

## K A N D A I

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**ACENG'S UNFORGIVEN APOLOGY:  
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS  
(Permohonan Maaf Aceng yang Tidak Termaafkan:  
Analisis Wacana dengan Pendekatan Interdisipliner)**

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**Abstrak**

Artikel ini membahas tentang permohonan maaf Aceng (Bupati Garut) atas sikap dan tindakannya yang berkaitan dengan kasus pernikahan kilatnya yang ditinjau dari Analisis Wacana/Critical Discourse Analysis" (CDA) dengan pendekatan interdisipliner. Bidang-bidang ini mencakup Speech Acts, Analisis Narasi, Sociolinguistik, Ideologi dan Hegemoni. Kesemuanya dipaparkan secara berurutan dengan tujuan menghasilkan perspektif yang menyeluruh tentang kasus Aceng yang fenomenal tersebut. Dari hasil analisis ditemukan bahwa permintaan maaf Aceng terbukti tidak efektif alias kontra produktif. Dari segi sociolinguistik, permohonan maaf Aceng dianggap bertentangan dengan norma-norma yang dipegang masyarakat Garut dikarenakan permintaan maaf tersebut tidak berasal dari hati nuraninya (tidak iklas). Secara ideologis, pernikahan merupakan suatu pekerjaan yang mulia dan oleh karena itu harus dijaga dan dihormati (dan ini diabaikan oleh Aceng), sementara itu perceraian merupakan suatu tindakan yang sulit sekali bisa diterima dengan dalih apapun. Secara hegemonis, kita menyaksikan bahwa yang berkuasa menguasai yang lemah. Dengan kata lain, kekuasaan Aceng sebagai Bupati telah disalahgunakan sehingga yang lemah menjadi tetap teraniaya.

**Kata-kata kunci:** permintaan maaf Aceng, analisis wacana interdisipliner

**Abstract**

This paper is aimed at analyzing Aceng's apology in relation to his brief marital case from interdisciplinary critical discourse analysis (CDA). This covers Speech acts, Narrative analysis, sociolinguistic considerations, ideologies and hegemonies. All of them are presented successively to support one another to reach a comprehensive perspective on Aceng's phenomenal case. Based on the analysis, it is found that Aceng's apology is not effective, it is contra productive. In terms of sociolinguistic considerations, Aceng's apology is against the common shared norms as it is not coming from his heart (insincerity). In terms of ideology, it is clear that marriage was considered to be a sacred thing to do and therefore should be kept, whereas divorcing is hardly acceptable in whatsoever reasons. In terms of hegemonies, it is also clear that the powerful dominates the weak, implying that Aceng's power was wrongly exercised.

**Keywords:** Aceng's apology, interdisciplinary discourse analysis

## INTRODUCTION

It is widely held that language plays a very crucial part in our life and everyone of us takes this role boldly without reserve. In line with this conception, Fairclough (1989) asserts a strong hypothesis that language is a part of society; so, linguistic phenomena are social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena are accordingly (in part) linguistic phenomena. Put differently, critical discourse analysis is both social and linguistic phenomena. Exactly, it is a phenomenon that exists in our society represented through languages or linguistic codes and symbols.

By the name, what we study and analyze here is essentially not language *per se*, but a discourse as a system of representation. By discourse, then, in line with Foucault as quoted by Hall (2001), it is a group of statements which provide language for talking about—a way of representing the knowledge about—a particular topic at a particular historical moment. Simply, discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. Therefore the discourse that this paper intends to address is the notion of discourse as social action (Wetherell, 2001). Put another way, this discourse, though subjectively portrayed, is a transformation process from a mere interest of social language to a real social conduct of solidarity through discourse.

