

## **Politeness in Javanese Krama Inggil: A Study of Daily Conversations in a Transmigration Community in South Sumatra**

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**Abstract:** This study examines the realization of language politeness in daily conversations using Javanese Krama Inggil in Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, East OKU Regency, South Sumatra, Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected through observation, recording, and note-taking from 27 native Javanese speakers who actively use Krama Inggil in daily interactions. The analysis employed Geoffrey Leech's six politeness maxims: tact, generosity (acceptance), praise, humility, agreement, and sympathy. Of 27 utterances analyzed, 24 (88.9%) adhered to politeness principles, while 3 (11.1%) violated them. The maxim of praise was most frequently observed (6 utterances), followed by the maxim of tact (6 utterances), maxim of generosity (5 utterances), maxim of sympathy (3 utterances), maxim of agreement (2 utterances), and maxim of humility (2 utterances). Violations occurred in the maxims of generosity, praise, humility, and sympathy. The findings indicate that the Gunung Terang community maintains a relatively high level of politeness in Javanese Krama Inggil usage, though generational and social factors contribute to occasional violations. This study contributes to the documentation of Javanese politeness practices in transmigration communities outside Java, an under-researched context. The findings have implications for language preservation efforts and intercultural communication studies.

**Keywords:** Daily Conversation, Javanese Krama Inggil, Politeness in Language

### **A. Introduction**

As a multicultural nation, Indonesia boasts a rich diversity of cultures, languages, and traditions that are a distinctive feature of the nation. This diversity is reflected in the hundreds of regional languages spoken by ethnic groups across various regions, including in the communication rules that differ from one community to another. Regional languages serve not only as a means of communication but also as a vehicle for preserving social values, norms of politeness, and the cultural identity of a community (Syam et al., 2023). Language is a communication tool used by humans to convey ideas, feelings, experiences, and information to others. Language is not just words, but also encompasses a system of symbols, sounds, and gestures understood by members of a particular community. In general, language is social, symbolic, and

conventional, making it a crucial medium in human interaction and life (Elleström, 2022; Mills, 2020).

Language serves as a means of communication between individuals. It is also used to interact with others in social contexts, both within the family and in the community. The role of language is crucial in human life (Kim, 2020). Through language, people can convey a variety of information. In addition to its use in daily life, language is essential for carrying out various human activities, such as research, counseling, and expressing ideas, views, and emotions. With language as a medium of communication, everything around us can be organized and expressed in linguistic form, enabling communication between humans. Through language, individuals can interact with one another and adapt to their social environment. Language is not merely a means of communication; it also reflects the social values, power structures, and norms of politeness that exist within a community (Mambetniyazova et al., 2024).

Among the various regional languages in Indonesia, Javanese stands out for its speech leveling system, including Ngoko, Krama Madya, and Krama Inggil, which directly represent social relations, respect, and politeness mechanisms between speakers (Djokowidodo, 2022; Setyawan et al., 2024). Krama Inggil, in particular, functions as a high-respect form often used in formal contexts, interactions with elders or those of higher social status, and during ritual or traditional occasions. In general, Javanese also represents Javanese culture, which is steeped in philosophical values, politeness, social harmony, and respect for hierarchy and custom (Mutiarra et al., 2023; Standiford, 2024). Thus, Javanese plays not only a linguistic role but also a strong social and cultural role in the lives of Javanese people. Javanese is one of the largest regional languages in Indonesia, used by the Javanese people as a primary means of communication in everyday life. In general, Javanese can be defined as a language system developed and used by the Javanese people to convey thoughts, feelings, and cultural values passed down through generations (Ramadhani et al., 2025).

Javanese serves not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for establishing ethnic identity, a tool for maintaining customs, and a reflection of the manners and social norms of its people (Aristiyanto et al., 2023). Amidst the changing times and the influence of globalization, the practice of using polite Javanese is beginning to face challenges. The younger generation tends to be more familiar with Indonesian or slang, resulting in a decline in the use of polite Javanese in everyday conversation (Puspita & Ardianto, 2024). However, polite Javanese not only represents a refined language but also reflects good manners, etiquette, and respect for others. This situation indicates a potential shift in cultural values within Javanese society if the use of this language is not maintained or preserved. Therefore, research into how the implementation of politeness in language is maintained in certain communities is highly relevant and important.

