

Manifestations of phaticity in podcast interaction: A discursive-integrative emic-epistemological pragmatic analysis within an ostensive-inferential framework

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Received: December 2, 2025

Revised: March 13, 2026

Accepted: March 15, 2026

KEYWORDS

Communication
Third-Wave
Pragmatics
Discursive
Pragmatics
Phatic
Communion
Podcast
Interaction
Ostensive-
Inferential

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the manifestations and pragmatic meanings of phaticity in podcast interactions through a discursive-integrative emic-epistemological pragmatic approach grounded in the ostensive-inferential framework. The research aims to uncover how phatic practices are produced, interpreted, and function interactionally within contemporary podcast discourse. The data consist of podcast utterances that exemplify various forms of phatic communion in natural language use. The substantive data source comprises podcast discourse containing identifiable phatic elements, while the locational data source includes a range of podcasts accessed throughout the research period. Data were collected using a non-participatory observation method, specifically through close and repeated listening to the selected podcast episodes. A systematic note-taking technique was employed to document relevant phatic expressions, enabling effective data organization, categorization, and analytical traceability. Data collection was deemed complete once all instances had been exhaustively classified into analytically relevant types serving as the basis for interpretation. Data analysis was conducted using a contextual pragmatic method that integrates conventional context and virtual context, with particular attention to the multimodal cybertextual environment of podcast interactions. In line with the principles of third-wave pragmatics, the analysis also incorporates social, societal, and cultural dimensions, emphasizing participants' emic perspectives while maintaining epistemological rigor. The analytical procedure involved data identification, classification or reduction, pragmatic interpretation, and systematic presentation of findings. The findings reveal three dominant manifestations of pragmatic meanings of phaticity in podcast interactions: (1) greeting-related phatic meanings, functioning to initiate and sustain interpersonal engagement; (2) humor-related phatic meanings, serving to build rapport and interpersonal alignment; and (3) emphasis-related phatic meanings, which reinforce attentiveness and interactional involvement. These findings demonstrate that phaticity in podcast discourse operates as a dynamic pragmatic resource shaped by inferential intentions, discursive context, and digitally mediated interaction.

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Introduction

Phatic phenomena are frequently conflated with small talk, despite the two being conceptually distinct. Small talk constitutes only a limited subset of phatic behavior and is culturally bounded,

particularly within communities that favor indirectness and reduced explicitness in interaction (Senft, 2012; Wang & Tucker, 2016; Žegarac & Clark, 1999). Phatic communion, by contrast, serves broader social functions, including maintaining interpersonal cohesion, signaling social involvement, and negotiating relational alignment. Accordingly, phaticity should be understood not merely as a politeness strategy but as a socially embedded pragmatic practice shaped by cultural norms and interactional demands (Rahardi, 2017; Rahardi, 2019a).

The concept of phatic communion was first introduced by Malinowski in his ethnographic study of the Trobriand Islands. However, a persistent terminological misinterpretation—equating *communion* with *communication*—has obscured the distinction between social bonding and information exchange (Coupland et al., 1992; Rahardi, 2019). Clarifying this distinction is essential, as phatic communion prioritizes participation and social togetherness over propositional content. This conceptual precision becomes increasingly important in contemporary media contexts such as podcasts, where linguistic performance, social presence, and interactional alignment intersect.

Scholars have conceptualized phaticity from diverse theoretical perspectives. Rahardi refers to it as *linguistic phaticity*, Kridalaksana frames it as a *phatic category*, and Leech characterizes it as *breaking the silence*. Although these views underscore the relational function of phatic expressions, they offer limited explanatory depth unless situated within a framework that accounts for social values, interpretive norms, and interactional expectations (Ameka, 1992; Frosh, 2011; Marsh, 1989). This analytical need is addressed by discursive pragmatics grounded in an emic–epistemological perspective, which conceptualizes meaning as co-constructed by participants and interpretable only through the lived categories of the speech community.

In discursive pragmatics with an emic–epistemological orientation, analysis aims to apprehend meaning from within a community’s own interpretive system. The emic stance requires attention to how speakers conceptualize categories, norms, and interactional strategies, while the epistemological dimension foregrounds pragmatic knowledge as emerging from social experience, discursive practice, and communal interpretation rather than universal abstraction. Consequently, the study of phatic communion becomes an inquiry into relationality, social positioning, and communicative ideologies as enacted in everyday discourse (Porter, 2017; Schandorf, 2013; Žegarac & Clark, 1999).

This epistemic–emic orientation gains analytical force when integrated with Rahardi’s five-context pragmatic model: social, societal, cultural, situational, and cybertextual contexts. These contextual layers function as inferential cues through which interlocutors interpret phatic meanings. Among them, cybertextual context is especially crucial in podcast interaction, where multimodality—encompassing aural, visual, gestural, spatial, and linguistic resources—produces layered signals that guide interpretation. Within such environments, even seemingly trivial expressions may index greeting, emphasis, or humor depending on the accompanying multimodal cues (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2018; Bezemer & Kress, 2016; Rahardi & Firdaus, 2023).

