



***LANGUAGE POLITENESS OF POLITICAL OBSERVER ROCKY GERUNG
IN CRITICIZING GOVERNMENT POLICIES***

Kesantunan Berbahasa Pengamat Politik Rocky Gerung
dalam Mengkritik Kebijakan Pemerintah

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti kritik yang disampaikan oleh pengamat politik Rocky Gerung terhadap kebijakan pemerintah, serta mengeksplorasi penggunaan bahasa yang digunakan dalam kritik tersebut. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif-deskriptif untuk menjelaskan fenomena data, dan kuantitatif-deskriptif untuk menghitung persentase penggunaan jenis dan prinsip kesantunan mengkritik. Data penelitian diperoleh dari tuturan Rocky Gerung dalam berbagai acara yang terdokumentasi di kanal YouTube @RockyGerungOfficial2023. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Rocky Gerung cenderung menggunakan tindak tutur langsung dalam mengkritik kebijakan pemerintah, dengan lebih dominan menggunakan jenis evaluasi negatif, pernyataan masalah, penolakan, ketidaksetujuan, dan konsekuensi. Selain itu, kritiknya cenderung melanggar prinsip kesantunan, terutama dalam maksim kearifan, kerendahan hati, dan kesepakatan. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa kritik Rocky Gerung terhadap kebijakan pemerintah cenderung tidak santun, karena menggunakan bahasa yang vulgar, sarkastik, dan menyerang. Faktor penyebab ketidaksantunan kritikan Rocky Gerung termasuk rasa emosi, protektif terhadap pendapatnya, serta kecenderungan untuk menuduh dan memojokkan pihak yang dikritik.

Kata kunci: kesantunan, kritik, pemerintah, politik,

Abstract

This study aims to examine the criticisms expressed by political observer Rocky Gerung towards government policies, as well as to explore the language used in these criticisms. The research method employed is qualitative-descriptive to elucidate the data phenomenon, and quantitative-descriptive to calculate the percentage of the types and principles of politeness in criticism used. The research data were obtained from Rocky Gerung's utterances in various documented events on the YouTube channel @RockyGerungOfficial2023. The findings indicate that Rocky Gerung tends to use direct speech acts in criticizing government policies, predominantly employing types such as negative evaluation, statement of problems, rejection, disagreement, and consequences. Additionally, his criticisms tend to violate the principles of politeness, especially in terms of wisdom maxim, humility, and agreement. This suggests that Rocky Gerung's criticisms of government policies tend to be impolite, as they employ vulgar, sarcastic, and attacking language. Factors contributing to the impoliteness of Rocky Gerung's criticisms include emotional responses, protectiveness of his opinions, and a tendency to accuse and corner the criticized parties.

Keywords: criticism, government, politics, politeness

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the times has made language a central point in conveying information. This development requires everyone to be proficient in oral and written language and be able to think critically in responding to the rapid flow of information dissemination every day, which is called linguistic intelligence (Agustina, 2020). Because, when someone is not able to speak well and is not wise in using technology, it will cause problems for themselves and others (Rismaya, 2020).

In Linguistics, language ethics is called language politeness, which is part of language use whose role is quite central in facilitating interactions between speakers and speech partners. Politeness is also the most important part for people who still adhere to culture and religious, cultural, and ethical norms. Therefore, the language used must pay attention to manners, order, courtesy, and contain high values of respect and morals. This is in line with Rustono's (1999) opinion that the politeness principle deals with rules about social, aesthetic, and moral matters in speech acts.

Politeness always has a two-way relationship, for example between children and parents, hosts and guests, students and teachers, as well as between the people and the government and vice versa. In these reciprocal relationships, politeness has its own size because it is related to age, education, and position in society. Children are required to be polite to parents because they are younger; students must be polite to teachers because teachers are older and the position of teachers is higher; likewise between the people and their government; although reciprocally the older must also model polite language to the younger.

