

SPEECH FUNCTIONS AND POLITENESS IN INDONESIAN COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

In communication, people care for politeness in their speech so as to successfully communicate the meaning they want to express. This article starts the discussion from speech function and then goes to the one on politeness theories in communication. From the speech functions section, the writer discussion several types of speech function provided with Indonesian language examples. One of the most popular theories on the speech and communication is Gricean maxims, i.e. quantity, quality, relation, and manner maxims. Basing the discussion on this theory, the writer discusses how politeness is achieved in Indonesian language communication.

Key-words: Gricean maxims, politeness, language, speech function

What differs, human being from animal is the language. Human language is spoken, creative and developed, but animal language is not. Even when an animal can speak, like cockatoo, its language is hardly developed. The language of a normal person always develops as he/she grows older. Chomsky in Brown (2000: 24), believes that human being is endowed by God with an innate capacity of language that enables him/her to improve the linguistic mastery in a short time. The natural capacity is embodied in a "little black box" called language acquisition device (LAD). Therefore, a human being can adapt his/her language to the context where the language is being used and to the audience with whom s/he is conversing.

The development of human language encourages many experts to study it more thoroughly. One of the branches of linguistic study is sociolinguistics in which we relate language to the community speaking the language. A sociolinguist is interested in explaining why we speech differently in different social context and he/she is concerned with two things, namely:

- 1) identifying the social functions of language
- 2) the ways it is used to convey social meaning.

This paper, however, will deal with a more specific discussion in the speech functions. In this case, the discussion will be focused on the question "what are speech functions?" and "How should one show politeness in the Indonesian language?". The examples will be shown in this paper will be taken from Indonesian language.

LANGUAGE AND SPEECH

Language has a wider sense than speech because language refers to speaking, writing and gesturing. We, for instance, recognize spoken language, written language, body language and gestural communications of the deaf and dumb etc. Linguistics only deals with spoken language (speech) and written language.

While speech is always spoken language, Robins (1989: 78) defines speech as follows:

"one human being, by movements beginning at his diaphragm and involving 'various parts of his chest, throat, mouth, and nasal passages creates disturbances in the air around him, which within a limited distances from him have a perceptible effect on the ear-drums and through them on the brains of other people, and the hearer can, if they belong to the same

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language community, respond to these disturbance, or noises, and find them meaningful".

In general linguistics, speech can be studied in phonetics and pronunciation. In sociolinguistics, it is related to the culture of community where the speech is produced and functional and it called that speech functions. In this case, body language may involve.

SPEECH FUNCTIONS

Language serves a range of functions. It is usually adjusted the speech to suit the social context of speech. The language we talk to a child may be different from the language we talk to our customer or colleague though the purpose is the same. The different purposes of talk can also affect the form of language and the variety of ways. Why do we say the same thing in different ways? The answers to the question basically imply the speech functions.

Cripper and Widdowson in Allen and Corder (ed.) (1975:195) divides speech function into seven classifications. They are the referential, the expressive (or emotive), directive (or conative), phatic (contact), contextual, metalinguistic and poetic. In line with the three functions, they explain more that the referential function relates to topic, the expressive to addresser, and the directive to addressee. Phatic or contact function refers to psychological link between addresser and addressee. Contextual function often serves to give formal notice of a set of conditions which best to certain rights and impose certain obligations on the participants in the speech event. Metalinguistic function has the principal purpose of ensuring the addressee to understand the meaning of a certain code used by the addresser. While poetic function serves a play upon words and sounds.

Holmes (1992:286) classifies speech functions into six categories, namely expressive, directive, referential, metalinguistic, poetic and phatic. The six speech functions will be connected to the principle of politeness in Indonesian communication and will be discussed successively in section III.

PRINCIPLES OF POLITENESS IN COMMUNICATION

Politeness is universal, but the way to show politeness is culturally bound. Besides linguistic factors, there is non-linguistic factor considered to be influencing the process of communication, namely politeness. Politeness is much more influenced by sociocultural aspects of the speaker. In the process of communication, both speaker and addresser are obliged to follow the cooperative principles, even when what s/he means is not uttered explicitly. Grice (1975) suggests four maxims called cooperative principles. They are quantity, quality, relation, and manner.

Quantity maxim suggests us to make our contribution as informative as it is required for current purpose of the exchange. Domination of conversation is not allowed in this case. This maxim also offers us not to make our contribution more informative than is required. We do not need to have exaggerated description of something or otherwise we will be called the big mouth. Below is a very short account of the maxims.

