



## Analyzing Language Politeness of Maxim of Courage Produced by Students in the Mobile Legends Game

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### Abstract

Online games, particularly Mobile Legends, have become highly popular among students, especially college students. While engaging and entertaining, this attraction can lead students to neglect important aspects of their behavior, including their language use. This research focuses on the impact of online gaming on language politeness among Unitomo students living in Pumpugan 3, Surabaya. Specifically, the study aimed to examine the influence of frequent online gaming on the level of language politeness among these students, with a qualitative research design conducted in April 2024. The study focused on five Unitomo students, consisting of three female and two male participants, who were active Mobile Legends players. Data collection methods included interviews and observations, providing insights into the students' everyday language use. The results revealed that the environment, particularly time spent playing online games, significantly affected their language politeness. The students often adopted words and phrases from the online gaming environment into their daily conversations, including vulgar language such as "fuck you," "damn," "crazy," "dog," and others, both in English and Indonesian. These findings underscore the importance of self-awareness in maintaining polite language, particularly as the influence of gaming environments can contribute to the erosion of linguistic decency. Developing and practicing polite language habits from a young age is essential to counteract the negative influence of such environments. The research highlights the need for greater awareness and personal responsibility in fostering polite communication in both gaming and everyday contexts.

**Keywords:** Language politeness; online gaming activities; mobile legends

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## INTRODUCTION

In any social interaction, effective communication plays a pivotal role in building and maintaining relationships. As Anwar Arifin highlights, communication is not just an exchange of information but also a social process deeply intertwined with human behavior, filled with implicit messages about social norms and values. At the heart of this interaction lies the concept of politeness, which serves as a guiding principle to ensure that communication remains harmonious and respectful. Politeness in language use reflects social etiquette and is essential in mitigating conflicts, preserving social harmony, and fostering positive relationships. However, in recent years, particularly with the advent of digital communication platforms and online gaming environments, there has been a

noticeable decline in the adherence to these norms of politeness, leading to concerns about the broader implications for social behavior.

The shift towards informal, and often impolite, communication patterns has been significantly influenced by globalization and the digitalization of society. Indonesia, like many other nations, has embraced rapid technological advancements, resulting in widespread access to the internet, smartphones, and digital platforms. While this digital revolution has brought numerous benefits, including easier access to information and enhanced connectivity, it has also posed challenges, particularly in the realm of communication. The increasing use of digital communication tools has created new spaces where traditional norms of politeness are frequently overlooked or abandoned altogether. The online environment, which often lacks the social cues present in face-to-face interactions, has become a breeding ground for impolite language, especially in contexts like online gaming.

One of the most prominent examples of this shift can be seen in the world of online gaming, particularly in multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) games like Mobile Legends. Mobile Legends is a team-based online game that has gained immense popularity across Southeast Asia, including in Indonesia. While the game fosters interaction among players from different locations, it also provides a platform where communication can become harsh, impolite, and even abusive. In the competitive and fast-paced environment of online gaming, players often resort to using rude or offensive language when communicating with teammates or opponents, as observed in the behavior of Mobile Legends players in Pumpungan 3, Surabaya. This phenomenon raises important questions about the influence of digital environments on language use and the erosion of politeness in communication.

This research focuses on the lack of language politeness in online gaming communication, with particular attention to the verbal exchanges that occur among Mobile Legends players. The study investigates how the impolite language used during gaming sessions affects not only the gaming experience but also the social interactions between players. For example, players frequently use derogatory terms such as "bitch," "dog," and "bastard" when communicating with others during the game. These interactions, which may appear trivial within the context of the game, can have far-reaching consequences, influencing the way individuals communicate in other social settings. The research examines this behavior among five students from the University of Dr. Soetomo (Unitomo), who regularly play Mobile Legends and reside in Pumpungan 3, Surabaya.

