

## Cultural Efforts to Maintain Environmental Sustainability: A Study of the Pragmatics of Politeness on Ethical Planks in Rural Sunda

Riza Lupi Ardiati<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Padjadjaran,  
Indonesia

\* Corresponding author:  
[riza.lupi@unpad.ac.id](mailto:riza.lupi@unpad.ac.id)

Received : April 2, 2022

Revised : July 24, 2022

Accepted : August 17, 2022

### Abstract

This study examines politeness utterances implemented with *manaa kanban* (ethics plank) in Sundanese society. In Japanese culture, this method is intended as a medium for giving specific directions and instructions. In the context of this research, the Kanban method has a pragmatic goal of motivating people to care about cleanliness and natural beauty. It is also an effort to regenerate Sundanese politeness discourses as a way of life for the people of West Java, which has always been instilled and contains noble values. Methods The research was conducted through field observations, searching for data from respondents using taping techniques. The theory used is pragmatics related to the principle of politeness, the relationship between speakers and their speech, as well as soft Japanese expressions (*kanwa hyougen*). This research was conducted in Sayang village, Subang, West Java. The results of the study revealed that in some places, there were no garbage disposal facilities, and there were trees that were used as promotional media for certain interests.

### Keywords

Pragmatics, Politeness discourse, Environmental sustainability, Manaa Kanban, Sundanese.

## 1. Introduction

Indonesia is one of the countries that play a role in protecting the world's lungs because it has extensive tropical forests (Laksono, 2022). However, as the times progressed, this tropical

forest would dwindle due to various reasons, such as arbitrary cutting of trees, under various pretexts for using wood for industry, and others. The impact of felling trees can cause floods, landslides, and others (Taufiqurrahman & Suharno, 2021). It is especially felt in urban areas with increasing population growth rates, such as West Java, especially Bandung, and its surroundings, which have many universities with many students. These factors create excesses that need to be watched out for and maintained regarding the impact of increasing housing which can result in nature conservation, environmental cleanliness, and other consequences. For this reason, it is necessary to strive for positive preventive measures (Purnomo et al., 2020; Sadma, 2021).

Nurhidayah (2020) stated that many things could be done to preserve nature and clean the environment, ranging from simple things that can be done in daily life to carrying out planned and sustainable activities that can be used as an encouragement or motivation for these efforts can succeed. One of these efforts is creating the *manaa Kanban* (ethics board), as one of the Japanese terms that have now begun to be used to achieve a goal. In daily life, Japanese people use language politeness a lot as a form of respect for others, obedience to ethics, and behaving orderly. It can be seen in the rules wrapped in language politeness; we can make this an example of a culture from which we can take positive benefits.

Thus, it can be said that politeness can be motivated by various aspects. Indonesia, which consists of various ethnicities, has various cultures, one of which is Sundanese culture as a form of local wisdom that should be upheld and respected. Sundanese, which has honorifics, is linear with politeness, which we have often heard with the term *undak usuk* language (Kulsum, 2020). So, we can also implement Sundanese politeness in the form of *manaa kanban* or ethics boards that Japanese people widely use, and it seems that they are also starting to be widely used in other countries.

Manaa kanban politeness discourse is often used to disguise the real speaker's intentions and avoid direct speech that will hurt the listener's heart (Ardiati & Sigiarto, 2022; Saputro et al., 2021). In Sundanese and Japanese, there are similarities in the culture of speech and the use of language ethics, namely, not directly expressing what you want to say but using other expressions (Mislikhah, 2020). For example, suppose you want to convey a prohibition. In that case, it can be conveyed with a different speech in the hope of touching and moving the heart of the speaker so that he follows the appeal without coercion as Huckin (2002) said that to investigate the use of language in context by the speaker/writer, and pay more attention to the relationship between the speaker and his utterance, on certain occasions of use, and not a potential relationship between one sentence and another regardless of usage.

