Politeness and Impoliteness Strategies in Some Javanese Jokes

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Abstract:

Purpose: This article tries to overview some Javanese jokes to find out some possible politeness strategies based on Brown’s and Levinson’s pragmatic theory. As a joke normally consists of jabs and punches and pragmatics discusses locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, this article relates the element of the jokes to the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts especially in the view of politeness strategy. Some of the jokes may involve rather dirty jokes in the sense that they are not explicitly dirty jokes.

Methodology: The data of Javanese jokes are obtained from the internet due to the fact that many Javanese jokes are available in the internet of Javanese traditional shows of shadow puppet shows or wayangkulit performances. The data in the form of jokes are described in terms of their elements and then their meanings are analyzed pragmatically in the view of politeness strategy.

Results: Some Javanese jokes make use of politeness strategy of face preserving strategy so that both the hearer’s and speaker’s face or self-esteem is maintained. This kind of strategy may prevent children from being involved in matters of adult things.

Implications: Politeness strategies in Javanese jokes are capable of hiding adult materials from children. This is a kind of veil, which is necessary and wants appreciating much for joke writers and performers.

Keywords: politeness strategy, face, jabs, punch, Javanese jokes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Politeness normally occurs in conversational exchanges (Brown and Levinson: 1978) where violation is avoided to maintain cooperation between a speaker and a hearer (Leech: 2014) (Searle: 1985). Sociologically and psychologically, violation is prevented to secure face threatening acts for both the speaker and the hearer or the interlocutors (Leech: 1978). In conversational jokes the interlocutors make use of jabs and punches where the jabs introduce background settings and the punches conclude the key points of the jokes due the double meanings of the locution. This article tries to overview politeness and impoliteness in some Javanese jokes.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Politeness as introduced by Goffman (1967,1971) and popularized by Brown and Levinson (1978),and also adopted by Leech (1983) has become an interesting topic to discuss. The idea of politeness is based on Brown’s and Levinson’s theory of face (1978), which is defined as individual’s self-esteem. At the beginning of its development, politeness is considered as the speaker’s way of minimizing violation of the hearer so that he employs strategies for some presuppositions before choosing a certain degree of politeness in his speech acts (Leech: 204). This is to say that the speaker’s speech acts may contain face threatening acts, which may terminate the conversational exchanges.

In politeness there are degrees where levels of face threatening acts range from which politeness strategies are done to avoid or mitigate them.
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The first strategy i.e. do the FTA without redressive action or baldly, is done when there is no risk of loss of face. The participants have achieved mutual understanding so there is no need to mitigate FTA. The second and third strategies involve redressive action where the speaker has to maintain the addressee’s face as well as his/her face. In other words, the speaker has to avoid or mitigate some possible FTAs. The fourth strategy is employed when the risk of loss of face is great, the communicative act is made ambiguous and the interpretation is left to the addressee so that FTA is flouted to prevent from the loss of face. In the positive politeness strategy, the speaker tries to please the addressee so that he can maintain the cooperative principle while in the negative politeness strategy the speaker tends not to disturb the addressee so that the addressee’s face is secure. The fifth strategy involves things not to be said because the risk of loss of face is too great.

The politeness strategy is often contrasted to the impoliteness strategy where FTA is emphasized rather than avoided. The following table shows different strategies of impoliteness as described by Culpeper.

Table 1. The categories of constraint violation of the “General Strategy of Impoliteness.”

| Violation of Maxim (expressed in an imperative mood): | Label for the maxim violated | Typical speech-act type(s) |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (M1) give an unfavorable value to O’s generosity      | Generosity                   | Refusing, threatening    |
| (M2) give a favorable value to S’s generosity         |                              |                          |
| (M3) give an unfavorable value to O’s tact            | Tact                         | Ordering, demanding      |
| (M4) give a favorable/high value to S’s modesty       |Boasting, being               | Complacent               |
| (M5) give an unfavorable/low value to S’s obligation to O | Obligation (to O)           | Withholding thanks or apologies |
| (M6) give a favorable/high value to O’s obligation to S | Obligation (to S)           | Demanding thanks         |
| (M7) give an unfavorable/low value to O’s opinions    | Agreement                    | Disagreeing, contradicting |
| (M8) give an favorable/high value to S’s opinion      | Opinion reticence            | Being opinionated        |
| (M9) give an unfavorable/low value to O’s feelings    | Feeling reticence            | Expressing antipathy to O |
| (M10) give a favorable/high value to S’s feelings    |                              |                          |

In conversational exchanges of joke, both politeness and impoliteness strategies are often used altogether for the participants often play different roles. The main purpose of the conversational joke is to entertain audience or to produce laughter (Fedfern: 2008). The typical characteristics of joke show the jabs i.e. introductory part of the joke, and punches i.e. the laughter-causing part of the joke (Attardo: 1994) (Chiaro: 2010). The jabs invite the audience to have shared understanding of a thing, which normally double or multi-interpretable case (Berger: 1993) (Cheang: 2006) (Ortega: 1989). The punches bring the audience to a certain understanding and let them convey in different meanings (Raskin 1944) (Bucharia: 2004).
3. Method

The qualitative data in the form of Javanese jokes in a puppet shadow performance are taken from the internet and then they are transcribed into a text and translated into English for the sake of discussion. Their jabs and punches are described to show the funny aspects of the jokes. The politeness and impoliteness strategies are overviewed and discussed to find out some characteristics of the Javanese conversational jokes.

