

Politeness in *Tiba Meka* Ritual in Manggaraian Language and Culture, Eastern Indonesia

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Abstract: *Politeness is crucial to communicating among individuals or between groups in a speech community. This research mainly explores the politeness of welcoming guests in the Manggaraian speech community. Video recording and interviews were the techniques used to collect the data. Eight videos were recorded and transcribed in text. The data were interpreted in socio-pragmatics theory. The findings reveal that the Manggaraian speech community tend to apply positive and off-the-record politeness strategies. A positive politeness strategy was mainly employed to build a close relationship and friendliness and to show respect to a guest. The use of a positive politeness strategy was marked in honorifics such as *ite*, *mori*, *ema*, and downtoner *yo*. An off-the-record politeness strategy was utilised to designate generosity, modesty, and approbation to a guest. This politeness strategy was indicated in metaphorical expressions. The social factors that determine the use of those politeness strategies are related to the context of the event, age, relation, and guest status. In this study, the Manggaraian speech community employ politeness in the ritual of welcoming a guest to achieve three benefits: manifesting respect, maintaining a good relationship, and showing a positive attitude toward the guest.*

Keywords: Politeness, *Tiba Meka* ritual, Manggaraian language, Manggaraian culture, speech community.

1. Introduction

Naturally, language and culture are interrelated in the sense that they interplay to such a dynamic extent. To one extent, language reflects and promotes cultural values, traditions, and customs, while culture shapes language use for various functions in social contexts. It implies that language is particularly bound to culture in society. Regarding this concept, culture serves as an ethnic identity that uniquely features a language use (Bustan & Kabelen, 2023). It is manifested in employing politeness in cultural rituals and practices.

In speech communities and ethnic groups, language is vital in maintaining social interaction and performing cultural practices. Socially, language is a means applied to carry out numerous affairs, such as the demand of communication, socialisation, self-adjustment, interpersonal relation, and a method of social control. Culturally, language is utilised for practising and preserving traditions, rituals, and nurturing values. Therefore, to achieve those goals, language speakers should consider politeness (Gao et al., 2021). More particularly, cultural practices and rituals require the application of politeness when involving insiders of ethnic groups or outsiders across groups. As such, politeness is essentially a language device employed to maintain cultural traditions, rituals, and customs.

Every ethnic group and speech community establishes a different politeness concept based on diverse cultural backgrounds and cognition. It is reflected in language use, such as utterances, lexicon, speech acts, and expressions. As Kramsh (2004) contended, various semiotics of language,

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cognition, and cultural worldview could be the factors driving linguistic variation, as in the case of politeness (Nunan & Choi, 2010). In the cultural worldview, speakers of any language express relatively distinct forms of politeness, especially related to cultural rites. Hence, interactants need to understand politeness in culture and linguistic behaviour (Erkinova, 2021).

The Manggarai ethnic group develops a linguistic system and culture that is typically unique and diverse from other communities settling in the western part of Flores Island, Indonesia. Linguistically, Manggarai language is the Austronesian language of Nusantara, categorised as the isolating language; it lacks morphological affixation and pronominal agreement on the verb (Arka, 2002; Jeladu, 2020). Moreover, it has distinctive phonetic and phonotactic features in the case of phoneme combination and pre-phoneme nasal sounds (Karjo, 2022). Culturally, Manggarai ethnic group has a variety of cultural traditions, customs, and rituals.

Tiba Meka is a unique tradition among many other rituals or cultural rites performed by Manggarai ethnic group. It is specifically the ritual of welcoming a distinguished guest. Lexically, *tiba* means welcome, and *meka* means a guest. The guests can be native insiders from the ethnic group or those outsiders visiting Manggarai region. The ritual is commonly conducted to show guests politeness, honour, and hospitality. Further, a spokesperson leads the ceremony by expressing utterances (e.g. greeting and welcoming) while holding the jar of local white wine (*tuak bakok*), white rooster (*manuk lalong bakok*), and several traditional wares such as hat, scarf, and woven cloth. The spokesman called *mu' u curup* in Manggarai language is a specialised person with the gifted ability in delivering utterances in the ritual of *tiba meka*. The location of the ritual can be done at two places. *Curu Meka* ceremony is the act of welcoming a guest at the front yard of the village (*pa'ang beo*), while *kapu/reis* ritual is the act of serving a guest in the living room of the private house and the meeting room in the traditional house (*lutur*).

