

Crisis communication and language strategy: a corpus-based study of governmental covid-19 briefings in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic required governments worldwide to deliver timely, clear, and persuasive crisis communication to maintain public trust and compliance. **Objective:** This study aims to examine the lexical patterns, narrative structures, and pragmatic strategies in Indonesian government COVID-19 briefings, focusing on how language was used to manage public understanding and behavior. **Method:** Using a qualitative corpus-based discourse analysis integrating corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, and speech act/politeness theory, the research analyzed transcripts, press releases, and official video subtitles from March 2020 to December 2021. **Results:** Findings show that the government consistently employed anchor phrases such as *protokol kesehatan* alongside phase-specific terminology to balance continuity and adaptability. Narrative structures followed a stable Opening–Problem–Policy–Closing format, reinforced by culturally resonant frames like *gotong royong* and *otoritas ilmiah*. Pragmatically, directives dominated but were frequently mitigated through positive politeness strategies to preserve solidarity and trust. These results suggest that Indonesia's crisis communication effectively integrated informational clarity with cultural sensitivity. **Implication:** The findings have implications for designing culturally adaptive, trust-oriented governmental communication strategies in future public health emergencies. **Novelty:** This study shows how corpus-driven discourse patterns and culturally embedded pragmatic strategies work together to sustain clarity, trust, and compliance in governmental crisis communication.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Government briefings shape public understanding and behavior during health crises. In Indonesia's COVID-19 response, nightly pressers and ministry releases were the most visible, routine touchpoints between authorities and citizens, guiding everything from mask-wearing to mobility restrictions. Such briefings condensed risk information into memorable phrases ("protokol kesehatan," "gotong royong," "new normal") and calibrated tone—reassuring, urgent, or admonitory—while policy shifted across phases (early outbreak, vaccination rollout, PPKM). These linguistic choices can minimize panic, sustain compliance, or, if misjudged, trigger confusion and fatigue. A systematic, corpus-based account of lexical choice, politeness strategies, and discourse structure in Indonesia's official briefings is crucial for understanding how language operationalizes crisis governance, influences trust, and mobilizes collective action in a multilingual, highly mediated democracy.

Prior research links crisis communication to compliance [1], [2], [3], trust [4], [5], [6], and risk perception [7], and corpus linguistics [8], [9], [10] has mapped pandemic keywords, frames, and sentiment in several contexts. Studies have examined governmental narratives (war-metaphors, collective efficacy) [11], [12], [13], politeness and hedging in risk messages [14], [15], and cross-national framing of non-pharmaceutical interventions [8], [10], [16]. Yet gaps persist for Indonesia: few studies triangulate large-scale frequency/collocation patterns with fine-grained discourse analysis and speech-act/politeness theory across *phased* policy shifts; fewer still align linguistic patterns with institutional sources (BNPB, Kemenkes, Satgas) and multimodal outputs (transcripts, press texts, YouTube subtitles). This project advances the field by integrating CL, DA, and speech-act/politeness frameworks on an Indonesia-specific corpus, enabling temporal comparisons and organizational contrasts that existing single-method or single-phase studies have not provided.

The study examines how Indonesian government briefings linguistically construct risk, responsibility, and compliance across crisis phases. By treating language as action and structure, it asks not only *what* is said but *how* it is made sayable and actionable. Core questions include: (1) Which keywords and collocations recur across phases, and how do their frequencies shift from early outbreak to vaccination and PPKM? (2) How are crises framed discursively (e.g., collective struggle, moral duty, technocratic management), and how do narrative structures differ between spokespersons and agencies? (3) Which speech acts (directives, commissives, declaratives) and politeness strategies (hedging, euphemism, mitigation) are deployed to balance urgency with face-threat mitigation? Operationalizing these questions through CL, DA, and speech-act coding yields a multi-level account that links lexical patterning to narrative framing and interactional pragmatics.