The present study adopts discursive pragmatics as situated within the second wave of pragmatic development, which prioritizes discourse and *face* as central analytic constructs. Yet, the study also integrates the ostensive–inferential model to explain how phatic communion functions within digital interactional spaces (Harley, 2013; Scollon & Scollon, 2001; Scott-Phillips, 2015). This integration allows for an account of pragmatics that recognizes not only the negotiation of face within discourse but also the cognitive processes through which listeners connect ostensive cues with inferential reasoning to arrive at intended meanings.

According to Sperber and Wilson’s ostensive–inferential model, every utterance contains two layers of information and two layers of intention—informational and intuitive. Podcasts, as a form of public spoken discourse, rely heavily on both. Utterances that appear casual or humorous often function as ostensive signals designed to direct listeners’ attention to socially relevant meanings. Listeners must mobilize contextual knowledge, multimodal cues, and shared background assumptions to infer the speaker’s intuitive intention. In this sense, phatic communion in podcasts is not merely conversational filler; it is a relevance-driven relational strategy that fosters engagement, solidarity, and co-presence (Rahardi, 2019c).

Previous studies on phatic communion have focused largely on educational or classroom contexts, yielding recurring findings on acceptance, refusal, invitation, gratitude, and humor. This study extends the scope by applying a combined discursive-emic epistemological and ostensive–inferential framework to podcast discourse (Arundale, 2013; Haugh, 2006). Using a qualitative approach and contextual analysis, it fills an evident research gap and proposes a more integrative analytic model capable of capturing phaticity as a socio-cognitive practice that operates within the multilayered communicative environment of digital media (Rahardi & Budhiono, 2024).

Method

The present study on the forms and pragmatic meanings of phaticity in podcasts adopts a descriptive-qualitative approach with an interpretative orientation. This approach was selected because the primary aim is not to test hypotheses or produce statistical generalizations but to identify, describe, and formulate pragmatic rules of phaticity as they naturally manifest in podcast interactions. The study aligns with contemporary discourse and pragmatic research, emphasizing analytical depth, contextual sensitivity, and the interpretation of meaning within social relations and the linguistic norms prevailing in the speech community.

The research data consist of spoken segments in podcasts that exhibit phatic expressions and their pragmatic meanings. The substantive data sources are podcast discourses containing observable instances of phaticity, while the locational data sources comprise various channels, platforms, and podcast episodes accessed during the research period (Fox & Alldred, 2023; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Data selection was purposive, focusing on material relevant to the linguistic phenomena under investigation, ensuring a representative and sufficiently rich dataset for analysis.

Data were collected using the observational method (simak), complemented by a non-participant attentive observation technique, where the researcher closely monitored podcast discourse without participating in its production. A note-taking technique was employed to systematically record all instances of phatic expressions (Mahsun, 2007). Each data segment was coded to facilitate organization and classification. Data collection continued until data saturation was achieved, meaning that no new significant forms or meanings of phaticity emerged relevant to the research focus.

Data analysis was conducted using a contextual analysis method, in which context plays a central role in interpreting the pragmatic meanings of phatic expressions. The analysis integrated both conventional and virtual contexts, particularly cybercontextual contexts characterized by multimodality, including visual, gestural, aural, spatial, and linguistic dimensions inherent in podcasts. Following the paradigm of third-wave pragmatics, the study also considered social, societal, and cultural contexts as bases for inferential understanding of speakers' intuitive meanings (Rahardi, 2019b; Rahardi, 2023). The analytical process involved data identification, reduction or classification, interpretation based on pragmatic theory, and the presentation of findings as systematically formulated rules of phaticity.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, the study employed data and theoretical triangulation. Data triangulation involved comparing findings across multiple podcast episodes and varying situational contexts, while theoretical triangulation combined frameworks from emic-epistemological discursive pragmatics, third-wave pragmatics, and the ostensive-inferential communication model (de Saussure, 2013; Kazemian, 2018; Sikka, 2008). This triangulative integration ensures that the interpretation of pragmatic meanings of phaticity is both empirically grounded and theoretically robust, providing a credible contribution to the development of contemporary pragmatic studies.

Results and Discussion

This study successfully formulated several rules concerning the pragmatic meanings of phatic expressions in podcast conversations, which include: (1) phaticity serving a greeting function, (2) phaticity manifested through humor or joking, and (3) phaticity functioning as a form of emphasis or reinforcement. The greeting function is exemplified in data segments 1 to 3, humor-related phaticity appears in data segments 4 to 8, while the emphasis function is observable in data segments 8 and 10. In the following sections, each category of pragmatic meaning will be elaborated in detail, providing a comprehensive account of its forms, functions, and contextual realizations.

