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Character Education through the Lens of Streaming Media: Exploring the Pragmatic Complexity of Politeness in Series Dialogue

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the complexity of language politeness in the Digital Era 4.0, where streaming platforms—unlike traditional television—offer uncensored content that exposes audiences to a wide range of language use, potentially impacting social norms. The research analyzes the pragmatic elements of politeness in two popular Indonesian streaming series, “Layangan Putus” and Wedding Agreement. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the study identifies types of utterances (constative, performative, illocutionary, perlocutionary), adherence to and violations of Leech’s politeness maxims, and the use of conversational implicature. The novelty of the study lies in its comparative approach to analyzing pragmatic politeness in widely viewed digital narratives. Results show a rich variety of utterance types and reveal both conformity to politeness principles—such as generosity and tact—and frequent violations, including blunt criticism and baseless accusations. Conversational implicature is also commonly used, illustrating a nuanced linguistic environment. These findings highlight the dual role of streaming media in shaping linguistic behavior, particularly for younger viewers. The study recommends that parents and educators play an active role in helping youth critically engage with media content. This includes guiding them to distinguish polite and impolite language, understand respectful social interaction, choose context-appropriate diction, and develop a positive communication character suitable for the digital age.

Keywords: Character Education; Complexity of Politeness; Pragmatic; Streaming Media

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 23 June 2025 | Revised: 1 July 2025 | Accepted: 25 July 2025 | Published Online: 25 September 2025
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i10.10657>

CITATION

Roysa, M., Rokhman, F., Rustono, et al., 2025. Character Education through the Lens of Streaming Media: Exploring the Pragmatic Complexity of Politeness in Series Dialogue. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*. 7(10): 390–400. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i10.10657>

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1. Introduction

Language forms the core of communication, serving as the primary activity for humans from morning until night, enabling the expression of ideas, thoughts, concepts, and messages^[1]. Effective communication, where messages are well-received as utterances, depends on mutual understanding within the conversation. However, the rapid development of the 4.0 era, characterized by the massive and universal access to digital platforms like streaming film services, presents challenges to the adherence to politeness in language^[2,3]. Unlike traditional television that often employs censorship, streaming platforms typically lack direct filtering, potentially exposing audiences, especially younger generations (“*kaum milenial*”), to impolite language used by characters^[4]. Given that film characters frequently serve as role models, the language they use can significantly influence daily interactions and contribute to a decline in adherence to politeness norms such as “*unggah-ungguh*,” ethics, and manners among youth^[5]. This necessitates a thorough linguistic examination of conversational discourse in popular streaming series to prevent misinterpretation and negative impacts on language use^[6].

Language serves as the fundamental core of human communication, enabling the expression of ideas, thoughts, concepts, and messages from dawn till dusk, and is deeply intertwined with the fabric of culture^[7]. Within the Indonesian context, effective communication is traditionally grounded in mutual understanding and adherence to specific norms of linguistic politeness, encompassing concepts such as “*unggah-ungguh*,” ethics, manners, and “*tata krama*”. These principles are considered vital for ensuring pleasant interactions and maintaining harmonious social relationships, reflecting a valued characteristic of the nation^[6]. However, the advent and rapid advancement of the 4.0 era have introduced unprecedented access to digital platforms, most notably streaming film services, creating new challenges to the preservation of these traditional politeness standards in daily language use^[8]. Unlike conventional broadcast television, which often employs censorship, streaming platforms typically offer content without such direct filtering, potentially exposing audiences, particularly the younger generations or “*kaum milenial*,” to language employed by characters that may not adhere to established politeness norms and can be perceived

as coarse or inappropriate.

The widespread accessibility and popularity of streaming media in the 4.0 era mean that the characters depicted within these series frequently become significant role models for viewers^[9]. Consequently, the language patterns and choices exhibited by these on-screen personalities can exert a considerable influence on the daily interactions of the audience, contributing to an observable decline in adherence to the principles of “*unggah-ungguh*,” ethics, and manners among the youth. This pervasive influence, facilitated by the unfiltered nature of digital platforms, risks fostering a negative politeness imbalance where impolite language gains wider acceptance, potentially leading to misinterpretation and conflict in communication^[10]. Thus, the proliferation of technology and streaming content plays a discernible role in the erosion of traditional Indonesian linguistic politeness values as depicted and potentially emulated through the dialogue of popular series^[3].

