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### SPEECH ACT AND POLITENESS IN SUNDANESE LANGUAGE

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**Abstract:** The aims of this study is to describe on how politeness occurred in Sundanese language, and what makes Sundanese politeness differed from any other languages. The research used qualitative method and the data was collected through interview, and document analysis. It was conducted to collect the data about Sundanese people perception toward the Sundanese language, and also their believe on the Sundanese politeness in its language. The findings showed the fact that Sundanese people do not all speak politely, since the geographical place and acculturation plays significant roles on its existence. As the result, the Sundanese politeness appeared according to the background of the region which affects the language. Meanwhile, language structure, lexical variable usage and also the manner of Sundanese people communicate is fundamental variable indicating politeness in speech act in Sundanese language.

**Keywords:** politeness, speech acts, sundanese

### INTRODUCTION

Starting from the class discussion on the subject of Pragmatics on particular material called "speech act", this material had given a writer interesting value to study more for further understanding. The topic discusses on how language is used through utterances to express our feeling and thought toward the listener and to show the relationship between them through the utterances (Yule, 1996). It also affects on how people use the language with the way their attitude (Crystal in Sukemi, 1995).

The explanation above reminds us that obviously we know that language is not only used as a communication tool to convey ideas, thoughts and feelings, but also it is used as a medium to express and receive messages (Sudrayat, 2015). Further information, in the work of Uyun (2020) Widianingsih said that that language has also an ideology inside, Through language, one's attitudes such as modesty or politeness and thoughts can be reached. This discussion has given me an interesting view toward the topic and it made me curious more about the term. The writer would like to find more information regarding the meaning behind every single words in the language particularly on how actually politeness occurred in the language.

Politeness in the language has specific position which cannot be separated from the language. As Austin (1962) argues that every language has its own characteristics in terms

of speech act, thus it is also occurred in every single language. One of its character is the politeness. It is closely related to the use of manner and attitude in a language. This is characterized by the variety of language systems used by considering the position such as social status or tone such as power, whether it is soft, medium, or rough, intimacy or solidarity, as well as the relationship between roles (Sudaryat and Rahman, 2019) Referring to another scholars such as Lakoff 1973; Leech 1983; Brown and Levinson 1987 in Michael (2018), politeness is also defined as the role of language in displaying respect and consideration for the feelings of others.

In relation to the theory above, as Sundanese person, the researcher learnt its culture and language. Particularly, it is recognised on how politeness in "*speech act*" has fundamental position in Sundanese language. We are also famous to the word "*someah*" meaning polite and friendly. This word "*someah*" is driven from the way Sundanese speak which is polite and friendly. This phenomenon is in similar to what Ningsih, Boeriswati, and Muliastuti (2020) said that politeness in language can be an indicator of a person's emotional intelligence in language, this is because in communication, we do not only convey the truth, but also must remain committed to maintaining harmonious relationships.

In this case, Sundanese language has their own rules and uniqueness in term of the language itself, particularly the courtesy of it (Indrayani, 2011). These rules and uniqueness have attracted many scholars to examine the language. The previous research on this topic was conducted by Kern (1906) Kats and Soeria Diradja (1927), Noorduyn (1963), wessing (1974) Djaja Wiguna (1978) Ayat Rohaedi (1980) and Soedradjat (1986). All studies discussed about language courtesy in speech act in Sundanese, and focus on the usage of the lexical variable in the language.

Nevertheless, Sundanese language courtesy or politeness have been discussed by a number of scholars, this study focused on the people perception toward the language politeness and the usage of lexical variable in Sundanese. It also aims to know how the politeness occurred in Sundanese language.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In linguistics there are, as mentioned earlier, many approaches to analyze and describe the politeness in language, these being united by the shared conviction that language is more than a sentence (Brown, 1996). Hence it is inaccurate for a language description to limit its scope to the properties of individual sentences. Analysis of politeness can be undertaken in various paradigms interactional, ethnographic, pragmatic, and many more. This study would describe the politeness from the speech act paradigm.

