



Voices, Identities, and Social Power in Contemporary Indonesian Cinema: A Quotation-Centered Discourse-Sociolinguistic Analysis of ‘*Tilik*’ and ‘*Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*’

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Abstract: This study examines how brief dialogue excerpts from the Indonesian films *Tilik* (2018) and *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* (2022) construct identity and enact social power. It combines critical discourse analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, stance analysis, and indexicality within a quotation-centered design. Ten purposively selected excerpts were curated through explicit criteria: each had to contain a salient linguistic resource, occur at a consequential point in the interaction, support bilingual or culture-sensitive analysis, and represent one of the films' central conflicts. The analytical unit is a short quotation together with its locally bounded turn sequence, speaker relationship, scene conflict, and relevant cultural frame. The findings show that power is not simply possessed by characters; it is interactionally achieved through evidential questions, minimal responses, attention-directing imperatives, gendered predication, motive attribution, counter-imperatives, social address, ethnic categorization, rhetorical questioning, and reported advice. In *Tilik*, requests for evidence suspend rumor authority, whereas references to *susuk* convert female visibility into moral suspicion and political accusations reframe apparently disinterested gossip. In *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, paternal commands claim deontic control, but counter-silencing exposes the fragility of that authority; Batak address terms and adat-based categories organize belonging, while Sarma's questions make unequal care visible. Subtitle comparison further shows that referential meaning may survive even when particles, honorifics, political titles, and kinship meanings are weakened. Methodologically, the article demonstrates how a small, systematically curated corpus of proportionate quotations can support transparent, copyright-conscious, high-context film discourse analysis.

Keywords: : Indonesian cinema, telecinematic discourse, critical discourse analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, stance, indexicality, audiovisual translation

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INTRODUCTION

Film dialogue has become an important object of linguistic inquiry because scripted talk simultaneously advances narrative, models social relationships, and circulates recognizable ways of speaking. Research on telecinematic discourse has shown that dialogue in film and television should not be dismissed as an imperfect copy of spontaneous conversation. It is designed language: compressed, repeatable, multimodal, and addressed both to characters inside the story and to audiences outside it (Kozloff, 2000; Piazza et al., 2011; Dynel, 2011; Bednarek, 2018). This dual orientation makes film dialogue especially valuable for examining how identities and power relations are made intelligible through wording, sequence, voice quality, gesture, and visual framing.

Local and regional cinemas add a further dimension to this research. Studies centered on global English-language media may overlook the dense cultural work performed by regional address forms, particles, kinship terms, religious expressions, and language alternation. Indonesian cinema offers a particularly productive site because Bahasa Indonesia, regional languages, ethnic repertoires, and English subtitles frequently coexist within the same film. Such forms do not merely provide local color. They index social distance, age, respect, gender, ethnicity, belonging, and claims to cultural competence. Their analysis can therefore reveal forms of authority and resistance that become less visible when dialogue is treated only as plot information or when English subtitles are analyzed without the source-language forms.

This article compares *Tilik*, a Javanese-language short film centered on village women traveling to visit an ill community leader, and *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, a feature-length family drama situated in Batak cultural life. The films differ in region, genre, and narrative scale, yet

both make talk the principal arena of conflict. *Tilik* develops through gossip, evidential challenges, moral evaluation, and rivalry around village authority. *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* develops through paternal directives, migration, marriage expectations, kinship obligations, and competing definitions of adat. In both films, the central question is not simply who speaks, but who can successfully define what counts as credible knowledge, respectable conduct, authentic belonging, and legitimate family duty.

Previous studies have established important foundations. Angjaya (2021) demonstrates that *Tilik* represents women's power ambivalently within patriarchal conditions. Saputra et al. (2022) classify the film's illocutionary acts, while Firdausi and Setiawan (2022) document the loss and gain of culture-specific items in its English subtitles. Research on *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* has examined deixis and social reference (Amaniyah & Rumilah, 2023), cultural identity and gendered representation (Simatupang et al., 2024), and the pragmatic or semiotic force of particular scenes. Together, these studies show that the films are linguistically and culturally rich. However, the existing work has generally treated speech acts, translation strategies, gender representation, deixis, or cultural symbolism as separate objects.