The decline in language politeness observed in online gaming environments such as Mobile Legends can be attributed to several factors. First, the anonymity of the internet allows individuals to communicate without the fear of immediate social repercussions. Unlike face-to-face interactions, where rude behavior can lead to direct social consequences such as disapproval or confrontation, online platforms create a sense of detachment that emboldens users to speak without filters. Second, the competitive nature of online games like Mobile Legends heightens emotions, leading to increased aggression and frustration, which are often expressed through impolite language. Third, the culture of online gaming itself often normalizes the use of offensive language as a form of banter or competitive trash talk, which can desensitize players to the impact of their words.

While online gaming environments may seem isolated from broader social life, the implications of impolite language use in these spaces are significant. Language, as a fundamental aspect of human interaction, shapes the way individuals perceive and relate to one another. The normalization of impolite language in online games can lead to the erosion of polite communication in other areas of life, particularly among younger generations who spend a considerable amount of time in digital environments. This is

especially concerning in a country like Indonesia, where cultural norms emphasize respect, politeness, and deference to authority figures and elders. The increasing use of impolite language in digital spaces represents a departure from these traditional values, raising questions about how digital communication is reshaping social behavior.

From a theoretical perspective, the concept of politeness in language has been explored extensively in linguistics, particularly through the work of scholars like Brown and Levinson, who developed the Politeness Theory. According to this theory, individuals engage in face-saving acts to preserve their own self-image and the image of others during communication. Politeness strategies are employed to avoid face-threatening acts, which can damage relationships or cause social embarrassment. However, in the context of online gaming, these politeness strategies are often disregarded, as the impersonal and competitive nature of the environment reduces the perceived need for face-saving behavior.

The impact of impolite language in online gaming extends beyond the immediate interactions between players. As mentioned earlier, digital communication platforms like online games can influence the way individuals communicate in other social settings, such as in classrooms, workplaces, and public spaces. For example, Unitomo students who regularly engage in impolite communication during gaming sessions may carry these language patterns into their interactions with peers, teachers, or family members. This can lead to a broader decline in communication etiquette, with negative consequences for social cohesion and mutual respect.

Addressing the issue of impolite language in online gaming requires a multifaceted approach. Educational institutions play a crucial role in promoting language politeness, particularly in the digital age. Schools and universities can implement programs that teach students about the importance of polite language in maintaining positive social relationships, both online and offline. These programs should emphasize the ethical responsibilities that come with digital communication and provide students with strategies for managing emotions and frustrations during competitive activities like online gaming. Additionally, game developers and online platform providers can contribute by implementing features that encourage positive communication, such as in-game reporting systems for offensive language and reward mechanisms for players who demonstrate respectful behavior.

Future research on language politeness in digital environments should focus on exploring the long-term effects of impolite communication on social behavior. While this study examines the behavior of a specific group of players in a particular game, broader research could investigate whether similar patterns exist in other online gaming communities or digital platforms, such as social media or discussion forums. Moreover, researchers could explore the psychological and sociocultural factors that contribute to the decline in language politeness, particularly among younger generations. Understanding these factors can inform the development of targeted interventions that promote respectful communication in digital spaces.

The maxim of language politeness is essential for maintaining harmony and mutual respect in social interactions. However, the rise of digital communication platforms, particularly online gaming, has led to a decline in the observance of politeness norms, as seen in the behavior of Mobile Legends players in Surabaya. This research highlights the negative impact of impolite language on social interactions, both within the gaming environment and beyond. Addressing this issue requires a collaborative effort from educators, game developers, and policymakers to promote respectful communication in digital spaces. By fostering a culture of politeness in online communication, we can help preserve the ethical foundations of social interaction and ensure that digital platforms contribute positively to social cohesion.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study adopts a qualitative research design aimed at exploring language politeness among Mobile Legends players, particularly focusing on a specific case of students at the University of Dr. Soetomo (Unitomo). Qualitative research is ideal for this study because it allows for in-depth examination of human behavior and social interactions in natural settings, enabling the researcher to uncover the subtleties of language use and politeness in online gaming contexts. In line with qualitative methodology, the research is conducted in real-life environments where the natural behavior of the participants can be observed and analyzed. This approach also emphasizes the role of the researcher as the primary instrument, who actively engages with the participants through observations and interviews to gather rich, detailed data. By focusing on a specific group of Mobile Legends players, this case study aims to understand how politeness maxims are applied or disregarded in competitive gaming scenarios, providing insights into the broader implications for digital communication.

