

The Use of Javanese as a Tool of Expression for Solidarity Politeness in the Ethnic Chinese Community in the Javanese Arek Cultural Area

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Abstract— This paper investigates the use of Javanese as a tool of expression for solidarity politeness in the ethnic Chinese community in the Javanese Arek cultural area. The objective is to understand what kind of Javanese language tends to be used as a tool for expressing solidarity politeness and the contexts of use. The data were collected through interviews and analyzed using the theory of Ron Scollon and Suzanne Wong Scollon (2001). The results show that the Javanese language used as a tool of expression for solidarity politeness by the ethnic Chinese community in the Javanese Arek cultural area is the Ngoko level. A strategy of involvement is realized with this level. Interestingly, the contexts in which the ngoko level is used are somewhat different from the ethnic Javanese community. In the ethnic Chinese community, the (-D) factor is more important than (+P), while the opposite is true for the Javanese. The different contexts of use may cause friction in cross-ethnic Javanese-Chinese communication if not properly managed.

Keywords— *solidarity politeness tool, Javanese Arek culture, Javanese language, ethnic Chinese*

I. INTRODUCTION

Politeness is an important aspect of human interaction. With politeness, social harmony can be achieved. With politeness, communication is better and smoother. With politeness, social conflict can be avoided. On the contrary, without politeness, human interaction is frequently incorporated with conflict and tension. Without politeness, the goals of communication become difficult to realize. These facts lead us to the understanding that politeness has a very important function in human interaction. Therefore, studies about politeness are important and offer a huge benefit for people's lives.

Politeness is universal; it is found in all communities throughout the world. Nevertheless, every community has its own ways for expressing politeness. According to Ron Scollon and Suzanne Wong Scollon (2001), the politeness systems that exist in different communities can be grouped into three types: the solidarity politeness system, the deference politeness system, and the hierarchical politeness system. This paper specifically investigates the use of the Javanese language as a tool of expression for solidarity politeness in the ethnic Chinese community, in particular in the Javanese Arek cultural area. The goal is to understand what kind of Javanese is used as a tool for expressing solidarity politeness and the contexts of use.

To date, a number of scholars have researched the language of the ethnic Chinese living in the Javanese cultural area. They include Weldon (1974), Wolff (1983, 1997), Kuntjara (2001, 2006), Oetomo (1991, 2000), Sartini (2007), Karsono (2014). None of these studies, however, views the language of the ethnic Chinese from the perspective of its politeness systems. In fact, the politeness systems of the ethnic Chinese community living in the Javanese cultural area are interesting to study, bearing in mind that they use the same language as the Javanese in their daily communication and interaction. Nevertheless, there is no guarantee that the Chinese and Javanese ethnic communities use the same politeness systems. This research is of great importance because it is beneficial for increasing the harmony in cross-ethnic communication between Chinese and Javanese communities, in particular those living in the Javanese Arek cultural area.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ron Scollon and Suzanne Wong Scollon (2001) argue that based primarily on whether there are differences in power (+ P or -P) and the distance between participants (+ D or -D), we can distinguish three politeness systems: the deference politeness

system, the solidarity politeness system, and the hierarchical politeness system. The deference politeness system is one in which participants are considered to be equals or near equals but treat each other at a distance. Therefore, this system is symbolized by (-P, +D). The characteristics of this system are that it is:

- 1 symmetrical (-P), that is, the participants see themselves as being at the same social level;
- 2 distant (+D), that is, each uses independence strategies in speaking to the other.

A solidarity politeness system is the one in which participants are considered to be close. When two close friends have a conversation with each other they exemplify a solidarity face system. There is a high level of involvement of politeness strategies. There is no feeling of either a power difference (-P) or distance (-D) between them. This system is symbolized by (-P, -D) and has the following characteristics:

- 1 symmetrical (-P), that is, the participants see themselves as being in equal social position;
- 2 close (-D), that is, the participants both use politeness strategies of involvement.

