

The Realisation of Speech Acts of Complaining among Native Javanese Speakers in the Village Council: An Ethno-pragmatic Study

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This study aimed at describing the forms and strategies of the speech acts of complaining among native Javanese speakers in the village council. It was conducted by means of a qualitative method with an ethno-pragmatic approach. The data of this study were lingual units of the speech acts of complaining tapped from the village council of Tlogomas Village, Lowokwaru Sub-district, Malang City. The data collection techniques used were observation and in-depth interview; while the data analysis methods used were identity method and distributional method (*padan* and *agih*). The findings have revealed that: (1) the speech acts of complaining tapped from the village council comprised complaint of inability, complaint of confusion, and complaint of disappointment; and (2) the speech acts of complaining were conveyed through both direct and indirect strategies in the form of (a) implicature, (b) excuse, (c) interrogation, (d) demand, (e) expectation, (f) rhetorical question, (g) metaphor, and (h) humour. In this case, native Javanese speakers tended to speak contextually with regard to the principles of being humble, respectful, and considerate. The speech acts uttered by this group were in accordance with norms and ethics of Javanese culture and thereby named *Jawa* (truly Javanese). In contrast, some of the native Javanese speakers tended to speak straightforwardly, which basically does not adhere to the principles of *andhap asor* (humility), *ngajeni* (respect), and *tepa selira* (considerate). This group was considered failing to meet norms and ethics of Javanese culture and thereby named *urung Jawa* (improper Javanese).

Key words: *Speech act of complaining, village council, Javanese culture, ethno-pragmatics.*

Introduction

Java, as the world's most populous Island where more than 50% of the Indonesian peoples reside, is always attractive to study in terms of life and culture (Derlina et al., 2019; Dewi et al., 2020; Iqbal et al., 2020), including the village council. The village council is a Javanese tradition (Santoso, 2012) held by the village government and the community to discuss the solution for any occurring problems (Ito, 2007). It reflects the value of harmony, togetherness, mutual cooperation, and modesty of the community (Santoso, 2012). However, the speech acts used by the people during the village council are prone to conflict, e.g. the speech acts of complaining. Trosborg (1995) defined the speech act of complaining as “...an illocutionary act in which the speaker (the complainer) expresses his/her disapproval, negative feelings, etc. towards the state of affairs described in the proposition (the complainable) and for which he/she holds the hearer (the complaine) responsible, either directly or indirectly”.

This definition contributes to an understanding that complaining is used by the speaker as they want to express disappointment and negativity towards the interlocutor. The speaker assumes that a person is responsible for an event/action that relates to the complainant. In this context, the speaker may complain directly or indirectly. Decock and Depraetere (2018) highlighted the taxonomies of speech act strategies focusing on binary distinction between direct and indirect strategies and /or on the directness levels of complaints. Furthermore, they confirmed that the speaker may be said to be indirect when they express more to the listener than they directly say, and the meaning is inferred by the hearer.

The speech act of complaining does not solely occur without a cause (Díaz Pérez, 2005). Therefore, a complaint occurs as a reaction of an action that has been or is being done by a speaker verbally or non-verbally (Everinghaff & Rhode, 2003). It is one of the expressive speech acts since it represents the psychological state of the speaker (Ghaznavi, 2017; Kozlova, 2004). Communication is considered as a complaint when the reaction is in the form of an apology or other (Mey, 1998).

Studies on speech acts of complaining in cultural contexts have been carried out by other scholars (Chen et al., 2011; Rinnert & Iwai, 2002). Kozlova (2004) compared indirect complaints of native Russian speakers and native English-American speakers. The findings showed that Russian speakers were more likely to use positive politeness; while English-American speakers tended to use negative politeness. Rinnert and Iwai (2002) examined the variety of complaining strategies for English speakers in Japan, Singapore, and America. This study figured out that (1) the English speakers in these three countries showed slight differences in strategies, (2) English speakers in Japan tended to use long sentences in complaining caused by various factors, especially due to the culture of the original country, and (3) English speakers in Singapore tended to use a direct strategy. Since the speakers of all regions use such speech

acts, they have their own lingual marks and strategies based on their cultural norms. Ad interim, this study conducted by Chen et al. (2011) focused on the comparison of complaining strategies used by Chinese speakers and American speakers. In line with Kozlova (2004), this study showed that quantitatively these two groups equally used the speech acts of complaining in the same distribution; however, qualitatively, they revealed different linguistic characteristics related to cultural norms.

