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Comparing Politeness in Australian and Indonesian Students: A Cross-Cultural Perspective in Academic Interaction

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Abstract

Language politeness reflects both communicative intent and cultural norms embedded in daily interaction. While intercultural pragmatics often views politeness uniformly, this study compares how Indonesian and Australian university students apply politeness strategies in academic settings. Using a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) with sixteen participants (eight from each group), the research analyzes responses to simulated interactions with peers, lecturers, and staff. Australian students predominantly used negative politeness, emphasizing autonomy and minimizing imposition. Indonesian students employed a wider range of strategies, combining positive and negative politeness aligned with collectivist values and diglossic language use. Cultural markers such as religious greetings and deferential terms were common among Indonesian participants, while Australians relied on hedging and indirectness. The study concludes that politeness is culturally shaped and context-dependent. These findings underscore the need for cultural awareness in academic communication and suggest future research should include spoken data and broader samples to examine multilingual and digital influences.

Keywords: Politeness, culture, students, university, pragmatics

1. Introduction

The origin culture of students strongly influences their communication within the university environment. This influence can be observed in various types of interactions, including communication between students and their peers, students and lecturers, as well as with university staff. Several leading universities in Indonesia have recognized the importance of polite communication by issuing regulations on appropriate student–lecturer interaction (Dorrance Hall et al. 2017; Wartoyo 2019), highlighting politeness as a critical communicative competence that must be mastered by university students. Maintaining politeness is not limited to classroom

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settings but extends to everyday academic life, indicating the need for students to sustain polite behavior in both formal and informal contexts.

Although its role has been noted, student politeness in university communication is an under-researched area (Febriadina et al. 2018; Mahmud 2018; Rahmi 2020). Few studies have carried out research on this field from a cross-cultural point of view (Kerkam 2015; Idemaru et al. 2019; Jakučionytė 2020; Thoyib et al. 2025), with research comparing Indonesian and Australian students particularly still in its infancy. With the exception of Jones and Adrefiza (2017), no research at all has directly compared these two groups on politeness strategies. This gap highlights the need for comparative studies that examine how students from different cultural backgrounds manage politeness in academic interaction. By addressing this gap, the present study offers an original contribution to cross-cultural pragmatics by comparatively studying Australian and Indonesian students in a systematic framework. Filling this void, the present work undertakes a study of student communication through role by adopting an online Discourse Completion Task (DCT) in data collection, differing methodologically from previous work.

Thus, this study aims to investigate how Indonesian and Australian speakers employ politeness in conversations at the university level. It investigates students' strategic options from both groups and analyzes how both social distance and status condition these options. By adopting this comparative perspective, this study seeks to discover how both cultural groups handle face in everyday interaction, adding to intercultural communication and pragmatics studies more generally. More particularly, this research answers: How do Australian and Indonesian students use politeness strategies to conduct themselves in interaction at the university level?

The two cultures under examination are expected to reveal both differences and similarities in the application of politeness. It has been established by previous cross-cultural research that culture influences linguistic conduct. For example, Ervas and Schnell (2024) noted that speakers from native cultures such as England tend to speak less directly compared to speakers from collectivist cultures, with a tendency toward indirect approaches. This difference is noted in Australian students' use of on-record approaches, as Indonesian students use off-record strategies, as theoretically explicated by Ambady et al. (1996). Moreover, Indonesia's diglossic environment, with its distinct formal and informal variety differentiation, predisposes students to use positive politeness strategies more than negative ones (Zainuddin & Yaqin, 2024). In contrast, relatively less differentiation in formality in Australian English may predispose students toward greater use of negative politeness (Gervasio & Humphrey, 2019).

In the context of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model, positive politeness strategies are those that emphasize solidarity, shared membership, and approval, such as the use of inclusive pronouns, jokes, or expressions of closeness. Negative politeness strategies, on the other hand, work at downtoning imposition, maintaining distance, and exhibiting respect for the interlocutor’s autonomy, typically through hedging, indirect speech, or deferential forms. Including both in cross-cultural analysis allows us to find out why there’s dominance of certain strategies in either of the groups over the other (Yergazy & Denisenko 2024). Above all, Brown and Levinson’s (1987) work ties in politeness and the idea of face, or public self-image, and the predisposition of participants to desire maintaining self-image in interaction. Politeness, then, in their view, is a transcend-cultural phenomenon, since

speakers will need to express respect for others' expectations of self-image, observe their feelings, and try and avoid face-threatening acts (FTAs) whenever possible (Sifianou, 2010). If FTAs cannot be avoided, the speaker will employ redressive strategies: negative politeness in order to ratify autonomy and freedom from imposition, or positive politeness in order to engender solidarity, approval, and in-group membership.

Building on this foundation, an understanding of politeness as a phenomenon is required before examining how it exists in cultures. Language politeness is understood in a broad sense as involving strategies used in speech to avoid offense and preserve harmony in society. This includes safeguarding interlocutors' faces, or public selves, while interacting (Brown, 2015; Miller-Ott & Alvarez, 2021). Brown and Levinson's theory, much employed, divides politeness into positive strategies aiming at closeness and approval and negative strategies attempting to minimize imposition (Onursal Ayirir, 2020). Politeness is not only a linguistic device but also an expression of culture and communication norms, as Fan et al. (2015) and Izadi (2022) have shown. Terada et al. (2021) conceptualize politeness as part of an expanded communication arsenal employed to conduct interpersonal relations management, while Miller-Ott and Alvarez (2021) highlight politeness as an interactive negotiation of faces in day-to-day conversation.

This theoretical underpinning relates strongly to the socio-cultural aspects of politeness. Language politeness is not a vacuum phenomenon but reflects on a society's values and structure. In most traditional societies, politeness is coupled with values such as tact, generosity, modesty, and deference (Osman & Wahab, 2018). Hassan et al. (2020) identifies how, in Malaysia, such values influence norms for formal communication, with students, particularly females, exhibiting higher politeness levels. Such evidence highlights how politeness strategies also depend on gender roles, institutional norms, and religious or cultural values. In academic environments, studies have established how making students aware of politeness norms enhances students' pragmatic competence and communication anxiety reduction (Bae, 2019; Marantika et al., 2020). Politeness is thus not merely a pragmatic skill but a culturally situated practice that fosters mutual intelligibility and maintains relational harmony in academic communities.

The use of this framework is also supported by Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, on which this research is theoretically founded. Brown and Levinson lay stress on how politeness is critical to maintaining social relations and introduced FTAs, as well as strategies to soften them. Brown and Levinson's categorization of negative politeness as affirming independence and positive politeness as pursuing closeness gives an insightful angle from which to analyze how students across cultures utilize language to navigate academic communication (Cutting & Fordyce 2021).