In *tiba meka* ritual, applying politeness is a crucial part of spokesman's linguistic behaviour. It affects the success of interaction between a host of village (*beo*) as a speaker and a guest as a hearer. More importantly, polite speech or utterance has a positive impact on maintaining face and convenience, building social relations, and hospitality. Hamrakulova (2020) stated that politeness makes people more relaxed and comfortable during the process of interaction. As such, politeness is a property of communication reflected in the choice of appropriate language. In the context of the ritual, in spite of speaker's dominance in interaction, politeness must be shown by the spokesman (*mu' u curup*).

The ritual of welcoming guests (*tiba meka*) is a unique cultural rite that performs how the Manggarai people respect a guest and maintain a social relationship with other participants in the ceremony. Politeness is a crucial element in carrying out the ritual of welcoming guests. However, studies concerning the case of politeness applied in the ritual framing of welcoming guests have not been conducted. The case of politeness is an interesting phenomenon to be explored in Manggarai language and culture. More importantly, it can be unveiled from a socio-pragmatic perspective. Two research questions were probed and analysed in the current study.

- **RQ1:** What are polite utterances employed in the ritual of *tiba meka*?
- **RQ2:** How are politeness strategies applied by the spokesman in the ritual of *tiba meka*?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous studies of politeness

Politeness is a complex pragmatic issue widely investigated from diverse fields and perspectives. Due to its great extent, numerous studies have analysed politeness in various communication contexts. In the cultural sphere, politeness has been investigated in numerous research (Atmawati, 2021; Azwan, 2018; Gao et al., 2021; Kadar & House, 2021).

Atmawati (2021) studied politeness in the case of using Javanese verb speech level. The findings reveal that the realisation of politeness varied among the participants, and the results are related to Javanese culture regarding respecting others. Azwan (2018) investigated politeness strategies of refusals to requests in Ambonese society. The study shows that Ambonese society employed positive and negative politeness strategies, such as expressing gratitude and solidarity. Furthermore, Gao et al. (2021) analysed the interplay between politeness, language, and culture. Based on the study, politeness across cultures can be varied; culture makes it different. More specifically, Kádár & House (2021) probed the topic of politeness in the ritual framing. The main findings concern the interface between ritual theory and politeness across cultures. Conclusively, the studies have disclosed the intersection between linguistic politeness and culture. The findings confirmed that cultural distinction directly affects the realisation of politeness.

Several studies have investigated Manggarai language and culture. Darong et al. (2022) studied politeness in FTAs theory and gender bias perspective. Menggo et al. (2021) researched metaphors in Manggaraian culture in relation to strengthening students character. Sanjaya & Rahardi (2021) focused on metaphors of the local wisdom in wedding ceremonies of Manggarai culture. Meanwhile, Semana and Menggo (2022) analysed politeness of the pronoun *ite*. The results of the previous studies have shed light on a close relationship between language and culture in the Manggaraian speech community, specifically in the cases of politeness, gender bias, metaphorical expression, and local wisdom. However, the current study explores the topic of politeness in the ritual of *tiba meka*, which has yet to be analysed in recent studies. The analysis is beneficial for constructing politeness theory and its relation to culture.

2.2 Politeness concept and face theory

Brown and Levinson (1987) define politeness as the speaker's attempt to save and keep the face of the listener. The term face was adapted from the work of Goffman (1967). The concept of face refers to the public self-image of the interacting person (p.61). The physical unit of the interactants is not discussed. Based on the concept, face falls under two types, namely, positive face and negative face. These two faces are attributed to the wanting (desire) of the participants involved in the interaction. Negative face is the want of every interactant which is not imposed by others, while positive face is the want of every interactant, which is to be appreciated or approved by others. Both are considered prominent aspects of applying politeness strategies. In the context of interaction, face can be saved, maintained, or lost, depending primarily on the use of appropriate and accurate language. Consistent with the concept of the face, Lakoff and Ide (2005) argue that politeness involves consideration for others. It means that speakers should show respect to listeners as they have a self-image of being pleased, positively and negatively. Therefore, it is seen as a crucial aspect that influences the success and achievement of communicative goals.

