



A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF SAGRAN'S "TIMOR-LESTE TIBA-TIBA MERDEKA" STATEMENT AND TIMORESE NETIZENS' RESPONSES ON YOUTUBE

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Abstract :

This study examines the pragmatic meaning of Sagra's statement, "Timor-Leste tiba-tiba merdeka," and responses posted by Timorese netizens on YouTube. It explores how the expression tiba-tiba is interpreted in relation to the historical struggle for independence and identifies pragmatic strategies used in the responses. The study employs a qualitative descriptive design and analyzes 20 purposively selected comments from a video identified as "Viral Timor." Data were documented, coded, classified, and interpreted using conversational implicature, speech act theory, and face-related analysis. The findings suggest that at least one commenter interpreted tiba-tiba as potentially overlooking the historical struggle for independence. Other comments contain expressive and directive acts, derogatory evaluations, identity-related references, and wording that appears to advocate physical harm. These interpretations remain context-dependent, particularly because several comments are written in Tetum and require linguistic verification. The study shows how historical context and audience interpretation may shape online responses to controversial statements, while recognizing that findings from 20 comments cannot represent all Timorese netizens.

Keywords : Pragmatics, Conversational Implicature, Speech Acts, Youtube Comments, Timor-Leste

INTRODUCTION

Language functions not only as a means of communicating information but also as a resource for expressing attitudes, constructing social identities, and interpreting historical events. The meaning of an utterance cannot always be determined by its literal meaning because contextual knowledge, social relationships, and communicative intentions influence how audiences interpret it. Pragmatics examines the relationship between linguistic expressions and meanings in context (Yule, 1996), while conversational implicature explains how listeners infer meanings beyond what speakers explicitly state (Grice, 1975). These concepts remain relevant to digital communication, where statements are interpreted, evaluated, and contested by diverse audiences.

The importance of contextual interpretation becomes particularly evident in historical and political discourse. The statement "Timor-Leste tiba-tiba merdeka" ("Timor-Leste suddenly became independent"), attributed to Sagra, provides an example of an expression whose pragmatic meaning may extend beyond its literal interpretation. Although tiba-tiba denotes suddenness or



unexpectedness, some audiences may interpret the expression as overlooking the prolonged struggle and sacrifices associated with independence. This is an audience inference, however, and should not automatically be equated with the speaker's intention. Research on collective memory indicates that social media can reshape how historical narratives are remembered, circulated, and contested (Adriaansen & Smit, 2025; Birkner & Donk, 2020).

Language also performs social actions rather than merely transmitting information. Speech act theory provides a framework for examining how utterances express attitudes, make demands, or challenge others (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). Studies of YouTube discourse have shown that comments can support knowledge co-construction and perform expressive functions (Dubovi & Tabak, 2020; Hambali et al., 2024). As a form of computer-mediated discourse, online commenting leaves textual traces that can be examined in relation to interactional context and communicative practice (Herring, 2004).

Social media also provides an environment in which disagreement may develop into impoliteness and hostility. Brown & Levinson (1987) conceptualize face as an important dimension of interpersonal communication, while (Culpeper, 1996, 2005, 2011) develops an account of impoliteness and language that causes offence. Locher & Bousfield (2008) further situate impoliteness within relations of power and interactional context. Research has applied these perspectives to contentious digital communication and YouTube comments (Groshek & Cutino, 2016; Hendar et al., 2022; Kapoor, 2022). Online interaction may also encourage disinhibited expression under certain conditions (Suler, 2004), although this concept cannot by itself explain the intentions of individual commenters. Recent work further examines creative impoliteness and audience responses in social media (Andersson, 2021, 2024; Dynel, 2024). These perspectives help distinguish ordinary disagreement from personal attacks and expressions that appear to advocate physical harm.

The controversy surrounding Sagra's statement also raises questions about national identity and historical memory. Expressions concerning independence may be interpreted as evaluations of a community's collective experience rather than as isolated linguistic statements. Research on social media and collective memory emphasizes that digital platforms can influence the construction and circulation of historical narratives (Adriaansen & Smit, 2025; Birkner & Donk, 2020). Digital political discussion also functions as an affective public sphere in which public expression, emotion, and participation intersect (Papacharissi, 2004, 2015). However, identity references in individual comments should be analyzed in context; their presence alone does not establish discriminatory intent or represent the views of an entire community.