Maxim of quality teaches us not to say what we believe to be false. It means that both speaker and the receiver is not allowed to tell a lie. In this case, we are also ordered not to say for which we lack of adequate evidences. Relation maxim suggests us to be relevant, meaning that what we talk about must be relevant to the topic we are discussing. We do not need to go far from the track. Manner maxim implies that what we talk about must be clear. Grice (1975) divides this maxim into four items 1) avoid obscurity, 2) avoid ambiguity, 3) be brief, and 4) be orderly.

Besides the four cooperative principles of communication discussed above, we still need to see some other principles that fundamentally influence the process of communication. Lakoff (in Cook, 1989) offers three principles of politeness in communication, namely: 1) don't impose, 2) give option, and 3) make your receiver feel good.

One of the communicative strategies commonly done by a speaker to sustain the social interaction indirect expression. In our daily conversation, we may see someone

reminding his/her student who is wearing wet raincoat in the class by saying "*John, why have you got the wet raincoat on inside?*". This indirect expression, in fact, implies command. The teacher wants John to put off the raincoat in indirect command. The indirectness of the speech shows that the teacher tries to be polite to his/her student in spite of the age difference.

Politeness takes very important role in maintaining social relationship between speaker and someone he/she is speaking to. The complexity is not only caused by linguistic factors, but also non-linguistic factors. A speaker does not only choose an appropriate grammatical formula and diction, he also has to consider the cultural value associated with the expression he/she performs. Hudson (1980) suggests that role relationship factors, age, and social stratification take a definitely important role in social interaction.

The factor of role relationship in a social interaction is considered to be very important. An employee, for example, has to consider the communicative strategy when he/she is speaking to his boss; a student, when he/she is talking to his/her teacher must consider the communicative strategy too. The communicative strategy used by a child to the parents, on the other hand, is different from the one used by two friends because the role of the participants are different. In Indonesia when an employee is talking to his/her boss, the choice of appropriate expression is not sufficient, he sometimes has to use body language to show his/her respect by ducking down his/her head. This kind of salutation, even, becomes one of Javanese attitudes of life (De Jong, 1984), especially to the one who has higher social status such as local leader or religious leader.

Age can become an important factor in the process of communication. A child, for example, is not polite to use direct order to someone older than his/her. When a child wants his/her mother to do something for him/her, an interrogative sentence will be considered more polite. For example:

- 1) "*Bisakah ibu membawakan tas ini?*"
(Could you bring this bag, mom?)
- 2) "*Bu, tolong bawakan tas ini*"
(Mom, please bring this bag).

- 3) "*Bu, bawakan tas ini*"
(Mom, bring this bag)

The expression (1) is generally considered more polite and more formal than the (2). The sentence (2), to some extent, is normally used by a child to his/her mother in Indonesia. Grammatically, sentence (3) is not wrong as a form of command but pragmatically it is not appropriate to convey an order to an older person. The difference of age urges a younger speaker to choose the accurate expression to keep up the relationship in social interaction.

Social stratification determines the form of daily speech. In Javanese community, we recognize three speech levels, namely *ngoko*, *krama madya* and *krama inggil* (Geertz, 1977) and Poedjosudarmo in Rahardi (2001:58) offers more detailed classifications. *Ngoko*, for instance, is divided into *basa antya*, *antya basa* and *ngoko lugu*, *krama madya* is divided into *madya krama*, *madyantara* and *ngoko*. While *krama inggil* is divided into *mudha krama*, *kramantara* and *wredha krama*.

SPEECH FUNCTIONS AND POLITENESS IN INDONESIAN COMMUNICATION

As it is explain in the former session, this paper will elaborate the speech functions defined by Holmes (1992:286) and relate it to the politeness in Indonesian communication. As Holmes admits, one speech may serve more than one function.

Expressive utterances

Expressive utterances express the speakers' feelings. This function serves the declaration of a speaker's ambience. In Indonesian communication, expression is used to keep up social relationship. When someone is meeting a friend or someone he/she is familiar with, he/she will greet him/her to make sure "here, I am your friend or your neighbor".

The following are the form of utterances that serve expressive function:

- (1) *Selamat pagi, ibu.*
(Good morning, mom?)

