

The Effectiveness of Social Distance on Requests

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Abstract

This essay is an attempt to explain one of the fundamental discourse analysis theories in the field of politeness: Brown and Levinson's face-saving theory. They divide the face into positive and negative then they formulate five politeness strategies the speaker can use when the person faces any of the face threatening acts. The aim of this paper is to investigate how this theory can be adapted and applied to interview using requests. In addition, the essay will identify the strategies of request and politeness phenomena in producing a request speech act. It will record a 10-minute interviews with an Australian native speaker of English and an Indonesian nonnative speaker about topics of interest to the participants. The study will show how the social distance, the power that the speaker wield on the hearer and the imposition of the request on the hearer impact forming the request sentence.

Keywords: brown & levinson, face saving, politeness, request, social distance

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Introduction

One of the aims of socialization is to develop the ability to behave appropriately in terms of politeness. The presence or absence of politeness depends on the social appreciation of competent members of society; not-so-competent members or nonnative speakers may face the permanent risk of violating politeness norms. Politeness as a linguistic phenomenon has been studied by various scholars over the past three decades, including linguists, language philosophers, and sociologists. Many theories have appeared during that time, one of which will be the focus of this paper: Brown and Levinson's theory. The work of these writers on linguistic politeness was first published in 1978, although Penelope Brown wrote an article entitled "Women and Politeness" in 1976 in which she expressed a new view about language and society. Brown and Levinson's theory, also called the "face-saving" theory of politeness, was revised in 1987. This theory has generated some controversy but is considered a fundamental politeness theory in the linguistic field.

The first and main section of this essay describes the literature on Brown and Levinson's theory, addressing the content of the theory and the criticisms that the theory has received from other scholars. A section concerning methodology follows, which provides data related to the theory and its analysis. The third section of this paper contains results and findings. Discussion is the focus of the next section. The paper's final section presents conclusions about the theory and the strategies that are used in interview requests.

Literature Review

Brown & Levinson's (1987) book has two primary parts. The first part contains an analysis of the nature of politeness and its functions in communication. The second part addresses politeness strategies with copious examples from three languages: English, Tzeltal, and Tamil. Brown & Levinson (1987) created a model person (MP) with the capability to move from communicative goals to the optimal means of achieving these goals. The function of the MP is to measure the danger of threatening other interlocutors' face and to select suitable strategies in order to reduce face threats while accomplishing goal-directed activity. Thus, this model of Brown and Levinson's theory is a method for the development of a theory of how individuals can produce linguistic politeness. It focuses on the speaker, though the hearer is mentioned so that the person model can determine the most suitable politeness strategy to employ in specific circumstances (Watts, 2003).

In Brown & Levinson's (1987) model, the concept of face is derived from the work of Erving Goffman (1978), in which it refers to "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (p. 66). Brown and Levinson proposed that every person has two kinds of face. The first type, *positive face*, is defined as the person's desire to be approved and appreciated in social interaction. *Negative face*, on the other hand, is described as the desire to be free from imposition and action. Brown and Levinson claimed that positive and negative faces are universal, existing in all cultures.

Face-threatening acts (FTAs) damage the face of the speaker or addressee by opposing the desires of individuals. Brown and Levinson defined FTAs according to two parameters: (a) which type of face is being threatened (positive or negative) and (b) whose face is being threatened (the speaker or the hearer). Hence, Brown and Levinson suggested a set of five

possible politeness strategies that a speaker may use. The optimal strategy, Strategy 5, is "Don't do the face threatening act." In contrast, Strategy 1, "Do the face threatening act," is the worst option and means engaging in the act baldly without redressive action. If the participant goes on record in FTA, two additional strategies might occur to soften the previous strategy by providing redressive actions: Strategies 2 and 3. Strategy 2, positive politeness, enhances the hearer's positive face, whereas Strategy 3 reduces the encroachment of the hearer's freedom of action or freedom from imposition. The last strategy is off-record politeness, which places the hearer in a position to infer the intended meaning.