In Figure 1, a *manaa kanban* expresses an invitation to protect nature which is very important for humankind. The speech reflected politeness with sociological, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds, namely the use of an invitation to *mamorimashou* 'let's take care. Japanese society prefers a request in various ways, generally using polite invitations, appeals, and other expressions. We implement this by instilling discipline and ethics for students by installing warning boards in the Japanese Literature Study Program, among others, aiming to introduce a culture of discipline to Japanese language learners in particular and generally to those who visit or study in our environment.



大切な自然をまもりましょう。

*Taisetsuna shizen o mamorimashou.*

Let's take care of the important nature

(Source: JM2012 Osaka)

**Figure 1.** *Manaa kanban* in Japanese

Suppose the ethics board is applied in the campus community's daily life. In that case, this is not impossible, as, in the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, the form of Japanese cultural products is installed, as the application of politeness speech, as shown in Figure 2.



いつもきれいに使っておき、ありがとうございます。

*Itsumo kireini tsukatteoki, arigatou gozaimasu.*

Thank you, always keep it clean

(Source: Author field documentation, 2017; Location of Japanese Language Study Center)

**Figure 2.** *Manaa kanban* in the campus toilet

The meaning of the request in Figure 2 implies a disguised request to the reader, but it is done politely through an expression of gratitude. In speech 2, if the appeal is made politely, the

readers may be moved to voluntarily maintain the toilet's cleanliness. The photo describes Japanese society's culture applied in the campus environment. The culture of working together to create order and cleanliness in shared public facilities is a natural thing to do with full volunteer and responsibility because, with this facility, they are also helped to use it when needed as well as a form of self-discipline that is beneficial for the users of the facility.

A positive culture can be applied if this will also positively impact the general public and implement and preserve the Sundanese language among young people who seem to be rarely used. Based on this explanation, this study aims to create a *manaa kanban* that contains an appeal for cleanliness and preserving nature by implementing a politeness discourse in Sundanese, as a regional language in West Java that we should preserve as a regional cultural identity in West Java, which will be installed in Sayang Village, Jatinangor, Sumedang Regency.

## 2. Method

The research method was carried out in stages through observation and socialization methods. Ciesielska et al. (2018) explain the meaning and function of the *manaa kanban* as well as its application or implementation in daily life, especially in maintaining cleanliness, preserving fauna, in this case, the trees in the Sayang Village area, and not throwing garbage into the river which will have an external impact. Common problems include flooding, destroying fields and gardens, and other things that harm the local community. The implementation of the data search was carried out in stages; namely, the first step was field observation, followed by the socialization of the theme, research objectives, and what preparations needed to be done. Next, the second step is divided into preparing illustrations and making *manaa kanban* poles. The last step is the implementation of the installation of *manaa kanban*. The technique used in this study is the tapping technique, by documenting locations that allow large amounts of garbage to be disposed of carelessly, trees being nailed and damaged, and locations near rivers that must be kept clean.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The politeness in discourse in the form of speech, as expressed by Taikura (2008), is different from the honorific principle in Japanese, but it is not something that can be disputed. In addition, Djajasudarma (2012) reveals that discourse can be studied based on (a) its existence (reality) is verbal (1) and nonverbal (2), (b) as a communication medium in the form of oral and written speech, and so on. So what is important in discourse is not only focusing on speakers and their speech but the use of language or an expression that can launch the ongoing process of communication (Nunan et al., 1992; Hashiuchi, 1999; Barron et al., 2014). In this process, one of the important things is using *poratoneisu* and wa' politeness of discourse', which is a kind of politeness in pragmatics (Young, 2009; Leech, 2014; Uemura, 2018). Therefore, what kind of politeness discourse can be implemented in *manaa kanban* in Sayang Village will be explained after explaining the conditions and circumstances of Sayang Village.