### **Research Instruments and Data Collection Technique**

In qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument for collecting and analyzing data. In this study, the researcher takes an active role in conducting observations and interviews, as well as analyzing transcriptions of conversations between Mobile Legends players. To complement the researcher's observations, interview guides are used as tools to facilitate structured, semi-structured, or unstructured interviews with participants. These guides are designed to probe the respondents' understanding of language politeness, their experiences with impolite language in gaming, and their thoughts on how digital communication affects politeness norms. Additionally, the audio recording device serves as an essential tool for capturing conversations during gaming sessions and interviews. These recorded interactions are later transcribed and analyzed to identify patterns in language use, such as the frequency of polite words, passive sentence constructions, or impolite expressions.

The primary data collection techniques in this research are observations and interviews, allowing the researcher to collect first-hand data in real-life settings. During the observations, the researcher immerses themselves in the gaming environment, observing how Unitomo students interact with one another and their opponents while playing Mobile Legends. The observations are carried out in natural contexts, where players communicate through in-game chat features or verbally with their teammates. This method provides insight into how politeness is negotiated, challenged, or ignored in fast-paced, competitive gaming situations. Interviews are conducted with selected participants to deepen the understanding of their language use and perceptions of politeness during gameplay. These interviews are either structured, semi-structured, or unstructured depending on the flow of the conversation and the research goals. The semi-structured format, in particular, allows for flexibility, enabling the researcher to explore unexpected insights that may emerge during the conversation. The interviews focus on participants' attitudes toward politeness, their experiences with both polite and impolite language during gameplay, and the impact these interactions have on their overall gaming experience.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis process involves several steps. First, the researcher organizes and transcribes the data collected through observations and interviews, creating a comprehensive set of textual data. This step is followed by text analysis, which is used to systematically examine the language used by participants in both their in-game

communication and interview responses. The researcher applies linguistic analysis techniques to identify specific politeness strategies, such as the use of polite phrases, passive constructions, or mitigation strategies that soften direct or impolite language. The analysis also includes identifying impolite expressions and categorizing them based on the context in which they were used, such as frustration during gameplay or competitive banter between teammates.

In addition to textual analysis, the research incorporates elements of a case study approach, focusing on the interactions of Unitomo students who regularly play Mobile Legends. By concentrating on this specific group, the researcher gains a deep understanding of how language politeness is negotiated and maintained (or disregarded) in an online gaming setting. The case study allows for detailed exploration of the unique dynamics at play in online games, where competitiveness often leads to lapses in polite communication. The thematic analysis method is used to group similar behaviors, identifying recurring themes related to the maxims of language politeness, such as respect, face-saving strategies, and the tension between competitive gameplay and social decorum. Through this comprehensive approach, the study aims to offer a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities for promoting polite language use in online environments.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Results

Researchers conducted interviews with Unitomo students who were active in playing the online game Mobile Legends. Researchers conducted research at Pumpugan 3 Surabaya. The total number of respondents involved in this research were 5 Unitomo students who lived in Pumpugan 3 Surabaya. Below are the results of interviews conducted by researchers with 5 respondents who actively play mobile legends online games.

