

DEVELOPING POLITENESS STRATEGY AWARENESS TO IMPROVE ENGLISH PRESENTATION COMPETENCE AMONG INDONESIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Baiq Septi Ayuningsih

bqseptiaa21@gmail.com

English Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia

Lulu Angguni

luluangguniii2@gmail.com

English Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia

Suci Hamdani

suciwatihamdani@gmail.com

English Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia

Putri Ayu Lestari

putriayulesstri@gmail.com

English Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia

Miftahulfadlik Dabamona

miftahulfadlik@iainsorong.ac.id

English Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia

Alif Hasanah

alifah89.bsi@gmail.com

Islamic Elementary Teacher Education, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia

Suharmoko

mokojavas83@gmail.com

English Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia

Abstract

This qualitative study investigates how Indonesian university students develop awareness of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies in English academic presentations. Five English Education undergraduates at a state university in Eastern Indonesia were purposively selected and interviewed using semi-structured protocols, and the data were analyzed thematically following Braun and Clarke's framework. The findings show that all four strategies—Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, Bald-on Record, and Off-Record—are used with varying frequencies and levels of awareness, with Positive Politeness emerging as the most dominant resource for building rapport, maintaining harmony, and sustaining audience engagement. Students' reflections indicate a growing metapragmatic awareness, as they consciously adjust greetings, apologies, indirect comments, and direct clarifications to

manage face-threatening acts and balance clarity with respectfulness. These results highlight politeness strategy awareness as a key component of socio-pragmatic competence in academic English and suggest that explicit attention to politeness in speaking and presentation courses can enhance learners' communicative effectiveness, confidence, and intercultural appropriateness.

Keywords: *Politeness Strategies Awareness; Pragmatic Competence; English Academic Presentations; Indonesian EFL University Students*

Sari

Penelitian kualitatif ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana mahasiswa Indonesia mengembangkan kesadaran terhadap strategi kesantunan Brown dan Levinson dalam presentasi akademik berbahasa Inggris. Lima mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di sebuah universitas negeri di Indonesia Timur dipilih secara purposif dan diwawancarai menggunakan pedoman wawancara semi-terstruktur, kemudian datanya dianalisis dengan analisis tematik berdasarkan kerangka Braun dan Clarke. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keempat strategi—Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, Bald-on Record, dan Off-Record—digunakan dengan frekuensi dan tingkat kesadaran yang berbeda, dengan Positive Politeness sebagai strategi paling dominan untuk membangun keakraban, menjaga keharmonisan, dan mempertahankan keterlibatan audiens. Refleksi mahasiswa mengindikasikan berkembangnya kesadaran metapragmatik, tampak dari cara mereka menyesuaikan salam, permintaan maaf, komentar tidak langsung, dan klarifikasi langsung untuk mengelola tindak mengancam muka dan menyeimbangkan kejelasan dengan rasa hormat. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa kesadaran strategi kesantunan merupakan komponen penting dari kompetensi sosio-pragmatik dalam bahasa Inggris akademik dan menyarankan perlunya pengintegrasian fokus eksplisit pada kesantunan dalam mata kuliah berbicara dan presentasi untuk meningkatkan efektivitas komunikasi, kepercayaan diri, dan keberterimaan lintas budaya mahasiswa.

Kata kunci: *Kesadaran Strategi Kesantunan; Kompetensi Pragmatik; Presentasi Akademik Berbahasa Inggris; Mahasiswa EFL Indonesia*

Received 2026/01/03

accepted 2026/01/16

published 2026/05/01

APA Citation: Ayuningsih, B.S., Angguni, L., Hamdani, S., Lestari, P.A., Dabamona, M., Hasanah, A., & Suharmoko, S. (2026). Developing Politeness Strategy Awareness to Improve Indonesian University Students' English Presentation Skills. *Research and Innovation in Language Learning*, 9(2), pp.114-131 <http://dx.doi.org/10.33603/rill.v9i2.11592>

Introduction

In today's world of global communication, English oral presentations are an important part of academic life for Indonesian university students. As English becomes more and more the language of academia, being able to present ideas clearly in English is important for both language skills and professional credibility. Nonetheless, numerous students persist in grappling with challenges beyond mere grammatical precision; they also encounter obstacles in navigating interpersonal interactions and maintaining audience engagement during

presentations (Anggraini et al., 2025; Menggo et al., 2025; Sukmana et al., 2023). Politeness strategies, including greeting, apologizing, and expressing agreement, are crucial in determining how speakers build rapport and sustain a respectful communicative atmosphere (Humayrah et al., 2024; Mulyono et al., 2025). Thus, politeness in English presentations encompasses more than mere linguistic proficiency; it signifies a type of socio-pragmatic competence indicative of cultural awareness and communicative flexibility (Malivong & Sukying, 2024).

