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The Politeness Concept of the Language Spoken by Women in Javanese Culture

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Abstract. This study critically examines the Politeness Concept of The Language Spoken by Women in Javanese Culture related to the realization or modesty of Javanese women in speaking with other people and what factors are behind this believed concept. The method used to study this topic is to use a description of the problem based on the concept of politeness from Foley, in the form of two types of politeness in general, namely positive and negative politeness. The results of this study generally describe Javanese women who more often use positive politeness strategies than negative politeness strategies when speaking. It also causes a woman to get closer to other women more quickly or with the opposite sex she has just met than men. Negative politeness strategies are mostly used by Javanese women in expressing apology. Secondly, in this study also identified factors underlying the concept of politeness, in these factors there are stereotypes in Javanese society which place women's gender as second sex after men and also the lack of confidence of women to express ideas or ideas as due to stereotypes in the community.

Keywords. Concept of Politeness, Women, Javanese Culture

1. Introduction

Speaking of language problems or expressions used by a particular person or group of people certainly cannot be separated from the cultural construction in shaping the person and the community. Clark (2006: 366) *states, in using language, speakers make communicative choices of many types.* When culture becomes the topic of discussion, discussion of concepts about values or norms contained and believed by society cannot be separated. One of the values or norms that might be an interesting topic to be discussed is the concept of politeness. Zainurrahman (2011) suggested that politeness in language might be a new horizon in language. Until now, politeness in language has not been studied in the linguistic

constellation; except in pragmatic study. The concept of politeness in language can be analyzed from various perspectives. One of them, in this study conveyed the politeness of language in a sociolinguistic perspective.

In sociolinguistic studies in particular, there is the concept of studying the relationship between language and heterogeneous society. Varied languages seem to be interpreted, 'a variety of speeches are based on formal and non-formal atmosphere, the existence of bilingual or multilingual, regional languages, national languages and international languages, resulting in a variety of standard languages, non-standard, scientific, literary, relaxed and formal, level said low, middle, or high with a variety of uniqueness and problems in their use'. Heterogeneous language user societies, among others, appear to be heterogeneous in terms of religion, customs, culture, level and field of study of science they are involved in.

Politeness is relative in society. Certain words can be said to be polite in a certain group of people, but in other groups it can be said to be impolite. According to Zamzani, et al. (2010: 2) politeness is behaviour that is expressed in a good or ethical way. Politeness is a cultural phenomenon, so what is considered polite by one culture may not be the case with other cultures. The purpose of politeness, including politeness in language, is to make the atmosphere of interaction pleasant, non-threatening and effective.

According Rahardi (2005: 35) politeness research studies the use of language (language use) in a particular language community. The speech community in question is a society with a variety of social and cultural background situations that embody it. As for what is studied in politeness research is the aspect of speech purpose and function.

This study tries to review the concept of politeness in language in Javanese culture. This discussion of the concept of politeness does not cover all matters relating to the overall Javanese general understanding of the concept of politeness. This study only reviews a part of the concept of politeness, namely the concept of modesty in women's language in Javanese culture. In this connection, there are two problems examined in this study, namely, how the realization or modesty of Javanese women in talking with others, and what factors may be behind the concept that is believed.

In general, this study will try to describe the concept of politeness in Javanese culture, especially those related to Javanese women's speech behaviour. Specifically, this study aims to identify the realization of the politeness of Javanese women in speaking with other people, as well as the factors underlying these believed concepts.

This study begins with a discussion of the concept or definition of politeness in language, then followed by a discussion of how the position of women in Javanese culture in general. Next, it is discussed the expression of politeness of language by women in Javanese culture and is accompanied by an analysis of the underlying factors. This study concludes with a summary of the topics discussed in the previous explanations.

2. Review of Literature

The discussion of politeness certainly cannot be separated from the cultural concept that gave birth to it. Culture itself according to Foley (1997: 19) can be interpreted as: "*A mental phenomenon lying beyond the actual social behaviour, and as such, quite private and individual. Culture is the cognitive organization of material and social phenomenon.*"

This cultural concept is then realized through language or speech form. Foley (1997: 19) further says that:

Language is often treated theoretically as a sub system of culture within cognitive anthropology but in practice and the structure of language as revealed by modern linguistics has generally served as the paradigm for analysing other aspects of culture. So, language can

be used as a medium to analyse aspects of culture, including the concept of politeness. Politeness can be interpreted as one of the social abilities that allows people to interact with others and be accepted in a particular culture.

Foley (1997: 270) further states that politeness is, of course, a battery of social skills whose goal is to ensure that everyone feels affirmed in a social interaction.

3. Research Methods

In accordance with the purpose of writing, the method used in this study is descriptive method. Sudaryanto (1986: 62) states that the descriptive method means that the research is based solely on the facts and phenomena that are empirically living on the speakers.

