



Violation of Politeness Maxims in Japanese and Indonesian Irony Utterances

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe the similarities and differences in the utterances of irony in Japanese and Indonesian in terms of maxim violations of Leech's (1983) politeness principle. The data in this study were taken from characters' dialogue in 8 Japanese and 9 Indonesian films. The data were collected through listening and note-taking techniques, then were input into a data card. Furthermore, the data were classified according to the type of irony utterance referring to Okamoto's theory (2007) and maxim violation referring to politeness principles by Leech (1983). Violation of politeness maxims found in irony utterances in both languages was then compared and contrasted based on the contrastive analysis method. The results showed that there were similarities and differences in Japanese and Indonesian irony utterances based on maxim violation of politeness principles by Leech (1983). The similarities between the utterances of irony in Japanese and Indonesian based on violations of the politeness principle, namely violations of the sympathy maxim, approbation maxim, agreement maxim, tact maxim, and modesty maxim were found in both languages. Meanwhile, the differences in an irony utterance in both languages are based on the violation of politeness principles. The most common violation of the maxims found in the Japanese irony utterance is the violation of the sympathy maxim, while in Indonesian the violation of approbation maxim was the most found in irony utterance. Moreover, in Japanese irony utterances, violation of generosity maxim was found, while in the Indonesian irony utterance, no violation of generosity maxim was found.

Keywords: *Contrastive analysis, Irony utterance, Maxim violation, Politeness principles.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Irony utterances are non-literal language styles in which speakers can convey implied meanings with the intention of mocking or insinuating the interlocutors. There are various views regarding irony utterances. Some experts understand ironic utterances as a statement that contradicts the fact or actual opinion (Grice, 1975; Utsumi, 2000; Gibbs, 2011). In Grice's (1975) perspective, irony utterance is considered to violate the maxim of quality because it is 'contrary to what is intended'. Therefore, the characteristic of irony utterance based on this view is to communicate the opposite of literal meaning (Wilson, 2006). Besides saying the opposite of what one means, irony utterance is also defined as saying something other than what one means (Myers-Roy, 1981).

In Japanese, irony is known as *hiniku*. Slightly different from the previous opinion, Okamoto (in Fitzgerald, 2013) argues that the distinction is the key in

exploring how irony is produced and used. According to Okamoto (2007), an ironic remark is produced when the speaker's expectation has failed and he or she has a negative emotion or evaluation of that failed situation. Therefore, instead of contradicting statements, Okamoto (2007) marks irony utterance in communicative insincerity concept. This is shown when Okamoto (2007) classifies irony utterance into two categories, namely reversal and non-reversal. If the reversal category is used to describe the irony utterance that is contrary to the facts, the non-reversal category is used to classify the irony utterance that does not contradict the actual fact.

As a country that emphasizes the importance of indirect speech, the ratio of using *hiniku* utterance in Japan is quite high (Soumi & Lee, 2019). Because it is often spoken in an indirect form, it is not uncommon for irony utterances to cause misunderstandings in communication activities. When the irony utterance is expressed in cross-cultural communication, understanding the irony utterance creates obstacles for

foreign language learners. According to Ellis, Zhu, Shintani, and Roeber (2021), foreign language learners tend to assess irony utterance as something difficult because irony utterance is expressed in ways and situations that are pragmatically different from the learner's culture. In some cases, interlocutors who receive irony utterances actually translate it as something positive (Okamoto, 2007). As a result, the speaker's intention is not conveyed properly. Therefore, further research is needed regarding irony utterance, especially in cross-cultural communication.

In addition to causing misunderstandings, irony utterances often violate the principle of politeness. The position of the principle of irony is in the middle between the principle of politeness and the principle of cooperation, making irony utterances often violate these two principles (Arifita, 2018). According to Leech's politeness principle (1983), there are six maxims that can be violated when a speaker expresses an ironic utterance, namely: tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim, and sympathy maxim. This violation occurs because the principle of irony allows speakers to be rude, but through an attitude that seems polite (Leech, 2015). Based on this perspective, the author is interested in conducting further research related to politeness violations contained in irony utterances in Japanese and Indonesian.

Several previous studies have examined research related to irony utterance. Arifita (2018) conducted research related to the violation of the cooperative principle and the politeness principle in irony utterance in the *Koe no Katachi* comic. Furthermore, Soumi and Lee (2019) tried to classify irony utterances in Japanese (*hiniku*) spoken by Japanese university student in daily life. Meanwhile, Sholehah (2020) conducted a study about violation of Grice's cooperation principle in irony utterance in illocutionary speech acts in the drama *Rich Man Poor Woman*. Although research on irony utterance has been widely carried out, research on contrastive analysis of irony utterance in Japanese and Indonesian is still rarely found. Therefore, this study tries to fill the gap by revealing the similarities and differences in an irony speech in the two languages in terms of politeness violations in irony utterances. Types of irony utterance are classified based on the theory of irony utterance categorization by Okamoto (2007), while politeness violations are examined based on politeness principle by Leech (1983).