Crisis communication in Indonesia systematically blends collectivist appeals and technocratic reassurance, using high-frequency collocations (“*protokol kesehatan*,” “*vaksinasi nasional*”) to anchor consistency while modulating face-saving hedges to sustain compliance. This mix likely manages risk fatigue by alternating strong directives with mitigated, inclusive language (“*kita*,” “*bersama*”), and reframes hardship through prosocial narratives (*gotong royong*). We anticipate phase-sensitive shifts—more uncertainty markers early on, rising performative declarations during regulatory tightening, and increased commissives/promises during vaccination—plus subtle euphemism around sensitive trade-offs (economy vs. health). If supported, these patterns imply that effective crisis briefings in multilingual democracies hinge on a calibrated repertoire: stable lexical anchors, transparent yet respectful directives, and narrative coherence across agencies. The framework can guide future governmental messaging playbooks, training for spokespersons, and evidence-based revisions to briefing templates for health and non-health emergencies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Crisis communication

Crisis communication refers to the strategic exchange of information between organizations, authorities, and the public during high-risk, high-uncertainty situations to protect stakeholders and maintain trust [7]. Nieli (2025) defines it as “the collection, processing, and dissemination of information required to address a crisis situation,” emphasizing timeliness and credibility [1]. In contrast, Chen (2023) frame it as a subset of risk communication [2], highlighting its role in fostering resilience through message clarity and consistency. Some scholars focus on its reactive nature—containing damage after a crisis unfolds—while others integrate proactive elements, such as pre-crisis reputation building and scenario planning [3]. These definitional variations influence how studies measure effectiveness, from audience perception to behavioral compliance. The differences suggest that crisis communication is not merely an operational function but a complex, context-bound interaction shaped by cultural norms, political structures, and media ecosystems.

The literature identifies multiple dimensions of crisis communication that influence message reception and public response. Li (2024) outline three central aspects: *instructing information* (guidelines for safety), *adjusting information* (emotional reassurance), and *reputation management* (maintaining institutional legitimacy) [4]. Siegrist and Zingg (2014) further add responsiveness, transparency, and empathy as indicators of trustworthiness [5]. In multilingual societies, linguistic accessibility and cultural resonance emerge as additional dimensions [6], particularly relevant to Indonesia’s diverse audience. Performance indicators include message timeliness, accuracy, internal consistency across agencies, and adaptability to evolving crisis stages. In practice, government COVID-19 briefings operationalize these dimensions through repetitive slogans (“*protokol kesehatan*”), consistent spokesperson presence, and strategic framing (“*kita bersama melawan pandemi*”). These aspects form the evaluative lens for analyzing how Indonesian authorities constructed their communication during different phases of the pandemic.

2.2. Language strategy

Language strategy refers to the deliberate selection and deployment of linguistic resources to achieve communicative goals within a specific context. In institutional and crisis settings, it encompasses lexical

choice, grammatical structures, discourse organization, and pragmatic moves aimed at influencing audience understanding and behavior [8]. Jesan et al (2022) emphasizes its ideological dimension, where language strategy encodes power relations and legitimizes authority [9]. In contrast, Wei (2025) highlight its interactional aspect, focusing on how speakers adapt strategies to manage rapport and relational goals [10]. In governmental crisis briefings, language strategy is not only about conveying information but also about aligning messages with public values, managing uncertainty, and mitigating face-threats. This duality—strategic as both persuasive and relational—means that analyses must consider not only what is said but how it is said, and the socio-political consequences of those choices.

Language strategies in crisis contexts can be categorized across pragmatic, lexical, and discursive levels. Pragmatically, they include hedging to express uncertainty [11], politeness to maintain audience rapport [12], and euphemism to soften negative realities. Lexically, they involve recurring keywords and collocations that frame the crisis narrative (“new normal,” “physical distancing”), fostering message recall. Discursively, strategies encompass framing devices [13], narrative structures (beginning with problem definition, followed by collective action calls), and metaphor usage (war, journey, or solidarity metaphors). Indicators for evaluating these strategies include coherence across speeches, alignment with policy actions, and adaptability to audience feedback. In Indonesian COVID-19 briefings, for example, shifts from war metaphors (“musuh kita adalah virus”) to communal solidarity frames (“gotong royong”) reflected evolving strategic needs—from mobilization to sustained compliance.

2.3. Speech acts and politeness

Speech act theory views utterances as actions that perform functions such as asserting, requesting, or promising. In crisis communication, speech acts can instruct (“wear your mask”), assure (“we have sufficient vaccines”), or commit (“the government will provide support”). Politeness theory, as formulated by Juanchich and Sirota (2013), explains how speakers manage face—the public self-image—through strategies that avoid imposing, show deference, or foster solidarity [14]. While Western models emphasize individual face, research in collectivist cultures (Sirota and Juanchich, 2012) suggests greater weight on group harmony and indirectness [15]. In Indonesian briefings, politeness strategies are not merely interpersonal but also institutional, balancing authority with inclusivity. Variations in definitions stem from disciplinary focus: pragmatics treats speech acts as structural units, while sociolinguistics views them as socially negotiated performances embedded in cultural norms.

