

# TOURISM-SERVICE LANGUAGE: A CROSSCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON POLITENESS

*Budi Purnomo\**

## ABSTRACT

This research aims at analyzing politeness principles, politeness norms and cross-cultural perspectives on politeness in tourism-service language used by tourism industry practitioners in Central Java. The research findings indicate that tourism industry practitioners in Central Java use various politeness principles and norms in serving English speaking tourists, Indonesian speaking tourists and Javanese speaking tourists. The findings also indicate that there are similar and different perspectives on politeness among English speaking tourists whose backgrounds are Western cultures, Indonesian speaking tourists whose backgrounds are Indonesian cultures and Javanese speaking tourists whose backgrounds are Javanese cultures towards the tourism-service language used by tourism industry practitioners in Central Java.

*Keywords: tourism-service language, politeness, cross-cultural perspective.*

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis prinsip kesantunan, norma kesantunan, dan pandangan lintas budaya mengenai kesantunan dalam bahasa layanan wisata yang dipakai oleh pelaku industri wisata di Jawa Tengah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelaku industri wisata di Jawa Tengah memakai berbagai prinsip dan norma kesantunan dalam melayani wisatawan berbahasa Inggris, wisatawan berbahasa Indonesia, dan wisatawan berbahasa Jawa. Hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa ada persamaan dan perbedaan pandangan mengenai kesantunan antara wisatawan berbahasa Inggris yang berlatar belakang budaya Barat, wisatawan berbahasa Indonesia yang berlatar belakang budaya Indonesia, dan wisatawan berbahasa Jawa yang berlatar belakang budaya Jawa terhadap bahasa layanan wisata yang dipakai oleh pelaku industri wisata di Jawa Tengah.

Kata Kunci: bahasa layanan wisata, kesantunan, pandangan lintas budaya.

## INTRODUCTION

As one of the main tourism centers in Indonesia, Central Java is a destination with many places of interest for tourists. Places of interaction between tourists and tourism industry practitioners in this area include the airports, bus stations, train stations, tourist

information centers, travel agencies, hotels, restaurants, places of tourist interest, souvenir shops and excursions. The language tourism industry practitioners use during interaction in these many and varied locations – both verbal and non-verbal – plays an important role in satisfying tourists needs.

\* Staf Pengajar FBS UNS Surakarta.



A basic goal of the tourism industry anywhere in the world is to provide an enjoyable and positive memorable experience for tourists. This can be especially accomplished by tourism service providers who are not only skilful in providing their services, but who also know how to communicate well and use appropriate nuances of politeness.

In the tourism industry, tourists act as guests and tourism service providers act as hosts. As the hosts, tourism service providers serve guests as well as possible in order to ensure the guests' satisfaction. Levels of satisfaction can be determined by the politeness of the hosts' behaviour towards their guests, including the politeness of their "tourism-service language". In this research project, I propose the term "tourism-service language" or *bahasa layanan wisata* as a new term in English and Indonesian which is different from the language of tourism which often refers to foreign language phrases provided for tourists. This research project focuses on the "tourism-service language" of the tourism industry practitioners in Central Java, Indonesia.

Typically tourism industry practitioners will try to act politely and follow politeness principles and norms when serving tourists. In an interaction tourists and tourism service providers will co-operate with each other in order that their speech can flow well, and so that each speaker can understand what they want through each other's utterances. For that purpose, they need cooperative principles which can be described in terms of four maxims, i.e. maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation and maxim of manner (Grice, 1975). Beside cooperative principles, they need other principles, namely politeness principles which have six maxims, i.e. tact maxim, generosity maxim, approbation maxim, modesty maxim, agreement maxim and sympathy maxim (Leech, 1983). Moreover, considered in the light of the host/guest roles of service provider and tourist, communicative interaction would certainly seek to avoid acts that could irritate the hearer's feeling and the interaction would use certain norms to reduce any unhappy feelings on the part of the hearer. In Indonesia, particularly in Central Java, unique politeness conventions can be identified

in comparison with those typically applied in Western countries (European countries, USA and Australia). Poedjosoedarmo (2009) suggests *unggah-ungguh* (politeness norms) as a typical form of Javanese politeness. To describe Western, Indonesian and Javanese politenesses, Chan (1992a) characterizes Western low-context, individualistic cultures and traditional high-context, collectivist Asian cultures.

The practical questions this thesis addresses are: how are the politeness principles in tourism-service language used by tourism industry practitioners in Central Java? Secondly, how are the politeness norms in tourism-service language used by tourism industry practitioners in Central Java? Finally, are there similar and different perspectives on politeness among English speaking tourists whose backgrounds are Western cultures, Indonesian speaking tourists whose backgrounds are Indonesian cultures and Javanese speaking tourists whose backgrounds are Javanese cultures towards tourism-service language used by tourism industry practitioners in Central Java?

## TOURISM-SERVICE LANGUAGE

*Tourism-service language* or *bahasa layanan wisata* is a phrase which consists of three words. The first word is *language* or *bahasa* which is a noun and functions as the nominal head, the second one is *service* or *layanan* which is a noun and functions as the first nominal modifier and the third one is *tourism* or *wisata* which is also a noun and functions as the second nominal modifier.

In English the phrases *service language* and *tourism-service language* and English dictionaries such as The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (1993), Chambers Essential English Dictionary (1995) and Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2004) have not included these terms, instead the separated words are *tourism*, *service* and *language*. Since the phrases *service language* and *tourism-service language* have not been included into the three dictionaries, the writer proposes that in the future editions those dictionaries could include



these phrases. The writer proposes that the phrase *service language* be defined as a type of language commonly used by persons who work in hospitality industries (tourism, banking, hospital, etc.) to serve their clients (tourists, guests, customers, patients, etc) and the phrase *tourism-service language* as a type of language commonly used by tourism service providers to serve their tourists.

