

POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN INDONESIAN MOTIVATIONAL PODCAST: AN INTERACTIONAL-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: May 2026 Revised: July 2026 Accepted: September 2026 Published: October 2026	<i>The growing popularity of podcasts has created new forms of digitally mediated spoken interaction in which speakers must manage both co-present interlocutors and wider unseen audiences. However, politeness in Indonesian podcast discourse, particularly in face-sensitive financial advice, remains underexplored. This study investigates how politeness is pragmatically accomplished in the Indonesian motivational podcast Suara Berkelas when speakers discuss financially sensitive issues. Employing a qualitative interactional-pragmatic single-case design, the study analyzes five purposively selected excerpts from Episode 86. The analysis draws on Brown and Levinson's face model, relational work, rapport management, and cyberpragmatics. The findings reveal that politeness is realized not primarily through conventional courtesy markers but through interactional strategies including third-party narratives, anticipatory mitigation, generalized social typing, quoted speech, analogy, irony, and moral reframing. These strategies enable speakers to criticize, warn, and advise while mitigating face threats and maintaining relational alignment and public credibility. The findings further demonstrate a dual audience orientation, as speakers simultaneously engage a co-present interlocutor and an unseen digital audience. In the Indonesian context, this orientation becomes particularly salient when financial advice intersects with family hierarchy, social image, and expectations of generosity. The study contributes to interactional pragmatics by showing how politeness in podcast discourse operates as dynamic relational work shaped by face sensitivity, cultural expectations, and digitally mediated audience design.</i>
Keywords Politeness strategies; Interaction pragmatics; Relational work; Podcast discourse; Cyberpragmatics;	
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INTRODUCTION

Classical politeness theory provides a useful starting point for analyzing face-sensitive discourse. Brown and Levinson (1987) conceptualize interaction in terms of face-threatening acts and the strategies used to mitigate them. However, subsequent research has demonstrated that politeness cannot be reduced to a fixed inventory of linguistic forms. Instead, relational and discursive approaches view politeness as socially evaluated and interactionally negotiated, closely tied to moral expectations within a community (Locher & Watts, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 2008; Kádár & Haugh, 2013; Haugh, 2024). From this perspective, face is not merely protected from potential threats but is actively displayed, ratified, and negotiated throughout interaction. This shift is especially relevant to podcast discourse, where speakers must sound both intimate and spontaneous while remaining accountable to a wider public.

Research on digital discourse further highlights how communication is shaped by audience design, technological mediation, and public visibility (Herring, 2013; Yus, 2011; Dynel, 2021, 2023). Recent studies have also shown that media hosts in digital environments often combine conversational interaction with public-oriented discourse and metapragmatic guidance (Liu & Jiang, 2024; Taguchi & Kim, 2016). Despite these advances, most studies of online politeness continue to focus on written interaction, such as social media comments and online forums. Spoken digital genres, particularly podcasts, remain underexplored, especially within Indonesian pragmatic research. More specifically, limited attention has been paid to how podcast speakers manage face-sensitive advice while simultaneously orienting to a co-present interlocutor and an unseen digital audience. The novelty of the present study lies not merely in examining an Indonesian podcast as a new data source, but in integrating face-based politeness theory, relational approaches, and cyberpragmatics to explain how advice-giving is simultaneously negotiated with a co-present interlocutor and designed for an unseen digital audience. This theoretical integration allows politeness to be examined not simply as linguistic mitigation but as interactional and relational work shaped by the communicative conditions of digitally mediated public discourse. This represents an important gap, as public spoken advice requires speakers to carefully balance intimacy, criticism, speaker authority, and audience alignment.

Recent research on Indonesian cyberpolitical discourse has shown that politeness and bald-on-record strategies are shaped not only by interpersonal face concerns but also by the communicative dynamics of digital platforms (Yanti et al., 2026; Anwar et al., 2024). Similarly, research on Indonesian digital discourse demonstrates that the interpretation of implicature depends on contextual and inferential processes operating across verbal and visual signs (Rina et al., 2020; Insyra & Supri, 2024; Ardianti et al., 2023). Together, these studies highlight the importance of examining pragmatic meaning as both interactionally and digitally situated. However, relatively little is known about how these dynamics operate in Indonesian digitally mediated spoken discourse, particularly when speakers provide advice on socially and morally sensitive issues.

