

Politeness Strategy on Sympathy Expression in Domestic Violence Cases in Tiktok: A Sociopragmatic Study

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Abstract

Recently, Tiktok has been widely used by netizens to express sympathy to each other, especially on unpleasant event. This research is based on how people interact in Tiktok regarding domestic abuse happenstance. This study aims to describe the politeness strategies used to express sympathy speech in the video of a domestic violence case on TikTok and the social factors influencing politeness strategies. This type of research is descriptive qualitative. The data source comes from a Tiktok video with the account name @ilham. art59, containing news videos related to domestic violence experienced by a woman named S (initials) located in Makassar. There were 30 data samples of expressions of sympathy taken from screenshots in the Tiktok video comment section. This study uses the theoretical approach of Brown & Levinson's politeness strategy and sociopragmatic theory. The results show that the expression of sympathy in the video of domestic violence cases on Tiktok uses two politeness strategies: positive politeness and off-record. There are 6 forms of positive politeness strategies: sharing life experiences, encouraging, giving prayers, expressing sorrow, advising, and appreciating. People tend to use positive politeness strategies more than off-record strategies in expressing sympathy for victims of domestic violence. Three social factors influence politeness strategies: the situation and context of the event that triggers sympathy, the close relationship between netizens and victims of domestic violence, and collective community interaction. The research provides insights into social interactions on social media, particularly in expressing sympathy, and contributes to sociopragmatics studies.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's digital world, social media, especially TikTok, is a popular platform where people share experiences and opinions, and even shop online. The ease of access and simple features allow TikTok to be used by all groups of people in Indonesia. People can easily access information, disseminate it, and provide responses so that spontaneous and fast-paced interactions occur. Many users share personal stories or their life stories, like the account @ilham.art59, which posted a video about a woman named S (initial) who suffered domestic violence. The video shows S with a bruised face, interacting with her upset father and older brother. In the video, S tries to calm down her father and older brother, who look filled with anger and tears. Woman S is trying to be strong with her poor condition after being beaten by her husband. The unpleasant incident attracted the public's attention, so the video went viral and got many comments. The video related to the domestic violence case made netizens sympathize with S and her family.

According to Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, the word sympathize means to feel the feelings of others. Sympathetic feelings are a natural reaction that a person feels when he sees something that can touch his sensitivity so that he can understand or feel the feelings experienced by others. Sympathetic feelings can arise in various social contexts or situations. In this case, people's sympathetic feelings arise when they see unpleasant events, the domestic violence cases experienced by victim S. In this situation, language plays an important role in expressing this sympathetic feeling. Sympathetic feelings are expressed by uttering utterances that contain expressions of sympathy and support for victims of domestic violence. The expression of sympathy spoken in direct interaction will also differ from that spoken through social media. Therefore, this study focuses on examining the variation of sympathy expressions in video uploads of domestic violence cases that befell victim S. This study also discusses the politeness strategies used by people in expressing sympathy

on TikTok in the context of domestic violence case. In addition, this study seeks to describe the social factors that influence the politeness strategies used by the community in expressing expressions of sympathy.

This study uses Brown & Levinson's (1987) theoretical approach related to politeness strategy theory. Brown & Levinson (1987), classify two types of face, positive face and negative face. Positive face refers to a person's desire to be appreciated, liked, and accepted by others. Speech that supports a positive face strengthens social relationships and shows solidarity or similarity. On the other hand, negative face refers to one's desire to be free from pressure or interference and to maintain personal autonomy. Speech that supports a negative face tends to avoid imposing its will or annoying others. In a communication interaction, there are intrinsically face-threatening actions. According to Brown & Levinson (1987), these 'face-threatening acts' are called Face-Threatening Acts or FTA. Brown and Levinson proposed four politeness strategies to avoid FTA in an interaction, namely bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record (indirect).

