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Politeness and Rating Practices in GoFood Reviews from Samarinda, Indonesia

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Abstract. This qualitative descriptive study examines how evaluative language, star ratings, and merchant replies contribute to politeness and accountability in GoFood reviews from Samarinda, Indonesia. The corpus comprises 268 reviews containing text from 16 merchants and nine replies from two merchants. Theory-guided pragmatic analysis draws on Brown and Levinson's facework, Culpeper's impoliteness framework, and relational work, applied through an explicit coding protocol and evidence register. The findings distinguish direct problem statements, mitigation through apology and hedging, affiliative praise and gratitude, and aggravation through rebuke and moral judgment. A five-level framework separates rating accompaniment, explicit rating reference, conditional rating, prospective rating, and inferred mitigation. Explicit references to stars account for an awarded score, make a score conditional on one product aspect, or offer a higher score for future performance, while a favourable score beside criticism supports only inferred mitigation. The replies, treated as illustrative rather than representative, offer contrasting presentations of responsibility through driver-based explanations, acceptance of negligence, and promises of improvement; accountability discourse is separated from causal attribution, factual responsibility, and service recovery. The study contributes an evidential distinction between a rating's contextual contribution and its explicit use by participants.

Keywords: GoFood Reviews, Merchant Responses, Politeness, Qualitative Pragmatics, Star Ratings

1 Introduction

A customer writes *ayam ny agak asin* ("the chicken is a bit salty") and awards five stars. Another begins a four-star review with *namun kurang pedas* ("however, not spicy enough"), leaving the positive background of the contrast unstated. These reviews invite an interpretive question: how do customers communicate a criticism while presenting an evaluation that also appears favourable? Answering it requires attention to wording, the rating, and the social setting in which the evaluation is made public.

Online reviews provide information about consumption and service experiences. Research on electronic word of mouth has examined their influence on consumer behaviour [1], their helpfulness [2], and the adoption of review information [3]. Satisfaction with review platforms has also been related to the credibility and usefulness of their content [4]. In food delivery, reviews have been used to examine service quality [5], while other work links purchase intention to perceived benefits, risks, and persuasion [6]. Indonesian research on customer experience and electronic service quality further demonstrates the operational significance of food-delivery feedback [7].

A pragmatic perspective asks how an evaluation is performed and to whom it is addressed. A complaint attributes a problem to a seller or service provider and may call for correction. Praise, gratitude, and requests can accompany that complaint but perform different acts. Vásquez [8] examined the interpersonal organisation of complaints on TripAdvisor. Holmes [9] discussed the relational functions of compliments, while Trosborg [10] distinguished requests, complaints, and apologies. Rahayu et al. [11] analysed politeness strategies in Indonesian Tokopedia reviews. Together, these studies establish the relevance of examining the linguistic organisation of customer evaluations beyond their positive or negative content.

The relationship between prose and stars is already established as an analytical problem. Baker and Hashimoto [12] investigated adversative constructions and ratings in restaurant reviews, while Seli, Yulfi, and Episiasi [13] examined sentiment–rating inconsistency in IKEA product reviews. The present question concerns the evidence required to explain that relationship pragmatically. A high rating beside criticism permits several interpretations; a reviewer's explicit explanation, condition, or promise concerning stars provides a different

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kind of evidence. This study distinguishes those evidential situations and examines how they intersect with verbal facework and merchant accounts of responsibility. Samarinda supplies the setting for that analysis rather than serving, by itself, as the claim to novelty.

Brown and Levinson's account of politeness [14] offers concepts for examining how speakers manage face-threatening acts. Its value here lies in distinguishing the criticism from the linguistic resources that frame it. A review can identify an error and still display affiliation or deference. Equally, direct wording can report a practical problem without necessarily constituting an insult. Reading the rating as part of the context makes it possible to examine how a favourable numerical evaluation accompanies a particular complaint, while keeping communicative intention open to interpretation.

GoFood's guidance asks customers to review restaurant products and services politely, separates restaurant evaluation from driver evaluation, and explains that reviews are visible to other customers [15]. A review therefore has a public audience as well as a potential merchant addressee. A complaint can inform prospective buyers while challenging the merchant's public presentation of competence. Merchant replies may acknowledge a failure, explain it, or contest its attribution. These audience and responsibility relationships provide the context for interpreting facework; they do not establish which audience a particular writer intended to prioritise.

The Samarinda corpus contains standard Indonesian, colloquial expressions, English, and regional address forms. The analysis examines what these resources do in particular utterances. Common forms such as kak, ya, and hehe are not treated as distinctive Samarinda norms. The address cil is discussed as a locally familiar resource in its occurrence, without inferring the reviewer's ethnicity, residence, or personal relationship with the merchant. An English gloss makes the example accessible but does not reproduce every social association of the source expression.

This study asks three questions. First, how do reviewers formulate criticism, praise, gratitude, and requests through directness, mitigation, affiliation, and aggravation? Second, how do ratings contextualise evaluation, and what functions do explicit references to stars perform? Third, how do available merchant responses acknowledge or negotiate responsibility? The contribution is an account of how rating explanations, conditional scores, and prospective rewards differ from an analyst's inference based on a rating–text combination. Linked response cases further show how public accountability is presented within that evaluative setting. The distinction is made operational in an evidential framework (Table 2), and the response cases are treated as illustrative of practices in this corpus rather than as representative of merchant behaviour.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Face and the formulation of evaluation

Brown and Levinson [14] distinguish positive face, associated with a desire for approval, from negative face, associated with freedom from imposition. A complaint can challenge the merchant's positive face by reporting inadequate performance. A demand for correction can also impose on future action. These dimensions provide questions for interpreting a review: what is being criticised, who is made responsible, and what response is requested? The analysis identifies these features from the utterance and its context.

The framework distinguishes bald-on-record performance, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record performance, and withholding the face-threatening act. Posted reviews provide evidence for the formulation of acts that were performed. They do not provide direct evidence of a criticism that a customer decided never to post. An unexpressed compliment is therefore not equated with withholding a face-threatening act. This distinction keeps the analysis anchored in observable discourse.

Positive politeness can involve affiliation, appreciation, or a shared orientation. Negative politeness can involve apology, deference, hedging, or attention to a burden imposed on the recipient. Off-record interpretation depends on an implication beyond the literal proposition. Directness, strength, and valence consequently require separate judgments: a mild assessment may still be explicit, and a strongly worded criticism can include a request formula. Several resources can operate within one review without requiring a single label for the entire text.

The analysis distinguishes the act, its linguistic formulation, and its interpersonal interpretation. An assessment predicates a quality of food or service; a compliment presents a favourable attribute as praise; thanking acknowledges a benefit; and a request seeks action. These acts may occur together. Positive sentiment alone does not establish positive politeness, and an explicit reference to a rating does not establish face redress. An interpersonal interpretation requires evidence of affiliation, deference, concern about imposition, or aggravation in the surrounding wording[9], [10], [14].

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2.2 Impoliteness and relational work

Culpeper's work [16], [17] provides a complementary perspective on discourse that aggravates an interpersonal attack. Rebuke, contempt, and hostile imprecation can move a complaint beyond naming a service failure toward challenging a person's competence or moral standing. Aggravation is examined through the wording and the progression of the review. Capital letters or second-person address alone do not establish an intention to offend.