This study addresses this gap by analyzing politeness strategies in the Indonesian motivational podcast *Suara Berkelas*. This podcast provides a particularly relevant site of inquiry because it regularly stages public advice on morally charged life issues in a conversational format that invites audience identification. Episode 86, “The Financial Phase of Your 20s to 40s That People Rarely Discuss,” was selected as a critical case due to its focus on financial decision-making, social comparison, intergenerational obligation, and the emotional consequences of money management. These themes generate repeated moments in which speakers must evaluate, criticize, warn, and reframe potentially face-threatening messages without disrupting relational alignment.

This article does not aim to generalize statistically from a single episode but instead offers analytical generalization through close interactional analysis. By examining a dense and information-rich case, the study provides insight into how politeness operates at the micro-interactional level, showing how speakers calibrate face threat and construct relational meaning through specific linguistic choices. This single-case focus enables a detailed examination of the interactional mechanisms through which sensitive financial advice is made socially and relationally manageable in a digitally mediated setting. Accordingly, this study addresses three research questions: *What politeness strategies are used in the podcast when discussing financially sensitive issues?; How do these strategies mitigate evaluation and face-threatening acts while maintaining speaker authority?; And How does the digitally mediated podcast setting shape the use and function of these strategies?*

By answering these questions, the study contributes to contemporary pragmatics by extending politeness research into Indonesian podcast discourse, integrating classical

politeness theory with relational and cyberpragmatic approaches, and demonstrating that in public spoken financial advice, politeness operates as dynamic relational work through which face management, moral positioning, speaker authority, and audience alignment are simultaneously negotiated.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This article adopts a qualitative interactional-pragmatic approach framed as an instrumental single-case study. The purpose is to explain how politeness is accomplished in situated talk, rather than to calculate the frequency of linguistic forms across a large corpus. Interactional pragmatics is considered appropriate because meaning in this study depends on sequential positioning, topic sensitivity, stance display, and audience design. What counts as politeness cannot be inferred from isolated words alone; it must be interpreted in relation to who is speaking, what prior talk is being responded to, and what kind of public uptake the utterance anticipates. The single-case design is deliberate rather than incidental. Episode 86 is treated as a critical, information-rich case that allows for a close analysis of how financial advice becomes socially manageable in a public podcast. The study therefore aims for analytical rather than statistical generalization by identifying interactional mechanisms and patterns that may be transferable to comparable contexts.

The episode was publicly accessible and produced for public dissemination. The speakers were therefore treated as publicly identifiable media speakers rather than as research participants recruited specifically for this study. No human participants were recruited, and no private or personally elicited data were collected. Accordingly, the analysis relied exclusively on publicly available media discourse, and no informed consent was obtained directly from the speakers for the purposes of this study.

Data Source and Sampling

The primary data source was Episode 86 of the Indonesian motivational podcast *Suara Berkelas*, entitled “The Financial Phase of Your 20s to 40s That People Rarely Discuss.” The episode features an interaction between a host and a guest and was publicly available through an online platform at the time of data collection. Because the study analyzes publicly available media discourse rather than data elicited from recruited human participants, the speakers were treated as publicly identifiable media speakers rather than as research participants. Given the qualitative single-case design, the study focuses on an analytically selected case rather than on a population and sample in the statistical sense. Episode 86 was selected through purposive sampling, a technique commonly used in qualitative research to identify cases that are particularly relevant to the research objectives. Prior to the final selection, several episodes with similar advisory orientations and interactional structures were reviewed.

The parameters guiding the selection included the presence of sustained dialogic interaction, a clear thematic focus on financial life across adulthood, and frequent instances of evaluative discourse involving potentially face-threatening acts, such as criticism, advice, and moral judgment. These characteristics made the episode especially suitable for examining politeness strategies, including mitigation, hedging, and indirectness. By concentrating on a single, information-rich case, the study enabled an in-depth and contextually grounded analysis of pragmatic phenomena while maintaining analytic coherence. The selected episode was thus treated as an instrumental case for the detailed exploration of how speakers manage socially sensitive topics within a specific communicative and cultural context.

Instruments

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher, supported by a qualitative analytical framework and a coding sheet applied to the audio data from Episode 86 of *Suara*

Berkelas. The episode was accessed through a publicly available online platform and served as the primary source of data. In line with qualitative research principles, the researcher acted as the key instrument, engaging in repeated and careful listening to identify and interpret relevant linguistic and interactional features. The selected excerpts were transcribed using a selective verbatim approach, retaining linguistic and interactional features relevant to pragmatic interpretation, such as discourse particles, reported speech, laughter, and salient prosodic cues when analytically relevant.