Furthermore, Brown & Levinson(1987) postulated 15 substrategies of politeness for the addressee's positive face and 10 substrategies for the addressee's negative face. The 15 substrategies for the addressee's positive face are the following: (a) notice and attend to hearer (needs, wants, and interests); (b) exaggerate (sympathy or approval with hearer); (c) intensify interest to the addressee in the speaker's contribution; (d) use in-group identity markers in speech; (e) seek agreement in safe topics; (f) avoid disagreement; (g) presuppose and assert common ground; (h) joke to put the addressee at ease; (i) presuppose or assert knowledge of and concern for addressee's wants; (j) promise and offer; (l) be optimistic that the addressee wants what the speaker wants; (m) include both the speaker and the hearer in the activity; (n) give or ask for reasons; (o) assert reciprocal exchange; and (p) give gifts to the hearer. The 10 substrategies for the hearer's negative face are the following: (a) be conventionally indirect; (b) do not assume willingness to comply (question); (c) be pessimistic about ability or willingness to comply (use the subjunctive); (d) minimize imposition; (e) give deference; (f) apologize; (g) impersonalize the speaker and the addressee; (h) state the FTA as an instance of a general rule; (i) nominalise to distance the actor and add formality; and (j) go on record as incurring a debtor as not indebted hearer. The aim of these substrategies is to minimize face threats.(92)

While Brown & Levinson (1987) posited that the definition of face is applicable worldwide, they observed, "in any particular society we would expect face to be the subject of much cultural elaboration" (p. 77). Their model needs to be determined by three sociocultural factors of the FTA: (D) social distance between the speaker and the hearer, (P) power that the hearer has over the speaker, and absolute (R) ranking of imposition in a particular culture. These scholars propose the following equation to assess the weightiness and seriousness of the FTA, which determine the most suitable strategy to use:

$$W_x = D(S, H) + P(H, S) + R_x$$

x refers to the FT

This means that the weightiness of the FTA is a combination of the social distance between the speaker and the addressee, the power that the hearer wields over the speaker, and the degree to which the FTA represents an imposition.

Chen (2001) forwarded a model of self-politeness that is regarded as filling a gap left by Brown and Levinson's theory. The current theory of politeness is a combination of other-politeness and self-politeness. Chen asserted that Brown and Levinson's theory is fundamental and remains the best theory in the investigation of politeness.

Criticisms of Brown & Levinson's (1987) theory have been published in the literature. There are two principal points of criticism. First, some linguists have challenged the universality of the politeness principles. Wierzbicka (1985) was among the first scholars to state this criticism. Many linguists followed Wierzbicka in discussing this issue, including Kasper (1990); Wierzbicka (1991); Watts, Ide, & Ehlich (1992); Janney & Arndt (1993); Chen (1993), Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1994); and Liao (1994). In general, data from non-English-speaking cultures indicate that many speech acts are perceived differently in the area of politeness in these cultures. For instance, in China, imperatives used to make offers (Chen, 1996) and to invite the addressee to dinner (Mao, 1992) are considered "polite." On the same hand, the explicit performative in Polish is a common way to give advice, while a bare imperative is considered one of the softer ways of issuing directives (Wierzbicka, 1985). In Brown and Levinson's theory, imperatives are the most imposing way of engaging in an FTA. However, scholars in this area are fully aware that this speech act could be polite even in English-speaking culture. In their discussion of the bald-on-record strategy, they provide a number of factors in a speaker's choice of imperatives, including interest to hearer, such as offers, invitations, and sympathetic advice. Moreover, every speech act is presented as having different degrees of politeness in different cultures, as in Brown and Levinson's equation of assessing a strategy, which involves "R," the force of imposition of an FTA perceived in a certain culture. This means, in other words, that Brown and Levinson would say that if the Chinese and Polish view acts such as making offers and giving advice as less imposing than English speakers do, then they would assign a lower value to "W," which results in a lower numbered strategy like bald on record.

The second criticism of Brown and Levinson's politeness theory concerns the differentiation between positive politeness and negative politeness, which some authors perceive as doubtful (Meier, 1995). The problem is that Brown and Levinson classify many FTAs as threatening both positive and negative face. For Brown & Levinson (1987), this treatment of FTAs as threatening both kinds of face is not necessarily an issue; it reveals the complicated nature of social interaction and reflects the multifacetedness of utterances. When one act could threaten more than one type of face, a specific strategy could be oriented to different face wants (Chen, 2001).

