

Application of Politeness Theory in Digital Communication: Impacts and Implications for Online Interactions

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to gather data pertaining to the significance of polite language usage on social media platforms and the influence of impolite language on social media interactions. This research, which focuses on language politeness in social media, employs a qualitative research method that collects data and then analyzes it in a way that produces a complete written work. The source data for this research are obtained from a variety of websites offering related information and a number of published works addressing the same background. The analysis of these diverse sources is an essential component of the research process. The findings presented here are limited to an investigation of social media, polite language, and the potential implications of applying politeness theory in everyday life. The data collected for this study was analyzed and sorted into categories that can be used as material for this research project's writing. From these analyses, it can be concluded that there is a notable influence of polite language in the digital media world and its impact on everyday life. The implementation of politeness in digital language has a positive influence in real life, as observed in this study.

Keywords: politeness, digital, interaction, online

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a reflection of one's personality, character, and disposition. The words we choose and the manner in which we express ourselves can provide insights into our personality traits. The use of language that is smooth, polite, well-mannered, orderly, and clear can directly reveal the personality of an individual who is adept at communicating effectively. Conversely, the utilisation of sarcastic language, slander, ridicule, or harassment serves to portray the individual in a negative light, suggestive of a lack of virtue. It is thus incumbent upon speakers and speech partners to be aware of the rules governing behaviour, language use, and the interpretation of the language and words of their interlocutors. (Stanley, 2007) Each individual engaged in discourse bears responsibility for ensuring adherence to linguistic norms. Failure to do so may result in the disruption of communication, particularly in social contexts. The objective of any communicative act is to convey messages and establish social relationships. In the act of conveying messages, language is typically employed in one of three forms: oral, written, or non-verbal. When these forms are understood by both the speaker and the interlocutor, the communication process is deemed to be successful. In such instances, the speaker leaves a profound impression, often characterized by qualities such as kindness, politeness, friendliness, and respect. The manner in which one speaks serves to reveal one's character and personality. (Teitelbaum & Ben-Ze'ev, 2023) The Millennial Generation, also known as Generation Y, was born between 1980 and 2000. The millennial generation, born between 1980 and 2000, is currently in the productive age range of 20 to 40 years. (Heinzen et al., 2023). It represents the largest population in Indonesia and is expected to exert significant influence during the demographic bonus period. Consequently, the millennial generation will bear a substantial responsibility for constraints on development, particularly in the economic field. The millennial generation exhibits distinctive characteristics that differentiate it from preceding generations. In contrast, the preceding generation, Generation X, is known for its independent and loyal character, a penchant for image, fame, and money, and a work ethic that is both arduous and thrifty. (Fisher, 2024) The generation X era marked the advent of information technology, which subsequently underwent exponential growth during the millennial era (Rajagukguk, 2022). In contrast to the millennial generation, which is distinguished by its pervasive familiarity with technology and social media, and which deploys these tools across all facets of its life, the millennial generation also exhibits creative, informative, productive, and dynamic characteristics. Additionally, the advent of digital technology and social media has precipitated a shift in character among the millennial generation. This is evidenced by the emergence of novel phenomena within the contemporary millennial context. One notable example is the phenomenon of global culture, which can be conceptualized as a pervasive phenomenon that intertwines various elements, including economic, political, and social and cultural dynamics (Agarwal & Dhingra, 2023).

The advancement of technology has brought about numerous conveniences in the realm of consumerism, prompting a transformation in the manner by which needs are quantified. The accelerated growth of the technology and information sector in

this globalized epoch has constituted a fertile field for producers, enabling them to generate an extensive array of sales items that are tailored to the distinctive attributes of the millennial generation.

Language serves as a conduit for the expression of an individual's unique personality. The words we use to communicate offer insights into our character and disposition, allowing for an understanding of our inner self. The use of language that is smooth, polite, well-mannered, orderly, and clear can directly reveal the personality of an individual who is adept at communicating effectively (Chukwudebelu & Uba, 2024). Conversely, the utilisation of sarcastic language, slander, ridicule, or harassment serves to portray the individual in a negative light, suggestive of a lack of virtue. It is thus incumbent upon speakers and speech partners to be aware of the rules governing behaviour, language use, and the interpretation of the language and words of their interlocutors. Each individual engaged in discourse bears responsibility for ensuring adherence to linguistic norms. Failure to do so may result in the disruption of communication, particularly in social contexts. The objective of any communicative act is to convey messages and establish social relationships. The act of conveying messages through verbal language can be achieved through three main forms: oral, written, or non-verbal. When these forms are utilized correctly, they can be understood by both the speaker and the interlocutor. This ensures a clear and effective communication process, where the speaker's manner of speaking leaves a positive impression on the interlocutor, such as being perceived as kind, polite, friendly, or respectful.

