

# The Emergence of the Javanese Sopan and Santun (Politeness) on the Refusal Strategies Used by Javanese Learners of English

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## Abstract

*This paper investigated refusal strategies conducted by British native speakers of English (NSE) and Javanese learners of English (JLE). The data were elicited through discourse completion tasks (DCT) from 20 NSE and 50 JLE. Refusal strategies in Javanese were elicited from 35 native speakers of Javanese (NJ) to provide a baseline for investigating the extent to which differences between JLE and NSE could be explicated by the influence of Javanese pragmatics. The refusal strategies were analyzed based on a modified refusal taxonomy proposed by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990). The study found that the refusal strategies of JLE and NJ were more similar than either was to those of NSE. These findings suggest that distinctive JLE usages are due to the use of the Javanese Sopan and Santun strategies.*

**Key words:** *Politeness, Javanese Sopan and Santun, pragmatic transfer, speech act of refusal*

## Introduction

The emergence of L1 pragmatics on that of L2 has been generally considered as pragmatic transfer which may include the production of L1 sociopragmatic aspects in L2 (Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz, 1990), the use of L1 conversational features in L2 (Scarcella, 1993), the application of previous pragmatics knowledge in L2 (Kasper, 1992), and inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies from one language to another (Thomas, 1983). In the study of interlanguage pragmatics, pragmatic transfer is considered as the influences of L1 pragmatics on language learner's interlanguage pragmatic forms and functions which may result in similar to or different from those of the target language (Kasper, 1998; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Takahashi, 1995).

This present study was to extend the study of interlanguage pragmatics in Indonesia, particularly in Javanese context, focusing on the realizations of speech act of refusals by Javanese learners of English as compared with those of British native speakers. The Javanese in Indonesia are commonly described in the research literature as collectivist (Barnes, 2006), indirect (Esterlina, 2008; Prawito, 2007), status oriented (Koentjaraningrat, 1985; Oktoprimasakti, 2006), and hierarchy conscious (Suseno, 1997). The British are generally considered as individualistic (Bochner, 1994; Hofstede, 1984) and egalitarian (Birch, 1998). With regard to politeness, the two groups practice very different face work strategies. The Javanese uphold good self-image (*santun*) and maintain or enhance feelings and self-worth (*sopan*). The British tend to exercise face-saving strategies through negative politeness: preserving individual freedom from imposition by others (Steward, 2002) and respect individual privacy (Hickey & Orta, 1994; Sifianou, 1992). Due to the differences, Javanese learners of English could have great learning tasks for applying politeness strategies of the target language (English) as what is appropriate in Javanese (referred to henceforth as native language or NL) communication could differ from that in English (referred to henceforth as target language or TL) and vice versa. This background motivated this study to observe whether the differences in the NL and TL politeness strategies induced the Javanese learners of English to revert to the NL politeness strategies when they communicated refusals in TL.

## Politeness

The politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) has been regarded as the most seminal conceptual framework of face-work. Brown and Levinson formulated the concept of face based on Goffman's face that is "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line

others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (1967, p. 5). Goffman views face as a self-image in the flow of events that is temporarily loaned to an individual by the society as long as he or she is worth to it. To secure their public image, as suggested by Goffman, people perform face-work that is conducting some actions to make whatever they are performing in the flow of events consistent with face. Although Brown and Levinson built the conception of their politeness on Goffman's characterization of a face-saving strategy, unlike that of Goffman which is developed through transactional discourse, Brown and Levinson's face-work constitutes two intrinsic wants: (1) *negative face*—"the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction—i.e. freedom of action and freedom from imposition" (2) *positive face*—"the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants" (1987, p.61).

Brown and Levinson's face-work model has been criticized, i.e. it has "a Western or even 'Anglo' bias, and therefore it cannot claim to present a universal theory applicable to all languages and cultures" (Leech, 2005, p. 2). Their concept of face is questioned, e.g. by Mao (1994), Matsumoto (1988), and Nwoye (1992). Matsumoto (1988) asserts that in Japanese culture, a person's face is defined by his or her accepted position in the group. To address one's face is to acknowledge his or her social position through proper linguistic usage. Matsumoto states that losing face is associated with the perception that one has not comprehended and acknowledged the structure and hierarchy of the group rather than the outcome of infringing one's freedom from imposition. Japanese politeness behaviour is discernment (*wakimae*), while that of Brown and Levinson is volition (Ide, 1992). Communicating with *wakimae* means that expressing one's intention is less important than what is expected by the social norms to say. In Chinese culture, face relates to either *miánzi* or *lián* (Mao, 1994). The former refers to the recognition of one's prestige or good public reputation which one deserves, while the latter refers to one's respect which is obtained from the group. Although the characteristics of *lián* are more like the positive face of Brown and Levinson, i.e. it requires recognition from others *lián* is a public loan which belongs to an individual only to the extent that he or she will respect the general code of behaviour of the society. Gu (1990) argues that the face-work proposed by Brown and Levinson is 'instrumental' which emphasizes verbal strategies while Chinese *límáo* (politeness) is 'normative' that is social principles to establish social bonds, strengthen solidarity, and control social distance. According to Igbo culture in Southeast Nigeria, face concerns one's public self-image and self-worth of his or her group (Nwoye, 1992). Nwoye asserts that politeness is "an individual's desire to behave in conformity with culturally expected norms of behavior that are institutionalized and sanctioned by society" (1992, p. 313). To be polite means to maintain the face of the group that is to act in conformity with Igbo social norms and refrain from bad behavior that will bring dishonor or shame to the group. What makes the concept of imposition in Igbo different from that of Brown and Levinson is the ethos of Igbo people which places the wants and needs of the group above those of an individual. In Javanese culture, politeness means adhering to *sopan* and/or *santun* discussed in the following section.

