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## AN ANALYSIS OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN A YOUTUBE INTERVIEW WITH ANIES BASWEDAN

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the types of politeness strategies used by Anies Baswedan in a YouTube interview on the podcast What Is Up Indonesia? Episode “The Fault in Our Education, Political Islam, and Gen Alpha Slang.” The study also investigates how these politeness strategies reflect his communication style as a public figure. This research used a qualitative descriptive method with a pragmatic approach. The data were collected from the transcript of the interview video uploaded on YouTube. The researcher analyzed the utterance using Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory of politeness strategies, focusing on positive politeness and negative politeness. The findings show that Anies Baswedan frequently used positive politeness strategies such as exaggerate, intensify interest to hearer, seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, joking, including both speaker and hearer in the activity and giving reasons. In addition several negative politeness strategies were also identified, including the use of questions and pessimistic expressions. The findings indicate that Anies Baswedan tends to create a friendly, respectful, and inclusive atmosphere during communication. His politeness strategies in digital political communication.

**Keywords:** *Politeness Strategies, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness,*

### INTRODUCTION

Language plays an important role in human communication because it is used to express ideas, feelings and intentions in social interaction. Communication is not only about delivering information but also about maintaining good relationships between speakers and listeners. Communication cannot be separated from language behavior because language reflects how people interact socially. Therefore, politeness becomes an important aspect of communication to avoid misunderstanding and maintain harmonious relationships.

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies meaning in context. Erlinda (2016) states that pragmatics is the study of language use in communication influenced by social conditions and speaker intention. Pragmatics not only focus on literal meaning but also on how listeners interpret meaning based on context. Mandarani and Fediyanto (2022) explain that pragmatic competence is important because it enables people to communicate appropriately according to social and cultural situations. Similarly, Astia (2020) argues that understanding pragmatic aspect is necessary to avoid communication breakdowns.

One important topic in pragmatics is politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that politeness strategies are used to minimize face-threatening acts and maintain social harmony in communication. According to Safitri and Ambalegin (2022), politeness is important because it helps individuals maintain social relationships and communicate effectively. Azizah (2024) also states that politeness strategies refer to language choices used to show respect and reduce threats to the hearer’s self-esteem.

Brown and Levinson (1987) classify politeness strategies into four types: bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness and off record. Positive politeness is used to create closeness and solidarity between speaker and listeners, while negative politeness is used to show respect and minimize imposition. Mandarani and Fediyanto (2022) explain that negative politeness frequently appears in formal situations or communication involving

differences in social status. Meanwhile, off-record strategies are commonly used to express ideas indirectly and avoid direct conflict.

Table 1. Positive Politeness Sub-Strategy

No	Sub-Strategies	Example
<b>1.</b>	<b>Using common ground</b>	
a.	Observing and attentive to the hearer	<b>You look tired today.</b>
b.	Exaggerating (e.g., approval, sympathy, interest in hearer)	<b>That's a really amazing idea!</b>
c.	Increasing hearer interest	<b>You won't believe what happened next.</b>
d.	Employing in group identity markers /jargon/slang/ellipsis	<b>Guys, this will be hard.</b>
e.	Seeking agreement (safe topics, repetition)	<b>This issues is important, right?</b>
f.	Avoiding conflict (token agreement, pseudo-agreement, white lies, hedging opinions)	<b>In some ways, I think you are correct. But consider it this way. Why don't you try....?</b>
g.	Proposing/Asserting/Assuming common ground (e.g., gossip, small talk, viewpoint operation, presupposition manipulation)	<b>we all know this problem has existed for a long time.</b>
h.	Joking	<b>if this keeps going, we might need a coffee break first.</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Demonstrating that the speaker and the hearer are partners</b>	
a.	Asserting/assuming the speaker's understanding of and concern for the hearer's desires	<b>Because I know you enjoying marshmallows, I have got you box of them.</b> I was wondering if I may ask you a favor.
b.	Offering/promising	<b>I will take you out to dinner on the weekend</b> if you make dinner tonight.
c.	Being optimistic	<b>I know you are usually grateful for gardening advice, Ted,</b> so I would not trim your lawn so short if I were you.
d.	Involving both the speaker and hearer in the activity	I am quite thirsty. <b>Let us pause for a moment.</b>
e.	Asking for/giving reasons	<b>John, I believe you have had a little too much to drink.</b> Why not spend the night at our place?
f.	Assuming/asserting reciprocity	If you assist me with my math assignment, mom, <b>I will mop the yard after school tomorrow.</b>

Table 2. Negative Politeness Sub-Strategy

No.	Sub-Strategies	Example
<b>1.</b>	Not being direct	<b>Could you tell me what time it is?</b>

