Translating Politeness of Persadaan Tendi Texts in Karonese Language Into English

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Abstract—This paper aims to explore the politeness of persadaan tendi texts in Karonese language and translate them into English. Persadaan tendi or mukul is the process by which the bride and groom introduce themselves to their new relatives. This study was conducted using descriptive qualitative research and supported by translation and pragmatics analyses. There are three data sources of this study; from two books titled Adat Karo Si Rulo written by Ginting (2008) and Indahnya Perkawinan Adat Karo by Milala (2007); and from the researchers’ observations as participants at persadaan tendi ceremonies in Tigabinanga sub-district, Karo Regency and Tuntungan sub-district, Medan, North Sumatra. The results reveal that in persadaan tendi texts there are linguistic and cultural forms of politeness which are kalimbubu, kampil, and manok sangkep as cultural politeness. The second singular pronoun kam subject and the enclitic pronoun -ndu means ‘yours’, and endi or ‘here’ are linguistic politeness. Rebu (social avoidance to talk directly) among the rebu participants in Karonese society is cultural politeness. These examples of linguistic and cultural politeness in the source language (SL) are not found in the target language (TL). Molina and Albir’s (2002) translation technique of description, supported by critical discourse analysis and semantic analysis is workable to overcome untranslatable of the cultural and linguistic politeness in the SL.

Index Terms—translating politeness, translating persadaan tendi into English, Karonese language

I. INTRODUCTION

Persadaan tendi, also known as mukul, is the process of introducing the bride to the groom’s relatives and the groom to the bride’s relatives. Linguistic and cultural expressions of politeness in persadaan tendi texts in Karonese language, the source language (SL), is explored and translated into English, the target language (TL), but the same types of politeness in the SL are not found in the TL. A translator should be aware of the problems related to politeness that might arise due to cultural differences between the SL and the TL. The best techniques implemented in translating politeness strategies will maintain the impact and fulfill the norms in the TL (Ardi et al., 2018, p. 291). But the norms of politeness in the SL are different from those in the TL. Kam and -ndu are linguistic politeness in Karonese language, but they are not found in English (Sembiring et al., 2022; Sembiring, 2014). Sembiring (2016) explains that -ndu is linguistic politeness in Karonese language, used as a possessive, and has the same meaning as ‘yours’ in English. However, it does not have the same polite sense in the TL. Sembiring (2016) points out that descriptive equivalents are mainly applied in translating the politeness of Karonese language into English. Woolams (1996) reveals the enclitic pronoun -ndu (yours) is the second person possessive. In Karonese language the suffix -ta (our) shows joint ownership of a thing or a person, and the pronoun of kam (you) is linguistic politeness in the SL. Schlund (2014) recognizes that politeness functions to establish the maintenance and negotiation of social distance relationships. Similarly, Fuertes and Nielsen (2008) discuss politeness as playing a crucial role and being essential in business communication for establishing a successful relationship. The use of politeness is also found in Karonese cultural activities such as the persadaan tendi ceremony.

Persadaan Tendi

A persadaan tendi in Karonese society is commonly held in the groom’s parents’ house at night. But nowadays a few families hold persadaan tendi at a jambor (hall) while having lunch, to use the time efficiently. Persadaan tendi literally translates as ‘to unite the spirit of the bride and the groom’. But nowadays, due to the development of technology and religious activities, the persadaan tendi is not believed to unite the spirits of the bride and groom. Instead, it is the
ceremony to introduce the bride to the groom’s relatives and the groom to the bride’s relatives. The participants in persadaan tendi are the representatives of the bride and groom’s sangkep nggeluh.

The authors translate sangkep nggeluh in Karonese language with ‘relatives’ in English, using Newmark’s (1988) communicative translation method. The meaning of sangkep nggeluh in the SL is not transferred completely to the TL, because it does not have an equivalent in the TL. Sangkep nggeluh is well-understood in Karonese society as consisting of three categories of relatives, but ‘relatives’ in English has a broader meaning.