What remains insufficiently addressed is the interactional connection among these domains. A linguistic form such as an interrogative, imperative, address term, or cultural keyword does several things at once: it evaluates a person or proposition, positions the speaker, invites or blocks alignment, and links the local turn to broader structures of gender, family hierarchy, ethnicity, and political legitimacy. Existing scholarship has also rarely compared *Tilik* and *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* through the same analytical procedure or made quotation provenance and selection criteria central to methodological transparency. The

present study fills this gap by integrating critical discourse analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, stance, indexicality, and bilingual subtitle attention in a systematically curated ten-excerpt corpus.

The study asks three questions: (1) How do brief dialogue excerpts construct socially recognizable identities? (2) Which linguistic resources authorize, negotiate, or challenge social power? (3) Which indexical meanings are retained, transformed, or weakened in English rendering? Its novel contribution is both analytical and methodological. Analytically, it compares horizontal, networked authority in village gossip with vertical, kinship-based authority in a Batak family. Methodologically, it develops a quotation-centered procedure in which every interpretive claim begins with a short, attributable excerpt and moves outward to its sequential, sociocultural, and translational frame.

Film dialogue as designed social interaction

Telecinematic dialogue is neither ordinary spontaneous talk nor autonomous literary text. It is constructed for performance and reception, but it draws on conversational resources recognizable to audiences (Kozloff, 2000; Piazza et al., 2011). Consequently, the analysis of film talk must consider both interactional plausibility and audiovisual design. Turn order, interruption, gaze, prosody, camera framing, and subtitle segmentation can all shape the force of an utterance (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Bednarek, 2018). The present study focuses primarily on verbal form and sequential placement while treating image and performance as contextual evidence rather than as separate semiotic datasets.

Interactional sociolinguistics provides the tools for connecting small linguistic cues with larger interpretive frames. Contextualization cues such as address terms, particles, repetition, prosody, and response design guide participants toward particular understandings of what is happening (Gumperz, 1982). In film dialogue, these cues help audiences recognize a turn as skeptical, deferential, accusatory, commanding, affiliative, or resistant. Because local particles and kinship expressions may lack direct English equivalents, the source-

language cue and the subtitle must be distinguished.

Critical discourse analysis and social power

Critical discourse analysis treats discourse as a form of social practice through which unequal relationships are reproduced, legitimized, and contested (Fairclough, 1992, 2013; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). The present study operationalizes this perspective through five questions: Who is entitled to introduce or close a topic? Whose knowledge is treated as credible? Which persons are categorized positively or negatively? What moral, familial, political, or cultural reasons legitimate a directive? How do other speakers ratify, negotiate, or resist the claim?

Power is therefore understood relationally rather than as a fixed possession. A father's social status may authorize an imperative, but the command becomes interactionally effective only if recipients orient to it. A skilled gossip narrator may control attention, but that control can be suspended by a demand for evidence. This distinction between role-based authority and achieved uptake allows the analysis to identify both domination and its fragility.

Stance, identity, and indexicality

Stance is defined here through Du Bois's (2007) three-part model: speakers evaluate an object, position themselves and others, and align or disalign with interlocutors. This definition makes stance observable. An evidential question evaluates a prior claim as insufficiently grounded, positions the questioner as an accountable knower, and withholds alignment. An ethnic condition evaluates a non-Batak partner as potentially culturally incompetent, positions the speaker as guardian of tradition, and invites alignment with an endogamous norm.

Identity is similarly treated as an interactional achievement rather than a stable essence (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Speakers become recognizable as responsible knowers, moral guardians, dutiful children, authoritative fathers, neglected caregivers, or culturally competent Batak participants through repeated acts of positioning. Indexicality explains how forms such as Yu, Pak, Amang, mauiate, susuk, and adat connect the immediate

exchange to histories of respect, gender, generation, ethnicity, and moral expectation (Ochs, 1992; Silverstein, 2003; Eckert, 2008; Agha, 2007).