Sayang Village is one of the villages located in the area of several universities, namely Padjadjaran University, ITB, UNIKOM, and STPDN. Cileles Village surrounds Sayang Village

to the north, Hegarmanah Village and Cikeruh Village to the east, Mekargalih Village to the south, and Cipacing Village and Cibeusi Village to the west. Administratively, Sayang Village is divided into three hamlet areas: Hamlet 1, Hamlet 2, and Hamlet 3. While the number of Rukun Warga and Rukun Tetangga areas are 13 Rukun Warga (RW) and 48 Rukun Tetangga (RT), respectively. Due to its strategic location, Sayang Village is a supporting area for the Jatinangor educational area, and this can be seen from the many providers of student boarding houses and other supporting facilities so that it automatically becomes an urban area with many immigrants; in addition to students who are increasing from year to year—also dominated by traders who open businesses in the area. On the other hand, the indigenous people of Sayang Village are increasingly marginalized by the presence of urbanites.

The impact of the development of an area will certainly have an impact on the lives of the residents of the area with various problems, one of which is related to the cleanliness and natural beauty which is observed to affect the daily life of the villagers, namely the cleanliness of the environment from garbage, rivers whose water has not been maintained. Overflow if it rains continuously because of garbage, and in some places, the trees are plastered or nailed with various slogans of interest. It is what makes this research carried out, by trying to give an appeal as a motivation or encouragement so that people in the area can be orderly in maintaining the cleanliness and beauty of their environment.

### **3.1 Application of the Code of Ethics (*Manaa Kanban*) to Maintain cleanliness**

The meaning of *manaa* comes from English, manner which is ethics or procedures, while *kanban* is a signboard or it can also be called a sign board. Kanban functioned as a medium of fast and accurate information, the shape was made of wood or metal, as a sign that often represented a trademark or seal, and *kanban* played an important role in trade in Japan in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Visually the form of puns, calligraphy, and other forms show the prestige of the businessmen or traders at that time. However, over time, the function of the kanban has shifted into a medium for various purposes, such as the kanban used in Sayang village will be placed according to the situation and conditions of the location.

#### **3.1.1 Throw garbage in its place**

The cleanliness of an environment must be maintained wherever we are, starting from the closest environment used for activities, namely the living environment and the environment where shared facilities are used, such as schools, markets, hospitals, and others. A clean and beautiful environment will make people comfortable and pleasant. Based on observations and surveys, the community still uses many places that do not meet the clean criteria. However, to motivate the surrounding community to be orderly about cleanliness and ethics in disposing of waste, it is not enough just to socialize. Motivating and instilling an attitude of maintaining a clean and beautiful environment is also very necessary.

Jatinangor is a university area that should be an example for other regions in terms of cleanliness, health, economy, culture, behavior, and other aspects. Therefore, keeping the Jatinangor area clean and beautiful is necessary despite many immigrants. In addition, as a cultural heritage of West Java, it is necessary to maintain the Sundanese language by using *manaa kanban* as a visual medium that can be seen and read by everyone, with polite speech and containing a philosophy of life, as shown in Table 3.



(a)



*Upami walungan kotor, jalmi oge tangtu kasimbeuh* (If the river is dirty, humans will be affected too)

(b)



(c)

*Source: Author field documentation, 2018*

**Figure 3.** (a) Surveyed locations; (b) Illustration for the first kanban; (c) the location to install the first kanban

### 3.1.2 Keeping the River Clean from Garbage

The word *upami walungan kotor, jalmi oge tangtos kasimbeuh*, means “if the river is polluted, then, of course, we will also be affected by it,” namely from the unpleasant smell due to the accumulation of garbage, the stagnant flow of the river which causes flooding because its function to accommodate water is hampered due to waste, various diseases that can spread to the community because the water has been polluted which causes bacteria and viruses to breed easily (Figure 4).

According to Taufiq (2015), organic waste is waste that comes from living things and has the nature of being easy/can decompose or decompose in a relatively short time. This type of organic waste is environmentally friendly, but it still requires special attention so as not to damage the environment due to excessive waste and lack of attention.



