

# Address Terms in Japanese, Indonesian and Sundanese *As Politeness Strategy in Apology Speech Act*

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to compare the use of address terms in intercultural context, which are in Japanese, Indonesian and Sundanese, and to analyse the tendency of their function as politeness strategy. The data in this study were collected by *Discourse Completion Test*, which investigated eight apology scenes focused on human relations and situation differences. The participants in this study were 60 Japanese Native Speakers (JNS), 58 Indonesian Native Speakers (INS), and 54 Sundanese Native Speakers (SNS). Address terms collected from the data then categorized into “Terms of self” and “Address terms”. The results suggested that the INS and SNS used “Terms of self” and “Address terms” in various numbers and expressions to show their consideration to the addressee, while on the contrary, JNS avoid or use less “Terms of self” and “Address terms” to express their consideration to the addressee. It is clear that as a politeness strategy, Japanese native speakers tend to minimize the use of address terms as an attempt to maintain addressee’s negative face as negative politeness strategy, while Indonesian and Sundanese native speakers used address terms as positive politeness strategy to maintain their addressee’s positive face.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Address terms are words or linguistic expression that speakers use to appeal directly to their addressees. In English, for instance, *Sir* is used in addressing only, but other words such as *you*, *Helen*, *daddy*, *darling*, or *Professor Brown* have other functions as well as they are used to talk about other persons rather than to talk to them directly, and *you* can be used generically (Jucker and Taatvitsainen, 2003). The forms of address terms of address are including pronouns, nouns, verb forms and other affixes (Braun, 1988). Suzuki (1973) examined the rules for using address terms in Japanese by dividing address terms into two classifications: 1) *Jishoushi* (term of self), and 2) *Tashoushi* (address term). There are many studies about address terms in Japanese from many perspectives. Lee (1991) studied about how address of terms and term of self in Japanese are used in Japanese and examined about how those use is omitted in speeches. Other than this study, the use of address terms in text books (Ohama, 2001). In other languages, the function of address terms in sociolinguistics context involves gender difference

also has been examined (Kim, 2015; Afful, 2010; Rendell-Short, 2009).

Furthermore, in speech act studies, there has been stated that address terms used in many languages with their own characteristics. Especially in apology speech act, Japanese native speakers tend to use much less address terms compared to Chinese native speakers (Kusumoto, 2010), English native speakers (Boyckman and Usami, 2005), and Korean native speakers (Jung, 2011). Similar to this tendency, Japanese native speakers also tend to use less address terms compared to Indonesian native speakers in apology situations (Takadono, 2000; Haristiani, 2012). These mean that the use of address terms in speech acts has different functions and meaning according to its language and culture background. In spite of these tendency, there is still no further inquiry about why Japanese prefer to use less address terms in apology situation (or other situations in general), and why in some language such as Indonesian use so many address terms in apology situation (or in other situations in general).

To fill this gap, this study aimed to analyse the use of address terms in apology situations in different languages and culture background, which

are in Japanese, Indonesian and Sundanese. The address terms data collected in this study then analysed based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory to determine their function as politeness strategy.

## 2 RESEARCH METHOD

### 2.1 Data Collection and Participants

The data in this study collected through an open questionnaire which is a "Discourse Completion Test" (DCT). The DCT was originally conducted as an inquiry about apology speech act, and the address terms data used in this study is a part from overall data collected. The data was collected in Hiroshima University-Japan, and Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia-Indonesia. Respondents for this study were 60 Japanese Native Speakers (JNS), 58 Indonesian Native Speakers (INS), and 54 Sundanese Native Speakers (SNS). All research objects were undergraduate and graduate students with average age of 23 years old for JNS, 22.5 years old for INS, and 22 years old for SNS.

### 2.2 Discourse Completion Test (DCT)

The DCT used in this study includes 2 apology situations which are, 1) Apology Situation ("*Forgot to return borrowed book*"), and 2) Misunderstood Situation ("*Asked to return the book before promised due*").

