

Language Politeness and Civic Values in Malaysian Facebook Discourse

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of social media has transformed public discourse, positioning digital platforms as important spaces for civic engagement and the expression of social values. In Malaysia, Facebook is widely used by government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), public figures and news organisations to communicate with the public. Although previous studies have explored online communication from linguistic and technological perspectives, limited attention has been given to the role of language politeness in fostering civic values within digital discourse.

This study investigates how language politeness is manifested in Malaysian Facebook discourse and examines its contribution to promoting civic values. A qualitative content analysis was conducted using purposive sampling method on 12 purposively selected Facebook texts from year 2020 to 2022 representing four categories of users: government agencies, NGOs, public figures and news organisations. The limitations of the study involve the use of selected text sources that have specific contexts and language features, thereby restricting the reproducibility and generalizability of the findings to a broader population and context.

Data were analysed using ATLAS.ti through thematic coding and cross-source comparison. The findings identify five recurring themes of language politeness: language sounds, etiquette, organized, meaningful utterance and promised actions. These themes consistently function as communicative strategies that encourage ethical behaviour, reinforce social responsibility and promote respectful online interactions.

The findings demonstrate that language politeness extends beyond interpersonal communication and serves as a sociolinguistic mechanism for cultivating civic values in digital environments. This study contributes to digital discourse and sociolinguistic research by providing empirical evidence that language politeness plays a significant role in promoting civic engagement and responsible digital citizenship in multicultural societies.

Keywords: Language politeness; Civic values; Digital discourse; Facebook communication; Digital citizenship.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to the way humans communicate, interact, and build social relationships. The presence of social media not only provides a space for information sharing but has also created a public discourse space that allows society to express views, stances, experiences, and responses to various issues. In the context of Malaysia, Facebook is one of the platforms used by various parties, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), public figures, and news

organizations, to convey information and interact with the community. Siti Ezaleila Mustafa (2014) explains that the development of new media has changed the way people communicate and socialize.

The shift from face-to-face communication to social media-based communication also has implications for language use. In face-to-face communication, speakers can utilize non-verbal elements such as intonation, facial expressions, and body language to help convey meaning. On the other hand, communication on social media relies more on language form, word choice, sentence structure, and certain symbols to convey messages. This situation makes the use of appropriate and polite language increasingly important because unclear or inaccurate statements have the potential to cause misunderstandings among the audience.

In the context of Malaysian society, which is rich in cultural and social backgrounds, linguistic politeness is closely related to the concepts of manners, courtesy, ethics, and discipline. Politeness does not only refer to the use of gentle or polite words but also includes how a person considers the interests, feelings, and positions of others when communicating.

Therefore, the use of polite language in the digital space has the potential to support the formation of more prudent, respectful, and responsible interactions. This perspective aligns with the study by Jaafar and Fariza Md Sham (2022), which shows the relationship between linguistic politeness and etiquette in social media use, as well as Zahid (2023), who links linguistic politeness with societal civilization.

However, the development of social media also shows a tendency toward the use of less polite language. Previous studies have shown that the Facebook space can become a battleground for criticism, verbal attacks, sarcasm, and various forms of rudeness. For example, the study by Jeffry, Mansor, and Omar (2023) on Facebook user comments in Malaysia identified several strategies of impoliteness used in user interactions. The findings indicate that social media can be a challenging space for the practice of linguistic politeness.

At the same time, the study by Sultan and Norazhar (2022) shows that the principles of politeness can still be identified in communication on social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp. These differing findings indicate that social media is not only a space where rudeness occurs but also a space for users to practice politeness in communication.

Language behaviour needs to be viewed as a social action because an utterance not only conveys information but also performs actions such as requesting, commanding, warning, stating a position, or making a promise. Based on Searle's (1969) perspective, utterances can be understood as actions with specific purposes in interaction. This study departs from the assumption that politeness in language on social media is not merely a matter of how a message is delivered but also relates to the values conveyed by the message.

The language used to give instructions, make calls, convey warnings or state positions for example, can carry values related to morals, etiquette, politeness, discipline, and good living rules. Thus, research on language behaviour and etiquette can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how language functions as a medium for the formation and conveyance of values in the digital space.

In this regard, this study aims to elucidate the aspects of language behaviour and etiquette in Malaysian Facebook discourse, focusing on the manifestations of linguistic politeness and the values contained within it. The analysis was conducted on Facebook data from four source categories, namely government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), public figures, and news organizations. This study specifically examines five themes identified through data analysis, namely language sounds, etiquette, organization, meaningful speech, and promising behaviour.

