

# Maxim of Politeness to Improve Language Principles: Case Study on Mata Najwa Trans 7 Talk Show Program

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## Abstract

This study investigated how politeness helped speakers and other participants used language as capital during interactions to reduce the likelihood of verbal abuse. This paper used qualitative descriptive research methods. The sample in this study was the Mata Najwa Trans 7 Talk Show Program. The instrument in this paper was observations on the Mata Najwa Trans 7 Talk Show Program. After the data were obtained, they were analyzed using narrative analysis. The results of this research showed that in the Mata Najwa Trans 7 Talk Show Program, six language principles were described: the maxim of wisdom, the maxim of generosity, the maxim of appreciation, the maxim of moderation, the maxim of consensus, and the maxim of sympathy. This study concluded that these six principles guide every speaker and interlocutor in improving the principle of language politeness. Therefore, this research helped to achieve state and national concord, which benefits the development of global peace.

**Keywords:** Maxim of Politeness, Language Principles, Talk Show, Impoliteness, Language compliance

## 1. Introduction

Being courteous of language is a sign of admirable ideals. Speakers who respect and show a warm attitude toward the interlocutor become a part of implementing commendable morals in the language (Chen, 2019). Ran and Zhao (2019) state that this praiseworthy character manifests when the speaker understands the interlocutor. To create an understanding, a speaker must understand the cultural background of his interlocutor (Sifianou, 2019). Understanding the cultural background is the initial capital that helps speakers understand the social context, communication patterns, and language diversity of interlocutors (Stepkowska, 2020). The premise is that linguistic variety and cultural diversity are equivalent (Han and Wu, 2020). Thus, when cultural diversity is fully merged with the speaker, admirable values will likely be attained (Hatab, 2022; Iqbal and Zulkifli, 2016).

Everybody must prioritize the use of courteous language in daily life. As courteousness affects social and personal communication, it must be prioritized (Zaitseva and Pelepeychenko, 2022). Therefore, the linguistic decorum represents the culture that Indonesian people uphold (see also Chen, 2019; Joh, 2019; Rabab'Ah et al., 2019). Furthermore, everyone's culture is inherently polite, making language speakers part of the fabric of society they support (Ardiati, 2023). Speakers who maintain language politeness become the capital for them to realize social harmony (see also Ardi & Budiarti, 2020; Chen, 2019; Prayitno et al., 2021). Consequently, the fundamentals of language depend on courteous language.

Some people still do not show politeness in their daily socialization. In line with Al Zidjaly, incivility begins with the speaker and has social and cultural impacts (Al Zidjaly, 2019). For this reason, relevance theory anticipates that speakers and interlocutors must have the same cognitive understanding of a speech event (Joh, 2019). Speakers and interlocutors who do not have agreement and harmony in speech, of course, language politeness will not be realized (Lee, 2018; Nursanti et al., 2023; Prayitno et al., 2021; Syting & Gildore, 2022; Tantucci et al., 2022). Politeness is essential in language; therefore, speakers and interlocutors must master fundamental maxims such as the maxim of self-denigration and gloominess (Chen, 2019). This confirms that speech accompanied by maxims maintains the quality of the information conveyed (Kravchenko and Zhykharieva 2020). Thus, people who lack polite languages have an impact on the absence of wisdom and generosity in their everyday relationships.

Non-compliance with civility negatively affects self-esteem. Zaitseva and Pelepeychenko believe that civility is not limited to self-image but also social influence and etiquette (Zaitseva & Pelepeychenko, 2022). This can be confirmed through the social exchange theory, which states that civility suits speakers and interlocutors because of moral responsibility (Ma et al., 2020). Ethical responsibility is obtained through the principle of simplicity, integrated into the speaker (Kravchenko et al., 2022; Strandberg, 2020). The reason is that appreciation for someone will not be achieved, but one must go through the principles of simplicity. The principle of simplicity is certainly not obtained

instantly but through experience applied by both speakers and opponents (King & Kabat-Farr, 2022). The same is true of simplicity, which is also not present instantly in a person but through the principles of consensus and sympathy, among others. Therefore, consensus and sympathy are communication strategies to realize language politeness (Ramli et al., 2023).