Lastly, since the use of language encompasses a broad spectrum of features such as vocabulary, grammar, intonation, and style, it also captures deeper layers of status, identity, and affiliation to cultures (Halibanon & Setiawan, 2020). Even in multilingual settings, these traits take on form as a result of policy and institutional practices, influencing the manner in which individuals switch or adapt communications (Horvat et al. 2017). For Joseph (2006) and Handono (2018), not only social status is conveyed through language but also it helps individuals

position themselves in cultural arrangements. According to Jahan and Hamid (2019), language also helps reinforce some individuals' interests, often not explicitly in the case of power arrangements. Situating this research within Brown and Levinson's theoretical framework, and focusing on both positive and negative politeness strategies, allows this study to contribute to a clearer understanding of how culture conditions politeness in academic life. Its major contribution is the direct intergroup comparison between Australian and Indonesian students, a pairing not typically utilized in the preceding work, and hence developing the theoretical and application understanding of intercultural pragmatics at large. From these analyses of theory and situation, the research then delves into the ways in which Australian and Indonesian students deliver politeness in academic interactions, and advances general understanding in intercultural practice of communication.

2. Methods

This study applied the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) as a qualitative method, originally coined by Blum-Kulka in 1982, to explore forms of politeness strategies and analyze cross-cultural pragmatic values. The data, collected from participants' responses to the DCT, was analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach. The study utilized purposive sampling to select participants, focusing on college students. Social factors such as Social Status (SS) and Social Distance (SD) were considered in the selection process due to their relevance to the DCT method. Participants were chosen to represent two distinct cultural groups: Indonesian native speakers and Australian native English speakers. Javanese students were selected to represent Indonesians because Standard Indonesian has been historically shaped by Javanese linguistic structures and cultural norms (Poedjosoedarmo, 1982). Each cultural group comprised eight students, ensuring equal representation.

The data collection was carried out in two phases. Firstly, questionnaires were prepared in line with everyday dialogue used by students at a university and how they engage with others in campus environments. The participants provided answers to these questionnaires based on everyday encounters. Secondly, a DCT was given to participants, and they performed the tasks in the local language. After obtaining the DCT answers, the researchers classified each utterance according to Brown and Levinson's (1987) framework of politeness strategies. Positive politeness was coded when utterances emphasized solidarity, closeness, or in-group membership, such as the use of inclusive pronouns, humor, casual tones, or religious greetings like *Assalamualaikum* (Ayirir 2020; Sudar et al. 2025). Negative politeness was coded when utterances minimized imposition, maintained distance, or affirmed autonomy, often realized through hedging, indirect phrasing, or the use of honorifics such as *Pak/Bu – Sir/Madam* (Banat et al. 2024). Off-record politeness was coded when utterances relied on indirect hints, ambiguity, or sarcasm that left interpretation to the hearer (Zhou & Zhang 2022; Aporbo et al. 2024). Finally, bald on-record was coded when utterances were direct and unmitigated, expressed without any redressive devices (Wijayanto et al. 2013). Next, each statement was tabulated into a politeness strategy table, and descriptive statistics provided frequency counts and percentages of each strategy. Data were entered and tabulated so distribution between scenarios would be apparent, and the mean and mode computed in order to determine the most typical strategies.

The methodology employed was suitable for uncovering differences in politeness strategies across cultures among students at the university level. Any unconventional methods were justified by their effectiveness in capturing the required data. Moreover, procedures were implemented for protecting participants' answers from future disclosure and for maintaining confidentiality with regard to participants' personal data, thus eliminating any ethical concerns over its collection. Through this in-depth and transparent method, this research aims to provide valid and replicable information on the politeness strategies employed by Indonesian and Australian university students.

3. Findings

3.1 Politeness Strategies Among Australian Students

The examination of politeness strategies employed by Australian students had a high rate of negative politeness, at 87.2 percent across all recorded uses (41 out of 47 turns). The strategy was deployed uniformly in all six interactive situations, ranging from requests made to lecturers, peer talk, and interactions with staff in a university setting. The defining features of negative politeness strategies are indirectness, hedging, and minimization of imposition, in line with Australia's cultural promotion of individual autonomy, egalitarianism, and avoiding confrontations.

Off-record strategies were also used next most frequently, at 12.8 percent frequency (6 uses). The off-record strategies generally involved indirect clues or ambiguous talk that enabled the addressee to deduce what was meant by doing this, thus minimizing the threat against face. The employment of off-record politeness reflects an added degree of prudence, particularly when directness is likely to be out of place or may come on as over-assertive.

Interestingly, no instances of positive politeness were recorded in the data. This absence suggests that Australian students, in this study, did not typically employ strategies that emphasized solidarity, familiarity, or mutual involvement. Rather than appealing to shared identity or emotional closeness, Australian students preferred to maintain respectful distance and highlight personal boundaries in their communication.

The detailed distribution of strategies across six scenarios is shown in Table 1. Negative politeness was used consistently and dominantly in every scenario, ranging from 4 to 8 instances per context. Off-record politeness appeared more sporadically, while bald on-record and positive politeness were entirely absent.

Table 1: Number of politeness strategies used by Australian students

Kind of Politeness		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**Total**	**%**
Off-Record		1	-	1	-	-	4	6	12.8%
Bald On-Record	Positive	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0 %
	Negative	7	8	7	7	8	4	41	87.2%
Total		8	8	8	7	8	8	47	100%

3.2 Politeness Strategies Among Indonesian Students

In contrast to their Australian counterparts, Indonesian students demonstrated a more diverse range of politeness strategies across different communicative situations. The most frequently used strategy was negative

politeness, comprising 69.6 percent of all recorded utterances (32 out of 46). Negative politeness in the Indonesian context is often marked by expressions of deference, indirectness, formal address terms such as Pak or Bu (Sir or Madam), and hedging techniques aimed at minimizing imposition while preserving hierarchical relationships. These patterns reflect deep-rooted cultural values such as andhap asor (humility) and social deference to authority figures.

Positive politeness was also in evidence, appearing in 19.6 percent of the data (9 examples). Indonesian students, in contrast to Australian students, often used relational strategies of solidarity, shared membership, and emotional closeness. These involved the use of inclusive pronouns, casual tones, humour, and appeals to group membership or mutual understanding. The prevalence of positive politeness also reflects the collectivist ideology of Indonesian culture, in which the maintenance of harmonious interpersonal relations ranks as highly as the expression of respect.

Off-record strategies appeared in 10.8 percent of the instances (5 out of 46), primarily in situations where indirectness served to soften criticism or address sensitive topics. Although less dominant, their use indicates an awareness of face threats and an attempt to preserve interpersonal harmony through subtlety and implication rather than direct confrontation.

The distribution of politeness strategies across six communicative scenarios is detailed in Table 2. Negative politeness was the dominant strategy in most contexts, particularly in formal and request-based situations. Positive politeness was heavily used in the third scenario, which likely involved more peer-centered or emotionally expressive interactions. Off-record strategies appeared exclusively in the fourth scenario, suggesting their strategic use in specific contexts such as giving indirect advice or managing face-sensitive issues.

