

Language, Power, and Solidarity in Public Service in Purwakarta District

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the analysis of the use of language in public services, which plays a very important role, not only as a means of conveying information, but also as a medium for forming power relations and solidarity between officers and the public. This research aims to examine the representation of power and solidarity in public service speech. The research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with discourse analysis and pragmatics methods. Research data is in the form of oral and written speech used by public service officials in interacting with the public, which is collected through observation, recording and documentation techniques. Data analysis focused on lexical choices, forms of speech acts, politeness strategies, and the use of greetings in service contexts. The research results show that power relations are reflected through the dominance of directive speech, the use of formal language, and instructional sentence structures. Meanwhile, solidarity is realised through the use of more communicative language, personal greetings, and positive politeness strategies that emphasise empathy and social closeness. This research confirms that the balance between power and solidarity in public service speech contributes to communication effectiveness and service quality.

Key words: language; power; public service; solidarity

INTRODUCTION

Language has a very strategic role in public service practice because it is the main medium of interaction between government officials and the community. According to (Halliday) language not only functions as a means of conveying information, but also as a tool for forming social relations between officials and society. The importance of Indonesian in daily human activities, especially those related to power (Amir). Through language, policies are conveyed, services are provided, and social relations between service providers and recipients are built. In this context, language not only functions as a neutral communication tool, but also as a means of establishing and negotiating power and social solidarity (Fairclough). Meanwhile, public services are the main source of interaction between the state and citizens. In it, language is not just a neutral communication tool, but a dynamic instrument that reflects social structures

and power relations. In the context of Purwakarta Regency—which has very strong Sundanese cultural characteristics but is being transformed into an industrial area—the dynamics of language in bureaucracy like this is an interesting phenomenon to study. This phenomenon involves the pull between administrative formality, the hegemony of bureaucratic power, and efforts to build humanitarian solidarity. As quoted from (N. Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*.) that speech in public services is part of social practice which is influenced by social structure, bureaucratic culture and institutional ideology. Therefore, language analysis cannot be separated from the social context in which the speech is produced and used. Public services are a space of social interaction that is full of language practices, where the speech used by state officials has the potential to shape people's perceptions of the authority of institutions and the quality of services received (Dwiyanto).

But on the other hand, there is an aspect of "Solidarity" which functions as a balance. (Brown-Gilman-Pronouns) in their classic theory of *The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity* states that the dimension of solidarity emerges when speakers try to reduce social distance through shared identity. (Yulistio's opinion), Social equality can also be influenced by solidarity. Solidarity can bring interactions to a friendly atmosphere which is characterized by the use of names only or personal names and preceded by kinship titles. In Purwakarta in particular, this is often reflected through the use of Sundanese or a distinctive local dialect. The use of greetings such as "*Akang*" or "*Teteh*" in public services is not just etiquette, but a linguistic strategy to break down bureaucratic rigidity and build trust (Brown-Gilman-Pronouns (1)). The quality of public services is not only determined by administrative systems and procedures, but also by the way officials use language in interacting with the public as service users (Moenir). Purwakarta Regency, as a region with strong social and cultural diversity, has its own characteristics in public service practices. Interactions between officers and the public are not only influenced by bureaucratic regulations, but also by local values, language habits, and social norms that develop in society. Therefore, analysis of public service speech in Purwakarta Regency is important to understand how language is used as a means of exercising power as well as building social solidarity. The use of language in institutional interactions often represents unequal power relations. Public service officials have symbolic authority that allows them to control the flow of communication, determine topics of conversation, and determine forms of speech that are considered legitimate (N Fairclough).

