

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Review of Related Theories

1. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies how language is used and interpreted in communication by considering the context in which an utterance occurs. In pragmatics, meaning is not understood solely from the literal meaning of the words or sentences, but also from the relationship between the language used, the speaker's intention, the hearer's interpretation, and the surrounding context. Pragmatics is concerned with the study of language use and meaning in relation to particular contexts and communicative situations (Cutting & Fordyce, 2020). Therefore, pragmatic analysis helps explain how speakers convey intended meanings and how hearers interpret those meanings in interaction.

Context plays an important role in pragmatic interpretation because the same linguistic expression may convey different meanings depending on the situation in which it is used. The interpretation of an utterance can be influenced by several contextual factors, such as the participants involved, the topic of interaction, the purpose of communication, the relationship between the participants, and the situation in which the communication takes place. For example, an expression that appears positive on the surface may function as a compliment in one context but may be interpreted as sarcasm or mockery in another context. Thus, understanding an utterance requires attention not only to its linguistic form but also to the context and communicative purpose behind its use.

The development of digital technology has expanded the use of language into various online environments, including social media, messaging applications, discussion forums, and online games. Communication in these environments can involve distinctive interactional characteristics because participants may communicate through written messages while responding to ongoing activities and other participants. In

online gaming, for example, players may use text-based communication to exchange information, provide instructions, coordinate actions, respond to other players, express opinions, and evaluate events that occur during gameplay. These interactions demonstrate that pragmatic meaning is also relevant to understanding communication in digital environments.

Online game communication may involve cooperation as well as competition. In team-based competitive games, players are required to communicate within a limited period of time while responding to the actions and performance of other players. Such conditions can influence the way players express their intentions, opinions, criticism, disagreement, or emotional reactions. Consequently, the language used in online game interactions cannot always be understood solely from its literal meaning. The context of the interaction is necessary to determine what a particular message means and what communicative function it serves.

In the context of Mobile Legends: Bang Bang, players can communicate through the in-game text chat feature during matches. Through this feature, players may exchange messages related to gameplay, such as giving instructions, coordinating strategies, responding to teammates, commenting on actions, or expressing reactions toward other players. Because Ranked Mode involves competitive interaction, text messages may also contain criticism, disagreement, mockery, or other expressions that potentially threaten the social image of other players. Therefore, the interpretation of these messages requires consideration of their linguistic form, the context of the interaction, and the relationship between the participants.

This situation demonstrates the connection between pragmatics and impoliteness. Language in interaction is not always used to maintain harmonious relationships or to communicate information politely. Speakers may also use language to express dissatisfaction, criticize others, reject opinions, mock, insult, or negatively affect another participant's social image. Such uses of language are relevant to the study of impoliteness because

whether an utterance is considered impolite depends not only on the words used but also on the context, the interaction between participants, and the communicative meaning of the utterance.

Therefore, pragmatics provides an important theoretical foundation for this study because the identification and interpretation of impoliteness in Mobile Legends Ranked Mode text chats require an understanding of language use in context. In this study, the text chat utterances are analyzed by considering their linguistic forms, the context in which they occur, and their meanings within the interaction. This approach helps determine whether an utterance functions as an impolite expression rather than relying only on isolated words or expressions. The discussion of pragmatics consequently leads to the concept of impoliteness, which specifically examines the use of language that negatively affects interpersonal interaction and social relations. The following section discusses impoliteness and its relevance to the interactions among Mobile Legends players.

2. Impoliteness

Impoliteness is an important concept in the study of pragmatics that examines the use of language that may offend, insult, threaten, or damage an interlocutor's face during interaction. Impoliteness is not merely associated with the use of words that are considered rude or offensive, but also concerns how an utterance is used and interpreted within a particular communicative context. Therefore, an utterance cannot be categorized as impolite solely on the basis of its linguistic form. The context of the interaction, the relationship between the participants, and the interpretation of the utterance also need to be considered in determining whether an utterance constitutes impoliteness.

The concept of impoliteness is closely related to the notion of face proposed by (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Face refers to an individual's public self-image that they seek to maintain during social interaction. Brown and Levinson distinguish between positive face and negative face. Positive face refers to an individual's desire to be appreciated, accepted, and positively regarded by others. In contrast, negative face refers to an individual's desire

to have freedom of action and to be free from imposition or interference by others. When an utterance threatens either aspect of face, it may be perceived as impolite because it can attack the interlocutor's social identity or personal autonomy.

The study of impoliteness has developed by placing greater emphasis on how attacks on face are realized through language and how such attacks are interpreted within interaction. Culpeper, (1996) explains impoliteness as the use of communicative strategies that attack an interlocutor's face. He proposes five impoliteness strategies: bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, sarcasm or mock politeness, and withhold politeness. These five strategies provide a systematic framework for identifying how impoliteness is realized in interaction.

In the present study, Culpeper's (1996) theory is used as the primary framework for identifying the impoliteness strategies used by Mobile Legends players in Ranked Mode. However, this study analyzes only four strategies: bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock politeness. The strategy of withhold politeness is excluded because the data consist of naturally occurring written utterances found in the in-game text chat. This strategy concerns the absence of politeness when it is expected in a particular interaction, making it more difficult to identify objectively based solely on the written utterances available in the data. Therefore, limiting the analysis to these four strategies is considered appropriate to the characteristics of the data and the objectives of the study.

The development of information and communication technology has expanded the contexts in which language interaction takes place, including through digital communication. Digital communication enables individuals to interact through various media, such as social media, instant messaging applications, online forums, and online games. One important characteristic of text-based digital communication is the limited availability of nonverbal cues. In face-to-face communication, participants can use facial expressions,

gestures, and intonation to help convey and interpret the intended meaning of an utterance. In contrast, such information is not always available in text-based communication. Graham & Hardaker, (2017) explain that these characteristics of digital communication provide a distinct context for the study of impoliteness, as participants often have to interpret messages based on the available text and interactional context.

The limited availability of nonverbal cues in digital communication may affect the interpretation of an utterance. A written expression may be understood as criticism, mockery, sarcasm, or hostility depending on the context in which it is used and the relationship between the participants. Therefore, the study of impoliteness in digital communication needs to consider the interactional context, the relationship between participants, and the communicative purpose underlying the use of an utterance. Xie, (2020) demonstrates that the study of impoliteness in online interactions needs to take into account the social norms and communicative contexts that develop within internet-mediated environments.

Online gaming is one form of digital environment in which text-based communication can occur rapidly during interaction. In multiplayer games, players may communicate to exchange information, provide instructions, coordinate strategies, respond to other players' actions, and evaluate the game situation. Such communication takes place in an environment characterized by competition, cooperation among players, the need for rapid responses, and continuously changing game situations. These conditions may influence how players use language when interacting with one another.

Graham (2020) demonstrates that interactions in online gaming environments are influenced by particular communicative norms that can shape players' language use and interpersonal behavior. In competitive gaming situations, gameplay errors, unsuccessful strategies, differences in ability, or dissatisfaction with teammates' actions may trigger negative verbal responses. Under certain circumstances, these responses may take the form of criticism, reprimands, mockery, sarcasm, or blame, which may threaten

another player's *face*. Therefore, online gaming provides a relevant context for examining impoliteness in digital communication.

One online game that provides players with a text-based communication feature is Mobile Legends: Bang Bang. In this game, players can use the in-game text chat to provide information about the game situation, give instructions to team members, respond to other players' actions, and express reactions to events occurring during a match. In *Ranked Mode*, interaction takes place in a competitive environment because players seek to win matches and maintain or improve their rankings. Situations such as gameplay errors, unsuccessful strategies, differences in skill levels, or dissatisfaction with teammates' actions may provide contexts in which impolite utterances occur.

In this context, players may use language to criticize, reprimand, mock, ridicule, or blame other players. Such utterances may threaten or attack the interlocutor's face and can therefore be analyzed using Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies. Thus, in-game text chat in Mobile Legends Ranked Mode constitutes a relevant source of data for identifying how impoliteness strategies are realized in written communication within an online gaming environment.

In addition to identifying impoliteness strategies, this study also examines the functions served by impoliteness in interaction. Culpeper (2011) emphasizes that impoliteness needs to be understood in relation to the interactional context and the purpose of a particular linguistic behavior. An utterance that appears impolite does not necessarily serve the same function in every situation. Such an utterance may be used to express emotions, influence the behavior of an interlocutor, or create entertainment within a particular interaction.

Culpeper, (2011) identifies three main instrumental functions of impoliteness: affective impoliteness, coercive impoliteness, and entertaining impoliteness. Affective impoliteness is used to express strong negative emotions, such as anger, frustration, or irritation toward a target. Coercive

impoliteness is used to influence, pressure, or direct a target to perform a particular action or change their behavior. Meanwhile, entertaining impoliteness refers to the use of impoliteness to create entertainment, humor, or amusement within an interaction.

In the present study, these functions are used to analyze the purposes or functions served by impoliteness strategies in the interactions among Mobile Legends players in Ranked Mode. Therefore, the study does not only examine the linguistic forms used by players but also considers the functions served by the use of impoliteness strategies within the context of game interaction.

Based on the discussion above, this study positions Culpeper, (1996) as the primary theoretical framework for analyzing the types or strategies of impoliteness, while Culpeper, (2011) is used to analyze the functions of impoliteness. Brown and Levinson (1987) provide the conceptual foundation of face, which helps explain why an utterance may be considered an attack on or threat to an interlocutor's face. Meanwhile, studies of digital communication and online gaming provide the contextual foundation for understanding where and how such interactions occur.

Thus, the theoretical position of this study can be described as follows: the concept of face proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) provides the basis for understanding threats to an interlocutor's social self-image and freedom of action; Culpeper's (1996) theory is used to identify impoliteness strategies; studies of digital communication and online gaming provide the context for language use in text-based interaction; Mobile Legends Ranked Mode serves as the research context; and Culpeper's (2011) concept is used to analyze the functions served by these impoliteness strategies. Based on this theoretical position, the present study examines the strategies and functions of impoliteness found in the in-game text chat of Mobile Legends players in Ranked Mode.

3. Type of Impoliteness Strategies

According to Culpeper, (1996) there are five main impoliteness strategies: Bald on Record Impoliteness, Positive Impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness, Sarcasm or Mock Politeness, and Withhold Politeness. These strategies provide a framework for understanding different forms of impoliteness that may occur in interaction. In this study, all five strategies are discussed as part of the theoretical framework, while their application to the research data takes into account the characteristics of the data, which consist of written interactions in the Mobile Legends *in-game text chat*.

