

Politeness in Directive and Expressive Speech Acts in the Javanese Short Film *Seutas Kenangan* by Kaistimewan

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This study explores the realization of politeness strategies in directive and expressive speech acts within the Javanese short film *Seutas Kenangan* by Kaistimewan. Grounded in speech act theory (Searle, 1979 and Leech's (1983) politeness principle, the research is further contextualized by *unggah-ungguhing basa*, a culturally embedded framework of speech level usage in Javanese language. Through a descriptive qualitative method, the study analyzes selected utterances from the film to identify how characters employ various levels of politeness in relation to social context, power relations, and emotional tone. The analysis reveals that directive and expressive speech acts are frequently realized through speech levels such as *ngoko lugu*, *ngoko alus*, *krama lugu*, and *krama alus*, each reflecting specific interpersonal dynamics. The findings indicate that politeness in Javanese is not merely a linguistic formality but is deeply rooted in cultural norms of deference, humility, and relational sensitivity. Notably, the film exemplifies how pragmatic choices are shaped by the cultural imperative to maintain harmony (*rukun*) and avoid social discomfort (*ewuh pakewuh*). This study highlights the importance of incorporating localized pragmatic systems into the broader discourse on politeness, challenging universalist models and expanding cross-cultural understandings of speech behavior.

Keywords: Politeness strategies, speech acts, Javanese, directive, expressive, *unggah-ungguh*

Introduction

Language is an integral part of human life. As the primary means of communication, it serves not only to convey information but also to express emotions, build social relationships, and direct actions. In spoken communication, particularly in everyday interactions, language serves to express intentions such as feelings, attitudes, and requests. In the field of pragmatics, these functions of language are analyzed through speech act theory, developed by Austin (1962) and refined by Searle (1979). This theory emphasizes that speech is not only informative but also functions as an action that can directly influence or involve the listener (Tarigan et al., 2022).

According to Searle (1979), illocutionary speech acts can be divided into five distinct types: representative, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative. Of these categories, expressive and directive speech acts appear most commonly in daily interpersonal communication. Expressive speech acts function to express the speaker's mental state or feelings about a particular circumstance, including emotions like appreciation, remorse, commendation, irritation, or expectation. On the other hand, directive speech acts are designed to influence the listener's actions and can take the form of commands, invitations, suggestions, or other forms of behavioral guidance (Arshanti & Swarniti, 2023). Both categories hold particular importance due to their strong connection to the emotional and interpersonal aspects of human communication.

To analyze directive and expressive speech acts in this study more holistically, Searle's (1979) speech act theory is complemented by two additional approaches, Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle and the concept of *unggah-ungguhing basa* in Javanese culture. Leech's

Politeness Principle serves to explain how speakers convey emotional expressions and directives in a polite manner that aligns with social norms. Leech proposes six maxims of politeness: (1) the Tact Maxim, which advises speakers to minimize cost and maximize benefit to the hearer; (2) the Generosity Maxim, which encourages minimizing self-benefit while maximizing the benefit to others; (3) the Approbation Maxim, which emphasizes minimizing criticism and maximizing praise; (4) the Modesty Maxim, which discourages self-praise and promotes humility; (5) the Agreement Maxim, which promotes harmony by minimizing disagreement and maximizing agreement; and (6) the Sympathy Maxim, which encourages the expression of empathy, sympathy, and support. These maxims are crucial in identifying the verbal strategies used by characters in the film to foster interpersonal harmony through polite and empathetic communication.

In Javanese culture, the concept of politeness is closely tied to the use of speech levels or *undha-usuk basa*, as discussed by Wardhaugh & Fuller (2015) as well as in the concept of *nggah-ungguh*. Javanese speech levels refer to the hierarchical variations of linguistic forms (such as *ngoko lugu*, *ngoko alus*, *krama lugu*, *krama alus*) that are employed based on age, social status, and relational proximity (Utami, 2022). Meanwhile, *unggah-ungguh basa* represents the appropriate application of these speech levels in accordance with specific situations, conditions, and the people being addressed. These speech levels do not merely regulate linguistic forms, but also impart moral values and social ethics such as *andhap asor* (humility), *empan papan* (knowing one's place), and *ajining dhiri* (maintaining the dignity of oneself and others) (Nuryantiningsih & Pandanwangi, 2018). The use of Javanese language with appropriate word choice and level of speech will shape a polite personality, mutual respect, love for the younger ones, respect for the older ones, and consideration for other people's feelings, as the Javanese proverb says “*karyenak tyasing sesama*” (make others feel comfortable). According to Utami (2022), for Javanese society, *unggah-ungguh* is considered a fundamental pillar of social life. Someone who fails to apply *unggah-ungguh* will be regarded as “*ora njawani*,” meaning uncultured, impolite, and abandoning proper etiquette. Within this culture, there is also the term “*ewuh pakewuh*,” which describes the feeling of discomfort when communicating impolitely or when using inappropriate speech levels, such as employing *ngoko* (informal register) when addressing someone older, of higher status, or newly acquainted.