In the context of Malaysia's multicultural society, the development of social media, particularly Facebook discourse, has provided a communication space that allows individuals from various linguistic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds to interact openly. Communication on Facebook not only involves the delivery of

information and opinions but also encompasses discussions, comments, criticisms, agreements, admonitions, and responses to social and community issues. This situation makes Facebook a significant space to examine how linguistic politeness and civic values are manifested in digital communication.

This study contributes to the field of linguistics, particularly the study of politeness and digital discourse, by expanding the examination of politeness from the aspect of language form to the social values contained in language behaviour. The findings of the study can also provide an overview of the potential of social media as a communication space that not only conveys information but also fosters values of etiquette, social responsibility, and prudent communication. In a broader context, this research can enrich the discussion on the role of language in shaping civic communication and digital citizenship in Malaysian society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Linguistic politeness is one of the important elements in ensuring that communication proceeds well. Politeness not only refers to the selection of polite words but also involves how the speaker considers the recipient, the purpose of communication, and the context of the utterance. This study adheres to the concept of speech acts. Searle (1969) explains that utterances are not just about conveying something but also about performing an action. Among these actions are requesting, commanding, promising, and apologizing.

Civic values in digital communication can be seen through the use of language that encourages society to act responsibly, respect others, adhere to rules, and maintain social harmony. Based on previous studies in the manuscript, social media has changed the way humans communicate and socialize. Therefore, language in social media can serve as a medium to convey values related to community life.

Social Media as a Public Discourse Space

The development of social media has transformed the form of societal interaction from face-to-face communication to technology-mediated communication. Siti Ezaleila Mustafa (2014) explains that the development of new media technology has changed the way humans communicate and interact, while Akhbar Satar (2014) views social media as a new form of communication that triggers changes in the process of socialization and community life. F

acebook, in particular, provides a space for users to share information, thoughts, opinions, and feelings within a vast social network. Mohd Zaidi Mahmud (2022) also explains that features of social media such as communication spaces, status updates, and message sending make social media an increasingly important medium of interaction.

In the context of Malaysia, the use of social media as a public communication space also has implications for language use. Zalila Isa (2012) emphasizes that communication on Facebook still requires elements of politeness and decorum, particularly in terms of word choice, pronouns, emoticons, and language structure. Errors in the use of these elements have the potential to cause messages to be misinterpreted and subsequently affect the perception of the speaker.

That view remains relevant, and recent studies show that the issue of politeness in social media is becoming increasingly complex. Hamid and Zaini (2025), for example, examined the practice of linguistic politeness on social media among university students and emphasized that the development of digital communication increases the need to maintain polite language in online interactions. This shows that social media is not just a technological channel, but a social space that shapes the way society communicates, evaluates issues, and showcases personal values.

Politeness in Language in Digital Communication

Politeness in language within the Malay context is closely related to the concepts of manners, etiquette, and behaviour. In the original manuscript, *tatasusila* (good manners) is described as a good way of life and is associated with politeness, while a person who practices *tatasusila* is associated with good behaviour and noble morals. Linguistic politeness, on the other hand, refers to speech that is polite and considerate, as well as the avoidance of course or indecent language.

This concept is supported by the study of Jaafar and Fariza Md Sham (2022) which examines language politeness and etiquette on social media from an Islamic perspective. The study shows that the use of inappropriate language on social media has the potential to cause conflicts and misunderstandings, while politeness and etiquette can support more harmonious communication.

In the context of empirical research in Malaysia, Sultan and Norazhar (2022) analyzed language politeness in WhatsApp and Facebook among upper secondary school students using Leech's Politeness Principle. Their study found that the maxims of politeness, agreement, and humility were among the forms of politeness identified in social media communication. The findings indicate that politeness in digital communication can be examined through the linguistic strategies employed by speakers. However, the aforementioned study focuses more on the principles or maxims of politeness, whereas this study emphasizes the value content contained in language behaviour and etiquette.

Politeness and Impoliteness on Facebook Malaysia

Studies related to Facebook in Malaysia also show that social media can become a space for breaches of politeness. The study by Umor et al. on Facebook comments related to COVID-19 news found that netizens often used harsh criticism and complaints, while reactions to information were also influenced by sentiment, politics, and personal interpretation. The study shows that the value of politeness in digital communication can be eroded when users act based on certain emotions and sentiments.