Audiovisual translation and cultural meaning

Subtitling operates under constraints of time, space, synchrony, and reading speed. Compression is therefore not evidence of poor translation by itself (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2021). The relevant question is which layer of meaning remains most accessible after compression. Culture-specific items may be retained, generalized, explained, or deleted, and each strategy redistributes interpretive work between language, image, performance, and audience knowledge (Aixelá, 1996; Pedersen, 2011).

For this study, referential meaning concerns the basic proposition: who did what, to whom, or under what condition. Indexical meaning concerns the social relationships and cultural associations evoked by the form. An English subtitle may accurately preserve the proposition while weakening an address term, particle, political title, or kinship relation. This distinction prevents translation analysis from being reduced to a simple accurate/inaccurate judgment

METHODS

This study uses qualitative, corpus-informed close reading. Corpus-informed means that interpretation is conducted on a bounded and explicitly documented collection rather than on memorable examples selected after the argument has been formed. The corpus consists of ten short excerpts: five from *Tilik* and five from *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*. The films are treated as primary audiovisual works (Prasetyo, 2018; Rajagukguk, 2022), while published transcriptions and subtitle analyses provide quotation provenance, source-language wording, English rendering, and time codes where available (Firdausi & Setiawan, 2022; Amaniyah & Rumilah, 2023; Saputra et al., 2022).

The *Tilik* items reproduce Javanese dialogue and English subtitles documented by Firdausi and Setiawan (2022). The *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* items reproduce short Indonesian or

Batak forms and time codes documented in published analyses; English versions are labeled as researcher translations when they are not quoted from an official subtitle. This separation among source dialogue, official subtitle, and researcher translation is essential because each constitutes a different evidential layer.

Corpus construction and inclusion criteria

Candidate lines were first grouped according to the conflicts central to each film: rumor and credibility, gendered reputation, village politics, family authority, ethnic marriage boundaries, and unequal care. An item was included only when it met all four criteria: (1) it contained a clearly identifiable linguistic resource; (2) it occupied a consequential sequential position, such as initiating a topic, challenging evidence, issuing a command, or reframing an obligation; (3) it supported a sociocultural interpretation grounded in the film's conflict; and (4) its wording and provenance could be documented through a film citation, published transcription, or subtitle study. The final set was then balanced across the two films and across interrogatives, imperatives, address forms, cultural keywords, categorization, and reported speech.

This procedure makes the corpus systematic without claiming statistical representativeness. The ten items are an analytical sample selected to maximize contrast and explanatory value, not a frequency sample of all dialogue. Recurrence refers to a mechanism demonstrated across more than one item, such as controlling epistemic rights or redefining family duty, rather than to a numerical distribution in the complete films.

Unit of analysis and frame boundaries

The basic unit is the brief quotation in its interactional and sociocultural frame. The interactional frame is delimited by the minimum sequence needed to identify the action performed by the line: normally the immediately preceding proposition or question, the focal turn, and the next response that displays uptake, resistance, or topic development. The sociocultural frame is limited to information demonstrably relevant to that sequence: participant roles, the scene's conflict, and the cultural category explicitly

invoked, such as lurah, susuk, Amang, Batak, or adat.

This bounded-frame rule prevents two common problems. First, it avoids treating an isolated sentence as if its force were self-evident. Second, it prevents the analysis from expanding into an unrestricted summary of the entire plot. Broader film context is introduced only when it explains the rights, expectations, or identity categories activated by the quotation.

Analytical procedure

Each item was analyzed in five stages. First, the wording was segmented into salient resources: lexical choice, mood, modality, deixis, address, repetition, presupposition, cultural keywords, or translation shift. Second, its speech action was identified, such as requesting evidence, recruiting attention, accusing, commanding, thanking, categorizing, or advising. Third, stance was coded through evaluation, positioning, and alignment. Fourth, the local action was connected to a broader relation of power, including epistemic authority, moral surveillance, political legitimacy, paternal control, ethnic boundary-making, or gendered care. Fifth, the source-language form and English rendering were

compared to distinguish referential meaning from indexical meaning.