In line with Nuryantiningsuh & Pandanwarngi (2018), research on speech levels in the Javanese language has been carried out by several scholars, including Poedjosoedarmo (1979), Uhlenbeck (1982), Sudaryanto (1989), Purwo (1995), Sasangka (2004), Wibawa (2005), and Wedhawati et al. (2006). Based on their discussions, it is concluded that Javanese speech acts are categorized into four primary levels *ngoko lugu*, *ngoko alus*, *krama lugu*, and *krama alus*.

As referenced in Nuryantiningsih & Pandanwangi (2018) *Ngoko Lugu* represents a form of Javanese language employed in casual settings. This speech level is characterized by its straightforward, direct nature and typically avoids honorific expressions. It is commonly used by speakers when addressing individuals with whom they share close relationships, such as peers, siblings, or other intimate family members. The use of *ngoko lugu* indicates that the social relationship between the speaker and interlocutor is either equal or marked by strong emotional bonds, eliminating the need for social distance in communication. For instance, a friend speaking to another friend during a relaxed afternoon conversation might use *ngoko lugu* with a phrase like, “*Kowe wis mangan durung?*” (Have you eaten yet?). This utterance reflects the intimacy of their relationship and the informal atmosphere of their interaction. *Ngoko alus* is a more refined variant of *ngoko lugu*, though it still belongs to the *ngoko* speech level. This variant is employed by younger speakers when addressing their elders, or by individuals seeking to demonstrate respect despite being in equal social relationships. The distinction between *ngoko lugu* and *ngoko alus* lies in the selection of more polite vocabulary, such as

using “*panjenengan*” instead of “*kowe*.” For instance, “*Mbak, wingi panjenengan mulih jam pira?*” This utterance demonstrates the speaker's courteous attitude while maintaining an element of familiarity and closeness.

Nuryantiningsih & Pandanwangi (2018) also stated that *Krama Lugu* is employed in circumstances that require politeness, though not in highly formal settings. This register is commonly used when addressing acquaintances or peers in moderately formal conversational contexts. In its application, *krama lugu* still demonstrates good intentions and respect, although it doesn't achieve the complete refinement found in *krama alus*. For instance, someone might say, “*Panjenengan sampun nedha dereng?*” when asking a colleague they've recently met whether they have eaten yet. This sentence reflects an appropriate level of respect in social situations that are not overly rigid or ceremonial. *Krama Alus* represents the highest speech register in Javanese and demonstrates the utmost level of courtesy. This form is employed in formal communications or when addressing community leaders, distinguished guests, revered elders, or individuals of superior social standing. *Krama alus* is characterized by the selection of extremely refined vocabulary and the implementation of sophisticated grammatical structures. For instance, “*Menapa panjenengan sampun dhahar?*” serves as an exceptionally polite inquiry, used to ask whether a respected person has eaten. The application of *krama alus* reflects reverence, self-restraint, and profound social awareness of Javanese cultural norms.

Despite the richness of Javanese linguistic and cultural systems, most existing research on speech acts and politeness strategies tends to concentrate on Western languages and cultural contexts. Prior studies have primarily explored expressive and directive speech acts within English-speaking environments, often emphasizing universal politeness frameworks as theorized by Brown and Levinson (1987); Kadar & Haugh (2013); Watts (2003) or Leech (1983). While these models are foundational, they may not fully capture the cultural and linguistic nuances embedded in regional languages such as Javanese. A number of studies, including Luthfa et al. (2023), who examined expressive speech acts in the film “*Kukira Kau Rumah*”, and Selsibilla et al. (2022), who analyzed emotional expressions in *The Joker*, have mainly focused on how feelings and psychological states are conveyed through utterances in cinematic dialogues. Similarly, Aritonang & Ambalegin (2023) investigated expressive acts in *Avatar: The Way of Water*, while Nityasa & Masykuroh (2024) explored gendered speech patterns in *Little Women*. In the area of directive speech acts, studies such as Wea & Bram (2022), which analyzed directives and expressives used by the character Travis Parker in *The Choice*, and Shelviana & Mulatsih (2022), which investigated speech acts in *Spider-Man 3*, have discussed how characters use language to instruct, advise, or demand. However, these studies are framed within predominantly Western perspectives and often adopt universalist theories, such as Searle's Speech Act theory, without accounting for the impact of localized cultural norms or speech level distinctions. Consequently, there remains a significant gap in understanding how politeness is constructed, interpreted, and maintained in non-Western sociocultural contexts particularly in languages like Javanese, where speech levels such as *ngoko lugu*, *ngoko alus*, *krama lugu*, and *krama alus* play a vital role in shaping communication.