Table 2: Number of politeness strategies used by Indonesian students

Kind of Politeness		**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**Total**	**%**
Off-Record		-	-	-	5	-	-	5	10.8%
Bald On-Record	Positive	-	-	7	-	1	1	9	19.6%
	Negative	8	8	1	3	7	5	32	69.6%
Total		8	8	8	8	8	6	46	100%

3.3 Interactions with Lecturers

In academic contexts where students disagreed with lecturers, Australian students used consistently negative politeness strategies designed to assert the lecturer's autonomy and minimize the potential for confrontation. Sentences like *"I have another idea, but would you mind hearing it?"*, *"I see what you're doing there, but have we thought about"*, and *"I understand where you're coming from, but have you considered…"* illustrate high degrees of linguistic mitigation. Other instances such as *"Although I see it in your perspective, I would like to vocalize my point of view, if you are willing to listen?"* and *"I see your point of view on this, but I have a different perspective. If you would like I could tell you it and then we can discuss a middle ground?"* further highlight the indirectness typical of Australian discourse. Such statements function as hedges, indirectly alerting to disagreement while protecting the lecturer's positive face. This use of polite strategies indicates the individualist cultural direction

of Australia, in which the assertion of personal boundaries and the avoidance of face-threatening acts are paramount (Scott et al. 2004; Park et al. 2012).

In contrast, Indonesian students used a mixture of negative and positive politeness strategies, indicating a more relation-oriented approach. Utterances like *"Pak/Bu saya mempunyai pandangan yang berbeda, bagaimana jika kedua ide ini kita jadikan satu?"* (*Sir/Madam, I have a different opinion, how about we combine the two ideas?*) and *"Menurut pendapat saya seperti ini Pak/Bu. Sebaiknya bagaimana ya?"* (*In my opinion, it is like that, Sir/Madam. How about it?*) combine deference and inclusiveness. Other examples reinforce this tendency: *"Permisi pak, kalau boleh saya memberikan saran…"* (*Excuse me, Sir, may I give a suggestion?*), *"Maaf pak/bu, saya ingin memberikan perspektif yang berbeda. Bolehkah?"* (*Sorry Sir/Madam, I would like to give a different perspective. May I?*), and *"Bagaimana menurut bapak apakah ide saya ini baik untuk dilanjutkan?"* (*What do you think, Sir, is my idea good to be continued?*) all demonstrate careful balancing of disagreement with respect. These strategies reflect the principle of *musyawarah* (consensual deliberation) and *andhap asor* (humility), central to Indonesian communicative norms. This is in line with Anggita and Hatori's (2020) view that *musyawarah mufakat* functions as a traditional consensus-building mechanism in Indonesian society, emphasizing collective harmony over individual preference, and with Sukarno's (2015) argument that *andhap asor* constitutes a key politeness strategy in Javanese communication, where humility and respect are expressed through linguistic choices.

In situations where lecturers appeared to need help, cultural contrasts were again evident. Australians frequently used simple offers of assistance framed negatively, such as *"Do you need a hand?"*, *"Do you need some help?"*, *"Would you like some help?"*, or *"Did you need any assistance with that at all?"*. These utterances signal readiness but keep agency with the lecturer. Indonesians, however, often layered their offers with honorifics and contextual support, such as *"Pak/Bu ada yang bisa saya bantu?"* (*Sir/Madam, is there anything I can help with?*), *"Permisi pak, apakah ada masalah? Dapatkah saya membantu Anda?"* (*Excuse me Sir, is there a problem? May I help you?*), or *"Sebentar bu/pak saya tanyakan ke teman-teman apakah ada yang bisa membantu memperbaiki."* (*Wait a moment Sir/Madam, I will ask my friends if someone can help fix it.*). In some cases, Indonesian students did not address the lecturer directly but mobilized peers instead, e.g., *"Guys, yang laki-laki itu lo bantuin!"* (*Guys, the boys should help him/her!*). This demonstrates a collectivist approach to problem-solving rather than individual initiative, which is consistent with Ibrahim's (2019) view that Indonesian communication is typically high-context and depends on shared group understanding, and also reflects Jeng's (2024) argument that collectivist orientations encourage students to rely on peer involvement in academic interactions rather than acting individually.

During the negotiation of assignment extensions, these contrasts became even clearer. Australian students typically made deferential but concise requests such as *"Could ___ and I please get an extension on this assignment?"*, *"Hi, I've been absolutely under the pump and understand it's the due day, but I believe a short extension would help me…"*, and *"Good morning Mr/Mrs, I am extremely sorry but I have not completed the assignment due to personal reasons… is there any chance I can have an extension?"*. These utterances frame the lecturer as the authority while presenting the request as a burden that needs softening.

Indonesian students, by contrast, combined apology, justification, and deference. Examples include *"Pak/Bu, minta perpanjangan waktu karena tugas saya dibawa teman saya dan ketinggalan."* (*Sir/Madam, may I ask for an extension because my assignment was taken by my friend and got left behind.*), *"Bu, saya nama dari kelas A5, sebelumnya saya mau minta maaf bu… apakah kami masih bisa mengumpulkan tugasnya di luar deadline?"* (*Madam, I am from class A5, first I would like to apologize… is it still possible to submit it after the deadline?*), and *"Assalamualaikum, permisi Pak maaf mengganggu, saya berniat meminta perpanjangan waktu pengumpulan tugas minggu lalu…"* (*Peace be upon you, excuse me Sir, sorry to disturb you, I would like to ask for an extension for last week's assignment…*). Others layered more cultural elements, such as *"Pak, mengumpulkan tugasnya minggu depan saja ya pak? Karena kita abis banyak kegiatan minggu ini."* (*Sir, can we submit the assignment next week instead? Because we had many activities this week.*) or *"Permisi pak, saya dan teman saya belum menyelesaikan tugasnya… mungkinkah jika kita meminta perpanjangan tugas kita? Saya pikir kita bisa menyelesaikannya besok."* (*Excuse me Sir, my friend and I have not finished the assignment… would it be possible to ask for an extension? I think we can finish it tomorrow.*). These utterances not only stress apology but also invoke collective responsibility, humility, and reassurance, which aligns with Wouk's (2006) findings that Indonesians frequently combine apology with justification, and with Jones and Adrefiza's (2017) observation that Bahasa Indonesia speakers tend to be less direct and more deferential compared to Australian English speakers.

Taken together, these patterns unveil deeper cultural logics: Australian students prefer autonomy and non-imposition, reflecting egalitarianism and an individualist orientation, while Indonesian students combine negative politeness with relational repair through honorifics, religious greetings, and appeals to solidarity, reflecting collectivism and hierarchical respect. Both groups use negative politeness, but the way it is embedded differs according to their socio-cultural schemata.

