JAVANESE MAXIMS AS POLITENESS GUIDANCE IN SOCIAL MEDIA PHATIC COMMUNICATION: A CYBERPRAGMATICS PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Communication on social media raises at a significant rate during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Social media communication (SMC) in specific culture requires particular strategies related to cultural norms. Due to the limitation of cyber communication compares to direct communication, users of social media utilize available features in social media platforms to perform politeness. The strategies of Javanese netizens to perform Javanese politeness maxims in SMC are the main discussion in this study. The data were collected from five WhatsApp Groups (WAG) of Javanese adults of 20s-40s of age comprising 246 respondents. The conversation texts containing phatic talks in WAG were selected by observation method. Then, the conversational texts and communication icons were transcribed for contextual analysis. The result shows that the Javanese maxims of Kurmat (Respect), Tepa Selira (Tolerance), Andhap Asor (Humility), and Empan Papan (Self-Awareness) were utilized by Javanese netizens in performing politeness in virtual phatic communication. During the pandemic, tolerance maxim is the most frequently used to support each other. The maxim of humility is not obvious in virtual phatic communication. To this extent, Javanese politeness maxims are mitigating devices to establish social rapport in phatic communication. The Javanese ability in performing Javanese maxims as politeness devices is essential to avoid conflict and mitigate Face Threatening Act (FTA) since the Javanese community tends to create harmony in life known as Guyub Rukun.

Keywords: Javanese; phatic; politeness; cyberpragmatics.

A.   INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 Pandemic change the way of life including the communication channel massively. Physical face-to-face communication suddenly turns into virtual internet-mediated communication. The massive change of communication channel gives impact to the alternative strategies to perform politeness in a virtual context. Consequently, the approach of language studies adjusted the current language phenomena. To this extent, the cyberpragmatics approach accommodates the lucrative object of research on internet-mediated-communication.

The term cyberpragmatics coined by Yus (2011) focuses on the role of the speaker's intentions and the quality of the addressee's interpretation when the internet-mediated interactions take place. The analysis of conversational data from cyberpragmatics perspective requires particular contexts with their particular features due to the physical limitation of virtual communication. Rahardi (2020) divided the cyberpragmatics context into social context, societal context, cultural context, and situational context. The elements and functions of the context might shift and change so that the meaning of speech intentions in cyberpragmatics might also change (Rahardi, 2020). The other significant feature of cyberpragmatics contexts is the use of virtual elements, e.g. smileys, emoji, emoticon, avatar, GIF,

and virtual stickers, to replace physical contact, express feeling, and clarify meaning. Those elements should be taken into consideration in analyzing the virtual text data. The effectiveness of the virtual elements to replace physical contact and expression would be a lucrative object of research to explore.