Following transcription, the data were coded according to analytical categories derived from the theoretical framework, including mitigation, hedging, indirectness, face management, relational work, and audience orientation. A coding sheet was used as a supporting instrument to ensure consistency in classification and to systematically document the patterns identified during analysis. Prior to the main analysis, a preliminary review of several comparable podcast episodes was conducted as an informal pilot phase to refine the analytical focus and coding criteria. This process resulted in minor adjustments to the coding scheme, particularly to clarify distinctions among the analytical categories. All stages of the research process, including data selection, transcription, coding, and interpretation, were carried out systematically to strengthen methodological consistency and analytical rigor.

Data Analysis

The analysis combined inductive noticing with theory-driven coding and proceeded in five stages. First, the full episode was repeatedly listened to, and initial analytic memos were developed to identify moments in which advice became evaluative, listeners could plausibly experience face threat, and the host softened, dramatized, or reframed potentially delicate messages. Second, the five focal excerpts were transcribed and annotated line by line for salient discourse features, including hedges, discourse particles, inclusive and exclusive pronouns, hypothetical examples, reported speech, laughter, irony, analogy, moral adjectives, and explicit references to audience judgment. Third, these discourse-level features were grouped into broader analytical categories derived from the theoretical framework: positive-face management, negative-face management, relational work, rapport management, disagreement mitigation, moral framing, and cyberpragmatic audience orientation. The coding was therefore both inductive and deductive. It remained open to features emerging from the data, while the interpretation was guided by explicit theoretical categories rather than by impressionistic interpretation alone.

Cyberpragmatic audience orientation was operationalized through four analytic indicators. The first was absent-audience design, identified when the host formulated advice in generalized or exemplary terms rather than restricting it to the immediate co-present interlocutor. The second was publicness and persistence, identified when utterances were formulated in ways that could remain interpretable and socially acceptable beyond the immediate interaction, given the replayable and shareable nature of podcast discourse. The third was audience heterogeneity, identified when speakers avoided overly local assumptions and instead used broader formulations that could be relevant to listeners with different social backgrounds and experiences. The fourth was parasocial intimacy, identified when the host used conversational warmth, empathy, or mock-casual evaluations to create a sense of interpersonal closeness while delivering normative guidance. Together, these indicators provided an operational basis for examining how the digitally mediated podcast setting shaped pragmatic meaning and audience orientation.

Fourth, each excerpt was interpreted sequentially. Rather than listing features in isolation, the analysis examined the interactional function of each move within its immediate context, including whether it softened criticism, displayed empathy, redistributed blame, restored face, or recalibrated the audience's moral stance. Fifth, the five excerpts were compared across the episode to identify recurring patterns and to distinguish strategies that

recurred across excerpts from those associated with particular topics, such as family hierarchy or social comparison. Coding and memoing were conducted manually because the dataset was intentionally small and required close interpretive reading rather than large-scale corpus processing.

To enhance analytical credibility, the coding process involved repeated listening, iterative comparison between transcripts and audio data, and analytic memoing throughout the interpretation process. Coding decisions were documented in an audit trail linking linguistic features, contextual information, theoretical categories, and pragmatic interpretations. Selected excerpts and interpretations were also reviewed through peer checking to reduce the risk of overly subjective interpretation and strengthen interpretive consistency.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents the findings from the interactional-pragmatic analysis of the five selected excerpts. The analysis focuses on how speakers employ politeness strategies to manage face threat, negotiate relational meaning, maintain speaker authority, and orient simultaneously to co-present and digitally mediated audiences. Table 1 provides an overview of the five excerpts, followed by detailed analyses of the interactional evidence. The recurrent strategies identified across the excerpts include third-party narrative, anticipatory mitigation, generalized dramatization, quoted FTA, analogy, irony, moral reframing, choice framing, and calibrated confrontation. Table 1 summarizes the five excerpts analyzed in this study. The table functions as a guide to the data rather than as a substitute for interpretation. Detailed analysis follows each excerpt so that the pragmatic significance emerges from the interaction itself, rather than merely from categorical labels. To make the evidential basis explicit, each subsection below provides an extended extract followed by an analytic commentary. Ellipses indicate omitted stretches within the selected segment, while square brackets mark brief contextual compression rather than verbatim wording.

