

The Role of Sociopragmatics in Indonesian Language Learning for Shaping the Character of Elementary School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe: (1) the implementation of a sociopragmatic approach by teachers in Indonesian language learning at the elementary school level; and (2) the role of teachers' politeness strategies in shaping students' character, particularly linguistic politeness, empathy, and respect. This descriptive qualitative study was conducted at SD Negeri 03 Malangjiwan, Colomadu District, Karanganyar Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. The data consisted of teachers' speech acts and students' responses during classroom interactions, collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, recordings, and documentation. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation, while data were analyzed using pragmatic analysis and the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The findings show that teachers applied a sociopragmatic approach through a balanced use of positive and negative politeness strategies in various learning contexts, creating polite, communicative, and conducive classroom interactions. These strategies played an important role in developing students' linguistic politeness, empathy, and respect. The study concludes that the sociopragmatic approach contributes to strengthening elementary school students' character through meaningful and contextual language practices.

INTRODUCTION

Character formation in elementary school students is a fundamental aspect of the educational process. At the elementary school age, children are in a stage of moral and social development that is highly sensitive to environmental influences. Therefore, schools play a strategic role in the internalization of values. Indonesian language learning is regarded as an effective medium for character development because it is directly related to students' communication activities and social interactions (Hoerudin, 2022). Values such as politeness, empathy, and respect can be cultivated through contextual language practices in the classroom. The role of language learning in strengthening the character of elementary school students has also been emphasized through the implementation of character education integrated into Indonesian language learning (Kurniawan & Rambe, 2024). Recent studies indicate that a sociopragmatic approach in Indonesian language learning can serve as a medium for the internalization of character values through polite and contextual language interactions among students (Pratama et al., 2026), thereby reinforcing the position of language learning as a vehicle for character education.

Recent national education policies emphasize character strengthening and competency development through the Graduate Profile (Profil Lulusan/PL), as stipulated in the Regulation of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Permendikdasmen) Number 13 of 2025 concerning the Deep Learning Approach. The Graduate Profile represents an enhancement of the Pancasila Student Profile by expanding the dimensions of character and competence from six to eight dimensions as an integral part of the Graduate Competency Standards (Kemendikdasmen, 2025). The deep learning approach emphasizes meaningful, reflective, and contextual learning that encourages the internalization of values as well as the development of students' reasoning and social abilities (Wijayanti et al., 2025). Indonesian language learning occupies a strategic position in supporting the implementation of the Graduate Profile because it is oriented toward communication practices that require politeness, empathy, and respect in authentic social contexts (Dewi et al., 2019). Dialogic language interactions enable students not only to understand linguistic structures but also to comprehend the social meanings and ethical dimensions of language use (Henik, 2024).

Teachers play a central role in implementing sociopragmatic strategies in the classroom through linguistic role modeling. Teachers' utterances serve as models for students in using language politely and appropriately according to social contexts. The ways teachers deliver instructions, reprimands, and appreciation influence students' communication patterns in the classroom. Teachers' politeness strategies have been proven effective in fostering respect and empathy among elementary school students (Huda et al., 2025). The role of teachers as models of polite language use is further reinforced through character-oriented regional language instruction (Ermawati et al., 2020).

Character formation cannot be separated from the influence of family, social media, and the school environment. Schools serve a strategic function as structured and directed spaces for value learning. Indonesian language learning

can act as a medium for character reinforcement to balance less conducive external influences. Research on the roles of family and social media suggests that schools need to take an active role in cultivating students' polite character (Amaruddin et al., 2020). The development of character-based Indonesian language learning modules has also been shown to improve students' social behavior (Rambe et al., 2023).

The implementation of Indonesian language learning in elementary schools still tends to focus on the mastery of formal linguistic aspects. The emphasis on grammar and reading skills often overlooks pragmatic dimensions and character values. As a result, language learning has not fully addressed the development of students' attitudes and behaviors. The integration of social, psychological, and cultural contexts into language learning has therefore become an urgent necessity. The importance of contextual approaches in language learning has been highlighted in studies integrating language, psychology, and technology for character development (Sondakh et al., 2021; Agustin & Yarmi, 2025).