Verbal language is a crucial aspect in shaping how we interact with others, and its effectiveness hinges on our ability to communicate with politeness, kindness, and respect. (Ferenčík, 2017)

The politeness of language is one of the linguistic aspects conducive to the enhancement of emotional intelligence among speakers. In the context of communication, speakers are not only required to convey the truth but must also maintain commitment to the preservation of harmonious relationships. The relationship between speakers and speakers is maintained if each speech participant refrains from humiliating the other. In other words, both speakers and speakers have the same obligation to maintain face. Politeness, politeness, or etiquette are manners, customs, or habits that apply in society. Politeness is a rule of behavior that is determined and agreed upon by a certain society, and thus politeness is also a prerequisite agreed upon by social behavior. (Могилевич, 2021)

Consequently, politeness is frequently designated as "tatakrama." In light of this definition, politeness can be observed from numerous perspectives in everyday interactions. Primarily, politeness exemplifies an attitude that encompasses the value of manners or etiquette in everyday relationships.

As posited by (Dawolo & Bawamenewi, 2023), in order to convey a message in a polite manner and ensure effective communication with the intended audience, it is essential to consider the principles of language politeness. The principles of language politeness, as proposed by (Nkirote, 2024), are as follows: (1) The Maxim of Wisdom (Dawolo & Bawamenewi, 2023) elucidates the fundamental tenet of the maxim of wisdom in the principle of politeness, which dictates that speech participants should adhere to the principle of consistently reducing their own benefits and maximizing the benefits of other parties in speech activities. Those who adhere to and implement the maxim of wisdom are considered to be polite. (2) Maxim of Generosity; (3) Maxim of Respect. This maxim requires each speech participant to maximize respect for others and minimize disrespect for others. Furthermore, (Dawolo & Bawamenewi, 2023) posits that the maxim of appreciation stipulates that individuals will be regarded as polite if they consistently express gratitude to their interlocutors. This implies that participants in a discourse should refrain from deriding, disparaging, or belittling one another. In this context, (Agovino et al., 2024) employs the term "maxim of generosity."

II. METHODS

In this scientific article, the author employs qualitative research methodologies, which entail an examination of the data gathered from online sources pertaining to the specified discussion topics, as well as existing scientific literature with a similar background. The object of research, which investigates the phenomenon of politeness in language on social media, primarily focuses on social media platforms that are commonly utilized, including Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp Groups, and Facebook. The objective is to analyze and elucidate the impact and implementation of language politeness in the context of social media. (Sugiyono., 2017)

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Despite the potential for its elimination, it seems likely that social media will remain a significant aspect of Indonesian lifestyles, particularly given the country's rapidly growing number of social media users. From 2014 to 2022, the number of social media users in Indonesia rose from 62 million to 191 million active users in January 2022.

In Indonesia, a number of social media platforms have achieved notable levels of popularity, either historically or in more recent times. A review of the data reveals that Facebook has been one of the most widely used social media platforms over time, from the past to the present. As indicated in data provided by Meta, Facebook reached 2.93 billion monthly active users globally in the second quarter of 2022. In Indonesia alone, 129.85 million individuals were recorded as active Facebook users in January 2022, positioning Indonesia as the third-largest Facebook user base worldwide.

In addition to Facebook, Indonesia is also one of the fourth largest users of Instagram, with Brazil ranking third. According to data obtained from We Are Social, Instagram reached 1.45 billion monthly active users worldwide in April 2022. Indonesia

accounts for 99.9 million monthly active users on Instagram, which positions it as one of the fourth largest user bases for the platform globally. With regard to age, Instagram users worldwide in the 25-34 age group constitute 31.6%. Additionally, 30.1% of users are in the 18-24 age group, while 2.1% are aged 65 years and over. Users in the 55-64 age range account for 3.7% of the total. According to data provided by SensorTower, Instagram users access the platform for an average of 51 minutes per day in July 2022, representing the average time spent on Instagram by daily users worldwide.

