

The Non-Observance of Grice's Maxims in *Sasak*

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how the Sasak people of Lombok Indonesia interact among each other in naturally-occurring interactions. The Politeness theory stipulates that the language of communication associates social reality and language use in real communities. Grice's theory is based on the assumption that people are cooperative in communication. It follows that the notions of politeness are likely to exhibit this observance of being cooperative. However, studies have shown that the Cooperative Principle and the attendant maxims are almost never strictly followed in daily conversations and so, what prompts this non-observation? The Sasak people are known to be naturally shy and communicate with each other using the Nggeto-Nggete dialect. Twenty participants were randomly selected from a population in East Sukamulia, a place where Sasak is spoken. Based on the data collected from informal domestic settings such as exchanges in the shop and home, and between the family and neighbourhood, the extent to which the Cooperative Principle and maxims are observed and the politeness strategies used to perform the exchanges are established. The findings reveal that the Sasak speakers of the Nggeto-Nggete dialect did not observe Grice's maxims and its principles when communicating with each other. They do so in order that they communicate information clearly to each other while observing what they regard to be moral etiquette and standard of decorum.

Keywords: Politeness; Grice's maxims; Nggeto-Nggete dialect; Sasak people

INTRODUCTION

The *Sasak* ethnicity makes up the majority population of Lombok Island in the West Nusa Tenggara Province of Indonesia and their language and the people have a unique cultural identity (Yaqin, Seken & Suarnajaya, 2013). The *Sasak* people speak the *Sasak* language which comprises five recognised ethnolinguistic dialects: *Ngeno-Ngèné*, *Menó-mené*, *Meriak-Merikuk*, *Kuto-Kute* and *Nggeto-Nggete*. The *Ngeno-Ngèné* dialect is spoken by natives in East Lombok and surrounding areas, *Menó-Mené* around the towns of Puyung and Praya, Central Lombok, *Meriak-Merikuk* in Pujut in Central Lombok, *Kuto-Kute* in Bayan in North Lombok and *Nggeto-Nggete* by the *Sasak* who live at Sukamulia, Suralaga, and Sembalun in the North-East of Lombok. According to Mahsun (1997, 2000), the emergence of dialect variants in a language is closely related to the desire of some members of the community to distinguish themselves from other community members and to preserve the authenticity of the *Sasak* community. The *Sasak* dialect variants that take the *e-e* construction results from the derivative construction from *a-e* (Balinese Language). This construction in the *Sasak* language is designed to differentiate the *Sasak* from other communities and to preserve their culture from Balinese influence. The derivatives are an assertion of the *Sasak* cultural identity and response (cultural resistance) to the Balinese influence, resulting from the colonisation by the Karangasem Balinese Kingdom in the 17th century.

Linguistic researchers have observed the study of dialect varieties and the morphological words of the *Sasak* language (see Mahsun 1997, 2000, 2006, Syahdan 2000,

Austin 2010a, 2014). However, the study of the *Sasak* dialect as being associated with politeness strategies in social interaction and language use, has been scarcely observed. The “*Nggeto-Nggete*” dialect speakers use their dialect as a form of cultural resistance, which means that they do not observe the maxims during their interaction. For instance, if one wants to share some information, the recipient does not know for sure if the information is valid as it usually lacks evidence. The observation of the maxim of quality is lacking as the conversation between Ibrahim (I) and Heri (H) below:

I: *Imbe kè buku nono?*
Where book that?
(Where is the book?)
H: *Sang gen atas meja nono tolan ne*
Maybe at on table that place (art)
(Maybe it is on the table)

It is also common in the culture of the *Sasak* not to show greed when someone offers them something, even if it is something they really like, need or want. It is only the cultured among the *Sasak* who would initially reject the offer, but when cajoled to accept the gift. It is also expected of the person who offers to repeat the offer until the recipient accepts it, Mahyuni (2005, 2007, 2008); Mahsun (2006). This differs from the Western practice from which Grice formulated his theory of maxims. If Westerners want something, they usually express it directly, but it is the reverse in the East. As explained elsewhere, communication cannot be separated from culture and people are formed by and brought up through their culture, thus the language used to communicate reflects the cultural conceptualisation of the *Sasak* community (Schiffrin 1998, Bamberg De Fina & Schiffrin 2011).