Furthermore, even within Indonesian academic contexts, the exploration of speech acts in regional languages often focuses on formal interactions (such as in ceremonies, classroom discourse, or public speaking) rather than naturally occurring, emotionally rich, and pragmatically diverse conversations found in popular media. Short films, in particular, remain underutilized as data sources despite their potential to present authentic, contextually embedded uses of language. The interactional depth and cultural specificity portrayed in short films, especially those produced in local languages, offer valuable insight into how speakers navigate politeness in emotionally charged or socially sensitive situations.

This study focuses on two main research questions: what politeness strategies accompany imperative and expressive language acts in Javanese short films, and how do these strategies reflect Javanese cultural values and communication norms? These questions are explored through an analysis of the short film *Seutas Kenangan*, which features dialogue in Javanese and centers on family relationships and emotional exchanges. The film provides a meaningful context for exploring how speakers use language not only to convey intentions but also to manage face, express empathy, and maintain social harmony. By analyzing authentic interactions, this study reveals the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and politeness in the regional context of Indonesia. The uniqueness of this study lies in its cultural specificity. Unlike previous works that apply general politeness theories across cultures, this study highlights the importance of local norms and the levels of *ngoko lugu*, *ngoko alus*, *krama lugu*, and *krama alus* as essential elements in understanding politeness strategies in Javanese society.

The development of regional language digital media shows that local languages remain a tool for cultural communication. This study addresses the need to explore how politeness is realized in media discourse that reflects local values. Academic documentation of forms of politeness in regional languages strengthens linguistic diversity while supporting the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Through this, the study contributes to a more inclusive understanding of cross-linguistic politeness strategies and expands the methodological scope of culturally rich pragmatic research.

Method of Research

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze directive and expressive speech acts in the Javanese-language short film *Seutas Kenangan*. The analysis focuses on interpreting utterances within their social and cultural contexts. It classifies the speech acts using Searle's (1979) taxonomy and Hymes' (1974) ethnographic framework and examines politeness strategies based on Leech's politeness principles (1983) and the Javanese concept of *unggah-ungguhing basa*, as reflected in speech level choices; *undha-usuk basa*, as discussed in Wardhaugh & Fuller (2015), including *ngoko lugu*, *ngoko alus*, *krama lugu*, and *krama alus*.

The data source is the short film *Seutas Kenangan*, selected for its rich verbal interactions that illustrate close social relationships, family dynamics, and varied speech levels used in culturally and emotionally significant situations. The data consist of verbal utterances containing directive and expressive speech acts, along with their corresponding politeness strategies.

Data were collected through non-participant observation by repeatedly viewing the film to capture the storyline and character interactions. Relevant utterances were transcribed and classified according to Searle's (1979) speech act categories. Each utterance was then analyzed using qualitative content analysis, focusing on the form and function of politeness strategies based on Leech's (1983) maxims of Tact, Modesty, Sympathy, and Approbation. The analysis also considered social variables such as age, social status, interpersonal relationships, and the level of formality to determine how politeness is conveyed through speech level selection. The results are presented narratively to show how directive and expressive speech acts are realized in accordance with Javanese socio-cultural norms.

Findings and Discussion

This research analyzes directive and expressive speech acts in the Javanese short film *Seutas Kenangan* using John Searle's speech act theory. The analysis considers the speech context, communicative purpose, and the relationship between speakers and interlocutors in

each scene. Speech acts function not only as tools for conveying information but also reflect social relationships, cultural values, and the psychological attitudes of the characters.

