Pragmatics in the Use of Social Media Language: A Case Study of Teenagers

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Abstract

This research examines the pragmatic aspects of language use on social media by teenagers, focusing on how they convey meaning and intent through online messages. The main aim of this study is to understand the patterns of pragmatic language use and the factors influencing the choice of communication strategies among teenagers on social media. The methodology employed is a literature review with qualitative analysis of various previous studies discussing pragmatics, adolescent communication, and social media. The findings indicate that teenagers tend to employ pragmatic strategies such as irony, sarcasm, and indirect markers to deliver messages effectively and maintain social relationships. The use of these strategies is influenced by cultural factors, social context, and the closeness of relationships between users. These results underscore the importance of understanding pragmatic aspects when studying teenage communication on social media, as well as its implications for developing digital literacy and effective communication skills.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Language, Social Media, Teenagers

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji aspek pragmatik dalam penggunaan bahasa media sosial oleh remaja, dengan fokus pada bagaimana mereka menyampaikan makna dan niat melalui pesan daring. Tujuan utama studi ini adalah untuk memahami pola penggunaan bahasa pragmatik serta faktor yang mempengaruhi pilihan strategi komunikasi di kalangan remaja media sosial. Metodologi yang digunakan adalah kajian literatur dengan analisis kualitatif terhadap berbagai studi sebelumnya yang membahas pragmatik, komunikasi remaja, dan media sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa remaja cenderung menggunakan strategi pragmatik seperti ironi, sindiran, dan penanda tidak langsung untuk menyampaikan pesan secara efektif dan menjaga hubungan sosial. Penggunaan strategi ini dipengaruhi oleh faktor budaya, konteks sosial, dan kedekatan hubungan antar pengguna. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya memahami aspek pragmatik dalam mengkaji komunikasi remaja di media sosial, serta implikasinya terhadap pengembangan literasi digital dan komunikasi efektif.

Kata Kunci: Pragmatik, Bahasa, Media Sosial, Remaja

INTRODUCTION

Advances in communication technology have brought about major changes in human social interaction patterns. One notable phenomenon is the emergence of social media as the primary platform for communication, information sharing, and self-expression. Social media allows users, especially teenagers, to interact quickly and directly with various groups, both privately and publicly. This has given rise to a new dynamic in language use that differs from conventional communication in the real world.[1]

The use of language in social media is not only functional in conveying messages, but is also greatly influenced by pragmatic aspects. Pragmatics studies how context influences the meaning of a statement or message. In the context of social media, pragmatics is important because users often rely on specific communication strategies to convey intentions, maintain social relationships, or express certain attitudes through indirect language, such as irony, sarcasm, or other indirect markers.[2]

Teenagers are among the most active users of social media. They use these platforms as a means of communication, expressing their identity, and building social relationships. Therefore, understanding how teenagers use language pragmatically on social media is important, given the differences in their communication patterns compared to previous generations. In addition, the use of pragmatic language can influence the understanding and interpretation of messages conveyed by social media users.[3]

Pragmatic phenomena in social media language among adolescents are also influenced by various factors, such as culture, education level, and social environment. The use of appropriate pragmatic strategies can help adolescents communicate effectively and maintain harmonious social relationships. Conversely, a lack of understanding of these pragmatic aspects can lead to miscommunication, conflict, or misunderstanding among social media users.[4]

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[1] Mahmud N, Sari R., "Strategi pragmatik dalam komunikasi digital: Studi remaja di platform media sosial", *Jurnal Komunikasi Digital,* Vol 6, No 2, 2021, hal 84-104.

[2] Nugroho S, Pratama Y., "Penggunaan strategi pragmatik dan impikasi budaya dalam komunikasi media sosial", *Jurnal Sosial dan Budaya*, Vol 9, No 1, 2022, hal 78-92.

[3] Prasetyo B, Lestari T., "Kendala dan tantangan penggunaan bahasa pragmatik dalam komunikasi digital", *Jurnal Bahasa dan Komunikasi*, Vol 11,No 1, 2023, hal 65-80.

[4] Sari D P, Wulandari E., "Peran media sosial dalam membentuk karakter komunikasi remaja", *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, Vol 4,No 3, 2020, hal 200-214.