3.4 Peer-to-Peer Interactions

In peer-to-peer interactions where students hold equal status, the politeness strategies used by Australian and Indonesian students reveal different cultural orientations. Australian students mainly relied on negative politeness, even in informal settings, to respect autonomy and avoid intrusion. Typical requests included *"Excuse me, could you mind moving over a little bit?"* and *"Excuse me? Are you able to move aside, please? Only for a short time, thank you."* Additional instances from our data such as *"Hi, excuse me, would you mind shifting that way just a touch, I'm just trying to get the notes off the whiteboard," "Sorry, excuse me, do you mind moving over a little bit please?"*, and *"Hey sorry, excuse me. Would you be able to move slightly, as I can't see the whiteboard?"* further illustrate hedging, apology, and softeners as default peer-to-peer resources. This pattern resonates with Izadi's (2013) observation that negative politeness strategies often serve to minimize intrusion and preserve the interlocutor's autonomy, and with Wijayanto et al.'s (2013) finding that Indonesian learners, by contrast, tend to incorporate more positive politeness elements such as inclusiveness and solidarity markers.

By contrast, Indonesian students more often used positive politeness to foreground solidarity, in-group membership, and closeness. Examples include *"Minggir dong, kuliah sama-sama bayar nih"* (Move over, we both

pay the same tuition fee, you know) and *"Bro, kamu ngehalangin papan tulis. Bisa minggir sedikit? Aku mau mencatat materi di papan tulis"* (Bro, you're blocking the board. Can you move a little? I want to copy the notes). Further peer examples show playful teasing and direct imperatives framed as camaraderie, such as *"Hey minggir, kamu mau jadi model apa berdiri di depan situ? Aku mau nyatet jangan ditutupin!"* (Hey move aside, are you trying to be a model standing there? I want to take notes, don't block it!), *"Hey minggir! Gak keliatan!"* (Hey, move! I can't see!), *"Hey minggir dong, hey kepalamu itu menutupi papan!"* (Hey move aside, your head is blocking the board!), and *"He geser dong, gak kelihatan nih…"* (Hey slide over, I can't see). Even when softened, the appeal is framed via shared goals, as in *"Hai bro… Bisakah kamu bergerak sedikit ke kiri?… Terima kasih"* (Hi bro, could you move a little to the left? Thanks). This finding corresponds with Sudar et al. (2025), who observed that Indonesian students often rely on positive politeness strategies such as greetings, humor, and solidarity markers in academic interactions, and with Mulyono et al. (2019), who demonstrated that in digital communication with lecturers, students continue to foreground respect and closeness through positive politeness expressions.

When addressing peers who were smoking in the wrong place, Australians tended to mitigate through indirect suggestions and appeals to choose. For example, students said, *"Hey, after this smoke, could you please not have another one?"*, *"Hi, if it is possible, can you please not smoke here during the meeting. It is your decision if you want to smoke but it is making a few people uncomfortable."* Other Australian examples include *"Excuse me [name], would you mind going outside to smoke, or even waiting until the meeting is over?"*, *"Sorry, are you able to wait until after the meeting has finished…?"*, *"Hey mate, sorry but could you not light up during the meeting…?"*, and *"Just reminding you that you are not allowed to smoke on the premises."* These utterances combined apology, permission-seeking, and reminders of rules to minimize imposition. This tendency corresponds with broader public health communication in Australia, which emphasizes community-based and non-confrontational strategies to regulate smoking (Chamberlain et al. 2017; Williams & Allan 2019).

Indonesian peers often used sarcasm, humor, or collective-welfare framing: *"Kamu boleh merokok, asal asapnya kamu hirup sendiri."* (*You can smoke, as long as you inhale the smoke yourself.*) and *"Dengar, dokter spesialis paru mahal ya?… Tolong dong yang peka…"* (*Listen, pulmonologists are expensive… Please be considerate…*). Additional realizations include empathy-based requests and performative cues: *"Mohon maaf saya mempunyai penyakit asma, apakah kamu bisa merokok di luar saja?"* (*Sorry, I have asthma; could you smoke outside?*), *"(Pura-pura batuk), Aduh asapnya bau banget!"* (*[Pretends to cough] Gosh, the smoke really smells!*), *"Sorry nih… kalau misal ngerokoknya jangan pada saat rapat berlangsung gimana?"* (*Sorry, what if you don't smoke during the meeting?*), *"Wah, udara di sini terkena polusi asap rokok ya… lebih baik kalau asapnya nggak ada."* (*Wow, the air here is polluted by cigarette smoke… better if there's no smoke.*), dan *"Permisi mas, bisa kasih tahu apa yang ada di layar?… karena ada asap yang menutupi layar."* (*Excuse me, could you tell me what's on the screen?… the smoke is blocking the view.*). These forms leverage joking, indirect criticism, and appeals to group comfort, which correspond with positive-politeness tactics typical of collectivist settings. This reflects what

Schnurr (2010) identifies as the use of humor to reinforce solidarity and smooth over face-threatening acts, as well as Ibrahim's (2019) observation that Indonesian students' communication relies on collectivist values and high-context indirectness.

In conflict-management among peers, Australians often steered the group back to task with inclusive, low-imposition directives. Examples included *"Hey guys, let's get on with it and all work together on this"* and *"Guys, let's put our differences aside, and finish the project as a group… Are we in agreement?"* They also reframed tension through appeals to shared outcomes, such as *"Hey guys, we need to do well so let's put aside any differences for this task"* and *"Alright guys, let's get this done for the sake of the discussion, deal?"* This tendency reflects what Burton (2012) observed in Australian classrooms, where peer teaching was employed as a low-imposition strategy to re-engage students and manage conflicts, and what O'Toole (2023) describes as inclusive drama-pedagogy approaches that empower students by foregrounding collaboration and mutual agency.

Indonesian students tended to combine appeals to harmony, gentle admonitions, and humor in peer conflict-management. Examples included *"Ayo salaman dulu biar gak salah paham…"* (Let's shake hands first so there's no misunderstanding…) and *"Mohon bantuan dan kerjasamanya ya teman-teman… tidak membawa urusan pribadi dalam grup ini"* (Please help and cooperate, everyone… don't bring personal matters into the group). Other utterances, such as *"Kita kan udah besar… sekarang ngerjain dulu"* (We're all grown up… let's do the task first), *"Please ya guys, aku nggak mau nilaiku jelek gara-gara masalah kalian…"* (Please guys, I don't want my grade to suffer because of your issues), and *"Masa sesama teman bertengkar, sih. Malu sama umur"* (Why fight among friends? That's not age-appropriate), blend positive politeness (in-group language, humor) with light face-threats to nudge cooperation. This tendency resonates with Petraki and Ramayanti's (2018) finding that Indonesian communicators use humor as a rapport-building and face-mitigating strategy, and with Sudar et al.'s (2025) observation that student interactions often combine politeness with gentle admonitions to sustain harmony.

