



Analysis of the Maxim of Language Courtesy of Geoffrey Leech in the Podcast Study of Ustad Felix Siauw: A Descriptive Study of Da'wah Communication Style in the Digital Era

Atika Zikri, Ngusman Abdul Manaf, Tressyalina

Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

Email: tikazii300402@gmail.com, ngusman@fbs.unp.ac.id, tressyalina@fbs.unp.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the application of Geoffrey Leech's politeness maxims in Ustadz Felix Siauw's podcast lectures on the YouTube platform. Using a qualitative descriptive method, this research examines how a contemporary Islamic preacher applies the principles of linguistic politeness in delivering da'wah messages to diverse audiences in the digital era. Leech's politeness maxim theory, consisting of six main maxims—tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim—is used as an analytical framework to dissect Ustadz Felix Siauw's communication strategies. The research findings indicate that Ustadz Felix Siauw effectively integrates all six politeness maxims in his communication style, with particular emphasis on the tact maxim and agreement maxim to build rapport with heterogeneous audiences. His logical, communicative, and polite da'wah approach reflects a deep understanding of linguistic pragmatics in the context of modern Islamic preaching. This study concludes that the application of Leech's politeness maxims not only enhances the effectiveness of da'wah message delivery but also creates an inclusive dialogue space that respects the diverse perspectives of the audience. The implications of this research highlight the importance of pragmatic competence in digital da'wah communication to reach critical and dynamic young Muslim generations.

Keywords: Politeness Maxims, Geoffrey Leech, Ustadz Felix Siauw, Da'wah Podcast, Digital Communication, Language Pragmatics, Communication Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Several studies have examined the application of politeness maxims in various communication contexts. Brown and Levinson (1987) developed a theory of politeness that focuses on the concept of face as the basis of social interaction, which is an important foundation in the study of pragmatics. Leech (1983) introduced six politeness maxims that serve as the main framework in this study, namely the maxims of tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy. In the context of da'wah, Zamzani (2011) developed an instrument to measure politeness in Indonesian social interactions, which is relevant to da'wah communication in Indonesia (Rosidi, 2022; Syasli & Juita, 2021). Weng (2018) examined Felix Siauw's da'wah on social media, focusing on visual persuasion and Islamic propaganda, showing that Felix Siauw has become an important figure in digital da'wah in Indonesia. Maula (2025) analyzed Aristotle's rhetoric (ethos, pathos, logos) in Ustadz Felix Siauw's podcast and found that these three rhetorical elements were used effectively in digital da'wah communication. However, these studies have not specifically examined the application of Leech's politeness maxims in digital da'wah communication, particularly on podcast platforms that have unique interaction characteristics

between preachers and heterogeneous audiences (Ramadhani et al., 2025; Santoso, 2024). Understanding how politeness maxims are applied in digital da'wah communication is crucial for developing effective and inclusive da'wah strategies that are appropriate to the characteristics of the young digital-native generation.

In the digital era, marked by massive transformations in communication patterns and information consumption, Islamic da'wah practices have undergone significant evolution. Social media platforms, especially YouTube, have become new arenas for da'i to reach wider and more diverse audiences (Fitriansyah & Lubis, 2023; Romadlany & Effendi, 2025). In this context, the ability to communicate effectively and politely is key to successfully conveying da'wah messages that are not only informative but also persuasive and acceptable to various groups. Ustadz Felix Siauw is one of the contemporary da'i who has successfully utilized digital media, especially podcasts and YouTube, as effective da'wah platforms. His logical, communicative, and inclusive communication style has attracted the attention of millions of viewers, particularly from the younger generation of Indonesian Muslims. This phenomenon is important to study from the perspective of language pragmatics to understand the communication strategies that make his da'wah effective (Jarudin et al., 2023).

