
A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF BROWN AND LEVINSON'S POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN PRESIDENT JOKO WIDODO'S INTERNATIONAL SPEECHES

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Abstract

This research presents a pragmatic analysis of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies in the international speeches of President Joko Widodo of Indonesia. Politeness theory serves as the theoretical framework for understanding the communicative strategies employed by President Widodo to navigate diplomatic exchanges and maintain positive face in diverse cultural contexts. The research involves compiling a corpus of President Widodo's international speeches and categorizing the language use into three politeness strategies: Bald on Record (BOR), Positive Politeness (PP), and Off the Record (OR). The findings reveal that Positive Politeness strategies are the most dominant, characterized by in-group identity markers, optimistic language, and presupposition to foster camaraderie and mutual understanding with the audience. Conversely, Bald on Record strategies are less prevalent, indicating a preference for indirect and tactful communication to preserve positive face and diplomatic relations. The strategic use of Off the Record strategies provides flexibility and ambiguity in delicate diplomatic contexts. The research concludes with suggestions for President Widodo to diversify his politeness strategies, enhance cultural sensitivity, and strengthen language proficiency to further enhance Indonesia's international relations and diplomatic effectiveness.

Keywords: Pragmatic Analysis; Politeness Strategies; Brown And Levinson; President Joko Widodo; International Speeches

INTRODUCTION

The use of politeness strategies in communication has long been a subject of interest for linguists and researchers. The field of politeness theory was popularized by sociolinguists Penelope Brown and Stephen

Levinson in their seminal work, "Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage," published in 1978. According to Brown and Levinson, politeness is a fundamental aspect of human interaction, serving as a mechanism to maintain social harmony and avoid

potentially face-threatening acts. The theory explores various politeness strategies employed in diverse cultural contexts and communication settings.

In recent years, political discourse has become a significant area of study within linguistics, given its impact on international relations and global diplomacy. One prominent figure in contemporary politics is President Joko Widodo of Indonesia, whose international speeches have garnered considerable attention for their language use and communicative strategies. As such, this research aims to conduct a pragmatic analysis of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies employed in President Joko Widodo's international speeches.

Politeness theory is rooted in the concept of "face," which refers to an individual's public self-image or social identity. Brown and Levinson identify two types of face: cheerful face, which represents the desire to be liked, appreciated, and approved by others, and negative face, which refers to the desire for freedom of action and not being imposed upon. Face-threatening acts (FTAs) are actions or utterances potentially damaging an individual's positive or negative face. The strategies employed to

mitigate these threats are known as politeness strategies.

The politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson include positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on-record, off-record, and avoidance. Positive politeness involves showing friendliness and appreciation to enhance the recipient's positive face. Negative politeness strategies, on the other hand, aim to respect the recipient's negative face by using indirect language and softening requests. Bald-on-record strategies are characterized by direct and unmitigated speech acts without concern for face needs. Off-record strategies are indirect and vague, allowing speakers to convey their intentions without explicitly stating them. Lastly, avoidances involve evading FTAs altogether by not addressing specific topics.

The study of politeness strategies in political discourse has gained significant momentum in recent years. Politicians, especially when addressing international audiences, often employ strategic language choices to maintain diplomatic relations and uphold national prestige. Politeness theory offers valuable insights into how political leaders navigate complex diplomatic scenarios while preserving face and social harmony.

Notable research in this domain has focused on analyzing the speeches of world leaders, including President Barack Obama, Prime Minister Angela Merkel, and President Xi Jinping, among others. These studies have shed light on the cross-cultural variations in politeness strategies and their impact on international relations.

President Joko Widodo, commonly known as Jokowi, is the seventh president of Indonesia and a prominent figure in global politics. Since assuming office in 2014, his international speeches have been the subject of public interest and media scrutiny. As Indonesia plays an increasingly influential role in the global arena, understanding the pragmatics of President Jokowi's communication style becomes essential.

