

# Politeness in Digital Conversations: An Analysis of Prilly Latuconsina's Speech on TikTok and Its Relevance to Language Learning

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## Abstract

In the era of digital communication, language use in public discourse has shifted significantly, especially through platforms such as podcasts that promote informal yet influential conversations. This study aims to identify and analyze the politeness strategies employed by Prilly Latuconsina, a public figure, in a podcast hosted by Dedy Corbuzier and Vidi Aldiano. Using a pragmatic approach grounded in Geoffrey Leech's (1983) politeness maxims, this qualitative study examines 150 utterances from the podcast transcript to determine the forms and frequency of politeness strategies in Prilly's speech. The results show that she consistently applies the maxims of tact, approbation, modesty, sympathy, and agreement, predominantly using tact and approbation to construct a positive public image and maintain harmonious interactions. These findings suggest that public figures can serve as effective pragmatic models for formal education, particularly in teaching politeness strategies within Bahasa Indonesia language classes and university-level pragmatics and rhetoric courses. By integrating authentic digital discourse into language instruction, this research supports the development of students' communicative competence in meaningful and context-rich ways, highlighting the pedagogical potential of podcast-based materials.

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## Introduction

In an era of rapidly evolving digital communication, public discourse has undergone a significant transformation, not only in terms of medium but also in the forms and styles of interaction. The proliferation of digital technologies has fostered the emergence of new communication platforms that enable society to engage more actively and openly in the exchange of information. One such rapidly growing platform is the podcast, an audio-visual medium that facilitates long-form and in-depth discussions that are rarely found in traditional mass media. According to McGarr (2009) and Godwin-Jones (2018), podcasts offer a fluid, interactive, and inclusive form of communication, reflecting the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of language in contemporary society. Recent global reports, such as UNESCO (2022) and Pew Research Center (2023), have highlighted the educational potential of podcasts, especially in promoting authentic discourse and critical thinking in language learning. Their informality and accessibility make them particularly attractive for exploring spoken pragmatics in realistic contexts.

Scholars such as Rosell-Aguilar (2015) and O'Bryan & Hegelheimer (2007) also argue that podcasts can enhance language learning by increasing exposure to natural language and promoting learner autonomy. As such, podcasts are not only reshaping communication practices but also expanding opportunities for linguistic research and pedagogy in the digital age. This perspective aligns with Taguchi and Roevers's (2021) emphasis on the importance of instructed pragmatics that utilizes authentic, technology-mediated input to enhance pragmatic competence in language learners. Podcasts, as rich digital resources, provide contextualized and naturalistic examples of pragmatic strategies, making them ideal for incorporation into language teaching practices that foster real-world communicative skills.

In the Indonesian context, the rise of podcasts reflects broader trends in digital engagement and educational innovation. According to APJII (2023), internet usage in Indonesia has surpassed 78%, with a growing number of users consuming audio-visual content for both entertainment and educational purposes. The Ministry of Education and Culture's Kurikulum Merdeka emphasizes the integration of digital literacy, character development, and contextualized language instruction in the classroom (Kemdikbudristek, 2022). Podcasts serve as an effective medium in fulfilling these curricular goals by providing learners with exposure to real-world language use and social interaction. The informal yet public nature of podcast communication offers an opportunity to analyze how pragmatic awareness, including politeness, is performed and modeled by figures with significant public influence. However, while digital media have increasingly been included in language education, research specifically focused on podcast content in Indonesian educational discourse remains sparse. This underlines the importance of exploring how podcasts can be utilized not only as tools of communication but also as resources for pragmatic instruction.

Despite the growing popularity of podcasts in both public and educational spheres, there is still limited understanding of how linguistic politeness is enacted by public figures in these spaces. Public figures due to their visibility and influence, play a critical role in shaping social discourse through their communicative behavior (Haugh, 2013; Weizman & Fetzer, 2021; Kurniawan et al., 2024). Yet, studies on podcast interactions tend to overlook the pragmatic strategies used in real-time, spontaneous speech where politeness is key to maintaining public image and interpersonal harmony. While linguistic politeness has long been studied in formal

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or scripted contexts, its application in unscripted and informal public media remains underexplored. Furthermore, the pedagogical potential of these interactions in informing language teaching practices, particularly in Bahasa Indonesia education is still largely untapped. Thus, this study is motivated by a twofold concern: the lack of pragmatic analysis in spoken digital discourse and the need to contextualize language instruction using authentic, socially relevant materials.