Locher and Watts's account of relational work [18] encourages attention to how language operates in its particular setting. A familiar address form, a blessing, or laughter can have different effects depending on the surrounding act. A religious expression may support a friendly exchange or intensify condemnation. The analytical task is to explain how the expression contributes to that occurrence, rather than assign politeness from a list of isolated markers. Relational work also includes unmarked behaviour that is simply appropriate, or politic, in a setting and need not be perceived as polite [18]. Ordinary colloquial usage is therefore not equated with politeness. A form becomes relevant as relational work when it modifies the force or the relational framing of a particular act; the conditions applied to that judgment are stated in Section 3.6.

2.3 Ratings as contextual resources

A rating gives a numerical evaluation alongside the written text. Research on adversative wording and rating alignment [12], [13] supports examining the two together. A favourable score can contextualise a complaint, but may also reflect an overall experience that the text describes only partly. An explicit explanation of stars, a condition on their award, or a promise concerning a later rating shows that the reviewer makes the scale relevant within the utterance. Each function must still be related to the speech act being performed: explaining a score can simply justify an evaluation, while offering a later score can accompany a request for improvement.

Three evidential levels are therefore kept separate. The displayed rating–text combination is directly observable. A pragmatic function is an interpretation supported by wording and context. Private intention requires evidence beyond the written record. Explicit references to stars strengthen a claim about the reviewer's expressed orientation to the scale, but do not supply unrestricted access to intention. This distinction prevents either a mismatch or a high score from being classified automatically as a politeness strategy. Section 3.5 operationalises these levels for ratings: Table 2 separates five kinds of rating evidence according to whether they are observed in the record or inferred by the analyst.

3 Method

3.1 Design and analytical orientation

The study uses a qualitative descriptive design with theory-guided pragmatic analysis [19]. Its object is the formulation and interpretation of evaluative acts in their written platform context. Brown and Levinson's concepts guide attention to redress and imposition, while impoliteness and relational work inform the interpretation of aggravation and locally situated expressions. The study seeks an account of how particular communicative practices work; it does not test a causal model or estimate their population prevalence.

The review is the contextual unit, while speech acts and linguistic resources are the units of interpretation. Each focal reading identifies the service issue, the act performed, its wording, the accompanying stars, and any available response. A single review may contain criticism, a request, and a mitigating formula. The analysis follows their relationship within the review rather than assigning the whole text one mutually exclusive strategy. For response cases, the initiating review context and the merchant's wording are distinguished so that a paraphrase cannot be mistaken for a verbatim customer turn.

3.2 Corpus and selection

The corpus comprises 268 text-bearing GoFood reviews from 16 merchants in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, together with nine merchant replies recorded in the same dataset. The collection log dates the captures to 28 October 2026. Displayed purchase dates extend from September 2023 to October 2026, with several dates flagged as uncertain. The texts are predominantly Indonesian, with regional and colloquial forms, English code-switching, and some English-only entries. Ratings without an accompanying text are outside the assembled corpus.

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Merchants were selected purposively to include variation in food and beverage businesses and contrasting evaluations. The geographical scope is merchant pages in Samarinda; the dataset does not establish the residence of individual reviewers. Table 1 reports each merchant context, the number of recorded reviews, and the extent of visible coverage. The sampling frame is the assembled capture set, not a complete list of GoFood merchants or purchasers. Variation in capture coverage constrains comparisons between merchants, and no probability of selection is claimed.

All review texts were read to identify evaluative acts and candidate resources. Focal excerpts were selected because they made a relevant resource visible, contrasted with another wording or rating, or included a response addressing the evaluation. The selection covers direct and mitigated criticism, affiliative praise and gratitude, mixed evaluation, explicit discussion of stars, and hostile escalation. Appendix A provides a coding protocol and separate registers of observed evidence and interpretive claims for the 22 focal review records represented in the Findings. M06-007 contributes two quoted segments from one record. The registers explain the reported interpretations without treating the focal set as a representative subsample.

Table 1. Merchant contexts represented in the qualitative corpus and focal records drawn from each.

Code	Business context	Reviews	Visible coverage	Focal records
M01	Padang restaurant	32	Partial capture	2
M02	Yellow-rice warung	31	Partial capture	2
M03	Rice warung	29	Apparent end	7
M04	Mall chain outlet	28	Partial capture	4
M05	Fast-food chain	28	Partial capture	1
M06	Street vendor	16	Partial capture	1
M07	National chain	16	Top displayed segment	0
M08	Local fried chicken	13	Partial capture	1
M09	Beverage kiosk	11	End marker observed	1
M10	Chicken and duck warung	10	Apparent end	1
M11	Lalapan	10	Partial capture	1
M12	Chicken and duck warung	10	Apparent end	0
M13	Bento chicken	10	Partial capture	0
M14	Coffee and tea kiosk	9	Apparent end	0
M15	Meatball and noodle shop	9	Partial capture	1
M16	Home-style depot	6	Partial capture	0
Total	16 merchant contexts	268	Unequal visible coverage	22

Focal records were selected after all 268 texts had been read. The selection criteria concern the wording, rating, and reply context of a record, and position in a merchant's list was not among them: (C1) a clear cue, where the relevant resource is explicit in the wording; (C2) contrast, where a comparable problem or rating is expressed differently in another focal record; (C3) explicit rating reference, where the wording itself mentions stars or a score; (C4) a boundary case, where a record tests or resists a category; and (C5) negotiated responsibility, where a merchant reply or an explicit contest of responsibility is present. Table A2 lists the criteria met by each focal record. Three features of the procedure address the risk of confirmation bias. First, the focal set includes a boundary case for each analytical category (Table A1), such as M04-023, M01-015, M09-003, and M03-013, so that records limiting a reading are reported alongside records supporting it. Second, every focal reading is reported with a plausible alternative (Table A3). Third, where the wording alone does not exclude an alternative, the more limited claim is reported and assigned a lower confidence level.

The focal set was also checked against the capture boundaries described above. Table 1 reports the number of focal records drawn from each merchant context. The 22 focal records come from 11 of the 16 contexts: 13

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from partial captures, eight from contexts with an apparent end, one from the context with an observed end marker, and none from the context captured only as a top displayed segment. The largest contribution, seven records from M03, includes three merchant replies; replies are available only for M03 and M15, so this concentration partly reflects the availability of response cases. The distribution does not remove the influence of platform display, but it shows that the readings do not depend on a single context or on the context most clearly limited to the top of a list. Section 5.4 discusses the remaining limit.

3.3 Data preparation and excerpt presentation

The source material consists of screenshot transcriptions organised in a spreadsheet, with identifiers linking review texts to merchant context, rating, notes, and available replies. Non-standard spelling, punctuation, abbreviations, and expressive forms are retained in quoted segments. Each excerpt carries its corpus code and review rating. Reply labels state that the stars belong to the initiating review. The records include long texts, but their presence alone does not establish that every captured review was fully expanded in the application. Interpretations therefore depend on the recorded wording; claims about a reviewer deliberately choosing brevity are avoided where display completeness cannot be established.

English translations are analytical glosses intended to make the pragmatic reading accessible. Quoted segments are identified as excerpts where only part of a review is presented. Original expressions remain visible when their register or relational force matters. For example, translating anjay lah as “Wow” conveys an approving exclamation in M02-018 but does not reproduce the marked slang form. Emoji and surrounding material remain part of the contextual record even when not quoted. In response cases, a customer review summary is explicitly labelled as an analytical paraphrase and kept separate from the verbatim merchant reply.