Sembiring and Panggabean (2018) indicate that sangkep nggeluh refers culturally to the three categories of relatives in Karonese society, which are kalimbubu (wife-givers), sembuyak (relatives who have the same clan, they are as the host of a party) and anak beru (wife-takers). Each category has its function and responsibilities. The kalimbubu relationship occurs through marriage or blood. Kalimbubu may remind their anak beru if they do not run the wedding ceremonies well. Anak beru ask their kalimbubu for guidance to conduct the wedding party. They accompany their kalimbubu to run the kalimbubu’s wedding ceremony. They support and honor their kalimbubu in their daily life and cultural activities.

The authors, as the researchers, recently attended a few persadaan tendi ceremonies in the Tigabinanga sub-district of Karo Regency and the Tuntungan sub-District, Medan in North Sumatra. During the persadaan tendi ceremony, belo pengkapuri is prepared and placed in a kampil (a small pandan leaf bag, it is used as the place of belo pengapuri). Belo pengapuri is betel leaves mixed with lime, tobacco, and areca nut. The bride hands the kampil to the groom’s relatives. She is introduced to the groom’s relatives and a few of them are identified as the bride’s rebu.

Rebu is cultural avoidance of talking directly, looking at face-to-face or sitting close to rebu participants. The first rebu is communication between a mother-in-law and her son-in-law. The second rebu refers to the relationship between a father-in-law and his daughter-in-law. The third rebu are the groom and his brothers-in-laws’ wives. The last rebu are the bride and her husband’s sisters’ husbands.

The bride and groom are introduced to the participants of their rebu and it is explained that they cannot speak directly to each other from that time on. It is also considered rebu in Karonese society when mami (mother-in-law) and kela (son-in-law) sit together on a mat. There must be a person sitting between them, the third person acting as a mediator in their communication. The starting of rebu is in the process of introducing the bride to the groom’s relatives and the groom to the bride’s relatives in the persadaan tendi. Rebu is practised by Karonese society who live in North Sumatra, Indonesia. It is practised by the relatives of both the bride and the groom. Karonese society has five clans, they are Karo-Karo, Ginting, Perangin-angin, Sembiring, and Tarigan. Karo-Karo has 18 sub-clans; Ginting has 16 sub-clans; Perangin-angin has 18 sub-clans; Sembiring has 19 sub-clans; and Tarigan has 13 sub-clans.

Marriage is not allowed within the same clans in Karonese society, except for Sembiring and Perangin-angin. When a woman is married, she transfers into the clan of her husband, and she instantly gains many new relatives. The woman’s relatives from her marriage are called kalimbubu. After marriage, the relatives of her new husband’s sisters are called anak beru. The adat (traditional customs) describes kalimbubu as ‘visible gods’. They are believed to influence the new couple’s fertility, health, and economic prosperity. The anak beru are required to treat the kalimbubu in high regard. Kalimbubu singalo bere bere are the bride’s mother’s brothers, who also accept part of the marriage payment, called perkempun. The bride’s mother’s sisters are also given marriage payments as perbibin.

In addition, a part of the marriage payment is also given to kalimbubu singalo ulu emas and kalimbubu singalo ciken-ciken. It is divided by the kalimbubu singalo ulu emas and given to the puang kalimbubu and their groups. The speeches are regularly given by sangkep nggeluh, who know their own positions at the wedding ceremony, whether they are kalimbubu, sembuyak or anak beru. Each of them has a function. They encircle the couple and take center stage to offer the couple advice on married life. Before the speeches begin, sometimes each category of sangkep nggeluh dances and, once the speeches are over, kalimbubu give gifts to the couple. The gifts are based on tradition and each has its own symbolic meaning. They can be Karonese cloth, uis nipes, which is wrapped around the bride and the groom, and the ends are tied as a symbol of wishing the couple a long and happy bonding.

This article contributes to the translation process to overcome the untranslatable examples of linguistic and cultural politeness between the SL and the TL. The persadaan tendi texts in Karonese language, which consist of expressions of politeness, are the focus of analysis in this paper.

