

How do English for Nusantara textbooks represent identity and politeness to develop students' sociolinguistic competence?

Bagaimana buku English for Nusantara merepresentasikan identitas dan kesantunan untuk mengembangkan kompetensi sosiolinguistik siswa?

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Abstract

This study examined how the *English for Nusantara* textbooks represent identity and politeness in fostering students' sociolinguistic competence across multiple grade levels. Using a qualitative case study design with content analysis, the study analyzed 93 identity-related words and phrases from all texts and 208 politeness-related utterances drawn exclusively from scripted dialogues. The findings indicate that the textbooks promote national identity through the incorporation of local names, places, foods, address forms, and other cultural references into English discourse. In terms of politeness, the textbooks contain 19 bald-on-record, 170 positive politeness, 18 negative politeness, and 1 off-record strategy, with positive politeness emerging as the dominant strategy that fosters solidarity, approval, and cooperation in peer interactions. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the *English for Nusantara* textbooks represent learners' sociolinguistic competence through language identity and politeness. However, this representation remains partial and requires further development to more comprehensively capture uniquely Indonesian identities and a broader range of politeness strategies. This highlights the need for more comprehensive cultural content and more varied interactional contexts, encompassing both formal and informal interactions that reflect authentic language use.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana buku teks *English for Nusantara* merepresentasikan identitas dan kesantunan dalam membangun kompetensi Sosiolinguistik peserta didik pada berbagai jenjang kelas. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif dan analisis isi, penelitian ini menganalisis 93 kata dan frasa yang merepresentasikan identitas dari seluruh teks serta 208 tuturan yang mencerminkan strategi kesantunan, yang diambil secara eksklusif dari skrip dialog. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa buku teks tersebut mempromosikan identitas nasional melalui pengintegrasian nama lokal, tempat, makanan, bentuk sapaan, serta referensi budaya lainnya ke dalam wacana bahasa Inggris. Dari segi kesantunan, buku teks ini memuat 19 strategi *bald-on-record*, 170 strategi kesantunan positif, 18 strategi kesantunan negatif, dan 1 strategi *off-record*, dengan kesantunan positif muncul sebagai strategi yang dominan dalam membangun solidaritas, persetujuan, dan kerja sama dalam interaksi antarteman. Secara keseluruhan, temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa buku teks *English for Nusantara* merepresentasikan kompetensi sosiolinguistik peserta didik melalui identitas bahasa dan kesantunan. Namun, representasi tersebut masih bersifat parsial dan memerlukan pengembangan lebih lanjut agar dapat secara lebih komprehensif merefleksikan identitas Indonesia yang khas serta ragam strategi kesantunan yang lebih luas. Temuan ini menegaskan perlunya pengayaan konten budaya dan variasi konteks interaksional yang lebih beragam, mencakup interaksi formal dan informal yang mencerminkan penggunaan bahasa secara autentik.

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A. Introduction

Sociolinguistic competence has emerged as a key focus in EFL instruction to ensure that students are equipped for contextually appropriate communication. Within the concept of Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum, learning is directed at developing learners' independence in actively exploring and building knowledge through engagement with authentic real-life contexts and social processes, particularly social interaction (Sopiansyah & Masruroh, 2022). In this context, state-issued textbooks, particularly the *English for Nusantara* series, play a strategic role in mediating sociocultural norms, identity, and appropriate language use by providing learners with contextualized models of social interaction that support independent meaning-making.

Building on Hymes' concept that effective communication requires not only grammatical accuracy but also sensitivity to cultural norms, Dewaele & Jean-Marc (2004) defines sociolinguistic competence as the ability to identify and generate socially acceptable speech in a given situation. In line with this, Mede & Dikilitaş (2015) point out that language learners may produce grammatically correct utterances that are understandable to native speakers, yet still fail to convey the intended social meaning within the target culture. This highlights the importance of incorporating sociocultural knowledge into language instruction to help learners navigate the social dimensions of communication.

In EFL contexts such as Indonesia, where authentic communicative exposure is limited, textbooks become a crucial resource for shaping learners' linguistic awareness and cultural understanding. Textbooks play a vital role in the educational process, as they facilitate teaching and learning for both instructors and students (Intan et al., 2021). As Weninger & Kiss (2013) argue, textbooks are not neutral but ideological artifacts that reflect and transmit values, beliefs, and social identities. Koroğlu & Elban (2020) and Atar & Erdem (2020) further emphasize that textbooks should not only equip learners with the linguistic and cultural competencies necessary for global communication but also foster the development of their national identity. In line with this, national identity can be understood as a socially constructed concept closely related educational practices and curriculum. It is shaped through the transmission of "national literacies"—a set of knowledge, values, and cultural narratives that cultivate a sense of national belonging and consciousness among students (Guichot-Reina & De la Torre-Sierra, 2025).