Pronominal forms of address often distinguish between a familiar or intimate pronoun, and a distant or polite pronoun on the other (Jucker and Taatvitsainen, 2003). Hence, to find out about the difference between address terms used in intimate and non-intimate relations, besides two different situations mentioned above, this study also observes the social distance between the speaker (addresser) with the hearer (addressee) and set as described as follows:

- 1) Status un-equals, intimates: Intimate Lecturer (IL)
- 2) Status un-equals, non-intimates: Non-intimate Lecturer (NL)
- 3) Status equals, intimates: Intimate Friend (IF)
- 4) Status equals, non-intimates: Non-intimate Friend (NF)

Abbreviations above will be used along analysis in results and discussion to simplify and shorten explanations.

### 2.3 Data Analysis

Address terms collected from DCT data then classified into 'Term of self' (*Jishoushi*) and 'Address terms' (*Tashoushi*). "Term of self" (*Jishoushi*) is a pronominal term that the speaker (addresser) used to mentions himself/herself, and the so called first-person is only small part of it. In the other hand, 'Address terms' (*Tashoushi*) is a generic term of words to refer to the hearer (addressee) (Suzuki, 1973). The data classified into 'Term of self' and 'Address terms' then analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative analysis conducted by calculating the frequency of address terms usage overall, and then calculating the frequency of 'Term of self' and 'Address terms' in 'Apology' and 'Misunderstood' situations specifically. In the other hand, qualitative analysis conducted based on Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory to identify the function of address terms in Japanese, Indonesian and Sundanese as politeness strategy.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 The Overall Use of Address Terms

Address terms used in all apology situations in Japanese, Indonesian and Sundanese is as shown on Table 1. Table 1 shows that in both 'Apology' and 'Misunderstood' situations, INS used the most of address terms overall, followed by SNS, and lastly JNS used the least number of address terms.

Table 1: Overall address terms using in Apology Situations and Misunderstood Situations by JNS, INS and SNS

		IL	NL	IF	NF	Total
JNS	AS	11	6	0	0	17
	MS	12	10	0	5	27
INS	AS	202	227	85	94	608
	MS	153	166	58	67	444
SNS	AS	134	126	40	36	336
	MS	110	109	31	26	276

Table 1 also shows that the situations difference affected the amount of use of address terms in Indonesian and Sundanese, but not in Japanese. In 'Apology situation', INS used address terms 608 times while in 'Misunderstood situation' they used those 444 times. This tendency also seen on Sundanese, when SNS used address terms 336 times

in 'Apology Situation', and 276 times in 'Misunderstood Situations'.

From above data, we can see that the necessity to use address terms is higher on 'Apology Situation' when the addresser has heavier responsibility to mend the unbalance relationship between the addresser and addressee which caused by addresser's fault, than in 'Misunderstood Situation' where conversely the mistake is on addressee's side. However, this tendency was not seen in Japanese, where JNS slightly used more address terms in 'Misunderstood Situations', than in 'Apology Situation'. Still, this tendency could mean that in Japanese, the role of address terms usage in both situation is not as crucial as in Indonesian and in Sundanese, and this showed by the number of address terms used by JNS relatively. Table 1 also shows that from social distance factor, three language's native speakers used address terms in larger number when the addressee is non-equal (IL/NL) than equal (IF/NF). Especially in Indonesian, it is clear that the use of address terms also influenced by intimacy/familiarity with the addressee.

### 3.2 The Use of 'Term of Self' and 'Address Term' in Apology Situations

Table 2: 'Term of self' and 'Address Term' used in Apology Situations by JNS, INS and SNS.

		IL	NL	IF	NF	Total
Term of Self	JNS	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0
	INS	123	140	61	69	393
		2.12	2.41	1.05	1.17	1.69
	SNS	53	54	26	20	153
		0.98	1.00	0.48	0.37	0.71
Address Term	JNS	11	6	0	0	17
		0.18	0.1	0	0	0.14
	INS	79	87	24	25	215
		1.36	1.50	0.41	0.43	0.93
	SNS	81	72	14	16	183
		1.50	1.33	0.26	0.30	0.85

Note: The first row on JNS, INS and SNS represents the number of address terms used, while the second row represents the average usage including repetition of address terms in one utterance.

The specific use of 'Term of self' and 'Address term' including its use based on social distance between the speaker and the hearer is as seen on

table 2. Table 2 shows that based on the type of address terms used, the three languages show different tendencies. JNS did not use 'term of self' at all, and only used 'address terms'. Meanwhile, INS and SNS used both 'term of self' and 'address terms', with larger number on 'address terms'. INS used much larger number of 'term of self' (393 times), than SNS (153 times). Moreover, INS also used more 'address terms' (215 times) than SNS (183 times), and lastly followed by JNS (17 times).

