

Study on Gus Dur's Ways in Hedging

M. Usman

Dosen Dosen Kopertis Wih DPK pada FKIP USM Banda Aceh

Abstract: Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) sangat cekatan dalam mengolah kata. Lantaran ucapan atau perbuatannya acapkali memicu kontroversi, ia sering berlindung di balik kata-kata (*hedging*), dan membuat analogi yang *powerful* dalam bereaksi terhadap persoalan dan tuduhan yang dilontarkan padanya. Dia melakukan *hedging* sehingga bisa menghindari sesuatu yang tidak menyenangkan atau tidak diinginkan terhadapnya. Dengan menggunakan kata-kata atau kalimat tertentu, ia menangkis pertanyaan atau menjelaskan kebijakannya, tanpa membuat si penanya atau pemrotos tersinggung. Tanpa perlu berdebat panjang, jawaban Gus Dur tadi telah bisa 'membungkam' si penanya.

Kata kunci: *Hedging, Aksi, dan Keputusan.*

Introduction

Hedging has powers in human's speech. The powers are sometimes so great that we do not have to make very long speeches to express our long and wide ideas but only with one sentence or several ones. "If you hedge against something unpleasant or unwanted that might affect you, you do something which will protect you from it. If you hedge or hedge a problem or question you avoid answering the question or committing yourself to a particular action or decision" (Collins 1987). This description of the everyday meaning of the verb hedge suggests that as a linguistic term it might also refer to the choice of a certain kind of communicative strategy. According to Grundy (2000), hedging maxims are utterances that prevent bald statement. They are used when the speaker does not want to engage in the further argument or when advising that the information being conveyed is limited. They do not add truth-value to the utterances. They are more comments on the extent to which the speaker is abiding by the maxims.

Working Through

Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) is a very unique man with his strategies for uttering ideas, attitudes, and controversies. Why I call 'unique is just because his opposing utterances against the policies of Indonesian Government. In the era of Soeharto, were very effective and safe. As we all know that it was very dangerous for Indonesian people to oppose Soeharto explicitly when he is still ruling Indonesian. By doing these, he wanted the readers and hearers to conclude by themselves about what he said. However, they will not misunderstand his utterances.

"Jika Syarwan mengatakan bahwa saya seperti Kardinal Sin dan Megawati sebagai Corry Aguino, kemudian apakah dia berani mengatakan 'siapa Marcosnya?' (If Syarwan Hamid said I am as Cardinal Sin and Megawati as Corry Aquino, do you think that Syarwan is brave enough to say 'who is as Marcos?)"

The story behind this statement is that Gus Dur, the leader of Nahdlatul Ulama at that time, was in close relationship with Megawati, the leader of PDI (Indonesia Democratic Party), after the attack to the central office of PDI in 1995, known by the Event of Kudatuli (Kerusuhan 27 Juli). Because Syarwan got annoyed with the close relationship and smell a rat that Gus Dur and Megawati wanted to succeed Syarwan's boss, Soeharto, he made an analogy about the relationship with the relationship between Corry Aquino, The President of Philippines, and cardinal Sin, The Leader of Catholic People to succeed Marcos, former president of Philippines who was corruptive and autocratic.

The interesting aspects of the question, who is as Marcos, are that:

- a. Gus Dur did not mention explicitly the person he intended. However, the readers and the headers knew that it was Soeharto;
- b. By stating this, he was safe from the headers knew that Syarwan Hamid would not be brave to answer his question; and
- c. He won the fight without fighting and he won the fight only by hedging.

"Jika ada orang yang mengatakan bahwa saya anggota Partai Baath, ini seperti seorang mahasiswa Jepang yang sedang belajar di Indonesia dan menjadi anggota Golkar. (If says I am a member a Baath Party, it is like a Japanese student studying in Jakarta becomes a member of Golkar)."

In denying the accusation addressed to him that he was a member of Baath Party from Iraq because once he was studying there, he made the illogical analogy. He wanted to say that the accusation addressed to him was impossible. Instead of saying "it is impossible", he gave a very powerful analogy to say that the accusation was not reasonable and he did not need long explanation to deny the accusation addressed to him. He actually wanted to explain that the basic requirement of being a member of a political party in a particular country is that the one must be a citizen of the country.

