JURNAL LOCUS: Penelitian & Pengabdian
Volume 5 No. 11 November 2026, pp 10634-10646
E-ISSN 2829-7334
DOI: 10.58344/locus.v5i11.6584

Analysis of Deontic Modality in Comments on TikTok Standard Content about Marriage

Shafira Qoriy Ramadhani*, Aprilia Firmonasari
Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia
Email : shafiraqoriyramadhani@mail.ugm.ac.id*, aprilia@ugm.ac.id

Keywords:
Deontic Modality; Tiktok Comments; Marriage Standards; Critical Discourse Analysis; Fairclough.

This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.

Copyright © 2026 by Author. Published by Riviera Publishing

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of "TikTok standards" for marriage is shaped not only by the content itself but also by users' comments in response to it. This study examines the forms of deontic modality in comments on marriage-related TikTok content and explains how they function to construct, negotiate, and reject marital standards. The data comprised 320 comments from ten marriage-themed TikTok posts uploaded between 2023 and 2026. The data were collected through observation and note-taking and analyzed using Palmer's and Alwi et al.'s theories of modality and Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework. Deontic modality was identified in 46 comments (14.4%), comprising 53 modal markers categorized as obligation (23), permission (14), absence of obligation (9), and prohibition (7). Deontic modality occurred more frequently in posts that explicitly addressed marital standards, whereas posts documenting personal experiences predominantly elicited expressions of hope. Obligation was employed to distribute marital responsibilities along gender lines, assigning economic responsibilities to men and expectations of self-restraint to women. Permission was used to seek and confer legitimacy on individual choices that deviated from familial and customary norms, while the absence of obligation served as the primary linguistic resource for rejecting the "TikTok standard" label. The findings demonstrate that TikTok comment sections function as discursive spaces in which users simultaneously assert and contest normative authority over other individuals' marital choices and practices.

INTRODUCTION

Digital media have become an integral part of everyday life in contemporary society. Advances in digital technology have enabled individuals to engage in various forms of interaction through social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, X, Threads, and WhatsApp. According to DataReportal, Indonesia had 180 million active social media user identities in October 2025, equivalent to 62.9% of the country's total population at the end of 2025 (Kemp, 2025). Among these platforms, TikTok has emerged as one of the most widely used social media applications. DataReportal reported that TikTok's advertising audience in Indonesia reached 180 million at the end of 2025 (Kemp, 2025). Although this figure represents advertising reach rather than the number of active users, it nevertheless illustrates the platform's extensive reach in Indonesia. TikTok primarily functions as an entertainment platform for both content consumers and content creators (Ren, 2024). Beyond consuming and producing content, users can interact with posts through the comment section. This feature transforms TikTok into a space for public discourse, where users express agreement, offer

suggestions, impose prohibitions, make jokes, and criticize the content they encounter. Furthermore, user comments contribute to the emergence and development of the phenomenon commonly referred to as "TikTok standards."

The term "TikTok standards" is commonly used by social media users to describe idealized representations of relationships or particular aspects of life that are repeatedly presented through TikTok content and subsequently perceived as normative. These representations encompass various aspects of life, including beauty, success, romantic relationships, and marriage. Through repeated exposure, the ideas conveyed through TikTok content and user comments may gradually become accepted as common sense. Fairclough (1995, p. 27) refers to this process as naturalization, whereby ideological perspectives become accepted as natural and are no longer recognized as ideological constructs. In the context of marriage, TikTok standards encompass criteria for selecting a partner, readiness for marriage, expectations regarding wedding celebrations, and the distribution of marital roles and responsibilities between spouses. Several studies have examined related phenomena, including Generation Z's perceptions of ideal partner standards from the perspectives of maṣlaḥah mursalah and kafā'ah (Deswinta, 2026), the standardization of ideal households among millennials (Mumtaz Zuhda Aufa, 2026), and the "marriage is scary" trend (Romadlany, 2026).

Marriage is a kinship institution that regulates collective life within society (Koentjaraningrat, 1985, pp. 165–166). Consequently, changes in how individuals perceive and discuss marriage warrant further investigation. Data from Statistics Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik, BPS), as reported by GoodStats, indicate that the number of marriages in Indonesia declined from approximately 2.02 million in 2018 to 1.48 million in 2024 (Ashfiya, 2025). This decline is often associated with increasing socioeconomic demands and marital expectations circulating on social media, including TikTok standards. Although a causal relationship between these phenomena has not been established, comments on marriage-related TikTok content provide a valuable source of linguistic data for examining how users articulate, negotiate, and contest contemporary marital expectations.