Another significant focus of the cyberpragmatics approach is the employment of virtual politeness. Politeness strategies play a significant role to establish smooth virtual phatic communication. Indeed, phatic communication is part of politeness strategies to create a social bond among members of a speech community. The effectiveness of virtual elements in cyberpragmatics context to perform politeness is an interesting object to analyze due to the unavailability of guidance in utilizing them. Generally, politeness maxim is a strategy to please others. However, the maxims are different on a cultural basis. The negative politeness and the positive politeness theory of Brown & Levinson (1987) are a breakthrough in politeness study. The theory has similarities to Javanese politeness maxims but it could not accommodate all politeness concepts in Javanese tradition. Javanese politeness strategies in phatic communication are closely related to the traditional politeness maxims consisting of *Kurmat* (Respect), *Tepa Selira* (Tolerance), *Andhap Asor* (Humility), and *Empan Papan* (Self-Awareness) (Gunarwan, 2007). The maxim of *kurmat* suggests speakers give high respect to the addressees. In so doing, the speaker is supposed to select the appropriate Javanese speech level and use the appropriate term of address based on the hearer's social status. The *tepa selira* maxim expects speakers to place themselves in the addresses' situation to comprehend what they feel in such circumstances. In *andhap asor* maxim, speakers are supposed to behave modestly and avoid showing off. The maxim of *empan papan* is a suggestion for the speakers to be aware of the circumstances of the setting and the addressee's social status or position to behave appropriately. The other essential maxim of Javanese politeness proposed by Poedjosoedarmo (2009) is *sumanak* (friendliness). The maxim suggests Javanese be friendly and treat his interlocutor as sanak 'relative or family' to establish a close relation and smooth communication, despite the status and power. The formulation of politeness maxims is guidance for Javanese to avoid conflict. In relation to Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, the *kurmat* maxim and the *tepa selira* maxim are similar to the concept of negative politeness that suggests the speaker consider the hearer's feeling. *Kurmat* maxim expects the speakers to respect the hearers whereas *tepa selira* maxim suggests the speakers put themselves in the hearers' circumstances. However, Brown and Levinson's concept could not explain the shifted use of Javanese speech level concerning politeness. The positive politeness of Brown and Levinson that focuses on the condition of the hearers seems like the *andhap asor* maxim and the empan papan maxim. To this extent, *andhap asor* maxim suggests the speakers praise the hearer more than praise themselves. Meanwhile, the maxim of *empan papan* expects the speakers to consider the social status of the hearers to select the appropriate manner and speech level. Selecting the suitable manner and speech level is a particular feature of the Javanese politeness concept. The concept does not exist in Brown and Levinson's positive politeness.

Previous studies on Javanese politeness contributed significant particular aspects. However, it needs more exploration due to the shift of communication channels. In his research of Javanese politeness political discourse in DPRD Provinsi DIY, Santoso (2015) claimed that political discourse is significantly shaped by basic principles of Javanese culture and that the concept of *rukun* 'social harmony' is important even in a political debate where conflict cannot always be avoided. The significant role of Javanese politeness maxim in establishing harmonious communication is seen in compliment response of Javanese. Sukarno (2015) stated that Javanese utilize the concept of *andhap-*

asor by denigrating himself and having a sense of *tanggap ing sasmita* 'understanding the hidden meaning' while responding to compliments. Consequently, failure to apply one of the cultural factors can be detrimental to the speaker and reduce the harmony of the conversation. Both studies prove that Javanese politeness maxims are essential factors in establishing harmonious communication among the members of the speech community. The current research on Javanese politeness on a gender basis shows that phatic communication is the essential strategy of performing politeness among Javanese women (Widiana, Sumarlam, Marmanto, Purnanto, & Sulaiman, 2020). Furthermore, Javanese phatic communication has more functions than just the ice-breaking tool. The functions are initiating a conversation, intensifying camaraderie, pleasing others, expressing happiness, and consoling others (Widiana et al., 2020). The study strengthens the importance of phatic communication in performing politeness in the Javanese speech community.

This study offers a different insight into politeness performance in the virtual context of SMC from a cyberpragmatics perspective. The description of Javanese politeness maxims in a virtual context is the main goal of the study. Research on Javanese politeness is not a great interest so far. However, the Javanese politeness maxims have the potential in establishing harmonious communication. Therefore, the study on this matter is interesting to explore.

B.   METHOD

The respondents for this research were 246 Javanese aged between 25-50. All respondents were native speakers of Javanese who were raised in a Javanese cultural environment. The data were obtained through three methods:

(1) Non-participation-observation,

(2) Semi-structured interviews, and

(3) Discourse completion task (DCT) questionnaire.

The conversational data of phatic communication is obtained through the non-participation-observation method by passively observing the conversational texts on five WAGs whose members are Javanese. Then, the transcription of the virtual texts was made for the textual analysis. The primary conversational data was complemented by the result of the semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview was conducted on 25 selected respondents to elicit further information on their perception of the importance of phatic communication and performing virtual politeness. The respondents were taken randomly out of the 246 respondents with similar criteria.