The collection notes flag relative dates in M05-001 and M07-001, uncertain dates in M05-006, M15-006, M11-007, and M13-010, and an inferred rating in M15-001. Focal interpretations do not depend on treating those dates or that rating as directly observed. Repeated wording in different records is not, by itself, evidence of either duplicate capture or a unique customer. Interpretations remain attached to record identifiers, and record totals are not equated with distinct purchasers. Distinguishing repeated submissions from overlapping screenshots requires the source-record linkage; no customer-level count is inferred here.

3.4 Analytical procedure

The analysis follows reading, organisation of relevant segments, evidence display, and interpretation, informed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña [20]. Initial reading identifies the service issue and the act performed. A second reading examines directness, degree expressions, address forms, apologies, requests, intensification, contrast, and references to ratings. Brown and Levinson [14], Culpeper [16], [17] and relational work [18] provide sensitising concepts. Table A1 states the decision rules, boundary rules, examples, and boundary cases for each category; it does not assume that a particular word has the same pragmatic function in every occurrence.

Each focal interpretation connects a quoted cue with the review’s rating and relevant co-text. Table A2 records the directly observed evidence for each focal record, while Table A3 records the proposed function, a plausible alternative or limit, the evidential basis of the reading, and a confidence level. Comparisons examine similar service problems expressed differently and similar resources used for different interpersonal purposes. For example, M02-031 supplies verbal evidence of mitigation through an apology and a hedge; M08-004 combines strong criticism with five stars but supplies weaker evidence that the score itself mitigates the complaint. These are distinct evidential judgments.

The working codebook informed attention to candidate forms. For this account, its categories are specified as a coding protocol with decision rules, boundary rules, examples, and boundary cases (Table A1). With that protocol, the evidence levels in Tables 2 and 3, and the registers in Tables A2 and A3, another researcher with access to the de-identified transcriptions can re-apply the rules to the focal records and compare the resulting readings with those reported here. The protocol guides contextual reading rather than producing completed numerical labels for all 268 reviews. The findings are organised by communicative practice, not strategy frequency. The corpus size, merchant coverage, and rating context delimit the material available for interpretation; they do not convert the selected examples into estimates of population prevalence.

The third author carried out the initial and second readings of the review texts and drafted the proposed pragmatic functions. The first author examined those readings against the service transaction described in each review. The second author examined the platform feedback setting and the rating as an evaluative signal. Differences in interpretation were discussed across these roles, and the findings present the agreed readings. Appendix A exposes the basis of those readings to scrutiny; it does not claim an independent re-coding exercise or participant confirmation.

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3.5 Evidential framework for ratings and responsibility

Two compact frameworks make explicit where interpretation moves from observable evidence to pragmatic inference. Table 2 distinguishes five levels of rating evidence. The first four are observable in the record: a score displayed with a text (accompaniment), wording that refers to the awarded score (explicit reference), wording that makes a score depend on a condition (conditional rating), and wording that offers a score for future performance (prospective rating). The fifth, inferred mitigation, is the analyst's inference that a favourable score softens criticism when the wording does not mention the score. Levels 2 to 4 show that the reviewer makes the scale relevant within the utterance, but none of them establishes face redress without further linguistic evidence. Level 5 is reported only as a possible reading, together with its alternatives.

Table 3 applies the same separation to responsibility. Accountability discourse is the way a reply or review presents responsibility in its wording, for example through an apology, an excuse, an acceptance of fault, or a promise; an excuse, in Scott and Lyman's terms, acknowledges a failure while denying full responsibility for it [21]. Causal attribution is the party or process that the wording names as the cause of a failure, such as a driver, a cashier, the application, or the merchant. Factual responsibility, meaning what actually caused the failure, cannot be observed in review data and is not assessed. Service recovery is the organisation's corrective response to a failure [22]; the corpus can show that recovery is offered or promised, but not whether it was carried out. Public responses to online reviews have been examined as discourse that manages consumer dissatisfaction [23]; the present framework restricts claims to what the recorded wording displays.

Table 2. Levels of rating evidence and their interpretive status.

Level	Definition	Indicator in the wording	Status	Focal examples	What it can support
1. Rating accompaniment	A score is displayed with the text; the wording does not refer to it.	None; star display only	Observed	All reviews; e.g., M01-015	Co-occurrence of score and wording, not the reason for the score.
2. Explicit rating reference	The wording names or accounts for the awarded score.	*bintang*, a score, a causal link such as *jadi*	Observed	M05-020	The reviewer's expressed orientation to the scale; mitigation only if a criticism is present and qualified.
3. Conditional rating	The wording makes a score depend on a condition or aspect.	*kalo … kasi bintang 5*	Observed	M03-024	Aspect-specific dissatisfaction made explicit; not every motive for the score.
4. Prospective rating	The wording offers a score for future performance.	*next jadi bintang 5*	Observed	M11-001	A request linked to a proposed reward; not later compliance or a later rating.
5. Inferred mitigation	The analyst infers that a favourable score softens co-occurring criticism.	None; favourable score with criticism and no reference to the score	Inferred	M03-026; M08-004; M01-025; M10-002	A possible reading only, reported with overall-approval and aspect-specific alternatives.

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Table 3. Dimensions of responsibility in the response cases.

Dimension	Evidential status	M03-021 reply	M03-022 reply	M15-004 reply	M04-027 review
Accountability discourse	Observed in the wording	Apology followed by an excuse	Apology with acceptance of negligence	Acknowledges a deficiency	Challenge to an account already given
Causal attribution	Observed as a claim	The driver's departure	The merchant (*kelalaian kami*)	The merchant, implicitly (*kekurangan pedasnya*)	The cashier, against an application-error account
Factual responsibility	Not observable	Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessed
Service recovery	Offer or promise observable; outcome not observable	None offered in the reply	None offered in the reply	Promise of improvement (*akan kami perbaiki*)	No reply analysed

The frameworks are applied in two places. In Section 4, readings that concern ratings or responsibility state the level or dimension on which they rest. In Appendix A, Table A2 records the directly observed evidence for each focal record and Table A3 records the interpretive claim, its alternative, its evidential basis, and a confidence level, so that observation and interpretation are not merged.

3.6 Interpretive quality and ethics

Analytical traceability rests on review identifiers, quoted wording, rating context, and the stated reasoning for each focal reading. Table A3 makes alternative interpretations visible alongside the proposed functions. Where an initiating customer turn is summarised in Section 4.5, that summary is labelled rather than presented as a quotation. A mild assessment is not automatically off record, a familiar address does not establish social closeness, and a favourable score does not demonstrate deliberate mitigation. The analysis does not claim access to private intention.

All three authors are based in Samarinda and report competence in the standard, colloquial, and regional forms represented in the corpus. This situated knowledge supports possible readings of cil and anjay lah, while requiring attention to variation in how other readers may hear them. In M02-018, the approving assessment and five-star context support an affiliative interpretation; the expression is not declared universally polite or free of coarse associations. The analysis grounds local readings in the visible wording rather than treating author familiarity as sufficient evidence.

Short colloquial forms such as *agak*, *ya*, *kak*, *cil*, *hehe*, *anjay lah*, *namun*, and *tapi* are not treated as politeness markers in themselves. A form is read as relational work only when three conditions hold: it occurs within an evaluative act whose force or relational framing it can modify; the co-text supports that contribution; and an unmarked reading, in which the form is simply the ordinary register of platform communication, has been considered. Where the unmarked reading remains equally plausible, the form is described as register rather than as a strategy. Thus *kak* in M09-003 is read as a friendly default address rather than as evidence of closeness, whereas *tp gpp* in M04-018 is read as qualifying a complaint because it responds to the order error just reported. This follows the distinction between politic and marked behaviour in relational work [18].