From the data above, it can be understood that compared to the other two languages, Indonesian prioritized the use of 'term of self', where SNS and JNS prioritized the use of 'address term', although in Japanese the number of its use was not significant. Table 2 also shows that based on the addressee, JNS only used 'address terms' when the addressee is non-equal (IL/NL). INS also showed similar tendency and used both 'term of self' and 'address term' more frequently when the addressee is non-equal and used them in the following sequence: NL>IL>NF>IF. Meanwhile, SNS tend to use 'term of self' and 'address term' differently. SNS used 'Term of self' in following order: NL>IL>IF>NF, while using 'address term' in following sequence: IL>NL>NF>IF, without striking difference in number.

From above data, it can be examined that in Japanese and Sundanese language, power distance (*jougekankei*) mainly affected the use of address terms. While in Indonesian, the use of address terms influenced by both power distance (*jougekankei*) with stronger influence, and by intimacy/familiarity (*shinsokankei*).

### 3.3 The Use of 'Term of Self' and 'Address Terms' in Misunderstood Situations

After analysing the use of address terms in apology situation, to examine further about address terms usage in different situations, the use of address terms in 'Misunderstood situations' will have discussed in this section. The use of 'term of self' and 'address term' by JNS, INS, and SNS in 'Misunderstood situation' is as shown in table 3.

From table 3, it can be seen that the use of 'term of self' and 'address terms' in three languages shows different tendencies. JNS prefer to use both 'term of self' (14 times) and 'address terms' (13 times) in almost the same number, while INS used larger number of 'term of self' (246 times) than 'address terms' (198 times) with significant difference. On the contrary, SNS used more than twice numbers of

‘address term’ (189 times) than ‘term of self’ (87 times).

Table 3: ‘Term of self’ and ‘Address Term’ used in Misunderstood Situations by JNS, INS and SNS

		IL	NL	IF	NF	Total
Term of Self	JNS	4	5	0	5	14
		0.07	0.08	0	0.08	0.08
	INS	69	86	38	53	246
		1.19	1.48	0.66	0.91	1.06
	SNS	25	29	17	16	87
		0.46	0.54	0.32	0.30	0.40
Address Term	JNS	8	5	0	0	13
		0.13	0.08	0	0	0.11
	INS	84	80	20	14	198
		1.45	1.38	0.35	0.24	0.85
	SNS	85	80	14	10	189
		1.57	1.48	0.26	0.19	0.88

Note: The first row on JNS, INS and SNS represents the number of address terms used, while the second row represents the average usage including repetition of address terms in one utterance.

Table 3 also shows that JNS did not distinguish the use of ‘term of self’ based on social distance and used ‘term of self’ similarly to IL, NL and NF. However, to IF, JNS did not use ‘term of self’ nor ‘address terms’ at all. This tendency could be seen as evidence that equal-intimate relation in Japanese language holds special or unique language rules, which is often different from other social distance/relations (Abe, 2006; Haristiani, 2010). Furthermore, JNS used ‘address terms’ only to non-equal addressee (NL/IL), and none to equal addressee (NF/IF). Meanwhile, INS showed slightly different tendency in using address terms in both ‘Apology’ and ‘Misunderstood’ situations. INS used more ‘term of self’ and ‘address terms’ to non-equal addressee than to equal addressee. However, the sequence in using ‘term of self’ is NL>IL>NF>IF, while in using ‘address terms’ the sequence changed to IL>NL>NF>IF, with only slight different number between IL and NL. Similar to INS, SNS used both ‘term of self’ and ‘address terms’ more to non-equal addressee than to equal addressee, but without significant difference in number. Even so, SNS used ‘address terms’ to non-equal (IL/NL) and to equal (IF/NF) with significant difference in number.

From above data, it can be concluded that in all three languages, power distance (*jougekankei*) mainly affected the use of both ‘term of self’ and ‘address terms’. Even more, in Indonesian language,

the use of address terms was clearly influenced also by intimacy/familiarity (*shinsokankei*). It is also examined that situation difference also influenced the use of ‘term of self’ and ‘address terms’, and their frequencies.