However, previous studies on both Indonesian and international English textbooks indicate that sociolinguistic competence is often only partially represented in terms of cultural registers and the representation of informal and formal social interactions across various contexts. Textbook dialogues frequently lack natural variation and fail to reflect appropriate contextual use (Yuen, 2011), while insufficient attention is given to intercultural sensitivity (Aliakbari, 2004). In addition, cultural content is commonly limited to surface-level representations, offering minimal opportunities for learners to engage critically with deeper cultural meanings (Shin et al., 2011). This limitation is particularly problematic, as the sociolinguistic value of textbooks is closely linked to their capacity to promote intercultural communicative competence (Atar & Erdem, 2020).

In the Indonesian context, government-issued textbooks are expected to simultaneously promote national values and foster global communicative competence. To achieve this, essential components of sociolinguistic competence, particularly language identity, should be meaningfully incorporated into textbook content in order to reflect authentic language use and learners' sociocultural realities. In relation to multiculturalism and cultural diversity, textbooks are also expected to provide equitable representation of various cultural backgrounds to cultivate a strong sense of national identity, as emphasized by Yumarnamto et al. (2020). Similarly, previous studies by Tyas (2017), Riadini & Cahyono (2021) and Roza et al. (2021) underscore the importance of aligning textbook content with learners' sociocultural environments to enhance relevance and inclusivity in English language education.

Drawing from Coupland (2007), language identity is not fixed but performed dynamically through social interaction and stylistic choices. This performative view aligns with Holmes's (2013) emphasis on how individuals reflect and shape their social identities through language use. In this

regard, identity plays a crucial role in shaping language use and communicative behavior, as language serves not only as a vehicle for information exchange but also as a marker of individual and group identity, reflecting one's cultural, ethnic, gender, and social affiliations (Eslami et al., 2023). In this context, Cummins (2015) emphasizes the importance of developing students' awareness of intercultural education by affirming their linguistic identities. He argues that this orientation is strengthened when instruction includes not only linguistic but also cultural knowledge, allowing students to engage with their own sociocultural realities. Teaching through an intercultural lens, therefore, fosters both academic achievement and deeper sociolinguistic awareness among students in multilingual classrooms.

Politeness is another critical aspect of sociolinguistic competence. Mede & Dikilitaş (2015) emphasize the importance of developing learners' sociolinguistic competence by introducing key concepts such as politeness. In line with this, Holmes, (2013) points out that sociolinguistic competence also involves the ability to use language for various communicative purposes across different contexts, including knowing how to speak effectively and politely to different people depending on the social situation. Brown & Levinson's (1987) framework remains a key theoretical model. It classifies politeness into four types: bald-on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. Although widely employed in pragmatic analyses, this theory is less commonly utilized to examine how language use reflects sociolinguistic factors like power relations, group identity, and social distance. Brown & Levinson (1987) also emphasize the role of sociocultural variables such as power, distance, and ranking of imposition, which are particularly relevant in teacher-student and peer interactions found in school textbooks. Textbooks play a vital role in embedding politeness as a fundamental dimension of language education, thereby fostering students' understanding of appropriate communicative behavior across sociocultural settings (Shooshtari et al., 2017).

Previous studies on politeness strategies in Indonesian EFL textbooks have predominantly employed a pragmatic orientation, as seen in the works of Erlinda et al. (2023) and Wahyuni et al. (2024), which primarily focus on identifying and classifying types of politeness strategies. In contrast, the present study adopts a sociolinguistic perspective, positioning politeness as a socially embedded practice that is closely intertwined with identity construction, power relations, and culturally situated norms of interaction. With regard to identity, research on Indonesian EFL textbooks has primarily examined the representation of cultural values and national identity. Studies by Sari & Ma'rifatulloh (2024), Ramadhani & Refnaldi (2024), Nugroho et al. (2024), and Silviana & Triastuti (2025) focus on how cultural elements are embedded in textbooks, with a strong emphasis on moral values and character education. However, these studies tend to underexplore linguistic features that function as sociolinguistic markers of identity, such as personal names, address forms, and other cultural references. In addition, most previous studies on the *English for Nusantara* textbooks have focused on a single grade level, typically Grade VII or Grade VIII, which limits the scope of analysis and constrains the ability to trace systematic patterns and developmental representations of identity and politeness across the entire textbook series. Moreover, prior research has not sufficiently examined how the representation of identity and politeness in textbooks enhances students' sociolinguistic competence in authentic social interactions.

