

The off-record politeness strategy and cultural values of the *Belis* negotiation speech event: A Sociopragmatic study

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the language politeness strategies applied by the *tongka* (spokesperson) and other parties involved in the *belis* negotiation speech event in the Manggarai community, the Pasat-Ruis dialect, Indonesia. This study used a phenomenological approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with five key informants with experience as spokespersons (*tongka*) and adequate knowledge of the Manggarai language and culture. Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1992). The study found that the off-record politeness strategy was applied in two patterns; (1) The use of metaphorical phrases to refine the speech. Knowledge and the ability to interpret the meaning of speech through metaphorical phrases is an important aspect that must be possessed by a *tongka* (spokesperson) by connecting the phrase with the context of its use so that it can be understood and fulfills the elements of Politeness. (2) The use of *sopi* while conveying speech. The patterns show Politeness and the distinctive and authentic characteristics of Manggarai culture. Meanwhile, the cultural values of the utterances of *belis* negotiations include kinship, brotherhood, responsibility, appreciation, and respect. Thus, the findings indicate that the spokespersons selected in the *belis* negotiation process need to consider the knowledge of Manggarai culture and the ability to use metaphorical phrases in cultural speech so that the *belis* negotiation process runs smoothly according to the expectations of the two extended families.

Keywords: Belis negotiation; cultural value; off-record politeness strategy

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INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the language politeness strategy in the *belis* negotiation process in the Manggarai marriage custom in the Ruis-Pasat dialect. The concept of language politeness is needed in an utterance. It supports the realization of comfort in speaking and the achievement of the purpose of the speech. Richard et al. (2005) stated that Politeness is a necessity and essential characteristic of people's lives. Communication that occurs between community members not only aims

to convey thoughts or ideas but also feelings. Interpretation of the intent and purpose of an utterance is very influential on the interlocutor's feelings, which impacts the achievement of communication goals (Anggraini et al., 2019).

The basic principle in communicating is the realization of social harmony through the implementation of interpersonal, textual, and contextual functions. These three functions emphasize the importance of social relationships in communication. Good speech relevant to the

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situation is needed, with the main emphasis on the principle of courtesy (Prayitno, 2009). Several strategies can be applied to encourage the realization of an effective communication process, including the right choice of words (diction), expressions of Politeness, the use of small talk methods, and the use of suitable sentence structures. These strategies also aim to make the communication process run well, and the message to be conveyed can be achieved (Nurhayati & Hendaryan, 2017).

The implementation of language politeness strategies can occur in various speech contexts. Using language politeness strategies is necessary to show cultural characteristics in a cultural context. In addition, language politeness strategies are needed to realize harmony in communication, and at the same time, the message to be conveyed is understood and accepted by the interlocutor. One aspect of communication that applies language politeness strategies in the traditional Manggarai speech community is speech in the *belis* negotiation process. This is also found in the speech of marriage of the Manggarai community in the Ruis-Pasat dialect.

In the Manggarai marriage tradition, *belis* is a dowry that is glorified as a form of appreciation for women (Laudasi et al., 2020; Lon & Widyawati, 2016) and also as a form of gratitude to the mother of the woman who gave birth and raised her (Dafiq, 2018). It is in line with the patriarchal and traditional concept of Manggarai culture. The male family gives *belis* in materials (usually money, animals, and cloth). The woman's party as wife giver (*anak rona*) has a special status because this family gives women to the man's party as wife receiver (*anak wina*) to continue their offspring (Lon & Widyawati, 2016).

Belis negotiations are part of the cultural stages of traditional Manggarai marriages. Negotiations aim to agree on the amount of *belis*, types, and stages of delivery of *belis* between the families of women and men. The negotiation process occurs at the bloating event when the man comes to the woman's party to officially propose to a woman as his fiancé (Lon & Widyawati, 2016). A spokesperson for the man's party negotiated based on a request for *belis* demanded by a spokesperson of the woman's party. If an agreement has been reached, the man's family will prepare *belis* materials according to the agreement during the *we'e weki*, *wagal*, or *paca* traditional event (an event to legally ratify a man and a woman as husband and wife). Negotiations can also be continued during the *we'e weki* traditional event. The representative of the male party, called *tongka* (spokesperson), negotiates in two contexts; First, negotiations convey the shortcomings and the inability of the men party to fulfil all the requests of the women party as agreed in the previous negotiations. It is casuistic. Second, negotiation is undertaken to fulfill every request

from the women's party as cultural stages need to be passed during the *we'e weki* traditional event.