Where senior–junior dynamics were involved, Australians often buffered juniors' lapses with reassurance and practical help: *"No stress, we'll find an extra piece of paper for you," "Hey, do you want to borrow a pen and a piece of paper?"*, and *"Don't worry too much about it… you are free to take a photo of someone's notes."* Even reminders remained non-intrusive: *"Hi… I can see that you forgot your book… it is okay for today but just remember for next time."*

Indonesian seniors, by contrast, frequently mixed direct admonitions with guidance, reflecting status-sensitive norms: *"Niat kuliah apa enggak sih?"* (*Are you serious about studying or not?*), *"Dek, kemarin sudah diinfokan… sekarang pilih pinjam atau beli."* (*We informed you yesterday… now either borrow or buy.*), and *"Besok jangan lupa dibawa ya."* (*Don't forget to bring it tomorrow.*). More forceful cases appear when sincerity is doubted: *"…kalau tidak… kalian tidak menghormati kami sebagai senior… (memberi hukuman)"* (*…otherwise you don't respect us as seniors… [punishment]*). This pattern aligns with findings that lecturers in Indonesia often employ bald-on-record strategies while still providing guidance, demonstrating how higher-status speakers can afford directness while maintaining relational bonds (Sudar et al., 2025). Similar dynamics are evident in cultural practices, such as Minangkabau wedding preparations, where direct strategies are used when imposition is low but

more indirect strategies are reserved for addressing powerful interlocutors (Revita & Trioclarise, 2020). These examples show how positive politeness (shared identity) coexists with status-linked directness when seniority is salient, reflecting the hierarchical underpinnings of Indonesian communicative norms.

Finally, with strangers (low familiarity, equal power), Australians continued to hedge and thank profusely: *"Hi, if you've got a second, could you please take a picture of us?"*, *"Excuse me, could you please take a photo for us?"*, *"Hi, are you able to take a photo of my friend and I, please? Thank you so much!"* Multiple forms stack apology and reason-giving: *"Hi, excuse me, sorry, would you be able to take this photo for us? It's our last day and we just want to be in the photo together?"*

Indonesian students often used address terms and casual barter appeals: *"Permisi, bisa minta tolong fotokan kami? Terima kasih."* (*Excuse me, could you please take our photo? Thank you.*) and *"Mbak, tolong fotokan kami dong, nanti aku fotokan balik deh."* (*Miss, please take our photo, I'll take yours in return.*). They also negotiated space politely: *"Permisi mbak/mas bisa tolong agak minggir dikit, soalnya mau foto hehe"* (*Excuse me, could you move a bit? We want to take a photo hehe*), and personalized requests: *"Kak kelihatannya kamu seorang fotografer, minta tolong fotoin dong."* (*You look like a photographer—could you take our photo?*). These reflect positive politeness via friendly footing, while still achieving the request.

Socioculturally, the expanded peer data clarify why Australians favor negative politeness that emphasizes autonomy, reduction of imposition, and rule-based reminders, while Indonesians favor positive politeness through teasing, camaraderie, honorifics, and collective-welfare frames. Australians' preference reflects an individualist cultural orientation in which autonomy and social distance are maintained through hedging, apologies, and reminders of rules, a pattern consistent with the high frequency of deference politeness in Australian English (Xie, 2024) as well as the use of direct, speaker-oriented apology strategies (Jones & Adrefiza, 2017). By contrast, Indonesians operate within a collectivist cultural framework in which positive politeness emphasizes social harmony, respect, and solidarity. This tendency is evident in the use of honorifics, indirect requests, and elaborated hearer-oriented apologies that foreground empathy and relational maintenance (Jones & Adrefiza, 2017; Sukarno, 2018; Jauhari, 2023). Therefore, although both communities aim to mitigate face-threats, Australians typically minimize burden through autonomy-preserving strategies, while Indonesians strengthen in-group bonds and appeal to shared responsibility. These patterns represent two distinct cultural routes to maintaining respect and harmony among equals.

3.5. Interactions with University Staff

In interactions with university staff, social interaction often involved different degrees of status and institutional authority. When seeking official support, such as recommendation letters, Australian students consistently maintained a preference for negative politeness strategies. Typical requests included *"I'm just wondering if I could get an application letter, when possible, please."* This hedging (*I'm just wondering*) and temporal softening (*when possible*) reveal an effort to avoid imposing on staff. Other examples from the data

include *"Hi, sorry to bother you, I was hoping to apply for a scholarship. Would that be possible now?"*, *"Hi there, sorry to bother you, I am after an application letter, I see that you're really busy so you can come back to me when you get the chance,"* and *"Excuse me, I'm sorry to bother, I am just wondering if I can please get an application letter… would you like me to come back later?"*. Even when students had a legitimate right to ask, these utterances softened the request, highlighting Australia's cultural emphasis on egalitarianism and non-imposition, even in formal institutional contexts.

Indonesian students, by contrast, elaborated a culturally situated combination of negative and positive politeness strategies. They often began with apologies, honorifics, and religious greetings. Examples include *"Maaf Pak/Bu, saya ada perlu untuk …"* (*I'm sorry, Sir/Madam, I need to…*) and *"Assalamualaikum, permisi Pak, saya mau minta surat rekomendasi untuk …"* (*Peace be upon you, excuse me Sir, I want to ask for a recommendation letter for…*). Further instances illustrate layers of politeness, such as *"Permisi Pak/Bu, mohon maaf saya mau bertanya. Saya membutuhkan surat rekomendasi untuk pendaftaran beasiswa bagaimana ya caranya?"* (*Excuse me Sir/Madam, sorry, I want to ask. I need a recommendation letter to apply for a scholarship—what is the procedure?*), and *"Assalamualaikum Bu/Pak… mohon maaf mengganggu, saya mau mendaftar beasiswa. Jika masih sibuk saya bisa menemui Bapak/Ibu kapan ya?"* (*Peace be upon you Sir/Madam, sorry for disturbing you, I want to apply for a scholarship. If you are still busy, when can I meet you?*). Such expressions illustrate how Indonesian students integrate negative politeness (apologies, deference, indirectness) with positive politeness (greetings, inclusive respect, and rapport-building). This combination reflects broader sociocultural norms of hierarchy, humility, and respect for education (Sukarno, 2015; Sudar et al., 2025).

When dealing with practical issues involving support staff (e.g., cleaners), the cultural differences become even more pronounced. Australian students again leaned on negative politeness, as in *"Hey, I just thought I'd mention that there's a puddle on the floor over there."* The use of hedges (*just, I thought I'd mention*) downgraded the directive into a casual suggestion. Other examples include *"Hey, just to give you a heads up, there's a puddle just there, just wouldn't want you to slip,"* and *"Sorry to bother you, but I was wondering if there is a way that we could get this puddle cleaned up, because it is a hazard to all of us students."* These utterances shift responsibility away from the speaker and appeal to shared concern while avoiding commands, consistent with an egalitarian and autonomy-centered orientation.

