Positive Politeness Strategies in the Ngapak Short Film Ingin Jadi Polisi by Cingire: A Pragmatic Study

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Abstract

This study investigates positive politeness strategies employed in the Ngapak-dialect short film *Ingin Jadi Polisi* (2022) by Cingire, a popular content creator from Kebumen, Central Java, Indonesia. Drawing on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, the study applies a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze conversational data derived from the film's transcribed dialogues. Ten utterances were selected through purposive sampling and analyzed according to five dominant positive politeness strategies: in-group identity markers, joking, seeking agreement, giving or asking for reasons, and offering or expressing optimism. The findings reveal that the characters predominantly employ informal address terms, humor, and solidarity-affirming expressions to minimize social distance and reinforce interpersonal bonds. These strategies reflect the culturally embedded communicative values of the Ngapak-speaking community in Kebumen, particularly the norms of directness, egalitarianism, and collective identity. The study contributes to the broader field of pragmatics by offering an empirical analysis of politeness phenomena in Indonesian regional language contexts and underscores the importance of integrating cultural and linguistic perspectives in the study of face-saving behavior.

Keywords: dialect; Ngapak; politeness theory; positive politeness; pragmatics

INTRODUCTION

Language is not merely an instrument of information transfer; it is equally a vehicle of social meaning, identity negotiation, and relational management (Yule, 2017). Within the field of pragmatics, the study of politeness has emerged as one of the most productive areas of inquiry, particularly in its examination of how speakers manage face—a concept defined by Goffman (1967) as the public self-image that individuals claim and protect in social interaction. Brown and Levinson (1987) extended this foundational concept into a comprehensive theoretical framework, distinguishing between two orientations: positive politeness, which attends to the hearer's desire to be liked and valued, and negative politeness, which respects the hearer's autonomy and freedom from imposition.

The present study is situated within the context of Indonesian regional languages, specifically the *Ngapak* dialect spoken predominantly in the Banyumas residency area of Central Java, including the regency of Kebumen. The *Ngapak* dialect is characterized by its preservation of certain archaic Javanese phonological features—most notably the retention of the bilabial plosive /b/ and /p/ in word-final positions where modern standard Javanese neutralizes them—resulting in a distinctive, often comic-sounding pronunciation that has become a marker of regional identity and pride (Wedhawati et al., 2006). The dialect's directness and robust humor make it a particularly rich site for examining how positive politeness operates in informal, community-based communication.

The data for this study are drawn from the short film *Ingin Jadi Polisi* (2022), produced by Cingire, a digital content creator based in Kebumen whose work consistently portrays everyday social interactions among young men in the region. Published on YouTube, the film presents naturalistic, spontaneous-sounding dialogues that authentically capture the

communicative norms of *Ngapak*-speaking communities. The film thus functions as a valuable corpus for pragmatic analysis, offering contextually embedded utterances that reflect real sociolinguistic practices.

Despite the growing literature on Indonesian sociolinguistics, studies focusing on positive politeness in regional dialects—particularly through the lens of media and popular culture—remain relatively scarce (Diani, 2015; Rahardi, 2018). This study addresses that gap by offering a systematic analysis of how positive politeness strategies are realized in *Ngapak* discourse, and by demonstrating the interplay between linguistic form and cultural value. The study aims to: (1) identify the positive politeness strategies used in the film's dialogues; (2) describe the pragmatic functions of each strategy in its conversational context; and (3) discuss how these strategies reflect the sociocultural norms of the *Ngapak*-speaking community.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to pragmatic analysis, consistent with methodological frameworks used in discourse and conversation analysis (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative paradigm was selected because it allows for contextual, interpretive analysis of linguistic data, enabling the researcher to examine not only what is said but how and why it is said within a specific cultural and social context.

The primary data source is the short film *Ingin Jadi Polisi* by Cingire, published on YouTube on August 24, 2022. The film, with a runtime of approximately nine minutes, features dialogues performed entirely in the *Ngapak* dialect. The film was accessed through the official Cingire YouTube channel and transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

Data collection followed a non-participatory observation technique (Mahsun, 2005). The researcher watched the film multiple times to ensure transcription accuracy, noting the speakers, their relational context, and the surrounding conversational turns. Utterances were then screened for potential positive politeness features using an initial coding framework derived from Brown and Levinson's (1987) taxonomy.