The study of language use in context, analysing utterances and their relationship with the situation, is the domain of pragmatics. Central to pragmatics is the concept of speech acts, defined as utterances with psychological significance and inherent meaning, and considered a core concept in pragmatics^[6,11,12]. Speech acts are categorized into three types: locutionary acts, which state something as it is; illocutionary acts, which perform an action through speech; and perlocutionary acts, which produce an effect on the listener^[13]. This research focuses particularly on illocutionary acts and the concept of linguistic politeness. Linguistic politeness refers to using language courteously, involving good behaviors, ethics, and manners, adhering to applicable rules and norms in communication to ensure pleasant interactions and avoid causing offense^[14].

A key theoretical framework for analysing linguistic politeness is Leech’s Politeness Principle, which concerns rules related to social, aesthetic, and moral aspects of speech acts^[15,16]. Leech’s framework includes ten maxims: the Generosity Maxim, Tact Maxim, Approbation Maxim, Modesty Maxim, Obligation of S to O Maxim, Obligation of O to S Maxim, Agreement Maxim, Opinion-Reticence Maxim, Sympathy Maxim, and Feeling-Reticence Maxim^[17,18]. These maxims guide speakers in minimizing impoliteness and maximizing politeness towards others within their utterances. Understanding the structure and

application of these maxims provides a robust basis for analysing politeness phenomena in discourse.

Adherence to these principles is demonstrated when utterances align with the guidance provided by the maxims, contributing to smooth and harmonious communication. Conversely, violations of these principles occur when utterances disregard these maxims. Violations can be triggered by various factors, including the speaker intentionally accusing the listener, a lack of sympathy, being protective of opinions, using direct criticism with harsh words, or mocking the interlocutor^[19]. Analysing both the instances of adherence and violation is essential for exploring the complexity of politeness in any given discourse^[20].

This research investigates linguistic politeness as manifested in the discourse of popular streaming film series. The specific objects of study are two particular series available on the WeTV platform: “*Layangan Putus*” and “*Wedding Agreement*”. These series were selected because they are popular and belong to the drama genre, known for raising issues derived from social reality and depicting complex interpersonal interactions. Their narratives, which portray the efforts of women to be good wives within marriage but also show instances of marital discord and betrayal, contain numerous examples of both politeness adherence and violations that are ripe for pragmatic analysis.

Previous research has explored pragmatics, speech acts, and politeness principles in various contexts, contributing valuable insights into linguistic behavior^[6,17,18,21]. Studies have examined the cooperation principle in novels, conversational implicature in animated films, deviations from politeness in educational interactions, and the application of politeness maxims in different cultural and social settings^[18]. While this body of work provides a foundation, there remains a specific gap in research comparing the complexity of politeness within interpersonal pragmatics as manifested in the dialogue of popular streaming film series^[6].

This research specifically addresses this identified gap by offering a comparative pragmatic analysis of language use in the chosen streaming series, “*Layangan Putus*” and “*Wedding Agreement*”. The novelty of this study lies precisely in its comparative focus on the pragmatic complexities of politeness within the context of popular digital streaming media. By undertaking this comparative analysis, the research aims to provide new findings regarding the types

of utterances present in this medium, the instances of adherence to politeness principles, the occurrences of violations of these principles, and the conversational implicatures found within the dialogue.

Based on the background and the identified research gap, the specific objectives guiding this research are to identify the types of utterances present in streaming film series in the 4.0 era. Another way this research aim to identify the complexity of politeness in the discourse of streaming film series in the 4.0 era as a realization of character values. These objectives collectively aim to illuminate the pragmatic nuances of language use in this increasingly influential medium and offer insights relevant to character education and effective communication in the digital age, with expected theoretical and practical benefits for applied linguistics, communication strategies, film actors, and educators.

2. Method

This research adopts a qualitative approach, grounded in the philosophy of positivism, which is used to study natural phenomena where the researcher serves as the key instrument. Qualitative research aims to understand phenomena such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, and actions holistically and descriptively through words and language within a natural context, utilizing various scientific methods^[22]. Data collection occurs in natural settings, employing various procedures to confirm developing insights and ensure data trustworthiness. Complementing the qualitative approach is a pragmatic approach, focusing on the study of meaning in utterance situations between speakers and hearers, particularly examining the relationship between sentences, context, and situation of use. Pragmatics analyses aspects of meaning not covered by semantic theory, or utterances whose meaning cannot be fully explained by direct reference to sentence truth conditions, ultimately studying language use in functional perspective tied to context, manner, and intention^[23]. This combination allows the research design to be descriptive qualitative, aiming to systematically, factually, and accurately describe the researched phenomena^[24]. The goal is to acquire information regarding the comparison of politeness complexity in streaming film series.

