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STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION ETHICS ON SOCIAL MEDIA USING JAVANESE SPEECH LEVEL

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Abstract

The development of social media has brought major changes in people's communication patterns, but on the other hand it has also raised various ethical problems, such as the use of rude language, hate speech, cyberbullying, and the dissemination of irresponsible information. This condition shows the need for efforts to strengthen communication ethics that not only rely on digital literacy, but also utilize the values of local wisdom. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the values of the Javanese speech level or unggah-ungguh basa as the basis for strengthening communication ethics on social media in members of the Karang Taruna. The research was carried out on members of the Karang Taruna in Pulosari Village, Kebakkramat District, Karanganyar Regency. The number of members involved in this study was 50 respondents. The research uses the participatory action research approach which is carried out through four stages, namely problem identification, action planning, program implementation, and observation and reflection with participants. Data were collected through participatory observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed qualitatively. The results showed that there was a change in behavior in the form of increased caution in choosing words, the ability to express opinions constructively, respect for differences of view, and awareness to verify information before sharing it as a form of digital responsibility. This research resulted in an approach to strengthening digital communication ethics based on local wisdom and community needs. The findings of the study confirm that the integration of the Javanese speech level is an effective strategy to strengthen communication ethics in the digital space while preserving local cultural values that are relevant to communication challenges in the era of digital transformation.

Keywords: *communication ethics; Javanese speech level; local wisdom; social media*

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INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has significantly changed the pattern of people's interactions. Technological developments affect communication activities into virtual form through social media platforms (Zunianta, 2023). Social media now not only functions as a means of sharing information, but also becomes a public space that allows each individual to communicate without being limited by space and time. This convenience has a positive impact on the dissemination of information, the improvement of social networks, and the acceleration of communication. However, on the other hand, the use of social media also raises various ethical issues, such as the use of abusive language, hate speech, cyberbullying, the spread of hoaxes, and low politeness in expressing opinions. The ease of use of social media on digital media, users are often negligent in using communication ethics (Purwanti, 2024). This phenomenon shows that technological progress has not been fully balanced with the ability of people to apply communication ethics in the digital space.

The high intensity of social media use by various age groups, especially the younger generation, makes social media a very dynamic communication space as well as vulnerable to violations of language norms. Communication that takes place quickly and anonymously often encourages users to ignore the values of politeness so that various forms of speech that are provocative, insulting, or attack the identity of individuals or groups appear. In fact, polite communication is an important foundation in building harmonious social relationships, both in the real world and in the digital space. The use of polite language is expected to maintain smooth interaction between individuals and groups and prevent misunderstandings in communication (Khasanah et al., 2024).

Various efforts have been made by various parties to improve digital ethics through digital literacy programs, character education, and campaigns to use social media wisely. However, most of these approaches focus more on regulatory aspects and technological literacy, while the strengthening of local cultural values as the foundation of communication ethics is still relatively limited. In fact, Indonesia's local culture has various concepts that are relevant to building polite communication behavior, one of which is the Javanese speech level. The Javanese speech level is also called the term *unggah-ungguh basa*. This concept contains a set of norms regarding language manners that emphasize respect for the opponent through the selection of a variety of language, diction, intonation, and communicative attitudes that are in accordance with the social context.

The Javanese speech level teaches that students can use the correct Javanese language and according to the context (Sastika & Mulyana, 2025). In addition, the Javanese speech level is a form of local wisdom that not only regulates the use of speech levels (*ngoko lugu, ngoko alus, krama lugu*, and *krama alus*), but also represents the noble values of the Javanese people, such as respect, humility, empathy, placing oneself according to the situation, and responsibility in conveying information. These values are essentially universal so that they remain relevant to be applied in digital communication. In the context of social media, the implementation of the Javanese

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speech level is not solely realized through the use of the Javanese language, but through the internalization of the principles of politeness, respect for others, emotional control, and responsibility in conveying information. A responsible attitude is needed for social media users because spreading news that is not necessarily true is one example of poor ethics because it provides invalid information to others (Mutiarani et al., 2024).

