

Phenomenon of Politeness Strategy in Negotiation Speech Acts in the Traditional Market

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Abstract

This qualitative study aims to examine the phenomenon of politeness strategies in negotiation speech acts that occur in traditional markets, by focusing on dialogue when sellers and buyers build interactions in the negotiation process. The study was conducted in six traditional markets located in Badung and Denpasar regencies to represent the local economic interaction environment. Participants in the study were sellers and buyers involved in the negotiation process, selected by purposive sampling based on predetermined criteria. The direct participatory observation method was used and supported by data collection techniques through listening, taking notes, recording and documenting, and interviewing 25 traders in traditional markets. The data analysis technique used pragmatic equivalents. To increase data validity, triangulation was conducted using several data sources (observation, interviews, and documentation and technique triangulation. The results of the study found that the types of politeness strategies used were Bald on record, positive politeness strategies, negative politeness, off record, and indirect speaking strategies. Politeness strategies play an important role in maintaining social relations and creating a harmonious atmosphere. The right politeness strategy not only functions to reach a price agreement, but also to maintain social harmony as a form of reflection of local cultural values that emphasize the importance of good social relations among market players. The results of this study are expected to provide insight

into how polite communication in negotiations becomes an important part of social life in traditional markets. This research contributes to the development of sociopragmatic studies, particularly in understanding the role of politeness strategies in negotiation speech acts within the domain of traditional trade. The findings can serve as a reference for enhancing communication skills that are polite, persuasive, and respectful of social relationships in trading activities.

Keywords: *politeness strategy, negotiation, traditional markets*

INTRODUCTION

Politeness strategies play an important role in shaping negotiation speech acts in traditional markets, where sellers and buyers must balance economic interests with the maintenance of social relationships. Negotiation is not merely an exchange of prices but also a communicative process involving requests, offers, refusals, persuasion, and agreement. Monson (2022), in a study of Akan marketplace bargaining in Ghana, demonstrates that traders combine persuasive expressions, complimentary forms of address, deferential language, and occasionally confrontational speech to attract customers while protecting their commercial interests. Similarly, Pratiwi and Hasibuan (2023) examine politeness strategies in requests in traditional markets, highlighting the relevance of positive politeness and other strategies in bargaining interactions. Research on buyer-seller communication at Pasar Langsa further connects speech acts, politeness, and conversational implicature, showing how indirect expressions, greetings, and culturally meaningful language choices contribute to trust and relational communication (Fitria et al., 2026). These studies suggest that politeness should be understood not simply as the use of gentle or respectful language but as a pragmatic resource through which market participants negotiate prices, manage interpersonal expectations, and maintain harmonious relationships.

The relationship between politeness and negotiation can also be understood through the influence of social power, interpersonal distance, indirect meaning, and nonverbal communication. Hanif et al. (2023) demonstrate that contextual factors, including power relations, social distance, and the degree of imposition, influence

impoliteness strategies in traditional market interactions. In addition, Lee et al. (2022) conceptualize politeness as a communicative strategy that enables negotiators to pursue their interests without unnecessarily offending their counterparts. Conversational implicature also allows buyers and sellers to communicate dissatisfaction, suggest alternative prices, and soften requests without explicitly expressing disagreement (Fitria & Ismail, 2026). Meanwhile, Maru (2025) emphasizes the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication in promoting harmonious interactions between buyers and sellers, while Kehinde and Adesoji (2026) illustrate how nonverbal impoliteness can be used to discourage prolonged or undesirable bargaining.

Taken together, these studies provide a foundation for examining politeness strategies in negotiation speech acts in traditional markets in Badung and Denpasar, Bali. The proposed research can contribute to sociopragmatic scholarship by investigating how bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record strategies operate in naturally occurring bargaining interactions and how these strategies reflect local cultural values, facilitate price agreements, and sustain social harmony among market participants.