The impetus of this paper is to search for some focal points related to Aceng's apology to his wife, ex-wife and his ex-wife's family which was considered by many people, especially from mothers' side, socially unforgiven. This search is mediated through an interdisciplinary discourse analysis in which it covers such field as Speech acts, Narrative analysis, and sociolinguistic considerations, all of

which belong to CDA. This analysis might give an appropriate answer to the central question, questioned by Seuren (1985), that is the empirical question of how humans understand and interpret utterances. This CDA is interdisciplinary in the sense that it can be seen as the result of opportunism in the production of knowledge. That is, the interdisciplinary opportunities to produce new knowledge of uncovering the stories within the text and discourse and beyond or behind the discourse (Weiss and Wodak, 2003).

Social problems in our contemporary society are inextricably linked to texts particularly the ones printed in newspapers (The Jakarta Post in our case in point). Our actions are frequently accompanied by language and, conversely, much of what we say is accompanied by action. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a program of social analysis that critically analyses discourse – that is to say language in use – as a means of addressing problems of social change.

The program of CDA is founded in the idea that the analysis of discourse opens a window on social problems because social problems are largely constituted in discourse. The example taken to be analyzed here is the case of Aceng, the regent of Garut who processed a shortly endured marriage and had a divorce in four days after the marital ceremony. This case will be seen from interdisciplinary perspectives and also very much focused on some points in CDA, which include (1) CDA addresses social problems, (2) power relations are discursive, (3) discourse constitute society and culture, (4) discourse does ideological work, discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory, and (5) discourse is a form of social action.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Discourse and Society

There could be many focus of CDA. Let us have a brief theoretical framework on the relation between discourse and society. Society may be analyzed in more local and more global terms, firstly at the level of interaction and situation and secondly at the level of groups, social organizations, organizations and institutions. The social structure may be related to discourse in two ways: firstly through the social representations of social members about such social structures, and secondly through the instantiation of social structures (such as groups and organizations) through social actors, interactions and situations at the local, micro level. CDA's actual study takes place at the micro level of discourse and social practices. Hence, we can have a clear idea of what CDA is actually about. For the sake of this analysis, let us take the conception proposed by van Dijk (2001) in which he defines CDA as a critical perspective on doing scholarship: it is discourse analysis 'with an attitude.' This sort of CDA focuses on social problems, and especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination. It is seen from the interests of dominated group that support their struggle against inequality. So to speak, CDA combines so-called 'solidarity with the oppressed.'

There are at least four main features that CDA should deal with (Van Dijk, 2001). First, it is concerned with *Social situations*. The structure of social situations is especially relevant for a theory of context. Discourse is often defined as a communicative event, and occurring in a social situation, featuring a setting, participants in different roles, actions, and so on. Second, it deals with

*action*. CDA is not only interested in speech acts, but also in many other actions, interactions and social practices that are accomplished by discourse, or that form conditions or consequences of text and talk. Thus, to understand what is going on in discourse, it is necessary to construct it as an instance of, or as part of many other forms of action at several levels of social and political analysis. Third, *actors* take another focus. This is virtually similar to actions. They are constituent categories of social situations, and as parts of communicative situations, they have various communicative roles, such as various types of speakers, writers or procedures, and various types of recipients. So, they may be locally defined as individuals or globally in terms of groups, organizations or institutions. The fourth focus is on *social structures*. We learnt that local situations of interaction and act, manifest or instantiate global societal structures. Participants speak and listen as women, mothers, lawyers, party members, or company executives. Their actions realize larger social acts and processes, such as education, legislation, discrimination and dominance, often within institutional frameworks such as parliaments, schools, families, etc. Thus, CDA is mainly interested in the role of discourse in the instantiation and reproduction of power and power abuse (dominance), and hence particularly interested in the interface between the local and the global, between the structures of discourse and the structures of society.

Because CDA is interested in power, domination and social inequality, it tends to focus on groups, organizations and institutions. This means that CDA (Van Dijk, 2001) also needs to account for the various forms of social cognition that are shared by these social collectivities: knowledge, attitudes,

ideologies, norms and values. These are frequently called as 'social representations.' These socially shared representations are expressed in discourse through so-called mental models, which is through an application to specific event or situation.