The politeness theory supports the Cooperative Principle and maxims, and language is seen as connecting with the social reality. Lakoff (1992); Brown and Levinson (1978); Eelen (2001); Watts (2003); Katz (2015) use the politeness theory to show the weakness of traditional linguistics by associating politeness theory with the Cooperative Principles of Grice. They claimed that in normal informal conversations, the Cooperative Principle and its maxims are almost never strictly followed. Therefore, in this research, we investigate and examine the way *Sasak* people communicate with each other, in particular whether the *Sasak* people who use the *Nggeto-Nggete* dialect use or obey the maxims in their daily conversations.

THE SASAK LANGUAGE IN A CULTURAL CONTEXT

The *Sasak* culture has a value system that builds the personality of its people. It seeks to mould the character of its members to exhibit the unique identity of the *Sasak*. It does this by advocating the concept of “*tendeh*” as a core value and primary function to fulfil the demands of a social behaviour and language behaviour of the *Sasak* culture (Mahyuni 2015).

The concept of *tendeh* as the core value of the *Sasak* ethnicity may be categorised as having an aligned meaning with politeness. Politeness according to the *Sasak* people manifests in approaches to saving face as detailed by Brown and Levinson (1987, 1978) and Scollon and Scollon (2001). In a social interaction, language plays a role as a medium of self-image. *Tendeh* is a means for a person to save face. The concept of *tendeh* in *Sasak* society reflects Leech’s (1983) politeness principle and the associated modesty and tact maxims. The concept of *tendeh* is also consistent with Gu’s (1990) concept of Chinese politeness that comprises respect, humility, warmth of attitude and refinement. On the basis of this understanding, he developed the self-denigration maxim, address maxim, tact maxim and generosity maxim to explain politeness in Chinese society.

The concept of *tendeh* in Sasak society must be advocated by the values of truth, kindness and equality so that it becomes a mirror of the Sasak ethnicity. Furthermore, Mahyuni (2015) suggests that *tendeh* acts as a cultural expression that contains the Sasak people's values such as being worthy (well, admirable, fit, reasonable - not excessive), *patuh* (obedience, discipline, harmony), *rukun* (peace and tolerance), and *pacu* (diligent, industrious, enterprising not easily discouraged). Mahyuni (2015) suggests that although the concept of '*tendeh*' is a local term, the values contained therein are universal. This universality can be seen in the ethics of politeness and speech acts shown in social interaction to all members of the Sasak community. For example, a person is called *tendeh* when he is able to use good language according to the expectations of his interlocutors.

If at one time someone who has been upholding this *ketendehan* violates *tendeh* by uttering offensive words that is not in line with the values of the Sasak community, then this person is called "*susut*" (depressed). The *susut* metaphor according to Mahyuni (2015) is the fall of one's dignity for failing to carry out the noble values of the Sasak.

The strongly ingrained cultural values that influence the thoughts of the Sasak people is only visible in their speech, which shows their upbringing and identity. This research investigates the way the Sasak people, particularly those who use the '*nggeto-nggete*' dialect, observe or violate Grice's cooperative-principle. When the results of this research overlap with the concept of Grice's maxims, it means that they do not obey the concept of maxims due to their cultural identity.

THE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

The maxims of conversation as expounded by Grice (1975) concerns how people use language. Grice claimed that a conversation is guided by a number of assumptions. The assumptions are based on rational considerations and can be formulated as a guide for communicating a language more effectively and efficiently in the conversation (Okanda, Asada, Moriguchi & Itakura, 2015). The guidance is called "maxims of conversation", that are subsumed under a more general principle called "Cooperative Principle". The Cooperative Principle and its maxims are designed, taking into account that the meaning of language often differs from what is intended during conversation (Farghal 1995, Kleinke 2010).

When people are involved in a conversation, they share general principles that allow them to interpret the speech. For example;

A: *Araq kè cèwèk-da tônō?*
have you girl there
(Do you have a girlfriend there?)

B: *Ajaq-ku, aku ngatōngang lôq Dènin obat*
Lie me, i took Dènin medicine
(I lied to you; I took medicine for Dènin)

To interpret and understand statement B, we should relate it to statement A. One assumption is that when a person asks you about something, your response will be interpreted as your answer to the person's question. This does not appear in the example above. Therefore, the conversation cannot be interpreted. If we have an experience like this, we will probably repeat our question to clarify whether the addressee understood our question, or we will ask him/her to repeat his/her words. However, if we receive the same answer repeatedly, we can say that the person does not understand the question or is trying to evade the question.

Now look at another example:

A: *Pira dôang batin-da nêngka, rata- rata?*
How much profits you now, average
(How much are your profits now, on average?)