The data for this research consists of excerpts of discourse from the film series “*Layangan Putus*” and “*Wedding*

Agreement” on the *WeTV* platform, specifically those suspected of containing politeness adherence and violations relevant to the study of politeness complexity in streaming film series in the 4.0 era. The source of the data is the entire discourse present in these two film series available on the *WeTV* streaming platform. The primary method of data collection employed is the observation method, which involves observing the use of language^[7]. This is implemented through the note-taking technique, where the researcher records excerpts of utterances, identifying instances of politeness adherence, violations, and implicature within the dialogue of the series’ scripts^[25,26]. These recorded data are then classified according to the research issues. A supplementary technique, observing while participating, is also used, enabling the researcher to listen to the dialogue in the scripts of “*Layangan Putus*” and “*Wedding Agreement*,” thus becoming directly involved in the scripts to pay close attention to language use. The data collected based on clear criteria derived from the theoretical framework are recorded using data cards^[12].

To ensure the validity of the data, the study utilizes the confirmability technique with triangulation of theory and observer. Confirmability, interpreted as intersubjectivity or transparency, involves the researcher openly presenting the research process and elements, allowing others to assess the findings for objectivity, independent of any single individual’s viewpoint^[22,27]. Triangulation of theory involves employing various theories to validate the data, including the understanding of pragmatics, speech acts, linguistic politeness, politeness principles, factors influencing politeness, politeness violations, and implicature^[28]. Triangulation of observer entails consultation with experts in the research field, specifically the promotor, co-promotor, and member promotor. The researcher periodically presents the data, data sources, analysis, and results to these experts to obtain confirmation regarding the accuracy of the findings^[29,30]. The data analysis techniques applied include the normative technique, the referential technique, the reflective introspective technique, and the heuristic technique. The normative technique involves matching the politeness found in the film discourse excerpts with Leech’s ten politeness maxims. The referential technique is a basic sorting method using the researcher’s mental ability to differentiate based on the referents of linguistic units. The reflective introspective technique utilizes the researcher’s understanding of language,

both within and beyond the specific data, in accordance with linguistic rules. Finally, the heuristic technique, a pragmatic analysis method, involves identifying the pragmatic force of an utterance by formulating and testing hypotheses against the available data until a valid hypothesis consistent with the evidence is reached.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Result

This research undertakes a qualitative approach, supplemented by a pragmatic perspective, to explore the complexity of linguistic politeness within dialogue from streaming film series in the 4.0 era, specifically focusing on “*Layangan Putus*” and “*Wedding Agreement*” available on the *WeTV* platform. The study aims to systematically describe the phenomena observed in the dialogue, identifying and analyzing instances of linguistic politeness adherence, violations, and implicature. By examining these specific series, known for their dramatic narratives rooted in social reality, the research delves into how politeness principles are manifested or disregarded in fictional communication that widely reaches audiences.

Central to the analysis of politeness adherence and violation are Leech’s politeness principles, which include ten maxims: Generosity, Tact, Approbation, Modesty, Obligation of S to O, Obligation of O to S, Agreement, Opinion Reticence, Sympathy, and Feeling Reticence. The research identifies instances where speakers adhere to these maxims, demonstrating efforts to maximize benefit or minimize cost to the hearer (Tact), maximize praise or minimize dispraise of others (Approbation), minimize praise or maximize dispraise of self (Modesty), and so forth. Conversely, the study also examines violations, which occur when dialogue contravenes these principles, often involving direct criticism or accusations.