Likewise, when it comes to ethnicity and culture, what is considered polite by one culture may not be the case with another culture. Therefore, based on Tarmini and Safii's research (2018), language politeness in each context of conversation will be different. Politeness that applies in society in a certain place or situation does not necessarily apply to other societies, places, or situations. This factor is caused by cultural differences adopted by each nation in a country. It also happens in Indonesia, because Indonesia has many tribes and cultures that can cause differences in ways of communicating (Zamzani, 2010). Differences in the way of communication are not only born from the many tribes and cultures, it also occurs because there are differences in social status or the role of a language speaker in the community. That is why, in linguistics, the rules of politeness are universally regulated with certain concepts and principles, namely the type of speech act chosen (Searle, 1979) and the principles of politeness applied in any speech (Leech, 1993), as well as paying attention to the factors of social gap and proximity in linguistic interaction (Yule, 2006).

In political years, political contestation in Indonesia no longer depends entirely on the performance of political machines or elites; but has shifted to the active participation of sympathizers/supporters and other social activists, especially in social media as one of the arenas for discourse battles. (Adek and Agustina, 2021). In addition, political contestation also depends on political observers. Although political observers are actually people outside political parties whose role is to observe/supervise the course of politics, the comments of political observers greatly influence people's perceptions of political contestants. The political observer who often criticizes the government and most often gets the spotlight from the use of language with certain jargon, labeling, stereotypes, and stigma is Rocky Gerung (Agustina, 2023b). This is reinforced by the results of research, conducted by Saragi (2019) and Asriandi, et al. (2021) that RG's speech when criticizing the government is categorized as quite harsh.

Therefore, the use of coarse vulgar language in political discourse has become a major highlight in Indonesia, especially since the 2019 DKI Pilkada through the studies of Agustina (2017, 2018), Bethinia, et al. (2019), Firmansyah, et al. (2020), Gani, et al, (2020); and research conducted by Rabiah (2016) that the use of language tends to be coarse is familiar in the world of Indonesian politics.

The use of harsh language is examined in the realm of politeness. There have been many studies on language politeness, including in Malaysia by Alakarsh and Bustan (2020) on the similarities and differences in politeness strategies used by Arab and Malaysian students in making requests. Then, research by Azman, et al. (2020) on politeness is part of the identity and quality of each ethnicity so that every act of impoliteness is a representation and threat to the vulnerability of their identity. In Finland, Nuolijärvi & Tiittula (2011) examined politeness in political debates on television. In the UK, Rashed (2020) examines the types of requests EFL students make in class with the aim of exploring the pragmatic functions of requests made by learners. Next in Indonesia, Mustika's research (2019) on the language use of supporters of the DKI Jakarta gubernatorial candidate pair which is dominated by the category of verbal violence because it is sarcastic and delivered with a direct strategy without pleasantries, so that the principle of politeness is not applied at all.

The studies on politeness are scattered in various objects. However, there are not many studies on language politeness by political observers. Political observers certainly have a variety of different styles and ways of communicating according to their personal characteristics. This in terms of Linguistics is characterized by indicators of whether the principles of politeness in communication are applied or violated. One political observer who is famous for his distinctive style with a negative stigma in criticizing is RG. Therefore, in this discussion, the language etiquette or better known as the language politeness of RG political observers in criticizing the government is studied based on aspects of (1) the type of criticizing speech acts he uses and (2) the application or violation of the principles of language politeness in his criticism.

THEORETICAL BASIS

To prove this, this study uses several main theories. *First*, the theory of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987) that politeness is social manners/ethics agreed upon by a society; which by Lakoff (1972) is a system of interpersonal relationships designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the potential for conflict and confrontation; and by Fraser (1983) as an associated property that the speaker believes that the speaker does not exceed/deny his obligations in speech, and by Leech (1993) politeness is an attempt to make the existence of impolite beliefs/opinions to be as small as possible by complying with several politeness principles. Therefore, an utterance can be said to be polite if it has fulfilled the politeness principle, namely (1) the principle of tact (tact maxim); (2) the principle of acceptance (generosity maxim), (3) the principle of respect (praise maxim); (4) the principle of humility (modesty maxim); (5) the principle of agreement (agreement maxim); and (6) the principle of sympathy (sympathy maxim). Theoretical basis can be written in subchapters while still considering the 15% quota of the overall article body. All referenced or quoted sources must be written in the bibliography. The citation technique follows the APA (American Psychological Association model). In addition, in communicating a person has its own characteristics and different styles (Leech, 1993). However, according to Pranowo (2012:68), a person's impoliteness in speech is caused by several factors, namely (1) delivering criticism directly, (2) being driven by emotions when speaking, (3) being protective of his opinion, (4) deliberately wanting to corner speech partners, and (5) accusing speech partners.