In identifying the strategies, this study does not classify an utterance as impolite solely because it contains a rude or offensive word. The classification considers the linguistic form of the utterance, the context of the interaction, the face-threatening act involved, and the way the impoliteness is realized. In particular, an utterance is categorized as Bald on Record Impoliteness when the face-threatening act is expressed directly and explicitly without an attempt to mitigate or soften its impact. Therefore, the analysis considers both the linguistic characteristics of the utterance and the context in which it occurs.

a. Bald on Record Impoliteness

Bald on Record Impoliteness occurs when a face-threatening act is expressed directly and explicitly without any attempt to reduce or soften its impact on the hearer. The utterance is delivered straightforwardly, making its face-threatening nature clearly recognizable. This strategy can be realized through direct commands, blunt criticism, or insults expressed without mitigating devices or other softening expressions (Culpeper, 1996).

In determining whether an utterance belongs to Bald on Record Impoliteness, this study considers several indicators. First, the face-threatening act is expressed directly. Second, the intention or meaning of the attack, criticism, blame, or command is explicitly conveyed. Third, the utterance does not contain linguistic devices that mitigate or soften the

face-threatening effect. These indicators are considered together with the context of the interaction rather than based only on individual words.

This strategy differs from the concept of bald on record proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). In their politeness framework, bald on record can be used when the speaker does not need to give much consideration to face concerns because the context allows direct communication. In contrast, in Culpeper's (1996) framework, Bald on Record Impoliteness refers to the use of direct forms to perform face-threatening acts.

In in-game text chat communication, this strategy may occur when players give direct commands, blame their teammates, or express criticism bluntly without using linguistic forms that reduce the negative impact on the hearer. For example, an utterance such as "*Noob, jangan main!*" can be considered as Bald on Record Impoliteness when the context shows that the player is directly attacking another player's performance and ordering the player not to play. The categorization is not based solely on the word **noob**, but on the direct and explicit way the face-threatening act is expressed without mitigation.

b. Positive Impoliteness

Positive Impoliteness is a strategy directed at damaging the hearer's positive face, namely the desire to be appreciated, accepted, and treated positively by others (Culpeper, 1996). This strategy may indicate that the speaker does not respect, accept, or value the hearer during the interaction.

Positive impoliteness can be identified by examining whether an utterance attacks the hearer's desire to be respected, accepted, or positively evaluated by others. Therefore, the analysis considers expressions that mock, insult, belittle, or negatively label another player, as well as the context in which such expressions are used.

In Mobile Legends player communication, Positive Impoliteness may occur when players mock their teammates' abilities, use derogatory labels, ignore another player's contribution, or blame a particular player

for the team's failure. Such forms of communication may threaten the player's desire to be respected and accepted as a member of the team.

For example, an utterance that directly calls a teammate “noob” may be categorized as Positive Impoliteness when the context indicates that the primary function of the expression is to belittle the player's ability and damage the player's positive face. Thus, the same word cannot automatically determine the strategy; its interpretation depends on how it is used in the interaction.

c. Negative Impoliteness

Negative Impoliteness is a strategy directed at damaging the hearer's negative face, namely the desire to have freedom of action and to avoid pressure or interference from others (Culpeper, 1996). This strategy may be realized through linguistic acts that pressure, intimidate, belittle, or restrict the hearer's freedom of action.

In determining Negative Impoliteness, this study examines whether an utterance places pressure on another player, threatens the player, intimidates the player, or interferes with the player's freedom of action. The context of the interaction is also considered to determine whether the utterance functions as an attack on the hearer's negative face.

In Mobile Legends interactions, Negative Impoliteness may occur when a player pressures another player to perform a particular action, threatens the player with certain consequences, or attempts to restrict a teammate's actions through coercive language.

For example, an utterance such as “*Kalau mati lagi, keluar!*” may be categorized as Negative Impoliteness when it is used to pressure or threaten another player in the interaction. The classification is based on the threatening or coercive nature of the utterance and its contextual meaning, rather than simply on the presence of a negative expression.

d. Sarcasm or Mock Politeness

Sarcasm or Mock Politeness is an impoliteness strategy in which language that appears polite on the surface is used insincerely to convey

criticism, ridicule, or insult. Culpeper, (1996) explains that this strategy may occur when a face-threatening act is expressed through insincere politeness formulas. Therefore, there is a discrepancy between the apparent positive meaning of the linguistic form and its actual pragmatic meaning.

In determining Sarcasm or Mock Politeness, this study considers whether an apparently polite or positive expression is inconsistent with the surrounding context and is interpreted as insincere. The literal meaning of the utterance is therefore not considered in isolation. The situation, previous interaction, and circumstances surrounding the utterance are also examined.

In in-game text chat communication, this strategy may occur when players give exaggerated praise or use positive expressions ironically toward teammates who have made mistakes. For example, a player may use an expression such as “great play” after a teammate makes a mistake. Although the expression appears to be a compliment at the literal level, it may be understood as sarcasm or mockery in a particular context.

e. Withhold Politeness

Withhold Politeness refers to a strategy in which politeness behavior is not provided when such behavior is socially expected in a particular situation (Culpeper, 1996). This strategy differs from strategies involving the direct use of rude or offensive language because the impoliteness may arise from the absence of a response or a politeness behavior that would normally be expected.

In determining Withhold Politeness, the researcher needs to establish that a particular politeness behavior was expected in the situation but was not provided. Therefore, the mere absence of a response or polite expression cannot automatically be categorized as Withhold Politeness. Sufficient contextual evidence is needed to support the interpretation.

In the context of this study, Withhold Politeness is included as part of Culpeper's (1996) theoretical framework. However, its application

needs to take into account the characteristics of the research data, which consist of written communication in the Mobile Legends in-game text chat. Therefore, this strategy is treated carefully during the data analysis process.

These five strategies demonstrate that impoliteness can be realized through various linguistic forms and communicative actions. In this study, Culpeper's (1996) framework is used as the primary basis for identifying and classifying impoliteness strategies in the Mobile Legends Ranked Mode in-game text chat. The analysis considers not only the linguistic forms of the utterances but also the context of the interaction and the pragmatic meaning of the utterances.

In Culpeper's (1996) framework, the five impoliteness strategies represent broader categories of impolite behavior, while the specific linguistic forms show how each strategy can be realized in interaction. Therefore, an utterance is first identified based on its characteristics as an impoliteness strategy and then interpreted according to its linguistic form and interactional context.

The identification of impoliteness strategies is distinct from the analysis of their functions. While Culpeper's (1996) framework is used to identify and classify the types of impoliteness strategies, Culpeper's (2011) framework is used to examine the functions served by these strategies in interaction. This distinction is important because the same impoliteness strategy may serve different functions depending on the context in which it occurs. Therefore, the analysis in this study considers both the type of strategy and its function in the interactions among Mobile Legends players in Ranked Mode.

4. The Functions of Impoliteness

In his most recent book, Culpeper, (2011) proposes four functions of impoliteness. These functions share features that contradict interpersonal relationships, identities, and social norms. Although affective, coercive, and entertaining impoliteness is presented as the main categories, it is important

to deliver that Culpeper likewise wrote another additional discussion that might as well arguably presented as the fourth type of impoliteness in detail as follows:

a. Affective Impoliteness

In affective impoliteness, the speaker expresses anger at the listener, thus creating a negative emotional atmosphere between the speaker and the listener. This feature includes emotional outbursts that occur during a conversation between the creator of the impoliteness and the subject of the impoliteness. Culpeper, (2011) impoliteness is the targeted display of heightened emotion, typically anger, with the implication that the target is to blame for producing that negative emotional state. For example;

“You made me crazy!”

In the example above, the speaker uses impoliteness utterance to express anger or frustration toward the listener. The speaker is using such disrespectful utterances to express the passive impact on the listener and to convey that the listener is no longer necessary.

b. Coercive Impoliteness

According to Culpeper, (2011), coercive impoliteness is the kind of impoliteness that calls for a realignment of values between producers and targets so that the interests or current advantages of the producer are enhanced or protected. This function includes coercive actions aimed at harming others or coercing agreements. Culpeper believes that this function of impoliteness is more common happened where the producer happens to be in the place to a higher and more powerful social class rather than the listener. For example;

“Shut up or I'll smash your head!”

The speaker ends the recipient's behavior by advising them not to speak. Such utterances are produced when the speaker affirm his/her position as the one that possess power and control over the listener.

c. Entertaining Impoliteness

Entertaining impoliteness is always exploitative to some degree because it is entertainment at the expense of obscene purposes that includes whether real victims or potential victims (Culpeper, 2011). It's surprising that impoliteness tends to hurt and increase anger but on the other hand, it can also entertain. For example;

A : "What a fancy smells this food!"

B : "Oh, thanks. I made it myself."

A : "Wow, really? *Cause I'd like to have one.... for my dog*"

In the above example, the comments uttered by A may have hurt the feelings of B but in certain way it can entertain the over-hearing audience. Based on Culpeper's (2011) framework, this study focuses on three main functions of impoliteness: affective impoliteness, coercive impoliteness, and entertaining impoliteness. These three functions are relevant to the present study because they can be identified through written interactions among Mobile Legends players in Ranked Mode. Affective impoliteness is used to express anger, frustration, or other negative emotions; coercive impoliteness is used to influence, pressure, or control another player's behavior; while entertaining impoliteness is used to create amusement or entertainment through impolite expressions. Therefore, these three functions are used as the analytical framework to examine the communicative functions of impoliteness strategies found in the in-game text chat interactions among Mobile Legends players in Ranked Mode.

5. Mobile Legends

According to Starosta, (2024) online games can be classified into several genres, including war, adventure, sports, puzzle, and Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA). Among these genres, MOBA games are currently one of the most popular in Indonesia. One of the most widely played MOBA games is Mobile Legends: Bang Bang, a mobile multiplayer online battle game developed by Shanghai Moonton Technology. The game was officially released on July 14, 2016 for Android devices and on November 9,

2016 for iOS devices. Since its release, Mobile Legends has experienced rapid growth in popularity and has become one of the most popular mobile games, particularly in Southeast Asia.