The research documents numerous examples of politeness adherence within the dialogue. For instance, in “*Layangan Putus*,” *Aris* adheres to the Generosity Maxim when responding to thanks by saying, “*Nggak perlu makasih, udah kewajiban aku. Selama aku bisa aku akan wujutin, itu aja*,” minimizing benefit to self and maximizing benefit to Kinan. Miranda demonstrates the Tact Maxim by saying, “*Enggak*

sayang. Mamim sehat kok ya. Mamim sehat,” to minimize potential harm to Raya’s feelings by reassuring her mother is well. The Approbation Maxim is seen when Merry compliments Kinan, *“Cantik banget,”* maximizing praise for the other person. Tari adheres to the Modesty Maxim by downplaying her skills, *“Huh, gue tuh belum jago,”* minimizing self-praise. Aris shows adherence to Obligation S to O by apologizing, *“Oke. Aku minta maaf. I’m promise, okay,”* giving high value to the speaker’s obligation to the hearer. Miranda follows Obligation O to S by quickly apologizing for being late, *“I’m so sorry,”* minimizing her fault to the hearer.

However, the study also identifies instances of politeness violations, indicating that not all dialogue adheres to these norms. A prominent example from *“Layangan Putus”* is Kinan’s emotional outburst towards Aris, stating, *“Yang seharusnya ada disini sekarang, itu Reno bukan kamu mas. Yang seharusnya ada disini, ngomong sama aku, itu Reno bukan kamu. Seharusnya aku bisa milih siapa yang harusnya mati duluan tau nggak?”*. This utterance is analyzed as violating the Wisdom Maxim because it maximizes detriment to Aris, fueled by Kinan’s strong emotions and grief over their child’s death. The word *“mati”* (die) is considered impolite and demonstrates a lack of wisdom in expression. Another violation occurs in *“Wedding Agreement”* when Bian accuses Tari after seeing ‘someone’ leaving the house, saying, *“Ya mana aku tahu, kalau aku engga ada kamu terima laki-laki lain,”* which is identified as maximizing insult and violating the Approbation Maxim.

Furthermore, the research analyzes the presence of implicature in the dialogue. Implicature refers to meaning that is implied or hidden, not explicitly stated, and is understood through context and the listener’s interpretation. For example, in a conversation about dating apps, the statement, *“Ya nggak adalah Ta. Kalau dia mirip Jefri Nicol yang ada dia ikutan keisting bukan ikutan tinder,”* implies that highly attractive people like Jefri Nicol or Song Kang would not be on such platforms but pursuing careers like acting. Another instance is Tari telling Bian, *“Kamu kasih waktu aku satu tahun kan? Aku mau disisa waktu pernikahan kita, kamu bisa menjaga nama baik aku sebagai seorang istri dan juga nama baik keluarga aku. Aku enggak minta banyak kan?”*, followed by Bian saying *“Gue pikirin!”* and Tari responding *“Jangan dipikirkan!”*. Tari’s final remark carries an impli-

cature suggesting Bian’s answer is unsatisfactory or shows a lack of immediate concern, highlighting the underlying tension and his perceived indifference.

Understanding the linguistic complexities portrayed in contemporary streaming media. By detailing the specific instances of politeness adherence and violation based on established pragmatic principles, and by identifying the use of implicature, the study provides a linguistic map of character interactions in these popular series. This analysis is crucial for character education as it offers concrete examples of both polite and impolite language use, reflecting the “complexity” of real-world communication as mediated through these platforms. Understanding these linguistic nuances, including instances where traditional politeness norms are challenged or subtly conveyed, can inform discussions about effective and respectful communication, equipping viewers, especially youth, to critically evaluate the language they encounter in digital media and its potential influence on their own linguistic character development.

3.2. Discussion

Based on the analysis of research findings concerning the pragmatic complexity of politeness in streaming media dialogue, significant implications for character education, particularly for children in the 4.0 era, can be drawn^[29,31]. The study, focusing on popular Indonesian series like *“Layangan Putus”* and *“Wedding Agreement”* available on platforms such as *WeTV*, employs a qualitative approach rooted in pragmatics to dissect how language is used by characters. This analysis encompasses various linguistic phenomena, including the different types of utterances (such as constative, performative, locutionary, illocutionary, perlocutionary, representative, directive, expressive, commissive, declarative, literal, non-literal, vernacular, and ceremonial), as well as the adherence to, violation of, and implicature within the principles of linguistic politeness^[6,30]. Understanding these complexities within widely consumed digital media is crucial, as it reveals the linguistic landscape presented to viewers, which in turn can shape their own communication styles and character development in the increasingly Digital Era 4.0^[32–36].