Negotiation in Manggarai culture aims to reach a mutually beneficial agreement. The dynamics and interactions in a negotiation determine the success of the negotiation. Therefore, the trusted spokespersons and other parties involved use acceptable communication strategies that show Politeness in the language used. In this context, language as a tool of interaction and a medium to eliminate social distance carries out its function.

Studies on language politeness in different settings have been carried out by several previous researchers (Abudayeh & Dubbati, 2020; Brown, 2015; Ide, 1982; Johnson et al., 1988; Maros & Rosli, 2017; Mat Hassan et al., 2020; Pizziconi, 2003; Rivai et al., 2021; Sidiropoulou, 2017; Waziana et al., 2021; Yeomans et al., 2019). Meanwhile, several scholars have conducted studies on applying linguistic Politeness in culture. Lee (2020) studied Linguistic Politeness in the Chinese Language and Culture. Yaqin et al. (2022) investigated the Sociopragmatic Parameters of Politeness Strategies among the Sasak in the Post Elopement Rituals. Syam (2019) conducted a study on Greetings in Mbojo Language: Towards an Attitude of Language Politeness in the Cultural Perspective of the Archipelago. These studies show that language politeness is central to accommodating social distance, increasing solidarity, and fostering mutual respect. More specifically, studies on language politeness in culture in the Manggarai speech community have been carried out by some researchers; Semana (2016) conducted a study on Politeness Construction In Manggarai Culture: A Study on the Linguistic Aspect of Manggarai Language. Kebol (2020) studied Politeness in Manggarai Language in the Speech of the *Hang Rani* Traditional Ceremony. Semiun (2014) investigated The Functions of the Politeness Marker "Io" in Manggarai Language: Kempo Speech. Although research on language politeness in the Manggarai culture has been carried out, specific research on off-record language politeness strategies in the speech of the *belis* negotiation has yet to be found.

The pattern of language politeness strategies is interesting to study because the parties involved in the *belis* negotiation process are required to have the ability to apply specific language politeness strategies so that the negotiation process runs smoothly and produces a mutually beneficial agreement. Therefore, this study tries explicitly to answer two research questions: 1) How is the off-record language politeness strategy applied by the spokespersons (*tongka*) in the cultural speech of *belis* negotiation in the Manggarai-speaking community, the Pasat-Ruis dialect? 2) What are the cultural values in the speech of the *belis* negotiation?

Language and Culture

Language and culture are inseparable because they have a very close relationship and influence each other (Abusyairi, 2013). Language is a medium for maintaining culture. Meanwhile, culture will be understood and upheld if the community comprehends the language of the culture (Fauzia et al., 2022).

According to Schwartz (2014), culture is a latent, hypothetical variable that can only be measured through its manifestations. He further stated that the underlying normative value is central to cultural influence and gives these manifestations coherence. Culture, according to this viewpoint, exists outside of the individual. It is not found in the thoughts and actions of individuals. It refers to the press to which individuals are exposed as a result of living in specific social systems.

Palmer (1996) used the term "cultural linguistics" to define anthropological linguistics in terms of how culture interacts with language. In his view, culture is a discipline that arises from anthropology. It is a combination of linguistics and culture. Cultural linguistics is fundamentally related to objective reality, and how people or societies talk about the world they describe. Furthermore, cultural linguistics relates to the factual or interpretive meanings (interpretation) over the whole context (linguistic, social, and cultural). According to Kushartanti et al. (2007), linguistic anthropology is a branch of linguistics that investigates the relationship between language and culture, mainly how language is used as a tool in social action daily.

On the other hand, Sociologists view people's lives from static and dynamic aspects. The static aspect of humans does not show any activity, even seeking relationships with other people far from their status as social beings. From a dynamic point of view, humans are always trying to get changes and developments in line with life as God's creatures who are given a position on this earth (Une, 2021). Changes and developments in society manifest in terms of dynamics. They are always in contact with others or interact with each other.