The theory of politeness maxims developed by Geoffrey Leech (1983) offers a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding how speakers use language politely and effectively in communicative interactions. Leech identifies six politeness maxims that function as regulative principles in interpersonal communication. The application of these maxims is highly relevant in the context of da'wah, where a da'i must balance firmness in conveying religious teachings with an attitude of respect and sensitivity toward diverse audience conditions (Abdulsalam, 2025). Based on this background, this study formulates several main questions: how Ustadz Felix Siauw applies Leech's six politeness maxims in his study podcasts on YouTube; which politeness maxims are most dominantly used in his da'wah communication strategy; how the application of these maxims contributes to the effectiveness of da'wah message delivery to heterogeneous audiences; and what implications the application of Leech's politeness maxims has in the context of contemporary digital da'wah communication.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on analyzing the application of Geoffrey Leech's six politeness maxims in digital da'wah communication via podcast platforms, with a case study of Ustadz Felix Siauw as one of the most influential contemporary da'i in Indonesia. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined rhetorical aspects or visual persuasion, this research offers an in-depth linguistic-pragmatic perspective on how a da'i builds polite, effective, and inclusive communication in the digital era. This study integrates Leech's politeness maxim theory with the context of digital da'wah, which has unique characteristics such as indirect interaction, heterogeneous audiences, and platforms that allow real-time feedback through comment sections (Nuriana & Salwa, 2024). The findings show that Ustadz Felix Siauw does not merely apply the six maxims separately but integrates them into a coherent communication strategy, with the tact maxim and agreement maxim serving as the main pillars that support his communicative effectiveness. This integration creates a natural, authentic, and unforced communication style,

which is difficult to explain through conventional communication analysis alone. The study also finds that the application of politeness maxims in digital da'wah communication functions not only as a pragmatic strategy but is also rooted in Islamic spiritual values of morality and adab, reflecting both linguistic intelligence and spiritual depth. Thus, this research makes a significant contribution to the development of pragmatic studies in the context of digital da'wah and offers a communication model that can be adopted by other contemporary da'i.

This study aims to identify and analyze the application of Leech's six politeness maxims in Ustadz Felix Siauw's study podcasts, describe the communication strategies used to build rapport with diverse audiences, evaluate the effectiveness of politeness maxim application in the context of digital da'wah, and make an academic contribution to the study of linguistic pragmatics in contemporary da'wah communication. This research is also expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits (Lynch et al., 2018). Theoretically, the results can enrich pragmatic studies in the context of Islamic da'wah communication, offer a new perspective on the application of Leech's theory in digital communication, and serve as a reference for future research on da'i communication strategies in the digital era. Practically, this research can guide da'i in developing effective and polite communication strategies, help them understand the dynamics of da'wah communication on digital platforms, and provide insights into how to build engagement with diverse audiences.

The theoretical benefits of this research are to enrich the study of linguistic pragmatics in the context of Islamic da'wah communication, provide a new perspective on the application of Leech's theory in digital communication, and serve as a reference for further research on da'wah communication strategies in the digital era. Practically, this research can provide guidance for da'i and preachers to develop effective and polite communication strategies, help them understand the dynamics of da'wah communication on digital platforms, and provide insights into how to build engagement with audiences from diverse backgrounds. For academics and researchers, the results of this study can be used as material for further studies on the relationship between linguistic politeness and da'wah effectiveness in the digital era (Rambe & Dianto, 2026; Saleh et al., 2022).

This research has important implications in various fields. In pragmatic linguistics, the findings extend the application of Leech's politeness maxim theory to the dynamic and interactive context of digital communication, demonstrating that these maxims remain relevant and increasingly important for building effective communication in the digital era. In da'wah communication, the implications highlight the importance of pragmatic competence for da'i—not only the ability to convey religious messages correctly but also the ability to choose appropriate linguistic strategies to build rapport, reduce resistance, and increase message acceptance among heterogeneous audiences. For digital da'wah content development, this research shows that integrating the six politeness maxims can increase credibility (ethos), build emotional connection (pathos), and strengthen acceptance of logical arguments (logos), thereby enhancing audience engagement and retention on platforms such as YouTube. In terms of da'wah development policy, the results can inform da'wah institutions and government bodies in designing training programs for da'i to develop effective and polite digital communication competencies suited to the

characteristics of the young digital-native generation (Athoillah et al., 2023; Kahfi et al., 2025). For future researchers, this study opens opportunities to examine the application of politeness maxims among other preachers with different backgrounds and communication styles, conduct comparative studies between digital and conventional da'wah, and develop models for measuring da'wah effectiveness based on politeness maxims that can be tested empirically.