In view of all that has been mentioned so far, culture plays an important role in speech acts of complaining. The complexity of problems and attempts to seek decisions in village council that provoke conflict or disagreement are interesting to study. On one hand, the speaker psychologically experiences feelings of annoyance, disappointment, or discomfort with the interlocutor during the council. This must necessarily be expressed not only to release the speaker's emotions, but also to achieve common ground and improvement in the social environment. On the other hand, the speaker is bounded by values of Javanese culture comprising the aspects of *empan papan* (contextual aspect in social interaction to maintain dignity between interlocutors), *andhap asor* (humility), *ngajeni* (respect), and *tepa selira* (tolerance) (Nuryantingsih & Pandanwangi, 2018; Widiana et al., 2018; Widiana et al., 2020). Moreover, what is compelling about this phenomenon is that these speech acts of complaining are not only spoken by the village officials to the villagers but also – against the taboo in Javanese culture – conveyed the other way around.

This current study considered the speech acts of complaining in the village council of Tlogomas Village, Malang. In order to analyse the forms and strategies of the speech acts of complaining encountered in the village council, an ethno-pragmatic approach was intended to reveal the socio-cultural phenomena behind the speech acts of complaining produced by the speakers. The intention of the delivery of speech through the language used, deals with the speaker's communicative competence, that mainly relates to social and cultural knowledge possessed by the speaker to assist them in using and interpreting linguistic forms (Ibrahim, 1994). In addition, the speech acts of complaining are part of social communication.

Furthermore, speech acts of complaining are prone to conflict and thus categorised into a contradictory speech act (Leech, 1983), a confronting speech act (Hutchby, 1993), a contradictory speech act (Bardovi-Harlig & Salsbury, 2004), a disagreement speech act (Koczogh, 2013), an opposing speech act (Kakava, 2002), or conflictive speech act (Honda, 2002). This current study aimed to contribute to this growing area of research by exploring the forms and strategies of speech acts of complaining among native Javanese speakers in the village council. Hence, this study could provide a comprehensive description of the Javanese communication act along with its cultural values to anticipate any possible conflicts.

Methods

This study was conducted in Tlogomas Village, Lowokwaru Sub-district, Malang, East Java, Indonesia. The study was conducted in January-April 2018, during 8 meetings of 120 minutes each. The data was collected by participant observation by utilising an observation checklist and note-taking, including field notes and in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview. The data sources were the participants of the village council. The data was in the form of speech acts of complaining that occurred during the event. The speech acts data was the usage of language features in the context that was considered having the opposing principles from the speakers. The data was collected with the permission of the Village Head, with a condition of treating the participants anonymously.

In order to obtain effective data, the researcher used the covert observation by using a hidden audio-visual and audio recorders as well as note-taking. The notes were taken to gain some essential information that was not covered by the limitation of the audio-visual and audio recorders. Meanwhile, the in-depth interviews to the selected informants were conducted to gain specific information regarding the speech acts.

Furthermore, the data was analysed by identity (*padan*) and distributional (*agih*) methods. The identity method refers to the data analysis method in which the determinants are on the outside, independent, and separated from the relevant or investigated language (Sudaryanto, 2015). In this context, the determinants were the interlocutors, otherwise known as the pragmatic distributional method. Meanwhile, the distributional method refers to the data analysis method in which the determinants are part of the relevant language. Overall, the techniques used were deletion, substitution, expansion, interruption, permutation, and paraphrase. They were used variably based on the data characteristics.

Results and Discussion

The Forms of Speech Acts of Complaining among Native Javanese Speakers

The forms of speech acts of complaining refer to the lingual form of speech act realisation of the speaker in conveying the message to the interlocutor. In the village council meetings, complaints to the interlocutor can be expressed in varied forms: (a) complaint of inability (34%), (b) complaint of confusion (15%), and (c) complaint of disappointment (51%).

Complaint of Inability

This form exists when the interlocutor requests something that cannot be granted by the speaker. However, in several cases, this speech act may occur if the speaker disagrees with the interlocutor, as shown below.

[1] The council leader was surprised since the Head of RW 2 – Rukun Warga (RW) as the lowest hierarchy of community organisational system – proposed an excessive amount of development cost.

Chairperson of the council: *Ini kok mengajukan banyak sekali Pak?*
(Don't you think it is too much to ask for, Sir?)