Table 1. Research Participants' Responses of mobile legends online games

No.	Name	Results
1.	ANS Respondent 1 (ANS), a 20 year old student who is currently studying in the 2nd semester of Food Technology, has been actively playing the online game Legends cars since grade 9	According to respondent 1, the online game Mobile Legends is an exciting game and can add friends.  There is use of impolite and rude words spoken by correspondents and game partners. Words like: what a pig, bastard, dajal, fuckyou, crazy, dog, bastard, stupid, lasu, pig, anjirt, jancok. Since the correspondent actively plays games, the correspondent has a habit of uttering impolite and rude words.
2.	Respondent 2 is a 20-year-old Unitomo student who is currently studying in the 2nd semester of Food Technology and has been actively playing the online game Mobile Legends since he was in grade 12 at Senior High School.	According to respondent 2, the online game Mobile Legends is a game that is very enjoyable to play and playing Mobile Legends provides its own happiness.  There is use of impolite and rude words spoken by correspondents and game friends. Words such as: fuckyou, youstupid, I hate you. Since the correspondent actively plays the online game Mobile Legends, the correspondent has had a habit of using impolite and rude words.

No.	Name	Results
3.	Respondent 3, is a 20 year old student who is currently studying in the 2nd semester of the Business Argo Department, who has been actively playing mobile legends online games since entering the 1st semester of college.	<p>According to respondent 3, playing the online game Mobile Legends is a game that can only fill your free time.</p> <p>Correspondents use impolite and rude words such as: cok, jancok, tae, kampret, asu. Since the correspondent actively plays games, the correspondent has a habit of using impolite and rude words.</p>
4.	Respondent 4 is a 22 year old student studying in the 4th semester of the Food Technology Department who has been actively playing the online game Mobile Legends since the 1st semester.	<p>According to respondent 4, the online game Mobile Legends is a game that the correspondent really likes and can make new friends virtually.</p> <p>There is the use of impolite and rude words that are often uttered by correspondents and friends in the game such as: Acu, ela, pukamai, code, jing, wedol, and bodok. (dog, pig, monkey, devil, crazy, stupid) since the correspondent actively plays the mobile legends online game the correspondent has had a habit of uttering impolite and rude words.</p>
5.	Respondent 5, is a 21 year old student who is currently studying in the 2nd semester of the Civil Technology Department, who has been actively playing the online game Mobile Legends since the 10th grade of high school.	<p>According to 5 respondents, the online game Mobile Legends is a very exciting game if you always win the game. Koroos Ponden often spends his time playing the online game Mobile Legends.</p> <p>There is a frequent use of harsh and impolite words by correspondents in online mobile legends games, and this has become the correspondent's habit in communicating with friends.</p>

The data presented by the researcher regarding the maxims of politeness in language among Unitomo students living in Pumpugan 3, Surabaya, particularly in the context of playing Mobile Legends, reveals significant patterns of impolite language use. From the analysis, it is evident that the use of harsh and offensive language is influenced by various factors tied to the gaming environment and social interactions within the game. Correspondent 1, for instance, frequently resorts to using harsh and inappropriate language due to the behavior and actions of opponents in the Mobile Legends game. The competitive nature of the game and the provocation from opponents appear to trigger Correspondent 1's impolite language use.

Similarly, Correspondent 2 is also prone to using offensive language, although the primary influence in this case stems from peers who are involved in the same game. The social dynamics between friends during gameplay seem to foster an environment where the use of rude and dirty words becomes normalized. This pattern of influence from peers is a common thread in the behavior of several correspondents. For Correspondent 3, the frequent use of impolite language has become a habitual part of communication with opponents during online gameplay. This respondent's exposure to repetitive interactions in competitive settings appears to reinforce the regular use of inappropriate language,

suggesting that the gaming environment plays a significant role in shaping communication habits.

Correspondent 4 exhibits similar behavior, where the use of harsh language is largely influenced by opponents in the game. The provocations and competitive interactions within Mobile Legends prompt a tendency to respond with rude language, indicating that the gaming culture itself may encourage such communication. Lastly, Correspondent 5 also displays a tendency toward impolite language, primarily due to the influence of co-players. The interactions and verbal exchanges between teammates and opponents in the game contribute to Correspondent 5's inclination to use rude words. Overall, the findings suggest that impolite language use among these students is not an isolated phenomenon but is deeply intertwined with the social and competitive dynamics of the Mobile Legends gaming environment. The influence of both opponents and peers plays a crucial role in shaping their communication behaviors, pointing to the broader implications of gaming culture on language politeness.