### **Sopan and Santun: Javanese face-work**

Javanese politeness is built on the feeling of *isín* (shame) by which polite conduct is introduced to Javanese children by making them to feel ashamed about what other people may think when they cannot show proper behaviour (Geertz, 1961). Outside their family, all social relationships are threatened by *isín* and only in the family circle do they feel relaxed completely (Suseno, 1997). To minimize *isín* in wider social contexts, Javanese people establish a strict formal etiquette (*tata krama*) which will secure and protect them against the feeling of *isín* when they perform it accordingly (Suseno, 1997). To feel and show *isín* is the basis of the Javanese socio-psychological inner state of politeness proposed as *santun* ('inward' politeness or 'self-oriented' politeness) in this paper. To uphold *santun* means to fulfill one's intentions and public expectations for one to obey the guidelines of behaviour institutionalized in the Javanese *tata krama* (etiquette) so that one will not bring shame or disgrace to oneself and others with whom one affiliates. *Tata krama* represents both cultural norms and language use (Geertz, 1969). As for the former *santun* commonly includes the manners of how to do or behave and body or physical attitudes, while the latter concerns language etiquette.

As a public orientation, *santun* is to show one's quality of 'Javaneseness' that is to act in accordance with the Javanese characters, some of which include (1) *Andhap-asor* (self-deprecation) that is not showing that one's desires, value, opinions, and abilities are greater or more important than those of other people (2) *Lembah manah*: modesty in deeds (3) *Grapyak*: friendly or amiable and warm (4) *Alus*: refined conduct or behavior which emphasizes self-control (5) *Empan-papan*: understanding

when, where and how one is appropriate. Meanwhile as a private or self orientation, *santun* lacks similarities to Brown and Levinson's negative face: the freedom from imposition, but rather the maintenance of one's awareness to show propriety in manners and behavior according to *tata krama* (etiquette) which could secure one from negative evaluation or appraisal by the public. One's deficiency of polite behavior in this sense is regarded as not having reached the quality of 'Javanese-ness' or he or she is not Javanese yet (*durung jawa*) (Kartomihardjo, 1981) and suffering from a lack of teaching (*kurang ajar*) which will bring shame. Thus, to maintain one's face through *santun* means to refrain oneself from being shameful by obeying *tata krama*. As the teaching of *tata krama* is the responsibility of one's immediate family members, teachers, and institutions, maintaining *santun* also indirectly means preserving the reputation of others with whom one affiliates. Meanwhile in terms of linguistic behavior *santun* means to act in accordance with the Javanese *unggah-ungguhing basa* (linguistic etiquette) which generally involves obeying the rules of using language levels or styles, the manners of using language verbally and non-verbally (through the aspects of paralinguistics and proxemics), and the selection of proper lexis.

In addition to *santun*, Javanese develop strategies to regulate their behavior so as to preserve good interpersonal relationships—proposed in this paper as *sopan* (outward politeness or other-oriented politeness). Unlike *santun* however, it is aimed mostly at attending to other people's welfare including maintaining their *rasa* (feelings) and/or respecting their *aji* (self-worth). As for linguistic behavior, to perform *sopan* one has to comply with the Javanese *unggah-ungguhing basa* (linguistic etiquette).

Emotional equilibrium is very highly valued in Javanese social life (Geertz, 1961), therefore respecting one's own and other people's feelings is essential in every interpersonal relationship. The Javanese inner behavior which controls one's own want or desire so as to preserve other's feelings or to mitigate threats on other's feelings is known as *ngemong rasa*, derived from *ngemong* (to look after or maintain) and *rasa* (feelings). Through *ngemong rasa*, Javanese interpersonal or social interactions are commonly felt and conducted with *rasa* (Suseno, 1997). Through this, every conduct is weighed carefully to refrain from making others hurt and insulted (*lara ati*), angry (*nesu* or *duka*), dislike or hatred (*gething*), disappointed (*gela* or *cuwo*) and the like. As offending the feelings of others is the most serious offence in Javanese (Geertz, 1961), everything that can stir up negative emotional reactions tend to be concealed or repressed (Suseno, 1997). As to linguistic behavior, speakers are required to use appropriate words and phrase the words in such a way so as to avoid offending other's feelings. *Ngemong rasa* also satisfies or enhances other's feelings in which one will use a good language to reassure or comfort others, and/or reinforce their piece of mind as well as enhance their positive self-image. In its broader sense it entails showing sympathy, empathy, and sensibility.