A number of previous studies have examined the Javanese speech level as part of Javanese language learning, character education, and Javanese ethics. Handayani (2009) has conducted research related to the Javanese speech level in Javanese Ethics, while Asih and Nisa (2024) and Wijayanti (2019) have also carried out research on character education through the use of the Javanese speech level. Meanwhile, Wahyuni and Setyowati (2021) have analyzed behavior in the application of the This research resulted in an approach to strengthening digital communication ethics based on local wisdom and community needs. Javanese speech level. However, research that specifically integrates the concept of the Javanese speech level as an approach to strengthen communication ethics on social media is still relatively limited. Thus, there is still a research space that connects local cultural values with the challenges of digital communication in the era of the information society.

Based on this description, this research is important because it offers a perspective that strengthening digital communication ethics can not only be done through regulation and digital literacy, but also through the revitalization of local cultural values that have long been a guideline for people's lives. Ethics and norms of politeness are indispensable in communication, especially in digital media (Turnip & Siahaan, 2021). This research resulted in an approach to strengthening digital communication ethics based on local wisdom and community needs. The integration of the Javanese speech level in communication practices on social media is expected to be able to form more polite, responsible, and respectful language behavior so that it can create a healthier and more civilized digital space. Politeness in speech can be seen from the way he uses polite language in speaking (Tadzkiroh et al., 2025). This study aims to describe the values of the Javanese speech level that are relevant to communication ethics in social media and analyze its implementation as an effort to strengthen communication ethics in the digital space.

METHOD

This study uses a participatory action research approach with a participatory research paradigm that places the community as an active partner in every stage of research. Participatory action research was chosen because the research not only aims to describe the phenomenon of communication ethics on social media, but also intervenes through educational programs based on the Javanese speech level to increase the awareness and skills of Karang Taruna members in communicating politely in the digital space. Through this approach, researchers and participants work collaboratively in identifying problems, designing solutions, implementing actions, and reflecting on the results obtained.

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The object of the research material is the communication practice of Karang Taruna members on social media, while the formal object of the research is in the form of the implementation of the values of the Javanese speech level as the basis of digital communication ethics. The number of members involved in this study was 50 respondents. The research was carried out on members of the Karang Taruna in Pulosari Village, Kebakkramat District, Karanganyar Regency, who were selected purposively because they actively used social media as a means of communication and dissemination of information about organizational activities.

The implementation of the research follows the participatory action research cycle which consists of four stages, namely (1) problem identification, (2) action implementation, (3) observation and evaluation, and (4) reflection. At the problem identification stage, the researcher and the administrators and members of Karang Taruna conducted a participatory discussion to identify the forms of communication that often appear on social media, the obstacles faced in maintaining language politeness, and the level of participants' understanding of the concept of the Javanese speech level. The identification results are used as a basis for compiling educational materials that suit the needs of the participants.

The stage of implementing actions is realized through socialization, training, and interactive discussions on communication ethics on social media by integrating the values of the Javanese speech level. The material is delivered through presentations, case studies, digital communication simulations, and analysis of examples of social media uploads that reflect polite communication and communication that has the potential to cause conflict. Furthermore, at the observation and evaluation stage, the researcher observed the participation of participants during the activity and documented changes in participants' understanding and communication behavior through observation sheets, interviews, and activity documentation. Evaluation was also carried out through group discussions to find out participants' responses to the material that had been provided and the possibility of its application in daily social media activities. The last stage is reflection, where researchers and participants discuss the results of the program implementation, evaluate the effectiveness of the activities, identify supporting factors and obstacles during implementation, and prepare recommendations for the sustainability of the program to strengthen communication ethics based on the Javanese speech level in the Karang Taruna environment.

Research data was collected through participatory observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were used to obtain an overview of participants' involvement during training and changes in communication behavior. Interviews were conducted with the management and several members of Karang Taruna to explore their experiences, perceptions, and understanding of communication ethics on social media. Discussions are used as a medium for problem identification as well as joint reflection, while documentation in the form of photos of activities, training materials, field notes, and examples of social media uploads are analyzed as supporting data.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Identifying Ethical Problems in Communicating with Karang Taruna Members on Social Media

The initial stage of the research was carried out through observation and interviews with the management and members of the Karang Taruna in Pulosari Village (Figure 1). This activity aims to identify the patterns of digital communication that have been carried out by Karang Taruna members and problems that often arise in the use of social media. The results of observations show that the most frequently used social media by Karang Taruna members are WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Threads. The media is used as a means of coordinating organizational activities, disseminating village information, promoting youth activities, and communication between members. However, in practice, there are still some members who have not used the Javanese speech level correctly, tend to use language that is too straightforward, and do not pay attention to word choice when expressing criticism on social media.