In terms of distribution, Javanese is widely spoken in Central Java, the Special Region of Yogyakarta, East Java, and various transmigration areas such as Sumatra and Kalimantan, including the East OKU Regency in South Sumatra. This widespread distribution makes Javanese one of the regional languages with the largest number of speakers in Indonesia. Javanese also plays a crucial role in education, serving not only as a means of communication but also as a means of instilling cultural values, character, and social skills (Sawitri et al., 2021; Wiraman et al., 2025). Through Javanese language learning, students are taught about language levels such as *ngoko*, *madya*, and *krama inggil*, which help them understand norms of politeness and respect for teachers and elders and adapt language to social contexts. Furthermore, Javanese can be used as a learning medium across subjects, such as history, literature, and art, allowing students to connect academic material to everyday life. Thus, learning Javanese not only improves students' language skills but also shapes character, strengthens cultural identity, and creates a harmonious learning environment and polite social interactions (Harwati & Sathian, 2024; Rohmadi et al., 2023).

Javanese is a language rich in speech acts, which are forms of utterance or language actions that have specific meanings according to social context (Rahardi et al., 2023). In Javanese, the use of speech levels such as *ngoko*, *madya*, and *krama inggil* not only indicates the social position between the speaker and the interlocutor but also reflects linguistic politeness. This is crucial in learning because through practising polite speech acts, students can understand norms of politeness, respect teachers and peers, and adapt language to social situations. Therefore, Javanese language learning, which emphasises speech acts and linguistic politeness, not only improves language skills but also shapes character, reinforces cultural values, and creates harmonious social interactions in the school and community environment. Linguistic politeness is the principle used to communicate with interlocutors by adhering to the principles of linguistic politeness (Simatupang & Naibaho, 2021). Failure to adhere to these principles will lead to mutual offence between the speaker and the interlocutor. People who do not adhere to the principles of linguistic politeness are indifferent to the politeness of their utterances. Apart from that, the principle of polite language is very important to apply in social life so that there are no disturbances, people offending each other and people being selfish.

Politeness in language can be understood as a form of language behavior that takes into account social norms, culture, the relationship between speaker and interlocutor, and the communication context, with the aim of maintaining harmonious interactions and respecting others (Eslami et al., 2023). Politeness in language goes beyond simply choosing "polite" words; it also concerns how messages are encoded and received in specific social conditions, including social distance, status, power, and the communication situation. Communication is the process of conveying information, ideas, feelings, or messages from one party to another with the goal of achieving mutual understanding. Communication occurs not only through words or spoken

language but also through nonverbal language, writing, images, symbols, gestures, or other media. The communication process is one of the most important aspects of human life because through communication, humans can build social relationships, express ideas, and influence the behavior and thinking of others.

Communication is the process of conveying information from one party to another. According to Sianturi & Megasari (2023), communication is the process of conveying messages, ideas, or concepts from one party to another so that they influence each other. The use of language to communicate within a society, particularly in applying the principles of politeness, varies. These differences occur within the culture and society of the language user, in different social situations, and within different social classes. This demonstrates that a person's deeply ingrained culture influences their language patterns. Therefore, we must learn cultural norms before or simultaneously with learning a language. Because language procedures that adhere to cultural norms will result in politeness. Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, East Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, South Sumatra Province, is a demographically and culturally distinctive rural community located on the banks of the Komering River and boasting a strong local history and community structure (the village was founded in the late 1970s, according to local documents). Gunung Terang Village has 1,227 households. Within Gunung Terang Village is a hamlet called Hamlet V Sungai Gunung.

