

THE REPRESENTATION OF POLITENESS VALUES IN THE SHORT FILM *TOPI (TINDAK, TANDUK, SUBASITA): A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY*

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Abstract

Politeness is an essential aspect of social interaction, particularly in Javanese culture, which strongly emphasizes manners and etiquette. The short film *TOPI (Tindak, Tanduk, Subasita)*, produced by Paniradya Kaistimewan Yogyakarta, portrays these cultural values through the language and gestures used by its characters. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method aimed at analyzing the values of politeness represented in the short film *TOPI* through the dialogues and gestures of its characters, grounded in Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson's (1987) politeness theory as the analytical framework. The analysis identified five positive politeness strategies, one negative politeness strategy, three bald-on-record strategies, and one off-record strategy. This finding demonstrates how language and gestures in the short film reflect Javanese manners within family and community interactions. Furthermore, this study highlights a contemporary phenomenon, how Javanese values are preserved through digital media. Short films published on YouTube serve not only as entertainment but also as a medium for character education, language learning, and a concrete example of the preservation of Javanese in the modern era. Overall, this research underscores the role of audiovisual media in strengthening cultural education and expanding the study of politeness phenomena within a sociolinguistic context.

Keywords: politeness, manners, Javanese culture, film, sociolinguistics

INTRODUCTION

Politeness in language plays an important role in social interactions, as it serves to express respect, particularly toward elders. In Javanese culture, this concept is known as *unggah-ungguh*. *Unggah- ungguh*, or manners, constitute an essential aspect of Javanese culture, especially in Yogyakarta, where social interactions are deeply influenced by respectful attitudes, polite speech, and proper behavior.

Within linguistic studies, politeness has frequently been examined through the framework proposed by Brown and Levinson, which conceptualizes politeness as strategies used to maintain social harmony by managing positive and negative face. This framework recognizes both verbal and non-verbal strategies that speakers employ to show respect, reduce imposition, or express familiarity. Because of its comprehensive nature, the framework has been widely applied to analyze politeness in films, literary works, and various speech communities. The short film *TOPI (Tindak, Tanduk, Subasita)*, produced by Paniradya Kaistimewan, the governmental body of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, seeks to introduce the values of *unggah-ungguh* in the Javanese language. The film employs Javanese in its dialogues, with Indonesian and English subtitles provided to help audiences from diverse backgrounds understand the narrative and the moral

message conveyed. The 12 minutes and 39 seconds film illustrate the importance of practicing politeness in daily life through various courteous expressions in both speech and behavior.

Several studies have investigated politeness in audiovisual media. For example, Rizki et al. (2023) analyzed politeness strategies in the film *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*. Similarly, Sholihah et al. (2017) examined politeness in the dialogues of *Ernest et Célestine*, while Dewanto (2022) investigated expressive speech acts in *Miracle in Cell No. 7*. In addition to film analysis, Brown and Levinson's theory has also been applied to language studies, such as by Winarty and Ramaniar (2023), who examined Pontianak Malay speech acts, and Manaf (2011), who analyzed comprehensive speech acts in Indonesian. However, research that specifically examines the representation of Javanese politeness values in short films, particularly those produced as cultural education media, remains limited.

This gap is significant because short films distributed through digital platforms, such as YouTube, are increasingly used to promote local cultural values. The short film TOPI, produced by Paniradya Kaistimewan Yogyakarta, is one such example. It presents scenes that illustrate Javanese manners through dialogues, gestures, and everyday interactions within a family setting. Despite its cultural relevance, systematic linguistic analysis of how the film portrays politeness strategies has not yet been conducted.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the representation of politeness values in the short film TOPI by identifying and interpreting the verbal and non-verbal strategies employed by its characters. Using Brown and Levinson's politeness framework as the analytical lens, this research seeks to reveal how Javanese *unggah-ungguh* is communicated, preserved, and contextualized within contemporary digital media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brown and Levinson's politeness framework categorizes politeness strategies into four main types as described below.

Positive Politeness Strategy

Brown and Levinson (1987) describe positive politeness as a means used by speakers to satisfy the hearer's positive face needs, their desire to be liked, appreciated, and approved of. Positive politeness strategies aim to show friendliness, solidarity, and closeness, even when the speaker and hearer do not share an intimate relationship. The speaker seeks to reduce social distance and highlight mutual respect and familiarity.

Example:

A: "How absolutely marvelous! I simply can't imagine how you manage to keep your roses so exquisite, Mrs. B!"

Negative Politeness Strategy

Negative politeness refers to the means used by speakers to mitigate imposition and respect the hearer's desire for autonomy. This strategy aims to avoid conflict or coercion by using apologies, indirect requests, hedges, or expressions of deference. The goal is to minimize imposition and acknowledge the hearer's freedom of action or opinion.