## **Discussion**

The principle of politeness is categorized into six maxims: wisdom, beneficence, acceptance, humility, compatibility, and sympathy. These maxims govern behavior in communication and social interactions, emphasizing respect, empathy, and harmony. Conversations typically involve two participants, the speaker and the interlocutor, with a third person possibly being referenced by both parties. Each maxim addresses a distinct facet of politeness and ensures that interactions remain constructive, considerate, and respectful. The maxim of wisdom highlights the importance of thoughtful judgment, encouraging individuals to consider the consequences of their words and actions before engaging, thus avoiding harm or offense. Beneficence promotes generosity and selflessness, fostering environments where individuals are encouraged to support each other and build stronger social bonds, both online and offline.

The maxim of acceptance underscores the need for inclusivity and open-mindedness, particularly in diverse environments like online gaming, where players from different backgrounds converge. Upholding this principle encourages a more welcoming atmosphere by discouraging discrimination and promoting fairness. Humility, or the willingness to assist others without seeking recognition, is crucial in social interactions. In online gaming, it emphasizes the importance of sharing knowledge and resources, ultimately creating a supportive and cooperative environment. The maxim of compatibility focuses on adapting one's behavior to align with the norms and expectations of a particular context, ensuring that communication and teamwork are effective and goal-oriented. Finally, the maxim of sympathy calls for empathy and understanding toward others, especially in stressful or competitive environments, fostering a friendlier and more inclusive community.

These maxims, when applied, create the foundation for polite and respectful communication across various contexts, including online gaming. The study on linguistic politeness maxims among Unitomo students in Pumpugan 3, Surabaya, who engage in Mobile Legends sheds light on the role of environmental and social factors in shaping language use. It highlights how exposure to competitive and provocative gaming environments fosters the normalization of impolite language, such as terms like "fuck you," "dog," "bastard," and "pig," which often spill over from gameplay into daily conversations (Balogh & Veszelszki, 2020). This erosion of linguistic politeness is indicative of a broader shift in communication patterns driven by the aggressive dynamics of the gaming environment.

The novelty of this research lies in its localized focus on the specific impact of online gaming on linguistic politeness. While previous studies have addressed language use in

general digital spaces like social media or forums, this study narrows its lens to the subculture of online gaming and its direct influence on everyday language behavior (Kusyk & Sockett, 2012). The findings suggest that impolite language prevalent in Mobile Legends and similar gaming environments has a lasting effect on players, influencing their communication beyond the game. This connection between virtual interaction and real-world behavior underscores the significant social impact of gaming on language norms, making this study a valuable contribution to the broader field of digital communication research.

The study's implications extend beyond the Unitomo students and gaming communities, raising critical questions for educators, linguists, and sociologists about how digital environments shape linguistic behavior. The exposure to competitive, often aggressive language in gaming can reshape broader communication habits, with potential effects on students' social skills and relationships (Lewiński et al., 2023). These findings suggest the need for integrating discussions on digital citizenship, politeness, and respectful communication into educational curricula. By doing so, educators can help students develop a deeper awareness of how their online behaviors influence their interactions in real-world settings. This aligns with ongoing research on digital literacy, which emphasizes the importance of equipping individuals with the necessary skills to navigate online spaces responsibly while maintaining respectful communication, even in high-pressure situations (Shaari et al., 2019).

Additionally, this research opens doors for further interdisciplinary exploration, especially in psychology. Future studies could investigate the cognitive processes behind the adoption of impolite language in competitive gaming environments. Are players consciously mimicking the language of their peers, or is it an unconscious reaction triggered by the intensity of competition? Understanding these mechanisms could inform the development of interventions aimed at promoting healthier communication habits in digital contexts (Firdaus, 2023). Furthermore, this study touches upon sociolinguistic theories related to language acquisition, suggesting that frequent exposure to impolite language in gaming environments might lead players to internalize the social norms of these communities (Purnomo et al., 2022).