The relevance to character education is underscored by the pervasive nature of streaming media in the 4.0 era, often

accessible without the stringent censorship applied to traditional television^[37,38]. Characters in these series often serve as role models, and their linguistic behavior, both polite and impolite, is readily absorbed by audiences, including children and youth^[39-41]. This exposure to a broad spectrum of language use, which may not always align with traditional Indonesian norms of politeness such as *unggah-ungguh*, ethics, and *tata krama*, poses a potential challenge to the development of good communication character^[42]. Analysing the pragmatic complexities of politeness in dialogue provides a direct lens through which to examine the kinds of linguistic models being presented, highlighting both commendable and problematic uses of language that can influence viewers' social interactions^[18].

The research findings detail numerous instances demonstrating adherence to politeness principles, offering positive examples for character education^[43,44]. These include adherence to maxims proposed by Leech. Apologies like Aris's "*Oke. Aku minta maaf. I'm promise, okay*" exemplify the Obligation S to O Maxim, while Miranda's swift apology "I'm so sorry" after being late reflects adherence to the Obligation O to S Maxim^[45]. Instances of agreement, opinion reticence, sympathy, and feeling reticence are also documented, providing a range of examples of polite communication^[29,46-49]. These instances offer tangible models of respectful interaction, humility, empathy, and consideration within interpersonal communication.

Conversely, the study also highlights instances of politeness violations and the use of implicature, which are equally important for character education as they expose viewers to complex and sometimes negative communication behaviors^[49,50]. Violations occur when dialogue disregards politeness maxims. A stark example is Kinan's emotional accusation towards Aris, using the harsh word "*mati*" and wishing he had died instead of their child, which is identified as violating the Wisdom Maxim by maximizing detriment to Aris. Such violations model impolite behavior and the negative consequences of unchecked emotions or baseless accusations^[51,52]. Furthermore, the presence of implicature, where meaning is implied rather than explicitly stated, requires viewers to interpret underlying messages. Understanding these instances of violation and implicature is essential for developing critical thinking about language and its potential to cause harm or convey complex, often negative, social

dynamics^[53-56].

These findings have direct implications for teaching politeness in language and social interaction ethics, particularly with respected figures. The numerous examples of politeness adherence provide concrete illustrations of how to speak respectfully and considerately. For instance, observing characters like "*Papah Kinan*" expressing sympathy or *Tari* and *Kinan* using respectful forms and apologies when interacting with elders like *Budhe* or *Papah Muchtar* (Bian's father) provides models for interacting appropriately with those who should be honored. Conversely, violations serve as cautionary examples, demonstrating the negative impact of rude language, direct criticism, or unfounded accusations on relationships and character perception^[21,29,57]. By analyzing why certain utterances are impolite (e.g., violating a specific maxim), educators and parents can guide children to understand the principles behind respectful communication and the importance of choosing words carefully depending on the context and the listener^[18].

Analysis of diverse speech acts (like directives, expressives, commissives, declaratives) and the distinction between literal and non-literal language, alongside politeness strategies and implicature, contributes to developing the ability to differentiate treatment towards others with good communication ethics and the appropriate word choice in communicating with various parties^[58,59]. Viewers are exposed to how characters tailor their language based on their relationship with the interlocutor (e.g., formal vs. informal, respectful vs. disrespectful). Understanding when a statement is a direct request versus an implied one, or when seemingly polite language masks underlying tension (as seen through implicature), enhances pragmatic competence^[28,60,61]. The dialogue in streaming media, with its mix of adherence and violation, offers a complex but realistic reflection of human communication. By critically examining these linguistic choices, young viewers can learn to navigate the nuances of social interaction, select appropriate diction for different contexts, and cultivate ethical communication habits essential for positive character development in the digital age.

The findings of this study intersect meaningfully with established theories of character education, particularly those emphasizing the development of moral and ethical communication skills as integral to holistic human development^[62-64]. One of the foundational frameworks in character education is

proposed by Thomas Lickona (1991), who defines character as comprising three interrelated components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior. Within this triad, language use—especially the capacity for polite, empathetic, and respectful communication—serves as a crucial medium for expressing and internalizing moral values^[65,66].

From a Lickonian perspective, the dialogic examples found in streaming series, whether polite or impolite, function as both explicit and implicit character-building stimuli. For instance, characters demonstrating adherence to politeness maxims (such as humility, generosity, and tact) reflect moral knowing and moral behavior, providing viewers, especially children and adolescents, with behavioral models that align with core virtues like respect, empathy, and responsibility^[21,67,68]. Conversely, instances of rudeness or verbal aggression—while negative—can support moral feeling, by provoking emotional responses such as discomfort, disapproval, or critical reflection in the viewer, thereby reinforcing the social consequences of violating ethical norms^[15,69].

