Requesting Behavior of Tenggerese Ethnic in East Java-Indonesia

Sukarsono (Corresponding author)

The Student of Department of Linguistics, Post Graduate Program

Sebelas Maret University of Surakarta, Indonesia

Tel: 6282140025871   E-mail: sukarsono71@gmail.com

Edi Soebroto and Joko Nurkamto

Department of Linguistics, Sebelas Maret University of Surakarta, Indonesia

Tel: 62-0271-632-450

Abstract

This article explores the requesting behavior of Tenggerese ethnic, a *relic* Javanese community inhibiting the highlands of mounts Bromo, Tengger, and Semeru located in East Java, Indonesia. My aim in the first part is to describe the forms of requestive utterances of the ethnic members along with the use of linguistic mitigating devices within the utterances. Through the analysis on the Tenggerese's natural conversations, I found that their requestive utterances tend to be realized in a direct illocution. Their polite behavior is manifested in the uses of *mitigating devices,* placed either within or outside the *head act*. Subsequently, I attempt to explain the relationship between their socio-cultural values and their politeness behavior in expressing requests. In this part, I argue that the verbal politeness behavior of Tenggerese, in fact, reflects the two fundamental socio-cultural principles of Tenggerese, i.e. the principles of *group harmony* and *deference.*

Keywords: Tenggerese requesting behavior, Mitigating devices, Socio-cultural values

1. Introduction

This paper addresses the request behavior of Tenggerese ethnic inhibiting the highlands of mounts Bromo, Tengger, and Semeru located in East Java, Indonesia. This ethnic is historically linked to the decendents of a group of Javanese people escorting the King of Majapahit, *Prabu Brawijaya*, fleeing from the kingdom to the highlands of Bromo due to the civil war occuring in 16th century. As the King proceeded his escape to Bali, because of feeling unsafe, some of the followers chose to stay in the highlands of mounts Tengger-Bromo-Semeru, developing a community currently named as Tenggerese ethnic. The members of this ethnic speaks old Javanese, which is slightly different from the modern dialect commonly spoken by Javanese people nowadays.

This ethnic group is culturally unique because of its traditional and religious ways of life despite its surrounding modern Javanese counterparts. They still strongly hold up the old Javanese socio-cultural values and Hinduism. The old Javanese traditions are well-maintained and fully practiced in their daily lives. Religious rites are still routinely carried out as to worship their God and respect their ancients whom they believe still alive after their death. They believe in *karma,* a revenge system by which one's fortune after his or her death is determined by the quality of his or her deed during worldly living. That is why every ethnic member tends to behave in a such a way that they are not to hurt or to make others suffer from losses since, if they do so, they will someday get the same misfortune as the person whom they had treated badly.

Based on the teaching of Hinduism, Tenggerese people (TP) hold up a life guideline named *Welas Asih Pepitu*, which means 'seven kinds of love and care', on which they must adjust and assess the propriety of their behavior (Waluyo dan Setiawati, 1997). This life guideline includes such moral precepts as (1) *Welas asih marang Bapa Kuasa* (Love and care of God as the Creator of Universe), (2) *Welas asih marang Ibu Pertiwi* (Love and care of the State and the motherland), (3) *Welas asih marang Bapa Biyung* (Love and care of Father and Mother), (4) *Welas asih marang rasa jiwa* (Love and care of soul), (5) *Welas asih marang sepadhane urip* (Love and care of human beings), (6) *Welas asih marang sato kewan* (Love and care of animals), and (7) *Welas asih marang tandur tuwuh* (Love and care of plants). Such a life guideline is strongly endorsed to be manifested on TP's behaviors and social conducts. At present, TP's lives are still prominently colored by the spirits of togetherness and mutual assistance and respect whereas such spirits have currently begun to fade away in other groups of Javanese in general.

Considered to be culturally unique, this ethnic is of a preferable testing medium for the validity of theoretical framework of Brown & Levinson (1987), especially in relation to the claim that an act of requesting is of a negative face-threatening act (FTA) (1987, p.66). It is intrinsically considered as an imposition since it impinges on one's freedom. How is request, among TP who hold up such social values as togetherness and deference, realized and to what extent it is considered as an FTA? This study attempted to answer such question by analyzing TP's requesting behavior within the framework of ethnography. It specifically focuses on such aspects as the linguistic mitigating devices employed in the TP's requestive utterances

in several situational contexts. Besides, it also tries to reveal the socio-cultural values, on which TP's mitigating strategies are hypothetically based. All this is supported by empirical data collected among TP in 2012.

2. Theoretical Framework

As defined by Blum-Kulka (1989) request is a pre-event act which expresses the speaker's expectation of the hearer to do a prospective action, verbal or nonverbal, for the speaker's interest. This act intrinsically generates an FTA effect on both interlocutors. For the hearer, a request could make him/her lose negative face because of its potential intrusive impingement on his/her freedom of action. Therefore, such an act calls for a redressive action in order to compensate the occuring impositive effect on the part of the hearer.On the part of the speaker, a request may put the requester in an awkward situation, in which the speaker may fear of exposing a need or risking the hearer's loss of face.