The primary objective of this research is to conduct a pragmatic analysis of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies in President Joko Widodo's international speeches. The study will focus on the following specific aims: to identify the prevalent politeness strategies used by President Jokowi in his international speeches, to analyze the contextual factors influencing the choice of politeness strategies, and to examine the effectiveness of these strategies in achieving their communicative goals.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Politeness Theory and Face Theory

The foundation of this research lies in the seminal work of sociolinguists Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson, "Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage" (1978). Their politeness theory introduces the concept of face, which involves positive and negative aspects of an individual's self-image. This theory explores various politeness strategies used to mitigate face-threatening acts (FTAs) in social interactions. Numerous studies have since expanded upon Brown and Levinson's work, exploring cultural variations in politeness strategies and their application in different communication contexts.

Politeness Strategies in Political Discourse

In recent years, there has been growing interest in the analysis of politeness strategies in political discourse. Researchers have examined how political leaders employ linguistic strategies to maintain face and diplomatic relations while communicating with international audiences. Studies have focused on political figures such as President Barack Obama, Prime Minister Angela Merkel, and President Xi Jinping, revealing diverse approaches to politeness in cross-cultural contexts.

Politeness Strategies in International Speeches

Specific studies have delved into the analysis of politeness strategies in international speeches of political leaders. Research by Brown and Levinson (1987) explores the use of politeness principles in international diplomacy and intercultural communication. Additionally, Watts' (2003) investigation into political leaders' language use in the international arena highlights the influence of politeness strategies on global diplomacy.

Pragmatic Analysis of Political Discourse

Pragmatics, as a linguistic subfield, focuses on the study of language use in context. Researchers have applied pragmatic frameworks to analyze political discourse, uncovering the intricacies of communicative strategies employed by political leaders. Notable works by Grice (1975) on implicature and Searle (1969) on speech acts have influenced the pragmatic analysis of political communication.

Joko Widodo's International Speeches

As President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo has delivered numerous international speeches that reflect his diplomatic communication style. Previous studies have analyzed specific aspects of his speeches, such

as rhetorical strategies (Marpaung et al., 2018) and linguistic characteristics (Dewi, 2021). However, there is limited research on the application of politeness theory to Joko Widodo's international speeches, making this study a significant contribution to the field.

Politeness Strategies in Indonesian Communication

Studies focusing on politeness strategies in Indonesian communication have explored cultural norms and linguistic conventions. Researchers, such as Eriyanto (2017), have highlighted the use of indirectness and politeness in Indonesian language and social interactions. Understanding politeness in the Indonesian context can provide valuable insights into President Joko Widodo's language use in international settings.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Politeness

Given Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape, investigating cross-cultural perspectives on politeness is essential in understanding President Joko Widodo's international speeches. Research by Ide (1989) and Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2008) has examined politeness norms in different cultures and their impact on communication styles.

RESEARCH METHODS

The first step of the research involves compiling a corpus of President Joko Widodo's international speeches. To create the corpus, we will collect transcriptions of his speeches delivered in various international settings, such as bilateral meetings, international conferences, and official visits to other countries. The corpus will span a selected timeframe, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of President Joko Widodo's diplomatic communication style.

The analysis of President Joko Widodo's international speeches will be conducted using Brown and Levinson's politeness theory as the theoretical framework. This theory provides a systematic approach to understanding the use of politeness strategies in language usage, particularly in mitigating face-threatening acts. We will apply Brown and Levinson's classification of positive politeness, negative politeness, bald-on-record, off-record, and avoidances to identify the politeness strategies employed by President Joko Widodo.

The research will utilize qualitative methods for pragmatic analysis. We will employ Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies as a coding framework to identify instances of positive politeness, negative

politeness, bald-on-record, off-record, and avoidances in President Joko Widodo's international speeches. Each instance will be carefully examined in its context to understand its communicative intent and effectiveness in achieving politeness goals.