Mobile Legends is an online multiplayer battle game played on smartphones. Each match consists of two opposing teams, with five players on each team, resulting in a total of ten players. The primary objective of the game is to destroy the enemy team's base while protecting one's own base. To achieve victory, players must cooperate with their teammates, coordinate their strategies, and perform their respective roles effectively throughout the match.

The game is played on a battlefield consisting of three lanes: the Top Lane, Middle Lane, and Bottom Lane. Each lane is protected by defensive towers that automatically attack enemy players within their attack range. Players control heroes with different abilities and responsibilities, including Tank, Fighter, Assassin, Mage, Marksman, and Support. Since each role has a specific function during the match, teamwork and coordination are essential for achieving victory. A match ends when one team successfully destroys the opposing team's main base.

To support teamwork and in-game coordination, Mobile Legends provides several communication features, including text chat, quick chat, voice chat, and in-game signals. These features allow players to exchange information, coordinate strategies, give instructions, and respond to situations during gameplay. Among these communication features, text chat enables players to communicate through written messages in real time. As a result, text chat has become one of the primary channels through which players interact with one another during matches. In addition to its communication features, Mobile Legends offers various game modes and a ranking system that provide different gameplay experiences for players.

a. Game Mode

According to Setyowulan & Agus Danarto, (2025) game mode refers to a specific gameplay format available in Mobile Legends. Each mode

offers different objectives, levels of competition, and gameplay experiences. The main game modes in Mobile Legends are described as follows.

1. Classic Mode

Classic Mode is the standard gameplay mode in Mobile Legends. It features a five versus five battle in which each team competes to destroy the enemy's base. The battlefield consists of three lanes and several defensive towers. Players are free to choose any available hero, making this mode suitable for practice, experimentation, and casual gameplay without affecting their rank.

2. Ranked Match

Ranked Match is the most competitive game mode in Mobile Legends. Similar to Classic Mode, it features a five versus five battle in which the objective is to destroy the opposing team's base. However, unlike Classic Mode, victories in Ranked Match reward players with stars or rank points, allowing them to increase or maintain their ranks.

Because players compete to achieve higher rankings, Ranked Match creates a highly competitive and demanding environment. Success in this mode requires not only individual skills but also effective teamwork, communication, and decision-making. The pressure to win may influence players' emotions and communication patterns during gameplay. Consequently, interactions among players in Ranked Match may involve various forms of language use, including impoliteness strategies.

3. Brawl Mode

Brawl Mode also features a five versus five battle but is played on a single lane protected by two defensive towers. Heroes are assigned randomly, creating a fast-paced and dynamic gameplay experience. The objective is to destroy the opponent's base before one's own base is destroyed.

4. Human vs AI Mode

Human vs AI Mode allows players to compete against computer controlled opponents (Artificial Intelligence). This mode is commonly used by beginners to learn the basic mechanics of the game, practice hero abilities, and improve their gameplay before participating in more competitive matches.

5. Custom Mode

Custom Mode enables players to create personalized matches according to their preferences. Players may compete against friends, play individually, or challenge AI opponents. This mode offers flexibility in terms of match settings, participant numbers, and gameplay rules. Among the various game modes available in Mobile Legends, this study focuses on Ranked Match, as it is considered the game's primary competitive mode. In this mode, players compete to earn stars or rank points in order to advance through the ranking system.

As a result, every match requires a high level of individual skill, teamwork, coordination, and consistent performance from all players. Due to its highly competitive nature, Ranked Match places considerable pressure on players to cooperate effectively with their teammates, make quick decisions, and perform at their best throughout the game. This pressure may influence players' emotional responses and the way they communicate during gameplay. Under these circumstances, players may express frustration, criticize or blame their teammates, use offensive language, or produce other forms of impolite utterances through the in-game text chat feature.

Therefore, Ranked Match was selected as the focus of this study because it provides an appropriate context for examining impoliteness strategies based on Culpeper's (1996) theory. Accordingly, this study limits its analysis to the utterances produced by players in the in game text chat during Ranked Match.

b. Ranking System

According to Xia et al., (2024) the ranking system in Mobile Legends is designed to measure players' skills, experience, and competitive performance. Players advance through different ranks by winning matches and accumulating stars or rank points. Higher ranks generally indicate better game knowledge, stronger strategic abilities, and greater experience. The ranking system consists of the following levels.

1. Warrior

Warrior is the entry-level rank for new players. At this stage, players learn the fundamental mechanics of the game, including hero control, map awareness, and teamwork.

2. Elite

Elite is the rank above Warrior. Players at this level generally demonstrate a better understanding of hero abilities and basic game mechanics.

3. Master

Master represents an intermediate level of competition. Players are expected to demonstrate improved gameplay skills, map awareness, and strategic decision-making.

4. Grandmaster

Grandmaster is a more competitive rank in which players are required to demonstrate stronger teamwork, communication, and decision-making skills to achieve consistent victories.

5. Epic

Epic marks the beginning of highly competitive gameplay. At this rank, the draft-pick system is introduced, requiring players to strategically select and ban heroes before each match.

6. Legend

Legend consists of highly skilled players with considerable experience and advanced knowledge of game strategies. Matches at this level require effective communication, coordination, and teamwork.

7. Mythic

Mythic is one of the highest ranks in Mobile Legends. Players who reach this level are expected to possess advanced mechanical skills, strategic awareness, and excellent teamwork.

8. Mythical Honor

Mythical Honor is the rank above Mythic. Players at this level consistently demonstrate outstanding performance, strategic gameplay, and a high level of competitiveness.

9. Mythical Glory

Mythical Glory represents an elite level of competition. Players in this rank are recognized as some of the best performers in the game because of their exceptional skills, consistency, and extensive experience.

10. Mythical Immortal

Mythical Immortal is currently the highest rank in Mobile Legends. Players who achieve this rank are regarded as among the best players in the game, having demonstrated extraordinary skill, dedication, experience, and competitive performance.

Although Mobile Legends consists of ten ranking tiers, this study focuses specifically on the Mythic rank. This rank was selected because it represents a highly competitive level of gameplay in which players are expected to demonstrate advanced mechanical skills, strategic decision-making, and effective teamwork. The highly competitive nature of the Mythic rank increases the likelihood of emotionally charged interactions and the use of impoliteness strategies in in-game text chats. Therefore, the data analyzed in this study are limited to text-chat interactions produced by players competing at the Mythic rank.

B. Previous Studies

Several previous studies have examined language impoliteness in different communication contexts. These studies are relevant to the present research because they show how Culpeper's framework can be applied to identify impoliteness strategies in various forms of interaction.

Nasirli, (2021) investigated impoliteness in American films, focusing on the types of impoliteness strategies used by the characters. The findings showed that various impoliteness strategies occurred in the characters' interactions. This study is relevant to the present research because both studies use Culpeper's framework to examine impoliteness strategies. However, the data sources are different. Nasirli's study examined interactions in films, which are part of fictional and constructed narratives, while the present study focuses on naturally occurring written interactions produced by Mobile Legends players during actual gameplay.

Acheampong & Kwarteng, (2021) examined impoliteness in interpersonal social interactions using Culpeper's framework. Their findings identified several impoliteness strategies, with negative impoliteness appearing as the dominant strategy. The study is relevant because it demonstrates the use of Culpeper's framework in analyzing impoliteness in interpersonal communication. Nevertheless, the data mainly consisted of spoken social interactions, whereas the present research examines written interactions through the in-game text chat of Mobile Legends Ranked Mode. The present study therefore places impoliteness in a different communication setting, namely competitive online gaming.

Jinan Salim Mohsen, (2022) examined impoliteness in drama and identified various impoliteness strategies used in interactions between characters. The study is relevant to the present research because it shows that Culpeper's framework can be used to classify different forms of impoliteness in interaction. However, the data were taken from a fictional work, in which the interactions were constructed as part of a narrative. In contrast, the present study examines naturally occurring written interactions among players during online gameplay.

Another relevant study was conducted by Soehendro & Jumanto, (2022) who examined language impoliteness in the context of the “Grammar Nazi” phenomenon on Twitter. Their study identified several impoliteness strategies, including bald on record and mock politeness. This study has a closer connection

to the present research because both examine impoliteness in written digital communication. However, Twitter interactions differ from communication in online games. On Twitter, users are not necessarily communicating while participating in an ongoing competitive activity. In Mobile Legends, players communicate while playing a team-based match, responding to teammates' actions, coordinating strategies, and dealing with mistakes under time constraints. These characteristics provide a different context in which impoliteness may occur.

Based on these studies, impoliteness has been examined in various contexts, including films, drama, spoken interpersonal communication, and social media. The studies also demonstrate the applicability of Culpeper's framework in identifying different impoliteness strategies. However, the studies discussed above do not specifically examine naturally occurring written interactions among Mobile Legends players during Ranked Mode matches. Communication in competitive online games has particular characteristics because players communicate while participating in an ongoing match, coordinating with teammates, responding to mistakes, and attempting to achieve victory. The competitive situation, limited response time, teamwork, and immediate reactions to other players' actions may influence how impoliteness is expressed.

Therefore, the present study focuses on impoliteness strategies in the in-game text chat of Mobile Legends Ranked Mode. Unlike the previous studies, which examined fictional dialogue, spoken interpersonal communication, or general social media interactions, this research examines naturally occurring written communication in a competitive online gaming environment. Culpeper's (1996) framework is used to identify and classify the impoliteness strategies found in interactions among Mobile Legends players in Ranked Mode.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative research design to investigate the impoliteness strategies and their functions used by Mobile Legends players in Ranked Mode. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because this study focused on examining naturally occurring written language and interpreting the use and communicative functions of the players' utterances within their original context. According to Creswell, (2014) qualitative research is an approach used to explore and understand the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to social and human phenomena. In line with this perspective, this study aimed to identify the types of impoliteness strategies used by Mobile Legends players and analyze the functions served by those strategies in in-game text-chat interactions during Ranked Mode matches.

The data in this study consisted of written interactions found in the in-game text chats of completed Mobile Legends Ranked Mode matches. The data were obtained from screenshots voluntarily shared by the players and supported by replay recordings of the completed matches. Since the interactions had already occurred before the researcher accessed the data, the study examined the language as it naturally occurred in the gaming environment without manipulating the communication or the gameplay. The collected utterances were analyzed by considering their linguistic forms, the situational context in which they occurred, the impoliteness strategies used, and the communicative functions served by those strategies.