In this study, the researchers conducted research in Hamlet V Sungai Gurung, where they reside. Hamlet V Sungai Gurung has 700 households and four neighborhood associations. I conducted the research in Hamlet V Rahayu. The percentage of Javanese krama inggil (high Javanese) spoken in Gunung Terang Village is 50%, as the other 50% of the community uses Javanese ngoko (low Javanese) for daily communication. Typically, people use Javanese krama inggil (low Javanese) when speaking with elders or those they are not familiar with. The language used in Gunung Terang Village, Masang Suku I District, East OKU Regency, is a regional language. Regional languages are languages used to communicate within tribal areas. The regional language used in Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, East OKU Regency is Javanese because the majority of the population in this area are immigrants from Java Island who were spread through transmigration. Therefore, the language used by the people of Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, Musi Regency, East OKU, is Javanese. The function of regional languages in Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, East OKU Regency is the same as the function of other regional languages, namely as a means of communication both with family and society, as a regional identity, and as a means of connecting for socializing. In addition, Javanese also functions for traditional events such as weddings.

Javanese in Gunung Terang Kencana, Madang Suku I sub-district, East OKU Regency, is the mother tongue (first language) of the Javanese community in the area. In this area, researchers heard that the languages used by residents for daily communication with their elders or parents are varieties of ngoko Javanese (Javanese used for

communicating with peers) and krama inggil Javanese (Javanese used for communicating with elders). Krama inggil Javanese is considered polite. This is evident in its politeness, as it sounds refined and not as harsh as ngoko Javanese. Not all Javanese people can speak this language, as it is considered a relatively difficult language, especially for those born and raised in transmigration areas. Therefore, the author attempted to conduct research on the principles of politeness in the language of the Gunung Terang Village community in Madang Suku I sub-district, East OKU Regency, with a Javanese Krama Inggil background. The author wanted to observe how the Gunung Terang Village community, Madang Suku I sub-district, East OKU Regency, adheres to the principles of politeness in language.

In this research, the author is interested in the Gunung Terang Village community because in their daily activities, they interact directly with other people. Naturally, they have different character backgrounds because the Gunung Terang Village community is located in several transmigration areas, including Central Java and East Java. Based on the explanation above, the reasons for conducting this research in Gunung Terang Village, Madang Subdistrict, East OKU Regency are (1) the author wanted to determine whether the language used by the people of Gunung Terang Village demonstrates the principles of politeness or whether there are still problems in the use of politeness principles; and (2) research on politeness in language has never been conducted in Gunung Terang Village, Madang Subdistrict, East OKU Regency. Studies on politeness in language have been conducted by many previous researchers, both from a pragmatic and sociolinguistic perspective.

Most of these studies focus on Brown and Levinson's politeness principles or Leech's politeness maxims, focusing on speeches in educational settings, mass media, literary works, or formal interactions such as speeches and official meetings. These studies generally focus on theoretical analysis of politeness strategies without delving deeply into the implementation of politeness in everyday communication practices. Furthermore, previous research examining Javanese tends to focus on comparing speech levels (ngoko, krama, krama inggil) or on the phenomenon of Javanese language shift and maintenance in Central and East Java. These studies emphasize structural or sociological aspects of language, such as language shift, language attitudes, and domains of Javanese language use, rather than the contextual implementation of politeness in everyday interactions (Purnomo, 2025; Rohmadi et al., 2023). Unlike previous studies, this study specifically focuses on the implementation of politeness in everyday conversations using krama inggil Javanese, which occurs naturally within the community. This research not only identifies forms of politeness but also analyzes how this politeness is realized through speech choices, social contexts, and relationships between speakers in the daily lives of village communities.

Another difference that emphasizes the novelty of this research lies in the research location: Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, East OKU Regency, which

is geographically located outside the core Javanese cultural area. This region is a transmigration area where Javanese culture meets local culture. This situation allows for the emergence of characteristics of krama inggil Javanese language use that differ from those of Javanese communities in their areas of origin. To date, studies of politeness in krama inggil Javanese in transmigration areas, particularly in East OKU Regency, are still very limited. Thus, this study differs significantly from previous research, both in terms of the object of study, the context of language use, and the research location. This research not only contributes to enriching sociopragmatic studies on politeness but also provides an empirical overview of the realization of Javanese krama inggil politeness in the lives of Javanese transmigrants. The results of this study are expected to serve as an academic reference in the study of politeness and as an effort to document and maintain the values of Javanese cultural politeness amidst the social dynamics of a multicultural society.