SD Negeri 03 Malangjiwan demonstrates interesting language interaction dynamics in the process of Indonesian language learning. Classroom activities reveal diverse forms of teacher language use in giving instructions, guiding discussions, and reprimanding students. These interactions indicate teachers' efforts to adapt their utterances to the characteristics of elementary school students. Classroom situations also show varying levels of linguistic politeness, empathy, and respect among students during learning activities. These conditions make SD Negeri 03 Malangjiwan a relevant context for examining the implementation of teachers' sociopragmatic strategies and their role in character formation through Indonesian language learning.

Previous studies have examined the role of language learning in shaping the character of elementary school students through both regional languages and Indonesian. However, these studies generally focus on character development outcomes or the integration of values in language learning in a broad sense (Hoerudin, 2022; Rambe et al., 2023). Existing sociopragmatic studies have primarily focused on analyzing students' linguistic politeness, while relatively few have investigated the relationship between teachers' speech strategies as pedagogical practices and the process of character formation within classroom interactions (Muharudin et al., 2023). Pratama et al. (2025) demonstrated the role of teachers' sociopragmatic strategies; however, their study was limited to a general description of politeness practices in learning contexts. This situation reveals a research gap concerning a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between teachers' sociopragmatic strategies and students' character formation in authentic classroom interactions.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the implementation of sociopragmatic strategies by Indonesian language teachers as deliberate and structured pedagogical practices in authentic learning contexts. This study not only analyzes students' linguistic politeness but also directly links it to teacher-student interactions as a process of character formation. The character dimensions examined are linguistic politeness, empathy, and respect as

indicators of students' social character. This study offers a new contribution to the development of sociopragmatic research by integrating sociopragmatic analysis with pedagogical practices and character education policies in elementary schools.

This study aims to describe: (1) the implementation of sociopragmatic strategies by teachers in Indonesian language learning at the elementary school level; and (2) the role of teachers' politeness strategies in shaping students' character, particularly in terms of linguistic politeness, empathy, and respect in the classroom. The findings are expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the contribution of the sociopragmatic approach in Indonesian language learning to strengthening the character of elementary school students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a reflection of the speaker's attitudes and social values. The way students use language indicates their level of understanding of social norms and communication ethics. Indonesian language learning enables students to express their ideas politely while respecting their interlocutors in various communicative situations (Syamsuri & Bur, 2023). The integration of character values into language learning helps students develop positive language habits from an early age. The role of language learning in fostering polite and empathetic character has been reinforced by studies on character development through children's language use (Mustoip et al., 2023). From a scholarly perspective, this demonstrates the close relationship between applied linguistics, particularly sociopragmatics, and character education in elementary schools.

The sociopragmatic approach adopted in this study is supported by several major theoretical concepts. The Politeness Theory proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987) explains that every individual possesses a "face" that must be maintained during social interactions. Politeness strategies are employed to preserve interpersonal relationships, either through positive politeness, which emphasizes closeness and solidarity, or negative politeness, which respects individual freedom and autonomy. In addition, this study draws upon Speech Act Theory developed by Searle (1979), which views language as a form of action. Every utterance serves a particular function, such as assertive (stating), directive (requesting or commanding), commissive (promising), and expressive (expressing feelings). These two theories provide the analytical foundation for identifying teachers' sociopragmatic strategies and the functions of utterances occurring in classroom interactions. Consequently, they facilitate an understanding of how language practices contribute to students' character formation.

The sociopragmatic approach emphasizes understanding language use based on social context, relationships among speakers, and communicative purposes. This approach is particularly relevant in elementary schools because students are learning to adapt their utterances to different social situations. Linguistic politeness constitutes a central aspect of sociopragmatic studies because it is closely related to maintaining harmony in social interactions.