1. Phaticity in Greeting Category

Phatic language functions not only to initiate conversation or fill interactional gaps but also as an expression of politeness, serving to show respect, maintain etiquette, and foster positive relationships between speakers and interlocutors. Among its most common forms, greetings act as interactional triggers that capture attention and build rapport, with their variation shaped by situational context and social proximity (Carbaugh & van Over, 2013; Haugh et al., 2013; Locher & Graham, 2010). In podcast communication, greetings are typically delivered in a relaxed and familiar manner, creating a warm and comfortable atmosphere for both hosts and listeners, exemplifying phaticity as a medium for social engagement and interpersonal connection.

Data 1



OKI RENGGA, AGAK LAEN URUSAN CINTA KE IBUNYA - NGOBROL DI WA EPS.3

Fig 1. Greeting

Source of data : <https://youtu.be/X9Qsg-rr17M?si=RxV3NSU50IaCFcpz>

Discursive Context : In segment 1:39 of the podcast Ngobrol di WA Episode 3 on the Wendy Cagur YouTube channel, titled “OKI RENGGA, AGAK LAEN URUSAN CINTA KE IBUNYA”, hosts Andika and Wendy welcomed guest Oki Rengga into the studio. Andika spontaneously compared the green-dominated studio to the PSMS Medan locker room, referencing Oki’s background as a former national team player. Delivering the humorous greeting, “Welcome to the PSMS Medan locker room,” while gesturing and laughing, Andika initiated interaction with a light, informal salutation that simultaneously functioned as humor and social engagement.

This utterance exemplifies phatic communication in the category of casual greetings, where the primary purpose is not to convey literal information about the location but to establish interpersonal rapport at the outset of interaction. By leveraging a local reference (PSMS Medan), the host created socially and culturally meaningful humor that resonated with both the guest and the audience, demonstrating attentiveness to the guest’s identity and prior experiences while easing initial social tension.

From a pragmatic perspective, this instance illustrates how phatic expressions serve to maintain social continuity and foster a positive interactional atmosphere. The humorous greeting allowed the host and guest to transition smoothly into substantive conversation, emphasizing the role of informal, humor-infused salutations in creating a relaxed, friendly, and socially cohesive environment at the beginning of podcast interactions (Lau et al., 2022; Maulida et al., 2022). Nonverbal cues such as laughter and gestural emphasis further reinforce the utterance’s function as a social signal rather than factual information.

Data 2



CERITA DIBALIK WEDDING OF THE YEAR LUNA MAYA & MAXIME BOUTTIER!

Fig 2. Greeting

Source of data : <https://youtu.be/b3IYEuBpmwo?si=Xscuv-yy0cNaEawQ>

Discursive Context : This utterance occurs between 1:23 and 1:31 in the TS Media podcast *Cerita Dibalik Wedding Of The Year Luna Maya & Maxime Bouttier!*. Host Ersya Mayori welcomes Luna Maya, appearing for the first time on TS Talk after her marriage to Maxime Bouttier. Ersya greets the audience with “Haiiii... teman setia!” while waving to the camera, then humorously acknowledges Luna’s new status by saying, “Let’s roll out the carpet for Mbak Luna, this is your first return to TS Talk—not Miss Luna Maya, but Mrs. Bouttier...” Delivered with a cheerful, expressive tone, the utterance combines informal greetings, humor, and recognition of Luna’s changed social identity.

The utterance in this segment exemplifies phatic communication within the greeting category, operating through a Discursive Pragmatics framework with an emphasis on ostensive-inferential intent. It occurs at the beginning of the episode when Luna Maya appears as the main guest for the first time after her marriage to Maxime Bouttier. Host Ersya Mayori delivers the greeting, “Let’s roll out the carpet... not Miss Luna Maya, but Mrs. Bouttier,” accompanied by a hand wave toward the camera. The utterance

incorporates the metaphorical expression “roll out the carpet,” which in the Indonesian popular cultural context signifies symbolic honor, alongside an identity-based pun shifting “Miss” to “Mrs,” creating interpersonal humor. The ostensive gesture further signals that the salutation addresses both Luna and the virtual audience simultaneously, reinforcing communicative engagement.

From the perspective of Discursive Pragmatics, Ersas’s choice of relaxed, expressive, and socially nuanced language constructs social relations rather than conveying propositional information. The use of metaphor and light humor functions discursively to initiate interaction, stabilize interpersonal rapport, and establish a shared common ground among participants (Barbulet, 2013; Sun et al., 2021). This form of utterance reflects the conventions of Indonesian entertainment communication, where warmth, spontaneity, and playful relational markers serve as primary mechanisms for building social cohesion within media spaces.

Through the ostensive–inferential lens, Ersas’s speech demonstrates clear ostension via enthusiastic intonation, gestural emphasis, and the highlighting of Luna’s new marital status. These ostensive cues prompt the audience and guest to infer relational meaning: that Luna is a celebrated, honored guest and that the greeting is intended to create social closeness and relational alignment rather than convey literal information. Consequently, the pragmatic meaning of this phatic utterance is predominantly interpersonal and symbolic, opening the interaction with warmth, inclusivity, and humor, while facilitating emotional attunement and establishing a convivial atmosphere prior to the substantive conversation (Alexander, 2006; Mey, 2002; Waskul & Lust, 2004).