To understand the contextual factors influencing the choice of politeness strategies, we will conduct a thorough contextual analysis of each speech. Factors such as the audience composition, diplomatic relations with the host country, cultural norms, and the overall purpose of the speech will be taken into account. This analysis will provide valuable insights into the pragmatic motivations behind the use of specific politeness strategies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data provided consists of excerpts from President Joko Widodo's international speeches, categorized into three politeness strategies: Bald on Record (BOR), Positive Politeness (PP), and Off the Record (OR). Below is the analysis of these politeness strategies and their implications for President Joko Widodo's diplomatic communication style:

Bald on Record (BOR)

Bald on Record strategies involve direct and unmitigated speech acts without

concern for face needs. In the data provided, we see an example of FTA-oriented bald-on-record usage with the phrase "good morning." Using such greetings in international settings might be perceived as straightforward and efficient, but it could potentially be seen as lacking positive politeness elements, especially in contexts where more elaborate greetings are expected. This indicates President Joko Widodo's preference for direct and straightforward communication, which can convey confidence and assertiveness in diplomatic exchanges.

Positive Politeness (PP)

Positive politeness strategies focus on demonstrating friendliness and appreciation to enhance the recipient's positive face. In President Joko Widodo's speeches, we observe several instances of positive politeness strategies. For example, he uses "I will push my ministers, my governors, my mayors" to intensify the interest of the audience in his commitment to address the issue at hand. Additionally, he employs in-group identity markers like "Distinguished Leaders of the Member Countries of the United Nations" to create a sense of belonging and camaraderie with the audience. These strategies aim to build rapport and

establish a positive relationship with the listeners.

Moreover, President Joko Widodo uses optimistic language, such as "We need around 35,000 megavolts," to assume that the hearer wants what he wants. By doing so, he aligns his goals with those of the audience, creating a persuasive and motivating atmosphere. The use of presupposition in phrases like "Today, I am happy, I am very happy" and "No one... no country should be left behind" further reinforces common ground between the speaker and the audience.

Off the Record (OR)

Off the Record strategies involve giving hints or being ambiguous in language use, allowing speakers to convey their intentions indirectly. In President Joko Widodo's speeches, we see examples of off the record usage when he states, "This is your opportunity" and "The UN needs to prove" or "be more responsive and effective." By using vague language and giving hints, President Joko Widodo suggests potential courses of action without explicitly stating his expectations. This approach allows for flexibility and can be perceived as less imposing, thereby mitigating face-threatening acts in delicate diplomatic contexts.

The analysis of the data provides valuable insights into President Joko Widodo's diplomatic communication style, particularly regarding his use of politeness strategies in international speeches. He demonstrates a preference for directness and assertiveness, as seen in the Bald on Record strategies. However, he also employs positive politeness elements, such as in-group identity markers and optimistic language, to build rapport and align his goals with those of the audience. Additionally, President Joko Widodo strategically uses off the record language to give hints and be ambiguous, providing flexibility in his diplomatic communication. These politeness strategies collectively contribute to maintaining positive face, fostering diplomatic relations, and influencing international audiences effectively.

Overall, the analysis showcases President Joko Widodo's adeptness in navigating complex diplomatic scenarios by skillfully employing a range of politeness strategies to achieve his communicative goals.

The Most and the Least Dominant Types of Politeness Strategies Used by President Joko Widodo in his International Speeches

Based on the data provided, the analysis reveals the most and least dominant

types of politeness strategies employed by President Joko Widodo in his international speeches:

Most Dominant Politeness Strategy: Positive Politeness (PP)

The data indicates that Positive Politeness (PP) strategies are the most dominant type used by President Joko Widodo in his speeches. PP strategies focus on enhancing the recipient's positive face by showing friendliness, appreciation, and building rapport with the audience. President Widodo employs various positive politeness strategies to create a favorable and engaging atmosphere during his diplomatic exchanges.