*Tepa-sliira*—involving the teaching of tolerance—is other strategy of *sopan* which advises the importance of maintaining other's feelings (Gunarwan, 2001). *Tepa* (to model or measure) and *slira* (body/one's body) idiomatically means: 'treat others as you want others to treat you, and don't treat others in the ways you don't want others to treat you'. The underlying philosophical concept of the expression is that if one treats others properly, in return they will treat one properly too, but if one is improper, one will not be treated properly (Kartomihardjo, 1981). In the language use, this has been formulated by Gunarwan (2001, p. 176) as the *Tepa-sliira* maxim: (1) don't use inappropriate language as you don't want others to use inappropriate language to you (2) use an appropriate language as you want others to use appropriate language with you.

*Aji* is one's self-worth similar to Maslow's (1987) conception of self-esteem and respect from others which may include recognition, acceptance, status, and appreciation. To respect (*ngajeni*) other's self-worth is essential in every social interaction in Java in which a number of aspects such as social status or rankings and social distance are significantly influential (Geertz, 1961). *Ngajeni* is more like mutual respect in which people from different status levels respect one another reciprocally (Setiawan, 1998) and it is applied to any social encounter which commonly involves the use of honorific language (Sadtono, 1972).

The use of Javanese language reflects the reality that Javanese social relationships are greatly influenced by the differences in socio-political and economic power, where different power means different application of language styles and address terms to acknowledge an individual's self-worth (*aji*). Javanese language as a means to legitimate and signify social hierarchies involves three broad levels, each of which has its own lexis and grammatical rules: *Krama* (high level), *Madya* (middle level) and *Ngoko* (low level) (Foley, 1997; Geertz, 1961; Koentjaraningrat, 1985; Risser, 1986). Each level indicates the attitude of a speaker toward an addressee and conveys different social status. *Krama* is addressed to interlocutors of higher status to assert respect and deference. *Madya* is commonly spoken to those of lower status to show mutual deference and it is addressed to strangers or unfamiliar interlocutors to maintain social distance in a polite way. *Ngoko* is spoken to a lower

status and it is used by collocutors of equal status to show equality or familiarity. In addition to using honorific language, to respect other's *aji* (self-worth) and show *kurmat* (deference) also mean acknowledging other's ranks or seniority through the use of titles and/or kin address terms which are commonly classified according to the levels of generation or seniority in horizontal stratifications: grandparents, parents, siblings, children, and grandchildren.

## Research method

### Participants

Three groups of participants took part in this study: Javanese learners of English (JLE), native speakers of English (NSE), and native speakers of Javanese (NJ). The JLE group involved 50 participants, comprising 38 female and 12 male undergraduate students studying at an English department in Central Java, Indonesia. The ages of the students ranged between 19 to 24 years old. The level of English proficiency was lower advanced. The NSE group consisted of 20 participants, involving 16 students at a British university; 3 members of the administrative staff at the same university; and one additional adult British speaker. Six (6) participants were male and 14 were female. The ages of the students ranged from 19 to 25 years old. The ages of the others ranged from 42 to 52 years old. The NJ participants were native speakers of Javanese living in Surakarta and Yogyakarta consisting of 22 females and 13 males. Their ages were ranging from 19 to 55 years old.

### Data collection method

Discourse completion task (DCT) was administered to elicit the data of the research. DCT has been widely used as one of the elicitation instruments in interlanguage pragmatic studies (Billmyer & Vargheshe, 2000; Sasaki 1998) as it provides researchers with second language learner's pragmatic knowledge (Al-Eryani, 2007; Woodfield, 2008). The data obtained through DCT is claimed to represent appropriate pragmatic norms (Hinkel, 1997) and provide model or stereotypical responses that occur in spontaneous speeches reflecting the culture of target native speakers (Beebe & Cummings, 1996). As social situations in DCT are generally controlled, it provides varied responses according to different social status (Kwon, 2004). In foreign language learning contexts where natural data rarely occur, DCT is the most effective research instrument (Seran & Sibel, 1997). In cross cultural pragmatics, DCT is an effective tool since it can be applied directly to participants coming from different cultural backgrounds (Nelson, Carson, Al-Batal, & El-Bakary, 2002). In spite of these, DCT lacks a face-to-face interaction (Cohen, 1996; Golato, 2003).