This study employed a non experimental and non-intervention design. The researcher did not participate in the gameplay, communicate with the players during the matches, or influence the interactions among the players. Instead, the researcher acted as a non-participant observer by examining the recorded in-game text chats contained in the screenshots and using replay recordings as supporting contextual information. The researcher only observed and

documented the existing interactions without introducing any treatment or intervention into the gaming environment.

The data were selected through purposive sampling based on predetermined criteria relevant to the objectives of the study. The researcher first collected and examined the written interactions from the selected Ranked Mode matches. All available text-chat interactions were documented before the screening process was conducted. The researcher then identified utterances relevant to the research focus and classified them according to the four impoliteness strategies proposed by Culpeper (1996), namely bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock politeness. After the strategies had been identified, the utterances were further analyzed based on Culpeper's (2011) framework of impoliteness functions, namely affective impoliteness, coercive impoliteness, and entertaining impoliteness. The classification of functions was determined by considering the linguistic form of the utterance and the situational context in which it occurred.

Thus, the descriptive qualitative design was used to provide a systematic description and contextual interpretation of the impoliteness strategies and their functions in Mobile Legends Ranked Mode text chats. The study focused on identifying the types of impoliteness strategies and analyzing their communicative functions rather than manipulating variables or testing a statistical hypothesis.

B. Location and Time

This research was conducted in the area of Jalan ABRI, Panyabungan II Urban Village, Mandailing Natal. The selection of the research setting was related to the process of obtaining the research data. The location was selected because the researcher obtained research materials from Mobile Legends players residing in the area who voluntarily shared screenshots and replay recordings of their completed Ranked Mode matches. The availability of these materials enabled the researcher to access naturally occurring in-game text-chat interactions relevant to the research topic.

Although the research materials were obtained from players residing in the area of Jalan ABRI, Panyabungan II Urban Village, the communication analyzed in this study occurred within the online gaming environment of Mobile Legends Ranked Mode. Therefore, the location functioned as the setting for accessing and obtaining the research data rather than as the physical setting in which the interactions took place.

The research was conducted from March to August 2026. This period covered the processes of obtaining the research materials, documenting the data, transcribing the text-chat interactions, organizing the data, analyzing the impoliteness strategies, and interpreting their functions. The data were analyzed using Culpeper's (1996) framework to identify the types of impoliteness strategies and Culpeper's (2011) framework to analyze the functions of those strategies in the players' interactions.

C. Source of Data

The data in this study were obtained from the in-game text chat of three completed Mobile Legends: Bang Bang Ranked Mode matches. The three matches were selected through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique in which researchers deliberately select data sources based on criteria relevant to the objectives of the study rather than statistical representativeness (Creswell, 2014).

The selection of the three matches was based on the following criteria:

1. The matches were completed Mobile Legends: Bang Bang Ranked Mode matches.
2. The matches were played at the Mythic rank.
3. The matches contained available in-game text-chat interactions.
4. The text-chat interactions contained utterances relevant to the analysis of impoliteness strategies and their functions.
5. The research materials were voluntarily shared by the players.

Screenshots of the in-game text chat and replay recordings of the completed matches were voluntarily obtained from the players. The researcher did not participate in the matches or produce any of the interactions under study.

Therefore, the researcher occupied the position of a non-participant observer who examined written interactions that had occurred naturally during the matches without intervening in the context or course of those interactions.

Screenshots served as the primary source of data because they preserved the written interactions as they appeared during the matches. Replay recordings served as supporting documentation because they provided additional contextual information about the course of the game and the situations surrounding the interactions. Since the chat interactions could not be fully reviewed through the replay feature after the matches had been completed, screenshots were used as the primary source for identifying and transcribing the text-chat data.

The data source was restricted to written interactions appearing in the in-game text chat. Voice communication, player usernames, profile information, profile pictures, and other information that could identify individual players were excluded from the analysis in order to protect their privacy. The use of three matches was based on purposive selection and the availability of relevant text-chat data rather than on a statistically determined sample size. This approach is appropriate for qualitative research, in which the adequacy of data is considered in terms of its relevance and richness in relation to the research objectives (Creswell, 2014). The three selected matches were considered sufficient to provide relevant written interactions for examining the types and functions of impoliteness strategies in Ranked Mode.

D. Technique of Data Collection

The data in this study were collected through observation and documentation techniques (Sugiyono, 2022). The researcher acted as a non participant observer who neither participated in nor intervened in the course of the matches. This role is consistent with the principle of non-participant observation in qualitative research, in which the researcher observes interactions without directly participating in the situation being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The data collection process focused on naturally occurring written interactions within the in-game text chat of the three selected Mobile Legends:

Bang Bang Ranked Mode matches. The process was conducted through the following stages.

1. Selecting the Data Sources

Researcher purposively selected three completed Ranked Mode matches based on the predetermined criteria described in the Source of Data section. The selected matches were played at the Mythic rank and contained in-game text-chat interactions relevant to the research objectives.

2. Obtaining the Research Materials

The researcher obtained screenshots of the in-game text chats and replay recordings from players who voluntarily shared these materials. The screenshots served as the primary documentation of the written interactions, while the replay recordings served as supporting documentation to provide contextual information about the situations in which the interactions occurred.

3. Collecting and Organizing the Text-Chat Data

The researcher reviewed and organized all available screenshots containing in-game text-chat interactions. At this stage, all relevant written interactions were collected before determining whether they contained impoliteness. This procedure was intended to prevent the researcher from selecting data solely on the basis of anticipated findings before the analysis was conducted.

4. Transcribing and Coding the Data

The text-chat interactions contained in the screenshots were transcribed and systematically organized into a data table. Each utterance was assigned a data code to facilitate identification, classification, and analysis. The transcription preserved the wording of the original text-chat interactions while excluding usernames and other identifying information.

5. Identifying Relevant Utterances

The researcher screened the collected interactions to identify utterances relevant to the research focus on impoliteness. The identification process considered the linguistic characteristics of the utterances and the situational context in which they occurred.

6. Classifying the Impoliteness Strategies

The identified utterances were classified according to Culpeper's (1996) framework. The analysis focused on four impoliteness strategies: bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock politeness. Withhold politeness was excluded because the strategy involves the absence of expected politeness behavior, which is difficult to establish confidently in brief written in-game interactions without sufficient contextual or non-verbal information.

7. Analyzing the Functions

After the impoliteness strategies had been identified, the classified utterances were analyzed according to Culpeper's (2011) framework of impoliteness functions. The functions examined were affective impoliteness, coercive impoliteness, and entertaining impoliteness. The function of each utterance was determined by examining its linguistic form, the preceding or surrounding interaction, the situation in the match, and the action or behavior that prompted the utterance.

Through these procedures, the collected data were systematically organized and prepared for the data analysis stage. The procedure enabled the researcher to address the first research question concerning the types of impoliteness strategies and the second research question concerning the functions of those strategies.

E. Ethical Consideration

This study involved written interactions produced by players whose identities could potentially be identifiable. Therefore, several ethical considerations were applied throughout the data collection, processing, analysis, and presentation of the research data.

First, all research materials, including screenshots of the in-game text chat and replay recordings, were obtained with the voluntary consent of the players who shared them. The materials were not obtained covertly or without the knowledge of the players who provided them. This consideration is consistent

with ethical principles for internet-based research, particularly when online data may be connected to identifiable individuals (Franzke et al., 2020).

Second, the privacy and confidentiality of the players were protected throughout the research process. Usernames, profile pictures, identification information, and other potentially identifying attributes visible in the screenshots were removed or anonymized before the data were analyzed and presented in the research report.

Third, the researcher limited the data used in the study to written text-chat interactions relevant to the research objectives. Voice communication, personal information, and other information unrelated to the analysis of impoliteness strategies and functions were excluded. This limitation was applied to minimize the use of information that was not necessary for the research.

Fourth, the researcher acted as a non-participant observer and did not participate in or intervene in the matches. The interactions analyzed in this study had already occurred before the researcher accessed the research materials. Therefore, the researcher did not influence the players' behavior or the communication that occurred during the matches.

Fifth, the screenshots and replay recordings obtained from the players were used solely for academic purposes within the scope of this research. The materials were handled confidentially and were not disseminated beyond what was necessary for scholarly reporting. When examples of utterances were presented in the research report, identifying information was omitted to protect the privacy of the players.

F. Technique of Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using the interactive qualitative data analysis model developed by (Miles & Huberman, 2014). The model consists of three interconnected stages: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification. These stages were conducted interactively and iteratively rather than as a strictly linear process.

1. Data Condensation

Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, focusing, and organizing the transcribed in-game text-chat data that had previously been collected and assigned data codes. At this stage, utterances that were irrelevant to the research objectives, such as technical gameplay remarks that did not contain evidence of impoliteness, were set aside. Utterances that potentially contained impoliteness were retained for further analysis.

The retained utterances were then examined in relation to their linguistic characteristics and situational contexts. The researcher also retained contextual information from the corresponding screenshots and replay recordings when necessary to support the interpretation of the utterances. This process was conducted to ensure that the data remained sufficiently contextualized for the subsequent identification of strategies and functions.

2. Data Display

The condensed data were organized into a systematic classification table. The table contained information such as the data code, utterance, situational context, impoliteness strategy, and impoliteness function. The identification of impoliteness strategies was based on Culpeper's (1996) framework, which was used to classify the data into four strategies: bald on record impoliteness, positive impoliteness, negative impoliteness, and sarcasm or mock politeness. After the strategy of each utterance was identified, its function was analyzed using Culpeper's (2011) framework, consisting of affective impoliteness, coercive impoliteness, and entertaining impoliteness.

The contextual information was considered in determining the function of an utterance because the same or similar linguistic form may serve different communicative purposes depending on the situation in which it occurs. Therefore, the classification of functions was not based solely on individual words or phrases but also on the relationship between the utterance, the surrounding interaction, and the events occurring during the match.

The data display was intended to help the researcher systematically identify patterns and relationships between the impoliteness strategies and their functions. A data table was also used to make the classification and interpretation process transparent and organized.

3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The conclusions were drawn based on the patterns identified during the data display stage. The researcher formulated conclusions concerning the types of impoliteness strategies found in the in-game text-chat interactions and the functions served by those strategies.

For the first research question, the researcher determined the types of impoliteness strategies based on Culpeper's (1996) framework. For the second research question, the researcher analyzed the functions of the identified strategies based on Culpeper's (2011) framework. The functions were interpreted by considering the linguistic characteristics of the utterances and the situational context in which they occurred.