More specific findings were shown by Jeffry, Mansor, and Omar (2023) through a study of 288 Facebook user comments in Malaysia. They identified several strategies of impoliteness, including bald on record impoliteness, sarcasm, and inappropriate forms of address. Interestingly, respondents' perceptions of impoliteness are negative, but forms of impoliteness are still widely found in actual interactions on Facebook.

The findings provide an important perspective for this study. If previous studies have shown how politeness is violated, the question that still needs attention is how polite language is used to convey positive values and shape social behaviour. Thus, this article does not position Facebook solely as a space that causes a decline in politeness. On the contrary, Facebook can also be a space for the generation and dissemination of civilized and civic-minded communication.

Politeness in Language as a Social and Civic Value

The relationship between language and social values becomes increasingly important when communication takes place in the digital public sphere. Zahid (2023), for example, emphasizes that linguistic politeness is related to the civilization of society. According to him, the development of technology and the use of social media present a more challenging situation when some users do not adhere to linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic rules, thereby potentially sparking conflicts.

The study by Noor Azam et al. (2024) found that positive politeness strategies are the dominant strategies in social media communication by Asian and Western influencers. The study shows that the use of good language and politeness strategies can support communication that reduces conflict and maintains the feelings of others. These studies show that politeness is not just a linguistic issue, but has implications for social relationships. In

the context of this article, the implications are extended to civic values, which are values related to responsible behaviour, respect for others, adherence to rules, and the harmony of communal life.

Therefore, the concept of politeness in this study is not limited to the form of "polite" speech, but also includes the values conveyed by that speech. This approach allows the elements of morality, good living habits, good manners, politeness, and discipline found in the data to be interpreted as manifestations of civic values.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study combines Searle's Speech Act Theory (1969) and Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987) to analyze language use in the context of civic values. The Speech Act Theory is used to identify the function of an utterance based on the actions performed by the speaker, such as making statements, requests, commands, promises, and expressions of feelings. Meanwhile, Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory is used to examine how these speech acts are conveyed through politeness strategies to maintain face and social relationships between the speaker and the listener.

The combination of these two theories allows the study to examine not only what is done through language but also how a linguistic action is delivered politely. This approach can further help explain how the use of polite language reflects civic values such as respect, tolerance, responsibility, empathy, and social harmony. Thus, the Speech Act Theory and Politeness Theory provide complementary theoretical foundations in explaining the relationship between the functions of language, politeness strategies, and the appreciation of civic values.

Research Gap

Based on the review of previous studies, several trends can be identified. First, studies on social media in Malaysia have largely focused on changes in communication forms, politeness, impoliteness, and linguistic strategies. The study by Sultan and Norazhar (2022), for example, examines the principles of politeness in social communication, while Jeffry et al. (2023) focus on strategies of impoliteness in the Malaysian Facebook community.

Secondly, some studies examine politeness based on specific linguistic strategies or maxims, while other studies focus on forms of impoliteness. However, research linking language behaviour, etiquette, and civic values in Malaysian Facebook discourse is still limited.

Third, recent studies continue to highlight the importance of politeness in digital communication. Hamid and Zaini (2025) emphasize the practice of politeness in social media among students, while the study by Noor Azam et al. (2024) highlights the importance of politeness strategies in influencer communication.

However, these studies do not specifically elaborate on the dimensions of politeness based on the value content contained in language practices within Facebook discourse from various sources such as government agencies, NGOs, public figures, and news organizations.

Therefore, this study fills that gap by explaining the manifestations of linguistic politeness through five main themes, namely phonetics, etiquette, organization, meaningful utterances, and performative acts. Of all the themes, special attention is given to the element of etiquette because this theme recorded the highest frequency, which is 47.33%.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach through content analysis. Although the main approach is qualitative, frequency and percentage are used descriptively to show the tendency of each theme's emergence. The analysis

process involves text selection, text transcription, text structure examination, theme determination, data labeling, context determination, and analysis based on the constructed framework.

The data for this study was collected over the period from early 2020 to mid-2022. The selection of Facebook texts is based on purposive sampling guided by the following inclusion criteria:

Delivery in Malay language based on public issues and societal values. Uploaded by verified official accounts from four categories namely Ministries, NGOs, Public Figures and News Channels.