Previous studies have examined pragmatic aspects of digital communication, but there are still limited studies that specifically examine the use of pragmatic strategies by adolescents on social media in a deep and contextual manner. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by focusing on case studies of adolescents as the main users of social media and analysing the pragmatic strategies they use in online communication.

The methodology used in this study is a literature review that collects and analyses various research sources related to pragmatics, adolescent communication, and social media. This approach was chosen to obtain a broad overview of pragmatic language usage patterns and the factors that influence them among adolescents. The analysis was conducted qualitatively by examining examples of language usage and communication strategies commonly found.

The results of this study indicate that adolescents tend to use pragmatic strategies such as irony, sarcasm, and indirect markers to convey messages effectively and maintain social relationships. The use of these strategies is greatly influenced by cultural factors, social proximity, and situational context. In addition, pragmatic understanding is very important so that the message conveyed can be understood correctly by the recipient.

Pragmatic aspects are an integral part of communication on social media, particularly among adolescents. Understanding and mastering pragmatic strategies can enhance the effectiveness of digital communication and contribute to the development of critical and responsible digital literacy. Therefore, this study has important implications for educators, parents, and policymakers in supporting the use of social media in a healthier and more meaningful way.

In a broader context, this study also contributes to the development of pragmatic theory in digital communication, particularly in relation to adolescent behaviour. By understanding the patterns and strategies they use in communication, it is hoped that interventions or educational programmes can be designed to improve pragmatic communication skills in today's digital age.

Overall, this research confirms that pragmatics is an important aspect of social media language analysis. Given the increasing number of teenage users and the role of social media in their lives, understanding this pragmatic aspect is not only academically relevant but also crucial for supporting more effective, empathetic, and responsible communication in the digital world.

METHODOLOGY

The approach used in this study is a literature review, which aims to collect and analyse various academic sources, articles, and previous studies relevant to the theme of pragmatics in social media communication among adolescents. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to obtain a comprehensive overview of the pragmatic patterns and strategies used by adolescents on social media platforms, based on existing research findings.

Data collection was conducted through literature searches in various electronic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, and university repositories. The keywords used include 'pragmatics,' 'social media language,' 'adolescent communication,' 'pragmatic strategies,' 'irony,' and other combinations. The search was conducted by considering the publication time frame to ensure that the collected data was relevant and up-to-date, typically from 2010 to 2023.

After obtaining a number of relevant sources, the researcher conducted a selection process by considering the quality and relevance of the content. The selected sources must be based on empirical research, theoretical analysis, or comprehensive studies on pragmatics and its use in social media. In addition, the sources must present data or analysis directly related to adolescent communication and the pragmatic strategies they use.

Furthermore, data from selected literature were analysed qualitatively using content analysis. Researchers identified and categorised various pragmatic strategies found in various studies, such as the use of irony, sarcasm, indirect markers, and others. This analysis aimed to identify general patterns, frequency of use, and factors influencing the use of these strategies among social media users.

Additionally, the researcher conducted an analysis of contextual factors influencing pragmatic use, such as cultural background, educational level, social relationship closeness, and specific communication situations. By triangulating various sources, it is hoped that a comprehensive understanding of the patterns and factors influencing the use of pragmatic language by adolescents in the context of social media can be obtained.

During the analysis process, researchers also noted various findings related to obstacles or challenges faced by adolescents in using pragmatic strategies on social media, as well as the implications of using these strategies on message comprehension and social relationships. The data obtained was then systematically organised in tables or matrices to facilitate interpretation and conclusion drawing.