The data of this study were collected from characters' dialogue in Japanese and Indonesian movies. Movie media is used as a source of research data because movie can record social phenomena that develop in the community to be projected onto the screen (Sobur, 2006).

2. METHOD

The data of this study were the irony utterances contained in dialogues in Japanese movies and Indonesian movies. Overall, these movies are youth genre movies. These movies were chosen as the data source because they tend to have lighter conflicts so that they are able to describe the activities of daily life. The Japanese movie titles that become the data source were: *Orange* (2015), *Your Lie in April* (2016), *Re-life* (2017), *One Week Friend* (2017), *Closest Love to Heaven* (2017), *Run! T High School Basketball Club* (2018), *One in A Hundred Thousand* (2020), *Switched* (2018). Meanwhile, the titles of Indonesian movies used as the data source are: *Stip dan Pensil* (2017), *Dear Nathan* (2017), *Dear Nathan 2: Hello Salma* (2018), *Melodylan* (2019), *Terlalu Tampan* (2019), *After Met You* (2019), *Mariposa* (2020), *Dignitate* (2020), *Geez & Ann* (2021).

In this study, the research method used was a contrastive analysis method with a qualitative approach. Through this method, the characteristics of the irony speech data contained in Japanese and Indonesian films were described, contrasted, analyzed, and interpreted. The steps were done based on Okamoto's (2007) theory of irony utterance classification, Leech's (1983) politeness principle, as well as various additional literature used in this study.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of data analysis, a total of 360 data were found showing violations of politeness maxims in irony utterance in Japanese and Indonesian. These violations could be found in the six maxims contained in Leech's politeness principle (1983).

3.1. Violation of Politeness Maxim in Irony Utterance in Japanese and Indonesian.

Leech stated (in Arifita, 2018), irony utterance often violates the principle of politeness because it aims to mock, insinuate, and threaten the interlocutor indirectly through an attitude that seems polite. In line with this statement, in this study, there are violations of sympathy maxim, approbation maxim, agreement maxim, tact maxim, modesty maxim, and generosity maxim in an irony utterance in Japanese and Indonesian. These maxim violations are presented in Table 1.

If viewed from Table 1, the number of violations of politeness maxims contained in the irony utterance in Japanese is 126 utterances. Among the six politeness maxims, the most violations of maxim were found in the sympathy maxim which was 49 utterances. Meanwhile, the least violation of maxims is found in modesty maxim and generosity maxim which are 2 utterances each maxim.

Table 1. Violation of politeness maxim in irony utterance

No.	Category Maxim of Politeness	Number of Violations	
		Japanese	Indonesian
1.	Sympathy maxim	49	66
2.	Approbation maxim	35	85
3.	Agreement maxim	33	68
4.	Tact maxim	6	6
5.	Modesty maxim	2	9
6.	Generosity maxim	2	-
	Total	126	234

On the other hand, the number of violations of politeness maxims found in Indonesian irony utterances is 234 utterances. Contrast with irony utterance in Japanese, the highest number of maxim violation was found in approbation maxim which is 85 utterances. Furthermore, the violation of maxims is at least found in the tact maxim with total of 6 utterances. For the notes, in Indonesian irony utterance, there is no violation of the maxim of generosity at all.

3.1.1. Violation of Sympathy Maxim

Violation of sympathy maxim occurs when the speaker maximizes his antipathy with the interlocutor (Leech, 1983). In this study, 49 Japanese irony utterances and 66 Indonesian irony utterances violated this maxim. These following are examples of irony utterances in Japanese and Indonesian that violate the maxim of sympathy:

(1) Japanese (FJ/111/POL)

[The utterance was addressed by Kanon towards Kanade. In that context, previously Kanade said that Kanon was the woman who was destined for him. However, from Kanon's perspective, Kanade's speech doesn't make any sense]

Kanon: *Ohana batake ni sunde irun desune, Otoko no mousou wo oshitsukeru no yamete moraemasuka?*

Kanon: You live in a flower garden, don't you? Can you stop forcing male fantasies on me?