In Indonesian the phrases *bahasa layanan* and *bahasa layanan wisata* have also not been found, even in the most complete Indonesian dictionary (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia/KBBI), III Edition, has not included these terms. Instead the words *tourism*, *service* and *language* are included in separate terms. Since the phrases *bahasa layanan* and *bahasa layanan wisata* have not been included into the Indonesian dictionaries, the writer proposes that in the future editions of the Indonesian dictionaries, in particular the KBBI include these phrases. The definition of the phrase *bahasa layanan* the writer proposes is *ragam bahasa yang lazim dipakai oleh orang yang bekerja pada industri layanan (pariwisata, perbankan, rumah sakit, dsb.) dalam melayani kliennya (wisatawan, tamu, nasabah, pasien, dsb.)* and the phrase *bahasa layanan wisata* is *ragam bahasa yang lazim dipakai oleh pelaku industri wisata dalam melayani wisatawan*.

Tourism-service language is a type of language commonly used by tourism service providers to serve their tourists. According to Astika (2004: 109) and Samiati et. al. (2008: v), the tourism-service language appears in the kinds of conversation between tourists and tourism service providers. This can be classified into (1) receiving reservations, (2) meeting tourists at the airport/railway station/bus station, (3) providing information upon arrival on the way to the hotel, (4) helping tourists with their registration, (5)

handling telephone enquiries, (6) giving directions, (7) giving information about art performances and entertainment, (8) beginning a tour and describing the itinerary, (9) describing points of interest on the tour route, (10) serving meals at restaurants, (11) describing processes used in making art objects (*batik*, leather puppets, *gamelan* instruments, etc.), (12) bargaining for souvenir prices and (13) describing tourist sites.

## POLITENESS PRINCIPLES

Leech (1983) theorizes a model of Interpersonal Rhetoric in which the Cooperative Principles (CP) of Grice stands as one of two primary stanchions that support the bridge of communication. The other stanchion, equal in important to Gricean CP is the Politeness Principles (PP). Leech sees the PP as rescuing the CP in that where the CP explains how people create implicatures in communication by deviating from or transgressing a tacitly expected norm, the PP can explain why people deviate from communicating completely in accordance with the norm (Grice's CP). In this way, argues Leech, CP and PP are complementary and necessary.

Leech (1983) uses Grice's principles and maxims as the basis of his approach. He has, however, elaborated his model to include politeness maxims and a set of rules, which accompany the maxims and are used to determine the degree of interaction between the maxims in a particular situation. Leech states that with all other things being equal one should, 'Minimize the expression of impolite beliefs; maximize the expression of polite beliefs' (Leech, 1983: 81). Summarizing further, Leech subdivides the Politeness Principles into six maxims which he later renames and expands as 'constraints' (2005), as shown in Table 1 below.



Table 1 Leech's Politeness Maxims and Sub-Maxims (Leech, 1983:32)

Maxim/Constraint	Positive Politeness	Negative Politeness
I. <b>Tact</b>	(a) Minimize cost to other	(b) Maximize benefit to other
II. <b>Generosity</b>	(a) Minimize benefit to self	(b) Maximize cost to self
III. <b>Approbation</b>	(a) Minimize dispraise of other	(b) Maximize praise to other
IV. <b>Modesty</b>	(a) Minimize praise of self	(b) Maximize dispraise of self
V. <b>Agreement</b>	(a) Minimize disagreement between self and other	(b) Maximize agreement between self and other
VI. <b>Sympathy</b>	(a) Minimize antipathy between self and other	(b) Maximize sympathy between self and other

According to Leech, the PP's maxims are further divided into sub-maxims. Here the sub-maxim (identified as the (a) sub-maxims above) is what Leech calls 'Positive Politeness'. The second sub-maxim (identified as square-bracketed (b) sub-maxims above) is what Leech calls 'Negative Politeness' (as opposed to Brown and Levinson's (1987) rather different use for these terms). Leech argues that the 'Positive Politeness' sub maxim in each case is more important than the 'Negative Politeness' sub maxim within interaction. Taking the tact maxim, for example, minimizing the cost to other is, generally, held to be more important than maximizing the benefit to other. Furthermore, these PP maxims tend to be paired according to pragmatic scales (Leech, 1983: 123). The Tact and Generosity maxims are paired together as they deal with a bipolar 'cost-benefit' scale; the maxims of Approbation and Modesty are paired together as they also deal with a bipolar scale: the 'praise-dispraise' scale. The remaining two maxims are paired as they deal with discrete but linked unipolar scales, the scales of agreement and sympathy respectively.

## POLITENESS NORMS

One of the major approaches to politeness in Indonesia is Poedjosoedarmo's (2009) theory of *unggah-ungguh* 'politeness norms' (an extension of "Language etiquette in Indonesia, 1978). This model is not meant to be a principle of universal language propriety, though the maxims, principles and strategies as proposed by Grice, Leech and Brown and Levinson are

paid attention to, and many of the points do agree with his theory.

Different from the situation in Western countries where the typical person is monolingual, most Javanese people are now bilingual, speaking Javanese and Indonesian. For some of them who work as tourism industry practitioners in Central Java, they are multilingual, speaking Javanese, Indonesian, English and other foreign languages. Besides, the Javanese language makes use of distinct speech levels, which means distinct speech codes, which therefore reflect a slightly different practice of politeness in Indonesia, especially in Central Java from those adhered to by the Western people. Poedjosoedarmo (2009: 1) explains the Javanese term *unggah-ungguh* (politeness norms) as a typical politeness of Javanese people. The norms are in the forms of idioms or set phrases which most parents and teachers actually use when they educate their children/students. Some are in the forms of positive advice (using positive idioms) and others are in the forms of prohibition (using negative imperative *aja* 'don't' do this or that).

The followings are the idioms and set of phrases actually used by parents and educators according to Poedjosoedarmo (2009: 2-7):

In a social communication, a speaker has to be *sumanak* (from the stem *sanak* 'family' plus infix *-um-*). One should try to treat his interlocutor as *sanak* 'relative, family', so the communication can be very smooth. With this friendly acceptance of friendship, an acquaintance will feel at ease, and a good social relation will prevail.