Readers of different ages, social positions, or regional backgrounds may hear some of these forms differently, and understandings of politeness can differ between participants and analysts as well as among participants themselves [24]. An older reader may hear *anjay lah* as coarse rather than approving; a reader unfamiliar with the regional address *cil* may not recognise it as a kinship term; *hehe* can signal embarrassment or irony as well as softening; and *ya* can insist as well as soften. These alternatives are recorded in Table A3, and readings that depend on such forms, as in M03-019, M02-018, and M04-018, are assigned moderate rather than high confidence. By contrast, *agak* qualifies degree lexically, so its hedging contribution depends less on the reader, although its interpersonal purpose remains interpretive. *Namun* and *tapi* mark contrast explicitly, but the background they contrast with is unstated, so readings of that background are tentative. The study therefore does not claim that its readings match those of every Indonesian reader; it claims that they are supported by the recorded co-text.

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Interpretive agreement was pursued through discussion of contextual readings. No agreement coefficient is reported, because the study does not undertake a fixed categorical annotation of every review. Such coefficients can increase transparency, but their use is debated in qualitative research, where critics argue that they conflict with interpretive aims that treat the analyst's reflexive engagement as a resource, and propose criteria such as dependability and trustworthiness instead [25]. The present design follows the latter course. Consistency was assessed through investigator triangulation across three analytical positions and is documented in three ways. First, each focal reading was proposed by one author and examined by each of the other two from a different position, the service transaction and the rating setting (Section 3.4). Second, the decision rules and evidence levels are stated in Table A1 and Tables 2 and 3, and each reported reading is aligned with them. Third, each reading carries an evidential basis and a confidence level in Table A3: high when an explicit wording cue supports the function and no stated alternative would change the category; moderate when the function depends on a socially variable form or on the rating, so that a stated alternative could change the category; and tentative when the reading rests mainly on inference from the score or from an unstated background. Contested cases included the status of biasa saja as an understated assessment and the interpretation of high ratings beside strong complaints. The first was resolved by reading M04-023 as an explicit but mild assessment whose critical force is supported by the two-star rating, rather than as an off-record act. The second was resolved by separating the hedge or contrastive wording, which is observed, from any mitigating contribution of the score, which is reported only as inferred (Level 5). The reported account retains the more limited claim where alternatives remain plausible. A second coder from outside the author team is not used, because the claims made here are argued readings with stated alternatives rather than category labels: agreement on a label would not test the argument behind a reading, and a disagreement would itself require the contextual adjudication that the registers already make visible. Appendix A is therefore designed to serve as the independent check, since it allows any reader, including speakers of other ages and regional backgrounds, to test each reading against the wording, the rating, and its stated alternative. Agreement among the authors supports a shared reading, while the evidence register allows readers to assess the reasoning independently.

The material concerns reviews visible on merchant pages, and the study involves no interviews or direct interaction with reviewers. Account identities are excluded from the article, and merchants are represented by neutral codes. Sensitive service and health allegations are treated as statements made by reviewers. The original screenshots are retained separately as a verification archive. Verbatim excerpts may remain recognisable or searchable, so de-identification reduces exposure without guaranteeing anonymity.

Because the analysis depends on the exact form of short cues, verbatim quotation cannot be replaced entirely by paraphrase without removing the evidence under analysis. Altering quoted material can nonetheless be an ethical response when verbatim online text is traceable [26], and decisions about public online data call for judgment about the specific risks to the people represented [27]. A tiered approach was therefore adopted. Short cues whose form is the object of analysis, such as *agak asin*, *garam nya kurangi ya*, or *tp gpp*, are quoted verbatim, because phrases of this kind are common and unlikely on their own to identify a writer. Longer excerpts are limited to the analysed segment, with omissions marked […]. Distinctive material that is not under analysis, including specific menu items and wording that carries a food-quality allegation, is masked in square brackets, as in M04-018, M03-021, and M03-024. Reviewer names, posting dates, photographs, and locations below city level are not reproduced. Merchant codes are neutral identifiers (M01–M16), assigned in the order of Table 1 and not derived from merchant names; the key linking them to the source records is held by the authors. A residual risk remains that an exact phrase could be matched to a public merchant page; these measures reduce that risk without removing it.

4 Findings

4.1 Stating a problem and qualifying its force

Direct criticism can be brief and focused on a concrete defect. In the first excerpt, the customer reports the presence of an unwanted material without an apology, an affiliative address, or a request formula.

M03-015 (review excerpt; three stars)
Nasi nya banyak batu
"The rice has a lot of grit."

The proposition itself makes the complaint recoverable. A bald-on-record reading is supported by its explicitness and the absence of overt verbal redress. The short formulation also leaves the expected corrective action unstated. It provides evidence of direct criticism, while the text alone does not establish that the customer

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intended a personal insult. The seriousness of the reported defect and the interpersonal manner of reporting it remain separate analytical questions.

M03-019 (review excerpt; four stars)
garam nya kurangi ya..
"Please reduce the salt, okay?"

Here, criticism is formulated as an instruction to change preparation. The imperative identifies a desired future action, while ya gives the request a conversational ending. Its effect can be read as softening the demand or seeking alignment with the recipient. The review illustrates why directness and mitigation can coexist: a request need not become off record in order to be presented less abruptly.

M04-023 (review excerpt; two stars)
Rasanya biasa saja
"It tastes ordinary."

The assessment is stated explicitly, but its unfavourable force is less explicit than a statement that the food tastes bad. Two stars strengthen a critical reading of biasa saja. This leaves an important distinction between naming an ordinary taste and implying disappointment in the particular service context. An off-record or understated reading requires that contextual argument; mild wording alone does not settle the category. The example also shows that the rating can guide the interpretation of the text rather than merely repeat it.

4.2 Mitigating criticism and displaying affiliation

Other reviews combine a recognisable complaint with resources that acknowledge its interpersonal delicacy. Apology and degree modification can operate together within a very short text.

M02-031 (review excerpt; four stars)
Nasi agak asin mohon maaf sebelumnya
"The rice is a bit salty; apologies in advance."

The hedge *agak* limits the degree of the defect, while mohon maaf sebelumnya acknowledges the delicacy of stating it. Although the apology follows the complaint in the written sequence, the anticipatory formula frames the criticism as something requiring care. These features support a negative-politeness reading of the verbal act. The four-star rating provides a further favourable assessment, but the linguistic evidence for mitigation is already present in the words themselves.

M04-008 (review excerpt; four stars)
mba mas, kayanya lupa masukan penyedap rasa ya.
"Miss, sir, perhaps you forgot to add the seasoning."

The address forms recognise the recipients directly, kayanya presents the explanation tentatively, and lupa attributes the problem to a lapse rather than an explicit lack of ability. The remaining review calls the food hambar bgt ("very bland") and compares it with previous experience, biasa gak gini ("it is not usually like this"). The criticism is therefore clear, but its attribution preserves a possible account in which the merchant's usual standard is better. Tentative wording and a strong negative assessment work together.

M02-018 (review excerpt; five stars)
anjay lah cil, enak banget
"Wow, auntie, this is really tasty."

The informal exclamation, the address cil, and the intensifier banget accompany explicit praise. Their combination supports an affiliative reading of this occurrence. The gloss "Wow" conveys the exclamation's approving force here, while the Indonesian form retains the marked slang register that the gloss cannot reproduce. The kinship address projects familiarity without establishing an actual family relationship, a shared ethnic identity, or agreement by the recipient about its appropriateness.