Examples of Positive Politeness Strategies in President Widodo's Speeches

- The use of in-group identity markers, such as "Distinguished Leaders of the Member Countries of the United Nations," fosters a sense of belonging and camaraderie with the audience.
- Optimistic language, like "We need around 35,000 megavolts," assumes that the audience shares the same desires and goals, creating a sense of unity and shared purpose.
- Presupposition in phrases like "Today, I am happy, I am very happy" and "No one... no country should be left

behind" reinforces common ground and mutual understanding between the speaker and the audience.

The high prevalence of Positive Politeness strategies suggests that President Joko Widodo prioritizes building positive relationships and engaging the international audience in a friendly and inclusive manner. By employing these strategies, he seeks to gain support for his diplomatic initiatives and foster a favorable image of Indonesia on the global stage.

The Least Dominant Politeness Strategy: Bald on Record (BOR)

In contrast, the data indicates that Bald on Record (BOR) strategies are the least dominant type used by President Joko Widodo in his speeches. BOR strategies involve direct and unmitigated speech acts without much concern for face needs. In diplomatic contexts, BOR strategies can be perceived as too assertive or impolite, potentially risking the recipient's positive and negative face.

Examples of Bald on Record Strategies in President Widodo's Speeches

- The use of "good morning" as a greeting represents an FTA-oriented bald-on-record usage. While direct and efficient, such greetings might be

considered lacking in positive politeness elements, especially in settings where more elaborate greetings are expected.

The scarcity of Bald on Record strategies in President Widodo's speeches indicates that he prefers a more diplomatic and tactful communication approach. Instead of relying on direct assertions, he opts for strategies that enhance positive face and maintain harmonious relations with the audience.

The analysis of President Joko Widodo's international speeches reveals that Positive Politeness (PP) strategies are the most dominant type employed by him. These strategies enable him to build rapport, create a sense of unity, and gain support from the international audience for his diplomatic initiatives. On the other hand, Bald on Record (BOR) strategies are the least dominant, suggesting that President Widodo prioritizes maintaining positive face and diplomatic relations by employing indirect and tactful communication methods. Overall, President Joko Widodo's adept use of positive politeness strategies showcases his skill in navigating complex diplomatic scenarios, ensuring effective communication and

strengthening Indonesia's diplomatic relations with the international community.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The research conducted a pragmatic analysis of Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies in President Joko Widodo's international speeches. Through the examination of the data, several conclusions can be drawn:

President Joko Widodo's diplomatic communication style is characterized by the predominant use of Positive Politeness (PP) strategies. By employing in-group identity markers, optimistic language, and presupposition, he fosters a sense of camaraderie and mutual understanding with the international audience. This approach helps build positive relationships and gain support for his diplomatic initiatives.

The data suggests that Bald on Record (BOR) strategies, involving direct and unmitigated speech acts, are relatively scarce in President Widodo's speeches. Instead of employing straightforward assertions, he prioritizes indirect and tactful communication to maintain positive face and diplomatic relations.

President Widodo strategically uses Off the Record (OR) strategies by giving hints and being ambiguous in his language. This

allows for flexibility in his diplomatic communication, particularly in delicate diplomatic contexts, while preserving face and avoiding potential conflicts.

The research suggests several improvements to President Joko Widodo's diplomatic communication and the strengthening of Indonesia's international relations. These include diversifying Politeness Strategies, increasing cultural sensitivity, fine-tuning Off Record usage, tailoring speeches for specific audiences, encouraging interactive and two-way communication, and strengthening language proficiency in English and other widely spoken languages.

President Widodo can build rapport and support by incorporating these strategies while maintaining a clear stance in international discussions. He should also tailor his speeches to suit different audiences' needs and interests, ensuring clarity and avoiding misinterpretation. Encouraging interactive and two-way communication in international speeches can create a more engaging and participatory experience for the audience. Strengthening language proficiency in English and other widely spoken languages can further enhance his effectiveness in communicating with diverse audiences,

allowing him to express ideas more eloquently and navigate complex diplomatic discussions more easily.

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