

POLITENESS STRATEGIES OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD INTERACTION IN DESA WONOREJO KECAMATAN MARON KABUPATEN PROBOLINGGO: A STUDY OF PRAGMATIC

*Strategi Kesantunan dalam Interaksi Antar Tetangga di Desa Wonorejo,
Kecamatan Maron, Kabupaten Probolinggo: Kajian Pragmatik*

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Abstract

Daily interactions among neighbors represent a form of social communication in which politeness strategies play an important role in maintaining harmonious relationships. In the community of Desa Wonorejo, polite language is frequently used as a reflection of local cultural values and social norms in everyday communication. This study aims to analyze the types of politeness strategies used in neighborhood interactions in Desa Wonorejo based on the politeness theory proposed by Brown & Levinson, (1987). The analysis focuses on four types of politeness strategies, namely bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record strategies. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method. The data were collected through direct observation of conversations among neighbors in daily interactions. The findings show that all four types of politeness strategies are used by community members in different situations. Among these strategies, positive politeness is the most dominant because it reflects closeness, solidarity, friendliness, and mutual respect among neighbors. Furthermore, the use of politeness strategies is influenced by social relationships, age differences, and situational context. It can be concluded that politeness strategies function not only as linguistic forms but also as social and cultural tools that support harmony and strengthen social relationships within the community.

Keywords: politeness strategies, neighborhood interaction, pragmatics, Desa Wonorejo

Introduction

Language plays an important role in maintaining social relationships and cultural values within society because it enables people to communicate, express ideas, and understand one another effectively (Prayitno et al., 2021). In addition to functioning as a communication tool, language also reflects cultural identity and social behavior within a community (Aurellia, 2023). Indonesia, as a multilingual country, demonstrates diverse language practices in daily interaction, including in Desa Wonorejo, a village located in the transitional area between Javanese and Madurese cultures. The coexistence of Javanese and Madurese languages in the

village creates a bilingual environment in which language choice depends on social situations, cultural norms, and communicative purposes (Holmes, 2013). In daily interaction, language use also reflects solidarity, social identity, and pragmatic competence among speakers (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Politeness in language use becomes an essential aspect of social interaction in Desa Wonorejo. Politeness is reflected not only through linguistic expressions but also through gestures, intonation, and social behavior that help maintain harmony and respect among community members. According to Brown and Levinson, politeness strategies are used to reduce conflict, show respect, and strengthen social relationships. In the Indonesian context, particularly in rural communities that strongly preserve traditional values, politeness plays a central role in maintaining social cohesion (Arianto, 2024). Daily interactions among the people of Desa Wonorejo demonstrate the application of politeness strategies influenced by both Javanese and Madurese cultural values.

Previous studies have examined politeness strategies in schools, workplaces, and urban communities. However, research focusing on politeness practices in rural and culturally diverse communities remains limited (Gunaningtyas & Fitriati, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the types of politeness strategies used by the people of Desa Wonorejo in their daily interactions based on the theory proposed by Brown and Levinson. This research also seeks to explore how politeness strategies function in maintaining social harmony, expressing respect, and strengthening solidarity within the sociocultural context of the village. The findings are expected to contribute to pragmatic and sociolinguistic studies by providing a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, culture, and social interaction in rural Indonesian communities (Watts, 2003).

Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design focusing on pragmatic analysis. Descriptive research is employed to portray the condition or value of one or more variables independently, without making comparisons or examining relationships among variables (Sugiyono, 2019). The data consisted of verbal utterances exchanged among neighbors during daily social interactions in Desa Wonorejo. Primary data were obtained from natural interactions among residents living in RT 12 RW 04 Desa Wonorejo. The participants consisted of approximately three to five residents aged between 25 and 70 years old who used Madurese in everyday communication. Data collection was conducted from February to March 2026.

The data were collected through direct observation, audio recordings, and field notes to identify politeness strategies used in social interaction. All recorded

utterances were transcribed verbatim and translated from Madurese into standard Indonesian when necessary. Secondary data were obtained from *Kamus Madura-Indonesia* by Safioedin, (1977). The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling, selecting utterances directly relevant to politeness strategies based on the framework proposed by Brown and Levinson. The data were classified into four categories of politeness strategies, namely bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. To ensure data validity, member checking was applied during the research process. Furthermore, data analysis followed the ethnographic analysis model proposed by Spradley, (2016), including domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, and componential analysis to identify the functions and patterns of politeness strategies in neighborhood interactions.