The preliminary conclusions were then verified by revisiting the original screenshots, transcriptions, data codes, and contextual information from the corresponding matches. This verification process was conducted to ensure that the classifications of strategies and functions were consistent with the available textual and contextual evidence. The process was repeated when necessary until the researcher reached conclusions that were adequately supported by the research data.

G. Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings, this study applies the criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility is established through repeated examination of the in-game text chat data obtained from three Mobile Legends: Bang Bang Ranked Mode matches at the Mythic rank. The researcher repeatedly reviews the screenshots to understand the interactional context and accurately identify utterances relevant to the research focus. Replay recordings are also used as supporting data

to understand the game situations, players' actions, and events underlying the occurrence of the utterances. The identified utterances are then classified based on Culpeper's (1996) theory of impoliteness strategies, while the functions of impoliteness are analyzed using Culpeper's (2011) framework. Discussions with the research supervisor are also conducted to obtain feedback and reduce the possibility of misinterpretation during the analysis process.

Transferability is supported by providing a clear and detailed description of the research context, including Mobile Legends: Bang Bang, the data sources, the criteria for selecting the three Ranked Mode matches, the use of screenshots as the primary data source, replay recordings as supporting contextual information, the theoretical frameworks, and the data analysis procedures. This detailed description allows other researchers to understand the research context and determine whether the findings may be applicable or relevant to similar studies of language impoliteness, pragmatics, digital communication, or online gaming interactions.

To strengthen the credibility of the data analysis, this study uses expert judgment. The researcher asks an expert with competence in pragmatics to review the identification of utterances containing impoliteness, the classification of impoliteness strategies, and the analysis of impoliteness functions in the selected data. The expert judgment is conducted by comparing the researcher's analysis with the relevant theoretical frameworks, namely Culpeper's (1996) theory of impoliteness strategies and Culpeper's (2011) framework of impoliteness functions.

The expert serves as a validator and does not replace the researcher as the main instrument of the study. The researcher remains the main instrument in collecting, identifying, classifying, and analyzing the data. The expert's role is to provide confirmation, corrections, and suggestions when there are differences or uncertainties in the researcher's analysis. The researcher then reviews the expert's feedback and makes the necessary revisions to the analysis. Through this process, expert judgment strengthens the credibility and consistency of the research findings.

Dependability is maintained by applying systematic and consistent research procedures, beginning with the purposive selection of three Ranked Mode matches, the collection of screenshots and replay recordings voluntarily shared by the players, data transcription, data coding, identification of relevant utterances, classification of impoliteness strategies, and analysis of impoliteness functions. All stages of the research process are documented clearly, allowing other researchers to understand and trace the procedures followed in the study.

Confirmability is maintained by ensuring that the research findings are based on the research data rather than on the researcher's personal assumptions. Each classification of an impoliteness strategy and function is supported by evidence from the original written utterances in the in-game text chat and contextual information obtained from the replay recordings. The researcher also uses Culpeper's (1996) theory as the basis for classifying impoliteness strategies and Culpeper's (2011) framework as the basis for analyzing impoliteness functions. Therefore, the interpretation of the data has a clear theoretical foundation.

Through these procedures, this study seeks to ensure that the findings are credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable, and are supported by the research data in answering the two research questions concerning the types of impoliteness strategies and the functions of impoliteness in the interactions of Mobile Legends: Bang Bang players in Ranked Mode.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Findings

1. Impoliteness Strategies Used by Mobile Legends Players in Ranked Mode

Based on the analysis of the utterances found in three Ranked Mode matches, three types of impoliteness strategies were identified: Negative Impoliteness, Positive Impoliteness, and Sarcasm or Mock Politeness. Of the 13 utterances analyzed, Negative Impoliteness was found in utterances that directly or indirectly evaluated the behavior and performance of other players. Positive Impoliteness was identified in utterances that attacked or undermined players' positive image as competent or cooperative teammates. Meanwhile, Sarcasm or Mock Politeness was found in utterances that used apparently positive or neutral expressions to convey mocking or critical meanings.

a. Positive Impoliteness

According to Culpeper, (1996) Positive Impoliteness refers to acts that attack a person's desire to be appreciated, accepted, or viewed positively by others. In this study, Positive Impoliteness was identified when players directly highlighted the weaknesses, mistakes, or inability of other players, thereby potentially threatening their positive image as players.

Data 1 : The jungler is ridiculous.

Context : The utterance "The jungler is ridiculous" occurs when the jungler does not assist a teammate during the match and instead focuses on farming his buff. While the teammate is engaged in the situation and requires assistance, the jungler remains focused on his own buff rather than helping the teammate. This behavior causes the speaker to express dissatisfaction with the jungler's decision and performance. In response to the jungler's behavior, the speaker refers to the jungler as "ridiculous." In this context, the word "ridiculous" conveys a negative evaluation of the

jungler's behavior and performance rather than simply meaning “funny.” Therefore, the utterance reflects the speaker's dissatisfaction and frustration toward the jungler for prioritizing his own buff instead of assisting his teammate.

Reason : The utterance is categorized as Positive Impoliteness because the expression “ridiculous” functions as a negative evaluation and ridicule of the jungler’s performance. By describing the jungler as “ridiculous,” the speaker attacks the jungler’s positive face and shows disregard for the player’s desire to be respected and viewed positively by others.

Data 2 : **“Level, bro!”**

Context : this context, Zetian addressed the utterance “Level, bro” to a teammate who had a low level. The utterance did not merely state the player’s level but can also be interpreted as a form of criticism directed at the teammate within the ongoing match. The brief and direct nature of the utterance indicates that Zetian explicitly highlighted the teammate’s low level. Therefore, the game context supports the interpretation that the utterance “Level, bro” contains an element of impoliteness because it draws attention to a teammate’s weakness or deficiency in front of the other players.

Reason: The utterance “Level, bro” is categorized as positive impoliteness because Zetian highlights the team's lower level and indirectly indicates that the team's performance is in a less favorable condition compared with that of the opponents. This statement may threaten the positive face of the teammates by highlighting their weakness or inability to keep up with the opponents' level. Therefore, the utterance can be understood as a form of negative evaluation of the players' performance during the match.

Data 3: “The EXP Can't Play”

Context: The utterance was expressed as a comment on the EXP player's performance during the match. Based on the observation of the replay recording, the EXP player was killed 12 times by the end of the match. This situation provides contextual support for the speaker's negative evaluation of the player's performance.

Reason: The utterance is categorized as positive impoliteness because the speaker explicitly criticizes the EXP player's ability by stating that the player “can't play.” The statement conveys a negative judgment of the player's competence and may threaten the player's positive face by portraying them as incapable of performing their role effectively.

Data 4: “Angela, where did you enter”

Context: Alpha responds to Angela's mistake when she incorrectly enters Zetian, even though Zetian does not have an available skill that could support the action at that moment. Alpha then responds to the mistake with a mocking question. This utterance is categorized as positive impoliteness because the speaker highlights Angela's mistake in entering Zetian through a mocking question.

Reason :This utterance is categorized as positive impoliteness because the speaker highlights Angela's mistake in entering Zetian through a mocking question. The utterance may threaten Angela's positive face because it draws attention to the mistake she made and may affect her positive image as a competent player.

Data 5 : “You were two people and still died”

Context: The utterance “You were two people and still died” occurs at approximately 2:17 minutes into the match. At that moment, two teammates using *Lukas* and *X.Borg* are fighting against an opposing hero, *Martis*. *Lukas* and *X.Borg* fight together against *Martis*, giving them a numerical advantage of two players

against one opponent. However, despite this advantage, both Lukas and X.Borg are defeated by Martis. After *Lukas* and *X.Borg* are defeated, the player using Belerick sends the utterance “You were two people and still died” through the in-game text chat. The utterance emphasizes that *Lukas* and *X.Borg* were in a two-versus-one situation, yet they were still unable to defeat Martis. Therefore, the utterance can be interpreted as a negative evaluation of the two teammates’ performance in that situation.

Reason: The utterance “You were two people and still died” can be categorized as positive impoliteness because the speaker directly gives a negative evaluation of the two teammates’ performance. This interpretation is supported by the situation in the game. *Lukas* and *X.Borg* were fighting against *Martis* in a two versus one situation, giving them a numerical advantage. However, despite this advantage, both of them were defeated by Martis. Through the expression “You were two people,” the speaker points out that the two teammates had a numerical advantage, while “and still died” emphasizes their failure despite being in a favorable position. Therefore, the utterance does not merely state that the two players were defeated. Instead, the speaker draws attention to and evaluates their failure, which can threaten their positive face, particularly their desire to be viewed positively, appreciated, and considered capable or competent as players.

Data 6 : “ **whatever**”

Context: Another player states, “The EXP can’t play,” and the speaker responds, “Whatever.” The validator considered this utterance more appropriately classified as Positive Impoliteness because the speaker shows indifference, rejection, and disregard toward the interlocutor. According to Culpeper’s framework, this

expression can be related to the strategy of snubbing or ignoring the other person, as the speaker dismisses the previous comment and shows a lack of concern for the interlocutor's positive face.

Reason : The expression "Whatever" shows the speaker's disregard and rejection of the previous comment. Rather than directly attacking the other player's social position, the speaker dismisses the interlocutor's comment and shows a lack of concern for the interlocutor's positive face.

b. Negative Impoliteness

According to Culpeper, (1996) Negative Impoliteness refers to acts that attack or hinder a person's desire to maintain their negative face. In the data analyzed in this study, this strategy occurs when players criticize, belittle the decisions of other players, or make comments that convey negative evaluations of their behavior or performance.

Data 1 : **"No need to spam the signal"**

Context : The utterance occurs when a teammate repeatedly uses the signal during the match. The speaker considers the repeated use of the signal unnecessary and responds by telling the teammate not to continue spamming it.

Reason: Based on Culpeper's (1996) framework, the utterance is categorized as Negative Impoliteness. This strategy is identified because the speaker directly criticizes the teammate's behavior through the expression "No need to spam the signal." The speaker indicates that the teammate's repeated use of the signal is unnecessary and inappropriate in the situation. By criticizing this behavior, the speaker negatively evaluates the way the teammate communicates during the match, which can threaten the target's face. Therefore, the utterance goes beyond simply providing information and functions as a direct negative evaluation of the teammate's behavior.