Although research has examined speech acts, online impoliteness, and social media discourse, these perspectives need to be connected when analyzing a specific controversial expression and the responses it generates. This study addresses that issue by examining Sagra's statement, "Timor-Leste tiba-tiba merdeka," and 20 selected YouTube comments. It explores how tiba-tiba may generate pragmatic implicatures related to the historical struggle for

independence and identifies speech acts, face-threatening expressions, identity-related references, and hostile language in the responses. By integrating conversational implicature, speech act theory, and face-related analysis, the study explains how context and audience interpretation contribute to meaning-making in online discourse.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with a pragmatic approach to examine the meaning of Sagraan's statement, "Timor-Leste tiba-tiba merdeka," and the responses of Timorese netizens on YouTube. A qualitative approach was appropriate because the study focused on linguistic meaning, contextual interpretation, and communicative functions rather than numerical measurement. Qualitative inquiry enables researchers to explore how individuals or groups construct and interpret meanings in particular social contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The pragmatic approach focused on two analytical dimensions. First, the study examined the literal meaning and possible conversational implicature of the expression tiba-tiba ("suddenly") in the context of Timor-Leste's independence. Second, it investigated the pragmatic strategies employed by netizens in responding to the statement, including expressive and directive speech acts, criticism, condemnation, identity-related expressions, and face-threatening acts. These dimensions provided the analytical framework for interpreting the relationship between the original utterance and the responses expressed in the selected comments.

Data Source and Selection

The primary data were obtained from comments posted on YouTube under a video identified in the original research as "Viral Timor," which discussed Sagraan's statement, "Timor-Leste tiba-tiba merdeka." The comments served as the main data source because they contained viewers' interpretations, evaluations, and reactions to the statement.

The study examined 20 selected comments relevant to the research objectives. Comments were selected purposively based on their linguistic relevance to the controversy, particularly those expressing disagreement, criticism, anger, condemnation, historical defense, demands for respect or an apology, identity-related judgments, insults, accusations, or other forms of hostility. Comments unrelated to the statement, advertisements, spam, and comments without relevant pragmatic features were excluded from the analysis.

The selection process was guided by the relevance of each comment to the research questions rather than by statistical representativeness. Accordingly, the findings describe pragmatic patterns in the selected comments and are not intended to represent the opinions of all Timorese netizens.

Data and Unit of Analysis

The data consisted of words, phrases, sentences, and expressions in the selected YouTube comments that demonstrated relevant pragmatic meanings or

communicative functions. The primary unit of analysis was an individual comment, although specific linguistic expressions within a comment were examined when they provided evidence of particular pragmatic strategies.

For example, comments expressing anger or disappointment were examined in terms of their expressive functions, whereas comments demanding an apology or requesting a particular action were analyzed as potential directive speech acts. Expressions containing insults, accusations, or personal attacks were examined as possible face-threatening acts. Each classification was based on the linguistic features of the comment and its contextual meaning.

Data Collection

Data were collected through documentation and note-taking. The researcher identified the relevant YouTube video, read the comments posted under the video, and selected comments that addressed the research objectives. The collection procedure consisted of identifying the video, examining its comments, selecting relevant data, recording the selected comments, assigning preliminary codes, and organizing the data for analysis.

During documentation, the researcher retained the relevant linguistic expressions as they appeared in the comments to preserve the evidence required for pragmatic interpretation. The selected comments were subsequently organized according to their communicative functions and contextual relevance.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using qualitative pragmatic analysis, guided by Miles et al. (2014) and Saldaña (2016). The analysis involved five stages: repeatedly reading the selected comments, coding and classifying pragmatic features, interpreting them in relation to Sagra's statement and Timor-Leste's historical and sociocultural context, presenting the findings in tables and descriptive narratives, and drawing conclusions based on recurring patterns. The categories included conversational implicature, expressive and directive speech acts, criticism, condemnation, sarcasm, insults, accusations, identity-related expressions, and face-threatening acts. The analysis distinguished the literal meaning of *tiba-tiba* from the meanings inferred by commenters and examined the communicative functions of their responses. Interpretations were checked against the recorded comments to maintain consistency between the data, analytical categories, and conclusions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Pragmatic Analysis of Sagra's Statement