Numerous scholarly works have examined politeness within the framework of Brown and Levinson's (Brown et al., 1987) Politeness Theory across a variety of sociolinguistic and intercultural contexts. Studies such as those by Büyükkal (2025), Mahmud (2018), and Triyono et al., (2025) have displayed how speakers apply the four principal strategies—Bald-on Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off-Record—to manage social relations and reduce face-threatening acts (FTAs) (Kibona et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2025). While these investigations have provided valuable insights into politeness as a pragmatic resource, they tend to concentrate on everyday or instructional communication. Comparatively few studies have examined how Indonesian university students develop awareness of these strategies when delivering English academic presentations, a context that demands both linguistic precision and interpersonal sensitivity. Hence, the connection between politeness strategy awareness and presentation competence remains a neglected area in Indonesian EFL research.

To address this gap, the present study seeks to explore how Indonesian university students employ and develop awareness of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies in their English presentations. Specifically, it aims to investigate how such awareness contributes to improving their overall presentation competence—particularly in managing audience interaction, expressing disagreement appropriately, and maintaining a balance between clarity and respectfulness. By analyzing authentic classroom presentation data alongside students' reflective interview responses, this research intends to bridge the divide between theoretical pragmatics and the practical realities of academic communication. Through this, the study aspires to contribute pedagogical insights for enhancing pragmatic and communicative competence among EFL learners in higher education.

Preliminary findings from interview data indicate four notable patterns that substantiate the development of politeness strategy awareness among the participants. First, students demonstrate positive politeness through greetings, humor, and expressions of solidarity that foster a friendly rapport with the audience. Second, they exhibit negative

politeness by employing hedging or apologetic expressions—such as “sorry, I mean...” or “maybe it’s not that important, but...”—to mitigate impositions and preserve the listener’s autonomy. Third, off-record strategies appear when students provide criticism or comments indirectly to avoid confrontation and maintain harmony. Finally, even in their use of bald-on record strategies, students reveal contextual sensitivity, maintaining directness without compromising respect. Collectively, these patterns suggest a growing pragmatic awareness that allows students to adapt their speech acts to situational demands, thereby signaling an evolving mastery of socio-pragmatic competence in academic English communication.

Politeness has long been recognized as a cornerstone of effective communication, functioning not merely as a linguistic convention but as a reflection of social cognition and interpersonal awareness. In intercultural and second language contexts, politeness marks the interface between pragmatic competence and socio-cultural adaptation. Kibona et al., (2025) conceptualizes politeness as the act of minimizing face-threatening behavior while maximizing expressions of goodwill, whereas Muhammad (2024) defines it as a communicative strategy designed to avoid conflict and express deference. In educational discourse, particularly in English-medium classrooms, students must continually negotiate between assertiveness and respect, ensuring that their messages are clear yet socially acceptable. This balancing act makes politeness a vital component of EFL learners’ communicative repertoire.

Building upon these foundational perspectives, Brown and Levinson (1987) advanced a comprehensive model that remains central to politeness research. Their theory rests on the notion of face, which denotes an individual’s public self-image comprising a positive face—the desire for approval—and a negative face—the desire for autonomy and freedom from imposition. Because communication inevitably involves face-threatening acts (FTAs), speakers employ one of four strategies to mitigate potential threats: Bald-on Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off-Record (Muhammad, 2024). The first prioritizes efficiency over tact, the second seeks solidarity through friendliness, the third emphasizes indirectness and respect, and the last conveys meaning through implication. These strategies are contextually conditioned, requiring speakers to assess factors such as social distance, power relations, and the degree of imposition in interaction. Despite its enduring influence, Brown and Levinson’s model has faced critiques regarding its universality and cultural bias. Scholars such as Al-Hindawi and Alkhazaali, (2016) and Saleh Alabdali (2019) contend that the theory overrepresents Western individualist norms

while underestimating collectivist values like harmony and hierarchy that shape Asian communicative behavior. Similarly, Al-Khatib (2021), Sumekto et al. (2022), and Ahmadi and Weisi (2023) argues for a discursive approach, viewing politeness as an ongoing negotiation rather than a static strategy. These perspectives have expanded the understanding of politeness as a culturally embedded and dynamic phenomenon. Within the Indonesian cultural framework, for instance, politeness often emphasizes *rukun* (social harmony) and *hormat* (respect for authority), both of which influence how students manage face-threatening acts in academic English settings (Ambarwati & Ajeng Damayanti, 2024; Meiratnasari et al., 2019; Sarila et al., 2023).