2.	Not assuming/pressuming (e.g., questioning, using hedge)	I was wondering if I may ask you a <b>quick question.</b>
3.	Not coercing the listener	
	a. Being pessimist	I will discuss my paper with you <b>if you have a bit of spare time</b> tomorrow afternoon
	b. Minimizing the imposition	Could I speak with you <b>for a moment?</b>
	c. Deferring communication	Excuse me, <b>officer.</b> I believe I parked at the incorrect location
4	Communicating the speaker's desires avoids interfering with the hearer	
	a. Expressing regret/apologizing (e.g., indicating reluctance, giving overwhelming reasons, begging for forgiveness)	<b>Sorry to disturb you, but...</b>
	b. Impersonalizing the speaker and hearer (using performatives, imperatives, impersonal verbs, passive and circumstantial voices, indefinite replace the pronouns 'I' and 'you' pronouns, viewpoint distancing)	A: <b>That car is parked in a no-parking zone.</b> B: Officer, it's mine. A: <b>Well, it must have a parking ticket.</b>
	c. Declarating the FTA to be a general rule	<b>Parking on double yellow lines is unlawful.</b> Therefore you will have to pay the fee.
	d. Nominalizing	<b>Participation</b> in an unauthorized demonstration is a crime. Could you please give me your name and address, sir?
5.	Resolving the hearer's other needs (going on record as incurring debt or as not indebting the hearer)	If you could only fix a formatting issue I'm having, <b>I'll buy you meal at lunch</b>

The use of politeness strategies is influenced by communication context, social distance, power realtions and coommunicative goals. Brown and Levinson (1987) state that speakers choose politeness strategies based on the relationship between participant and the level of imposition in communication. In Indonesia culture, politeness is highly valued because respectful communication reflects good social ethics and harmony.

In the digital era, communication increasingly occurs through online platforms such as YouTube and podcast. Nawawi et.al (2026) state that social media has transformed public communication by allowing wider interaction and instant access to information. YouTube interviews and podcasts combine formal and informal communicaiton styles, making them interesting contexts for analyzing politeness strategies in digital communicaiton.

One public figure recognized for his polite communication style is Anies Baswedan. He is known for using calm, respectful and persuasive language in public discussions and interviews. His appearance in the podcast What Is Up Indonesia? Episode "The Fault in Our Education, Political Islam and Gen Alpha Slang" provides an Interesting context for analyzing politeness strategies because the discussion involves sensitive social and political issues in a semi formal communication setting.

Several previous study have discussed politeness strategies in communication. Ambarsari et.al (2024) found that Indonesia political figurs use politeness strategies, language

style and code switching to engage audiences and maintain public image in digital communication. Barus et.al (2022) also found that politeness remains important in online communication to maintain respectful interaction in social media spaces. In addition, Indahsari and Surjowati (2020) found that positive politeness strategies were dominantly used in political interviews to reduce conflict and maintain harmonious interaction between interviewer and interviewee.

Although many studies have discussed politeness strategies, most previous research focuses on classroom interaction, social media comments, or television interview. Studies analyzing politeness strategies used by Indonesia political figures in YouTube podcast interview are still limited. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the politeness strategies used by Anies Baswedan in the podcast *What Is Up Indonesia?* And explain how these strategies reflect his communication style as a public figure in digital communication.

## METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative descriptive method because the research focused on analyzing and interpreting utterances in communication. Qualitative research is suitable for examining language use, meaning and social interaction in natural contexts. The source of the data in this study was a YouTube interview video from the podcast *What Is Up Indonesia?* Episode “The Fault in Our Education, Political Islam and Gen Alpha Slang.” The duration of the video was approximately 1 hour and 17 minutes. The data consisted of Anies Baswedan’s utterances containing politeness strategies.

The data collection process involved several steps, first the researcher watched the video repeatedly to understand the context of the conversation. Second, the researcher transcribed the utterances from the video. Third, the researcher identified utterances containing politeness strategies.

The data analysis used Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory of politeness strategies. The researcher classified the utterances into positive politeness strategies and negative politeness strategies. After classification, the strategies reflected Anies Baswedan’s communication style.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

The findings show that Anies Baswedan used both positive politeness and negative politeness strategies during the interview. However, positive politeness strategies appeared more frequently than negative politeness strategies. Several positive politeness substrategies identified in the interview include exaggerate, intensifying interest to the hearer, using in group identity markers, seeking agreement, avoiding disagreement, presupposing common ground, joking, involving both speaker and hearer in the activity, giving reasons and giving gifts or appreciation. Meanwhile, the negative politeness identified include questioning and being pessimistic.