Second, criticizing belongs to expressive speech acts that express the speaker's psychological state that is vulnerable to threatening the positive face of the interlocutor (Brown & Levinson, 1987) so that it is often used as a weapon to bring down the opponent/speaker and conversely used as a pretext to uphold the truth by the speaker. The speech act of criticizing by Nguyen (2005; 2008) is divided into two types, namely (1) direct criticism, in the form of: negative evaluation, rejection, expression of disagreement, statement of problems, statement of difficulties, and consequences; and (2) indirect criticism in the form of improvement, indicating standards, orders for change, requests for change, advice for change, suggestions for change, expressions of disbelief, requesting/presuming, and other cues. Therefore, according to Nguyen (2008), direct criticism is referred to as negative criticism that has the potential to bring down the self-image of the criticized; whereas indirect criticism is referred to as positive criticism, which displays positive language, behavior, and meaning so as to avoid conflict between speakers and speakers.

RESEARCH METHOD

This type of research is qualitative-descriptive to explain the phenomenon of data as it is (Moleong, 2011); Mahsun, 2005), and quantitative-descriptive to calculate the percentage of the use of types and principles of politeness to criticize used (Sugiyono, 2015). The main instruments of this research are the researchers and assisted by data transliteration tools from videos, recording devices, and notes. The research data is in the form of RG's speech that contains criticism of government policies in several events documented on the @RockyGerungOfficial2023 YouTube channel. Data collection uses the media review method with a listening-recording technique that is validated by triangulation; while the data analysis technique begins with identifying data, classifying, describing, interpreting linguistic context and situation context, and discussing the results of data analysis into research findings.

Analyzing data with stages: (1) identifying and classifying data according to research objectives; (2) analyzing data according to the theory used; (3) interpreting the results of data analysis into research findings; (4) conducting discussions by connecting or comparing research findings with theories and previous research results; and (5) concluding research results.

DISCUSSION

Use of Types of Criticizing Speech Acts

Based on the research data, there are two types of criticizing speech acts used by RG, namely direct criticism (82%), and indirect criticism (18%); which are scattered in several categories, as follows.

Tabel 1. Penggunaan Jenis Tindak Tutur Mengkritik

No	Jenis Tindak Tutur Mengkritik	Jumlah (%)
1.	Langsung	93 (82%)
	a. Evaluasi Negatif	28%
	b. Penolakan	9%
	c. Ekspresi Tidak Setuju	12%
	d. Pernyataan akan Masalah	30%
	e. Konsekuensi	3%
2.	Tidak Langsung	21 (18%)
	a. Menunjukkan Standar	2%
	b. Perintah untuk Perubahan	2%
	c. Permintaan untuk Perubahan	2%
	d. Saran untuk Perubahan	3%
	e. Ekspresi tidak Yakin	2%
	f. Meminta/Berpraanggapan	2%
g. Isyarat Lain	5%	
Jumlah		114 (100%)

The dominant type of criticism found was direct criticism. Direct criticism is criticism that is delivered explicitly pointing out the problems, actions, and performance of the

person/parties being criticized (Nguyen, 2008). In this case, explicit means that it is delivered frankly, directly, straightforward word choice, and denotative meaning. The following are some of the direct criticizing data found.

- (1) Ada satu keyakinan bahwa ke depan tetap Indonesia memerlukan sinyal ketokohan historis dan itu ada pada ibu Mega karena tradisi PDIP yang konsisten di dalam mendukung Soekarno walaupun di dalam praktek kebijakannya itu diperlihatkan bahwa **Pak Jokowi sebagai kader PDIP nggak paham tentang Soekarnoisme, itu intinya kan** (RG, ILC: 25/12/23).
- (2) Jadi, soal itu yang gagal kita bicarakan, **Pak Jokowi dengar doang. Politik identitas di dalam kepalanya Islam, selesai, karena nggak paham itu.**
- (3) Yang nggak paham menurut saya bukan Pak Jokowi, tetapi lingkungannya yang price dengan cara buruk. **Itu akibatnya kalau bergaul dengan orang dungu.** (RG, ILC:25/12/23).