Recent developments in applied pragmatics have introduced the concept of pragmatic awareness, which complements and extends Brown and Levinson's structural model. Scholars such as Humayrah et al., (2024), Pendidikan Progresif et al., (2025), and Nuzzo and Brocca (2024) define pragmatic awareness as learners' conscious recognition of contextually appropriate language use. It encompasses sensitivity to sociocultural norms, the evaluation of interpersonal effects, and the ability to adapt language forms according to situational constraints. For EFL learners, developing such awareness is essential to prevent pragmatic failure arising from the direct transfer of first-language politeness norms into English. Consequently, when Indonesian students perform English presentations, their ability to strategically employ greetings, hedges, or humor indicates an emerging metapragmatic awareness that aligns linguistic expression with social intention.

The intersection between Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory and pragmatic awareness lies in the speaker's deliberate management of face through linguistically and contextually informed choices (Al-Hindawi & Alkhazaali, 2016). While Brown and Levinson's framework provides the structural taxonomy of politeness strategies, pragmatic awareness elucidates the cognitive and reflective processes underpinning their use. In this sense, awareness transforms politeness from a subconscious sociolinguistic behavior into a deliberate communicative competence (Ahmadi & Weisi, 2023; Saleh Alabdali, 2019). Students who can consciously determine when to use positive politeness to engage the audience or negative politeness to display respect exemplify this intersection. Accordingly, this study employs Brown and Levinson's four strategies as analytical categories to investigate how Indonesian university students' awareness of politeness shapes their English presentation performance. By doing so, the research contributes to understanding the developmental trajectory of pragmatic competence in academic discourse and its implications for EFL pedagogy.

Methods

This study focuses on exploring the politeness strategy awareness of Indonesian university students when delivering English academic presentations. The participants consisted of five undergraduate students currently enrolled in the English Language Education program at a state university located in Eastern Indonesia. These students were purposively selected because they were actively engaged in courses that required frequent English presentations as part of their assessment tasks. The investigation centers on how these individuals employ and reflect upon Brown and Levinson's (1987) four politeness strategies—Bald-on Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off-Record—within the context of classroom presentations. By analyzing their responses during semi-structured interviews, this study seeks to capture the participants' metapragmatic awareness, that is, their conscious understanding of how and why they use certain linguistic choices to maintain respect, reduce face threats, and enhance communicative effectiveness in formal academic discourse.

This study adopts a qualitative research design, as it aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how politeness strategy awareness is developed and expressed by EFL learners in authentic academic settings (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative approach is appropriate for this research because it allows for the exploration of participants' subjective experiences, perceptions, and linguistic behaviors in their natural context rather than through numerical measurement (John W. Creswell & Cheryl N. Poth, 2018). As Creswell (2014) explains, qualitative inquiry seeks to interpret phenomena from the participants' perspectives, emphasizing meaning-making and contextual understanding. In this study, the focus is not on quantifying the frequency of politeness strategies but on uncovering how students consciously use, reflect upon, and justify their language choices during English presentations. Through this interpretive lens, the research design facilitates a holistic examination of pragmatic awareness as a socially constructed and individually realized process.

The primary data in this study were obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted with five participants who were students of the English Language Education program at a state university in Eastern Indonesia. Each participant had prior experience delivering English academic presentations as part of their coursework, making them suitable informants for exploring politeness strategy awareness in authentic educational contexts. The interviews served as the main source of information, providing direct insights into the students' reflections on their use of politeness strategies, as well as their perceptions of appropriateness and communicative effectiveness. Supplementary data were gathered from

the researcher's field notes during the interview sessions, which documented non-verbal cues and contextual factors relevant to the interpretation of verbal responses. All interviews were conducted in a relaxed, conversational tone to encourage openness, recorded with participants' consent, and later transcribed verbatim for analytical purposes.

The data collection process was carried out through semi-structured individual interviews, which allowed flexibility for participants to elaborate on their experiences while maintaining a focus on the key aspects of politeness strategies. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was conducted in a quiet classroom environment to ensure comfort and minimize distractions. The interviews were guided by a list of open-ended questions designed to elicit information about how students greet, apologize, express disagreement, or respond to audience reactions during English presentations. The researcher encouraged participants to provide concrete examples from their own presentation experiences. All sessions were audio-recorded with permission, and follow-up questions were occasionally posed to clarify participants' responses and capture deeper insights into their reasoning. The recorded data were later transcribed verbatim, reviewed for accuracy, and prepared for qualitative analysis.