(2) Indonesian (FI/60/TT)

[[The utterance was said by Rere to Kulin. In that context, Rere saw Kulin about to jump from the roof of the building. Instead of forbidding Kulin, who seemed hesitant to jump, Rere advised Kulin to jump down immediately]

Rere: *Lompat mah lompat aja, Mas! Kenapa nggak jadi? Takut ya?*

Rere: Just jump! Why not? Afraid huh?

In data (1), irony utterance is expressed in two subcategories: first, irony utterance in using metaphor subcategory in sentence: "*Ohana batake ni sunde irun desune*" or "You live in a flower garden, don't you?". Second, irony utterance in question with affirmative answer subcategory in sentence: "*Otoko no mousou wo oshitsukeru no yamete moraemasuka?*" or "Can you stop forcing male fantasies on me?".

The irony utterance by Kanon as a speaker to Kanade as interlocutor shows a violation of sympathy maxim. In

this context, the speaker responds interlocutor's utterance by showing a sense of antipathy. The speaker's antipathy is shown when the speaker mocks the interlocutor by referring him as someone who lives in a flower garden. Even though it looks positive, it refers to an imaginary world. In other words, the speaker has assumption that the interlocutor is someone who fantasizes too much. Furthermore, the speaker's antipathy attitude is also shown when the speaker asks the interlocutor to stop imposing male fantasies on the speaker.

The accusation clearly indicates the speaker's antipathy. From this situation, it can be seen that the speaker increases antipathy and reduces sympathy for the interlocutor. Therefore, the irony utterance in data (1) shows a violation of the sympathy maxim.

Furthermore, the utterance that Rere said in data (2) are irony utterances that can be classified into 3 subcategories at once. First, the irony utterance in reversal non-assertive subcategory which is shown in the sentence: "*Lompat mah lompat aja, Mas!*" or "Just jump!". Second, the irony utterance in infelicitous WH question subcategory, which is shown in sentence: "*Kenapa nggak jadi?*" or "Why not?". Third, the irony utterance in question with affirmative answer, which is shown in sentence: "*Takut ya?*" or "Afraid huh?".

The irony utterance addressed by Rere as a speaker to Kulin as an interlocutor describes a violation of the sympathy maxim. In this case, the violation is indicated by the antipathy attitude shown by the speaker when the interlocutor wants to jump from the roof of the building. When seeing this situation, the speaker should be sympathetic by persuading the interlocutor to give up his intention. However, the speaker actually shows an attitude of antipathy through satire by pretending to give advice so that the interlocutor quickly jumps.

The next utterance said by the speaker also implies a lack of sympathy from the speaker towards the interlocutor. When the interlocutor seems hesitant to jump, the speaker instead raises a belittling question through the utterance: "*Kenapa nggak jadi? Takut ya?*" or "Why not? Afraid huh?". Indirectly, through the utterance, the speaker mocks the interlocutor as someone who is coward. The fact that the interlocutor does not jump at all does not indicate the speaker's relief. This matter shows that speaker has maximized her antipathy, even minimized her sympathy for the interlocutor. Therefore, it can be concluded that the irony utterance in data (2) violates the maxim of sympathy.

3.1.2. Violation of Approbation Maxim

Violation of approbation maxim occurs when the speaker criticizes the interlocutor and minimizes his praise (Leech, 1983). In this study, there are 35 Japanese irony utterances and 85 Indonesian irony utterances which violate the approbation maxim. The examples of

violations of approbation maxim in irony utterances can be seen as follows.

(3) Japanese (FJ/203/S04)

[The utterance was said by a student towards Ayumi. In that context, she does not believe that a student as handsome as Kaga is rejected by Ayumi, who has an ugly face. Rumors of Ayumi's rejection of Kaga were responded to by the student through irony]

Gakusei: E? Futta no? Sonna wake nai ka. Teiuka, dou kangaete mo tsuri awanai deshou. Busu tte, jikakunai no ka?

Student: What? You rejected him? That's not possible right? By the way, come to think of it, you guys don't match up at all, right? Don't you know that you're ugly?

(4) Indonesian (FI/30/SDA)

[This utterance was said by Edwin to Aghi, Bubu, Toni and Saras. In this context, Edwin mocked Aghi and his friends' messy fashion style by using irony utterance]

Edwin: Kayaknya semenjak bergaul dengan anak jalanan, dandanannya jadi sama kayak mereka nih!

Edwin: It seems that since hanging out with street children, your make-up looks the same as theirs!

In data (3), the irony utterance that said by the student towards Ayumi is expressed in question with obviously negative answer subcategory. The utterance is shown through the sentence: “*Busu tte, jikakunai no ka?*” or “Don't you know that you're ugly?”. The irony utterance expressed by the student as a speaker to Ayumi as the interlocutor implies a violation of approbation maxim.