The DCT of this study involved nine social situations, each represented one of three different status relationships (lower, equal, and higher status) and three initiating acts of refusals (invitation, offer, or suggestion). Three DCT scenarios required participants to refuse an invitation, offer, and suggestion to interlocutors of equal status. Other three involved declining an invitation, offer, and suggestion to those of higher status and the last three scenarios required the participants to decline an invitation, offer, and suggestion to those of lower status. Two language versions of DCT were constructed: one in English for NSE and one in Indonesian with English conversational prompts for JLE and those with Javanese conversational prompts for NJ. The conversation prompts in the DCT for JLE were the same as those used for NSE, while the ones for NJ were close translation of those used for JLE and NSE.

### Data analysis

The data of refusals were classified into categories and subcategories of refusal strategies based on the taxonomy of refusal proposed by Beebe et al. (1990). The strategies include two broad categories: direct and indirect strategies. Refusal responses are segmented into semantic formulas: utterances to perform refusals and adjuncts to refusals: remarks which by themselves do not express refusals but they go with semantic formulas to provide particular effects to the given refusals. A direct strategy consists of either:

- A performative refusal ( e.g. 'I refuse')
- A non-performative statement expressing negative willingness or inability and
- No directly (e.g. 'I can't', 'I don't think so, 'No').

An indirect strategy is expressed by means of one or more semantic formulas, of which the following are the most common types:

- Apology/regret. (e. g., 'I'm sorry ...', 'I feel terrible ...'etc.)

- Wish. It is conducted by wishing that an interlocutor could do something. (e.g. 'I wish I could go to your party')
- Excuse, reason, explanation for not complying. (e.g. 'My children will be home that night'; 'I have a headache')
- Statement of an alternative. (e.g. I can do X instead of Y, e.g. 'I'd rather ...', 'I'd prefer ...' Why don't you do X instead of Y, e.g., 'Why don't you ask someone else?')
- Set conditions for future acceptance. It is performed by providing a condition over the acceptance of an invitation, offer, and suggestion. (e.g. 'if I am not busy, I will...; if you asked me earlier, I would have...')
- Promise of future acceptance. (e.g. 'I'll do it next time')
- Statement of principle. It is a statement of an interlocutor's standard rule of personal conduct (e.g. 'I never do business with friends')
- Statement of philosophy. It is a statement of a personal outlook or view point (e.g. 'One can't be too careful; things break any way; this kind of things happen')
- Attempt to dissuade interlocutor with some strategies such as stating negative consequences to the requester (e.g. 'I won't be any fun tonight.') or a guilt trip (e.g. 'I can't make a living off people who just order coffee' said by waitress to a customer who wants to sit a while) or a criticism of the request or the requester (e.g. 'that's a terrible idea'.) or a request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request or letting off the hook (e.g. 'that's okay') or a self defense (e.g. 'I'm doing my best'.)
- Acceptance that functions as a refusal. Instead of refusing at first hand, interlocutors initiate their refusals by giving an acceptance to the invitation, offer and suggestion. (e.g. 'yes, but...; Ok I will, but ...; alright I would go, but...')
- Avoidance: This may be expressed by means of a verbal act (such as changing the subject, joking, or hedging), or by means of a non-verbal act (such as silence, hesitation, or physical departure).

In addition, Beebe et al. (1990) identify four adjuncts that might be added to either of the two basic strategies:

- Positive opinion/feeling/agreement (e.g. 'that's a good idea/ I'd love to...')
- Empathy (e.g. 'I realize you are in a difficult situation')
- Fillers (e.g. 'uhh', 'well', 'oh', 'uhm')
- Gratitude/appreciation (e.g. 'thanks')

Thus, for example:

"Uhm I am sorry I can't make it, I have some work to do this night. Thanks your Invitation though".

is made up of filler + apology+ inability + excuse/explanation + gratitude. In the following sections, the semantic formulas and adjuncts are written in boldface.

## Findings and discussion

### The use of Other-Oriented Politeness (*Sopan*) in TL

A number of examples showed that the emergence of some Javanese pragmalinguistics on the refusal strategies used by JLE related to a variety of the Javanese politeness strategies of mitigating threats on other collocutors. To express **inability** to accept an invitation Javanese commonly elaborate this semantic formula so as to avoid negative feeling such as anger, irritation, displeasure, and strong disapproval or rejection intrinsically carried by its short forms. Wordy **inability** implies politeness, or at least the speakers do not intend to express the negative feeling. For example, declining an invitation to collocutors of higher status (DCT 1), some NJ in this study used verbose **inability**.

1. *Dinten miggu kulo mboten saget dugi dateng syukuran panjenengan.* (Next Sunday I won't be able to come to your party)
2. *Dalem mboten saget dugi dateng acara syukuran bapak mbenjang Minggu.* (I won't able to

go to your party next Sunday)

3. *Kulo mbok menawi mboten saget dumugi dateng acara panjenengan.* (I possibly won't be able to go to your party)

Although short forms of **inability** were also used by NJ, commonly to interlocutors of equal status (DCT 6), they were used along with the Javanese particles *e* or *je* so as to sound less forceful, for example:

4. *Aku raiso e.* (I can't)
5. *Aku ra iso je.* (I can't)

Although JLE, like NSE, used short forms of **inability** to decline an invitation to interlocutors of the three status levels (equal, lower, and higher), for example:

6. I can't. (Declining those of equal status: DCT 6)
7. I can't come. (Declining those of higher status, see DCT 1)
8. I can't go there. (Declining those of lower status, see DCT 7)

a number of JLE, like NJ, but unlike NSE often elaborated **inability** particularly to decline an invitation to those of higher status (DCT 1), suggesting that JLE might intend to sound more polite, e.g.