In interaction, interactants attempt to minimise the effect of threatening acts through the employment of politeness strategies. Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed politeness strategies in the frame of face-threatening acts theory (FTAs). Those strategies are classified into four types, namely, the bald-on-record strategy, the positive politeness strategy, the negative politeness strategy, and the off-the-record strategy. Each politeness strategy is realised in different sub-strategies such as hedged opinions, use of in-group identity markers, understatement, overstatement, giving hints, and metaphors. More importantly, the choice of politeness strategies is bound by the context and situation of interaction. Some politeness strategies are utilised in a specific context, while others may not occur. When applying politeness, interactants should also consider maxims. Leech (2014, p. 90) has clearly defined the term maxim as "a constraint of communicative behaviour with the aim of achieving a particular goal". Maxim encapsulates cost-benefit on the side of the speaker to the hearer; minimises cost to the hearer while maximising benefit to the hearer (Leech, 1983). Theoretically, there are six maxims of politeness: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy.

Naturally, politeness is a universal phenomenon. It is an integrated element of communication across language and culture. However, every language and culture have different manifestation of politeness in social interaction (Kamehkhosh & Larina, 2020). Numerous studies of politeness (e.g. Borris & Zecho, 2018; House & Kádár, 2021; Kadar, 2020) have proved that politeness across cultures has a profound distinction that is attributed to cultural values and norms. Diversity of culture shapes and modifies the way interactants perform politeness in interaction. Therefore, a cultural aspect provides a comprehensive and deeper understanding of politeness applied in different speech communities.

Politeness theory is developed from the face concept. The core assumption is that a speaker uses language in favour of hearer's self-esteem. The notion of face metaphorically refers to "the public self-image of the interacting person" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). It is more emotionally driven than physical appearance, e.g., feeling ashamed or humiliated. Based on the concept, face falls under two types, namely, positive face and negative face. These two faces are related to the desire of the participants involved in the interaction. A negative face emphasises the want of every interactant, which is not imposed or hindered by others. Conversely, a positive face addresses the want of every interactant, which is to be appreciated, praised, accepted, or approved by others. Both are considered prominent dimensions of applying politeness strategies. Face can be saved, maintained, or lost in the interaction context, depending primarily on appropriate and accurate language. Consistent with the concept of the face, Lakoff and Ide (2005) argued that politeness involves consideration for others. It means that speakers should respect listeners as they have a self-image reflected in both positive and negative faces.

2.3 Politeness marker

Pragmatic modifier is a linguistic unit that indicates polite utterances in communication. It is explicitly stated in utterances. Applying pragmatic modifier is one of the salient aspects determining the degree of politeness. Darong et al. (2020) revealed that pragmatic modifier is a useful linguistic expression employed to reduce the speaker's imposition on the hearer, as in the case of making requests. Additionally, pragmatic modifier enhances the positive mood of interaction in any circumstance. It is, therefore, prominently required for interactants to employ linguistic markers as a way of expressing politeness.

Brown and Levinson (1987) argued that pragmatic modifier is a linguistic resource for the realisation of politeness. It has motives and effects on communication. One of pragmatic modifiers suggested is hedge. Hedged markers enact protection of illocutionary force such as giving an order, request, warning, suggestion, and so forth. In classroom interaction, a teacher often performs the act of order by this utterance "if you do not know the answer, you may work with your classmates". The utterance is hedged with clause "if" to lower the imperative force to the students. Hedging is used in various linguistic units, namely, prosodics, lexical items, parentheticals, clauses, and other means.

In pragmatic analysis, politeness can be approached by "pragmatic modifiers" (Leech, 2014, p. 159). It is linguistic devices that strengthen and intensify polite utterances. According to classification, pragmatic modifiers cover two main types, namely internal and external modifiers. Internal modifiers include downtoner (softener and diminisher), politeness marker (please), deliberative opening (hedging), appreciative opening (sweetener), and hedged performative opening. External modifiers contain apologies (disarmer), thanks (propitiator), vocatives, and grounder (move). Based on the theory, pragmatic modifiers are more comprehensive. In EFL classroom interaction, pragmatic modifiers are realised to achieve several instructional goals set by teachers. Different gender of teachers can also contribute to the application of pragmatic modifiers.

