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Sound Change as Media for Showing Deference

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Abstract

Javanese language shows a dynamic change when used in daily communication. The change represented by vowels and consonants as a speaker alternates from *ngoko* to *krama* is not only a phenomenon of phonetics but also a phenomenon of intention. A speaker changes his linguistic code to meet social functions of language. One of them is that the change of phoneme represents the way of Javanese people when they give respect or honor to others. Phonetically, the change of phoneme will result in different mouth shapes as these phonemes are produced. According to Javanese, the shape of mouth is in line with politeness. The participatory observation method was applied to get the data. The result shows that indeed there are various changes in vowels and consonants when a speaker alternates from *ngoko* to *krama*. This alternation is in line with the change in which language sound tends to change from open to close. It seems Javanese will use frontier vowels and consonants as they want to obey politeness principle.

Keywords: vowel and consonant change; shape of mouth and politeness

1. Introduction

Speech level (*undha usuk*) system in Javanese language accommodates two interests at once, language as media for communication and reflection of etiquettes. These functions will always be performed by Javanese as they are engaged in a conversation. Speakers perform not only their competence on linguistic codes but also their knowledge on social factors and their skill on language usage. In short, a speaker has knowledge on three competences, namely linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic.

When a speaker changes their linguistic code from Javanese *ngoko* to *krama*, there are various phenomena following that language usage. Phonetically, the change from *ngoko* to *krama* is always followed by the change of vowel and consonant. This change contributes to the way a speaker produces the sound. S/he will form rounded and unrounded shapes of mouth while producing utterances. The different shape of mouth relates to the perception of politeness. Politeness in this case is merely on the way Javanese people produce sound from their oral cavity. There is a local wisdom believed that when a person is producing utterance it is better not to open their mouth widely. They consider the better or more polite way in speaking is indicated by making appropriate shapes of mouth. Even, as a woman or a man is smiling or laughing, they are suggested to close their mouth by their palm to make sure that there will be nobody seeing their teeth. As people can see in the puppet show, the characters of these puppets are displayed in opposite position. The good characters are displayed on the right hand side and the bad ones are on the left hand side. The puppets displayed on the left are mostly dominated by bright colors such as red, green, and yellow on their face. Their lips are also opened and show their teeth. On the right, the

characters are dominated closed-shape of mouth. This difference shows the management of mouth shape in Javanese culture is also a part of values.

Politeness in language usage is not only indicated by the selection word, sentence modus, and directness and indirectness of the speech but also accompanied by the use of appropriate body language or gesture. Referring to the definition of Indonesian dictionary, politeness covers two aspects, namely good manner and gesture in using language [1]. Politeness indicated by the appropriate gesture is reflected as a person deals with others coming from different social background. They sometimes have to bow their body to show obedience. Special hand movements also help people to show good attitude to a counterpart. Sometimes, they do not show any body movement, since they consider it is not necessary for them to do so. These indicate that gesture change show the level of politeness as a person is engaged to others as they are having verbal interaction.

Politeness in speaking is also reflected from the articulation of vowel and consonant. The alternation from *ngoko* to *krama* is followed by the change of vowel and consonant. For example, as a speaker alternates from the word '*ngedol*' (to sell) to '*ngaben*' (to sell), there will be a change on the vowel and consonant at once. For example, the half-open vowel [ɔ] in the second syllable of '*ngedol*' [ŋɛdɔl] is changed into half-close vowel [ə] in '*ngaben*' [ŋabən]. This vowel alternation gives impact to the shape of mouth, from half-open to half-close. The change also happens to the consonants, that is, the consonant dental stop [d] alternates to plosive bilabial [b]. The change of consonant from back to frontier sound changes rounded to unrounded sound. From the point of view Javanese culture, the alternation from open to close is one way to produce language in polite way. In other word, the change of vowel and consonant in *Ngoko* and *Krama* obeys the principles of politeness in Javanese language. This phenomenon is found abundantly in the word class 'verb'. This article focuses on the language sounds which show politeness principle in Javanese language.

2. Phonematic Principle

Related to the change of sound accompanying the usage of politeness in language, the understanding on phonetics is used as method for analysing data. Phonetics that is closely related to politeness is articulatory phonetics as this deals with the change of oral cavity. According to [2] and [3], this phonetics is related to sound of language produced by oral cavity. Sound language is differentiated into two, namely segmental and suprasegmental. Referring to the discussion of politeness in language use, the focus is on the segment of a segmental sound. A sound as segment is a sound which is based on the order pattern within a word, the initial to the end or the left to the right [2].

Phonematic principle is a restricted principle to the formation of *ngoko* to *krama* based on the analogy of other words. *Kramafication* is a term proposed by [4] as a sign of change in Javanese *ngoko* to *krama*. Since this term are restricted, the analogy of *kramafication* can not be classified as the real principle. Even though, the analogy of *krama* words undergoes phonematical process.

The formulation of this phonematical *krama* is difficult to do. This formulation will be applied to the most prominent phoneme as the previous study has already done.