Indonesian students, however, showed a hybrid strategy of directness framed with politeness markers. One typical example is *"Pak, minta tolong kelasnya dipel dong, daripada nanti ada yang terpleset."* (*Sir, could the classroom be mopped before someone slips?*). Other realizations include *"Pak mohon maaf sebelumnya, saya mau minta tolong di depan kelas saya ada genangan air, minta tolong dibersihin ya Pak takutnya ada yang kepleset nanti,"* (*Sorry Sir, there's a puddle in front of my class, could you please clean it, we're afraid someone might slip*), and *"Mohon maaf mas, itu di depan kelas saya ada genangan air. Bisa tolong dibersihkan terlebih dahulu karena kami ada kelas sebentar lagi. Terima kasih ya mas."* (*Sorry, Sir, there's a puddle in front of my class. Could you clean it first because we have a class soon? Thank you*). These statements balance direct instructions with

honorifics (*Pak, Mas*), apologies, and pragmatic justifications, indicating that even when authority differences favor the student, respect and relational warmth are maintained.

Socioculturally, these patterns illustrate complex power relations in Indonesian student interactions. When engaging with academic staff who hold higher institutional authority, students typically adopt deferential strategies such as religious greetings, repeated honorifics, and frequent apologies, reflecting cultural values of respect for education and hierarchy (Toyyibah & Kadarisman, 2017; Sukarno, 2018; Ibrahim, 2019; Cahyono et al., 2024; Dharta et al., 2025). By contrast, in interactions with cleaners or clerical staff who are perceived as holding lower authority, students still demonstrate respect but often combine it with more direct requests and pragmatic justifications. This flexibility reflects a collectivist orientation in which group welfare and relational harmony take precedence, even when directness might otherwise pose a face threat (Latif et al., 2025). Australians, however, tend to maintain a consistent reliance on negative politeness across different staff types, minimizing imposition and emphasizing autonomy regardless of power distance (Xie, 2024). Such patterns show how Indonesian communication is shaped by sensitivity to hierarchy, while Australian styles prioritize egalitarianism and autonomy over status differences.

3.6 Cultural Factors Influencing Negative Politeness Strategies

The in-depth examination of the present research indicates that Australian and Indonesian students mainly employ negative politeness strategies. Yet, the frequency, the form, and the usage of these strategies show significant differences and reflect distinct cultural attitudes. Australian students repeatedly focus on minimizing imposition and maintaining individual boundaries in interactions with lecturers, fellow students, and administrators. This tendency aligns with the broader cultural orientation of Australian society toward individualism, where autonomy, personal space, and egalitarianism are highly valued. These findings are also supported by research from Scott et al. (2004), who observed that individualistic orientations in Australian contexts are linked to the prioritization of independence, and by Ragusa (2025), who found that Australian students prefer emotionally managed, boundary-respecting interactions with lecturers.

By contrast, the use of negative politeness among Indonesian students is more situational and locally variable. It is most impacted by social hierarchies, collectivist principles, and national norms that valorize *andhap asor*, or self-deprecation and lowering oneself, and *tanggap ing sasmita*, or the ability to read between the lines. For instance, in requesting official support, Indonesian students often combine apology, honorifics, and religious greetings, such as *"Assalamualaikum, permisi Pak, saya mau minta surat rekomendasi untuk..."* (Peace be upon you, excuse me Sir, I would like to ask for a recommendation letter for…). This layering of greeting, apology, and deference reflects a relational rather than purely transactional approach. As noted by Sukarno (2018), for instance, Javanese speakers use different degrees of politeness according to age and status. Similar to the above, the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia also focus more on social distance than hierarchical status (Jauhari and Purnanto 2022). The variability of politeness strategies used by Indonesian students also shows the effect of socio-localization, such as

among fishing communities in Java when communication becomes more direct and less formal (Muharudin et al. 2023). Regardless, however, in formal and official environments, most notably in the use of grammar in issuing requests, Indonesian students use negative politeness to voice respect and minimize imposition (Pujiati et al. 2024). This habit also receives further support from the syllabus and curriculum as Indonesian English textbooks teach the use of polite speech as a key aspect of communicative competence (Meiratnasari et al. 2019).

These results validate that the usage of negative politeness in Indonesia will not be just a linguistic preference but will be rooted in socialization and deep-seated cultural expectations. Furthermore, the diglossic nature of Indonesian society ensures that formal and respectful language usage becomes the order of the day in scholarly and official communication, and Standard Indonesian serves as the high variety in relation to everyday regional or colloquial forms (Riansi et al. 2023). This finding is consistent with Peters and Burke (2025), who demonstrated that Australian English employs negative politeness primarily as a means of asserting equality and autonomy rather than managing hierarchical distance. Thus, the comparison with Australia, with its less stratified and less rigid linguistic patterns, illustrates how cultural and linguistic structures shape communicative action: Australians rely on negative politeness to affirm the autonomy of the self, whereas Indonesians employ it to regulate complex social hierarchies and foster relational harmony.

Such politeness foundations of culture have practical applications, particularly in intercultural academic environments. Recognizing that Australians tend to perceive politeness as a tool to respect autonomy and personal space, while Indonesians perceive it as a tool to sustain harmony and preserve social order, can help instructors and university administrators design communication practices that are culturally responsive. As Izadi (2022) has shown, intercultural encounters often risk miscommunication when differing socio-cultural schemata of politeness are not acknowledged. Similarly, Pikhart and Koblizkova (2017) emphasize that intentional application of culturally grounded politeness strategies can enhance communication efficiency in diverse professional and academic contexts. Future research could extend these insights by examining additional cultural settings and by investigating how digital communication platforms reshape emerging politeness patterns in intercultural interactions.

4. Discussion

The research finds that negative politeness strategies largely predominate the speech of Australian students, accounting for 87.2% of the total occurrences (41 of 47 instances). This compares to the relatively lower occurrences of positive politeness and off-record strategies amongst Australians. This inclination among Australian students towards negative politeness can be explained in the light of different social factors such as the social norms within cultures promoting the minimization of imposition and the protection of individual boundaries. The negative politeness strategies in Australia reflect the wider cultural preference for the mitigation of confrontation and demonstration of respect through indirectness, especially in hierarchical relationships. For instance, in a request for the extension of a submission of an assignment, Australian students employed utterances such as, "*Hi, I've been absolutely under the pump and know it's the deadline day, but I think that a brief extension will enable me to get the assignment to a high standard*."