The first strategy is bald on-record, which is the delivery of messages with direct and clear speech without any attempt to reduce the potential threat to the interlocutor's 'face'. Second, a positive politeness strategy is a strategy to strengthen the positive face of the interlocutor, like showing interest, agreement, or similarity. Third, negative politeness is a strategy that aims to respect the negative face of the interlocutor, like giving choices, using indirect expressions, or apologizing. Fourth, Off-Record (indirect) is the delivery of messages with indirect speech that provides an open interpretation so that the interlocutor can understand the intention and provide space for the listener to reject without losing 'face.'

Then, to understand the social factors that affect how netizen express sympathy, this study uses the theory of sociopragmatics. According to Leech (1983), sociopragmatics refers to the social and cultural norms that shape

and guide language choices in everyday interactions. Rahardi (2009) that the fundamental difference between pragmatics and sociopragmatics is that general pragmatic studies are based solely on the context of the situation, while sociopragmatic studies are based on the social context combined with the situational context.

Research related to the use of politeness strategies in various fields has been conducted by several previous researchers, including Habiburrahman & Arahman (2018), Badelah et al., (2019), Aini et al., (2020), Asmara & Kusumaningrum (2020), Kembaren & Sanubarianto (2021), Budiarti, (2022), Joys et al., (2022), Nurhawara et al., (2022), Susana et al., (2022), Insani (2023), Suarni et al., (2023), dan (Dhana Bhrata et al., 2024). These studies found variations in the use of politeness strategies in various fields, such as on television shows, in speech videos, Instagram captions, YouTube videos, in gender-based buying and selling, in the realm of learning in schools, and even violations related to politeness strategies. These studies show that politeness strategies vary greatly and provide an overview of the forms of politeness strategies used by the community in various fields.

Furthermore, several previous researchers have also carried out research related to expressions of sympathy. Research related to expressions of condolence has been conducted by Peneva (2020), then, Narmurodova (2021) examines empathy as an emotion and mood in Lingvo Culture English, Lubis et al., (2022) examines the empathy gap in social media comments on victims of sexual harassment. In addition, research on expressions of sympathy in English and Ukrainian has been conducted by Lychuk et al., (2023). Furthermore, House et al., (2024) also examined the contrastive viewpoint of sympathy expressions in the case of Chinese-English residents. However, little research has been conducted on sympathy expressions on social media in Indonesia. This research is here to fill the space in research related to politeness strategies, especially in expressions of sympathy in videos of domestic violence cases on TikTok.

METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive qualitative research. This research method uses data obtained through several stages and described descriptively. This research uses qualitative methods to explore and understand the data deeply. There are three stages of research: data collection, data analysis, and presentation of results. The data source from the Tiktok user, who has the account name @ilham.art59, contains a new video related to domestic violence experienced by a woman named S (initials) located in Makassar. The video was uploaded on 11 July 2024. The content of the video is news of domestic violence experienced by victim S in the compilation of videos and photos of the victim's face and the touching atmosphere when meeting with her family. This research's selection of data sources was based on the video's virality. As of November 2024, the video had been watched by more than ten million viewers, liked by more than five hundred thousand people, and garnered around four thousand comments.

The data collection was carried out using the simak bebas libat cakap method. According to Sudaryanto (1993), the free listening method is a data collection technique that involves listening to language use without participating in the conversation. The first step was to observe TikTok news videos on domestic violence cases and then analyze community comments or reactions to related videos. Then, researchers took data samples that represented various variations of sympathy expressions. Data was collected by taking screenshots of the comment's column on the Tiktok account @ilham.art59. A total of 30 screenshot data samples were collected, showcasing community expressions of sympathy. These samples were classified by the form of sympathy expressed and analyzed using politeness strategy theory and sociopragmatic theory. The findings are presented as a descriptive narrative.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data classification, 30 data represented various variants of sympathy expressions. It is found that all data on sympathy expressions belong to the type of positive face. A positive face maintains one's 'face' or honor in social interaction. In this case, a positive face is used to express sympathy and provide moral support to victims of domestic violence. According to Brown & Levinson (1987), four politeness strategies can be used to fulfill positive face needs. In this research, people who commented tried to fulfill positive face to victims of domestic violence by emphasizing similar feelings, acknowledging or validating the victim's feelings, giving appreciation, and providing solidarity support.

