

**INDIRECT SPEECH IN POLITENESS STRATEGIES AND ISLAMIC ETHICS  
(A Case Study at IAIN Surakarta)**

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**Abstract**

*Politeness is widely used in conversation among people. To do this, people tend to use indirect speech acts, since they diminish the unpleasant message contained in requests and orders. Beside politeness, people also use indirect strategies when they want to make their speech more interesting, when they want to reach goals different from their partners' or when they want to increase the force of the message communicated. The notion of indirection should be expanded to take into account at any use of language that is 'unconventional' in a particular community. Therefore, indirect speech act may be arguably used in communication. There are many reasons for using whether direct or indirect speech act. In Islamic value, the notion of politeness and brotherhood become portray of Islamic relationship among people. The example of real use of indirect speech in terms of politeness strategies can be taken from academic context. This will give authentic samples of the way people communicate to achieve the goal of interaction. This paper focuses on the study of indirect utterance for the interaction among participants at campus of Islamic State Institute (IAIN) Surakarta*

**Keywords:** *Indirection, stance, topic, participation, production*

**A. Introduction**

In this research, we argue for an expanded understanding of indirection that considers illocutionary force as only one type of the meaning or intention which can be indirectly indicated by an utterance. We show that there are at least four types of indirectness, and that placing them all under the notion of indirection is desirable and useful. We begin with an example in order to provide a way in to the issues we are concerned with.

This example of exchange is one which we observed and reconstructed.

Shofi (who is with her two children) and Atik (who is with her ten-year-old Son, Mujahid) are acquaintances from a children's classroom. The dialogue takes place outside of a meeting room from which all of the speakers have just exited, where the children had played while the parents ate after meeting there by chance. The intended addressee for Shofi is indicated in parentheses; she indicated her addressee through eye gaze and body position.

Excerpt 1

- 1 Shofi: (to her son) Maybe Mujahid can come over to our house and play sometime this week.
- 2 Shofi: (to Mujahid) Would that be OK? Would you like that Mujahid?
- 3 Shofi: (to Atik) Would you like to do that?
- 4 Drop Mujahid off for a while and you can have a rest?
- 5 Atik: Oh, yeah, that would be great.

In presenting this example, students are asked to identify the illocutionary act Shofi performs (an invitation). They usually have no problem with that. They are then asked to explain where the invitation is. They usually locate it ('correctly') in line 3, with the question would you like to do that? The next part of the lesson then instructs the students on the 'conventionalized indirectness' in that phrase, and the politeness strategies in line 4.

However, things rarely go so smoothly. Many students say that the invitation is in line 1, or in line 2, as Shofi addresses Mujahid and her son. The students are told that while Atik may be able to figure out that an invitation is on the way after line 1, this does not count as an invitation to Atik, or even an indirect one, since it is addressed to Shofi's son. The lesson tries to show that because line 1 is not the place of illocutionary force, it does not get a politeness strategy in the Brown and Levinson account. Thus, the speech act theory on which Brown and Levinson's very useful theory is built is unable to account for the possibility that Shofi's question to her son can function as an invitation to Atik, because there is always only one imagined H (or 'hearer'). Yet students intuitively feel that the invitation has been made at this point already.

In this paper, we want to consider that maybe we should listen to the students' intuition and expand how we think about indirection.

## **B. Theoretical Review and Method**

### **1. Indirect Speech Act.**

Indirectness is a widely used conversational strategy. People tend to use indirect speech acts mainly in connection with politeness (Leech 1983: 108) since they diminish the unpleasant message contained in requests and orders, for instance,

"It's very hot in here"

In this example the speaker explains or even excuses the reason why he makes a request (Open the window!). People use indirectness, because sometimes direct addresses may even appear impolite as in

"Would you lend me some money?"

and

"Lend me some money!"

The latter variant would be absolutely unacceptable in some contexts.

However, politeness is not the only motivation for indirectness. People also use indirect strategies when they want to make their speech more interesting, when they want to reach goals different from their partners' or when they want to increase the force of the message communicated (Thomas 1995: 143). A different approach to distinguishing types of speech acts can be made on the basis of structure. A fairly simple structural distinction between three general types of speech acts is provided, in English, by the three basic sentence types. There is an easily recognized relationship between the three structural forms (declarative, interrogative, imperative) and the three general communicative functions (statement, question, command/request).

"You wear a seat belt" (declarative), "do you wear a seat belt?" (interrogative), "Wear a seat belt!" (imperative) (Yule 2008).

In the theory of speech acts Searle has introduced the notion of an indirect speech act'. In indirect speech acts the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutual shared background information, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer (Searle 1976). Imperatives can function as indirect speech acts performing advice,

offer, suggestion, invitation, gratitude, warning, threat, resentment, persuasion, prohibition.

## **2. Politeness Principles and Islamic Ethic.**

Brown and Levinson see politeness as a rational and rule-governed aspect of communication, a principled reason for deviation from efficiency and aimed predominantly at maintaining social cohesion via the maintenance of individual's public face.

Brown and Levinson developed a theory of politeness that drew on Goffman's idea of face and expanded upon Lakoff's rules of politeness. Brown and Levinson's 'face' is construed as a double want: a want of freedom of action and freedom from impositions this called '*negative face*' (desire to express one's ideas without resistance), and a want of approval and appreciation a '*positive face*' (desire to have one's contributions approved of)

Brown and Levinson theorize that face must be continually monitored during a conversation because it is vulnerable. During a conversation face can be lost, maintained or enhanced. It is important to not only maintain one's own face but also the face of others. Interlocutors must be able to "save face" when they are confronted with a "face-threatening act" (FTA), which threatens the faces of the addressees. Outlines the four potential face-threatening acts, proposed by Brown and Levinson, as follows.