II. METHODOLOGY

The Persadaan Tendi ceremony in Karonese society is practised by participants who live in villages and cities. In this article, the authors describe and analyze the politeness of persadaan tendi texts in Karonese culture. The data of Persadaan Tendi have been collected from three different sources. First, one data source of this research is the Persadaan Tendi text in a subchapter of the book titled Adat Karo Si Rulo written by Ginting (2008). Second, data are also taken from the dialogue of Mukul written by Milala (2007), titled Indahnya Perkawinan Adat Karo. And third, primary data was found from the researchers’ observations as participants at Persadaan Tendi ceremonies in the Tigabinanga sub-district in Karo Regency and Tuntungan sub-district in Medan, North Sumatra.

The three kinds of data were classified into each category and organized as the focus of the analysis. The texts were separated into linguistic politeness and cultural politeness. The politeness of the dialogues in the persadaan tendi was analyzed, according to whether they were linguistic or cultural politeness. The data collected from the Persadaan Tendi
texts and the observations of the researchers are all in the form of words. The data from the Persadaan Tendi texts and the field notes were selected, simplified, and reduced to be the focus of analysis and they are as data display. Miles et al. (2014) emphasize three types of analysis, which are data collection, data display, data condensation, and conclusions. Dey (1993, p. 38) argues that the researcher can be a participant observer to obtain the data and make notes as part of the vital analysis.

The authors applied translation analysis and chose the politeness phenomenon in the persadaan tendi texts as the focus of the analysis. Translation analysis is supported by semantic analysis and critical discourse analysis in translating the persadaan tendi texts. Saldanha et al. (2014) assert that register is the starting point in critical discourse analysis and refer to the context of the situation which covers the field, tenor, and mode.

### III. Data Analysis

**Data 1:**

**SL:** Kalimbubu enggo mereken manuk pukulen, jenari ipesikap anak beru si empo.

**TL:** Kalimbubu (wife-givers) present manuk pukulen, (a hen that has been cooked and arranged well), which is served by the groom’s anak beru (wife-takers).

*Kalimbubu* is translated literally with ‘wife-givers’ in the TL and manuk pukulen, translated with ‘the hen which has been cooked and arranged to look like a complete hen’. Sample 1 has two polite expressions in the SL; they are kalimbubu and manuk pukulen. Kalimbubu in the SL and ‘wife-givers’ in the TL have are close in meaning, but they have different roles and functions. Kalimbubu in the SL has six categories: they are singalo bere-bere, singalo perbibin, si ngalo perkempun, singalo ciken-ciken, kalimbubu sipemeren and puang kalimbubu. These six categories of *kalimbubu* in the SL are untranslatable. They are not found in the TL. In fact, each category of *kalimbubu* relatives has no equivalent in the SL.  They are culture-bound terms in Karonese culture. Each should be identified, classified, described, and explained in the TL. To know more about the categories of relatives that are *kalimbubu*, see Sembiring and Panggabean (2018).

The authors use Molina and Albir’s (2002) translation technique of description to obtain the closest meaning of the SL in the TL. Kalimbubu are honored by their anak beru. They are served well because in Karonese culture they are believed to be visible gods. Karonese society believes that if they honor their kalimbubu, they will have prosperity and good health.

The translation of the cultural politeness in Sample 1 was done using Molina and Albir’s (2002) translation technique of description. It is similar to Newmark’s (1988) translation procedure of descriptive equivalent. But it should be supported by a familiar translation procedure to translate the polite expressions of the SL, so they are identified, classified, described, and explained in the TL. This process should be supported by interdisciplinary translation techniques.

**Data 2:**

**SL:** Rakat man, maka sijerjabu me lebe isuruh persadaan tendi.

**TL:** The bride and groom are pleased to have the persadaan tendi and are followed by their relatives to have dinner together.

The authors should be familiar with the term rakat in the SL to get its closest meaning in the TL. Rakat man in the SL goes with having dinner together in the TL. In the SL, rakat man shows polite manners when having dinner, but it does not sound polite in the TL. The politeness function of the verb phrase of rakat man suggests togetherness and enjoyment while having dinner.

Sijerjabu me lebe isuruh persadaan tendi in the SL is translated literally as, firstly, the bride and groom are pleased to have dinner. Priority is given to the bridegroom to have dinner and they are followed by their relatives. The custom of giving someone priority to have dinner in the SL is considered as a cultural politeness. The priority in serving the bride and groom first shows politeness in Karonese culture.