Several previous studies that were used as references for the author in this research include studies that examine the use of official language in interactions between public officials and the public, as well as how this language reflects the power structure in services. For example, research by Rahmawati (2021) highlights how certain terms can indicate hierarchy in communication, while research by Setiawan (2020) focuses on the role of language in building solidarity between officers and citizens. Another research from (Zeidtry Maulana Aziz1) regarding *Creating Public Services Based on Language Politeness*. This study examines language interactions between the police and the community in patrol dialogue which is part of public services. The research uses a pragmatic approach to assess the realization of language politeness, politeness violations, and the way polite communication is built in the context of police agency public services. Rahmawati's research places more emphasis on linguistic analysis and the social implications of language choices, while Setiawan focuses more on the impact of language interactions on social relations and community participation in public services. Both provide valuable insight into the dynamics of communication in the context of public services.

Meanwhile, the difference between previous research and this research is that apart from having different themes, the research approach, research location and research object are also different.

The importance of this research is based on the fact that communication gaps often occur in public services. People sometimes feel intimidated by rigid bureaucratic language, or conversely, feel very helpful when officers are able to position themselves as partners through egalitarian language. As emphasized by (Wardhaugh), sociolinguistics must be able to dissect how people use language to determine status and maintain social relationships. Through analysis of speech at various public service points in Purwakarta Regency, this research aims to map how language is used as a tool to assert authority (power) as well as a bridge to empathy (solidarity). Linguistic studies in public services at the regional level are important to understand how language is used as an instrument of power as well as a means of building social solidarity, especially in the context of local community culture (Chaer).

This research aims to analyze forms of speech in public services in Purwakarta Regency by highlighting the relations of language, power and solidarity contained therein. Through a discourse analysis approach, this research is expected to be able to provide an in-depth overview of public service communication practices as well as theoretical and practical contributions to the development of public services that are more communicative, fair and oriented towards the interests of society. By understanding this pattern, it is hoped that the creation of a communication model in public services can be more humane and effective for the people of Purwakarta.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with analytical descriptive methods. The main focus of this research is to dissect linguistic phenomena in social interaction. The strategy used is Critical Discourse Analysis (AWK), which, according to Fairclough (2013), aims to investigate the relationship between language use, power domination, and the socio-cultural context behind it. Meanwhile, critical discourse analysis views language as not just a means of communication, but a means of establishing and reproducing power in social practice, including in public services (Van Dijk). In this case, the researcher will describe how power and solidarity are negotiated through speech in public service agencies in Purwakarta.

Research locations were determined at public service centre in Purwakarta Regency (such as Disdukcapil or District Office). The choice of this location was based on the unique characteristics of the Purwakarta community which has a strong but dynamic Sundanese social and cultural structure. Primary Data: In the form of speech recordings, field notes from observations, and transcripts of interviews between service officers and the community. Secondary Data: Official documents, public service regulations, and relevant literature on sociolinguistics.

Data Collection Research data was obtained from the oral speech of public service officials and service users in Purwakarta Regency through direct observation techniques, recording service interactions, and recording the context of communication situations that underlie the use of language (Sugiyono).

Data is collected through three main techniques to ensure validity; (1) Listening and Engaging *Cakap* (SLC) Observation: Researchers are directly involved in listening to conversations without interrupting the service process. In line with Sudaryanto's thoughts, this

technique allows researchers to capture linguistic data naturally and spontaneously in its original context, (2) In-depth Interviews: Conducted with informants (officers and residents) to explore the motives behind the choice of certain diction, and (3) Record and Note: Use a digital recording device to document intonation, word choice, and code-switching.

Data analysis was carried out using the Pronouns of Power and Solidarity model from Brown and Gilman (1960) to identify vertical (power) and horizontal (solidarity) dimensions in speech. The data that has been collected is analyzed through the following stages: (1) Transcription: Converts recorded data into written text, (2) Data Reduction: Selecting speech that contains elements of power (such as orders/directives) and solidarity, such as friendly greetings/politeness, (3) Data Display: Presents data in the form of tables or dialogue pieces for interpretation, and (4) Drawing conclusions: Connecting the findings with the local cultural context of Purwakarta.