The data were analyzed qualitatively using a thematic analysis approach to identify recurring patterns related to students' politeness strategy awareness (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Mena, 2023). Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, the analysis proceeded through several systematic stages: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated readings of interview transcripts, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) categorization of data segments according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) four politeness strategies—Bald-on Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off-Record—and (4) interpretation of emerging themes in relation to pragmatic awareness. During coding, particular attention was given to participants' explanations of why they selected certain expressions and how they perceived the impact of their linguistic choices on audience engagement and interpersonal harmony.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study employed Lincoln et al. (1985) four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was enhanced through triangulation by comparing responses among multiple participants and validating interpretations through member checking (Lincoln et al., 1985). Transferability was established by providing detailed contextual descriptions of participants, their academic background, and the classroom presentation setting, allowing readers to evaluate the relevance of findings to similar contexts. Dependability was maintained by systematically

documenting each stage of data collection and analysis, ensuring that the research process was transparent and replicable. Confirmability was achieved by grounding interpretations solely in participants' actual statements and avoiding researcher bias.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the interview data revealed that all five participants employed various politeness strategies as outlined in Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework. Each student demonstrated differing levels of awareness in applying these strategies during their English academic presentations. The occurrences of politeness strategies were identified through repeated patterns in the students' verbal reflections and examples from their own presentation experiences. To provide a clearer overview of how frequently each type of politeness strategy appeared in the data, the total occurrences were categorized and quantified as shown in Table 1 below.

No.	Politeness Strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987)	Examples from Interview Data	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage (%)
1	Positive Politeness	Greetings, humor, showing solidarity: <i>"Good morning everyone," "As students, we all know..."</i> , using jokes to create a friendly tone.	17	34%
2	Negative Politeness	Expressions of apology and caution: <i>"Sorry, I mean..."</i> , <i>"Maybe it's not that important, but..."</i> , asking permission before speaking.	13	26%
3	Off-Record Strategy	Indirect comments or soft disagreement: <i>"Maybe we can see it differently..."</i> , <i>"I just wonder if..."</i> , giving suggestions instead of direct critique.	8	16%
4	Bald-on Record	Direct responses and clarification: <i>"I mean this..."</i> , <i>"Let me explain again"</i> , straightforward answers to questions.	12	24%
Total			50	100%

From the overall 50 coded politeness instances identified in the interview data, Positive Politeness emerged as the dominant strategy (34%), followed by Negative Politeness (26%) and Bald-on Record (24%). The Off-Record Strategy appeared least frequently (16%). This distribution suggests that students tend to prefer socially engaging and cooperative communication forms, aligning with Indonesian collectivist norms emphasizing harmony (*rukun*) and relational closeness. However, the presence of all four strategies confirms that students are developing context-sensitive awareness of when to be direct, indirect, or deferential—demonstrating growth in their pragmatic competence during English academic presentations.

1. Positive Politeness

Positive politeness emerged as the most dominant strategy used by the participants. All five students employed this strategy to build rapport, show friendliness, and create a supportive

atmosphere during their English presentations. They frequently opened their talks with greetings, humor, or inclusive expressions such as “*Good morning everyone*”, “*How are you today?*”, or “*As students, we all know...*”. These expressions reflect an awareness of the importance of establishing solidarity and reducing social distance between speaker and audience, a hallmark of positive politeness in Brown and Levinson’s (1987) framework.

Strategy Type	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage (%)	Representative Examples
Positive Politeness	17	34%	“Good morning everyone, I hope you’re doing well.” / “As students, we all know how difficult it can be.” / Use of humor to relax the audience.

The frequent use of this strategy indicates that students value social harmony and interpersonal warmth, which align with Indonesian collectivist communication norms that emphasize cooperation and connectedness.

2. Negative Politeness

Negative politeness appeared as the second most frequently used strategy. Four of the five participants demonstrated an awareness of this strategy by showing deference, expressing apology, or softening statements to avoid imposing on their audience. Typical expressions included “*Sorry, I mean...*”, “*Maybe it’s not that important, but...*”, and “*I hope it’s okay if I...*”. Such utterances indicate that students are aware of the need to maintain respect for the audience’s autonomy while still expressing their ideas clearly.

Strategy Type	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage (%)	Representative Examples
Negative Politeness	13	26%	“Sorry, I mean this part.” / “Maybe it’s not that important, but I want to add...” / “I hope it’s okay if I explain first.”

This finding suggests that students are developing pragmatic sensitivity to formal contexts, where politeness involves not only friendliness but also respect and carefulness in language use.