The most famous scholars presenting "*speech act*" theory is Austin in 1960 in his famous book *how to do things with word*. The theory was developed from the basic understanding that language is used to do something, because meaning and action are related to language, it can be said that actions are carried out through language. This applies to the communicative speaker in producing an utterance. Austin also said there are many things we can do with words. We can make statements, requests, questions, give orders, make promises, give thanks, offer apologies, and so on (Austin, 1953).

Further, Yule in 1996 proposes that speech acts is performed action via utterance. It means every single words come out all express what we have in our mind. Another meaning is defined by Crystal in Soekemi (1995) which mentions that speech act is a theory which analyses the role of utterance in relation to the behaviour of speaker and

listener in interpersonal communication. It is also argued that speech act is a theory of performative language, in which to say something is to do something. In brief when speakers are saying words, they not only produce utterance containing words and grammatical structure, but they also perform action in those utterances, or we can said there will always be meaning behind the words. .

Speech acts reveal the intention or purpose of the speaker and the effect of the speaker's speech and expressions on the listener. as an implication, that we can know that from every utterance or utterance, has a purpose that is conveyed in a certain context. as we know that the use of language is always tied to the context in which the language is used. such as cultural, social conditions, beliefs, gender and others, and one of the most frequently discussed topics in speech acts is politeness.

In ordinary language use, politeness refers to person's behavior when speaking, and to proper social conduct and tactful consideration of others or we can say language context. Even though it connotes this usage, 'politeness' as a pragmatic notion refers to ways in which the relational function in linguistic action is expressed. Crystal (1997, p. 297) explains that politeness in language is part of the study of Sociolinguistics and Pragmatics. Politeness can be said as a term is a term of linguistic features related to the norms of social behaviour prevailing in society in relation to meanings such as politeness, good relations, respect and distance. These features usually involve the use of certain discourse markers such as please, appropriate tone of voice, and tolerable forms of greeting (e.g., choice of intimate pronoun v. distant, or first name v. last name).

Another explanation of politeness can be found in the work of Brown. He argues that politeness framework describes facial expression when everyone is trying to control his attitude through their face to be nice to each other. Among the theories that attempt to extend politeness theory to cover impoliteness, Culpeper et al. (2003), outline a set of impoliteness strategies that mirror Brown's politeness strategies. Bald on record impoliteness is similar to the bald on record politeness. The distinction between bald on record politeness and bald on record impoliteness is that the previous is utilized when it'll cause the slightest conceivable confront taken a toll to either speaker or recipient, whereas bare on record lack of consideration is utilized when the speaker wishes to form it self-evident that he or she is debilitating somebody else's confront. Negative impoliteness intensifies a threat to the addressee's negative face by associating him or her with an undesirable trait or simply cutting the addressee off to restrict his or her freedom to speak. Positive impoliteness, on the other hand, debilitates an addressee's positive confront by making him or her feel avoided or unvalued, whereas roundabout lack of consideration is frequently accomplished through contemptible neighbourliness, mockery, or essentially not performing an anticipated courteous discourse act (Culpeper et al., 2003).

Generally, sociolinguists put more accentuation on the transaction of confront than on shared suspicions in spite of the fact that there may be critical social contrast within the suspicions. In this way, the idea 'face', the arranged open picture, utilized by sociolinguistics, is an perfect demonstrate of 'self' as a communicative personality.

Therefore, it should be noted that 'politeness' is conveyed not only to a hearer of higher status, but also to a hearer of equal or lower status. In addition, the clashing control of the speaker's and hearer's 'face' is impacted by the connection between the two parties in terms of Control, Remove, and the Weight of the Inconvenience. Additionally, its sign varies, depending on formative angles of a

speaker's down to business abtily since of the trouble in overseeing the confusing nature of the face-work in communication.

In the work of Kareem, Yule (2010, p. 139-140) explains that every culture is unique in the way they express politeness. Hence, politeness can be describes in may ways. According to Lakoff (1990), there are at least three types of politeness, namely distance politeness, respectful politeness and friendly politeness.