Data 3



Fig 3. Greeting

Source of data : <https://youtu.be/UWFg9Thb00c?si=ifpSEUGR6Mwjkkd4>

Discursive Context : In the opening segment (1:21) of the SHOWKESMAS podcast episode titled “Nunung: ‘Lu Boleh Bercandain Gua Apapun, Asal Jangan Ludahin Gua!’” on the Podkesmas YouTube channel, host Angga Nggok greets the audience and welcomes the special guest, senior comedian Nunung, with the utterance, “Kembali lagi di Showkesmas, dan kali ini spesial sekali karena kita kehadiran mami Nunung...” Delivered with enthusiastic intonation and accompanied by applause from the co-hosts, the greeting establishes a warm, respectful, and convivial atmosphere at the very start of the episode.

The utterance “Kembali lagi di Showkesmas, dan kali ini spesial sekali karena kita kehadiran mami Nunung...” occurs at the opening of the SHOWKESMAS podcast segment, serving as a phatic greeting that marks the introduction of Nunung as the main guest. Structurally, it combines verbal cues of welcome, acknowledgment of presence (“kita kehadiran”), and a familiar form of address (“mami Nunung”). While the expression does not include an explicit salutation such as “welcome,” the host’s intonation and phrasing fulfill the same function: initiating the interaction, signaling the transition to the main discussion, and establishing direct engagement with the guest (Driver, 2019; Goddard, 2010; Kulkarni, 2014). Within the discursive context of Indonesian entertainment podcasts, such utterances exemplify a relaxed, expressive, and emotionally close register commonly employed to create a convivial and friendly atmosphere.

Situationally, the utterance reflects the informal and intimate style typical of comedic talk shows. Nunung’s status as a widely recognized public figure enhances the “special” character of the greeting, prompting the host to employ a personal, warm address that combines humor and respect. The utterance thus functions less as propositional information and more as a social act, opening the space for interaction among the host, guest, and audience. Culturally, this pattern of salutation aligns with Indonesian media conventions, particularly in formats that privilege spontaneity, humor, and warmth, as conveyed through diction, intonation, and performative delivery.

From a Discursive Pragmatic perspective, the greeting constructs social meaning by managing interpersonal relationships. The host’s use of familiar naming, hyperbolic emphasis (“spesial sekali”), and

enthusiastic delivery fosters symbolic closeness, establishing common ground with the audience and stabilizing the social dynamics of the segment. Viewed through an ostensive–inferential lens, the host’s intonation, lexical choices, and accompanying nonverbal cues such as applause signal that the communicative intent is relational rather than informational (Rahardi & Budhiono, 2024; Wilson, 2003, 2017). Audiences infer that Nunung is honored and celebrated, the program is entering its main segment, and the intended atmosphere is friendly and engaging. Pragmatically, this phatic utterance exemplifies relational meaning in media interaction, strengthening social cohesion, facilitating emotional alignment, and enhancing audience involvement from the outset of the episode.

2. Phaticity in Joking Category

Humor and joking are hallmark practices of culturally grounded societies, serving to strengthen interpersonal bonds between speakers and their interlocutors. In educational contexts, teachers or lecturers who skillfully employ humor are often perceived as more engaging, fostering a warm and enjoyable learning atmosphere, whereas those lacking humor may be seen as rigid or unapproachable. Within Javanese culture, individuals who struggle to make lighthearted conversation are often labeled “ngemut inten,” reflecting difficulty in easing social interactions (Rahardi, 2019a). Pragmatically, humor can function as genuine phatic communication, yet it may also mask negative emotions such as sadness or anxiety, making context and speaker intent crucial for interpretation. In podcast interactions, phatic humor is frequently used to create a relaxed atmosphere, enhance rapport between hosts and guests, and maintain audience engagement, resulting in a dynamic, natural conversational flow.

Data 4



Fig 4. Jokes

Source of data : <https://youtu.be/Q5TUT6tV7mM?si=gWqP7P2wVyFLWdJf>

Discursive Context : This utterance occurs at 1:41 in the podcast *Ngobrol di WA EPS.5* on Wendy Cagur’s YouTube channel, titled “Hesti Purwadinata Kena Paku Di Kepala Santai Aja!!!” At the beginning of the episode, Andika opens with a relaxed tone, welcoming Hesti Purwadinata as the guest: “Before we start, we want to apologize because the last few episodes had male guests... now again a male...” (while gesturing toward Hesti and laughing), followed by a joke: “...actually we tried to find a female guest... looks like a female, but has a jawline.” This utterance exemplifies the informal, humorous style characteristic of Indonesian entertainment podcasts, where spontaneous jokes serve to lighten the mood and signal a close, relaxed rapport between host and guest.