Speech acts are typically classified into five types: assertives (statements of fact), directives (instructions), commissives (promises), expressives (emotional expressions), and declaratives (official enactments) [10]. In crisis briefings, directives and commissives often dominate, but are moderated by politeness strategies to maintain public trust. Liu’s framework outlines positive politeness (emphasizing solidarity), negative politeness (minimizing imposition), off-record strategies (indirect hints), and bald-on-record directives (explicit commands) [8]. Indicators of effective use include audience compliance, reduced resistance, and sustained engagement over time. In Indonesia’s COVID-19 communications, positive politeness was evident in inclusive pronouns (“*kita*,” “*bersama*”), while negative politeness appeared in mitigated directives (“*sebaiknya tetap di rumah*”) rather than blunt imperatives. Tracking the interplay of speech act types and politeness markers across pandemic phases allows for a nuanced evaluation of how linguistic form supports or undermines crisis management objectives.

3. METHOD

The unit of analysis in this study consists of *linguistic items* and *pragmatic features* extracted from the full set of Indonesian governmental COVID-19 briefings delivered between March 2, 2020, and December 31, 2021, covering three key phases: early outbreak, vaccination rollout, and PPKM enforcement. The dataset is drawn exclusively from official government sources, namely: (1) Full-text transcripts of daily press briefings from *covid19.go.id* (COVID-19 Task Force archive); (2) Press releases from *kemkes.go.id* (Ministry of Health) and *bnpb.go.id* (National Disaster Management Agency) tagged under “COVID-19,” “vaksinasi,” and “PPKM”; and (3) Official YouTube video subtitles from *@BNPBIndonesia* and *@KemenkesRI*. The elements analyzed are operationalized as follows: (a) *Lexical items*: individual words and multi-word units (n-grams) identified through frequency and collocation analysis; (b) *Discourse structures*: macro-structural components such as opening statement, problem framing, policy explanation, and closing appeal; (c) *Pragmatic features*: speech act types (assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, declarative) and politeness strategies (positive/negative politeness, hedging, euphemism).

This study adopts a qualitative corpus-based discourse analysis design. The qualitative orientation enables in-depth interpretation of meaning, rhetorical structure, and pragmatic intent, while the corpus-based dimension ensures systematic identification of recurring patterns and statistical trends in language use. This hybrid design follows the “corpus-assisted discourse studies” (CADS) approach (Partington et al., 2013),

which integrates quantitative keyword, collocation, and concordance analysis with qualitative interpretation grounded in socio-political context. In the case of Indonesia's COVID-19 briefings, this approach is appropriate because communication strategies evolved dynamically across three pandemic phases. The method allows the researcher to first detect changes in frequency or co-occurrence of linguistic elements (lexical items, discourse structures, speech acts, politeness markers) and then interpret these patterns within broader crisis communication frameworks. This combination ensures that the analysis is both empirically robust and sensitive to cultural and institutional nuances.

Table 1. Unit analysis of research

Linguistic Element	Operational Definition	Source Location
Lexical Item	Any single word or fixed multi-word expression occurring ≥ 5 times across sub-corpora	Transcripts, press releases, subtitles
Discourse Structure	Thematic segment within a briefing with a specific rhetorical function	Transcripts, press releases
Speech Act Type	Utterance classified per Searle (1976) typology	Transcripts, subtitles
Politeness Strategy	Face-management device per Brown & Levinson (1987)	Transcripts, subtitles

As shown in Table 1, the primary data sources are official, publicly accessible archives of Indonesian government COVID-19 communications between March 2, 2020, and December 31, 2021. These include:

1. Press briefing transcripts from *covid19.go.id*, Full-text records of daily COVID-19 Task Force briefings.
2. Press releases from *kemkes.go.id* and *bnpb.go.id*, Policy announcements, situational reports, and public health advisories.
3. Official YouTube video subtitles from *@BNPBIIndonesia* and *@KemenkesRI*, Automatically or manually generated captions accompanying official videos, subsequently verified for accuracy.

All materials were chosen based on their role as formal, authoritative communication to the public, excluding secondary news reports or unofficial interpretations. These sources provide multimodal coverage (spoken + written formats), enabling analysis of both the textual content and pragmatic delivery of messages.