Consequently, the phenomenon of politeness strategies in negotiation speech acts in traditional markets warrants specific investigation because bargaining involves the continuous negotiation of both economic interests and interpersonal relationships. Sellers seek to obtain profitable prices, whereas buyers generally aim to secure affordable purchases; these potentially competing interests require speakers to manage disagreement without damaging social harmony. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of politeness in maintaining harmonious interactions and preventing conflict during negotiation (Prakoso, 2019; Wahyuni & Afifah, 2014). Traditional markets thus provide a valuable context for examining how speakers employ politeness strategies to perform negotiation speech acts, including making offers, requesting price reductions, rejecting proposals,

presenting counteroffers, and reaching agreements. Nevertheless, understanding this phenomenon requires attention not only to the types of politeness strategies used but also to their pragmatic functions, linguistic realizations, and effects on the progression of bargaining interactions. A study focusing on this topic can therefore contribute to pragmatics by explaining how politeness is enacted through negotiation speech acts in traditional markets and how linguistic choices reflect the interplay between face management, local sociocultural norms, and transactional objectives.

Politeness is not only interpreted as a form of respect, but also includes strategic efforts to achieve communication goals effectively (Hanafi, 2016; Mislikhah, 2020; Andriyani, 2022). In traditional markets, politeness strategies are often carried out and vary greatly depending on the context of the speech situation (Anugrah; Revita & Marnita, 2020; Joys; Nurkhasanah & Gunawan, 2022). The form of language use also varies, including in the form of humor, sarcasm, or praise, which are adjusted to local cultural norms (Nakrowi & Pujiyanti, 2019). For example, a trader can use compliments to attract the attention of buyers or humor to lighten the atmosphere of the negotiation. The phenomenon of implementing politeness strategy choices in negotiations is very interesting to study further because the negotiation speech acts carried out by sellers to buyers in markets or other buying and selling contexts aim to reach agreements in transactions, and traditional markets have unique characteristics, are more personal, and involve close social relationships.

Politeness strategies play a central role in regulating the dynamics of negotiations; in negotiations, both traders and buyers often try to maintain good relationships through the use of polite language, with a variety of languages and levels of speech that are believed to be used when using regional languages as a means of communication. Research on politeness strategies in negotiation speech acts in traditional markets is still limited. This is because the results of previous

studies focused on the types and functions of speech acts without looking at the cultural aspects and social context of traditional markets as a basic reference for establishing harmony.

Politeness and negotiation speech acts have contributed to the development of sociopragmatic studies; however, further exploration is needed regarding the relationship between politeness strategies and local cultural contexts in interactions within traditional markets. Studies focusing on the classification of politeness strategies based on specific theoretical frameworks may explain the forms and functions of utterances, but they do not necessarily reveal how social norms, cultural values, communicative habits, and interpersonal relationships of the local community influence the choice and interpretation of those strategies. In the context of traditional markets, bargaining activities are not merely processes of reaching price agreements; they also involve managing social relationships, showing respect to interlocutors, building familiarity, and avoiding conflict. This gap highlights the need for a sociopragmatic approach that positions local culture not merely as the background of research but as an analytical element in explaining the meaning and function of negotiation speech acts.

Research on politeness strategies and negotiation speech acts has become part of pragmatic and sociopragmatic studies, particularly in explaining utterance forms, language strategies, and communicative functions in social interaction. However, studies on politeness strategies in negotiation still require deeper investigation from the perspective of the interrelation between linguistic practices, local socio-cultural contexts, and speakers' communicative goals. Research focusing on the classification of politeness strategies based on certain theories may not fully explain how cultural values, interactional norms, social relationships, and communicative habits of the local community influence the choice and interpretation of politeness strategies in bargaining processes. Therefore, research is needed that places local cultural contexts as an integral part of sociopragmatic