Figure 1. Problem Identification

This finding was strengthened through the results of interviews with members of Karang Taruna. The chairman of Karang Taruna said that most of the participants understood the importance of maintaining good manners in digital communication, but did not know how to apply the principle of politeness in concrete terms when interacting on social media. Some participants also thought that communication through social media was freer than direct communication, so the use of informal language was considered something natural. This condition shows that there is a gap between the understanding of communication ethics and its implementation in daily life.

2. Implementation of the Communication Ethics Strengthening Program Using the Javanese Speech Level

Communication in the digital space is a representation of a person's character. There is a Javanese proverb that reads *ajining dhiri dumunung ana in lathi*. The proverb has a meaning, namely a person's value or self-esteem lies in his speech. "*Lathi*" (tongue) is not only interpreted as a means of speech, but also as a symbol of speech,

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communication attitude, honesty, and the ability to control oneself in expressing opinions. The proverb teaches that every speech reflects a person's character and integrity. In communication ethics, language is not only a means of conveying messages, but also a means of building harmonious social relationships.

Based on the results of the problem identification, the researcher and the management of the Karang Taruna in Pulosari Village developed an educational program on the ethics of communicating on social media based on the Javanese speech level. The program is carried out in the form of socialization, interactive discussions, case studies, and polite digital communication simulations.

The material presented in the socialization activity consisted of the basic concepts of digital communication ethics, the negative impact of hate speech and cyberbullying, as well as the values of Javanese speech level that can be applied in communication on social media. Then an interactive discussion session was held between the resource persons and the participants (Figure 2). The case study activity aimed to understand the phenomenon of communication carried out by participants on social media. After that, the simulation involved the active role of all participants by applying the material that had been delivered by the resource person. These values include humility (*andhap asor*), empathy (*tepa salira*), placing oneself according to the situation (*empan papan*), and responsibility in conveying information.

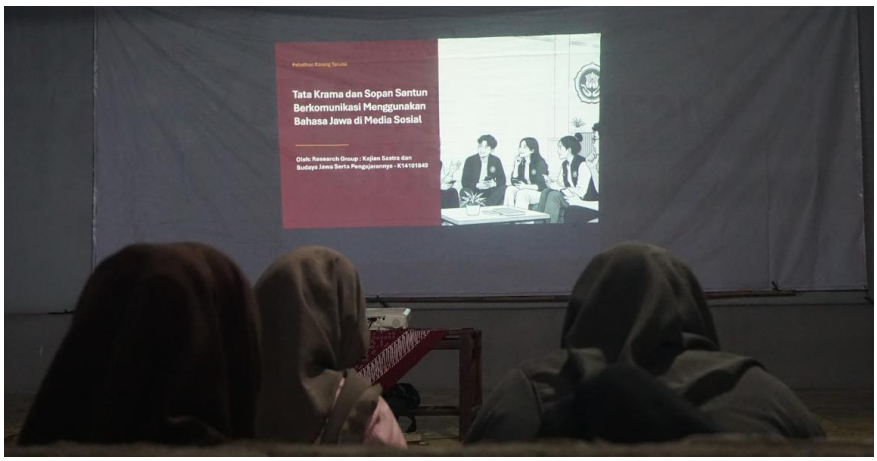


Figure 2. Program Implementation

In the case study session, participants were asked to analyze several examples of comments that are often found on social media. Participants then discussed less polite forms of communication and prepared alternative sentences that were more polite based on the principle of Javanese speech level or *unggah-ungguh basa*. This activity takes place in a participatory manner so that participants not only receive material, but also actively participate in the learning process.

3. Implementation of Javanese Speech Level Values in Digital Communication

The implementation of the program showed a change in participants' understanding of the importance of communication ethics on social media. Based on the results of observations and interviews after the training, participants began to

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realize that digital communication has the same social impact as face-to-face communication so it still requires politeness and responsibility. The implementation of the values of the Javanese speech level in communicating using digital media, including *tepa salira, andhap asor, empan papan*, and responsibility.