According to Chen (2001), a number of alternative theories of politeness have been established, but these theories have not replaced Brown & Levinson's theory. The first approach is the "norm approach." Hill, Ide, Ikuta, Kawasaki, & Ogino (1986) published the best work that represents this approach in their model of discernment. *Discernment* refers to a situation in which "the speaker can be considered to submit passively to the requirements of the system. That is, once certain factors of addressee and situation are noted, the selection of an appropriate linguistic form and/or appropriate behavior is essentially automatic" (Hill et al., p. 348). Fraser's model of the "conversational contract" belongs to the same approach (Fraser, 1990). Fraser admitted that his model differs from the "social norm view." Conversational participants follow a conversational contract that is determined by social values. In Brown & Levinson's (1987), the norm approach is considered and is then abandoned.

One such alternative might in fact be phrased in terms of norms or rules ... Even intraculturally there are problems, for the kinds of norms envisaged by such workers are extremely specific, in some cases being strict applications of (possibly recursive) rules specifying ritual formulae ... But this will not produce the flexible and indefinitely

productive strategic usage we here describe this possibility has no attraction in a cross-cultural perspective. For norms, being specific to particular social populations, have a severely limited explanatory role in comparative (cross-cultural) research. Moreover, as has been persuasively argued by Lewis (1969), conventions—therefore norms—may have rational origins. This suggests that the notion “norm” may not have the utility as a sociological primitive that it has usually been accorded. (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pp. 85–86)

The second alternative approach to the current "face-saving" theory is the cognitive approach advocated by Escandell–Vidal. Escandell-Vidal (1996) postulated that the addressee's processing of a polite utterance does not differ from the processing of any other type of utterance. Therefore, the hearer requires only a number of cultural assumptions to explain and interpret the intention of the speaker.

Escandell–Vidal (1996) is like previous scholars who criticized Brown and Levinson, in that she contended that their theory fails in explaining cross-cultural differences. She could not solve this problem, however; the only way that she follows is by avoiding this point. The main reason that makes politeness a viable issue in the study of language use is that it provides one explanation for the speaker's linguistic behavior. Politeness is a factor that determines what a speaker says and how he or she can say it. This explains why all theories of politeness have focused on the speaker, whereas Escandell–Vidal shifts the focus from the speaker to the hearer, which does not create a genuine solution to the problem she criticizes.

On other hand, many studies and researches agree with Brown & Levinson's theory as a universal theory. Gilks (2009) discusses in his essay some remarkable arguments against Brown & Levinson model. However, the essay is concluded by the fact that the model in Brown & Levinson's theory still the most influential and useful in the politeness field. Moreover, Agis (2012) conducted a study about the impact of gender on the use of politeness strategies in Turkish series. The study reveals that females used more positive politeness strategies than males in particular in the interaction with friends and children. In contrast, Turkish males used more positive politeness strategies than female in the interaction with older relatives.

Many empirical works on particular types of speech acts in a wide range of cultural and linguistic situations have involved the use of Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness. The most common speech activities that have been discussed in these works are apologies, requests, thanks, and compliments. The speech act that will be investigated in this paper is the request. *Requests* are directive acts that initiate the negotiation of face during a conversational interaction. In Brown and Levinson's theory, requests are face-threatening acts that threaten the addressee's negative face. Thus, a person who performs a request needs to reduce the level of imposition created by an act being requested in order to save the hearer's face and at the same time gain his or her compliance with the request. In addition, the request is realized by means of four linguistic strategies as discussed previously.

Alongside the previous studies using Brown & Levinson's theory the aim of the present study is to determine whether Brown & Levinson's politeness theory can be adapted and applied in an interview focusing on the request speech act as a measuring tool regarding Brown and

Levinson's theory and to identify the politeness strategies that are used by native and nonnative speakers in this interview.

Methodology

There were two participants in this study: the first one is an Australian female and native speaker of English. She spent all of her life in Australia. The native speaker is 32 years old and a lawyer. She studied the law in Monash University beside some short courses related to her major. There is no relationship between her and the interviewer; they met each other coincidentally at Reservoir Pleasure Centre in Melbourne. The other participant is an Indonesian female and nonnative speaker of English. She is 25 years old and came to Australia to study Master in Education. The nonnative speaker is a classmate of the interviewer at La Trobe University whom the interviewer has known for a year.

The two participants, after signing a consent form, were asked to engage with the interviewer in conversation for about 10 minutes. The interview was recorded. After finishing the interview, participants were asked to summarize what they had said in the interview in written form. In the interview, the participants talked about topics of interest to them. The first participant talked about travelling, and the second participant talked about her educational experience in her hometown. The focus of this paper is request sentences in the interview.