In the interaction process between language and culture, it is evident that several values emerged based on their orientations. According to Schwartz (2014), these orientations are normative responses; they prescribe how institutions should function and how people should behave to best deal with societal issues. As societies generate and modify their preferred responses, cultural value emphases evolve and change over time. These orientations are as follows: (1) Autonomy cultures regard people as autonomous, bounded entities. They encourage people to cultivate and express their preferences, feelings, ideas, and abilities and find meaning in their uniqueness. (2) Embeddedness cultures view people as entities embedded in a collectivity. Meaning is expected to be gained primarily through

in-group social relationships, identifying with the group, participating in its shared way of life, and striving toward its shared goals. (3) 'Egalitarian' cultures encourage people to see one another as moral equals with fundamental human interests. They socialize people to internalize a commitment to collaborate, to care about the well-being of all, and to act voluntarily to benefit others. (4) 'Hierarchy' cultures rely on hierarchical systems of assigned roles to ensure responsible, productive behaviour. (5) 'Harmony' cultures emphasize fitting into rather than exploiting the social and natural worlds, accepting, preserving, and appreciating the way things are rather than attempting to change them. (6) 'Mastery' cultures encourage individuals or groups to actively assert themselves to master, direct, and change their natural and social environments, thus achieving group or personal goals (Schwartz, 2014).

Politeness Strategy

The theory of Politeness, which was established using information from three distinct languages and cultures—English, Tamil, and Tzeltal—was fundamentally based on Goffman's (1967) concept of "face." This idea holds that everyone has a face and that during interactions, people attend to face by avoiding conflict and minimizing Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) through linguistic techniques or courteous behaviour (Santoso, 2015). Brown and Levinson proposed the politeness theory in 1987, and this led to a variety of conceptual and empirical studies. The idea was developed following social sciences' theoretical and methodological traditions, including anthropology, developmental psychology, linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, applied linguistics, and communication (Kasper, 1990).

According to Thomas (1995), Politeness Theory is a group of linguistic theories that link language action or behaviour to social behaviours. The commonplace concept of Politeness is attempted to be scientifically conceptualized by politeness theories. The practical or acceptable use of words in a particular circumstance is referred to by the colloquial term "Politeness" (Al-Hindawi & Alkhazaali, 2016). Similarly, Leech (1983) claimed that being polite is a way to foster and preserve a harmonious relationship. Politeness encourages engagement by reducing the likelihood of conflict and confrontation, which are inherent in all human encounters. As a result, to avoid FTAs, interlocutors must apply specialized techniques to reduce the threat by a logical assessment of the face risk (Maros & Rosli, 2017). Politeness—in this broad sense of speech oriented to an interactor's public persona or "face"—is pervasive in language use (Brown, 2015). Politeness is a social phenomenon. It is needed to promote harmonious interpersonal relationships.

Brown and Levinson (1987) classified Politeness into positive and negative. The speaker's desire to be respected is referred to as positive Politeness. It is used to protect the audience's positive face by attending to their needs, invoking equality and feelings of belonging to the group, hedging or indirectness, avoiding disagreement, using humour and optimism, and making offers and promises (Waziana et al., 2021). Negative Politeness, on the other hand, refers to the speaker's desire to be independent. It is used to reduce threats to the negative face of the audience. When the speaker requires something from the audience but wants to preserve the audience's right to refuse, negative Politeness is used (Waziana et al., 2021).

More specifically, Brown and Levinson (1987) promoted and developed politeness strategies to save the "face" of the hearers (H). Face, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), refers to an individual's respect for himself or herself, as well as maintaining that "self-esteem" in public or private situations. They also broadly explain the concept of 'face' to demonstrate 'politeness' (Indahsari & Surjowati, 2021). Brown and Levinson (1987) propose five strategies for Politeness:

- 1) Bald on record; When the speaker does not attempt to minimize the threat to the other person's face, this strategy is used. It is most commonly used when people know each other well or in an emergency. Maintaining one's face is not a conversation's priority or the main goal in these situations. If they see someone in danger, they may shout, "watch out," or a mother may tell her son to "eat your peas" at dinner. This strategy does not attempt to save face, but it can be used to threaten it if used out of context (Waziana et al., 2021). According to Grice's (1967; 1975) maxims, bald on record is a strategy for speaking. The main reason for using bald on record is that a speaker (S) frequently wants to avoid mitigating an FTA to a listener (H). S, who has a close relationship with H, is the most likely to employ this strategy (Santoso, 2015).
- 2) Positive Politeness; (desire for one's contributions to be acknowledged). A positive face is a desire to be accepted, even liked by others. It is also a desire to be treated as a member of the same group. A positive face and a member of the group must be linked (Sukarno, 2018)
- 3) Negative Politeness; (desire to express one's ideas without being met with resistance). A negative aspect is a desire to be independent, to have freedom of action, and not to be imposed on by others. It refers to every competent adult member's

desire for their actions to be unimpeded by others (Waziana et al., 2021).