Examples:

A: "Could you please pass the salt?"

B: "Would you mind closing the door?"

Bald-on-Record Strategy

Bald-on-record strategy, as stated by Brown and Levinson (1987) is used when the speaker conveys their intention directly and unambiguously, without employing any linguistic devices to soften the message. This strategy is typically used when clarity and efficiency are prioritized over politeness, such as in urgent or emergency situations. It disregards the hearer's face needs to achieve communicative effectiveness.

Examples:

A: "Come home right now!"

B: "Get up! Get up! There's a big snake!"

Off-Record Strategy

The off-record strategy involves communicating a message indirectly, allowing the hearer to infer the intended meaning. This approach protects the hearer's negative face by avoiding direct imposition. The speaker's meaning is implied rather than explicitly stated, thereby giving the hearer the freedom to respond without feeling pressured.

Examples:

A: "It's cold here." (Please close the window.)

B: "This soup's a bit bland." (Please pass the salt.)

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to examine the representation of politeness in the *TOPI (Tindak, Tanduk, Subasita)* film. This approach was chosen because it allows for detailed description and interpretation of both linguistic and non-verbal politeness strategies as they naturally occur in the data.

Data source

The data for this study were obtained from the short film *TOPI (Tindak, Tanduk, Subasita)*, which features various scenes and dialogues uploaded to the Paniradya Kaistimewan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta YouTube channel. The film was selected because it reflects the linguistic behavior and cultural values of Yogyakarta society. No human participants were directly involved in this study.

Data collection

The data were gathered through repeated watching of the film, careful listening to the dialogue, and systematic note-taking techniques. The researcher observed the film content, transcribed the dialogues, and recorded both verbal and non-verbal expressions related to politeness. Additionally, a literature review was also conducted to support the research framework by incorporating relevant articles, books, and journals.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, which is classified into four categories: positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on-record, and off-record. The analysis involved the following steps: (1) Transcribing the content of the *TOPI film (Tindak, Tanduk, Subasita)*; (2) Identifying language and gestures related to politeness; (3) Categorizing the data based on Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies; and (4) Drawing conclusions from the analyzed data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The short film *TOPI (Tindak, Tanduk, Subasita)* was analyzed using Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework, which includes positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on record, and off-record strategies. A total of Ten data points consisting of verbal utterances and non-verbal gestures were identified. The findings shows that politeness strategies are consistently used to reflect Javanese *unggah-ungguh* norms in family and community interactions.

1. Positive Politeness Strategy

(Data 1)

When the child was about to take food with his left hand, the mother immediately reprimanded him to take food with his right hand.

Ibu: "*Eh, **hayo tangane*** (hey, please watch your hands)"

Sabrang: "*Tangan kiwo nopo tengen, sae kabeh to bu sakjane?*"

("Whether it is the left hand or the right hand, both are actually acceptable, aren't they, Mom?")

Ibu: ***"Lha iyo apik kabeh, tapi nek njupuk maeman ki kudu nganggo tangan tengen, ora pareng tangan kiwo"***

(Indeed, both are acceptable; however, when taking food, one is required to use the right hand, as the left hand is not permitted.)

Analysis:

The mother's use of the expression "*hayo tangane* (hey, please watch your hands)" constitutes a positive politeness strategy because the utterance is delivered gently rather than as a direct command. By maintaining a soft tone, the mother reduces potential face threat and preserves emotional closeness with her child. This aligns with Brown and Levinson's claim that positive politeness seeks to highlight solidarity and familiarity. The mother's explanation regarding cultural dining etiquette further reinforces Javanese values connected to politeness and proper behavior at the dinner table.

This strategy was successful because the child did not feel offended by the mother's words and immediately switched to using her right hand. This also shows respect and obedience to cultural norms that prioritize the use of the right hand when eating. In addition, through the statement, "*Lha iyo apik kabeh, tapi nek njupuk maeman ki kudu nganggo tangan tengen, ora pareng tangan kiwo*" (Indeed, both are acceptable; however, when taking food, one is required to use the right hand, as the left hand is not permitted). Mother also teaches her child the value of good manners when eating.

(Data 2)

"Oalah, Le. Kui le mu moco salah. Pancen tulisane K-E-C-A-P, tapi le moco kui kəcap dudu kecap."

(Oh, son, you read it incorrectly. It is indeed spelled K-E-C-A-P, but you should read it as *kəcap*, not *kecap*.)

Analysis:

The statement "*Oalah, Le. Kui le mu moco salah. Pancen tulisane K-E-C-A-P, tapi le moco kui kəcap dudu kecap*. (Oh, son, you read it incorrectly. It is indeed spelled K-E-C-A-P, but you should read it as *kəcap*, not *kecap*.)" can be classified as a form of positive politeness strategy because even though she knows her child is incorrect in pronouncing the word 'kécap', instead of criticizing the child, she offers guidance in a manner that maintains the child's positive face needs, by saying "*Oalah, Le* (Oh, Son.)" to keep the atmosphere positive and show concern. This illustrates the Javanese preference for gentle correction, reflecting familial warmth and the cultural emphasis on non-confrontational communication.