- (2) *Hari ini cerah sekali*
(very lovely day)
- (3) *Terimakasih banyak*
(Thank you very much)
- (4) *Jangan kapok datang lagi ya ?*
(Come here again, some time) .
- (5) *Senang sekali bias beristirahat di tempat yang tenang seperti ini .*
(It is nice to have a rest in this silent place)
- (6) *Oh tidak apa-apa , ini enak sekali*
(No problem, it is very nice)

All the utterances above could be categorized as expressive function, though the first, usually can be put into phatic function slot. People usually express their feeling like sentence (4) when a guest is asking for permission. This expressive utterance is used to show that the host/hostess is happy with the guest and he/she wants the guest to come again next time. Sentence (6) serves both expressive and informative functions.

Directive utterances

Directive utterances attempt to get someone to do something. In Indonesian communication, directive function can be articulated by imperative sentences, interrogative sentences as well as declarative sentences. Orders and commands are normally expressed in imperative form. The standard of polite utterances in requesting people to do something, somehow, is not only seen from the form of interrogatives or declaratives , but intonation, tone' of voice, and context also determine it . A gentle "*Bawakan tas ini*" may be more polite than a thundered "*Bibi, tolong bawakan tas ini* ". The following are the instances of directive utterances:

- (1) *Pergi!*
(Go away! /Leave me alone!)
- (2) *Bawakan tas ini !*
(Bring this bag)
- (3) *Bibi, tolong bawakan tas ini.*
(Auntee , please bring this bag !)

- (4) *Silahkan minum, ibu*
(Please have a drink)
- (5) *Bisakah anda duduk ?*
(Could you sit down ?)

The sentences above indicate directive speech functions in the form of imperatives. Sentence (1) and (2) are considered to be rude because these sentences depict, direct order. These utterances are usually used by an older person to a younger one. Those are also commonly used by two persons that has different social status - the superiors to those of subordinate status. While sentences (3), (4) and (5) show more delicate sense that are normally used by someone to order others in a more polite way.

- (6) *Apa kamu sudah **memberi** makan kucingmu?*
(Have you fed the cat?)
- (7) *Apakah kucingnya sudah **diberi** makan?*
(Has the cat been fed?)

The Utterances (6) and (7) are slightly different. Both illustrate an order or command in interrogative forms that show politeness. Sentence (6) uses active verb (*memberi*) and the subject (*kamu*) is clearly mentioned. In this case, the utterance serves two possibilities - the speaker really wants to know whether the addresser has fed the cat or the speaker indirectly orders the addressee to feed the cat. Sentence (7) applies passive verb (*diberi*) and the subject is omitted. The omission of the subject indicates a more tender order that makes the addressee feels happy with the speaker's statement. This means that the person to whom the speaker is speaking does not feel insulted, though he/she knows that the one who is supposed to feed the cat is the addressee. There is no sense of ordering or being ordered in the sentence. That is why the passive mode is frequently used in Indonesian communication. The, following are declarative sentences that explicate directive function of speeches. This kind of utterances is regarded as moderately polite in Indonesian communication. Intonation, tone and context,

however, definitely determine the ethics.

- (8) *Ayah, aku ingin dibelikan sepeda baru.*
(Daddy, I want you to buy me a new bike)
- (9) *Aku kira, kita sekarang butuh sesuatu untuk diminum.*
(I think, we need something to drink now)
- (10) *Kamu bisa lebih nyaman kalau mau duduk*
(You would be more comfortable sitting down.)

In our daily conversation, we often come across some indirect directive 'expressions. For example, when a man is working until midnight in his living room, his wife says to him:

- (11) *Pak, sudah malam.*
(Daddy, it has been late.)

This utterance can be multi-interpretable. This may provide directive as well as informative. His wife' may remind him to check the doors and the windows because of security reason. She can intend to ask her husband to stop working because she is worried about his health or she does not want him to be sleepy in his work place. This utterance can also mean informative function - the wife informs her husband that it is time to stop working.

Referential utterances

Referential utterances provide information. Politeness in these utterances can be seen from the substance of cooperative principles - quality, quantity, relation and manner. The value of politeness, in the same way, a great deal depends on intonation, tone of voice and context too. The following utterances are instances for the referential function:

- (1) *Kami akan berangkat ke Jakarta besok pagi jam 9*
(We will leave for Jakarta tomorrow at 9 a.m.)
- (2) *Bayi kami selalu terjaga jam tiga pagi.*

(Our baby always wakes up at 3 a.m.)

- (3) *Beres*
(No problem)
- (4) *Ibukota negara Indonesia adalah Jakarta*
(The capital city of Indonesia is Jakarta)

Sentence (3) serves both referential and expressive function. Had it occurred without the utterance which precedes it, it could have served as referential in function, depicting information that the task could be finished in the time. It serves expressive when it is intended as reassurance.