The expression "*Timor-Leste tiba-tiba merdeka*" ("*Timor-Leste suddenly became independent*"), attributed to Sagra, provides the starting point for examining how language is interpreted in relation to historical and sociocultural contexts. Literally, the word *tiba-tiba* means "*suddenly*" or "*unexpectedly*." At the lexical level, it describes an event perceived as occurring unexpectedly. However, the pragmatic meaning of an expression may extend beyond its literal meaning when audiences interpret it in relation to their background knowledge, shared experiences, and expectations. In this case, the expression concerns

Timor-Leste's independence, which is associated with a historical process of political struggle and resistance. The 20 selected YouTube comments used in this analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected YouTube Comments on Sagrañ's Statement

No	Data of comments	Comments	Web News
1		<i>O la merese hela iha rai idane. Laran makerek diak liu sai husi Timor.</i>	Viral Timor
2		<i>Se snhor lakoi hela iha Timor por favor sai tia. Ita lalika tur-tur fanu fali povu nia matan ben no emosaun. Kuidadu tamba Rai nee livre ona bele liberdade expressa maibe tetu didik.</i>	Viral Timor
3		<i>Kaer oho tiha. Sira mak uluk lakohin Timor ukunan sira Mak oho Timor barak. Kaher oho tia.</i>	Viral Timor
4		<i>Hau nia uma sorin mos ema Arabia Timor.</i>	Viral Timor
5		<i>Povu Timor nia fuan sei kane, o mangame ema kapa tia o nia panleru ne.</i>	Viral Timor
6		<i>o husu deskulpa taka tia deit. o loke ona escola hira iha Timor no mos loke kampu tarbalho hira iha Timor. Koalia kaben nakfurin.</i>	Viral Timor
7		<i>o nia liafuan ne lia teror jadi diak liu mak o fila ba o nia Rai Yaman neba</i>	Viral Timor
8		<i>Sorti hau iha tia Manleu, Uluk hau sei iha Fatuhada nemak ko'aia hanesan ne, uma sunu motuk tia ona.</i>	Viral Timor
9		<i>Islam het inan sira ne duni lakon tha.</i>	Viral Timor
10	28/08/2026	<i>Afinal ema nia aman ne representa nasaun Pakistan sai hanesan emabaixador onorario mai Timor-Leste.</i>	Viral Timor
11		<i>o halo saida tena ba Timor ukun naan ne, o mai aprofeta Timor nia diak deit, o melisi ida karik kaher oho tia.</i>	Viral Timor
12		<i>Tiba-Tiba nee hanesan o haluha tia luta husi tempu Portuguese to Indonesia nee, tinan neba ita gasta ba luta nee barak liu ukun ann ne rasik fahi, maibe ukun ann ne rasik o senti lafuan.</i>	Viral Timor
13		<i>o ema Arabi ne mai fali konta istoria Timor nian.</i>	Viral Timor
14		<i>Karailho beik ten koalia fuch liu diak liu duni sai tiha.</i>	Viral Timor
15		<i>Kaer oho tha mss dk.</i>	Viral Timor
16		<i>Ina nia huin o ne beggraoun sa1</i>	Viral Timor
17		<i>Inahuin kualia Bahasa Indonesia deit foin fila fali mai Timor karik. China sira loke loja kualia Tetum diak liu fali o haji moral laiha nee.</i>	Viral Timor
18		<i>Hoi minoritas o halimar ho mayoritas o halai dad kalsa labiban, het o nia aman Arabi.</i>	Viral Timor
19		<i>o ne'e merese kaer no oho tia deit. Las fuan ho o.o mate iha ne'be mk derepente o koalia ba edukasaun. Merese o nia uma mos sunu mos tiha. Asu ho O ema Arabe.</i>	Viral Timor
20		<i>O ne makerek duni o ne'e so sunu motuk tiha mk asu het fli o nia aman ne.</i>	Viral Timor

Comment 12 provides the clearest evidence of how one commenter interpreted the expression:

"Tiba-Tiba nee hanesan o haluha tia luta husi tempu Portuguese to Indonesia nee, tinan neba ita gasta ba luta nee barak liu ukun ann ne rasik fahi, maibe ukun ann ne rasik o senti lafuan."