Theoretically, this means that social representations (Van Dijk, 2001) are 'particularized' in mental models, and it is often through mental models that they are expressed in text and talk. And conversely, it is through mental models of everyday discourse such as conversations, news reports and textbooks that we acquire our knowledge of the world, our socially shared attitudes and finally our ideologies and fundamental norms and values. Now we have a rough picture of the way groups and power are able to affect discourse and vice versa, namely through the social representations shared by groups, and the mental models that in turn are the specific instances of these social representations.

### **Knowledge**

There are many kinds of knowledge that we may acknowledge and share. They cover personal knowledge, group knowledge, and cultural knowledge. (Van Dijk, 2001). Personal knowledge is represented in mental models about specific, personal events, Group knowledge is shared by specific social groups, such as professionals, social movements or business companies. Such knowledge may be biased and ideological, and not be recognized as 'knowledge' by other groups at all, but be characterized as mere 'belief'. Cultural knowledge is shared by all competent members of a society or culture, and forms the basis or common ground of all social practices and discourses. In principle, all culturally shared knowledge may be presupposed

in public discourse. Yet, such common ground knowledge constantly changes, and what was common ground yesterday, may be ideological group belief today. Discourses are like icebergs of which only some specific forms of (textually relevant) knowledge are expressed, but of which a vast part of presupposed knowledge is part of the shared sociocultural common ground.

### **Attitudes**

Attitudes are socially shared opinions, such as the opinions people share about abortion, gender, drugs abuses, etc. These are usually complex, that is, consist of a cluster of evaluative propositions. In the same way as general knowledge may influence mental models, the general propositions of attitudes may also be 'particularized' as specific, personal opinions in mental models, as is the case for Aceng's short span marriage.

### **Ideologies**

Eventually, we come to the crucial aspect in CDA, ideologies. Van Dijk (2001) defines ideologies as the basic social representations of social groups. They are at the basis of the knowledge and attitudes of groups such as socialists, neo-liberals, ecologists, feminists, as well as anti-feminists. They probably have schematic structure that represents the self-image of each group, featuring membership devices, aims, activities, norms and resources of each group. Ideologies feature the basic principles that organize the attitudes shared by the members of a group. Thus, a feminist ideology may organize attitudes about human rights, equal rights, education, political and the like.

### ***Language and Ideologies***

It is theoretically believed that there is a relation exists between language and ideology. According to Fairclough (1995), ideologies invest language in various ways at various levels, and ideology is a property of structures or a property of events.. Fairclough further states that a number of accounts place ideology in some form of system of potential underlying language practice – be it a ‘code’, ‘structure’, ‘system’, of ‘formation’. These structures are defined for various varieties of a language, not for a language per se.

There is a textual variant of this location: ideologies reside in texts. While it is true that the forms and content of texts do bear the imprint of ideological processes and structures, it is not possible to ‘read off’ ideologies from texts. This is, according to Fairclough, because meanings are produced through interpretations of texts and texts are open to diverse interpretations, and because ideological processes appertain to discourses as whole social events – they are processes between people – not to the texts which are produced, distributed and interpreted as moments of such events.

Ideology is located both in structures which constitute the outcome of past events and the conditions for current events, and in events themselves as they reproduce and transform their conditioning structures. Therefore, Fairclough believes that the discourse is the language use which is to be imbricated in social relations an processes which systematically determine variations in its properties, including the linguistic forms which appear in a texts. One aspect of this imbrication in the social which is inherent to the notion of iscourse is that language is a material form of ideology, and language is invested by ideology. Another common claim is that

(Fairclough 1995) it is ‘meanings’ (contents) that are ideological and this often refers just to lexical meanings. Lexical meanings are important, but so too are presuppositions, implicatures, metaphors, and coherence, all aspects of meaning. Ideology, for Gramsci in Fairclough (1995), is tied to action, and ideologies are judged in terms of their social effects rather than their truth values.