To ensure the quality of research results, researchers used source triangulation. According to (Miles), triangulation is carried out by comparing data from field observations with data from interviews, so that the findings produced are not subjective but are based on a consistent reality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General Description

Public service speech in Purwakarta Regency occurs in various formal interaction contexts, such as in sub-district offices, sub-districts, population services, and other administrative service units. This interaction is generally institutional in nature, with service officers as representatives of the state and society as service recipients. These conditions make language not just a means of communication, but also a means of asserting authority, regulating social relations, and building or weakening solidarity between interacting parties (Rani Sri Wahyuni). Observation results show that public service speech in Purwakarta combines the official variety of Indonesian with Sundanese as the local language. This choice of language is not neutral, but rather reflects communication strategies related to power relations and efforts to build social closeness. In sociolinguistic studies, human relationships in speech are measured along two main axes: (a) Power (Power/Status): A vertical dimension that shows hierarchy. Who has the authority to order or determine procedures? (b) Solidarity (Solidarity/Distance): A horizontal dimension that shows the level of intimacy or shared identity between the speaker and the speech partner.

Manifestation of Power in the Bureaucracy in Purwakarta;

In Purwakarta Regency, power in public service speech often appears through "Pattern Language of Authority". Power is not always realized directly, but can be present symbolically through language. The way of speaking, choice of words and speech style of officials can strengthen a dominant position or actually create a more equal relationship with society (Bourdieu).

a. Use of Administrative Registers:

The use of terms such as "incomplete files", "according to SOP", or "central regulation" is a form of assertion of power. Here, officers position themselves as key holders of access to public/community rights.

Data 1: Speech Dialogue Representing Institutional Power

Context: Population administration services at the Purwakarta sub-district office

Officer (F): "Sir, the file is not complete, so we cannot process it today."

Community (M): "Which one is lacking, sir?"

P: This is a photocopy of the family card and the cover letter from the RT–RW is not yet available. It must be completed first according to procedure."

Analysis:

The officer's speech shows institutional power through the declarative sentence "we can't process it yet" which emphasizes the officer's authority in determining the continuation of services. The use of the phrase "according to procedures" functions to legitimize the policy, so that the officer's decision is not personal, but rather represents institutional rules. In this dialogue, social relations are hierarchical and solidarity is not yet explicitly visible.

b. Speech Initiation Domination:

In interactions at the service counter, the officer usually has control over the flow of the conversation (who asks and who should answer). This indicates control of communicative space.

c. Standard Indonesian as Distance:

The use of very formal Indonesian in Sundanese-dominant communities often becomes a "fence" that emphasizes the officer's status as a rigid representative of the state.

The results of observations in Purwakarta Regency show that public service speech combines the official variety of Indonesian with insertions from Sundanese. The use of these two languages is not neutral, but rather is a strategy to assert institutional power while building social solidarity through local identity. When compared with previous public service research, the difference lies in language strategy. Research in the area generally shows that power is softened through politeness strategies in formal Indonesian. Meanwhile, in Purwakarta, solidarity is not only built through politeness, but also through local language code-switching. Theoretically, this finding is in line with the concept of power and solidarity from (Brown and A. Gilman) which explains that language reflects vertical (power) and horizontal (solidarity) relations. However, the Purwakarta context shows that these two relations can be negotiated flexibly in one interaction through a combination of national and regional languages.

Data 2: Obstructed E-KTP processing

Employee: "Queue number 45. Yes, please sit down. What do you need?" (Analysis: The officer uses short and direct interrogative sentences, showing control over the flow of time.)

Resident: "*Punten*, sir. I want to ask about my KTP which hasn't been ready for two months, even though it has been recorded. What do you think?"

P: "Let's look at the receipt. The status is still Data Record Clean, but the form is not yet available from the centre. I just have to wait for further instructions."

(Analysis: The use of technical terms such as "Data Record Clean" and "Central Blank" without a detailed explanation is a form of power through information monopoly. Citizens are made dependent on agency decisions.)

