakitakunaimajide nantoka shite nettode-kin kasegitai gachi de*; 'Honestly don't want to work. Seriously want to find a way to make money online, for real.').

Analysis: The user explicitly states the source of objection: the obligation to work (*hatarakitakunai*). The absence of metaphors or satire excludes it from implicit complaints, yet the lack of explicit external targets prevents it from being categorized as blaming.

Data 3 (Tweet X, April 3, 2026)

マッチングアプリやってるけどじぶん
が典型的な高望み売れ残り女で死ぬ
でもどうでもいいひとと一緒に住むなら
孤独死したいよお... (*Matchinguapuri
yatterukedoji bun ga tenkei-tekina
takanozomi urenokori on'na de shinu demo
dō demo ī hito to isshonisumunara kodoku-
shi shitai yo o...*; 'Dating apps again, but I
am a typical leftover woman with sky-high
standards, I'll die. But rather than living
with an insignificant person, I'd rather die
lonely...'). **Analysis:** The poster clearly
describes a personal predicament: the harsh
reality of modern dating apps where they
feel trapped between high personal
standards (*takanozomi*) and fear of the
future. The text contains no metaphors but
refrains from explicitly blaming external
parties.

b. Indonesian Data

Data 1 (Tweet X, June 4, 2026)

“Kerja cari uang, libur sehari cuma buat
cuci baju trs istirahat capeknya blm ilang
eh besoknya udah kerja lagi” ('Working to
earn money, one day off is only for doing
laundry and resting, before the exhaustion
fades, boom, work again the next day').

Analysis: The writer transparently details a
grueling routine. The clear source of
complaint is the brief weekend duration
relative to the total workload. The text
conveys an explicit grievance without
casting blame on any specific party.

Data 2 (Tweet X, September 25, 2025)

“STOP NORMALIZING ADMIN QRIS 500
PERAK ARRHGHHHHD SEBEL” ('Stop
normalizing the 500 rupiah QRIS admin
fee, arrgh, so annoying'). **Analysis:** The
tweet expresses overt annoyance toward
electronic payment admin fees. The
grievance is delivered without metaphors,
yet it avoids explicitly placing the blame on
any specific institution or individual.

Data 3 (Tweet X, June 1, 2026)

“*Manipulatif banget sialan*” ('So manipulative, damn it'). **Analysis:** The text registers an open protest against manipulative behavior. While the discomfort is stated flatly without metaphors, no particular entity is overtly blamed in the text.

Berikut adalah hasil terjemahan untuk kategori ketiga dengan format ringkas, padat, dan formal yang sama agar konsisten dan langsung siap dimasukkan ke dalam draf naskah jurnal ilmiah kamu:

Accusation

According to Trosborg (1995), an accusation is a relatively explicit or direct type of complaint. At this stage, the speaker begins to assign blame or point to another party as the responsible entity, though it is not yet as severe as the blaming stage. Out of 20 Japanese data, 2 speakers (10%) utilized this strategy, while 2 Indonesian speakers (10%) opted for it.

a. Japanese Data

Data 1 (Tweet X, June 5, 2026)

妹がスマホ覗き見してくる のぞき見防止フィルムなんだけど、わざわざ見える角度まで移動して見てくる (*Imōto ga sumaho nozoki mi shite kuru. nozoki mi bōshi firumuna ndakedo, wazawaza mieru kakudo made idō shite mitekuru*; 'My younger sister keeps peeking at my phone screen. Even though I use an anti-peek film, she deliberately moves to an angle where it is visible just to peek'). **Analysis:** The writer directly points to their younger sister as the violator of privacy and clearly describes the annoying action. The user expresses discomfort through this complaint but stops short of using harsh language or condemning the sister's behavior entirely.

Data 2 (Tweet X, June 5, 2026)

クラスの友達1人マジでヤバいんだけど。人を勝手にこっそり写真撮っててほんと無理。イラつくし最悪。あれ、自分で犯罪だって分かってんのかな? (*Kurasu no tomodachi hitori majide yabai ndakedo. Hito o katte ni kossori shashin tottete honto muri. Iratsuku shi saiaku. Are, jibun de hanzai datte wakatten no ka na?*; 'There is this one classmate who is seriously awful. They secretly take photos of people without permission, I really can't stand it. It's irritating and the absolute worst. I wonder if they even realize that it is a criminal act?'). **Analysis:** The text clearly accuses an external individual—specifically a classmate—of being "awful" for taking photos without permission, subsequently questioning their morality. This remains categorized as an accusation rather than full blaming because the evaluation is framed around a question regarding the individual's moral awareness.

b. Indonesian Data

Data 1 (Tweet X, June 5, 2026)

“*Kenapa sialan bgttt rekan kerjaaaa yang semaunya, sokkk seniorrr, ga bisa liat orang santai dikitt. nyebelin banget sih, udahhh mana kalo di belakang bos kerja semaunya giliran di depan bos sok berasa paling kerjaaaa. Kenapa sih bos baik, rekan kerja gini*” ('Why are my co-workers so damn arbitrary, acting all senior, can't stand seeing someone relax even a bit. So annoying, especially when they slack off behind the boss's back but pretend to work the hardest in front of the boss. Why is the boss good but the co-workers are like this?'). **Analysis:** The writer does not complain about the job description or the office system abstractly, but instead targets their frustration directly at "co-workers." Although no specific names are mentioned, the target is localized and identifiable. The grievance is framed as micro-criticism rather than massive condemnation, placing

it within the accusation category rather than blaming.