9. I can't to come to your house to join the party.
10. I can't come in your house warming party.
11. I can't go to your house warming party next Saturday sir.

A study by Al-Issa (2003) reported that English learners often elaborated pragmalinguistic forms in order not to be misunderstood. Blum-Kulka and Olsain (1986) reported that verbose pragmalinguistic forms were used by foreign language learners who lacked confidence to get their messages across. More words were used by the learners to provide more information so as to ensure their communicative intention was understandable. As for JLE in this study, the application of prolix **inability** suggested that they used NL pragmalinguistic forms to express TL functions (i.e. politeness strategy) rather than they lacked confidence to express their communicative intentions since this strategy commonly occurred in the Javanese normative data to express politeness.

Rhetorical questions are generally employed by Javanese to mitigate threats on other interlocutor's feelings whilst still expressing a clear refusal or disagreement. Some NJ in this study often used rhetorical questions to decline a suggestion to leave a faulty motorcycle at the office (DCT 3), e.g.

12. *Pak la sesok isuk kulo mlampah ngge nopo nek motore ditinggal?* (If I leave my motorbike at the office, how could I go to work tomorrow morning?)
13. *Trus pripun motore samak ditinggal, mengke ilang pripun?* (How can I commute to the office later on if I leave my motorbike at the office? What if it is stolen?)

Similar pragmalinguistic forms were phrased by JLE, for example:

14. If I leave it here, tomorrow is weekend, so how about with my motorcycle?
15. And I will be confused tomorrow because it is my transportation, how can I go?

Since in English contexts such rhetorical questions are used with an implication of reproach or even ridicule (by stating the obvious), such questions could unintentionally make JLE to sound impolite.

Congratulating is a common Javanese strategy to enhance people's feelings and self-worth. For example, to decline an invitation to go to a boss's house warming party (DCT 1), some NJ congratulated the boss to initiate refusals.

16. *Nderek mangayobagyo kemawon njih pak.* (I am happy to hear it sir [congratulation sir])
17. *Sampun sios pindah to pak? Nderek bingah nggih pak.* (Have you moved into your new house? I am happy to hear it sir [congratulation sir])

Similar strategies were found in JLE, for example:

18. Congrat boss for your new house!
19. Oh I am happy to hear it, but...

Although congratulating is very common in Western social contexts to express joy and pleasure to a person at a happy event, a success etc. or it is a politeness strategy to place a high value on other's feelings (Leech, 2005), it was not used by NSE to introduce refusals. By contrast NSE opted for expressing a positive opinion or agreement, e.g.

20. Oh that sounds really nice! Unfortunately,...

21. I'd love to, but...

This suggests that having a new house tends to be regarded as an achievement in Java. According to Javanese traditional philosophy, there are five things that a Javanese man should acquire to achieve a happy and successful life: one of them is *wisma* (house). This value makes gaining a new house a very significant personal achievement—hence worthy of congratulation. That perhaps makes it very important to attend to this aspect of other's *aji* (self worth or esteem) in social interactions.

For Javanese, refusing strikes both the speakers and the addressees. It causes upset and discomfort for the speakers and disappointment to the persons being refused. To anticipate this, Javanese tend to obscure disagreements and refusals so that on the surface the interaction looks harmonious even though inwardly both participants may feel otherwise. This commonly includes *ethok-ethok* or dissimulation in which one conceals one's true intentions and situation (Geertz, 1969) and it is a common strategy to avoid interpersonal awkwardness (Suseno, 1997). Some pragmalinguistic strategies in the present study showed that dissimulation was utilized by JLE and NJ as a strategy of polite refusals to an offer of help. For instance, responding the scenario of DCT 5 (having a faulty motorcycle), NJ denied having a problem, thus relieving other interlocutors of any obligation to help, for example:

22. **Mboten wonten nopo pak. Maturnuwun, niki sampun biasa rade ngadat.** (I have no problem sir, thank you, it often stalls)

23. **Mboten pak, mboten onten nopo-nopo.** (No sir, I have no problem)

Denials were also employed by some JLE to answer the same DCT scenario, for example:

24. Nothing, I have no trouble with my motorcycle, thanks.

25. Oh thank sir, but it is not a problem.

By contrast, NSE tended to emphasize their optimism or confidence to solve the problem, e.g.