This research responds to the identified gaps by drawing on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and Coupland's (2007) view of style as the performance of identity. Unlike pragmatic models that focus on speech act function, this approach views politeness and identity as socially embedded, shaped by power, group affiliation, and local values. Coupland (2007) emphasizes that speakers use language variation and stylistic choices to construct social identities and relationships, making language a performative tool rather than a neutral medium. Through an analysis of *English for Nusantara* textbooks across Grades VII, VIII, and IX, this study examines how identity and politeness are represented to foster Indonesian learners' sociolinguistic competence.

B. Method

A descriptive qualitative case study design was used in this study, and content analysis was used to examine data. Mayring (2014) defines qualitative content analysis as a systematic and rule-guided approach to analyzing textual material, in which categories are developed and applied to segments of text in order to identify patterns and interpret meaning within a clearly defined communicative context. The process allows researchers to draw inferences about the underlying communicative functions and sociocultural messages embedded in the text.

The data used in this study were derived from three English textbooks titled *English for Nusantara* for Grades VII, VIII, and IX, written by Damayanti et al. (2022) and published by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology through the Center for Books and Curriculum (*Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset dan Teknologi Badan Standar, Kurikulum dan Asesmen Pendidikan-Pusat Pendidikan-Pusat Perbukuan*). These textbooks are publicly accessible and downloadable from the official site: <https://static.buku.kemdikbud.go.id>. They were selected because they are mandated for national use under the Kurikulum Merdeka and reflect current pedagogical directions and sociocultural expectations.

The data consisted of linguistic units representing language identity and politeness. Language identity data comprised 93 lexical items in the form of words or phrases appearing in texts and dialogues that indexed local or national identity, such as personal names, places, foods, address terms, and other culturally specific references. Repeated occurrences of the same identity item across different texts were counted only once. In addition, politeness data consisted of 208 interactional utterances drawn exclusively from scripted dialogues and comic-strip conversations, while politeness features appearing in non-dialogic texts were excluded from the analysis.

The data were examined using content analysis following the concepts proposed by Mayring (2014), which emphasizes a structured, rule-based, and theory-driven approach to interpreting textual data. The process began with determining the relevant material and analyzing its context of origin, particularly focusing on the sociocultural background of the *English for Nusantara* textbooks. Formal characteristics of the material, including textual structure and communicative function, were examined to identify how language use reflects sociocultural interactions. Guided by Coupland's (2007) theory of language identity and Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, the analysis involved systematic categorization and segmentation of data into meaningful units. These units were then segmented thematically and quantified according to their occurrence within each category and strategy, and subsequently interpreted based on the theoretical framework employed. This technique made it possible to fully comprehend how the textbooks encourage sociolinguistic competence through contextual language use.

C. Results and Discussion

The findings first highlight the representation of language identity through several categories, including local personal names, local place names, food references, address terms, and other culturally specific references. Among these categories, local personal names emerge as the predominant identity resource employed in the textbook. The results also show the existence of four politeness strategies: positive, negative, bald on record, and off-record. Among these strategies, the most dominant is positive politeness., indicating a strong emphasis on solidarity and interpersonal closeness in the textbook interactions. Detailed results are presented in the following sections.

1. Language Identity

Table 1. Frequency of Language Identity in the *English for Nusantara* Textbook

Categories of Language Identity	Frequency			Subtotal
	Grade VII	Grade VIII	Grade IX	
Local Personal Names	11	14	12	37
Local place names	10	4	9	23
Food References	6	1	3	10
Address Terms	2	4	2	8
Other culturally specific references (animal, flower, folktale, musical instrument, traditional games)	-	8	7	15
Total	29	31	33	93

The analysis identified a total of 93 identity-related linguistic items across the *English for Nusantara* textbooks, consisting of 29 items in Grade VII, 31 in Grade VIII, and 33 in Grade IX. Local personal names emerged as the most frequent category, with 37 occurrences, followed by local place names (23), other culturally specific references such as animals, folktales, musical instruments, and traditional games (15), food references (10), and address terms (8).

Table 2. Representation of Language Identity in the *English for Nusantara* Textbooks