W: "But sir, I need to quickly make a list of assistance in the village. When will it be done?"

P: "Mrs. *Punten*, we have a centralized system here. If the system isn't ready, we can't do anything. Later, please check regularly on the application or come again next month. Don't forget to bring the original requirements file, don't just photocopy it, ma'am. Thank you

(Analysis: The officer terminates the conversation unilaterally and gives the imperative instruction "Don't forget...". This shows the officer's higher bargaining position because he has control over the "door" of service.)

Power Analysis Points in the Conversation: (1) Information Asymmetry: Officers use bureaucratic jargon which creates knowledge distance. Citizens are positioned as those who "don't know" and must "comply" with procedures that are not transparent to them, (2) Time and Space Control: The officer determines when the interaction starts and when it ends (thank you). Residents do not have the power to extend the discussion if officers have decided to end it, (3) Imperative Language Style: There are many instructions that are one-way. Even though we use formal Indonesian, the absence of elements of empathy or warm kinship greetings shows the prominence of the "Official/Apparatus" side compared to the "Servant" side, and (4) Hegemony of System: Officials often use the "System" or "Central Rules" as a shield of power to avoid personal accountability, so that citizens feel powerless against larger entities.

Comparison with Similar Research; Language and Power (N Fairclough) emphasizes that institutional language often reproduces relations of domination through lexical choices and discourse structures. In e-KTP conversations, procedural and passive phrases ("still being processed") reflect discursive power because the officer controls the definition of the situation. Fairclough's study is macro-theoretical (general critical discourse analysis), while the e-KTP example is micro-interactional at the local service level. The hampered conversation about processing e-KTPs shows that: power exists through information control, procedural legitimacy, and social distance. This finding is in line with previous theory and research which sees language as a means of reproducing social structures. The difference lies in the local context of public services, which shows concrete power practices in daily interactions

Solidarity: the "*Ngalemes*" strategy and Local Culture;

What makes Purwakarta unique is that there is a systematic effort to break down bureaucratic rigidity through a Sundanese cultural approach. Solidarity is built to create comfort. The use of language that is accommodating and respectful of interlocutors can be an important means of building social solidarity, especially in the context of interaction between public service officials and citizens (Holmes). Some of the data taken is as follows:

Data 1: conversation at the hospital between the registration/administration department and the patient

From this context, administrative officers must show empathy towards the patient's family in Sundanese/local language.

Pasien: *Sus, punten. ieu pun anak muriangna teu turun-turun, kedah kumaha nya?*

Perawat: *Mangga, teteh tenang heula nya, teu keudah hariwang. Badé diparios ku dokter. Manawi atos nyandak kartu BPJS atanapi kartu pasiénna?*

Pasien: *duh, hilap teu kacandak, Sus, margi tadi rurusuhan pisan abdina*

Perawat: *teu sawios-wios, teh. Sae mah ayeuna murangkalihna candak heula ka UGD supados énggal ditangani ku dokter. Perkawis administrasi mah tiasa dikantun heula, tiasa nyusul upami murangkalih tos tenang. Mangga, ku abdi diijap ka lebet*

Pasien: *Hatur nuhun pisan, Sus tos dibantos*

Perawat: *sami-sami teh, Mugia murangkalihna énggal damang deui sapertos biari.*

Data 2: Dialogue at a Village Office, where a resident wants to take care of a business certificate (SKU).