B: *Aduuh, ntah sèkèdar sikut mangan dôang*
Aduuh, until enough eat it is
(It is just enough for our food)

Based on the example above, B does not answer A's question, but it can nevertheless be interpreted as an answer, i.e. just enough profit to have food on the table. Although evasive, recipient B does give a related answer. Grice formulates four maxims in the Cooperative Principles that must be obeyed in conversations. It means that the speaker is cooperative in a conversation if they obey or use the four maxims. However, if the speakers do not observe the maxims, they can be considered uncooperative in their communication. Grice's four maxims are:

1. Maxim of quantity: being as informative as is necessary and provide as much information as required, and no more or less than is required.
2. Maxim of quality: being honest and does not provide news that is false or unsupported by facts.
3. Maxim of relation or relevance: to be relevant and say something that relates to the conversation.
4. Maxim of manner: being clear, brief and as orderly as one can in what is said and avoid vagueness and ambiguity.

Pfister (2010) and Hadi (2013), criticised Grice for differentiating solely between information and what is not information. Grice believes that false information cannot be categorised into information because it does not have to provide facts. However, if the speaker is lying, he still contributes to the conversation because the interlocutor has a reaction. Mey (2001) adds that not everyone is willing or participates in a conversation by consciously observing Grice's maxims. In fact, Grice's Cooperative Principles are not universal because it depends on the cultural background of the speaker and the context in which the conversation occurs (Lumsden 2008, Davies 2007, Kheirabadi & Aghagolzadeh 2012, Simons 2017). Thus, it is common for the non-observance of Grice's Cooperative Principle and the maxims during interactions, but to what extent is politeness retained is investigated in this study.

POLITENESS

The study of politeness has been a research interest since the 1960s (Brown 2009). The pragmatism of politeness as suggested by Goffman (1967) is based on the 'face' concept. According to his theory, 'face' is a self-image that embeds people's social attribute (Thomas, 1995). It was advocated by Brown and Levinson (1987) who took Goffman's 'face work' theory as the basis of their politeness theory. According to Brown and Levinson, there are some types of illocutionary acts that are an obligation for ruining or threatening face. These are known as 'Face Threatening Acts' (FTAs) (Thomas, 1995). Brown and Levinson's 'face' theory is defined as a double desire: a want to get freedom of action and freedom from imposition, and a want for freedom of approval and appreciation (Brown 2009, Tan, Teoh & Tan 2016). The FTA is influenced by the power, distance, and ranking of imposition. Grice's (1975) Politeness Principles is a set of maxims which allows a speaker to communicate with the assumption that the other speaker is being cooperative, thus Leech's (2005) politeness

principle (reformulated into Grand Strategy of Politeness (GSP), is a set of maxims that “has a regulative role” by maintaining social balance and responsive relation that renders the interlocutor cooperative.

Leech based his politeness principles on interpersonal rhetoric as well as the Cooperative Principle to support the bridge of communication (Bousfield 2008). His politeness principles “Lessens the expression of impolite tenets” and “increases the expression of polite tenets”, Leech (1983). However, as Leech (2005) reformulated his theory, he added that to be polite, the speaker expresses a meaning that puts a high value on what influences the other or puts a low value on what influences the speaker.

Although Grice’s theory is based on the assumption that people are cooperative in communication and that the maxims serve as the linguistic rules of behaviour governing the production of language and interpretation, Lakoff (1973) observes that in normal informal conversation, the CP’s maxims are almost never followed (Tomasello 2010). In fact, Grice’s cooperation principles and the politeness principles of Leech have a tendency to overlap and to violate between each theory’s maxims (Winarsih 2009, Johari & Zahid 2016).

The notion of violation or non-observance always indicates a negative notion but it is not applicable in interaction. When the interlocutors recognise that the speakers do not fully follow Grice’s maxims, they try to find a reasonable explanation in the rules of politeness. If speakers are not clear, they would usually try to interpret and infer the intention and meaning of the utterance. While the rules of politeness that are triggered by Lakoff (1973) are ‘do not impose’ (rule 1) and ‘give option’ (rule 2), and ‘make them feel good and be friendly’ (rule 3) are always present in any interaction, different cultures tend to emphasise one or a combination of the other since politeness differs according to cultures (Eelen 2001, Watts 2003, Ide 1989, Gu 1990). Recent theories have attributed politeness as a social practice (Kadar & Haugh 2013, Haugh 2013) which suggests that politeness resides in evaluations of behaviours and linguistic forms. This perspective allows politeness to be an evaluation that can vary across individuals even when they are from the same social group. Thus, the evaluation of politeness is tied to social actions and meanings that are recognisable to the participants in situational contexts and not just the behavioural or linguistic forms per se (Kadar & Haugh 2013, p. 57).