The third politeness system is hierarchical. In such a system the participants recognize and respect the social differences that place one in a superordinate position and the other in a subordinate position. The main characteristic of this system is the recognized difference in status, for which we are using the designation +P. It may be of much less significance whether or not there is distance between the participants. In this system the relationships are asymmetrical. The participants do not use the same face politeness strategies in speaking to each other. The person in the superordinate or upper position uses involvement strategies in speaking "down." The person in the subordinate or lower position uses independence strategies in speaking "up." Calling someone by his or her surname and title (Mr Hutchins) is an independence strategy. Calling someone by his or her given name without a title (Bill) is an involvement strategy. The characteristics of this hierarchical face system are as follows:

- 1 asymmetrical (+P), that is, the participants see themselves as being in unequal social position;
- 2 asymmetrical in face strategies, that is, the "higher" uses involvement face strategies and the "lower" uses independence face strategies.

III. METHOD

The data for this paper was collected by interviewing a number of informants. Interviews were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere and focused on the activity of daily communication in informal situations inside and outside the family environment (not in a formal office environment). To ensure the accountability of the data, informants were selected who met the following requirements: (a) ethnic Chinese, (b) born, raised, and living in the Javanese Arek cultural area of Surabaya and neighbouring towns, (c) using Javanese and/or Indonesian for daily communication, both inside and outside the family environment, (d) understanding the communication habits of the ethnic Chinese community in the Javanese Arek cultural area. Interviews were conducted with attention to two factors: power and social distance. In addition, the researcher carried out observations of various communication activities in day-to-day life. The purpose of the observation was to ensure that what the informants said in the interviews was not contrary to the facts in the field. The data were subsequently analyzed using Ron Scollon and Suzanne Wong Scollon's theory (2001) to discover what kind of Javanese tends to be used as a tool of expression for solidarity politeness and the contexts of use.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. The Javanese Language as a Tool of Expression for Solidarity Politeness

As stated above, the strategy used for expressing solidarity politeness is an involvement strategies, as opposed to an independence strategy, which is used to express deference politeness. The use of an involvement strategy is possible if the speaker and hearer have a close relationship (-D). In a relationship with distance (+D), the use of an involvement strategy is considered inappropriate. The data show that in the ethnic Chinese community in the Javanese Arek cultural area, an involvement strategy is generally realized with the use of Javanese rather than Indonesian. In other words, the Javanese language is used as a tool to express solidarity politeness.

It is well known that the Javanese language has a number of speech levels. Broadly speaking, there are three different speech levels in Javanese: *ngoko*, *madya*, and *krama* (cf. Dwiharjo, 2001; Wajdi, 2010a and 2010b, and Poedjosoedarmo, et. all. 2013). The question is whether all these Javanese speech levels are used by the ethnic Chinese (in the Javanese Arek cultural area) as a tool of expression for solidarity politeness. The data show that the Javanese speech level which tends to be mostly used as a tool for expressing solidarity politeness is the *ngoko* level. Here, an involvement strategy is realized through the use of the *ngoko* level of the Javanese language. The *madya* and *krama* levels, meanwhile, tend not to be used by members of the ethnic Chinese community in their daily communication. By contrast, in the ethnic Javanese community, the *madya* and *krama* levels clearly have a very important function in daily communication, in the use of an independence strategy to express deference politeness (-P+D).

The question is how the ethnic Chinese express deference politeness in their day-to-day lives. The data show that in communication with distance (+D), or when speaking to people who they respect, the ethnic Chinese generally use the Indonesian language. They do not use the *ngoko* level of Javanese. Evidently, the use of *ngoko* in communication with distance is considered to be inappropriate or even impolite. Therefore, they tend to avoid it and use Indonesian instead. Hence, the use of Indonesian is the manifestation of the use of an independence strategy. It can be concluded from this finding that the ethnic Chinese express

deference politeness by using Indonesian language. Indonesian is used to indicate social distance or to show respect to the hearer. As mentioned above, in the ethnic Javanese community, deference politeness is not expressed using Indonesian language but using the *krama* level of Javanese. The function of *krama* in the ethnic Javanese community is replaced by Indonesian in the ethnic Chinese community. Therefore, in the ethnic Chinese community, the Indonesian language is treated as a form of *krama* of the Javanese *ngoko* level, despite its lack of hierarchy.