Students' sociopragmatic competence is reflected in their empathy and respect when communicating with teachers and peers. Research on the linguistic politeness of elementary school students indicates that sociopragmatic aspects play a significant role in the development of children's social character (Muharudin et al., 2023). Recent trends in applied linguistics research also demonstrate growing attention to the integration of language and social character development, particularly at the elementary education level, which serves as the foundation for personality formation.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach conducted in an authentic classroom setting at SD Negeri 03 Malangjiwan, Colomadu District, Karanganyar Regency, Central Java, during the first semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth and contextual understanding of language use and teachers' sociopragmatic strategies in Indonesian language learning. The study focused on language as a medium for constructing social meaning and fostering students' character through classroom interaction by considering speech contexts, including communicative situations, relationships between speakers, and communicative purposes.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, in which informants were intentionally chosen based on characteristics relevant to the research objectives. In qualitative research, the sampling focused on participants rather than data because the purpose was not statistical generalization but obtaining rich and in-depth information from individuals with relevant characteristics. The participants consisted of one fifth-grade teacher, who taught Indonesian language lessons, as the primary informant and 22 fifth-grade students as supporting participants. Grade V was selected because the students had developed sufficient language proficiency to engage in diverse classroom interactions, allowing various speech acts and sociopragmatic strategies to emerge. The teacher was selected as the primary informant due to their central role in managing classroom interaction and producing utterances that reflected sociopragmatic strategies. The students served as supporting participants by responding to the teacher's speech acts during classroom interaction. Participant selection was based on the consideration that Indonesian language instruction in this classroom provided rich examples of speech acts and politeness practices.

The research data consisted of the teacher's speech acts and students' responses occurring in various classroom learning situations. The data included both the forms of utterances and the contextual factors underlying language use. Primary data were obtained from the classroom teacher as the main speaker during instructional interaction, whereas secondary data consisted of supporting documents, including lesson plans, field notes, classroom recordings, and interview transcripts.

Data were collected using several complementary techniques. First, classroom observations were conducted using the participant observation technique (*simak libat cakap*), in which the researcher directly participated in the

learning process while observing the teacher's speech acts and students' responses in their natural setting. Observations were conducted over three Indonesian language learning sessions, each lasting approximately 70 minutes, resulting in a total observation time of about 210 minutes. Field notes were used to document speech situations, interactional contexts, and communication patterns. Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the teacher's considerations in using particular language strategies during instruction. Third, audio and audiovisual recordings were employed to preserve the completeness and accuracy of classroom interactions. Finally, documentation was collected to support the analysis through instructional documents. The combination of these techniques ensured comprehensive, stable, and contextually rich data.

Data were analyzed using a pragmatic analysis approach to identify speech act forms, language functions, and the sociopragmatic strategies employed by the teacher while considering the context of each utterance. The analysis followed the interactive model of data analysis, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing conducted continuously throughout the research process. Data trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation and technique triangulation by comparing findings from observations, interviews, recordings, and documentation. These analytical procedures enabled the study to generate an in-depth understanding of the teacher's sociopragmatic strategies and their implications for Indonesian language learning.

RESEARCH RESULT

1. The Implementation of the Sociopragmatic Approach in Indonesian Language Learning

The implementation of the sociopragmatic approach was identified through teachers' utterances that considered students' social contexts and emotional conditions during Indonesian language learning. Language use was not neutral; rather, it was adapted to classroom situations and communicative purposes. This was evident in the teacher's opening remarks, such as, "Good morning, children. Today we will learn together in a relaxed way." Such an utterance demonstrates the teacher's effort to create a friendly and emotionally secure atmosphere. This practice confirms that language serves not merely as a medium for delivering instructional content but also as a means of building social relationships.

The sociopragmatic approach was evident from the beginning of the lesson through the use of friendly greetings and inclusive expressions. The teacher employed utterances such as, "Who is ready to learn today? Let's begin slowly; there is no need to be afraid of making mistakes." These utterances were intended to reduce the social distance between teacher and students. Students' responses appeared more relaxed and enthusiastic, indicating the effectiveness of the strategy. This situation reflects the implementation of positive politeness, which is oriented toward fulfilling students' needs for affiliation and social acceptance. It also contributed to the creation of a more communicative and open learning atmosphere from the outset of classroom activities. Students became more willing to respond to the teacher's questions without hesitation. This

interactional pattern served as an important foundation for fostering active student engagement throughout the learning process.

During the core learning activities, the teacher frequently employed indirect instructional utterances. Rather than issuing direct commands, the teacher often used requests or invitations, such as, "Could you please read this paragraph slowly?" Such utterances reduced the impression of coercion in the learning process. Students complied without signs of resistance or discomfort. This pattern indicates the implementation of negative politeness, which respects students' autonomy and freedom of action within classroom interactions.