The textual analysis procedure was conducted within a cyberpragmatics framework. The analytical procedure was the adaptation of Leech's (1983) means-end method and a heuristic method. The analytical procedure illustration is provided in Figure 1.
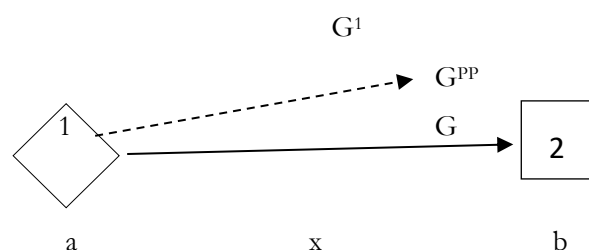
G^1

G^{PP}

G

1

2

a   x   b

FIGURE 1. Means-ends analytical procedure (Leech, 1983)

1 =	Initial state	G =	goal of attaining
a =	speaker's action	GPP =	goal of preserving
b =	hearer's action		the Politeness Principles
2 =	Final state	G1 =	further goal (unspecified)

The means-ends analysis has a goal to gain a problem solving both from the speaker's point of view and the hearer's point of view. From the speaker's point of view, problem-solving is a plan (illocutionary act) to get the most likely result (perlocutionary act) by producing certain utterances (locutionary act). The problem-solving from the hearer's point of view refers to the interpretation of the hearer's mental state to comprehend the most likely reason for the speaker's saying certain utterances. The scale describes the means-end chain connecting the speech act to its goal. In addition to the goal, the speaker might perform the act of preserving the politeness principles (G^{PP}) to maintain good social relations or the G^{PP} is the main goal. The other probability potential goal is marked with G1. The process starts at number 1 and accomplishes at number 2. The effect of the speaker's speech act (perlocutionary act) is seen based on the response of the hearer to the speaker's phatic utterances. The cyberpragmatics context comprising the social status of the interlocutors, the form of utterances, and virtual symbol of expressions are taken into consideration to analyze the politeness maxims conducted during the phatic conversation. The politeness maxims utilized by Javanese in phatic communication were discussed based on Javanese politeness principles of *Kurmat* (respect), *Tepa Selira* (tolerance), *Andhap Asor* (humility), and *empan* papan (self-awareness).

C.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The four Javanese politeness maxims are implemented by Javanese in their daily phatic communication. The result of the semi-structured interview showed that 20 out of 25 interviewees consider politeness maxims are essential in establishing harmonious communication and building a social rapport in all contexts of virtual conversations. The rest of the 5 interviewees argue that

politeness maxims should be implemented in a formal atmosphere only. The discussion of each politeness maxim is placed in the following parts.

1. *Kurmat* (Respect)

The *Kurmat* (respect) maxim occurred when there was a different social status between the interlocutors. Unlike the traditional Javanese principles, deference is implemented in the form of the term of address such as *Mas*, *Kang*, *Den Baguse* for male interlocutors; and *Mbak*, *Jeng* for female interlocutors. The terms of address do not only refer to the age difference but also peer acquaintances. The following excerpt of virtual conversation explains this matter.

R05:   *Piye **Kang** Nardi? Suk Riyaya isa mudik ora?*

       'Kang Nardi, would you be back home on Eid?'

R06:   *Durung entuk mudik ki…mudah2an September isa njupuk cuti.*

The term of address *Kang* is used by R05 to refer to R06. Both were classmates at the university and currently live in different cities. Both are from the same hometown. R05 lives in his hometown but R06 works in another city. Although both are of the same age, R05 used *Kang* to refer to R06 for respect since R06 has a high rank in his job. R05 is the online taxi driver whereas R06 works at the governmental institution as the head of the department. Another example is as follows.

R17:   ***Kang** Nardi, piye efekmu bar vaksin? Tambah kereng (*emoji of angry giant mask with a thick moustache) *apa tambah keren?* (emoji of a handsome man with a hat, coat, and sunglasses)

       'Kang Nardi, how is the side effect of your vaccination? Do you become more fierce or more handsome?'

R18:   *Sing pertama wingi ana mumet sithik **Jeng**…yen sing kedua iki mau lanciiir jaya alias aman terkendali.*

       'The first one, I felt a bit dizzy, *Jeng*…but the second one is fine and smooth.'