Inorganic waste, or non-organic waste, is the opposite of organic waste; this waste does not come from living things and has properties that are difficult to decompose or decompose. This type of inorganic waste takes a very long time to decompose or decompose (Santoso et al., 2021). Therefore, it is hoped that the speech can touch people's hearts so that they are aware and are moved to care about the environment, and can protect the environment and not pollute or damage it, because the impact will befall them again. Also, the speech that uses the Sundanese language is expected to be able to keep in mind so that the Sundanese language survives and continues to be preserved.



(a)



*Upami miceun runtah dimana wae, tangtos engke janten mamala kanggo urang sadaya* (If you throw trash anywhere, one day, it will cause disaster for all of us)

(b)



(c)

Source: Author field documentation, 2018

**Figure 4.** (a) Surveyed locations; (b) Illustration for the first kanban; (c) the location to install the first kanban

### 3.2 The Application of the Code of Ethics on the Board of Ethics (*Manaa kanban*) to Maintain the Beauty of the Trees

The word '*Hayu urang piara tutuwuhan supados hirup urang bagja*' means "let's take care of plants so that our lives are happy," which indicates an appeal for us to maintain the beauty of nature by treating plants or trees around the environment well maintained so that in return

nature can protect us from negative impacts, such as the absence of floods and landslides and other adverse effects (Figure 5). Hurting nature is the same as destroying the earth; it is clear, for example, if we nail a tree, the nails stuck in the tree can cause the tree to rot, which is dangerous in the event of strong winds, and the tree falls due to decay and hits road users. The more definite impact of nailing the trees is the disruption of tree life. Nails, screws, or bolts can cause health problems to the tree if not installed properly (Abimanyu et al., 2019). Stretches, Cables, and ropes hanging from tree branches are very destructive and can damage the bark and structure of the tree. In addition, if trees are cut down carelessly, the environment will be damaged, namely arid, hot, lack of fresh air because there is no one to break down carbon dioxide into oxygen, and so on.



(a)



*Hayu urang piara tutuwuhan supados hirup urang bagja* (Let's take care of plants so that our lives are happy)

(b)



(c)

*Source: Author field documentation, 2018*

**Figure 5.** (a) Surveyed locations; (b) Illustration for the first kanban; (c) the location to install the first Kanban

Fathoni et al. (2016) stated that the negative impact of massive tree cutting is now being felt by global warming due to the effects of greenhouse gases and increasingly denuded forests.



Barren forests are the cause of global warming because objects that produce carbon substances can cause the earth to get hotter. This carbon substance cannot be converted into oxygen by the presence of fewer and less plants. These carbon substances can also damage the earth's ozone layer, so the polar ice caps will melt even more.

Thus, what Leech (1983) conveyed in pragmatics is the study of meaning in relation to speech situations, including the greeter's elements and who are addressed, context, purpose, illocutionary acts, speech, time, and place can be applied in which *kanban*. This will lead to harmonization, tolerance, and mutual respect if the speech uses polite discourse that still respects the addressee or reader (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Halliday et al., 2014; Winter, 2020).

#### 4. Conclusion

Speech is a verbal communication tool from a speaker to the addressee when communicating. The *Manaa Kanban* board that has been made with the speech in Sundanese reflects a message in the form of an appeal and an invitation to follow it. However, if it is only verbal, it will be limited in time, and the speaker then we aim to implement *manaa kanban* through visual communication media by completing it through pictures to attract the attention of the public, both parents, adults, and small children to read the board. It can be concluded that the use of *Manaa Kanban* has a positive impact. However, several things need to be considered to work more effectively. The placement of the *kanban* according to the situation, namely in a location with a lot of garbage and near a river, is appropriate because many residents pass by in their daily activities, so if they are going to dispose of garbage, trash cans are provided. In addition, the placement of the *manaa kanban* according to the situation, namely in the location where there are trees that are nailed, might discourage him from reading the *manaa kanban*. Furthermore, the use of the Sundanese language in delivering the message is felt to be more targeted to the target community, namely the residents of the Sayang Village community in the West Java region. In addition, it can be recognized by the immigrant community as well as the preservation of the Sundanese language.

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