

The Relationship Between The Concept of *Pdr* and The Practice of Brown & Levinson's Politeness Strategies by Indonesian Caregivers in The Domain of Elderly Care in Japan

¹Putu Dewi Merlyna Yuda Pramesti, Ganesha University of Education

²N.L., Sutjiati Beratha, sutjiati59@gmail.com, Udayana University

³Made Budiarsa, made_budiarsa@yahoo.com, Udayana University

⁴I Nengah Sudipa, nengahsudipa@yahoo.com, Udayana University

*Corresponding Author: dewi.merlyna@undiksha.ac.id

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Abstract— An important topic of pragmatic studies is politeness. To be able to deliver messages successfully in a speech act, politeness is believed to be an important means that can be used to reduce inconvenience in communication process. This article is a piece of research to support a dissertation that examines politeness in communicating in Japanese by Indonesian caregivers towards the elderly in Japan. Specifically, this article examines the relationship between PDR (power, distance, rank of imposition) concept and the practice of Brown&Levinson's politeness strategies by the Indonesian caregivers towards the elderly in Japan. This study applies qualitative method. The type of data used is primary data in the forms of utterances from the Indonesian caregivers towards the elderly. The Indonesian caregivers who are the subjects of the study work at 6 elderly care homes in Japan. These six homes were chosen as research locations as they hire more Indonesian caregivers compared to other homes. The results of the analysis indicate that there is relationship between the concept of PDR and the practice of Brown&Levinson's politeness strategies in the utterances of the caregivers towards the elderly; however, the two concepts of Brown&Levinson can not be fully applied in the utterances of the Indonesian caregivers in the context of taking care of the elderly. The Indonesian caregivers applied positive and negative politeness strategies in their utterances towards the elderly, as the choice of the politeness is highly dependent on the situational contexts where the utterances take place.

Keywords: *positive politeness strategy, negative politeness strategy, and utterance*

1. Introduction

At present, the existence of caregivers in Japan is emerging. This is due to the unbalanced number between the elderly and newborns that it has been a social issue in Japan in the last several years. This study deals with a certain group of language users, namely the caregivers, and is related to the language behaviour at a certain establishment; in this case, the workplace of the caregivers.

The approach considered suitable to be applied in this study is pragmatic approach as pragmatics is a science that examines the ways in which utterances are applied differently in different cultures, language communities, social situations, and social classes. There are many studies on politeness that have been conducted in various domains across the world. The theory of politeness was introduced for the first time by Brown&Levinson (1978, 1987) with the concept of politeness strategy, face concept known as FTA (Face Threatening Act), which is a concept that relates politeness to face saving. Many studies on politeness have been conducted since then. Studies on Japanese politeness were first conducted by Ide (1982, 1989, 2005, 2006), Fujibayashi (2001), Usami (2002), Haugh (2003), and the latest one was conducted by O'Driscoll (2017).

Japan is a country with a high politeness level. In Japanese language, as in Balinese, Javanese and Korean, there is speech level. In the concept of Japanese honorific language, it is mentioned that in conversing with older people, the type of utterances used is the polite one or *keigo*, especially in the context of giving services (Kabaya, 2009). A study on the elderly care has been conducted by Backhaus (2009). In his study, Backhaus drew conclusion that the residents at nursing homes in Germany and Tokyo applied compliments and jokes as ways of face saving in communicating with the elderly. This phenomena made the researcher interested in studying the relationship between the PDR concept and the practice of politeness strategy of Brown &Levinson's concept in the utterances of Indonesian caregivers towards the elderly in Japan.

2. Research Method

This study applied qualitative approach. The subjects of the study were 39 Indonesian caregivers. The location of data collection spread in 6 areas in Japan. The data source was primary data in the forms of the utterances of the Indonesian caregivers when communicating with the elderly. The research instruments included the writer herself, observation sheets, interview guides and questionnaires. The methods of data collection applied were documentation and observation.