Table 1
Excerpts of Interactional Focus, Dominant Strategy, and Pragmatic

Data	Timestamp	Interactional focus	Dominant strategy	Why it matters pragmatically
Data 1	00:15:51–00:16:30	Home-gym story; non-rational spending	Third-party narrative and indirect critique	Criticism is displaced onto a relatable story, reducing listener defensiveness
Data 2	00:17:21–00:17:53	Money vigilance and the label <i>pelit</i>	Anticipatory mitigation and relabeling	External judgment is acknowledged, then reinterpreted to protect face
Data 3	00:17:53–00:18:49	Money status and appearing rich	Generalized dramatization and moral framing	Status-seeking is criticized without directly shaming listeners
Data 4	00:30:13–00:34:10	Family guilt and financial enmeshment	Quoted FTA, analogy, and face restoration	Toxic family language is exposed while the affected listener is re-legitimated
Data 5	01:03:04–01:05:02	How to refuse family demands	Choice framing, irony, and calibrated confrontation	Autonomy is defended through soft provocation rather than blunt command

Data 1: Third-Party Narrative as Low-Threat Financial Advice

In Data 1, the speakers discuss a case in which someone enthusiastically builds a home gym but later realizes that what was needed was not merely the equipment but the “environment” that supports discipline. Although the excerpt is framed as a casual story about a friend, it functions as an illustrative case of low-threat financial advice: the financial problem is recognizable, but the listener is never directly accused of being irrational or wasteful. This illustrates how politeness operates as relational work rather than as a fixed set of linguistic strategies.

Timestamp	Extended extract (verbatim key wording with limited contextual compression)
00:15:51–00:16:30	Bilal: [shares a story about a friend who wanted a home gym but later found that training at home did not work as imagined] ... needed the “environment” [of going to the gym].

Potentially face-threatening financial criticism is delivered through a third-party narrative rather than directed at the interlocutor or audience. By locating the questionable spending in the experience of “a friend,” the speaker creates interactional distance from the criticism, allowing listeners to recognize the relevance of the advice without being positioned as irrational or wasteful. The lexical item *environment* further reframes the failed purchase as a mismatch between individual habits and contextual support rather than as evidence of poor judgment or lack of discipline. In this way, the narrative transforms potential blame into empathetic explanation and reduces the threat to the audience’s positive face.

From a relational-work perspective, the strategy does more than soften criticism: it positions the speaker as understanding rather than morally superior. The financial lesson is therefore constructed through shared recognition rather than direct accusation. In the podcast context, this is particularly significant because the publicly distributed advice must remain sufficiently critical to be useful while also being relationally acceptable to an absent and potentially heterogeneous audience.

Data 2: Anticipatory Mitigation and the Reframing of “*Pelit*”

Data 2 concerns the “money vigilance” type, namely a person who saves so aggressively that others may judge them as excessively stingy. The key line is: “*bisa jadi sebenarnya dia tuh udah kemampuannya di atas tapi dia jadi kayak kelihatan kok agak pelit ya.*” The potentially face-threatening label *pelit* (“stingy”) is introduced through a cluster of epistemic and evaluative

Timestamp	Extended extract (verbatim key wording with limited contextual compression)
00:17:21–00:17:53	Prita: “ <i>bisa jadi sebenarnya dia tuh udah kemampuannya di atas ... tapi dia jadi kayak kelihatan kok agak pelit ya.</i> ”

Data 2 demonstrates anticipatory mitigation through a cluster of epistemic and evaluative softeners. The expression *bisa jadi* (“it could be that”) marks epistemic tentativeness, presenting the evaluation as a possibility rather than a categorical judgment. Similarly, *kayak kelihatan* (“seems/looks like”) and *agak* (“rather/somewhat”) reduce the force of the negative label *pelit* (“stingy”). The particle *ya* further invites alignment rather than imposing the evaluation unilaterally. Together, these linguistic resources transform *pelit* from a fixed identity attribution into a negotiable social evaluation.

Pragmatically, the speaker acknowledges a potentially damaging social judgment while maintaining distance from it. Rather than directly categorizing someone as stingy, the utterance presents stinginess as an interpretation that others might construct. This protects positive face while preserving the speaker’s authority to discuss socially recognizable financial behavior. This is particularly relevant in the Indonesian context, where generosity

may carry social and moral value and financial restraint may therefore be interpreted not simply as an individual habit but as an index of social character. By anticipating and softening such judgments, the speaker designs the advice for both the immediate interlocutor and listeners who may recognize themselves in the category being discussed.

Data 3: Generalized Dramatization and the Moral Critique of Money Status

Data 3 shifts from over-saving to performative consumption. The speaker dramatizes status-seeking through expressions such as “*gila si Bilal keren banget*,” “*lu happy with that*,” and then the evaluative line “*dia sebenarnya enggak mampu segitu tapi dia pengen kelihatan kaya*.” These lines are crucial because they show how moral criticism is built in stages rather than delivered in one blunt accusation.