**Data 3:**

**SL:** Adi nai ibas rumah Adat Karo ‘rumah si waluh jabo’ si labo lit kamar-kamarna, emaka ibas jabo nge ilaksanaken acara persadaan tendi enda.

**TL:** In the old times the persadaan tendi was held at an adat house, which has eight jabo (families) and the rooms are not separated.

A Karo adat house is inhabited by eight families, rakat si telu, and there are rules for living there. Rakut si telu, also referred to as sangkep nggela, is for the categories of relatives: kalimbubu, sembuyak, and anak beru. The kalimbubu dwell in the bena kayu and anak beru dwell in the ujung kayu of the adat house. The living arrangements in the adat house show the cultural politeness of Karonese society. The families who live in the adat house are very friendly. People who enter the adat house must should bow their heads to show their respect. In fact, everyone bows their head when entering an adat house because the doorway is low.

**Data 4:**

**SL:** Ibas acara persadaan tendi enda lit pig-piga singikatkenca, gelah ola mela, silang langna telu kalak arah diberu eme: bibina, sibiak nandena, sibiak mamina ras arah sidilaki telu kalak ka, eme biak bibi nande.
In this persadaan tendi ceremony, a few relatives accompany the bride and groom. They are three of the bride’s female relatives and three of the groom’s female relatives to avoid the couple feeling shy. The bride’s relatives are her mother’s sisters and the groom’s mother’s sisters.

Having six women accompany the bride and groom is considered a polite number which has a symbolic meaning in the SL. Enem in the SL means ‘six’ in the TL. Enem has rhymes with gelem which means ‘hold’ in the TL. Gelemna ulitha laith means that they keep their income.

In a Karonese wedding ceremony number six is considered to have linguistic politeness. The marriage payment ends with the number six, for example, IDR 860,000.

Data 5:
SL: Maka sidiberu saja ikut ibas tak-tak persadaan tendi enda, erkiteken nakan pukulen enda iepapukul seh piherkel dingen ielaken man sinaru, emaka perbapan labo terpansa.

TL: So the women accompany the bride and groom into their bedroom for the persadaan tendi, with the food held firmly in their hands. The food is delivered and the rice is very hard, so only women can enjoy it. The men have other food.

The men are not invited to accompany the bridal couple in the persadaan tendi. It is a polite custom that is believed to be women’s work. The women in the persadaan tendi represent the bride and groom’s sangkep nggeluh. One of relative categories of sangkep nggeluh is kalimbubu. The men, as kalimbubu, are given priority to have a good dinner. They are served well. Sembiring (2015) affirms that Karonese society has a philosophy of mehop man kalimbubu, which means ‘respect the wife-givers’.

The reason for accompanying the couple at the persadaan tendi is to avoid their being shy.

Data 6:
SL: Isuruh man si persadaan tendi enda alu sada sura-sur, emaka si naru (enem kalak) endai iaturken bibi si empo man nakan, pukulen ndai si enggo nisii alu sitik-sitik bengkau, alu kuta endi, dahupken nakan pukulen enda, perjabunna pagi ula nggit sirang.

TL: The bride and groom are invited by the groom’s six aunts to have dinner. They ask the couple to eat the rice which has been held firmly, saying endi dahupken pukulen enda in expectation that they will have a good marriage.

This persadaan tendi marriage rite is not an oath because nakan pukulen, the menu for the couple, is called manuk sangkep, which means that the hen has been prepared and presented in its complete form for the dinner. The hope is that, by having a complete hen for the bride and groom's dinner, there will be no shortages in their life and they will always have enough.

Data 7:
SL: Manuk isangkepi ipan si erjaba gelah min ia pe lalit kekurangen, srobat manuk siipanna enda ndai pe igelelh ija maka kerina siterpake sada pe labo banci kurangi (kuh).

TL: Manuk isangkepi is translated as the hen, which has been cooked and arranged in its complete form, has been eaten by the new couple and hopefully, they will have sufficient in their life because the hen they have eaten is complete. All parts of a hen is arranged completely for the bridegroom in their dinner.