Documentation was carried out by recording the communication activities between the caregivers and the elderly with different speech settings, such as bedrooms, dining rooms and toilets. The type of observation conducted was non-participatory observation, that the writer

conducted the observation and data recording without being involved in the communication process (Sugiyono, 2005). There was no special design for the informants, the dialogues recorded were natural dialogues without interference of the researcher by creating special scenarios in order to produce the utterances that were expected by the objectives of the research. The data in the forms of the the caregivers' utterances were then transcribed and classified based on the statements of the problems. Prior to the analysis, the data were validated by applying data source triangulation method and method triangulation.

3. Theoretical Framework

In this section, the concept of PDR and Brown&Levinson's politeness strategy (1978, 1987) as well as Japanese Respect Language will be explained respectively.

3.1 The PDR concept and Brown & Levinson's Politeness Strategy

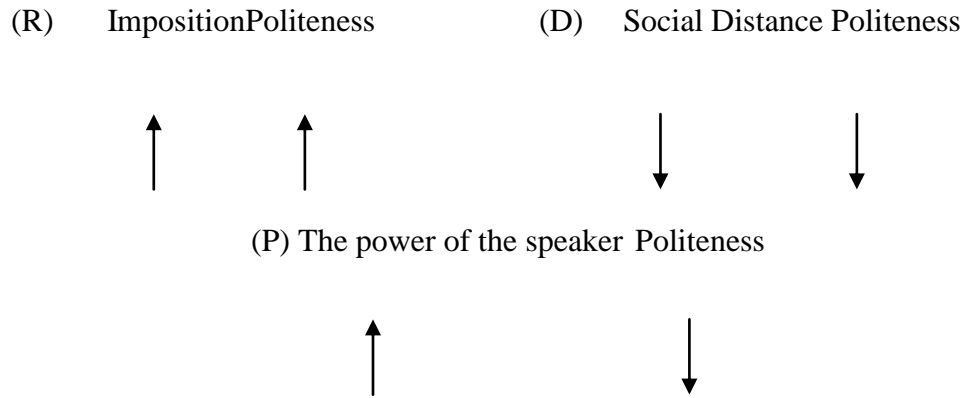
Brown & Levinson (1978) describes that there are three variables that influence an utterance, namely power (P), distance (D), and imposition rank (I). P refers to three types of relationship, namely the speaker and the hearer in their social status. The dynamics between these three can be seen from the status of the hearer, whether he/she is of higher, equal or lower social status. D refers to the amount of social distance between the speaker and the hearer which can influence the language and attitude of the two parties; whether it is close or distant. R refers to imposition level that can be divided into big and small level.

As explained by Backhaus (2009) in his study at nursing home in Germany and Tokyo, when the residents request something big or difficult, then the imposition level (R) is also big, on the other hand, when they request something easy, the imposition level is small.

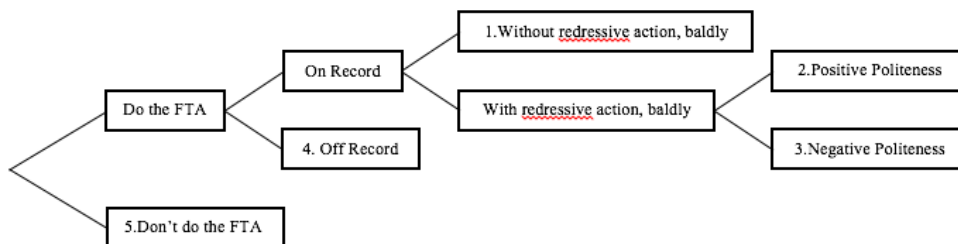
Rai (2017) in his study in the scope of hotels in Bali adds that the practice of politeness strategy is also determined by the relationship between the speaker and hearer and the content of their utterances. The rank of R is based on the social distance (D) and the social status (P) of the speaker and hearer. It is further explained that social status makes huge contribution to the choice of strategy applied by the speaker and the hearer. In the situations where R is high, the number of politeness forms is expected to be high. If the social distance is low, the politeness is also low, and if the P of the speaker is higher than the hearer, the politeness form used is expected to be

low. The three propositions proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987) are shown in picture 1 below.