Timestamp	Extended extract (verbatim key wording with limited contextual compression)
00:17:53–00:18:49	Prita: “ <i>gila si Bilal keren banget</i> ” ... “ <i>lu happy with that</i> ” ... “ <i>dia sebenarnya enggak mampu segitu tapi dia pengen kelihatan kaya</i> .”

The extract unfolds through a staged movement from dramatized admiration to moral exposure. Expressions such as *gila* and *keren banget* reconstruct the social appeal of appearing financially successful, allowing the speaker to acknowledge the attraction of public recognition before introducing criticism. This initial alignment is pragmatically significant because the speaker demonstrates an understanding of the motivation underlying status-oriented consumption rather than immediately condemning it. The interaction subsequently shifts from admiration to critique through the contrast between financial capacity and public appearance: *enggak mampu segitu tapi dia pengen kelihatan kaya* (“not actually able to afford that level of spending but wants to appear rich”). The utterance is potentially face-threatening because it associates performative consumption with a discrepancy between appearance and economic reality. However, the criticism is formulated through a generalized social scenario rather than as a direct second-person accusation. This generalization distributes the evaluative force across a recognizable social type and reduces the likelihood of directly threatening an individual listener’s positive face.

This pattern is particularly relevant from a cyberpragmatic perspective. From a cyberpragmatic perspective, the relevance of this critique is amplified by the podcast’s digitally mediated setting, in which the interaction is accessible not only to the co-present interlocutor but also to a wider and potentially heterogeneous audience. However, the expression *pengen kelihatan kaya* should be interpreted primarily as a critique of social-image management rather than as direct evidence of digital self-presentation. The excerpt indirectly indexes a broader ideology in which self-presentation matters and external validation circulates quickly. Generalizing the behavior as a recognizable social phenomenon allows the host to criticize the ideology of “looking rich” without directly assigning that identity to a particular listener.

Accordingly, the politeness work in Data 3 is not simply mitigation for its own sake. It is a calibrated means of delivering moral criticism under conditions of publicness. The host challenges the ideology of “looking rich” by first acknowledging its attraction and then generalizing the behavior into a shared social phenomenon. The result supports Brown and Levinson’s (1987) account of face threat while also illustrating how moral stance, relational positioning, and audience design jointly shape the delivery of criticism in digitally mediated discourse.

Data 4: Quoted Face-Threatening Acts, Family Hierarchy, and Face Restoration

Data 4 is the most overtly face-threatening sequence in the dataset. Here, the host quotes parental discourse such as “*tagihan dari kamu dulu nih ... kamu lagian sih dulu lahirnya caesar*,” and later explains its emotional consequence through the analogy “*kayak*

ada rasa guilty gitu.” These are not incidental quotations; they are the evidential core of the analysis because they reveal what kind of language is being normalized and why the host intervenes so strongly.

Timestamp	Extended extract (verbatim key wording with limited contextual compression)
00:30:13–00:34:10	Prita: “ <i>tagihan dari kamu dulu nih ... kamu lagi sih dulu lahirnya caesar ...</i> ” Prita: “ <i>kayak ada rasa guilty gitu.</i> ”

In Data 4, reported speech functions differently from the mitigation strategies observed in the earlier excerpts. The host reproduces the parental utterance rather than softening it, thereby making its face-threatening character available for explicit evaluation. The quoted discourse frames the child’s birth and upbringing as a form of indebtedness, potentially threatening positive face by associating personal existence with moral and financial obligation. Rather than mitigating the original utterance, the host subsequently redirects the interaction toward face restoration.

The expression *kayak ada rasa guilty gitu* (“it is like there is a feeling of guilt”) shifts attention from the quoted utterance to its possible emotional consequences. Through this metapragmatic reframing, the host legitimizes the perspective of the person subjected to the guilt-inducing discourse. Politeness work here therefore operates not primarily through face-threat avoidance but through the restoration of relational legitimacy after the face-threatening discourse has been exposed. The analogy about guilt performs a second layer of interpretation. Rather than leaving the example as a shocking family quote, the host explains its durable psychological effect: the child may feel guilty even when acting within normal personal limits, for example when travelling or spending on themselves. This move translates a seemingly local incident into a more general experiential pattern. In methodological terms, it shows why the excerpt is analytically rich: the sequence contains the FTA, the metapragmatic labeling of that FTA, and the explanation of its interpersonal consequences.

