

Politeness Strategies on Language Use in Asjitba Village: A Pragmatic Analysis

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to explore the politeness strategies used by people of Asjidba Village, Sorong Regency. The recent study was carried under descriptive qualitative method, using pragmatic analysis of Brown and Levinson's Politeness theory. The data collection techniques used are observation, documentation, recording and transcription. The data analysis techniques used are data reduction, data display, and verification. The researcher summed up that Asjitba used three types of politeness strategies, namely: (1) Positive Politeness Strategy, (2) Negative Politeness Strategy, and (3) positive politeness strategy. Among the three strategies, Positive politeness strategy is a language strategy that they used most.

Keywords: language use; politeness strategies; pragmatic analysis

INTRODUCTION

Politeness is a fundamental aspect of language and social interaction, serving as a bridge that connects individuals from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It encompasses verbal and non-verbal behaviors that convey respect, consideration, and adherence to social norms, ensuring harmonious communication (Zamzani et al., 2017). In addition, Wael et al. (2025) pointed out that human language abilities may be increased in two ways: acquisition and learning. However, politeness is not universal; it is deeply rooted in cultural values, meaning that what is considered courteous in one society may be perceived differently in another (Mislikhah, 2019).

This cultural relativity becomes particularly significant in multilingual and multiethnic communities, where varying politeness norms can lead to misunderstandings or even conflicts. In Indonesia, a nation renowned for its rich ethnic and linguistic diversity, the need for effective intercultural communication is paramount. A compelling example of such diversity can be found in the village of Asjitba, an acronym representing its multiethnic composition: Ayamaru, Serui, Java, Inanwatan, Teminabuan, Bugis, and Ambon. While this diversity enriches the village's cultural fabric, it also presents unique challenges in maintaining politeness, especially during formal gatherings where language use must accommodate multiple ethnic sensitivities. Given this context, it is essential to investigate how politeness is negotiated and preserved in Asjitba's heterogeneous social environment.

This research holds significant value for several reasons. First, by examining politeness norms in Asjitba, the study can contribute to fostering social harmony by identifying potential communication barriers and promoting mutual respect among different ethnic groups. Second, the findings can enhance language education in multicultural settings by highlighting the importance of culturally appropriate politeness strategies. Third, the research adds to the broader sociolinguistic discourse on politeness, particularly in understudied regions of Indonesia. The primary objectives of this study are threefold: (1) to analyze how politeness is maintained in Asjitba's multiethnic community during formal interactions, (2) to identify the challenges that arise from differing politeness norms, and (3) to propose practical strategies for improving intercultural communication while respecting linguistic and cultural diversity.

To achieve these objectives, the study will employ a mixed-methods approach, including interviews and participatory observations during village meetings to document language use and politeness strategies. The data will be analyzed using established frameworks such as Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, which distinguishes between positive and negative politeness strategies. Additionally, the research will compare politeness norms across Asjitba's ethnic groups to identify commonalities and divergences. Based on these findings, the study will develop culturally sensitive communication guidelines tailored to the village's unique sociolinguistic dynamics.

Previous researches amplify the importance of this investigation. Rahardi (2019) emphasizes that language is not merely a tool for communication but also a reflection of social identity, while Mislikhah (2019) highlights how indirectness and deference vary across cultures. Creswell (2012) further elaborates on the role of linguistic politeness markers – such as honorifics, indirect requests, and softening expressions – in maintaining social harmony. By building upon these insights, this study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of politeness in Asjitba, ultimately contributing to more inclusive and effective communication practices in Indonesia's diverse communities.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method to analyze politeness aspects in language use among the Asjitba community. The qualitative approach was chosen as it is particularly suitable for exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups attribute to human experiences, as emphasized by Creswell (2012). The research process consists of three main stages: (1) the orientation or explanatory stage, where initial data is collected through observation, interviews, and documentation; (2) the reduction stage, where data is simplified and focused on key issues; and (3) the selection stage, where an in-depth analysis of the selected focus is conducted to develop theories or new insights.