One significant linguistic feature of TikTok comments is modality. Palmer (2001, pp. 7–8) conceptualizes modality as a linguistic means of expressing a speaker's attitude toward a proposition or the potential realization of an event. One type of modality is deontic modality, which concerns obligation and permission. Within the framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA), modality is also closely associated with power relations. Fairclough (1989, pp. 126–127) explains that modality reflects a speaker's authority, particularly when speakers impose obligations, express prohibitions, or grant permission to others, thereby asserting a degree of authority over their addressees. Such claims to authority are often expressed implicitly rather than explicitly, making modality particularly relevant to ideological analysis (Fairclough, 1989, p. 127). In TikTok comment sections, users who may have no personal relationship with one another can articulate what others harus (must), boleh (may), or jangan (must not) do within marriage. This phenomenon raises questions regarding the sources and legitimacy of the normative authority asserted by social media users.

Research on modality in Indonesian has been conducted extensively. Hariri (2011) examined Indonesian deontic modality, particularly permission and commands, drawing on Japanese modality theory. Jannatussholihah and Triyono (2020) and Pratama and Jannah (2024) analyzed modality in the official speeches of President Joko Widodo, while Risaldi et

al. (2021) investigated modality as a manifestation of power within an online community. Furthermore, studies applying Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework to TikTok have examined authenticity norms (Taboen, 2024), the legitimation of hijab regulations (Damayanti, 2025), and the representation of TikTok in news reports (Lin, 2023). Other studies have shown that Indonesian social media functions as a space for political satire (Nugraha, 2025) and for the reproduction of patriarchal ideology (Masruroh et al., 2025). Nevertheless, research specifically examining deontic modality in TikTok comments, particularly in relation to marital standards, remains limited. Much of the existing research on modality has focused on speeches and news texts involving speakers with institutional authority, whereas social media comments are predominantly produced by ordinary users who may not possess formal institutional authority. This distinction provides an opportunity to investigate how normative authority is constructed and negotiated through everyday digital discourse.

Against this background, this study aims to (1) describe the forms and distribution of deontic modality in comments on marriage-related TikTok content; (2) explain the functions of deontic modality in constructing, negotiating, and rejecting marital standards; and (3) examine the power relations and sociocultural contexts underlying the use of deontic modality through Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework. The urgency of this research arises from the increasing normalization of marital standards on TikTok, while the linguistic mechanisms through which users regulate and evaluate one another's marital choices remain insufficiently explored. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on deontic modality in comments produced by ordinary social media users rather than in institutional speeches or news texts, as well as its integration of a four-category analytical model of deontic modality with Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework. This study contributes to the linguistic study of modality in Indonesian and the critical discourse analysis of social media while providing insights into how marital norms are constructed, negotiated, and contested within digital spaces.

Palmer (2001, pp. 7–8) distinguishes between propositional modality and event modality. Propositional modality concerns the speaker's attitude toward the factual status of a proposition and encompasses epistemic and evidential modality. In contrast, event modality concerns the potential realization of events and encompasses deontic and dynamic modality. The principal distinction between deontic and dynamic modality lies in the source of the conditioning factors governing an event. Deontic modality involves conditions imposed externally on the agent, such as social norms, regulations, or authority, whereas dynamic modality concerns the agent's abilities and willingness or relevant circumstantial conditions. The two principal categories of deontic modality are obligation (obligative modality) and permission (permissive modality) (Palmer, 2001, pp. 7–8).

In Indonesian, Alwi (1992, pp. 36–261) classifies modality into four categories: intentional, epistemic, deontic, and dynamic modality. Deontic modality encompasses permission and commands and is expressed through linguistic markers such as boleh, harus, wajib, and jangan. For analytical purposes, this study operationalizes deontic modality into four categories. The first category is obligation, which expresses a requirement for an action to be performed and is marked by expressions such as harus, wajib, mesti, and perlu. The second category is prohibition, which expresses a requirement that an action not be performed and is marked by expressions such as jangan and tidak boleh. The third category is permission, which

indicates that an action is permitted and is expressed through markers such as boleh, izin, and tidak apa-apa. The fourth category is absence of obligation, which indicates that an action is not required and is expressed through markers such as tidak perlu and tidak usah. The absence of obligation must be distinguished from prohibition. For example, tidak usah menikah buru-buru ("there is no need to rush into marriage") does not prohibit marriage but removes the perceived obligation to marry quickly. In addition to categorical distinctions, deontic obligation varies in modal strength. Expressions such as harus and wajib convey strong obligation, whereas perlu, sebaiknya, and lebih baik generally express weaker obligation, recommendations, or advice, depending on their discursive context.