The comment explicitly connects tiba-tiba with the struggle from the

Portuguese period to the Indonesian period, suggesting that the commenter perceived the expression as overlooking the historical struggle and sacrifices associated with independence. This interpretation can be explained through Grice (1975) concept of conversational implicature, in which meaning is inferred from context rather than stated explicitly. Although the statement does not directly deny the struggle for independence, the commenter appears to interpret it as insufficiently acknowledging the historical process. However, this reflects the commenter's interpretation and does not establish Sagra's communicative intention.

Comment 8 provides another possible reference to historical or personal experience:

"Sorti hau iha tia Manleu, Uluk hau sei iha Fatuhada nemak ko'aia hanesan ne, uma sunu motuk tia ona."

The comment mentions Manleu and Fatuhada and refers to a burned house, potentially reflecting a memory associated with destruction. However, the available wording does not establish the circumstances of the burning or its connection to a specific historical event.

Taken together, Comments 12 and 8 illustrate how contextual knowledge and references to past experiences may shape responses to controversial statements. Comment 12 offers the strongest evidence of a historical implicature, while Comment 8 provides a more tentative indication of personal or collective memory. These findings suggest that pragmatic interpretation depends not only on literal meaning but also on how audiences connect an utterance with historical experiences and contextual knowledge. Nevertheless, the analysis is limited to the selected YouTube comments and cannot be generalized to all Timorese netizens.

Netizens' Speech Acts

The selected YouTube comments demonstrate various communicative functions in response to Sagra's statement, including expressing emotions, criticizing the statement, demanding an apology, and challenging the speaker. These responses can be analyzed through speech act theory, which views utterances as actions performed through language (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). This study focuses on expressive and directive speech acts.

Expressive speech acts communicate emotional attitudes toward a situation or person. Comment 5 states:

"Povu Timor nia fuan sei kane, o mangame ema kapa tia o nia panleru ne."

The comment appears to express strong dissatisfaction by referring to the feelings of the Timorese people and directly addressing the person being criticized. However, its precise emotional meaning requires verification of the original Tetum wording. Comment 14 also contains a derogatory expression:

"Karailho beik ten koalia fuch liu diak liu duni sai tiha."

The wording appears to convey contempt or rejection. Similarly, Comment 17 combines criticism of language use with a negative evaluation of the addressee's morality:

"Inahuin kualia Bahasa Indonesia deit foin fila fali mai Timor karik.China sira loke loja kualia Tetum diak liu fali o haji moral laiha nee."

This response appears to extend beyond disagreement with the statement to criticism of the speaker's perceived linguistic or moral standing. Comment 20 also contains derogatory language:

"O ne makerek duni o ne'e so sunu motuk tiha mk asu het fli o nia aman ne."

Its wording appears hostile and contributes to a personal attack. These examples suggest that some commenters expressed disapproval through negative personal evaluations as well as criticism of the statement. However, Comment 16, "Ina nia huin o ne beggraoun sa1," cannot be assigned a definite emotional function without further linguistic verification.

Directive speech acts attempt to get another person to perform an action, refrain from acting, or respond to a demand. Comment 2 states:

"Se snhor lakoi hela iha Timor por favor sai tia.Ita lalika tur-tur fanu fali povu nia matan ben no emosaun. Kuidadu tamba Rai nee livre ona bele liberdade expressa maibe tetu didik."

The opening phrase appears to tell the addressee to leave Timor-Leste if they do not wish to stay. The comment also warns the addressee to exercise caution when expressing opinions, combining a directive with a warning and disapproval.

Comment 6 contains a more explicit demand:

"o husu deskulpa taka tia deit.o loke ona escola hira iha Timor no mos loke kampu tarbalho hira iha Timor. Koalia kaben nakfurin."

The phrase *o husu deskulpa* appears to demand an apology, while the subsequent questions about schools and employment opportunities potentially challenge the addressee to demonstrate a contribution to Timor-Leste. The complete meaning requires verification by a competent Tetum speaker.

Comment 13 states:

"o ema Arabi ne mai fali konta istoria Timor nian."

The comment refers to recounting Timor's history and may function as a rhetorical challenge to the addressee's position in discussing the country's past. However, the wording does not conclusively establish whether it constitutes a literal instruction, sarcasm, or a challenge to the addressee's legitimacy.