RESEARCH METHODS

Using a qualitative approach, naturally-occurring conversations between participants and their role relationships were investigated. The communicative behaviours of the participants as they appear in actual social interaction events in a community were observed, analysed, and explained. This aspect of the study is similar to the ethnography of communication in that it uses communication as its frame of reference and, in relation to this, sees the community as a context.

The research sample comprised 20 participants from the Sasak population. The participants were people aged between 20 to 60 years, and who speak the *Nggeto-Nggete* dialect in East Sukamulia, East Lombok, Indonesia. The seven sets of conversations analysed in the findings and discussion sections come from audio recordings of approximately fourteen hours of interaction.

TABLE 1. The Participants' Profile

	Code of participants	Education	Occupation	Age
Extract 1	I	: University	: Trader (Male)	: 30
	H	: University	: Teacher (Female)	: 34
Extract 2 & 3	A	: University	: Teacher (Female)	: 26
	S	: Unfinished Primary School	: Labourer (Male)	: 37
	E	: University	: Teacher (Female)	: 35
Extract 4	T	: Unfinished University	: Business Person (Male)	: 40
	B	: Unfinished Primary School	: Labourer (male)	: 26
Extract 5 & 6	O	: Primary School	: Farmer (Male)	: 30
	HZ	: Secondary school	: Trader (Male)	: 34
	D	: Unfinished Primary School	: Trader (Male)	: 29
Extract 7	E:	: Secondary School	: Migrant Worker (Male)	: 40
	T:	: Secondary School	: Migrant Worker (Male)	: 36

This study used audio recordings of interactions and employed the participant-observation approach and note-taking, followed by informal interviews. The researchers participated in the interaction and were actively involved in the interactions from which data was collected. Informal interviews were conducted after the audio-recordings were reviewed. The purpose of the informal interview is to gather information on the participants' views through casual chat, during which the participants sometimes forgot that they were being interviewed (Patton 1987, p. 113). To collect authentic data, unstructured and topic-based interviews were carried out. They were unstructured in the sense that the researcher allowed the participants to talk and provide information as they would without being guided or prompted in any way. To obtain the spoken *Sasak* language, a variety of conversations among participants were recorded in informal domestic settings (spontaneously and naturally-occurring interaction). The existence of the tape recorder was notified and participants were orally informed of the purpose of the study. Finally, consent was obtained to record the interactions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following are several extracts of conversations compiled through recordings and note-taking. Although most of the four maxims were observed, the maxim of quality was hard to establish during the interactions except in some examples where the quality maxim was evoked. Therefore, assuming that the participants only interacted in an honest way and that the participants did not provide news that was false or unsupported by facts, the discussions below would discuss the three remaining maxims.

MAXIM OF QUANTITY

This maxim posits that the speaker be as informative as is necessary and provide as much information as required, and no more or less than is required.

TABLE 2. The Participants' Profile

	Code of participants	Education	Occupation	Age
Extract 1	I	: University	: Trader (Male)	: 30
	H	: University	: Teacher (Female)	: 34
Extract 2 & 3	A	: University	: Teacher (Female)	: 26
	S	: Unfinished Primary School	: Labourer (Male)	: 37
	E	: University	: Teacher (Female)	: 35

Extract I

The extract is drawn from the airline ticketing counter one afternoon, which was collected in 2016 at Lendang Batu of East Sukamulia. All data has been recorded, and field notes were taken after securing permission from the participant. There are four participants in the conversation, but only two are involved in the conversation in this extract. There is a trader (I) who is male and in his 30s, while (H) is a teacher (Female, 34). I was a textile retailer in a traditional market located outside his village, and I often asked friends to sell second-hand phones. H is a Biology Teacher who teaches in SMA 1 Sukamulia (secondary school). I was given a new mobile phone by her husband. The following conversation between I and H can be seen in the extract below:

I: *Sai èpèn Hp nini.?*
Who own mobile phone that.
(Whose mobile phone is it?)