Data 2 (Tweet X, June 5, 2026)

“PENULIS SIALAN SUMPAH GUE BENCI BANGET” ('DAMN WRITER I SWEAR I HATE YOU SO MUCH'). **Analysis:** The phrase "DAMN WRITER" demonstrates that the poster is directly confronting the creator, holding them responsible for the negative emotions, disappointment, or hatred being felt. However, due to the absence of a deeper, explicit moral judgment, the statement remains classified as an accusation rather than blaming.

Blame

According to Trosborg (1995), blame represents the most severe level of complaint. The complainer does not merely accuse but also passes negative moral judgments, reprimands, or condemns the actions of the responsible party. Out of 20 Japanese data, 3 speakers (15%) utilized this strategy, whereas 6 Indonesian speakers (30%) opted for it.

a. Japanese Data

Data 1 (Tweet X, June 4, 2026)

私も、市民に嫌な事ばかりする政府の有料会員になりたくないの、税金払いたくないんです (*Watashi mo, shimin ni iyana koto bakari suru seifu no yūryō kaiin ni naritakunainode, zeikin haraitakunaindesu*; 'I also don't want to become a paid member of a government that does nothing but annoy its citizens, which is why I don't want to pay taxes.'). **Analysis:** The poster does not merely complain about high taxes (an Expression of Annoyance). Instead, the user passes a negative moral judgment on the government's performance, stating it "does nothing but cause trouble for its citizens" (*shimin ni iya na koto bakari suru*). The target of the complaint is explicitly the government, followed by a

defiant stance: "which is why I don't want to pay taxes."

Data 2 (Tweet X, June 2, 2026)

台風直撃で学生は学校休校のところが多いのに、社会人になると何の連絡もなくて命より会社の利益優先なのやばい (*Taifū chokugeki de gakusei wa gakkō kyūkō no tokoro ga ōi no ni, shakai hito ni naru to nani no renraku mo nakute inochi yori kaisha no rieki yūsen'na no yabai*; 'Even though many schools are closed due to being directly hit by the typhoon, it is appalling that working adults receive no notification at all, prioritizing corporate profit over human life.'). **Analysis:** The writer bluntly judges the company's decision not to grant leave to its employees as "appalling/insane" (*yabai*). This is because the company is perceived to trade employee safety for monetary gain (*inochi yori kaisha no rieki yūsen*—prioritizing company profit over life).

Data 3 (Tweet X, June 4, 2026)

生活保護の人が、子供作るのはやばいだろ。まず自分を養えるようになってから子供作れよ (*Seikatsu hogo no hito ga, kodomo tsukuru no wa yabaidaro. Mazu jibun o yashinaeru yō ni natte kara kodomo tsukureyo*; 'It is terrible for people on social welfare to have children. They should only have children after they are able to support themselves first.'). **Analysis:** The author does not vaguely complain (Implicit) or express a general dissatisfaction regarding the welfare system. The writer specifically targets a distinct group, namely recipients of *seikatsu hogo* (social welfare) who choose to have children. The sentence concludes with a stern directive ("They should..."), which is a defining characteristic of blame.

b. Indonesian Data

Data 1 (Tweet X, June 4, 2026)

“Saking jelek dan toxic-nya work environment indo, pekerja tuh sampai

abstrak atau ga tahu tolak ukur tentang berapa layakannya upah yg harus mereka terima." ('Because the Indonesian work environment is so bad and toxic, workers are left clueless or lack a benchmark regarding how much wages they deserve to receive.'). **Analysis:** The writer boldly and explicitly stigmatizes the national working environment using the phrase "so bad and toxic." This constitutes a moral judgment against a socio-economic system. The statement serves as a critical argument that blames the structure of the Indonesian work environment as the root cause of workers' ignorance regarding their own value. Explicitly framing a party as inherently bad is a primary feature of blame.

Data 2 (Tweet X, June 5, 2026)

"Saling nguatn ya ges. karena yang peduli sama rakyat ya rakyat itu sendiri, pemerintah kita gak peduli." ('Let's support each other, guys. Because the only ones who care about the people are the people themselves; our government does not care.'). **Analysis:** The author passes a negative moral verdict on the government through the phrase "our government does not care." This statement judges the collective character and moral integrity of the government body. Furthermore, the claim that "the only ones who care about the people are the people themselves" reinforces a class dichotomy between the suffering citizens and the neglectful authorities, which is characteristic of sharp socio-political complaints grounded in moral condemnation.

Data 3 (Tweet X, June 5, 2026)

"pemerintah tuh buang-buang anggaran segede itu buat hal yg ga perlu, ga pernah nyesel kah?? gweh self reward jajan 50rb aja nyesel bgt." ('The government wastes such a massive budget on unnecessary things, do they never feel regret?? I feel so guilty just spending 50k on snacks as a self-reward.').