Data analysis proceeded in three stages. First, the transcribed utterances were coded according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) fifteen positive politeness strategies, with particular attention to five categories that were found to be salient in the data: (1) use of in-group identity markers; (2) joking; (3) seeking agreement; (4) giving or asking for reasons; and (5) offering, promising, or expressing optimism. Second, each coded utterance was examined in its conversational context to determine its pragmatic function. Third, the findings were interpreted in light of the sociocultural norms of the *Ngapak*-speaking community in Kebumen, drawing on relevant literature in Indonesian sociolinguistics and regional language studies.

The data sample consists of ten purposively selected utterances that clearly instantiate one or more positive politeness strategies. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the selected data represent the range of strategies found in the film and are sufficiently varied in terms of speaker, context, and pragmatic function (Sugiyono, 2019).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the positive politeness strategies identified in the short film *Ingin Jadi Polisi*. Ten utterances were selected to illustrate the five dominant strategy types found in the data. Table 1 provides an overview of the findings, followed by a detailed discussion of each strategy type.

Table 1. Positive Politeness Strategies in *Ingin Jadi Polisi*

No	Positive Politeness Strategy	Dialogue Excerpt	Pragmatic Function
1	In-Group Identity Marker	*"Yo ngerti panas kok malah pesane kopi."* ("You know it's hot, but you still ordered coffee.")	Indicates closeness and solidarity through shared knowledge between speaker and hearer.
2	In-Group Identity Marker	*"Bro, ngopi maning."* ("Bro, let's grab coffee again.")	Informal address term reinforces social bond and signals in-group membership.
3	Joking	*"Motor kayak gue Blorong barang."* ("My motorbike looks like a ghost serpent.")	Self-deprecating humor eases tension and reinforces group cohesion through shared cultural reference.
4	Joking	*"Film luar negeri oppana film azab?"* ("Foreign movie or sinpunishment movie?")	Entertains the hearer; reinforces group identity through shared cultural humor.
5	Seek Agreement	*"Opo ora yo, Bro?"* ("Isn't that right, Bro?")	Invites shared perspective; reduces social distance and seeks interpersonal validation.
6	Seek Agreement	*"Yo yo."* ("Yeah yeah.")	Brief affirmation reinforces agreement and interpersonal alignment.
7	Give or Ask for Reasons	*"Panas cewek-cewek opo hubungane?"* ("Hot girls—what's the connection?")	Encourages collaborative explanation without confrontation; signals genuine curiosity.
8	Give or Ask for Reasons	*"Daftar polisi bae? Oh jadi polisi daftar ya Pak ya?"* ("Just sign up to be a cop? Oh, so you register to become a cop, Sir?")	Expresses indirect curiosity; seeks clarification in a non-threatening, deferential manner.
9	Offer / Promise / Express Optimism	*"Ora dipungut biaya. Yen ora ngerti bisa ndelok neng internet."* ("It's free of charge. If you don't understand, just check online.")	Provides help and projects a positive outcome; strengthens trust between interlocutors.
10	Offer / Promise / Express Optimism	*"Wes memenuhi syarat tambahan daftar mengkurep."* ("You've already met the extra requirements to register.")	Affirms the hearer's capability; expresses optimism and solidarity through positive reinforcement.

In-Group Identity Markers

In-group identity markers—the most frequently occurring strategy in the data—are defined by Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 107) as linguistic devices that signal shared membership in a group, such as in-group address forms, dialect features, and jargon. Utterances 1 and 2 exemplify this strategy. In Utterance 1, the speaker's reference to shared knowledge ("you know it's hot") presupposes a high degree of familiarity and shared experience, thereby invoking solidarity. In Utterance 2, the address term *Bro*—an anglicism widely assimilated into informal Indonesian youth speech—functions as an explicit marker of in-group membership and close interpersonal relationship. The use of *Ngapak* dialect itself also operates as a powerful in-group identity marker, as it signals the speakers' shared regional identity and communicates an implicit message of social closeness (Wedhawati et al., 2006).

Joking

Joking is classified by Brown and Levinson (1987) as a positive politeness strategy because it appeals to the hearer's desire to be relaxed and comfortable, and signals that the speaker does not pose a serious threat to the hearer's positive face. Utterances 3 and 4 demonstrate this strategy. In Utterance 3, the self-deprecating humor regarding the speaker's motorbike—likened to a ghost serpent (*Blorong*), a figure from Javanese folklore—serves to lower the speaker's own social standing playfully, thereby reducing hierarchical distance. In Utterance 4, the humorous misclassification of a foreign film as a religious "sin-punishment" film engages shared cultural knowledge and creates a moment of levity that strengthens group cohesion. Holmes (1995) notes that humor in informal interaction functions not merely as entertainment but as a relational strategy that signals trust and mutual understanding.