Petugas Administrasi: *waalaikumsalam, Aya anu tiasa dibantos? Mangga calik heula, kang*

Warga: *Ieu pak, badé naroskeun syarat ngadamel serat keterangan usaha (SKU). Badé nambut modal ka bank saurna kedah aya SKU.*

Petugas Adminstrasi: *Sumuhun kang, mangga. Upami serat keterangan usaha (SKU) mah syaratna gampil pisan. Ibu mung peryogi nyandak fotokopi KTP, KK, sareng serat panganteur ti RT/RW. Upami serat ti RT-na parantos aya?*

Warga: *Aduh, nembe pisan ti Pak RT mah, ieu seratna. Mung abdi téh rada bingung, prosésna lami moal nya? Jalaran peryogi pisan enjing*

Petugas: *teu kedah hariwang kang. Upami seratna parantos lengkep mah, ayeuna kénéh urang pangdamelkeun. Ngantosan paling sapuluh menit tos janten. Mangga bari dileueut caina kang.*

Warga: *Alhamdulillah, hatur nuhun pisan, bapak. Mani saé pelayananna, janten teu tegang abdi téh.*

Petugas: *Sawangsulna, kang. Parantos kawajiban abdi di dieu kanggo ngabantos warga. Sangkan usahana lancar, janten ekonomi urang sadaya ogé tiasa nambahan saé.*

Analysis of "Ngalemes" Strategy & Local Culture

1. *Soméah* (Hospitable): Kang Dadang greeted with the phrase "*Mangga calik heula*" (Please sit down first). This shows openness and removes barriers between officials and the people.
2. Solidarity (Empathy): The phrase "*Teu kedah hariwang*" (No need to worry) provides a sense of psychological calm to residents who feel pressed by need.
3. *Undak-Usuk Basa*: The use of the words "*Bantos*" (Help), "*Peryogi*" (Need), and "*Leres*" (Correct/Exact) creates a formal but still warm and respectful atmosphere.
4. Culture of "*Silih Asah, Silih Asuh*": Seen when Kang Dadang prays for Mrs Neneng's business to run smoothly. This is a form of moral support (solidarity) typical of the Sundanese people.

The important points of the "*Ngalemes*" strategy from the dialogue above are; (1) Ngagunakeun kecap ganti instead of *Merenah*: Ngagunakeun "*Punten*", "*Mangga*", "*Servant*", "*Father/Mrs*" and maintaining manners, (2) Emotional Solidarity: The phrase "*Mugia énggal damang*" (Hospital) and "*Sing tenang heula*" (Police Station) indicates that the officers are

willing to take care of the residents' cases, and (3) *Ngaleungitkeun Kasieun*: At the police station, soft language changes the public's perception that the police are tough so that they are someone they can talk to.

Solidarity in Sundanese culture is not just about helping physically, it also includes maintaining feelings so that the interlocutor is comfortable with public services in Purwakarta. Choice of Kinship Diction (Kinship Terms): Use of the formal greeting "*Kang*", "*Teh*", or "*Ambu*" instead of "Mr/Mrs". This reduces social distance and creates the illusion that public service is a mutual aid, not just an administrative obligation. Code-Switching: Officers who use soft Sundanese (*Lemes*) when dealing with elderly residents or village residents show empathy. This is a solidarity strategy to build trust so that citizens do not feel intimidated by government buildings. Humor and "*Panyapa*": The typical Sundanese *someah* (friendly) culture embedded in formal instructions serves as a lubricant for effective interactions.

Comparison of this data with other research, namely regarding the "*ngalemes*" strategy, can also be analyzed through politeness theory (Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson). This theory explains the concept of positive face (needs to be respected) and negative face (needs not to be suppressed). In conversation: The staff maintains the patient's positive face with empathetic expressions. Soft language functions to minimize threats to the patient's negative face (not forcing or blaming). Similar health care research shows that empathetic language increases patient trust and satisfaction because it creates a sense of being valued

Discussion: Tension between Formality and Locality

This analysis shows that in Purwakarta there is identity negotiation. On the one hand, officers must maintain a professional image (power), but on the other hand, they are required to be "people" (solidarity). This tension is often resolved with the "Politeness Paradox": Officers reject citizens' requests (using power) but with very gentle and apologetic language (building solidarity). This aims to ensure that citizens still feel respected even if their aspirations are not met administratively.