The Chairperson of the council, Mrs. KAR (52), a lecturer, expressed the complaint to the representative of RW 2, Mr. KN (61), a pensioner, while looking at them and scratching their right forehead using a pen. The complaint was delivered in a moderate intonation. This complaint was delivered when the representative of RW 2 insisted to read the proposed development programs that exceeded the maximum amount of the funding agreement.

The sentence emphasises the word “*kok*” which indicates there is something odd from the Chairperson of the council and is not understood by the Head of RW 2. This inquiry basically intends to ask for explanation as well as complaining, since the explanation does not meet the expectation upon the interlocutor's proposal that is considered too much to ask for.

Complaint of Confusion

This form of complaint exists due to negative feelings as the result of inability to understand the topic of speech. This type is characterised by (a) negation lingual markers, (b) irrelevance to the reality, and (c) phrase emphasis in the markers. The example is as follows:

[2] The treasurer of the Family Welfare Movement (or *Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga/PKK*) of Tlogomas Village, Malang City was confused about the funds.

Treasurer: *Cuman saya bingungnya tim penggerak PKK ini terima uang 25 juta tapi harus dilaporkan 50 juta. Uang yang 50 juta itu **Belum Semuanya Turun**.*

(**However**, I am confused that the funds for PKK team must be reported 50 million rupiahs while in fact, we currently received merely 25 million rupiahs. The 50 million rupiahs **are yet to Be Received**).

In example (2), the PKK Treasurer (Prw, 27) expressed the complaint before all council participants with flat intonation, with more emphasis on the phrase “*BELUM SEMUANYA TURUN*” (“ARE YET TO BE RECEIVED”). This was delivered in the context of financial elaboration year 2016, stating that PKK received the grant of fifty million rupiahs despite the

fact that the institution only received twenty-five million rupiahs. However, it must be reported fully fifty million rupiahs.

The way the treasurer initiated the sentence with “*cuman*” (“however”) signifies that there was hesitation to openly express that such action, writing fifty million rupiahs in the financial report, was bad and wrong. The use of the confusion element in this speech act illustrates the Javanese principle of *sungkan* (considerate) and respect since the order to make such report comes from village officials.

Complaint of Disappointment

This form of complaint exists when (a) the Chairperson of Kormas Prona expected something from the council participants, (b) the expectation was not granted by the council’s participants, and (c) the Chairperson felt ashamed by the council’s participants’ speech or action. Trosborg (1995) called it ‘annoyance’. According to Ghaznavi (2017), through the disappointment complaint, the speaker may express disappointment by directly pointing to the situation that is considered bad.

[3] The Chairperson of *Kormas* (community coordinators) of *Prona* (the project of agrarian national operation) was grumbling that the National Land Agency (or *Badan Pertanahan Nasional/BPN*) was late while actually the meeting schedule was set by the agency.

The Chairperson of *Kormas Prona*: ... ***Mintak jam 8 ternyata sampai jam segini juga belum datang.***

(... **They demand at 8 o’clock. Apparently, they do not show up until this late.**)

The disappointment in example (3), was expressed by the Chairperson of Kormas Prona (WS, 48) to all council participants. In the speech, it was explained that BPN (National Land Authority) of Malang City demanded the council to start at 8 o’clock, yet, until 9.30 p.m., they did not show up. This speech was delivered with frowning expression and occasional looks at the wristwatch while holding a microphone.

The sentence “*mintak jam 8 ternyata sampai jam segini juga belum datang*” (“They demand at 8 o’clock. Apparently, they do not show up until this late”) signifies that the Chairperson felt disappointed and ashamed. It also implies that the mistake had nothing to do with the Chairperson. It means that this complaint does not directly address the people concerned. There is a possibility that if the people concerned are present, such complaint will not be delivered. Even if it is delivered, it tends to use different lingual form (subtler). In the Javanese culture, this type of speech act is called *nggrundel* (grumbling). This *nggrundel* action, in fact, is still

common in various contexts in Javanese community. It shows that native Javanese speakers tend to be secretive.