To examine deeper about the use of address terms and its function as politeness strategy, in the next sections ‘term of self’ and ‘address terms’ will be analyzed by its form and their function as politeness strategy.

### 3.4 The Form of ‘Term of Self’ and ‘Address Terms’ and Their Function as Politeness Strategy

The form of ‘term of self’ and ‘address terms’ used in Japanese were very simple. Form of ‘term of self’ used in Japanese was only 「私 (*watashi*)」 which means “I” as formal form. This term used only 14 times when the addressee was non-equal (IL/NL) and non-intimate equal (NF). Since social distance with the addressees are rather distant, the ‘term of self’ that used by the addresser was only *Watashi*. Moreover, JNS only used one type of ‘Address term’ which is 「先生 (*Sensei*)」 (30 times), meaning “Lecturer” or “Teacher”. The use of *Watashi* and *Sensei* are as *Example (1)* and *(2)*.

#### Example (1)

(JNS16) 「すみません、私は明日お返しするつもりでおりました。」

*Sumimasen, watashi wa ashita okaeshisuru tsumori de orimashita.*

I’m sorry, I have planned to return it tomorrow.

#### Example (2)

(JNS51) 「あつ！先生申し訳ありません！忘れていました。昨日まで覚えていたのですが…。明日必ず返しに参ります。」

*A! Sensei moushiwake arimasen! Wasurete imashita. Kinou made oboete itanodesuga.... Ashita kanarazu kaeshini mairimasu.*

Ah! Sir (Lecturer), I’m sorry! I forgot it. But I remembered until yesterday though... Tomorrow I will definitely return it (to you).

From *example 1*, it is shown that the choice of formal form of *Watashi* did not stand alone and supported by honorific ‘Modest form’ (*Kenjougo*) such as *okaeshisuru* (return) and *orimasu* (be). As well as *example 2*, to show higher level of politeness, address term *Sensei* used along with ‘Polite form’ (*Teineigo*) such as *-mashita* and *-desu* form, and with ‘Modest form’ *mairimasu* (go/come). Address



terms used by JNS shows formality and tend to function as politeness strategy. However, the numbers of address terms use in Japanese are extremely few compared to the other two languages. From the cultural anthropology point of view, addressing someone is similar to 'touch' that someone indirectly, and has an aspect conflicting with basic taboos (Takiura, 2008). In Japanese it is said that the impact of this taboo is strong, and this tendency showed in the result of this study. That JNS tend to avoid or minimize using address terms to the addressee, which means minimizing 'touching' the hearer. For Japanese that prefer to maintain their *negative face* (Ikeda, 1993; Jung, 2011), minimalizing the use of address terms means respecting the addressee's *negative face*, which also could be understood as *negative politeness strategy*.

Meanwhile, INS used two types of 'Term of self' which are *Saya* (416 times) and *Aku* (2 times) when the addressees are non-equal. *Saya* is formal form of a 'term of self', and *Aku* is rather informal than *Saya*. This explains why *Saya* used in enormous number while *Aku* in extremely small number. Since with non-equal addressees the power or social distance between addressees and addresser are distant, it is understood that the respondents felt the necessity to maintain the distance and the formality which shown by their use of 'term of self'. This tendency also shown by their use of 'address terms', that they only used one type of expression to their 'lecturer', which is *Bapak/Ibu* (often shorten as *Pak/Bu*) meaning "Sir/Ma'am", for 297 times. This *Bapak/Ibu* is a pronominal that originally means "Father/Mother", but in communication is generally used to address someone older, or someone respected regardless of their age.

*Example (3)*

(INS8) **Pak**, maaf saya tidak bisa mengembalikan bukunya tepat waktu. Apa **Bapak** tidak keberatan saya mengembalikannya besok? **Saya** benar-benar minta maaf. Sir, I'm sorry I cannot return your book as promised due. Do you mind Sir if I return it tomorrow? I'm really sorry.

As seen on *Example (3)*, INS used *Saya* to address himself and used *Pak* and *Bapak* to address the lecturer. It is seen that the choice of these formal 'term of self' and 'address term' were used by INS to show his/her respect to the addressee. The willingness to show respect to the addressee was also shown by repeatedly using 'term of self' and 'address term', and this tendency from INS data is remarkable.