26. I'll sort it.

27. I'm sure I'll get it to work soon.

JLE denials and NSE assertive statements were utilized to persuade or influence interlocutors not to make an offer. Although JLE and NSE were freeing others from any obligation to help, both groups used very different pragmalinguistic strategies that is JLE used Javanese *ethok-ethok* (dissimulation) strategies, while NSE seemed to use Leech's (2005) *pos*-politeness: placing a low value on the addressee's obligation towards the speaker. The intention of JLE's 'letting off hook' strategies is to sound polite. There is a danger, however, that they may be seen as hypocritical. JLE strategies also seem to carry a conflict between Grice's (1975) quality maxim: be truthful and Leech's (2005) *pos*-politeness strategy.

Some other pragmalinguistic data suggested that different perception on the threat of refusals induced JLE and NSE to use different politeness strategies. As stated earlier that refusals in Javanese could cause upset and discomfort for the speakers and disappointment to the hearers. To minimize this, Javanese commonly initiate refusals with an apology. Even NJ and JLE in this study intensified their apology.

28. **Sori tenan lho.** (really sorry)

29. **Sori banget yo.** (very sorry)

30. I am so sorry friend,... (Declining an invitation to a collocutor of equal status: DCT 6)

31. I am so sorry sir,... (Declining an invitation to a collocutor of higher status: DCT 1)

32. I am so sorry,... (Declining an invitation to a collocutor of lower status: DCT 7)

Unlike the Javanese groups, NSE commonly expressed regret to initiate refusals to an invitation, e.g.

33. What a shame!,... (Declining an invitation to a collocutor of higher status: DCT 1)

34. Unfortunately, I have other engagement. (Declining an invitation to a collocutor of lower status: DCT 7)

These data suggest that refusals to an invitation are perceived to be more face threatening by JLE (and NJ) than by NSE. In NSE context an invitation is for the benefit of the invitee (e.g. Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 2005), and hence refusing an invitation is less face threatening. In Javanese social contexts, while individuals have their own self-interests, they are also expected to put interests on other's importance for the sake of collective well-being, where an invitation is often for the interest of both the invitees and the inviters. As Javanese are typically status conscious (Suseno, 1997), an invitation given by collocutors of different status often means different interests or purposes. For

example, for a collocutor of equal status, inviting a friend is one of the means of showing the inviter's sociability while at the same time it is to strengthen the sense of familiarity and solidarity among in-group members. For an inviter of higher status, extending an invitation to those of lower status often means to show sociability and acknowledge that those of lower status are important, while for persons of lower status, inviting those of higher status means showing sociability and deference or respect, and hence declining an invitation tends to be face threatening in Javanese. Intensifying the degree of apology suggested the means by which JLE (and NJ) intended to redress the threats on the addressee whose invitation was refused. For English native speakers, expressing regret is a normal politeness strategy to show sorry for not being able to accept an invitation. In addition, in NSE social context, people are more autonomous and freer to do what they want, where declining an invitation, offer, and suggestion is not normally a face-threatening act, or at least it is not as face threatening as it is in the Javanese context.

While this seemed to suggest that JLE have been informed by the NL pragmalinguistic functions, to intensify the degree of apology/regret is a common strategy used by English native speakers, e.g. to sound more polite or to ask pardon for a fault or offence. This would be that the social situation in the DCT scenarios might not provide necessary information for NSE in this present study to intensify apology/regret. Much more importantly, as an invitation, offer of help or things, and suggestion, as noted earlier, are for the benefit of the addressees, declining these acts tends to be less face threatening. Furthermore as suggested by Brown and Levinson that expressing an apology could mitigate threats on the hearer's negative face but at the same time it puts imposition on the speaker, and hence NSE may not need to express a deep apology/regret when they refused an invitation, offer and suggestion.

As noted earlier that Javanese uphold *sopan* in order to maintain other's *rasa* (feelings), respect other's *aji* (self-worth), and show *urmat/kurmat* (deference) through the use of Javanese honorific language (*Krama* level) and the Javanese kinship terms. In wider interpersonal communication contexts, the Javanese kin terms are applied as social identifications for non-family members by which they are placed in their social rankings or stratifications. Reflecting this, NJ frequently used kin address terms of *bapak/pak* (father) and *ibu/bu* (mother) when they declined collocutors of higher status (DCT 1).

35. *Nggih, matur nuwun pak.* (Yes, thank you sir)

36. *Ngapunten bu kulo wonten rapat wonten kampung.* (I am sorry ma'am I am going to attend a meeting in my village)

A similar strategy was conducted by JLE who often involved English deference *sir* and *ma'am* to address a collocutor of higher status which might be used to express *bapak/pak* and *ibu/bu* respectively in the target language, for example:

37. No sir, thank you. (Declining an offer: DCT 5)

38. Thank you ma'am for your invitation, but... (Declining an invitation: DCT 1)

Interestingly JLE used the inappropriate Mr. (which in English is sometimes used by children to an unknown adult) to address a higher status and known interlocutor (in this case the employer) (DCT 1).

39. I am sorry Mr., maybe I can't go to your house warming party.

In addition, JLE often employed a position title (i.e. boss) to address a collocutor of higher status.