The Strategies of Speech Acts of Complaining

The strategies of speech acts of complaining refer to the correlation between the speech meaning and realisation in the opposition data obtained by this study. In other words, this relates to the mode of speech intention. In general, the native Javanese speakers are strongly bound to Javanese cultural norms. The speakers are expected to speak by paying attention to the *unggah-ungguh basa* (lexical and grammatical rules of Javanese language) and *empan papan* (the context of the conversation). *Unggah-ungguh basa* refers to the use of Javanese language stratification, ranging from *karma inggil*, *krama*, and *ngoko* (Endraswara, 2015). Meanwhile, *empan papan* refers to the adagium “*Please behave the way you speak: upon elders be polite, upon youngsters be patient, upon the rich be straightforward, upon the poor be compassionate, and upon fellow human beings be wise*” (Nadjib, 2016). Besides, the speakers are expected to put forward the principles of *andhap asor* (humility), *ngajeni* (respect), and *tepa selira* (consideration).

In this case, the native Javanese speakers generally have two tendencies in delivering the speech acts of complaining. Firstly, the native Javanese speakers speak according to the norms and ethics of Javanese culture. This group is considered able to internalise Javanese cultural values in their daily life and thereby named of *Jawa* or *Njawani* (truly Javanese) (Endraswara, 2015). Secondly, the native Javanese speakers speak without concern for the norms and ethics of Javanese culture. This group is considered having negative behaviours that do not meet Javanese cultural values and thereby named *urung Jawa* or *urung Njawani* and *ora Jawa* or *ora Njawani* (improper Javanese) (Endraswara, 2015). If the speakers have not had psychological maturity, yet they still have a possibility to be better Javanese, they are called *urung Jawa* or *urung Njawani*. Conversely, if the speakers have already had psychological maturity, yet they still tend to break Javanese cultural values, they are called *ora Jawa* or *ora Njawani*. It can be said that this group has shifted from the Javanese culture due to varied factors, including the shift of social status in the community.

Furthermore, the data analysis results reveal that the speech acts of complaining can be delivered through direct and indirect strategies. Each strategy along with its derivation is elaborated as follows.

The Direct Strategy of the Speech Acts of Complaining

The direct strategy of the speech acts of complaining indicates direct confrontation (Alfaleh, 2019; Deveci, 2015). The speaker conveys their ‘inconvenience’ to the interlocutor specifically

considered as the one who is responsible for the negative condition (Kozlova, 2004). The analysis of the direct strategy of speech acts of complaining is presented as follows.

[4] The village council participant conveyed an opinion on the idea of carnival as an event that was burdensome for the community.

PY: *Ini kan sudah sering diadakan dan membutuhkan biaya lumayan. Ini kan membebani kita semua, Pak. Terus terang saya keberatan. Iya nek ada dananya sendiri dari Walikota sih tidak apa-apa. Nilainya kan tidak sedikit.*

(This often has been held and requires a decent fund. **It will burden all of us. Unless if the City Major funds this.** We are not talking about small amount of money, are we?)

In expressing his opinion to the Head of RW as in example (4), one of the participants (PY, 40) spoke slowly and carefully. According to the elaboration from the Head of RW, Tlogomas Village would hold an annual carnival as those in the previous years. Due to the event's cost and time-consuming issues, several RWs proposed to abolish the event. However, based on the Village Head's elaboration, the cadet corps insisted that the carnival be held. Listening to this elaboration, PY smiled wryly and delivered the speech when they got the turn to speak. It represented the speech acts of complaining with the direct strategy.

The phrase "*ini kan membebani kita semua*" ("it will burden all of us") implies that they objected to the idea of conducting the carnival because of its high cost. It can be interpreted directly through the meaning of its constituent lingual unit. Therefore, the strategy used by PY to express the speech acts of complaining can be categorised into direct strategy.

Specifically, the speech act of complaining with the direct strategy represents a shift in how a native Javanese speaker communicates. In social life, Javanese are more likely not to assert themselves and tend to be *anoraga* (modest). Nevertheless, PY spoke quite straightforwardly, that seems to be correlated with the social changes of native Javanese speakers. Education and social mobility enable native Javanese speakers to make a cultural contact with other ethnics. This makes native Javanese speakers aware that there are weaknesses in their culture; one of which is not speaking straightforwardly.

The Indirect Strategy of Speech Acts of Complaining

The indirect strategy does not contain linearity of type and function of the sentence in conveying its intention. This strategy uses 'implicit' language that cannot be directly interpreted. The complaint is not specifically addressed towards someone or a party that is considered responsible for the substance of the complaint (Boxer, 1993) and is delivered with

subtle language. This study results showed the indirect strategy, comprising (a) implicature (*nglulu*), (b) excuse, (c) interrogation, (d) request, (e) expectation, (f) rhetorical question, (g) metaphor, and (h) humour.