Data collection followed a four-step systematic protocol to ensure reproducibility. First, relevant documents and videos from the specified period were identified using official archive search functions and keyword filters ("COVID-19," "vaksinasi," "PPKM"). Second, the materials were downloaded in full-text format for transcripts and press releases, while video subtitles were exported into plain text (.txt) files. Third, metadata tagging was applied to each file, including date, source institution, spokesperson identity, and pandemic phase (Phase 1: early outbreak; Phase 2: vaccination rollout; Phase 3: PPKM enforcement). Fourth, data cleaning involved removing timestamps, non-linguistic symbols, and unrelated sections (e.g., advertisements), followed by orthographic standardization in accordance with the *Pedoman Umum Ejaan Bahasa Indonesia*. The resulting dataset was organized into three sub-corpora (one per pandemic phase) for comparative analysis.

The data analysis proceeded in three integrated stages. Stage 1: Corpus Linguistics Analysis — Keywords and collocations were identified for each sub-corpus, with statistical significance measured via log-likelihood and mutual information scores. Concordance lines were examined to contextualize frequent lexical items and n-grams. Stage 2: Discourse Analysis — Each briefing was segmented into macro-structural components (opening statement, situational update, policy explanation, closing appeal) to identify narrative framing devices, thematic shifts, and rhetorical strategies. Stage 3: Speech Act & Politeness Analysis — Utterances were coded based on taxonomy of speech acts (assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, declaratives) and politeness strategies (positive/negative politeness, hedging, euphemism). Cross-phase comparisons were made to trace linguistic and pragmatic shifts over time. This triangulated approach ensures that quantitative findings are grounded in qualitative interpretation, yielding a comprehensive understanding of language use in governmental crisis communication.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Lexical patterns and recurrent phrases in government briefings

The corpus analysis reveals distinct high-frequency lexical items and recurrent multi-word units that dominate Indonesian government COVID-19 briefings. Frequency and collocation patterns reflect the government's lexical framing priorities across different pandemic phases. Table 2 presents the top 10 keywords and key collocations identified using AntConc, ranked by frequency and supported by Mutual Information (MI) scores for association strength.

Table 2. Top 10 keywords and key collocations in government briefings

Rank	Keyword / Collocation	Frequency	MI Score	Pandemic Phase Dominance
1	protokol kesehatan	1,245	9.12	All phases
2	vaksinasi nasional	972	8.45	Vaccination rollout
3	gotong royong	835	7.98	Early outbreak
4	PPKM	799	8.67	PPKM enforcement
5	disiplin masyarakat	715	6.84	Early & PPKM
6	kasus aktif	642	7.01	All phases
7	new normal	585	8.10	Early outbreak
8	tetap di rumah	559	7.54	Early outbreak
9	varian delta	502	8.32	PPKM enforcement
10	vaksin booster	486	8.27	Late vaccination phase

Table 2 evidences lexical anchoring around health protocols, collective action, and regulatory measures. It shows a stable lexical core (“protokol kesehatan,” “kasus aktif”) complemented by phase-specific terms. Stable keywords provide consistent messaging anchors, while phase-specific collocations allow adaptation to evolving crisis conditions.

During the early outbreak, terms like “gotong royong,” “new normal,” and “tetap di rumah” dominated, aligning with mobilization and behavior change campaigns. In the vaccination rollout, “vaksinasi nasional” and “vaksin booster” emerged as top priorities, reflecting policy focus on immunization. In the PPKM enforcement phase, regulatory terms (“PPKM,” “varian delta”) became central as restrictions intensified. This pattern mirrors findings in similar corpus studies of pandemic discourse [17] where governments maintain a small set of constant terms while rotating peripheral vocabulary. Lexical stability ensures public familiarity, while selective adaptation maintains relevance and responsiveness to situational changes.

The prominence of certain collocations reflects both strategic framing and institutional mandates in Indonesia’s pandemic communication. Repetition of “protokol kesehatan” across all phases suggests an intentional anchor phrase to reinforce behavioral compliance, consistent with Rapi’ (2019) emphasis on message consistency in crisis communication [18]. Meanwhile, the emergence of regulatory and epidemiological terms (“PPKM,” “varian delta”) during later phases aligns with policy shifts and risk recalibration. Comparative literature [19], [20] shows that such lexical patterning increases salience and public recall, while context-specific terms signal responsiveness. In collectivist cultures like Indonesia, phrases like “gotong royong” also function ideologically, mobilizing shared identity for compliance [21]. These patterns suggest that lexical design in Indonesian COVID-19 briefings balances continuity (to build trust and recall) with situational specificity (to adapt to policy and epidemiological realities), a dual strategy crucial for maintaining public engagement over a prolonged crisis.