The speaker's criticism for the interlocutor is shown when the speaker asks the interlocutor's self-awareness of her face which is considered not beautiful. Through this criticism, the speaker implicitly tries to humiliate the interlocutor by using the form of a question. According to the speaker, a girl who has a face like the interlocutor is inappropriate to reject Kaga who has a handsome face.

This opinion was also expressed by the speaker in the previous utterance: “*Teiuka, dou kangaete mo tsuri awanai deshou*” or “By the way, come to think of it, you guys don't match up at all, right?”. In this utterance, the speaker says directly that the interlocutor is inappropriate to be in relationship with Kaga. If viewed from the context, it can be concluded that the speaker maximizes efforts to criticize the interlocutor. Therefore, the irony utterance in data (3) shows a violation of approbation maxim.

Furthermore, in data (4), the irony utterance expressed by Edwin to Aghi and his friends is an irony utterance in discovery similarities subcategory. The irony utterance expressed by Edwin as a speaker towards Aghi, Bubu, Toni and Saras as interlocutors indicate a violation of approbation maxim. The violation is marked by criticism made by the speaker against the interlocutors. The criticism is shown when the speaker equates the interlocutors' fashion style with the clothes of street children. In reality, street children's clothes tend to be

shabby and messy. This shows the speaker's efforts to humiliate the interlocutors.

The previous statement, “*Kayaknya semenjak bergaul dengan anak jalanan*” atau “I think since hanging out with street children”, seems to emphasize that interlocutors' dress style has gotten worse since they met street children. This also implies the speaker's insinuation that the street children have a negative influence on the interlocutors. From the utterance, it is seen that the speaker increases the criticism and does not show praise to the interlocutors. Therefore, it can be concluded that the irony speech in data (4) contains a violation of approbation maxim.

3.1.3. Violation of Generosity Maxim

Violation of the generosity maxim occurs when the speaker maximizes the profit for himself and minimizes the profit of the interlocutor. The number of irony utterances in Japanese that violate the maxim of generosity is 2 utterances. On the other hand, there is no irony utterance in Indonesian that violates the generosity maxim. These following are examples of violation of generosity maxim in Japanese irony utterance.

(5) Japanese (FJ/172/S04)

[This utterance was said by Umine's mother to Umine. In this context, Umine's mother scolded Umine for constantly coming home late. Umine's mother's anger is expressed through irony utterance]

Haha: Mou kaette konakute mo ii no yo! Antan nante ne, inai houga yoppodo raku nan dakara

Mother: It's better that you don't have to go home. My life is much easier without you!

(6) Japanese (FJ/201/S06)

[This utterance was said by Umine to her mother. In this context, Umine expressed her emotions to her mother because she does not care about her. Umine's feelings are shown through satire in the form of irony utterance]

Umine: Watashi wa karada to isshoni anata wo suteta.

Umine: I dumped you along with my body.

In data (5), the irony utterance addressed by Umine's mother to Umine is an irony utterance in the reversal non-assertive subcategory. The utterance is shown through the sentence: “*Mou kaette nakute mo ii no yo! Antan nante ne, inai houga yoppodo raku nan dakara*” or “It's better that you don't have to go home. My life is much easier without you”.

The utterance addressed by the mother as a speaker to Umine as the interlocutor indicates a violation of the generosity maxim. The maxim of generosity requires the speaker to make his own profit as small as possible and make his own loss as big as possible (Leech, 1983). However, the utterance in data (5) does not seem to compliance the maxim rules. In this case, instead of minimizing his own profit, the speaker actually tries to make a profit by pretending to give advice so that the interlocutor does not have to go home.

Through this advice, the speaker wants to give an insinuation that the actions committed by the interlocutor cannot be forgiven. This satire is stronger when the speaker says the prohibition sentence in a polite form using the sentence pattern "*~nakutemo ii desu*", even though the speaker is the biological mother of the interlocutor. This is even emphasized when the speaker says that her life will be easier without the presence of the interlocutor. In other words, the speaker tries to avoid the loss of living with the interlocutor. From this situation, it can be seen that the speaker tries to maximize her profits and minimize her losses. Therefore, the irony utterance in data (5) is classified as an utterance that violates the generosity maxim.