Analytical trustworthiness was strengthened through a fixed worksheet applied to every excerpt, a data-provenance table, negative-case attention, and comparative interpretation. Negative-case attention required the analysis to consider alternative functions where the wording was underdetermined. For example, Really? can display surprise, interest, or skepticism; the interpretation therefore remains conditional on intonation and uptake rather than assigning one fixed meaning. Comparative interpretation required each film-specific claim to be tested against the other film's architecture of authority.

Ethical and copyright-conscious quotation

The study uses only short excerpts necessary for criticism and linguistic analysis. No excerpt substitutes for the films, and no continuous transcript is reproduced. Quotation length is proportionate to the analytical purpose, and all excerpts are accompanied by attribution or time-code information. This design is not merely a legal precaution; it encourages analytical precision by requiring each cited line to carry a clearly stated evidential function

Table 1. Analytical corpus, provenance, and selection rationale

ID	Film / time	Source dialogue	English rendering	Primary resource	Selection rationale
T1	Tilik 00:56	Yu Sam reti kabare seko sopo lho?	Who said that? (official subtitle)	Evidential interrogative; deleted address/particle	Makes source accountability relevant and interrupts unsupported rumor.
T2	Tilik 00:51	Tenane lho?	Really? (official subtitle)	Minimal response; stance particle	Shows how alignment can be encouraged or suspended with minimal wording.
T3	Tilik 16:31	Eh Yu Sam, kiro-kiro menurutmu si Dian kui nganggo susuk ra?	Do you think that Dian has a charm? (official subtitle)	Interrogative; susuk; address deletion	Connects female visibility to occult-cultural suspicion and moral surveillance.
T4	Tilik 11:48	Padune ben Pak Tejo dadi lurah yo ra?	That's you wanting your husband to replace her, isn't it?	Motive attribution; Pak/lurah; tag question	Reframes moral criticism as politically interested speech.

			(official subtitle)		
T5	Tilik 02:01	Delok iki delok.	Guys, come here, look at this. (official subtitle)	Attention directive; subtitle addition	Shows topic initiation and coalition recruitment through control of shared attention.
N1	Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap 01:23:40-01:24:30	Pak Domu: Diam kau, Mak! / Mak Domu: Sekarang kau yang diam!	Pak Domu: Be quiet, Mak! / Mak Domu: Now you be quiet! (researcher translation)	Imperative and counter-imperative	Makes floor control visible and displays the reversal of deontic authority.
N2	Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap 09:57	Mauliate, A mang Pandita.	Thank you, Reverend. (researcher translation)	Batak gratitude and social address	Indexes respectful Belonging that exceeds the lexical meaning of thanks.
N3	Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap 03:12-03:15	Kalau bukan Batak, nanti dia tidak tahu adat.	If she is not Batak, she may not understand adat. (researcher translation)	Ethnic condition; adat	Turns a marriage preference into a cultural-competence boundary.
N4	Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap 01:28:54-01:29:01	Yang memikirkan Bapak dan Mamak siapa? Siapa?	Who will think about Father and Mother? Who? (researcher translation)	Rhetorical question; repetition	Makes unequal caregiving obligations explicit and demands recipient participation.
N5	Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap 01:28:41-01:28:46	Jangan lupa pikirkan dirimu sendiri.	Don't forget to think about yourself. (researcher translation)	Reported advice; negative imperative	Authorizes self-care relationally without rejecting family solidarity.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Across the corpus, social power is enacted through four recurrent kinds of entitlement: the right to define knowledge, the right to organize attention and speaking turns, the right to categorize persons and relationships, and the right to interpret cultural obligation. Tilik represents authority as largely horizontal and networked among peers. Influence depends on narrative skill, evaluative confidence, and the recruitment of listeners. Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap represents authority as more vertical, organized through fatherhood, generation, and adat. Yet neither form is secure. Rumor authority can be suspended by evidential questioning, while paternal authority can be reversed through counter-imperatives and counter-narratives of care.

1. Tilik: evidentiality and suspended alignment

Source dialogue	Yu Sam reti kabare seko sopo lho? (00:56)
English rendering	“Who said that?”
Analytical focus	Evidentiality; deleted address and particle; evaluation of the prior account as insufficiently sourced.