Seeking Agreement

Seeking agreement—inviting the hearer to concur with the speaker's assertion—is identified by Brown and Levinson (1987) as a strategy that satisfies the hearer's positive face want to be aligned with and approved of. Utterances 5 and 6 illustrate this strategy. Utterance 5 (*Opo ora yo, Bro?*) appends a tag question to an assertion, explicitly soliciting the hearer's agreement and co-construction of a shared viewpoint. Utterance 6 (*Yo yo*) is the hearer's affirmative response, which itself functions as an agreement-realization move that confirms alignment and reinforces the interpersonal bond. The iterative structure of the agreement expression also has an intensifying effect, signaling enthusiastic concurrence rather than mere acquiescence (Levinson, 1983).

Giving or Asking for Reasons

Giving or asking for reasons is described by Brown and Levinson (1987) as a strategy through which the speaker demonstrates engagement with the hearer's activities or interests, thereby expressing genuine attention and care. Utterances 7 and 8 represent this strategy. In Utterance 7, the speaker's question about the connection between "hot weather" and "girls" reflects an informal, playful way of requesting elaboration, signaling curiosity without asserting dominance. In Utterance 8, the speaker's repeated questioning (*Daftar polisi bae? Oh jadi polisi daftar ya Pak ya?*) reveals a process of seeking clarification that, rather than being confrontational, is performed with a rising, exploratory intonation that marks the speaker's deference to the interlocutor's superior knowledge. This exemplifies how asking for reasons can function simultaneously as a face-threatening act and as a face-saving move, depending on the delivery and relational context (Watts, 2003).

Offering, Promising, and Expressing Optimism

The final strategy type—offering, promising, and expressing optimism—represents the most prosocial manifestation of positive politeness, as it involves the speaker's commitment to acting in the hearer's interest and projecting a positive outcome (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Utterances 9 and 10 demonstrate this strategy. In Utterance 9, the speaker explicitly offers free information and suggests an additional resource, demonstrating benevolence and concern for the hearer's success. In Utterance 10, the speaker affirms that the hearer has already met the requirements for police registration, functioning as an act of encouragement that compliments the hearer and expresses optimism about the hearer's future. These utterances reflect a collaborative orientation in which speakers actively work to support one another's positive face and project interpersonal goodwill (Leech, 1983).

Summary of Findings

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that the characters in *Ingin Jadi Polisi* consistently employ positive politeness strategies to co-construct an interactional environment characterized by warmth, solidarity, and mutual regard. The prevalence of in-group identity markers reflects the community's strong investment in regional and peer-group identity; the use of humor reflects the culturally recognized value placed on levity and indirect communication in *Ngapak* discourse; and the strategies of seeking agreement, giving reasons, and expressing optimism collectively index a cooperative, egalitarian communicative ethos. These findings are consistent with earlier observations about the relational orientation of Javanese communicative norms (Geertz, 1960; Keeler, 1987) while also reflecting the distinctive directness that characterizes the *Ngapak* variety as a departure from the more hierarchically sensitive norms of Standard Javanese. The analysis thus supports the view that positive politeness is not a universal constant but is shaped by the specific cultural values, social structures, and linguistic repertoires of the community under study (Wierzbicka, 1991).

CONCLUSION

This study has analyzed the use of positive politeness strategies in the *Ngapak*-dialect short film *Ingin Jadi Polisi* by Cingire, employing Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory as the analytical framework. The analysis of ten selected utterances revealed five dominant strategy types: in-group identity markers, joking, seeking agreement, giving or asking for reasons, and offering or expressing optimism. These strategies collectively function to minimize social distance, affirm interpersonal bonds, and construct a shared relational identity among the film's characters.

The study's findings illuminate the intersection between linguistic behavior and cultural values in the *Ngapak*-speaking community of Kebumen. The dominant use of in-group markers and humor reflects a communicative culture in which solidarity, levity, and community identity are highly valued. At the same time, the presence of reason-giving and optimistic expressions indicates that *Ngapak* speakers are also attentive to the hearer's desires and interests, suggesting a nuanced and context-sensitive deployment of politeness strategies.

Theoretically, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on politeness in regional Indonesian languages by demonstrating that Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework remains a productive analytical lens for community-specific discourse. Methodologically, the use of digital media as a corpus for pragmatic analysis opens productive avenues for future research, particularly as Indonesian regional language content continues to proliferate on online platforms. Future studies are encouraged to compare positive and negative politeness strategies

across different *Ngapak*-language media, or to examine how politeness norms shift across different age groups, genders, or social contexts within the Kebumen community.

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