No.	Page	Topic	Textbooks	Example of Representation of Language Identity
1.	28-30	Characters	Grade VII	Posma Hutasuhut, Andre Tanudjaja, Monita Turangan, Made Wirawan, Ida Ayu Komang, Edo Salosa
2.	123, 192, 194	Love our world	Grade VIII	a. Two years ago, I had a tour of Kota Tua or Jakarta's Old City. b. When did Pak Rahmansyah like to come down to Sungai Lestari?
3.	89, 99	Culinary and me	Grade VII	a. Monita: So, what's the special lunch? b. Monita's father: They're rice, rica-rica chicken c. My favorite meal is Nasi Goreng. It's savory. It's a bit greasy.
4.	192, 126, 18, 192	Kindness and Friendship Begins with Me Love our world	Grade VIII	a. Did it rain for hours, kak Galang? b. Mbok Sрни gave the child the best possible upbringing, forgetting the important promise she made to Buto Ijo. c. Bu Ayu teaches everyday. d. Ibu Posma cleans her house every week. e. When did Pak Rahmansyah like to come down to Sungai Lestari?
5.	25	Exploring Fauna of Indonesia	Grade IX	a. Monita: Bekantan is quite big. Its weight is about 6-22 kilograms, and its height is around 55 to 76 cm
	42	Celebrating	Grade VIII	b. Their singing was accompanied by traditional instruments like angklung, suling, and rebana.
	35	Independence Day		c. Galang: Dad, please tell me more about the Panjat Pinang. d. Monita: Did you win the krupuk race?
	125	Kindness Begin with Me		e. In a rage, Buto Ijo chases after Timun Mas.

The most frequently occurring category of language identity in the textbooks is local personal names, with 37 instances identified across the analyzed textbooks. An example can be seen in excerpt (1) with names such as Posma Hutasuhut, Andre Tanudjaja, Made Wirawan, and Ida Ayu Komang. They function as markers of language identity, indexing regional, ethnic, and gender affiliations that reflect Indonesia's cultural diversity. Coupland (2007) argues that identity is performed through linguistic choices shaped by broader socio-cultural frames such as ethnicity and gender. The use of culturally and gender-specific names in the textbook shows how identity is embedded in discourse and localized for learners. This aligns with Javadi et al. (2020) and Yumarnamto et al. (2020) who highlight the significance of representing ethnicity and gender in textbooks in a balanced and inclusive way, free from cultural bias.

Place names constitute another prominent indicator of language identity, accounting for 23 occurrences across the textbooks. An example can be seen in excerpt (2), where the inclusion of Indonesian terms such as Kota Tua, Kota Amuntai, and Sungai Lestari in English-language discourse reflects the performative construction of language identity. Rather than translating these toponyms, the textbook preserves them to index local culture and national belonging. According to Coupland, (2007) such linguistic choices are acts of identity that signal place-based affiliation.

Food names represent another category of language identity in the textbooks, comprising a total of 10 occurrences. An example can be seen in excerpt (3): the mention of foods such as *rica-rica* and *nasi goreng* reflects the performance of language identity through culturally specific lexical choices. As Coupland (2007) argues, identity is enacted through language, and here, retaining Indonesian food terms in English discourse signals cultural affiliation.

The textbooks also feature address terms as a form of language identity, with 8 occurrences. Excerpt (4) features Indonesian address terms such as *Pak*, *Bu*, *Mbok*, and *Kak*, which serve not only as polite expressions but also as markers of language identity that reflect cultural norms and social roles. Coupland (2007) highlights that such stylistic choices index social relationships and are shaped by socio-cultural frames like age and status. The textbook's use of these terms in English utterances, rather than replacing them with equivalents like "Mr." or "Mrs.," reflects a deliberate effort to maintain cultural authenticity. This supports Nugroho et al.'s (2024) view that incorporating culturally specific language promotes learners' sense of national identity and encourages critical engagement with local cultural markers.

Other culturally specific references also constitute a category of language identity, comprising 15 items identified in the Grade VIII and Grade IX textbooks. This category includes culturally specific terms for animals, musical instruments, folktales, and traditional games. In excerpt (5), the animal's name *Bekantan* reflects language identity through the inclusion of the culturally specific term *Bekantan*, an endemic primate of Kalimantan. Instead of using a generic term like "monkey," the use of *Bekantan* serves as a semiotic resource that indexes local ecological knowledge and national identity. Similarly, culturally specific musical instruments such as *Suling*, *Angklung*, and *Rebana*, as well as folktales such as *Timun Mas*, are incorporated in English discourse to represent Indonesian cultural identity. Furthermore, the use of traditional games such as *Panjat Pinang* and *Krupuk Race* reflects a deliberate strategy to embed Indonesian cultural identity within EFL materials. Rather than translating these terms, the textbook preserves them as stylistic acts of performed identity (Coupland, 2007) affirming learners' cultural background.

The analysis of language identity representation in the *English for Nusantara* textbooks reinforces Coupland's (2007) theory that identity is enacted through linguistic choices that convey social affiliation and cultural positioning. Coupland also explains that language use is influenced by socio-cultural framing at the macro level, such as ethnicity, age, gender which are central components of the sociolinguistic structure of a community. These social categories determine which linguistic forms are legitimized and meaningful within a given discourse, thus actively shaping how identity is constructed and perceived in communication.