The sources involved comprised three from ministries, three from NGOs, three from the public figures and three from news channels.

Table 1: Research Sources

Sources	Sample
Ministry	Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia
	Kementerian Pembangunan Wanita, Keluarga & Masyarakat
	Kementerian Pertahanan
NGO	Persatuan Pengguna Islam Malaysia (PPIM)
	Medical Mythbuster Malaysia (M3)
	Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia (ISMA)
Public Figure	Sakinah Sulong
	Datuk Dr. Zulkifli Mohamad al-Bakri
	Adam Corrie
News Channel	BernameTV
	Berita Al Hijrah
	Malaysia Kini

Data is analyzed using the ATLAS.ti method. Coding is carried out to identify words, phrases, and excerpts that illustrate phenomena of language behavior and etiquette. Coding allows data to be grouped into more specific themes and subthemes.

In the context of this study, the author uses the inter-rater reliability method to ensure that the coding and findings generated are accurate, true, and valuable according to expert opinion. The results of the analysis of the study data, which were coded according to the established taxonomy using ATLAS.ti software, were submitted to the relevant experts for review and verification.

As stated by Marques (2005), the Inter-rater reliability method should be used as a solidification strategy in qualitative research. The experts involved in the Inter-rater reliability process of this study include the Head of the Social Science Research Cluster, UIS and subject matter experts.

The advantage of the Inter-rater reliability method is that it allows the use of this verification or validation tool as soon as the research theme is identified but before drawing conclusions about the constructed theme. The method of verifying research findings is a constructive approach (during the research process) in ensuring consistency in the interpretation of findings compared to evaluations conducted after the research has been completed.

This method avoids the problem of inconsistency in interpretation after the study is completed and provides an opportunity to strengthen and solidify the research being conducted.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Manifestation of Language Politeness in Facebook Discourse Analysis of 150 data points shows that linguistic politeness in Malaysian Facebook discourse can be described based on five main themes, namely phonetics, etiquette, organization, meaningful utterances, and performative speech acts. The distribution of data for all five themes is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Themes of Language Politeness in Malaysian Facebook Discourse

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Language Sounds	45	30.00%
Etiquette	71	47.33%
Organized	12	8.00%
Meaningful Utterance	13	8.67%
Promised Actions	9	6.00%
Total	150	100%

Table 2 shows that etiquette is the most dominant theme, with 71 data points equivalent to 47.33 percent. The second highest theme is the sound of language, which is 45 data (30.00%). Meaningful utterances recorded 13 data points (8.67%), followed by structured utterances with 12 data points (8.00%) and promised actions with 9 data points (6.00%).

These findings indicate that the element of politeness in the studied Facebook discourse is more prominently displayed through values and behaviours related to etiquette rather than merely the aspect of language form.

The dominance of the theme of etiquette is an important finding because it shows that polite communication in the digital space does not only depend on the use of gentle or polite words. On the contrary, politeness is also related to the values that one wishes to convey to the audience. In this study, the theme of etiquette encompasses five sub-themes, namely morals, good living rules, good manners, politeness, and discipline.

Etiquette (Adab) as a Manifestation of Civic Values

The theme of etiquette that recorded the highest percentage shows a significant finding regarding the research question. The five identified subthemes, namely morals, good living rules, good manners, politeness, and discipline, show that language on Facebook also serves as a medium for conveying values.

In this context, civic values do not exist separately from language use; instead, they are conveyed through the linguistic actions performed by users. For example, when a statement contains a reminder about discipline or a call for the community to practice certain behaviors, the language not only conveys information but also shapes a social norm.

Etiquette

For the theme of etiquette, there are five sub-themes, namely morals, good living rules, good manners, politeness and discipline.

Morals

Ministry

6 kematian termasuk 1 bukan warganegara akibat jangkitan COVID-19 dilaporkan hari ini menjadikan kematian akibat jangkitan COVID-19 adalah sebanyak; 1141. **KKM mengucapkan takziah kepada ahli keluarga mereka (1:34; 274 – 275 in Ministry).**

YB Menteri menyatakan bahawa Projek Bayaran Kewangan Tanpa Tunai ini antara lain **bertujuan untuk membantu penerima bantuan JKM untuk mengurus dan mengawal perbelanjaan secara berhemah dan bermanfaat disamping dapat memastikan penerima bantuan dapat memenuhi pembelian keperluan asas harian yang amat diperlukan (1:35; 277 in Ministry).**