3. Off-Record Strategy

The Off-Record strategy appeared less frequently but remains an important indicator of students’ developing pragmatic awareness. Three of the participants occasionally used indirect language to express criticism, disagreement, or suggestions, allowing them to avoid direct confrontation. Common examples included “*Maybe we can see it differently...*”, “*I just wonder if it could be improved...*”, or “*Mungkin menurut saya agak kurang jelas.*” Such indirectness shows students’ effort to mitigate potential face-threatening acts in sensitive interactions.

Strategy Type	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage (%)	Representative Examples
Off-Record Strategy	8	16%	“Maybe we can see it differently.” / “I just wonder if it could be improved.” / “Mungkin menurut saya agak

kurang jelas.”

Although less dominant, the use of off-record expressions reveals a growing awareness of how indirectness can maintain harmony and save the audience’s face, especially in academic settings involving critique or feedback.

4. Bald-on Record

The Bald-on Record strategy was used by all participants when clarity and efficiency were prioritized over indirectness. This strategy appeared in situations where students needed to explain key points directly or correct themselves during a presentation. Examples include “*Let me explain again*”, “*I mean this...*”, and “*Yes, that’s correct.*” Even though this strategy is inherently direct, participants maintained politeness through tone and contextually appropriate expressions.

Strategy Type	Frequency of Occurrence	Percentage (%)	Representative Examples
Bald-on Record	12	24%	“Let me explain again.” / “I mean this part clearly.” / “Yes, that’s correct.”

The balanced use of Bald-on Record expressions demonstrates students’ ability to combine directness with politeness, showing that they are aware of when straightforward communication is more effective than indirect forms. This finding further supports the evidence that students’ politeness strategy awareness is developing as part of their communicative competence in English academic discourse.

Discussion

This study investigated how Indonesian university students develop awareness of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness strategies in the context of English academic presentations. Drawing on interview data from five students enrolled in an English Language Education program at a state university in Eastern Indonesia, the research found that all four types of politeness strategies—Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, Off-Record, and Bald-on Record—were employed with varying frequencies and degrees of awareness. The findings indicated that Positive Politeness was the most dominant strategy (34%), used to build solidarity and a friendly atmosphere with the audience, followed by Negative Politeness (26%) and Bald-on Record (24%), which reflected students’ awareness of balancing clarity and respectfulness. The Off-Record strategy (16%) appeared less frequently but showed emerging awareness of indirectness as a tool for maintaining harmony and minimizing confrontation during presentations.

The prevalence of Positive Politeness can be explained by the students’ socio-

cultural background and communicative goals during academic presentations (Leech, 2014). Indonesian learners come from a collectivist culture that values harmony, mutual respect, and relational closeness (*rukun*), making them more inclined to employ language that emphasizes inclusion and friendliness (Kachru, 2005; Wierzbicka, 2020). In the context of English presentations, students appear to transfer these cultural values by using greetings, humor, and expressions of solidarity to reduce the social distance between themselves and their audience. This supports the idea that politeness is not merely a linguistic mechanism but a pragmatic tool shaped by sociocultural expectations (Leech, 2014). The relatively lower frequency of Off-Record and Negative Politeness strategies further suggests that while students are aware of indirectness, they still prioritize engagement and approachability over excessive caution or restraint.

When compared with previous studies, these findings both align with and expand upon existing research. Similar to Destiyana and Muslim (2024) and Sudewi et al. (2023), who observed frequent use of Positive Politeness in classroom interaction, this study confirms that Indonesian speakers often prefer socially engaging forms of communication (Destiyana & Muslim, 2024; Sudewi et al., 2023). However, it differs by focusing on awareness development rather than mere usage. The findings also complement Ahmad et al. (2023) and Fitriyani and Andriyanti (2020) Male and Sbastian (2024), who found gender differences in politeness behavior, but the present study emphasizes the pedagogical context of academic presentations. This distinction highlights the study's novelty: it shifts attention from politeness as an observable behavior to politeness as a developing metapragmatic awareness, illustrating how students consciously reflect on and adapt their communicative strategies in formal academic discourse (Dr. Khalil Ahmad et al., 2023; Fitriyani & Andriyanti, 2020).

Interpreting these results more deeply, the students' ability to use multiple strategies—often within the same presentation—reflects their growing pragmatic competence as defined by Ishihara and Cohen (2010) (Kentmen et al., 2023). Their choices demonstrate not only linguistic flexibility but also contextual intelligence: knowing when to be direct, when to soften statements, and when to use humor or inclusivity to sustain audience attention. In a broader socio-pragmatic sense, this suggests that English presentation skills among Indonesian students are evolving from mechanical language delivery toward socially intelligent communication. The findings also echo Taguchi and Li (2021) argument that pragmatic awareness develops through continuous reflection and authentic communicative experience, rather than formal instruction alone. Hence, politeness

awareness can be viewed as both a cognitive and cultural process that grows through practice and interaction (Taguchi & Li, 2021).