## **B. Methods**

This type of research is qualitative research using descriptive methods. The data is described in the form of words or sentences by describing the daily speech or conversations of the people of Gunung Terang Village. The research was conducted in Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, East OKU Regency for two months. This research will describe the speech spoken by the people of Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, East OKU Regency. The data source used in this research is the people of Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, East OKU Regency. The respondents of this research numbered 27 people, who are native speakers who use Javanese Krama Inggil. The data collection techniques used in this research are observation, recording and note-taking. The data validity test in this research was carried out through triangulation techniques. The data analysis technique used in this research is the intralingual equivalent analysis technique. The intralingual equivalent analysis technique (comparative relationship) is used to analyze the principles of politeness between speakers and interlocutors and as a means of analyzing the use of each maxim in the speech of the people of Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, East OKU Regency.

The steps in analyzing intralingual equivalent data that the author conducted in this study were:

1. Recording data in the form of speech acts by the people of Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, East OKU Regency.
2. Converting the recorded data into written text, namely data recorded during conversations by the people of Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, East OKU Regency.
3. Translating the data into Indonesian, as the language used in the conversations was a regional language.

4. Identifying the speech acts or utterances of the people of Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, East OKU Regency, for each maxim of politeness.
5. Classifying the data based on the maxim of tact, maxim of generosity, maxim of praise, maxim of humility, maxim of agreement, and maxim of sympathy. Analyze and describe the speech acts or utterances using the lingual equivalent method (comparative relations) and then drawing conclusions from the data obtained.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

Language is a means of communication between humans in social life, consisting of spoken sounds produced by the human vocal tract. Language is also a tool or means for individuals to learn, not just in school but also in the community, such as learning to socialize, understanding the etiquette of speaking, and learning how to respect others through polite language (Tarnopolsky et al., 2021). Javanese is the language used daily, and it can be called a mother tongue. Javanese has a communicative function, serving as a means of introducing noble values and good manners. The language used by the people of Gunung Terang Village is Javanese. In Gunung Terang Village, the community uses two language groups: Ngoko Javanese and Krama Inggil Javanese. Ngoko Javanese is used with peers or familiar people, while Krama Inggil Javanese is used with elders or those of a higher rank.

Politeness is one aspect of language that can enhance the speaker's emotional intelligence because in communication, the speaker and the interlocutor are not only required to convey the truth but also to remain committed to maintaining harmonious relationships. Based on the explanation above, I conducted a study on politeness in Gunung Terang Village, using the Javanese Krama Inggil language as a background. This study aimed to determine whether the language used in Gunung Terang Village is polite. Based on the results of the study of "The Speech of the Gunung Terang Village Community," it was found that there were forms of application and violations of the principles of politeness, as proposed by Leech, which consist of six maxims: the maxim of tact, the maxim of acceptance (generosity), the maxim of praise, the maxim of humility, the maxim of agreement, and the maxim of sympathy.

In communication, speakers and interlocutors both recognize that there are rules governing their actions and language. Each participant is responsible for any actions or violations related to linguistic rules in communicating with one another. Communication will proceed smoothly if there is a shared perspective regarding the meaning of the discussion. Violations of the principles of politeness occur due to antipathy between the speaker and the interlocutor. This antipathy stems from the lack of concern for others in most communities. Furthermore, violations of the principles of politeness occur because speakers prioritize maximizing their own benefit over the benefit of others. Because of this unwillingness to harm themselves,

they prefer to harm others. The author's research findings indicate that the principles of politeness in spoken language among the people of Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, East OKU Regency, are categorized as polite.