Discussion and Result

no	Types of Politeness Strategies	Percentage
1.	Positive Politeness	50%
2.	Negative Politeness	12%
3.	Bald on record	18 %
4.	Off record	20%

Positive Politeness

Positive politeness became the most dominant strategy used by the participants. This strategy was commonly used to maintain solidarity and build close relationships among neighbors.

Data 1

P1: *Assalamualaikum lek*

P2: *Waalaikumsalam*

This conversation takes place at Participant 2's house in Desa Wonorejo, Kecamatan Maron, Kabupaten Probolinggo, in the morning. The participants are two neighboring women, P1 (22 years old) and P2 (48 years old), who are familiar with each other and are Muslims. The interaction begins with the greeting "*Assalamualaikum lek*," which is responded to with "*Waalaikumsalam*." These greetings originate from Islamic tradition, meaning "peace be upon you" and "peace be upon you too." The use of the address term "*lek*" indicates familiarity

and social closeness. Pragmatically, this exchange functions as an opening to interaction that shows respect, friendliness, and solidarity. It reflects, as the speaker maintains harmonious social relationships through a polite and culturally appropriate greeting.

Negative Politeness

Negative politeness was used by the participants to show respect and minimize imposition toward the hearer. This strategy commonly appeared when the speakers asked for help, permission, or apologized during interactions.

Data 47

P2: *mak saporanah nggeh a ganggu niko, anu pon totop labenggah pon*

P1: *nggeh, a lako a empiyan?*

The conversation takes place at Participant 2's house located in Desa Wonorejo, Kecamatan Maron, Kabupaten Probolinggo. It occurs in the morning during a casual gathering among neighbors. The participants are two women, Participant 1 (P1) and Participant 2 (P2), who are neighbors and familiar with each other. Participant 1 (P1) is around 45 years old and Participant 2 (P2) is 48 years old. They have a close social relationship, so the interaction occurs informally and warmly. The theme of this conversation is a polite request preceded by an apology. In Data 47, P2 says *mak saporanah nggeh a ganggu niko, anu pon totop labenggah pon*, expressing an apology for possibly disturbing the hearer while stating the intention to close the door. P1 then responds with *nggeh, a lako a empiyan?*, acknowledging the statement and asking about the activity. The utterance *mak saporanah nggeh a ganggu niko, anu pon totop labenggah pon* belongs to a negative politeness strategy. Pragmatically, the speaker realizes that the action may potentially disturb or impose on the hearer, so the speaker first offers an apology before expressing the intention. The use of an apologetic expression shows that the speaker respects the hearer's freedom and comfort. In this way, the speaker attempts to minimize the imposition when expressing the desire to close the door. This strategy reflects the speaker's effort to maintain the hearer's negative face, which refers to the desire to have freedom of action and not to be imposed upon.

Bald on Record

Bald on record strategy was used when the speakers intended to deliver messages directly and clearly without using additional politeness expressions. This

strategy usually appeared in urgent situations or in close relationships among neighbors.

Data 64

P2: *tika, kalak cabbih en la dek*

P3: *cabbih enna brempah*

P2: *tellok an la, dina ralah ibuk en tak bettah jek*

P3: *behh yelah yelah*

The conversation takes place at Participant 2's house in Desa Wonorejo, Kecamatan Maron, Kabupaten Probolinggo during a casual gathering among neighbors while preparing *rujak* together. The interaction occurs in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The participants involved in this conversation are Participant 2 (P2), a woman aged 48, and Participant 3 (P3), a woman aged 26. During the activity, P2 asks P3 to take some chili that will be used as an ingredient for the *rujak*. The request is expressed directly while they are preparing the food together. The theme of this conversation is giving a direct instruction to take an ingredient needed for a shared activity. The utterance *tika, kalak cabbih en la dek* is categorized as a bald on record strategy. Pragmatically, the goal of this utterance is to directly instruct P3 to take the chili needed for making the *rujak*. The speaker delivers the command directly without using mitigating devices or indirect politeness strategies. In the context of a close social relationship and a relaxed shared activity, such directness is not considered face threatening. Instead, it functions to convey the instruction clearly and efficiently so that the preparation of the *rujak* can continue smoothly. Therefore, this utterance reflects the characteristics of a bald on record strategy, where the speaker expresses the intended meaning directly without mitigation when the social context allows it.