This utterance exemplifies phatic communication in the joking category, emerging at the early stage of interaction as the host welcomes Hesti as a guest. Formally, the statement “now again a male” followed by a comment on her “jawline” employs humor through identity play and deliberate incongruity, creating a comedic effect. The joke relies on hyperbole and irony, as the host pretends to classify Hesti as male despite her being female. Within the discursive context of a comedic podcast, such utterances typify conversation openers that privilege entertainment over literal informational content, aligning with the genre’s reliance on spontaneity and lightheartedness to set the tone of the episode.

Situationally, the utterance occurs within a pre-established rapport between the host and Hesti, a public figure frequently appearing in entertainment media. This familiarity allows playful references to gender identity without threatening face, signaling interpersonal closeness rather than offense (Adu-Amankwah & McDowell, 2003; Hickey & Roderick, 2022). The audience interprets the comment not as a factual statement but as a device to ease the conversational atmosphere and highlight the chemistry between host and guest. Culturally, this style of humor leveraging identity play, hyperbole, and friendly mockery is pervasive in Indonesian entertainment, functioning to provoke laughter and foster warmth and engagement among participants and viewers.

From a Discursive Pragmatic perspective, the meaning of the utterance emerges through the host's management of social relationships and emotional proximity. The phrase "now again a male" serves as a social act marking the opening of interaction, orchestrating a relaxed, friendly, and humorous relational frame rather than conveying propositional content. Utilizing humor as a phatic strategy, the host discursively cultivates interpersonal cohesion, structures the conversational flow, and invites the audience to share the same comedic frame. Through an ostensive-inferential mechanism, the host's intonation, facial expressions, and wordplay signal that the communicative goal is relational and humorous, prompting the audience to infer that the joke functions as a warm, playful opening (Adu-Amankwah & McDowell, 2003; Wilson, 2017). Pragmatically, the utterance operates to strengthen social bonds, alleviate initial stiffness, and immerse the audience emotionally in the lighthearted atmosphere characteristic of comedic podcasting.

Data 5



HESTI PURWADINATA KENA PAKU DI KEPALA SANTAI AJA!!! - NGOBROL DI WA EPS. 5

Fig 5. Jokes

Source of data : <https://youtu.be/Q5TUT6tV7mM?si=gWqP7P2wVyFLWdjf>

Discourse Context : This utterance occurs at 1:49 in episode 5 of the podcast *Ngobrol di WA* on Wendy Cagur's YouTube channel, titled "Hesti Purwadinata Kena Paku Di Kepala Santai Aja!!!". Delivered by Andika Pratama during the opening segment, it serves to welcome Hesti Purwadinata, a female public figure known for her humor and frequent participation in comedy programs. Andika begins by playfully apologizing to the audience for the predominance of male guests in previous episodes and emphasizes that they aimed to feature a female guest to refresh the show's dynamic. Within this humorous framing, he quips, "She looks like a girl, but has a jawline," using a light, comedic intonation. Hesti responds with laughter, signaling mutual recognition that the remark is a playful joke rather than a serious statement, exemplifying the podcast's characteristic style of informal, humor-driven interaction.

This utterance exemplifies phatic communication within the joking category, aiming to initiate interaction through a hyperbolic humor strategy. Situationally, it occurs in the context of a podcast-based entertainment program that deliberately relies on a fluid, spontaneous, and informal communicative style. *Ngobrol di WA* cultivates a comic talk genre, where slightly exaggerated or absurd humor functions as a device to establish a relaxed atmosphere from the outset of the conversation. Within the Indonesian cultural context, jokes referencing gender stereotypes or specific physical traits frequently appear as elements of popular humor, particularly when participants share a close interpersonal relationship (Haugh et al., 2013; Locher & Graham, 2010). In the interaction between Andika and Hesti, this pre-existing familiarity creates shared background knowledge that allows the interpretation of the "jawline" joke as comedic hyperbole rather than an attack on identity.

From a Discursive Pragmatics perspective grounded in Inferential-Ostensive Meaning, the utterance carries dual layers of significance. Ostensively, the speaker (Andika) deliberately produces a statement that appears "incorrect" or contrary to fact—referring to a female guest as a "guy" or joking about her jawline. This ostensive incongruity signals to the interlocutors that the statement is not literal but humorous. Inferentially, listeners (both Hesti and the broader audience) interpret the remark as a social cue intended to ease the atmosphere, foster rapport, and elicit laughter as part of the interactional opening. This meaning is facilitated by the participants' shared understanding of the show's genre, the interpersonal relationship between host and guest, and the norms of Indonesian comedic communication.

The pragmatic function of the utterance is evident in its relational rather than informational purpose. The phatic act operates to open conversation non-formally, create interpersonal closeness between host and guest, signal the start of the entertainment segment, and sustain audience attention through playful banter (Lawless & Magrath, 2021; Wardman, 2021). Humor as an opening marker reinforces the

expectation that subsequent interaction will remain relaxed and friendly. Discursively, the utterance functions as a mechanism of interpersonal cohesion, maintaining a warm, convivial flow of interaction that aligns with the conventions of the podcast's comedic genre.