Practically, the method used in this study is described in three methods according to the stages of its implementation, namely: (1) data collection methods, (2) data analysis methods, and methods of presenting the results of the analysis.

The method used to study this topic is to use a description of the problem based on the concept of politeness from Foley, in the form of two types of politeness in general, namely positive and negative politeness.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Women in Javanese Culture

The tendency that occurs in societies that adhere to patriarchal culture, systems and orientation of values that are developed and believed by Javanese people tend to look down on women than men. That is, it can be said that women occupy the position of second class, second class in society.

Reflections on stereotypes of women as second-class creatures or lower than men are proved by the existence of expressions illustrating that the dignity of women are indeed below men. Beliefs of expressions that are still very strong to date include that the woman is limited to a *koncowingking* ('back friend'). Other expressions that read more extreme, namely *perempuaniku swarga nunutnerakakatut* ('if a woman goes to heaven with a man, likewise if going to hell'), also expressions of *perempuaniku yen awandaditheklek, lha yen bengidadilemek* ('the woman if the day becomes footwear, whereas if the night becomes a sleeping mat '). In fact, in terms of terms in Javanese, the word 'woman', comes from *keratabasa* (language expression), namely *wani* ('dare') and *ditata* ('rule'), which means that *wani* is arranged ('dare to be arranged'). In short, the ideal woman in Javanese cultural orientation, many are described as delicate, patient, compassionate, resigned, submissive or obedient, and loyal to men.

The phenomenon of system beliefs and values orientation found in the gender-biased Javanese society and culture seem to be still quite strong even though the development and dynamics of the soul of the times have changed. This is due in part to the socialization and internalization of gender-specific values, which have been going on for quite a long period of time. Besides that, the area of the value system is the most difficult cultural element to change in all cultural contexts, namely during the heyday of the Javanese kingdoms, especially the Mataram Kingdoms of Yogyakarta and Surakarta.

4.2 Concept of Politeness

The discussion of politeness expressions of speech, certainly cannot be separated from Leech's view of courtesy which includes a set of maxims which is also an analogy of the Grice maxim. Here are the four politeness maxims proposed by Leech in Ibrahim (1993: 321).

- 1) Maximum Concern: Minimize losses to others. Increase profits in others.
- 2) Maxim of Kindness: Minimize the benefits in yourself. Increase profits in others.
- 3) Maxims of Appreciation: Minimize the lack of respect for others. Increase appreciation for others.
- 4) Maximum Simplexes: Minimize praise to yourself. Increase praise on others.

Aside from the concept of Leech politeness, there is still another concept of courtesy, such as the concept of courtesy of Brown and Levinson. Ibrahim (1993: 323) states that this second politeness concept is a concept that has cross-cultural validity and this concept is related to the expression of the people "losing face" which means "insulted". In this case there are two types of faces, namely: (a) negative faces and (b) positive faces. Negative faces are related to rights to territory, freedom of action, and freedom from interference, which means the desire that your actions are not disturbed by the actions of others. Positive face is a consistent self-image that a person has to be appreciated or recognized by others. Based on that understanding, manners can be interpreted as an effort to save face. For that the speaker must avoid disagreement.

Furthermore, Foley (2001: 271) defines politeness as, "The redressing of the face to face is posed by face-threatening acts to addressees". Based on these two aspects of face, there are two types of politeness, namely positive politeness (in order to try to correct insults on the positive face of the opponent's speech) and negative politeness (which is aimed at the negative face of the opponent's speech, his desire for autonomy). Positive politeness means the speaker understands the desires of the interlocutors who want to be appreciated positive face. Strategies for expressing positive politeness include statements of friendship, solidarity, and praise.

Conversely, negative politeness are aimed more at the negative faces of the speaker, in other words, the speaker does not want to interfere with the opponent's autonomy rights so the strategy to express negative politeness involves expressions of apology and other forms of avoidance. The following are some examples of the use of both types of politeness strategies as proposed by Brown and Levinson in Foley (2001: 271-272).

4.2.1 Positive politeness strategy covering:

- (a) accompanying the interlocutor's interests, needs, and desires;
- (b) using solidarity in identity markers in groups;
- (c) showing confidence;
- (d) involving both the speaker and the interlocutor in speech activities;
- (e) offer or promise;
- (f) exaggerating interest in the speaker and things that attract the speaker;
- (g) avoiding disputes;
- (h) kidding.

4.2.2 Negative politeness strategies include:

- (i) speak indirectly;
- (j) use restrictions or questions;
- (k) being pessimistic;
- (l) minimizing imposition;
- (m) uses a disappearance structure, such as by nomination, passivity or general statements;
- (n) apologize;
- (o) use plural / plural pronouns.