So far, several studies on request have focused on the different aspects. Some scholars like Ervin-Trip, 1976 and Blum-Kulka et al. (1985) focused their studies on revealing the sociopragmatic system of a particular society. Other scholars such as Clark and Schunk (1980) as well as Gibbs (1985) focused on discovering the process of its interpretation while Dascal (1983) discussing the basic issues of indirectness of requests in discourse. The present study focuses on the use of the request case to study politeness phenomena, like what have been conducted by Brown & Levinson (1978); Leech (1983); House and Kasper (1981) ; Blum-Kulka (1987).

Specifically, the present study analyzes the parts of requestive utterances that function as the encoding of linguistic politeness, i.e. the linguistic encoding of the relative interpersonal distance between the speaker (S) and the hearer (H), showing either (1) the recognition of social conventions or (2) the modification of the impositive force of a speech act (Chodorowska-Pilch, 1999, p.345). Indeed, the latter is of my interest in this paper. I propose some linguistic encodings of politeness of TP, which uniquely convey the S's way of modifying the impositive force of their requests. The linguistic politeness encoding under the investigation also coresponds to such a notion as conversational mitigation, that is the modification of a speech act in such a way that the degree of particular unwelcome effect of a request can be reduced on the part of H (Fraser, 1980).

Furthermore, Blum-Kulka (1989) explains that an act of mitigation can be carried out by inserting the lexical, phrasal, or syntactic *downgrader* as well as by extending sentential units of *supportive move* within a requesting utterance. The former refers to elements within the request utterance proper, whose presence in the utterance functions as an internal modifier which may play a role of indicating device as to signal the pragmatic force as well as a role of a mitigating device as to reduce the degree of coerciveness (House and Kasper, 1981). Meanwhile, the latter refers to a linguistic unit external to the request proper, which modifies the request impact by mitigating the request's force. According to Fraser (1980, p. 344), 'mitigation entails politeness, and it occurs only if the speaker is polite'. Hence, it suggests that S's use of mitigation markers in conveying a request reflects his communicative efforts to behave politely toward the interlocutor.

3. Data

For this study, I employ the data of spoken conversational Tenggerese language containing a request in natural setting. The data were obtained via *Participant Observation* along with the application of *recording* technique. During the data collection process, I was assisted by some native Tenggerese who had been briefed and trained on his duties concerning with the recording of the data. Practically, I assigned the assistant to record the target conversation by minggling with other TPs in daily activities. Besides, they also provide some information on the social attributes of the interactants in the target conversation such as their relative power and degree of familiarity. At the same time during a recording activity, I was observing the conversational event, carefully examining the situation of the target conversation and jotting down necessary notes on it.

The data recordings on the target conversation were conducted during a six month period. The recordings were geared to obtain the natural conversations in which a requesting act occurs between Tenggerese interactants whose social relations are of four types of constellation. Those are respectively (1) the conversation between a speaker *superior* to the addressee and both are socially *solidary,* (2) the conversation between a speaker *superior* to the addressee but both are *not solidary,* (3) the conversation between a speaker *inferior* to the addressee and both are *solidary,* and (4) the conversation between a speaker who is *inferior* to the addressee but both are *not solidary.* Respectively, those social variable constellations are later on represented by such symbols as [S>H, +F], [S>H, -F], [S<H, +F], and [S<H, -F], where S stands for *speaker*, H for *hearer* or *addressee*, and F for *familiarity*. Meanwhile, such mathematic symbols as '>' means *superior*, '<' means *inferior,* '+' is *present* and '–' is *absent.* Such constellations are based on the framework of Brown and Gilman (1968), who state that:

> 'The dimension of solidarity is potentially applicable to all persons addressed. Power superiors may be solidary (parents, elder siblings) or not solidary (officials whom one seldom sees). Power inferiors, similarly, as may be as solidary as the old family retainer and as remote as the waiter in strange restaurant' (Brown and Gilman, 1968, p.257).

4. The Mitigation Devices Used by TP to Show Polite Request Behavior

To reveal politeness when producing requestive utterances, TP linguistically employ *mitigating devices,* i.e. linguistic units functioning as *lexical*, *phrasal, syntactic down-grader* as well as *supportive move* optionally used in order to reduce the degree of coerciveness of the request. The identification of mitigating devices in TP's requestive utterances in this study was theoretically based on Blum-Kulka's framework. Besides, informants' judgment was also considered to verify if a particular linguistic unit certainly brings an effect of reducing the degree of imposition or coerciveness inherently existing in a requestive utterance of TP.

The data analysis shows that the mitigating devices found within the requestive utterances of TP function as (1) lexical down grader, (2) phrasal down grader, (3) syntactic down grader, (4) supportive move, and (5) *honorific* forms. The use of each device in requestive utterances of

TP is discussed as follow.

4.1 The Use of Lexical Down Grader

The mitigation device frequently used by TP to reduce the degree of imposition or coerciveness in a requestive utterance is a lexical down-grader *tulung*, which means 'help'. The example of the use of *tulung* in requestive utterance of TP can be seen in excerpt [1].