The recorded interview was the source of data in this study; participants' written summaries did not contain any sentences related to requests. During data collection, the emphasis was on the three sociocultural factors in Brown & Levinson's theory that affect politeness behavior and the strategy that speakers might use. Therefore, the participants in this research are the most important element in analyzing the data because the speaker or interviewer determines the type and structure of request regarding the relationship with participants.

Request sentences were used as data in this study in order to determine whether sociocultural factors affect the way in which individuals formulate requests. In addition, there was an effort to determine the appropriate strategy to reduce face-threatening acts that the speaker used in relation to Brown & Levinson's theory. This is a suitable method for the analysis of speech acts such as requests.

Results

This section presents examples of request sentences from the interviews with the native speaker and nonnative speaker. The first part of the findings concerns the interview with the native speaker. This interview yielded two examples of requests, which were the following:

1.S: You told me today that you want to talk about traveling as an interesting topic for you.

NS: Yes.

S: Can you start talking, please?

2.S: Yeah, I would like to ask you about it, how is the shopping in Dubai?

According to Brown & Levinson's definition of FTA, the person who is threatened here is the native speaker, who is the hearer, and her type of face is positive face because she was happy to

be interviewed. She indicated her happiness to be interviewed to her friend in the place where the interview was conducted; she considered the interview an expression of appreciation. The interviewer, who was the speaker in the passages above, noticed this feeling from the hearer, so in Example 1, she asked the interviewee about an interesting topic. This is one of the 15 substrategies that Brown and Levinson offered to preserve the hearer's positive face. In the same way, in Example 2, she asked also about one of the hearer's hobbies, which is shopping. Moreover, the sociocultural value is high, as the speaker and hearer did not have any relationship before this interview and the level of imposition of a request is high in English. In other words, the weight and seriousness of a request in this situation is high. Thus, the speaker in Examples 1 and 2 tried to use words such as *can*, *please*, and *would* within more formal sentences to express politeness.

The following examples were taken from the interview with the nonnative speaker:

3. S: You said you will talk today about your learning experience in Indonesia, which is your hometown. Okay, can you start now?
4. S: So, tell me about the common language that you speak at home.

The face that is threatened in this case is that of the nonnative speaker, who plays the hearer role. The hearer demonstrated her desire to be accepted in this interaction; thus, her face would be classified as positive. The speaker chose to seek a topic of interest for the hearer, which is the topic of learning experience. This conforms to what politeness theory postulates about the substrategies for positive face. There is a relationship between the speaker and the hearer as classmates who meet each other in other places such as the library and the prayer room at La Trobe University. There is no power of one over the other, and the rank of imposing this request is low. The combination of these three factors results in a low weight and seriousness of the request. In this situation, the speaker is encouraged to present the request sentences in a more direct way using the words *can*, *now*, and *tell me*.

Discussion

Speech acts such as requests, apologizes, and thanks are frequently used in studies of politeness and are important in Brown and Levinson's theory. Request sentences are the best common variables used to explain the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson. These sentences demonstrate the type of face that has been threatened, the strategy that the speaker would use, the impact of sociocultural factors, and the rank of imposition. There are certain forms of sentences that include words such as *can*, *could*, and *please* and imperative verbs that show different levels of politeness as mentioned in this paper. When there is a high degree of social distance, as in Examples 1 and 2, the speaker tends to use a more polite and off-record strategy. In contrast, a speaker will tend to use the bald and on-record strategy while there is low social distance between the speaker and hearer. The data set constituted by the interview and the summary sheet written after the interview did not provide many examples for discussion in this essay. The written summary did not show any examples at all, but it described what the interviewees talked about. In the interview, the interviewer tried not to interrupt the interviewees with many requests, imposing only a few requests on the participants. The advantage of the request sentences in the interview is the ability to apply Brown and Levinson's theory easily. Choosing request variables makes it possible to find relevant examples because it is the most common speech act used in interviews. Unfortunately, the interview lasted only 10

minutes, which resulted in the problem of having too few examples of requests. There were not any differences between the native speaker and nonnative speaker; this might be because they both speak English and adapt English culture in their speech. Quantitative methods such as the use of a questionnaire are among the best for this type of research, as they allow researchers to ask many participants from different cultures about the form of request that they might use in certain situations. More data should be collected from participants, as there is a need for more demonstration of the differences between cultures. The interview should be longer (not less than 20 minutes), and the interviewer should control the interview, determine the topic, and prepare before conducting it.