40. I am so sorry boss I can't go. (Declining an invitation: DCT 1)

41. Thank you boss, but I try to fix my motorcycle first. (Declining an offer: DCT 5)

By contrast, NSE never showed deference, e.g.

42. Thanks for the suggestion, but ... (Declining a suggestion: DCT 3).

Indeed, sir, ma'am, and madam in English are usually limited to interlocutors who are either unknown or very high status. Since the DCT scenarios did not include such interlocutors, the NSE in this present study did not use any instance of deference. Even though the use of such terms is a normal function to show deference in the target language; however such usage is very rare, and probably limited to very formal occasions. The use of deference by JLE may be informed by the Javanese pragmalinguistic function that is to show respect to a collocutor of higher status. The findings suggest the greater egalitarianism of NSE and the social hierarchical consciousness of the Javanese.

Kin address terms within ego generation such as *mbak* (older sister) and *mas* (older brother) were used by NJ to address a collocutor of lower status for showing mutual deference. For example in the DCT scenario in which a lecturer declined help from a student to arrange books (DCT 8), NJ stated:

43. *Wis mbak ra popo, matur nuwun.* (Don't worry older sister; I am fine, thank you)



44. *Ora usah mas, gampang iki.* (No older brother, it's easy to do)

JLE appeared to make an attempt to express mutual deference by involving roughly an equivalent English address form, *bro*, e.g.

45. Thanks bro, but I won't bother you. (Declining an offer to equal status: DCT 4)

### The use of Self-Oriented Politeness (*Santun*) in TL

A number of examples of NL pragmalinguistic usage involved strategies to stress the importance of self-deprecation (*andhap-asor*) by presenting oneself as humble. *Andhap-asor* as an inward or self-oriented politeness strategy is expressed by involving language levels and word choice. To convey *andhap-asor*, a person of lower status will speak in *Krama* (high level) word styles to address those of higher status and use *Madya* (middle level) to address oneself. A speaker will select forms and manners of speaking which do not imply that his or her own desires, opinions, abilities, and importance are greater than those of others (Kartomihardjo, 1981). Reflecting *andhap-asor*, when NJ declined an offer to use a printer (DCT 4) they used *wis gampang* (it's easy) or *aku gampang* (I am easy or don't worry about me) to express that the speaker's importance should not be greater than that of the hearer.

46. *Wis gampang, sesok wae tak prinke neng rental.* (It's easy for me I will print it in a print shop).

47. *Aku gampang, ono rentalan kok neng cedak omahku.* (I am easy there is a printing shop close to my house).

To dissuade an offer of help (to fix a faulty motorcycle: DCT 5) NJ often used *cobi* (try) neither to assert their capability to handle the problem nor underestimate the addressee's abilities to help, e.g.

48. *Kulo cobo dandani piyambak mawon niki.* (I will try to fix it myself)

49. *Mangka kulo cobo ndandosi piyambak,* (I will try to fix it later)

Similar forms were used by JLE frequently, for example:

50. Thank you boss. But I try to fix my motorcycle first.

51. Thank you for your help, I try this myself.

By contrast, NSE tended to use a more assertive stance, for example:

52. I'm sure I'll get it to work soon. Thanks anyway.

The frequent use by NJ and JLE of the pragmalinguistic strategy suggested a direct influence of self-deprecation strategy. While 'I try (first)' is common in the target language, it was not obviously used by NSE to show self-deprecation, but rather to express its real meaning, for example:

53. I'll try for a while longer. (Declining a suggestion to a collocutor of higher status: DCT3)

54. I am going to try something else first. (Declining a suggestion to a collocutor of lower status: DCT 9)

One formula used by all groups in this context was to emphasize the temporary nature of the problem. Here, too, NSE tended to adopt a more positive stance than did NJ or JLE as they declined an offer of help (DCT 5). In contrast, JLE, like NJ, used modal adverbs suggesting tentative proposition, for example:

55. I'm sure it will start in a minute! (NSE)

56. Maybe the little time my motorcycle can back on. (JLE)

57. *Paling mengke sekedap malih saget.* (Maybe it will work in a minute) (NJ)

The different pragmalinguistic strategies suggest a different politeness orientation. NSE, reflecting an ideal Western politeness value, used more dissuasive strategies in order to free the obligation of the addressees on the speakers (e.g. Leech, 2005). While JLE tried to do a similar strategy they were constrained by *andhap-asor*. The difference would be also that NSE valued independence or self-reliance; stronger dissuasiveness reflected this value. By contrast, NJ and JLE tended to concern about the implication of their utterances on others. While expressing strong dissuasiveness is a polite refusal to an offer in Javanese, showing one's ability persuasively often implies overvaluing one's ability which is regarded as unrefined behavior.