The findings reveal recurring culturally embedded elements, including local personal names, places, food names, address terms, and other culturally specific references, which function as markers of language identity. This pattern is consistent with earlier studies (e.g., Tyas, 2017; Riadini & Cahyono, 2021; Roza et al., 2021) that emphasize the role of local cultural references in constructing linguistic identity within EFL materials. The findings also support Javadi et al. (2020) and Cummins (2015) who argue that culturally relevant materials enhance language learning by connecting with learners' sociocultural backgrounds. Furthermore, as noted by Guichot-Reina & De la Torre-Sierra (2025) national identity is shaped through educational content that symbolically includes or excludes individuals, positioning textbooks as key instruments in fostering cultural awareness and belonging.

2. Politeness Strategies

Table 3. Frequency of Politeness Strategies in the *English for Nusantara* Textbook

Politeness Strategies	Sub Type of Politeness Strategies	Frequency			Subtotal for Sub-Strategy
		Grade VII	Grade VIII	Grade IX	
Bald on Record	Task Orientation	1	6	9	16
	Welcoming	1	-	-	1
	Metaphorical urgency for emphasis	-	-	2	2
Positive Politeness	Notice, attend to hearer (interests, wants, needs, goods)	4	3	4	11
	Exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with hearer)	8	6	10	24
	Use in-group identity markers.	9	8	-	17
	Avoid disagreement	3	15	28	46
	Presuppose/raise/assert common ground	6	2	2	10
	Include both speaker and hearer in the activity	8	12	14	34
	Assume or assert reciprocity	11	6	9	26
	Give gifts to hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation)	-	1	1	2
Negative Politeness	Be conventionally indirect	3	1	6	10
	Giving deference	1	4	2	7
	Apologize	-	-	1	1
Off Record	Displace the hearer	1	-	-	1
Total		56	64	88	208

The analysis identified a total of 208 politeness-related utterances across the *English for Nusantara* textbooks, comprising 56 utterances in Grade VII, 64 in Grade VIII, and 88 in Grade IX. Across all grade levels, positive politeness strategies were the most prevalent, accounting for 170 instances, followed by bald-on-record strategies with 19 occurrences and negative politeness strategies with 18 occurrences. Off-record strategies were minimally represented, with only one instance identified.

Table 4. Representation of Bald on Record Strategy in the *English for Nusantara* textbooks

No.	Page	Topic	Textbooks	Example of Representation of Bald on record strategy
6.	60	Exploring Fauna of Indonesia	Grade IX	Pak Edo Salosa: Get your VR goggles, guys.
7.	150	Home Sweet Home	Grade VII	Come in. Sit down in the living room!
8.	26	Exploring Fauna of Indonesia	Grade IX	Monita: Hey, look... The book says Bekantan is a Proboscis monkey.

The analyzed data demonstrate the use of bald on record politeness strategies across different interactional contexts, with task-oriented directives emerging as the most frequent type (16 utterances) across all three textbooks. An example is presented in excerpt (6), where a teacher employs a task-oriented directive such as “Get your VR goggles, guys.” This utterance functions as an instructional directive, and in this context, institutional authority legitimizes the use of unmitigated direct commands, demonstrating how social power relations and contextual norms shape the appropriateness of directness in educational discourse. In contrast, welcoming bald on record strategies, as illustrated in excerpt (7) by an utterance such as “Come in. Sit down in the living room!” occur only twice in Book VII. This peer interaction is characterized by equal social status and minimal power distance, rendering direct imperatives socially acceptable and indicative of friendliness. Metaphorical bald on record strategies, including attention-getting expressions such as “hey, look.” in excerpt (8), are the least frequent. It appears only twice in Book IX, and it functions to convey urgency and communicative efficiency in informal peer interactions that prioritize solidarity over potential face-threatening concerns.

Table 5. Representation of Positive Politeness Strategy in the *English for Nusantara* Textbooks

No.	Page	Topic	Textbooks	Example of Representation of Positive Politeness strategy
9.	87	Culinary and Me	Grade VII	Galang: What are you having? Monita: I'm having banana fritters. Would you like to have some?
10.	39	Celebrating Independence Day	Grade VIII	Pipit: Hi, everyone, how was the game? Monita: It was awesome!
11.	240	Embrace yourself	Grade VIII	Sinta: Hey, girls. I just overheard.
12.	53	About Me	Grade VII	Monita: See you later, guys.
13.	134	Love Our World	Grade VIII	Galang: How about we bring our own container next time? Monita: Good idea, Andre! Let's do that.
14.	215	Upcycling used materials	Grade IX	Monita: What I'm trying to say is that we can create something from the cap, and we can create something else from the bottle. Galang: Hey, I think we can try to use Monita's idea.
15.	53	About Me	Grade VII	Galang: You know, we can play mobile games together.
16.	127	Upcycling Used Materials	Grade IX	Monita: Well, this fish is made of a circular plastic cap. The cap is the head and the body of the fish. There is a toy eye on the cap. The body of the fish is also painted. The tail is made of triangular paper. Made: I see.
17.	150	Love Our World	Grade VIII	Monita: You're right. Let's keep on doing it. It's not going to be easy. Pipit: Yes, but we must not give up!
18.	277	Digital Life	Grade IX	Galang: Alright. Thank you Monita. Monita: Anytime
19.	89	Taking Trips	Grade IX	Monita: Andre, you did not join the trip to Lestari National Park, did you? Andre: No. I had a stomachache. Monita: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