The research was conducted in Asjitba Village, Sorong Regency, Southwest Papua, with the local community serving as the primary subject. Data collection took place over two months (January to June 2024) using multiple techniques. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to gather in-depth information about politeness strategies, while document analysis and audio recordings were used to verify the data. All conversations and interactions were recorded using a smartphone and later transcribed into written form for detailed analysis. The primary research instrument was the researchers themselves, who directly engaged with participants during data collection. Supporting tools such as audio recorders and written documents were also utilized to ensure data validity. The research variables included politeness strategies, defined as verbal and nonverbal behaviors reflecting respect or social harmony in communication, as well as everyday language use within the Asjitba community.

Data analysis followed the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014), which comprises three steps. First, data condensation was performed by filtering and categorizing information into essential and non-essential components. Second, the simplified data was systematically presented in narrative or graphic form. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on findings from the data reduction and display stages, supported by interview transcripts and relevant documents. Through this method, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of politeness strategies in language use among the Asjitba community.

This methodological approach ensures a rigorous and systematic examination of the research focus while maintaining flexibility to accommodate emerging insights during the study. The combination of direct engagement with participants, multi-method data collection, and structured analysis aligns with established qualitative research principles, enhancing the reliability and depth of the findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research on language politeness strategies among the community was carried out in Asjitba. The research had been conductor for three months, from March to May, 2024. The research data was taken in the form of speech made by people in Asjitba whose conversations were recorded in their monthly meetings in three different places. The data was then transcribed, and analyzed thematically by the researchers. The choice of research location was based on some considerations such as in Asjitba there were various events regarding speech acts or conversations which were closely related to language politeness, especially among teenagers. The following data display the result of research and its analysis.

1. Positive Politeness Strategy

Positive politeness strategies are defined as the way people create communicative relationships by creating good relationships. The concept of rapport may vary because each person has their own understanding of closeness with other people. Positive politeness strategies are usually seen in groups of friends, or when people in a particular social situation know each other well enough. Researcher found the data as below:

Table 1. Positive Politeness Strategy

No.	Expert	Transcript	Line/Page
1.	<i>Minta maaf mengganggu waktunya,</i> Sorry to disturb your time	1	3/45
2.	<i>Oke baik terima kasih lagi buat bapak</i> OK, thank you sir.	1	37/46
3.	<i>Oh ya kalau kerja bakti ya itu bagus emang harus to</i> Oh yes, if you do community service, that's good, that's how it should be.	2	16/47
4.	<i>perlu berarti kerja bakti dan keamanan</i> it's necessary, to hold social works and security	2	21/47
5.	<i>Mau bikin usaha kecil-kecilan lah untuk ibu-ibu</i> I want to start a small business for mother	2	44,45 /48

6.	<i>Terimakasih, saya sebagai RW siap menampung itu</i> Thank you, as RW I am ready to accommodate it.	2	70/49
7.	<i>Baik terimakasih. Terimakasih banyak lagi untuk waktunya</i> Okay, thank you. Thank you very much for your time	2	79/49
8.	<i>Oh iya terimakasih untuk waktu yang diberikan</i> oh yes, thank you for the time given	3	8/49
9.	<i>Oke baik berarti menurut ibu untuk ibu pengelolaan sampah ya</i> okay, fine, that means according to you, waste management is what we have to do first	3	34/50
10.	<i>Terimakasih lagi buat penjelasan bahkan gagasan yang ibu sampaikan untuk Pembangunan kita punya RT ini</i> Thank you again for the explanation and even the ideas you conveyed for the development of our RT	3	70,71/51

The data that researcher found clarify what the speaker wants to convey to his audience as members or listeners. The speaker greets his audience by using identity markers to show that the speaker appears to have affection and a close relationship with his audience.

Positive politeness strategies are used for speech actions that are not too threatening to the face of the speaker, but the speaker doesn't have the heart to express it in the form of a command. This strategy is widely used in between two friends, acquaintances, or parties who are already in a relationship closeness even though not yet too familiar.

Brown and Levinson (1987) state This strategy is used to minimize the distance between them by expressing friendliness and strong interest in the listener's need for respect. Based on existing data, people in asjitba also use positive politeness strategies, because the speaker addresses the listener in his speech which is compensation aimed at a positive face. This strategy uses a kind of metaphorical extension of intimacy to imply similarity or shared desire to some extent. Like the examples of dialogues that researchers found above.

