

Educating the Indonesian Language:

A Proposed Verbal Social Project for the National Harmony

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Abstract—This paper presents the exploration of language use pragmatically and to propose educating the Indonesian language as a verbal social project for the national harmony. The word *educating* here is beyond in-classroom teaching-learning process, as it also involves family and societal participation in the project. With the formats of *Distant Indonesian Language (DIL)* and *Close Indonesian Language (CIL)*, this proposition is important to avoid rude situations and awkward situations to different types of hearer. Within the formats, DIL is spoken to superiors, while CIL is spoken to close people. Ineligible use of the two formats may cause either situation to happen, which may lead to interpersonal or social friction, or the national disharmony. The formats have never been researched on nor applied in the Indonesian language education policy so far. The social project in this scheme comprises six phases, namely (1) in-family interaction phase, (2) in-classroom teaching-learning process phase, (3) in-school evaluation phase, (4) in-school re-evaluation phase, (5) in-public verification phase, and (6) in-society selection phase. Each phase in this verbal social project is described and justified for its efficacy to contribute to the national harmony. Theoretically, this research develops the notions of *positive and negative face*, *positive and negative politeness strategies*, *respect and solidarity politeness*, and *politeness and camaraderie*, with elaborated types of hearer. Empirically, this study presents to reduce or to eliminate rude and awkward situations.

Keywords—*Indonesian language; politeness theory; verbal social project; national harmony*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language use is a matter of probabilities [1]. So is the Indonesian language use today. Peoples of Indonesia use language in their everyday life through verbal interactions on the street, at workplaces, in the mass-media, or even in the virtual world. However, cases on hate speech and hoax happen due to their ignorance or probably under knowledge on what is appropriate to say or what is not in public or in private. These cases are rampant and are endangering the social harmony in various aspects of life: socio-cultural, political, religious, or even military. The Indonesian language use today is probably still out of good control, with the expense of threatening or spoiling the interpersonal face or the social face.

Formulating as well as educating the Indonesian language based on theories of politeness is important. The theory of *face* is a center in politeness theories. *Face* refers to the want or the will and every possible affiliation of it in the self of every person [2]. Interpersonal face exists between two people in

interaction, and the social face exists and belongs to an ethnic group of people. The interpersonal face as well as the social face in interactions should always be managed in such a way that politeness is maintained and interpersonal as well as social harmony instills.

In this verbal social project the Indonesian language is pragmatically formulated into *Distant Indonesian Language (DIL)* and *Close Indonesian Language (CIL)*. DIL is spoken to superiors or used in the formal setting, while CIL is spoken to close people or used in the informal setting. The formulation of DIL and CIL is based on the theories of *negative and positive face* [2], *negative and positive politeness strategies* [3], *respect and solidarity politeness* [4], and *politeness and camaraderie* [5]. Meanwhile, the formulation of *superiors* and *close people* is based on the theories of types of hearer with the aspects of *power* and *solidarity* [6].

After the formulation of DIL and CIL is done, dissemination of that formula needs to be carried out. Here comes the educating process. Educating the Indonesian language is a verbal social project in this paper. The project is *verbal* as it involves language, in this sense the Indonesian language, while it is also *social*, as it involves social parties or agents: family, school, community, public, society, and the governments.

This explorative study proposes a verbal social project for educating the Indonesian language for the national harmony. The national harmony here refers to a pleasing combination of different Indonesian peoples talking to, behaving toward, and dealing with one another. This project advocates and develops the six phases for educating the Indonesian language to Indonesian native learners, i.e. (1) in-family interaction phase, (2) in-classroom teaching-learning process phase, (3) in-school evaluation phase, (4) in-school re-evaluation phase, (5) in-public verification phase, and (6) in-society selection phase [1]. The verbal social project involves DIL and CIL elaboration with different ratios of probabilities in language use. Upon completion of the verbal social project, competent Indonesian speakers are expectedly able to reduce or to avoid rude situations or awkward situations, as they are aware of what is appropriate to say and what is not to maintain politeness in public space or private space, hence promoting the national harmony.

II. ISSUES ON FORMALITY, INFORMALITY, AND POLITENESS

Formality is something serious. Formality is when something or someone is serious and correct [7], or, another previous definition, formality refers to high or strict attention to rules, forms, and convention [8], or just attention to rules [9]. Hence, formality suggests three aspects, namely seriousness, correctness, and strict attention to rules, forms, and convention. Formality is distinguished from informality according to the findings of a research [10][11]. Formality refers to report-talk, while informality is of rapport-talk, and both show the stylistic differences between men and women. It is further explained that report-talk functions to present objective information to public, while rapport-talk is private speaking and involves conversations among couples or small, intimate groups [11]. In addition to this, a formal style will be characterized by detachment, precision, and objectivity, but also rigidity and cognitive load; an informal style will be much lighter in form, more flexible, direct, and involved, but correspondingly more subjective, less accurate and less informative [10].