Politeness in language has been a central concern in pragmatics, leading to the development of several influential frameworks. One of the most comprehensive is Geoffrey Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle, which consists of six maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Leech's model emphasizes the cooperative nature of communication and the socio-cultural aim of preserving harmony among interlocutors. This approach complements Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of face-saving, which focuses on how speakers manage their own and others' social face during interactions. Leech's emphasis on strategic linguistic choices and interpersonal sensitivity makes his framework particularly relevant for analyzing spontaneous spoken discourse. In digital settings, where speech is public yet conversational, such frameworks help uncover how individuals navigate the tension between informality and social accountability. By applying Leech's model, researchers can systematically identify the forms and functions of politeness in real-time dialogue, making it especially suitable for the analysis of podcast conversations.

Numerous studies have employed Leech's politeness theory in a variety of contexts, illustrating its broad applicability. Duangkhot (2017), for example, examined job application letters in Thailand and identified frequent use of the tact and modesty maxims to construct professional identity. Eshreth and Badran (2020) analyzed politeness strategies in classic drama scripts, linking them to character development and narrative cohesion. In digital communication, Choi (2020) explored WhatsApp interactions among university students and noted how politeness was mediated by institutional roles and social distance. Indonesian scholars have also examined digital politeness. Daulay et al. (2022) and Puspawati (2022) focused on teacher-student exchanges in online classrooms, while Ahmadi and Weisi (2023) investigated politeness dynamics in Telegram groups. While insightful, these studies largely center on written digital interaction. This indicates a gap in research concerning real-time, audio-visual spoken discourse, especially involving public figures whose speech acts may have broader social and educational influence.

Compared to text-based analysis, the study of spoken politeness strategies in podcast settings, particularly those distributed via platforms like TikTok remains underdeveloped. Previous research on politeness in TikTok (e.g., Putri et al., 2024; Nurul & Mayong, 2022; Rahmawati, 2022) has focused mainly on viewer comments rather than the discourse of the content creators themselves. This leaves an important gap in understanding how public figures navigate politeness in spontaneous dialogue, especially when addressing complex topics or interacting with multiple co-speakers. A relevant case for this inquiry is the participation of actress and activist Prilly Latuconsina in a podcast hosted by Dedy Corbuzier and Vidi Aldiano. The episode presents a rich instance of digital discourse where interpersonal rapport, self-presentation, and social commentary intersect. By examining how Prilly manages her speech acts with respect to the hosts and audience, the study contributes to our understanding of politeness strategies in high-stakes, public-facing conversations.

Based on the aforementioned background, this study aims to analyze the forms of politeness strategies employed by Prilly Latuconsina in a podcast conversation and to explore the relevance of these findings for the development of pragmatic teaching strategies in language education. The focus lies on identifying how tact, approbation, modesty, sympathy, and agreement are operationalized in her discourse. Through this analysis, the study also seeks to demonstrate how podcast content can serve as authentic material for developing communicative competence in students. In line with context-based learning approaches, it emphasizes the need for integrating real-world digital discourse into formal instruction, particularly in Bahasa Indonesia subjects. This not only enhances students' pragmatic awareness but also aligns language teaching with contemporary communicative environments. Ultimately, the research contributes to both linguistic scholarship and pedagogical innovation in the digital age.

## Method

This study adopted a qualitative approach using pragmatic discourse analysis, specifically grounded in Leech's (1983) theory of politeness. This approach was chosen to examine the implied meanings, linguistic strategies, and social functions embedded in the utterances produced by Prilly Latuconsina in a podcast context. As emphasized by Creswell (2014), qualitative research is suitable when the objective is to explore complex social or cultural phenomena in depth within their natural settings and to interpret meaning from participants' perspectives. Although the podcast data were publicly available, ethical considerations were observed, particularly in selecting and interpreting the speaker's discourse to ensure respect for the individual's representation and to maintain analytical integrity. The analysis was conducted with careful attention to the public nature of the data and the potential implications of interpreting a public figure's speech. The research design employed in this study was an intrinsic case study (Creswell, 2013), in which the selected case held intrinsic value due to the uniqueness of the communicative event and the involvement of a public figure whose discourse carries pedagogical significance. This design enabled the researcher to investigate the context, interaction, and linguistic phenomena in a holistic and contextualized manner. The primary data source consisted of a podcast transcript featuring Prilly Latuconsina as a guest speaker, in dialogue with Dedy Corbuzier, Vidi Aldiano, and Kiki CJR. Data were collected through documentation and non-participant observation, and supported by contextual analysis of the communicative situation, social roles, and audience reach within the podcast setting. The data analysis procedure involved segmenting the transcript into individual utterances, followed by thematic coding based on Leech's (1983) six politeness maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. A coding schema was developed to guide the analysis, with each utterance labeled according to the dominant maxim it represented, along with any associated pragmatic features such as implicature, tone, and interactive alignment. To ensure analytical rigor, two independent coders reviewed 30% of the data. An intercoder agreement rate of 90% was achieved, which confirmed the reliability of the coding process. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion and iterative refinement of coding criteria. This validation process contributed to the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Furthermore, example segments from the data were used during the coding calibration process to ensure consistency in identifying pragmatic intentions and politeness strategies across utterances. This