M04-018 (review excerpt; five stars)
enakk tp td pesen [menu item] *minta nasi tp dtgnya kentang hehe tp gpp*
"It tastes good, but I ordered rice with the [menu item] and got potatoes; hehe, but it is okay."

The review begins with approval, identifies a departure from the order, and then supplies laughter and an acceptance formula. The final tp gpp allows the writer to record the problem while reducing the force of the complaint. This sequential organisation is more informative than assigning one sentiment or one politeness label

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to the whole review. The five-star rating is consistent with a favourable overall frame, although the text gives more direct evidence of how the criticism is qualified.

M09-003 (review excerpt; five stars)
sesuai req, makasih ya kak moga ga ngeribetin
"As requested, thank you; I hope it was not a bother."

This review combines confirmation that a request was fulfilled, thanking, and concern about having imposed on the seller. It is therefore analysed as gratitude and attention to imposition, rather than classified simply as a compliment. The address kak projects a friendly orientation, while moga ga ngeribetin makes concern about burden explicit. The case illustrates why positive evaluation, speech act, and politeness function require separate judgments.

4.3 Reading stars together with evaluative language

Favourable stars can accompany criticism without cancelling its practical content. The following two examples differ substantially in the intensity and elaboration of the verbal complaint.

M03-026 (review excerpt; five stars)
ayam ny agak asin
"The chicken is a bit salty."

M08-004 (review excerpt; five stars)
kelamaan .... buanget tolong di cepatkan oelayanan nya geh jgn lma ² masak nunggu sampai berjam ² kasian kloe dah lapar
"It took far too long; please speed up the service. Do not take so long that we wait for hours; it is hard when we are hungry."

M03-026 qualifies the defect with *agak*. M08-004 intensifies the delay, requests faster service, and invokes hunger as a reason for urgency. Both carry five stars. A maximum rating therefore does not entail that the text consists of praise, nor does it specify how strongly the writer objects to a particular aspect. A mitigating contribution from the rating is plausible, but an overall evaluation that remains favourable is another possible explanation. The corpus does not reveal how the writers would describe their own rating choices. In the terms of Table 2, both records display rating accompaniment (Level 1); a mitigating contribution of the score would be an inferred reading (Level 5), whereas the hedge in M03-026 is observed in the wording.

M01-025 (review excerpt; four stars)
namun kurang pedas
"However, not spicy enough."

M10-002 (review excerpt; four stars)
tapi es tehnya kurang 1
"But one iced tea was missing."

The contrastive openings make a problem explicit while leaving the background evaluation unwritten. Four stars can help the reader recover a favourable background against which the defect is presented. Nevertheless, the missing background could also concern the customer's overall experience or an expectation that is shared through the situation. The data support an interpretation across the displayed resources, not a demonstration that stars literally replace a grammatical clause. The contrastive wording is therefore observed, whereas the favourable background attributed to the score is inferred (Level 5).

M05-020 (review excerpt; five stars)
enak jadi aku kasih bintang lima
"It tastes good, so I am giving five stars."

The causal connection expressed by jadi makes the numerical evaluation part of the reviewer's account. It provides evidence of an explicitly justified rating (Level 2 in Table 2), rather than merely a rating displayed beside text (Level 1). The act is an explanation of the score grounded in a favourable assessment. Because no complaint is present, this case is not classified as mitigation. Its analytical role is to establish a form of expressed orientation to stars against which the conditional and prospective cases can be compared.

M11-001 (review excerpt; three stars)
lebih teliti lagi dengan menu pesanan yang dimuat di sistem ya, next jadi bintang 5
"Be more careful with the menu posted in the system, okay; next time it will be five stars."

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The promise of five stars follows a complaint about receiving less than the quantity described. The rating is presented as something that can change with future performance. Its pragmatic contribution involves an offered future reward and a request for greater care. The case shows that ratings can be discussed within the utterance rather than understood only as an analyst's external measure of sentiment. It exemplifies a prospective rating (Level 4).

M03-024 (review excerpt; three stars)
knp harus nangka si nasi campurnya aku benci nangka […] *mungkin kalo bkn nangka saya kasi bintang 5*
"Why does the mixed rice have to have jackfruit? I hate jackfruit […]. Maybe if it were not jackfruit I would give five stars."

Here the score is presented as conditional on a single ingredient. The counterfactual *mungkin kalo bkn nangka … saya kasi bintang 5* states the rating that an altered dish would have received, and three stars are awarded instead. The utterance makes the scale answerable to one specific aspect rather than to the experience as a whole, and it withholds the remaining stars explicitly. This is different from a rating that simply fails to match the text, because the reviewer supplies the reason. It exemplifies a conditional rating (Level 3).

M05-020 explains an awarded score, M03-024 makes a hypothetical higher score conditional on one ingredient, and M11-001 offers a higher score for future performance. These correspond to Levels 2, 3, and 4 in Table 2. These are locally evidenced forms of rating use, rather than a frequency-based typology. They differ in temporal orientation and in their relationship to the surrounding act: justification, aspect-specific dissatisfaction, and a request linked to a prospective reward. Only the latter two contain criticism or a request for change. Explicit reference to stars establishes the scale's relevance within the utterance, while any further claim about face management requires additional linguistic evidence.

M01-015 (review excerpt; three stars)
pas porsi x kk trimaksih
"The portion is just right; thank you."

This favourable text carries three stars. The example cautions against assuming that a fixed cut-off captures the writer's intended meaning. Reading the stars and words together exposes an interpretive question, while the available data do not resolve why that particular score was chosen. The qualitative concern is the relationship between the resources and the limits of the interpretation, rather than a universal definition of the middle point of the scale. Only rating accompaniment (Level 1) is observed here, so no inference about the score is reported.

4.4 Aggravating criticism through rebuke and moral judgment

Some criticism moves beyond reporting an error toward attacking the acceptability of the seller's conduct. M06-007 begins by contesting the menu and order, then escalates through personal rebuke and a hostile wish.

M06-007 (review excerpt; one star)
mending ga usah jualan kalau ga niat
"Better not sell if you do not intend to do it properly."

M06-007 (review excerpt; one star)
semoga allah balas yg kamu perbuat
"May Allah repay what you have done."

The first segment challenges the seller's willingness to conduct the business properly. The second invokes moral judgment against the addressee. In the wider review, the customer also contrasts paying for food with being treated in an unacceptable way. These resources support an aggravating reading because they expand the complaint from a specific product problem to the recipient's conduct and moral standing. Culpeper's framework [16], [17] helps distinguish that expansion from directness alone.

Religious wording does not have a single interpersonal function. A merchant's response to a favourable review provides a contrasting occurrence.

M03-013 (merchant reply excerpt; review rated five stars)
Masyaallah semoga selalu suka kak
"What Allah has willed; may you always enjoy it."

The expression accompanies appreciation and a familiar address rather than condemnation. Its function differs from the hostile wish in M06-007 because the speech act and evaluative context differ. The comparison supports a relational interpretation of the expression [18] rather than a fixed classification of religious language as polite or impolite. It also illustrates why an analytical category should be justified through the utterance it is used to explain.