Conclusion

Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness is the essential theory in the field of politeness. It derives its *face* definition from the work of Goffman, dividing face into positive and negative. These scholars postulate five strategies of politeness for the speaker to use and classify 15 substrategies to be addressed to the hearer's positive face and 10 substrategies to be addressed to the hearer's negative face. Although Brown and Levinson stated that the notion of face is universal, face also depends on three sociocultural factors that might differ from one culture to another: (D) social distance, (P) power of the interlocutors over each other, and (R) ranking of imposition in the culture where the interlocutors are from. The combination of these three factors determines the seriousness and the weight of a face-threatening act. Many scholars have criticized this politeness theory, but it remains flexible and applicable to different cultures with different politeness strategies.

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Appendix

1-Native speaker

S: ok, hello Nabilah.

NS: hi.

S: how are you?

Ns: very good.

S: ok, you told me today that you want to talk about travelling as an interesting topic for you.

Ns: yes.

S: can you start talking, please?

Ns: sure. I am.. I have travelled a little bit, I born in Melbourne and I lived in Melbourne all my life and I've done a little bit of travelling but I found travelling to be an interesting topic because there are many places that I haven't been to and I think that many places in country I'd love to see.

S: ok, can you tell me about the places that you travelled to.

Ns: sure, I have travelled to Morocco in 2010. I took a trip with my parents and my parents are both from Morocco and they lived in Australia for the last thirty years so I was born in Australia, I am ... I haven't done a lot of travelling because of my study etc. but the places that I've been back to your question,mmm. In Morocco, so different areas of Morocco, Spain. I went to Spain a couple of occasions, I've been all around Australia that was quite a good experience.

S: yeah.

Ns: I've been to Dubai, but there are many other countries I'd like to experience.

S: like what?

Ns: particularly because of the culture differences.. I'd like to experience... I think each country has different culture experience and I think it will be amazing to experience these different places.so..

S: can I ask you a question?

Ns: sure.

S: what did you find different in Morocco than Melbourne?

Ns: oh, Melbourne is a western country as you know, the different between Melbourne or Australia and Morocco is that.. Morocco is a third world country the majority in Morocco either sort of .. either rich or poor there is no...

S: do you mean it's a developing country?

Ns: it's yeah, it's a developing country that's right but the vast difference is there is no middle ground, there is no middle pound if you know what I mean like.. there is either very rich or very poor. What is in Melbourne because of the government support the people

S: ahh

Ns: they have things like searching the government gives.. pays money if you don't have a job..that assist the people.

S: you mean that in Morocco there is a gap in the classes.

Ns: correct! And the government doesn't support you, the government doesn't give you any money.

S: um

Ns: so, if you are poor and you beg in the street. Where is in Australia, you not begging in the street because you got a government to help you out, so that is the vast difference in the type of people..I think..

S: uhmmm, what about your experience in Thailand? Can you talk about it?

Ns: yes, sure, I went to Thailand probably four may be four, five years ago.. now . I've been a couple of weeks and I went with my best friend Emily, and we took a plane to .. we went to "Pokka" from Bangkok and when we first arrive, it was the first time I've been to third world country and it was just a standing, because I've never been exposed to it, previously for me it was a really sort of new impact experience and I recall in the very first days " I just want to leave" I mean we got there .. we start walking around the main streets of the city. The people just walk straight up to you and just trying sell things to you, you know constantly showing things in your face trying to get you buy something from them.

S: you didn't plan for this travel?

Ns: oh, no, we did, so we did plan for this travel but because I had only heard nice things about it and it's very cheap country to go to, so when you're a student

S: yeah

Ns: it's just sort of experience really.

S: did you search about the best places you have to go to?

Ns: we have done a little bit of research yeah and we've chosen to go to Pokka and there is a beautiful islands around Pokka, so what we end up doing, because we have such an experience on the first day we end up planning the couple of weeks and we end up doing things actively doing things to consume our days. So , for example, we got a boat trip down to Pokka islands and we saw the monkeys down there and we went a safari trip which is really nice we got on an elephant.

S: oh, you're so brave.

Ns: yeah, it was fantastic, it was excellent. So, we end up having very good experience considering the fact that it was a very different culture.