- 4) Off-record; This strategy is used when the speaker asks an indirect question that requires the listener to interpret. In other words, the speaker does not impose himself on the listener. As a result, there is no direct threat to the face. This strategy frequently necessitates the listener to interpret what the speaker is saying. The off-record indirect strategies relieve some pressure and Avoid FTA (Sukarno, 2018).

From the speaker's point of view, there are three rules for being courteous, giving options, not imposing, and making the other person feel good or pleasant (Lakoff, 1973). Leech (1983) also develops a "politeness principle" and its tenets. The purpose of this politeness principle and its maxims is to sustain amicable social relationships so that the speaker may guarantee that cooperation will follow (Sukarno, 2018).

METHOD

Research Design

The study used a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. It involves all aspects, including how the spokesperson (*tongka*) applied the off-record politeness strategy during the *belis* negotiation in Manggarai Pasat-Ruis dialect. The researchers argued that Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory could explain the application of the off-record politeness strategy in *belis* negotiation speech events. The current study thus aims to analyze how the off-record politeness strategy is used in the interaction among the participants in the *belis* negotiation speech event. Language politeness strategies in cultural speech found through this study can be empirical evidence for constructing language politeness strategies in certain cultural domains and contexts.

Participants

This research was conducted in the Manggarai speech community, which typically applies the *belis* culture in marriage customs. *Belis* symbolizes responsibility and a medium for strengthening kinship between male and female families in the context of Manggarai culture. The research was conducted on the Manggarai-speaking community in the Ruis-Pasat dialect during March and April 2022. The participants in this study were five elders taken from one village in the Manggarai regency, Pasat-Ruis dialect. The participants were taken purposively based on some criteria such as; (1) living in Pasat-Ruis dialect community for over 20 years; (2) having knowledge of the Manggarai language and culture; (3) having experience of being a *tongka* (spokesperson) in any Manggarai cultural event.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

One primary type of data in this study is qualitative data. Sources of data to obtain qualitative data are parents who have adequate knowledge of Manggarai culture and language and have experience as a *tongka*, namely parents who are entrusted as spokespersons for traditional Manggarai weddings. Therefore, the data collection method used was in-depth interviews with five key informants. Researchers interviewed informants by asking open-ended questions about the language politeness strategies of a spokesperson or other parties involved in the negotiation process. There are nine main questions asked in the interview, including: (1) What is the meaning of *belis* in Manggarai culture? (2) When does *belis* occur? (3) How much is *belis* in Manggarai culture? (4) When is the negotiation process of *belis* in the Manggarai culture? (5) Who is involved in the *belis* negotiation process? (6) Who initiates the *belis* negotiation process? (7) How does *tongka*, as spokesperson of both parties, deliver a speech during the negotiation process? (8) How to refine the language in *belis* negotiation? (9) What is the philosophy of *sopi* or *tuak* in Manggarai culture? Interview data collection was assisted with a voice recorder to store more comprehensive data. Researchers also conducted participatory observations of cultural activities to obtain more objective data. During the observation, the researcher prepares a guide to help answer the research problem. The collected data were then analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1992), which consists of data collection, reduction, classification, verification, and conclusion drawing.

FINDINGS

In the *belis* negotiation process, the main principle emphasized is the awareness of the parties involved in the speech to respect each other by prioritizing the family character, not harming and injuring each other's feelings. Therefore, the interactions built in the negotiation process involve direct interactions involving a spokesperson called *tongka* from both parties and the families of the man and woman. In marriage kinship, the Manggarai community recognizes the philosophy of "*wae teku tedeng*," which is the principle of kinship that continues at any time between male and female families. Therefore, everyone involved in the kinship relationship has the same responsibility to be involved in every traditional event that requires material for the success of the traditional event. A spokesperson is expected to have adequate knowledge of philosophy; therefore, the utterances used in the *belis* negotiation process put forward the principle of "*wae teku tedeng*."