H: *Pe Nurdin, mbèli-na terbin aji tèlu juta Sètènga.*
Nurdin, bought he yesterday price seven million half
(It is Nurdin's mobile phone, he bought it yesterday for three million and five hundred thousand)

This conversation reveals that speaker H did not obey the concept of the Cooperative Principle of Grice's maxims. The speaker provided more information beyond what was needed by the interlocutor, I. Analysing speaker I's question, he only wanted to know or verify the owner of the mobile, and the answer should have been '*Pe Nurdin*' (It is Nurdin's), but speaker H added information that was not required by the interlocutor. Therefore, according to Grice's maxims, speaker H was giving more information than needed to the interlocutor in the conversation above and can be regarded as not observing the maxim of quantity.

However, in not observing the maxim of quantity and by providing the added information, there are a whole lot of layered meanings that unfolds. It is obvious that both I and H have a mutual friend named Nurdin. H's response intends I to infer that the mobile phone was expensive and that Nurdin could afford the phone. Furthermore, the fact that I had noticed the mobile phone was fortunate as Nurdin was obviously not in sight and there was no indication that it belonged to anyone else present in the vicinity. We could also infer that Nurdin was there in the same vicinity a while ago and had left his mobile phone behind. The main concern of I was that the mobile phone looked new and H's offer of a longer-than-needed answer was to indicate that Nurdin would be worried at losing an expensive mobile phone. Thus, unless it is intentional, H's non-observance of the maxim of quantity is warranted in this context.

Extract 2

The following scene of this conversation occurred when we were talking with respondents, two female guests came but did not follow the conversation. The following is a conversation between (A) a teacher (Female, 26) and (S) a Labourer (male, 27). They are discussing the cost of building a kitchen at S's house one afternoon. The following is their conversation which was successfully recorded and field notes were taken with their permission.

A: *Kira-kira pira mbèsang-da pak S nèmbòk knèq inè?*
Perhaps how much spent you Mr.S building it this.
(About how much have you spent to build the building, Mr. S?)

S: *Sèjuta lebih inè, ndèq man-na buèq.*
One million more than not finish.
(It has been more than one million, but it is still not a complete amount yet)

In this conversation, A imposes a face threat by posing an enquiry. Questions related to the amount of money spent or personal details tend to assess the financial capability of the recipient. In certain contexts, it could be taken as intentional, to test the capability of the interlocutor in managing finances well. Thus, A's enquiry threatens S's negative face wants. A wanted to know how much S spent on a particular building belonging to S. Despite the FTA, S responds and appears to fulfil the maxim by stating the amount spent thus far and indicates that the building is yet to be completed. However, the response by speaker S was not sufficient and lacked information.

In this extract, both the quantity and quality maxims were not observed. S's answer '*sèjuta wah lebih inè* (it was more than one million)' in actual terms, is a rather small amount. This implies that S was withholding some truth. A simple conversion would show that the IDR1 million is about RM315. A mobile phone costs more than that amount, and so the IDR1 million appears in this case to show that S was withholding the exact amount spent on the building. By adding '*ndèq-man buèq* (but it is still not a complete yet)' would appear strange that S would imply the obvious, of course it would cost more to construct or repair a building. Therefore, by not providing enough information, S provokes the recipient A to infer that S is not comfortable about revealing the cost or the amount he has spent so far on the building. It is also apparent that by adding that the work is not yet complete, S was implying that he was unable to give the exact cost incurred, but that he had spent IDR 1 million. It is clear that S expressed a meaning that puts a high value on what influences the other to accept the response without being obtrusive which concurs with Leech (2005).

Extract 3

This conversation was between two teachers who worked in a public school at East Sukamulia. E is a teacher (Female, 35) who pays a visit to A's house (female teacher, 26). E, passed in front of A's house one afternoon. The following is their conversation which was successfully recorded and field notes were taken with their permission.

E: *wah de lèkan mbe, buq?*
have you from where, Miss
(Where have you been, Miss...?)

A: *wah-ku mbeli rokok*
have me bought cigaret
(I bought cigarettes)

aku bliang bapak-na
i bought father him
(I bought it for the children's father)

batur-na ngajar tônô
Friend his learner there
(Two of his colleagues are there).

A's lengthy response obviously did not observe Grice's maxim of quantity. In the conversation, speaker E only wanted to know where she (A) had been. Although it appears as a plain enquiry, A's positive face is threatened since in this context E sounds more interrogative. A's answer '*wah aku mbeli rokok* (I bought cigarettes)' should have been enough, but A recognises the FTA and so offered to explain further that the cigarettes were meant for her husband. In this clause, A's reference to her husband as 'the children's father' indirectly implies the deference paid to her husband and the status accorded by the *Sasak* women to their spouses. The husband is respected and the wife is willing to do errands on his behalf even if that particular errand may be associated with an act that is not condoned in another context. As a teacher, A has an image to protect and portray, and buying cigarettes

would be frowned upon and would not augur well among the *Sasak* community. It would imply that someone who buys cigarettes also smokes. Therefore, in this case it implies that A has a bad habit and how would she be exemplary to her students? As such, to erase any apparent implications of A buying cigarettes is justified through her explanation that the cigarettes were not meant for her but for her husband. And because she respects her husband and his needs, she was willing to forsake her image for her husband.