### **Hegemony**

The concept of hegemony originates in Lenin, yet this is very much referred to Gramsci’s conception. In Gramsci’s conception, hegemony is leadership as well as domination across the economic, political, cultural and ideological domains of a society (Fairclough, 1995). Hegemony is the power over society as a whole of one of the fundamental economically defined classes in alliance with other social forces. Hegemony is about constructing alliances, and integrating rather than simply dominating subordinate classes, through concessions or through ideological means, to win their consent. Hegemony is a focus of constant struggle around points of greatest instability between classes and blocks, to construct or sustain or fracture alliances an relations of domination/subordination, which takes economic, political and ideological forms (Fairclough, 1995). Hegemonic struggle takes place on a broad front which includes the institutions of civil society (education, trade unions, family), with possible unevenness between different levels and domains.

### ***Understanding Apology (Its Form and Function)***

It is good to understand apologies as contributions to a larger discourse, viewing them from a variety of perspectives. Apologies are articular

good examples, theoretically rich as well as practically important. They are hard to identify, define or categorize a difficulty that arises directly out of the functions they perform. Lakoff (2001) elucidate that apology places psychological burdens both on its maker and, less seriously, on its recipient. That is the reason for the plethora of indirect forms, in appropriate contexts, recognized as apologies. There exists an unambiguous apology form, as seen in:

*I apologize for eating your hamster.*

Yet this form is rarely encountered in the most characteristic apologies, informal ones between intimates. In these cases, there is a tendency to resort to any of a set of forms that involve one or another of the presuppositions or assertions of apologies, either blurring it or explicitly stating it. For example, for conveying regret (Lakoff in Schiffirin et al. 2001):

*"I'm sorry about your hamster."*

Or in extreme cases responsibility may be explicitly assigned elsewhere:

*"Well, someone left the hamster in the refrigerator!"*

Or in the utterance may deny that wrongdoing occurred at all:

*"Well, that's what hamster is for, right?"*

The presence of *well* in extreme cases like this suggests an awareness that, as apologies, these utterances are not fully satisfactory, and that the addressee's goodwill is required to make them function appropriately. But some forms of apologies refer specifically to one of their functions, perhaps as a way

to minimize the utterer's responsibility for the others.

*I admit I ate the hamster.*  
(Responsibility)

*It was wrong of me to eat the hamster / I shouldn't have eaten the hamster.* (Wrongdoing)

*Can you find it in your heart to forgive me for eating the hamster?*  
(Wish for forgiveness).

*I'll never eat a hamster again as long as I live.* (Abjuration of bad behavior)

These cases illustrate the many forms available for the performance of the single act of apology. The converse is also true: a single form, "I'm sorry", can function variously as an apology, an expression of non-responsible sympathy, and as a denial that an apology is, in fact, in order at all:

*I'm sorry that I ate the hamster.*

*I'm sorry, Mr. Smith isn't available today.*

*Well, I'm sorry! But you don't know what you're talking about!*

One advantage to having all these choices, for apologizers, is that they are thus enabled to calibrate the self-abasement to the perceived seriousness of the offense. It may seem that a full canonical apology would be preferable to an offended party.

Some apologies, to be felicitous, require at least the appearance of contrition (sadness and regret). In these cases, the recipients must have the power and the right to enforce demands for "real remorse". Another advantage of options is that an apologizer with power can, by making use of an ambiguous form, look virtuous while saving face. This is often seen in legally mandated "apologies". There are other problematic cases. One currently is the public-official

apology, statement made by someone in a position of power regretting bad behavior by holders of that office, in the name of the governed, against wronged ancestors of the grieved group.

### ***The Pragmatics of Apology: Speech Acts***

Pragmatics occupies a realm intermediate between language-autonomous, decontextualized approaches and more complex theories entailing the consideration of the linguistic context and extralinguistic circumstances in which utterances occur. According to Austin, speech acts were referred to as “utterances” rather than “propositions” or “sentences,” because Austin was talking about language use, rather than mere form (Lakoff, 2001). In Austinian speech acts, one of the conditions underlying the successful performance of an apology is felicity condition, or preparatory or essential condition. This condition should include such aspects as 1) the apologizer expresses his regret; 2) the apologizer assumes the responsibility for the act; 3) that the act was wrong; 4) that the addressee is hurt; 5) it puts the apologizer clearly one-down; and 6) the apologizer promises that such a thing will never happen again (Schiffrin, 1994; Yule, 1997).