Politeness is something else serious. The word has derived from polite, i.e. (1) behaving in a way that is socially correct and shows understanding of and care for other people's feelings, (2) socially correct rather than friendly [7]. From this source of definition, politeness suggests socially correct behaviors to show understanding of and care for other people's feelings. However, other people to consider here may fall into two categories, e.g. not close people and close people, or superiors and subordinates, as the theory of power and solidarity [6] suggests. Issues on formality and politeness are interesting to bring up together, and that is why linguists and researchers around the world have made accounts on this relationship. Formality and politeness have been frequently treated as equivalent [12]. However, formality is a multidimensional phenomenon and hard to define, largely because it subsumes many factors including familiarity, seriousness, and politeness [12].

Concerning informality, we need to give special account on this. This concept is not easy to define in linguistics. A borrowing from the economy context, the term informal was coined by Keith Hart in his article on informal income opportunities in Ghana, while the 1972 ILO report on employment and poverty in Kenya was the starting point of the subsequent notoriety of the informal sector [13]. In previous accounts, the concept of informality may refer to heterogeneity and inconsistencies, which is realized in terms of: non-observed, irregular, unofficial, second, hidden, shadow, parallel, subterranean, informal, cash economy, black market, unmeasured, unrecorded, untaxed, non-structured, petty production, and unorganized [14]. In line with this concept, it is asserted that informality is a term that has the dubious distinction of combining maximum policy importance and political salience with minimal conceptual clarity and coherence in the analytical literature. It is furthermore added that the informality literature is vast and its multifaceted nature was present at the creation [15].

There is also another confirmation on this issue of informality [16]. Informality features prominently in development discourse, accompanied with a vast and growing literature; and in tandem with this, there are growing

inconsistencies in the way it is conceptualized and measured. There is no single approach to defining informality and the definitions used in theoretical and empirical research often lack consistency from one study to the next [16]. Hence, however, from these few accounts, we would like to close that formality and informality exist in aspects of life, including aspects of language use.

III. FORMULATING DISTANT INDONESIAN LANGUAGE AND CLOSE INDONESIAN LANGUAGE

From various theories of politeness discussed into considerable accounts [17], the notion of face has come into important play in language use towards politeness and camaraderie. Based on this notion of face, a working definition has been provided that politeness is everything good that has been uttered as well as acted by the speaker to the hearer within a particular context, to maintain their interpersonal face as well as their social face [5]. Based on the working definition and the assertion that language use is a matter of probabilities [1][18], a formulation of distant Indonesian language (DIL) and close Indonesian language (CIL) is then made. This assertion on language use as a matter of probabilities to formulate DIL and CIL is in line with the tendency of pragmatic viewpoints on negative and positive face [2], negative and positive politeness strategies [3], respect and solidarity politeness [4], and politeness and camaraderie [5]. This idea is not alone.

Another assertion has raised the similar theme. Politeness theory has primarily been investigated in face-to-face situations, with some exceptions [19]. These exceptions, the author believes, are situation-based, e.g. in crowds in conference meeting breaks, when gossiping in public setting, in doctor-patient consultations, in personal consultations in newspapers or periodicals, or the most recent today, in computer-mediated communications. Some computer-mediated communications have been researched relevantly based on the hyperpersonal model [20]. However, utterances in real face-to-face situations are best referred to here in this paper, as different forms of utterances can be created in such a way that they will suggest either politeness or camaraderie.

A clear highlight on politeness as elaboration of face into the Indonesian language use has been taken into account [21][22][18], i.e. the presentation of DIL and CIL. DIL refers to distancing politeness to bring respect, while CIL refers to closeness politeness to instill solidarity. DIL is spoken to superiors for politeness, while CIL is spoken to close people for camaraderie. Within the Indonesian context, the stipulation on a formula of trichotomy or trichotomous analyses of DIL and CIL [5] can be seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1. TYPES OF THE INDONESIAN LANGUAGE

Types of the Indonesian Language	Trichotomous Types of Forms of Utterances	Elaboration
Distant Indonesian language (DIL)	formal utterances, indirect utterances, non-literal utterances	careful, with safe and common topics
Close Indonesian language (CIL)	informal utterances, direct utterances, literal utterances	free, with any topics personal and private

DIL is usually carefully elaborated and uses safe and common topics, while CIL involves contractions, slangs, reverse-ups, changes, taboos, swearing, f-words, and uses any topics, personal and private [5]. The account for DIL and CIL also explains that politeness is maintained when we use DIL and CIL eligibly, i.e. to superiors and close people respectively. In this case the so-called code-switching for politeness happens, i.e. whether to use DIL for politeness or CIL for camaraderie in a particular situation that may call [5][18].