analysis, rather than merely as the social background of the study. This research is expected to contribute by integrating the analysis of speech acts, politeness strategies, local cultural contexts, and interlocutors’ responses into a single sociopragmatic framework. In doing so, it aims to provide a more contextual understanding of politeness strategies as communicative practices that connect economic interests with the maintenance of social relationships in traditional market life.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a sociopragmatic design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to understand the use of politeness strategies in negotiation speech acts based on the interactional context, communicative goals, social relationships, and underlying local cultural norms. The sociopragmatic framework is applied to analyze the relationship between utterance forms, politeness strategies, social factors, and interlocutors’ responses in the bargaining process between sellers and buyers. The research participants consist of sellers and buyers directly involved in transactions at traditional markets. Participant selection was conducted using purposive sampling, namely selection based on criteria relevant to the research objectives. This technique allows the researcher to obtain rich and relevant data concerning the phenomenon under study. The criteria for participant selection can be formulated as follows.

Participants	Inclusion Criteria
Sellers	Actively engaged in selling at the research site and experienced in bargaining with buyers.
Buyers	Have previously or are currently involved in transactions that include offering, price responses, or negotiation.

**Supporting
informants**

Experienced traders or community figures who understand communicative practices and socio-cultural norms in the market environment, when needed.

The study was conducted in six traditional markets located in Badung and Denpasar regencies to represent the local economic interaction environment. Participants in the study were sellers and buyers involved in the negotiation process, selected by purposive sampling based on predetermined criteria. The direct participatory observation method was supported by data collection techniques through listening, recording, documenting and interviewing 25 traders in traditional markets. The data analysis technique used pragmatic equivalents. To increase the validity of the data, triangulation was carried out using several data sources (observation, interviews, and documentation). Data collection was conducted through four complementary techniques:

- a) *Field Observation*. The researcher directly observed transactions to identify forms of negotiation, interaction situations, social relationships, as well as verbal and nonverbal behavior. Field notes included transaction contexts, conversation sequences, intonation, gestures, and participants' responses.
- b) *Recording and Documentation of Speech*. Negotiation conversations were recorded with the consent of the participants. Recordings were carefully transcribed, preserving words, repetitions, pauses, refusals, and other relevant elements. Participant identities were anonymized in transcripts and publications.
- c) *Contextual Interviews*. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants to understand the intentions behind utterances, reasons for choosing certain expressions, interpretations of interlocutors' speech, and politeness norms recognized within the market community.

- d) *Documentation of Socio-Cultural Context*. The researcher noted relevant information about communicative habits, seller–buyer relationships, local terms, and interaction norms. This information was used to interpret the data, not to generalize the characteristics of the entire community.

The stages of data analysis included: a) **Data reduction and organization** – selecting conversations containing negotiation activities such as price offers, requests for discounts, refusals, objections, agreements, or failures to reach consensus. b) **Transcription and coding** – transcribing conversations and coding them based on speech act forms, politeness strategies, speaker roles, interlocutor responses, and interaction contexts. c) **Classification of politeness strategies** – analyzing utterances using the chosen politeness framework (e.g., Brown & Levinson, 1987), while considering possible local meanings not fully represented by theoretical categories. d) **Sociopragmatic contextual analysis** – linking utterance forms with transaction situations, socio-cultural norms, seller–buyer relationships, intonation, gestures, and communicative goals. e) **Interpretation of functions and responses** – explaining how strategies were used to make offers, maintain prices, politely refuse, build familiarity, or manage potential conflict. Transaction outcomes were analyzed as supporting context, not as sole evidence of strategy effectiveness. f) **Conclusion drawing** – comparing patterns across cases, checking against differing or contradictory data, and relating findings to research questions and previous studies.

The technique of presenting data analysis uses ordinary sentences so that it is easy for readers to understand and does not appear rigid.