On the other hand, when he/she becomes the addressee, he/she should then be *tanggap*



'responsive' or *tanggap ing sasmita* 'responsive toward the finest sign' of the addresser. When somebody wants to converse with him/her, he/she should be *nggatekake*, which means he/she should care to pay attention to what he/she says, and ready to respond to him/her. He/she should not only pay attention to the actual words the addresser has uttered, but to the gestures accompanying the speech as well. In addition, it is advisable to be *sumeh*, showing a cheerful face while engaging in a conversation. It is not good to be *mrengut* 'frowning or showing a sour face'.

*Sabar* 'patient' and *sareh* 'calm and easy' are attributes that are good to be observed in many occasions, especially when talking to somebody. During a conversation, one must not *gampang nesu* 'get easily angry', *gampang muntab* 'get hot temper' and *mutungan* 'easily feeling broken, frustrated'. Parents often say *aja ladak* 'don't be quarrelsome', *aja nyenyengit* 'don't be hateful', *aja galak* 'don't be vicious', and *aja kumaki* 'don't be cocky, don't be a brag'.

When a person is talking to an addressee, there are three idioms usually used: *tepa slira*, *andhap asor* and *ngajeni*. When the interlocutor is someone of the lower status than his/her own, he/she should act *tepa slira*. This may mean 'position oneself at the place of the addressee'. To be brief, it can be translated as 'be considerate'. In other words, it is 'showing a feeling of sympathy or solidarity'. If the interlocutor is not able to speak Indonesian well, join him/her in using Javanese. If the interlocutor does not speak the respectful or high *krama* well, join him/her in using the *madya* (middle, moderate) level. If the interlocutor does not know how to express the idioms of gratefulness and complementation in a nice way, just accept it. One has to be *momot*, which means 'accommodating'.

When the second person (P2) is someone from the same higher social status than the first person (P1), P1 should be *andhap asor*. This literally means 'low and humble'. P1 should give P2 the high respect. P1 may speak to P2 in a respectful code, using high polite *krama* (the polite level) when P1 wants to show distant relation, or *ngoko* (ordinary level) with honorific vocabulary if

P1 wants to be intimate with P2. If P2 speaks to P1 in Indonesian, he/she can respond accordingly, using polite Indonesian. In terms of the content, P1 should give appreciation and complementation to P2 when the situation is right. P1 must *ngajeni*, meaning 'giving high respect, proper appreciation'. P1 must give P2 complementation whenever the opportunity is right.

When P1 wants to initiate a conversation, P1 must see to it that his/her topic and objective agree with the principle of *empan papan*. This literally means 'agree with the setting and occasion'. It must suit the speech event and agree with the mood of P2. For example, P1 should not try to collect the debt from the addressee while attending a wedding party, or during a funeral ceremony. P1 should not blame P2 for having been lazy at the time when P2 just found out that he/she failed his/her exam and was very upset.

When P1 wants to speak, there is a principle he/she should observe, viz. *nuju prana*. It literally means 'pleasing the heart' of the addressee. It includes the way he/she enunciates the words, the sequence of the sentences in the discourse, and the content of the message. The speech must be delivered with good enunciation, pleasing intonation and nice tempo. Everything must *resep* 'pleasing' or *ngresepake* 'causing pleasant feeling'. The speech must be delivered in a *sareh* 'reasy, calm' and *cetha* 'clear, distinct' way.

From the above explanation, it can be inferred that there are six politeness norms as stated by Poedjosoedarmo (2009): (1) *Sumanak* 'Friendly', (2) *Sabar lan sareh* 'Patient and with ease, calm', (3) *Tepa slira* 'Showing a feeling of sympathy or solidarity', (4) *Andhap asor* 'Giving a high respect, appropriate appreciation', (5) *Empan papan* 'Matches with the setting and occasion' and (6) *Nuju prana* 'Pleasing, satisfying'.

## CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON POLITENESS

Almost all linguistic research views politeness as a universal feature of civilized societies, regardless of their background culture, or their language. Politeness is thus seen as an important



social value, inherent to successful communication, although its realization may vary across the different speech communities. Politeness offers a good method of emotional control of the individual (House and Kasper, 1981: 158), and is typically a means of preserving and maintaining good social relationships between the speakers of one or more cultures. Polite behavior generally protects the individual, as well as their addressee.

The verbal realization of politeness poses even greater problems when the interlocutors belong to different cultures and try to communicate, transferring their pragmatic knowledge of polite behavior into the foreign language. Lack of practice and or a learners' uncertainty in rendering correctly the grammatical structures of foreign language in the first place often lead to misunderstandings, or the so-called 'sociopragmatic failures' (Thomas, 1983), that is errors resulting from non-native speakers not knowing what to say or not saying the appropriate things as a result of transferring incongruent social rules, values and belief systems from their native languages and cultures. These types of errors are likely to cause a downright insult for both the non-native and the native speakers of a certain language, or with native speakers misunderstanding and misinterpreting the intentions of the non-native speakers, and the non-native speakers becoming over-sensitive to 'distinctions of grammatical form' (Brown and Levinson, 1978: 35), in a way the native speakers are not. In any case, being polite is essential to maintaining healthy social relations within a specific culture, and even more so, for the communication across cultures.

The work in intercultural and cross-cultural communication draws on general communication theory and is concerned with comparing cultural differences across such broad dimensions as individual/collective, personal/positional or even more generally as high versus low context cultures (Hofstede, 1994). In this tradition, attitude surveys are used to construct general statements about a national group. For example, Japan is said to have a high context culture (dependence on implicit assumptions and shared values) whereas America is said to be a low context culture (one in which roles and relationships are more explicitly negotiated) (Roberts et al. 2001: 32). Cross-cultural communication offers a wide field for research, as the sociopragmatic failure of one speaker of a certain community tends to be stereotyped for the whole community (Knapp-Pothoff, 1992: 203), consequently labeling a nation as rude, over-polite, insincere, etc. For instance, one is often confronted with statements like 'Russians are rude', 'The English are hypocrites', 'Japanese bow a lot', all of them resulting from a superficial comparison between the own pragmatic knowledge and the politeness strategies of the foreign culture.