Interestingly, she even goes on to elevate her husband's status by continuing and implying that she would not have gone to buy the cigarettes if it was not for the visitors who had come to pay her husband a visit to their house. We would also be able to infer the cultural schema that is in play here where guests are important in the *Sasak* community. The community would go out of their way to make their guests comfortable and offer them good hospitality. Thus, politeness is embedded in the evaluation of behaviours and realised through the lengthy explanation by A. It would therefore imply that being in the same social group (as suggested by Kadar & Haugh 2013), E would understand perfectly what it meant for A to sacrifice her pride and how important it was to ensure that the spouse and guests are kept happy.

MAXIM OF RELATION/RELEVANCE

The Relevance/Relation maxim refers to an utterance that is relevant to the conversation and say things that relate to the discussion.

TABLE 3. The Participant's Profile

	Code of participant's	Education	Occupation	Age
Extract 4	T	: Unfinished University	: Business Person (Male)	: 40
	B	: Unfinished Primary School	: Labourer (male)	: 26

Extract 4

The following is a conversation between T, a business person (male, 40) who frequently visits Jakarta for business, and B, a Labourer (male, 26) who works in a chilli warehouse belonging to one of his fellow villagers. At the time the data was taken, B has to return home to buy medicine for his nephew and stopped by T's house. The conversation takes place at home while B is drinking coffee and smoking a cigarette. At that time, the sun had begun to set at around 6 pm. They discussed work and women. The data is recorded after securing their permission.

T : *Araq kè cèwèk-da tónô?*
have you girl there
 (Do you have a girlfriend there?)

B : *Ajaq-ku, aku ngatôngang lôq Dènin obat.*
lie me, i took Dènin medicine
 (I lied to you; I took medicine for Dènin).

In this conversation, speaker B's answer was not relevant to speaker T's question '*Araq kè cèwèq-da tónô?*' on whether T had a girlfriend at his village. Speaker B has deliberately avoided answering the question posed by T. Thus, although it would appear that he did not observe the maxim of relation, B shifts topic and picks up on a prior turn of conversation that was related to a person by the name of Denin, whom T also knew. By shifting the focus to the fact that B had lied to T about who administered the medicine for Denin, B hoped that T would infer correctly that T preferred not to answer B's inquisition

about any girlfriends. This avoidance of giving a relevant answer is deliberate and implies that B was embarrassed at T's question but was willing to denigrate himself to admitting that he had lied. In this instance, it is unclear whether his admission of having lied is deliberate, to shift the focus of the question. If so, then B would obviously have also violated the quality maxim.

MAXIM OF MANNER

The maxim of manner refers to the requirement that the interlocutors ensure their utterance are clear, brief and orderly, and avoid vagueness and ambiguity.

TABLE 4. The participant's profile

	Code of participants	Education	Occupation	Age
Extract 5 & 6	O	: Primary School	: Farmer (Male)	: 30
	HZ	: Secondary school	: Trader (Male)	: 34
	D	: Unfinished Primary School	: House Wife (Female)	: 29
Extract 7	E:	: Secondary School	: Migrant Worker (Male)	: 40
	T:	: Secondary School	: Migrant Worker (Male)	: 36

Extract 5

The following is a conversation between O, a farmer (male, 30) and HZ, a trader (Male, 34). They talked about the price of meatballs at HZ's house one afternoon. O just returned home from his rice field and stopped at HZ's house. While at home, HZ talked about his son who will continue his studies in university. When O enters, HZ greets O, and their conversation continues to the business run by HZ. The following extract was recorded after securing permission for it to be used as data in this study.

O: *Pira kè nènka inè, HZ?*
How many now this.H
 (How many are these now, HZ?)