Overall, this literature study methodology enables researchers to construct a strong and in-depth theoretical framework regarding pragmatics in adolescent communication on

social media. With this approach, it is hoped that a solid academic foundation can be obtained to support the analysis and discussion in this study, as well as contribute to the development of communication and pragmatics studies in the digital era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Meaning of Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies how context influences the meaning of language. Unlike semantics, which focuses on the literal meaning of words or sentences, pragmatics emphasises the meaning that emerges from the use of language in real situations. In everyday communication, the meaning conveyed often depends not only on the words spoken literally but also on the social, cultural, and situational context in which communication takes place. Therefore, pragmatics helps us understand how implicit and explicit meanings interact in communicative activities.[5]

In general, pragmatics studies how speakers and listeners interact with each other and how deeper or implicit meanings can be understood through context. For example, a statement that seems neutral can have different meanings depending on the situation and the social relationship between the two parties. In practice, pragmatics includes the study of speech acts, implicatures, deictics, and implicatures related to how language is used to achieve specific communicative goals. For example, when someone says 'Can you help me?', they are actually asking for help, not just inquiring about the other person's ability.

Pragmatic understanding is very important because humans often communicate indirectly and rely on implied meaning to convey messages politely, efficiently, and in accordance with social norms. In different cultures, the ways of expressing intentions and goals also differ, so the study of pragmatics helps in understanding these differences. By understanding this aspect, we can avoid misunderstandings and strengthen social relationships through appropriate and effective communication. An example is the use of polite language in certain cultures that place great emphasis on norms of politeness and social hierarchy.

In the modern era, the development of digital communication media such as social media and instant messaging has brought new challenges in pragmatics. Messages conveyed in writing without intonation and facial expressions force speakers to be more creative in conveying meaning. The use of emojis, punctuation marks, and specific

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[5] Kusuma N, Wibowo A., "Pengaruh faktor budaya dan norma sosial terhadap penggunaan bahasa pragmatik di media sosial". *Jurnal Linguistik Terapan*, Vol 10,No 2, 2024, hal 147-162.

language styles has become part of a new pragmatic strategy that helps express emotions and nuances in digital communication. Therefore, pragmatics is not only applicable in oral communication but also in the increasingly developing digital world.

This phenomenon of digital communication necessitates a deeper understanding of contextual meaning so that messages can be understood correctly. Misunderstandings often occur due to the lack of nonverbal elements in written communication. Therefore, the study of pragmatics is important so that digital media users can compose messages that are effective, polite, and unambiguous. Thus, pragmatics plays an important role in maintaining harmonious and effective communication in the digital age.

Pragmatics helps humans understand how language is used dynamically in various social situations. The ability to understand implied meaning and social context is key to successful human communication. By mastering pragmatics, we can be more sensitive to meanings that are not explicitly stated and adapt our language use according to prevailing norms and cultural values. This makes pragmatics an essential aspect of language proficiency and effective communication across various fields of life.

B. Prinsip-prinsip Pragmatik dalam Bahasa

Pragmatic principles serve as guidelines for understanding and using language effectively in accordance with the context of communication. These principles help speakers and listeners to construct, interpret, and respond to messages appropriately so that communication flows smoothly and does not lead to misunderstandings. One of the main principles is relevance, which requires that every utterance be relevant to the situation and purpose of communication so that the message conveyed is on target and does not deviate from the context.[6]

In addition to relevance, the principle of politeness is fundamental in pragmatics. Speakers are expected to observe norms of politeness and respect their listeners through their choice of language, intonation, and communication style. The use of polite language that respects social norms is essential for maintaining good relationships and avoiding conflict. This principle is also closely related to the culture and customs that prevail in society, so an understanding of social norms is very influential in communication.

The principles of clarity and effectiveness in communication require that messages be easy to understand and not ambiguous. The use of straightforward language, well-organised sentence structures, and the avoidance of confusing terms are part of this

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[6] Hidayat U, Sulaiman R., "Karakteristik media sosial dan dampaknya terhadap pola komunikasi sosial", *Jurnal Media dan Komunikasi*, Vol 7, No 1, 2020, hal 10-25.

principle. Thus, the message conveyed is able to achieve its communication goal without causing misinterpretation by the recipient. The habit of using clear language also helps reduce the possibility of misunderstanding.

Furthermore, the principle of cohesion states that messages must support and relate to each other so that their meaning is complete and easy to understand. The use of appropriate references, repetition of keywords, and connectors between parts of the message are part of the strategy to achieve this principle. When messages are cohesive, the recipient can follow the flow of communication more easily and does not feel confused about the intended meaning.