B. Contexts of Use of Javanese as a Tool of Expression for Solidarity Politeness

The previous section explains that the Javanese language level used as a tool to express solidarity politeness in the ethnic Chinese community is *ngoko*. The evidence of this is found in various daily communication activities, both inside and outside the family environment. The data show that when communication takes place in an atmosphere of intimacy, closeness, and familiarity, the ethnic Chinese tend to use the *ngoko* level of Javanese. Evidently the *ngoko* level is considered suitable for this type of familiar situation. In the ethnic Javanese community, Javanese *ngoko* is also used in intimate situations. This concurs with the views of Javanese language experts such as Poedjosoedarmo et. all. (2013), Dwiharjo, (2001), and Wajdi (2010a, 2010b), who explain that in the ethnic Javanese community the *ngoko* level of Javanese is used in familiar or intimate situations.

The question is whether the Chinese and Javanese use the same linguistic tool to express solidarity politeness. The answer tends to be that yes, they do, namely the Javanese *ngoko* language. Nevertheless, the contexts of use of Javanese *ngoko* in these two ethnic groups are not exactly the same. The data show that in the ethnic Chinese community, the factor which tends most strongly to determine the use of *ngoko*, as the manifestation of an involvement strategy, is (-D), while the (+P) factor is only taken into account subsequent to the (-D) factor. Therefore, in the ethnic Chinese community, the use of the *ngoko* level of Javanese in daily communication can take place in the context (+P-D). In the ethnic Javanese community, there is only a small possibility of *ngoko* being used in this context. The reason for this is that aside from the factor of closeness (-D), the factor of the speaker's age (+P) is also an important consideration when electing to use *ngoko*. Since the power of the speaker is an important factor to be taken into consideration, in the context (+P-D) the Javanese are more inclined to use an independence strategy rather than an involvement strategy. Table 1 below outlines the contexts of use of Javanese *ngoko* as the manifestation of an involvement strategy for expressing solidarity politeness in the ethnic Chinese community in the Javanese Arek cultural area. The symbol (v) indicates that *ngoko* can be used, while (x) indicates that *ngoko* does not usually occur.

Table 1 Contexts of Use of Ngoko Javanese as the Manifestation of an Involvement Strategy in the Ethnic Chinese Community in the Javanese Arek Cultural Area

No	Context	Involvement Strategy
1	(+P+D)	x
2	(+P-D)	v
3	(-P+D)	x
4	(-P-D)	v

Table 1 above explains that in daily communication in the ethnic Chinese community living in the Javanese Arek cultural area, the use of an involvement strategy is commonly found in the contexts (+P-D) and (-P-D), while in the contexts (+P+D) and (-P+D) it does not usually occur. The use of an involvement strategy in these contexts occurs particularly in informal situations inside or outside the family environment, not in formal situations such as in an office or organization environment. Therefore, the realization of power tends not to be rank or position, but age. If this is related to the theory of Scollon and Scollon, there is no problem with the use of an involvement strategy in the context (-P-D), but in the context (+P-D) there would appear to be a problem. The reason for this is that this context reflects an asymmetrical relationship (+P), and as such, it is not possible that all speakers use the same politeness strategy (involvement). In an asymmetrical relationship such as this one, usually the speaker with greater power uses an involvement strategy while the speaker with less power uses an independence strategy. Therefore, this type of politeness falls into the category of hierarchical politeness. The question is, why in context (+P-D), the ethnic Chinese use an involvement strategy when speaking to each other. As stated above, the first factor taken into consideration when selecting a politeness strategy is the (-D) factor, while the (+P) factor is only taken into account subsequent to the (-D) factor. Hence, the situation that occurs in the ethnic Chinese community living in the Javanese Arek cultural area is not exactly the same as that described by Ron Scollon and Suzanne Wong Scollon (2001).

V. CONCLUSION

The Javanese language used as a tool of expression for solidarity politeness in the ethnic Chinese community living in the Javanese Arek cultural area is the *ngoko* level of Javanese. A strategy of involvement is realized with this level. This

manifestation of an involvement strategy in the ethnic Chinese community is no different from that in the ethnic Javanese community. However, the contexts of use are not exactly the same. In the ethnic Javanese community, an involvement strategy tends to be used only in the context (-P-D), whereas in the ethnic Chinese community it is also used in the context (+P-D). Thus, what is seen to take place in the ethnic Chinese community is not exactly the same as that described by Ron Scollon and Suzanne Wong Scollon. This is because in the ethnic Chinese community, the first factor taken into account when using an involvement strategy is the (-D) factor, while the (+P) factor is considered only subsequent to the (-D) factor..

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