4.3 *Expression of Politeness in Language by Women in Javanese Culture*

After understanding the explanation of the concept of modesty in the previous section, this section describes the form of politeness expression shown by women in Javanese culture. In the foregoing discussion, Leech explained politeness maxim which is an analogy of Grice's maxim and politeness concept according to Brown and Levinson. In this discussion, the expression of politeness in speaking of Javanese women will be viewed from the perspective of the concept of politeness in Brown and Levinson.

If we pay attention to the facts that exist in our society, it seems clear that in general Javanese women more often use positive politeness strategies than negative politeness strategies when speaking. It also causes a woman to be more quickly familiar with other women or with the opposite sex that she just met compared to men.

The forms of the use of positive politeness strategies include the appearance of small talk habits or attitudes of attention that can change the very formal atmosphere to be a little more relaxed. The following are some examples of expressions commonly used by Javanese women when speaking that show the use of positive politeness strategies.

Conversation (1):

A : *"Wah bu Sri, kadosipun kok radi kesesa, badhe tindak pundi?"*

(Wow, Mrs. Sri, it seems a bit rushed, where are you going, ma'am?)

B : *"Meniko lho jeng, kulo badhe ningali peken Sidorejo."*

(Here you are, I want to go to the Sidorejo market.)

A : *"Wah, badhe mborong batik, njih bu?"*

(Wow, you want to buy batik, aren't you?)

B : *"Walah jeng Sarifah ki lho, lha ingkang kagem mborong menika artanipun sinten. Kulo menika rak naming sak dremi ngatur punapa paringanipun simah. Dados njih mboten saged suwala punapa-punapa. Mboten kados panjenengan, menawi jeng Hani rak saged nyambut damel piyambak. Njih temtu kemawon benten."*

(This JengSarifah, whose money can I use to buy up. I only manage what my husband gives me. So, I can't be willing to spend money. Unlike you, if you can work alone. Of course, I will be in a different situation.)

A : *"Waduh ibu Sri meniko lho, sami kemawon kog ibu."*

(Wow, this Sri's mother could have been, just the same ma'am.)

In the conversation above there are expressions that show positive politeness strategies, namely solidarity and praise. In conversation (1), speaker A wanted to show friendship and also praise to his interlocutor which in this case was B. Meanwhile, B as opposed to speech showed solidarity and friendship to A. This conversation was only one small example of politeness strategy used by Javanese women. Of course, there are many more examples of the use of positive politeness strategies that are used. As for the use of negative politeness strategies, many Javanese women use the expression of apology when talking. The following is an example of using a negative politeness strategy.

Conversation (2):

A : *Nuwun sewu Kang mas, panjenengan mangke kondur jam pinten?*

(Sorry, bro, what time will you go home?)

B : *Wah yo, durungtempu njeng.*

(Wow, I am not sure)

The conversation above is a conversation between a wife and her husband. The wife began her question by apologizing to her husband for being worried or not confident enough to ask. Another negative politeness strategy used is the use of questions that are not directly on the

subject matter. In the above conversation, in essence, the wife wants to know her husband's activities that day. However, the question used is the question of the time when approximately her husband will return. This shows that the wife does not want to disturb her husband's autonomy to choose whether he wants to share his activities on that day with his wife or not.

4.4 Background Factors

When talking about the factors underlying why Javanese women tend to use expressions that show politeness, both in the form of expressions that use positive and negative politeness strategies, it will lead us to an explanation of the stereotypes of women in Javanese culture. In the previous discussion / explanation, it was explained that the ideal woman in Javanese cultural orientation was often described as a gentle, patient, merciful, submissive, submissive or obedient person, and loyal to men.

That view certainly affects the personality of Javanese women in general. In general, we can see the attitude of Javanese women in front of their husbands. In fact, there is a cultural construct in Javanese society that states that women must submit and obey their husbands. The position of women is always second only to husbands in the household context. The construct of Javanese cultures strongly cornered the women to always be second class creatures. This is what makes Javanese women tend to yield and always avoid disputes or differences of opinion. This attitude, initially only applied before their husbands. However, gradually this attitude has become a habit so that there are types of female expressions that show the use of the concept of politeness in language.

5. Conclusions

Based on the description above, two general conclusions can be drawn about the concepts that emerge in speech acts practiced by Javanese women in general. First, the concept of politeness in women's speech in the context of Javanese culture is dominated by the use of positive politeness strategies rather than negative politeness strategies to avoid dissent.

Secondly, through this brief study, several factors were identified as the background for the use of a positive politeness strategy. These factors include the existence of stereotypes in Javanese society which positions women as second sex after men and also the lack of confidence of women to express ideas or ideas as a result of stereotypes in the community.

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