"NU tidak ke mana-mana tetapi ada di mana-mana (Nadhatul Ulama is not going anywhere but existing in everywhere)."

The story behind this utterance happened in 1996 when the Indonesian political situation grew and hotter due to the following Indonesian General Election which would be held in 1997. At that time Gus Dur had very close relationship with Siti Hediati Indra Rukmana, mbak Tutut. Gus Dur tried to introduce Tutut to Nahdliiyins (the members of NU) all over Indonesia. He was accused of driving Nu to Golkar, one of the Indonesian. He was accused of driving NU to Golkar, one of the Indonesian Political Parties because Tutut was one of the leaders of Golkar.

By stating that he intended to tel the readers and the headers that Nahdlatul Ulama did not lead its members to be members of a particular politic party, especially Golkar. However, NU confessed that its members existed in the three political parties in Indonesia; they were PPP (United Development Party), (Labores' Party), and PDI (Indonesia Democratic Party). So in this case, it is no need to tell his explanation in a long speech. He used only one sentence to represent the long explanation and the readers and the headers would not misunderstand the representing sentence uttered and written by him.

"Kalau mau tahu tentang Syi'ah, harus mengundang tokoh Syi'ah, jangan malah menghakimi dari jauh. (If you want to know about Syiah, you must invite the leaders or experts of Syi'ah. Don't even just it from far away!)"

The story about behind this is that Gus Dur was invited to make a speech and a comment about Syi'ah belief at the Conference of discussing Syi'ah belief. He knew that the conference will talk about Syi'ah's faults and he knew that the participants attending the conference do not know about Syi'ah belief.

They conduct the conference because of the development of Syi'ah belief grew faster in Indonesia and they felt worried about it.

Gus Dur tried to inform them that it was not a discussion but a slaughtering against Syiah belief since there were no participants of the discussion who were Syiah followers. He told them that it was not objective to judge Syiah without knowing what it really was.

"Saya ini lebih Syi'ah daripada orang Syi'ah (I am more syi'ah than Syi'ah people)."

By stating this, Abdurrahman Wahid tries to explain that he knows more about Syi'ah people their lives, and Syi'ah belief it self. He wants to tell the people who accuse him a Syi'ah follower. However, according to him, they do not know the lives of Syi'ah followers. Syi'ah followers. Syi'ah people live in respect with one another, unlike the Moslems in Indonesia. Most Indonesia Moslems always think that Syi'ah belief is wrong and against al-Qur'an but in fact, they do not know much about it.

Aburrahman Wahid, however, knows very much about Syiah and tries to tell them that they have wrong opinion about Syi'ah followers. They live in very Islamic lives that they never blame on other believers, while what we find in Indonesia is that a particular belief is always suspected by others. They often use religions to protect them from their faults. They also use Islamic symbols in order that the people accept them. However, they often behave against the teaching of Islam. Many of them are involved in corruptive activities. In order to be safe from accusation, they use Islamic symbols to show people that they are pious and seem to be impossible to do corruptive activities.

In this way, Gus Dur try to make Indonesia Moslems understand that Syi'ah believe is not entirely wrong.

Conclusion

When we want to avoid something unpleasant or to give safe reaction to something that might have unwanted effects to us, we can use hedging maxims as our strategies. Hedging maxims are needed because we hope that we avoid answering unpleasant questions by stating accurate statements as our reaction.

References

- Grundy, Peter. 2000. *Doing Pragmatics*. London: Arnold Publisher.
- Markkanen, Raija And Hartmut Schröder. 1996. *Hedging. A Challenge for Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis*. <http://www.sw2.euv-frankfurt-o.de/Publikationen/Hedging/markkane/markkane.html> (access on 22 april 2003)
- Yule, George. 1998. *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1995. *Majalah Aula Surabaya*. Surabaya: Aula Press.
- _____. 1996. *Majalah Aula Surabaya*. Surabaya: Aula Press.
- _____. 2001. *Majalah Aula Surabaya*. Surabaya: Aula Press.