Fairclough (1995, p. 97) conceptualizes every discursive event as comprising three interconnected dimensions: text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. These dimensions are examined through three analytical stages: description, interpretation, and explanation (Fairclough, 1989, p. 26). At the description stage, modality is examined as a grammatical feature with relational value, reflecting the social relationships between discourse participants. Fairclough (1989, pp. 126–127) distinguishes between relational modality, which concerns the authority of one participant in relation to others, and expressive modality, which concerns the speaker's authority regarding the truth or probability of a proposition. Deontic modality can function as a form of relational modality because expressions of obligation, prohibition, and permission may construct or reinforce power relations between speakers and addressees. Fairclough (1989, p. 126) further explains that imperative sentences position speakers as individuals requesting or directing actions and addressees as actors expected to comply. In his subsequent work, Fairclough (2003, p. 17) situates modality within identification, emphasizing speakers' commitments to truth and necessity. Accordingly, deontic modality in TikTok comments can be interpreted as a linguistic manifestation of how users position themselves in relation to other discourse participants, assert or challenge normative authority, and construct, negotiate, or contest marital norms within digital discourse.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design supplemented by frequency counts to examine the distribution of deontic modality in comments on marriage-themed TikTok content. The data were obtained from ten TikTok posts drawn from the first author's thesis research corpus on the phenomenon of TikTok marriage standards. The posts were selected through purposive sampling based on four criteria: (1) addressed or depicted marriage; (2) received more than 1,000 likes and at least 100 comments; (3) were uploaded between 2022 and 2026; and (4) contained Indonesian-language content, including Indonesian mixed with other languages. The selected posts represented two modes of content delivery. Details of the data sources are presented in Table 1.

Note: The abstract specifies a publication period of 2023–2026, whereas the methodology specifies 2022–2026. Please verify and ensure consistency between these sections.

Table 1. Research Data Sources

Code	Account	Year	Likes / Comments∗	Comments Collected	Content
V1	@shadirafirdausi	2023	1.5M / 5,356	21	The journey of building a house with her husband
V2	@dinata.organizer	2025	115K / 1.1K	19	Documentation of an *intimate* wedding by a wedding organizer
V3	@pepeng	2025	1.7M / 8.8K	51	Opinion on dangdut music at wedding parties
V4	@Try Pribadi Kurniawan	2026	100K / 476	31	A list of wedding preparations from men for men
V5	@Naya Defisa	2026	65.8K / 274	35	Signs that someone is ready to marry
V6	@Pop Culture	2026	533K / 2.1K	29	A clip of dr. Tirta on marrying a man "from zero"
V9	@Fakboiberkelas8	2025	67.4K / 1.8K	28	A response to the financial standards for a future husband
V13	@ramadan & azhyra	2025	44.1K / 466	33	A relationship journey from dating to proposal
V14	@sinta's digital diary	2025	92.6K / 238	15	A couple's discussion on wedding preparations
V15	@kata hati	2024	108.8K / 713	58	A compilation of a husband and wife's togetherness (*pov: marriage is (not) scary*)
Total				**320**	

∗The numbers of likes and comments were recorded from the TikTok page at the time of data collection. Comments collected are the comments recorded by the researcher after duplicates were removed.

The data were collected using the observation method (metode simak), non-participant observation (simak bebas libat cakap), and note-taking techniques (Sudaryanto, 2015, pp. 203–206). Comments were documented in their original form, preserving nonstandard spelling, abbreviations, and emojis. After duplicate entries were removed, a total of 320 comments were retained for analysis. Each comment was assigned a unique identification code comprising the post code and the comment's sequential number. To protect user privacy, usernames were excluded from the discussion, and tagged accounts were anonymized.

Data analysis was conducted in three stages. First, all comments were examined to identify lexical markers of deontic modality, including harus, wajib, musti, perlu, lebih baik, boleh, izin, gapapa, jangan, gak usah, and gak perlu, as well as lexical expressions conveying obligation or permission, such as tanggung jawab, berhak, and dipaksa. Each occurrence was evaluated according to the source of its conditioning factor. Markers were classified as deontic when the obligation or permission originated from social norms, regulations, or external authority. Markers expressing circumstantial necessity, such as jadi harus nyari yang lain (V14-K4), or personal willingness, such as gak mau (V13-K5), were excluded. Based on these criteria, 15 occurrences were excluded from the frequency counts. Imperative expressions, such as carilah and tinggalin aja, were analyzed qualitatively as grammatical constructions with deontic functions but were excluded from the frequency counts. Second, the identified deontic

markers were classified into four categories: obligation, prohibition, permission, and absence of obligation. Third, the data were analyzed using Fairclough's (1989, p. 26) three-stage critical discourse analysis framework, comprising description of modality forms, interpretation of their relationship with the TikTok content to which users responded, and explanation of their relationship with the broader sociocultural context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Distribution of Deontic Modality

Of the 320 comments, deontic modality was found in 46 comments (14.4%) with 53 markers. Its distribution is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Forms and Markers of Deontic Modality in the Comments