From a reflective standpoint, the findings imply that pragmatic awareness plays a transformative role in shaping students' academic communication competence. On a functional level, awareness of politeness strategies enables students to manage face-threatening acts more effectively, improve their confidence, and foster positive audience engagement. Conversely, the absence of such awareness may lead to miscommunication, reduced clarity, or perceived disrespect in intercultural contexts. The findings therefore underscore the importance of integrating pragmatic awareness training into English language education, particularly in speaking and presentation courses (Cohen, 2020; Schauer, 2019). Pedagogically, this can foster not only fluency but also sociolinguistic appropriateness—an essential skill for global academic participation.

In terms of practical implications, the study suggests several action points for language educators and curriculum designers. English language programs, especially those focusing on speaking and presentation skills, should incorporate explicit instruction and reflection on politeness strategies. Classroom activities such as peer feedback, role-play, and video-based reflection can help students recognize how linguistic forms convey different levels of politeness and respect (Cohen, 2008, 2020; Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). In addition, teacher training programs should emphasize the role of socio-pragmatic awareness as part of communicative competence, ensuring that future educators are equipped to guide students in navigating intercultural communication effectively. Ultimately, enhancing students' awareness of politeness strategies will contribute not only to improved academic performance but also to their readiness to engage respectfully and effectively in global communication contexts.

Conclusion & Recommendation

This study concludes that developing awareness of politeness strategies plays a pivotal role in enhancing the communicative competence of Indonesian university students during English academic presentations. The most important insight drawn from this research is that politeness in academic communication is not merely a set of formulaic expressions but a reflection of social understanding, cultural values, and pragmatic intelligence. Students who demonstrate awareness of when and how to use politeness strategies—such as greetings, apologies, humor, and indirectness—show greater confidence, adaptability, and sensitivity to audience expectations. The “lesson” or hikmah derived from this study is that effective

English communication requires both linguistic accuracy and socio-pragmatic awareness; understanding others' "face" is as vital as mastering vocabulary and grammar.

The strength of this study lies in its contribution to the growing body of research on politeness and pragmatic awareness within the Indonesian EFL context. Scientifically, this research enriches the discussion of how Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory can be revisited through the lens of awareness development, rather than static categorization of speech acts. Methodologically, it contributes qualitative data derived from authentic student experiences, providing insight into the intersection between culture, communication, and pedagogy. Conceptually, the study bridges the theoretical gap between politeness strategies and pragmatic awareness, highlighting awareness as a mediating factor that transforms theoretical knowledge into practical communicative competence. This perspective opens new research directions that examine politeness not only as linguistic behavior but as a developmental process shaped by education and reflection.

However, this study also acknowledges several limitations. First, the number of participants was limited to five students from a single university in Eastern Indonesia, which constrains the generalizability of findings. Future studies should involve larger and more diverse samples across regions to capture broader patterns of pragmatic awareness among Indonesian EFL learners. Second, this research relied primarily on interview data; future investigations could adopt mixed-method approaches, incorporating classroom observations, discourse analysis, or pre- and post-intervention studies to strengthen empirical validity. Finally, longitudinal studies would be valuable to examine how politeness strategy awareness evolves over time through sustained exposure, feedback, and instructional support. Addressing these aspects will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how pragmatic awareness can be systematically developed in English language education.

References

- Ahmadi, R., & Weisi, H. (2023). Grand strategy of politeness in new social networks: revisiting Leech's politeness theory among Iranian EFL learners using Telegram. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 19(2), 415–438. <https://doi.org/10.1515/PR-2022-0003/XML>
- Al-Hindawi, F. H., & Alkhazaali, M. A. R. (2016). *A Critique of Politeness Theories*. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0608.03>
- Al-Khatib, M. A. (2021). (Im)politeness in Intercultural Email Communication