The analysis shows that positive politeness is realized through strategies that foreground attention to the hearer's (H) interests and needs, which appears in 11 utterances across the analyzed textbooks. An example is provided in excerpt (9), where Monita's utterance, "I'm having banana fritters. Would you like to have some?" functions as an offer that responds directly to Galang's prior question, "What are you having?" This response not only provides relevant information but also demonstrates attentiveness to Galang's potential desires and comfort. From a sociolinguistic perspective, such exchanges reflect everyday politeness practices among adolescents, in which food-sharing functions as a relational resource for expressing solidarity and friendliness, thereby supporting the development of sociolinguistic competence through contextualized language use.

The exaggerate (interest, approval, sympathy with the hearer) strategy is evident in the textbooks, comprising 24 utterances identified across the analyzed textbooks. This strategy is employed as a means of expressing admiration, approval, and supportive attitudes toward the hearer. An example is provided in excerpt (10), where Monita's utterance, "It was awesome!" conveys heightened approval. Other expressions such as "wow," "yeay," "amazing," "nice," and "cool" are also observed. These instances demonstrate how positive politeness strategies enhance to the development of sociolinguistic competence by encouraging affirmation, approval, and respectful communication within peer interactions.

A total of 9 utterances in Book VII and 8 utterances in Book VIII is identified as instances of positive politeness strategies employing "in-group identity markers." In excerpt (11), the utterance "Hey, girls. I just overheard," spoken by Sinta to Monita and Pipit, illustrates the use of girls as a collective identity marker that indexes in-group membership and familiarity among peers. Similarly, in excerpt (12), Monita's utterance "See you later, guys," addressed to Andre and Galang, employs "guys" as an identity marker that emphasizes equality and solidarity in peer interaction. In addition to these address terms, the textbooks also include familial and relational identity markers such as "mom," "dad," "son," "kak," and "dear," which index specific social roles and varying degrees of intimacy within family and close interpersonal relationships.

The use of positive politeness strategies, specifically "avoid disagreement" through mitigated suggestion forms, emerges as the most dominant strategy across the three textbooks, accounting for a total of 46 utterances. In the findings, Excerpt (13), "How about we bring our own container

next time?” and Excerpt (14), “Hey, I think we can try to use Monita’s idea,” illustrate this strategy. The expressions “how about” and “I think” function as hedging devices that soften suggestions and invite agreement rather than impose opinions. Such strategies help maintain harmony and cooperation by minimizing potential conflict, thereby contributing to learners’ sociolinguistic competence through respectful and collaborative peer interaction.

Ten utterances in the textbooks reflect the use of the positive politeness sub-strategy concerned with establishing shared common ground. An example is provided in excerpt (15), “You know, we can play mobile games together,” spoken by Galang to Monita and Andre. The discourse marker “you know” functions to presuppose shared knowledge and mutual understanding, thereby emphasizing in-group membership and interpersonal closeness. Similarly, in excerpt (16), Made’s use of the expression “I see” in response to Monita’s explanation of the bottle-cap fish functions to affirm shared understanding and alignment with the hearer’s perspective. Collectively, these expressions contribute to the development of sociolinguistic competence by fostering solidarity, mutual engagement, and cooperative interaction among peers.

The textbooks contain 34 instances in which positive politeness is constructed through shared participation between the speaker and the hearer. In excerpt (17), this strategy is observed in an exchange between Monita and Pipit, in which Monita states, “You’re right. Let’s keep on doing it. It’s not going to be easy,” followed by Pipit’s response, “Yes, but we must not give up!” Monita’s use of “let’s” and Pipit’s inclusive pronoun “we” function to involve both participants in a joint effort and shared commitment. These inclusive forms reduce the force of individual obligation and promote collective motivation, thereby reinforcing solidarity and cooperation in peer interaction.

The “assume or assert reciprocity” strategy occurs in 26 utterances across the textbooks. In excerpt (18), Galang’s response, “Alright. Thank you, Monita,” following Monita’s assistance in checking information from a reliable website, and her reply, “Anytime,” reinforce a positive reciprocal dynamic through expressions of gratitude and willingness to help. These utterances demonstrate cooperative interaction and solidarity, which are characteristic of peer relationships, where mutual assistance and politeness contribute to the maintenance of respect and inclusive communication.