Directive speech acts appear in the form of invitations, requests, suggestions, and commands aimed at influencing the listener's actions. These utterances reveal the dynamics of interpersonal relations, including friendship, kinship, respect, and care. Expressive speech acts take the form of apologies and compliments, expressing the speaker's emotional or psychological stance toward particular situations.

Table 1. Findings of the directive and expressive speech acts in the Film

| No. | Directive | Data Found | Expressive | Data Found |
|-----|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| 1. | Suggesting | 1 | Apologizing | 1 |
| 2. | Commanding | 2 | Praise | 1 |
| 3. | Invitation | 1 | Thanking | 1 |
| 4. | Request | 1 | | |
| | Total | 5 | Total | 3 |

1. Directive

Directive speech acts aim to make the interlocutor perform an action in accordance with the speaker's intention. These include acts such as commanding, requesting, suggesting, advising, pleading, and inviting.

a. Suggesting

Data 1 (01:30)

Context: The conversation takes place in an informal office setting before work hours. Adam prepares to leave, while Satriyo stays behind. In a casual tone, Adam brings up the topic of returning home. Satriyo expresses reluctance due to family pressure about marriage. Adam responds by offering personal advice.

Adam : *“Anyway lo jadi mudik minggu depan?”*

Satriyo : *“Ngga tau aku, bingung. Kamu tau sendiri toh, Dam. Kalo aku pulang ke Yogya itu yang ditanyain cuman ‘kapan nikah?’ bingung mau jawab gimana.”*

Adam : *“Hmm, baperan lu, Yo. Santai aja kali. **Yo, menurut gua ya, lu mending pulang aja deh.** Ya seenggaknya lu bisa ketemu keluarga lu di sana. Udah tiga tahun masa belum ketemu, emang lu ngga kangen?”*

In the dialogue excerpt at minute 01:30, Adam suggests that Satriyo return home by saying, *“Yo, menurut gua ya, lu mending pulang aja deh. Ya seenggaknya lu bisa ketemu keluarga lu di sana. Udah tiga tahun masa belum ketemu, emang lu nggak kangen?”* This utterance constitutes a directive speech act in the form of a suggestion, as it aims to influence the interlocutor's decision in a persuasive manner. It falls under the category of directive speech acts because it intends to guide the hearer's actions, though not through an explicit command (Searle's, 1979). Adam uses informal and emotionally nuanced language to convey supportive rather than authoritative advice. This reflects empathy and personal involvement within the context of a close peer relationship.

From the perspective politeness principle, Adam's verbal strategy reflects several politeness maxims. First, the Tact Maxim, by avoiding direct commands and instead framing the utterance as a suggestion, thereby reducing imposition on the hearer. Second, the Sympathy Maxim, is evident in Adam's concern for Satriyo's emotional discomfort due to familial pressure. Adam's suggestion not only provides a possible solution but also communicates

emotional support, representing an instance of politeness as solidarity (Leech's, 1983). The utterance may also be understood as a face-saving act, as it avoids making Satriyo feel blamed or pressured in his making decision.

In the context of Javanese culture, this conversation employs the speech level *ngoko lugu*, which is commonly used among peers in informal situations (Nuryantiningsih & Pandanwangi, 2018). The use of *ngoko lugu* reflects a horizontal and egalitarian relationship, in which speakers do not need to express social hierarchy in their interaction. Although the utterance is directive in nature, it is still considered polite, as it aligns with the norms of *nggah-ungguhing basa* that emphasize the values of *andhap asor* (humility) and *karyenak tyasing sesama* (the effort to comfort others). If the social situation were different, for instance, if Adam were speaking to someone older or of higher status, the speech level would shift to *krama alus*, and the politeness strategies used would become more deferential and indirect. This illustrates that politeness in Javanese culture is not solely determined by the content of the utterance, but is strongly shaped by social context and the appropriate choice of speech level. Thus, the speech act can be understood as a combination of illocutionary function, pragmatic politeness strategy, and adherence to Javanese socio-cultural norms.

b. Commanding

Data 2 (06:22)

Context: The conversation takes place in the living room. Satriyo is sitting and resting after what appears to be a tiring activity or journey. His mother comes to him with his favorite food, *telo godog* (boiled cassava), and a glass of tea. Her words express care, comfort, and affection.