S: yeah, that's right, even the weather is it different?

Ns: the weather was , it was very humid I found. It was either very harsh or it was raining, so it was quite tropical, yeah tropical but it was a good experience.

S: ok, what about Dubai?

Ns: waw, Dubai, where I am going from Dubai!

S: it's like Hollywood in the Middle East.

NS: Dubai, I was there in transition for three days and this was in the way back from Morocco, so we got a flight an Emirati's flight from Casablanca/ Morocco to Dubai and we stayed in Dubai. This is my sister and I, we stayed in Dubai for three days before back down to Melbourne.

NS: we decided to do a trip it called the big bus trip, and we took that from our hotel at 9:00 am in the morning and it goes pass two rout so there is a red route and a blue route and basically it likes you all around Dubai and shows you. You know, all the sort of touristy sites, it was amazing, I think Dubai is a beautiful city but I could never live there, and I say that because it was extremely hot, so it was forty-four degrees or something like that. You literally you can't go outside you live inside when you're in Dubai.

The usuall degree you find in the middle east, it's common it was absolutely crazy, so we found our selres sort of going into buildings, we went to saw the museums.

We saw the pountry on the oceans, we saw the huge fish aquarium tank in the shopping centre. The shopping centres there're so many shopping centre in Dubai.

S: yeah, I would like to ask you it..... How is the shopping in Dubai?

The shopping is amazing but the thing my feet got sore after walk because you just walk and walk around all these different shopping centre, and there is something always new because there is so much to see there but I haven't said that I am a rery outdoor person, I love sport and I do a try act today as you can see.

S: yeah. Sound great!

NS: I like to be outside and I like to have a good weather and you know joyable weather.

That's so healthy for you

Exactly, it's heal their for you, so, look I really like Dubai but I found it to be a bit fake in the sence that it is a desert, it's a city made of in a desert which makes it a sort of for me it just feels unreal I feel it's sereal.

I think it's yeah the major trouble and the major problem in Dubai is the weather, everything is good in this city but the weather is so actually trouble.

That's right, exactly, yeah I Agree

The people are very nice I have no problem with the people, the women dressed in Nekab so it's

S: very good for them, for the weather.

NS: yeah, I noticed that the women dressed in Black and the men dressed in white.

S: yeah that the usual dress you can find it in the middle east, especially in the Goulf, you know the Goulf.

NS: yes

S: located in the Goulf and the majority of women. Wear the black and the men like to wear the white, it's actually the culture.

NS: yes, I found that to be an experience. Seeing the different types of people in Dubai, of course they are very different to Thailand, again very different to Spain and morocco they all are very enjoyable place but can I keep going.

I could talk for ages.....

S: thank you, thank you. For this talk Nabila, I'm so thank for you.

NS: no problem, thank you very much.

2-Non- Native speaker

S:Ok. Good morning Ade.

NNS: Good morning

S: How are you?

NNS: Fine. Thanks

S: Glad to see you today

NNS: Me too

S: I, you said, you will talk today about your learning experience in Indonesia which is your hometown, Ok. Can you start now.

NNS: Ok. I started my learning experience when I was six years old. So, at that time, I didn't take kindergarten program because in 1987 kindergarten program was not popular in my country. I mean there were rich people who enroll their children in the kindergarten program, so I didn't go to kindergarten program

S: As it is my country, there was no kindergarten program is like compulsory for children in the few.....

NNS: But now in my country kindergarten program is like compulsory for children because when they had to go to primary school they have to show kindergarten certificate

S: Oh, great

NNS: Yeah, it is about five times, five years, I mean since five years ago kindergarten.... Every child goes to kindergarten now, I mean in Indonesia but not in my era in 1987, so I did my primary school in Karawang, West Java Karawang is

S: Is that near to your town

NNS: No, let's talk about me I was born in Ramayu. In Ramayu is the district in West Java

S: Aha, in the west

NNS: But even I was five years old. My parents moved to Karawang a different district in West Java but they are still in the same province, West Java but different districts it's about three hours by bus, so I moved to Karawang you know in Ramayu I spoke Java, Javanese language in Karawang I spoke Sundanese language

S: You mean you have a different language in Indonesia

NNS: There are very different local languages, different words, different languages because Indonesia has five-hundred local languages not dialects but languages, so I have to learn about Sundanese but as a child. It was easy for me to learn language

S: What about the official language in your country?