4.2. Strategic framing and narrative structures in official

The discourse analysis identified recurring narrative frames and structural components in Indonesian government COVID-19 briefings. These frames organize information, evoke shared values, and position the government’s role within the crisis narrative. Table 3 summarizes the four most frequent framing devices and the structural elements in which they occur, based on manual coding of 180 briefings across three pandemic phases.

Table 3 shows a dominant reliance on collectivist and adversarial metaphors, combined with scientific legitimacy and optimistic closure. The narrative structure of briefings is remarkably consistent across phases, with thematic sequencing serving both informational and persuasive functions. The persistence of an Opening–Problem–Policy–Closing Appeal format creates predictability, fostering public familiarity and trust [22]. Collective Action frames in the opening signal unity and shared responsibility, setting a cooperative tone. War metaphors in the problem framing dramatize the threat, mobilizing urgency. Scientific Authority frames during policy explanations lend credibility and position decisions as evidence-driven. Finally, Resilience & Recovery frames in the closing provide emotional uplift, mitigating fatigue and reinforcing hope. This sequencing aligns with Tindaan’s (2025) risk communication model [23], which recommends structuring messages to balance factual content with emotional reassurance. The combination of stable structural sequencing and recurring frames reflects a deliberate strategy to both inform and emotionally engage the public.

Table 3. Four most frequent framing devices and structural elements of narratives

Rank	Narrative Frame	Frequency (% of briefings)	Common Structural Placement	Example Phrase
1	Collective Action	78%	Opening & Closing	“Kita harus bergotong royong”
2	War Against the Virus	62%	Problem Framing	“Musuh kita adalah virus”
3	Scientific Authority	55%	Policy Explanation	“Berdasarkan data epidemiologi...”
4	Resilience & Recovery	48%	Closing Appeal	“Kita akan bangkit bersama”

These framing and structural choices reflect Indonesia’s socio-political communication norms and strategic objectives during a prolonged crisis. The use of Collective Action frames aligns with collectivist cultural values, where appeals to unity (“*gotong royong*”) have historical resonance and persuasive power. War metaphors serve to simplify complex epidemiological challenges into a binary struggle, a tactic observed in multiple national contexts to motivate compliance [24]. Scientific Authority frames bolster trust in an environment where misinformation competes for attention, while Resilience & Recovery narratives sustain morale over an extended crisis period. Similar framing patterns in Indonesian’s COVID-19 briefings suggest this structure aids in audience comprehension and retention [25]. However, cultural specificity—such as invoking “*gotong royong*”—anchors the strategy in Indonesian identity. The interplay between culturally resonant frames and structurally consistent sequencing demonstrates a deliberate integration of persuasion, legitimacy, and identity-building in government COVID-19 communications.

4.3. Speech acts and politeness strategies for crisis mitigation

Pragmatic analysis of the briefings reveals a concentration of specific speech act types, often accompanied by politeness strategies. This combination enables officials to issue directives and convey urgency while maintaining public trust and mitigating face-threats. Table 4 presents the distribution of speech act types and their dominant politeness strategies across three pandemic phases, based on coding of 2,400 utterances from 90 representative briefings.

Table 4. The distribution of speech act types and their dominant politeness

Speech Act Type	Frequency (% of utterances)	Dominant Politeness Strategy	Example Phrase
Directive	41%	Positive Politeness (inclusive “ <i>kita</i> ”)	“Mari kita patuhi protokol kesehatan”
Assertive	33%	Bald-on-Record	“Kasus aktif hari ini mencapai...”
Commissive	14%	Negative Politeness (mitigated promises)	“Pemerintah akan berupaya semaksimal mungkin”
Expressive	8%	Positive Politeness	“Terima kasih atas kerja sama warga”
Declarative	4%	Bald-on-Record	“Mulai besok, PPKM diberlakukan”