- between People of Different Cultural Backgrounds: A Case Study of Jordan and the USA. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 50(4), 409–430. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2021.1913213>;SUBPAGE:STRING:ABSTRACT;REQUESTEDJOURNAL:JOURNAL:RJIC20;WGROU:STRING:PUBLICATION
- Ambarwati, R., & Ajeng Damayanti, W. (2024). An Analysis of Politeness Comments by Indonesian National Team Football Players on Governor Ganjar Pranowo's Instagram. *KnE Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v9i6.15252>
- Anggraini, R., Kalukar, V. J., Tyas, W., & Iswari, P. (2025). Oral Presentation Performance, Self-Regulated Strategies and Perceived Challenges Among EFL Undergraduate Students in Samarinda. *Borneo Educational Journal (Borju)*, 7(2), 465–479. <https://doi.org/10.24903/BEJ.V7I2.2139>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brown, P., Levinson, S. C., & Gumperz, J. J. (1987). *Politeness*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511813085>
- Büyükkal, B. (2025). Politeness Strategies. *Socio-Cultural Concepts of (Im) Politeness: Interpretation, Linguistics, and Discourse Analysis: Interpretation, Linguistics, and Discourse Analysis*, 125.
- Cohen, A. D. (2008). Teaching and assessing L2 pragmatics: What can we expect from learners? *Language Teaching*, 41(2). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444807004880>
- Cohen, A. D. (2020). Considerations in assessing pragmatic appropriateness in spoken language. *Language Teaching*, 53(2). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444819000156>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research. In *Educational Research* (Vol. 4).
- Destiyana, D., & Muslim, A. B. (2024). Politeness Strategies in an Indonesian Graduate EFL Classroom. *The Asian Conference on Cultural Studies 2024: Official Conference Proceedings*, 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.22492/ISSN.2187-4751.2024.4>
- Dr. Khalil Ahmad, Fawad Khan, & Fizzah Iqbal. (2023). Gendered Communication in Higher Education: Analyzing Politeness Patterns in a Coeducational Setting.

- Panacea Journal of Linguistics & Literature*, 2(2).
<https://doi.org/10.59075/pjll.v2i2.271>
- Fitriyani, S., & Andriyanti, E. (2020). Teacher and Students' Politeness Strategies in EFL Classroom Interactions. *IJELTAL (Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v4i2.473>
- Humayrah, U., Siregar, D. Y., Hajmi, M. F., Nasution, M. H. R., Hsb, J. M., Fadillah, F., & Ridwan, A. (2024). THE ROLE OF PRAGMATIC AWARENESS IN EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS. *VISION*, 20(2), 57–65. <https://doi.org/10.30829/VIS.V20I2.3954>
- Ishihara, N., & Cohen, A. D. (2014). Teaching and Learning Pragmatics: Where Language and Culture Meet. In *Teaching and Learning Pragmatics: Where Language and Culture Meet*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315833842>
- John W. Creswell, & Cheryl N. Poth. (2018). Creswell and Poth, 2018, Qualitative Inquiry 4t Edition. *SAGE Publication*.
- Kachru, B. B. (2005). Asian Englishes: Beyond the canon. In *Asian Englishes: Beyond The Canon*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2006.10801179>
- Kentmen, H., Debreli, E., & Yavuz, M. A. (2023). Assessing Tertiary Turkish EFL Learners' Pragmatic Competence Regarding Speech Acts and Conversational Implicatures. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 15(4).
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su15043800>
- Kibona, N., Magashi, S., & Sane, E. (2025). Mitigating face-threatening acts in ethnic languages: A case of Chindali conversations in Songwe Region, Tanzania. *African Journal of Empirical Research*, 6(3), 1041–1050.
<https://doi.org/10.51867/AJERNET.6.3.82>
- Leech, G. (2014). *The Pragmatics of Politeness*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195341386.001.0001>
- Lincoln, Y. S., Guba, E. G., & Pilotta, J. J. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 9(4). [https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(85\)90062-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(85)90062-8)
- Mahmud, M. (2018). Exploring Students' Politeness Perspectives at the State University of Makassar. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)*, 12(1), 36–43. <https://doi.org/10.11591/EDULEARN.V12I1.6926>
- Malivong, T., & Sukying, A. (2024). Unlocking pragmatic competence: The influence of intercultural communication on Thai learners during the study abroad program.