[1] P1: *Se **tulung** rewangana ngunggah iki, Pak But.* **'**Please **help** me to lift this, Mr. But. (1a)

P2: *Rika kate mentasa?* 'You (*def*) gonna go home?'

P1: *Ya. kate nang Tumpang.* 'Yes, I will go to *Tumpang*'.

The conversational event above occurred in a savannah between two Tenggerese farmers doing traditional grass cutting to feed their cattle. They were friends who often looked for the grass to feed their cattle together. Both of them are familiar to each other. P1, who was older than P2, intended to transport a sack of grass home. Because it was too heavy, he then asked P2 to help him lift it up on his bicycle. Thus, the request in 1a conveyed by a speaker who is *superior* to the addressee within familiar social relation, symbolically represented by [S>H, +F].

The requestive act of asking in the conversation is linguistically realized in *imperative* form. The request sequence contains only a core unit, namely the *head act,* preceded by an addressing term *Pak But,* a proper name. Such a head act is internally modified by the word *tulung* which is habitually inserted in a requestive utterance. From the interview, my informant informed me that presenting the word *tulung* within a request would make them feel uneasy as the speakers while it would bring about 'softness feeling' as they act as the addressee. Such information is verified by way of comparing two similar requestive utterances below.

(1a) *Se **tulung** rewangana ngunggah iki, Pak But.* **'**Please **help** me to lift this, Mr. But.

(1a') *Se rewangana ngunggah iki, Pak But.* **'**Please lift this for me, Mr. But.

When being asked to judge which utterance is more polite between 1a and 1a', most TP choose 1a. From the informant's response, it is convinced that *tulung* in a requestive utterance like 1a can mitigate the coercive effect of a bald record request like 1a'.

Besides being used to mitigate a request realized in *imperative*, the word *tulung* is also used to modify a request linguistically expressed in *hedged performative*, in which the illocutionary intent is explicitly named and modified by a modal or adverb expressing intention like 2a.

[2] P1: *Mak nik, eang njaluk **tulung** se rika jupuken kresek ndik pawon. Soale wis entek iki sing ndik toko.* Mak Nik, I asked you help to take the plastic bag in the kitchen. We have it no more here in the store. (2a)

P2: *Ndik Pawon sebelah ndi?'*Where is it about in the kitchen?

P1: *Ika lo sebelahe bayang sisih kidul.* 'It's right beside the bamboo bench on the southern part.'

P2: *Ya.* (Pergi ke dapur). 'OK'. (Heading to the kitchen).

Excerpt [2] is the example of a request conveyed by a speaker to a superior addressee within *familiar* social relation, [S<H, +F]. P1 is P2's younger brother in law. At the moment, P1 was busy serving the customers in his store. Every goods the customers bought needed to be packed in a plastic shopping bag. Since he found none in the store, he then asked P2, his older sister in law, to take the plastic bags stored in the kitchen. Utterance 2a consists of two units utterances, namely a *head act* and a *supportive move*. The former is linguistically realized in *hedged performative*, in which the illocutionary force of the request is explicitly named, i.e. *eang njaluk tulung* 'I ask you help'. An *alerter* in the form of proper name, *Mak Nik,* is also added to the head act. Such a head act is mitigated by two mitigation devices. The first device is the word *tulung* which modifies the head act internally. The other is a supportive move, which modifies the head act externally. Such a supportive move, i.e. *Soale wis entek iki sing ndik toko* '(Because) We have it no more here in the store' functions as a *grounder* of reason. In conclusion based on the interview with informants, TP value a request accompanied by the word *tulung* as a polite way in all situational contexts with social variable constellations of [S>H, +F], [S>H, -F], [S<H, +F], and [S<H, -F].

Another lexical down-grader frequently found in TP's requestive utterance is the appealer *ya*, which is uttered in questioning intonation. Using *ya*, which means *okay,* with rising intonation in requesting utterance can make the utterance more acceptable to the addressee. In the interview, being asked why TP often insert the word *ya* as they are requesting, my informant answered that 'we use *ya* because we want to make sure that our request is not compelling the hearer. So, we ask him or her whether it is *okay* to ask him to do something'. Such a response suggests that a TP speaker inserts the word *ya* in a requestive utterance to get a pre-agreement with the hearer before the execution of the action as wanted by the requester. Hence, the speaker implicates a positive attitude not to coerce the hearer to do the requested action by way of asking a preceding permission for his request. The example of the use of *ya* in requestive utterance of TP can be seen in excerpt [3].

[3] P1: *Iki ngene Pak Suyak, eang rene iki saperlu ngandani rika nek adhike Pak Samiyono iki kate sinau bahasane wong kene. Tulung rika bantu paran ae sing dibutuhna* **ya?**. 'Here we go Mr. Suyak, my coming here is to inform you that Mr. Samiono's brother here is to learn the language spoken by the people in this village. So, please help him obtain whatever he needs, okay?'. (3a)

P2: *Oh.. ya isa..*' I see.. That's alright. (nodding)

P3: *Nggih badhe ngrepoti Bapak niki…*'Yes sir, my coming here is somehow bothering you... (*deference*).