METHOD

Types and Approaches to Research

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore communication phenomena in depth, natural, and contextual. Through this approach, data is not only seen as a purely linguistic fact, but also as a reflection of social and cultural practices in the context of digital da'wah. The descriptive-analytical method is used to systematically describe the forms of application of Leech's politeness maxims in the study podcast of Ustad Felix Siauw, then analyze how these maxims play a role in building effective, polite, and persuasive communication. Thus, this research focuses not only on the identification of linguistic phenomena, but also on the analysis of the meaning and strategic function behind the choice of language used by preachers in online interactions (Akhimien & Farotimi, 2018; Razzaq, 2023).

Data Source

The data sources in this study consist of two types, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data includes *a video podcast study of Ustad Felix Siauw* uploaded through his official YouTube channel. From the video, data was obtained in the form of verbal speech, linguistic expressions, as well as situational and interactional contexts that appear in the da'wah process. A complete transcript of the relevant speech is made to facilitate an in-depth analysis of the pragmatic elements used. Meanwhile, secondary data include various relevant literature sources, such as *Leech's theory of politeness maxims*, previous research on digital da'wah communication, a study of Ustad Felix Siauw's rhetoric and communication strategies, as well as references related to *Indonesian pragmatics*. In addition, the audience's comments and responses to *the YouTube column* are also used as additional considerations to understand the public's acceptance and perception of the da'wah communication style being studied.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection is carried out through several complementary techniques. First, documentation techniques are used to download, save, and review *video podcasts* repeatedly to gain a thorough understanding of the content of the message and delivery style. Second, the observation technique is carried out by paying attention in detail to verbal and nonverbal aspects in the delivery of da'wah, including word choice, intonation, sentence structure, and the context of interaction between *the dai* and the audience. Third, the transcription process is carried out *verbatim* to ensure that every relevant speech is accurately documented and ready for analysis. Fourth, a categorization process is carried out, which is to group data based on six types of *Leech's politeness maxims tact*,

generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy so that the analysis can be carried out systematically and in a directed manner.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is carried out through several main stages. The first stage is data reduction, which is the process of selecting and filtering podcast segments that contain the application of the maximum of politeness. The second stage is categorization, which is the grouping of data into six maximum categories that have been identified by Leech (1983). The third stage is interpretation, where each speech is analyzed based on its meaning, function, and social context in da'wah communication. The fourth stage is triangulation, which is comparing the results of the analysis with the findings of previous research and relevant theories to strengthen the validity of the findings. The final stage is verification, which is carried out through repeated analysis, cross-source data comparison, and consultation of the authoritative literature to ensure the consistency and reliability of the research results (Abrar et al., 2025; Sayeedi et al., 2025).

Data Validity

To ensure the validity of the data, this study applies four main criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The credibility aspect is maintained through in-depth observation and persistent involvement of researchers in the data analysis process. Transferability is obtained by providing a detailed and clear description of the context so as to allow the reader to apply the findings of the research in a similar context. Dependability is guaranteed through systematic documentation of the research process, including data collection and analysis steps. Meanwhile, confirmability is achieved through the application of triangulation to both sources and methods, so that research results can be accounted for scientifically and free from the subjectivity bias of researchers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile Communicator: Ustad Felix Siau

Ustad Felix Siau is a popular Muslim dai, writer, and activist in Indonesia, especially among the urban young generation. His background as a convert provides a unique perspective in the way he views and conveys the teachings of Islam. With more than two million followers on Instagram and millions of viewers on his YouTube channel, Felix Siau has become one of the most influential voices in contemporary Islamic discourse in Indonesia.