Cultural differences have particular implications for intercultural communication, especially for interactions involving people whose backgrounds are one of the Asian cultures and for Australians (Irwin, 1996: 53). Chan (1992a: 252) has offered a summary of differences in expression of communication style between traditional high-context, collectivist Asian cultures and low-context, individualistic cultures such as Australia as in the following table.

Table 2 Contrasting Communication Styles

Characteristics of traditional Asian high-context, collectivist cultures	Characteristics of low-context, individualistic cultures such as Australia
Indirect	Direct
Implicit, nonverbal	Explicit, verbal
Formal	Informal
Goal oriented	Spontaneous
Emotionally controlled	Emotionally expressive
Self-effacing, modest	Self-promoting, egocentric



## RESEARCH METHOD

This study is of a qualitative and descriptive nature. It uses five techniques for collecting data: (1) observation and field notes, (2) recordings, (3) questionnaire, (4) in-depth interviewing and (5) document analysis. The observation was done in an airport, tourist information centers, travel agencies, hotels, restaurants, places of interest, souvenir shops and excursions where the tourism service providers and the tourists made speech acts during their interaction. During the observation, the researcher took field notes. The field notes were written to complement the observation. In this research the recordings of informants were done to naturally. It means that they were not aware of being recorded. The recording was done by using a small tape recorder which has very high recording quality.

The purpose of using the questionnaire was to obtain information about politeness levels of tourism service language as used by the tourism service providers based on the tourists' perception. From the 200 questionnaires distributed to tourists and then completed by them, the researcher selected them and found 120 which were considered representative. From these 120, 50 completed by English speaking tourists and 70 by the Indonesian speaking tourists. The 50 English speaking tourists came from Great Britain (10 persons), USA (20 persons) and Australia (20 persons). The 70 Indonesian speaking tourists came from various provinces, including Central Java Province.

Interviews were undertaken by the researcher with tourism service providers to elicit the reasons why they used particular politeness principles and norms during their interaction with the tourists. In this research the researcher analyzed documents of standard operation procedures (SOP) for tourism service providers to serve tourists produced by tourism industries in Central Java. The purpose in analyzing SOP documents is to know whether politeness is included in the standard of serving tourists.

The research had been undertaken for eight months, between September 2009 to May 2010.

## ANALYSIS

Data analysis for this research were undertaken in four steps: (1) sorting data corpus by giving data number, context and content of conversation; (2) analyzing data based on parameter of politeness principles (Leech, 1983) which comes from Western nuanced politeness theory; (3) analyzing data based on parameter of *unggah-ungguh* 'politeness norms' (Poedjo-soedarmo, 2009) which comes from Javanese nuanced politeness theory and (4) analyzing data based on parameter of cross-cultural perspectives on politeness (Chan, 1992a). The total amount of the analyzed data was 127 data. The following are some examples of the data analysis in this research.

### Data (1) Context: Conversation between a receptionist (R) and a walk-in guest (G) in Kusuma Sahid Prince Hotel

- R : Good evening, Sir. May I help you?  
 G : Hallo. I have poor eyesight. Can you fill in the form for me?  
 R : Yes, certainly Sir. Can I have your name?  
 G : John Davis.  
 R : Mr. John Davis. Now, can you give me your passport number?  
 G : It's zero nine two zero four seven eight.  
 R : Right. I'm sorry, how are you going to pay? By cheque? By credit card?  
 G : Err ... by credit card ... Visa.  
 R : Very good Mr. Davis. Now, I've put you in Room 119, on the first floor.  
 G : Okay.

In the first, second, third and fifth underlined expressions, the receptionist *ngajeni* 'gives a high respect' to the guest by using honorific words 'Sir' and 'Mr' in his utterances. Furthermore, in first, second, third and fourth underlined expressions, he offers assistance, asks the name, the passport number and the method of payment to the guest humbly and politely. In other words, the receptionist uses polite level to show distant relation. Therefore, the receptionist's utterances *Good evening, Sir. May I help you?; Yes, cer-*



tainly Sir; Can I have your name?; Mr. John Davis. Now, can you give me your passport number?; Right. I'm sorry, how are you going to pay? By cheque? By credit card? and Very good Mr. Davis. Now, I've put you in Room 119, on the first floor follow the Leech's tact maxim (minimize Hearer costs, maximize Hearer benefit) and generosity maxim (minimize your own benefit, maximize your H's benefit) as well as Poedjosoedarmo's *andhap asor* (giving a high respect, appropriate appreciation).

Both foreign and domestic tourists stated that the R's utterances *Can I have your name?* 'Bisa minta nama Bapak?'; *Now, can you give me your passport number?* 'Sekarang, bolehkan saya tahu nomor paspor Bapak?' and *I am sorry, how are you going to pay? By cheque? By credit card?* 'Maaf, bagaimana cara pembayarannya? Dengan cek? Dengan kartu kredit?' have a polite level.

In the English, Indonesian and Javanese speaking tourists' cultures, changing an order expression into a request expression makes it more polite. Thus, the request expression *Now, can you give me your passport number?* 'Sekarang, bolehkan saya tahu nomor paspor Bapak?' is more polite than the order expression *Give me your passport number!* 'Berikan nomor paspor Bapak!'. Besides that, to ask something politely, the utterance *I am sorry* is commonly used in the English, Indonesian and Javanese speaking tourists' cultures. Furthermore, the question *how are you going to pay?* is a polite expression which lets the guest to decide by himself. Moreover, the utterances *By cheque? By credit card?* are the polite expressions to help the guest to decide because he looks confused with what kind of payment he wants to use.