The Strategy of Nglulu (Implicature)

In the Javanese community, *nglulu*, in pragmatics known as implicature, is very commonly used. *Nglulu* is an act of communication by conveying the opposite of what is intended. This is used by the speaker to soften the speech act of complaining through interlocutor's awareness. The analysis of the indirect strategy: *nglulu* (implicature) is presented below.

[5] The Spouse of the Head of RW 4 was commenting on the Head of Pokja 1 Proposal about a gymnastic event.

The Spouse of the Head of RW 4: ***Wah, sip itu!***
(Oh, that's great!)

The speech in example (5) shows the strategy of indirect speech acts of complaining uttered by the spouse of the Head of RW 4 to the entire meeting participants. It was delivered with a smile and thumb up gesture; then they glanced and raised their eyebrows (signalling a code) to the person sitting adjacent. In the previous discussion, the Head of Pokja 1 (working unit) stated that a gymnastic event would be held on August. The discussion then developed on the event's technical issues, the costume judging. The Head of Pokja 1 proposed that the costume should not be assessed. This proposal was responded differently by every participant. Some showed approval and some others showed disapproval. The spouse of the Head of RW 4 was among those who approved the proposal due to the efficiency factor. The speech was delivered directly in the forum. However, Bu Lurah (the spouse of the Village Head) responded to this by proposing that the costume should be assessed. Hearing that, the spouse of the Head of RW 4 spontaneously stopped their current activity—feeding their grandson some bread—and spoke (5).

The expression “*Wah sip itu!*” (“Oh, that's great!”) represents compliment. *Great* means nice, splendid, or perfect as a form of positive assessment toward an idea. Yet, when viewed from the context, it turns out that the speech was not a compliment. It is an act of refusal delivered indirectly through the way of *nglulu* as polite sarcasm.

An interesting point to examine is how the speech is delivered with a smile. A smile has been a part of Javanese communication culture, which is categorised as the highest pseudo level. A speaker who wears a smile in communication assumes that their interlocutor is a person who

has the value of *tanggap ing sasmita*. According to the native Javanese mindset, *tanggap ing sasmita* means clever, intelligent, or having a high social status.

The Strategy of Making Excuse

The speech act of complaining by making an excuse is delivered by using reasons as the basis of argumentation. The following is the example.

[6] The spouse of the Head of RW 1 was objecting the schedule of gymnastics because of their inability to join the event.

The Spouse of the Head of RW 1: *Yo liane longgar, tapi lek awak ngene iki yo tetep ngajar sampek sore. (Javanese)*

(We, the lecturers, will be teaching till the afternoon.)

In objecting the schedule of gymnastics, the spouse of the Head of RW 1 stated their objection to Pokja 1 as shown in example (6). It was delivered in a thick Javanese accent while smiling sarcastically. This speech occurred when the council discussed the routine gymnastic schedule for PKK members which was planned to be reactivated starting in February. Initially, the Head of Pokja 2 proposed a gymnastic schedule on Saturday because of the assumption that most of its members were available, but some participants seemed to disagree with it. To respond, the spouse of the Head of RW 1 indirectly stated their argumentation by stating a reason.

The spouse of the Head of RW 1 faced a different situation from the other PKK members, who were probably available on Saturday. The speech “*tapi lek awak ngene iki yo tetep ngajar sampek sore*” (“We, the lecturers, will be teaching till the afternoon”) described it. However, when associated with the context of previous speeches, this is not considered only as an informative speech, but also a speech of complaining against the Saturday gymnastic proposal. Hence, this indirect strategy indicates the speaker’s effort to disguise the speech, like common Javanese who are characterised as non-straightforward. In the Javanese culture, particularly, female speakers often grumble.

The Interrogating Strategy

The indirect strategy by interrogating is the realisation of the speech act of complaining by using questions. The following speech presents the indirect strategy through the act of interrogating.

