

Gita Wirjawan's Use of Politeness in Requesting and Using Addressing Terms in Two Endgame Podcasts

Olivia Faustine Supriyono¹, Esther Kuntjara²

English Department, Faculty of Humanities and Creative Industries, Petra Christian University,
Siwalankerto 121- 131, Surabaya, 60236, INDONESIA
E-mail: a11190041@john.petra.ac.id, estherk@petra.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This research examines politeness in two Endgame podcasts, focusing on Gita Wirjawan's request and the use of address terms with a minister and a non-government employee. The writer analyzes politeness expressed by Gita Wirjawan in two podcasts on his channel using First-Order Politeness by Watts (2003) and the Indonesian (Javanese) politeness principle by Suseno (2001) and Kuntjara (2009). A descriptive qualitative approach is employed in this study. The analysis shows that Gita often uses direct language for requests, utilizing the term 'you' to blur their distance. The findings show that Gita wanted to look neutral with someone who has the same rank and tended to appear to have a lower rank when he talks with someone with a higher rank. In conclusion, differences in rank influence how people communicate.

Keywords: address terms, podcast, politeness, request

INTRODUCTION

Communication is needed by everyone in everyday life. In communication, people use language to build a connection between two or more people. To enhance communication, people should understand the implicit meaning of each other's utterances. To fully understand the meaning, people should look more at the context than the literal meaning of the utterances. Watts (2003) states that context must be considered when interpreting politeness. Since Brown & Levinson introduced the concept of politeness in 1987, politeness has become one of the most well-known concerns in pragmatics. Brown & Levinson (1987) bring politeness into universal understanding and divide politeness into several strategies. Moreover, some researchers, like Richard Watts, argue that the theory of politeness should not aim to develop a universal term applicable to all sociocultural groups (Watts, 2003).

Despite the unconfirmed understanding of politeness, the writer decides to go with the topic for some essential reasons. First, politeness is a vital tool that needs to be utilized to carry out smooth communication (Syahrin, 2017). Therefore, the writer chose this topic to understand more deeply the politeness culture in Indonesia, and whether Indonesian people have applied it in their daily lives. Second, the goal of politeness is to respect the feelings of other individuals in order to establish mutual comfort (Hill et al., 1986, as cited in Watts et al., 2005). Moreover, politeness should be linked with the culture where people live because every culture has its own standard of politeness

Speaking about the data in this study, the writer chose podcasts to be the source of the data. The writer chooses the podcast between Gita Wirjawan and Sabda Putra "*Sabda PS: Tanpa Standar Intelektual, Peradaban Bisa Celaka*". Subsequently, the writer decides to analyze Gita Wirjawan and Nadiem Makarim's podcast entitled "*Nadiem Makarim: Siap Dihujat Demi Bela Generasi Berikutnya*". The writer presents a number of reasons before choosing these two podcasts. First, Gita Wirjawan is a former Minister of Trade in Indonesia, and now he has a massive online following of 607,000 YouTube subscribers. Second, the writer uses the Gita

Wirjawan podcast with Nadiem Makarim and Sabda Putra because they are in different positions but share a similar history, and they do not have a wide range of ages.

In terms of the theoretical framework, the writer uses Watts (2003), Suseno (2001), and Kuntjara (2009). First-order politeness believes that everyone has a different interpretation of politeness, it might be caused by context and culture. Watts (2003) created the term "interaction order" to strengthen first-order politeness. Interaction order is a set of behaviors exhibited by participants in some social interactions that are governed by a specific place or circumstance (Watts, 2003).

In order to support first-order politeness, the writer also uses the Indonesian (Javanese) politeness principles by Suseno (2001) and Kuntjara (2009). (Suseno, 2001) stated that in Javanese society, the association is determined by two principles, which are *rukun* [harmonious] and *hormat* [respect]. First is *rukun*, *rukun* seeks to maintain a harmonious society (Suseno, 2001). A state of harmony occurs when all parties are at peace with one another, accept one another, and are in a state of calm and agreement. Being in harmony involves removing signs of tension throughout the community so that the relationship becomes harmonious and on good terms (Suseno, 2001). Second is *hormat*, *hormat* means that every time people speak or act with others, they must show respect based on their place and position. The principle of respect is based on the belief that everything is ordered hierarchically (Suseno, 2001).