P2: *Walah mboten nopo-nopo, kulo sering kok mbantu masalah ngeten niki. Tapi sekacane ngeten mangke kulo teraken teng Pak Lurah mawon supados sekeco.* That's no problem at all, I am often asked to assist (a researcher) to do such a kind of job. But it is better (before you

do your research activity in this village), I need to take you to the head of village (to ask permission) for the sake of convenience. (*deference*) (3b)

P3: *Nggih Pak matur nuwun sak derange. '*Yes I will Sir, Thank you very much.'

P2: *Nggih sami-sami* 'You're welcome'.

Excerpt [3] is the conversational event occurring in a living room of house of a Tenggerese. There were three interactants involved. They were P1 and P2, the native Tenggerese, and P3, a non-Tenggerese. P1 and P2 were colleagues, who were both the forest rangers of Semeru-Bromo-Tengger National Park, located in East Java, Indonesia. Meanwhile, P3 was the younger brother of Mr. Samiono, as stated in the text, who had been also the old colleague of P1 and P2. P3 is the researcher who intended to collect data on language research in Tenggerese community. Since P3 needed an accommodation during his research, he was taken by P1 to see P2 for possible help of accommodation.

Fragment 3a in excerpt [3] is the example of a request addressed to a familiar-superior addressee, [S<H, +F]. The request is linguistically realized in two segments of utterance. The first is the *head act,* i.e. **Tulung** *rika bantu paran ae sing dibutuhna, **ya?'*** So please help him to obtain whatever he needs, **okay?**'. The second is *a supportive move* preceding the *head act,* which functions as the grounder, i.e giving an orientation to the addressee before making request.

The mitigating function of the word *ya* is verified by asking the informant to compare two similar requestive utterances below.

(3a) *Iki ngene Pak Suyak, eang rene iki saperlu ngandani rika nek adhike Pak Samiyono iki kate sinau bahasane wong kene.* **Tulung** *rika bantu paran ae sing dibutuhna, **ya?*** 'Here we go Mr. Suyak, my coming here is to inform you that Mr. Samiono's brother here is to learn the language spoken by the people in this village. So please help him to obtain whatever he needs, **okay?**'.

(3a') *Iki ngene Pak Suyak, eang rene iki saperlu ngandani rika nek adhike Pak Samiyono iki kate sinau bahasane wong kene.* **Tulung** *rika bantu paran ae sing dibutuhna.* 'Here we go Mr. Suyak, my coming here is to inform you that Mr. Samiono's brother here is to learn the language spoken by the people in this village. So please help him to obtain whatever he needs'.

Even though 3a and 3a' are both perceived as polite because of the presence of the lexical down-grader *tulung* and the supportive move (the underlined part of the utterance), the informant grades 3a more slightly polite than 3a' because 3a' lacks of the word *ya*. However, to be noted here that the word *ya,* as a lexical down-grader, is preferably used in such social variable constellations as [S>H, +F] and [S<H, +F] because it tends to shorten the social distance between the interlocutors. Thus, the use of word *ya* is in fact of a positive politeness strategy within the framework of Brown and Levinson.

4.2 The Use of Phrasal Down-grader

Besides using a lexical down-grader, TP commonly use a *phrasal down-grader* to mitigate the coercive force of a request. The most apparent *phrasal down-grader* used by TP is *understater,* that is *'*an adverbial modifiers by means of which the speaker under-represents the state of affairs denoted in the proposition' (Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989). The understater used among TP is the phrase *dhilut ae*, which means 'just for a while', as exemplified in **5a.**

[5] P1: *Sakjane karo areng muka.'* It should be toasted by wooden coal.

P2: *Ya sik dijupuken.* 'Right, It is being prepared'.

P3: <u>*Om, sik om, nyok tah dhilut ae.'*</u> Uncle, sory uncle, please come here just for a while'. **(5a)**

P2: *Lha ika.* 'Here it is'.

Conversation [5] occurs in the backyard of a Tenggerese house. There were three interactancts involved, namely P1, P2, and P3. P1 and P2 are close friends, who were chatting joyfully. To warm the situation, they were also toasting a kilogram of peanut for snack. Then, came P3, the nephew of P2, interrupting the joyful moment. P3 asked P2 to come closer to him because there was something he wanted to tell. Thus, (5a) is a request conveyed by a speaker to the *superior* addressee within familiar social relation, [S<H, +F].

As found in **(5a),** P3's requestive act is conveyed by a head act, *nyok tah dhilut ae* 'please come here just for a while', opened by an alerter *Om, sik om* 'uncle, sory uncle'. The head act is linguistically realized in *imperative* form internally modified by *dhilut wae* 'just for a while'.The mitigating function of *dhilut ae* is tested by informant's judgment on the two similar requestive utterances below.