**Data (2) Context: Conversation between a male receptionist (R) and a female hotel guest (G) in front of reception counter of Pramesthi Hotel during check-out service. The guest has appropriated certain hotel belongings**

- G : Why should I pay for these items?  
 R : Yes, Madam. This bill is for two night stay, this is for food and this is for laundry.  
 G : But why you include two kinds of souvenir from this hotel? What do they mean?  
 R : All right, Madam. For guests who want to have souvenirs in guestroom, we charge them the same price as in souvenir shops. (R hands documents to G) So, please check this price list. For this item we charge five dollars and this one ten dollars.  
 G : Oh, umm ... okay. Do you mean you charge fifteen dollars for the towels in my bag?  
 R : You're right, Madam.  
 G : Why don't you put this price list in my room? I thought they're free of charge.

Based on the parameter of politeness principles, the receptionist's utterance "*All right, Madam. For guests who want to have souvenirs in guestroom, we charge them the same price as in souvenir shops. So, please check this price list. For this item we charge five dollars and this one ten dollars*" follows the Leech's tact maxim which means minimize cost to the hearer and maximize benefit to the hearer. Although the guest is proven to have taken hotel belongings (a hand towel and a bath towel) that can be categorized a criminal act, the receptionist just asks her to pay them, not reports to security department or police department.

Based on the parameter of politeness norms, it can be seen that by indicating to the guest that guests who want to have souvenirs from guestrooms can pay for them at the same price as in souvenir shops in fact the receptionist is hinting to the guest that she has taken hotel belongings. By that hint it is expected that the guest be *tanggap ing sasmita* 'responsive toward the finest sign'. As a Javanese, the receptionist still *ngajeni* 'treats her with respect' because in the hospitality industry the guest is the king. The problem solving expected by the receptionist, and also by the guest is *ing buri tiba penake* 'a happy outcome'. In other words, the receptionist has applied the Poedjosoedarmo's *tepa slira* 'showing a feeling of sympathy or solidarity'

Based on the parameter of cross-cultural perspective on politeness, English speaking guest



wants the receptionist to answer directly why she should pay the hotel souvenir. On the other hand, with the high-context language, the receptionist answers indirectly and formally by stating the general rules of the hotel concerning the hotel's belongings. In the low-context culture, speaking indirectly and implicitly does not satisfy the hearer. Unlike the English speaking guest, the Indonesian and Javanese speaking guest has the same culture as the receptionist, i.e. high-context, collectivist culture. Indonesian people, especially the Javanese like to speak indirectly if they have a different opinion/conflict with a respected/high social status person. In the context of host-guest relationship, the guest has higher social status than the receptionist. Moreover the receptionist who has lower social status would like to try to speak formally and modestly as a sign of deference. In the tradition of collectivist culture, people would like to end the conflict in harmony.

**Data (3) Context: Conversation between a reservation clerk (C) of Nusantara Tours and a caller/tourist (T) through telephone**

- T : *Apa masih ada tiket pesawat ke Jakarta untuk besok pagi?* 'Do you have any tickets to Jakarta for tomorrow morning?'
- C : *'Tunggu sebentar ... Ya. Ada satu untuk jam setengah delapan dan satunya lagi untuk setengah sembilan.'* 'One moment, please ... Yes. There's a ticket for seven thirty and one for eight thirty.'
- T : *Baiklah.* 'That's fine.'
- C : *'Yang mau Bapak pesan kelas ekonomi, bisnis, atau eksekutif?'* 'Do you want an economy, business or executive ticket?'
- T : *Ekonomi saja. Berapa harganya?* Economy please. How much?
- C : *Tiga ratus empat puluh ribu.* 'That would be three hundreds and forty thousands.'
- T : *Baiklah. Bisa saya pesan sekarang?* 'OK. Can I make a reservation?'
- C : *Tentu saja. Untuk penerbangan jam berapa?'* 'Certainly. Which flight would you like?'
- T : *Delapan tiga puluh.* 'The eight thirty'.
- C : *Bisa minta nama Bapak?'* 'Can I have your name, please?'

- T : *Dwipa Nugroho.* 'Dwipa Nugroho.'
- C : *Bapak Dwipa Nugroho. Sistem pembayarannya mau bagaimana, pak?* 'Mr. Dwipa Nugroho. How would you like to pay, Sir?'
- T : *Bisa bayar lewat transfer bank?* 'Can I pay by bank transfer?'
- C : *Bisa, dan tolong bukti transfernya nanti difaks ke nomor faks kami kosong dua tujuh empat tujuh dua delapan empat lima satu.* 'Yes, and please fax the transfer receipt to our fax number zero two seven four seven two eight four five one.'

In the first underlined expressions, the reservation clerk answers the tourist patiently by requesting him to wait for a moment while she is checking the available flights. Chronologically in the second, fourth, fifth and sixth underlined expressions, the clerk asks the tourist politely about the type of ticket he wants, the time of flight he likes, his name and the type of payment he wants to do in *runtut* 'ordered in good sentences'. In the third underlined expression she mentions the rate of the ticket and in the last underlined expression she agrees the type of payment asked by the guest and then requests him to send the transfer receipt to the fax number indicated in a *cetha* 'clear, distinct' way and *cekak aos* 'brief but comprehensive'. Therefore, it can be inferred that the clerk's utterances *One moment, please ... Yes. There's a flight at seven thirty and one at eight thirty, Do you want an economy, business or first class ticket?; That would be four hundreds and fifty US dollars; Certainly. Which flight would you like?; Can I have your name, please?; Mr. Dwipa Nugroho. How would you like to pay, sir? and Yes, and please fax the transfer receipt to our fax number zero two seven four seven two eight four five one* follow the Leech's tact maxim (minimize Hearer cost, maximize Hearer benefit) and agreement maxim (maximize agreement to the hearer and minimize disagreement to the hearer) as well as Poedjosoedarmo's *sabar lan sareh* (patient and with ease, calm).

Both foreign and domestic tourists stated that the C's utterance *Bisa minta nama Bapak?'* 'Could I have your name, please?' has a polite level. Furthermore, they also stated that the C's



utterance *Pembayarannya bagaimana, pak?* 'How would you like to pay, sir?' has a polite level.