In performing requests, the speaker must be careful and polite so as not to cause the listener to lose face or feel embarrassed (Kuntjara, 2012). Given that those being addressed may view requests as a violation of their own freedoms. In high-context cultures such as Javanese, requests are frequently conveyed indirectly. (Kuntjara, 2009). According to Mulder (1996, as cited in Kuntjara, 2009, p. 107), Javanese people believe that it is never good manners to be straightforward or explicit, and good, refined (*alus*) people are masters of indirectness, often evasive and devious, disguising their intentions, always avoiding the risk of others suffering the loss of face. Javanese people exhibit a tendency to employ indirect communication, particularly when making requests to someone with higher social status, as a means of conveying politeness. However, not all direct requests are impolite. According to Kuntjara's (2009) research, the listener's relationship with the speaker is a determining factor in the politeness of a sentence. Kuntjara (2009) argues that it is considered polite even though one of the participants uses the *ngoko* language because they have a close relationship.

One way to learn Indonesian politeness is through the use of terms of address (Kuntjara, 2009). Different phrases are used to address people depending on criteria such as age, sex, ethnicity, status, kinship, distance, familiarity, and even mood (Kuntjara, 2009). Brown & Gilman (1960, as cited in Kuntjara, 2009) identify two dimensions, namely power and solidarity, as norms underlying the selection of address forms. For Javanese, almost all terms used in greeting other people are included, whether the person is older or younger. The term senior is used when referring to someone whose social rank is higher, and junior when referring to someone whose social rank is lower (Suseno, 2001).

Suyanto and Narwoko (2004) define status as a person's place or position in a social group in relation to other people in the group. Social status is typically based on many aspects of human interest in social life, such as job status, familial status, position status, and religious affiliation. Javanese tend to think that social relations are managed by a hierarchical system based on status (Kuntjara, 2009). Everyone must understand their place in society and contribute to the establishment of harmony by practicing good social ethics (Suseno, 1997, as cited in Kuntjara, 2009). Those who have higher positions should be treated with respect. While a positive attitude toward individuals in lesser positions demonstrates a sense of responsibility. As a result, status is a major issue for the Javanese people.

There are three research questions in this study: 1) How does Gita Wirjawan use politeness when he makes requests and uses address terms to Nadiem Makarim? 2) How does Gita Wirjawan use politeness when he makes requests and uses address terms to Sabda Putra? What are the similarities and differences from Gita Wirjawan when he makes requests and uses address terms to Nadiem Makarim and Sabda Putra?

METHODS

The writer uses a qualitative approach to analyze the data in this study. The writer took the source of the data from Gita's podcast with Nadiem Makarim and Sabda Putra entitled "*Sabda PS: Tanpa Standar Intelektual, Peradaban Bisa Celaka*" and "*Nadiem Makarim: Siap Dihujat Demi Bela Generasi Berikutnya*" found on Gita Wirjawan's Youtube channel. The data that is analyzed here are Gita Wirjawan's utterances, which show politeness in making requests and using address terms. There are steps in analyzing the data. First, the writer reads the transcript and sorts out what's included by making requests and using address terms. Second, the writer highlighted the utterance. The writer used "blue" for requests, and "orange" for the use of address terms. The highlighted utterances are analyzed in the findings and discussions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the writer's discussion of analysis as a means to address research questions. The data was obtained from Gita Wirjawan's conversations with Sabda Putra and Nadiem Makarim. The utterances that are spoken here are composed of two different languages, namely Indonesian and English. However, the writer has provided an English translation.

Gita Wirjawan's Requests to Nadiem Makarim and Sabda Putra

In making requests to Nadiem Makarim and Sabda Putra, Gita Wirjawan expresses politeness through direct, indirect, and tag questions. The politeness can be seen in the examples below.

1. Direct communication

(1) *Apa yang sudah berubah semenjak kita ... sampai sekarang?* [1.1]

[What has changed since we ... until now?]

(2) *Would you consider her as a tiger mom?* [2.25]

(3) *... Ibu atau Bapak yang ... kayak begini?* [2.6]

[mom or dad who ... does this?]