Picture 1 The Concept of PDR by Brown and Levinson (1987)



However, the practice of PDR concept that this article tries to examine is not fully like the one shown in the picture. In other words, the PDR concept by Brown & Levinson is modified based on the needs and the data used. Concept modification is needed in this paper as the type of data used is the utterances used by the Indonesian caregivers when communicating with the elderly in Japan. Another concept from Brown & Levinson is concerning politeness strategy. As put forth by them, politeness strategy can be divided into five types, namely (1) Bald on record that is saying something directly or commonly said as direct strategy, (2) Positive politeness that is talking to someone using positive politeness, (3) Negative politeness that is the strategy used when talking to someone using negative politeness, (4) Off record, that is saying something indirectly, and (5) Don't do the FTA, that is the strategy of saying something by means of silence.



Picture 2: Face Saving Act by Brown and Levinson (in Kristianto, 2017)

3.2 Japanese Respect Language

O' Neill (2008: 9-20) in his book “**Japanese Respect Language**” states that respect language is special form of utterances or writing used in Japanese to show respect towards someone else, and especially used in special things, such as the language used in the temple or palace. The opposite of respect language is neutral language, that is a language that does not need special forms to express respect. Tsujimura (1991, 4-5) further states that there are two major classifications in Japanese speech act, namely respect language (*keigo*) and ordinary language (*futsuukei*). Further, Rahayu (2013:10-130) also gives limitation to *keigo* and its divisions, namely *sonkeigo*, *kenjougo* and *teineigo* as well as *futsuukei*. The divisions of speech level in Japanese can be seen in table 1 below.

Table 1 Speech Levels in Japanese Language

SPEECH LEVEL		EXPLANATION
<i>Futsukei</i>		The language used in non formal situations, between close friends or when the hearer is younger than the speaker, or when the speaker-hearer relationship is superior and inferior.
K e i g o	<i>Sonkeigo</i>	The language used to show respect to the hearers/the people who are the subjects of the conversation for his/her deeds or conditions
	<i>Kenjougo</i>	The language used to lower the deed or condition of the speaker to respect the hearer or the people who are the subjects of the conversation.
	<i>Teineigo</i>	The language used in formal situations (<i>teineigo</i> has exact markers, that is copula <i>desu</i> and <i>~masu</i> with their variations)

Source: Rahayu (2017:13)

Each speech level in Japanese language in the table above is explained as follows (Kikuchi, 1996).

1. **Sonkeigo** is used to respect the hearer. The marker is the addition of the prefix [O/Go~ni narimasu], [~(ra)reru], or the use of special lexicon like *irasshaimasu* to say whether someone comes, goes somewhere, or is available, depending on the context and *meshiagarimasu* to mean to eat or drink.

2. **Kenjougo** is used to respect the hearer by lowering the speaker's deed. The marker of this type is the use of the prefix [O/Go~shimasu] and the use of the verb ~renyoukei + itashimasu/shimasu.
3. **Teineigo** is used in formal situations, very often called formal language. The use of copula [~desu] at the end of an adjective or a noun, the use of the verb type of [~masu/~mashita/~masen/~masen deshita] are the common markers of this speech level.
4. **Futsuukei** or known as ordinary type of language (non formal type) is used when interacting with people of the same or lower level/positions. Sentences without copula and the use of base form of verbs are the markers of this speech level.

4. Results and Discussion

To examine the relationship between PDR concept and politeness strategy applied by the caregivers towards the elderly in the communication process in the domain of care giving towards the elderly, the analysis is presented by displaying the excerpts of the conversations between the caregivers and the elderly.

Utterance Data: D071

Utterance Context
 Speakers :
 The caregiver identity : Bisri, Male, 25 years old (Working period 4,5 years)
 The elderly : Sugihara san, Female, 83 years old
 Setting : Dining room
 Situation : Serving breakfast
 Time : 23 April 2017, 09:00 AM
 Utterance Context : Caregiver (-P), Meeting Intensity (-D), Imposition Level (+R),
 Formal Situation

The utterances :

CGI : ごめんね、ご飯はもうないんですよ。(a)
Gommenne, gohanwamounaindesuyo.
 I am sorry, the rice is finished.