Ibu : “*Telo godog kesenanganmu, wis, diminum sek. Kesel kan awakmu?*”

In the dialogue at minute 06:22, the mother addresses Satriyo with the utterance, “*Telo godog kesenanganmu, wis, diminum sek*” (“Your favorite boiled cassava. Here, drink this first”). This utterance represents a directive speech act in the form of a command, as it aims to prompt Satriyo to perform an action, drinking the tea. In Searle's (1979) classification, this speech act falls under the directive category, as the speaker seeks to influence the behavior of the hearer. However, the command is delivered in a softened and affectionate manner, without imperative force. This reflects a nuanced use of directive language that emphasizes care rather than control. From the lens of politeness principles, this utterance exemplifies the Tact Maxim, as it minimizes imposition while promoting the listener's well-being (Leech's, 1983).

In terms of *unggah-ungguhing basa*, the mother's speech reflects *ngoko alus*, a polite but informal speech level commonly used in emotionally intimate relationships, such as between parent and child (Nuryantiningsih & Pandanwangi, 2018). Although the mother occupies a higher hierarchical status due to age, she avoids asserting dominance. Instead, her language use aligns with *andhap asor* (humility) and *empan papan* (knowing one's place), two central values in Javanese cultural interaction. The choice of *ngoko alus* in this context expresses warmth and attentiveness, and it demonstrates that Javanese politeness is not solely dependent on formal vocabulary or status, but is deeply shaped by relational intent and emotional tone. The command is thus embedded in affection, making it a culturally appropriate and polite directive within the familial setting.

Data 3 (09:04)

Context: The interaction occurs in the living room. Sekar has just returned from school and greets her brother, Satriyo, who is sitting and eating boiled cassava. After replying to

Sekar's question about when he arrived, Satriyo jokingly tells her to change clothes, implying that she smells sweaty from school.

- Sekar : "Mas Tiyo kapan e sampe rumah?"
Satriyo : "Tadi pagi. **Wes, kamu ndang ganti baju, baunya ini lho.**"
Sekar : "Heh, ngawur. Wangi e mas."

In the dialogue at 09:04, Satriyo responds to his sister Sekar's question with a humorous directive, "**Wes, kamu ndang ganti baju, baunya ini lho**" ("Alright, go change your clothes now, you smell"). This utterance serves as a directive speech act in the form of a casual command. It fits the directive category, as the speaker intends to influence the listener's behavior and in this case, prompting Sekar to change clothes (Searle's, 1979). Although the utterance contains a directive intention, the communicative style is softened by a teasing and playful tone, signaling that the interaction is grounded in emotional closeness rather than authority.

From the perspective of politeness theory, the utterance reflects elements of the Tact Maxim, as the command is embedded in humor rather than direct imposition. Though it contains a critique (implying body odor), it avoids threatening the hearer's face due to the playful framing, which aligns with Leech's (1983) Approbation Maxim, minimizing the force of negative evaluation by delivering it with humor and affection.

In *unggah-ungguhing basa Jawa*, Satriyo uses *ngoko lugu*, the most basic speech level, which is appropriate for close and equal relationships such as between siblings. The absence of refined vocabulary or formal structure reflects a relaxed and egalitarian tone. In Javanese culture, this is not considered impolite; rather, it is an appropriate way to strengthen bonds through honest, everyday expressions, aligned with the values of *karyenak tyasing sesama* (maintaining emotional comfort) and *tepa slira* (mutual understanding). This data, along with previous examples, reveals a consistent pattern: politeness in Javanese directive speech acts is strongly influenced by speech level and social context. In *ngoko lugu*, politeness is maintained through relational closeness, direct language, and emotional openness, allowing commands or suggestions to be delivered openly, even humorously, because social distance is minimal (Nuryantiningsih & Pandanwangi, 2018). In contrast, if Satriyo were speaking to someone older or of higher status, such direct and joking expressions would be inappropriate and would need to shift to *krama* either *krama lugu* or *krama alus* to convey politeness and respect. For instance, "*Menawi kersa, panjenengan saged ganti busana rumiyin*" ("If you are willing, perhaps you could change your clothes first") illustrates this shift with conditional phrasing, refined vocabulary (*panjenengan, saged*), and longer sentence structure to reduce the imposition of the request. This shift demonstrates how politeness in Javanese is both relational and contextual, moving from solidarity-based strategies in *ngoko* to respect-based strategies in *krama*, where the choice of speech level encodes not only linguistic politeness but also cultural respect and social hierarchy.

c. Invitation

Data 4 (16:46)

Context: Satriyo visits Endah's house, and their conversation flows comfortably. However, when a small child unexpectedly appears from inside the house, Satriyo looks surprised and abruptly says goodbye. Endah responds by questioning his sudden departure.