A. Politeness Strategies In Expressions Of Sympathy In Domestic Violence Video

Based on the analysis, there are two politeness strategies used in expressing sympathy: the positive politeness strategy and the off-record strategy. In this research, 27 data were found that showed the use of positive politeness strategies and 3 data using indirect strategies. People tend to use positive politeness strategies to express sympathy for victims of domestic violence. The variations of sympathy expression forms are described as follows.

1. Positive Politeness

It was found that 27 out of 30 data of sympathy expressions contained positive politeness strategies. Based on these data, various sympathy expressions contain positive politeness strategies, such as sharing life experiences, encouraging or motivating, giving prayers, expressions of condolence, advising, and appreciating. These forms are described as follows.

1.1 Sharing Life Experience

There are 3 data of sympathy expressions that share life experiences. The following are examples of the data.

Context of speech: The TikTok video contains uploads of domestic violence cases experienced by Victim S.

Sympathy speech in the comments:

- (1) "Yang pernah kdrt tapi masih tetap bertahan demi anak ikutan sakit hati ya Allah [emoji menangis]"
- (2) "Ya Allah ingat waktu pernikahan aku yang pertama abis babak belur seperti kak korban S. Nangis seketika melihat dia, jadi merasa aku kembali ke masa lalu."
- (3) "Sabar dek korban S dulu aku pernah jadi korban kdrt. insyaAllah suatu hari tuhan akan mengembalikan kebahagiaanmu... semangat untuk kedepan hidupmu dek"

The data above shows the experiences of those who have suffered domestic violence. In this case, sharing the same life experience aims to show sympathy explicitly because the expression and the feeling of sadness or pain are spoken. This can be seen in data (1) and (2), as found in the underlined utterances (1) "*Yang pernah kdrt tapi masih tetap bertahan demi anak ikutan sakit hati ya Allah [emoji menangis]*" and (2) "*Ya Allah ingat waktu pernikahan aku yang pertama abis babak belur seperti kak korban S. Nangis seketika melihat dia, jadi merasa aku kembali ke masa lalu.*". The utterance *ikutan sakit hati ya Allah* and *nangis seketika melihat dia* showed the pain also felt by the netizen. Netizens have similar feelings towards the victim because they have experienced being a victim of domestic violence and facing this challenging position. The expression aims to increase a sense of concern for others by sharing the pain and not letting victims of domestic violence face their pain alone. The speaker hopes Victim S can feel understanding and support from her surroundings as a victim of domestic violence, so she does not feel alone. Expression of sympathy through data (3) indicates the speaker's own experience with domestic violence, followed by prayers for the victim. It conveys solidarity and moral support for those affected by domestic violence.

1.2 Provide Support or Motivation

The next form of expression of sympathy is providing support or motivation, which was found in 4 data. In difficult conditions, people generally provide moral support to each other by

encouraging or motivating. In this case, utterance that motivating can express sympathy for domestic violence victims. The following are examples of expressions of sympathy in the form of motivation.

Context of speech: The TikTok video contains uploads of domestic violence cases experienced by Victim S.

Sympathy speech in the comments:

- (4) "Btw semangat ya mbak jangan pernah menyerah sama dunia, ini sebagai ujian dan untuk kita sebagai pelajaran cari suami yang pintar agamanya"
- (5) "Masha Allah Korban S yang tegar ya ka, masih ada 2 laki-laki hebat yang menyayangimu [emoji sedih]"
- (6) "Lihat semua videonya, langsung menetes deras air mataku apalagi mbak yang menjadi korban KDRT. yang kuat ya mbak cantik"

Data (4) show that in Indonesia, motivation can be expressed directly by saying *semangat* itself. The utterance "*Btw semangat ya mbak jangan pernah menyerah sama dunia, ini sebagai ujian dan untuk kita sebagai pelajaran cari suami yang pintar agamanya*" is included in the expression of sympathy in the form of motivating followed by advice. The utterance *jangan pernah menyerah sama dunia* is also form of motivation.