Data 2 : **“Report Miya”**

Context : An opposing player asks the other players to report Miya because she is considered to have contributed insufficiently to the team. During the match, Miya is perceived as playing more individually by focusing on pushing lanes and taking buffs, while providing limited assistance to her teammates. Her performance in using the hero is also considered less than optimal. In this context, the utterance “Report Miya” is expressed as a form of criticism directed at Miya’s behavior and performance during the match.

Reason: The utterance “Report Miya” is categorized as negative impoliteness because the speaker directly proposes an action that could result in negative consequences for Miya. The word “report” indicates the speaker’s disapproval of Miya’s behavior and directs attention toward an action that could be taken against her as a consequence of her performance during the match.

Data 3: **“Akai’s ultimate wasn’t used”**

Context : The utterance “Akai’s ultimate wasn’t used” occurs when Gusion approaches the situation after Akai has already used his ultimate against another enemy. As a result, Akai no longer has his ultimate available when Gusion arrives. Gusion then uses the utterance to point out Akai’s lack of an available ultimate and to sarcastically criticize Akai’s previous use of the skill. In this context, the utterance is not merely intended to describe the availability of Akai’s ultimate. Instead, Gusion uses the statement to highlight Akai’s gameplay decision and imply that Akai’s previous use of the ultimate was inappropriate or ineffective in the situation. Therefore, the utterance functions as a sarcastic remark directed at Akai’s gameplay.

Reason : Based on Culpeper’s (1996) framework, the utterance “Akai’s ultimate wasn’t used” is categorized as Negative Impoliteness.

This strategy is identified because Gusion uses the utterance to criticize Akai's gameplay decision by drawing attention to the fact that Akai no longer has his ultimate available when Gusion approaches. Although the statement appears to be a simple observation about the availability of Akai's ultimate, its meaning in the interaction is sarcastic and evaluative. Gusion indirectly portrays Akai's previous use of the ultimate as an ineffective or inappropriate decision, thereby negatively evaluating Akai's performance as a teammate. This negative evaluation can threaten Akai's face by portraying his gameplay decision as inadequate. Therefore, the utterance represents Negative Impoliteness because Gusion uses an apparently factual statement to convey criticism and indirectly undermine Akai's performance.

c. Sarcasm or Mock Politeness

According to Culpeper, (1996) Sarcasm or Mock Politeness occurs when apparently polite or positive expressions are used to convey an impolite meaning. In this study, this strategy was identified when players used apparently positive or neutral expressions to convey sarcasm, mockery, or criticism, particularly when the intended meaning could only be understood by considering the surrounding context.

Data 1 : **“The complete package”**

Context : The utterance “The complete package” occurs when the Akai player observes that the members of his team are not playing effectively. Each teammate appears to focus on their own actions rather than cooperating with the team, and they are considered unable to use their respective heroes effectively. Seeing these problems occur together, the Akai player refers to the team as “The complete package.” In this context, the expression is used sarcastically to criticize the overall performance and teamwork of the members.

Reason: Based on Culpeper's (1996) framework, the utterance is categorized as Sarcasm or Mock Politeness. The expression “the complete package” normally has a positive connotation, referring to someone or something that possesses all the qualities or features needed to be considered complete. However, the context presents the opposite situation, as the teammates demonstrate poor cooperation and ineffective individual performance. The contrast between the positive meaning of the expression and the negative situation indicates that the utterance is not intended as genuine praise. Instead, the Akai player uses the positive expression sarcastically to criticize his teammates' overall performance and lack of teamwork. Therefore, the utterance represents Sarcasm or Mock Politeness because the speaker conveys criticism through an apparently positive expression.

Data 2 : **“No wonder, your phone is Samsung”**

Context : The utterance “No wonder, your phone is Samsung” occurs when the speaker observes that a teammate is performing poorly during the match. Based on the teammate's poor performance, the speaker sarcastically assumes that the problem is related to the type of phone the teammate is using. However, the speaker does not actually know what type of phone the teammate uses while playing. By saying “No wonder, your phone is Samsung,” the speaker presents Samsung as if it were the reason for the teammate's poor performance, even though there is no information confirming that the teammate is actually using a Samsung phone. Therefore, the utterance is used to mock the teammate by making an unsupported association between the teammate's poor performance and the type of phone supposedly being used.

Reason: Based on Culpeper's (1996) framework, the utterance is categorized as Sarcasm or Mock Politeness. This strategy is identified because the speaker uses the expression “No wonder” to sarcastically associate the teammate’s poor performance with a Samsung phone, even though the speaker does not actually know what type of phone the teammate is using. The speaker presents Samsung as if it were the reason for the teammate’s poor performance, but this statement is not based on any actual information about the teammate’s device. The contrast between the speaker’s apparently matter-of-fact statement and the unsupported assumption about the teammate’s phone creates a mocking meaning. Rather than genuinely commenting on the device, the speaker uses the statement to indirectly ridicule the teammate’s poor performance. Therefore, the utterance represents Sarcasm or Mock Politeness because the speaker conveys a negative evaluation through an apparently casual but sarcastic remark.

Data 3 : **“Wi-Fi, lol.”**

Context ; The utterance “Wi-Fi, lol” occurs after Akai says “No wonder, your phone is Samsung” as a comment on the poor performance of one of the heroes in the match. Akai sarcastically attributes the poor performance to the type of phone supposedly being used by the player, even though Akai does not actually know what type of phone the player is using. Following Akai’s remark, Hanabi responds with “Wi-Fi, lol” in a similar manner by associating the hero’s poor performance with the Wi-Fi connection. The use of “lol” reinforces the mocking tone and indicates that the utterance is not intended as a serious explanation of an internet connection problem. Thus, Hanabi does not merely mention Wi-Fi but follows the pattern of Akai’s comment by replacing the previously suggested cause, the type

of phone, with the Wi-Fi connection. In this interactional context, the utterance “Wi-Fi, lol” can be understood as a sarcastic response that also mocks the poor performance of the hero.

Reason : Based on Culpeper's (1996) framework, the utterance “Wi-Fi, lol” is categorized as Sarcasm or Mock Politeness. This strategy is identified from the relationship between Hanabi's utterance and Akai's previous remark, “No wonder, your phone is Samsung.” Akai had sarcastically associated the poor performance of one of the heroes with the type of phone supposedly being used, even though Akai did not actually know what type of phone the player was using. Following this remark, Hanabi responds with “Wi-Fi, lol” by using a similar pattern of attributing the poor performance to another possible cause, namely the Wi-Fi connection. The expression “Wi-Fi” therefore follows the same sarcastic pattern established by Akai, while the addition of “lol” reinforces the mocking and humorous tone of the utterance. In this context, Hanabi's response is not intended as a serious explanation of an internet connection problem. Instead, it imitates the form of Akai's sarcastic remark and contributes to the mockery of the hero's poor performance. Therefore, the utterance represents Sarcasm or Mock Politeness because Hanabi conveys the comment in an apparently casual manner while creating a sarcastic and mocking meaning through the context of the interaction.

Data 4 : ” **Lukas plays really well**”

Context :The utterance “Lukas plays really well” occurs when Layla comments on the performance of the teammate using Lukas. Although the utterance appears to be a positive evaluation, the actual game situation shows that Lukas was not performing well. The contrast between the positive expression and the

actual performance indicates that Layla was not genuinely praising Lukas. Instead, the utterance is understood as an ironic remark intended to mock his performance

Reason : The utterance “Lukas plays really well” can be categorized as sarcasm or mock politeness because the speaker uses an apparently positive expression to convey a negative evaluation. Literally, the utterance expresses praise for Lukas’s performance. However, the actual situation in the game shows that Lukas was not performing well. The contrast between the positive statement and Lukas’s actual performance indicates that the speaker’s praise is not intended literally. Instead, the speaker uses the positive expression “plays really well” to indirectly criticize and mock Lukas’s performance. The utterance therefore conveys a meaning that differs from its literal interpretation. This contrast between the apparent praise and the actual situation provides the basis for classifying the utterance as sarcasm or mock politeness.

2. Functions of Impoliteness Used by Mobile Legends Players in Ranked

Based on Culpeper's (2011) framework, impoliteness can serve three main functions: Affective Impoliteness, Coercive Impoliteness, and Entertaining Impoliteness. These functions refer to the purposes served by impolite expressions in interaction. Affective Impoliteness is primarily used to express negative emotions such as anger, frustration, or dissatisfaction. Coercive Impoliteness is used to influence, pressure, or direct another person's behavior. Entertaining Impoliteness is used to create amusement or entertainment through impolite or mocking interaction. In the present study, the functions of the identified impoliteness strategies are interpreted based on the immediate game context and the relationship between each utterance and the preceding or subsequent interaction.

a. Affective Impoliteness

Affective Impoliteness was identified when players used impolite expressions primarily to express frustration, dissatisfaction, or other negative emotional reactions toward another player's behavior or performance.

Data 1 : “ **The jungler is ridiculous**”

Function : Affective Impoliteness

Reason : In terms of function, the utterance represents Affective Impoliteness as proposed by Culpeper (2011). The speaker uses the expression “The jungler is ridiculous” to express negative emotions toward the jungler's behavior. The speaker is dissatisfied and frustrated because the jungler does not assist a teammate who needs help and instead remains focused on farming his own buff. The use of the word “ridiculous” serves as an emotional reaction to the jungler's decision and expresses the speaker's dissatisfaction with the way the jungler performs his role as a teammate. There is no clear indication that the speaker intends to pressure or force the jungler to perform a particular action, nor is the utterance primarily intended to entertain other players. Therefore, Affective Impoliteness is the most appropriate function because the main purpose of the utterance is to express the speaker's frustration and dissatisfaction with the jungler's behavior.

Data 2 : “ **The complete package**”

Function: Affective Impoliteness

Reason: In terms of function, the utterance represents Affective Impoliteness based on Culpeper's (2011) framework. The Akai player uses the sarcastic expression to express frustration and dissatisfaction with his teammates' performance. His negative emotional response is related to their lack of cooperation, individualistic gameplay, and ineffective use of their

respective heroes. The utterance is not primarily used to instruct the teammates to perform a particular action, nor is it intended mainly to entertain other players. Instead, it functions as an expression of the speaker's negative feelings toward the team's overall performance. Therefore, Affective Impoliteness is the most appropriate function for this utterance.