Moreover, Lakoff (1990) further mentions that distant politeness, refers to politeness which can be identified as a civilized human being by making physical signs to show their colleagues about their boundaries, staying go out. Human usually use symbols to create symbolic fences. Distance politeness shows equality between participants. Second is respect politeness. It can be adopted by a culture that avoids the dangers of conflict. This type of politeness is characteristic of ma Asians where respect for people is the most important thing in socializing in society. The third is friendship politeness. Here, politeness is identified as a friendship which shows that interactions and connections regarding socially positive ideas and openness are the most essensial signs of politeness.

## **METHOD**

The method of this research was qualitative method. It provides descriptive analysis and focuses on contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2009, p. 2). It also focused on qualities of human behaviour (Ferreira, Mouton, Puth, Schurink & Schurink, 1988). It means, the researcher took a part of activity and getting emerge straightforwardly to the research area. It was done to comprehend it and to investigate the circumstance, occasion, gather or specific social interaction happen. At this arrange, the researcher was going to explore the utilization of speech acts and politeness in Sundanese language in their everyday life.

The research was conducted at one of private developing schools in Bandung. The school was established in 2012. Majority students and teachers are Sundanese. So it was relevant to the research topic that was conducted.

In order to achieve the valuable data, the stakeholder of institution were the research participants. Those were the teacher and students. The participants were selected based on the purposive sampling that all thing such as people, background, setting, could give important information of data. It was believed that they could give much information in regards their view and understanding, regarding the usage of speech acts and politeness in Sundanese language.

In order to gather the data, the researcher utilized two instruments to gain up the information. Those two instruments were accepted to produce a precise result (substantial). The accentuation in data collection was to create inquire of research evidence systematically, searching for a broad array of evidence which looks for both confirming and disconfirming data (Hartley, 2004). The first is interview. It was essential to gain some information from the interviewee. It is one of an appropriate instrument for qualitative research in order to get the emmerge from the real research object. The writer had had interviewed teachers and students, so that they gave information regarding the topic discussed. The question such as their perception about sundanese language was asked. The second one is document nalysis. In order to validate the data, the researcher also used document analysis as one of the instruments. These documents are the things that is written and documented such as book, film or audio record. The document can be as a letter, journal, autobiography, text book, diary, or even speech text or script. Furthermore, the researcher strengthen the data by supporting it with many document

and resources related to Sundanese literature. The document such as journal and recent research on the same field were also needed to be analyzed. It was all significant to validate all findings having gained before in data interview.

Further in order to analyze the data, In this study, the researcher used interactive processes of data analysis by Creswell. It divided into four stages of data analysis, which are the stage consists of data collection and display reflection, the second stage consists of data coding and data reduction, the third stage consists of generation of key themes and the last stage consists of story report and conclusion

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### People perception on politeness of speech act in Sundanese language

The interview result which was conducted to two native Sundanese and two Non-native Sundanese had found that all participants agreed with the statement "Sundanese people speak in a polite way". Both respondent of nonnative sundanese said that they were very comfort when having a conversation with Sundanese. They also said that they are very happy to work together with Sundanese persons. Even one of them has stayed shorter than the other one, He still argues the same thing.

#### Excerpt 1

Even if I just have stayed for about one year, I also learn and understand some of Sundanese language. I like the most when I am having a conversation with Sundanese person especially the women. They speak very polite, in contrast with almost my friends in Bekasi. (Anton, UIN Bandung Student. Non-Native Sundanese)

This findings is actually in line with Sudaryat and Rahman (2019), who said that every politeness is characterized by the variety of language systems to considering the position such as social status or tone such as power, whether it is soft, medium, or rough, intimacy or solidarity, as well as the relationship between roles. Referring to another scholars such as Lakoff 1973; Leech 1983; Brown and Levinson 1987 in Michael (2018), politeness is also defined as the role of language in displaying respect and consideration for the feelings of others. It can be seen from the finding which was said that they were very happy to work together with sundanese people because they are very polite.