Through this statement, the mother also indirectly teaches the value of manners when eating, which is to avoid eating with your mouth open or making noises. This relaxed explanation

reflects the main characteristics of a positive politeness strategy, which is to emphasize familiarity, attention, and appreciation of the positive face of the interlocutor.

(Data 3)

Gesang: "*Anak polah bopo kepanah?*" (When a child misbehaves, the father is hit?)

Kakek: "***Kok kepanah? Kepradah. Anak polah bopo kepradah***"

(Why '*kepanah?*' it should be '*kepradah*'. When a child behaves improperly, the father bears the consequences.)

Gesang: "*Tegese, Mbah?*" (What does it mean, Grandpa?)

Kakek: "*Yen koe ki bertindak seng ora-ora, ngko bakalan bapakmu seng dadi repot*" (If you act badly, then your father will be troubled.)

Analysis:

The statement "*Kok kepanah? Kepradah. Anak polah bopo kepradah* (Why '*kepanah?*' it should be '*kepradah*'. When a child behaves improperly, the parent bears the consequences.)" is part of a positive politeness strategy because the grandfather corrects his grandson's statement in a kind and relaxed manner while maintaining their closeness as a form of affection. The grandfather uses a calm, humorous correction when explaining the proverb. His tone promotes relational closeness and avoids embarrassing the child, so that the grandson did not feel offended but still listened to his grandfather's explanation attentively as a form of respect and appreciation for his elders. This strategy exemplifies positive politeness, as the speaker prioritizes affection and harmony while educating the child about consequences, an important value in Javanese social teaching.

(Data 4)

Gesang: "*Bu*" (Mom)

Ibu: "*Yo, Le?*" (Yes, Dear?)

Gesan: "*Salim*" (Asking for blessing)

Ibu: "*Iya. **Seng ngati-ati yo, sekolah seng pinter***"

(Yes. Please be careful on the road, and make sure to study diligently.)

Gesang: "*Nuwun nggih, Bu*" (Thank you, Mom)

Ibu: "*Iya*" (Yes.)

Analysis:

The utterance in the dialogue is included in the positive politeness strategy because it shows an effort to strengthen the relationship between Gesang and his mother through familiar greetings, such as "*Bu*" and "*Le*," which reflect affection and warmth. Then, the mother's statement giving

advice to Gesang, "*Seng ngati-ati yo, sekolah seng pinter* (Yes. Please be careful on the road, and make sure to study diligently.)" who is leaving for school, also highlights her concern for her child's safety and success.

This is in line with Brown and Levinson's theory, where positive politeness strategies always seek to emphasize attention, familiarity, and appreciation for the positive "face" of the interlocutor through polite and warm language.

(Data 5)

Gesang: "***Kulo ngunduh layangan riyin nggih, Mbah. Salim.***"

(I'm going to fly a kite first, Grandpa. Please allow me.)

Analysis:

The utterance "*Kulo ngunduh layangan riyin nggih, Mbah. Salim.* (I'm going to fly a kite first, Grandpa. Please allow me.)" can be classified as a form of the positive politeness strategy because it aims to build a warm relationship and respect the positive "face" of the grandfather. Gesang, the grandson, uses polite language, namely Javanese Krama, and says goodbye to his grandfather before going to fly kites to show respect for his elders.

The above statement also reflects good manners or etiquette in accordance with Javanese culture, namely saying goodbye before leaving and speaking politely to older people. In addition, Gesang uses the phrase "*nggih, Mbah*" and the salim gesture to maintain intimacy and strengthen harmonious relations with his grandfather. This is in line with Brown and Levinson's theory, where positive politeness strategies emphasize respect, intimacy, and attention to the positive face of the interlocutor.

(Data 6)

Kakek: "***Ati-ati yo, Le. Ojo keplayon lho, Le***"

(Be careful, son. Don't wander off, alright?)

Gesang: "*Nggih, Mbah*" (Okay, Grandpa)

Analysis:

The utterance "*Ati-ati yo, Le. Ojo keplayon lho, Le* (Be careful, son. Don't wander off, alright?)" is a positive politeness strategy because it reflects the grandfather's concern for his grandson's safety. The grandfather tries to maintain a good relationship and preserve the positive face of both of them by giving a casual warning.

Gesang also responds to his grandfather in formal Javanese, saying "*Nggih, Mbah* (Okay, Grandpa)" as a sign of respect and good manners when speaking to elders. This dialogue reflects

a positive politeness strategy where respect, familiarity, and attention to the positive face of the interlocutor are emphasized.