This excerpt also reveals the importance of Indonesian family hierarchy. The extract can also be interpreted in relation to the culturally salient theme of intergenerational hierarchy represented in the podcast, where respect for parents may constrain how disagreement or resistance is expressed. That hierarchy constrains how resistance can be voiced. The host therefore criticizes the communicative pattern rather than directly instructing listeners to confront parents aggressively. The strategy preserves cultural recognizability while still challenging harmful discourse. From a relational perspective, Data 4 shows that politeness in this podcast is not always reducible to softening disagreement. Sometimes the host must first name and expose problematic discourse in order to protect vulnerable hearers. Politeness therefore lies not in making the original FTA sound mild but in re-legitimizing the perspective of the listener who may have internalized its guilt-inducing implications. This finding supports the broader claim that podcast advice can operate through moral positioning, face restoration, and culturally calibrated critique

Data 5: Choice Framing, Irony, and Calibrated Confrontation

Data 5 addresses a practical dilemma: how should someone respond when family expectations exceed their financial capacity? The key formulation is “*Kamu memilih loh untuk enggak apa-apa deh gue diginiin daripada gue diomongin orang,*” followed by the apparently ironic or mock-evaluative remark “*ih kelas.*”

Timestamp	Extended extract (verbatim key wording with limited contextual compression)
01:03:04–01:05:02	Prita: “ <i>Kamu memilih loh ... enggak apa-apa deh gue diginiin daripada gue diomongin orang</i> ” ... “ <i>ih kelas.</i> ”

Analytic commentary. This excerpt is pragmatically dense because the host combines agency attribution, mock reported thought, and light irony in one short sequence. *Kamu memilih loh* pushes the listener to recognize that silence is itself a social choice, while the reported wording “*enggak apa-apa deh gue diginiin daripada gue diomongin orang*” dramatizes the internal logic of conflict avoidance. The expression “*ih kelas*” appears to function as an ironic or mock-evaluative comment in the local interactional context. However, its interpretation depends on prosodic and sequential cues; therefore, it should not be classified as irony solely on the basis of its lexical form. In combination with the preceding choice framing, it contributes to a form of motivational confrontation that remains interactionally manageable within a public advisory format.

The phrase *kamu memilih loh* is crucial because it reintroduces agency into a situation that may feel socially predetermined. The particle *loh* adds insistence and makes the reminder harder to evade. Pragmatically, the host reframes silence and over-compliance not as neutral survival strategies but as choices with interpersonal consequences. Although this does not remove the structural pressure created by family expectations, it prevents avoidance from being represented as entirely cost-free. The closing remark “*ih kelas*” is pragmatically dense. It is neither straightforward praise nor an explicit rebuke. Its apparently ironic or mock-evaluative force allows the host to challenge the listener without resorting to a direct command such as “you must stop this.” This constitutes calibrated confrontation: the host protects the listener’s autonomy by not issuing an outright order while still encouraging critical self-reflection.

Across the five excerpts, the findings reveal several recurrent interactional strategies: third-party narration, anticipatory mitigation, generalized dramatization, reported speech, moral reframing, choice framing, and calibrated confrontation. These strategies address RQ1 by showing the principal forms through which politeness is interactionally accomplished in the selected excerpts. In relation to RQ2, they enable speakers to manage face-threatening financial advice while maintaining relational alignment and speaker authority. With respect to RQ3, the podcast setting shapes these strategies through dual audience orientation, as utterances are designed not only for the co-present interlocutor but also for an unseen and potentially heterogeneous digital audience. Across the five excerpts, politeness is therefore realized primarily through interactional and relational strategies rather than conventional courtesy markers.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that politeness in the five analyzed excerpts is accomplished through interactional strategies that extend beyond conventional courtesy markers. Third-party narratives, anticipatory mitigation, generalized dramatization, reported speech, moral reframing, choice framing, and calibrated confrontation allow the speakers to address financially and relationally sensitive issues while managing face threat and maintaining interactional alignment. Taken together, these findings suggest that politeness in the podcast is not simply a matter of linguistic softening but operates as dynamic relational work through which evaluation, authority, empathy, and audience alignment are simultaneously negotiated. These findings resonate with previous research on online advice-giving, which shows that advice is inherently evaluative and requires speakers to negotiate interpersonal judgments and politeness within digitally mediated interaction (Lu, 2025).