A spokesperson or other party involved in the speech negotiation of *belis* must be able to convey a

speech that does not cause a burden and hurt the feelings of the interlocutor. In this context, an interaction strategy is needed to show Politeness in language. Based on the results of interview data analysis, it was found that off-record language politeness strategies used by speakers in the *belis* negotiation process in traditional marriage speeches of the Manggarai community are as follows:

Using Metaphorical Phrases

The following is a speech between *tongka anak rona* (wife giver spokesperson) and *tongka anak wina* (wife receiver spokesperson) in the *belis* negotiation process:

Tongka Anak rona: "Io ite ase kae cicing agu riang. Gauk mara bantang cama. Hoo de manga ranga agu neki weki dite wie hoo. Rencun ite, ai botong mbetek. Reweng dami ngasang bilik agu kilo kamping ite cicing agu riang. Latang te sai olo agu iko musi, wuli lite sua ratus juta rupiah uwang cee mbaru, sua kaba, lima jarang, pat mbe, agu pat lipa. Hitu reweng dehami bilik agu kilo. Titis (tuak)".

(Wife giver spokesperson):

Due to a mutual agreement between us as *anak rona* (wife giver) and you as *anak wina* (wife receiver), tonight we gather here. Therefore, to shorten our time and business, we would like to convey that you are asked to prepare two hundred million rupiahs, two buffaloes, five horses, four goats, and four pieces of woven cloth as a dowry. (Followed by handing a bottle of *sopi* or *tuak*).

Tongka Anak wina:

Io ite, reweng dehami cicing agu riang. Toe manga salan neho ite ema. Gauk pait, gauk piara cempulu wulang one tuka. Neho lehami ite, toe manga salan. Terima kasih laing lehami latang te hitun. Landing tegi de hami wel ga, ceratus juta ata nagance dami. (anak wina teing uwang ceratus sebu agu ca botol tuak).

(Wife receiver spokesperson):

On behalf of *cicing agu riang* (wife receiver), we convey that what you say is true. Nothing is wrong. As the *anak rona* (wife giver) who was nine months pregnant, we agree that you gave birth and raised your daughter. We thank you for all of that. However, we said that we could only prepare a hundred million. (Followed by the delivery of one hundred thousand rupiahs and one bottle of *sopi*)

Tongka Anak rona:

Io... ite ase kae. Tae de hami bilik agu kilo, bo mengaku dite. ceratus juta. Landing ite wel gah nuk kin kole lite

	<i>rang dehami nenggitu kole rang dite. Jadi rencun wel gah... sua ratus juta kin tegi dehami.</i>
(Wife giver spokesperson):	On behalf of the <i>anak rona</i> (wife giver), we would like to thank you for recognizing that you accepted our request for one hundred million rupiahs. However, you need to be aware of and consider our dignity as <i>anak rona</i> (wife giver) and your dignity as <i>anak wina</i> (wife receiver). Thus, we remain to ask you to prepare two hundred million rupiahs.
<i>Tongka Anak wina:</i>	<i>Io.. ite... bo neng tae dite tem salan. Landing nuk kin agu ba weki de hami cicing. Jadi ata ngance dehami ite, ceratus limampulu juta kali.</i>
(Wife receiver spokesperson):	What you say is true. Nevertheless, you must consider our capabilities as your <i>anak wina</i> (wife receiver). Therefore, we can only prepare one hundred and fifty million rupiahs.
<i>Tongka Anak rona:</i>	<i>Io ite ase kae. Woko neggitu mengaku dite. Neho lami kole ite. Terima kasih. Tiba lehami cee reweng dite.</i>
(Wife giver spokesperson):	We thank you for your recognition and willingness. We accept and agree to what you convey on behalf of the <i>anak rona</i> (wife-giver).
<i>Tongka Anak wina:</i>	<i>Io ite bilik agu kilo. Woko minak bantang dite, oeh pongo lehami bantang soo. Ngong bantang soo dasor neka pande beka koes. (Anak wina teing uwang suaratus sebu rupiah kut pongo bantang paca).</i>
(Wife receiver spokesperson):	On behalf of the <i>anak wina</i> (wife-receiver), we would like to thank you. We ask that this agreement be bound and ratified so that it will be of common concern in the future at the time of delivery of the <i>belis</i> material. (Followed by the delivery of two hundred thousand rupiahs as a sign of binding the agreement).