3. Method

Qualitative research was applied to explore politeness in the ritual of welcoming guests in the Manggarai ethnic group. The primary source of data is four videos of *tiba meka* rituals purposively selected from YouTube. The data are the spokesman's utterances gathered through transcription and documentation. Both techniques were applied to obtain sufficient data in a natural setting and to capture the context of the rituals. The data were interpreted from socio-pragmatic theory, particularly politeness. The procedures of analysis include three steps: condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). The condensation of data was done by identification and classification. The data were further identified in terms of polite utterances containing lexicons, phrases, and expressions. The data were then classified into types of politeness strategies. The results of the data analysis were displayed in a descriptive model. The last procedure is drawing a conclusion which reveals the crucial points of the findings. To address the ethical issues of the data used in this study, the researchers assigned a consent form containing the statements regarding the data extracted from the selected videos and a digital data repository for analysis and research reports.

4. Results and Discussion

Before presenting the results and discussion, this part briefly describes the ritual in Manggaraian ethnic group. The ritual of welcoming a guest (s) called *tiba meka* is a customary practice inherited from the tradition of Manggaraian ancestors over generations to date. It is usually performed when a distinguished guest or a group (insider or outsider) pay a visit to a village (*beo*) and an institution for various purposes in Manggarai region. The ritual involves three related stages, namely *curu*, *reis*, *kapu*. On the ritual, a spokesperson serves a significant role in welcoming and expressing some utterances in the spoken text termed *torok*. The utterances consist of words, phrases, sentences, and metaphorical expressions.

4.1 Polite Utterances

Based on the data analysis, it was found that the spoken texts delivered in the ritual of welcoming a guest applied politeness. The employment of politeness was performed to the guests on a special event. The following part is concerned with the interpretation of the ritual based on the eight excerpts. The samples of the ritual text welcoming a guest displayed below reveal how politeness strategies were employed to distinguish guests at different events.

Excerpt 1:

SM: Yo, ite ema DPRD Propinsi Komisi V. Ite woko cai one sai, manga one ranga tite, reweng dami etai mai kepala sekolah nenggitu ngasang guru-guru, wali di'a lami kamping Morin agu Ngaran. Aram leles keta kebe, tadang keta salang, aram runcung keta buru, tuke keta dureng. Ai mesen momang dite kut cumang ami ngasang ase kae ce SMA Negeri 1 Langke Rembong. Itu ca salang reweng dami. Ca salang kole ite, tegi dami keluarga besar SMA Negeri 1 Langke Rembong. Woko lambu mbaru, liba natas, lejong beo, bengkes dami lelo koe ata toe di'an ce SMA Negeri 1 Langke Rembong. Eme manga ata kurang, tambang koe lite. Ca salang kole, "neho tendeng tuka mese, neho joreng tuka koe, nai ca anggit tuka ca leleng, naka neho wua nangka, kapu neho wua pau lami ite". Yo...kepok tuak robo agu manuk kapu ite. (Well, our father the regional legislative assembly of the fifth commission. As you have arrived before our head and presence among us, representing the headmaster and the teachers we thank to God. May you have travelled along the ways and hills, through the wind and the rain to show your big care and love to us as your brother and sister in SMA Negeri Langke Rembong. That is our request. As you come to our house, visit village, and yard, we would also like to request you to look at the bad sides of our school. We would utter that it is like lifting big belly, pushing small belly,

one stomach, welcoming you like jackfruit and holding like mangoes. Well, this is our word with traditional wine and a rooster holding you).