R17 and R18 were classmates at the university. R17 is a university lecturer and R18 is the head of the department at a governmental institution. Both are at the same age but they call each other by the addressee terms *Kang* for male acquaintance and *Jeng* for female acquaintance. Based on the interview, both use the terms to respect each other since they had already been the important person in each career.

2. *Tepa Selira* (Tolerance)

The maxim of *tepa selira* (tolerance) was implemented by the Javanese netizens to support each other. During the pandemic, supports were related to healthy life and perseverance and endurance to get through a difficult situation. The excerpt of the phatic conversation is as follows.

R21:   *Selamat pagi. Semoga sehat selalu* (written in stickers)
       'Good morning, Stay healthy. '

R22:   *Semangaaat…*(written in stickers)
       'Keep going on.'

R23:   *Wis ngopi bos* (written in stickers)

'I had my coffee already.'

R21, R22, and R23 were old friends. They were at the same company a long time ago but they resigned and got different jobs. To keep in touch, they made the WAG whose members are the ex-workers at the company. In the conversations, they greet each other and support each other to keep going on the good life. Based on the interview, both agreed that the use of stickers is more attractive than just writing a text. Therefore, both used eye-catching stickers instead of writing a text. Supports by utilizing *tepa selira* maxims were also seen when one of the members of the WAG was confirmed COVID-19 positive. The conversation text is as follows.

R43:   *Assalamu'alaikum kanca-kanca kabeh. Mohon doa ya, aku karo anakku loro karo positif. Padahal bapake lagi wae mari, saiki wis negatif. Malah genti aku karo anak-anakku sing positif.*

'*Assalamu'alaikum* friends. Please pray for me, I and both my children are confirmed positive. The father had just recovered and already been negative right now. However, now, I and the children are confirmed positive.'

R44:   *Semangat Jeng. Pasti sembuh. Pokoke mangan sing akeh terus aja lali ditambah vitamine. Tak dungakna awakmu karo bocah-bocah ndang mari, ndang cepet negative maneh.*

'Don't give up, *Jeng.* You will be recovered. You've gotta eat much and don't forget to take some vitamins. I pray for you and your children to get well soon and be confirmed negative quickly.'

R43 and R44 were the members of the same WAG. Both were classmates at the university. R43 needs support from her friends in WAG since she and both her children were confirmed COVID-19 positive. R44 performed *tepa selira* maxim to give support to R43 not to give up. He also consoled R43 that she and her children would recover soon. In this case, R44 tried to comprehend his friend's circumstances by giving support to her since he knew that his support would be a great consolation for R43.

3. *Andhap Asor* (Humility)

Traditionally, Javanese are expected to be humble since the act of showing off is an inappropriate and impolite manner in the Javanese community. The previous study proved that Javanese tends to denigrate themselves in responding to compliments (Sukarno, 2015). Concerning this matter, the *andhap asor* maxim is one of the essential politeness principles to establish smooth phatic communication. The example of the implementation of *andhap asor* maxim is provided in the following excerpt of conversation.

R47:   *Piye kabare, boss. Tambah makmur saiki*

'How you doing, boss. You look greater now. '

R48:   *Iki dudu boss…tapi bis* (grin emoji)

'This is not boss…but bus.'

The excerpt of the conversation was taken from the WAG of the ex-co-workers. R47 called R48 boss since he considered that R48 lived a prosperous life. Responding to R47, R48 implemented the *andhap*

asor maxim by saying that he is not a boss but a bus. The response contained a joke to make the conversation more cheerful and warm. The respondents' answers in the interview showed that being humble is important to avoid conflict. However some Javanese responded to the compliment by thanking instead of denigrating themselves. They believe thanking is polite and would not create a conflict. Here is an example of the conversation.