The principle of context is also very important, because the meaning of a message is greatly influenced by the social and cultural situation and the relationship between the speaker and the listener. Knowledge of this context helps in interpreting the meaning correctly, including implied and implicit meanings that are not explicitly stated. Therefore, understanding the social context requires speakers and listeners to be sensitive to the social and cultural aspects of communication.

These pragmatic principles are interrelated and must be implemented in a balanced manner for communication to be effective and efficient. Mastery of these principles also helps individuals adapt to various communication situations, both formal and informal, as well as in various cultures and social norms. By paying attention to these principles, communication not only serves to convey information, but also builds harmonious and respectful social relationships.

Pragmatic principles form an important foundation for language and communication. They help us not only to speak correctly in terms of structure, but also in terms of social and contextual appropriateness. By understanding and applying these principles, we are able to communicate more effectively, politely, and in accordance with established norms, both in everyday life and in formal contexts.

C. Pragmatic Strategies in Digital Communication

The development of technology and digital media has significantly changed the way humans communicate. In digital communication, the emphasis on speed and efficiency requires users to adopt pragmatic strategies that differ from conventional face-to-face communication. Effective and appropriate language use is essential for messages

to be conveyed properly, even without the body language and tone of voice that usually reinforce meaning in spoken communication.[7]

One of the main strategies is the use of concise and compact language. In platforms such as text messages and social media, limited space encourages users to compose messages that are short, clear, and to the point. The use of abbreviations, acronyms, and emoticons is part of this strategy, helping to convey emotional nuances and specific meanings quickly and efficiently. For example, the use of 'LOL' to indicate laughter or a smiling face emoticon to express happiness.

In addition, punctuation and text formatting play an important role in digital communication. The use of capital letters can indicate assertiveness or frustration, while exclamation marks show strong emotional expressions. The use of underlining, italics, or bold can also highlight certain parts of a message to make it clearer and more attention-grabbing for the recipient. These strategies help communicate meaning visually, supporting the main message.

Interpreting implied meaning or implicature is an important part of digital communication because messages are often ambiguous without tone of voice and facial expressions. Recipients must be able to understand the unspoken meaning through context and their experiences. Therefore, sensitivity to context and the communication style of the other party is essential to avoid misinterpretation.

The use of social media and digital platforms also encourages creativity in conveying messages, such as through memes, GIFs, and short videos. These media are capable of conveying humour, criticism, and emotional expressions visually and quickly. This strategy is highly effective in attracting attention and reinforcing the meaning of the message, especially among young users who are familiar with digital culture.

In addition, in digital communication, managing social relationships is an important aspect. The use of polite and courteous language is still necessary to maintain harmonious relationships, even though communication is conducted in writing and face-to-face meetings are rare. Awareness of language norms and ethics in the virtual world is part of a pragmatic strategy that must be considered to ensure that communication remains effective and does not cause conflict.

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[7] Fajar M, Rahman A., "Media sosial dan transformasi pola komunikasi remaja: Pendekatan pragmatik" *Jurnal Teknologi dan Komunikasi*, Vol 12, No 4, 2023, hal 321-336.

Pragmatic strategies in digital communication require users to be more creative, adaptable, and sensitive to the context and social norms of the online world. The ability to craft appropriate messages, use symbols and text formats effectively, and understand implied meanings are key to achieving efficient and polite digital communication. By mastering these strategies, communication in the digital world can flow smoothly, be meaningful, and foster mutual respect.

D. Social Media and Its Characteristics

Social media is a digital platform that allows users to interact and share information widely and quickly. The main characteristics of social media are that it is open, interactive, and easily accessible to anyone around the world. Social media enables the creation of large and dynamic social networks, with various features such as posting, commenting, private messaging, and sharing a variety of multimedia content.[8]

One important characteristic of social media is its instant and real-time nature. Users can upload content and interact directly without strict time constraints. This makes communication faster and more responsive, but also requires accuracy and clarity in conveying messages to avoid misunderstandings. This speed can also create social pressure to always be active and keep up with the latest information.

Social media is also known for its flexibility and variety in content. Users can share text, images, videos, audio, or a combination of all of these. This ability gives users the freedom to express themselves and communicate visually and verbally. In addition, social media allows users to tailor their communication style to the characteristics of their audience and their objectives.