[7] *One of the council participants was asking questions related to financial issues.*

Krd: *Ini kan anak kos ada tarikan 25.000 tapi di laporan kok tidak ada? Iuran ini ditangani ibu-ibu PKK atau bagaimana? Siapa yang bertanggung jawab? Larinya ke mana?*

(We've agreed that boarding house members should pay 25,000, but **where's the report? Is it handled by PKK members? Who's responsible for this? Where did the money go?**)

In example (7), one of the council participants (Krd) asked some questions to the treasurer of RT 1 – *Rukun Tetangga* (RT) as the Neighborhood Association – in a loud voice but slow tempo. In the previous opportunity, the treasurer had reported the financial condition of RT 1. All revenues and expenses were reported in detail regarding the time, nominal, and subject matter. It had been agreed that the boarding house occupants were charged 25 thousand rupiahs. However, none of the boarding house charges were ever mentioned. This raised a big question for Krd, who witnessed the boarding house members pay the fee. Although the questions were addressed to the treasurer of RT 1, Krd's eyes were also intensely looking at the Head of RT 1 who was also responsible for the financial matter, when talking. Krd asked for the information regarding the reasons for the absence of fee reporting as well as its responsibility and use. Contextually, the speech also had a contextual meaning of complaining for the carelessness and non-transparency of Pokja 1.

The interrogating strategy indicates the speaker's effort to disguise the speech intention. The purpose is to save the interlocutor's face due to their action. In general, native Javanese speakers have polite, sensitive, and reluctant personalities (*pakewuh*). This is due to the existence of two life-principles in the pattern of Javanese community, which are harmony and respect (Suseno, 1984). The harmony principle implies that people are expected to prevent conflict in all situations. Meanwhile, the respect principle demands individuals to take care of their speech and acts as a means to respect others based on their degree and status.

The Demand Strategy

The demand strategy of speech act of complaining refers to a complaining speech that does not indicate a negative thing received by the speakers, but immediately states the request as an improvement in circumstances. The example is presented as follows.

[8] During the discussion on the implementation of night patrol, the Head of RT 4 requested people to maintain the cleanliness of the patrol hut.

The Head of RT 4: *Kami mohon nanti setiap jaga setiap regu jaga setelah regu jaga kami Mohon membersihkan pos!*

(We expect everyone, **Please** clean up the patrol hut after the shift!)

The example (8) evidences the Head of RT 4's polite request to the entire council participants in slow and careful tempo with the stress in the word "*MOHON*" ("PLEASE"). The speaker advised the council participants to pay attention to the patrol shift in RT 4. The patrol shift was implemented to establish harmony and awareness among the people. Unfortunately, the Head of RT 4 noticed that some people were not aware of leaving the hut clean after their patrol shift. This caused disappointment.

The contextual meaning derived from the example is divided into two. First, based on the referential meaning, the Head of RT 4 proposed a request to the participants for always cleaning up the patrol hut before leaving it in the next morning. Second, he complained about the act of those who were not aware of environment cleanliness. The reason is that in addition to reflecting irresponsibility, this typical act would cause negative impacts to others. This is inferred from his next speech "You shall pity Mr. Anok who always cleans that up every day."

The speech act of complaining (8) exemplifies a communication pattern in Javanese culture. The speaker, as the native Javanese, spoke in a polite way despite their superior status as a leader. The speaker would not consider themselves as the most superior and important individual in the circle, which is best described by a Javanese proverb *adigang, adigung, and adiguna* (the terms for arrogance). The speaker would show the attitude of *andhap asor* (humility).

The Expectation Strategy

In accordance with the previous strategies, the strategy of speech act of complaining through expectation refers to complaining without showing any negative aspects the speakers received. Instead, they immediately expressed an expectation as an improvement in circumstances.

[9] The Head of RW was asking the council participants to pay attention to their preparation for Green and Clean Event.

The Head of RW: *Nah, saya harap di RT 4 juga seperti itu, ya paling tidak penghijauannya itulah nanti yang ditambah.*

(Well, **I hope RT 4 can do so**, at least planting more greenery)

The speech (9) was delivered by the Head of RW to the Head of RT 4, in a flat intonation and slow tempo. They delivered this speech as well as directions regarding the *green and clean* event preparation. Actually, in the previous meeting, they had informed that all RTs should

optimise the event preparation due to the short time left. However, during an inspection around the RW in the afternoon, they found out that RT 4 did not prepare the event optimally, especially in the painting and greenery planting. This caused disappointment.

“*Saya harap di RT 4 juga seperti itu*” (“I hope RT 4 can do so”) refers to the speech act’s referential meaning that the Head of RW hoped that the council participants would paint the wall or at least plant some greenery like RT 12 that had finished painting the wall. Associated with the context, this speech act represents not only a hope that council participants would paint and plant greenery, but also a complaint of their attitude of ignoring the request.

The expectation strategy basically represents the communication pattern in Javanese culture. The native Javanese speaker speaks in a polite way despite their superior status, as a leader in the council for instance. Instead, the speaker holds the value of *ora dumeh* (no arrogance), *ora aji mumpung* (not being opportunist), and the attitude of *andhap asor* (humility).