Idea agihan bubuk lambuk ini telah dicetuskan oleh Pegawai Memerintah, Lt Kol Shah Rizal bin Chan Shah dan beliau berharap **aktiviti ini akan dapat mengukuhkan kerohanian dan mampu membentuk akhlak serta budi pekerti yang seimbang dalam menghayati serta mendalami pengertian kemuliaan bulan Ramadhan ini (1:36; 279 in Ministry).**

Selain kelihatan sopan, **etika batuk dan bersin adalah cara selamat untuk menguruskan gejala dalam masa yang sama melindungi orang sekeliling anda** dari risiko penyakit berjangkit termasuk ancaman jangkitan COVID-19 **(1:37; 282 in Ministry).**

Selaras dengan konsep Keluarga Malaysia yang telah diinspirasikan oleh YAB Perdana Menteri, sambutan Bulan Keluarga Malaysia pada tahun ini akan **memberi fokus kepada 5 nilai pengkayaan Keluarga Malaysia, iaitu K.A.S.I.H yang merangkumi kasih sayang, akhlak atau pun peribadi mulia, Sihat fizikal dan mental, berilmu dan Harmoni** sebagai nilai yang perlu ada di dalam setiap ahli Keluarga **(1:38; 283 in Ministry).**

This finding reinforces the view of Jaafar and Fariza Md Sham (2022) that linguistic politeness in social media is closely related to etiquette. Politeness is not just a mechanism to avoid communication conflicts but also a manifestation of values that guide social relationships. In the context of Malaysian society, this finding is also in line with the view that linguistic politeness is related to the civilization of society (Zahid, 2023).

Thus, the findings of this study indicate that etiquette is an important dimension in understanding language politeness in digital discourse. This provides an extension to previous research that typically evaluates politeness based on certain principles, strategies, or linguistic forms.

The Sound of Language as a Strategy for Politeness

The theme of language sounds recorded 45 data points (30.00%) and is the second highest theme. Analysis shows that this theme encompasses six sub-themes, namely instructions, requests, notifications, explanations, questions, and exclamations.

These findings show that various forms of language behavior are used in Facebook communication. Interestingly, forms such as commands and requests do not necessarily indicate rudeness. On the contrary, politeness depends on the purpose, context, and manner in which the speech is delivered.

Language Sounds

For the theme of language sounds, there are six sub-themes, namely commands, requests, notifications, explanations, questions and exclamations.

Commands

NGO

Nak buat konten, buat lah yang berfaedah dan tidak menimbulkan kekusaran dan kekeliruan masyarakat. Bukan semua boleh dijadikan konten. Ingatlah, bila dah biasa ‘menipu’ lama-lama takut orang dah tak percaya lagi sebab fikir semuanya konten semata-mata. Hati-hati sebelum menyewa rumah! Ini tips untuk tidak menjadi mangsa penipuan! (2:16; 218 – 221 in NGO).

PRU dah dekat dah. Nanti korang jangan lupa perhatikan wakil-wakil rakyat ni. Kalau nampak agenda mereka BUKAN untuk Generasi akan datang. Fikir 10 kali sebelum undi (2:17; 223 – 224 in NGO).

Kita mendesak agar pihak berkuasa jangan berikan lesen penganjuran pesta arak ini dan jangan sekali-kali juga berikan lesen mengiklankan pesta ini di khalayak (2:18; 226 in NGO).

Public

Kalau tak suka bahasa saya yang kasar, mohon scroll laju-laju (3:16; 192 in Public).

Saya telah mencadangkan beberapa penambahbaikan dilakukan pada kertas kerja yang akan diusulkan (3:17; 193 in Public).

Kalau dah ambil gambar curi-curi seseorang, tak perlulah kita share pada public... kemudian kita dengan bangga cakap... contoh; “aku nampak ‘retis’ sorang ni, muka bajet bagus je” (3:18; 194 in Public).

This finding aligns with Sultan and Norazhar (2022), who demonstrate that forms of communication such as requests and commands can be part of politeness strategies in social media communication. In the context of this study, commands and exhortations can be interpreted as forms of communication with a social purpose, particularly when used to encourage good actions or provide guidance to the audience.

Therefore, the function of utterances should be interpreted together with the context and the values they carry, rather than solely based on their linguistic form. This finding also illustrates the relationship between the concept of speech acts and politeness. A statement in the form of an instruction, for example, not only conveys a message but also serves as an action to influence the recipient's behavior.