NNS: Indonesia is the national language but we have five-hundred local languages not dialects

S: But what about the school, did you study in the same official language?

NNS: Yes, we study in Bahasa Indonesia but I mean every subject is taught in Bahasa, national language which is Bahasa Indonesia but we have to study local language. For example, if I'm in Javanese district region, I have to study Javanese, so when I was in Sundanese region, I have to study Sundanese. But the teaching was delivered in national language so everybody should speak national language at school. I mean in the classrooms, not outside

S: Ok. Let's go back to study?

NNS: I only, only did primary school in Karawang for two years, then I moved again in Lndramayu

S: So you change your language also.

NNS: Yeah, because six years primary school is compulsory so I spent two years, I did two years for primary school in Karawang then I continued my four years primary school in Indonesia.

S: Ok. After that.

NNS: After that, after I finished my primary school, I went to secondary school.

S: Yeah

NNS: Junior high school and I have to, I went to another district still in West Java, it's about one hour by bus so, but I had to live there because I went to Islamic boarding school, so I sleep there and sleep. It's like boarding school, you know boarding school! So, I spend...

S: How many years?

NNS: Three years, I spent three years in Cirebon, different district

S: Do you like your school?

NNS: Yes, I really like boarding school because I learned there about independency, I have to manage my own money, so my parents send me money every month

S: And you spend much time with your friends?

NNS: Yes, much time and because at the time it's funny. It was funny because in Islamic boarding school I have to study a lot with 9:00 pm

S: Oh!

- NNS: Yes, until 9:00 pm
S: In the school
NNS: So, I started studying at 7:00 am that formal school, I went to formal school means I wear uniform until 1:00 o'clock and then I went back to my boarding school and I started again another...
S: Classes!
NNS: Classes , yeah at 2:00 to 3:00 p.m and then I had another classes at 4:00 to 5:00 p.m and then I had another classes at 7:00 to 9:00 p.m
S: Did you study the same subjects?
NNS: No, different! At formal school in morning I studied math's, English, biology, physics, Bahasa Indonesia, social sciences and in the Islamic boarding school I studied Naho, Sarf, Fikh, Tawhid
S: Ah, Islamic subjects
NNS: Islamic subjects all Islamic subjects. Naho, Sarf, Fikh
S: Fikh , yeah
NNS: You know Tawhid, Tajwid, you know Tajwd?
S: Yeah , about Quran
NNS: Yeah, so many things Arabic, I studied Arabic and I had to speak Arabic in that I Islamic boarding school
S: Is it compulsory?
NNS: Yes, there was a time when I didn't speak arabic and I get, I got fine , I got hit
S: Oh really?
NNS: Yeah....., I got hit from my teacher, you have to pay also if you didn't speak Arabic because this is not my language, it is easy for me to sleep and speak Javanease or Indonesia so I had many friends, a lot of friends from different countries, from different districts with different languages
S: Can you just limit to me, hoe many languages do you know?
NNS: Bahasa Indonesia, Javanease language
S: Ahh
NNS: This my father, I mean my father is Javanease
S: Your father's mother tongue
NNS: Yeah, my father's mother tongue, the third one is Sundanease language, that's my mother's mother tongue because my mother is Sundanease there are different ethic group so they have different language and then English and Arabic.
S: That's mean five languages
NNS: And my husband is Asakis, he has different language and until now I don't understand and I can't speak my husband mother's tongue. That's very difficult also
S: Yeah, so, tell me about common language that you speak at home.
NNS: Bahasa Indonesia , national language, with my daughter, with my husband,, because I have my own language, my husband has his own language we can't communicate , so we use both national language
S: So what happened after that? After you finish your school
NNS: After I finished my junior high school, I went to anther district located in Sunndanease region. This also an Islamic boarding school but that school I only studied about Islam
S: uhm
NNS: Still I had very busy activities from 7 to 9.
S: how long have you been there?
NNS: Three years
S: Three years and by this finish your high school?
NNS: Yes, so at that time, I didn't live with my parents, I only went back home maybe every six months
S: every six months! For how long?
NNS: For two weeks
S: Only!

NNS: Yeah three weeks or one month in Ramadan.

S: Ok. So

NNS: Ramadan and Eid Al-fiter, Eid Al-fiter

S: That's really interesting topic with you. Thank you for this Ade.