Category	Markers (Frequency)	Total	Percentage
Obligation	*harus* (10), *lebih baik* (2), *mending* (2), *tanggung jawab* (2), *wajib* (1), *musti* (1), *seharusnya* (1), *harusnya* (1), *perlu* (1), *should* (1), *dipaksa* (1)	23	43.4%
Permission	*boleh* (4), *izin/ijin* (3), *gapapa/gpp/enggak papa* (5), *berhak* (1), *sah-sah aja* (1)	14	26.4%
Absence of obligation	*gak usah/nggak usah/gausah* (5), *gak perlu* (1), *nggak ada yang maksa ... harus* (1), *bukan disuruh* (1), *ga dipaksa* (1)	9	17.0%
Prohibition	*jangan* (3), *jangan sampai* (2), *gak boleh* (1), *ngelarang* (1)	7	13.2%
Total		**53**	**100%**

Source: researcher's analysis (2026). One comment may contain more than one marker.

Table 2 shows that obligation is the most frequently found category, followed by permission, absence of obligation, and prohibition. Nevertheless, deontic modality is not the dominant type of modality in the data. Almost a third of the comments, about 99 comments, instead contain markers of desire or hope, such as *semoga*, *pengen*, *mau*, *manifesting*, and *aamiin*. This finding is in line with the view that marriage standards on TikTok circulate more often as wishes than as commands. Deontic modality appears only when users openly regulate, permit, or reject something.

The distribution of deontic modality also differs by content type. The four direct posts (V4, V5, V6, and V9), which together have 123 comments, produced 35 deontic markers. The six indirect posts, with 197 comments, produced only 18 markers. Post V1, which shows the journey of building a house, contains no lexical deontic markers at all, whereas post V9 contains the most markers, namely 13. This difference shows that the content genre helps determine how viewers respond. Content that gives advice, lists, or opinions about standards invites regulating responses, while personal documentation content mostly invites hopes and prayers.

Obligation: Dividing Responsibilities in Marriage

Obligation modality in the data is used to establish what a particular party must do. Interestingly, these obligations are often divided according to gender.

> (1) "gua cowo yang punya mindset kalo cewe gua hidup nya udah mewah sebelum nikah,gua punya tanggung jawab buat bikin kehidupan yang lebih mewah setelah gua nikahin" (V9-K17)

(2) a. "The woman should understand when it comes to marriage it's not all about her anymore. it become you and him as a family. gak blh lg egois tentang kebutuhan diri sndri krna lu lagi bangun keluarga." (V9-K27)

b. "kalo menurut aku sebagai cewe uang selfcare tuh lebih baik ditanggung sendiri karna itu tanggung jawab diri" (V9-K24)

Data (1) does not use a modal verb, but the obligation is expressed lexically through the phrase *punya tanggung jawab* ("have a responsibility"). The speaker, who calls himself *cowo* (a guy), places the economic obligation on himself as a future husband, namely to make his wife's life *lebih mewah* (more luxurious) after marriage. The word choice *tanggung jawab* makes the obligation sound natural and moral rather than merely a personal choice. Data (2) shows obligations directed at women. Data (2a) uses the English modal *should* and the prohibition *gak blh*. The woman's obligation is formulated as the obligation to understand that marriage is *not all about her anymore* and the prohibition against being *egois* (selfish). Data (2b) uses *lebih baik* (it is better), a weaker obligation, and opens with the hedge *kalo menurut aku sebagai cewe* ("in my opinion as a girl"). The speaker advises women to bear the cost of their own self-care and calls it *tanggung jawab diri* (one's own responsibility).

These three data show a clear division. Men are given economic obligations, whereas women are given emotional obligations and self-restraint, namely not being selfish and not burdening their partner. The strength of the modality also differs. The woman's obligation in data (2a) is expressed with *should* and a direct prohibition addressed to *lu* (you), whereas data (2b), written by a woman herself, uses the advice *lebih baik* and the hedge *menurut aku*. The switch to English in data (2a) also gives the impression that the statement is general advice applicable to all women.