Principally, speech acts are divided into three types or related acts (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1997; Holtgraves, 2002; Cummings, 2005). First, it is called a *locutionary act*, the basic act of utterance, producing a meaningful linguistic expression. This first act is produced with some kind of function in mind. The second type of act is an *illocutionary act*, performed via the communicative force of an utterance. The utterance produced is used to make a statement, an offer, an explanation or for some other communicative goals. The last dimension is a perlocutionary

act, creating an utterance with a function to have an effect on the part of the hearer, that is intending to drive the hearer to perform something.

### ***The Story Behind The Apology***

Apologies can be looked as plot points in a story: what events led up to their making; how did the utterance of an apology move the story along? What happens when the internal stories of two people are in conflict – A sees B as someone who owes A an apology; B either does not believe she or he has done anything wrong, or believes that their social differences are such that no apology is necessary? When apology is duly made and properly accepted, both parties come away satisfied. A good apology, in the words of Lakoff, convinces both participants that their narratives are rational and permits both to have more or less happy endings.

### ***Sociolinguistic Considerations***

Sociolinguistic consideration directly links the social group memberships of the pair involved in the apology and their options and expectations in the event. Lakoff (2001), further mentions that larger cultural background plays a significant role in the understanding of the need for apologies and the determination of their appropriate form. For instance, in many societies like in Indonesia especially in Java “honor” is important, and may both keep an apology from being made. An apology is always face-threatening for the speaker; but not making a necessary apology may occasion more serious face loss in the long run. To sum, apologies raise the important question of when, how much, and in what way someone divulges his/her “real self” or private persona to the world via language.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The discussion is presented descriptively in which the available data on Aceng's apology were taken from articles published in The Jakarta Post. The articles taken as data are: "Regent involved in Underage Marriage", The Jakarta Post, 2012, December 5, p. 1, "Garut Regent's Future Remains Uncertain", The Jakarta Post, 2012, December 7, p. 2, both written by Arya Dipa, and "Aceng Now more than just a Dirty Word", The Jakarta Post, 2012, December 11, p. 2, written by Deanna Ramsay.

The data considered as the secondary data were taken purposively and selectively where the reported case should deal with some kind of apology from the regent and its closely connected effect and responses of the readers, the society.

## DISCUSSION

The case of Aceng, the running regent of Garut, has been widely reported by virtually all mass media either electronic or printed ones. The case also took the attention of nearly all Indonesian peoples from West to East as long as they have access to TV channels. Not the least, the President of the Republic of Indonesia took part "seriously" in giving comments and encouraged the regent and the peoples with whom the regent had the conflict to settle down. There had been more and more people gave their empathy and sympathy to the "victim" and condemned the regent for his conduct and to ask the regent to step down from his current post.

In the course of the "family conflict" of Aceng vs. his ex-wife that ran for at least one month, there was only one time the regent publically announced his seemingly forced regret and sadness. Since this is an

interdisciplinary CDA, it is good to start from looking at the linguistic features related to a number of Aceng's statements, seemingly disgraced his ex-wife, leading toward Aceng's apology through speech acts as the following.