Manuk sangkepi is not only served for the couple at the persadaan tendi, but it is also served to celebrate someone’s success, for example, on a graduation day. The participants hope the bride and groom will have a healthy and harmonious marriage. Household harmony for the couple is the desire of all sangkep nggeluh. Manuk isangkepi is an expression of politeness in Karonese culture.

Data 8:
SL: Kenca dung persadaan tendi, bage pe man ras sienterem iban me percakapen.

TL: Kenca dung persadaan tendi means that, after finishing the persadaan tendi ceremony and the relatives have had dinner, the speeches begin.

Kenca dung persadaan tendi in the SL is translated as ‘after finishing persadaan tendi ceremony’. The host of the persadaan tendi ceremony gives out cigarettes and belo, ‘a betel leaf’ a polite custom in Karonese society. The talk will start after dinner. It is a sign of respect for sangkep nggeluh to have dinner before having the talk, because the participants are tired after attending the wedding ceremony all day.

The bridal couple is provided with a hen and an egg for their dinner, which reveals the cultural politeness of kalimbubu for them. It is an adat debt for kalimbubu singalo bere-bere. Manok megersing si ibereken orangtua sinereh (yellow hen which is given by the bride’s parents), as luah kalimbubu singalo bere-bere in Sample 12 is translated with kalimbubu singalo bere-bere’s gift they are manok megersing (yellow hen) and naroh manok raja mulia ‘manok raja mulia egg’ for the persadaan tendi. The yellow hen symbolizes a woman raising their children well and in naroh manok raja mulia manok pemukul, the term mulia is an expectation that the bride and groom to have a good future.

Data 9:
SL: Endi dahupken nakan pukulen enda perjabunna pagi ula nggit sirang.

TL: Here enjoy this nakan pukulen we hope their marriage will keep getting better.

Endi is translated literally with ‘here it’, endi in the SL being a polite offering, but it does not sound polite in the TL. Endi is an offering term when handing something to someone.
A. Results
Politeness in persadaan tendi texts of Karonese society
Social culture and material culture are used in Karonese society to foster social relationships. The cultural terms in Karonese society are not found in other cultures, especially for English-speaking people. All cultural aspects of the persadaan tendi texts are categorized into social and material culture. Most of the cultural aspects of Karonese society are found in the words and phrases of the sentences. The authors use specific culture-bound terms in this article because the objects of this study are very specific and unique. Some cultural terms are bound to other cultural terms. There are many culture-bound terms in the persadaan tendi texts in Karonese society, but the authors only analyze the terms associated with politeness. They are material culture and social culture in the persadaan tendi text.

The specific food known as manok sangkep is provided for the bride and the groom. They are accompanied by three women, who are the groom’s aunts, the bride’s mother’s brothers’ wives. In this ceremony, both bride and groom are introduced to their sangkep nggeluh, who consist of kalimbubu, sembuyak and anak beru. Sangkep nggeluh is also known as rakat si telu or daliken si telu. Sembiring (2015) in Translating Daliken si Telu Texts in Karonese Society into English. International Journal of Language Studies, 9(3) explains that politeness is found among participants of daliken...
sitelu in Karonese society by using a medium, a separation, certain expressions, and a third person as a mediator of a communication. Changes in kinship terms happen in the process of persadaan tendi. Rebu is practised from that time on among the participants of rebu. Rebu is social avoidance of talking directly between a daughter-in-law and her father-in-law, father-in-law’s brothers, and her husband’s sisters’ husbands. A son-in-law also avoids talking directly to his mother-in-law, his mother-in-law’s sisters, and his wife’s brothers’ wives. The practice of indirect communication among rebu participants is culturally polite.

Persadaan Tendi has symbols for honoring the new couple and for their happiness. A white pinggan pasu, a large white ceramic plate, is a symbol of purity, and there is a belo cawir (betel leaf) on it as a symbol of praying. Uis mbiring is a black cloth used under the pinggan pasu. During the persadaan tendi, manok sangkep is provided by the bride’s kalimbubu as their token of appreciation for the bridal couple. The bride and groom are accompanied to avoid their being awkward. Rebu is practised after getting married. Persadaan tendi, manok sangkep, belo kinapur, kalimbubu, ngobah tutur, erbahan penadingen and rebu are cultural politeness in the persadaan tendi texts.