Off Record

Off record strategy was used when the speakers intended to convey messages indirectly. This strategy allowed the hearer to interpret the meaning of the utterance by themselves without receiving a direct statement.

Data 93

P5: *cabbih en neka bennyak elluh, cek peddis sa, cabbih sa napa neko*

P2: *cabbih tellok an gun*

P4: *peddis peddis sara cabbien* (lip smacking as an oral response to sour and spicy taste)

The conversation takes place at Participant 2's house in Desa Wonorejo, Kecamatan Maron, Kabupaten Probolinggo in the morning during a casual gathering among neighbors while tasting the *rujak* they prepared together. The interaction occurs in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. The participants involved in this exchange are Participant 2 (P2), a woman aged 48, Participant 4 (P4), a woman around 70 years old, and Participant 5 (P5), a man aged 53. During the interaction, P5 comments that the *rujak* seems very spicy because of the chilies used. P2 explains that only three chilies were added. After that, P4 reacts spontaneously to the spicy taste while tasting the *rujak*. The theme of this conversation is a spontaneous reaction to the spiciness of food. The utterance *peddis peddis sara cabbien* belongs to an off record strategy. Pragmatically, the intended meaning of the speaker is to express that the *rujak* tastes very spicy. However, the speaker does not directly request any action, such as asking for water or asking to reduce the spiciness. Instead, the speaker simply expresses a spontaneous reaction to the strong taste. From this utterance, the implicature emerges that the spiciness is quite intense and may cause discomfort. Because this meaning is not stated explicitly, the hearer must interpret it through the conversational context and the situation in which the speakers are tasting the *rujak* together. In this way, the speaker expresses a personal reaction to the food without making a direct request or statement. Therefore, the utterance reflects the characteristics of an off record strategy, where the intended meaning is conveyed implicitly and depends on the hearer's interpretation.

Politeness strategies were found in 110 utterances obtained from observations conducted in Desa Wonorejo. The analysis showed that all four types of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson, namely positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on record, and off record, appeared in conversations among neighbors in Desa Wonorejo, Kecamatan Maron, Kabupaten Probolinggo. The conversations involved five participants who communicated with each other in daily interactions. Among the four strategies, positive politeness was the most frequently used strategy with a percentage of 50% (55 utterances). This finding indicates that the speakers tended to create closeness and maintain harmonious relationships with others. Positive politeness was commonly expressed through giving information, greeting, asking questions, and engaging in small talk. Meanwhile, negative politeness had the lowest percentage at 12% (13 utterances). This strategy appeared when the speakers attempted to show respect and minimize imposition while making requests. In the conversations, negative politeness was commonly expressed through polite requests, apologies, and asking about someone's availability. In addition, bald on record strategies appeared in 18% of the data (20 utterances). This strategy was used when the speakers

delivered their utterances directly without additional politeness markers, such as giving instructions or making direct requests. This directness often occurred because the participants had close social relationships as neighbors. Lastly, off record strategies accounted for 20% of the total data (23 utterances). These strategies were used when the speakers conveyed their intentions indirectly through hints, comments, or complaints. By using indirect expressions, the speakers were able to express their intentions without stating them explicitly. Overall, the findings demonstrate that positive politeness played an important role in maintaining social harmony and solidarity among neighbors in Desa Wonorejo.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of 110 interaction data among neighbors in Desa Wonorejo, Kecamatan Maron, Kabupaten Probolinggo, this study concludes that all four politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on record, and off record were used in daily interactions among the participants. Among these strategies, positive politeness appeared most frequently, indicating that the participants tended to maintain friendliness, solidarity, and close social relationships through casual conversations, information sharing, and small talk. This reflects the strong sense of social closeness among neighbors in everyday communication. In addition, negative politeness was found when speakers attempted to show respect and minimize imposition, particularly when making requests or asking for help. Meanwhile, bald on record strategies were used in direct utterances such as instructions or commands, while off record strategies appeared through indirect expressions, hints, or comments. These findings demonstrate that the participants adjusted their politeness strategies depending on the social context and communicative purposes in their interactions.

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