Further, if we want to analyzed more, the words "I like to have conversation with Sundanese people especially the woman, because they are very polite, is similar to the term *"someah"* meaning polite and friendly. This word *"someah"* is driven from the way Sundanese speak which is polite and friendly. This phenomenon is strengthened by Ningsih, Boeriswati, and Muliastuti (2020) in their research they said that politeness in language can be an indicator of a person's emotional intelligence in language, this is because in communication, we do not only convey the truth, but also must remain committed to maintaining harmonious relationships. Hence this is the definition of *someah* is.

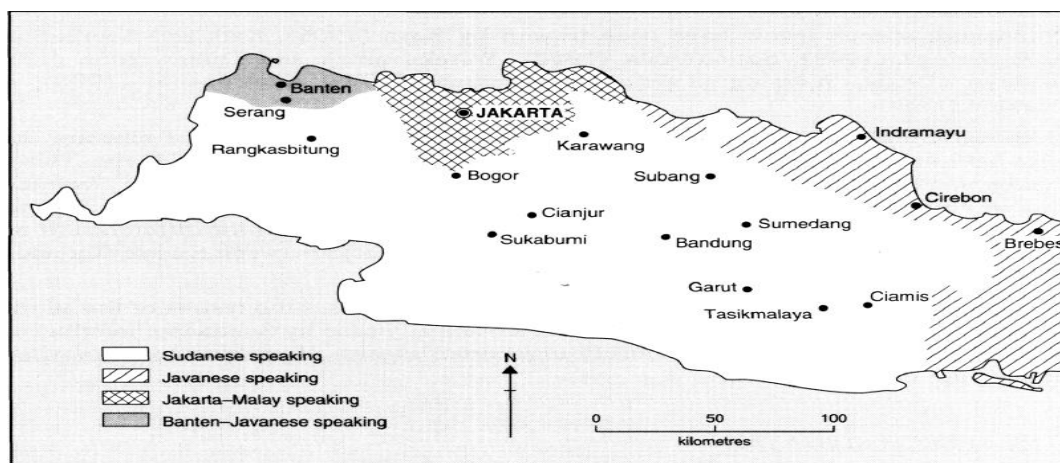
On the other hand, however, the two natives also said that it is not every Sundanese doing so, because there are several areas where Sundanese language seems different from its original language. It is the place where people speak Sundanese in different way.

#### Excerpt 2

I do agree with that. I believe that we as Sundanese are very polite when having communication with another, either the use of the language or the attitude. Unfortunately, it is not all Sundanese to do so, as I know it is only particular Sundanese persons speak polite Sundanese and it is located in Priangan Timur. While in another part as like Bekasi and Karawang, they speak rough Sundanese *"heras gengerong"*. Another part like Indramayu and Cirebon are also do not speak Sundanese at all, since their culture have been acculturated by Javanese. (Samsul Jaelani, teacher at SMP Tunas Unggul)

Based on the above data we can know that Politeness in Sundanese language used in certain areas only. It is not all Sundanese doing so. This finding is similar to the work of Sobarna (1997), he said Sundanese people speaking finely dispersed in Bandung area, Priangan Timur and Western parts of Priangan namely Cianjur and Sukabumi. While Bekasi area as well as the majority of Priangan Barat speaks Malay. Cirebon area on the other hand, they almost do not speak sundanese, they use Javanese, but some of speaks Sundanese which has been acculturated with Javanese language.

The widespread use of Sundanese language can be seen as follows:



**Picture 1. The widespread of Sundanese language**

We can see that Sundanese language is being used by almost people in West Java and Banten province. However, according to the result, Sundanese people speaking in a polite way is only based in Ciamis, Tasikmalaya, Garut, Bandung, Sumedang, Cianjur and Sukabumi. In addition this finding is in a line with the result of Anderson study in 1997 who said so. Thus, it can be inferred that the people perception toward the politeness of Sundanese language is agreed, yet it is not all Sundanese speaks in that way, since the politeness of Sundanese language is also affected by geographical place.