Furthermore, in data (5) the motivating speech is spoken with the sentence *Masha Allah Korban S yang tegar ya ka* and continued by motivating that there are still two men (father and brother) who love her. In data (6), the motivating speech begins with an expression of sympathy and then encourages with the utterance *yang kuat ya mbak cantik*. It shows that motivation can be combined with words of advice. Expressing sympathy in the form of support or motivation aims to provide moral support and positive emotional support. In addition to this, it can provide a sense of optimism in facing the trials of life that victims of domestic violence are experiencing.

1.3 Giving Prayers and Hopes

5 data were found in the form of giving prayers or hopes. In Indonesian culture, people often pray for each other during both good and bad times. In news of domestic violence cases, expressions of sympathy in the form of prayers or hopes are often spoken, such as the data below.

Context of speech: The TikTok video contains uploads of domestic violence cases experienced by Victim S.

Sympathy speech in the comments:

- (7) "InsyaAllah di balik musibah ini, dek korban S akan diangkat derajatnya oleh Allah SWT. Amiin"
- (8) "Semoga cepet sembuh seperti semula"
- (9) "Ya Allah mbak, semoga Allah ganti jodoh yang lebih baik ya mbak, peluk jauh."

Based on the comments on data (7), the expression of sympathy in the form of prayer is spoken using identical expressions used in Islam by mentioning the words *insyaAllah* dan *amiinn*. In that speech, it is intended to pray for victims of domestic violence who are experiencing a disaster to be elevated by God Almighty. The data (8) contains utterances that pray for immediate recovery as before. The word *semoga* is synonymous with being used to give prayers or hope, likewise in data (9), which uses the word *semoga* to give prayers. Prayer can provide positive affirmation to the victims. It helps them feel renewed and encourages them to believe in a better future after their struggles. In Indonesian society, prayer and hope are common ways of communicating.

1.4 Expressions of Condolences

The expressions of condolence contain the netizens sadness and pity towards the victims of domestic violence. 9 data were found in the form of expressions of condolences. The example datas described as below.

Context of speech: The TikTok video contains uploads of domestic violence cases experienced by Victim S.

Sympathy speech in the comments:

- (10) "Sedih banget liat videonya"

- (11) “Jangankan orangtuanya, aku sebagai orang lain aja sakit liatnya [emoji menangis]”
- (12) “Ikut sedih aku juga punya adek perempuan”
- (13) “Aku liat pun air mataku taterasa menetes merasakan apa yang ia rasakan, rasa sakit dan sesak dada membuat seolah tak bisa bernapas lagi, yang sabar saudaraku”

Data (10) to data (13) are expressions of sympathy that directly state that they share the condolences and pain felt by Victim S. This is indicated by the statement *sedih banget liat videonya, sakit liatnya, ikut sedih, aku liat pun air mataku taterasa menetes merasakan apa yang ia rasakan*. The public directly expressed their concern in the comments column as a form of spontaneous emotional reaction after seeing the video of the domestic violence case. Expressions of sympathy in this form aim to show solidarity with victim of domestic violence. These compassionate reactions validate the pain and suffering of victims, hoping to ease their emotional burden.

1.5 Providing Advice

The next form of expressing sympathy is providing advice with total of 4 data. This form of advice is often expressed together with other forms of expression of sympathy. The following is an example of data expressing sympathy through advice.

Context of speech: The TikTok video contains uploads of domestic violence cases experienced by Victim S.