process facilitated a nuanced understanding of the speaker's pragmatic competence and communicative sensitivity in a public digital space. In alignment with educational research methodology, the findings of this study were intended to inform the development of instructional materials and classroom practices, particularly in teaching politeness strategies and discourse analysis in Bahasa Indonesia subjects or university-level pragmatics courses.

## Results and Discussion

### Results

To identify the forms and frequency of politeness maxims employed by Prilly Latuconsina in the podcast conversation, the researcher conducted an analysis of her utterances by referring to the six politeness maxims proposed by Leech (1983). The analysis involved identifying relevant utterances, classifying them based on maxim types, and calculating the frequency of occurrence. The classification and coding of data were conducted by two independent researchers and cross-checked to ensure inter-coder agreement, resulting in a 90% concordance rate. The quantity and distribution of the maxims used are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Politeness Maxims Used by Prilly Latuconsina in the Podcast Conversation

No.	Type of Politeness Maxim	Frequency of Occurrence
1	Tact Maxim	4 times
2	Generosity Maxim	1 time
3	Approbation Maxim	3 times
4	Modesty Maxim	3 times
5	Agreement Maxim	4 times
6	Sympathy Maxim	3 times

*Source: Transcript of Prilly Latuconsina's podcast, 2024*

Examples of utterances illustrating each maxim are as follows:

Tact Maxim: "Jangan suka menilai orang dari potongan-potongan video. Gila!"

Generosity Maxim: "Karena syuting full di Jogja... bareng aktor-aktor Jogja juga."

Modesty Maxim: "Prilly harus ke airport, iya nih, mau ke Jogja, doain ya."

Agreement Maxim: "Kenapa dark lagi sih bercandanya, ya Allah."

Approbation Maxim: "Iqbal pasti ngerasa lah... dia tuh kan kaya kakak yang protektif."

Sympathy Maxim: "Luar biasa, makasih banget loh."

Each of these utterances represents a distinct maxim of politeness as outlined by Leech (1983), showing Prilly's consistent use of pragmatic strategies across different conversational turns. The frequency and distribution of the politeness maxims, as outlined above, reflect a clear pattern in Prilly Latuconsina's communication style. The predominance of the Tact Maxim and the Agreement Maxim, each appearing four times suggests a consistent pragmatic orientation toward maintaining harmony, minimizing face-threatening acts, and building rapport with her interlocutors. These patterns are not merely stylistic; they reveal a conscious or intuitive strategy to project a careful, considerate, and inclusive public persona.



The tact maxim, exemplified in the utterance "Jangan suka menilai orang dari potongan-potongan video. Gila!", signals Prilly's attempt to critique behavior in a way that is assertive yet mitigated. Rather than attacking or directly blaming others, she frames her criticism within a broader social concern, which aligns with the principles of face-saving and indirectness in digital discourse. This usage supports the idea that Prilly positions herself as someone who is socially aware and ethically grounded in her public communication. Similarly, her use of the Agreement Maxim, such as in "Kenapa dark lagi sih bercandanya, ya Allah," shows an effort to align with the conversational flow, often employing humor or soft interjections that signal mild agreement or shared understanding. This pattern reinforces her image as approachable and emotionally intelligent, which is essential for sustaining audience engagement on platforms like TikTok or podcasts, where spontaneity and relatability are highly valued.

The presence of other maxims, including Approbation, Modesty, Sympathy, and Generosity, although slightly less frequent, contributes to a nuanced representation of Prilly as empathetic, humble, and supportive. These pragmatic strategies indicate a deliberate or habitual use of politeness to navigate social dynamics, reduce interpersonal friction, and enhance her credibility as a public figure. In terms of broader implications, these patterns are pedagogically relevant to language learning, especially in teaching pragmatic competence. By analyzing the way a celebrity like Prilly employs politeness maxims naturally in conversation, learners can observe how politeness is contextually negotiated, not just through formal language, but through interpersonal sensitivity and adaptive communication. This analysis illustrates how pragmatic strategies function in authentic discourse and how language learners can use similar tactics to manage impressions, build rapport, and communicate effectively in digital and real-world interactions.