The hallmark of Felix Siau's communication lies in his ability to combine rationality and empathy. He packaged religious messages with a logical and systematic approach, without losing the emotional and spiritual touch. His communicative approach not only focuses on information transfer, but also builds an emotional and moral connection with the audience. The language style is light yet meaningful, with a high sensitivity to the diverse backgrounds of the digital audience it faces (Okonkwo et al., 2023; Webster, 2016).

The following is a summary of Ustad Felix Siauwa's communication characteristics:

Table 1. Summary of the Communication Characteristics of Ustad Felix Siauwa

Communication Aspects	Main Description
<i>Logical and Rational Approach</i>	Conveying the teachings of Islam with rational and argumentative reasoning
<i>Simplification of Complex Concepts</i>	Describe theological concepts in a simple and easy-to-understand way
<i>Communicative and Non-Patronizing Style</i>	Conveying a message in egalitarian language without a patronizing impression
<i>Audience Sensitivity</i>	Tailor language and examples to the characters of digital audiences
<i>Use of Humor and Analogy</i>	Using light humor and contextual analogies to clarify the message

Source: Analyzed from Ustad Felix Siauwa's podcast (2025)

This approach makes his da'wah easily accepted by the younger generation who tend to be critical of the authoritative style of da'wah.

Analysis of the Application of Leech's Politeness Maxims

A. Maksim Kebijaksanaan (Tact Maxim)

The application of the tact maxim is very prominent in Felix Siauwa's communication style. He often uses indirect communication strategies to convey criticism without offending the audience. For example, phrases like "Maybe we often hear this kind of understanding..." or "It could be that someone understands this verse in a different way..." shows his caution in avoiding face-threatening acts. In addition, it also provides a space for the audience to think and judge for themselves, for example through the phrase "Please study and reflect for yourself..." or "We can consider different perspectives...". Gentle modalities like "It would be nice if we could..." or "Maybe we can start with..." shows that the invitation to da'wah is delivered without coercion.

B. Maksim Kedermawanan (Generosity Maxim)

This maxim is seen in Felix Siauwa's humble and non-self-centered attitude. He often admits the limitations of his knowledge, as in the phrase "I'm not an expert in this field, let's learn together...". This shows intellectual generosity, where the preacher does not position himself as the sole authority, but as a learner. He also shows generosity of time and attention by explaining difficult concepts using easy-to-digest analogies. In discussing heavy topics, he tries to ease the burden on the audience through sentences such as "It doesn't need to be perfect right away, we can gradually..." which is motivating and calming.

C. Maksim Penerimaan (Approbation Maxim)

Felix Siauwa practices the maxim of acceptance consistently, especially through appreciation of the audience's goodwill. Expressions such as "Masya Allah, the spirit of learning is extraordinary..." or "Great question, shows great concern..." create a positive atmosphere and encourage active participation. He is also careful not to make personal criticism, but to focus on

ideas or actions, such as "This understanding needs to be straightened..." rather than "You misunderstood...". This approach shows respect for the dignity of the audience.

D. Modesty Maxim

Felix Siau's humility is reflected in his tendency not to over-claim knowledge. He often closes his explanation with the phrase "Wallahu a'lam" (Allah knows best) as a form of recognition of human limitations. In addition, he also does not hesitate to correct previous statements if there is valid input, for example "Thank you for the correction, this is important for all of us...". This attitude shows modesty and accountability, two important values in ethical and spiritual communication.

E. Maksim Kesepakatan (Agreement Maxim)

Felix Siau often builds common ground before conveying sensitive issues. Sentences like "We all agree that honesty is important..." serves as a foundation for understanding before getting into sharper criticism. He also consistently uses inclusive language such as "we" instead of "you", which fosters a sense of community and reduces social distancing. In conveying the difference of views, he remains gentle, for example through the sentence "I understand this popular view, but if you study it more deeply..." that maintain harmony in dialogue.