The interrogative Who said that? is the clearest instance of epistemic resistance in the Tilik sample. Grammatically, it requests a source. Sequentially, it suspends the progression from hearsay to accepted

community knowledge. Gossip gains authority when repeated information is treated as self-confirming; the question interrupts that process by making the chain of transmission accountable. The speaker who had occupied the position of confident narrator must now identify an observer, reporter, or evidential basis.

In stance terms, the question performs all three components identified by Du Bois (2007). It evaluates the preceding account as inadequately grounded, positions the questioner as a responsible knower, and disaligns from automatic uptake. The line does not replace the rumor with a competing story. Its counter-power lies in withholding ratification. This supports Fairclough's view that power may be challenged by denaturalizing what had begun to appear as common sense.

The source form contains Yu Sam and lho, both omitted in the English subtitle. Yu indexes a respectful or familiar relation to an older woman, while lho adds attention, insistence, or affective emphasis depending on delivery. The subtitle preserves the evidential proposition but reduces the interpersonal configuration.

Firdausi and Setiawan's (2022) translation analysis therefore provides more than a technical observation: the deletion changes how the challenge is socially voiced.

Source dialogue	Tenane lho? (00:51)
English rendering	"Really?"
Analytical focus	Minimal response; ambiguous stance; possible surprise, encouragement, or skepticism.

The item is a methodological negative case: the form alone does not justify a single ideological interpretation. The analysis must preserve the range of possible alignments and rely on sequential uptake. The omission of lho again matters because the English subtitle provides the basic request for confirmation but leaves less evidence of affective emphasis.

Together, T1 and T2 show that gossip is an organized epistemic practice in which participants negotiate not only what is known but how strongly they will align with a claim.

This finding extends rather than replaces previous work. Saputra et al. (2022) identify interrogative and expressive actions in Tilik, while Firdausi and Setiawan (2022) classify subtitle loss. The present analysis connects those observations to the distribution of epistemic rights: questions and particles help determine who may convert circulating talk into credible village knowledge.

2. Tilik: attention, gendered surveillance, and political motive

Source dialogue	Delok iki delok. (02:01)
English rendering	"Guys, come here, look at this."
Analytical focus	Attention directive; added English vocative; topic initiation and coalition recruitment.

The directive look at this illustrates a form of power that precedes explicit evaluation: control of shared attention. By directing recipients toward an object or piece of information, the speaker establishes what the group should discuss next. The subtitle adds Guys, come here, which makes the recruitment function more explicit than the source wording. The addition does not merely increase friendliness; it constructs a collectivity and frames the following material as jointly inspectable evidence.

In stance terms, the directive positions the speaker as a discoverer and organizer of relevance. Recipients are invited to align by looking before they have evaluated the content. Topic control therefore creates an asymmetry: the person who selects the object of attention gains the first opportunity to interpret it. This mechanism helps explain how informal authority develops in Tilik without official office or formal turn-taking rules.

Source dialogue	Eh Yu Sam, kiro-kiro menurutmu si Dian kui nganggo susuk ra? (16:31)
English rendering	"Do you think that Dian has a charm?"
Analytical focus	Gendered predication; susuk; address and interjection deletion.

The question about *susuk* condenses a complex gender ideology. *Susuk* can refer to a culturally specific supernatural or implanted means of enhancing attraction. Rendering the term as charm provides an accessible generalization, but it weakens the embodied, occult, and morally charged associations available in the Javanese context. The question does not simply ask why Dian is attractive. It proposes an illegitimate hidden cause and thereby turns beauty, mobility, and male attention into evidence of questionable character.

The linguistic evidence for moral surveillance lies in the causal presupposition. The wording treats Dian's visibility as something requiring explanation and makes a culturally suspicious explanation conversationally relevant. It evaluates Dian's attractiveness as abnormal, positions the speaker and addressee as legitimate moral interpreters, and invites alignment against an absent woman who cannot defend herself.

Angjaya's (2021) account of ambivalent female power is clarified here: women possess considerable interactional authority, but that authority may reproduce patriarchal regulation by making another woman's body and relationships publicly accountable.