(3) "niat, persiapan yg matang, planning kedepan, masalah tempat tinggal, berapa anak, itu harus jelas dan diobrolin sebelum menikah. pemikirian seperti ini seharusnya memang sudah bisa direalisasikan buat yg sudah ada niat untuk menikah" (V6-K29)

(4) a. "Ini yg namanya Pertemanan dalam pernikahan. Nikah harusnya seseru itu sih" (V15-K8)

b. "kayak nya harus lebih bnyk vt kyk gini dehhh, jdi gk bikin org lain takut untuk nikah" (V15-K19)

Data (3) contains two levels of obligation. The first clause uses *harus* to establish that life plans *harus jelas dan diobrolin sebelum menikah* (must be clear and discussed before marriage). The second clause uses the weaker *seharusnya* (should) to express the normative expectation that such thinking *sudah bisa direalisasikan* (can already be realized). The obligation here is not directed at one gender but at anyone *yg sudah ada niat untuk menikah* (who intends to marry). Data (4) shows obligations directed at marriage itself and at TikTok content. In data (4a), *harusnya* establishes that the ideal marriage is one that is *seseru itu* (that fun). In data (4b), *harus* is used to demand that such content be multiplied so that people are not *takut untuk nikah* (afraid to marry). These two data show that obligation modality is also used to make content a measure of what marriage ought to be.

(5) "bang, tapi beda loh 'mengusahakan yang terbaik' dan 'dipatok standar'. kalo mengusahakan yg terbaik itu kita ikhlas dan emang kemauan, tapi kalo dipatok standar harus gini gitu sih gaenak ya" (V9-K23)

Not all obligations in the data are used to establish standards. Data (5) uses *harus* to criticize obligation itself. The speaker distinguishes *mengusahakan yang terbaik* (striving for the best), which is based on *kemauan* (willingness), from *dipatok standar* (being pegged to a standard), which is formulated as *harus gini gitu* (must be like this and that). In this utterance, *harus* becomes a characteristic of an imposed standard, whereas action based on willingness is judged better. In other words, the speaker uses obligation modality to show that what he or she rejects is the form of necessity itself.

Apart from lexical markers, obligation is also present through imperative sentences. The comment *Cowok tu kaya gini*, *tanggung jawab, buktiin kalo emang kita tujuannya* uses the imperative verb *buktiin* (prove it). The word *tu* in this comment is a short form of *itu* that functions as a demonstrative, not as a modality marker. Its meaning of obligation comes from the sentence *Cowok tu kaya gini* ("a guy is like this"), which makes the man in the content a measure for other men, and from the imperative *buktiin*. Other comments use imperatives to give directions in choosing a partner, for example *Carilah yang tepat!!!!! bukan yang cepat* and *tinggalin aja kak*. Fairclough (1989, p. 126) explains that imperative sentences place the speaker in the position of asking for action and the addressee as a party expected to comply. In these comments, that position is taken by users who have no relationship whatsoever with the people they are directing.

Prohibition: Preventing the Wrong Choice and Borrowing the Content's Authority

Prohibition is the least frequently found category. Nevertheless, prohibitions in the data show a distinctive pattern: most prohibitions relate to choosing a partner, and some of them are quoted from the content.

(6) "Menikah itu indah asal jangan sampe salah pilih pasangan yaaa" (V15-K18)

(7) a. "'Sudah tau arah hidup kalian kemana. / Jangan sampe pasangan kalian malah / jadi pelampiasan emosi kalian yang / belum selesai sama diri sendiri.' keliatan sederhana, tapi percayalah ketika pasangan kita ngelampiasin emosinya ke kita rasanya melelahkan" (V5-K17)

b. "' rezeki tuh udah di atur, tapi jangan nekat'" (V6-K1)

Data (6) uses *jangan sampe* in a conditional clause introduced by *asal* (as long as). Marriage is judged *indah* (beautiful) on one condition, namely not choosing the wrong partner. The form *jangan sampai* is softer than *jangan* because what is prevented is an unwanted consequence rather than a deliberate action. The particle *yaaa* also softens the prohibition so that it sounds like advice between friends. Data (7) shows prohibitions that are not formulated by the commenter but quoted from the content. Data (7a) quotes one of the requirements for readiness to marry in post V5, marks it with quotation marks, and then adds personal experience as reinforcement. Data (7b) quotes dr. Tirta's utterance in post V6. By quoting, the speaker borrows the authority of the content creator. The prohibition no longer sounds like the commenter's personal opinion but like advice from a party considered more knowledgeable. This pattern shows that deontic modality circulates from content to the comment section through re-quotation.

(8) a. "boleh gak sih gausah nikah" (V6-K15)

b. "emg yg ngelarang siapa" (V6-K16)

Data (8) is a pair of consecutive comments. The first comment asks permission not to marry, and the second comment, which appears immediately afterwards, seems to answer with

the rhetorical question *emg yg ngelarang siapa* ("who's forbidding it anyway"). The verb *ngelarang* is a lexical marker of prohibition, but here the prohibition is denied. The second speaker states that no party has the authority to forbid someone not to marry. This short exchange shows that the comment section is also a place where users question who has the right to regulate the choice to marry.

Permission: Requesting and Granting Legitimacy

Permission modality in the data has two directions, namely requesting permission and granting permission. Both directions show who is considered to have the authority to determine choices in marriage.