(5a) *Om, sik om, nyok tah **dhilut ae**.'* Uncle, sorry uncle, please come here **just for a while**'.

(5a') *Om, sik om, nyok tah.'* Uncle, sorry uncle, please come here'.

According to my informant, 5a the degree of politeness of 5a is higher than 5a' because of the presence of of *dhilut ae*. Thus, it is quite convincing that the phrase functions as a *down-grader*. Such a phrase is actually the form of self-awareness of other's business even though giving help is socio-culturally obligated in Tenggerese society. As viewed from the framework of Brown and Levinson, the use of phrase *dhilut ae* in TP's requestive utterance is actually of a negative politeness strategy, especially the strategy of minimizing the imposition. However, in further response, my informant perceives that 5a is acceptable in all social variable constellations, i.e. [S>H, +F], [S>H, -F], [S<H, +F], and [S<H, -F].

4.3 The Use of Syntactic down Grader

The next mitigating device in TP's request is a syntactic down-grader, a syntactic choice made by the speaker to modify the head act internally in such a way that it mitigates the impositive force of a request. The most apparently chosen syntactic form in TP's requestive utterance is *conditional clause,* which is, in Tenggerese, introduced by such a clause marker

as *Nek ...,* meaning 'If ...'. The use of TP's conditional clause is exemplified in 6a and 6b.

[6] P1: *Anu… alah… <u>Pak Wi,</u>* **<u>nek ana</u>** <u>ewon wae</u> 'Oh my goodness ... Mr. Wi, If you have an exchange, (I prefer you give me) just the thousand one. (6a)

P2: *Nun?*'Pardon me?'

P1: <u>*Nek ana ewon no*</u>*…*'A thousand, (of course) if you have. (6b)

The conversational event occurring in a small vendor, where two interactants were involved in a transaction. They were familiar to each other. P1, the owner of the vendor, is younger than P2, the customer. P2 was buying a pack of cigarette and paying it with a hundred thousand rupiahs. Realizing that he had no exchange, P1 asked P2 to pay in the acceptable fraction of rupiah. Thus, requests in 6a and 6b were addressed to a familiar-superior hearer, [S<H, +F]. Both requests are linguistically realized in *imperative,* expressed in elliptical structure. Both utterances contain only one *head act,* which is internally modified by the clause *Nek ana* 'If you have'.

From the interview, a request linguistically realized in conditional clause implicates a meaning that the speaker is aware of the fact that the success of his/her request execution by the hearer depends on a conducive condition in which the hearer is situated. Thus, in case the request execution fails, the hearer is not to blame. In other words, the failure occurs due to the fact that the condition is not fulfilled. Thus, viewed from the framework of Brown and Levinson, *conditional clause* marker *Nek iso* as seen in 6a and 6b is actually a strategy of hedging, which belongs to negative politeness. My informant perceives that a request realized in conditional clause has higher degree of politeness than that expressed in *imperative* or *performative.* In addition, such a request is relatively proper in all kinds of contexts with the constellations of [S>H, +F], [S>H, -F], [S<H, +F], and [S<H, -F].

4.4 The Use of Supportive Move

Another type of mitigating device used in TP's requestive utterance is a *supportive move.* The most common *supportive move* found in TP's request is a *grounder,* i.e. a linguistic unit in the requestive utterance conveying the speaker's reason, explanation, or justification for the committed request. From the interview, my informant informed me that a reason or explanation is commonly added to a request as to generate an understanding and sympathy on the part of the addressee toward a problem or misfortune being experienced by the speaker. By giving reason, explanation, or justification for the request he did, a Tenggerese speaker would expect that the addressee could understand his/her difficult situation so that his/her request is socially acceptable. In fact, such a grounder belongs to positive politeness strategy within Brown-Levinson's framework.

A *grounder* may be employed either as an internal or as an external modifier. The former is the part of utterance functioning as the mitigator of the impositive force of a request placed within the *head act*, like in **3.**

[3] *Namung kewajiban kulo maringi sumerap panjenengan bahwa tanggal limo niku <u>panjenengan</u>* **<u>kedah</u>** <u>*rawuh*</u>. 'It is my duty to inform you that on the fifth (of this month) <u>you</u>

must attend (the general election) (*deference*).

Excerpt 3 is the fragment of a briefing conveyed by *Lurah,* the head of village, to his folks during a formal meeting held to inform the general election for the mayor of Malang. Thus, the situation where the request was addressed is public. The request is in the form of *obligation statement* (the underlined clause). Despite its coercive effect, the presence of the word *kudu* 'must', the request is considered *acceptable* since it is conveyed by a superior speaker. The sequence of utterance 3 contains an only *head act,* internally modified by such a clause as *Namung kewajiban kulo maringi sumerap panjenengan "*It is my duty to inform you'. Such a grounder of explanation is in fact a politeness strategy of stating the FTA by general rule within Brown and Levinson's theoretical framework.

The mitigating function of the grounder in 3 is also verified by the informant's judgment. My informant undoubtedly stated that the request is simply less polite when the grounder is omitted. Furthermore, he also perceives that a request containing a grounder like 3 is socially proper in all social situations like [S>H, +F], [S>H, -F], [S<H, +F], and [S<H, -F].