This article presents six previous studies selected better to understand the relationship between language politeness and principles. Liu (2017) presented a solid conceptual framework by applying the host's and interviewee's maximum civility, paving the way for understanding concrete strategies to create polite and effective conversational environments. Meanwhile, the third (Zhou & Zhang, 2018) and fourth (Yaqubi et al., 2016) articles present an in-depth analysis of the impact of politeness practices on verbal and non-verbal interactions in talk show settings, providing valuable insights into the evolving conversation dynamics. The fifth (Omar et al., 2018) and sixth (Aini et al., 2023) articles enrich the literature by investigating politeness communication patterns in the media context and providing an in-depth understanding of the differences in applying politeness norms across different broadcasting formats. These advantages give a solid foundation for the empirical data analysis undertaken in this study, ensuring relevance and significant contribution to understanding the application of the maxim of modesty in the Mata Najwa program.

As argued above, this research is fundamental because language politeness is part of commendable morals that must be upheld in every speech. Speaking not based on the maxim of effectiveness results in disharmony between the nation and the state. Even in general, it can disrupt world order and peace. Therefore, this study explores how the maxim of language politeness equips speakers and interlocutors in their daily interactions to avoid verbal violence. Indeed, violence is the forerunner of the disharmony that divides the nation's citizens from the world.

Against several explanations, the question in this study is how the application of politeness maxims in Mata Najwa's talk show program in Trans 7 improves verbal and non-verbal language principles. In this context, we will identify concrete strategies that host, resource persons, and audiences use to enhance language politeness and its impact on language principles in television communication.

## 2. Method

This study used descriptive, qualitative research methods. The selection of qualitative descriptive methods was intended to describe the phenomenon under study. The phenomenon studied was a talk show at a national television station on handling COVID-19. Thus, this method plays a role in describing the phenomenon of language from the perspective of politeness.

A sample in this study is Mata Najwa's Talk Show Program entitled "Be Ware of Relaxation." Mata Najwa's talk show program is broadcast live by Trans 7, one of the national television stations in Indonesia. The recording of this program has been uploaded to YouTube using the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMLwC1m7BVg>. Najwa Shihab, as the host, invited three speakers, namely Juri Ardiantoro (Deputy IV KSP for Political Communication and Information), Wiku Adisasmito (Head of the Expert Team of the Task Force for the Acceleration of Covid-19 Handling), and Faisal Basri (Economist). Three were asked about the COVID-19 relaxation policies issued by the government. Several language facts taught by the host language and resources were sampled in this study. In the data section of the research results, the authors only wrote their respective initials: NS for Najwa Shihab, JA for Juri Ardiantoro, WA for Wiku Adisasmito, and FS for Faisal Basri.



Figure 1. Host and resource person in Mata Najwa's talk show program entitled "Beware of Relaxation."

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMLwC1m7BVg>

Mata Najwa's Talk Show program entitled "Be Ware of Relaxation" was used as an instrument in this study. Specifically, the host and three speakers became the focus of the instrument. The Najwa Eye Program is observational. Observations of the language spoken by the host and

the three speakers were recorded on a data card. Data were selected and disaggregated based on the theory of language civility. The collected data were then analyzed using narrative analysis. Narrative analysis was chosen because it was based on the consideration that the host and speakers explained an event handling COVID-19 that occurred. For this reason, through this explanation, narrative analysis produces several language facts that lead to language politeness.

### 3. Findings

Research that used data on Mata Najwa's Talk Show program entitled "Beware of Relaxation" found six maxims. The six maxims are as follows: the maxim of wisdom, the maxim of generosity, the maxim of appreciation, the maxim of moderation, the maxim of consensus, and the maxim of sympathy. Each maxim is described based on the tendencies and characteristics of the accompanying language.

#### 3.1 Maxim Compliance with Wisdom

JA's response to NS's question describes the maxim of wisdom.

"... various discourses regarding relaxation of concessions or the like are just what kind of presidential directives ministers and aides need to think about future steps, but policy-wise, until now, the PSBB is still in effect." (JA)

JA responded to the question posed by NS:

"Well, I want to go to Bang Juri first, presidential chief of staff. What is clear is that we hear the discourse on the relaxation or easing of the PSBB that arises from various ministerial statements. So what relaxation does the central government want, Bang Juri?" (NS)

The characteristics of language facts that belong to the maxim of wisdom are marked by a definite answer given by JA to NS. JA explained the president's directives regarding him. In his speech, JA tries to maximize profits or minimize losses for his opponents, although his response will probably maximize his opponent's losses.