The Strategy of Rhetorical Question

In its realisation, the speech act of complaining might be in the form of rhetorical question, or a question that does not need any answer. The example is as follows.

[10] The speech act of complaining was not directly expressed to the chief of Village Council but to the other participant sitting next to the Head of RT 2.

The Head of RT 2: ***Jane enak biyen ya?*** (*Javanese*)
(The previous occasion was better, wasn’t it?)

The speaker in example (10) was the Head of RT 2. The speech was delivered to an adjacent village council participant while putting back an unfinished coffee cup. This speech act occurred when the chief of village cleaning program was explaining the event’s technical issue. In listening to the explanation, the Head of RT 2 seemed anxious. This was due to several technical changes compared to the similar program last two years. Furthermore, they looked more anxious when the changes included the carnival theme, which was previously freely determined by each RT. That sort of anxiety was then reflected in a speech act to the other council participant.

The utterance (10) represents a meaning that the Head of RT 2 thought that the previous carnival policy or rule was better, easier, or more comfortable than the current one. The speech “*Jane enak biyen ya?*” (“The previous occasion was better, wasn’t it?”) means an objection in accepting the new policy related to the carnival theme. Meanwhile, the question tag “*wasn’t it*” in a rising and long intonation indicated the Head of RT 2’s request for an approval from

the council participant sitting adjacent. Nevertheless, this question was not an ordinary question if associated with the fact that they had already got their personal assessment on the rule. Accordingly, this question is more likely a rhetorical question, which does not require any answer.

The speech act of complaining as shown in example (10) represents a communication pattern in Javanese culture. The speaker was looking for an affirmation or support from the other council participant. The support became important because when the idea was heard by the council leader, the idea would become a collective idea. Therefore, if there were any issues due to the idea's implementation in the future, the speaker would not be the only one to blame. In Javanese culture, this speech act frequently occurs. People tend to disguise their intention and/or position by showing their sides to the majority in order to prevent conflicts in the future. Javanese people sometimes still apply the culture of *nabok nyilih tangan* (slapping by using other's hand—connotative meaning).

The Metaphor Strategy

The speech act of complaining through metaphor shows the strategy characterised by the use of direct comparison on the basis of characteristic similarities. The indirect strategy through metaphor is presented as follows.

[11] The Head of Village had an intention to reject by comparing one thing to the other in order to get all village council's cooperation.

The Village Head: *Lek ngukure iku penak, sing nduwe nyepak, trus tonggo teparone penak, mari ngono ora ndadak eker-ekeran yo cepet. Tapi, lek sampeyan ndadak sinetronan sedino deng yo mek oleh enem, bahkan kadang papat.* (Javanese)

(It'd be great if the assessment is good, the owner is available, and the neighbours are cooperative and straightforward. But, if you keep acting like in soap operas, maybe we can only obtain six, even four sometimes.)

As the Head of Village, Pak Lurah delivered a speech (11) by looking at the entire council participants while smiling once in a while. Pak Lurah provided directions before the BPN officer gave the detailed explanation. Based on the previous experiences, the Prona implementation was never easy. This was related to the measurement process, which became longer due to the bad relationship between the applicants, heirs, and neighbours, which often led to quarrels. Therefore, Pak Lurah spoke to prevent such things to happen in the future. In example (11), "*Lek sampeyan ndadak sinetronan sedino deng yo mek oleh enem, bahkan kadang papat*" ("If you keep acting like in soap operas, maybe we can only obtain six, even

four sometimes”) represents the complaining intention for the people’s uncooperativeness. Uncooperativeness means that they cannot resolve their internal issues before the Prona proposal. In this case, the metaphor “*Lek sampeyan sinetronan*” (“If you keep acting like soap operas”) compares the phenomena in the community as those in soap operas – television drama that present excessive conflicts.

The indirect strategy of speech of complaining by means of metaphors shows speakers’ effort to make a hyperbole. In several occasions, the feeling of severe disappointment and such a negative emotion can make the main principles of *ngajeni*, *anoraga*, and *tepa selira* marginalised. Therefore, another cultural phenomenon illustrated in example (11) is considered a cultural shift in Javanese speech act.

The Humour Strategy

In its realisation, the speech act of complaining is evident by means of humour. The following is the example.