- (1) *"I spent almost Rp250 million to sleep with her for one night. Even sleeping with a celebrity would not have cost me that much."* (Jakarta Post, December 5, 2012)

Statement (1) above is said to be the locutionary act, a meaningful linguistic utterance, said by the regent of Garut. The possible interpretation of the first sentence *"I spent almost Rp250 million to sleep with her for one night"* is that the regent felt that his sleep with her ex-wife was meaningless for a very short time (though this is not the main reason) and paying Rp250 million for that *meaningless night* was considered too expensive therefore he regretted paying that. So, the idea here is that he should have not married her. The next sentence *"Even sleeping with a celebrity would not have cost me that much"* can be interpreted as the supporting reason why paying that amount was too expensive since, as far he was concerned about the tariff of celebrity a night, sleeping with somebody special referred to as celebrity would not take that much. In other words, the regent might intend to say that "sleeping" with celebrity is cheap. To laypeople understanding, the position of being regent promises everything including money. So, should spending just Rp250 million become a problem for Mr. Aceng if that is the actual reason for divorcing her in just four days? The answer is certainly "no". The next question is that what made his one-night sleep too expensive? Wasn't she his wife when he was sleeping with her? Why the feeling of expensiveness came after the sleep?



Aceng's statement in (1), viewed from the second act, illocutionary act, certainly carries meaning or intention especially for Aceng himself. There are at least two strong meanings behind this expression. First, his intention was to give information to the public, to the society, to the people who blamed his ill-behavior, that what he did (divorcing her ex-wife) had a strong basis and therefore he had legal right to do so. What made "her" too expensive for Aceng after his sleep with her was his total disappointment toward her very state. This is clearly seen in his statement mentioning that "He divorced her after he discovered that she was no longer a virgin and she was suffering from a particular disease". Aceng's another intention was to defend his supposed wrongdoing by claiming that his conduct was not against the rules of marriage in Islam as a husband is allowed to do one-sided divorce and this act was not without reason and the reason was something principle for him, that is the wife should be "original". Otherwise, he could not stand living together for he needed a "good" wife who could guide him when he was "out of track".

The perlocutionary act of utterance (1) is that Aceng hoped and wished that people would stop blaming him, criticizing him, condemning him, and even cursing him. He would like the public to understand his position that he was not "really wrong". He needed people to support him and said, "Well, you had the right to do so and we just feel OK with that". He insisted that this is just a small matter and it is a family conflict and very personal and let me handle it in my own way. However, what Aceng underwent was totally the reverse as perhaps he could not understand the people, the society and the norms he lives with.

The effect of statement (1) is presented together with the effect of

statement (2) as they look similar in tone and meaning. Now let us see the second statement from speech acts point of view.

- (2) *"If I buy something and 'Hey, this doesn't match the specs', then it's no big deal if I return it."* (Jakarta Post, December 7, 2012)

The first act here, the locutionary act, has a complete thought or linguistically meaningful. Take, for instance, the first sentence, the if-sentence *"If I buy something and 'Hey, this doesn't match the specs'"* indicates that Aceng means to inform people that buying things is everybody's business including himself and Aceng further argues that when the things he bought had a defect, not representing the specs when the product was being promoted, then every purchaser had the rights to complain or if necessary to return the thing and possibly exchanged with a better one. This is represented by the answer of the condition *"then it's no big deal if I return it."* Yet, the only problem that Aceng might not realize was that he did not deal with a brand of certain product that can be treated in a market system, but with human being, his ex-wife and her family and then the people of Indonesia who still have a feeling, a sense of humanity. The embedded meaning in this utterance is probably that marrying and divorcing are a packaged matter that everyone can deal with easily and loosely. And, he assumed that there is nothing wrong, nothing serious with this act.

The second act, illocutionary act, of this utterance is that Aceng intended to inform people, the people of Indonesia, that marrying and divorcing is his own business that can be acted out by everyone else. He meant to construct people's mind that what he did was rule-based, that is based on Islamic law.

Probably, Aceng forgot his current status as a public figure as the leader of a regency, the one that should exemplify a good role model. Probably, if the case was done by common people, then not many people would pay attention. Since he is a leader and leading by example is what people call leadership, and that is missing in Aceng's leadership and that is also fading from this country. Therefore, the illocutionary act shown here was not nicely welcome by the people as they are no longer easily fooled.