Structured and Meaningful Utterances in Discourse Formation

The organized theme recorded 12 data points (8.00%), while the meaningful utterances recorded 13 data points (8.67%). The structured theme relates to issues, scenarios, and atmospheres, while meaningful utterances encompass hope, assurance, awareness, confidence, and reminders. Although both themes recorded a lower percentage compared to etiquette and the sound of language, their existence indicates that politeness also depends on the clarity of context and the direction of digital citizenship behavior.

Organized

For the structured theme, there are three sub-themes, namely correlation (issue), correlation (scenario) and correlation (atmosphere).

Correlation (Issue)

Public

Maka, isu kelestarian alam sekitar wajar menjadi asas bagi pembangunan sebuah universiti pada hari ini dan masa depan (3:8; 172 in Public).

News Channel

Tular aku janji dengan kepala surat UMNO yang memaparkan tandatangan Ahmad Zahid dan Setiausaha Agung Datuk Seri Ahmad Maslan, yang antara lain menyatakan ikrar calon UMNO dan Barisan Nasional yang menang pada PRU15 untuk mencalonkan serta menyokong Ahmad Zahid sebagai perdana menteri (4:7; 200 in News Channel).

CGS-CIMB Securities International Pte. Ltd. ("CGS-CIMB") and its group recently hosted a five-day business visit for five Chinese fund houses with Asset Under Management ("AUM") of approximately RMB 8.1 trillion in its Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand offices. The exercise took place from 31 October 2022 till 4 November 2022 (4:8; 201 – 203 in News Channel).

Correlation (Scenario)

NGO

Badan Bukan Kerajaan (NGO) perlu aktif jadi mata dan telinga Suruhanjaya Pencegahan Rasuah Malaysia (SPRM) dalam usaha membendung kes rasuah dalam negara (2:7; 174 in NGO).

Perkara paling penting untuk sebarang kanser adalah PENGESANAN DAN RAWATAN AWAL (2:8; 176 in NGO).

Public

Kalau dia ambil gambar tanpa mengaibkan diri saya, ok je (3:9; 173 in Public).

News Channel

Wisma Putra dalam kenyataan hari ini memaklumkan kumpulan pertama seramai 36 jemaah umrah tersebut telah tiba di Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Kuala Lumpur (KLIA) pada 5.50 pagi tadi, dan 27 jemaah lagi akan dibawa pulang menerusi penerbangan seterusnya (4:6; 197 – 198 in News Channel).

Statements that contain hope, awareness, or reminders, for example, demonstrate that Facebook communication can be used to build social awareness. In this case, the meaning of a statement lies not only in its literal content but also in the social purpose it aims to achieve. This aligns with Searle's (1969) concept of speech acts, which views utterances as a form of action.

A statement can be used to influence, persuade, warn, or shape the actions of the recipient. Therefore, a structured theme and meaningful discourse demonstrate that politeness requires the appropriateness of language, context, and communication purpose.

Promise Making and Social Commitment

The theme of promise-making is the lowest, with only 9 data points (6.00%). This theme encompasses the subthemes of stance and problem-solving. Although the number is small, these findings are important from the perspective of the social function of language. The act of promising demonstrates that language can be used to express an individual's or a party's commitment to an action that will be carried out.

Finally, for the theme of promising actions, there are only two sub-themes, namely stance and problem-solving.

Stance

NGO

PPIM mengambil pendirian untuk menyokong calon-calon yang berwibawa tanpa mengira parti mengikut penilaian PPIM (2:10; 187 in NGO).

Public

Saya tak pernah mintak bayaran (3:10; 178 in Public).

InsyAllah ok kalau kena dengan cara dan situasinya (3:12; 180 in Public).

News Channel

KUALA LUMPUR: Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) telah menaikkan kadar dasar semalaman (OPR) sebanyak 25 mata asas kepada 2.75 peratus, kenaikan keempat berturut-turut sejak Mei tahun ini apabila Jawatankuasa Dasar Monetari (MPC) bank pusat mengambil keputusan untuk membuat pelarasan selanjutnya terhadap tahap akomodasi monetari (4:10; 210 – 212 in News Channel).

Problem Solving

Ministry

KKM sentiasa berusaha mendapatkan bilangan jawatan tetap yang memenuhi konsep 'right sizing'. Sehubungan itu, banyak konsultasi telah diadakan antara pelbagai pihak MMA, JPA dan MOF untuk mencari jalan penyelesaian (1:13; 172 in Ministry).