(9) a. "Aku yang cewe liatnya mules kek boleh ga si ga di acarain 😔 tp gue anak pertama cucu pertama, cowo gue jg anak pertama 😔 😔" (V4-K27)

b. "boleh gk sih lagu nya tuh inggris atau gk pop gitu loh ...bosen pake koplo trs" (V3-K45)

Both data in (9) are requests for permission marked by *boleh ga si* and *boleh gk sih* ("is it okay if…"). The particle *sih* and the form of a question addressed to no one in particular show that these requests are directed at the general public. What is asked permission for is not something prohibited by law or religion, namely marrying without a celebration and using English-language songs. Thus, these requests for permission reveal unwritten norms felt by the speakers. Data (9a) even names the source of the norm, namely the position of *anak pertama cucu pertama* (first child and first grandchild). In the family institution, this position carries the obligation to hold a wedding celebration, so the wish not to hold one needs to be asked permission for.

(10) "bpk gue udh request katanya 'neng, klo km nikah harus rame yaa, harus ada panggung ... gue iyain aja bpk gue tp kata gue teh 'boleh pak, tp eneng pke kpop koplo'" (V3-K14)

Data (10) shows negotiation between obligation and permission in a single utterance. The speaker's father is quoted using *harus* twice, namely *harus rame* (must be lively) and *harus ada panggung* (there must be a stage). The speaker responds with *boleh pak* ("okay, Dad"), thereby granting permission to her father, and then adds a condition through *tp eneng pke kpop koplo* ("but I'll use K-pop koplo"). This reversal is interesting. Socially, it is parents who usually give permission to children; in this utterance, it is the child who gives permission, albeit conditionally. Conditional permission modality becomes the speaker's way of complying with parental authority without fully giving up her own wishes.

(11) a. "Enggak papa ajak susah sama laki" yg kerja…" (V13-K27)

b. "Si cewe dpt treatment dri uang sendiri ya gpp masang standar tinggi" (V9-K8)

c. "semua orang berhak punya standar nya masing2" (V9-K6)

d. "Gapapa banget kok kakkk! Setiap orang pasti punya preferensi beda-beda." (V5-K4)

Data (11) consists of permission-granting. Data (11a) uses *enggak papa* (it's okay) to legitimize women who are willing to live in hardship with a man, on the condition that the man *kerja* (works). This permission at the same time carries a standard, because what is allowed is only accompanying a man who works. Data (11b) and (11c) legitimize women who set high

standards, through *gpp* and *berhak* (have the right) respectively. The word *berhak* expresses permission as a right possessed by everyone, not as a grant from a particular party. Data (11d) was written by the creator of post V5 as a reply to a viewer who asked whether her thinking was wrong because it differed from the content. With *Gapapa banget kok* ("it's totally fine"), the content creator gives permission for a choice that does not match her own content. Here it can be seen that the content creator is treated as a party with the authority to grant permission.

In addition, the word *izin* also appears as a form of politeness, for example *bg, izin simpen* ("bro, permission to save") and *izin rekomendasiin undangan website digital* ("permission to recommend digital website invitations"). In the first example, the speaker asks permission to save the content, even though such permission is technically unnecessary. In the second example, *izin* is used by a digital invitation seller's account to open a promotion. This use shows that deontic markers can lose part of their permissive meaning and turn into politeness formulas.

Absence of Obligation: Rejecting TikTok Standards and Old Norms

Absence of obligation is the category most closely related to the rejection of standards. The markers used include *gak perlu*, *gak usah*, and negated forms of *maksa* (force) or *disuruh* (be told to).

(12) a. "gak perlu ngikutin standar tiktok gaes." (V4-K2)

b. "Lah…. Nggak ada yg maksa elu harus kaya begini juga bang" (V4-K3)

c. "Ini untuk Yang nikahnya budget unlimited ya gaes. untuk yang intimate gak usah di ikutin, kalo gak di pangkas pangkas aja sesuai budget." (V4-K29)

d. "simple aja sih kalo ga mampu ya ga dipaksa" (V9-K22)

The first three data come from post V4, namely a list of wedding preparations addressed to men. Data (12a) uses *gak perlu* (no need) to remove the obligation to follow the *standar tiktok* (TikTok standard). The speaker does not forbid people from following the list but asserts that it is not an obligation. Data (12b) removes the obligation in a different way: the speaker denies that anyone is forcing (*Nggak ada yg maksa*), so that the *harus* in the utterance becomes an obligation that is cancelled. Data (12c) limits the applicability of the list to *Yang nikahnya budget unlimited* (those with unlimited wedding budgets) and then removes the obligation for those who choose an *intimate* wedding. Data (12d) formulates a general principle: the obligation applies only to those who are able. These four data show that marriage standards circulating on TikTok are not automatically accepted as obligations. Absence of obligation becomes a way for users to relativize standards according to their respective abilities.