Overall, the selected comments demonstrate that expressive and directive speech acts can overlap in online disagreement. Expressive utterances communicate negative evaluations, whereas directives seek to influence the addressee's conduct or response. Some comments also contain personal attacks and identity-related criticism. These findings are limited to the selected data and cannot be generalized to all viewers or Timorese netizens.

Face-Threatening Acts

Face-threatening acts are communicative actions that potentially undermine an individual's public self-image or social standing. Brown & Levinson (1987) explain that individuals seek to maintain a desired social image during interaction. In online discussions, criticism may become face-threatening

when it shifts from evaluating an opinion to attacking the person expressing it. This pattern appears in some selected comments through derogatory expressions and negative evaluations of the addressee's perceived competence, identity, or morality.

Comment 14 states:

"Karailho beik ten koalia fuch liu diak liu duni sai tiha."

The derogatory wording appears to question the addressee's judgment or competence rather than offer a reasoned counterargument. It may therefore threaten the addressee's positive face by undermining their social image and claim to respect.

Comment 17 provides another example:

"Inahuin kualia Bahasa Indonesia deit foin fila fali mai Timor karik.China sira loke loja kualia Tetum diak liu fali o haji moral laiha nee."

The comment refers to Bahasa Indonesia and Tetum and includes a negative evaluation of the addressee's morality. It appears to extend the disagreement beyond the original statement to the person's perceived linguistic and moral standing. However, this interpretation does not establish the addressee's actual language competence or moral character.

Comment 20 states:

"O ne makerek duni o ne'e so sunu motuk tiha mk asu het fli o nia aman ne."

The wording appears to contain an insult and hostile personal evaluation, potentially threatening the addressee's positive face. Because the original wording is not fully transparent, its precise meaning requires verification; the analysis therefore focuses on its apparent derogatory function.

Together, Comments 14, 17, and 20 illustrate how online disagreement may shift from criticism of an idea to personal attacks. These expressions are relevant to Brown & Levinson (1987) framework because they potentially undermine the social image of the person being addressed. However, face-threatening language must be distinguished from explicit threats of physical harm, and offensive wording alone does not establish the commenter's intention or its actual effect on the recipient.

Overall, the selected comments suggest that some responses to Sagra's statement involved personal criticism and derogatory language rather than focusing solely on its historical implications. These findings are limited to the selected data and should not be generalized to the wider Timorese online community.

Historical Memory and National Identity

Historical memory provides an important context for interpreting statements about national independence. Audiences may evaluate such statements not only through their literal meaning but also through historical experiences and collective sacrifices. In this study, some responses to Sagra's statement, "Timor-Leste tiba-tiba merdeka," suggest that the expression was interpreted in relation to the historical struggle for independence.

Comment 12 provides the clearest evidence:

"Tiba-Tiba nee hanesan o haluha tia luta husi tempu Portuguese to Indonesia nee, tinan neba ita gasta ba luta nee barak liu ukun ann ne rasik fahi, maibe ukun ann ne rasik o senti lafuan."

The commenter explicitly refers to the struggle from the Portuguese period to the Indonesian period, suggesting that *tiba-tiba* was perceived as potentially overlooking the prolonged struggle and sacrifices associated with independence. Pragmatically, although the word literally conveys suddenness, its use in this context prompted the commenter to connect the statement with a broader historical narrative. This response illustrates how historical knowledge may shape an audience's interpretation of an utterance.

Comment 8 provides a more tentative example:

"Sorti hau iha tia Manleu, Uluk hau sei iha Fatuhada nemak ko'aia hanesan ne, uma sunu motuk tia ona."

The comment mentions Manleu and Fatuhada and refers to a burned house, potentially reflecting a personal experience or memory of destruction. However, the available wording does not establish when or why the burning occurred or whether it was connected to a specific historical event. It should therefore be treated as a possible reference to personal or historical memory rather than definitive evidence of a particular episode.

Together, the comments illustrate different ways historical experience may shape online responses. Comment 12 explicitly connects the controversy with the struggle for independence, whereas Comment 8 potentially evokes memories of destruction. These responses suggest a possible relationship between historical memory and national identity: language perceived as overlooking the independence struggle may be received as insufficiently acknowledging the experiences associated with national history. Nevertheless, the data do not establish that all commenters shared this interpretation or that Sagraan intended to challenge Timor-Leste's national identity. The findings are limited to the selected comments and cannot be generalized to the wider population of Timor-Leste.