From the perspective of Brown and Levinson (1987), several of these strategies can be understood as responses to potential threats to positive and negative face. Third-party narratives and generalized scenarios, for example, reduce the directness of criticism by shifting evaluation away from an identifiable addressee. Similarly, epistemic and evaluative mitigators such as *bisa jadi*, *kayak kelihatan*, and *agak* reduce the categorical force of potentially damaging judgments. These findings support the continuing relevance of face-

based approaches for explaining how speakers manage criticism and advice. However, the data also indicate that politeness cannot be fully explained solely in terms of mitigating isolated face-threatening acts. Speakers simultaneously construct interpersonal alignment, establish moral credibility, and negotiate what counts as socially appropriate financial behavior. The findings therefore support relational approaches that conceptualize politeness as interactionally negotiated and socially evaluated rather than as a fixed inventory of linguistic strategies (Locher & Watts, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 2008; Haugh, 2013, 2024).

A particularly significant finding concerns the relationship between face threat and what may be described here as face restoration. Data 4 shows that politeness does not always involve making potentially offensive language less direct. In the quoted parental discourse, the original face-threatening utterance is reproduced rather than softened. Its reproduction enables the host to expose its potentially damaging relational meaning and subsequently reframe the experience from the perspective of the person subjected to the guilt-inducing discourse. The expression *kayak ada rasa guilty gitu*, for example, shifts attention from the original utterance to its possible emotional consequences. In this case, relational work operates through the re-legitimation of the affected person's perspective rather than through the avoidance of face threat (Qian & Pan, 2029; Fatmawati & Ningsih, 2024). This pattern extends a predominantly mitigation-oriented interpretation of politeness by showing that public advice may first expose problematic discourse and then work toward restoring the relational legitimacy of the person affected by it.

The findings also reveal that moral evaluation is central to the politeness work performed in the podcast. Financial behavior is not represented simply in terms of economic rationality but is associated with socially recognizable evaluations such as being *pelit* ("stingy"), wanting to *kelihatan kaya* ("appear rich"), fulfilling family obligations, or avoiding negative judgments from others. Such evaluations potentially implicate social identity and moral character. Consequently, the speakers frequently formulate criticism through hedging, dramatization, reported speech, analogy, and generalized social categories. These strategies allow moral positions to be communicated while reducing the likelihood that an individual listener is directly categorized or shamed. The findings thus reinforce the view that politeness and impoliteness are closely connected to processes of evaluation and moral ordering in interaction (Parvaresh & Tayebi, 2018; Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Sifianou, 2019).

The Indonesian sociocultural framing represented in the analyzed excerpts is particularly visible when financial decisions intersect with family relationships and expectations of generosity. Labels such as *pelit* and guilt-oriented parental discourse illustrate how, within these excerpts, financial choices are constructed as relationally consequential rather than as purely individual decisions. Data 4 and Data 5 further show that speakers negotiate a tension between personal autonomy and family expectations. Rather than promoting blunt or direct confrontation, the podcast frames agency through reflection, choice, and calibrated challenge. These patterns resonate with previous research indicating that Indonesian pragmatic practices are shaped by concerns with social relationships, interpersonal harmony, and culturally situated evaluations (Rahmayanti et al., 2025; Yanti et al., 2025). Rather than generalizing these patterns to Indonesian interaction as a whole, the present study shows how such sociocultural concerns are locally negotiated within a specific instance of digitally distributed spoken advice.

The digitally mediated nature of the podcast provides an additional dimension to these findings. Unlike an exclusively dyadic face-to-face conversation, podcast interaction is produced for both a co-present interlocutor and an absent audience. This dual audience orientation helps explain the recurrent use of third-party stories, generalized social types, hypothetical scenarios, and broadly recognizable moral framings. Such strategies enable the

speakers to formulate advice that remains relevant beyond the immediate interaction while reducing the likelihood that individual listeners will feel directly targeted. In this sense, politeness is designed not only for the interpersonal demands of the immediate exchange but also for its potential uptake by a wider listening public. This observation is consistent with research showing that digital discourse involves complex participation frameworks and audience design (Herring, 2013; Dynel, 2021, 2023).

From a cyberpragmatic perspective (Yus, 2011), the interpretation of these utterances is also shaped by the communicative conditions of digitally mediated discourse. The analyzed interaction is publicly accessible, replayable, and potentially interpretable by listeners with different social backgrounds and experiences. Cyberpragmatics is therefore relevant not because every utterance explicitly refers to digital communication, but because the podcast medium broadens the inferential context within which utterances may be interpreted and recontextualized. Speakers must manage not only the immediate interpersonal relationship but also the possible uptake of their advice by an unseen and heterogeneous audience. This communicative condition helps account for the usefulness of generalized, narrativized, and indirectly evaluative forms of criticism in the podcast environment.