Rang Undang-undang ini merupakan manifestasi penting yang menunjukkan bahawa Kerajaan amat prihatin dalam menghapuskan diskriminasi berasaskan gender terutamanya dalam soal gangguan seksual (1:14; 174 in Ministry).

Mesyuarat yang dipengerusikan oleh Asisten Ketua Staf Perkhidmatan Anggota Mej Jen Datuk Arman Rumaizi bin Hj Ahmad ini cukup penting demi memastikan seramai mungkin bekas tentera diiktiraf seterusnya dapat menikmati pelbagai inisiatif kebajikan untuk Veteran ATM (1:15; 175 in Ministry).

NGO

Kami ahli-ahli Medical Mythbusters Malaysia (M3) sentiasa merancang pelbagai aktiviti pendidikan awam berkaitan kesihatan. InshaAllah, Medical Mythbuster Malaysia akan terus mengorak langkah tahun ini dengan melibatkan diri dengan projek komuniti, bukan terhad di laman media sosial semata-mata. Inilah usaha kecil kami untuk bersama-sama masyarakat, setakat yang kami mampu (2:11; 189 – 192 in NGO).

ISMA Sepang dalam kempen Malaysia Sejahtera Tanpa Arak mensasarkan komuniti muslim bebas arak dan membantu pekerja muslim yang terpaksa menjual arak di kedai serbaneka (2:12; 194 in NGO).

In the context of Facebook, a statement of position or commitment to solving a problem is not just about providing information to the audience. That statement also builds a relationship of trust between the speaker and the recipient.

Therefore, the act of promising can be associated with the values of responsibility, trust, and accountability. These findings expand the understanding of language behavior because language not only functions to convey meaning but also creates a social relationship between the parties communicating.

Politeness in Language as a Mechanism for the Formation of Civic Values

Overall, the findings indicate that the five identified themes are related to the formation of civilized social communication. Etiquette displays values of morality, good manners, politeness, and discipline; the sound of language reflects forms of language actions such as requesting, commanding, and calling; orderliness shows the importance of context; meaningful utterances convey hope, awareness, and reminders; while promising behaviour relates to stance and commitment.

Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that linguistic politeness on Facebook can be seen as a sociolinguistic mechanism that connects language use with social values. This is the main contribution of the study. If previous politeness studies focused on whether a statement is polite or impolite, this study expands the question by examining the values contained in the language behaviour used.

In this context, politeness is not just "speaking well," but a form of social action that has the potential to shape the way society thinks, acts, and interacts. This has important implications for digital communication in Malaysia. Facebook is not just a space for information dissemination, but it can also be a space for the formation of social norms. The use of language that promotes ethics, politeness, decorum, awareness, and responsibility has the potential to contribute to the formation of more prudent civic communication.

Overall, this study examines the manifestations of linguistic politeness in Malaysian Facebook discourse based on the analysis of 12 texts from four user categories. Five main themes have been identified, namely language sounds, etiquette, organization, meaningful speech, and promise behaviour. Of the five themes, etiquette is the most dominant theme with 47.33 percent, followed by phonetics with 30.00 percent.

The findings show that linguistic politeness in Facebook discourse is not only related to the selection of words or polite speech forms. Politeness also encompasses moral values, good living rules, manners, etiquette, and discipline. The six dimensions of politeness that are the focus of this article's abstract demonstrate that language can function as a medium for conveying and reinforcing values in community life.

The findings of this study also highlight the ways in which politeness operates within Malaysia's increasingly diverse digital communication environment, particularly on Facebook. Unlike face-to-face communication, digital interaction provides limited access to non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, tone of voice and body language.

Consequently, language choices become particularly important in signalling respect, solidarity, disagreement and social sensitivity. In the Malaysian context, these linguistic practices are further shaped by the country's multicultural and multilingual social environment.

This study further suggests that linguistic politeness should be viewed as a sociolinguistic resource in the formation of civic communication and digital citizenship. However, these findings are limited to purposefully selected Facebook data and cannot be generalized to the entire social media user base in Malaysia.

Further studies can expand the data corpus, compare different social media platforms, and examine audience reception of the politeness forms used. Further studies can also empirically test the relationship between linguistic politeness and the formation of civic values and digital citizenship behavior.

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