2. Negative Politeness Strategy

(Data 7)

Pak Guru: "*Sang! Kenapa disini? Ayo upacara!*"

(Sang! Why are you here? Go join the ceremony!)

Gesang: "**Anu, Pak. Nyuwun ngapunten, saya tidak membawa topi**"

(Sir, I apologize. I did not bring my hat.)

Analysis:

Gesang's statement, "*Anu, Pak. Nyuwun ngapunten, saya tidak membawa topi* (Sir, I apologize. I did not bring my hat.)," is a negative politeness strategy because Gesang, uses the apology "*Nyuwun Ngapunten* (I apologize)" at the beginning of the sentence to show politeness to the teacher and reduce the potential for impoliteness due to not bringing a hat. This is in line with Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness, where negative politeness strategies have characteristics such as using an apology before making a request to show respect to the interlocutor, using pessimistic statements to reduce pressure or coercion, and using expressions of humility that emphasize respect for the interlocutor.

3. Bald-On Record

(Data 8)

Ibu: "***Le, Sabrang, mbok ojo sing sot sing sot to nek neng njero omah***" (Le, Sabrang, don't whistle inside the house.)

Sabrang: "*Lha pripun to, Bu?*" (Why is that, Mom?)

Ibu: "***Mundak ora sopan, mengko dadi kebiasaan yen koe lagi mertamu***"

(It's not polite, and it will become a habit when you visit someone's house)

Analysis:

The utterance "*Le, Sabrang, mbok ojo sing sot sing sot to nek neng njero omah* (Son, Sabrang, don't whistle inside the house.)" is included in the bald-on record strategy or direct speech because the mother is trying to reprimand her child with specific instructions directly without trying to soften the message. This is in accordance with the characteristics of bald-on record according to Brown and Levinson, where direct speech is used when the speaker wants to convey their intentions or messages firmly and efficiently to the listener. This strategy is commonly used in

urgent situations or situations that require clarity so that instructions must be carried out immediately.

In addition, the mother also explained the reason behind the reprimand by saying, "*Mundak ora sopan, mengko dadi kebiasaan yen koe lagi mertamu* (It's not polite, and it will become a habit when you visit someone's house)" which means that you should not whistle inside the house so that it does not become a habit when visiting other people's homes. Thus, the mother not only reprimanded her child directly, but also taught him manners to behave politely both at home and in public.

(Data 9)

Kakak: "*Le bali ra sore-sore lho, ndak gondol wewe*"

(Don't come home too late, or *Wewe* (ghost) will kidnap you.)

Analysis:

The statement "*Le bali ra sore-sore lho, ndak gondol wewe* (Don't come home too late, or *Wewe* (ghost) will kidnap you.)" is included in the bald-on record strategy because it contains a direct instruction from the older sibling to come home before it gets too late. In this case, the older sibling conveys the message firmly without trying to soften the instruction, in line with the characteristics of the bald-on record strategy, which aims to convey messages clearly and directly. In addition, humor is added through the use of the word "*wewe* (ghost)" as a threat, giving a familiar impression and reflecting the good relationship between the younger and older siblings. In Javanese families, direct admonitions are common among siblings and do not constitute impoliteness, especially when framed playfully.

4. Off-Record

(Data 10)

When the younger sibling handed the scissors to the mother with the sharped facing forward, the older sibling silently turned the scissors around so that the mother could immediately receive the handle.

Analysis:

The gesture of turning the sharp part of the scissors inward without speaking is included in the off-record strategy because the older sibling implicitly or indirectly shows the younger sibling the correct, polite, and safe way to give scissors to someone else without having to reprimand or correct the younger sibling directly.

This is included in Brown and Levinson's theory, where off-record strategies are used to convey messages indirectly or implicitly. This strategy indirectly prompts the listener to interpret the speaker's meaning themselves.

CONCLUSION

The results show that the short film *TOPI (Tindak, Tanduk, Subasita)* effectively presents various politeness strategies developed by Brown and Levinson, namely positive politeness strategies, negative politeness strategies, bald-on-record strategy, and off-record strategy, as well as the reasons behind them. The speech and gestures in this short film convey the values of manners (or *unggah ungguh*) in Javanese culture and show how language and behavior can be used to build harmonious social relationships both within the family and in society.

The findings of this study are consistent with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework, which explains how speakers employ politeness strategies to manage positive and negative face in social interaction. In the context of the short film *TOPI*, these strategies are used to reflect Javanese *unggah-ungguh* norms, particularly in interactions involving older family and community members. Furthermore, this study contributes to linguistics by providing empirical evidence of how politeness strategies are realized in audiovisual media and by offering insights into the relationship between language, culture, and social interaction in the Javanese context.

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