The use of positive politeness was also evident in the provision of praise and verbal reinforcement throughout the lesson. The teacher offered specific appreciation, for example, "Your answer is correct, and your explanation is also very good." Such utterances acknowledged students' efforts and abilities. Students appeared more confident and willing to express opinions or answer follow-up questions. These findings suggest that praise functioned as a sociopragmatic strategy to strengthen students' participation and learning motivation.

Classroom management represented another important context in which the sociopragmatic approach was applied, particularly when addressing students' behavior. The teacher delivered reprimands in a gentle manner, using utterances such as, "I know you can focus better; let's pay attention for a moment." Such reprimands were accompanied by implicit reasoning and avoided judgmental language. As a result, interpersonal relationships between teacher and students remained positive, and no resistance emerged. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the teacher's sociopragmatic approach was aligned with principles of linguistic politeness and functioned as a foundation for educational communication in Indonesian language learning at the elementary school level.

The implementation of the sociopragmatic approach highlights the important role of language in Indonesian language learning as a medium for character education. The teacher employed a contextual combination of positive and negative politeness strategies to guide, correct, and motivate students, thereby creating harmonious interactions that supported the development of social character. These strategies not only facilitated students' understanding of instructional content but also fostered values of politeness, empathy, and respect in everyday classroom interactions. The teacher's consistent speech patterns enabled students to imitate and internalize polite communication practices. Consequently, the sociopragmatic approach became a crucial foundation for effective Indonesian language learning oriented toward character formation.

The implementation of the sociopragmatic approach maintained consistency between teachers' utterances and pedagogical objectives, with language serving not only as a means of instruction but also as a medium for fostering positive social relationships and character development. Through polite, contextual, and non-threatening communication, particularly during evaluation and correction activities, teachers modeled respectful language that students gradually adopted in expressing opinions, requesting permission, and

responding to peers. This continuous habituation promoted the internalization of linguistic politeness values while creating a more participatory and inclusive classroom environment in which students felt confident to communicate without fear of criticism. These findings indicate that the sociopragmatic approach supports character formation through meaningful, sustained, and socially grounded language interactions in elementary school learning.

Table 1 presents a summary of the implementation of the sociopragmatic approach in Indonesian language learning based on observations of teachers' utterances across various classroom contexts.

Table 1. Teachers' Sociopragmatic Approach in Indonesian Language Learning (Based on Searle's Speech Act Categories)

No.	Learning Context	Teacher's Utterance	Politeness Strategy	Speech Act Type (Searle)	Impact on Students
1	Lesson opening	"Good morning, children. Today we will learn together in a relaxed way."	Positive Politeness	Expressive (greeting, creating a positive atmosphere)	Students feel comfortable and ready to participate in learning.
2	Giving instructions	"Could you please read it slowly?"	Negative Politeness	Directive (requesting/ guiding)	Instructions are accepted without pressure.
3	Classroom discussion	"What do you think? It is okay to have a different opinion."	Positive Politeness	Directive (eliciting opinions)	Students' participation and confidence increase.
4	Providing reinforcement	"Your answer is correct, and your explanation is also very good."	Positive Politeness	Expressive (praise/ appreciation)	Students' self-confidence develops.
5	Correcting behavior	"Let's focus for a moment so that we do not fall behind."	Negative Politeness	Directive (guiding behavior)	Student behavior is managed without conflict.
6	Lesson closing	"Thank you for learning well today."	Positive Politeness	Expressive (expression of gratitude)	Students appreciate the learning process.
7	Encouraging questions	"If anything is still unclear, please feel free to ask."	Positive Politeness	Directive (inviting action/ providing opportunities)	Students become more willing to ask questions.
8	Guiding group work	"Please discuss it with your group members, and we will review it together afterward."	Positive Politeness	Directive (collaborative instruction)	Cooperation and peer interaction improve.
9	Assisting struggling students	"It is okay if you are still confused; we can work through it together step by step."	Negative Politeness	Expressive (empathy)	Students feel supported and are not afraid of making mistakes.
10	Appreciating students' efforts	"I am happy that you made an effort to answer."	Positive Politeness	Expressive (appreciation)	Students' motivation and learning effort increase.

Source: Research data processed by the authors (2026).