Based on the speech data between *tongka anak rona* (spokesperson of the wife giver) and *tongka anak wina* (spokesperson of the wife receiver) above, it can be seen that some phrases have a metaphorical meaning used in the speech. According to Leng (2000), metaphor is attached to a word or phrase. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denotes one kind of object or action. It uses the place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. Therefore, the speaker and interlocutor need to understand the social and cultural context to understand the

meaning of the phrases used in the speech. In *belis* negotiation utterances, phrases with metaphorical meaning aim to refine the meaning referred to in the phrase. The use of the phrase shows Politeness in both the language and behaviour of the speaker and the interlocutor. Here are some phrases with metaphorical meaning in the utterances of *belis* negotiation:

- (1) *Cicing agu riang.*
- (2) *Bilik agu kilo*
- (3) *Pongo bantang*

The phrase (1) *cicing agu riang* refers to the position and family status of the man who acts as the wife receiver (*anak wina*). The word *cicing* lexically refers to the outer or edge of a garden or field. The field is integrated with the life philosophy of the Manggarai people because of its strategic position as the primary place to produce food products as a source of life. *Riang* lexically refers to the activity of guarding. By referring to the philosophy of Manggarai culture context, the phrase, *cicing agu riang* refers to the male family as the wife receiver (*anak wina*) or an outsider (*ata peang*). Wife receiver (*anak wina*) has the task of looking after the daughter given and has specific responsibilities to the wife giver (*anak rona*). The phrase (2) *bilik agu kilo* refers to the position and family status of the woman who acts as the wife giver (*anak rona*). The word *bilik* means a house, and the word *kilo* refers to the most private part of a house, namely the bedroom. In Manggarai culture, the house has meaning and value; for example, the house is a place to live and a place of shelter. However, in the context of the marital relationship, the house and bedroom (*bilik agu kilo*) refer to the center and source of descent, which is then given to the wife receiver (*anak wina*). A woman of wife giver (*anak rona*) who is given to male families becomes a bridge or channel for giving offspring. Therefore, in the Manggarai culture, *bilik agu kilo* (*anak rona*) is a party that must be respected by the wife receiver (*anak wina*). Phrase (3) *pongo bantang* is a phrase spoken by the *anak wina*. The phrase *pongo bantang* lexically means binding an agreement. *Anak Wina*, as the party obliged to fulfil the request for *belis* from *anak rona* asks to ratify the *belis* agreement through an amount of money handed over to *Anak Rona* at the time of the negotiation process. The phrase is used to refine the speech delivered. In addition, convey a hope not to disobey the agreement, for example, increasing the number of *belis* unilaterally at the time of the delivery of the *belis*.

The use of the three phrases above requires the ability of the spokesperson to understand the context of using them. It also includes understanding the meanings contained in the Manggarai culture, especially concerning kinship. It is in line with Hymes's (1964) notion of communication in a

cultural context. Speakers and addressees need to understand the norms of interaction and interpretation to achieve communication goals. Although the purpose of using phrases with metaphorical meanings is to show Politeness in language and behaviour, the use of these phrases becomes useful if speakers and addressees need to understand them.

Using the three phrases with a metaphorical meaning described above is an off-record politeness strategy. The meaning of the speech needs to be interpreted by the interlocutor (Brown & Levison, 1983). By referring to the speech data between *tongka anak rona* (wife giver spokesperson) and *tongka anak wina* (wife receiver spokesperson) above, language politeness strategies in speech are also seen in the use of two lexicons that function as polite markers "*io*" and "*ite*". In daily interactions, the lexicon "*io*" functions to initiate saying the prayer, to say the agreement, to induce a request, and to reply to a call (Semiu, 2014). However, in the context of the conversational culture of *belis* negotiation, the use of "*io*" aims to initiate an utterance. The use of "*io*" aims to show the Politeness of a speaker in respecting the interlocutor. By referring to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategy, the use of "*io*" is implementing a positive politeness strategy. Language politeness strategies are also found through the lexicon "*ite*" in speech. "*Ite*" refers to the second singular "you," which is usually used to address someone. "*Ite*" is the most polite second-person singular to show the speaker's appreciation for the interlocutor in an utterance.

Using Particular Materials

A Particular material used during the speech delivery is a bottle of *sopi*. *Sopi or tuak* is a Manggarai traditional drink that contains alcoholic substances. A bottle of *sopi or tuak* is placed before the spokesperson when delivering a speech. A confident spokesperson conveys the speech while holding the *sopi* with both hands, and then handing the *sopi* to the interlocutor after delivering the speech. The interlocutor does the same way when responding to the speech delivered.