Examples (1), (2), and (3) show that Gita Wirjawan directly asked Nadiem and Sabda questions with the same format. According to Suseno (2001), Javanese tend to use indirect sentences when they make requests. However, using direct sentences does not always mean they are not polite. In this sentence, Gita did not ask about sensitive matters, even though it is phrased in the form of a direct question. In example (2), even though Gita employs direct language when requesting Sabda's opinion about his mom, Gita's query cannot be considered impolite. Previously, Sabda stated that his mother was a strict individual who frequently posed difficult requests but offered numerous solutions. The fact that Sabda's opinion of his mother is sensitive because it involves his listener's relationships with other individuals. Since Sabda had previously explained about his mother first, Gita asked Sabda's opinion just for greater detail or to break the ice between them. Example (3) shows a similar question format, as Gita asked

about Sabda's opinion about good education. Gita directly asked about Sabda's opinion on education to ensure that their discourse was comprehensible for the audience. Gita's way of making requests cannot be classified as impolite since it is a necessary practice in podcasting to sustain the flow of the discussion. In the three examples above, they show that Gita employed straightforward sentence structures when he made requests. However, the literal statement at hand does not mean he was being impolite. As in Kuntjara (2009), Gita employs direct language for the sake of clarity in those questions.

2. Indirect communication

(4) ... *tapi mungkin sebelum ke situ kita ngobrol mengenai* ... [1.5]

[... but maybe before we go there, we'll talk about ...]

(5) *Ini justru wawancara bukan debat.* [1.23]

[Actually, this is an interview, not a debate.]

(6) *Saya mau cerita, saya sampai sekarang* ... [2.65]

[I want to tell you something, until now...]

Example (4) demonstrates that Gita Wirjawan invited Nadiem Makarim to discuss the development of early childhood education in Indonesia prior to discussing tertiary issues in Indonesia. The usage of the word "maybe" in that sentence meant to show Gita's doubt, which may mean that Nadiem was given the option to decline Gita's request. In (5), Gita Wirjawan responded to Nadiem's question, "*Boleh saya challenge?*" [May I give you a challenge?] However, after Nadiem responded with a query, Gita stated that since they were having an interview and not a debate. With this response, Gita implied that Nadiem should continue to challenge him. Instead of providing yes or no answers, Gita provided informative responses. Even though he was joking, Gita's requests are regarded as polite because he did not joke about sensitive matters. In addition to that, the reason for telling this joke is to break the ice between us and make things a little less awkward. Since Nadiem is on a higher rank than Gita, Gita did not immediately convey his intention to discuss other topics. However, he provided the information that they would first discuss, which is the topic of early childhood education development in Indonesia. Furthermore, example (6) describes Gita's memories of his third-grade lecturer. Gita decided to use informative sentences such as "*saya ingin cerita*" [I want to tell you a story] instead of direct sentences such as "*dengarkan saya*" [listen to me]. Through this sentence, he implicitly expresses his desire for Sabda Putra to attentively hear and comprehend his story. Gita decided to use informative sentences instead of direct ones such as "*dengarkan saya*" [listen to me]. Through those sentences, he implicitly expresses his desire for Sabda Putra to attentively hear and comprehend his story. This might have been done by Gita because he did not want to sound controlling. In those statements above, Gita employed an informative sentence. According to Kuntjara (2009), an informative statement is a form of indirect request made to the listener in a more polite manner. Therefore, those utterances are considered polite due to their indirect structure.

3. Using tag Question

(7) *The choice you made ... itu masih muda sekali, kan?* ... [2.27]

[The choice you made ... when you were so young, right? ...]

In example (10), Gita sought information about Sabda's age at the time he entered the field of entrepreneurship. Instead of asking, "*Umur berapa jadi entrepreneur?*" [at what age did you start being an entrepreneur?] He rather began by stating the facts before concluding with a tag question that required Sabda to either agree or disagree with the statement. Lakoff (1987, as cited in Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003) defines a tag question as a fragment of a question attached to a declarative clause. Gita employs the question tag, "*kan*" [right?]. Gita's use of the

tag question implies that he anticipates Sabda will concur with his statement. This claim is supported by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003), who stated that the reason people may be using tag questions is to be verified or rejected by another party. Holmes (1982, cited in Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003) noted that a tag question denotes uncertainty and requests confirmation from the other party. Gita felt unsure when he asked using the tag question, so he expected Sabda to affirm whether the information he provided was true or false. Gita's use of a tag question may appear more polite because he appeared to be requesting Sabda's approval on the veracity of his statement, as opposed to explicitly mentioning known information without requesting Sabda's validation.

Gita Wirjawan's Use of Address Terms to Nadiem Makarim and Sabda Putra

In making requests to Nadiem Makarim and Sanda Putra, Gita Wirjawan expresses politeness to Nadiem Makarim and Sabda Putra by using "*Mas Menteri*, you, *Anda*," and his personal name.