The implementation of the teacher's sociopragmatic approach was consistently evident across various contexts of Indonesian language learning. Positive politeness strategies were predominantly used to build emotional closeness, create a comfortable learning atmosphere, and encourage active

student participation. Negative politeness strategies were applied proportionally in delivering instructions and reprimands, ensuring that students' freedom of action was maintained without diminishing the teacher's authority. These findings indicate that the sociopragmatic approach plays an important role in creating effective, polite, and character-supportive classroom interactions in elementary school settings.

2. The Role of Teachers' Sociopragmatic Politeness Strategies in Student Character Formation

Students' character formation was identified through their responses to the teacher's sociopragmatic approach in Indonesian language learning. Observation data show that the teacher's polite and contextual speech patterns influenced how students interacted verbally in the classroom. Students began to imitate the teacher's forms of expression when communicating with peers and when interacting with the teacher. Students' linguistic behavior reflected not only compliance but also mutual respect.

Students' linguistic politeness developed through continuous and repeated exposure to the teacher's consistent utterances. The teacher used non-face-threatening language, such as *"Please share your opinion; it is okay if it is different."* Such utterances provided a concrete model of respectful language use toward interlocutors. Students tended to use more polite expressions and avoided interrupting their peers. This pattern indicates that Indonesian language learning serves as a natural habituation space for linguistic politeness. Interview data reinforce this finding. The teacher explained, *"I deliberately use polite and encouraging language because students are more willing to express their ideas when they feel respected. I want them to experience respectful communication in class so that they naturally apply it when interacting with others."* This statement indicates that the use of positive politeness strategies was a conscious pedagogical decision aimed at cultivating students' linguistic politeness through continuous modeling.

Students' empathy also developed through the teacher's sociopragmatic approach, which emphasized understanding students' emotional conditions. The teacher often responded to students' mistakes using supportive language, such as *"It is okay, let's try again slowly."* Such utterances taught students to understand others' feelings without negative judgment. Students subsequently demonstrated empathetic behavior by offering verbal support when their peers made mistakes. This behavior indicates the transfer of empathetic values from teacher discourse to student-to-student interactions. The teacher confirmed this intention during the interview by stating, *"When students make mistakes, I avoid blaming them because I want them to understand that making mistakes is part of learning. If I respond calmly and respectfully, they usually treat their classmates in the same way."* This explanation strengthens the interpretation that empathetic communication was intentionally embedded in classroom interaction as part of character education.

The formation of respect toward teachers and peers was also evident through students' responses to the teacher's use of negative politeness strategies. Instructions and reprimands were delivered in non-coercive language, such as

"Let's pay attention for a moment so that everyone can understand." Such utterances maintained the teacher's authority without pressuring students. Students responded with compliant behavior accompanied by positive attitudes, not out of fear, but due to an understanding of instructional goals. This condition shows that respect emerges through communicative relationships that are equal and humanistic. Interview findings further revealed that the teacher intentionally preferred indirect instructions over direct commands. The teacher explained, *"I prefer giving directions politely rather than ordering students directly because they tend to cooperate better when they understand the purpose instead of feeling forced."* This statement confirms that negative politeness strategies were deliberately employed to maintain classroom discipline while preserving students' dignity.

Classroom interactions enriched by the sociopragmatic approach also contributed to a more harmonious classroom climate. Students appeared more willing to express opinions, listen to peers, and wait for their turn to speak. These communication patterns reflect the internalization of social character values integrated into Indonesian language learning. Character formation occurred implicitly through everyday language practices in the classroom. The teacher's sociopragmatic approach functioned as a bridge between academic objectives and character-building goals. This interpretation is supported by the teacher's interview statement: *"A comfortable classroom atmosphere encourages students to participate actively, respect different opinions, and communicate more confidently. Language is one of the most important tools for creating that atmosphere."* The interview demonstrates that the teacher consciously viewed language use as a means of fostering a positive learning environment alongside achieving instructional objectives.

Students' self-confidence also developed through the teacher's use of positive reinforcement strategies. The teacher provided appreciation through utterances such as *"Your answer is interesting; please continue."* Such reinforcement created opportunities for students to express ideas without fear or hesitation. Students demonstrated increased confidence in expressing opinions and greater participation in classroom discussions. This condition shows that respectful language use can foster self-confidence and motivation to engage in learning activities. The teacher further explained, *"Even when a student's answer is not entirely correct, I always appreciate the effort first because appreciation motivates students to continue participating without being afraid of making mistakes."* This interview finding strengthens the interpretation that positive reinforcement was intentionally used to develop students' confidence and learning motivation.