Two utterances identified in the Grade VIII and Grade IX textbooks reflect the use of the positive politeness strategy “Give gifts to the hearer (goods, sympathy, understanding, cooperation).” In excerpt (19), Monita responds to Andre’s explanation about his absence from the school trip by saying, “Oh, I’m sorry to hear that.” This utterance exemplifies the “Give gifts to the hearer” strategy in the form of expressed sympathy. By conveying concern, Monita offers emotional support and acknowledges Andre’s discomfort, thereby reinforcing interpersonal closeness and solidarity.

Table 6. Representation of Negative Politeness Strategy in the *English for Nusantara* textbooks

No.	Page	Topic	Textbooks	Example of Representation of Negative Politeness strategy
20.	230	This is my school	Grade VII	Pipit : Monita, can you tell me where the teachers’ room is?
21.	178	Journey to Fantasy Worlds	Grade IX	Monita: “Are you Prof. Mahmud?” asked Monita.
22.	274	Digital Life	Grade IX	Galang: Wow, there are so many websites that provide information about B.J. Habibie.... Hmmm... Which one should I choose? There are more than three million results here. Monita: Well, first you can check the date of the article. Galang: I’m sorry, but I’m not sure that I understand.

The textbooks represent 10 utterances that can be categorized as the negative politeness strategy “Be conventionally indirect.” In excerpt (20), utterances such as “Can you tell me where the teachers’ room is?” exemplify conventional indirectness. The use of the modal “can” does not function as a genuine polar question but rather as a conventionally indirect request, serving to soften the utterance and reduce the level of imposition compared to a direct command. This indirect form signals deference and respect for the hearer’s negative face. From a sociolinguistic

perspective, such an utterance is culturally appropriate in educational contexts, where polite and indirect requests are commonly employed to maintain harmonious interpersonal relations, even among peers.

The findings indicate that 7 utterances across the textbooks reflect the use of the negative politeness strategy “giving deference.” This strategy is typically employed in interactions involving unequal power relations or social distance. An example is provided in excerpt (21), where Monita asks, “Are you Prof. Mahmud?” The use of the professional title “Prof” functions as a deferential marker that acknowledges the addressee’s higher institutional status and expertise. By explicitly recognizing the hearer’s social position, the speaker minimizes potential imposition and demonstrates respect, thereby aligning with negative politeness norms in formal or hierarchical interactions.

The use of the negative politeness strategy “apologize” is identified in only one utterance in Book IX. In excerpt (22), Galang responds to Monita’s explanation by stating, “I’m sorry, but I’m not sure that I understand.” The apology mitigates the potential face-threatening act of admitting misunderstanding. By apologizing prior to expressing confusion, Galang shows deference and minimizes imposition on Monita’s negative face. This pattern reflects the tendency to preface potentially dispreferred or face-threatening responses with an apology in order to maintain social harmony.

Table 7. Representation of Off record Strategy in the *English for Nusantara* textbooks

No.	Page	Topic	Textbooks	Representation of off record strategy
23.	194	My school activities	Grade VII	Ibu Ida Ayu Komang: Students turn off your microphone

One utterance identified in Book VII reflects the use of an off-record politeness strategy, specifically “displace the hearer.” In Excerpt (23), the teacher states, “Students, turn off your microphone,” during an online class session in which Galang is heard mumbling and Monita is singing. Although the utterance is framed as a general instruction, it functions as an off-record strategy by indirectly targeting specific students. By employing the plural form “students” rather than addressing Galang and Monita directly, the teacher enables the intended addressees to infer the message without being explicitly singled out. This strategy serves to minimize face-threatening acts and reduce the risk of embarrassment in group settings. From a sociolinguistic perspective, such indirectness supports the maintenance of group harmony in educational contexts while allowing the teacher to preserve both institutional authority and positive relational dynamics with students.

Based on the findings, positive politeness strategies emerge as the most dominant type in the *English for Nusantara* textbooks. In line with Erlinda et al. (2023), the inclusion of appropriate politeness strategies in textbooks promotes efficient communication and aids students in forming constructive social relationships in English-speaking environments, including solidarity, sympathy, closeness, appreciation, approval, and cooperative communication. Furthermore, the *avoid disagreement* strategy is the most dominant sub-strategy of positive politeness, as it enables speakers to mitigate differences of opinion through hedging and indirect suggestions. Consistent with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) framework, this strategy functions to minimize face-threatening acts and preserve the hearer’s positive face, thereby reducing social distance and maintaining interpersonal harmony.