PL : お、
 O
 O

- CGI : うん、もうかわりはもうないんですよ。 (b)
Un, mou kawari wa mou nain desu yo.
 Yes, if you want to have more rice, it is finished already.
- PL : (Silent)
- CGI : また昼ご飯しましょうか (c)
Mata hiru gohan shimashouka
 What about having more rice at lunch
- PL : (Shakes her head)
- CGI: でも、それはもうたくさん撮ってるから、しっかりお召し上がって下さいね (d)
Demo, sore wa mou takusan totteru kara, shikkari o meshi agate kudasai ne.
 But, I took much rice for you already, please enjoy it happily.
- CGI : ごめんね、ちょっと もうご飯はもうないんですよ。 (e)
Gomenne, chotto mou gohan wa mou nain desuyo
 I am sorry, the rice is finished.
- PL : (Nods and smiles).

The analysis:

The excerpt of conversation above took place in formal situation, that is when the caregiver served breakfast to the elderly patient. In the utterances (a-e) the caregiver used the *teineigo* type which is a part of respect language in Japanese (*keigo*). The use of *teineigo* is marked by the use of **desu** and **masu**. As explained previously, the *teineigo* style consists of the use of ~ *masu* at the end of the sentences that contain verbs, and the use of copula~ *desu* and ~ *de gozaimasu* at the end of sentences that contain nouns and adjectives. In tense-marker concept of Japanese language, the copula~ *desu* indicates present tense (*genzaikei*) and future tense (*miraikei*). The type of politeness strategy applied by the caregiver in the conversation above was the negative politeness strategy. As the explanation of Brown & Levinson, in theory the use of respect language is one of the efforts made by the speaker to apply negative politeness strategy. This strategy was used by the caregiver to avoid negative face threatening act towards the elderly patient. In utterance (a) the caregiver gave information to the elderly patient that ‘the rice was finished’. The information was given in polite manner as the caregiver considered the power owned by the elderly patient as the party to whom service was given. The frequent meeting between them did not make the caregiver choose non formal utterance style, as in the utterance context above, the imposition rank (R) was on the caregiver. The caregiver had to give understanding carefully to the elderly patient that ‘the rice was finished’ (utterances a and b),

because, actually, the patient was suffering from diabetes so that the carbohydrate intake had to be precisely measured. The response “shaking head” from the elderly resulted in burden on the caregiver. To response to this, in utterance (c) the caregiver offered the elderly patient to eat rice again at lunch time. The advice of the caregiver in utterance (c) was then strengthened by utterance (d) that the caregiver convinced the elderly patient that the amount of rice taken for her was much. In utterance (e) the information in utterance (a) was repeated so that the patient understood her health condition. The conversation was ended by the patient by nodding her head as a sign that she accepted what was told by the caregiver.

Compare with the following utterances. The setting of the following utterances is the same, namely the dining room, yet the speaker and the hearer are different.

Utterance Data: D015

Utterance Context

Speakers :

The caregiver identity : Rosa, Female , 20 years old (Working period 6 months)

The elderly patient : Takada san, Male, 90 years old

Setting : Dinning room

Situation : Serving lunch

Time : 24 April 2017, 01:00 PM

Utterance Context : Caregiver (-P), Meeting intensity (-D), Imposition Level (+R),

Formal Situation

Utterances :

CGI : おそば どうぞ (a)

O soba douzo

Enjoy the soba, please.