[12] In a casual situation to complain the prolonged meeting, the Head of RT 3 expressed complaint by joking.

Head of RT 3: ***Tak gembosi kene wetenge ngko lek ngomong ae, wis jam 10 kok sik mbethet ae..*** (Javanese)

(I’ll flat his belly if he keeps talking, it’s been 10 PM and he is still blabbering.)

The speaker in example (12) was the Head of RT 3. The speech was delivered in moderate intonation and by looking at the Head of RT 2 who was sitting on their left side while laughing. The other council participants started to laugh when hearing this. This speech act occurred during the discussion session of village cleaning preparation of Tlogomas Village, which lasted until late at night. This was because several participants were being insistent on their opinions, especially the Head of RT 7. The Head of RT 3 felt annoyed because it was getting late and started to complain.

The expression (12) “*Tak gembosi kene wetenge ngko lek ngomong ae.. wis jam 10 kok sik mbethet ae..*” represents the complaint intention to the Head of RT 7 who forgot the time. It had been 10 PM and the Head of RT 7 kept arguing several unimportant issues. In this context, the strategy used by the Head of RT 3 was through the use of humour. The humour can be found in the use of “*Tak gembosi kene wetenge*” (“I’ll flat his belly”) and “*kok sik mbethet ae*” (“he is still blabbering”) expressions. The Head of RT 7 merely had a bloated belly, yet a belly,

in real life, cannot be flattened just like a vehicle's tire. Also, the Head of RT 7 was considered to be blabbering like a parrot. That is how illogical thinking works as the basis of humour. In the context of the village council, various speech acts were used by the speakers to achieve the objectives of the council. One of the examples was speech the act of complaining. According to House and Kasper, the speech act of complaining requires an interlocutor performing an act that disadvantages the speaker (Chen et al., 2011). Regarding this, Searle has categorised complaint speech acts into the expressive speech act: expressing disapproval or aggravation on something (Ghaznavi, 2017; Kozlova, 2004).

The results of this study showed that through the speech acts of complaining, the speaker shows the weakness of the ideas that are being discussed. Therefore, this type of speech act usually coexists with a request speech act. This is relevant to Trosborg (1995) who stated that instead of merely expressing their aggravation, a speaker tends to request the interlocutor to take any action as the compensation of his disadvantage.

Moreover, strategy relates to the manner of conveying a message, including the selection of lingual units in the speech act. The selection of lingual and non-lingual units is crucial in achieving the communicative objectives of the speaker and to avoid relationship threats between interlocutors (Gallaher, 2014). Technically, the selection of particular strategy correlates with the social gap between interlocutors (Tabatabaei, 2015). A close social gap enables the speaker to use the direct strategy of opposing speech acts. This is in accordance with Brown and Levinson (1987) who stated that the directiveness level of speech acts of complaining is based on three criteria: social distance, relative power, and ranking of imposition.

The most dominant strategy used is the indirect strategy, since the direct complaint has the potential to threaten the face of the interlocutors (Decock & Depraetere, 2018). This is in compliance with previous studies (Chen et al., 2011; Kozlova, 2004; Rinnert & Iwai, 2002). The dominant use of the indirect strategy indicates one of the Javanese native speakers' characteristics, i.e. considering the aspects of *unggah-ungguh basa*, *empan papan*, *tepa selira*, *andap asor*, and *ngajeni* (Endraswara, 2015). Hence, a speech act of complaining is an act that threatens the face of the interlocutors (Umar, 2006). The speaker tends to use an indirect strategy to maintain social harmony.

Conclusion

The discussion about the realisation of the speech acts of complaining was one of the efforts to provide a real depiction of native Javanese's communication culture in the present time. In accordance with the objectives, this study has generated two conclusions. First, the speech acts of complaining might be in the forms of inability, confusion, and disappointment. Second, the



speech acts of complaining were delivered through direct and indirect strategies in the forms of *nglulu* (implicature), excuse, interrogation, demand, expectation, rhetorical question, metaphor, and humour.

The deliverance of the forms of speech acts and the strategies used are parts of the cultural framework. The way of delivering the speech acts of complaining has two tendencies. First, those who tend to speak by considering the Javanese norms and ethics and thus known as *Jawa* or *Njawani*. This group attempt to preserve their own culture. Second, those who tend to speak against the norms and ethics of the culture and thus recognised as *urung Jawa* or *urung Njawani*. They tend to shift from their own culture due to many reasons; one of which is the shift of social status in the community.

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