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4.5 Illustrative response practices and negotiated responsibility

The nine recorded replies come from two merchants, six of them from one. The cases below are therefore read as illustrative of response practices that occur in this corpus, not as representative of how GoFood merchants respond. The available response cases contrast driver-based explanation, acceptance of negligence, and a promise of improvement. Each case below separates the customer review context, given as an analytical paraphrase, from the verbatim merchant reply. This distinction preserves the link between the reported problem and the response without presenting an analyst's summary as the customer's original wording. Each case is also described with the four dimensions in Table 3, so that accountability discourse is not read as evidence of what caused a failure.

M03-021 customer review context (analytical paraphrase; one star). The customer reports missing items and dissatisfaction with repeated service problems. The merchant responds to the missing dish with an apology and an account of the driver's departure.

M03-021 (merchant reply; review rated one star)
Maaf kak kemarin kita udh konfirmasi ke drivernya kalo untuk nunggu [dish] *karna lagi di buat tapi drivernya lngsung pergi dn gak balik lagi ambil* [dish]*nya*
"Sorry, we had told the driver to wait because the [dish] was being prepared, but the driver left and did not return to collect it."

The apology recognises the complaint, but the subsequent account shifts the explanation for the missing dish toward driver conduct. In Scott and Lyman's terms [21], the account works as an excuse: the failure is acknowledged, while responsibility is located with another party. This is an interactional presentation of responsibility, not independent evidence of the cause. It is relevant to the platform's distinction between restaurant and driver evaluation [15], because the reply repositions the incident across that institutional boundary. In the terms of Table 3, the reply supplies accountability discourse and a causal attribution; factual responsibility is not established, and no service recovery is offered in the reply.

M03-022 customer review context (analytical paraphrase; four stars). The customer reports that a sauce was missing from the order. The response explicitly locates negligence with the merchant.

M03-022 (merchant reply; review rated four stars)
Kak, mohon maaf yaaa atas kelalaian kami
"Please accept our apology for our negligence."

The phrase kelalaian kami accepts negligence as the merchant's own. The apology therefore performs different accountability work from the driver-based explanation in M03-021. An apology's interpersonal meaning depends on the account that follows it: the same broad act can precede a redirection of responsibility or an acceptance of fault. The comparison concerns the public presentation of responsibility, not verification of the underlying incident. Here accountability discourse and causal attribution coincide, because the merchant names itself as the cause; the reply still does not establish factual responsibility.

M15-004 customer review context (analytical paraphrase; five stars). The customer praises the food, requests hotter chilli sauce, and expresses continued patronage. The reply addresses the requested change within that favourable evaluation.

M15-004 (merchant reply excerpt; review rated five stars)
Akan kami perbaiki kekurangan pedasnya kak
"We will improve the chilli sauce's lack of spiciness."

The future-oriented akan kami perbaiki acknowledges the reported deficiency and commits to improvement. This shows the merchant addressing a critical component within a five-star evaluation. The reply offers evidence of recipient uptake of that component; it does not prove that the customer selected five stars to obtain the commitment, or that a subsequent improvement occurred. Among these replies, only this one contains a service-recovery element, and that element is a promise whose implementation cannot be observed.

Responsibility can also be contested within a customer's account, and in the following case the contest is made explicit.

M04-027 (review excerpt; one star)
ANEH kasir yg salah ga keluarin struk sampe orderan ga masuk kenapa aplikasi gojek yg disalahin?
"Strange — the cashier was the one who failed to issue the receipt so the order never registered; why is the Gojek application being blamed?"

The interrogative challenges an application-error explanation and relocates responsibility with the cashier. This extends the accountability problem beyond the restaurant–driver distinction discussed in M03-021. The

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platform's guidance [15] supplies a relevant evaluation setting, but does not verify either party's explanation of a particular failure. The customer report and merchant reply cases show different ways of disputing where responsibility belongs; they are not independent reconstructions of the service events. Two causal attributions are in competition, and the review records only the customer's side of that dispute.

These cases support a comparison of expressed accountability practices within this corpus; they are illustrative and are not presented as representative of GoFood merchants. Nine recorded replies from two merchants, six of them from one merchant, cannot establish a general response policy, response rate, or distribution of response types. The review paraphrases delimit the present comparison: stronger claims about the sequential details of an exchange would require the complete initiating wording and interaction history.

5 Discussion

5.1 Politeness as contextual work within evaluation

The findings support treating evaluative content, speech act, and relational function as separate analytical questions. M02-018 is praise with an affiliative formulation; M09-003 combines gratitude with concern about imposition; M02-031 mitigates a complaint through apology and degree modification. Brown and Levinson [14] help identify those resources, while Holmes [9] and Trosborg [10] support distinguishing the acts they accompany. Applying one politeness label to the whole review would conceal how those components interact.

The contribution to Indonesian review research is thus a distinction within individual evaluations. Rahayu et al. [11] establish the relevance of politeness strategies in Tokopedia reviews; the present account examines how several resources coexist with ratings and responses in food-delivery feedback. It does not test gender differences or transfer a platform-wide norm to GoFood. The comparison makes the unit of interpretation consequential: the function of a phrase is assessed within its act and co-text, rather than inferred from the review's overall sentiment.

Relational work [18] further explains why familiar address and religious expressions cannot be assigned a fixed value independently of their occurrence. The approving environment of M02-018 supports affiliation, while the progression from service complaint to moral rebuke in M06-007 supports aggravation. Culpeper's framework [16], [17] clarifies that expansion beyond the product problem. Such readings remain claims about publicly available language and context; recipient offence or appreciation cannot be established from these examples alone.

5.2 Ratings and the interpretation of a review

The relationship between stars and prose is not itself a new finding. Baker and Hashimoto [12] establish its relevance through adversative constructions in restaurant reviews. Here, contrastive openings such as namun and tapi make that relationship an interpretive question at the level of a short Indonesian review. A favourable score can help a reader recover a positive background, but the examples do not demonstrate that a rating replaces a missing grammatical clause. This specifies the evidential limit of extending the earlier relationship to an individual utterance.

Seli et al. [13] interpret sentiment–rating inconsistency in terms of pragmatic strategies. The present cases qualify how intentionality can be argued from written records: a mismatch alone allows explanations such as aspect-specific dissatisfaction within overall approval. An explicit star explanation or condition supplies stronger evidence of the reviewer's expressed use of the scale, without proving every motive behind that use. The analytical advance is this distinction in evidence, rather than a claim that all high scores soften criticism.

M05-020, M03-024, and M11-001 make that distinction concrete. A score can be justified after evaluation, made conditional on an alternative product, or offered prospectively alongside a request. These functions suggest that the scale can participate in an account, an aspect-specific objection, or a proposed exchange concerning future service. Their relationship to politeness is contingent: M05-020 contains no face-threatening criticism to mitigate, whereas M11-001 connects a request with the prospect of a better evaluation. The three cases establish different uses without establishing their prevalence. Table 2 separates these observed uses from inferred mitigation, so that the step from co-occurrence to a claim about face redress is visible in each reading.

5.3 Accountability and practical implications

Vásquez's treatment of online complaints [8] directs attention to their interpersonal organisation. The response cases add a comparison of how responsibility is publicly presented after a food-delivery evaluation.

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Driver-based explanation, accepted negligence, and a promise of improvement position the merchant differently toward the reported problem. Because potential customers can also read these exchanges [15], a reply may contribute to the merchant's public presentation of accountability as well as address the original reviewer. The data do not show which audience the merchant prioritised. Zhang and Vásquez [23] examined how hotels' public responses to online reviews manage consumer dissatisfaction; the present cases are fewer and concentrated in two merchants, so they show which presentations of responsibility occur in this corpus rather than how often they occur.