Identity-Based Pragmatic Responses

Identity-related language appears in some selected YouTube comments through references to the addressee's ethnic background, language use, and social position in Timor-Leste. Such references must be interpreted contextually because mentioning identity does not automatically indicate discriminatory intent; it may function as a description, rhetorical challenge, or form of exclusion.

Comment 13 states:

"o ema Arabi ne mai fali konta istoria Timor nian."

The comment refers to the addressee as an Arab person and connects this identity with recounting Timor's history. In the context of the controversy, it may challenge the addressee's position or authority to discuss Timor-Leste's past. However, the wording alone does not establish whether the commenter intends ethnic exclusion, questions the person's historical knowledge, or uses sarcasm.

Comment 17 combines references to language with a negative evaluation of the addressee's morality:

"Inahuin kualia Bahasa Indonesia deit foin fila fali mai Timor karik.China sira loke loja kualia Tetum diak liu fali o haji moral laiha nee."

The comment refers to Bahasa Indonesia and Tetum and appears to criticize the addressee's language use and perceived moral standing. This suggests that the disagreement may extend beyond the original statement to questions of language and belonging. Nevertheless, the intended relationship between these elements remains uncertain without further contextual and linguistic verification.

Comment 18 states:

"Hoi minoritas o halimar ho mayoritas o halai dad kalsa labiban,het o nia aman Arabi."

The comment explicitly mentions minority-majority relations and the addressee's Arab background. These references make group identity and social position relevant to the response, although the precise pragmatic meaning and the commenter's intended argument cannot be established confidently from the available wording.

By contrast, Comment 4 states:

"Hau nia uma sorin mos ema Arabia Timor."

This comment mentions an Arab person in the commenter's surroundings but contains no clearly identifiable insult or explicit challenge. Without additional context, it cannot reliably be classified as an identity-based attack. This distinction is important because references to ethnic identity do not necessarily constitute exclusion or discrimination.

Overall, Comments 13, 17, and 18 indicate that references to Arab identity, language, and minority-majority relations form part of some responses to the controversy. These references may shift the discussion from Sagra's statement toward the addressee's perceived identity or social position. However, their pragmatic functions vary and must be interpreted individually. Stronger conclusions about ethnic exclusion or discriminatory discourse require reliable translations, clearer linguistic evidence, and sufficient contextual information.

Hostile and Threatening Responses

The selected YouTube comments contain expressions of hostility, including derogatory language and statements that appear to advocate physical violence. These responses indicate that disagreement over Sagra's statement sometimes extends beyond criticism of its meaning. However, offensive language should be distinguished from explicit calls for physical harm, as not every hostile expression constitutes a direct threat.

Comment 3 states:

"Kaer oho tiha.Sira mak uluk lakohinTimor ukunan sira Mak oho Timor barak.Kaher oho tia."

The repeated phrase *kaer oho* appears to call for the addressee to be seized and killed. Similarly, Comment 11 states:

"o halo saida tena ba Timor ukun naan ne, o mai aprofeta Timor nia diak deit, o melisi ida karik kaher oho tia."

The closing phrase appears to refer to seizing and killing the addressee.

Comment 15 contains a shorter expression:

"Kaer oho tha mss dk."

This wording appears to repeat the call for physical harm found in Comment 3. Together, these comments provide preliminary evidence of language that appears to advocate violence. Nevertheless, their precise meanings and pragmatic functions require verification by a competent Tetum speaker, and the available text does not establish whether they represent literal threats, expressions of anger, or rhetorical exaggeration.

Comment 19 contains several hostile expressions:

"o ne'e merese kaer no oho tia deit. Las fuan ho o.o mate iha ne'be mk derepente o koalia ba edukasaun. Merese o nia uma mos sunu mos tiha. Asu ho O ema Arabe."

The comment appears to advocate seizing and killing the addressee and refers to burning the person's house, alongside derogatory language concerning identity. It therefore potentially combines personal attacks with expressions advocating physical harm or property destruction. Comment 20 also contains derogatory wording and a reference to a burned house:

"O ne makerek duni o ne'e so sunu motuk tiha mk asu het fli o nia aman ne."

Although this comment contributes to the analysis of hostile discourse, its precise meaning is less certain and should not automatically be classified as an explicit threat.