In the context of Manggarai culture, *sopi or tuak* have a high value of respect for the interlocutor. Using *sopi* also has the value of brotherhood and intimacy, usually manifested in the tradition of sitting in a circle while enjoying *sopi*. Therefore, using *sopi or tuak* when delivering speech indicates specific messages to the interlocutor that must be interpreted. Several meanings can be interpreted from the use of *sopi* in speech: (1) The speaker formally submits a request for the amount of *belis*, which is then responded to by the interlocutor (wife receiver spokesperson) in the form of negotiation; (2) The interlocutor politely refuses and makes an offer; (3) The interlocutor

accepts the speaker's request; (4) The speaker and the interlocutor agree on the amount of *belis* based on various considerations.

Concerning the cultural meanings and values of using *sopi* in the tradition of *belis* negotiation, it can be seen that the use of *sopi* is an off-record politeness strategy pattern. One bottle of *sopi* does not say anything, but the meaning and value of it politely convey a particular message to the interlocutor.

The use of *sopi* is also closely related to the tradition that refers to the family status of the man as wife receiver (*anak wina*) and woman as wife giver (*anak rona*) in marital relations. *Anak rona* is a party that must be respected as a family that gives a wife to *anak wina* as wife receiver (Iswandono et al., 2015). This appreciation is manifested through the giving of *sopi or tuak*. *Anak wina* as wife receiver, is obligated to provide *sopi or tuak* to *anak rona* in and outside cultural situations.

Referring to the two patterns implemented by the spokesperson as a form of off-record politeness strategy, there are several values in the interaction between language and materials used in the speech event of *belis* negotiations, including kinship, brotherhood, harmony, mutual respect and appreciation. These cultural values become the community's social capital in Manggarai; the Pasat-Ruis dialect builds harmonious relations and interactions with others. Kinship is only a bridge connecting fellow human beings to realize social harmony. However, the most important thing is how these cultural values help humans maintain harmony throughout their journey as social and cultural beings.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be seen that the off-record politeness strategy in the speech of *belis* negotiation is found in two forms; (1) the use of metaphorical phrases in the speech and (2) the use of a bottle of *sopi* while delivering a speech. Both forms carry out specific cultural values that help strengthen the two families' brotherhood, kinship, and harmony.

Aristotle, as cited by Wang (2013), stated that a metaphor is when a name that refers to one object is applied to another. Metaphor, or comparing one object to another, has been called a key component of our cognitive machinery. It is crucial to comprehend the organization of discourse, thought, and language. Additionally, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) believe that metaphors are used frequently in daily life in thought, language, and behaviour. In the speech on *belis* negotiation, the purpose of using metaphorical phrases is to refine the language in the speech delivered. The use of metaphorical phrases has charm because it is considered artistic value. To understand the meaning of the metaphorical phrase used, the interlocutor and listener need to interpret

and respond to the utterance using the same language style. It is in line with the type of language politeness strategy off-record (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Waziana et al., 2021). When the speaker asks an indirect question that requires the listener to interpret, the off-record strategy is used. In other words, the speaker does not impose himself on the listener. As a result, there is no direct threat to the face. This strategy frequently necessitates the listener to interpret what the speaker is saying.

According to Leech (1983), being polite is a matter of "strategic conflict avoidance," which "may be quantified in terms of the degree of effort put into the avoidance of a conflict situation." Lakoff (1973) stated that Politeness is a concept that has been "created by civilizations to avoid friction in intimate communication." Similarly, Kasper (1990) stated that being polite refers to an individual's attempts to improve the effectiveness and courteousness of their communication. She views communication as an activity that is intrinsically risky and harmful (Ibid). Politeness is addressed here as referring to conversational interlocutors' tools to reduce the risk and the tension (Al-Hindawi & Alkhazaali, 2016). Referring to the language politeness theories above, using a bottle of *sopi* or *tuak* in speech is one of the politeness strategies used by speakers and interlocutors to create harmonious interactions during the *belis* negotiation process. Understanding the use of a bottle of *sopi* is a factor that determines the delivery of the message. Therefore, speakers and listeners need to understand the meaning of using *sopi* and its cultural values, including appreciation and respect for the interlocutor, brotherhood, and kinship. It is in line with what Hassan et al. (2020) stated that in the aspect of behaviour, Politeness is reflected through actions that do not go beyond the cultural norms of a nation and society. According to Hasanah and Andari (2020), the practice of Politeness in a language is embodied in society's culture. Omar (2003) also stated that language and cultural elements should be viewed together without isolation because combining the two can form an index of a civilized nation.