Sympathy speech in the comments:

- (14) “Ya tuhan kasihan kali liat putri bapak tu sampai matanya lebam [emoji sedih], semarah apapun kita para lelaki jangan lah kita kdrt kepada istri [emoji sedih]”
- (15) “Ya Allah sedihnya [emoji menangis] lelaki sepatutnya melindungi wanita bukan memukul dia. Semoga ada keadilan untukmu.”
- (16) “Padahal mah kalo kita udah gak sanggup untuk menapkhahi lahir batin nya, daripada di

kdrt lebih baik pulangkan sajah sama kedua orang tuanya.”

Data (14), (15), and (16) contain expressions of sympathy in the form of advice that tend to provide advice to men, who in the context of this study are perpetrators of domestic violence. Men are considered inappropriate to commit physical violence against wives or women. The form of advice can be seen in the underlined data. Expressions of sympathy in the form of advice aim to be a form of concern for each other. In addition to this, speech advice can provide alternative solutions that are not coercive. Often, people who are experiencing a disaster cannot think clearly. Therefore, advice can provide an alternative way out for those experiencing problems.

1.6 Giving Appreciation

In this study, there were not many expressions of sympathy in the form of appreciation. There is data on expressions of sympathy in the form of appreciation that were spoken without additional forms of speech.

Context of speech: The TikTok video contains uploads of domestic violence cases experienced by Victim S.

Sympathy speech in the comments:

- (17) “[emoji menangis] Kamu wanita yang kuat”

The form of appreciation in data (17) is told directly by praising Victim S as a victim of domestic violence and considered a strong woman. The form of appreciation aims to praise or appreciate the victim of domestic violence's patience in facing the trials of life. It also aims to provide positive affirmation and rebuild the victim's spirit of life.

1. Off-Record Strategies

In this research, only 3 out of 30 data of sympathy expressions were found that used indirect politeness strategies. In this case, the speaker gave comments with vague speech or did not indicate the purpose directly. The following is

data of sympathy expressions using indirect strategies.

Context of speech: The TikTok video contains uploads of domestic violence cases experienced by Victim S.

Sympathy speech in the comments:

(18) "Dan aku pernah di posisinya dulu dan hingga sekarang sakit itu masih membekas di ingatanku"

(19) "Udah ga kebayang gimana sakitnya"

(20) "yaAllahhhh [emoji menangis]"

In data (18), the comment contains netizen's stories who have experienced domestic violence as experienced by Victim S. However, the netizen does not provide other speech that supports the expression of her stories. This can be interpreted as the netizen speaking indirectly or implicitly expressing her sympathy so that the interlocutor can understand the meaning of the expression of sympathy without any direct threat to the interlocutor's face. Likewise, in data (19), the speaker indirectly shares her concern for the pain suffered by Victim S due to the domestic violence she experienced. Meanwhile, data (20) only contains the word yaAllah or in Islam is the mention of God. In the context of the domestic violence incident, the interlocutor indirectly feels that she has received an expression of sympathy from the interlocutor.

The purpose of using indirect strategies is to protect victims of domestic violence from criticism and to maintain the face of her. Expressions of sympathy are expressed with caution. This also increases the interlocutor's involvement without any coercion. This strategy is suitable for expressing sympathy without offending the interlocutor and avoiding conflict in communication. In the context of communication in this study, indirect strategies are used to maintain a close relationship between the victim and the commentator, who do not know each other.

A. Social Factors That Influence The Use Of Politeness Strategies

Expressions of sympathy are included in expressive speech acts that influenced by the individual's intention to express their feelings and the following social context. Therefore, one's choice of language in expressing sympathy is considered important in communicating in society. That is in line with Leech's opinion (1983), which emphasizes the importance of politeness in maintaining social harmony through language in social interactions. According to Holmes (2001), variations in a person's use of language are influenced by various social factors. The factors below can determine the form and function of the speech used to express sympathy. Expressions of sympathy spoken through comments on TikTok have specific characteristics that differ from expressions of sympathy in direct communication or other platforms. TikTok offers an interaction experience using short videos with fast and dense interactions. Therefore, TikTok's language variation in expressing sympathy for domestic violence cases is influenced by the social factors below.