The excerpt (1) above is the utterances conveyed by the spokesman on the ritual of *tiba meka* at State High School of Langke Rembong. The guests were the regional legislative members (DPRD) in East Nusa Tenggara Province, Eastern Indonesia. As the host, the school committee performed the welcoming ceremony in Manggarai language and culture. Some samples of utterances show politeness to the guests, such as in the given data. The politeness marker (*yo*), pronoun (*ite*), and noun (*ema*) indicate higher respect and honour to the guest whose status is higher than the host. The other polite utterances express sympathy toward the guests' presence at the school after the long trip was done (*Aram leles keta kebe, tadang keta salang, aram runcung keta buru, tuke keta dureng*) (May you have travelled along the ways and hills, through the wind and the rain). Polite utterances were also employed to express the school's joy due to their visiting. For this expression, the spokesman used metaphor (*neho tendeng tuka mese, neho joreng tuka koe, naka neho wua nangka, kapu neho wua pau lami ite*) (it is like lifting big belly, pushing small belly, one stomach, welcoming you like jackfruit and holding like mangoes). In addition, the spokesman elaborated polite utterances to show modesty and indirectly beg the guests' generosity (*Eme manga ata kurang, tambang koe lite*) (if there is still something lacking, please add it).

Excerpt 2:

SM : Yo...ite ema wakil Bupati nggitu kole ngasang ema DPR Kabupaten Manggarai, sanggen SKPD ata manga ranga. Yo...woko manga one ranga ite, cai bolo mai sai, reweng dami sanggen kepala SMA/SMK kabupaten Manggarai nenggitu kole tae de ketua panitia agu panitia, nenggitu kole tae de anak dami ata ikut one liga pelajar kabupaten Manggarai, anak koe ine wai agu anak koe ata rona. Ite sembang keta le Mori dedek, ngalis keta le Mori Jari, woko tite manga bolo mai ranga. Wali dia lami kamping Morin agu Ngaran. Aram leles keta kebe, tadang keta salang. Aram lage keta lite wae. Hitu ca salang reweng dami. Ca salang kole ite, woko ho'o ite manga ranga, woko ho'o ite cai, woko ho'o ite lejong, *bengkes agu tegi nai ngalis tuka nengga dite kudut lite koes resmi liga pelajar ce kabupaten Manggarai tingkat SMA/SMK*. Ca salang kole ite, "*mut keta lami one pucu, nai ngalis tuka nengga dite, neho tendeng tuka mese, neho joreng tuka koe. Naka neho wua nangka lite lami, kapu neho wua pau*". *Iyo kepok tuak curu ite*. (Well, His excellency the vice regent and the local legislative assembly of Manggarai regency and Regional Apparatus Work Unit who are present here. As You are standing here and arriving in front of us, our voice as the school principals in Manggarai regency, the steering committee, and all the students, male and female, participating in the student league. His excellency for God's blessing and protection, you are with us here. We thank to God. May you have travelled along the hills, long roads and past the water. Together with your presence, arrival, and visit, we raise our hope and beg your sincere heart and big belly to officially open the student league in Manggarai regency. It is like lifting big belly, pushing small belly, one stomach, welcoming you like jackfruit and holding you like mangoes. This is our word with the wine welcoming you).

In excerpt (2), the ritual of *tiba meka* was carried out to welcome a vice-regent as the local distinguished guest. The polite utterances were shown in politeness marker (*ite*), honorific (*ema*), and opening hedge (*yo*). These linguistic devices are the common features of the spoken text delivered in the ritual *tiba meka*, which shape the host's politeness. The pronoun (*ite*) is the polite form commonly used to convey respect and gratitude to the older person and, more particularly, address a distinguished guest like a vice-regent in this context. The noun *ema* is an honorific expressing an intimate relationship and camaraderie. Additionally, the expression *aram leles keta kebe, tadang keta salang* (May you have travelled along the hills, long roads and past the water) convey the host's sympathy upon the vice regent's visiting throughout a long trip. The lexicons *kebe* (hill), *salang* (road),

wae (water) indicate the metaphorical sense of challenges that the guest passed over. The verbs *leles* (walk in the long way) and *lage* (pass over) metaphorically indicate the guest's effort to reach the place. Beside welcoming the guest, the spokesman uttered a polite request and hope (*bengkes agu tegi nai ngalis tuka ngengga dite kudut lite koes resmi liga pelajar ce kabupaten Manggarai*) (we raise our hope and beg your sincere heart and big belly to officially open the student league in Manggarai regency). By the utterances, the spokesman representing the committee stated the prime end of welcoming the vice-regent of Manggarai regency. At the last part of the ritual, the spokesman expressed the joy and pleasure of the guest's visiting (*neho tendeng tuka mese, neho joreng tuka koe. Naka neho wua nangka lite lami, kapu neho wua pau*). The metaphorical expressions are reflected in the utterances "tendeng tuka mese, joreng tuka koe, naka wua nangka, kapu wua pau".