- Satriyo : "Aku pamit dulu ya, Ndah."
Endah : "Lho? **Ngga masuk dulu to, Mas?**"
Satriyo : "Aku mau ke rumah temenku."

In the dialogue at 16:46, Endah responds to Satriyo's farewell with the utterance "*Lho? Ngga masuk dulu to, Mas?*" ("Oh? You're not coming in first?"). Although phrased as a question, this utterance functions as a directive speech act in the form of an indirect invitation. Such utterances are classified as directives because they aim to influence the hearer's behavior (Searle, 1979) —in this case, encouraging Satriyo to enter the house. However, the use of an interrogative rather than an imperative reflects an important strategy in Javanese communication: politeness through indirectness.

From Leech's (1983) politeness principle, this utterance illustrates the Tact Maxim, as it minimizes imposition by giving the listener the freedom to accept or decline the invitation. The speaker prioritizes face-saving, both for herself and for Satriyo, by using a non-threatening form of suggestion that allows space for autonomy and social comfort.

Endah uses *krama lugu*, a polite yet moderately formal speech level, incorporating the honorific term "*Mas*", which signals respect toward Satriyo as someone slightly older or socially equal but still deserving of courteous address. Within the framework of *unggah-ungguhing basa Jawa*, this usage aligns with the principles of *tepa slira* (consideration for others' feelings) and *rukun* (social harmony) as highlighted by Nuryantiningsih & Pandanwangi (2018). The indirect form of the invitation allows the speaker to maintain emotional closeness while also adhering to social decorum, reflecting the delicate balance that is central to Javanese politeness. This invitation also demonstrates a shift in politeness strategies across different Javanese speech levels; compared to *ngoko lugu*, which tends to be more direct, relaxed, and solidarity-based—for instance, "*Masuk dulu, yuk*", *krama alus* employs a more indirect and formal approach, such as "*Menawi kersa, panjenengan saget mlebet rumiyin*", maximizing politeness through refined language, conditional structures, and deference to the hearer's autonomy. Thus, while *ngoko* manages politeness through tone and relational closeness, *krama* emphasizes linguistic distance and formality as expressions of respect.

d. Request

Data 5 (17:55)

Context: The conversation occurs in the courtyard of Satriyo's house as he prepares to return to Jakarta. Endah brings food prepared by her mother for Satriyo. Endah's message conveys both the gift and the emotional sentiment from her mother. Satriyo responds with gratitude and a request to deliver his greetings.

Endah : "*Ini ada titipan dari ibu. Ibu masak sendiri loh, Mas. Katanya ibu kangen Mas Tiyo.*"
Satriyo : "*Walah, malah repot-repot. **Salamkan untuk ibu yo, Ndah.** Matur nuwun.*"

In the dialogue at 17:55, Satriyo responds to Endah's gesture of bringing food from her mother with the utterance "*Salamkan untuk ibu yo, Ndah*" ("Please send my regards to your mother, Ndah"). This is a directive speech act in the form of a polite request. While the utterance lacks explicit imperative force, it clearly conveys the speaker's intention for the hearer to perform an action. Such utterances qualify as directives, particularly of the request subtype, which seek to influence behavior while minimizing imposition (Searle's, 1979). The use of the softening particle *yo* adds friendliness and informality, ensuring that the request is perceived as thoughtful rather than demanding.

From the perspective of politeness theory, the utterance reflects the Sympathy Maxim, as it expresses warmth, gratitude, and emotional consideration. Rather than commanding, Satriyo acknowledges Endah's helpfulness and respectfully extends a request that also honors her mother. The utterance not only maintains the listener's positive face but also reinforces relational harmony, an essential element of politeness as solidarity (Leech's, 1983).

This utterance employs *ngoko alus*, an informal yet polite speech level, reflecting Satriyo's respect toward Endah's mother, who is older, in accordance with the Javanese principle of *ajining dhiri* (maintaining dignity and respect) as delineated by (Nuryantiningsih & Pandanwangi, 2018). Although he is speaking with a peer, deference toward elders is still implied through emotional tone, indirectness, and social awareness. Politeness in *ngoko alus* is conveyed through softening particles and warmth. However, when addressing someone of higher status, the language shifts to *krama alus*, using more refined and indirect expressions such as "*Menawi kersa, panjenengan saged nyangking pangestunipun kulo*" ("If you are willing, perhaps you could convey my respects"). This distinction underscores that Javanese politeness is deeply context-dependent ranging from emotional closeness in *ngoko* to expressions of respect and social distance in *krama*.