- **Triangulation of Sources:** Comparing data from sellers, buyers, and supporting informants to understand differences in interpretation of the same utterances
- **Triangulation of Techniques:** Comparing the results of observation, recorded conversations, field notes, and contextual interviews.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table of Politeness Strategy and Function of Utterance

No.	Speaker	Politeness Strategy	Function of Utterance	Interlocutor's Response
1	Buyer	Positive politeness	Building familiarity and making an offer	Seller considers giving a discount
2	Buyer	Negative politeness	Softening the request for a discount	Seller explains the price of the goods
3	Buyer	Bald on record (direct speech)	Conveying the offer firmly	Seller accepts or rejects the offer
4	Buyer	Off-record (indirect speech)	Hinting at the desire to obtain a lower price	Seller may offer an alternative price
5	Seller	Indirect speech	Rejecting the offer while maintaining interpersonal relations	Buyer considers another offer

This study focuses on the phenomenon of politeness strategies in negotiation speech acts that occur in traditional markets, focusing on the dialogue between sellers and buyers in building interactions in the negotiation process. Politeness strategies in negotiation speech acts in traditional markets are very important to understand because politeness is not only about etiquette, but is used as a guideline to achieve communication goals, both in the social and economic realms (Nadar, 2009:35). Politeness strategies are strategies used to avoid face threats by speaking, taking into account the degree of threat of a speech act, using a face-saving action strategy (Brown and Levinson, 1978,1987).

The interaction pattern of sellers and buyers in negotiation speech in traditional markets is generally formed into one interaction pattern starting with an opening from the seller to open a conversation through greetings to the buyer, followed by an offer or promotion of the product that is highlighted so that negotiations occur from the buyer, then continued by the seller to respond to the

offer, either with agreement, complaints, humor, or giving reasons to maintain the price; then, after an agreement, the dialogue ends with an expression of gratitude. This phenomenon confirms that traditional markets are not only a place for transactions, but also a space for social interaction that shows harmony between economic interests and cultural values of Indonesian society, which are characterized by friendliness, familiarity, and mutual respect. This is one form of positive face-saving actions that can be done by feeling close, sharing the same fate, showing a sense of solidarity, and showing the same desire as MT to achieve the same goal (Brown & Levinson, 1978; 1987; Yule, 1996: 107).

The strategy in the speech act of negotiation is chosen based on context, with the hope that a transaction will occur between the seller and the buyer, and the use of the right strategy, for example, closing the distance to the buyer by using a positive politeness strategy to make the negotiation atmosphere in buying and selling comfortable and sustainable so that it can strengthen social relations between the seller and the buyer. This condition is in accordance with the definition of context that, with the presence of context in a speech situation, it is easy to interpret the implied meaning of the speech uttered by the speaker to the speech partner (Leech, 1983:13-14). The following is the context of the situation and analysis of the negotiation speech in the traditional market.

Context of the Situation (1)

Speaker	:	Fruit Seller (approximately 50 years old)
Speech partner	:	Buyer (female, aged approximately 45 years)
Location	:	Kreneng Market, Denpasar
Time	:	07:30 WITA
Topic	:	Seller offering fruit to potential buyers passing by

Dialogue :

Seller	:	<i>Mari, bu cantik, buahnya, mau hari raya, untuk buat sodan.</i> (Come on, beautiful lady, the fruit, it's Eid, to make offering)
Buyer (1)	:	See without buying
Seller	:	<i>Buahnya bu... manis manis, mangga mateng pohon</i> (The fruit ma'am... sweet, ripe mango from the tree)
Buyer (2)	:	<i>mangga apa ini, Bu?</i> (What kind of mango is this, ma'am?)