Based on research results, the Asjitba community uses the positive politeness strategy when interacting, namely in the sentence sorry to disturb your time, OK, thank you sir, that's good and fine. From these sentences the speaker pays attention to time and response interlocutor, such as thank you for your time. Paying attention by paying attention to the interlocutor's time is included in the strategy positive politeness and the speaker tries to maintain a positive face from the partner said.

This strategy is employed to demonstrate familiarity to interlocutors who are not close friends or family members of the speaker. In order to encourage conversation, the speaker attempts to create the appearance that they share the same destiny and that they both have a

shared desire that is genuinely desired by both parties. In order to make the speaker's want seem like a shared desire between the speaker and the interlocutor discourse, this method is directly directed at the interlocutor's positive face. By employing it, the speaker expresses a desire to learn more about the other person.

Positive etiquette tactics may be used in fifteen different ways, including the following: (1) concentrating on the other person; (2) paying closer attention; (3) intensifying the focus on the interlocutor; (4) using markers of group familiarity; (5) finding agreement; (6) avoiding conflict; (7) equalizing assumptions into general opinions; (8) joking; (9) adding to or agreeing with the interlocutor's opinion; (10) offering assistance or promises; (11) being upbeat; (12) involving speakers and interlocutors in activities; (13) providing or requesting a specific reason; (14) assuming or displaying similarity of action; (15) exchanging gifts.

2. Negative Politeness Strategy

Negative politeness is applied to create a communicative relationship by providing distance between the speaker and the speech partner. Negative politeness focuses on minimizing imposition on the listener. The main focus in using this kind of strategy is to assume that the speaker may force himself on the listener and intrude on their space. Therefore, it is automatically assumed that there may be some social distance or awkwardness in the situation. like the data that researcher found below.

Table 2. Negative Politeness Strategy

No.	Expert	Transcript	Line/Page
1.	<i>Ya paling nggak begitulah, biar aktif lagi kan banyak yang nganggur juga toh, biar ada kegiatan gitu loh</i> At least that's how it is, to be active again, there are lots of people who are unemployed too, so there are activities like that.	2	11,12/47
2.	<i>he ee maksudnya kalo kita bikin keripik,bikin apakah ada yang memasarkan gitukan</i> If we make chips or something else, is there anyone who wants to market it?	2	66,67/48
3.	<i>Jadi ibu-ibu yang ada disini juga jugakan tidak duduk-duduk saja begitu tapi bisa ada kekompakan</i> So the mothers here don't just sit around like that. but there can also be solidarity for cooperation	3	64,65/51
4.	<i>masyarakat ini juga sekarang banyak buang air tak karuan</i> Now many people just urinate uncontrollably	4	51/53

The speaker's speech applies a negative politeness strategy, the speaker says if he can, if he can't, that's all. Negative politeness is used when the speaker is aware of the existence of something the degree of threat that the interlocutor can accept. This can happen for example in language acts towards people you don't know, among others superiors and subordinates, and young people with older people. When By doing this strategy, the speaker acknowledges and respects the negative face opposite him.

Based on research results, the Asjitba community uses the negative politeness strategy when interacting, namely in the sentence at least that's how it is, to be active again, there are lots of people who are unemployed too, so there are activities like that, If we make chips or something else, is there anyone who wants to market it, So the mothers here don't just sit around like that. but there can also be solidarity for cooperation, and now many people just urinate uncontrollably.

In the example sentences above, the partners say negative words such as unemployment, the mothers here don't just sit around, defecating carelessly. these sentences is included in the negative politeness strategy and the speaker tries to reduce actions that threaten the face of the speech partner.

The speaker's wish to be free from the burden and the interlocutor's negative face are countered by negative politeness strategies, which are actions taken with the intention of preventing the speaker's intentions and actions from being restrained or disturbed. This strategy's major goal is to make the assumption that the speaker will likely burden or bother the other person since they have entered their space and are likely to do so. It is considered that the circumstances involve some social distance or barrier.

Here are ten strategies or actions are used to implement this politeness strategy: (1) state indirectly; (2) ask questions or be evasive; (3) be pessimistic; (4) downplay the importance of the request; (5) degrade oneself; (6) apologize; (7) personalize the speaker and the interlocutor; (8) make the act of threatening face a standard procedure; 9) nominalization; and 10) explicitly state that the interlocutor's action is valuable to the speaker.