The direct criticism in data (1) is in the form of a negative evaluation of government policies, namely *Pak Jokowi sebagai kader PDIP nggak paham tentang Soekarnoisme, itu intinya kan*. The straightforward use of the word choice doesn't understand shows that RG doesn't mince words so it means 'accusing' because the choice of the words *tidak* (data 1) and *nggak* (data 2) are finite adverbs with a denotative meaning of 'certainty' and are emphasized at the end of the statement with the phrase *itu intinya kan* to confirm her belief in J's lack of understanding of Soekarnoism.

Likewise, in data (2), in addition to negative evaluation, criticism is also categorized as a consequence, namely the result of *Pak Jokowi dengar doang. Politik identitas di dalam kepalanya Islam, selesai karena nggak paham*. RG's criticism is in the form of an accusation as a consequence of J's lack of understanding of identity politics, then emphasized by the previous clause *Pak Jokowi dengar doang and selesai*, which means that according to RG J has no concept at all about identity politics. Likewise, in data (3) *Itu akibatnya kalau bergaul dengan orang dungu*, in addition to negative evaluation, there is also a consequence that without a doubt RG ensures that J's ignorance (for sure) *tidak paham Soekarnoisme, politik identitas*, is a consequence because his assistants are incompetent people.

The next direct criticism seen in data (4) is categorized as rejection and disagreement, while in data (5) it is categorized as problem and disagreement.

- (4) **Jadi, kalau saya lihat misalnya Pak Jokowi mending jangan lihat ILC karena dia akan gugup, konsepnya macam-macam di sini. Dia pasti nggak ngerti [tepuk tangan] karena itu saya buat mengerti dulu. Ya, saya buat mengerti dulu kata identitas dipakai Pak Jokowi itu sebab kita juga pakai kata itu....** (RG, ILC:25/12/23).
- (5) Tadi siang sy makan bakso terus Tukang Bakso bilang begini tulisan dari Wamen itu Pak Roki, **itu tulisan yang kurang ajar** karena menghina orang yang ingin mengkritik, dia baca, tukang baksonya bilang begitu **tulisan kurang ajar. Saya bilang enggak, itu bukan tulisan kurang ajar, itu tulisan kurang otak.** Yes, karena dia tidak punya lagi kemampuan untuk membedakan *causa cocnos candi dan causa ecensi*. Kan yang mau dikatakan bahwa ini harus benar, karena kalau udah tidak benar artinya **kalian itu enggak punya otak**. Kan itu isi dari artikel Profesor, siapa namanya tuh, Edi. Itu menunjukkan **kegurubesaran dia tidak ditopang oleh otak yang besar karena menghina akhirnya**, itu dasarnya tuh (ILC:11/07/23).
- (6) **Jadi kita mensurvei sesuatu, dimana pemimpin kita hasil surveinya bukan hasil pertengkaran akademis, bukan hasil mortality** karena di tempat dimana pertengkaran pikiran harusnya diwujudkan, justru dilarang, yaitu kampus; di tempat dimana moralitas diuji justru dilarang, yaitu Masjid, gereja, rumah ibadah; **di mana otaknya. Tetapi, kata Pak Jokowi jangan bawa politik ke kampus. Dia tak mengerti masa depan, artinya** (RG, ILC:25/12/23).

In data (4), the criticism is in the form of a rejection that *J mending jangan lihat ILC karena dia akan gugup, ... konsepnya macam-macam di sini*. With her conviction, RG explains her disapproval if J watches a program that discusses identity politics because she will be confused because of her lack of understanding. Therefore, after her explanation in the program, it will be able to make J fully understand the concept of identity politics.