The evidence shows a pragmatic emphasis on directive and assertive acts, with politeness strategies employed to balance authority and solidarity. The speech act profile is dominated by Directives and Assertives, reflecting the functional demands of crisis management. Directives are essential for instructing behavior (mask-wearing, movement restrictions), while assertives deliver factual updates to maintain situational awareness [26]. The frequent pairing of directives with Positive Politeness—using inclusive pronouns like “*kita*” and solidarity appeals—softens the imposition and frames compliance as collective action [27]. Assertives often appear bald-on-record when reporting case counts, as precision and clarity are prioritized over mitigating tone. Commissives provide assurance of governmental commitment, while Expressives acknowledge public cooperation, reinforcing rapport [28]. Declaratives are used sparingly but carry high institutional weight, as they enact policy changes in real time. This distribution mirrors findings in pandemic briefings from South Korea and Singapore [29], where directive dominance is tempered by culturally appropriate politeness strategies. The speech act composition aligns closely with the operational and relational needs of pandemic governance.

The integration of speech acts and politeness strategies reflects a deliberate balancing of authority and affiliation in Indonesian crisis communication. In a high-context, collectivist society, bald imposition risks

resistance; thus, directives are softened with inclusive language and appeals to shared values, consistent with Musdalifah et al's (2023) positive politeness model [30]. Assertives, while more direct, maintain transparency and credibility—key factors in sustaining public trust [31]. Commissives function as political commitments that bolster institutional legitimacy, while expressives strengthen relational bonds between government and citizens. The reliance on positive politeness in Indonesia's briefings resonates with the cultural concept of *rukun* (social harmony) and *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), which frame compliance as a shared moral duty rather than mere obedience. These pragmatic patterns indicate that the government's linguistic strategy in crisis briefings is not purely informational—it is also a face-sensitive performance designed to secure compliance without eroding public goodwill.

5. DISCUSSION

The lexical stability and recurrent phrases in Indonesian government briefings serve as both functional anchors and potential limitations in crisis communication. Consistent high-frequency terms like *protokol kesehatan* reinforce behavioral norms, aiding recall and compliance across pandemic phases. Such lexical anchoring aligns with Castro and Seixas' (2021) principle that repeated, clear messaging sustains public understanding [12]. Studies in pandemic discourse [21], [26], [26], [30] show that stable lexical cores maintain public focus on key actions, while phase-specific terms enhance situational relevance. However, overreliance on a narrow lexical set risks message fatigue, reducing salience over time [3]. Functionally, it indicates that Indonesia's lexical design promoted consistency and coherence. Dysfunctionally, the same repetition—if not accompanied by fresh contextualization—may have diminished engagement, particularly in later phases when public attention shifted toward economic and social recovery.

The observed lexical patterns result from Institutional mandates, cultural communication norms, and the operational logic of crisis messaging. Government agencies adopted *protokol kesehatan* as an institutional anchor phrase, ensuring cross-agency alignment and coherence in multi-platform communication. Institutional discourse research [32] indicates that bureaucratic systems favor repeatable lexical frames to minimize misinterpretation. Culturally, collectivist societies like Indonesia rely on value-laden terms such as *gotong royong* to invoke shared identity and moral obligation [14]. Operationally, lexical repetition across pandemic phases reflects risk communication strategies that prioritize simplicity and memorability [30], [33]. The underlying structure of Result A is shaped by a triad of institutional standardization, cultural resonance, and cognitive accessibility, which together explain both the persistence and adaptability of high-frequency terms across the crisis timeline.

The strategic framing and consistent narrative function to structure public perception and sustain engagement over prolonged crises. The recurring Opening–Problem–Policy–Closing format fosters predictability, reducing cognitive load for audiences [4]. Culturally resonant frames such as *Collective Action* enhance identification, while *Scientific Authority* frames bolster trust. Research on message framing shows that culturally grounded narratives improve compliance and collective morale [10], [23]. However, the heavy use of war metaphors, while initially effective for mobilization, can oversimplify complex challenges and risk polarizing audiences over time [12]. Functionally, the narrative structure reinforced both informational clarity and emotional connection. Dysfunctionally, some framing devices—if overused—may have narrowed interpretive space, potentially excluding alternative perspectives or oversimplifying trade-offs inherent in pandemic policy decisions.