### **The Performance of the Politeness**

To answer such a question, it is taken one script from data interview who said that the politeness in Sundanese language is not only looked from the manner and the structure of the speech act and utterances but also from the lexical variable choices.

#### **Excerpt 3**

We as Sundanese has our own rules of a language, for example if we want to speak to ourselves, it will be different to speaking to other persons, not only in the level of manner, but also the lexical variable choices among loma language for ourselves, and others. (Adam Rahmat Fauzan, Bahasa Teacher)

This statement can be strengthened by Anderson study (1997) who said that politeness or courtesy has also been seen in some languages in Asia such as Korean, Japanese, Thai Sundanese and Javanese. The study had distinguished one particular differences among the language in term of the courtesy itself. Sundanese and Javanese are considered the most polite languages among others. Korean, Japanese and Thai language is considered polite in term of their expression and gesture deal with the manner they are speaking. On the other hand, Sundanese has their own uniqueness in its language where the usage of words is also considered as a form of politeness. This research was strengthen by Indriyani (2011), who argued that Sundanese and Javanese is not only

taking the manner on the utterances and expression, but also the lexical variable choices in communication .

In this case, both Native provided an example of the lexical variable level in Sundanese language. The first example is the lexical variable of the word “eat” meaning “to take into the mouth and swallow for nourishment; chew and swallow “food” (dictionary). As we can see to the meaning, then we can say *the dog eats*, and the *President eats*, since the action has similar meaning which is “to take something into the mouth”. However, it will not be happened to Sundanese language since the level of the lexical variable used will be different. It depends on, to whom they are speaking. For further illustration we can see as follows:

**Table 1. Lexical variable of the word eat**

No	Word	Level of politeness	Used for
1	Tuang	Very polite	For some others else which is very very important person
2	Neda	Polite	For ourselves
3	Dahar	Less polite	For some others, someone close to us such as friend or younger person
4	Daang	Less polite	For some others
5	Nyatuk	Impolite	For some others
6	Madang	Impolite	For some others
7	Tetegek	-	For animal
8	Lolodok	-	For animal

According to the table above, all the eight words have similar meaning, it is eating. However the all words have different utilization to whom and what for the word be used. The lexical variable chosen will affect to the level of politeness we give. As the result, it is important for Sundanese to be familiar with this type of lexical variable variation. Another following illustration can help us to be more understood. The illustration bellow is using the word “sleeping”.

**Table 2. The use of lexical variable of the word eat**

English	Note	Sundanese	Note
The dog is sleeping now	The sentence is correct in term of syntax, as well as there is no particular problem related to the semantics sides.	Anjing ker hees	The sentence is correct in term of syntax, as well as there is no particular problem related to the semantics sides.
The president is sleeping now	The sentence is correct in term of syntax, as well as there is no particular problem related to the semantics sides.	Presiden ker hees	The sentence is correct in term of syntax, but the word choices is not appropriate with president since “hees” is rant word to be used to human. Thus Sundanese prefer to use <i>President nuju kulem</i>

The choices of lexical variable in utterances will be very important in Sundanese. Further, from this finding, we can also see that the politeness in the language is not only seen from the manner or gesture of the speaker, yet also from the lexical variable chosen.

This is what makes Sundanese language is quite unique among other local languages in Indonesia

### Lexical Variable Analysis in Sundanese language

Sundanese polite performance speech level can also be shown by the lexical variable used. The previous research on this topic have been treated by Kern (1906) Kats and Soeriadiradja (1927), Noorduyn (1963), wessing (1974) Djajawiguna (1978) Ayatrohaedi (1980) and Soedradjat (1986). The theories all discussed about the usage of the lexical verb itself. Although Sundanese lexical variable have been discussed by the number of scholars, this study will be focused more on the distinction among the variable itself. The data was taken from list of *undak usuk basa sunda* (Sundanese lexical variable) published by Indonesian University of Education, Sundanese Department. Here are some lexical variables as follows:

**Table 3. List of some Sundanese lexical variable**

Loma language/ Sundanese Lingua Franca (less polite)	Language Courtesy for Ourselves (very polite)	Language Courtesy for Other people (very polite)	Meaning in English	Word classes
Dagang	Dagang	Icalan	Sell	Verb
Dahar	Neda	Tuang	Eat	Verb
Dangdan	Dangdan	Dangdos	Wear	Berb
Dapur	Dapur	Pawon	Kitchen	Noun
Déngé, ngadéngé	Nguping, miring	Ngadangu	Hear	Verb
Deukeut	Caket	Caket	Near	Adjective
Didik, ngadidik	Ngatik	Miwuruk, miwejang	Teach	Verb
Diri	Diri	Salira	Ourselves	Noun
Diuk	Diuk	Calik, linggih	Sit	Verb
Dubur	Dubur	Palawangan	-	Noun
Duga, kaduga	Kaduga	Kiat	Able to	Adjective
Duit	Artos	Artos	Money	Noun
Duméh, lantaran	Jalaran	Kumargi	Since	Adverb
éléh	Éléh	Kawon	-	Adverb
éling, inget	Émut	émut	Realize	Verb
émboh, tambah	Tambah	Tambah	Add	Verb
Éra	Isin	Lingsem	Shy	Adjective
embung	Narah (awéwé)	Teu kersa	Not able	Adjective
emét, saemét	Saeutik	Saeutik	Little	Adjective
endeng,	Salamina	Sapapaosna	Forever	Adjective
enggon	Pamondokan	Pangkuleman	-	Verb
eukeur, keur	Nuju	Nuju	In progress	Adverb
euweuh	Teu aya	Teu aya	Nothing/none	Adverb
Gancang	énggal	Enggal	Hurry	Adjective
Gandék	Réncang	Réncang	Friend	Noun
Gandéng	Gandéng	Baribin	Crowded	Adjective
Ganti	Ganti	Gentos	Change	Verb
Gawé	Gawé	Damel	Work	Verb
Gedé	Gedé	Ageung	Big	Adjective
Gering	Udur	Teu damang	Sick	Adjective
Geura, pék, hég	Geura, manga	Mangga	Allow	Verb
Cocoba	Cocoba	Cocobi	Obstacle	Noun

According to the data above, it shows lexical variable is quietly different from another languages. It just like what Anderson (1997) said that only Javanese and Sundanese language are having it. If we compare to Indonesian, English, Arabic, Korean, and Japanese, all the language do not have particular word for particular meaning and for particular purposes and usage. For example in English we can find synonymous, yet



it is only the word with similar meaning and it does not have particular instruction of usage for the word. I cannot certainly argue whether this statement is true, that uniqueness is only having in Sundanese and Javanese, but as far as I concern to several sources, this is the only opinion I have come up with. In addition, the lexical variables of Sundanese language does not only occurred in one particular class of word. Yet it can be found on every single class of word.

The above table shows an example of vocabulary can be used based on their role. In Sundanese, there is a term called "*undak usuk basa*". "*Undak*" means someone older, "*Usuk*" means someone younger, and "*Loma*" means Sundanese lingua franca. Therefore, the modesty, courtesy or politeness in Sundanese, is also reflected from the choices of the lexical variable they have among Sundanese vocabularies.

## CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the politeness in speech act can be identified from the way people communicate, body language, as well as our expression when delivering ideas, thought, and opinion in the language. Politeness can also be identified from changing sentence structure; it can be longer or even shorter form the ordinary structure.

The finding of this research has found that it is strongly argued that Sundanese is considered one of the polite languages used in the world. It is argued from the people perception toward Sundanese language who said so. On the other hand, the uniqueness of the lexical variable which is had in Sundanese language making a distinction that the politeness in the language is not only considered by the manner of the way communication and also the use of structure, but also the variety and usage of vocabulary mastery which particular language had.

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