Furthermore, the irony utterance expressed by Umine towards her mother in data (6) is an irony utterance in using metaphors subcategory. The irony utterance addressed by Umine as the speaker to her mother as the interlocutor indicates the violates of generosity maxim. The violation is shown when the speaker says that she will discard the interlocutor. In the literal sense, the speaker intends to leave the interlocutor and start a new life with a new body. From the speaker's perspective, living with the interlocutor is a hassle because the speaker cannot get what she wants. This implies the speaker's efforts to maximize profits for himself. Therefore, the irony utterance in data (6) is classified as an utterance that violates the maxim of generosity.

3.2. Similarities and Differences in Irony Utterance in Japanese and Indonesian According to the Violation of Politeness Maxim

Based on the results of data analysis, similarities and differences in irony utterances were found in irony utterances in Japanese and Indonesian according to the violation of politeness maxim by Leech (1983). The similarities between the irony utterances in Japanese and Indonesian show that there are violations of the sympathy maxim, the approbation maxim, the agreement maxim, the tact maxim, and the modesty maxim in irony utterances in both languages. In general, this is in accordance with Leech's statement (in Arifita, 2018) which states that irony utterance violates the maxim of politeness because it aims to control, insinuate, and threaten the interlocutors.

Furthermore, the differences in irony speech in Japanese and Indonesian based on Leech's (1983) politeness maxim are: first, in Japanese irony utterance, the most violation was found is violation of sympathy maxim. On the other hand, in Indonesian irony utterance, the most violation was found in approbation maxim.

The differences in the dominating violations between Indonesian irony utterance and Japanese irony utterance indicates the differences in communication styles of both languages. The communication style of Indonesian

speakers which is more straightforward and expressive is shown through the violation of the approbation maxim which is more commonly found in Indonesian irony utterances. Through the violations committed, it can be seen that Indonesian speakers do not hesitate to criticize the interlocutors to display irony utterance. The criticism that is shown in the violation of approbation maxim makes the irony uttered by Indonesian speakers more offensive, because the speaker tries to demean the interlocutor. Therefore, Indonesian irony utterance is more straightforward than Japanese irony utterance.

On the other hand, Japanese speakers seem to be more careful in expressing irony utterance. This is shown when Japanese speakers choose to express irony utterance by maximizing antipathy towards the interlocutor by violating the sympathy maxim. By showing a sense of antipathy, the speaker hopes that the interlocutor can understand the insinuation, criticism or disagreement that is being conveyed lies behind the speaker's intention. Thus, through this utterance speakers can still minimize conflict and maintain harmony. This matter shows that although both languages have high context communication styles, Japanese has higher context compare to Indonesian (Turistiati, 2019).

Furthermore, in the second difference, it can be seen that the violation of generosity maxim was found in Japanese irony utterance, while in Indonesian it was not found. The violation of generosity maxim occurs when the speaker maximizes the benefits to himself and minimizes the harm to himself (Leech, 1983). This violation tends to conflict with the careful communication style of Japanese society, because through the violation of the maxim of generosity the speaker directly confirms the benefits he can get. In this study, in fact only two Japanese irony utterances were found that violated this maxim. This case indicates that the irony utterance that violates the maxim of generosity is not in accordance with the communication style of Japanese speakers.

Violation of the generosity maxim in this study is actually carried out by speakers and interlocutor who have close relationships as mothers and daughter. This makes the irony utterance that violates the maxim appear more expressive, because the speaker and the interlocutor are in the scope of an insider (*uchi*). In that scope, speakers can express their true feelings freely using the *honne* style of communication. Therefore, in this utterance the speaker can emphasize the benefits for himself without thinking about the feelings of the hearer. Thus, the resulting irony utterance also looks more direct and expressive.

4. CONCLUSION

The similarities and differences between irony utterance in both languages indirectly show the

communication style of Japanese and Indonesian speakers when telling irony utterances. Although both countries adhere to a high context culture of communication, Indonesian speakers tend to be more expressive than Japanese speakers. Therefore, Indonesian speakers do not hesitate to violate maxim that can give more harm to the interlocutors. This is shown when Indonesian speakers express irony utterances by violating the approbation maxim. On the other hand, Japanese prefers indirectness and contains many implied meanings. They also tend to be more reserved and cautious because they adhere to the *enryou* culture. Therefore, when violating the maxim of politeness when saying irony, Japanese speakers show it more by violating the sympathy maxim. Therefore, when compared to Japanese speakers, Indonesian speakers have a more direct, explicit, and expressive style of communication

The results of this study are expected to be a reference for Japanese language learners as well as teachers, especially for understanding irony utterances. The irony utterances in this study only focused on satire function and violation of politeness maxim. So, in the next study, irony utterances can be viewed from the jocular side which describes the closeness between the speaker and the interlocutor.

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