Data 6



Fig 6. Jokes

Source of data : <https://youtu.be/Q5TUT6tV7mM?si=gWqP7P2wVyFLWdJf>

Discursive Context : This utterance occurs at 3:23 in Ngobrol di WA EPS.5 on the Wendy Cagur YouTube channel, titled “Hesti Purwadinata Kena Paku Di Kepala Santai Aja!!!”. During the early segment, Wendy, Andika, and Hesti engage in light conversation about the podcast studio's bright green walls. Hesti remarks that the color evokes memories of her childhood home in Bogor, even commenting that the studio “takes her back to her childhood.” Wendy responds with playful humor: “So this is actually a psychologist’s room, and we’re going to explore your inner child...” The utterance parodies a therapeutic or psychological consultation context, referencing the notion of “inner child,” but delivers it in the program’s characteristic comedic style.

Wendy’s utterance exemplifies phatic humor, employed to sustain conversational flow within the characteristic comedic atmosphere of the digital entertainment podcast. The comment arises as Hesti reflects on her childhood, and instead of allowing the conversation to shift toward more personal or emotional territory, Wendy parodies the studio as a “psychologist’s room” and invokes the popular term “inner child.” This humorous intervention not only lightens the mood but also reorients the interaction toward playful entertainment, aligning with the genre’s expectations and the broader Indonesian media culture, where psychological terms are often appropriated for comic effect.

From a Discursive Pragmatic perspective grounded in Inferential–Ostensive meaning, Wendy’s remark carries dual layers (Rahardi & Budhiono, 2024). Ostensively, the exaggerated framing signals to participants that the utterance is non-literal, while inferentially, both Hesti and the audience interpret the intent as humorous, reinforcing warmth and preventing the conversation from becoming overly serious. This shared understanding relies on contextual knowledge of the show’s character, the established rapport among hosts, and conventions of popular humor.

Pragmatically, the utterance functions not to convey scientific notions of the “inner child,” but to maintain interactional rhythm, foster social cohesion, and sustain a relaxed conversational tempo. As a phatic device, it facilitates interpersonal bonding through playful teasing, entertains the audience with culturally resonant humor, and ensures the dialogue adheres to the light, comedic style of the podcast. In this way, Wendy’s quip operates as a cohesive, humor-driven strategy to preserve interactional continuity, strengthen social connections, and reinforce the podcast’s identity as a casual, engaging communicative space.

Data 7



Fig 7. Jokes

Source of data : <https://youtu.be/Q5TUT6tV7mM?si=gWqP7P2wVyFLWdJf>

Discursive Context : This utterance occurs in the podcast Ngobrol di WA EPS.5 on Wendy Cagur's YouTube channel, titled "HESTI PURWADINATA KENA PAKU DI KEPALA SANTAI AJA!!!" at 4:33. During a discussion on Hesti Purwadinata's expertise in construction materials and home renovation, Wendy expresses admiration for Hesti as the only female friend knowledgeable about tools, tiles, nails, and cement. Hesti explains that she acquired this knowledge by accompanying workers during home renovations with her husband. When Wendy inquires whether this interest is longstanding, Hesti humorously concludes, "Gua kan mau bikin agency...," to which Andika responds, "Agency apa tuh?" and Hesti laughs, adding, "Agency tukang... hahahaha." The exchange exemplifies situational humor, aligning with the topic and functioning to lighten the conversational atmosphere.

This utterance exemplifies phatic humor, categorized as a form of phatic joke, as it does not aim to convey factual information about construction materials or renovation activities. Rather, its function lies in sustaining conversational flow, fostering interpersonal closeness, and creating a relaxed communicative atmosphere (Bezemer & Kress, 2016; Harley, 2013). Situationally, the humor emerges when Hesti responds to Wendy and Andika's surprise at her knowledge of construction work. Instead of providing a literal explanation, Hesti leverages social incongruity specifically the stereotype that women are typically unfamiliar with manual labor to enhance the comedic effect. Consequently, the joke functions as a mitigating strategy, maintaining a light tone and signaling that the topic need not be approached seriously or technically.

Culturally, such humor is characteristic of Indonesian entertainment communication, particularly within comedy podcasts that emphasize host intimacy, spontaneity, and playful interaction. Humor drawing on personal experience, mild stereotypes, or hyperbolic commentary is frequently used to cultivate closeness, elicit shared laughter, and sustain dynamic conversational flow. The gender-based stereotype in this instance is not intended to demean but serves as a conventional comedic device within popular culture, especially when interlocutors share strong interpersonal rapport, enabling the audience to interpret the humor through shared background knowledge.

From a Discursive Pragmatics perspective framed by the Inferential-Ostensive approach, the utterance carries two layers of meaning. Ostensively, Hesti produces a deliberately exaggerated statement that signals non-literal interpretation, marking it as humorous for co-participants. Inferentially, Wendy, Andika, and the audience recognize that the communicative intent is to generate laughter, maintain interactive dynamism, and reinforce social closeness among hosts (Bhattacharyya, 2013; Heyes, 2020). Pragmatically, the utterance functions to sustain social relations through light-hearted interaction rather than propositional content. This playful talk enables smooth conversational transitions, strengthens interpersonal solidarity, and engages the audience, thereby operating as a phatic device that preserves interactional continuity and reinforces social bonds within the comedic podcast format.