From a pragmatic perspective, these expressions illustrate how online disagreement may shift from criticism of an argument toward hostility directed at the person being addressed. Comments 3, 11, 15, and 19 provide the strongest preliminary evidence of language advocating physical harm, while Comment 20 contains hostile wording whose function remains uncertain. However, the data do not establish the commenters' intentions, the likelihood of violence occurring, or the impact on the targeted person. Overall, the findings indicate that some selected responses involved severe hostility, but they are limited to the 20 comments examined and cannot be generalized to all viewers or Timorese netizens.

Summary of Pragmatic Findings

The analysis of the 20 selected YouTube comments reveals several pragmatic patterns in the responses to Sagraan's statement, "Timor-Leste tiba-tiba merdeka." These patterns include the interpretation of conversational implicature, the expression of negative attitudes, the use of directives, face-threatening language, references to historical experience and identity, and expressions that appear to advocate physical violence. Table 2 summarizes the main categories identified in the analysis.

Table 2. Summary of Pragmatic Categories in the Selected YouTube Comments

Pragmatic category	Comment numbers	Main analytical finding
Conversational	12	The expression <i>tiba-tiba</i> is interpreted in relation to

implicature		the historical struggle for Timor-Leste's independence.
Expressive speech acts	5, 14, 17, 20	Comments appear to communicate disapproval, contempt, or hostility toward the addressee.
Directive speech acts	2, 6, 13	Comments contain an apparent instruction to leave, a demand for an apology, or a possible rhetorical challenge.
Face-threatening acts	14, 17, 20	Derogatory language and negative personal evaluations potentially undermine the addressee's social image.
Historical memory	8, 12	Comment 12 explicitly refers to the independence struggle, while Comment 8 mentions a burned house without establishing its precise historical context.
Identity-related discourse	13, 17, 18	Comments refer to Arab identity, language, or minority-majority relations.
Hostile and potentially violent expressions	3, 11, 15, 19	The wording appears to include calls for physical harm, although the exact pragmatic force requires linguistic verification.
Other hostile expressions	20	The comment contains derogatory language and a reference to destruction, but its precise meaning requires further verification.

The categories in Table 2 are analytical rather than mutually exclusive. A single comment may perform more than one pragmatic function, depending on its wording and context. For example, Comment 17 is relevant to expressive language, face-threatening acts, and identity-related discourse because it combines negative evaluation with references to language and perceived morality. Similarly, Comment 20 contains derogatory wording and is relevant to the discussion of hostility, although its precise meaning should be verified before assigning it a more specific function.

The findings indicate that the controversy involved more than a disagreement over the literal meaning of the word *tiba-tiba*. Comment 12 suggests that at least one commenter interpreted the expression in relation to the historical struggle for independence. Other comments demonstrate how disagreement may be expressed through demands, personal criticism, identity-related references, and language that appears to advocate violence. These patterns illustrate the importance of examining the relationship between an utterance, its contextual interpretation, and the communicative functions of audience responses.

However, the findings must be interpreted within the limits of the data. The analysis concerns 20 selected comments from one YouTube video and does not establish the prevalence of these responses among all viewers or Timorese netizens. Furthermore, several comments contain wording whose exact meaning requires verification by a competent Tetum speaker. The classifications should therefore be understood as context-based interpretations of the available text rather than definitive judgments about every commenter's intention.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the pragmatic interpretation of Sagraan's statement,

"Timor-Leste tiba-tiba merdeka," and responses in 20 selected YouTube comments. The findings indicate that tiba-tiba may be interpreted beyond its literal meaning of "suddenly," particularly in relation to the historical struggle for Timor-Leste's independence. Comment 12 provides the clearest evidence of this interpretation by referring to the struggle from the Portuguese period to the Indonesian period. The analysis also identified expressive and directive speech acts, face-threatening expressions, identity-related references, and language that appears to advocate physical violence. These findings demonstrate how historical context and audience interpretation can shape responses to controversial statements in online discourse.

This study contributes to pragmatic research by illustrating the relationship between linguistic meaning, historical memory, and audience responses in digital communication. However, the findings are limited to 20 selected comments from one YouTube video and cannot be generalized to all Timorese netizens. Furthermore, some interpretations require verification of the original Tetum wording. Future research could examine a larger corpus across multiple digital platforms and use verified translations to provide a more comprehensive understanding of pragmatic strategies in online discussions of national history and identity.

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