HZ: *Sèkèt, sèlaè, sèlaè*
Fifty, twenty fif, twenty fif
 (Fifty, twenty-one, twenty-one)

sèlaè wah mauq-ta bèdagang inè
Twenty-five can get we trading these
 (We can get twenty-five when trading these)

HZ appears to be unsure of the number of meatballs made when enquired by O. His string of numbers appears to confirm his uncertainty, almost as if he was trying to guess and voicing his guess aloud at the same time. However, the first guess fifty seems to overshoot the count and he settles for almost half the number to 'twenty-one'. The repetition on 'twenty-one' appears to fix the number as if to confirm the accuracy of his guess. All these utterances and the '*sèlaè wah mauq-ta bèdagang inè*' (we can get twenty-five when selling these) suggests that HZ is not observing the maxim of manner. The words 'we can get' brings about some ambiguity. How can one get *sèlaè* (twenty-five) from twenty-one? It was not clear whether the amount was referring to the number of *bakso* or it meant profits earned. And again, ambiguity in terms of whether it was twenty-five thousand or twenty-five million was unclear. In this case, the maxim of manner is not observed due to uncertainty.

Extract 6

The extract is drawn from O's house one afternoon. The data were obtained when we were at O's home who works as a farmer (Male, 30). At that time, O was talking in front of his house with D a vegetable vendor in the village (male, 29). When O and D were talking, suddenly HZ, a trader (male, 34) passed by and beeped on his motorcycle while carrying meatballs on the box behind his motorcycle. To record the data, we sought permission of the participant.

O: *Pira dôang batin-da nêngka, rata-rata?*
How much profits you now, average
(How much are your profits now, on average?)

HZ: *Aduuh, ntah sèkèdar sikut mangan dôang*
Aduuh, until enough eat it is
(Oh: It is just enough for our food)

D: *Sèlaè, Tèlung dasa*
Twenty-five, thirty
(Twenty-five or thirty)

HZ: *Sèlaè, wah nô montor*
Twenty-five it is for motorcycle
(Twenty-five is for the motorcycle)

wah, nô ta kakèn, buèq wah inô
Then it is we eating, finish it is
(Then for eating food, it is gone)

Mun-ta mentlah bèdagang, metlah wah mangan
If we stop selling, stop eating
(If we stop selling *bakso*, we stop eating)

From an analyst's perspective, the maxims of quantity, quality, and manner were not observed by the interlocutors. The interlocutors however seem to be able to understand each other and the interaction progressed despite the lack of clarity. O's curiosity in wanting to know how much profit her parents had made on average is bald-on record impolite. The directness in O's question suggests that she was eager to know and seemed oblivious to her FTA. HZ starts with an '*aduhh*' which is usually used when someone is in pain or exasperated. The close equivalent 'ohhh:' does not do justice to the intended meaning here, but the exasperation could well explain that HZ's negative face was threatened and was not able to or was unwilling to share with O the exact amount. Therefore, HZ chose to be vague with his answer that it was just enough for their food expenses. Whatever that amount spent on food was unclear. D, the mother however, tries to give a figure and gives an estimate of between twenty-five or thirty, "*Sèlaè, Tèlung dasa* (twenty-five or thirty).

Interestingly, HZ's vague answer in the prior turn can now be justified, i.e. it was not that HZ was unwilling to share the exact amount but he was unable to give the correct answer. The observer or analyst can deduce immediately that prior to O's query, HZ may not have given thought to the earnings or profits made thus far, until O's enquiry. He disagrees with D's approximation of 'twenty-five or thirty'. HZ's remark that 'twenty-five was for the motorcycle' denotes that D's estimate was wrong, as twenty-five was the amount for the motorcycle expenses or a loan repayment. As HZ did the calculation aloud, he continued that whatever profit made, after paying off the loan was gone on expenses for food. At this juncture, the implicature was that the earnings were just enough to cover their expenses and there was nothing left at the end. HZ's last sentence summarized the interaction that without their *bakso* business, the family would not be able to have food on their table. The implication here is that HZ was more concerned about continuing with their small business as

long as their expenses were covered, and profits were not kept account. In this sense, the interlocutors' non-observation of maxims does not in any way disrupt the conversation as it is clear within the context that the utterances are related, but perhaps only vague (manner) and lengthy (quantity).

The exchange shows how a family observes politeness where Leech's notion to 'lessen the impolite tenets' is demonstrated through HZ and D. Both parents entertained their daughter's bold question in a reasonable way, without so much as telling her to mind her own business. The effort taken to explain why they were not making much profit and sharing the information on the household expenses is another demonstration of the *Sasak* values.