In comparison, Indonesian students exhibit a more varied use of politeness strategies, employing negative politeness in 69.6% of the instances (32 out of 46). This contrast suggests that while Indonesians also rely on negative politeness, they frequently incorporate positive politeness and off-record strategies—particularly when interacting with individuals of equal or lower status. This broader range of strategies reflects a more adaptive and relationally sensitive approach to communication, consistent with cultural norms that prioritize social harmony and hierarchical respect. For instance, when requesting an extension, Indonesian students combined negative and positive politeness by saying, *"Bu, saya nama dari kelas A5, sebelumnya saya mau minta maaf, bu, saya dan teman-teman belum bisa menyelesaikan tugas yang ibu berikan minggu lalu, apakah kami masih bisa mengumpulkan tugasnya di luar deadline, bu? Kami akan mengumpulkan sesegera mungkin. Terimakasih."* (*Ma'am, I am from class A5. First of all, I would like to apologize, ma'am, my friends and I haven't been able to finish the assignment you gave us last week. Would it still be possible for us to submit it after the deadline, ma'am? We will submit it as soon as possible. Thank you.*)

These differences in politeness strategies reflect deeper cultural orientations that shape students' communication practices. Australia, representing Western cultural norms, tends to prioritize individualism and autonomy (Grossmann & Santos 2016). This is reflected in the consistent use of negative politeness across different social interactions, whether with lecturers, peers, or university staff. Australians often use phrases like *"I have another idea, do you mind to hear it?"* when expressing differing opinions, which demonstrates a high degree of deference and caution to avoid face-threatening acts. In contrast, Indonesia, representing Eastern cultural norms, places a higher value on collectivism and social cohesion (Goodwin 2003). This is evident in the more frequent use of positive politeness strategies by Indonesian students, such as *"Pak/Bu, saya mempunyai pandangan yang berbeda, bagaimana jika kedua ide ini kita jadikan satu?"* (*Sir/Madam, I have a different opinion, how about we combine both ideas?*). These expressions seek to foster a sense of community and mutual respect, highlighting the importance of relational closeness in Indonesian culture.

Adding to this, the linguistic context of Indonesia also determines politeness behavior. One key feature of this context is the phenomenon of diglossia, which provides the structural backdrop against which politeness is enacted. Diglossia refers to a linguistic condition in which two different varieties of the same language are used by a particular language group in different social domains. These two varieties are generally classified as the "high" (H) and the "low" (L) varieties (Ferguson 1959). Formal domains like education, official communication, and literature make use of the high variety while the low variety is used in routine casual interactions among family and close friendships. Diglossia in Indonesia is common in the sense that Standard Indonesian acts as the high variety and the regional languages and colloquial Indonesian as the low variety. Works by Sneddon (2003) and Turner and Wong (2010) point to the diglossic nature of Indonesia in that there is the use of the ethnic languages in the most intimate and casual of communication in the family and the homestead and the use of Indonesian in education and official work. This diglossic condition produces a linguistic duality that determines the manner in which politeness strategies get used.

Diglossia's effect on politeness strategies is seen in the diversity in the usage of Indonesian students' language. The ability to switch between formal and informal language with such agility enables Indonesians to use a broader scope of politeness strategies (Muslimawati 2022). For example, the overuse of positive politeness in formal situations attests to the intimacy and familiarity with the domestic use of language with little diversity in day-to-day interactions. This adaptability in the use of language differs from the strict use of English in Australia, where the distinction between formal and informal seems to be less overwhelming (Nguyen 2015). Indonesia's linguistic duality results in higher proficiency in the use of politeness strategies. Indonesian students' proficiency in navigating from formal to informal language environments allows them to use positive politeness strategies without limitations in interactions with superiors. This manifests in the overuse of titles and honorifics, which are rooted in the deep-seated cultural convention of expressing respect and building harmony.

Also, the diglossic nature of Indonesian society influences the ways in which students interact with each other and university administrators. Between peer and peer interaction, use of positive politeness and off-record strategies such as joking and casual speech allows for social solidarity and a feeling of belonging (Prasetyo 2019; Santos et al. 2023; Pujiati et al. 2024). This strategy represents the collectivist ideology of maximizing social harmony and proximity in human relations. On the other hand, the lack of a high-level diglossic context in Australia results in routine use of negative politeness strategies in all social interactions. This is in line with the findings of Babai Shishavan and Sharifian (2016), who showed that Anglo-Australian students employ indirect and courteous speech consistently, regardless of the interlocutor’s social status.

The research results correlate with theoretical models presented by Brown and Levinson (1987). Brown and Levinson's data-driven and social psychology-based model has insights into the subtleties of politeness strategies. Although they have different points of departure, they overlap to a great degree. For example, an utterance may simultaneously reflect positive and negative politeness strategies. Indonesian students' double usage of politeness strategies, in that they use negative and positive politeness at the same time in their interactions, accords with the assumption that politeness strategies are not mutually exclusive. Such flexibility serves to reflect the social norms in Indonesia where sociability and respect take precedence. Adding titles and respect markers in Indonesian students' speech serves to reinforce it further, depicting the possibility of different politeness strategies to exist in one utterance.

Politeness is naturally a pragmatic phenomenon and not just defined by the words and the form used but by the latter's meaning and intended social meaning (Cutting & Fordyce 2021). The current research finds the role of context in understanding politeness to be key. For example, it may take the polite form of the utterance, but the intended meaning may modify the perception of politeness. Exaggerated or inappropriate polite forms may at times be received as sarcastic or insincere, further indicating the role of context in politeness (Mahmud 2018).

Deference, an act of politeness indicating distance and respect towards individuals of superior status (Mansoor 2018), also dominates the outcomes of the present research. Indonesian students used consistently deferential tokens such as "*Pak*" or "*Bu*," a culturally preferred emphasis on respect and status. This differs from the style of the Australian participants, where such tokens of deference were less in use and politeness more concerned with

the minimization of imposition and guarding of personal boundaries (Al-Duleimi et al. 2016). The amount of situational context also dictates the usage of politeness strategies, avers Cutting and Fordyce (2021). The higher the imposition or the more formal the context, the more indirect the language will be (Heylighen & Dewaele 1999). This theory also manifests in the outcomes of the research, in that Australian students employed more indirect speech in the formal or hierarchical context. As opposed to the employment of positive politeness by Indonesian students in the majority of the pertinent contexts, including the formal one, we see a culturally preferred mode of harmony maintenance and relationship building.

Social context, including social distance and power relations, also affect politeness strategies, according to Bakry (2015). The study finds that Australians use negative politeness consistently, across social status, and show a social norm of maintaining boundaries. Indonesians, however, distinguish between politeness strategies based on the interlocutor's social status and use more positive politeness between equals and more negative politeness to superiors. Cultural context also renders it challenging to associate politeness with social variables, according to Lu (2009). Findings of the research support the assumption that politeness and indirectness are tightly bound to cultures. Australian and Indonesian students' politeness strategies differences illustrate the contribution of cultural norms to shaping communication behavior. For example, the high usage of positive politeness by Indonesians in hierarchical environments contrasts with the usage of negative politeness by Australians and reflects the social significance of social harmony over autonomy.