Because during the research, the author recorded, noted, and analyzed the speech of the people of Gunung Terang Village, and then the data was processed from the recapitulation table; it was found that there were applications and violations that occurred against the six maxims in the principle of politeness. However, it can be seen that the application of the principle of politeness occurred more than the violations, meaning that the principle of politeness in the language of the people of Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku I District, Musi OKU Timur Regency, is polite. Based on Halimah's research (2015), it shows that in employee speech there are 7 utterances, namely 6 polite utterances and 1 impolite or violating utterance, so it does not comply with the principle of politeness (Halimah, 2015). The similarity of this research with the research that I will review is that both analyse language politeness and both use Geoffrey Leech's theory of language politeness, while the difference lies in the object of research. Halimah's research also only focuses on a cooperative work environment, while my research focuses on a broader contextual analysis. I not only identify violations but also analyse the forms of politeness shifts, social factors that influence the use of Krama Inggil Java, and patterns of language use between generations.

A similar study by Anggraini (2020) entitled "Politeness in Spoken Language of Air Limau Village Officials, Muntok District, Regency" resulted in 5 polite utterances, thus complying with the principles of politeness, and one impolite utterance, violating the principles of politeness. The similarity between Riska's research and this research is that both examine politeness in language and also use the same theory, namely Geoffrey Leech's theory of politeness in language. In addition, there are similarities in the research method, namely, using descriptive qualitative research. The difference is in studying the speech of village officials with the context of location, bureaucracy, and semi-formal/formal relationships. This research focuses on a more contextual analysis, namely, not only identifying compliance and violations but also the form of realization of politeness and social factors that influence the use of the krama inggil language.

Based on Perdi's (2015) research, "Principles of Linguistic Politeness in Buying and Selling Interactions at Sebokor Market, KM 18, Air Kumbang District, Banyuasin Regency," it was found that there were 13 utterances or utterances used by sellers and buyers. Of these, eight were polite and five were impolite or violated. These studies both examined linguistic politeness and employed descriptive qualitative research methods, namely observation, recording, and analysis based on adherence to and violations of politeness principles. The difference lies in the object of study: Ferdi's study examined the principles of linguistic politeness, while I examined the implementation of linguistic politeness. Another study by Devi (2022) entitled "The Principles of Politeness in the Conversation of the Millennial Ustad Film" shows the

results of the study that in the millennial ustad film for the category of politeness principles, namely, the maxim of wisdom/wisdom 6, the maxim of praise 10, the maxim of humility 10, the maxim of generosity 9, and the maxim of sympathy 7, there are 44 utterances of compliance with the principles of politeness in language. The similarities are research on politeness of language, similarities in the theory of politeness of language by Geoffrey Leech, and descriptive qualitative research methods. The difference lies in the object. Sridevi's research object is a film, so the speech is a scenario construction rather than the natural speech of the community. This research is considered natural because its focus is on the community of Gunung Terang Village, Madang Suku 1 District, East Oku Regency.

This study is limited to a single village and 27 participants, which limits generalizability. The presence of the researcher during recording may have influenced natural speech (observer's paradox). The study did not analyze generational differences in Krama Inggil use.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This study examined the realization of language politeness in daily conversations using Javanese Krama Inggil in Gunung Terang Village, East OKU Regency, Indonesia. Three main conclusions emerge. First, of 27 utterances analyzed using Leech's six politeness maxims, 24 (88.9%) adhered to politeness principles, while 3 (11.1%) violated them. This indicates that the Gunung Terang community maintains a relatively high level of politeness in Krama Inggil usage. Second, the maxims of tact (6 utterances), praise (6 utterances), and generosity (5 utterances) were most frequently observed, reflecting the community's emphasis on respect, positive evaluation of others, and mutual benefit in social interactions. Third, violations occurred primarily in contexts of interpersonal conflict or perceived urgency, suggesting that politeness may be reduced when speakers experience competing demands or emotional stress. This study provides empirical support for Leech's politeness framework in a Javanese transmigration community context, demonstrating that the six maxims are applicable beyond core Javanese cultural areas. Language preservation efforts should emphasize Krama Inggil training for younger generations, as 50% of the community reportedly uses ngoko (low Javanese) daily. Community-based language programs could focus on the most frequent maxims (tact, praise, generosity) as entry points for politeness education. Single-village study; small sample size; observer's paradox. Comparative studies across multiple transmigration villages; generational analysis of Krama Inggil proficiency; experimental studies testing the effectiveness of politeness training interventions.

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