IV. EDUCATING THE INDONESIAN LANGUAGE: A PROPOSED VERBAL SOCIAL PROJECT FOR THE NATIONAL HARMONY

A. The Verbal Social Project

The scheme of *verbal social project* has long been proposed in the writer's previous publications [21][22][1]. The verbal social project has been termed *character language*, i.e. a language which is able to function as a means of communication (ability), has qualities with which the language is different from the others (quality), and is effective in a correct formality (validity) [1]. The verbal social project of character language is intended to produce character speakers, hence in the long term, character citizens. Many parties or agents are involved in this verbal social project for educating the Indonesian language: parents in a family, teachers at school, communities in public, societies at large, and the authorities: the school managers, the local government, and the national government [1]. This project for educating the Indonesian language has a long-term objective that DIL and CIL is learned, internalized, personalized, and socialized or practiced in everyday life, so rude situations and awkward situations can be avoided. Educating the Indonesian language here is put in a context as if an Indonesian native speaker is trying to acquire their native language. The verbal social project consists of six phases, i.e. interaction phase, teaching-and-learning phase, evaluation phase, re-evaluation phase,

verification phase, and selection phase[1]. Developing the scheme, the writer would like to propose further elaboration of the verbal social project below.

1) *In-family interaction phase*

This is the first and earlier phase a learner mainly interacts with their parents, siblings, and close communities, i.e. those most responsible for observing while encouraging this very early phase. Close communities are probably the learner's close relatives, or other communities the learner is frequently involved in a social gathering with their parents or siblings. In this phase, elaboration of CIL is more important than elaboration of DIL. CIL strategies should also be more emphasized in the daily experience than DIL strategies to instill more solidarity than power. As the learner just starts educating themselves, DIL and CIL should be experienced in a 75-25 ratio of probabilities, as seen in Table 2.

TABLE 2. IN-FAMILY INTERACTION PHASE

Types of the Indonesian Language	Probable Ratio of Educating the Language	Agents to encourage educating process
Distant Indonesian language (DIL)	25%	parents, siblings, close communities
Close Indonesian language (CIL)	75%	

2) *In-school teaching-and-learning process phase*

In this further early phase, a learner mainly interacts with their teachers and schoolmates. This early phase is done at school. Teachers and schoolmates are most responsible for observing and encouraging this phase. The observing and encouraging by teachers is directly done, while the observing and encouraging by schoolmates is indirectly done, as schoolmates are also in the process of learning. DIL and CIL strategies should equally be experienced by the learner in a 50-50 ratio of probabilities, as seen in Table 3.

TABLE 3. IN-SCHOOL TEACHING-AND-LEARNING PROCESS PHASE

Types of the Indonesian Language	Probable Ratio of Educating the Language	Agents to encourage educating process
Distant Indonesian language (DIL)	50%	teachers and schoolmates
Close Indonesian language (CIL)	50%	

3) In-school evaluation phase

This further phase is also done at school, i.e. the evaluation phase. A learner goes through a formal and structured evaluation processes: progress, mid-term, and final-term evaluations, designed by teachers and school authorities. The evaluations of DIL and CIL strategies are made relatively equal, i.e. a relative 50-50 ratio of probabilities on language use material having been learned. Written reports are given upon the evaluation processes. The agents most responsible for observing and encouraging this phase are teachers and school authorities, as seen in Table 4.

TABLE 4. IN-SCHOOL EVALUATION PHASE

Types of the Indonesian Language	Probable Ratio of Educating the Language	Agents to encourage educating process
Distant Indonesian language (DIL)	50%	teachers and school authorities as evaluators
Close Indonesian language (CIL)	50%	

4) In-school re-evaluation phase

This further re-evaluation phase is also done at school. However, the re-evaluation phase here is an informal and unstructured evaluation atmosphere: in fun classrooms, in the school doorways, in sudden encounters between teachers and the learner at school yard or at other school spaces, in relaxed situations. Teachers should observe and evaluate the learner's verbal performance on their DIL and CIL in indirect and relaxed manners: whether their DIL and CIL is appropriately used or not yet. The ratio of probabilities is still maintained relatively 50-50. When doing so, teachers should minimize or avoid threats to the learner's face. Compliments and discussions could be given upon the learner's verbal

performance. The agents most responsible for observing and encouraging this phase are teachers and all the school authorities, as seen in Table 5.