4. Discussion

In discussing the Javanese jokes from the point of view of the joke quality and from the point of view of politeness strategy, the following table may help us understand the case. The table presents the conversational exchanges of Javanese jokes, which then are translated into English. After that classification of joke jabs and punch is given followed by classification of (im)-politeness strategies. Table 2 deals with data taken from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cVcdDRTLg0

Table 2. Data of joke 1 (J1) and their classification of joke elements and (im)-politeness strategies

| Conversational exchanges (Javanese) | English translation | Jab and punch | Politeness and impoliteness |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| A – Kapingmbudheg,(1)               | You are deaf.       | Jab           | Insulting (impoliteness)   |
| B – Ora icsakutepetkrungu,(2)       | It’s impossible. I still can hear. | Jab       | Refusing (impoliteness)    |
| A – Tenantakoni, (3)                | Sure? I am asking you now. | Jab       | Demanding (impoliteness)   |
| B – Iya. (4)                       | Yes.               | Jab           | Baldly (politeness)        |
| A – Jenengmasapa?(5)               | What’s your name?  | Jab           | Baldly (politeness)        |
| B – Kirun. (6)                     | Kirun.             | Jab           | Baldly (politeness)        |
| A – Umarupipra?(7)                 | Your age?          | Jab           | Baldly (politeness)        |
| B – Pupat lima. (8)                | Four five.         | Jab           | Baldly (politeness)        |
| A – Alamat? (9)                    | Address?           | Jab           | Baldly (politeness)        |
| B – Jawa. (10)                     | Java.              | Jab           | Baldly (politeness)        |
| A – Emememem? (11)                | Hem hemhemhem?     | Jab           | Boasting (impoliteness)    |
| B – Hu ha … (12)                   | Er er ………       | Punch         | Insulting (impoliteness)   |
| A – Budheg … budheg…..budheg(13)  | Deaf… deaf …deaf  | Punch         | Insulting (impoliteness)   |
| B – Apa sing mburi                 | What? The last word |              |                            |
| Em..em…em… (14),                  | hem…hem…hem… | Punch         | Insulting (impoliteness)   |
| A– LIyanekrupu, Sing rakrunugkowe.(15) | Others hear. You did not hear. | Punch | Disagreeing (impoliteness) |

From the table above the joke presents jabs (1-11) i.e. introductory setting and punch (12-15) funny aspects which are followed by laughter. The funny aspect makes use of desired miscommunication. The same case happens to the succeeding parts, which make use of the same aspect but the second person is successful in insulting the first person.

Politeness speaking, the politeness and impoliteness strategies are employed in the conversational exchanges. As jokes are desired to produce laughter scarifying face is necessary. That is why both politeness and impoliteness are present.
Now let us see the following joke, which is found in the internet https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg49objZ7Jg. The joke also contains jabs and punches, which followed by laughter. The joke employs the face or self esteem of the interlocutors. For the politeness and impoliteness strategies the case is just the same as found in the previous joke.

Table 3. Data of joke 1 (J2) and their classification of joke elements and (im)-politeness strategies