Either in the English speaking tourists' culture or in the Indonesian and Javanese speaking tourists' cultures, the use of indirect questions is considered to be more polite, especially to persons they have not familiar with. Thus the utterance *Could I have your name, please?* 'Bisa minta nama Bapak?' is more polite than *What is your name* 'Siapa nama Bapak?' or *Your name, please?* 'Nama Bapak?'. Another similarity is that questions which let the tourists to have freedom of action are more liked by them. Thus, the utterance *Pembayarannya bagaimana, pak?* 'How would you like to pay, sir?' is more polite than *Bapak ingin membayar dengan tunai atau dengan kartu kredit?* 'Do you want to pay by cash or by credit card?'

**Data (4) Context: Conversation between a receptionist (R) and a guest (G) in Hotel Sahid Jaya Solo**

- G : *Kamar yang biasa saya pesan lagi vacant nggak, Mbak?* 'Is the room I usually stay vacant, Miss?'  
R : *Oh yang menghadap ke taman itu to, Pak? Sebentar saya cek ... Maaf masih dipakai tamu lain itu, Pak.* 'Oh the one faces the park, Sir? One moment, I'll check ... Sorry, still used by another guest, Sir.'  
G : *Terus kamar yang sejenis dengan itu ada nggak?* 'So, is there a similar room available for me?'  
R : *Ada Pak. Ini malah lebih bagus ... menghadap kolam renang. Tapi harganya lebih mahal sedikit.* 'Yes, Sir. The room is better ... faces the swimming pool. But the rate is little bit more expensive.'  
G : *Mbok dibuat sama dengan kamar yang saya pakai gitu lho?* 'Why not to make it the same rate as the room I used to stay?'  
R : *Mm ... ya sudah lah, karena Bapak pelanggan kami, saya berikan harga yang sama dengan kamar yang menghadap taman.* 'Mm ... it's ok. Because you are our customer, I charge it as same as the one faces to the park.'

In the underlined expression, R maximizes agreement with other. To respond the G's request about the rate for the room faces the swimming

pool, R answers that she will give it the same price as the room faces the park. Although the former is more expensive than the latter, the R's consideration to charge it the same is because G is a hotel customer or a repeater. In other words, it can be inferred that the R's expression *Mm ... ya sudah lah, karena Bapak pelanggan kami, saya berikan harga yang sama dengan kamar yang menghadap taman* 'Mm ... it's ok. Because you are our customer, I charge it as same as the one faces to the park' follows the Leech's agreement maxim (maximize agreement to the hearer and minimize disagreement to the hearer).

In the underlined expression, the receptionist pleases the guest's heart. Although the actual rate for the room faces the swimming pool is more expensive than one faces the park, he will charge it the same because the guest is one of the hotel customers. In other words, the utterance he expresses *ngresepake* 'causing pleasant feeling'. Moreover, the content of the message is *cekak aos* 'brief but comprehensive'. Therefore, it can be inferred that the receptionist's expression *Mm ... ya sudah lah, karena Bapak pelanggan kami, saya berikan harga yang sama dengan kamar yang menghadap taman* 'Mm ... it's ok. Because you are our customer, I charge it as same as the one faces to the park' follows the Poedjosoedarmo's *nuju prana* (pleasing, satisfying).

From a cross-cultural perspective, either in foreign tourists' hospitality culture or in domestic tourists' hospitality culture, it is common to treat a customer (repeater) more specially than a new guest. In hotel industry, kinds of special treatment could be in the forms of giving special discount, complimentary or upgrading a room from lower class to higher class that will satisfy the guest.

**Data (5) Context: Conversation between a souvenir seller (S) and a tourist (T) in Windujenar Antique Market**

- T : *Gantungan kunci ini satunya berapa, Mas?* 'How much is this key handle, brother?'  
S : *Lima ribu, Bu.* 'Five thousands rupiahs, Madam.'



- T : *Kalau saya beli banyak bisa kurang harganya? 'If I buy many pieces, can you reduce the price?'*
- S : *Wah itu sudah murah, Bu. Mau beli berapa biji? 'Mmm, that's already cheap, Madam. How many pieces you want to buy?'*
- T : *Lima puluh. Ada bonusnya satu dua biji? 'Fifty pieces. Is there one or two pieces for bonus?'*
- S : *Untuk ibu saya kasih lebih. Tiap pembelian sepuluh bonusnya satu biji. Jadi untuk ibu bonusnya lima biji. 'For you I'll give more. One piece bonus for each ten pieces you buy. So, I give you five pieces bonus.'*

From the underlined expressions uttered by S, it is clearly known that S is trying to maximise benefit to T by minimising his own benefit. It is done by stating that he will give one piece of souvenir as a bonus for each ten pieces of souvenir bought by T. By bargaining, it is common in souvenir shops in Central Java that sellers will give bonus to buyers who buy souvenirs in big quantity. The bigger the quantity of souvenir they buy, the more bonuses they will get. Based on the above analysis, it can be inferred that the souvenir seller's utterances *Untuk ibu saya kasih lebih. Tiap pembelian sepuluh bonusnya satu biji. Jadi untuk ibu bonusnya lima biji* 'For you I'll give more. One piece bonus for each ten pieces you buy. So, I give you five pieces bonus' follow the Leech's generosity maxim (minimize your own benefit; maximize your Hearer benefit).

In the underlined expressions, the souvenir seller pleases the tourist's heart. The utterance *untuk Ibu saya kasih lebih* is *ngresepake* 'causing pleasant feeling'. The way she enunciates the words in the following sentences, the sequence of the sentences in the discourse and the content of the message are *runtut* 'ordered in good sentences' and *cekak aos* 'brief but comprehensive'. Therefore, it can be inferred that the seller's utterances *Untuk Ibu saya kasih lebih. Tiap pembelian sepuluh bonusnya satu biji. Jadi untuk Ibu bonusnya lima biji* 'For you I'll give more. One piece bonus for each ten pieces you buy. So, I give you five pieces bonus' follow the Poedjosoedarmo's *nuju prana* (pleasing, satisfying).