TABLE 5. IN-SCHOOL RE-EVALUATION PHASE

Types of the Indonesian Language	Probable Ratio of Educating the Language	Agents to encourage educating process
Distant Indonesian language (DIL)	50%	teachers and school authorities as re-evaluators
Close Indonesian language (CIL)	50%	

5) In-public verification phase

This advanced verification phase is done everywhere. This phase is to strengthen the re-evaluation phase at school. This phase should be done everywhere by competent speakers upon the DIL and CIL performance of the learner. Mannership towards DIL and CIL performance is on the air, and every competent speaker is responsible for observing, verifying, and encouraging the learner's verbal performance to its completion. Just like the re-evaluation phase, this phase is also done in an informal and unstructured atmosphere, but outside school boundaries, everywhere in the country, with a relative 50-50 ratio of probabilities. The observation and verification should also be done in indirect and relaxed manners. Compliments and discussions should also be given upon the learner's DIL and CIL performance. All the agents are most responsible for observing and encouraging this phase, as seen in Table 6.

TABLE 6. IN-PUBLIC VERIFICATION PHASE

Types of the Indonesian Language	Probable Ratio of Educating the Language	Agents to encourage educating process
Distant Indonesian language (DIL)	50%	All: parents, siblings, teachers and school authorities, close and distant communities, societies, the governments
Close Indonesian language (CIL)	50%	

6) *In-society selection phase*

This final phase is for the learner to use and to experience using their DIL and CIL competence in a particular probable situation that may call. The learner is now smart enough to use DIL and CIL pragmatically, as they have equipped themselves with all the DIL and CIL strategies required for facing a *diglossic* situation. The learner is now a competent speaker who is able to select and use either DIL or CIL, i.e. DIL with formal utterances, indirect utterances, and non-literal utterances in the formal situations, or CIL with informal utterances, direct utterances, and literal utterances in the informal situations. DIL with safe and common topics is spoken to superiors for politeness, while CIL with any topics is spoken to close people for camaraderie or friendship or solidarity. The ratio of probabilities in language use is kept relatively 50-50. In this final phase of the verbal social project, all parties or agents as well as members of the speech society are responsible for observing and encouraging one another to use and maintain DIL and CIL in verbal interactions for social harmony, as seen in Table 7.

TABLE 7. IN-SOCIETY SELECTION PHASE

Types of the Indonesian Language	Probable Ratio of Educating the Language	Agents to encourage educating process
Distant Indonesian language (DIL)	50%	All: parents, siblings, teachers and school authorities, close and distant communities, societies, the governments
Close Indonesian language (CIL)	50%	

B. The Verbal Social Project: Distant Indonesian Language (DIL) and Close Indonesian Language (CIL) for the National Harmony

The verbal social project of educating the Indonesian language is basically trying to create a common nation-wide awareness that politeness should be maintained for the national harmony. In this research-based proposition, distant Indonesian language (DIL) and close Indonesian language (CIL) with their respective forms and topics, spoken either to superiors or to close people, are to maintain politeness. Ignorance or ineligible use of either type will probably lead to impoliteness, either rude situations between not close people or awkward situations between close people; either rude situations in the formal setting or awkward situations in the informal setting.

1) *DIL and CIL towards Hate Speech*

Hate speech is speech which attacks a person or group on the basis of attributes such as gender, ethnic origin, religion, race, disability, or sexual orientation [23], or speech expressing hatred of a particular group of people [24]. Hence,

hate speech attacks and endangers interpersonal face or social face of others. Upon the acquired awareness of DIL and CIL in language use, a competent speaker is able to avoid threatening face of others, interpersonal or social, by considering their DIL and CIL performance, thus avoiding hate speech to spoil the interpersonal or social face. The adequate competence of DIL and CIL saves the common harmony, as a competent speaker has a control on their speech performance on what is appropriate to say and what is not when speaking to a particular hearer. Pragmatically, hate speech with *touchy* topics, i.e. gender, religion, race, etc., belongs to CIL, thus appropriate to be spoken to close people in the informal setting to instill camaraderie or solidarity, not to be used to superiors or in the formal setting for politeness.