A grounder may be employed as an external modifier, i.e. the part of utterance outside the head act as found in (**2a).**

[2] P1: *Sira saiki langsung balik ta Le?* 'Are you going back (to Malang) directly, Son?'

P2: *Nggih* 'I do'.

P1: *Butuh sangu pira?*'How much allowance do you need?'

P2: *Wonten tasikan.* 'I still have some'.

P1: <u>*Ya sangua ambek urusana SIM-e lho Budi.*</u> <u>**SIM-e sepeda iku mati urusana mesisan ndik Pasuruan.**</u> 'Certainly you need some money and revalidate the vehicle operation license, will you Budi?' It has been invalid for quite some time and you can revalidate it in Pasuruan.' (2a)

P2: *Sembarang.* ' Alright'.

Excerpt [2] is the conversational event occurring in a villager's house between a mom (P1) and his son (P2). The former asked the latter to revalidate the effective period of vehicle operation license. At the moment, P2 was about to go back to Malang, where his college is located. Since Pasuruan, where the revalidation of the vehicle license could be carried out, is located nearby Malang, P1 asked P2 to do the revalidation at once. Thus the request in 2a is carried out within the constellation of [S>H, +F].

The request is linguistically realized two segments. The first segment is the head act in *imperative* form, i.e. *Ya sangua ambek urusana SIM-e lho Budi,* and the other is a supportive move, i.e. *SIM-e sepeda iku mati urusana mesisan ndik Pasuruan,* functioning as a *grounder* which modifies the *head act* externally.

Another example of a grounder used to modify the head act externally is found in excerpt [3] especially fragment 3b.

[3b] *Walah mboten nopo-nopo, kulo sering kok mbantu masalah ngeten niki. Tapi sekacane ngeten mangke kulo teraken teng Pak Lurah mawon supados sekeco.* That's no problem at all, I am often asked to assist (a researcher) to do such a kind of job. But it is better (before you do your research activity in this village), I need to take you to the head of village (to ask permission) for the sake of convenience. (*deference*) (3b)

Fragment **3b** in excerpt **[3]** is a request addressed to an unfamiliar-inferior addressee, [S>H, -F]. In 3b, the speaker asked the addressee to see the head of village before he conducted his research activity in the speaker's village. The request is linguistically realized in two segments of utterance. The first is the *head act* realized in *suggestory formulae,* i.e. *Tapi sekacane ngeten mangke kulo teraken teng Pak Lurah mawon supados sekeco* 'But it is better (before you do some activity in this village), I need to take you to the head of village (to ask permission) for the sake of convenience'. Such a head act is preceded by a grounder, that is the explanation for the request, functioning as an external modifier.

4.5 The Use of Honorific Forms

The last mitigating device used in TP's requestive utterance is *honorific* forms, that is the choice of speech level that implies deference or respect to the hearer. For daily communication, TP speaks Tenggerese language in two speech levels, namely *ngoko* and *krama/basa.* The former is normally used to the hearer to whom the speaker feels socially close and thus s/he wants to show this familiarity. On the other hand, the latter is normally spoken to the hearer to whom the speaker feels socially distant due to the aspects of unfamiliarity, seniority, or power so that s/he wants to show deference or respect to such a hearer. The exemplified utterance, in which the honorific form in TP's utterance to show politeness behavior, is in 8a.

[8] P1: *Sanja.* 'Excuse me'. (deference)

P2: *Oh, nggih. Monggo mlebet mawon. Wonten nopo Bu?* 'Alright then. Please come in. What's the matter?'

P1: *Nuwun sewu Buk Bidhan. Kulo nggadah yugo alit sakit mencret Buk. Kulo badhe nyuwun tulung nedi obat mencret teng njenengan.* Excuse me, Madam. But I have a baby suffering from diarrhea. I intend to ask you help to give me medicine for him. (deference). (8a)

P2: *Oh nggih wonten... Obate niki diombekno setunggal-setunggal nggih Bu. Sedinten ping tiga.* Oh sure. I have one. This medicine must be given to him one by one, okay Mom? (deference).

P1: *Matur nuwun Buk. Kulo badhe wangsul.* 'Thank you very much Madam. I must go'. (deference).

P2: *Nggih-nggih, monggo.* 'Alright, please'. (deference).

Excerpt [8] shows a conversation between a common housewife (P1) and a nurse (P2), who was officially on duty in a Tenggerese village. P1 came to P2's house to ask medicine for her baby who was suffering from diarrhea. The request in 8a is linguistically sequenced in three

units of utterances. The first unit is *Nuwun sewu Buk Bidhan.'* Excuse me, Madam', which is an apology functioning as a supportive move. The second one is a grounder, *Kulo nggadah yugo alit sakit mencret Buk* 'But I have a baby suffering from diarrhea'. And the last one is the head act, *Kulo badhe nyuwun tulung nedi obat mencret teng njenengan.* 'I intend to ask you help to give me medicine for him', which is realized in *hedged performative*.