Excerpt 3:

SM : Iyo..., reweng dami pa'ang olo ngaung musi beo Wae Rebo Desa Satar Lenda Kecamatan Satar Mese Barat. Mori ai mai dite lau mau sondong ata saun landuk one Republik Indonesia, toe hemong agu mamur mai laat ami anak ata sau ce sising uma. Ai landing kembang agu momang ai lau landuk se sising wiga ite ame ata saun landuk to'o one mai lodok mai landing kembang agu momang latang te ami roeng koe ce sising uma, hitu tara mehen kembang dite ata ema laing. Le hitu wali dia'a latang te cai dite ame laing. Mori one lako lelap eta awang, goros lobo oto wiga cai ce desa Satar Lenda, nitu kole mengkek dite kut siap kole tenaga kut sau wake haju, hamar tana, landing kaut nanang ami anak ata lami mbaru adat ce beo Wae Rebo. Mehen keta momang dami mori ai ite landing momang agu kembang ami roeng koe ce beo Wae Rebo. Hitu ata mehen latang te ami anak dom ce beo Wae Rebo ho'o. Asam kamer tite, ho manuk bakok agu tuak te kapu agu naka ite ema menteri. Kepok. (Our voice from the village of Wae Rebo Satar Lenda Kecamatan Satar Mese Barat. Your excellency as you came from your house of the Republic of Indonesia, you did not forget to visit us in this land. Because you miss and care for us, you were willing to show your attention to us all in this village. We would like to thank you as our father for your arrival. Your excellency you fly by airplane, travelled by car and finally arrived at the village. From the place, you prepare the energy holding the roots and touching the ground to meet us at the village of Wae Rebo. We would also like to express our care to you our excellency as you are willing to visit us at this village. That is the big concern and attention for us. May you be tired, this is the white rooster and wine to welcome you our father the minister of tourism and creative work affairs).

The utterances displayed in excerpt (3) were performed on the welcoming of the minister of tourism and creative economy affairs, Mr. Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno. It was on his visit to Wae Rebo traditional village located in the Southern part of Manggarai regency. As the very distinguished guest, he was greeted by the regent of Manggarai regency, the head of the subdistrict, head of the village, and the villagers. On the ritual of *tiba meka*, the spokesman conveyed polite utterances. In the utterances, there is an indication of politeness, such as "iyo, mori, ite, dite, ame". The politeness marker "iyo" is the same to "yo" that was used as the opening greeting to the guest. Interestingly, the word "mori" makes more polite utterances than using the pronouns "dite and ite". Originally, it was only used for mentioning God in the prayer as the glorified and holy creator. However, it has shifted to respecting a person with high social status. In this case, it seems appropriate to use the word "mori" designating a high degree of politeness to the guest. The word "ame" (father) is the dialect of west Manggarai language that is identical to the word "ema" in the central Manggarai dialect. This polite honorific is often employed to show honor and to build a close relation. The spokesman also delivered his great thank to the guest's visiting in the polite utterance "wali dia'a latang te cai dite ame laing" (we would like to thank you for your arrival). To address sympathy and appreciation to the guest's visiting, the spokesman conveyed the utterance "sau wake haju, hamar tana, landing kaut nanang ami anak ata lami mbaru adat ce beo Wae Rebo" (holding the roots and

touching the ground). It is different from the previous utterance in terms of lexicon and phrase such as “wake haju (the root), tana (ground)” and the verbs “sau (hold), hamar (touch)”. Metaphorically, the phrases and the lexicons refer to the challenge and efforts in reaching the place. Contextually, they indicate the guest’s sincerity and willingness. The ritual was closed by the polite utterances indicating sincerity to welcoming the guest symbolised in the expression “*ho manuk bakok agu tuak te kapu agu naka ite ame menteri*” (this is the white rooster and wine to rejoicefully welcome you our father the minister of tourism and creative work affairs).