Language is a means of communication that reflects the personality of the individual using it, and can even reflect the personality of a nation. In communication, the use of language and appropriate body gestures are of great importance, as they can significantly influence the impression and response of the individual being spoken to or communicated with. Nevertheless, in practice, there is still a tendency to use language inappropriately, both directly and indirectly. There are several factors that contribute to the use of impolite language, including (a) emotional outbursts during communication, (b) attempts to corner the interlocutor, (c) prejudice against the interlocutor, (d) stubbornness about one's own opinion, and so on (Napitupulu & Semiun, 2022)

There are underlying factors that contribute to the use of impolite language. These include a lack of understanding of polite communication, as well as a tendency to be difficult to interact with. (1) Modifying one's linguistic habits in accordance with the norms of the target language, (2) the influence of the mother tongue, and (3) the innate tendency to use impolite language from birth. The use of polite language is not only applicable in social interactions but also in digital contexts, such as social media. (Pandang et al., 2024)

Social media represents a product of the ongoing development of modernity. The more rapidly social media develops, the more features it offers users to access information with greater ease. It is not uncommon for cases originating from innuendo or malicious comments on social media to end up in court. This is because social media provides users with unlimited access, despite the existence of privacy protection measures. However, these measures are not yet fully effective in controlling the spread of hate speech, negative comments, and other forms of inappropriate language on social media. (Kumar et al., 2024)

In utilizing social media, it is imperative that users adhere to established ethical standards. As (Dhian Sulistyowati et al., 2024) describes: (1) The dissemination of content containing SARA in any form, such as pictures, videos, or writings, should be avoided. (2) Polite language should be used when uploading comments or writing. (3) Private and public chats should be kept separate to prevent conflict through social media. (4) Information should be verified to ensure its reliability before sharing. (5) Content should be thoroughly understood before writing comments and personal views.

Language politeness represents a fundamental aspect of linguistic behavior that must be adhered to by all language users. The aim of politeness in communication is to enable speakers and speech partners to accept each other's speech. That politeness principles must be employed by both speakers and their speech partners in order that communication may be properly conveyed without causing offence. The application of language politeness principles ensures that speakers directly respect their interlocutors through their speech (Mantra et al., 2022).

The primary objective of communication is not merely the transmission of information; it is also the preservation or reinforcement of the social relationships between speakers and interlocutors. Accordingly, it is essential that both parties possess an understanding of the principles of language politeness (Daulay et al., 2022). The language behavior of a person can be used as an indicator of the civilization of a nation. As defined by (Fauziah Nasution & Elissa Evawani Tambunan, 2022), language is "a sound language system that is arbitrary and used as a means of communication or social interaction." As posited by Aderson, language is a distinctive and evolving vocal system that serves as a conduit for communication, shaped by both individual habits and the collective culture of a given society. Politeness, in this context, represents a set of behavioral norms that are collectively determined and agreed upon within a social group. This mutual understanding of politeness serves as a foundation for social interactions, and it is often referred to as karma-based politeness. In everyday life, politeness manifests in various forms, influencing our interactions with others.

The influence and application of politeness theory in the digital domain are beneficial for social interaction in the physical world. There are numerous impacts and forms of implementation that occur in society, including:

In the context of an increasingly digitalized society, the implementation of digital ethics is of paramount importance. Digital ethics encompasses a set of principles and norms that regulate behavior in the online domain.

The following ten examples illustrate the necessity of digital ethics in our digital activities: (Dahal, 2023)

1. Avoidance of the Dissemination of Misinformation.

The dissemination of false information or hoaxes constitutes a grave breach of digital ethics. It has the potential to impair an individual's reputation, precipitate social unrest, and inflict harm upon numerous parties. Prior to sharing any information, it is imperative to ascertain its veracity and only disseminate information that has been duly vetted.

2. Respect the privacy of others.

Respect for privacy is a fundamental tenet of digital etiquette. It is imperative to refrain from disclosing or sharing another individual's personal information without their explicit consent. This encompasses a range of sensitive data, including photographs, addresses, phone numbers, and other personally identifiable information.

3. The Non-Disclosure of Content that Harms Others

In accordance with the tenets of digital etiquette, it is imperative to refrain from disseminating content that is injurious or derogatory to others. This encompasses forms of harassment, cyber harassment, and unwarranted commentary. Instead, it is incumbent upon us to cultivate a culture of constructive and uplifting discourse.