The perlocutionary act of statement (2) from Aceng's side was that people should have realized and understood the position of Aceng and gave no more complaint and condemnation of whatsoever. The presupposed effect should be that Aceng's brief marriage was no longer questioned as it was legal and valid therefore people should keep silent. From the people's side either from Garut or beyond were almost the same in which they expressed their disappointment, fed-up, and anger to the shameful regent. Due to his cynical statement, people wanted him to step down from his current post as he did not deserve to be a leader.

Now, we came to the apology made by Aceng when he was *cornered* when he felt nobody seemed to support him even from his own family. At the moment, when truly felt lonely, he finally uttered his seemingly insincere apology as elucidated below.

- (3) *"If what I did was wrong, even though it was allowed by Islamic law, then I deeply apologize to my family and my ex-wife."* (Jakarta Post, December 11, 2012)

The locutionary act performed by Aceng has full meaning and idea. This locutionary act was in the form of apology using "If conditional sentence" reflecting insincerity. The expression "*If*

*what I did was wrong*" can be simply interpreted as "I did something (marrying and divorcing) and it was right thing to do". This implies that actually he did not have to bother with making an apology as it is only for those who feel wrong and guilty. The second continuing line "*even though it was allowed by Islamic law*" gives the idea that the action (marrying and divorcing) was legal as there is a clear reference for this, that is Islamic law. Then, again in Aceng's perspective, apologizing was something Aceng should not do as his act was not against the law. He is right that the truth is not about breaking or obeying the Islamic law, but more on breaking the heart of the people, the feeling of the people, and the sense of humanity.

The second act, the illocutionary act of this utterance is that Aceng meant to inform the people that he has been kind enough and willing to admit that he was wrong (though he is persistent that he was not wrong) and publically apologized. Here Aceng intended to say that "Well, now I have done what you wanted me to do and please stop blaming me". If we looked at the statement closely "*then I deeply apologize to my family and my ex-wife*", we would see that Aceng also felt guilty to his own family and therefore he also apologized to them for any hurt feeling caused by the case. Yet, he should put his family in the last and his ex-wife first. This indicates that he just feels truly sinful to his family not to his ex-wife, the real individual being spoiled painfully. In short, Aceng was apparently in accordance with the people's demand. Yet, why did people seem unconvinced and still kept asking him to step down? Perhaps, he was no longer trusted. The people have lost their trust in him.

The perlocutionary effect of statement (3) was that the people would start realizing that it was not fair just to

blame Aceng even though he deserved to be blamed. He was just human who was not free from making sin and mistakes and therefore Aceng expected that (the effect) people would forgive him for any wrongdoing, for any wrong statement and for any ill-behavior. Aceng here gave a message that if God could forgive His worshipers why you couldn't do the same. Aceng really hoped that the gossip would end soon and the people would forget the case and forgive him wholeheartedly at last.

However, it seems that the people could take Aceng's words for granted, as they still doubted Aceng's sincerity and willingness to do so. People have been so painful that they seemingly could not forget and forgive him. In other words, Aceng's apology was, in the eyes of the people, too late and meaningless. Consequently, his apology is unforgiven, an undeletable story in the mind of people.

### **The Story Behind The Apology**

Aceng's apology has a vivid plot that most people have followed. The brief plot probably goes as follows. Garut Regent Aceng Fikri burst into the news cycle a month ago exactly in November when it was reported that he had taken a second wife, a 17-year-old identified as FO, in a *nikah siri*, or unregistered marriage, in July, only to divorce her four days later via text message service.

After the teenager and her family went public, Aceng claimed he divorce her because she was not a virgin. Seemingly publically questioning a 17-year-old's virginity was not problematic enough, Aceng attempted to defend himself on national television, mentioning, "I spent almost Rp250 million to sleep with her for one night. Even sleeping with a celebrity would not have cost me that much."