Cooperation and responsibility were also fostered through instructional language that encouraged collaborative activities. The teacher used expressions such as *"Discuss it with your group members before answering"* and *"Those who have finished may help their group members."* These utterances instilled habits of working together and helping one another in completing learning tasks. Students' responses showed more active group discussions and willingness to assist peers who experienced difficulties. This pattern indicates that the teacher's sociopragmatic approach can cultivate responsibility and solidarity in group learning activities. According to the interview, the teacher intentionally integrated collaborative expressions into classroom interaction. The teacher

stated, *"I encourage students to discuss and help one another because learning is not only about completing tasks but also about developing responsibility and teamwork."* This explanation confirms that collaborative language was deliberately employed to strengthen students' social responsibility.

Tolerance, patience, and social care were also developed through communicative practices emphasizing respect for others. The teacher used utterances such as *"Your friend has a different opinion, let's listen first," "Let's wait for our turn to speak,"* and *"Please help your classmate who is still struggling."* These utterances taught students to accept different viewpoints, respect speaking turns, and show concern for peers in need. Students demonstrated more orderly communication behavior, willingness to listen to others' opinions, and increased mutual assistance. These findings indicate that the teacher's sociopragmatic approach plays a role in fostering tolerance, patience, and social care through everyday classroom interaction. Interview data also revealed that the teacher intentionally used these expressions to build inclusive classroom communication. The teacher explained, *"I remind students to listen, wait for their turn, and appreciate different opinions because these habits are important not only in the classroom but also in their daily social lives."* This statement strengthens the interpretation that sociopragmatic strategies functioned as a medium for internalizing broader social values through routine classroom interaction.

Interview data with the teacher strengthen the observational findings regarding the role of the sociopragmatic approach in student character formation. The teacher recognizes that language has a direct impact on students' attitudes and behavior. This awareness encourages the teacher to choose utterances that are not only instructionally effective but also morally educative. As the teacher explained, *"Every sentence I use in class is intended not only to deliver the lesson but also to teach students how to communicate respectfully with others."* This statement indicates that character formation is an intentional part of pedagogical practice. The sociopragmatic approach becomes a reflective medium for continuously developing students' character.

The following table presents the results of the analysis of the role of the teacher's sociopragmatic approach in shaping student character during Indonesian language learning. The data were obtained from classroom interaction observations, including teachers' speech acts in various learning contexts. Each utterance was analyzed based on the politeness strategy used and students' responses as indicators of character development. This table illustrates the relationship between teachers' language practices and the development of students' character values, such as linguistic politeness, empathy, respect, self-confidence, cooperation, responsibility, tolerance, patience, and social care in the classroom.

Table 2. The Role of Teachers' Sociopragmatic Approach in Shaping Students' Character

No.	Character Aspect	Teacher's Utterance	Politeness Strategy	Students' Response
1	Linguistic politeness	"Please express your opinion using good and polite language."	Positive Politeness	Students speak in an orderly manner and use polite language.

2	Empathy	"It is okay if you are still making mistakes; we are learning together."	Positive Politeness	Students show mutual support.
3	Respect	"Let's listen to the friend who is speaking."	Negative Politeness	Students respect speaking turns and do not interrupt.
4	Self-confidence	"Your answer is good; try to explain it further."	Positive Politeness	Students become more confident in expressing their opinions.
5	Communicative discipline	"Let's focus for a moment so everyone can understand."	Negative Politeness	Students follow instructions and maintain classroom order.
6	Responsibility	"Those who have finished may help their group members."	Positive Politeness	Students show responsibility and initiative.
7	Cooperation	"Discuss it together before giving your answer."	Positive Politeness	Students actively discuss and collaborate.
8	Tolerance	"Opinions may differ; let's listen to each other."	Positive Politeness	Students accept and respect differences.
9	Patience	"Let's wait for our turn to speak."	Negative Politeness	Students are able to wait patiently for their turn.
10	Social care	"Please help your classmate who is still experiencing difficulties."	Positive Politeness	Students show care for their peers.