Analysis: The target of this complaint is highly explicit and specific, namely "the

government." The writer holds the state institution fully accountable and culpable for failing to prioritize the allocation of public funds.

Cross-Cultural Similarities in Digital Complaining Speech Acts

Qualitative analysis reveals that the fundamental similarity between the two linguistic communities lies in the utilization of digital media as a space for emotional catharsis. Both Indonesian (40%) and Japanese (25%) internet users exhibit a high frequency in the *Expression of Annoyance* category. In the digital era, the platform X (formerly Twitter) functions as a publicized private sphere, where both speech communities articulate grievances regarding interpersonal dysfunction, occupational burnout, and daily psychological stressors. Furthermore, within the *Accusation* category (10%), speakers from both nations uniformly bypass traditional linguistic politeness, opting for direct attack strategies when their privacy or material rights are acutely violated in physical spaces.

Cross-Cultural Differences in Digital Complaining Speech Acts

While both speech communities utilize digital platforms for emotional release, their underlying pragmatic approaches diverge significantly. The contrastive analysis reveals profound cross-cultural differences in conflict orientation, linguistic realization, and the strategies used to criticize authority.

1. Conflict Orientation: Externalization vs. Internalization

The Indonesian dataset is predominantly oriented toward a confrontational and external axis, characterized by a high incidence of *Expression of Annoyance* (40%) and *Blaming* (30%). Indonesian internet users consistently seek external agents—such as the government or specific

individuals—to hold accountable for their grievances. As argued by Pratama (2020), the contemporary digital landscape in Indonesia frequently fosters a unique breeding ground for cyber-aggression and highly confrontational behaviors. Consequently, Indonesian netizens tend to externalize their grievances through direct, emotionally charged expressions that define the standard pragmatic mechanism of digital complaining in this context.

Conversely, the Japanese dataset leans heavily toward a restorative and internal axis, dominated by Implicit Complaints (50%). In this paradigm, speakers mitigate conflict through self-blame strategies, such as lamenting their own circumstances, or by disguising their grievances to preserve social harmony.

2. Linguistic Realization: Explicit vs. Mitigated

Indonesian digital complaints frequently employ aggressive, bald-on-record strategies, utilizing macro-level swear words and pejoratives to signal the intensity of their frustration. In contrast, Japanese users rely on internal linguistic modifications, particularly ellipsis—leaving sentences hanging with conjunctions like *...kedo* (but) or *...ga* (however)—to achieve strategic ambiguity (*Aimai*). Additionally, the Japanese corpus shows a preference for passive sentence structures (*sarete*) to obscure the identity of the wrongdoer, functioning as a deliberate face-saving act.

This distinct linguistic mitigation and tendency to avoid overt friction strongly aligns with the concept of *wakimae* (discernment) proposed by Ide (1889). In Japanese socio-cultural pragmatics, *wakimae* dictates that speakers must continuously observe and adapt to social roles and situational constraints to maintain interpersonal harmony. Even within the relatively liberated and anonymous space of virtual interactions, Japanese netizens do not entirely abandon these deep-seated

cultural codes, opting for highly strategic ambiguity instead of direct confrontation.

3. Character of Authority Criticism: Blaming Strategies

When engaging in Blaming, Indonesian users tend to launch ad hominem attacks, targeting the personality or character of specific individuals. Pratama (2020) notes that this shift toward personal target localization often overrides traditional communal politeness values, allowing users to bypass standard social constraints when dealing with systemic or interpersonal frustrations online.

Conversely, Japanese users maintain formal linguistic registers (*Desu/Masu*) even when criticizing authority. Their grievances focus on systemic or regulatory failures on a collective, abstract level without directly attacking an individual's persona. This behavior further reinforces Ide's (1889) framework on linguistic politeness, demonstrating that for Japanese speakers, maintaining proper social discernment (*wakimae*) and collective face-saving remains paramount, even when launching structural critiques against higher authorities.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that while social media functions globally as a space for emotional catharsis, the linguistic realization of complaints remains deeply anchored in cultural socialization. The contrastive analysis reveals that Indonesian users lean heavily toward an externalized conflict axis, utilizing explicit expressions of annoyance (40%) and blame (30%) via bald-on-record strategies and ad hominem critiques. Conversely, the Japanese corpus reflects a high-context orientation, where 50% of users employ implicit complaints. Japanese interlocutors mitigate overt friction by internalizing conflict through self-blame, linguistic ellipsis (*...kedo*, *...ga*) to achieve strategic ambiguity (*Aimai*), and

formal registers (Desu/Masu) even when criticizing systemic failures. Theoretically, these findings prove that digital spaces do not eradicate ingrained cultural codes; rather, traditional communicative norms continue to dictate how individuals navigate social friction online. However, this study is limited by its exclusive reliance on text-based data from a single platform. Future research should expand this cross-cultural inquiry into emerging multimedia and video-centric platforms to examine how diverse digital affordances further modulate cultural complaint paradigms.

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