2. Expressive

Expressive speech acts express the speaker's psychological state or attitude toward a particular situation. Examples include thanking, apologizing, praising, complaining, and criticizing.

a. Apologizing

Data 6 (04:57)

Context: The conversation takes place in the courtyard as Satriyo arrives home and reunites with his mother. The moment is emotional, reflecting the long-awaited return. His mother gently scolds him for not informing her in advance. Satriyo initially gives an excuse, then offers an apology.

Ibu : "*Kowe kok balik ora ngabari loh?*"
Satriyo : "*Ngabari priipun toh, Bu? Ibu ra ndue HP kok.*"
Ibu : "*Kan iso ngomong adimu toh, yoo.*"
Satriyo : "*Nggeh ... pangapunten, Bu ...*"

In the dialogue at 04:57, Satriyo responds to his mother's gentle reproach with the utterance "*nggeh ... pangapunten, Bu ...*" ("yes ... forgive me, Mom ..."). This is an expressive speech act, as defined by Searle (1979), used to convey the speaker's internal psychological state and in this case, remorse. The act of apologizing reflects Satriyo's recognition of a social transgression (not informing his mother of his return) and his intention to restore emotional harmony. While his initial response is defensive, the transition to a soft apology signals a shift toward face-saving and relational repair.

In terms of Leech's (1983) politeness framework, this utterance aligns with the Tact Maxim emerges in the way he minimizes the social damage of his oversight, and the Sympathy Maxim reflects emotional consideration for his mother's feelings. The apology is not only linguistically polite but also emotionally sincere, showing awareness of interpersonal and cultural expectations.

Satriyo uses *krama alus*, the most refined and polite level of Javanese speech, with expressions such as "*nggeh*" (respectfully) and "*pangapunten*" (forgive me), which signify politeness and humility, especially when speaking to a parent. In the framework of *unggah-ungguhing basa Jawa*, this usage reflects deep respect (*andhap asor*) and emotional sensitivity, in accordance with the norm of *ajining dhiri* (upholding personal and social dignity) through appropriate language (Nuryantiningsih & Pandanwangi, 2018). An apology delivered in *krama alus* is not merely a formality; it is rich in cultural meaning, expressing affection, sincerity, and reverence within a single brief utterance. If Satriyo were speaking to a peer, he would instead use *ngoko*, such as "*Maaf yo, aku lupa ngabarin*" ("Sorry, I forgot to inform you"), which is more casual and emphasizes familiarity. The shift from *ngoko* to *krama* is not just a matter of

vocabulary; it reflects respect, emotional restraint, and social awareness. The higher the speech level, the more polite, indirect, and measured the apology becomes—underscoring that politeness in Javanese culture is deeply shaped by relational context and social hierarchy.

b. Praise

Data 7 (14:46)

Context: The conversation takes place in the living room as Satriyo is preparing to go out. He has applied perfume, and the scent catches Sekar's attention while she is reading. Sekar responds spontaneously with a positive comment about the fragrance, using an enthusiastic and informal tone.

Sekar : “*Wihh, wangine Mas. Mau kemana kamu, Mas?*”

Satriyo : “*Kepo wae senengane.*”

In the dialogue at 14:46, Sekar responds to Satriyo's appearance by saying, “*Wihh, wangine Mas*” (“Wow, you smell good, Mas”). This utterance functions as an expressive speech act, specifically a compliment or praise (Searle's, 1979). Expressive speech acts convey the speaker's psychological state and in this case, Sekar's positive emotional response to her brother's perfume. The utterance is spontaneous, lighthearted, and intended not only to express appreciation but also to maintain warmth and connection in their sibling relationship.

From the lens of politeness theory, this utterance exemplifies the Approbation Maxim, which emphasizes maximizing praise and minimizing criticism toward others (Leech's, 1983). Sekar's praise is both a social strategy and a sincere emotional expression. It reinforces solidarity politeness by strengthening familial closeness.