Table 3. Types of Positive Politeness Strategies Found in the Interview

No	Positive Politeness Substrategies	Example Found	Frequency
1	Exaggerate	Expressing admiring or strong interest	8
2	Intensifying Interest to Hearer	Making stories engaging for listeners	5
3	Use In-group Identity Marker	Using inclusive and familiar	2

		expressions	
4	Seek Agreement	Confirming shared opinions	1
5	Avoid Disagreement	Softening differences in opinion	1
6	Presuppose Common Ground	To assume shared views or knowledge, making agreement seem natural.	1
7	Joke	Creating a relaxed atmosphere	10
8	Include Both Speaker and Hearer in the Activity	Using “we” and “us” in discussion	5
9	Give or Ask Reasons	Explaining opinions politely	1
10	Give Gifts	To satisfy the hearer’s positive face by showing empathy and appreciation.	3

Table 4. Types of Negative Politeness Strategies Found in the Interview

No	Negative Substrategies	Politeness	Example Found	Frequency
1	Use Question		Asking indirectly and respectfully	1
2	Be Pessimistic		Minimizing imposition in communication	1

### The Use of Politeness in Different Communication Context

Politeness strategies are used in different communication situations depending on relationship between speakers, the communication goals and the social context. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), each politeness strategy has a particular function in maintaining social harmony and reducing face-threatening acts.

Bald on record strategy are commonly used in urgent situations, direct commands or conversations between people who have a close relationship. This strategy focuses on clarity and efficiency rather than maintaining politeness. Positive politeness strategies are generally used when speakers want to create closeness, solidarity and friendliness with listeners. Speakers use this strategy to make the hearer feel appreciated, accepted and include in the interaction. Negative politeness strategies are often used in formal situations or when there is social distance and power difference between speakers and hearers. This strategy aims to show respect and avoid imposing on the listener. Meanwhile, off-record strategies are used when speakers want to express ideas indirectly to avoid conflict responsibility for potentially sensitive statement. This strategy is commonly found in political communication and public discussions.

In the context of YouTube interviews, public figure often combine several politeness strategies depending on the topic, audience and communicative goals. As a politician and public figure, Anies Baswedan uses politeness strategies to maintain professionalism, build rapport with audiences and create persuasive communication.

### Factor Influencing the Use of Politeness Strategies

Several factors influence the use of politeness strategies in communication Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that politeness is closely related to social interaction and contextual factors. The first factor is social distance. Speaker tend to use more polite expressions when communicating with people they are not close to. The second factor is power or status difference.

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In communication involving public figures, leaders or older people, speakers often use negative politeness to show respect. The third factor is the communication context. Formal situations usually require more polite and careful language compared to informal conversations. In semi-formal settings such as podcasts and YouTube interviews, speakers often combine formal and informal styles.

Another important factor is culture. Indonesian culture highly values politeness and respectful communication. Therefore, speakers usually avoid direct disagreement and prefer indirect expressions to maintain harmony. Finally, communication goals also influence the choice of politeness strategies. Public figures may use politeness strategies to persuade an audience, maintain a positive public image and avoid conflict in public communication.

## **Discussion**

The findings indicate that positive politeness strategies were dominant in the interview. This suggests that Anies Baswedan attempted to create closeness and solidarity with both the hosts and the audience. Positive politeness strategies are generally used to make listeners feel appreciated, respected and included in the interaction.

One of the dominant strategies was seeking agreement. Anies Baswedan often responded to questions by acknowledging the interviewer's opinions before expressing his own ideas. This strategy helped reduce potential conflict and created smoother interaction. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), seeking agreement is a way to maintain a positive face and strengthen interpersonal relationships.

Another frequently used strategy was including both speaker and hearer in the activity. Anies Baswedan often used inclusive pronouns such as "we" and "us" to create a sense of togetherness. This strategy reflected his cooperative communication style and his effort to involve the audience in the discussion.

The use of jokes and humor also contributed to a relaxed atmosphere during the interview. Humor helped reduce social distance between the speaker and listeners. In political communication, humor can strengthen the speaker's image as approachable and friendly.

In addition to positive politeness, negative politeness strategies were also found in the interview. For example, Anies Baswedan sometimes used indirect questions and hedging expressions to avoid imposing his opinions directly on others. This reflects respect for the interlocutor's freedom and perspective.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous studies on politeness in political communication. Indahsari and Surjowati (2020) found that political interviews often involve positive politeness strategies to maintain harmonious interaction. Similarly, Barus et al. (2024) explained that politeness remains important in digital communication because it helps maintain respectful interaction in public space.

Overall, the use of politeness strategies by Anies Baswedan reflects his persuasive, inclusive and respectful communication style. His language use demonstrates awareness of audience perception and social harmony, which are important aspects of communication for public figures.

## **Conclusion**

This study analyzed politeness strategies used by Anies Baswedan in the YouTube podcast "What Is Up Indonesia? Episode 'The Fault in Our Education, Political Islam and Gen Alpha Slang.'" Based on Brown and Levinson's theory, the findings show that both positive politeness and negative politeness strategies were used throughout the interview.

Positive politeness strategies were used more frequently, especially seeking agreement, intensifying interest to hearer, joking and including both speaker and hearer in the activity. This

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strategies helped create a friendly, cooperative and respectful atmosphere during communication. Meanwhile negative politeness strategies such as questioning and pessimistic expressions were used to minimize imposition and maintain respect.

The findings indicate that Anies Baswedan's communication style reflects politeness, inclusiveness and persuasive interaction. This study contributes to pragmatic studies, particularly in understanding politeness strategies in digital political communication.

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