(13) a. "Aku save bjirr, kalo mamahku gak mau aku nikah gini mending gak usah nikah" (V2-K12)

b. "ingat yah guys planing yang jelas bukan di suruh Nerima apa adanya" (V6-K5)

Absence of obligation is used not only to reject TikTok standards but also to reject old norms. Data (13a) uses *gak usah* in a conditional sentence. The speaker states that if her mother does not approve of the simple wedding concept in the content, it would be better for her not to marry at all. This utterance rejects parental authority in determining the form of the wedding, although it is delivered jokingly. Data (13b) shows the opposite direction. The speaker removes an old obligation, namely *Nerima apa adanya* (accepting things as they are), and replaces it with a new obligation, namely *planning yang jelas* (clear planning). The imperative *ingat yah*

guys ("remember, guys") shows that the new obligation is directed at fellow viewers. This data shows that absence of obligation does not always mean rejecting standards; it can also be used to replace one standard with another.

Deontic Modality and Power Relations

At the description stage, the findings above show that deontic modality in the comments is rarely accompanied by a clear source of authority. Commenters oblige, prohibit, and grant permission to people they do not know but almost never state on what basis they are entitled to do so. Fairclough (1989, p. 127) refers to such implicit claims of authority as the reason why relational modality is important to examine ideologically. Commenters overcome this lack of authority in several ways, namely by using hedges such as *menurut aku* (in my opinion), softening obligations with *lebih baik* and *seharusnya*, using familiar forms of address such as *gaes*, *kak*, and *bang*, or borrowing the voice of other parties through quotation.

At the interpretation stage, deontic modality appears to depend heavily on the content being responded to. Direct content in the form of lists, advice, and opinions produced almost twice as many deontic markers as indirect content, even though it had fewer comments. Content such as V4, V5, V6, and V9 offers standards openly, so viewers respond by agreeing with, adding to, or removing obligations. In contrast, personal documentation content such as V1 and V13 mostly elicits hopes. In addition, some deontic modality in the comments is quoted directly from the content, as in data (7). This quotation shows that content creators are considered to have greater authority than commenters, so that the prohibitions and obligations they formulate can be reused by viewers.

At the explanation stage, deontic modality in the data reveals three social contexts. First, the gender-based division of obligations (data (1) and (2)) is in line with Law Number 1 of 1974 on Marriage (Republik Indonesia, 1974), which places the husband as the head of the family and the wife as the housewife (Article 31 paragraph 3) and obliges the husband to provide the necessities of household life according to his ability (Article 34 paragraph 1). Obligation modality in the comments reproduces this division in everyday language, namely *tanggung jawab* for men and the prohibition against being *egois* for women. Second, requests for permission and conditional permission (data (9) and (10)) show the strong authority of family and custom in marriage. The choice to marry without a celebration or without dangdut needs to be asked permission for because marriage is still viewed as a matter for the extended family. Third, absence of obligation (data (12) and (13)) shows that the *TikTok standard* label itself has become an object of resistance. Users not only reject the content of the standards but also reject the assumption that the standards must be followed.

Overall, deontic modality in TikTok comments functions as an arena of contestation over authority. Marriage standards more often circulate as hopes, but when a standard is formulated as an obligation, other users immediately weigh, limit, or remove it. The comment section is thus not only a place where standards are reproduced but also a place where users question who has the right to determine how other people marry.

CONCLUSION

This study identified deontic modality in 46 of the 320 comments (14.4%), comprising 53 modal markers. Obligation was the most frequently identified category (43.4%), followed by permission (26.4%), absence of obligation (17.0%), and prohibition (13.2%). Deontic

modality occurred more frequently in posts that explicitly addressed marital standards, whereas posts documenting personal experiences predominantly elicited expressions of hope. Each category of deontic modality served a distinct discursive function in constructing and negotiating marital standards. Obligation was employed to distribute marital responsibilities along gender lines, assigning economic responsibilities to men and expectations of self-restraint to women. Prohibition was used to discourage the selection of unsuitable partners, often by invoking content creators' authority through direct quotation. Permission served to seek and confer legitimacy on individual choices that deviated from familial and customary norms. The absence of obligation was employed to reject and challenge the perceived universality of TikTok standards, although it could also function as a means of replacing one normative expectation with another. These findings demonstrate that deontic modality in TikTok comments functions as a linguistic resource through which users simultaneously assert and contest normative authority over marital choices and practices. However, this study has several limitations, including the relatively small corpus of ten TikTok posts and the restriction of frequency counts to lexical markers, excluding the systematic quantification of imperative constructions. Future research could expand the corpus, systematically incorporate imperative constructions into quantitative analysis, examine gender-based differences in the use of deontic modality where reliable gender information is available, and investigate its relationship with intentional modality to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the linguistic construction of marital norms in digital discourse.