Data 3 : “No wonder, your phone is Samsung”

Function : Affective Impoliteness

Reason : In terms of function, the utterance represents Affective Impoliteness based on Culpeper's (2011) framework. The speaker uses the sarcastic remark to express a negative attitude toward the teammate's poor performance during the match. By saying “No wonder, your phone is Samsung,” the speaker sarcastically suggests that the teammate's poor performance is understandable because of the phone they supposedly use, even though the speaker does not actually know what type of phone the teammate is using. This unsupported assumption serves to mock the teammate and conveys the speaker's dissatisfaction with the teammate's performance. The utterance is not primarily intended to make the teammate perform a particular action, and there is no clear indication that it is mainly used to entertain other players. Therefore, Affective Impoliteness is the most appropriate function because the utterance primarily expresses the speaker's negative attitude and dissatisfaction through a sarcastic remark directed at the teammate's poor performance.

Data 4 : “Wi-Fi, Lol”

Function : Affective Impoliteness

Reason : In terms of function, the utterance represents Affective Impoliteness based on Culpeper's (2011) framework. Hanabi uses the sarcastic response to express a negative attitude

toward the situation and to participate in the mocking comment about the hero's poor performance. By saying “Wi-Fi, lol,” Hanabi follows Akai's previous remark by attributing the poor performance to the Wi-Fi connection rather than to the type of phone. The addition of “lol” further reinforces the mocking tone of the utterance and indicates Hanabi's negative or dismissive attitude toward the situation. The utterance is not intended to make another player perform a particular action, as it does not contain a request, instruction, or command. Although the use of “lol” gives the utterance a humorous tone, there is no clear evidence that its primary purpose is to entertain the other players. Therefore, Affective Impoliteness is the most appropriate function because the utterance primarily conveys Hanabi's negative attitude through a sarcastic and mocking response to the ongoing interaction.

Data 5 : “Akai’s ultimate wasn’t used”

Function: Affective Impoliteness

Reason : In terms of function, the utterance represents Affective Impoliteness based on Culpeper's (2011) framework. Gusion uses the utterance to express a negative attitude toward Akai's gameplay decision and to sarcastically criticize his use of the ultimate. By pointing out that Akai's ultimate is no longer available when Gusion approaches, Gusion highlights the consequence of Akai's previous decision and implies that the decision was ineffective in the situation. The utterance does not contain a request or instruction intended to make Akai perform a particular action. Therefore, its primary function is not to control Akai's future behavior but to express criticism and dissatisfaction toward his gameplay through a sarcastic remark. For this reason, Affective Impoliteness is the most appropriate function for the utterance.

Data 6 : **“Level, bro”**

Function : Affective Impoliteness

Reason : The utterance occurs in a disadvantageous game situation and can be understood as an expression of Zetian's dissatisfaction with the ongoing game situation and the low level of a teammate. Through the utterance “Level, bro,” Zetian directly highlights the teammate's low level while the team is facing opponents with relatively higher levels. This context indicates that the utterance is not merely used to provide information about the player's level but also conveys a negative evaluation of the teammate's condition. Therefore, the utterance “Level, bro” can be categorized as affective impoliteness because it is used to express dissatisfaction through a negative evaluation of the teammate's low level in a disadvantageous game situation.

Data 7 : **“The EXP can't play”**

Function : Affective Impoliteness

Reason : The utterance functions as affective impoliteness because it conveys the speaker's dissatisfaction and frustration with the EXP player's performance. In the context of the player being killed 12 times during the match, the statement reflects the speaker's negative emotional response to what is perceived as ineffective performance.

Data 8 : **“Whatever “**

Function: Affective Impoliteness

Reason : This utterance serves an Affective Impoliteness function because it is used to express the speaker's dissatisfaction and rejection of the previous comment. The use of “whatever” indicates that the speaker dismisses or rejects the negative evaluation directed at the EXP player, thereby reflecting a negative emotional response in the interaction.

Data 9 : **“ You were two people and still died”**

Function : Affective Impoliteness

Reason : In terms of function, the utterance is best categorized as affective impoliteness because it expresses the speaker's dissatisfaction, annoyance, or frustration with the performance of the two teammates. This can be seen in the expression “still died.” The word “still” suggests that, from the speaker's perspective, the defeat was unexpected or disappointing because the two players already had a numerical advantage. By pointing out that they were defeated despite being in a favorable position, the speaker expresses a negative emotional reaction to the outcome of the fight. The utterance does not strongly indicate a coercive function, as the speaker does not give an explicit command or request for Lukas and X.Borg to take a particular action. It also does not clearly serve an entertaining function, as there is no indication that the speaker intends to entertain or amuse the other players. Therefore, affective impoliteness is the most appropriate function for this utterance.

Data 10 : **“ Lukas plays really well”**

Function ; Affective Impoliteness

Reason : In terms of function, the utterance serves an affective function because it expresses the speaker's negative emotional reaction to Lukas's performance. Although the expression “plays really well” appears to be positive, the context shows that Lukas was not performing well. The use of ironic praise allows the speaker to express dissatisfaction or annoyance indirectly rather than stating the criticism explicitly. The utterance does not clearly indicate a coercive function, as the speaker does not attempt to force Lukas to perform a particular action. It also does not clearly indicate an entertaining function, as there is no sufficient evidence that the main purpose of the utterance is

to entertain the other players. Therefore, affective impoliteness is the most appropriate function for this utterance.

b. Coercive Impoliteness

Coercive Impoliteness was identified when the speaker used an impolite expression to influence or control another player's behavior.

Data 1 : **“No need to spam signal”**

Function: Coercive Impoliteness

Reason: In terms of function, the utterance represents Coercive Impoliteness as proposed by (Culpeper, 2011). The speaker uses the utterance to encourage the teammate to stop repeatedly using the signal. The expression “No need” indicates that the repeated use of the signal is unnecessary, while “spam the signal” clearly refers to the behavior that the speaker wants the teammate to stop. Thus, the utterance is mainly used to influence the teammate's behavior rather than simply express the speaker's negative emotions or entertain other players. Therefore, Coercive Impoliteness is the most appropriate function for this utterance.

Data 2 : **“Report Miya”**

Function ; Coercive Impoliteness

Reason : This utterance serves a Coercive Impoliteness function because the speaker attempts to influence the other players to take a specific action toward Miya, namely reporting her. By saying “Report Miya,” the speaker encourages the other players to respond to Miya’s behavior, which is perceived as lacking support for teamwork.

c. Entertaining Impoliteness

Entertaining Impoliteness refers to the use of impoliteness primarily to create amusement or entertainment through mocking or playful interaction.

Data 1 : “ Angela where did you enter “

Function : Entertaining

Reason : This utterance serves an Entertaining Impoliteness function because the speaker uses Angela’s mistake as a source of mockery to create humor or amusement during the match. Rather than merely pointing out the mistake, the speaker expresses it in a mocking manner, turning Angela’s action into a subject of amusement in the interaction.

B. Discussion

The findings of this study show that impoliteness plays a significant role in the written interactions of Mobile Legends players in Ranked Mode. The analysis of 13 utterances taken from three Ranked Mode matches revealed three impoliteness strategies: Positive Impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness, and Sarcasm or Mock Politeness. These strategies occurred in various game situations, particularly when players encountered mistakes, poor performance, ineffective decisions, insufficient teamwork, and other situations that were considered unfavorable. Thus, impoliteness in online gaming communication is not limited to the use of harsh or offensive expressions. It can also be realized through criticism, negative evaluation, dismissal, and sarcastic comments whose meanings depend on the context of the interaction.

The findings show that Positive Impoliteness occurred most frequently among the three strategies. This indicates that players often focused on attacking the positive image of their teammates by pointing out their weaknesses, mistakes, or lack of ability. Culpeper (1996) explains that Positive Impoliteness concerns attacks on the hearer's positive face, particularly the desire to be appreciated, respected, accepted, and regarded favorably by others. In this study, such attacks can be seen in expressions such as “The jungler is ridiculous,” “The EXP can't play,” and “You were two people and still died.” These utterances go beyond describing events in the game because they contain negative judgments about the target players. As a result, they may affect the players' image as capable and cooperative members of the team.

The frequent occurrence of Positive Impoliteness can be related to the competitive characteristics of Ranked Mode. In this mode, players depend on both individual skills and cooperation with teammates to achieve their objectives. Consequently, players tend to monitor and evaluate the actions of their teammates throughout the match. When a player is perceived as making mistakes, failing to provide assistance, or performing below the expected level, other players may respond by highlighting these shortcomings. For instance, “The EXP can't play” directly questions the player's ability, whereas “You were two people and still died” emphasizes the failure of two teammates even though they had a numerical advantage. These examples indicate that competence and effective participation are important elements of a player's positive image within the gaming interaction.

The expression “Level, bro!” provides another example of how a short utterance can carry an impolite meaning. On its own, the expression may simply refer to the level of a player. However, the surrounding game situation gives it a different pragmatic interpretation. The speaker uses the expression to draw attention to a teammate's relatively low level while the team is facing stronger or higher-level opponents. Therefore, the utterance functions as more than a statement of information because it implicitly evaluates the teammate's condition negatively. This finding emphasizes that the interpretation of impoliteness requires consideration of the circumstances in which an utterance is produced.

The utterance “Angela, where did you enter” also demonstrates that Positive Impoliteness can be expressed without using an explicit insult. Although it takes the form of a question, the expression is used to highlight Angela's inappropriate decision during the match. The question indirectly criticizes her action and may challenge her competence as a player. Similarly, the expression “Whatever” represents a less direct form of impoliteness because it dismisses the preceding statement rather than responding to it seriously. Through this response, the speaker demonstrates disregard for the previous comment. These examples support Culpeper's (1996) argument that impoliteness can take various linguistic forms and that its interpretation is strongly influenced

by the interactional context. The second strategy identified in this study is Negative Impoliteness, which occurred in three utterances: “No need to spam the signal,” “Report Miya,” and “Akai's ultimate wasn't used.” Culpeper (1996) describes Negative Impoliteness as behavior that attacks the hearer's negative face, including the desire to maintain personal freedom and avoid unwanted interference or imposition. In the present findings, this strategy was mainly associated with criticism and attempts to restrict or influence the behavior of other players.