In other words, the maxim of wisdom appears in NS's question on JA.

"Why did the discourse come up when, for example, today, the highest number of cases of addition since it was first announced?" (NS)

"So, I think it is not a discourse, but something long-term planning that has not been or is not being carried out at this time. Thus, the concern now is how the government, task force, and all parties are concerned about handling COVID-19 itself. How do we prevent breaking the transmission chain widely and then implement the PSBB, which is considered loose, effective..." (JA)

#### 3.2 Maxim Compliance with Generosity

The following results regarding the maximum generosity are presented in another section. The language facts related to the maxim of generosity are described in the answer submitted by WA to NS.

"Let's put it this way: we see clearly in the data covert COVID-19. It can be seen that. I only explain from the context of the deceased, but if in a positive context, some are treated too, some are cured too, and there is there. I only show the extremes, but if you want to see that everything is exposed, ODP PDP is also there..." (WA)

The language used in WA speech describes maximizing losses or minimizing benefits. For this reason, the maxim of generosity is that the language emphasizes the advantage of the interlocutor. WA maximizes benefits for NS, as seen in the exposure to COVID-19 case data submitted by WA.

Another maxim of generosity is evident in FB's answers to NS.

"...The dilemma between health and economics. This occurs in all countries, not just ours. You, as economists, see how Bang Faisal?" (NS)

"Yes, people who die can't recover. However, the economy can recover. Thus, the IMF estimates that in 2021, we will fully recover. Even though the growth could be higher than in 2019, it decreased this year. According to the World Bank, the ultrasound scenario can be minus three and a half. Therefore, we do not consider the trade-off if this is, in my opinion, a sequence. Economic predictions will worsen if the handling of the pandemic is ineffective..." (FB)

#### 3.3 Maxim Compliance Award

The maximum award compliance was found in the FS's answer to the NS. FB explains according to expertise in economics. The explanation given by FB maximizes the respect for the interlocutor.

"I would like to ask Bang Faisal Basri, an economist, for a response. Bang Faisal, what solutions can be provided by the government to UMKM and, for example, to creative industry workers whose income is obtained from organizing concert concerts?" (NS)

"So far, what the government has done in more detail is related to the Bank. Therefore, paying instalments and interest in MSMEs is free, and the government bears responsibility. Yes, the data happens to be complete through the kur. The data are complete, right, everything, and through program credit. Well, the problem is that it does not pass credit programs like Mrs. Indrawati, eh, uh, maybe it doesn't matter at the Bank, the problem is that no income causes employees to be laid off, well that's not it yet..." (FB)

Another language fact related to maximum appreciation is found in the dialogue between NS and JA in the concluding sentence.

"Okay, thank you, Bang Juri Ardiantoro, for joining Mata Najwa tonight." (NS)

"You're welcome. Good evening." (JA)

### 3.4 Maxim Compliance with Simplicity

Adherence to the maxim of simplicity is seen in NS's dialogue with WA. The fact that WA conveys to NS maximizes respect for its speech opponents. WA begins with the diction of the Mba, an honorable call for a woman with a Javanese cultural background.

"Mr. Is Wiku an example of the implementation policy carried out by the Task Force? (NS)

"Good mba Nana. This shows the data from our analysis that, indeed, the number of deaths, especially those over the age of 60, was 45 percent. In contrast, the number of people aged 46–59 years was 40%, with a total of 80%. Thus, if you describe it easily, five people were infected at the age of 60 and above, one person died if it was 50-46-50, 9, and 10 people were infected one person died because we see a very high risk at the age of over 40 6 years; that is, we say that in PSBB for 11 sectors of the economy that can run it is recommended that work is at the age of forty-five years and below it is essentially to protect the high risk it is recommended. After all, before we did not have an analysis, it said every one of all ages can work next to the sector it's on the PSBB, so it's a recommendation to make sure that we have to be prepared to protect those at risk." (WA)

### 3.5 Compliance with the Maxim of Consensus

The maximum consensus is seen in the dialogue between NS and FB. Both occur in consensus or during a speech event.