1. "*Mas Menteri*"

(8)By the way, loans *yang dikasih oleh Mas Menteri itu* ... [1.17]
[By the way, the loan given by the *Mas Menteri* was ...]

According to Kuntjara (2009), the term *mas* is used to refer to older brothers. According to Manns (2015), the use of Kinn terms highlights the difference between listeners and speakers. It is possible that Gita Wirjawan uses *mas* instead of *pak* to close the distance between him and Nadiem. Here, Gita applied the aspect of principle *hormat* [respect] defined by Suseno (2001), which is Kinn terms. He is aware that Nadiem has a higher position than he does, but he does not want to put too much distance between them, so he addresses Nadiem as *mas menteri*.

Moreover, the use of *menteri* clarifies Nadiem's position within the government. Gita would display the least intimate way if he addressed Nadiem with his positions only because titles typically denote ranks or occupations (Wardhaugh, 2006). Therefore, he addressed Nadiem as *mas menteri* because utilizing honorific kin titles such as *mas menteri* has a higher level than ordinary kin terms (Errington, 1998, as cited in Manns, 2015). The combination of *mas* and *menteri* emphasizes Nadiem's government position. Even though the use of *mas* already demonstrates Gita Wirjawan's respect for Nadiem, Gita specifies a position to emphasize Nadiem's position in the government.

2. "You"

(5)Because you're not there. [1.35]
(6)How would you have done it differently, *semenjak mulai sebagai Menteri?* [1.37]
[How would you have done it differently, since you became a minister?]
(7)Would you consider her as a tiger mom? [2.25]
(8)The choice you made to be an entrepreneur *itu masih muda sekali, kan?* [2.27]
[The choice you made to be an entrepreneur, it was when you were still really young, right?]

In examples above the second-person pronoun "you" refers to Nadiem and Sabda in the second person. This can serve as a means for Gita to demonstrate his proficiency in the English language. The act of communicating in the English language conveys to Sabda and Nadiem a sense of acceptance and permission to engage in English conversation. Furthermore, upon examining their mode of communication, it is evident that they derive enjoyment from code-switching between Indonesian and English. Furthermore, Gita tried to demonstrate respect

for Nadiem and Sabda by avoiding using second-person pronouns in Indonesia, such as *kamu* or *Anda*. The word "you" in Bahasa means *kamu*, *engkau*, *kau* or *Anda*, but using "you" sounds more neutral. Gita most likely employs "you" to avoid referring to the second person in Bahasa. This is due to the fact that using the word *Anda* creates space between the listener and the speaker (Sneddon, et al., 2010). While the use of the word *kamu* suggests that the speaker and listener are close companions (Sneddon, et al., 2010). Thus, in order to achieve neutrality, Gita employs the English language, specifically addressing Sabda and Nadiem as "you".

3. Personal name

(9) Sabda, Welcome. [2.1]

The address term "Sabda" is categorized as a personal name (Manns, 2015). In addition, the use of personal names demonstrates the intimacy between speakers and listeners (Manns, 2015). Despite Sabda being younger than Gita, Gita did not call Sabda by "*dek*" [younger brother]. The decision to use the name directly instead of calling by "*dek*" [younger brother] was likely made to avoid the implication of a higher position for Gita over Sabda. In addition, using such a direct name shows his closeness to Sabda. This might just imply that the podcast is not sufficiently formal, so he wanted to show his closeness to Sabda Putra.

4. "Anda"

(10) *Kedengaranya ... untuk nge-push Anda untuk ...* [2.15]

[Sounds like ... pushed you to ...]

According to Sneddon et al. (2010), there exist various address terms in Indonesia that can be employed to refer to the second person, including "*Anda*," "*kamu*," and "*engkau*." Gita may perceive the utilization of the second-person pronoun "*kamu*" [you] as indicative of intimacy, given its connotation of closeness, which may not align with the level of familiarity with "*Anda*" [you]. Furthermore, Kuntjara (2009) asserts that individuals of elevated social standing frequently employ the term "*kamu*" when addressing individuals of lower social standing. Gita employed the use of "*Anda*" in his conversation as a means of maintaining a friendly yet polite attitude towards Sabda. Gita exemplifies Suseno's (2001) principle of *hormat* [respect] through the utilization of the second-person pronoun.