1.1 Situation and Social Context

The context or situation influences individual language choice in social media communication. In this research, the context of the video data is an informal situation. The video tells stories that can touch the heart and spark sympathy. Domestic violence can be considered an event that violates the limits of human norms. Therefore, expressions of sympathy spoken by the community tend to maintain the face of victims of domestic violence and are informally spoken with care. People try not to put down or humiliate victims of domestic violence so that expressions of sympathy can be received openly by victims of domestic violence and by other TikTok users who read them.

1. Relationship between Netizen and Victim of Domestic Violence

Language users will adjust to the speech partners they interact with. In this research, the interacting speech partners are the video owner, the person in the video upload, and the

community. In this case, netizens who comment on the TikTok video upload feel emotionally close to the victim of domestic violence. Therefore, netizens use informal and casual language to express comments that contain sympathy. The close relationship between netizens and victim of domestic violence can be seen in terms of the greetings *aku*, *kamu*, *Korban S*, *dek Korban S*, *mbak cantik*, dan *mbak*. These words are greetings used in the informal realm and show the closeness between speakers and speech partners. Based on the research, it was found that more expressions of sympathy were spoken in a positive face compared to those using the off-record strategy. This also supports the existence of a close relationship between netizens and victims of domestic violence and other netizens. Sympathy will bring closeness to one another.

2. Collective Community Interaction

TikTok, which has a fast and dense interaction base, can quickly respond to an event or videos with a massive interaction capacity. Fast-paced and massive interactions can also affect the variety of expressions of sympathy the community speaks. One video upload can trigger a uniform reaction from many TikTok users. The same is the case with the video data taken in this study. The video has been commented on by approximately four thousand netizens with varied comments, but still in a uniform context, namely expressing sympathy for victims of domestic violence.

These interactions can trigger other users to support and reinforce each other's expressions. For example, when one netizen comments an expression of sympathy for the victim, it can trigger others to express sympathy, even with deeper expressions of sympathy. The many expressions of sympathy written by netizens in the comment column form a collective response, and this is the beginning of the formation of group solidarity in response to the video. The massive flow of comments makes the commenting community also provide support to victims of domestic violence. It can be said that the video's virality also depends on the community's

collective response in providing comments. In this case, expressing sympathy becomes a positive thing to follow and leads to a positive collective response. The collective response aligns with the variety of sympathy expressions that use more positive politeness strategies. Positive politeness is considered the most acceptable communication strategy to express sympathy. This strategy encourages a close relationship between netizens and victims of domestic violence without any imposing and intimidating expressions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, two politeness strategies are used to express sympathy in TikTok videos with domestic violence cases: positive politeness and off-record (indirect speech). There are 6 forms of positive politeness: sharing life experiences, encouraging, giving prayers, expressing sorrow, advising, and appreciating. Furthermore, the off-record strategy has a uniform form. This indirect expression must be followed by the context of events that occur in social interaction to change its meaning according to the context of the events that follow it. People tend to use positive politeness strategies more than using off-record strategies in expressing sympathy for victims of domestic violence. In addition, people support positive faces to provide moral support and solidarity with victims of domestic violence. Then, 3 social factors influence the use of politeness strategies; first, the context of the event triggers feelings of public sympathy; in this case, the domestic violence case is a criminal act, so it arouses a sense of sympathy from the community towards victims of domestic violence. The second social factor is the close relationship between netizens and victims of domestic violence; in this case, the use of informal and casual language is used to show closeness of each other. The third social factor is the influence of massive community interaction using positive politeness strategies that lead to uniform sympathy expression responses. This research provides insight into the use of sympathy expressions in Indonesian in the

realm of social media, especially TikTok, in the context of domestic violence cases and adds to the repertoire of research in sociopragmatics.

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