A practical implication is to identify the criticised aspect before relying on the star score as a summary. M15-004 illustrates that a maximum rating can still contain a request to which a merchant responds. An appropriate analytical reading distinguishes acknowledgement of the problem, the stated attribution of responsibility, and any commitment to future action, and does not treat a stated cause as a verified one (Table 3). These are dimensions for interpreting the observed replies, not evidence that a particular response policy improves satisfaction, loyalty, or purchasing.

The local setting contributes situated language evidence rather than a distinct city-wide norm. Forms shared with wider Indonesian usage cannot be attributed to Samarinda alone. Regional address, marked slang, and religious wording are useful because the surrounding act makes their possible relational contribution inspectable. Cross-city comparisons or participant accounts could test how those readings vary; the present corpus does not establish the cultural uniqueness or universal acceptability of the forms.

5.4 Scope and limitations

The corpus covers selected merchant pages in one city, includes only reviews containing text, and has unequal capture coverage. Display order and a common stopping rule are not established by the reported capture information. Displayed material may also reflect the platform's presentation and moderation practices [15]. The focal examples were selected for analytical relevance, so their visibility in the findings is not evidence of statistical predominance. One merchant's reviews are all dated 2024 and may concern an earlier period of operation. On another page, a carousel of photo reviews above the main list could not be read. Future collections could reduce the dependence on capture boundaries through a standard protocol: recording the sort setting at capture, applying a common stopping rule such as all reviews within a defined period or all reviews to the displayed end, recording each review's display position, capturing replies together with their initiating reviews, and noting whether each long review was fully expanded.

The records do not provide participant accounts of intention, complete interaction histories, or independent verification of service and health allegations. Purchase dates do not establish posting time or the opportunity to respond. Uncertain dates and the inferred rating are retained as uncertainty rather than converted into observed values. Unverified display expansion and the distinction between repeated text and duplicate capture further constrain what record totals and review length can establish. The nine replies are concentrated in two merchants, and customer paraphrases in Section 4.5 cannot support fine-grained claims about the original turn sequence.

Interpretations of ordinary, familiar address, laughter, and religious expressions remain context-dependent. Appendix A presents the evidential grounds and limits of focal readings rather than an exhaustive annotation of the corpus. Interviews with reviewers could investigate rating choices, while merchant accounts could clarify how criticism is read. Complete paired turns and documented capture procedures would strengthen future comparisons of response practices. Reception studies with readers of different ages and regional backgrounds could examine how the forms behind the readings marked moderate or tentative in Table A3 are heard. These extensions concern questions that the present written records cannot resolve.

6 Conclusion

This study identifies how direct criticism, mitigation, affiliation, and aggravation operate within GoFood evaluations from Samarinda. Praise and gratitude perform distinguishable acts, and a direct complaint need not be an interpersonal attack. The illustrative response cases contrast explanations involving driver conduct, acceptance of merchant negligence, and promises to improve. These are situated interpretations of recorded cases rather than estimates of common behaviour.

The central contribution is to distinguish a rating's contextual presence from its explicit use in a reviewer's wording. Explaining an awarded score, conditioning a higher score on one aspect, and offering a higher future score provide different grounds for pragmatic interpretation. A favourable score accompanying criticism supplies weaker evidence of deliberate face redress on its own. Reading the act, wording, rating, and available response together makes those evidential differences visible and helps identify actionable criticism within

favourable feedback. The five-level framework in Table 2 makes this distinction operational and can be applied to other review corpora.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

Author Contributions

J.L.A.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Validation, Writing – Original Draft. **S.E.W.**: Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Validation. **M.R.A.**: Formal Analysis, Supervision, Writing – Review & Editing. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Statement

The analytical distinctions and evidence register for the focal cases are provided in Appendix A. De-identified review transcriptions and other analysis materials are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request, subject to access and confidentiality conditions. Original screenshots are not publicly distributed because they may expose reviewer identities.

Ethical Considerations

The study analyses reviews visible on merchant pages without recruitment of or direct interaction with reviewers. Account identities are excluded from the article and merchants are represented by neutral codes. Verbatim excerpts may remain searchable or recognisable, so de-identification does not guarantee anonymity. Service and health allegations are treated as reviewer statements. Original screenshots are retained separately as verification records and are not publicly distributed. Quotation is limited to analysed segments, and distinctive material that is not under analysis is masked (Section 3.6).

Data Availability

The coding protocol and the registers of observed evidence and interpretive claims for the focal cases are provided in Appendix A. De-identified review transcriptions and other analysis materials are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request, subject to access and confidentiality conditions. Original screenshots are not publicly distributed because they may expose reviewer identities.

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Appendix A Coding protocol and evidence registers

Table A1 states the coding protocol. Table A2 records directly observed evidence and low-inference descriptions for the 22 focal records, including the selection criteria C1–C5 (Section 3.2). Table A3 records the interpretive claim for each record separately, with an alternative reading or limit, the evidential basis, and a confidence level (Section 3.6). The appendix is not a frequency table or a complete categorical annotation of the 268-record corpus. Quoted cues are excerpts, and stars attached to merchant replies refer to the initiating review.

A1 Coding protocol

Table A1. Coding protocol: decision rules, boundary rules, and cases.

Category	Code when (decision rule)	Do not code when (boundary rule)	Example	Boundary case
Speech act	The proposition and its use identify an assessment, complaint, compliment, thanking, request, explanation, apology, or promise. Several acts may be coded in one review.	A favourable evaluation is not automatically a compliment, and no act is inferred from the rating alone.	M03-019: complaint and request	M09-003: thanking and concern about imposition, not only a compliment
Directness	The problem or desired action is stated explicitly in the proposition.	Mild wording is not coded as off record when the assessment is explicit; directness is not coded as an attack.	M03-015	M04-023: explicit but mild assessment
Mitigation	A hedge, apology, tentative attribution, laughter token, or acceptance formula qualifies the force of a criticism or imposition in its co-text.	A favourable score alone; a particle or address term with no criticism or imposition to qualify.	M02-031; M04-008	M03-026 and M08-004: score beside criticism, recorded only as a Level 5 inference
Affiliation	Praise, familiar address, appreciation, or a good wish projects a friendly orientation within the act.	An address term alone does not establish closeness or shared identity; a default platform address is recorded as register.	M02-018	M09-003: *kak* as a friendly default address
Aggravation	Rebuke, contempt, or moral judgment expands criticism from the product to the addressee's conduct or standing.	Intensity, capital letters, or religious wording alone.	M06-007	M08-004: intensified complaint without attack; M03-013: religious wording in appreciation
Rating orientation	The wording refers to the score (Levels 2–4, Table 2).	A score displayed without reference (Level 1); an inferred mitigating role of the score (Level 5) is recorded as interpretation, not as rating orientation.	M05-020; M03-024; M11-001	M01-015: favourable text with three stars and no reference to the score
Response accountability	The wording presents responsibility through an apology, excuse, acceptance, acknowledgement, or promise (Table 3).	A stated cause is not coded as factual responsibility; a promise is not coded as completed recovery.	M03-022; M15-004	M03-021: apology followed by an excuse

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A2 Observed evidence register

Table A2. Directly observed evidence for focal records.