## Discussion

In the era of digital communication, where public discourse often unfolds in informal and improvisational formats such as podcasts, the strategic use of politeness serves as a valuable indicator of communicative ethics and social intelligence. This study highlights how Prilly Latuconsina applies the six politeness maxims not only to maintain harmony but also to construct a positive public persona.

For instance, the tact maxim is evident in her invitation to refrain from quick judgment, which minimizes potential face-threatening acts, a key element in public-facing discourse. The generosity maxim surfaces when Prilly highlights the role of local actors in the production process, demonstrating self-effacement and collaborative spirit. These patterns reflect how politeness can operate on both interpersonal and ideological levels (Leech, 1983; Akhmad, 2021).

The modesty maxim appears in subtle emotional appeals such as "doain ya," where humility is embedded within casual expression, humanizing her public figure status. Similarly, the agreement maxim is applied to maintain conversational harmony even in sensitive contexts. The approbation and sympathy maxims also reflect her interpersonal sensitivity, qualities that resonate with listeners and promote respectful dialogue (Chia, 2023; Karina, 2023). While this study is grounded in Leech's (1983) taxonomy of politeness maxims, the observed patterns may also be interpreted through the framework of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. Their concept of positive and negative politeness, which centers on maintaining the speaker's

and hearer's face, provides additional insight into Prilly's communicative strategies. Her use of the tact maxim aligns with negative politeness, as it functions to minimize imposition and respect the listener's autonomy. Meanwhile, the approbation and sympathy maxims can be read as forms of positive politeness, which aim to enhance solidarity and express approval. Integrating these frameworks enriches the analysis by showing how different politeness strategies converge to construct both relational harmony and a favorable public image.

This study contributes to the field of pragmatics by illustrating how digital, unscripted conversations can become a rich source of pragmatic data. It helps bridge the gap between public digital discourse and formal pragmatic instruction in language classrooms, which remains an underexplored area. By providing authentic examples of pragmatic strategies in use, this study enhances the contextual grounding of politeness theories and opens pathways for applied research in language education. From a pedagogical standpoint, the utterances analyzed in this study can serve as resources in teaching speech acts, politeness strategies, and context-sensitive communication. Table 2 below provides examples of how these utterances can be integrated into language instruction.

**Table 2.** Sample Integration of Podcast Excerpts into Classroom Activities

Politeness Maxim	Example Utterance	Instructional Use
Tact	"Jangan suka menilai orang..."	Teaching face-saving strategies
Modesty	"Doain ya."	Modeling humility in requests and farewells
Approbation	"Iqbal pasti ngerasa lah..."	Practicing positive reinforcement techniques

Such material can be incorporated into task-based learning, role-playing, or media literacy activities that promote ethical communication. Moreover, students can be encouraged to analyze contemporary discourse critically and compare formal pragmatic models with real-world practices.

The study also reinforces the importance of character education in language learning. As highlighted by Simarmata and Agustina (2023), language education should cultivate empathy, respect, and responsibility. Prilly's language use exemplifies these values, making her utterances relevant not only for pragmatic instruction but also for moral development (Arrahman et al., 2023; Hasjim et al., 2023; Wardana et al., 2023). Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, it focuses on a single public figure and a limited sample of podcast episodes, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Second, the analysis has not yet been tested in actual classroom contexts, which limits its pedagogical validation. Future studies should consider applying the findings in educational settings to examine their effectiveness in improving students' pragmatic competence.

## Conclusion

This study has explored the politeness strategies employed by Prilly Latuconsina in a podcast setting, utilizing Leech's (1983) politeness maxims as the analytical framework. The analysis revealed that Prilly consistently enacted all six maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy, through utterances demonstrating not only pragmatic

competence but also emotional sensitivity and social awareness. These findings confirm that even in informal digital contexts, politeness is strategically employed to manage face, construct identity, and sustain positive interpersonal relationships rather than being merely formulaic. Crucially, this study contributes to bridging the gap between public digital discourse and formal pragmatic instruction in language education. By illustrating how public figures like Prilly model nuanced communicative behaviors, it offers a pedagogical framework for integrating authentic, contextually rich materials into classroom practices. This integration promotes students' development of pragmatic sensitivity and ethical awareness in language use, skills increasingly vital in both offline and online communication. However, the study's scope is limited by its focus on a single public figure and specific podcast context, without empirical validation through classroom application. Future research should explore the practical implementation of podcast-based materials in language instruction and assess their impact on learners' pragmatic competence. By situating politeness within digital media discourse and connecting it to pragmatic pedagogy, this research not only advances scholarly understanding but also proposes a model for context-based, ethically informed language education, thereby laying groundwork for future curriculum development in pragmatics.

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### Authors' Note

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