English retains the accusation in broad form but redistributes its indexical force. Yu Sam and the opening interjection are deleted, while *susuk* is generalized. The subtitle conveys the plot-level suspicion; the source form more strongly displays who is being recruited, how the question is affectively launched, and why the alleged cause is culturally dangerous.

Source dialogue	Padune ben Pak Tejo dadi lurah yo ra? (11:48)
English rendering	"That's you wanting your husband to replace her, isn't it?"
Analytical focus	Motive attribution; local political titles; tag-like pressure toward confirmation.

3. Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap: command, counter-command, and threatened

paternal authority

Source dialogue	Pak Domu: Diam kau, Mak! / Mak Domu: Sekarang kau yang diam! (01:23:40-01:24:30)
English rendering	Pak Domu: "Be quiet, Mak!" / Mak Domu: "Now you be quiet!"
Analytical focus	Imperative and counter-imperative; competition for floor rights and deontic authority.

The paired imperatives make social power visible as a struggle over who may speak and who must listen. Pak Domu's command claims deontic authority based on husbandhood, fatherhood, and seniority. He attempts to terminate Mak Domu's turn rather than answer its substance. The action is therefore both conversational and ideological: controlling the floor protects his position as the family's principal interpreter.

Mak Domu's counter-imperative reverses the direction of obligation. By repeating the command structure and changing the target, she rejects the assumption that authority flows only from husband to wife. The parallel wording is crucial evidence.

Her resistance does not merely express anger; it appropriates the grammatical form through which Pak Domu has claimed control. The sequence shows that role-based authority must still be ratified interactionally.

The exchange also reveals threatened power. Commands become more explicit when ordinary status no longer guarantees compliance. Pak Domu's imperative displays dominance, but Mak Domu's immediate refusal turns the same line into evidence that his authority has lost moral legitimacy. The finding develops critical discourse analysis by showing how deontic power is not only encoded in imperative mood but tested through recipient uptake. It also deepens previous gender-focused readings of the film (Simatupang et al., 2024): resistance is located in the sequential transformation of silence into counter-command.

4. Cultural keywords, social address, and performed belonging

Source dialogue	Mauliate, Amang Pandita. (09:57)
English rendering	"Thank you, Reverend."
Analytical focus	Gratitude plus Batak social deixis; respectful alignment with a relational order.

Mauliate can be glossed as thank you, but its discourse value exceeds lexical gratitude. Retaining the Batak word performs ethnolinguistic belonging rather than merely describing it. Amang Pandita adds a respectful, relational address to a male religious figure. As Amaniyah and Rumilah (2023) show in their study of deixis, such forms locate speakers within social coordinates of age, respect, role, and proximity.

The utterance evaluates the prior action positively, positions the speaker as a culturally competent and respectful participant, and aligns with a Batak relational order. This is not coercive power, yet it supports relational legitimacy: speakers who command the appropriate repertoire can present themselves as entitled members of the community. Agha's (2007) account of enregisterment is useful here because the social force comes from a recognizable register of Batak respect, not from dictionary meaning alone. Translation faces a choice between visibility and explanation. Retaining *mauliate* preserves cultural presence but may leave international viewers dependent on context. Translating it as thank you increases accessibility but reduces ethnolinguistic performance. Translating Amang only as Reverend communicates institutional role while weakening kin-like respect. No single solution preserves every layer; the analyst must therefore state which layer is foregrounded.

Source dialogue	Kalau bukan Batak, nanti dia tidak tahu adat. (03:12-03:15)
English rendering	"If she is not Batak, she may not understand adat."
Analytical focus	Conditional ethnic categorization; presupposed cultural incompetence; marriage boundary.

The conditional clause converts a personal relationship into a collective boundary

problem. Its grammar makes non-Batak identity relevant before the prospective partner is evaluated as an individual. The projected consequence is cultural incompetence: she may not understand adat. A preference for an in-group spouse is therefore naturalized as a practical requirement for continuity.

The stance structure is explicit. The line evaluates the outsider category as risky, positions the speaker as guardian of cultural knowledge, and invites alignment with an endogamous norm. Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) principle of distinction explains how Batak identity is produced through differentiation from a non-Batak other. The line also expands paternal or elder authority because marriage is framed not as an individual decision but as a matter with consequences for the whole kin group.