"It's fine, so there are too many factors that have to be taken into account compared to just throwing a discourse relaxation." (NS)

"Okay." (FB)

Other data related to compliance with the consensus maximum appear in the NS and WA dialogues.

"Sorry, Mr. Wiku, it's death data, right, if it's death data? Is it not data collected at the hospital? (NS)

"Death data, yes, death data is indeed hospital data, but we have the data, not just death data." (WA)

The marker of consensus is found in the fact of "Good" language submitted by FB and WA for an answer offered by NS.

### 3.6 Maxim Compliance with Sympathy

The maximum level of sympathy is found in the dialogue between NS and FB. FB, in its speech, shows sympathy for its speech partners. The fact that the language of "You see, this seems to be trying to describe what the president wants, yes, the president wants the peak of May-June is already declining" characterizes sympathy.

"Well, I want to go to Bang Faisal, an economist. Bang Faisal is a pa you read from various studies of seemingly cross-crossing messages that often arise from the government. Is this because it is difficult or dilemmatic, or is there a tug-of-war of interests?" (NS)

"You see, it's trying to pin down what the president wants; the president wants the peak in May-June. This number is already declining. As July has been as usual, how do I respond to the president's wants if I look at the schedule? So it is not based on scientific evidence or data." (FB)

Another language fact about the maxim of sympathy is found in the dialogue between WA and NS.

"It is data collected from various parties. In this context, the health sector is not only those in the hospital for the period of illness, so again, I emphasize not only in hospitals because they collect it also from Puskesmas from communities with the most rising cases." (WA)

"Sorry, Mr. Wiku, it's death data, right, if it's death data? Is it not data collected at the hospital? (NS)

## 4. Discussions

Putting consensus and sympathy concepts into practice becomes crucial to upholding the civility maxim (Culpeper & Pat, 2021; Ramli et al., 2023; Syting & Gildore, 2022; Tantucci et al., 2022). In Syting and Gildore's view, this modesty maxim consists of four maxims: tact, consent, politeness, and agreement (Syting and Gildore 2022). Maximum politeness is a model of politeness found in everyone. However,

Culpeper and Pat emphasized that politeness is relative; everyone interprets politeness according to their respective cultures (Culpeper & Pat, 2021). Nursanti et al. exemplifies that this maxim of politeness is one strategy to minimize misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication (Nursanti et al., 2023). Thus, it is harmonious that Sifianou affirmed that politeness is a reflection of morals that exist in everyone (Sifianou, 2019).

In daily contact, the rules of simplicity in communication are invaluable. Daily interaction must address linguistic rules such as language use, which leads to politeness (Ramli et al., 2023). Indeed, the key to successful communication is to uphold the simplicity of the language. Simplicity in language is shown through speech partners feeling comfortable being invited to communicate (Zaitseva and Pelepeychenko, 2022). It must be recognized that language that creates a relaxed atmosphere in speech partners requires communication skills (Thomas et al., 2023). Interpersonal skills are honed through interactions with social environments (Adam et al. 2021). Mastering the social environment is essential because it conditions the flow of information in the language (Marcos-García et al., 2020). Thus, the social environment is a test location where individuals can interact. In addition, the social environment is essential in leading the principle of simplicity in interacting with others (Bennani et al., 2023).

What must be considered in this language is to pay respect to the interlocutor (see also Culpeper & Pat, 2021; Ran & Zhao, 2019; Zaitseva & Pelepeychenko, 2022), acknowledging the other person as an evaluator of the communicator's spoken words. The interlocutor assesses speech from social feasibility and trustworthy speech (Tantucci et al., 2022). In Ardila's view, the communicator does not necessarily speak to the other person but to the whole nation. When it is indicated that his speech diction does not respect his speech opponent, it affects his self-image (Ardila 2019). Brown and Levinson emphasized that speakers must not let the other person have a negative face for disrespectful speech (Brown & Levinson, 1988; Wang, 2023). The worst impact of a negative face is that it results in disharmony between nations. For this reason, Brown and Levinson recommend that speaking should make the other person's face positive (Brown & Levinson, 1988; Oyedokun-Alli & Babatope, 2019).