- Seller : *Mangga Harum manis, bisa dicoba bu, Bu. Mari, Bu, coba dulu, mateng pohon ini* (Harum manis mango, you can try it ma'am. Come on, ma'am, try it first. Ripe from the tree)
- Buyer (2) : *Berapa 1 kilo?* (How much is 1 kilo?)
- Seller : *Rp.25.000 Mateng pohon ini, dijamin manis bu cantik...* (Rp.25,000 Ripe from the tree, guaranteed sweet, beautiful lady...)
- Buyer (2) : *Kok mahal?* (Why is it so expensive?)
- Seller : *Berapa Kilo bu cantik mau beli* (How many kilos do you want to buy, beautiful lady?)
- Buyer (2) : *1 Kilo aja pake buat sodan* (Just 1 kilo to make offering)
- Seller : *Ya, Rp. 23.000 ribu aja, pake garus.* (Alright, Rp. 23,000 thousand only, for *garus*) (*Garus* is a Balinese word that means the first buyer as a sales inducer)
- Buyer (2) : *Kasi yang kecil-kecil aja, biar dapat banyak* (Just give me small ones, so I can get a lot)
- Seller : *Manis sekali ini bu, mateng pohon* (This is so sweet, ma'am, ripe from the tree)
- Buyer (2) : *Uang pas ya bu* (This is the right amount of money, ma'am.)
- Seller : *Iya, makasih banyak bu cantik...garus...garus* (Alright, thank you very much, beautiful lady...*garus...garus* (receiving money and patting the fruit being sold as a sign of a first purchase and hopefully attracting further sales)

Negotiation speech acts carried out by sellers to buyers in the market or other buying and selling contexts aim to reach an agreement in the transaction. Sellers use various politeness strategies in communication to attract the attention of buyers, influence their decisions, and maintain good relationships. The dialogue with the seller's speech: "*Mari, bu cantik, buahnya, mau hari raya, untuk buat sodan*" (Come on, beautiful lady, the fruits, Eid is coming, to make an offering). This speech is aimed at buyers who pass by as a form of offer and appeals to the buyer's need to buy fruit because of Eid. In other words, the speech act used refers to Persuasive speech because the seller tries to convince the buyer by highlighting the advantages of the product, namely mangoes.

The seller praises the buyer to create a friendly atmosphere and increase the chances of successful negotiations. Expressions such as "*ibu cantik*" (beautiful lady) are included in positive politeness strategies because they show appreciation for

the positive face of the interlocutor, thus creating a friendly, polite, and attentive interaction. This strategy is often used in cultures that emphasize hospitality and familiarity, such as Indonesian culture. The trader remains friendly and offers the buyer to try to be sure about the desired mango. The seller provides factual information about the product to help buyers make decisions in the form of Information Speech Acts. Finally, the buyer tries to bargain by saying “*kok mahal*” (why is it expensive). The buyer responds back by asking about the need for mangoes, because it is small and for the first purchase, the seller finally follows the buyer's wishes. The seller shows flexibility or agrees with the buyer's offer to reach an agreement.

Context of the Situation (2)

Speaker : Chicken Meat Seller (approximately 45 years old)
 Speech partner : Buyer (female, aged approximately 30 years)
 Location : Badung Market, Denpasar
 Time : 06:30 WITA
 Topic : Seller offering chicken meat

Dialogue :

Seller : *Daging ayam bu, mari...Daging ayamnya, Bu* (Chicken meat, ma'am. Chicken meat, ma'am)
 Buyer : *berapa sekilo bu?* How much per kilo, ma'am?
 Seller : *Sekilo Rp. 35.000 aja* (One kilo is only Rp. 35,000)
 Buyer : *Nda bisa kurang bu? Khan nda hari raya sekarang* (Can't you have less, ma'am? It's not Eid now)
 Seller : *Nda bisa, Bu, harga pas* (No, ma'am, the price is fixed)

Dialogue in the context of situation (2) is an interaction that occurs in a traditional market. The buyer is a new person and not a regular customer of the chicken trader, so from the beginning of the speech to the end, it seems stiff because they do not know each other. The seller offers chicken meat politely and is responded to by asking the price of chicken meat. When a speech containing negotiation occurs, asking for the price of chicken meat to be lowered because it is not a holiday, the trader does not agree with it, with direct speech, without further ado. The seller's response contains the *Bald on Record* politeness strategy, namely

a speech strategy from the speaker, as it is without further ado, because the trader does not agree to lower the price of meat from the initial price offered because it does not match the market price at that time.