As discussed earlier that *grapyak* (friendliness or amiability and warmth) as one of the Javanese characters underlies *santun* (self-oriented politeness). To demonstrate this, NJ used kinship terms such as *mas* or *dab* (older brother), *mbak* (older sister) and other address term such as *cah* (friend) to address collocutors of equal status. Attempting to phrase this in English, JLE frequently addressed

collocutors of equal status involving solidarity markers such as my friend, guys, and my dear, for example:

58. Thank you very much my friend you are so friendly. (Declining an offer to those of equal status: DCT 4)
59. I am sorry guys. I must finish my job. (Declining an invitation to those of equal status: DCT 6)
60. Thanks very much my dear, but I needn't it. (Declining an offer to those of equal status: DCT 4)

While JLE strategy is similar to Brown and Levinson's (1987) positive politeness: a strategy to claim commonalities among group members to convey in-group memberships, in the Javanese context the use of these address terms express intimacy or friendliness.

## Conclusion

The use of the Javanese politeness in the JLE refusal strategies contributed to the major differences in the target pragmalinguistic, particularly the application of *ngemong rasa* principles—to maintain and enhance other's feelings—for TL negative politeness strategies. The divergent use by JLE of pragmalinguistic strategies suggested that JLE lacked models of the TL pragmalinguistic usage. Some findings also confirm Kasper and Rose's (2002) claim that learners demonstrate knowledge of a particular grammatical structure but they use it to express pragmalinguistic functions that are not conventionalized in the target language. The use by JLE of unconventional pragmalinguistic forms also seems to confirm Koike's (1989) claim that there is a lag between the development of grammatical skills and that of pragmalinguistic competence.

Pragmalinguistic transfer found by this study was mostly attributed to the use of NL pragmalinguistic forms and functions to express TL politeness. It has been claimed that negative pragmatic transfer results in pragmatic failures or misunderstanding (e.g. Beebe et al., 1990; Kasper, 1992; Takahashi, 1995; Thomas, 1983). Nevertheless, a number of occurrences of pragmatic transfer in this present study revealed that the claim was partly true since some data indicated that the use of NL politeness strategies for that of TL only emphasized the foreignness of the language learners. Pragmatic failures or misunderstanding would likely be induced by the realization of NL cultural schemata in the target pragmalinguistics, e.g., the use of Javanese dissimulation strategies, although this needs further evidence from real life usage.

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## Appendix

### DCT Scenarios

1. You are about to leave your office. On the way to parking lot, your boss stops you and invites you to go to his house warming party. As you cannot go, you decline his invitation.  
Your boss : "oh incidentally, we are going to have a house warming party next Saturday. My wife and I would be very pleased if you could come"  
You say : ...
2. You have worked too hard at your study. Your close friend knows this and he suggests you do something to make your mind relax a bit. However, you refuse his suggestion.  
Your friend : "hey, why don't you at least do something else to make your mind relax?"  
You say : ...
3. It is Friday afternoon; you are leaving your office. You are in the parking lot. You are starting your motorbike many times, but it does not work. Your boss is in the parking lot too. He suggests you to leave your motorbike in the parking lot and take a taxi home. However, you decline his suggestion.  
Your boss : "why don't you leave your motorbike here and take a taxi home?"  
You say : ...
4. You have a close friend. He is the most kind and generous person you have ever known. One day he drops by your flat while you are doing your assignment. He knows that you don't have a printer. Your friend offers you his printer to use. However, you do not want to use his printer and you decline his offer.  
Your friend : "if you need a printer for printing your assignment you can always use mine"  
You say : ...
5. It's Friday afternoon. You are leaving your office. You are in the parking lot. You have tried to start your motorbike many times, but it does not work. Your boss is in the parking lot too. He is parking his car opposite your motorbike. He approaches you and offers to help. However you decline his help.  
Your boss : "anything I can do to help?"  
You say : ...
6. It is Friday afternoon. You meet your close friend in the front of the library. He says that he is going to the beach next Sunday and invites to join, but you cannot go.  
Your friend : "hey, I am going to the beach next Sunday, do you want to come along?"  
You say : ...
7. You are a senior lecturer at school of Arts and Literature. In your break time, you happen to have a small chat with a graduate student representative at a cafe of the campus. He is organizing some programs for fresher week orientation. He says that at the end of the fresher orientation days, there will be a party. He invites to go to the party, but you cannot go.

Student : "we are going to have a party next Saturday night. We would be very pleased if you could come"

You say : ...

8. You are a lecturer in the School of Linguistics. You and an administrative staff member are in the language centre office busy packing books and folders that will be moved to your office. One of your students whom you know well shows up to ask you about his assignment. Noticing that you still have a lot of books to be removed from the shelves, he offers you help, but you decline his offer.

Student : "is there anything I could do to help?"

You say : ...

9. You are a manager of an online advertising business. Recently your laptop has been infected by computer viruses. You have tried some new anti viruses, but they are not quite effective. One of your staff suggests you apply a different operating system to avoid the virus. However, you decline his suggestion.

Staff : "I heard LINUX is the safest operating system. Perhaps you could give it a try".

You say : ...