The findings consequently extend conventional understandings of speaker-hearer relations in politeness research. In the analyzed podcast, the pragmatic target of an utterance cannot always be reduced to the person participating in the immediate conversation. Advice may be formally addressed to the co-present interlocutor while pragmatically designed to reach listeners who recognize their own experiences in the example. It is line with Oyadiji (2020) who argues that politeness therefore operates across multiple participation roles: the immediate interlocutor, the person represented in a narrative or quotation, and the wider listening audience. This layered participation framework suggests that the interpretation of politeness in digitally mediated spoken genres requires attention not only to who is directly addressed but also to who may be indirectly implicated as an intended or ratified audience.

These findings also have implications for applied pragmatics. The excerpts illustrate how criticism, advice, stance, indirectness, and relational meaning are realized through naturally occurring interaction rather than through isolated linguistic forms. Previous research in L2 pragmatics has demonstrated that pragmatic comprehension depends not only on grammatical knowledge but also on contextual inference and sociopragmatic awareness (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Taguchi, 2007, 2008, 2011; Tai & Chen, 2021). Although the present study is not classroom-based, its findings suggest that podcast discourse has the potential to serve as authentic material for exploring how speakers negotiate face, interpersonal relationships, and implied evaluation in digitally mediated communication. This pedagogical implication should, however, be understood as a potential application of the findings rather than as an outcome directly tested in the present study.

The study contributes to politeness research in three ways. First, it demonstrates that face management in the analyzed podcast is achieved through interactional and relational strategies rather than through courtesy markers alone. Second, it shows that politeness may involve both face-threat mitigation and what this study identifies as face restoration, particularly when speakers reproduce and subsequently reframe problematic discourse. Third, it demonstrates that podcast politeness is shaped by dual audience orientation, requiring speakers to negotiate relationships with both co-present interlocutors and unseen digital audiences. Taken together, these contributions position Indonesian motivational podcast discourse as a productive site for examining how politeness, relational work, moral evaluation, and audience design intersect under conditions of digitally mediated public interaction.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how politeness is interactionally accomplished in five selected excerpts from Episode 86 of the Indonesian motivational podcast *Suara Berkelas*, with

particular attention to face-sensitive financial advice and digitally mediated audience orientation. The findings identified several recurrent strategies, including third-party narratives, anticipatory mitigation, generalized dramatization, reported speech, moral reframing, choice framing, and calibrated confrontation. These strategies enabled speakers to deliver criticism, advice, and moral evaluation while managing face threats, maintaining relational alignment, and preserving speaker authority.

The findings further demonstrated that politeness in the analyzed excerpts involves more than the mitigation of face-threatening acts. In particular, the analysis identified what this study describes as face restoration, whereby problematic discourse is reproduced, evaluated, and subsequently reframed in ways that re-legitimate the perspective of the affected person. In addition, the podcast setting creates a dual audience orientation in which speakers simultaneously manage interaction with a co-present interlocutor and design their discourse for a wider, unseen digital audience. Taken together, these findings demonstrate the value of integrating face-based politeness theory, relational approaches, and cyberpragmatics to account for how politeness is negotiated in digitally mediated spoken discourse.

As a qualitative single-case study based on five purposively selected excerpts from one podcast episode, the findings are analytically rather than statistically generalizable. Future research could examine larger datasets across different podcast genres, speakers, topics, and digital platforms to determine whether similar patterns of face management, relational work, face restoration, and audience orientation occur in other contexts. Comparative research may also explore how cultural expectations and platform characteristics influence the pragmatic realization of advice, criticism, and politeness in digitally mediated spoken interaction. Such research could further clarify how politeness practices adapt to the increasingly complex participation structures and audience configurations of contemporary digital communication.

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INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

This study did not involve the recruitment of human participants or the collection of private or personally elicited data. The analysis was based exclusively on a publicly available podcast episode produced and disseminated for public consumption. The speakers were therefore treated as publicly identifiable media speakers rather than as research participants recruited for the study. Accordingly, informed consent was not obtained directly from the speakers for the purposes of this research.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data analyzed in this study were derived from a publicly available episode of the Indonesian motivational podcast *Suara Berkelas*. The study analyzed selected excerpts from the publicly accessible media content; no private participant data were collected or generated. The relevant excerpts and contextual information necessary to support the analysis are presented in the article. Further information regarding the analyzed data may be made available by the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to applicable ethical and copyright considerations.

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