| Conversational exchanges strategy | English translation | Jab and punch | Politeness and impoliteness |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 08.00 A – Takasawangyanean ki kaya | I think you are like a log. | Jab | Insulting (impoliteness) |
| Antipathy (impoliteness) B – Ora masalah pan cendhualgelan | It doesn’t matter I am like | Jab | Expressing |
| bentuke kaya blandar. Ngapu? (2) | a log of wood. | Punch | Insulting (impoliteness) |
| A – Tapih뱅귀기말 bànlăngselan | But now the narrator is | Jab | Disagreeing (impoliteness) |
| bentuke. (3) | like a container. | Punch | Insulting (impoliteness) |
| C – Lara atimukowe. (4) | You are insulted. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| B – Ben, yendhagelankayablandar? (5) | I don’t care. I was said like a log? | Jab | Being opinionated |
| (impoliteness) C – Justrumalalabberyakaranggita? (6) | You must be grateful right? | Jab | Disagreeing (impoliteness) |
| B – Besyukuraskandhi? Dhaqelanuaheke | How come? I was said | Jab | Disagreeing (impoliteness) |
| kayablandar. (7) | like a log. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| C – Aja nyawangkayenwuwensewu. | Do not consider the material please. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| Nggih. (8) | Yes. | Jab | Disagreeing (impoliteness) |
| B – Kaya blandarkoeverahmuborori? (10) | Like a log over there. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| Nggih. (14). | It lays, no one wants to see it. | Jab | Insulting (impoliteness) |
| C – Diturokoora ana sing nyawang | Your contrast me to the log? | Punch | Insulting (impoliteness) |
| C – Nek koe karorawonisih ajivawon. (15) | About you, you are less precious | Punch | Disagreeing (impoliteness) |
| B – Wang kevanromenungsa ki dhaunjate | You contrast me to the log? | Punch | Insulting (impoliteness) |
| dhurowenungsalho. (16) | other bees. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| C – Tawonkaye yen madenedikumputnesak | Em. Compared to man, animals | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| botolreganetanguasekur. | are less valuable than man, yes. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| A bottle can cost 350 thousands. You | It is just wood, neglected costs | Punch | Baldly (politeness) |
| If you lay like the log | much. If you lay like the log | Punch | Baldly (politeness) |
| no one like to see you the dead. | like a log. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| B – Koweberatimbahdingkeka kaya | Do not you say thank? | Jab | Insulting (impoliteness) |
| kayu. (12) | Do not consider the material please. | Jab | Insulting (impoliteness) |
| C – Nek kwe karo tawonisih ajivawon. (15) | About you, you are less precious | Punch | Disagreeing (impoliteness) |
| B – Wang kevanromenungsa ki dhaunjate | You contrast me to the log? | Punch | Insulting (impoliteness) |
| dhurowenungsalho. (16) | other bees. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| C – Tawonkaye yen madenedikumputnesak | Em. Compared to man, animals | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| botolreganetanguasekur. | are less valuable than man, yes. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| A bottle can cost 350 thousands. You | It is just wood, neglected costs | Punch | Baldly (politeness) |
| If you lay like the log | much. If you lay like the log | Punch | Baldly (politeness) |
| no one like to see you the dead. | like a log. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| B – Koweberatimbahdingkeka kaya | Do not you say thank? | Jab | Insulting (impoliteness) |
| kayu. (12) | Do not consider the material please. | Jab | Insulting (impoliteness) |
| C – Nek kwe karo tawonisih ajivawon. (15) | About you, you are less precious | Punch | Disagreeing (impoliteness) |
| B – Wang kevanromenungsa ki dhaunjate | You contrast me to the log? | Punch | Insulting (impoliteness) |
| dhurowenungsalho. (16) | other bees. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| C – Tawonkaye yen madenedikumputnesak | Em. Compared to man, animals | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| botolreganetanguasekur. | are less valuable than man, yes. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| A bottle can cost 350 thousands. You | It is just wood, neglected costs | Punch | Baldly (politeness) |
| If you lay like the log | much. If you lay like the log | Punch | Baldly (politeness) |
| no one like to see you the dead. | like a log. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| B – Koweberatimbahdingkeka kaya | Do not you say thank? | Jab | Insulting (impoliteness) |
| kayu. (12) | Do not consider the material please. | Jab | Insulting (impoliteness) |

The third joke as found in https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAt03kdccCY involves adult materials. Although there is no dirty words, the location emut, which means remember is interpreted as sucking by the addressee (2) of table 4. The use of language can be comprehended by both the speaker and the hearers so that there is laughter. The politeness and impoliteness strategies are actively employed in the joke.

Table 4. Data of joke 1 (J3) and their classification of joke elements and (im)-politeness strategies

| Conversational exchanges strategy | English translation | Jab and punch | Politeness and impoliteness |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 05.55 A – mokkeling emut. (1) Be wise, remember. | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| B – Koweberatimbahdingkeka kaya | Do not you say thank? | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| koe karorawonisih ajivawon. (2) | Do not you say thank? | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| koe karorawonisih ajivawon. (2) A – Ngapu, kopingebudhgwongmut kok. (3) | A – Ngapu, kopingebudhgwongmut kok. (3) | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| koe karorawonisih ajivawon. (2) C – Apa? Akakakanggempang gula pa piye? Akakanggempang gula pa piye? (4) | Akakanggempang gula pa piye? Akakanggempang gula pa piye? (4) | Punch | Baldly (politeness) |
| koe karorawonisih ajivawon. (2) B – Koweberatimbahdingkeka kaya | Do not you say thank? | Jab | Baldly (politeness) |
| koe karorawonisih ajivawon. (2) C – Apa? Akakanggempang gula pa piye? Akakanggempang gula pa piye? (4) | Akakanggempang gula pa piye? Akakanggempang gula pa piye? (4) | Punch | Baldly (politeness) |

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From the above mentioned discussion some points can be taken out in the conclusion.

5. CONCLUSION

Politeness and impoliteness strategies are mutually found in Javanese jokes. This is due to the fact that the interlocutors try to dominate the conversation. Like any other jokes, Javanese jokes also consist of jab and punch as the elements producing funny feelings. The jab and punch employ different illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts of a locution. Adult material is hidden in the illocutionary acts. It prevents from being received by children.

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