The realizations of negative politeness employed in Lakoff's (1973) rules of politeness can be showed by two rules. Those realizations are keeping aloof from the interlocutor and giving options. The first realization is to keep aloof from the interlocutor which is expressed to show formality. The second realization is giving options toward interlocutor as representative of the second rule which is deference.

3. Off Record Politeness Strategy

The off record strategy is usually carried out through the use of indirect illocutionary acts that have more than one interpretation. So, if a speaker wants to perform an FTA, but he wants to avoid the responsibility of doing so, he can do so in the form of an off-record speech and leave it to his interlocutor to decide how to interpret it. Basically off-the-record speech uses indirect language. This is to minimize threats to the listener's face. Dead notes include indirect actions so that the speaker is not responsible for any particular communicative intent. The findings show that the community in Asjitba implements this strategy. As shown in the following table 3.

Table 3. Off Record Politeness Strategy

No.	Expert	Transcript	Line/Page
1.	<i>kalau bisa itu, ibu PKK juga itu digerakkan lagi gitu loh</i> If that's possible, the PKK mother will also be mobilized again like that	2	7/46
2.	<i>Kalau saya tuh maunya itu kalau ibu-ibu disini tuh kayak ada yang bikin apa usaha gitu ya</i> If I wanted, there would be a business for the ladies here to make something like that	2	11,12/47
3.	<i>Sebisa mungkin apa seperti kita buat satu kelompok-kelompok untuk ibu-ibu begitu</i> maybe we can create a group for mothers like that	3	39,40,41/50

The above data is off record strategy because indirect strategies are used especially if there is a more serious threat to the face of the person you are talking to. According to Brown and Levinson, this strategy is a strategy to carry out FTA indirectly by letting the interlocutor decide how to interpret the speaker's words.

Based on research results, the Asjitba community uses the off-record politeness strategy when interacting, namely in the sentence if that's possible, the PKK mother will also be mobilized again like that, if I wanted, there would be a business for the ladies here to make something like that, and maybe we can create a group for mothers.

In the conversation example above, the speaker wants to create a business group so that the speaker can have their own income. Speaker expresses his wishes in disguise, namely with giving advice on starting a business for women in Asjitba village, he did not directly express his desire and let his interlocutor interpret his speech the. Therefore, this speech is included in speech with an indirect strategy.

This tactic is implemented covertly and fails to convey the intended message clearly. By allowing the interlocutor to understand the action independently, the speaker removes himself from the conversation. take action. This tactic is employed when the speaker wishes to make a bold statement but is unwilling to accept accountability for it.

Some of the aspect indicating off-record politeness include: (1) Speaking vaguely; (2) Being ironic or using metaphors; (3) Not addressing the hearer directly; (4) Giving hints; (5) Using contradictions; (6) Asking rhetorical questions that don't need to be answered.

The research above is in accordance with research conducted by Supriyanta dan Ghozali (2017) which confirmed that based on analysis, there were 37 utterances that contained politeness strategies used by Claire Peterson. In detail, he was recorded as using the bald strategy seven times or 18.9%, positive politeness 20 times or 54%, negative politeness 9 times or 24.4%, and off record once or 2.7%. Claire Peterson's most frequently used politeness strategy is "offer and promise." included in positive politeness strategies. This strategy was used 7 times or 18.9%. In

general, he is using politeness strategies to maintain and build good relationships with other people in everyday life.

Research by Suryanita dan Edward (2018) The results of the analysis show that there are 15 utterances that can be classified as expressions of apology which were analyzed using Brown and Levinson's (1983) Politeness Strategy. The fifteen utterances were divided into 11 utterances that used positive politeness and 4 utterances that used negative politeness. Based on Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy, positive politeness occurs in a group of friends and a group of family who have a close relationship with the speaker, while negative politeness is used to avoid offending the listener by showing respect. Thus, it can be concluded that positive politeness is the politeness strategy that is most widely applied by all characters in the film to express apologies.

CONCLUSION

Having analyzed the data in the previous section, the researcher summed up that Asjitba community uses three types of politeness strategies, namely: (1) Positive Politeness Strategy, (2) Negative Politeness Strategy, and (3) positive politeness strategy. But in this study no bald on record strategy was found. Positive politeness strategy is a language strategy that they often use when they hold monthly meetings.

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