The foreign tourists stated that the S's utterance 'For you I'll give more. One piece bonus for each ten pieces you buy. So, I give you five pieces bonus' has a normal level, but the domestic tourists stated that the S's utterance *Untuk ibu saya kasih lebih. Tiap pembelian sepuluh bonusnya satu biji. Jadi untuk ibu bonusnya lima biji* has a polite level. In the English speaking tourists' culture, it is normal for a buyer who buys merchandizes in wholesaler will get a discount. Although the discount is commonly applied to the souvenir price, for instance by reducing 2.5% to 5% of the rate, giving bonus as a substitution of discount is acceptable. On the other hand, in the Indonesian and Javanese speaking tourists' cultures, giving more bonus (5 pieces) than expected (1 or 2 pieces) is an action which satisfies the buyer's feeling. Moreover, the way the seller expresses is polite.

#### Data (6) Context: Conversation between a souvenir seller (S) and a tourist (T) in Kauman Batik Village

- S : *Ngersake napa, Den? 'What do you want, Madam?'*
- T : *Namung badhe ningali batik. 'I just want to see batik.'*
- S : *Mangga .... Ingang alus napa biasa? 'Please ... you want the soft or the ordinary?'*
- T : *Ingang biasa mawon, Bu. 'The ordinary, please.'*
- S : (S hands the batik samples to T). *Mangga kantun milih. Mangke pilihan warnanipun kathah. 'Please choose by yourself. There are many color choices.'*
- T : *Ingang niki pinten regine? 'How much for this?'*
- S : *Niku kangge bukaan dhasa nggih ... pitung dasa gangsal ewu mawon. 'That's for opening ... just seventy five thousands.'*
- T : *Menawi kawan dasa ewu dos pundi? 'How about forty thousands?'*
- S : *Wah dereng nderek. Kulakanipun kemawon dereng pikantuk. 'Mm no ... it's under the buying price.'*
- T : *Menawi kawan dasa gangsal dos pundi pun? 'How about forty five?'*



S : Nggih sampun ... menawi panjenengan kersa ... seket ewu kemawon kados regi bakul. 'Well ... if you want it ... fifty thousands as the buying price.'

In the first underlined expression, the souvenir seller tries to minimize disagreement to the tourist by giving a reason why she does not agree with the tourist's bargain. In other words, the S's utterance *Wah dereng nderek. Kulakanipun kemawon dereng pikantuk* 'Mm no ... it's under the buying price' follows the Leech's agreement maxim. In the second underlined expression, S tries to maximize benefit to T by offering her the buying price as the last price. In other words, it can be inferred that the S's utterance *Nggih sampun ... menawi panjenengan kersa ... seket ewu kemawon kados regi bakul* 'Well ... if you want it ... fifty thousands as the buying price' follows the Leech's tact maxim.

Analyzed by politeness norms, refusing something directly is not considered *ngresepake* 'causing pleasant feeling' in some Indonesian cultures and Javanese culture. That is why the souvenir seller utters *Wah dereng nderek* instead of *Mboten saged* or *Mboten tawis* to express *resep* 'pleasing'. Moreover, to close the bargaining, S expresses statement *Nggih sampun ... menawi panjenengan kersa ... seket ewu kemawon kados regi bakul* which is *cekak aos* 'brief but comprehensive'. In other words, it can be inferred that both underlined expressions uttered by S follow Poedjosoedarmo's *nuju prana* 'pleasing, satisfying'.

Both the foreign and domestic tourists stated that the S's utterance *Wah dereng nderek. Kulakanipun kemawon dereng pikantuk* 'Mm no ... it's under the buying price' has a normal level. Furthermore, both the foreign and domestic tourists also stated that the S's utterance *Nggih sampun ... menawi panjenengan kersa ... seket ewu kemawon kados regi bakul* 'Well ... if you want it ... fifty thousands as the buying price' has a normal level.

In the English speaking tourists' culture, the utterance *Mm no ... it's under the buying price* is normal because it gives a reflection to the tourist

to understand that her bargain is too low. Similarly, in the Indonesian and Javanese speaking tourists' cultures, the utterance *Wah mboten nderek. Kulakanipun kemawon dereng pikantuk* is also normal because it seems that by selling the souvenir with the buying price the seller will not get profit. Furthermore, the utterance *Well, fifty thousands as the buying price* is normal in the English speaking tourists' culture because tourists do not care about the seller's price whether it is a buying price or a selling price. The most important one is the dealing price. On the other hand, the utterance *Nggih sampun ... menawi panjenengan kersa ... seket ewu kemawon kados regi bakul* is also normal in the Indonesian and Javanese speaking tourists' culture because it gives options to the tourist either she wants to buy it or not.

**Data (7) Context: Conversation between a tour guide (G) and a tourist (T) at Mangkunegaran Palace**

G : *Bapak Ibu, kita sampun dumugi gerbang luwar Istana Mangkunegaran. Makaten ingkang saged dalem aturaken. Mugi-mugi Bapak Ibu remen ing penggalih. Menawi wonten kekiranganipun dalem salebeting mandu panjenengan sedaya, dalem nyuwun gunging pangapunten.* 'Ladies and gentlemen, we have arrived at the exit gate of Mangkunegaran Palace. That was the information I can provide about this palace. Hopefully you are pleased with it. I apologize if I could not satisfy you during the guiding.'

T : *Matur nuwun, Mbak Ifah. Kita sedaya rumaos remen dipun pandu dening panjenengan.. Panjenengan kagungan wawasan sae sanget babagan istana punika.* 'Thank you Miss Ifah. We are satisfied guided by you. You're very knowledgeable about this palace.'

G : *Njih sami-sami. Punika sampun dados kewajiban kawulo.* 'You're welcome. It has become my duty.'