Excerpt 4:

SM: Yo...ite ema Uskup, ai ite poli na panggala one gala kut di’an lonto lodok, kaen bongkok latang te umat serani one tana Manggarai Ite, wan ata koe etan ata tua, ulun le ho’on ce Paroki Datak Kecamatan Welak. Neho tendeng tuka mese, neho joreng tuka koe ai manga adak kole one tana ho’o ga. Ite...kapu lami tite neho wua pau, naka lami ite neho wua nangka. Ho’o tuak kapu dami aguk manuk. Tesuan ite, mai lau mai Jakarta dite lelap eta awang lako wa tana, toe rantang lite darap tana, toe asi leso walis ai mesen nuk one tana ho’o. Ite... aram do lako dite lau mai Jakarta haeng ho’o ce’e., lolong wae roho dite, inung wae bajang, manga moeng one mose dite, beret one celi. Manga ngasang ringing tis, nepo leso, ngoel loke, dango ranga. Ho’o keta manuk kut sonda taung situ, Te saka taung darap tana. Porong ite kali ga jojong one gong ata toe di’an, one waes lau, one lesos sale. Ho’o manuk kut oke taungs ata toe di’a hitu. Porong ite kali geal, reha-rahata, tepo-tapung jalalah mose dite, sae bombang mose dite. Wake caler nggerwan, watu pogor onto dite. Rana rembong kin woko lelo kut di’an lonto leok kaeng bongkok one tana Manggarai. Kepok. (Yo...your excellency our father the bishop of Diocese Ruteng, you have been ordained and given a blessed power to lead the catholic followers in Manggarai region, including the younger and the older in Welak district. It is like lifting big belly, pushing small belly, one stomach, welcoming you like jackfruit and holding you like mangoes. This is our white rooster and wine to welcoming you our bishop. Your excellency, you have travelled in the long way from Jakarta by airplane and car in wet and dried weather. Your excellency, may you have travelled over the flood water, drunk dirty water, unhealthy life and got foot weight. May you have felt thirsty, dried, and pale. This is the rooster to chase away all those bad things and to protect you from the evil spirit. It is the rooster to throw away all those bad things. wish your life be joyful and successful. May your life grow as deeper as the root and stand as stronger as the rock. May your life be like the blossom of green young leaves. These all our words.)

The excerpt (4) illustrates the polite utterances applied in the ritual of *tiba meka*. The distinguished guest was the Bishop of Local Catholic Diocese Ruteng. The bishop was welcomed in the region of Datak Parish church west Manggarai. The spokesman opened the ritual with a polite greeting “Yo, ite ema Uskup”. This utterance designates deference to the bishop. The other polite utterances indicate the faithful people’s joy over the ordinary of the new bishop of Local Catholic Diocese Ruteng in the data “*Neho tendeng tuka mese, neho joreng tuka koe ai manga adak kole one tana ho’o ga*” and “*Ite...kapu lami tite neho wua pau, naka lami ite neho wua nangka*”. As the data in the excerpt (1-3), the same metaphorical expressions were applied. However, the polite utterances expressing sympathy were constructed in different words and phrases such as “*lolong wae roho dite, inung wae bajang, manga moeng one mose dite, beret one celi*”. The phrases “*wae roho*” and “*wae bajang*” refer to the symbol of obstacles hampering bishop’s visiting and destroying his physical strength. Moreover, such distinction characterises the dialects of the West Manggarai language regardless of the same meaning. The word “*manuk*” serves two meanings: (1) to convey sincere welcoming and (2) to expel any kind of evil spirits.

The data presented in the above excerpts explicate the realisation of polite utterances on the ritual of *tiba meka*. It was applied to save the positive face of the guests, such as being respected, which is related to the concept of face as the crucial element of politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Darong et al., 2022). In socio-cultural context, polite utterances maintain a social relationship, fraternity, and intimacy between the host and the guest (Semana & Menggo, 2022). Additionally, polite utterances promote the cultural values of Manggarai ethnic group, highly upholding deference, friendliness, sincerity, and humility in welcoming and serving the guests.