Negative politeness strategies are also identified in the *English for Nusantara* textbooks, although they occur less frequently than positive politeness strategies, with the most salient realizations found in conventionally indirect forms and the use of giving deference. These strategies are typically used to soften requests and show respect, reflecting an awareness of power relations and social sensitivity in line with cultural norms valuing indirectness and hierarchy. The use of honorifics such as *Bu*, *Pak*, and *Prof.* exemplify the giving deference strategy by acknowledging higher status and authority. This aligns with Holmes’s (2013) view of language as encoding power relations and interpersonal dynamics, as well as findings by Budiarti (2022) and Hadiwijaya et al.

(2021) on honorifics as culturally embedded markers of politeness. Through these forms, the textbooks model appropriate negative politeness strategies in English while simultaneously affirming the coexistence of English discourse with local sociolinguistic practices.

This study highlights previously underexplored strategies, including off-record strategies such as *displace hearer*, which are employed to maintain interpersonal harmony and avoid potential face threat or embarrassment. In addition, bald on record strategies such as task orientation, welcoming, and metaphorical urgency are identified as indexing social distance and power relations, particularly in peer interactions where familiarity permits directness and in teacher–student interactions where institutional authority legitimizes unmitigated directives. Unlike earlier studies that focus primarily on pragmatic classifications, this research examines how politeness choices are shaped by age, status, and social roles. It affirms, as Holmes (2013) and Coupland (2007) argue, that culturally aware and stylistically appropriate language enables learners to navigate diverse social interactions.

This study extends prior research by offering a deeper sociolinguistic analysis of *English for Nusantara*, showing how politeness strategies not only support effective communication but also reflect social hierarchy, cultural norms, and identity. This is in line with Eslami et al. (2023), who view politeness as a phenomenon rooted in sociocultural contexts, where individuals' strategies for expressing politeness are shaped by their social identities and culturally grounded interpretations of appropriate behavior. Consistent with Wahyuni et al. (2024), the study underscores the importance of adapting universal politeness theories to Indonesian cultural contexts, thereby providing a more nuanced and locally relevant account of how politeness is represented and internalized through educational textbooks. This emphasis aligns with the view that textbooks play a vital role in embedding politeness as a fundamental dimension of language education, contributing significantly to students' awareness of appropriate communicative behavior across diverse sociocultural settings (Shooshtari et al., 2017).

To sum up, the findings underscore the importance of embedding both language identity and politeness strategies in English textbooks. This study highlights the importance of textbooks in developing learners' sociolinguistic competence by mediating language use in the construction of local, social, and national identities, as well as in the negotiation of interpersonal relationships. Accordingly, English textbooks in Indonesia should incorporate richer and more culturally embedded representations of identity and politeness. Such development should reflect diverse local sociocultural contexts and authentic patterns of interaction, enabling learners to use English not only accurately but also appropriately across varied social situations.

D. Conclusion

To address the research questions, the findings indicate that the *English for Nusantara* textbooks represent learners' sociolinguistic competence through two central dimensions: language identity and politeness strategies. Language identity is primarily constructed through dominant local resources such as culturally specific names, places, foods, address terms, and other national references that align with the concept of *Nusantara*, positioning English as a medium for expressing local and national identity. Theoretically, these findings extend Coupland's (2007) view of style as the performative construction of identity by showing how identity is systematically embedded across multiple grade-level textbooks. With respect to politeness, drawing on Brown & Levinson's (1987) framework, reveals a strong prevalence of positive politeness strategies, particularly in peer interactions within informal settings, highlighting an emphasis on solidarity, familiarity, and interpersonal closeness. Pedagogically, the study underscores the value of locally grounded EFL textbooks in making sociolinguistic norms more accessible and culturally relevant for learners.

Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. Although the textbooks foreground local identity, their representation of Nusantara remains partial, relying on a limited range of cultural references and failing to showcase uniquely Indonesian elements such as traditional

clothing, vernacular houses, and customary ceremonies. In addition, the dominance of informal peer interactions in the dialogues limits learners' exposure to a wider range of politeness strategies, particularly those found in formal teacher–student interactions. These limitations highlight the need for richer cultural representation and more varied interactional contexts in future textbook development. Further research is needed to compare the representation of language identity and politeness strategies in textbooks with their authentic use in classroom interactions in order to comprehensively capture how sociolinguistic competence is enacted in classroom discourse.

E. AI Declaration

Portions of this manuscript were drafted, edited, or enhanced using ChatGPT (OpenAI). The authors utilized this tool to improve grammatical accuracy and clarity, as well as for paraphrasing. All AI-generated content was thoroughly reviewed, edited, and validated by the authors, who assume full responsibility for the final content and the originality of the research.

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