2) *DIL and CIL towards Hoax*

Hoax can be a noun or a verb. As noun, it is a deliberately fabricated falsehood made to masquerade as the truth [25]. As a verb, to hoax is to trick into believing or accepting as genuine something false and often preposterous [26]. Thus, a hoax or to hoax is threatening to interpersonal face or social face of others. A hoax is pragmatically also of *touchy* topics used to bully others whom a speaker is not close to. A hoax is dangerous, as it is insulting or threatening to others who are weaker, smaller, or in some way vulnerable [26]. A hoax conveyed to superiors or not close people in public or another conveyed to close people or in the informal setting is potentially also threatening a common harmony. A hoax between not close people may lead to rude situations, or else a hoax between close people may lead to awkward situations. Rude situations and awkward situations are thus disharmony, a friction in a social relationship. Knowledge and competence of DIL and CIL may prevent hoax-texting from happening, thus promoting a common harmony among members of a society or a nation.

3) *DIL and CIL towards Text Interactions in the Virtual World*

Interactions in the virtual word, including hate speech and hoax, with verbal or non-verbal texts, should also be reckoned not to lead to disharmony. A guideline for the text interactions in the virtual world should be obeyed, or else something will happen and a friction or disharmony between or among netizens entails. A recently-proposed guideline has been provided [27], and DIL and CIL strategies are part of the guideline as efforts to guide verbal text interactions towards the world harmony. In line with distant Indonesian language (DIL) in the guideline [27], it is suggested that netizens consider the words and images they will have left unforgotten, and, probably, unforgiven, by (1) using the words of distant language: formal (e.g. *I am sorry*, instead of *sorry*); indirect (e.g. *I think it is better like this*, instead of *Sorry, I don't agree with you*); non-literal (e.g. *That is a gasbag*, instead of *That is talking nonsense*); (2) using the words of common, safe, not

personal and private topics (family, work, school, weather, sports, arts, etc.) and avoiding the words of *touchy* and dangerous topics (politics, religion, age, race, marital status, etc.); (3) not using *dirty* images and perform *dirty* actions (of profanity, pornography, sadism, or brutality); and (4) not posting any signs or uploading any videos and films of you alone, of others, and of you with others, which are suggesting dirty minds, dirty topics, and dangerous topics.

V. CONCLUSION

The exploration of this paper is aimed at educating the Indonesian language as a verbal social project for the national harmony. The project's proposition is formatted into *Distant Indonesian Language* (DIL) and *Close Indonesian Language* (CIL). Educating the Indonesian language here is put in a context as if an Indonesian native learner is trying to acquire their native language, with elaborated DIL for superiors in the formal setting and elaborated CIL for close people in the informal setting. The project's proposition is important to avoid rude situations and awkward situations for a common harmony, or to the widest extent, the national harmony. The verbal social project for the national harmony in this paper comprises six phases with different ratios of probabilities in DIL and CIL use, i.e. (1) in-family interaction phase (25-75), (2) in-classroom teaching-learning process phase (50-50), (3) in-school evaluation phase (50-50), (4) in-school re-evaluation phase (50-50), (5) in-public verification phase (50-50), and (6) in-society selection phase (50-50). Each phase in this verbal social project is observed and encouraged by different parties or agents for educating the Indonesian language. Equipped with the DIL and CIL competence, a competent Indonesian speaker is able to avoid threatening the interpersonal or the social face of others, hence reducing or eliminating rude situations or awkward situations, either to superiors or to close people; either in the formal setting or in the informal setting. The DIL and CIL competence upon the verbal social project is probably effective for the competent speaker to avoid hate speech and hoaxes, and to handle text interactions in the virtual world. The DIL and CIL competence and performance of an Indonesian speaker upon the verbal social project is, therefore, promoting the national harmony.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to acknowledge all the distinguished people here for contributing their thoughts as well as precious opinions to the linguistic world he has academically lived in. They are nine English native speakers: (1) Samantha Custer (New England, US), John Custer (Pennsylvania, US), Bradford Sincock (Michigan, US), Patricia Mary O'Dwyer (South Ireland, GB), Patrick Bradley (Scotland, GB), Simon Colledge (London, UK, GB), Ian Briggs (Northern Territory, Australia), Anastasia de Guise (New South Wales, Australia), and Katrina Michelle Langford (Victoria, Australia). They have inspired him on how a linguist should perform in the

linguistic world as well as on how he should learn more to observe people talking and to get real-life lessons for developing the pragmatic world.

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