At the same time, the film's wider narrative supplies a counter-model: cultural continuity can be sustained through learning, respect, and adaptation rather than categorical exclusion. The quotation is analytically valuable precisely because it marks the threshold between those models. It does not prove that Batak culture is uniformly exclusionary; it shows how one character uses cultural competence as a warrant for controlling marriage.

5. Rhetorical questioning and the counter-discourse of care

Source dialogue	Jangan lupa pikirkan dirimu sendiri. (01:28:41-01:28:46)
English rendering	"Don't forget to think about yourself."
Analytical focus	Reported advice; negative imperative; relational authorization of self-care.

The advice authorizes self-care through a family relationship. Because Sarma reports the words of her brother, attention to the self is not framed as isolated individualism. It is validated by another family member. The negative imperative *don't forget* presupposes that self-attention has repeatedly been postponed, making neglect rather than selfishness the background condition.

The line evaluates self-care as legitimate, positions the advising sibling as supportive, and aligns with Sarma against a model of duty that requires self-erasure. Its power is counter-discursive: it offers a vocabulary through which Sarma can reinterpret obedience. Family solidarity is retained, but the definition of legitimate obligation is widened to include the caregiver

Source dialogue	Yang memikirkan Bapak dan Mamak siapa? Siapa? (01:28:54-01:29:01)
English rendering	“Who will think about Father and Mother? Who?”
Analytical focus	Rhetorical interrogative; repetition; exposure of unequal care.

The rhetorical question reveals the contradiction in the advice. If Sarma prioritizes herself, who will care for the parents? Formally, the line requests an answer; pragmatically, it presents the absence of alternatives as painfully obvious. Repetition intensifies the demand and forces listeners to confront a distribution of labor they have treated as natural.

The question evaluates the existing arrangement as unequal, positions Sarma as the unrecognized caregiver, and compels the brothers to align by supplying the missing answer. A declarative such as nobody else will do it would state a conclusion. The interrogative makes recipients participate in producing that conclusion, thereby increasing its moral force. The line shifts the family's interpretive center from the father's anxiety about cultural continuity to the daughter's experience of accumulated sacrifice.

The broader social implication is gendered but not reducible to a universal claim about all Batak families. Within this narrative, the daughter remains near the parents and carries emotional responsibility while the sons have greater mobility to pursue work, marriage, and personal choice. The excerpt therefore provides direct linguistic evidence for a gendered moral economy: care is praised as duty until the caregiver asks who cares for her.

6. Comparative synthesis: categories as instruments of power

The two films represent different architectures of authority. In *Tilik*, power is horizontal and networked. A speaker becomes influential by directing attention, producing a coherent account, evaluating absent persons, and recruiting agreement. In *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, power is vertically organized through fatherhood, generation, and adat. Yet the contrast is not absolute. Gossip can harden into hierarchy when one narrator monopolizes credibility, and family hierarchy depends on the same interactional resources of uptake, repetition, categorization, and motive attribution found among peers.

Across both films, identity categories operate as condensed arguments. To frame Dian as a woman who may use *susuk* is to imply that her visibility requires moral regulation. To frame a prospective spouse as non-Batak is to imply possible cultural incompetence. To frame Sarma as dutiful is to normalize her availability for care.

Categories therefore connect description to obligation: they imply how a person should behave and how others are entitled to respond. Counter-discourse reopens the category. Who said that? turns moral certainty back into hearsay. The accusation about Pak Tejo turns community concern into interested political speech. Mak Domu's counter-imperative rejects the category of the silent wife, while Sarma's questions transform dutiful daughterhood into invisible labor. Social power is thus exercised through the capacity to stabilize categories, and resistance begins by exposing their evidential, moral, or distributive costs.

This comparative finding integrates the article's theoretical components. Critical discourse analysis identifies legitimation and categorization; interactional sociolinguistics explains how local cues guide interpretation; stance analysis specifies evaluation, positioning, and alignment; indexicality connects the local form to social histories. None of these perspectives alone fully explains the excerpts. Their synthesis shows how a small linguistic choice can become evidence of a broader social structure without treating the structure as mechanically encoded in grammar.