The expression “No need to spam the signal,” for example, communicates that the teammate's repeated use of the signal is considered unnecessary. The speaker does not simply describe the behavior but also indicates that it should be stopped. Therefore, the utterance places a restriction on the teammate's actions. The finding illustrates that Negative Impoliteness may be realized when players attempt to regulate how their teammates behave during the match.

The utterance “Report Miya” provides another example of this strategy. The speaker encourages other players to report Miya because her gameplay is perceived as insufficiently supportive of the team. In this case, the utterance goes beyond expressing dissatisfaction because it proposes a specific action that should be taken. The speaker therefore attempts to influence the responses and decisions of the other players. This demonstrates that impoliteness may also be used as a means of directing interaction within the game.

Meanwhile, “Akai's ultimate wasn't used” represents a more indirect form of Negative Impoliteness. At the surface level, the expression appears to be a simple comment concerning the availability of Akai's ultimate skill. However, the surrounding situation indicates that the speaker is evaluating Akai's earlier decision to use the skill. By drawing attention to the fact that the ultimate was no longer available, the speaker implicitly presents the previous decision as ineffective. Therefore, the meaning of the utterance cannot be fully understood from its literal form alone. The game context provides the basis for interpreting it as an indirect criticism.

The third strategy identified was Sarcasm or Mock Politeness, which appeared in four utterances: “The complete package,” “No wonder, your phone is Samsung,” “Wi-Fi, lol,” and “Lukas plays really well.” According to Culpeper (1996), this strategy occurs when an expression that appears positive or polite is used to convey an impolite or critical meaning. In the data analyzed, the intended meanings of these expressions become clear through the contrast between the words used and the actual game situation.

For example, “The complete package” normally suggests that something contains all the necessary qualities or elements and therefore has a positive connotation. However, the context shows that the teammates were demonstrating poor cooperation and ineffective gameplay. The positive expression is therefore inconsistent with the actual situation. This contrast indicates that the speaker was using the expression ironically to criticize the team's overall performance rather than to offer genuine praise.

The same pattern appears in “No wonder, your phone is Samsung.” In this utterance, the speaker jokingly connects the teammate's poor performance with the type of phone the player supposedly uses. However, the speaker has no actual information confirming that the teammate uses a Samsung device. The statement is therefore not intended to provide a genuine explanation for the poor performance. Instead, the unsupported connection between the phone and the player's performance creates a mocking effect. The utterance demonstrates how sarcasm can communicate criticism without directly stating the negative evaluation.

The utterance “Wi-Fi, lol” develops the same type of sarcastic interaction. After the previous player associates poor performance with a particular phone, Hanabi responds by suggesting Wi-Fi as another possible explanation. The word “lol” strengthens the humorous and mocking character of the response. The utterance is not intended as a serious diagnosis of an internet connection problem. Instead, it follows the sarcastic pattern established by the previous utterance and contributes to the mockery of the player's performance. This demonstrates that sarcastic meaning can be constructed through the relationship

between consecutive utterances. Another example is “Lukas plays really well.” Literally, this statement appears to compliment Lukas. However, the actual performance observed during the match does not support such praise. The difference between the literal meaning of the expression and the actual situation indicates that the speaker is using irony. The apparent compliment therefore becomes an indirect form of criticism. This finding further demonstrates that the interpretation of sarcasm depends heavily on contextual information and shared knowledge about what is happening in the game.

Taken together, the findings show that players employ both direct and indirect forms of impoliteness. Positive Impoliteness is mainly realized through negative evaluations of players' abilities, mistakes, and performance. Negative Impoliteness tends to occur when players criticize, restrict, or attempt to influence the behavior of their teammates. Meanwhile, Sarcasm or Mock Politeness allows players to communicate criticism indirectly by using expressions that appear positive, neutral, or humorous. The different realizations demonstrate that written communication in online gaming involves a variety of pragmatic strategies.

In addition to examining the strategies, this study analyzed the functions of impoliteness using Culpeper's (2011) framework. Three functions were identified: Affective Impoliteness, Coercive Impoliteness, and Entertaining Impoliteness. Affective Impoliteness appeared most frequently, occurring in ten of the 13 utterances. This was followed by Coercive Impoliteness in two utterances and Entertaining Impoliteness in one utterance. The frequency of Affective Impoliteness indicates that players commonly use impolite expressions to communicate emotional responses such as frustration, dissatisfaction, irritation, or disappointment toward the actions and performance of other players.

The affective function is evident in expressions such as “The jungler is ridiculous,” “The complete package,” “The EXP can't play,” and “You were two people and still died.” These utterances are produced in response to situations that the speakers consider disappointing or problematic. For example, “The

“jungler is ridiculous” reflects dissatisfaction with the jungler's decision not to assist a teammate, while “You were two people and still died” expresses disappointment with the outcome of a fight in which two teammates were defeated despite having a numerical advantage. In both cases, the main purpose of the utterances is to communicate the speaker's negative emotional response.

Sarcasm can also function as a means of expressing negative emotions. The expressions “No wonder, your phone is Samsung,” “Wi-Fi, lol,” and “Lukas plays really well” do not openly state frustration or anger. Nevertheless, their meanings within the game context convey negative attitudes toward the target player's performance. These findings indicate that players can communicate emotional dissatisfaction indirectly through sarcasm and irony.

The dominance of the affective function can be associated with the nature of Ranked Mode itself. Players continuously encounter situations involving kills, deaths, levels, objectives, team fights, and other forms of performance evaluation. These events can produce immediate emotional reactions, particularly when the outcome does not meet players' expectations. Since the in-game chat allows players to communicate while the match is occurring, players can immediately express their reactions to these situations. Therefore, the chat system serves not only as a means of coordinating gameplay but also as a medium for expressing frustration and dissatisfaction.

Coercive Impoliteness was found in “No need to spam the signal” and “Report Miya.” Culpeper (2011) explains that this function occurs when impoliteness is used to influence another person's behavior. In the first utterance, the speaker attempts to persuade the teammate to stop repeatedly using the signal. The utterance therefore has a clear behavioral objective. Similarly, “Report Miya” encourages other players to take a particular action toward Miya. Rather than merely criticizing her performance, the speaker attempts to influence what the other players do in response. These findings demonstrate that impoliteness may serve a practical purpose in addition to expressing negative emotions.

Although Coercive Impoliteness occurred less frequently than Affective Impoliteness, its presence demonstrates that players may use negative expressions strategically. In these cases, the speaker's intention is not limited to expressing dissatisfaction but also includes an attempt to change or influence another player's behavior. This finding supports Culpeper's (2011) distinction between affective and coercive functions.

Entertaining Impoliteness was identified in “Angela, where did you enter.” In this case, the speaker uses Angela's mistake as an opportunity for mockery. The expression is formulated as a mocking question rather than as a straightforward description of the mistake. Consequently, the utterance may create humor or amusement within the interaction. This finding indicates that impoliteness in gaming communication is not necessarily intended to express serious hostility. It may also become part of playful or humorous interaction among players.

The relationship between impoliteness strategies and functions is also significant. These two aspects should be understood as different dimensions of analysis. The strategy describes **how** the speaker threatens or attacks another person's face, whereas the function explains **what purpose** the impolite expression serves in the interaction. For instance, “Angela, where did you enter” is classified as Positive Impoliteness because it highlights and mocks the player's mistake, while its function is Entertaining Impoliteness because the mistake is used as a source of amusement. Likewise, “No need to spam the signal” represents Negative Impoliteness because it restricts the teammate's behavior, while its function is Coercive Impoliteness because the speaker attempts to make the teammate stop the behavior.

The combination of Culpeper's (1996) and Culpeper's (2011) frameworks therefore provides a broader understanding of the data. Culpeper's (1996) framework helps identify the type of face attack involved in each utterance, whereas Culpeper's (2011) framework helps explain the communicative purpose behind the impoliteness. Using the two frameworks together allows the present

study to examine not only the linguistic forms of impoliteness but also their roles in player interaction.

Another important aspect revealed by the findings is the importance of context in interpreting written communication during gameplay. Several expressions would be difficult to classify accurately if they were examined independently from the game situation. For example, “The complete package,” “Akai's ultimate wasn't used,” and “Lukas plays really well” do not contain clearly offensive words. Their impolite meanings become apparent only after considering what happened during the match. This demonstrates that pragmatic interpretation in online gaming depends strongly on the relationship between language and situational context.

The findings also suggest that players' expectations concerning teamwork and individual performance influence the emergence of impoliteness. Players enter Ranked Mode with expectations that their teammates will perform their respective roles, assist one another, and contribute to the team's objectives. When these expectations are not fulfilled, players may respond through criticism, sarcasm, dismissal, or attempts to control behavior. Consequently, impoliteness can be understood as one of the ways through which players respond to perceived failures in the cooperative aspects of competitive gameplay.

Overall, the results demonstrate that impoliteness in Mobile Legends Ranked Mode is closely related to performance evaluation, teamwork, competition, and emotional responses. Players use different impoliteness strategies depending on the situation they encounter. Positive Impoliteness is used to highlight weaknesses, mistakes, and poor abilities; Negative Impoliteness is used to criticize or restrict another player's behavior; and Sarcasm or Mock Politeness is used to communicate criticism through apparently positive or neutral expressions.

Furthermore, the findings show that impoliteness serves different interactional purposes. Affective Impoliteness is the most prominent function, indicating that emotional responses to gameplay situations are an important reason why players produce impolite expressions. At the same time, Coercive

Impoliteness demonstrates that players sometimes use impoliteness to influence the behavior of others, while Entertaining Impoliteness shows that mockery can also be incorporated into humorous interaction.

Therefore, the findings suggest that impoliteness in online gaming should not be viewed only as the use of rude or aggressive language. It represents a pragmatic form of communication through which players express emotions, evaluate performance, respond to mistakes, influence teammates, and engage in humorous or sarcastic exchanges. In Mobile Legends Ranked Mode, these functions emerge naturally from the competitive environment and the need for players to cooperate while simultaneously evaluating one another.

Finally, this study contributes to the understanding of impoliteness in computer-mediated communication by demonstrating that short written utterances can convey complex pragmatic meanings. The analysis confirms that understanding impoliteness requires attention not only to the words used but also to the events, interactions, and circumstances surrounding each utterance. Through the application of Culpeper's (1996, 2011) frameworks, the study illustrates how different forms and functions of impoliteness emerge within the competitive and collaborative environment of Mobile Legends Ranked Mode.