Furthermore, in data (5), direct criticism is a statement of the problem. RG criticized the government about the writing of one of the Deputy Minister who suggested the draft Criminal Procedure Code. RG listened to a meatball worker's statement that the minister's *tulisan kurang ajar*. But RG asserted that *...itu bukan tulisan kurang ajar, itu tulisan kurang otak karena menghina orang yang ingin mengkritik*. In addition, this direct criticism is also an expression of RG's disapproval of the minister's writing with the phrase *...kegurubesaran dia tidak ditopang oleh otak yang besar karena menghina akhirnya, itu dasarnya tuh*.

In data (6), direct criticism is in the form of rejection, for the information developing in the community that the government prohibits discussing/discussing politics on campus and in houses of worship. This made RG furious so he issued the following criticism: *di mana otaknya. Tetapi, kata Pak Jokowi jangan bawa politik ke kampus. Dia tak mengerti masa depan*.

Use of Politeness Principles in Criticizing

The use of politeness principles in the speech acts of RG criticizing government policies can be seen in the data distribution in the following table.

Tabel 2. Penggunaan Prinsip Kesantunan

No	Prinsip Kesantunan Berbahasa	Pematuhan	Pelanggaran
1.	Maksim Kearifan	3%	3%
2.	Maksim Kedermawanan	2%	2%
3.	Maksim Penghargaan	2%	56%
4.	Maksim Kerendahan Hati	2%	8%
5.	Maksim Permufakatan	-	18%
6.	Maksim Kesimpatian	-	4%
Jumlah		10 (9%)	104 (91%)

From the findings, it is revealed that the violation of politeness rules is more dominant than its compliance. The most violated politeness principle is the approbation maxim. The word choice *tidak paham* (data 1-2), and *lingkungan yang buruk* (data 3) in the context of the speech violates the principle of politeness of the maxim of appreciation, which is considered impolite if the speaker has berated, mocked, or demeaned the other party (Rahardi, 2005). As a result of the vulgar choice of words, RG is not only prejudiced but has accused so that criticism is not constructive because it has berated and demeaned the self-image of the person being criticized, let alone the highest position in a country. This is because, in the maxim of respect, speakers are expected to try to give credit to speakers, not insult others. In addition, the criticism in data (3) also violates the agreement maxim. The agreement maxim is also called the maxim of compatibility, which is for speech participants to maximize compatibility and minimize incompatibility in speech acts (Wijana, 1996). In this maxim, it is emphasized that speech is said to be polite if the speech participants can foster mutual compatibility or mutual acceptance (Rahardi, 2005); not giving a one-sided assessment as in data (1-3), thus harming the self-image of the criticized party (Yule, 2006).

Furthermore, in data (5) there is a violation of the sympathy maxim. Sympathy maxim is a politeness rule that requires speech participants to maximize sympathy. This is because antipathy towards others is considered an impolite act. This violation of the maxims of politeness is characterized by the statement *tulisan kurang ajar, tulisan kurang otak, kegurubesaran dia tidak ditopang oleh otak yang besar*. Such scathing criticism not only expresses antipathy, but also insults and blasphemy. This is because people who are antipathetic towards others, let alone being cynical, will be considered as people who do not know politeness

in society (Rahardi, 2005). The criticism in the data not only violates the principle of sympathy, but also violates the maxim of appreciation. The sarcastic choice of words (diction) in her criticism shows that RG does not appreciate the criticized party at all, even though there are many appropriate diction choices to express her dissatisfaction with the policy that are more polite. In data (5) there is also a violation of the generosity maxim, which in speech must minimize respect for oneself; otherwise maximize respect for others (Wijana, 1996). This rule is instead carried out by RG, because the use of interrogativa *di mana otaknya (pemerintah)* implies that RG does not respect the criticized party because sarcastic brain diction is a common vocabulary used for animals (compare with the expression *otak udang*); while for humans it is used *pikiran* and *akal*. Thus, the party in question *dimana otaknya* can be compared as human beings who are equal to non-human sentient beings, namely animals. The lack of consideration of language ethics resulted in the criticism being categorized as impolite. RG considers the ban to be a wrong and unreasonable policy so that the government is considered irrational in making rules; even though it is not clear / certain whether the ban is a policy or not by the government so far.