The outcomes of the current research have significant implications for education and administrators in multicultural settings. A knowledge of the communication context in relation to cultures could guide strategies to foster successful and considerate communication, building a more positive learning climate and assisting in promoting intercultural understanding (Ilie 2019). For instance, knowledge of the Australian negative politeness preference could alert instructors to the need to frame instructions and feedback in ways to minimize imposition. Similarly, knowledge of the Indonesian positive politeness focus could assist in enhancing a more cooperative and supportive classroom atmosphere. Future research could expound upon these factors of cultures by exploring additional environments and cultures. Research into the role of digital communication media influencing politeness strategies could be a significant contribution in addition to the new standards and challenges to intercultural communication presented by digital media. Further, research into the role of diglossia in determining politeness strategies in additional multilingual societies might deepen existing knowledge of the relationship between language use and standards of cultures.

In summarizing, the research provides rich insight into politeness strategies employed in various cultures in university settings and the complex interactions between social and cultural norms, social order, and communication practices. The research outcomes have practical applications and theoretical value in the domain of intercultural communication in creating more harmonious and considerate interactions in relatively more heterogeneous university settings. The research also highlights the significance of diglossia in shaping politeness strategies and the role of context in interpreting intercultural interactions, as elaborated by Al-Hamzi et al. (2024).

The outcomes also validate the universality of the proposed strategies of Brown and Levinson (1987), with the predominance of the negative politeness among the Australian students and the broader diversity of the observed strategies among the Indonesian students serving to attest to the cross-cultural applicability and versatility of the theoretical framework. The outcomes also indicate that the theory may need to be fine-tuned further to reflect the complexities inherent in the introduction of cultural and linguistic factors such as diglossia, and while the paradigm of Brown and Levinson remains firm, the addition of maxims of politeness in analysis in subsequent studies could enhance the extrapolation of politeness in various cross-cultural settings and deliver a more sophisticated account of intercultural communicative practices.

5. Conclusion

Contrary to general impressions, the current research finds that although the students in Australia and Indonesia most often employ negative politeness strategies, the cultural underpinnings of such usage differ in interesting and tellingly different ways. Australian students strongly prefer to minimize imposition at all times, in line with individualistic sensitivities to autonomy and non-intrusiveness. Indonesian students, in contrast, reveal a wider range of politeness strategies, often intermixing negative and positive forms of politeness. This combination points to the operation of collectivist political and social values in the country, in which the maintenance of social solidarity, respect for authority, and emotional intimacy are paramount. The research concludes that politeness is not a universally applicable concept but a culturally embedded and context-specific one.

The findings contribute new insights to the field of cross-cultural pragmatics by illustrating how cultural values and linguistic structures shape politeness behavior in academic contexts. The Indonesian diglossic language environment, for instance, provides greater leeway for the deployment of register-switching, facilitating students in the use of formal and informal vocabulary in the management of peer and hierarchical interaction. By contrast, the uniform employment of negative politeness strategies across all environments by Australian students indicates a preference in the culture for egalitarianism and respect. However, this does not indicate that positive politeness strategies imply a lack of respect. Actually, negative politeness implies respect through maintaining autonomy and decreasing intrusiveness, and positive politeness implies respect through solidarity, inclusion, and interpersonal harmony. That is, both forms of politeness involve respect but in a different manner, through the logic of collectivist or individualist culture of the specific society.

From a scholarly perspective, these findings amend Brown and Levinson's framework by revealing that politeness strategies cannot be framed as universally recognizable markers of respect and instead must be situated within particular sociocultural frames. It demonstrates, as does the research, the manner in which diglossia and culturally characteristic value schemes such as *andhap asor* in Indonesia or Australian egalitarianism regulate the saliency of different strategies. From a methodological perspective, the research demonstrates the merits of crossing over between Discourse Completion Tasks and systematic schemes of classification, thus offering a repeatable model for research in cross-cultural pragmatics.

From a practical perspective, the research outcomes of this investigation have implications for intercultural pedagogy and university communications. For administrative and teaching personnel in diverse learning environments, awareness of these different pragmatic tendencies may contribute to the creation of more culturally aware teaching behaviors. Familiarity with Australian students' tendency to interpret direct involvement as intrusive, in contrast to Indonesian students' expectations of expressions of proximity and solidarity, may preclude misunderstanding and smooth classroom rapport. Correspondingly, direct training in procedures of politeness may advance students' pragmatic capability, reduce intercultural tension, and promote inclusiveness in the university environment.

The study does, however, have certain limitations. Its reliance on written responses through Discourse Completion Tasks may not capture the full complexity of spoken language, especially in spontaneous interactions. Furthermore, the sample size and scope were limited to university students from two national backgrounds. Future research is encouraged to include a more diverse set of participants, covering various professions and cultural groups, as well as data collected through interviews, recordings of natural conversations, and other interactive methods. Additionally, studies may explore how emerging modes of digital communication affect politeness strategies across cultures, or examine the role of multilingualism and diglossia in other sociolinguistic settings. These avenues will help deepen our understanding of how politeness operates within and across different cultural contexts.

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الملخص

تعكس اللباقة اللغوية النية التواصلية والمعايير الثقافية المترسخة في التفاعل اليومي. وبينما ترى التداولية البينية اللباقة على أنها ظاهرة موحدة، تقارن هذه الدراسة كيفية تطبيق طلاب الجامعات الإندونيسيين والأستراليين لاستراتيجيات اللباقة في السياقات الأكاديمية. استخدمت الدراسة أداة إكمال الحوار (DCT) بمشاركة ستة عشر طالبًا (ثمانية من كل جنسية)، لتحليل ردودهم على مواقف تفاعلية مع الزملاء، والمحاضرين، والموظفين. استخدم الطلاب الأستراليون في الغالب أساليب اللباقة السلبية، مع التركيز على الاستقلالية وتقليل الإلزام، بينما استخدم الطلاب الإندونيسيون مجموعة أوسع من الاستراتيجيات تجمع بين اللباقة الإيجابية والسلبية، متماشية مع القيم الجماعية واستخدام اللغة في بيئة لغوية ثنائية. كانت التحيات الدينية وألقاب الاحترام شائعة لدى الإندونيسيين، في حين اعتمد الأستراليون على التلطيف وعدم المباشرة. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن اللباقة تتشكل ثقافياً وتعتمد على السياق. تؤكد النتائج الحاجة إلى الوعي الثقافي في التواصل الأكاديمي، وتقترح أن تشمل الدراسات المستقبلية البيانات المنطوقة وعينات أوسع لفحص تأثير التعدد اللغوي والوسائط الرقمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية اللباقة، الثقافة، الطلاب، الجامعة، التداولية.

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