Tepa salira is one of the noble values in Javanese culture that teaches a person to put themselves in the shoes of others, have empathy, be tolerant, and consider the feelings and interests of others before acting or speaking. *Tepa salira* is interpreted as an attitude of measuring or judging others based on measures that also apply to oneself. This value encourages a person not to act arbitrarily and always consider the impact of his or her words and behavior on others. The value of *tepa salira* is the principle that is easiest for participants to understand. They state that before commenting or sharing information, it is necessary to consider its impact on others. This attitude encourages participants to be more careful in choosing words and avoid comments that have the potential to offend certain parties.

Andhap asor is one of the main values in Javanese ethics that teaches humility, not exalting oneself, and respecting others in every social interaction. In Javanese culture, *andhap asor* is manifested through a polite attitude in speaking, a willingness to listen to the opinions of others, and the ability to control the ego when interacting. A person who has a humble attitude is not easily proud of himself, does not underestimate others, and is able to accept criticism and differences of opinion with open arms. Therefore, this value is one of the important foundations in building harmonious social relationships. In addition, the value of *andhap asor* has also begun to be applied in digital communication. Participants showed a tendency to use more polite language when giving criticism or expressing opinions. They understand that differences of opinion do not have to be manifested through abusive or demeaning language of others.

Empan papan is one of the noble values in Javanese culture that teaches a person to be able to position themselves according to the situation, condition, time, place, and interlocutor. In Javanese philosophy, a person who has an *empan papan* attitude not only understands what to convey, but also knows when, where, to whom, and how the message is conveyed. Therefore, *empan papan* also shows social intelligence, namely the ability to read situations and adjust behavior without losing self-identity. The value of empan papan provides an understanding that the use of language must be adjusted to the situation, the media, and the interlocutor. Participants realize that communication within organizational groups, Karang Taruna's official accounts, and personal social media requires different language choices so that information can be received properly without causing misunderstandings.

Another change can be seen in the increased awareness of participants on the importance of verifying information before sharing it with others. This was proven in the practice session of communicating with their friends. Then there was an improvement, namely the selection of more polite words according to the Javanese speech level. This attitude shows the development of digital responsibility as part of the implementation of the value of the Javanese speech level in community life. Digital responsibility is not only related to compliance with the rule of law, but also includes

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moral and ethical awareness in producing, sharing, and responding to information in the digital space. Social media users not only have freedom of expression, but also have the responsibility to ensure that the information conveyed is correct, not misleading, not detrimental to others, and conveyed in polite language.

4. Program Reflections

The reflection stage (Figure 3) was carried out through discussions with all participants after the program was completed. The results of the reflection showed that participants assessed that the Javanese speech level material was very relevant to today's digital life. Most of the participants revealed that previously they viewed *unggah-ungguh basa* only related to the use of Javanese speech level (*ngoko lugu, ngoko alus, krama lugu*, and *krama alus*).



Figure 3. Program Reflections

After participating in the activity, participants understood that the Javanese speech level also contains universal values in the form of respect for others, self-control, empathy, and social responsibility that can be applied in digital communication. Participants also proposed that similar activities be carried out in a sustainable manner by involving village youth, other youth organizations, and village social media managers. Habituating communication ethics from a young age will help create a healthier, more inclusive, and free digital space from hate speech and cyberbullying.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the Javanese speech level has a strong relevance as a foundation for strengthening communication ethics on social media. Javanese cultural values, such as *tepa salira, andhap asor*, and *empan papan*, not only serve as a guideline in oral communication, but can also be internalized into digital communication practices. These values form an attitude of empathy, humility, the ability to adapt to the context of communication, and the awareness that every speech or upload reflects a person's character and dignity.

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Socialization, discussion, simulation, and reflection activities with Karang Taruna members succeeded in increasing participants' understanding of the importance of communication ethics on social media. Participants showed changes in attitudes in the form of increased prudence in choosing words, the ability to express opinions politely, awareness to respect differences of opinion, and responsibility in verifying information before sharing it. These changes show that the integration of Javanese speech level values with digital literacy is able to form more ethical and responsible communication behavior in the digital space.

The results of the study confirm that strengthening communication ethics on social media is not enough to be done through a regulatory approach or digital literacy alone, but needs to be supported by the internalization of local wisdom values that have lived in society. In this context, the Javanese speech level is a relevant cultural capital to build a polite, inclusive, and harmonious digital communication culture. Therefore, the values of the Javanese speech level can be integrated into various digital literacy programs, character education, youth organization development, and community empowerment activities as a strategy to form ethical digital citizens.

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