FUNDING

The authors declare that no financial support was received for the conduct of this research and/or the publication of this article.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that this research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed to the preparation and writing of this article.

GENERATIVE AI STATEMENT

In the preparation of this manuscript, the authors utilized Artificial Intelligence (AI) solely for the purposes of improving grammar and checking language usage.

REFERENCES

Alwi, H. (1992). *Modalitas dalam bahasa Indonesia*. Kanisius.

Ashfiya, D. A. N. (2025). *Bagaimana tren nikah-cerai di Indonesia selama 7 tahun terakhir?* GoodStats. https://goodstats.id/article/tren-nikah-cerai-di-indonesia-XcPoy

Damayanti, N. A. (2025). Legitimasi aturan berjilbab dalam akun TikTok @okisetianadewi_official: Analisis wacana kritis Norman Fairclough. *Millatuna: Jurnal Studi Islam*, *2*(02), 153–164. https://doi.org/10.33752/mjsi.v2i02.8969

Deswinta, H. S. (2026). *Kriteria memilih pasangan nikah bagi Gen Z berdasar standarisasi TikTok perspektif maslahah mursalah* [Diploma thesis, UIN Raden Intan Lampung]. https://repository.radenintan.ac.id/42617/

Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. Longman.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. Routledge.

Hariri, T. (2011). A review of deontic modality in Indonesian language based on the theory of Japanese modality. *Humaniora*, *23*(1). https://doi.org/10.22146/jh.v23i1.1012

Jannatussholihah, S., & Triyono, S. (2020). Power in Indonesian presidential speeches: An analysis of linguistic modality. *LiNGUA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa dan Sastra*, *15*(2), 239–252. https://doi.org/10.18860/ling.v15i2.8471

Kemp, S. (2025, November 5). *Digital 2026: Indonesia*. DataReportal. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2026-indonesia

Koentjaraningrat. (1985). *Pengantar ilmu antropologi*. Aksara Baru.

Lin, Y. (2023). Critical discourse analysis of news reports on TikTok. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, *6*(10), 71–75. https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2023.6.10.10

Masruroh, D., Wardani, F. Y. K., Suhatmady, B., & Aridah. (2025). Patriarchal ideology in Indonesian social media: A critical discourse analysis. *SCOPE: Journal of English Language Teaching*, *9*(2). https://doi.org/10.30998/scope.v9i2.26099

Mumtaz Zuhda Aufa. (2026). *Analisis teori maslahah terhadap standardisasi rumah tangga ideal dalam platform TikTok (Studi keluarga generasi milenial Kapanewon Depok Sleman)* [Undergraduate thesis, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta]. https://digilib.uin-suka.ac.id/id/eprint/75487/

Nugraha, D. S. (2025). Examining political satire in Indonesian TikTok videos: An analysis of humor and commentary. *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature*, *19*(2). https://doi.org/10.15294/lc.v19i2.2742

Palmer, F. R. (2001). *Mood and modality* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Pratama, A. P., & Jannah, R. (2024). Analyzing modality in President Jokowi's 78th anniversary state speech at the Indonesian Parliament Building. *Proceedings of National English Undergraduate Student Conference (NEUSCO)*. https://proceedings.uinsa.ac.id/index.php/neusco/article/view/3038

Ren, Q. (2024). Advertising and content creation on digital content platforms. *Marketing Science*, *43*(4), 734–750.

Republik Indonesia. (1974). *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 1 Tahun 1974 tentang Perkawinan*.

Risaldi, A., Santoso, A., & Syahri, M. (2021). Modalitas sebagai fitur lingual praktik kuasa dalam komunitas pedofilia. *KEMBARA: Jurnal Keilmuan Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya*, *7*(2), 241–255. https://doi.org/10.22219/kembara.v7i2.17682

Romadlany, Z. (2026). Social media as a space for da'wah dialogue on marriage: An analysis of the 'marriage is scary' issue on TikTok. *Islamic Communication and Civilization Journal*, *1*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.67367/iccj.v1i1.1255

Sudaryanto. (2015). *Metode dan aneka teknik analisis bahasa: Pengantar penelitian wahana kebudayaan secara linguistis*. Sanata Dharma University Press.

Taboen, A. P. (2024). Norma autentisitas dan standar buffer di TikTok: Tinjauan analisis wacana kritis. *Jurnal Riset Rumpun Ilmu Sosial, Politik dan Humaniora*, *3*(3), 22–35. https://doi.org/10.55606/jurrish.v3i3.6148