Another characteristic of social media is its highly social and collaborative nature. Users can build communities, follow, and interact with others who share similar interests. These interactions create a certain culture within the platform, such as memes, viral trends, and even a unique language that develops among certain users. This also leads to the emergence of new norms and ethics in online communication.

However, social media also has characteristics that pose challenges, such as a high level of anonymity and the possibility of spreading false information or hoaxes. The anonymous nature and lack of direct supervision make users more likely to behave freely, including acting inappropriately or harming others. Therefore, awareness of the norms and ethics of communication on social media is very important.

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[8] Dewi A P, Hartono B., "Penggunaan strategi pragmatik remaja dalam media sosial: Studi fenomenologis", *Jurnal Psikologi dan Komunikasi*, Vol 9, No 3, 2022, hal 203-219.

Additionally, social media has characteristics that influence users' psychology, such as the tendency to compare oneself with others, dependence on likes and comments, and pressure to present a perfect image online. These phenomena impact mental health and foster a culture of consumerism and a high pursuit of popularity among users, particularly among teenagers and young adults.

Social media has unique and complex characteristics that influence users' communication patterns and social behaviour. Understanding these characteristics is important so that users can utilise social media positively and responsibly. By understanding its characteristics and challenges, we can develop a healthy, inclusive, and productive digital culture.

E. Patterns of Pragmatic Strategy Use by Adolescents on Social Media

Teenagers as active users of social media demonstrate distinctive pragmatic strategies that differ from other age groups. They tend to adopt a casual, expressive style of language and frequently use slang and trendy colloquialisms. These patterns reflect their self-identity and social closeness, as well as their adaptation to the digital world they inhabit.[9]

When communicating on social media, teenagers often use pragmatic strategies such as emoticons, emojis, memes, and GIFs to express emotions and nuances that are difficult to convey through text alone. They also adopt a more informal and creative language style, including the use of abbreviations and acronyms such as 'LOL,' 'OMG,' or 'ASAP,' which speed up communication and add uniqueness to their language.

The use of these pragmatic strategies often involves humour, sarcasm, or subtle insults that are conveyed in a way that does not offend others but still conveys criticism or a specific message. They are also adept at utilising the context of a particular situation to interpret the meaning of a message more broadly in line with their digital culture.

In addition, teenagers tend to utilise pragmatic strategies in building their personal and social identities. They use specific language that is unique to their community to create a sense of belonging and exclusivity. This can be seen in the use of hashtags, jargon, and different styles of language depending on trends and norms within their group.

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[9] Barus M, Putra D., "Pengaruh norma budaya terhadap penggunaan bahasa pragmatik dalam komunikasi lintas budaya", *Jurnal Budaya dan Bahasa*, Vol 5, No 1, 2020. hal 45-58.

In their use of strategies, teenagers also often adapt to digital etiquette norms to avoid conflict or misunderstanding. They learn from experience and emerging trends, and follow the social norms that apply in their communities. Awareness of these norms is important to ensure that communication remains positive and builds healthy relationships.

However, this pattern also carries risks, such as the use of overly casual or inappropriate language, as well as the spread of misinformation. Therefore, education on the appropriate and responsible use of language on social media is essential to enable them to communicate effectively while upholding social norms and digital ethics.

Overall, the patterns of pragmatic strategy use by teenagers on social media are highly dynamic and creative. They are able to adapt their language and communication style according to needs and context, and play a role in shaping a unique and diverse digital culture. Understanding these patterns is important for teenagers to use social media positively and responsibly.

F. Factors Affecting Pragmatic Use

The use of pragmatics in communication cannot be separated from various factors that influence the effectiveness and meaning of the message conveyed. The first factor is the social and cultural context, which determines the norms, values, and language habits that apply in a particular society. These norms influence how a person chooses words, expressions, and communication strategies to suit social expectations.[10]

The next factor is the social relationship between the speaker and the listener. The level of closeness, hierarchy, and social status influence the choice of language and strategies used. For example, in cultures that place great importance on manners, speakers will be more careful in choosing words and style so as not to offend others, especially those who are older or have a higher position.