Complementing Lickona's theory, Severino-González, Martín-Friorino, and González-Soto advocate for an integrated moral character education that includes both rational judgment and emotional responsiveness, grounded in everyday moral experiences. Through this lens, exposure to varied speech acts and politeness phenomena in popular media becomes a critical space for children to observe, process, and internalize social and ethical cues^[70]. Streaming content, unlike curated educational programming, offers a more spontaneous and nuanced representation of moral dilemmas and communicative choices—both appropriate and problematic—thus presenting realistic moral complexity for developing critical discernment^[71].

Furthermore, Pulkki emphasizes the importance of intentionality and context in character education, arguing that environments, including media, must be viewed as part of the “moral ecology” of the learner. Given that streaming platforms often bypass traditional filters and reach audiences directly, they form part of this moral ecology where language becomes a carrier of values^[72]. Thus, educators, parents, and policymakers must recognize how the subtleties of linguistic politeness (or the lack thereof) in media dialogues can influence the development of children's communication ethics,

emotional intelligence, and social sensitivity^[73]. The present study therefore situates itself within this theoretical framework by asserting that pragmatic politeness analysis in film dialogues is not merely a linguistic exercise, but a pedagogical tool—capable of enriching character education programs aimed at nurturing socially competent, morally grounded, and communicatively skilled individuals.

4. Conclusions

Based on the analysis of research findings, streaming media platforms in the 4.0 era, such as those studied, present a complex linguistic landscape that significantly impacts children's character development, particularly concerning communication politeness, social interaction ethics (including “*tata krama*” with respected figures), appropriate word choice, and the ability to differentiate treatment towards others with good communication ethics. The research highlights instances where characters adhere to various politeness maxims like generosity, tact, approbation, modesty, obligation S to O, obligation O to S, agreement, opinion reticence, sympathy, and feeling reticence, providing positive examples of respectful language, empathy, and consideration. Conversely, the content also features violations of these politeness principles and employs implicature, exposing viewers to impolite behaviors, direct criticism, unfounded accusations, and complex, sometimes negative, social dynamics that might not align with traditional ethical norms. Given the widespread accessibility of these platforms and the lack of strict censorship compared to traditional television, children are exposed to this broad range of linguistic models. The profound implication for character education is the necessity for active guidance from parents and educators to help children critically analyse the language and interactions depicted. This guidance should focus on discerning polite from impolite communication, understanding the impact of word choice on others, learning to apply ethical communication appropriately in different social contexts, particularly when addressing older or respected individuals, and internalizing positive social interaction strategies while recognizing and avoiding detrimental ones, thereby cultivating a strong communication character essential for navigating the digital age effectively and respectfully.

Author Contributions

M.R. contributed to conducting the research, organizing the study, and writing the manuscript. F.R. provided supervision in the field of linguistics. R. contributed supervision in the field of literature. H.B.M. supervised the study in the areas of Indonesian grammar and semiotics.

Funding

This research was funded by Universitas Muria Kudus, which provided a scholarship to the first author.

Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committees of Universitas Negeri Semarang and Universitas Muria Kudus. All research procedures were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of both institutions.

Informed Consent Statement

This study did not involve human participants; therefore, informed consent was not required.

Data Availability Statement

The data for this study consist of audiovisual materials accessed from Indonesia's subscription streaming platform WeTV. The primary sources are episodes of the drama series *Layangan Putus* and *Wedding Agreement*. These materials are available to WeTV subscribers and can be located by searching the respective titles on the platform. Access is subject to WeTV's licensing and regional availability; the authors do not hold distribution rights. No proprietary or personal datasets were generated or analyzed beyond these publicly accessible recordings. If required by the journal, episode and timestamp references can be provided in supplementary materials.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Universitas Muria Kudus, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Balai Bahasa Jawa Tengah, and WeTV for their valuable

support and contributions that facilitated the successful completion of this research.

Conflicts of Interest

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committees of Universitas Muria Kudus and Universitas Negeri Semarang. The authors declare that the study does not involve any conflict of interest with any parties. All procedures adhered to the ethical standards established by both institutions.

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