7. English subtitles and the redistribution of social meaning

Subtitle mediation should not be described simply as loss or failure. English subtitles must fit visual timing and reading constraints (Díaz Cintas & Remael, 2021). The analytical issue is which meanings become most visible after compression. In the *Tilik* data, official subtitles reliably preserve the central speech action: a source is questioned, confirmation is requested, attention is recruited, a charm is alleged, and political motive is attributed. However, address forms, particles, and local titles are frequently deleted or generalized.

The effects are systematic. *Yu Sam* and *lho* disappear from evidential questions, reducing information about relationship and affect. *Susuk* becomes charm, making the accusation accessible while broadening a culturally specific practice. *Pak Tejo* and *lurah* become relational nouns or pronouns, preserving who is implicated while weakening village hierarchy.

Conversely, *Guys*, *come here* is added to *Delok iki delok*, making coalition recruitment more explicit. Translation therefore does not only remove meaning; it can redistribute and occasionally amplify it.

The *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* items show a related tension between cultural visibility and interpretive opacity. *Mauliate* and *Amang* can be retained to foreground Batak presence, but viewers may need scene context to infer relational force. *Adat* can be borrowed, translated as custom, or explained, with different consequences for cultural specificity. A quotation-centered article should therefore identify the status of every English line: official subtitle, published translation, or researcher translation. This distinction is part of the evidence, not a technical footnote.

For international scholarship, the practical implication is clear. Where lawful access and linguistic competence permit, researchers should present a brief source-language form beside the English rendering and explain at least one indexical feature at risk. English-only analysis may be accurate at the propositional level while remaining incomplete at the relational level.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that brief film quotations can reveal how social power is built, challenged, and translated. In *Tilik*, evidential

interrogatives and minimal responses regulate the passage from rumor to knowledge; attention directives organize collective relevance; references to *susuk* turn female visibility into moral suspicion; and motive attribution destabilizes gossip by linking it to village politics. In *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, imperatives claim paternal control, counter-imperatives reverse that claim, Batak gratitude and address perform belonging, ethnic conditions police marriage boundaries, and rhetorical questions expose an unequal distribution of care.

These linguistic resources are connected to distinct theoretical dimensions of power.

Evidential questions redistribute epistemic rights. Imperatives and counter-imperatives negotiate deontic rights and floor control. Predication and ethnic categorization define moral and cultural membership. Address terms and cultural keywords authorize relational legitimacy. Rhetorical questions and reported advice reframe the moral economy of obligation. Power therefore emerges from the relationship among wording, sequence, role, cultural history, and recipient uptake rather than from grammar or social status alone.

The comparison also contributes to understanding Indonesian society and cinema beyond the two films. Regional-language cinema can stage tensions that broad accounts of national or global media may flatten: village office and informal political rivalry, women's participation in the policing of gender norms, migration and adaptation within ethnic continuity, and the unequal allocation of care inside families. The films do not transparently represent all Javanese or Batak communities. They offer culturally recognizable models through which audiences can debate who may speak for the community, who bears the cost of continuity, and how tradition can be maintained without making one voice final.

The focused ten-item corpus is a limitation in coverage but a strength in analytical control. It cannot estimate the frequency of a feature across either film, nor can it represent all communicative practices in Indonesia. It can, however, support transferable analytical propositions: credibility depends on accountable evidence, role-based authority depends on uptake, identity categories carry behavioral expectations, and translation may

preserve reference while weakening indexicality.

These propositions can be tested in larger corpora, audience studies, and comparisons across regional-language films.

Methodologically, the study demonstrates a transparent and copyright-conscious alternative to reproducing long transcripts. A small corpus becomes rigorous when selection criteria, provenance, frame boundaries, stance coding, and translation status are made explicit. Future research should verify excerpts against standardized film editions, incorporate prosody and gesture more systematically, compare audience interpretations, and examine whether the same mechanisms recur across genres and regions. Even within a focused corpus, Indonesian cinematic talk provides rich evidence of how language organizes moral authority, cultural continuity, gendered responsibility, and social change.

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