In fact, 8a is very polite since it is simultaneously mitigated by two supportive moves and honorific form. My informant states that a request expressed in *krama/basa* is socially very polite in all contexts except in such constellation as [S>H, +F]. This is in line with Brown-Levinson's framework, especially the strategy of giving deference as the sub-strategy of a negative politeness.

5. The Socio-cultural Values as Reflected on the Polite Requestive Behavior of TP

Sociologically, the social behavior of a society reflects the unique characteristics of its members which is much determined by its culture, that is a system of socio-cultural values on which the attitudes, personalities, and habits of the society members in question are based and framed (Sukanto, 1997). Through the observation on their daily social practices and interview with the informants, I discovered that TP hold up two fundamental socio-cultural principles, namely *in-group harmony* and *deference,* which are similarly hold up by Javanese counterparts in general. The former refers to such a set of social values as *social concern, conflict avoidance, mutual understanding,* and *brotherhood* while the latter refers to such a set as *respecting the senior* and *the unfamiliar.* Such values hypothetically frame and motivate TP's polite behavior in expressing a request. Through data analysis, I found that TP's requestive behavior is of a reflection of TP's socio-cultural values, accordingly discussed below.

5.1 The Reflection of Social Concern Value on TP's Requestive Behavior

The most apparent socio-cultural value of TP reflected on TP's request behavior is *social concern.* My experience in mingling with them during the process of data collection gave me a vivid picture of such a high social concern among them. TP readily give their hands to other people who have got troubles in their lives. Even, help is also given not only to a normal individual but also to the insane person who incidentally enters their village. Giving and taking a help is deeply rooted and becomes daily rites in Tenggerese community. In addition, asking help to others seems to be a legitimate way out for a Tenggerese as s/he gets a problem, tragedy, or misfortune. By cultural system, an individual giving help to those who need it will be socially rewarded as a person of virtue whereas an individual who is intentionally indifferent to others' difficulty will get a social sanction in the form of social isolation. Therefore, asking help to others when one is in need is perceived as strongly endorsed while giving help to those who need it is viewed as obligatory in Tenggerese community.

Such a value as social concern not only affects the TP's social behavior in general but also affects their way of communication, especially as they conduct a request. In my observation during data collection, almost every TP who executes a requesting act commonly employs the

word *tulung* in their utterances. From the interview, I infer that using this word when doing a request could socially attract a sympathy from other ethnic members. For TP, the word *tulung* can implicitly declare that they are being helpless to get rid of their problems at the moment of speaking and thus send a signal for help to others. On the other hand, on the part of the addressee, the word *tulung* will be responded as a cultural obligation to give help or, otherwise, he will get such a mark as an egoist who deserves to be socially exiled by others if he ignores the signal.

In conclusion, a request escorted by the word *tulung* is always socially acceptable and perceived as a polite manner in TP community. To the addressee, giving help is not only socio-culturally rewarded but also personally appreciated as 'savior', who can set the person in need free from his or her problem. In line with Brown-Levinson's theoretical framework, such a social and personal acknowledgement is in fact a form of satisfaction for a positive face on the part of the hearer and therefore using the word *tulung* while doing a request is a positive politeness. At the same time, the use of word *tulung* in TP's requestive utterance can be of a negative politeness strategy because the speaker also intends to show respect to to a distant addressee.

5.2 The Reflection of Conflict Avoidance Value on TP's Requestive Behavior

The next socio-cultural value of TP apparently reflected on TP's request behavior is *conflict avoidance.* Like Javanese in general, TP dream peaceful, secured, and harmonious life, being far from conflict. They realize that such a peaceful life can only be realized if every ethnic member willingly maintains harmonious and balanced life-atmosphere in all levels of social environment, i.e.: in family, in neighborhood, as well as in the broader units of community. Therefore, each member is expected to contribute 'nice conduct' and to prevent or avoid a social conflict. Whenever a conflict takes place, one must manage to withdraw himself from it the best s/he can by means of self-controlling and self-introspection so that in-group harmony can still be retained.

Such a value is vividly reflected on the way TP verbally convey a request. TP often use the word *ya*, which means *okay,* in their requestive utterance. As previously discussed, such a word indeed functions as a mitigating device, which is optionally presented in the utterance. The question is why they often use this word as they are requesting? It can be inferred from the interview that the use of *ya* in requesting context generates such an implicature as 'whether H agrees if S asks H to do something for S'. Thus, the word *ya* uttered in rising intonation while requesting is actually S's act of asking a permission if it is okay for H to do an action for S's benefit. Hence, in Brown-Levinson's perspective, TP's inserting *ya* in a requestive utterance can at least implies twofold meanings. First, it implies S's seeking an agreement with H if H is willing to do the requested action. Second, it implies S's attitude of not coercing H, by giving H option not to do the requested action. In short, positive as well as negative politeness manifest on the use of *ya* in TP's requestive utterances.