In the first underlined expression, G is trying to maximize dispraise of self. She realizes that she is not a perfect tour guide, so that she apolo-



gizes if she could not satisfy the tourists during her guiding service. In other words, it can be inferred that the tour guide's expression *Menawi wonten kekiranganipun dalem salebeting mandu panjenengan sedaya, dalem nyuwun gunging pangapunten* 'I apologize if I could not satisfy you during the guiding' follows the Leech's modesty maxim (minimize praise of self; maximize dispraise of self). In the second underlined expression, G is trying to minimize praise of self. Although T and his group are pleased of guided by G and praises her by saying that she is a knowledgeable tour guide, G does not respond directly to his praise. As substitute, she expresses that her satisfaction service is a kind of her duty. In other words, it can be inferred that tour guide's utterance *Punika sampun dados kewajiban kawulo* 'It has become my duty' follows the Leech's modesty maxim (minimize praise of self; maximize dispraise of self).

In the first underlined expression, the tour guide shows her 'low and humble' utterances by apologizing if she could not satisfy the tourists during her guiding service. In the second underlined expressions, she is still humble by saying that her satisfaction service felt by the tourist group is a kind of her duty. In other words, she does not act *umuk* 'conceited', *ngunggung diri* 'indulge in showing herself off' and *degsura* 'self-centered'. Therefore, it can be inferred that tour guide's utterances *Menawi wonten kekiranganipun dalem salebeting mandu panjenengan sedaya, dalem nyuwun gunging pangapunten* 'I apologize if I could not satisfy you during the guiding' and *Punika sampun dados kewajiban kawulo* 'It has become my duty' follow the Poedjo-soedarmo's *andhap asor* (giving a high respect, appropriate appreciation).

Analyzed by a cross-cultural perspective, either in the English speaking tourists' culture or in the Indonesian and Javanese speaking tourists' cultures, expressing apology and responding the speaker's praise with utterances showing low profile is considered polite. Besides that, the utterances to express apology and show low profile gives comfortable feeling to the tourists.

## CONCLUSION

This research has been able to answer the three research questions articulated in the Introduction.

First, the tourism industry practitioners in Central Java use various politeness principles in tourism-service language in serving their tourists. The politeness principles they use comprise (1) tact maxim, (2) generosity maxim, (3) approbation maxim, (4) modesty maxim, (5) agreement maxim and (6) sympathy maxim.

Second, the tourism industry practitioners in Central Java use various politeness norms in tourism-service language in serving their tourists. The politeness norms they use comprise (1) *sumanak* 'friendly', (2) *sabar lan sareh* 'patient and with ease, calm' (3) *tepa slira* 'showing a feeling of sympathy or solidarity', (4) *andhap asor* 'giving a high respect, appropriate appreciation', (5) *empan papan* 'matches with the setting and occasion' and (6) *nuju prana* 'pleasing, satisfying'.

Third, there are similar and different perspectives on politeness among English speaking tourists whose backgrounds are Western cultures, Indonesian speaking tourists whose backgrounds are Indonesian cultures and Javanese speaking tourists whose backgrounds are Javanese cultures towards the tourism-service language used by tourism industry practitioners in Central Java.

The research findings also indicate that there is a slight difference of language etiquette in English, Indonesian and Javanese as well. English speaking tourists tend to like tourism industry practitioners to speak directly, explicitly, verbally, informally and spontaneously in their communication. On the other hand, Indonesian speaking tourists and Javanese speaking tourists tend to like tourism industry practitioners to speak indirectly, implicitly, formally, modestly and be emotionally controlled in their communication. Therefore, it can be inferred that the research findings support the Chan's model of contrasting communication styles (1992a) which distinguishes the Western's characteristics of low-context, individualistic cultures and the traditional Asian's high-context, collectivist cultures.



Thanks to Dr. Joost Cote (senior lecturer, Faculty of Arts, Deakin University) who assisted the writer to proofread the syntax and type of structure of this article.

## REFERENCES

- Astika, Gusti. 2004. *Syllabus Design for Tour and Travel Management Department at Satya Wacana University Salatiga: A Policy Research to Develop an Alternative English Syllabus*. Surakarta: Sebelas Maret University.
- Brown, Penelope and Levinson, Stephen C. 1978. "Universals in language usage: Politeness phenomena". In Goody E. (ed.) *Questions and Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chambers Essential English Dictionary*. 1995. Great Britain: Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd.
- Chan, S. 1992a. "Families with Asian roots", eds. E. Lynnh & M. Hanson, *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence: A Guide for Working With Young Children and Their Families*, Paul H. Brookes, Baltimore.
- Grice, Paul H. 1975. "Logic and Conversation". In Peter Cole and Jerry Morgan (eds), *Syntax and Semantics*, vol.3: *Speech Acts*. New York: Academic Press.
- Hofstede, G. 1994. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. London: Harper Collins.
- House, J. and Kasper, G. 1981. "Politeness markers in English and German". In Coulmas F. (ed.) *Conversational Routines*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Irwin, Harry. 1996. *Communicating with Asia: Understanding People and Customs*. New South Wales: Allen & Unwin.
- Knapp, M.L., Hart, R. P., Friedrich, G. W. & Shulman, G. M. 1973. "The rhetoric of goodbye: Verbal and nonverbal correlates of human leave-taking". *Speech Monographs*, vol. 40.
- Leech, Geoffrey. 1983. *Principles of Pragmatics*. New York: Longman Group Limited.
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (New Edition)*. 2004. England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Poedjosoedarmo, Soepomo. 2009. "Language Propriety in Javanese". *Journal Fenomena*, Vol. VI No. 2, March – May 2009. Yogyakarta: Lembaga Penelitian, Sanata Dharma University.
- Pusat Bahasa Depdiknas. 2007. *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Edisi III)*. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka.
- Roberts, Celia et al. 2001. *Language Learners as Ethnographers*. London: Cromwell Press Ltd.
- Samiati, M. Sri, Nurkamto, Joko, and Purnomo, Budi. 2008. *Model Development for Improving English Speaking Skills for Tourism Industry Practitioners in Surakarta and Its Surroundings*. Surakarta: Sebelas Maret University.
- The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. 1993. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Thomas, J. 1995. *Meaning in Interaction: An Introduction to Pragmatics*. London: Longman.