The politeness of language is based on wisdom and generosity in everyday relationships. The maxim of wisdom is a vital pillar for strengthening the character of the nation's next generation during the globalization era (Prayitno et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the maxim of generosity is language, namely, maximizing the benefits the opponent receives (Hatab, 2022; Ramli et al., 2023). The maxims emphasize verbal and non-verbal communication (Rabab'Ah et al., 2019). For this reason, the purpose of the maxim of wisdom and the maxim of generosity is to realize harmony in verbal and nonverbal communication (Zaitseva & Pelepeychenko, 2022). Subchi et al. agreed that language harmony positively affects economic and religious harmony (Subchi et al., 2022). Thus, it is non-negotiable that the harmony of language should be placed above all else because it intersects with world peace ( Han & Wu, 2020; Li et al., 2020).

Language civility has become a mouthpiece of the nation's peacekeepers. Civility is a concern for ethicists (Sifianou 2019). Furthermore, Sifianou (2019) added that politeness impacts harmony and tolerance and reduces community miscommunication. Miscommunication occurs because everyone interprets something differently (Autiosalo et al., 2020). Igaab and Wehail provided a way to ensure civility is upheld; sarcasm, despite its heartbreaking nature, must be spoken with complete politeness (Igaab & Wehail, 2023). Thus, sarcasm has become a common enemy when realizing politeness in a language (Feng & Ren, 2020). Therefore, the primary key to the realization of peace in a nation is when the politeness of language is truly integrated with everyone.

In the context of this study, these findings provide a solid foundation for better understanding the application of the maxim of politeness, mainly when applied in a talk show program, such as Mata Najwa in Trans 7. As defined by the different sub-maxims, politeness can be a model for each individual participating in the interaction. In addition, the findings become important in discussing and analyzing how this concept of politeness can create patterns of interaction and influence the principles of language in the format of talk shows. Engaging these concepts in the context of Mata Najwa, we can see concrete examples of how tactical wisdom, consent, politeness, and consent emerge in conversations and how relative politeness can play a role in interpreting audiences from different cultures. By detailing the direct linkage between these findings and the research topic, we can illustrate in greater depth how politeness maxima can be vital to improving language principles in this context.

## 5. Conclusion

The findings that have been presented show that the application of the maxim of politeness is a solution for realizing the improvement of language principles. Compliance with the principle of decency positively affects the formation of a harmonious social environment among citizens. Language politeness carries the concept of maximizing benefits for interlocutors and minimizing benefits for oneself, giving meaning to implementing the 16<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) as a pioneer in realizing world peace. This research conveys that world peace can be achieved through language that prioritizes politeness in every conversation. Therefore, this study contributes to the principle of language politeness as an alternative solution for realizing world harmony and peace.

Although these findings provide valuable insights, it is essential to recognize that generalizing these findings must be done cautiously because of certain study limitations. Limitations, such as the possibly limited sample coverage or the specific context of Mata Najwa Trans 7, may affect the level of generalization. Therefore, for future research, it is recommended to expand the scope of the sample and delve deeper into the context of talk shows to obtain a broader view. In addition, including respondent variation and a richer context can increase the validity and generalizability of the findings. Further research can explore the impact of politeness on interactions across multiple communication contexts, enriching our understanding of the role of language in creating peace and harmony in a global society.

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### Authors contributions

M. Wildan is responsible for the planning and execution of research. M. Wildan is the brains behind the data collection and analysis on which this paper is based. Eva Ardiana Indrarians manages practical implementation, ensures data quality, and provides important insights into script writing. Wahyu Damayanti plays a role in deepening data analysis with particular expertise, helping to detail methodologies, and providing an in-depth understanding of findings. Darsita Suparno was instrumental in managing further technical aspects of the research, focusing on analyzing additional data and preparing certain parts of the manuscript. Ilhamudin played a special role in developing the interpretation of the results, identifying significant implications, and refining certain parts of the manuscript. The active involvement of all these authors creates a collaborative framework that combines their unique expertise and knowledge, resulting in powerful and informative work. Thus, each author assigns their particular role in shaping the foundation of this study.

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### Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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