CGI : たかださん、たかださん、たかださん (b)

Takada san, Takada san, Takada san

Mr. Takada, Mr. Takada, Mr. Takada

PL : はい

Hai

Yes

- CGI :眠たい? (c)
Nemutai?
 Are you sleepy?
- PL : 眠い
Nemui
 Yes, I am sleepy

The analysis :

The excerpt of conversation above involved a caregiver and an elderly patient in the dining room in formal situation when the caregiver served lunch to the elderly patient. In utterance (a) the caregiver invited the elderly patient to have the noodle served for him. Utterance (a) was said in polite manner by considering the power owned by the patient as the party to whom service should be given. The frequent meeting between the two did not make the caregiver choose non formal utterance style, as in the context of the conversation, the R level was on the caregiver side as the one who gave service. In utterance (a) the caregiver invited the elderly patient to have the *soba* ‘noodle’ by using the *sonkeigo* utterance style. In Japanese language, morphologically, one marker of the use of *sonkeigo* style is the prefix *O/Go* which is in front of the verb. *O~* is used as a prefix for nouns and follows the *wago* way of reading, that is the way of reading for kanji characters from words that are originally Japanese. The pattern *O+nouns* is used to respect the hearer by giving respect to the items belonging to the hearer. In the conversation excerpt above, *soba* belongs to the elderly patient, hence it is said as *Osoba*. In utterance (b) the caregiver called the elderly patient politely marked by adding *.....~san* behind the name of the hearer. The elderly gave response after being called three times by the caregiver. Calling one’s name a few times or repeating utterances often take place in elderly care as the ability to hear of most of the elderly already decreases and to obtain response for an utterance, the caregiver has to repeat utterances. Both utterances (a and b) display the use of negative politeness strategy, adjusted by the morphological markers in the utterances. A different thing is seen in utterance (c). In utterance (c) the caregiver used *futsuukei*, marked by the omission of the copula *desu* and *gimonshi* (question word) *ka* in question “*Nemutai?*”. The use of utterance in *futsuu* (non formal language) is a characteristic of the application of positive politeness strategy. The shift in the use of

politeness strategy from negative politeness strategy in the beginning of the conversation to positive politeness strategy is possible in the context of elderly care. The shift of strategy used is influenced by the situational context of the utterances when the interaction takes place.

5. Novelties

The novelties of the study are as follow :

1. Even though the caregivers use positive politeness strategies in their communication with the elderly, it does not mean that the caregivers are not polite. Hence, this study rejects the honorific concept of Japanese language that says that when talking with the elderly, as a form politeness, someone has to use the respectful form of the language. The decide whether a speech of an Indonesian caregiver is polite or impolite towards the elderly in Japan depends on the situational context of the speech itself. The choice of using positive politeness as speech strategy does not threat the faces of the elderly as the interlocutors, as in the domain of elderly caregiving. One thing that is wanted by the elderly is for them to be able to communicate comfortably, the way they do at their own home environment.
2. The PDR concept of Brown&Levinson (1978) cannot be applied universally. This concept cannot be applied in the communication aspect in elderly care domain, where the caregivers have lower power and distance compared to the elderly patients.

6. Conclusion

The conclusion that can be drawn from the research is that the PDR concept of Brown&Levinson (1978) cannot be applied universally. This concept cannot be applied in the communication aspect in elderly care domain, where the caregivers have lower power and distance compared to the elderly patients. Among the three variables in the concept, only the level of R (rank of imposition) can be changed. When taking care of the elderly, the caregivers apply either positive or negative politeness strategy, and or apply both of them in one communication process. The determination of politeness strategy by the caregivers are based on situational context of the utterance, language markers and utterance markers.

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Bibliography

Putu Dewi Merlyna Yuda Pramesti, S.S., M.Hum, was born in Singaraja, 25 February 1982 and the first child of three brothers. She completed her undergraduate education at the Japanese Language and Litterature Program, in Faculty of Language and Litterature - Padjadjaran University and completed in 2005. Then in 2006 she continued her studies on the same majors, namely Master Linguistic in Linguistic Magister Program, Udayana University completed in 2008. To improve her competence in linguistics, she continued her doctoral studies in Linguistics Doctorate Program, Udayana University in 2016. Currently, she teaches in the Japanese Language Education Study Program of the Ganesha University of Education in Singaraja- Bali.

Email: dewi.merlyna@undiksha.ac.id