Based on the table, it can be understood that the teacher's sociopragmatic approach plays an important role in shaping students' character through communication practices that are consistently implemented in the classroom. The positive and negative politeness strategies used by the teacher do not merely function as tools for managing classroom interaction, but also as a medium for internalizing character values. Students' responses indicate that contextual and polite teacher utterances are able to foster linguistic politeness, empathy, respect, and social responsibility. The sociopragmatic approach can therefore be used as a medium for character formation in Indonesian language learning at the elementary school level.

DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of the Sociopragmatic Approach in Indonesian Language Learning

The implementation of the teacher's sociopragmatic approach in Indonesian language learning demonstrates the use of language that considers students' social context, emotional conditions, and cognitive development. Rather than merely delivering instructional content, the teacher adjusts utterances according to classroom situations and communicative purposes. Utterances such as *"Good morning, children. Today we will learn together in a relaxed way"* (Obs.1) and *"Who is ready to learn today? Let's begin slowly; there is no need to be afraid of making mistakes"* (Obs.2) illustrate how language is intentionally used to establish a psychologically safe and supportive learning environment. The dominance of positive politeness strategies shown in Table 1 indicates that greetings, praise, invitations, and inclusive expressions function not only to reduce social distance but also to encourage students' active participation in classroom interaction.

Positive politeness is further reflected in verbal appreciation such as "*Your answer is correct, and your explanation is also good*" (Obs.4), which strengthens students' confidence and motivation to participate in learning. Meanwhile, negative politeness appears through indirect directives and gentle reprimands, including "*Could you please read it slowly?*" (Obs.3) and "*Let's focus for a moment*" (Obs.5). These utterances allow the teacher to maintain classroom discipline while preserving students' autonomy and self-esteem. The variation of expressive and directive speech acts demonstrates that teacher language simultaneously fulfills instructional and interpersonal functions.

The findings indicate that language serves not merely as a communication tool but also as a pedagogical medium for creating meaningful classroom interaction. This finding supports Hoerudin (2022) and Kurniawan and Rambe (2024), who argue that polite language interaction facilitates the internalization of students' values and character. Similar findings were reported by Dewi et al. (2019), Latrech and Alazzawie (2022), and Agustin and Yarmi (2025), who emphasize that context-based communication and positive politeness contribute to a supportive classroom climate and meaningful learning experiences. From a pragmatic perspective, the findings also reinforce Leech's (1983) politeness principle and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, which explain that politeness strategies maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships while supporting instructional effectiveness. Specifically, negative politeness minimizes imposition on interlocutors while preserving their freedom of action (Brown & Levinson, 1987), thereby promoting classroom discipline without generating resistance. These findings are also consistent with Luh et al. (2023), Mahmudi et al. (2021), Syamsuri and Bur (2022), and Amaruddin et al. (2020), who conclude that contextual and respectful teacher communication creates conducive learning environments while strengthening students' communicative behavior.

Furthermore, the implementation of the sociopragmatic approach supports innovations in Indonesian language learning. Meaningful interaction supported by polite communication enhances the effectiveness of collaborative, project-based, and technology-assisted learning (Agustin & Yarmi, 2025; Rambe et al., 2023; Wijayanti et al., 2023). Language and literature learning also function as media for transmitting social and cultural values (Al-Ma'ruf et al., 2024; Nugrahani & Al-Ma'ruf, 2019). The integration of local wisdom into literacy learning strengthens students' understanding of character values rooted in their daily experiences (Nugrahani & Al-Ma'ruf, 2020), while local wisdom-based Problem-Based Learning promotes responsibility and cooperation (Nugrahani & Suwanto, 2025). The effectiveness of these instructional practices can be monitored through data-based evaluation methods such as the SMART approach (Oktavianti et al., 2019). These findings suggest that the sociopragmatic approach provides a comprehensive pedagogical framework integrating language, culture, learning innovation, and character education.