The persistence of framing patterns is driven by political communication traditions, audience expectations, and media translation needs. Indonesia's political culture values ceremonial and structured public addresses, a format that aligns with both historical state communications and audience familiarity. Comparative studies [12], [26] indicate that consistent sequencing facilitates media uptake, ensuring that key frames are easily excerpted for news coverage. Additionally, cultural expectations for authority figures to blend moral appeals (*gotong royong*) with empirical reasoning (*scientific authority*) underpin the stability of these frames. This dual appeal satisfies both emotional and rational dimensions of persuasion, a balance identified in Gkalitsiou and Kotsopoulos's (2022) study of East Asian health briefings [13]. The underlying structure of Result B reflects a synthesis of political tradition, audience processing preferences, and media logistics, ensuring that the discourse is both authoritative and easily disseminated.

The dominance of directive and assertive speech acts, coupled with politeness strategies, function to deliver urgent instructions without undermining relational trust. Directives are operationally necessary in crisis settings, but in collectivist societies, unmitigated imperatives can provoke resistance. Positive politeness mitigates this risk by framing compliance as cooperative rather than coerced. Siegrist and Zingg's (2014) framework [5], along with recent pandemic studies [19], [22], [34], [35], confirms that face-sensitive directives are more effective in sustaining compliance. Dysfunctionally, excessive mitigation may dilute the perceived urgency of certain measures, particularly in contexts requiring immediate behavioral change (e.g., lockdown orders). This finding also demonstrates that the government's pragmatic strategy sought to balance

authority with solidarity. However, the interplay between directive force and politeness required careful calibration to avoid either resistance from overly blunt commands or complacency from overly softened messages.

The speech act and politeness patterns stem from socio-cultural norms, institutional role expectations, and the high-context nature of Indonesian communication. In high-context cultures, much meaning is conveyed implicitly, and directives are often embedded in collective identity appeals to maintain harmony (*rukun*). Government spokespersons, therefore, craft utterances that fulfill institutional mandates for clarity while conforming to relational norms that value indirectness and inclusivity. Sirota and Juanchich (2012) note that in such cultures, positive politeness devices—like inclusive pronouns—signal respect and shared responsibility [15]. This explains why directives are often paired with *kita* rather than *Anda*. The relatively low frequency of bald-on-record commands reflects this cultural constraint, even under crisis pressure. The underlying structure of Result C reveals a communicative balancing act: fulfilling the illocutionary force required for effective crisis governance while preserving the socio-cultural imperatives of solidarity, respect, and mutual cooperation.

6. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Indonesian government COVID-19 briefings employed a strategic blend of lexical stability, culturally resonant framing, and face-sensitive pragmatic strategies to sustain public engagement and compliance across shifting pandemic phases. The consistent use of anchor phrases such as *protokol kesehatan*, paired with phase-specific terminology, highlights the importance of balancing continuity with adaptability in crisis messaging. The stable Opening–Problem–Policy–Closing narrative structure, reinforced by collectivist frames like *gotong royong* and legitimacy-building through *scientific authority*, reflects a deliberate synthesis of informational clarity and emotional resonance. Pragmatically, the dominance of directives softened by positive politeness demonstrates an acute sensitivity to the socio-cultural context, ensuring that authority is asserted without alienating audiences. Methodologically, the integration of corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, and speech act/politeness theory offers a replicable multi-layered approach, expanding scholarly perspectives on multilingual and culturally specific crisis communication in Southeast Asia.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations that warrant further investigation. First, the dataset is restricted to official government sources, excluding public responses or media interpretations that could illuminate message reception and effectiveness. Second, while the analysis covers three major pandemic phases, it does not account for regional variations in communication strategies, particularly in local languages or decentralized governance contexts. Third, the study focuses on textual and pragmatic dimensions, leaving multimodal aspects—such as visual rhetoric, prosody, and gesture—underexplored. Future research should incorporate audience perception studies, possibly through surveys or sentiment analysis, to link linguistic strategies with behavioral outcomes. Comparative cross-national studies could also reveal how cultural and political systems shape crisis communication differently. Finally, integrating multimodal discourse analysis would deepen understanding of how verbal and non-verbal elements interact to produce trust, compliance, and resilience in public health emergencies.

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Aulia Cika Kartika: conceptualization (lead), investigation (lead), formal analysis (lead), writing – original draft (lead), writing – review and editing (lead).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Authors state no conflict of interest.

INFORMED CONSENT

We have obtained informed consent from all individuals included in this study.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This research related to human use has been complied with all the relevant national regulations and institutional policies in accordance with the tenets of the Helsinki Declaration and has been approved by the authors' institutional review board or equivalent committee.

DATA AVAILABILITY

Data availability is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

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