Record	Merchant context	Rating	Speech act(s)	Quoted cue	Criteria
M03-015	Rice warung; apparent end	3	Complaint	*Nasi nya banyak batu*	C1, C2
M03-019	Rice warung; apparent end	4	Complaint; request	*garam nya kurangi ya..*	C1
M04-023	Mall chain outlet; partial	2	Assessment	*Rasanya biasa saja*	C4
M02-031	Yellow-rice warung; partial	4	Complaint; apology	*Nasi agak asin mohon maaf sebelumnya*	C1
M04-008	Mall chain outlet; partial	4	Address; complaint; explanation	*mba mas, kayanya lupa masukan penyedap rasa ya.*	C1
M02-018	Yellow-rice warung; partial	5	Compliment; address	*anjay lah cil, enak banget*	C1, C4
M04-018	Mall chain outlet; partial	5	Compliment; complaint; acceptance	*enakk tp td pesen* [menu item] *minta nasi tp dtgnya kentang hehe tp gpp*	C1
M09-003	Beverage kiosk; end marker	5	Confirmation; thanking; concern about imposition	*sesuai req, makasih ya kak moga ga ngeribetin*	C4
M03-026	Rice warung; apparent end	5	Complaint	*ayam ny agak asin*	C2
M08-004	Local fried chicken; partial	5	Complaint; request	*kelamaan .... buanget tolong di cepatkan oelayanan nya geh jgn lma ² masak nunggu sampai berjam ² kasian kloe dah lapar*	C2
M01-025	Padang restaurant; partial	4	Complaint (contrastive)	*namun kurang pedas*	C2
M10-002	Chicken and duck warung; apparent end	4	Complaint (missing item)	*tapi es tehnya kurang 1*	C2
M05-020	Fast-food chain; partial	5	Assessment; rating explanation	*enak jadi aku kasih bintang lima*	C3
M11-001	Lalapan; partial	3	Request; rating offer	*lebih teliti lagi dengan menu pesanan yang dimuat di sistem ya, next jadi bintang 5*	C3
M03-024	Rice warung; apparent end	3	Complaint; conditional rating	*mungkin kalo bkn nangka saya kasi bintang 5*	C3
M01-015	Padang restaurant; partial	3	Assessment; thanking	*pas porsi x kk trimaksih*	C4
M06-007	Street vendor; partial	1	Complaint; rebuke; hostile wish	*mending ga usah jualan kalau ga niat* *semoga allah balas yg kamu perbuat*	C1, C2
M03-013 reply	Rice warung; apparent end	5 (review)	Appreciation; good wish	*Masyaallah semoga selalu suka kak*	C4, C5

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Record	Merchant context	Rating	Speech act(s)	Quoted cue	Criteria
M03-021 reply	Rice warung; apparent end	1 (review)	Apology; account	*Maaf kak […] tapi drivernya lngsung pergi dn gak balik lagi ambil* [dish]*nya*	C5
M03-022 reply	Rice warung; apparent end	4 (review)	Apology; acceptance	*Kak, mohon maaf yaaa atas kelalaian kami*	C5
M15-004 reply	Meatball and noodle shop; partial	5 (review)	Acknowledges a deficiency; promise	*Akan kami perbaiki kekurangan pedasnya kak*	C5
M04-027	Mall chain outlet; partial	1	Complaint; challenge; attribution of fault	*ANEH kasir yg salah ga keluarin struk sampe orderan ga masuk kenapa aplikasi gojek yg disalahin?*	C5

A3 Interpretive register

Table A3. Interpretive claims, alternatives, evidential basis, and confidence.

Record	Proposed pragmatic function	Alternative reading or limit	Basis	Confidence
M03-015	Explicit defect report supports a direct complaint; no overt verbal redress is quoted.	Direct wording does not establish an intention to insult. The claim concerns formulation.	W	High
M03-019	An instruction requests reduced salt; ya can seek alignment or soften the ending.	A direct request and a mitigating ending can coexist. The particle is context-dependent. ya can also insist.	W+C	Moderate
M04-023	An explicit mild assessment is interpreted critically alongside two stars.	Mildness alone does not establish off-record performance; disappointment remains contextual.	W+R	Moderate
M02-031	agak qualifies degree; the apology frames criticism as interpersonally delicate.	Four stars may reflect overall approval. Mitigation is supported by the words themselves.	W	High
M04-008	Tentative attribution to forgetting qualifies responsibility for a plainly negative assessment.	The fuller review remains strongly critical. Tentative attribution does not erase dissatisfaction.	W+C	High
M02-018	Praise, a familiar address, and a marked exclamation support an affiliative stance.	Familiarity is projected, not proven; the English exclamation does not reproduce the slang register. An older or non-local reader may hear anjay lah as coarse.	W+C	Moderate
M04-018	Praise precedes an order complaint; laughter and acceptance qualify its force.	Five stars may express overall approval. The verbal sequence supplies the clearest evidence of mitigation. hehe may also signal embarrassment.	W+C	Moderate

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Record	Proposed pragmatic function	Alternative reading or limit	Basis	Confidence
M09-003	Confirmation, thanking, and concern about imposition coexist with friendly address.	This is not classified simply as a compliment; each act is distinguished.	W	High
M03-026	A hedge qualifies a product criticism within a maximum-rated review.	The rating may concern overall experience. The hedge, rather than the stars alone, supports mitigation.	W; R (score)	High (hedge); tentative (score)
M08-004	An intensified delay complaint requests faster service and invokes hunger.	Five stars do not prove that the score mitigates the strong complaint; overall approval remains possible.	W; R (score)	High (complaint); tentative (score)
M01-025	An adversative opening makes criticism explicit against an unstated background.	The background may be overall approval or a situational expectation. Stars do not demonstrably replace a clause.	W; R (background)	High (criticism); tentative (background)
M10-002	A contrastive opening reports a missing drink within a favourable-rated review.	The source of the implicit contrast remains underdetermined by the short excerpt.	W; R (background)	High (criticism); tentative (background)
M05-020	jadi explicitly links a favourable assessment to the awarded score.	This is rating justification, not complaint mitigation; no criticism is present.	W	High
M11-001	A request for greater care is linked to a prospective higher score.	The text offers a future reward; actual later rating or compliance is not observed.	W	High
M03-024	A hypothetical higher score is made conditional on changing one ingredient.	The condition supports aspect-specific dissatisfaction, not a claim about every motive for the score.	W	High
M01-015	A favourable portion assessment and thanking coexist with three stars.	The reason for the middle score is unresolved; no fixed sentiment cut-off is imposed.	W	High (wording); score not interpreted
M06-007	Rebuke and an invocation of moral repayment expand criticism toward the seller's conduct.	The aggravating reading depends on their complaint context, not religious wording alone.	W+C	High
M03-013 reply	A religious expression and familiar address accompany appreciation.	Its affiliative reading is tied to this favourable context, in contrast with M06-007.	W+C	High
M03-021 reply	An apology precedes an explanation locating the missing item with driver conduct.	The review context is paraphrased in Section 4.5. The reply does not independently establish the cause.	W	High
M03-022 reply	The merchant explicitly accepts negligence alongside an apology.	Acceptance of responsibility is expressed; the underlying service event is not independently verified.	W	High
M15-004 reply	A future commitment responds to criticism embedded in a favourable evaluation.	Recipient uptake is visible; later improvement and the customer's rating motive are not.	W+C	High

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Record	Proposed pragmatic function	Alternative reading or limit	Basis	Confidence
M04-027	A rhetorical question disputes an application-error explanation and attributes fault to the cashier.	The report presents a contested account, not a verified reconstruction of the incident.	W	High

Basis: W, explicit wording cue; W+C, wording with supporting co-text; W+R, wording read with the rating; R, inference from the rating. Confidence criteria are stated in Section 3.6.