2. The Role of Teachers' Politeness Strategies in Shaping Students' Character

The findings demonstrate that teachers' politeness strategies play a significant role in shaping students' linguistic politeness, empathy, and respect through repeated classroom interaction. Observation data show that students gradually imitate the teacher's polite expressions when communicating with both teachers and classmates. The consistent use of non-face-threatening language encourages students to express opinions politely, respect different viewpoints, avoid interrupting others, and communicate more confidently. These interaction patterns indicate that character formation occurs naturally through continuous language habituation rather than through explicit moral instruction.

The teacher's use of supportive utterances, such as *"It is okay, let's try again slowly,"* encourages students to understand others' feelings and respond empathetically when classmates experience learning difficulties. Similarly, indirect instructions such as *"Let's pay attention for a moment so that everyone can understand"* cultivate respect toward teachers and peers without relying on coercive authority. Expressions encouraging collaboration, including *"Discuss it with your group members before answering"* and *"Those who have finished may help their group members,"* also foster responsibility, cooperation, tolerance, patience, and social care during classroom activities. Observation data indicate that students become more willing to participate in discussions, appreciate different opinions, and assist classmates experiencing difficulties.

These findings support the perspective that repeated sociopragmatic interaction functions as a mechanism for character development. Mustoip et al. (2023), Ermawati (2020), Farizki et al. (2023), Huda et al. (2025), and Al-Ma'ruf et al. (2024) similarly argue that students' character develops through continuous language habituation and meaningful social interaction in school. Leech's (1983) politeness principle further explains that appropriate language use facilitates the internalization of communicative norms emphasizing empathy, respect, and responsibility. Comparable findings were reported by Khoiriyah et al. (2024), who found that integrating character education into elementary school subjects strengthens discipline, collaboration, and respectful behavior through everyday classroom communication.

The effectiveness of these strategies is reinforced by the teacher's role as a linguistic and moral model. Observation data show that students frequently imitate the teacher's communication style (Obs.6), confirming that teacher language functions not only as instructional discourse but also as an example of desirable social behavior. This finding is consistent with Dewi et al. (2019) and Pratama et al. (2026), who emphasize that teachers serve as the primary agents of character development through daily communicative practices. The successful implementation of this approach is supported by teachers' competence in applying politeness strategies, positive school culture, and consistent communicative habits (Kurniawan & Rambe, 2024; Agustin & Yarmi, 2025). However, differences in students' pragmatic competence and external influences, including family environments and social media, remain challenges in maintaining polite language habituation (Amaruddin et al., 2020). Overall, the

findings confirm that teachers' positive and negative politeness strategies contribute to the development of linguistic politeness, empathy, respect, confidence, responsibility, and cooperation, demonstrating that Indonesian language learning serves not only academic purposes but also continuous character formation through meaningful sociopragmatic interaction (Hoerudin, 2022; Kurniawan & Rambe, 2024; Syamsuri & Bur, 2023).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study demonstrates that the sociopragmatic approach in Indonesian language learning creates meaningful classroom interactions while supporting elementary students' character development. Teachers employ positive and negative politeness strategies to establish a comfortable, inclusive, and participatory learning environment. Language functions not only as a medium of instruction but also as a means of internalizing social values through contextual communication.

The findings indicate that this approach promotes students' linguistic politeness, empathy, respect, self-confidence, cooperation, responsibility, tolerance, patience, and social care through repeated interaction and teacher modeling. Teachers' communicative competence and a positive school environment support the effectiveness of this approach, whereas differences in students' pragmatic abilities and external influences remain challenges. Indonesian language learning therefore serves as a strategic medium for integrating language instruction with character education.

Teachers should consistently apply sociopragmatic principles in classroom interaction. Schools, curriculum developers, teacher education institutions, and parents need to collaborate in strengthening pragmatic competence and fostering a culture of polite communication that supports students' character development.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future studies may expand this line of inquiry through comparative research across schools with different characteristics and contexts, as well as by employing mixed-methods approaches to measure the impact of sociopragmatic strategies on students' character development. Further research could also focus on developing sociopragmatic-based Indonesian language learning models integrated with deep learning principles and the Graduate Profile framework. In addition, future investigations may explore the use of digital technologies in sociopragmatic instruction, examine the long-term effects of sociopragmatic approaches on students' character development through longitudinal studies, integrate local wisdom and multicultural education values into language learning, and evaluate the effectiveness of various teacher politeness strategies in enhancing students' social character, learning motivation, and communication skills at the elementary school level.

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