Data 8



Fig 8. Jokes

Source of data : <https://youtu.be/Q5TUT6tV7mM?si=gWqP7P2wVyFLWdJf>

Discursive Context : This utterance occurs at 7:28 in the podcast Ngobrol di WA EPS.5 on Wendy Cagur's YouTube channel, titled "Hesti Purwadinata Kena Paku Di Kepala Santai Aja!!!". During the segment, Hesti Purwadinata discusses her interest in construction materials such as besi holo and bondek, noting the aesthetic appeal of bondek. Andika's admission of unfamiliarity with bondek prompts Wendy to make a humorous remark: "Gua juga kalau bondek gua gak tahu, tapi kalau ngondek gua tau," accompanied by a playful stereotypical gesture. The joke elicits

spontaneous laughter, reflecting the relaxed and comedic atmosphere of the podcast. Functionally, the utterance does not convey substantive information about construction materials; rather, it operates as phatic humor aimed at sustaining conversational flow, strengthening interpersonal rapport, and generating amusement during a technically oriented discussion. Wendy's playful use of stereotype-based humor exemplifies the phatic strategy typical of Indonesian comedy podcasts, where light-hearted banter regulates the interactional tone and maintains audience engagement.

This utterance by Wendy functions as a phatic joke, as it does not convey factual information about the technical term *bondek* but serves to maintain conversational flow and preserve a relaxed, humorous atmosphere. The joke emerges when the discussion shifts toward Hesti's interest in construction materials, a potentially technical topic that could disrupt the comedic rhythm of the podcast. Wendy intervenes with a playful phonological pun, contrasting *bondek* with *ngondek*, eliciting laughter and restoring the interactional dynamics aligned with the program's comedic identity.

Culturally, humor based on puns, phonological play, or light stereotyping—such as the use of *ngondek* remains prevalent in Indonesian comedy. While such terms could carry social sensitivities, within the context of entertainment and an established rapport between hosts, these utterances are interpreted as part of a shared comedic norm. Wendy's performative gestures and intonation signal that the remark is intended as humor rather than a literal or evaluative comment on gender identity.

From a Discursive Pragmatics perspective framed by Inferential–Ostensive Theory, the ostensive exaggeration in Wendy's remark cues interlocutors that the statement is non-literal. Through inferential reasoning, Hesti, Andika, and the audience understand the communicative goal as humorous: to elicit laughter, sustain interactive solidarity, and maintain the podcast's informal, playful tone (Pang & Samp, 2022). Functionally, the utterance stabilizes conversational energy, mitigates cognitive heaviness of technical topics, and reinforces social cohesion, marking it as an effective phatic device that strengthens relational bonds while sustaining the comedic character of the podcast.

3. Emphatic Reinforcement Category

Teachers and lecturers often repeat information to emphasize key points, helping students consolidate understanding and maintain focus. However, not all repetition serves purely for emphasis; sometimes it functions simply to regain or direct the listener's attention. In everyday communication, repetition is also commonly employed to clarify intent and ensure the message is received (Chatting et al., 2015; Nicolle & Clark, 1998). In phatic communication, such reiteration not only enhances clarity but also keeps conversations lively and engaging. In podcasts, for instance, speakers frequently use repetition or heightened intonation to highlight central ideas, guide audience attention, and sustain interactional flow, illustrating how emphasis operates as a phatic strategy.

Data 9



Fig 9. Emphatic Reinforcement

Source of data : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqEfCT9rh0g>

Discursive Context : This utterance occurs in episode 5 of the podcast *Ngobrol di WA*, aired on the Wendy Cagur YouTube channel, at timestamp 10:59. In this segment, Andika and Wendy discuss the personality of Hesti Purwadinata, their colleague on the show *Lapor Pak*, highlighting her maternal, organized, and advisory traits, likening her to a “motherly figure” within their group. This characterization is further reinforced by noting that Hesti is the eldest female cast member. The utterance is delivered in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere, with Andika's casual and repetitive phrasing (“*lu tuh mak-mak banget, ngerti gak lu?*”) and Wendy's affirmative response exemplifying a form of communication that not only conveys an opinion but also functions to reinforce and emphasize Hesti's character traits to the audience.

This utterance exemplifies phatic communication in the category of intensification, employing emphatic expressions to reinforce socially shared perceptions among conversational participants. Within an ostensive–inferential framework, the speaker deliberately signals emphasis through the repetition of “lu tuh” and the evaluative phrase “mak-mak banget,” indicating that the primary focus of the utterance is not on factual content but on affirming a socially recognized identity. The interlocutors and audience then infer that this intensification functions as a marker of camaraderie rather than critique.