Metalinguistic utterances

Metalinguistic utterances comment on language itself. Holmes (1992:286) gives the example of this function is like '*Hegemony*' is not a common word. While Crippen and Widdowson in Allen and Corder (ed.) (1975:1997) explain that the utterances of this kind focus on the code or the language. The principle purpose of metalinguistic is to make sure that the addressee understands the meaning of the code which the addresser is using. In Indonesian communication, we often find metalinguistic function of speech in scientific discussion.

- (1) *Poetic art adalah seni penulisan karya sastra.*
(Poetic art is the art of writing a literary work.)
- (2) *Stylistics adalah ilmu mengenai gaya bahasa dalam karya sastra.*
(Stylistics is science about language style in a literary work.)

Poetic utterances

Poetic utterances focus on aesthetic features of language. This speech function is rarely used in daily conversation. In special occasion, like in the ceremony of engagement in North Sumatra community, anyway, poetic function is commonly used. RRI Tanjung Pinang broadcasts a special program named *Serumpun Melayu* that is this program dealing with the

reproduction of *Pantun Melayu* on air (Srinthli, 2005). The following is the utterances of the broadcaster, Wan Abidah:

*Pohon pinang disambar petir
Tumbang menimpa pohon kedondong
Kalah menang jangan dipikir
Yang penting penampilan , dong...*

(Palm tree is struck by lightning
It falls over kedondong tree
Don't think of losing or winning
The important thing is the performance)

Poetic utterances may be found in daily conversation, but it seldom happens in Javanese community. When it happens, the purpose is to raise a humorous effect between people who are close friends.

*Kucing kurus mandi di papan
Papan nama kayu jati
Badan kurus bukan tak makan
Memikirkan si jantung hati*

(Skinny cat takes a bath on a board
Nameboard made of jati tree
Skinny body is not because of lack of food
But thinking of the sweet heart)

Phatic utterances

Phatic utterances express solidarity and empathy with other. This speech function always exists in all community, but the form is different. In other words, this expression is culturally linked.

- (1) *Mau ke mana?*
(Where are you going?)
- (2) *Mari singgah dulu.*
(Please drop in.)

Utterance (1) is Indonesian distinctive expression that often make western people offended. For English community "*Where are you going?*" is such a sensitive greeting. This is too private question that someone who is greeted that way will be feeling spied and unsecured. That is why the possible answer to this question may be "*It is none of your*

business". On the other hand, in Indonesian daily social interaction, "*where are you going*" is a part of communicative strategy for breaking the ice. This expression is commonly used to start a conversation or to show one's care of others. This greeting may become a 'lip-service' that is to show "*I am your friend and I care of you*". This is apparently a form of phatic expression in Indonesian vernacular.

We often hear "*Mari singgah dulu*" in Indonesian daily communication and it serves a social function too. The offering is usually done by a speaker to someone he/she is familiar with - someone to his/her neighbors. Sometimes someone offers his friend or his neighbor to drop in his/her house. He offers something, but he actually does not mean so. He just wants to demonstrate utterly that "you are my friend".

- (3) *"Mari makan. "*
(Let's have a meal.)

It happens very often in a campus canteen when a person is about to eat his/her meal and his/her friend comes then he/she will say "*Mari makan*". The statement of offering food is sometimes merely a lip-service. The speaker does not intend to share his food with the addressee. What he has in mind is that "*well you are my friend*". Cook (1989) calls this "the phatic function of the language". As this expression is only a lip service, so the addressee usually applies the same strategy, namely flouting co-operative principle, by uttering "*Terimakasih, saya baru saja makan*". Meanwhile, accepting the offer sometimes can cause embracement because the food may not be enough for two persons. Conversely, when two persons are very close friends, the acceptance of the proposal is reasonable.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that in Indonesian speeches serve many functions too, namely expressive, directive, referential, metalinguistic, poetic, and phatic. The most sensitive function of the speech is directive function because misunderstanding can mostly happen in this field. It would be considered rude when someone does not have

enough knowledge of using this directive expression. Lack of this knowledge in a long run will ruin the social relationship.

The purpose of communication is not only delivering messages, but it also means keeping up the social relationship. To maintain the social interaction, some one needs to understand the co-operative principles and politeness principles. Co-operative principles sometimes need to be conformed so as to understand the message delivered, but at the same these principles have to be flouted to maintain the social relationship. That is why the study of speech functions and politeness in many speech communities is important.

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