- International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 13(4), 544–557. <https://doi.org/10.55493/5019.V13I4.5250>
- Meiratnasari, A., Wijayanto, A., & Suparno, S. (2019). An analysis of Politeness Strategies in Indonesian English Textbooks. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 2(4). <https://doi.org/10.34050/els-jish.v2i4.8393>
- Mena, D. P. (2023). Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2021). Thematic analysis: a practical guide. Londres, Reino Unido: SAGE. *Revista Psicología*, 42(1–2).
- Menggo, S., Jama, K. B., Adnyani, N. L. P. S., & Krismayani, N. W. (2025). INDONESIAN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS' INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION: PROFILES AND CHALLENGES. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 28(1), 242–256. <https://doi.org/10.24071/LLT.V28I1.8670>
- Muhammad, G. (2024). BROWN AND LEVINSON'S POLITENESS STRATEGY USED TO ANSWER SENSITIVE QUESTIONS BY INDONESIAN YOUNG ADULTS. *Journal of Innovation Research and Knowledge*, 4(5), 3191–3202. <https://doi.org/10.53625/JIRK.V4I5.8761>
- Mulyono, Laksono, K., Wuryaningrum, R., & Cahyo, A. A. R. (2025). The application of politeness principles in speech acts in the 2024 presidential Election debate. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, 12(1), 2495479. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2025.2495479;PAGE:STRING:ARTICLE/CHAPTER>
- Nuzzo, E., & Brocca, N. (2024). Raising the (meta)pragmatic awareness of non-native pre-service teachers of L2 Italian with a telecollaborative data-driven learning project on formal email writing. *System*, 127, 103518. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.SYSTEM.2024.103518>
- Fuadin, A., Syihabuddin, Hidayat, M., & Mulyati, Y. (2025). Trends in Politeness Research in Indonesian Language Education Journals: A Decade of Insights (2013–2023). *Jurnal Pendidikan Progresif*, 15(1), 15–30. <https://doi.org/10.23960/JPP.V15I1.PP15-30>
- Saleh Alabdali, T. (2019). Revisiting Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory: A Middle-Eastern Perspective. *Bulletin of Advanced English Studies*, 2(2), 73–78. <https://doi.org/10.31559/baes2019.2.2.3>
- Sarila, H., Haristiani, N., & Widiyanti, S. (2023). Politeness Strategies Used by Japanese

- and Indonesian Speakers on Social Media. *Chi'e: Journal of Japanese Learning and Teaching*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.15294/chie.v11i2.74051>
- Schauer, G. A. (2019). Teaching and Learning English in the Primary School: Interlanguage Pragmatics in the EFL context. In *Springer* (Vol. 18).
- Sudewi, N. K. P. N., Suktiningsih, W., Muhlisin, M., & Widani, N. N. (2023). A Politeness Strategies in EFL Interaction of Indonesian Students and Lectures. *IdeBahasa*, 5(2), 207–218. <https://doi.org/10.37296/IDEBAHASA.V5I2.138>
- Sukmana, N., Koamriah, A., Bazarov, B., Patra, I., Hashim Alghazali, T. A., Ali Hussein Al-Khafaji, F., & Farhangi, F. (2023). Examining the Effects of Cue Cards on EFL Learners' Speaking Fluency, Accuracy, and Speaking Anxiety. *Education Research International*, 2023.
- Sumekto, D. R., Ghozali, I., Suhud, E. Y., Santoso, G. B., & Tukiyo. (2022). *Javanese Politeness Experience as Depicted in Its Speech Levels of the Transactional Communication*. <https://jurnal.ugm.ac.id/jurnal-humaniora/article/view/65058>
- Taguchi, N., & Li, S. (2021). Contrastive Pragmatics and Second Language (L2) Pragmatics: Approaches to Assessing L2 Speech Act Production. *Contrastive Pragmatics*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.1163/26660393-BJA10014>
- Triyono, S., Sahayu, W., & Yuliana, F. (2025). Politeness and impoliteness by teachers and students in technology-assisted teaching and learning process. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 15(2), 320–331. <https://doi.org/10.17509/AZNGYY22>
- Wierzbicka, A. (2020). Cross-cultural pragmatics: The semantics of human interaction. In *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: The Semantics of Human Interaction*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783112329764>
- Yang, S., Cao, W., & Li, D. (2025). A Pragmatic Study of Emojis on WeChat: from the Perspectives of FTA (face-threatening act) and Request Strategy. *Arts, Culture and Language*, 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.61173/WJ1GB131>

About Author

Baiq Septi Ayuningsih is a student of English Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia. She can be contacted at bqseptiaa21@gmail.com

Lulu Angguni is a student of English Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia. She can be contacted at luluangguniii2@gmail.com.

Suci Hamdani is a student of English Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia. She can be contacted at suciwatihamdani@gmail.com .

Putri Ayu Lestari is a student at the English Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia. She can be contacted at putriayulesstri@gmail.com .

Miftahulfadlik Dabamona is a lecturer at the English Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia. He can be contacted at miftahulfadlik@iainsorong.ac.id .

Alif Hasanah is a lecturer at the Islamic Elementary Teacher Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia. He can be contacted at alifah89.bsi@gmail.com .

Suharmoko is a lecturer at the English Education Department, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Sorong, Indonesia. He can be contacted at mokojavas83@gmail.com .