

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

It can be assumed that many would hypothesize that prostitutes, being women who are marginalized not only by their gender but also by their nature of work, would use crude language and impolite strategies in their interactions with clients and potential clients. As such, the main aim of this study is to identify and describe the degree of politeness in how Javanese prostitutes, communicate their intended messages to their potential clients based on the Politeness Theory proposed by Brown and Levinson. It therefore set out to seek answers to two research questions:

1. What are the lexical choices made by the subjects, and how do these choices reflect the degree of politeness intended?
2. What positive and negative politeness strategies do the subjects employ?

The sample of this study comprised 25 Javanese lower class prostitutes between the ages of 18 to 45 years old working at a brothel complex in Surabaya, Indonesia. The tools of this study consisted of three parts: recording of naturally occurring conversation between the subjects and their potential clients, informal interview, and non-participant observation. The data was tape recorded and transcribed with permission from the subjects and their care takers. Interviews were then carried out with all 25 subjects to obtain further information on their background and experience. These interviews were used to aid in the analysis of the audio recorded data. After

obtaining the data required, the data was analyzed based on the lexical choices and the degrees of politeness employed by the subjects. The findings and their implications have been discussed in Chapter 4. To close this report, the following section will discuss the major conclusions that can be made based on the findings.

5.1 Major Conclusions

The conceptual framework of this study was built around the notion that communication is culture-bound; that members of a particular culture understand each other through a shared system of communication that reflects the culture's thinking, attitudes, beliefs and values. This notion is in turn built on the agreement that language is the most important tool in the communication process. As such, the speakers' attitudes, judgments, and feelings invariably appear in the language that is used within their respective communities and cultures. In other words, language is taken to be as always emotionally loaded, where every utterance can never be taken as neutral. Language is by nature ambiguous and this empowers language to either promote unity and identification, or cause separation and division among its speakers, both in the inter-cultural as well as intra-cultural contexts.

Within a culture, there are many subordinate groups which have their own set of rules to communicate politeness, apart from the universal rules. Holmes (2001:159) for example states that women use politeness strategies in their speech as a way to not offend men. In addition, Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) believe that because it is an attribute that is universally valued across all cultures, politeness, or the act of protecting the face of the other person, is an important goal in every communication

act. Different cultures, however, have different levels of required politeness and different ways of being polite, but all people have the need to be appreciated and protected, which Brown and Levinson call *face needs*.

As discovered through the literature review for this study, research on politeness covers a wide range of cultures and languages. Each culture will have its own politeness style and strategies. As such Javanese politeness is unique as it is put into play through a language that is in itself also unique due to the speech levels between the speaker and the hearer. This uniqueness is clearly expressed in Holmes (2001:101) who states that “Javanese has a complex linguistically marked politeness system based on assessments of relative status”. The complexity of Javanese language opens it to vast areas yet to be explored. Although this study has only looked at a small aspect of the language due to its scope and limitations, its findings have revealed interesting features of the language, the politeness that is embedded within it as well as the socio-cultural characteristics of its speakers who make the language come alive. It is hoped that these findings will encourage other work to be carried out in the area so we can have a better understanding of how we speak, whether we are leaders of great nations or prostitutes.