Beyond gaming, the study's broader implications are relevant to the increasing digitalization of social interactions. Platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok often exhibit similar trends, where competitive or provocative interactions contribute to the breakdown of traditional politeness norms (Codarcea, 2021). This study highlights the need for future research to determine whether the patterns observed in gaming are reflective of a wider phenomenon in digital communication. Such research could explore whether certain platforms are more conducive to fostering impolite language and how these trends might influence social interaction in the future.

To further develop this research, several areas for improvement and expansion can be identified. While this study offers valuable insights into a specific demographic, future research could explore different age groups, regions, or cultural backgrounds to assess whether impolite language use in online gaming is consistent across various populations (Yibokou, 2023). Additionally, longitudinal studies could be conducted to examine whether the adoption of impolite language from gaming environments is a temporary behavior or if it has long-term effects on communication. Understanding the permanence of these behaviors is critical for developing strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of digital communication (Prima, 2019).

Another promising direction for future research is the development and testing of interventions aimed at reducing impolite language in online gaming. Game developers and platform moderators could foster more positive communication environments by implementing systems that reward polite language and penalize offensive behavior.



Testing the effectiveness of such interventions would help determine whether they encourage players to maintain politeness, even in competitive situations (Yergaliyeva et al., 2018). Additionally, the findings from these interventions could be applied to other online spaces, such as social media, where impolite language also tends to flourish.

Peer influence is another critical area for future research. The study revealed that Mobile Legends players were influenced by both their peers and opponents, suggesting that social pressure normalizes impolite language in digital environments. Investigating how language norms are transmitted and reinforced within these communities could provide deeper insights into the role of peer influence. For instance, are players more likely to use impolite language if their peers engage in such behavior regularly? Or can individual players shift the language norms of their group by modeling positive communication behaviors (Susylowati & Muljani, 2022)?

This study offers valuable insights into the ways environmental factors, particularly online gaming, influence language politeness among Unitomo students in Pumpugan 3, Surabaya. The findings suggest that impolite language commonly used in \*Mobile Legends\* spills over into everyday communication, emphasizing the broader impact of digital environments on social behavior. While the study makes a novel contribution to understanding linguistic politeness in online gaming, it also raises important questions for future research, especially regarding the psychological, sociolinguistic, and educational implications of impolite language in digital spaces. As digital communication continues to evolve, it is crucial for researchers, educators, and game developers to collaborate in promoting respectful, healthy communication practices in both online and offline settings.

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of the research show that the linguistic politeness maxims expressed by Unitomo Surabaya students who live in Pumpugan 3 when they play the Mobile Legends online game in communicating are caused by environmental factors. Their environment is often spent playing online games and this influences Unitomo students who live in Pumpugan 3 Surabaya, often using the language they get in playing the online game Mobile Legends. The harsh words they get when playing online games are in the form of words in English or Bahasa. Indonesia like. Fuckyou, smut, dog, bastard, adopted child, pig, crazy, and stupid. The online game Mobile Legends has a lot of negative influences on politeness in language. Unitomo students who live in Pumpugan 3 Surabaya often spend time playing online games, resulting in Unitomo students being more inclined to use the language they get from playing online games so they often use it in daily conversations. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to more polite communication procedures so that Unitomo students who actively play online games can pay attention to more polite language. Polite language habits need to start from yourself. When playing online games, wherever possible, pay more attention to the language used and get used to speaking politely. This can help us in acquiring more polite language. From the results of the interviews conducted by the researcher, it can be concluded that the five respondents were very affected by the negative impact of playing the online game Mobile Legends which resulted in maximizing language politeness expressed by Unitomo students.

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