Meanwhile, when the addresser is equal (friend), INS used 3 types of 'term of self' which are *Saya*

(103 times), *Aku* (97 times) and others (18 times). Interestingly, when the addresser is NF, *Saya* was mainly used, but when to IF, *Aku* was mainly used. It merely shows the social distance between the addresser and addressee, that when the distance is closer, addressee tend to use informal form of 'term of self', but when the distance is further, they tend to use more formal 'term of self'.

On the other hand, 'address term' used when the addressee is equal are 4 types which are *Kamu* (you) (42 times), *Teman* (friend) (21 times), Addressee's name (13 times), *Sayang* (or *Say* in short, means 'Love') (7 times). The use of first 3 address terms did not show much difference on IF and NF, when *Sayang* which shows intimate relationship only used for IF. These shows that addressees tend more freely to choose and use varieties of address terms to the equals which has closer social distance than to non-equals. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), address forms is an in-group identify markers, which included as *positive politeness strategy*. Indonesian has been stated prefer to maintain their *positive face* (Takadono, 2000; Haristiani, 2010). This tendency proven by the data in this study, where INS tend to use address terms repeatedly in one utterance and showed enormous number of address terms use also in many varieties of expressions overall.

In Sundanese, the form of 'term of self' used to non-equal addressee were 3 types, which are *Abdi/Abi* (I) (144 times), Addresser's name (15 times), and Others (2 times). *Abdi* means "I", which has the honorific meaning. *Abdi* generally used in formal situations, which has function to express respect to the addressee. However, *Abi* has less formal meaning, although in this study we did not differentiate the function between *Abdi* and *Abi*. Meanwhile, the 'address term' used by SNS to the non-equal was similar to INS, which was *Bapak/Ibu* (318 times). This address terms have similar meaning and function to those used in Indonesian, since those words were originally borrowed from Indonesian.

*Example (4)*

(SNS1) **Punten Bapak, abi** teu nyandak bukuna. Tadi teh **abi** rusuh jadi weh hilap. Wios teu pami enjing **Pak?** **Punten pisan.**

Sorry Sir I did not bring the book. I was in a hurry and forgot about it. Is it OK to return it tomorrow? (I'm) really sorry.

As seen on *Example (4)*, SNS used *Abi* to address himself and used *Bapak* and *Pak* to address the lecturer. Similar to INS, SNS choose these formal 'term of self' and 'address term' to show his

respect to the addressee. The willingness to show respect to the addressee was also shown by repeatedly using 'term of self' and 'address term', even though the tendency was not as obvious as INS.

For 'term of self' to equal addressee, SNS used mainly 4 types of 'term of self' which are *Abdi/Abi* (47 times), *Urang* (17 times), and *others* (15 times). Others were such as *Kuring*, *Aing*, etc. Meanwhile the use of 'address term' including Name (12 times), *Maneh* (7 times), *Bro* (shortened from 'brother') (7 times), *Kang* (shortened from *Akang* means 'brother') (5 times), *Neng/Eneng* (means 'sister') (5 times), and others (18 times). This tendency is similar to INS, when SNS tend more freely to choose and use varieties of address terms to the equals which has closer social distance than to non-equals. These use of address terms in Sundanese also considered as *positive politeness strategy*, where SNS prefer to use address terms to maintain addressee's *positive face* with numerous and varieties in forms of address terms.

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

This study observed the use of 'Term of self' and 'Address term' in 'Apology' and 'Misunderstood' situations in cross cultural context, which are in Japanese, Indonesian, and Sundanese. The result showed that Japanese had different tendency in using address terms, where in Indonesian and Sundanese the tendency to use address terms were more similar. The use of address terms in Japanese and Sundanese mainly influenced by power relation (*Jougekankei*), when in Indonesian it is influenced both by power relation and familiarity/intimacy (*Shinsokankei*). From politeness perspective, Japanese tend to minimize using address terms as their effort to maintain addressee's *negative face* as *negative politeness strategy*, while Indonesian and Sundanese tend to use address terms to show their willingness to respect addressee's *positive face* and use address terms as *positive politeness strategy* as many as possible, and this tendency seen most obvious in Indonesian.

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