Context of the Situation (3)

Speaker	:	Vegetable Seller (approximately 50 years old)
Speech partner	:	Buyer (female, approximately 25 years old)
Location	:	Ketapian Market, Denpasar
Time	:	07:00 WITA
Topic	:	Seller offering vegetable

Dialogue:

Seller	:	<i>Sayur bu, baru dipetik segar-segar</i> (Vegetables, ma'am, freshly picked)
Buyer	:	<i>Ada sayur Kacang panjang?</i> (Are there long beans ?)
Seller	:	<i>Ada, kacang panjangnya segar, baru dipetik tadi pagi. Ibu bisa. Lihat sendiri, masih segar!</i> (Yes, the long beans are fresh, just picked this morning. You can. See for yourself, they're still fresh!)
Buyer	:	<i>Berapa Seikat bu</i> (How much, one bunch, ma'am?)
Seller	:	<i>Rp. 5000 aja, Cuma di sini jual sayur semurah ini, Bu.</i> (Only Rp. 5,000, only here do you sell vegetables this cheap, ma'am)
Buyer	:	<i>Dua ikat saja, Bu, mau saya tumis.</i> (Just two bunches, ma'am, I want to stir-fry them)
Seller	:	<i>Iya, ditumis jangan terlalu layu pasti enak.</i> (Yes, stir-fry them; don't let them wilt too much; they'll definitely be delicious)
Buyer	:	<i>uang pas ya</i> (right amount of money)
Seller	:	<i>makasei bu.</i> (Thank you, ma'am)

The dialogue in the context of speech situation (3) is at a vegetable seller. The interaction occurs in the morning between the vegetable seller and the buyer. The seller greets the buyer using the greeting “*ibu*” (ma'am) as a form of respect for buyers who are not yet known and is generally used in interactions as part of a form of negative politeness from the seller to the buyer. In the next context, the seller tries to convince the buyer by highlighting the advantages of the product, providing additional information that “*baru dipetik tadi pagi*” (it was just picked this morning) and the seller provides factual information about the product to help the buyer make a decision. In addition, after the seller conveys the price to the buyer so that the price is agreed to, the seller uses speech that contains an offer to attract the

buyer's interest. The seller has succeeded in convincing the buyer so that interaction occurs between the two parties. The positive politeness strategy to close the distance is in accordance with the context of the situation above.

CONCLUSION

Research on the phenomenon of politeness strategies in negotiation speech acts in traditional markets has practical implications for improving the quality of communication between sellers and buyers. Understanding politeness strategies can be utilized to develop communication skills that are polite, persuasive, and yet assertive in expressing economic interests. For sellers, such understanding can assist in offering goods, explaining prices, rejecting offers, and building long-term relationships with customers. For buyers, awareness of politeness strategies can encourage the delivery of offers in ways that show greater respect to interlocutors. The findings of this study also have the potential to serve as training material for service communication among traders, as well as a source of pragmatic and sociopragmatic learning based on authentic community interactions.

Further research is recommended to expand the study sites by comparing several markets with different social and cultural characteristics. Subsequent studies may also integrate verbal and nonverbal aspects, such as intonation, facial expressions, and gestures, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of politeness practices in negotiation. In addition, the relationship between politeness strategies and negotiation outcomes needs to be examined more deeply through measurable indicators of success. A mixed-methods approach may also be considered to combine contextual interpretation with the frequency distribution of politeness strategies. With such developments, future research is expected to enrich sociopragmatic studies while contributing to the advancement of effective, polite, and socially oriented communication in trade interactions.

The phenomenon is that politeness strategy not only functions as a communication tool, but also as a means to strengthen social relations. Negotiation

speech acts in traditional markets provide an illustration that communication plays a very important role not only in negotiation agreements between sellers and buyers but also in maintaining social relations between speech participants to achieve communication goals so as to avoid misunderstandings. This condition provides a characteristic that maintaining social relations is a manifestation of the character of friendly Indonesian society. In addition, it is expected to contribute to pragmatic studies, especially in understanding the phenomenon of politeness in the context of negotiation (bargaining) and providing insight to traders and buyers about the importance of politeness in creating harmonious and effective interactions in traditional markets.

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