Extract 7

The following is a conversation between E, a migrant worker (male, 40) and T, also a migrant worker (male, 36). T has been a migrant worker for ten years in Brunei. Every two years T takes leave to go back to his hometown. Since T did not pass the medical check-up to go to Brunei, T decided to work in Kalimantan. While E is still under contract to the oil fields in Malaysia, E has a three-month leave from where he worked. E and T are talking about their monthly income one afternoon while eating fried banana chips.

E: bagus kè gajian-da tônô?
Good is salary you there
(Is your salary good there?)

pira gajin-da tônô?
How much salary you there
(How much is your salary there?)

T: Ba lamun-ta anuq jaq
Mm if we but
(But if we...),

bagus so
Good it
(Yes it is),

ntah sèkitar sèjuta mauq ita tônô
Until roundabout one million get we there
(We can get approximately one million there),

balu ratus, siwaq ratus bèrsin-ta
Eight hundred, nine hundred clear we
(We can save eight or nine hundred)

mauq ita tèluôlas, èmpat ôlas
Get we thirteen, fourteen
(We can get thirteen or fourteen)

E: ba kan bagus taoq da ini
So good place you it
(your place is good, isn't it?)

T: bagus laguq-na aku kan aku sakit
good but i sick
(Yes it is, but I was sick)

Sèbulan lè bulan puasa nô anggap dua kali te mangan saur anta
One month in month fasting that only two times we eat saur you
(You know, I had breakfast in the fasting month only twice).

Ampô nô anggap sèjeput inô
And it little that
(And it is a little)

Angkaq aku Môngkaq-môngkaq wah
So i cooked just
(So I just cooked the rice)

ba angkaq si ngènè- ngènè, si pèdis-pedis kakèn ku
so like, sour eating me
(And I just like ate with pickles).

In this conversation, speaker E uses direct enquiries on T's workplace and salary, imposing on T's negative face. Although T initially hesitated, he responded patiently to E's 'is your salary good there?' and 'how much is your salary there?' T replied in the affirmative that indeed the salary was good in Riau and stated the exact amount one could earn and save. His detailed explanation suggests that T has inferred E's intention behind his line of questioning. It is obvious that E may have plans to also seek employment in Riau. However, the part on 'we can get thirteen or fourteen' is ambiguous and difficult to draw any conclusion to what it meant here.

T's intuition and accurate inference is verified by E when he posits his next question, 'your place is good, isn't it?' T's response in the affirmative is capped with a contradictory phrase 'but I was sick'. T cites that he had to work through the fasting month and had little time to eat before fasting. The manner maxim was not observed especially in the last three lines, whether during the two times he managed to eat before fasting he had just cooked rice and ate with pickles or that these were the only food he managed by during the fasting month. In providing this lengthy explanation, T implies that although the pay was good, the working conditions were tough and he was obviously working in the wee hours of the morning, as that is when the Muslims eat prior to starting their fast.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis above, it is obvious and not surprising that the *Sasak* speakers do not observe Grice's maxims and its principles in their daily social interaction. This was explained by Lakoff that in normal informal conversations, the Cooperative Principles and maxims are almost never strictly followed, and so the *Sasak* people are no exception. However, the question is why is that so? As a member of the sampled community, one of the researchers had insider knowledge about the community members and was able to explicate the social and cultural values upheld by the discourse community.

Although most *Sasak* speakers lack formal education, they have been socialised to always observe politeness in their conversations and pay deference to the elders, spouses, and in fact both young and old are given respect and responded to appropriately when in conversation. This explains the reason why interlocutors always gave more information than asked or required. The speakers feel that it would be curt and rude not to give or explain in full when someone enquires. The speakers also know that brief responses would elicit even more questions and perhaps more bald-on. This pre-emption thus influences the way they communicate by providing more information than requested by the interlocutor to avoid further questions. This belief concurs with the politeness rules posited by Lakoff (1992), 'not to impose' (rule 1), 'give options' (rule 2), 'make them feel good, and be friendly' (rule 3). Thus, when responses are offered in a brief or minimal way, it is assumed that the speaker cares little about his/her question or enquiry. As such, answers usually contain more information to make them feel good or to show that they are friendly, in other words face-saving strategies are employed.

In the East Sukamulia society, it is also common and acceptable if responses to queries on personal details and financial enquiries are left vague or ambiguous. The speaker

appreciates the fact that the recipient or hearer responds with an average and would not make it an issue if they chose to avoid or change the topic. The *Sasak* values are simple and the manner of speech is soft and courteous. For these simple people, elaborating and giving lengthy responses mean being culturally and morally right and polite.

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