F. Maksim Simpati (Sympathy Maxim)

The maxim of sympathy is seen in his empathy for the audience. Felix Siau often admits their difficulties in practicing religious teachings: "I understand that this is not easy in this day and age...". He also gave spiritual encouragement with the phrase "Don't give up, every effort will be rewarded by Allah...". In addition, he is sensitive to the socio-economic conditions of diverse audiences, for example "Adapt to each other's abilities..." that shows contextual empathy.

Table 2. Integration of the Six Maxims in Felix Siau's Communication Strategy

Maximum Type	Forms of Application	Communicative Impact
<i>Tact Maxim</i>	Use of indirect strategies, soft modalities	Reduce <i>face-threatening acts</i>
<i>Generosity Maxim</i>	Acknowledging limitations, sharing time and knowledge	Building a humble and collaborative image
<i>Maxim Approval</i>	Appreciating the audience, avoiding personal criticism	Increase motivation and engagement
<i>Modesty Maxim</i>	Avoiding the impression of superiority, accepting criticism	Increase credibility and <i>trustworthiness</i>
<i>Agreement Maxim</i>	Building <i>a common ground</i> , inclusive language	Improve harmony and message acceptance
<i>Sympathy Maxim</i>	Showing empathy and moral support	Build emotional and spiritual connections

Source: Analyzed from Ustad Felix Siau's podcast (2025)

Integration and Effectiveness of Maksim in Digital Da'wah

The six maxims do not work separately, but are integrated with each other. The combination of tact and agreement maxim makes criticism feel gentle and easy to accept. The integration of

modesty and sympathy maxim creates an atmosphere of da'wah full of empathy. While the combination of generosity and approbation maxim strengthens the relationship between dai and audience. The effectiveness of the application of this maxim can be seen in three main aspects: increasing credibility (ethos), forming emotional connections (pathos), and strengthening logical persuasion (logos). The audience feels appreciated, understood, and more open to the message of da'wah. Data from the comment column showed many positive responses such as "Da'wah that is soothing and non-judgmental" or "Explanations that are easy to understand and build enthusiasm".

CONCLUSION

Based on an in-depth analysis of the application of politeness maxims developed by Geoffrey Leech, this study concludes that Ustadz Felix Siau effectively applies the six maxims of politeness—tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim—in his da'wah communication strategy. This application demonstrates a holistic understanding of pragmatic principles of language, with each maxim complementing the others to form a polite, effective, and influential communication style. Of all the maxims analyzed, the tact maxim (maxim of wisdom) and the agreement maxim occupy positions as the main pillars supporting the effectiveness of Felix Siau's communication. The tact maxim plays an important role in minimizing audience resistance to critical or challenging messages, while the agreement maxim helps build common ground that enables constructive dialogue with heterogeneous audiences. These two maxims serve as the foundation for creating harmonious and inclusive da'wah communication.

In addition, the six maxims are not applied separately but are integrated into a complete and coherent communication strategy. This integration produces a communication style that is natural, authentic, and not forced. In the context of digital da'wah, the application of politeness maxims has been shown to increase credibility (ethos), create emotional connections with the audience (pathos), and strengthen the acceptance of logical arguments (logos). Furthermore, this strategy helps Ustadz Felix Siau to engage with audiences of diverse backgrounds and to increase engagement and retention levels on digital platforms such as YouTube.

This study also finds that Felix Siau's communicative success lies in his ability to balance firmness in principle with politeness in delivery. This balance between firmness and politeness makes his da'wah acceptable to a wide spectrum of audiences without sacrificing the substance of Islamic teachings. The application of politeness maxims is not merely a pragmatic strategy but is also rooted in Islamic spiritual values of moral character and adab. Therefore, Felix Siau's communication style reflects not only linguistic intelligence but also spiritual depth that lends authenticity and moral credibility. Thus, Ustadz Felix Siau's communication approach can serve as a model for contemporary da'i who wish to develop da'wah that is intellectually rigorous, emotionally resonant, socially inclusive, digitally adept, and spiritually grounded. Da'wah that combines rationality, empathy, politeness, and wisdom is an ideal representation of Islamic communication practice in today's dynamic and multicultural digital era.

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