R13:   *Wah…apik men suaramu. Gitaranmu ya keren.*
        'What a beautiful voice you have. You're also good at playing guitar. '

R14:   *Suwun, Mas* (praying hand emoji)
        'Thanks, *Mas..*'

Thanking is a common politeness strategy in responding to compliments in a virtual context. It could be performed by writing a text or utilizing an emoji or sticker. Both thanking and self-devaluation strategies were used by Javanese netizens in responding compliments virtually as the implementation of *andhap asor* maxim. The interviewees in the interview session considered thanking is not less polite than self-devaluation-strategy.

4. *Empan Papan* (Self-Awareness)

Capability to do self-adaptation in the different atmosphere of communication is the goal of *empan papan* maxim. Based on a traditional concept, Javanese are suggested to be aware of the context with whom, where, and what about the conversation takes place. The concept is related to the stereotype of Javanese as polite and delicate people (Tiarawati & Wulandari, 2015). Self-awareness includes the capability to select the appropriate speech level to which it fits. The ability of a speaker to use the degree of Javanese speech correctly reflects the politeness degree of the speaker's behavior (Nuryantiningsih & Pandanwangi, 2018). However, speech level selection is no longer significant for nowadays phatic communication. The selection of the speech level is limited to certain diction. Here is the example.

R61:   *Aja fotone thok sing di-*share. *Nomor WA ne barang kudune.*
        'Don't just share the pictures. The WA number must be shared too '

R62:   *Tiara: 081803422254*
        'Tiara: 081803422254.'

R61:   M*angga Mas Dodik, jajal langsung ditelpun.*
        'Please try to call her, *Mas* Dodik.'

The conversation was taken from the ex-co-workers WAG. One of the members, R62 shared the flyer of the next performance of the female Disc Jockey. Then, R61 commented on the flyer by asking the sender to share the WA number of the female Disc Jockey. After R62 shared the WA number, R61 asked another male member in WAG to try to call the female Disc Jockey. The formal term *mangga* is used by R61 to another member of the group that he called *Mas Dodik.* R61 used the term *mangga* since he realizes that *Mas Dodik* is the one who deserves respect. However, the rest of the utterances

are at low *ngoko* speech level. Another example of the implementation of *empan papan* maxim is as follows.

R95:   *Kuwi lho ana jajan ning kulkas. Jupuken cah. Dienggo kanca-kanca kabeh kuwi.*
       'There is a snack in refrigerator. Have some. It's for everybody.'

R96:   *Maturnuwun, bro* (Thumb up emoji and hand praying emoji)
       'Thanks, bro.'

Both R95 and R96 are members of co-worker WAG since they work at same company. R95 left some snacks in the refrigerator in their office and shared the information in WAG. R96 gave a response to the information by thanking him with the formal term *maturnuwun.* The choice of the formal thanking expression is a politeness performance since both interlocutors are at a similar level of social status. Furthermore, the conversation occurred on the office WAG so R96 considered that it was the formal context. It makes R96 chose the formal *maturnuwun* 'thank you' instead of the colloquial *suwun* 'thanks'

D.   CONCLUSION

Javanese politeness maxims are a guidance to establish a smooth communication among Javanese. *Kurmat* (respect) maxim and *Tepa Selira* (tolerance) are almost similar to Brown and Levinson's negative politeness since the focus is on the addressee. On the contrary, *andhap asor* (humility) and empan papan (Self-awareness) that focus on the speaker's manner resemble Brown and Levinson's positive politeness. However, the four Javanese maxims have their peculiar characteristics since they are not only a communicative strategy but more about a moral identity representation of Javanese. Consequently, the violation of the maxims leads to the risk of being excluded from the community.

The implementation of the Javanese politeness maxims in virtual communication contributes to effective and warm communication. The specific virtual expression symbols like emoji, GIFT, and stickers make a virtual conversation more lively and cheerful. However, the guidance of the appropriate use of virtual expression symbols is not formulated yet. Thus, it probably triggers the use of inappropriate symbols that potentially create a conflict. More exploration of virtual symbols concerning virtual politeness would be a lucrative object of research in the field of cyberpragmatics.

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