Sekar uses *ngoko lugu*, the most informal speech level, which is appropriate for the context of sibling familiarity. Although casual, the use of the respectful term “*Mas*” maintains politeness in accordance with the Javanese principle of *empan papan* (situational appropriateness), indicating that language choice is based on the relationship, not rigid formality. The praise, delivered in simple yet sincere language, reflects the value of *karyenak tyasing sesama*, making others feel emotionally at ease. In *ngoko lugu*, politeness is expressed through warmth and sincerity, which is well-suited to close relationships such as between siblings (Nuryantiningsih & Pandanwangi, 2018). In contrast, in more formal or hierarchical situations, praise shifts to *krama lugu* or *krama alus*, using more refined vocabulary and structure. For example, “*Wangi panjenengan menika sae sanget,*” which emphasizes deferential politeness and reduces familiarity. In conclusion, Sekar's compliment demonstrates how politeness in Javanese is shaped by social and emotional context, where speech level functions as a dynamic marker of social positioning and interpersonal relationships.

c. Thanking

Data 8 (17:55)

Context: The conversation takes place in the courtyard of Satriyo's house as he prepares to leave for Jakarta. Endah brings a package of food cooked by her mother for Satriyo, along with a heartfelt message. Satriyo receives it with appreciation, expressing thanks and sending his regards.

Endah : “*Ini ada titipan dari ibu. Ibu masak sendiri loh, Mas. Katanya ibu kangen Mas Tiyo.*”

Satriyo : “*Walah, malah repot-repot. Salamkan untuk ibu yo, Ndah. Matur nuwun.*”

In the dialogue at 17:55, Satriyo responds to Endah with the utterance “*Matur nuwun*” (“Thank you”), after she delivers a food package and a heartfelt message from her mother. This

utterance represents an expressive speech act in the form of gratitude, as defined by Searle (1979), who notes that expressive acts convey a speaker's internal psychological state. Here, Satriyo's expression of thanks communicates not only appreciation for the tangible gift but also recognition of the care and emotional warmth embedded in the gesture.

In Leech's (1983) politeness, this utterance reflects Tact Maxim, as his response avoids imposition and instead affirms the goodwill of others. The gratitude serves as a face-enhancing act, showing emotional sensitivity and reinforcing social harmony. In this way, *matur nuwun* functions both linguistically and socially, reaffirming the mutual respect and affection between characters.

The use of the expression *matur nuwun* aligns with *krama alus*, the highest level of Javanese speech, symbolizing respect, politeness, and cultural appropriateness. Although spoken to Endah, the gratitude is directed toward her mother, who is older, thus requiring a refined and respectful form of expression. In the framework of *unggah-ungguhing basa Jawa*, this reflects the values of *ajining liyan* (honoring others) and *andhap asor* (humility). The use of formal language in a moment filled with emotional warmth shows that Javanese politeness is not merely about word choice, but also about a deep awareness of social roles and emotional context. In contrast to *krama alus*, in more casual or peer relationships, Satriyo might have simply said "*Makasih yo*" (in *ngoko*), which, though still sincere, emphasizes solidarity-based politeness rather than deference. The shift from *ngoko* to *krama* in expressions of gratitude reflects a cultural structure in which thankfulness is not merely a statement, but a relational expression shaped by social hierarchy, emotional tone, and contextual appropriateness (Nuryantiningsih & Pandanwangi, 2018).

Conclusion

This research examined directive and expressive speech acts in the Javanese short film *Seutas Kenangan* by applying Searle's speech act theory, Leech's politeness principles, and the sociolinguistic concept of *unggah-ungguhing basa Jawa*. The findings show that speech acts in Javanese are closely tied to cultural values, social roles, and emotional tone. Language choice is not limited to conveying meaning but also serves to maintain relationships, show respect, and preserve social harmony.

Directive speech acts, such as suggesting, commanding, inviting, and requesting, are shaped by the speaker's intent and the social distance between interlocutors. The use of *ngoko lugu* highlights familiarity and emotional closeness, while *krama* forms are used to express deference and maintain politeness in more formal or hierarchical contexts.

Expressive speech acts which are apologizing, praising, and thanking, reveal psychological states and fulfill interpersonal functions. Expressions like *pangapunten* and *matur nuwun* illustrate how gratitude and remorse are encoded in refined language when directed toward elders or respected figures. These forms are not only linguistically polite but also socially appropriate, reflecting Javanese values such as *andhap asor* and *ajining liyan*. The analysis demonstrates that politeness in Javanese is not determined solely by the utterance type, but by the alignment between speech level, relationship, and context. The findings emphasize that Javanese speakers strategically select language forms to express solidarity, maintain face, or convey respect, depending on the social setting. Understanding these patterns contributes to a deeper appreciation of how politeness operates within languages that include speech level hierarchies and culturally embedded norms.

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