4.2 Politeness strategies in the Ritual of *Tiba Meka*

Two types of politeness strategies were resorted on the ritual: positive politeness strategy and off-the-record politeness strategy. Positive politeness strategy was predominantly used to maintain positive face of the guests for appreciation, honour, and friendliness as well as to minimise the risk of the face-threatening act. Preserving the positive face of the hearer is the main orientation of applying a positive politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The spokesman's attempt to build a good relationship and solidarity.

Off-the-record politeness strategy was also applied in the ritual texts with the purpose of expressing honour and gratitude, sincerity, and happiness. Using this strategy avoids overtly expressing their feelings and honour, which can be considered "exaggeration". In this regard, both the positive politeness strategy and off-the-record maximises the benefit to the guests by applying three maxims of modesty, generosity, and approbation. It is also an indication of how the spokesman protected the face (self-image) of the guests in order that they felt honoured and convenient. Therefore, it is crucial to account for the face of the hearer in the cultural events or rituals (Darong et al., 2022; Kadar & House, 2021; Menggo et al., 2021).

The application of the two politeness strategies was explicitly observed in the use of politeness markers. In the case of positive politeness strategy, the markers are personal pronouns (*ite*) and honorifics (*ema*, *mori*). The personal pronoun (*ite*) is the polite form referring to a person. In the context of the ritual, it is appropriate to show respect because the guests are the distinguished persons in high positions. This finding is related to the previous study conducted by (Semana & Menggo, 2022), regarding the use of the polite marker *ite*. The other polite marker exploited in the ritual text of welcoming a guest is honorifics. In the view of Brown and Levinson (1987), honorifics are the grammatical encoding referring to social status between the interactants in a communicative act. In this regard, the social status of the participants is manifested in honorifics. In the ritual text, the honorific *ema*, *mori* were employed to show high respect and honour to the guest in a distinguished social status and rank. This finding is in line with the theory of honorifics applied in the studies by Andini (2021), who argued that honorifics serve a paramount role in respect, familiarity, and formality in society depending on age, social hierarchy, and rank.

In the ritual, the spokesman conveyed politeness in an implicit way or in an indirect manner. It was exploited in the metaphor of fruits (plant), physical appearance, parts of the body, and parts of the house. The cases are stated in the instances (1) *neho tendeng tuka mese, neho joreng tuka koe*, (2) *nai ca anggik tuka ca leleng*, (3) *naka neho wua nangka, kapu neho wua pau lami ite, naka neho wua pandang* and (4) *husur lutur hamar wancang kamping, dan (5) te Kapu lami mendi ema lobo pa'a, koe mose merik weki*. The metaphorical expressions are the polite forms commonly used by the Manggaraian speech community to designate modesty and sincerity. Despite the fact that other studies indicate the intricacy of the cultural metaphors that lead to over politeness and irony, they have prominent roles in conveying cultural values (Menggo, Sebastianus, Ndiung et al., 2021; Sanjaya & Rahardi, 2021).

5. Conclusion and Recommendation for Further Studies

Politeness is concerned with linguistic behaviour, which is required for social interaction and cultural performances. The realisation of politeness showcases a high variety and complexity in customary life and social contexts. The Manggaraian speech community has many unique traditions, customs, and rituals, among which is the ritual of welcoming a guest. In this ritual, politeness is vital. Based on the data analysis of several selected texts, some crucial points to be considered in understanding the application of politeness strategy in the interaction of the cultural ritual. Firstly, politeness is an integrated element that shapes the ritual of welcoming a guest. Secondly, the politeness of the ritual encapsulates the cultural values of Manggaraian speech community. The root of politeness is local and culture-based. Thirdly, the social and cultural meaning of politeness is to show honour, respect, friendliness, and solidarity. Fourth, politeness is realised in positive politeness strategy and off-the-record. Personal pronoun (ite), honorifics, downtoner (yo, iyo), and metaphorical expressions are the primary features of politeness strategy in the ritual of welcoming a guest. As the investigation of politeness is complex in Manggarai language and culture, further studies are necessary to be conducted.

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7. Conflict of Interest

Authors declare no conflict of interest whatsoever.

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