3. Method

The data were collected by applying participatory observation method. At the time of collecting data, the conversation among participants were recorded and written in a book note. This note was used as complementary data, giving descriptions on the context of situation. The data, both written and verbal,

then were selected to figure out types of data needed. The analysis was done by using *metode padan referensial* and *metode agih* [5].

4. Result and Discussion

The change of word from *ngoko* to *krama madya* or *krama inggil* will always be followed by the change of sound, either consonant or vowel. This change indicates the difference of word usage as it is used in different utterance contexts, objectives, speakers and hearers, and speech events. The main function of Javanese *ngoko* and *krama madya* and *krama inggil* shows a good and full deference between speaker and hearer. The participants give respect each other in a speech event. Besides, it also functions as media to meet politeness principles in language usage, namely gesture and speech.

The articulation of *ngoko* words makes the shape mouth open since the word is constructed by back and rounded vowels, such as [u, o, and ɔ]. These vowels will shift to unrounded and middle or front vowel [ə]. The back vowels also undergo shifting; the rounded and open vowels shift to closed and back vowels.

Commonly, Javanese words, *krama madya* and *krama inggil* use unrounded, central and half close vowels. The change of consonant and vowel can be seen from the example and explanation below.

1. The change of words *ngoko* to *krama madya* and *krama inggil* keeps the first syllable unchanging. There will be reduplication on the first syllable and the last syllable changes. The last syllable ended by rounded, close and back [u] will be changed into unrounded semi-open, and middle [ə]. The change of vowel [u] to [ə] will shape the mouth from rounded to semi-rounded. The articulation of sound produced by semi close has a better level of politeness.

<i>maju</i> [majU]	→	<i>majeng</i> [majəŋ]	“to move”
<i>ngaku</i> [ŋakU]	→	<i>ngaken</i> [ŋakəŋ]	“to admit”
<i>nggeguyu</i> [ŋgəguyU]	→	<i>nggegujeng</i> [ŋgəgujəŋ]	“to laugh”

The similar change is also found in the words whose last syllable are ended by vowel [ɔ]. These can be seen from the examples below.

<i>ngapuro</i> [ŋapurɔ]	→	<i>ngapuntən</i> [ŋapuntən]	“to forgive”
<i>ngiro</i> [ŋirɔ]	→	<i>ngintən</i> [ŋintən]	“to guess”

2. If the last syllable does not undergo sound change and another syllable within the word does not show reduplication, the vowel change occurs in the previous syllable.

From the examples below, sound changes take place in the second syllable in which rounded, open and back vowels, that are vowels [U,ɔ] will be changed into unrounded, half close and middle vowels [ə, ɛ]:

<i>ngrusuhi</i> [ŋgrusuhi]	→	<i>ngresahi</i> [ŋgrəsəhi]	“to bother”
<i>ngakoni</i> [ŋakoni]	→	<i>ngakeni</i> [ŋakəni]	“to admit”

In short, the change within the second syllable from close, back and semi back vowel to semi close vowel makes the shape of mouth of the speaker adapt to semi close. This such articulation is more polite compared to the open mouth shape.

3. If there is not a syllable reduplication within the word, the change of sound takes place as the oral cavity shifts the back vowel to middle or frontier vowels. The open vowel will be changed into close one. The vowel change can be seen from the examples below.

<i>kongkon</i> [kɔŋkɔŋ]	→	<i>dhawuh</i> [dhawUh]	“to request”
<i>ngutang</i> [ŋutan]	→	<i>ngampil</i> [ŋampil]	“to owe”

The shift occurs as the semi open vowel [ɔ] is shifted to semi close vowel [U], while the frontier, and open vowel [a] undergo shifting to the frontier close vowel [i].

<i>turu</i> [tUrU]	→	<i>tilem</i> [tiləm]	“sleep”
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In the word above, the shift occurs as a back vowel [U] changes into middle vowel [ə].

4. As a vowel change or shift does not take place, the sound change is usually on its consonant. The shift will reduce the openness level of the mouth shape. This is usually done by replacing the consonant from frontier part of oral cavity by consonant belonged to the back part of oral cavity. The example is shown below.

<i>njupuk</i> [njupuk]	→	<i>mundhut</i> [munɖut]	“to take”
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In the example above, as the word *ngoko njupuk* “to take” changes into *krama mundhut* “to take”, there is no change on its back vowel [U]. The change of sound occurs on its consonant, that is, a plosive consonant [p] is replaced by a stop consonant [ɖ]. This change causes the articulation of the word *njupuk* [njupuk] “to take” leads to a spread shape of mouth. This shape reduces the protruding level of mouth and is considered as a good way of speaking to others.

5. Conclusion

The sound change in form of consonant and vowel is used by Javanese people as one of ways for showing respect to others as s/he is changing her/his language from *ngoko* to *krama madya* and *krama inggil*. This deferential form indicates that politeness is also characterized by the internal sound change of the word and is not merely determined by choice of words. This internal change will result in less protruding shape of mouth as speakers change open to semi open or close pronunciation. This is done by changing rounded vowels to semi close and back to middle or frontier vowels. As a vowel change does not occur, the politeness will be indicated by the change of its consonants. There will be a replacement of front consonant with middle or back consonant. This causes the articulation of a word can be done well, not protruding or widely opened-shape of mouth.

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