Sarcastic word choice is socially rejected in a society that still upholds cultural and moral values (Yule, 2006: 104). Therefore, speakers can foster mutual compatibility or agreement in speech. Thus, the criticisms in data 1-6, not only violate the maxim of respect but also violate the maxim of agreement and the maxim of humility, because the accusations and reproaches are only one-sided, but still need to be questioned yet their acceptability in general.

In fact, criticizing as a type of expressive speech act is a speech act that expresses the speaker's psychological attitude towards the situation implied in the illocution (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Rustano, 1999). If the expressive speech act is in the form of thanks, congratulations, condolences, apologize, praise then the illocution will function pleasant (convivial) because the illocution is intrinsically polite; but if the expressive illocution criticizes which is accompanied by, condemnation, accusations, insults, and the like, then the illocution functions competitively, even conflictively (Searle, 1989). Therefore, the speech act of criticizing is a speech act that is prone to threaten the face (self-image) of the criticized party (Brown and Levinson, 1987). That is why, in language ethics, criticism needs to be conveyed by applying the principles of politeness with the five maxims recommended above. to reduce the illocutionary power and threat to the criticized self-image (Leech, 1993, p. 206) so that criticism is in accordance with its function, namely as input and solutive improvements (Agustina, et al. 2023a).

However, based on the results of this study, it can be seen that RG predominantly uses direct criticism, especially negative evaluation, followed by rejection, disagreement, and problem criticism in order to be heard and accepted by the government. Regardless of the truthfulness of RG's criticism, in terms of content it may not be problematic under the pretext of being an evaluation for the betterment of society. However, in terms of language ethics, especially the use of bad, harsh, and vulgar diction towards the country's highest leader has the potential to cause problems because personally it tends to be an insult or insult and socially it has the potential to make noise or disturbance in society and the state. This is in line with the results of previous research that the dominant use of verbal violence in the political realm tends to threaten intolerant attitudes in society (Agustina, 2020).

In fact, in this study, the dominant use of direct criticizing speech acts and sarcastic style is directly proportional to the violation of politeness principles because the criticism delivered only benefits the critic, but harms the criticized person. In fact, because the criticism is delivered in a sarcastic manner, it seems to mean dropping and upholding the truth based on the critic's own thoughts. This impression arises because the criticisms conveyed tend to be based on

opinion, not based on scientific data because the content of such comprehensive criticism is not always based on RG's academic expertise as a critic, who does not have a political background.

Furthermore, although compliance with the maxims of politeness is also found in RG's criticism, it is not balanced by the violations. The dominant violation of the maxim of agreement shows how much RG draws her own conclusions on the various topics discussed. In fact, the maxim of agreement aims to avoid making one-sided conclusions.

CLOSING

Based on the results and discussion of the research that has been stated, conclusions can be drawn. *First*, RG political observers in criticizing the government dominantly use direct criticism speech acts (82%) compared to indirect criticism (18%). Direct criticism is delivered directly (to the point), without further ado, generally using words without parables, sarcastic, vulgar and denotative meaning so that it directly hits the face (image) of the criticized, so that criticism is categorized as impolite.

Secondly, in criticizing RG hardly applies or violates the maxims of politeness (91%) rather than using or complying with them (9%). This fact shows that the dominant violation of the principles of language politeness in RG's criticism indicates that the face threat (self-image) of the criticized party is high, so the criticism delivered is not polite. This is due to the non-application of the maxims of politeness initiated by pragmatists that language politeness is an attempt to make the existence of impolite beliefs and opinions smaller or less. In addition, politeness rules are created to minimize the potential for conflict and confrontation that always occurs in human relationships. Thus, speakers who ignore the principles of politeness in criticizing and other speech will be considered impolite. The impact of impoliteness in criticizing is not only for the person who is criticized and can also be widespread as a trigger for uproar and confrontation in the midst of society; but also for the criticizing party because it is considered not to have manners and manners in communication, because one's language shows one's personality.

Since criticizing is an evaluation activity for improvement and goodness for the future, then criticism should be delivered with polite language so that the essence of criticism does not lose meaning and the purpose of criticizing reaches the target, moreover delivered in public (public speaking). Especially in Indonesia, politeness is something that is considered important by language communities, especially language communities in an environment that still upholds cultural norms.

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