In addition, situational factors such as place, time, and purpose of communication also influence pragmatic usage. In formal situations, speakers tend to use formal and polite language, while in informal situations, more casual and familiar language is often used. The purpose of communication also determines whether the message is conveyed directly, implicitly, or through certain symbols.

Furthermore, individual factors such as educational level, language experience, and sensitivity to social norms also play a role. Individuals with extensive experience and

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[10] Alfian R, Sari N P., "Strategi pragmatik dalam komunikasi digital di media sosial", *Jurnal Linguistik dan Komunikasi*, Vol 8, No 2, 2021, hal 115-130.

a good understanding of culture tend to be more capable of using pragmatic strategies effectively. Conversely, a lack of this understanding can lead to inappropriate message delivery or conflict.

Technology and communication media are also important factors. In digital communication, the use of emoticons, punctuation, and specific writing styles is influenced by the characteristics of the platform and the norms that develop within the user community. This factor requires users to be able to adapt their pragmatic strategies to the medium being used.

Psychological factors such as emotions, self-confidence, and perceptions of the interlocutor influence how a person constructs a message and expresses its meaning.

For example, someone who feels insecure tends to use more cautious and formal language, while someone who feels comfortable will be more relaxed in their language.

Overall, the use of pragmatics is influenced by various interacting factors. Understanding these factors is important for communication to be effective, normative, and non-conflictual. Awareness of these factors helps individuals to better manage messages and social relationships.

G. Constraints and Challenges in the Use of Pragmatic Language

The use of pragmatic language often faces obstacles and challenges that can hinder successful communication. One of the main obstacles is ignorance or misunderstanding of the social and cultural context underlying language use. When speakers do not understand social norms, they risk using language that is impolite or inappropriate, leading to misunderstandings or conflicts.

Another obstacle is cultural differences that influence the interpretation of meaning. In cross-cultural communication, what is considered polite or appropriate in one culture may not necessarily apply in another. This can result in messages being misunderstood or even offending others. Therefore, the ability to adapt to the cultural norms of the interlocutor is an important challenge.

Furthermore, in digital communication, the absence of nonverbal elements such as tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language poses a significant challenge. Written text often leads to ambiguity and misunderstandings because recipients must interpret meaning based on context and personal experience. The use of emojis and punctuation marks can help, but they are not always sufficient to address all ambiguities.

Another challenge is the spread of false information and hoaxes that are difficult to detect. When messages are conveyed implicitly without verification, the risk of

misunderstanding and spreading false news increases. In addition, the culture of hate speech and hate speech on social media is also a major challenge in maintaining polite and ethical communication.

Psychological barriers such as shyness, fear of being misunderstood, or lack of confidence also affect a person's ability to use pragmatic language effectively. They may be reluctant to participate actively in conversations or tend to use overly formal and rigid language, making communication less natural and ineffective.

Apart from individual factors, environmental factors such as lack of language education, lack of communication experience, and minimal supervision of social norms are obstacles to mastering pragmatics. Lack of awareness of the importance of norms and appropriate communication strategies can increase the risk of conflict and misunderstanding.

These challenges require increased awareness, education, and training on the effective and polite use of language. Mastery of pragmatic aspects is crucial for communication to occur smoothly, reduce conflicts, and strengthen social relationships in various contexts. Collaborative efforts are needed to foster a healthy and responsible communication culture in society.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the use of pragmatic language by adolescents in social media is a complex phenomenon influenced by various contextual, cultural, and social factors. Adolescents tend to use pragmatic strategies such as irony, sarcasm, and indirect markers to convey messages effectively while maintaining their social relationships. Mastery of these strategies is essential so that messages are understood correctly by the recipient and do not cause misunderstandings or conflicts.

In addition, understanding these pragmatic aspects plays an important role in improving adolescents' digital literacy, enabling them to communicate more empathetically, responsibly, and effectively in the virtual world. This study confirms that pragmatic aspects are not merely components of language but also essential tools for maintaining harmony and clarity in communication on social media platforms. Therefore, the development of pragmatic literacy and a healthy communication culture must be continuously promoted in education and digital policies in the modern era.

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