The Similarities Between Wirjawan's Requests and Use of Address Terms for Sabda Putra and Nadiem Makarim

The writer notices that there are several similarities in how Gita Wirjawan employs politeness toward Nadiem Makarim and Sabda Putra. First, Gita tends to use direct communication. The topics discussed in those podcasts were not sensitive; if Gita did not inquire directly, the podcast's purpose would remain unclear. Regarding the concept of politeness, this aligns with the statement by Kuntjara (2009), wherein people employ direct language to communicate in order to ensure clarity. Second, in making requests, Gita used indirect sentences several times. According to Suseno (2001), Javanese culture tends to refrain from expressing unnecessary honesty. In this context, Gita might use an informative approach in order to avoid Nadiem or Sabda feeling any sense of being controlled by Gita, given that Gita was serving as the host for both podcasts.

In using address terms, the writer finds a similarity in Gita's choice of address terms towards Nadiem and Sabda; he employs the second-person pronoun "you" in English. The utilization of the second-person pronoun "you" directed towards Nadiem and Sabda may

indicate Gita's attempt to adopt a more neutral tone and conceal his personal relationship with his speakers. According to Sneddon et al. (2010), the use of the pronoun "you" can serve to maintain a neutral tone as it can refer to *kamu*, *kau*, *engkau*, and *Anda*. Gita did not want his relationship with Nadiem and Sabda to be distant or close, because the usage of *kamu* or *Anda* can show how close or distant they are to one another

In terms of differences in employing politeness when making requests, it can be observed that when requesting Sabda, the Gita showed a degree of uncertainty. Gita used tag questions when he talked to Sabda. However, Gita refrained from using tag questions when he asked Nadiem. Conversely, the podcast with Nadiem exhibited a more formal tone as it centered on the discussion of the ministry, without digging into Nadiem's personal life. Moreover, Gita frequently poses questions about the advancement of the country's educational system.

Moving on to the use of address terms, Gita did not use kinship terms when he talked to Sabda. During the talk show with Nadiem, Gita referred to him as *mas menteri* on several occasions. The utilization of the honorific *mas* by Gita may indicate a display of respect towards Nadiem. Using kinship titles, such as *mas menteri* shows a greater degree of power compared with ordinary kinship terms (Errington, 1998, as cited in Manns, 2015). Meanwhile, during the podcast with Sabda, Gita directed a personal name toward him, as in the second dialogue. The use of a personal name (Manns, 2015) in this context denotes a sense of intimacy.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, differences in rank influence how people communicate. According to the findings of this study, when speaking with people of the same status, the subject intends to appear neutral, without having a higher or lower status. However, while speaking with people of greater standing, he tends to appear to have a lower status. Gita's action might connect to the principle of hormat [respect] by Suseno (2001) where Javanese should understand their place and status in society.

In addition to the insights obtained from the present study, the writer suggests that future researchers conduct further studies with data coming from neutral contexts. It will make the data obtained more neutral since there will be fewer formalities that affect the data. This would allow for the exploration of alternative ways that may yield new findings and support the validity of the data obtained.

REFERENCES

- Watts, R. J. (2003). *Politeness* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Syahrin, E. (2017). Directness in politeness of Indonesian children's requests. *BAHAS*, 26(4), 446-454. <https://doi.org/10.24114/bhs.v26i4.5627>
- Watts, R. J., Ide, S., & Ehlich, K. (2005). *Politeness in language: Studies in its history, theory and practice* (2nd ed.) De Gruyter Mouton.
- Suseno, F. M. (2001). *Etika jawa* (8th ed.). PT Gramedia Pustaka Ulama.
- Kuntjara, E. (2009). *Women and politeness: The hybrid language and culture of Chinese Indonesian women in Surabaya* (1st ed.). VDM Verlag
- Kuntjara, E. (2012). *Gender, bahasa, dan kekuasaan* (2nd ed.). Libri.
- Manns, H. J. (2015). Address terms, framing, and identity in Indonesian youth interaction. *Nusa: linguistic studies of Indonesian and other languages in Indonesia*, 58(11), 73-93.

- <https://research.monash.edu/en/publications/address-terms-framing-and-identity-in-indonesian-youth-interactio>
- Suyanto, B., & Narwoko, D. J. (2004). *Sosiologi : Teks pengantar & terapan* (2nd ed.). Jakarta: Kencana.
- Sneddon, J., Adelaar, A., Djenar, D. N., & Ewing, M. T. (2010). *Indonesian reference grammar* (2nd ed). Allen & Unwin.
- Wardhaugh, R. (2006). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (5th ed.). Blackwell Publishing.