5.3 The Reflection of Mutual Understanding Value on TP's Requestive Behavior

Another socio-cultural value of TP apparently reflected on TP's request behavior is *mutual*

understanding. TP community is quite unique in the terms of exercising social status throughout the members. Like in other society in general, an individual of lower social status normally respects the one with higher social status very much. On other hand, the latter does not have any social privilege in terms of social obligation such as public social works or volunteer services, known as *kerja bakti* or *gotong royong*. Socially, they have to be actively involved in such social works or services. Even, it is not a rare scene that the head of village, the most powerful and respected person in the entire village, is physically involved, mingling and working together with the folks in building public facilities like bridge, road, houses for the needy, etc. In short, TP is a kind of community who advocate altruism other than egoism on the basis of mutual understanding between the rich and the poor, as well as between the strong and the weak.

The reflection of *mutual understanding* value on the TP's polite behavior in conveying a request can be seen in the use of an understater, *dhilut ae*. The presence of the phrase generates such an implicature that S is compelled to ask H to do something for S and thus S is aware of the imposition inherently brought about by the requested action and therefore S wants to minimize the imposition. S's want of minimizing the imposition shows an S's understanding to H although asking help is socially acceptable among TP and giving help for H is socio-culturally obligated. In Brown-Levinson's perspective, the strategy of minimizing the imposition is a form of a negative politeness.

The value of mutual understanding is also reflected on the use of *conditional clause,* i.e. *Nek...*'If...', as to downgrade the degree of imposition within TP's request. A request conveyed in conditional clause give an implicature that S is aware of H's success in doing the requested action absolutely depends on a conducive condition which enables H to do the action. Therefore any failure of the request execution will not be of H's responsibility. Hence, a request syntactically expressed in conditional clause is always perceived as polite by TP since H is given an option not to do the action if he is put in the nonconducive situation to do the requested action. This in line with Brown and Levinson's negative politeness strategy, namely 'Don't coerce H'. .

5.4 The Reflection of Sense of Brotherhood Value on TP's Requestive Behavior

In-group harmony principle upheld by TP is also manifested in such a socio-cultural value as *sense of brotherhood* among members of TP community. This *sense of brotherhood* refers to assuming people of the same ethnicity as one's own family. Each Tenggerese is obligated to strengthen brotherhood as to generate togetherness and solidarity in facing and coping with problems, difficulties, and natural barriers arising in their lives, due to the fact that they live in a territory isolated by forest. By *sense of brotherhood,* the social distance among Tenggerese could be shortened and thus they do feel easy to ask for help to any other Tenggerese whenever they are in need.

TP's value of sense of brotherhood can be traced on the fact that most requestive utterances accompanied by family-addressing terms such as *Gus, Pak, Mak, Yu, Pak Wo,* and the like, which respectively means 'elder brother', 'father', 'mother', 'elder sister', and 'uncle'. These terms are used not only to family members but also to those who has no blood relationship.

My informant underscores that the presence of family-addressing terms in requestive utterances is undoubtedly perceived as polite manner by TP. In fact, the terms used to trigger solidarity and the awareness of the importance of being *hand in hand* in overcoming any hardships coming to their lives. In fact, such a communicating behavior is in line with Brown-Levinson's politeness strategy, i.e. 'claim in-group membership with H' by using in-group identity markers. Therefore, the use of family-addressing terms is actually the form of a positive politeness.

5.5 The Reflection of Deference Value on TP's Requestive Behavior

The last socio-cultural value of TP clearly reflected on TP's request behavior is *respecting the senior* and *the unfamiliar* addressee. The linguistic behavior reflecting respecting attitude is the use of the speech level of *krama,* by which S shows respect and a significant social distance with H. In particular, TP's showing respect to the senior and an outsider is linguistically manifested in honorific forms, the use of which suggest that S necessarily humbles himself/herself in front of the more senior or unfamiliar H. The type of honorific form practiced among TP is addressee honorific, namely the second-person pronoun *rika* (deference) as opposed to *sira* (non-deference)*,* both of which mean 'you'*.* The former is used to show S's respect to the more senior or the unfamiliar H while the latter used to show S's superiority or familiarity to H. In fact, such a use of pronoun of deference is a form of negative politeness in Brown-Levinson's theoretical perspective.

6. Conclusion

At last, the study results in some conclusions as follow. First, the requestive utterances of TP tend to be realized in direct illocution, by using *imperative, obligation statement,* a *suggestory formulae,* and *hedged performative*. Those forms are internally or externally modified to show TP's attempts to balance the effectiveness of the communicative intention of the utterance and the maintenance of social harmony between the interlocutors. Secondly, the addition of the *mitigating devices* in the forms of lexical, phrasal, syntactic as well as *supporting moves* to the *head act* within the overall structure of requestive utterance of TP can directly enhance the degree of politeness of an impositive utterance of TP. The more mitigating devices used by the TP speaker in an impositive utterance, the more polite the utterance is. Finally, the verbal politeness behavior of TP is, in fact, the manifestation of the two fundamental socio-cultural principles of TP, namely the principles of *group harmony* and *deference.*

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