1. Acts which threaten the audience's negative face: ordering, advising, threatening, warning.
2. Acts which threaten the audience's positive face: complaining, criticizing, disagreeing, raising taboo topics.
3. Acts which threaten speaker's negative face: accepting an offer, accepting thanks, promising unwillingly.
4. Acts which threaten speaker's positive face: apologizing, accepting compliments and confessing

## **C. Analysis and Discussion.**

Indirect Speech Act is speech act to govern someone do something indirectly. This action is done by making use of news sentences or interrogative sentences, so that the governed do not feel he is being governed. This is directed to make keep polite manner in communication.

### **1) Bald on Record**

Ayu : Duh, Pam, kakiku kamu injak.

Pampam : oops, ya ampun. Sorry yu'. Gak sengaja. Sakit gak??

#### **English Version**

Ayu : Ouch, Pam, you step on my foot.

Pampam : Oh My God, I am so sorry, I did not do it on purpose. Did it hurt?

#### **The context of situation and explanation**

This conversation took place in college. In this conversation, Ayu yelled at Pampam spontaneously because Pampam stepped on her foot unconsciously. The way Ayu yelled at Pampam can be categorized as an example of utterance that followed the principle of Bald on record because Ayu yelled or tell Pampam with a loud voice without considering about politeness and impoliteness.

Hedge Opinion

Ika : Eh, aku jilbaban kayak gini cocok gak? Kelihatan bagus gak sih?

Tika : Bagus kok, kamu jilbaban apa pun juga kelihatan cantik. Tapi, aku lebih suka cara kamu jilbaban kayak biasanya.

#### **English Version**

Ika : What do you think of my new hijab style? Does this fit me?? Do I look good??

Tika : You look good. Whatever hijab style you wear, you always look good. However, I prefer your previous usual hijab style.

#### **The context of situation and explanation**

This conversation happened in college when Ika suddenly came up with new hijab style. In this conversation, Ika asked Tika about her new hijab style whether it fitted to her or not. Tika seemed trying to make her opinion to Ika in a polite way. She was actually trying to say that the hijab style was not suitable for Ika but she said it in a very good way due to aspect of politeness and impoliteness in conversation. This dialog can be considered as an example of hedging opinion or trying to say something in a different way which is better and politer to say.

### **2). Negative politeness and off-record politeness**

Situation : This is a conversation between a lecturer (A) and his colleague (B) in the former's office. Lecturer B enters, does not close the door and the conversation begins:

A: My AC

B: (looks around the office, nonplused) eem eehm

A: The breeze is going out.

B: (quickly closes the door) Oh sorry.

In conversation above, The politeness strategies of A are discernible. It uses negative politeness, which it give attention to the negative face by applying the distance between speaker and hearer and doesn't interfere with each other region. Speakers use it to avoid coercion, and provide options hearer. Speakers can avoid the impression of force by emphasizing the interests of others by using an apology. It serves to minimize the imposition of a face-threatening act. The negative form of politeness strategies find 5 illocutionary namely: indirect speech, don't create presumption, don't force something, don't aggressive, and confirming something. The hearer asks apology "Oh Sorry" for the imposition of the speaker that is expressed by apprehension about the loss of the listener.

### **3) Positive politeness**

Attend to the hearer

After the lecture has finished, some of students in the class wants to go to canteen. "W" orders her friend to lunch today.

Weny : You must be hungry; it's a long time since breakfast. How about some lunch?

Junita : Yes, I agree with you, I'm so hungry

Weny : So, let's go to the canteen, right ?

Junita : Allright

The situation from the dialogue above is in the daylight and after the lecture has finished, and also it's time for lunch. The underlined words above show the positive politeness, because the speaker invites her partner to have lunch. So, she wait for her partner to agreee or disagree about her statement.

In the class when the lecturer teach the lecture for Monday, there two students talk about something

T : I'm looking for my pen

U : Where is your pen

T : I forget about that

U : You can use it (putting the pen in her table)

T : Oh, thank you

The dialogue above happens in the class when the lecturer teach the students in Monday. The underlined word is an example from negative politeness, the speaker speaks indirectly. Actually, the speaker wants to borrow the pen but she says that she is looking for her pen.

#### **4) Off-record indirect**

In the class there are two girls waiting for the next lecture. That day is very hot and there si no wind to feel.

R : It's very hot in here

F : Yeah, I think so

R : What should I do ?

F : You can borrow my paper to reduce a hot today

The situation from the conversation above is in the class and very hot. The dialogue is an example of off-record indirect. The underlined word shows the statement indirectly, because, off-record indirect is you are removing yourself from any imposition whatsoever. So, from the dialogue above we know that the speaker says something to give a code to the partner speaker to do something for her. But, she doesn't speak directly to shows her purpose.

#### **D. Conclusion and Suggestion**

The data above show only some of how indirection may be expanded in terms of keeping politeness. They are valuable, we argue, partially because these 'exotic' types of indirection are being found in the most mundane of interactions, and in contexts that are aligned. Polite utterance is not something extra that speakers do to embellish their speech, but it is the stuff of which interaction is made. Moreover, politeness is not done solely for the purpose of avoiding face threats, but can be used to 'attack' face and to actively 'build' face. The traditional literature understands polite utterance to have a 'real' or 'true' illocutionary force (the speaker's intention) accomplished by a 'false' illocutionary force indicating device. We are arguing, in contrast, that the issue is not what the 'real' function of an utterance is. We can recognize all the levels on which an utterance is functioning, and to think about how we might insert that into our theories of interaction more explicitly. Indirect speech for politeness can be deployed for any of these functions of talk in interaction. These are the exchange structure (turn taking), the act structure (speech acts), the production format (author, animator, principal), the participation framework (e.g., addressee, overhearer), and the information state (entities in the discourse model).

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