B. Discussion

(a). The Relationship Between Findings and Politeness Theory

The analysis of the persaaan tendi texts is applied using Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory to reveal the politeness strategies of the SL. This theory of politeness correlates with Newmark’s cultural theory explored in the persaaan tendi texts. Newmark (1988) proposes five cultural categories, which are: “

(1) Ecology
(2) Material culture
(3) Social culture
(4) Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts
(5) Gestures and habits” (p. 95).

Of the five cultural categories, the authors used only two, which are material culture and social culture. The reasons for limiting the cultural categories to two are to use the most relevant and to enable deep analysis of them.

Two of Brown and Levinson’s (1987) five acts of politeness strategies are relevant in analyzing the persaaan tendi texts. They are positive politeness and negative politeness. Similarly, Kitamura (2000) discusses some ‘politeness’ phenomena, not included in Brown and Levinson’s list. These phenomena are related to the interactants’ manner of speaking and listening, and to the sequence of the exchange in extended interactions.

A politeness strategy is used when a face-threatening act occurs in an interaction. Brown and Levinson (1987) conclude five such acts: they are on the record ‘a direct way of saying things’, positive politeness, negative politeness, off the record means do something indirectly, and silent or do not do face-threatening act (FTA).

(b). Linguistic Politeness

Ndu is used as the enclitic pronoun –ndu (Woollams, 1996, p. 24). It is also known as a linguistic politeness and is included as a suffix. On the other hand -ndu is translated with ‘your’ as possessive, but ‘your’ is not a suffix in the TL, nor is it a polite linguistic form in the TL. Endi is an imperative politeness which is translated with ‘here it is’ in the TL. Linguistics can contribute the concepts of the forms in analyzing the text of persaaan tendi. The study of persaaan tendi texts in the process of translation has proven the importance of preserving the local language as a national asset. As native speakers of Karonese language, the authors are satisfied with their findings.

(c). Cultural Politeness

Ngobah tutur in the SL is translated literally as ‘to change the kinship terms’ in the TL. It is the ceremony of introducing the relatives and synchronizing Karonese kinship terms because of the marriage. In this ceremony, the bride and groom demonstrate their respect for their new relatives, especially their rebu.

Belo pengapuri, translated as a betel leaf with lime, tobacco, and areca nut in the TL is cultural politeness and is handed by the bride to the groom’s relatives.

Erbahan penadingen is polite behavior for the bride and groom’s representative parents, so they are responsible for the cultural activity. Erbahan penadingen is translated as the representatives of the bride and groom's relatives. The purpose of having these representatives is to serve as the bride and groom's parents in the social and cultural activity. This situation is to honor the bridal couple with cultural politeness.

V. Conclusions

Kam is a linguistic politeness with the same meaning as ‘you’ in the TL. It can be used as the subject of a sentence. Ndu is also a linguistic politeness; it is an enclitic pronoun –ndu, ‘you’ in the TL.

The bride serving a kampil to the relatives, especially the kalimbubu, is a cultural politeness in the persaaan tendi ceremony. Kalimbubu is a polite term, as each is believed to be a visible god, so should be honored in Karonese society.

Manok sangkep that has been served to the bride and groom is translated as ‘the hen has been cooked and reconstructed completely, including its peak and its claws.’ It is to honor the bride and groom culturally, as a symbol of
unity and to predict they will have a good future. When a Karonese gets married, rebu is practised. Rebu is translated as social avoidance to talk directly to certain relatives in Karonese society, and it is cultural politeness. Cultural and linguistic politenesses are found in the persadaan tendi ceremony, but they are difficult to explain because they are untranslatable. The authors applied Molina and Albir’s (2002) translation technique of description. It is recommended that future researchers, as translators of politeness, must be familiar with both the source culture and the target culture, and apply interdisciplinary translation techniques to translate a source language into a target language.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was supported financially by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology.

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