According to Salesman et al. (2018), *Sopi* beverage is accepted as a form of social kinship. *Sopi* beverages are made by local indigenous people in Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara, as a kinship tool in various customary concerns. *Sopi* beverages are collected at every ritual gathering of kinship members as a sign of kinship links in their traditional community. Kinship members transport *sopi* beverages packaged in beer bottles to the drum house, the Manggarai people's traditional residence, which serves as the focal point of the ritual. Customary elders document it in a register book based on a *panga* (sub klen). Based on genetic similarity, the number of kinship members in one *wa'u* or klen determines how many *Sopi* drink bottles are collected. Salesman et al. (2018) also

stated that the *torok* interpreter can be inspired by drinking *sopi*. By drinking a good quality of *sopi* before conveying *torok* (prayer), a *tongka* (spokesperson) can spell the prayer to the ancestor fluently. However, the words of prayer can only be spoken well if *tongka* drank *sopi*.

The use of metaphorical phrases while holding a bottle of *sopi* in the conversation of *belis* negotiations has a philosophical value that becomes the lifeline of the Manggarai community in building kinship relations through marriage. Manggarai culture has its authentic characteristics. The use of metaphorical phrases in negotiation is an effort to show cultural identity in which the Manggarai-speaking community prioritizes the value of courtesy by not embarrassing the interlocutor in public. Keeping the interlocutor from feeling embarrassed creates a harmonious relationship and interaction. It is also strengthened by the use of politeness markers "*io*" and "*ite*" in the speech to show respect (Semiun, 2014). It certainly has an impact on reaching an agreement in mutually beneficial negotiations. According to Barr et al. (1977), good citizens adapt to their surroundings, hold certain beliefs, and adhere to local norms. It can be interpreted that in order to be a good citizen, one must adhere to local norms. The oral tradition already contains local norms that can be used as lessons for all community members (Hasanah & Andari, 2020).

Meanwhile, cultural values that can be learned by using a bottle of *sopi* are the values of appreciation, respect, family values, and brotherhood. Using a bottle of *sopi*, in addition to showing respect for the interlocutor in the negotiation process, also shows respect for the existence of fellow human beings with the same dignity and worth. In addition, appreciation and respect are forms of positive Politeness that naturally exist and are needed by everyone. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), Positive Politeness is utilized when the speaker acknowledges the listener's friendliness and desire for respect. This strategy aims to lessen the danger to the audience's favourable perception. It can be accomplished by paying attention to the audience's needs, emphasizing equality and a sense of community, employing hedging or indirectness, avoiding contention, being humorous and upbeat, and making offers and promises (Waziana et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the off-record politeness strategy in the customary speech of the *belis* negotiation is found in (1) The use of metaphorical phrases in the speech; (2) The use of a bottle of *sopi* or *tuak* during the negotiation speech. Using metaphorical phrases is a strategy speakers use to refine their speech and avoid face-threatening acts.

The meaning of metaphorical phrases needs to be interpreted by the interlocutor. By understanding the meaning of metaphorical phrases, the interlocutor can respond to the speech in the same pattern as the implementation of the offer to the speaker's request. Using a bottle of *sopi* during negotiation is also an off-record politeness strategy that affects the interlocutor's behaviour in the negotiation process. The interlocutor must interpret the meaning of *sopi* and its cultural values so that the response is under the speaker's expectations. The study also found the use of polite markers "io" and "ite" placed at the beginning of each utterance to show respect to the interlocutor. The polite markers "io" and "ite" apply a positive politeness strategy, which refers to the need for everyone to be respected or appreciated. The two patterns of language politeness strategy above have strong cultural values in the cultural journey of the Manggarai speech community in the Pasat-Ruis dialect, including family values, brotherhood, harmony, responsibility, and mutual respect. These cultural values help people involved in the marriage procession maintain their kinship relations forever.

The study showed that the off-record politeness strategy was found in different cultural contexts, including Manggarai culture. The cultural values obtained can be applied to maintain kinship relations. The study contributes significantly to developing a theory of pragmatics, particularly the Politeness strategy theory, which is also found in the local cultural context. Although this study has answered the research problems on the off-record politeness strategy and cultural values of cultural speech of *belis* negotiation, there are some limitations to be considered in future research. In this study, the analysis of language politeness strategies only focuses on the *belis* negotiation process in traditional marriage speeches. Language politeness strategies can be found in various traditional speeches in the Manggarai speech community. Therefore, further research can be carried out by analyzing language politeness strategies in other aspects of traditional Manggarai speech, such as the traditional speeches of *we'e mbaru*, *Tiba meka*, *hang woja*, and so on, which are unique and rich in politeness principles.

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