The author has summarized the general relevance of the findings from this research compared to previous research. The following are some of the relevance of these findings compared to other existing research findings: (1) The findings in this research that power relations are reflected through the dominance of directive speech, the use of formal language, and instructional sentence structures are in strong agreement with studies in Sociolinguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis, (2) Norman Fairclough's research confirms that institutional language tends to reproduce power through linguistic forms that direct, control and limit response options, and (3) Brown and Gilman's research also shows that power relations are reflected in asymmetric choices of language forms, including the use of commands and formal structures

So the findings from this research can strengthen the results of previous research by showing that in the context of local public services, power is not only structural, but also manifests concretely in the choice of directive speech and formal language style. This emphasizes that bureaucratic communication practices still tend to be hierarchical.

Relevance to the Findings of Solidarity and Politeness Strategies

The findings in this research explain how public service solidarity in Purwakarta is realized through communicative language, personal greetings, and positive politeness strategies which

are very much in line with the politeness theory of Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson. Meanwhile, in politeness theory, positive politeness strategies are used to build social closeness, show empathy, and reduce the distance between the speaker and the speech partner. Other research also shows that the use of personal greetings and informal language in public services can increase public satisfaction and comfort. So the relevance of this finding to other findings is that this research not only confirms this theory, but also shows that in the practice of public services in the city of Purwakarta, solidarity is realized in real terms through adapting language that is more humane and contextual in accordance with the data that has been obtained in the field.

Relevance to the Balance of Power and Solidarity

One of the important contributions of this research is to show that the balance between power and solidarity influences the effectiveness of communication and the quality of public services, especially in Purwakarta. In a pragmatic perspective, effective communication occurs when speakers are able to adapt language strategies to the social context. Previous research in the field of public services also confirms that communication that is too rigid (dominant of power) can reduce service quality, while communication that is too informal without authority can reduce the clarity of procedures.

Explicit relevance: The findings of this research can expand previous studies by showing that it is not the dominance of one aspect (power or solidarity) that determines the success of communication, but rather the balance of both. This is an important contribution because it offers an integrative perspective.

Relevance to Humanist Public Service Studies

The findings in this research that language practices contribute to the quality of public services in Purwakarta are related to modern public administration studies which emphasize community-oriented services. The contemporary public service approach emphasizes the importance of empathetic, responsive and non-discriminatory communication. Meanwhile, other research shows that the quality of verbal interactions greatly influences public trust in institutions.

Explicit relevance: This research provides empirical evidence that language is a key instrument in building humanistic public services, not just an administrative complement.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the language of communication dynamics in the public service sector in Purwakarta Regency, the author can conclude several main points as follows:

Power Relations in Speech (Power): The use of language by service providers (bureaucrats) still shows the existence of hegemony of power through the choice of diction that is instructive and formal. In Purwakarta, this power structure is often reflected in the use of Sundanese speech levels indicating hierarchical positions between officers and service applicants.

Manifestation of Solidarity: There is a shift in language style to be more relaxed or reflect local culture when officers want to build emotional closeness. The use of Purwakarta's typical familial Sundanese greetings (such as *Akang*, *Teteh*, or *Ambu*) has proven effective in diluting

bureaucratic rigidity and creating a sense of mutual trust between the government and the community.

Local Cultural Integration: The characteristics of public service speech in Purwakarta are strongly influenced by policies to strengthen cultural identity. Language is not just a reporting tool, but rather an instrument for instilling local wisdom values in every administrative procedure.

Communication Balance: Success in public services in Purwakarta district is very dependent on the ability of officers to balance between authority (to maintain the firmness of the rules) and solidarity (to provide comfort to its citizens). If there is inequality in just one of these aspects, it can cause communication barriers or low public satisfaction with public services in Purwakarta district.

Overall, this research confirms that the quality of public services is not only determined by systems and policies, but also by linguistic practices used in daily interactions. Choosing appropriate and solidarity-oriented language has the potential to increase service effectiveness, community satisfaction, and the positive image of public service institutions.

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