4. Refrain from the Use of Abusive Language or Insulting Others
The use of polite language and the avoidance of abusive language are fundamental tenets of digital etiquette. They reflect a respect for one's fellow internet users. It is imperative to refrain from verbal conflicts and to communicate in a polite manner at all times.
5. The Use of Inappropriate Identities
The use of fake identities or the assumption of another person's identity is a violation of digital etiquette. The use of a fictitious identity or the attempt to assume the identity of another individual constitutes a fraudulent act that violates the standards of digital etiquette. It is imperative that all communication be conducted with a transparent and authentic identity, thereby fostering trust and credibility.
6. It is imperative to refrain from the illicit reproduction and distribution of copyrighted material
The violation of copyright or the theft of another's content is both an illicit act and a breach of digital etiquette. It is imperative to ensure that material is utilized only with the explicit permission or license. It is essential to respect the intellectual property of others and to refrain from any infringement of copyright.
7. The Utilization of Technology for Illicit or Unlawful Purposes
The utilisation of technology for illicit purposes, such as hacking or online fraud, is contrary to the tenets of digital ethics. It is imperative to adhere to the principles of honesty and legality. The deployment of technology for the infliction of harm upon others constitutes a transgression of ethical norms.
8. The Utilization of Technology for Personal Gain that Results in Harm to Others
The utilisation of technology for personal gain at the expense of others constitutes a violation of digital ethics. It is imperative to refrain from self-serving actions and to consider the impact on others. It is our collective responsibility to endeavour to construct a fair and sustainable online environment.
9. The Utilization of Technology for the Purpose of Creating or Distributing Viruses or Malware
The creation and dissemination of viruses and malware have the potential to cause significant harm to numerous individuals and erode the trust that is essential to the functioning of the digital ecosystem. Digital ethics requires that we refrain from engaging in such activities and that we respect the privacy and security of others. The responsibility for ensuring digital security is a shared one.
10. The utilization of technology for the purpose of creating or disseminating spam or phishing is prohibited
The practice of spamming or phishing emails is detrimental to online safety. Digital etiquette requires that we refrain from engaging in such practices and that we respect the privacy and security of others. It is imperative that we avoid scams and practices that harm others.

The necessity for politeness theory is evident in the context of the growing prevalence of cyberbullying, which has become a significant concern in contemporary society. One frequently observed consequence of the use of impolite language is the phenomenon of cyberbullying. The phenomenon of cyberbullying is not a novel occurrence. Indeed, one of the forms of intimidation that has gained particular currency on social media is the use of impolite language. (Dhian Sulistyowati et al., 2024) defines cyberbullying as the use of information technology to instill fear in individuals through the dissemination of threatening messages. The difficulty in pursuing legal action against perpetrators of cyberbullying, despite the prevalence of this phenomenon, stems from the fact that the majority of perpetrators utilize anonymous accounts, making it challenging to identify and prosecute them.

One consequence of cyberbullying that is frequently observed is depression (Al-Badayneh, 2024). The impact of cyberbullying that occurs through social media tends to have a prolonged effect on the victim. This is because the speed of information dissemination on social media is difficult to control, even if the perpetrator of the message has been arrested. In some cases, victims who experience this will experience psychological disorders such as depression, which can then lead to extreme actions such as suicide. This is evidenced by the cases of Korean idols who have committed suicide as a result of depression caused by cyberbullying on social media.

The phenomenon of cyberbullying provides a case in point for the impact that arises from the use of language that is neither polite nor respectful when utilising social media. Examples of the use of impolite language on social media include: (1) The individual in question displays a self-assured demeanor following surgical procedures, or (2) The female in question exhibits a rebellious and unruly nature, while the male in question presents as a responsible and dutiful father of five children. It would be prudent to observe the situation firsthand, or (3) The individual in question claimed to be a public figure but demonstrated a penchant for misappropriating funds, even donning expensive perfumes and colognes, which nevertheless retain an odor of corruption. The use of inappropriate language on social media is often a result of public anger towards a public figure or the user's personal animosity towards the victim. This is particularly prevalent in the case of South Korean artists and idols. In addition to the potential for cyberbullying to result in suicide, the use of disrespectful language can also lead to criminal defamation charges.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

As evidenced by the aforementioned explanation, the utilisation of appropriate language facilitates the dissemination of beneficial information to a vast audience. Such language use may also have a positive impact and become a model for politeness in the

digital realm. The utilisation of polite language on social media can serve to mitigate and preclude the emergence of conflicts and issues. For example, the use of polite language can prevent or mitigate the occurrence of various forms of digital harm, including defamation cases, disputes that result in legal proceedings, and even instances of cyberbullying that may culminate in suicide. The politeness of language on social media can reflect the character and thought processes of the user, as impolite speech is indicative of emotional states and a lack of critical thinking. Social media is a forum for the dissemination of information and the facilitation of communication. As such, it is subject to the norms and conventions that govern civil discourse in this context. These include the avoidance of language or content that could be construed as SARA, the careful consideration of the implications of one's comments before posting, the avoidance of personal matters in online discourse, and the verification of information before sharing it.

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