Situationally, the utterance occurs within a lighthearted, comedic conversation in which the hosts engage in playful banter. The emphasis does not serve corrective purposes but affirms Hesti’s social persona as a “motherly” figure perceived as flexible, positively talkative, and in control in everyday matters. In the context of podcasts or comedic talk shows, such identity reinforcement operates as a mechanism to maintain a natural, engaging, and humor-filled interactional rhythm.

Culturally, expressions like “lu tuh mak-mak banget” reflect a common practice in Indonesian communication, where familiarity is demonstrated through playful teasing without offense. Social identities such as “mak-mak,” “boss,” or “anak kecil” are frequently employed as humorous labels that consolidate solidarity. In entertainment contexts like *Lapor Pak*, affirming roles such as “motherly,” “organizer,” or “affectionately talkative” constitutes a shared interactional pattern understood by both hosts and audiences. Pragmatically, this utterance functions as a social adhesive: sustaining conversational warmth, enhancing emotional engagement, and reinforcing interpersonal closeness. Its phatic function prioritizes relational dynamics over propositional content, using humor to maintain a relaxed discourse flow while consolidating the public image of a familiar character (Kobuta, 2022; Sugiyo & Purwastuti, 2017).

Data 10



HESTI PURWADINATA KENA PAKU DI KEPALA SANTAI AJA!!! - NGOBROL DI WA EPS. 5

Fig 10. Emphatic Reinforcement

Source of data : https://youtu.be/Q5TUT6tV7mM?si=Hb06bDtGKGkU_bIP

Discursive Context : This utterance occurs in *Ngobrol di WA* episode 5, aired on the Wendi Cagur YouTube channel, at 17:23. In this segment, Andika and Wendi explore Hesty Purwadinata’s personal side as a highly competent homemaker, managing everything from packing and scheduling to everyday household tasks. During the casual discussion, Andika prompts an emotional response through a rhetorical question that acknowledges the potential frustration Hesty might feel when her efforts are met with complaints from her husband and children. Hesty’s reply, “Ya kesel lah,” functions not merely as a factual answer but as an emotional affirmation, signaling shared contextual understanding and a relatable experience for the audience, particularly homemakers.

The utterance “Ya kesel lah” exemplifies an emphatic phatic form of communication, where the speaker does not convey new factual information but instead reinforces an emotionally shared state among participants. Within an ostensive–inferential framework, the speaker deliberately employs a brief yet forceful linguistic signal to guide the audience toward a specific emotional interpretation: that the feeling of “frustration” is normal, shared, and universally relatable in similar circumstances. Listeners infer that the utterance functions not merely as a literal response but as a marker of emotional solidarity, strengthening social bonds.

Situationally, this expression occurs within a relaxed conversation addressing the often underappreciated burdens of domestic labor. The succinct response “Ya kesel lah” operates as a rapid confirmation of assumptions implicitly established earlier in the discourse. It signals that speaker and interlocutor are aligned in interpretive understanding, allowing the conversational rhythm to continue smoothly without extended explanation.

Culturally, brief affirmative expressions of this kind are characteristic of informal communication in Indonesia, especially within entertainment or casual talk settings. Such compact yet emotionally loaded

language reflects a high degree of interpersonal closeness, where feelings can be conveyed directly without being perceived as excessive (Ye & Kang, 2017). Pragmatically, the utterance is clearly phatic: its primary function is relational maintenance rather than the transmission of information. By emphasizing emotional resonance, it sustains interpersonal connection, preserves the flow of interaction, and reinforces the warm, familiar atmosphere emblematic of entertainment podcast discourse.

Conclusion

This study produced several key findings regarding the pragmatic functions of phatic communication in the podcast Ngobrol di WA: (1) phatic communication as manifested in greetings, (2) phatic communication expressed through humor or joking, and (3) phatic communication associated with emphatic reinforcement. Greeting patterns were observed in data items 1–3, humorous forms appeared in data items 4–8, and emphatic functions were evident in data items 9–10. Each category reflects how phatic strategies serve not merely to convey information, but to maintain interactional flow, build interpersonal rapport, and reinforce shared social understanding among participants. This research is limited by its reliance on a single type of substantive data and a phenomenological approach. Future studies may expand on this work using positivist methodologies, larger datasets, and more precise computational analyses. Scholars interested in contemporary developments in pragmatics, particularly third-wave or integrative approaches, are encouraged to pursue similar research. By adopting such integrative perspectives, investigations into ostensive–inferential mechanisms of phatic communication in digital media can be further deepened and enriched.

Declarations

- Author contribution** : R. Kunjana Rahardi was responsible for the entire research project. He also led the writing of the manuscript and the collaboration with the second author. Kristina Marta Noviance participated in the data collection, transcription and analysis. She also revised the manuscript. Both authors approved the final manuscript.
- Funding statement** : This research was funded by Sanata Dharma University through the internal LPPM grant in 2025.
- Conflict of interest** : Both authors declare that they have no competing interests.
- Ethics Approval** : Information on Ethics Approval and informed consent statements are required for all articles published in BAHASTRA since 2025.
- Additional information** : No additional information is available for this paper.

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