Soon after this statement, people around the country were blowing their outcry and blamed, condemned and cursed Aceng for his ill-conduct. They considered socially and morally improper to behave like that on TV while he was holding an important post in his regency. He should, people demanded, be a role model, somebody to follow to his peoples. Because the people considered him immoral he was asked to apologize publically and step down from his current position. However, FO's family seemed reluctant to continue the lawsuit they have proposed to the central police and the court, and proclaimed that the case was closed and said firmly "bygones be bygones." The people might question this decision and perhaps assumed that there might be some "negotiable" reasons among Aceng and the victimized family. It typically American style movie, happy ending. But we don't know who is "happy".

### **Sociolinguistic Considerations**

Since this case occurred in Indonesia whose culture is very typical, well-known for being very forgiving, Aceng's decision to make a public apology was considered to be the right thing to do. It is very clear in this case that the cultural background is very dominant here in yielding the apology. Javanese people are known for being calm and non-confrontational, therefore this case was considered "bad" to be prolonged as it is against the shared norms and values of the Javanese people. Aceng, as Javanese person, still considers "honor and dignity" as something treasured therefore he and his party tried hard to find a way out together with his ex-wife family. Finally, having being mediated by a local cleric, certainly respected by both parties in the region, the disputed parties agreed to end

the conflict peacefully and apologize each other. Thus, Aceng's apology was, at least to him and his supporters, significant and meaningful. It shows, to him, a dignity. However, the people out there still could not forgive Aceng's ill-behavior. Probably the reason was that the case was no longer between Aceng and his ex-wife, but rather Aceng versus the mothers, the women, the weak, the insane, the human rights, and the humanity. Whatever action was taken, it has to take into account the sense of fairness toward women.

### **Ideologies**

The ideologies of Aceng's apology is that 1) getting married for more than one time is understandable and sometimes acceptable in this country, especially to Islam followers, as long as it is legally done, based on the agreement with the first wife, registered in KUA (Religion Affairs Office), 2) marrying more than one wife is tolerable on the condition that the husband is responsible and take cares of her "physical and mental" needs, 3) divorcing is never accepted when it is done one-sided (especially the husband) without considering the pleas, appeals, hopes, expectations and needs of the wife, 4) divorcing is considerably accepted by the people when it is believed to be the only likely final solution and on the basis of both parties' agreement, and 5) in general marriage is considered "sacred" by the majority of Indonesian people and therefore have to be preserved in whatsoever conditions, and divorcing is also assumed to be "improper" thing to do and therefore rejected morally and culturally in whatsoever conditions, meaning that divorcing is never a solution, it is just a wrong way out.

### **Hegemonies**

From the case, it is obviously seen that there is a hegemony here in terms of power abuse on the powerless. Aceng seemed to exercise his mandated power wrongly. He was supposed to use his power to optimize the development and improvement of life quality of Garut's people. In fact, he was considered by many to have failed achieving that goal. His achievement was only in getting two wives. In the marriage, Aceng seemed to demonstrate his power excessively by which he could ask anybody he wanted to be his wife by giving illusionary promises to his victim. In other words, power dominance is central in the case.

Meanwhile, the weak, the powerless, the victim was unable to respond Aceng's ill behavior in a balanced way as she and her family kept waiting for the given promises until they lost their patience and reported him to the police and court. Another hegemony reflected in the case was that man was and is still more powerful and woman was, as usual, made as a victim. This is dealing with gender. So, it can be seen that in this country man is still very powerful over the woman. In other words, man is still the beneficiary and woman is the unfortunate. That is the story goes in terms of hegemonies in this country at least from Aceng's case.

### **CONCLUSION**

To sum up, Aceng's case has been very "sexy" lately in this country. It took a lot of attention from the grassroots to the high rank people up to the level of president. This indicates that it is a serious case. However, such case has never been seriously handled. On the basis of the aforementioned discussion, it can be deduced that Aceng's apology was not real, not sincere, it was a forced apology. Therefore, the people did not

give their forgiveness although the victimized family did that. In terms of speech acts, Aceng's apology was not effective, in terms of social aspects Aceng was considered to be against the norms and values existing in the society, in terms of ideology and hegemony, Aceng's case truly represented the typical bad exercise of the power against the powerless. In short, Aceng's case can be a good lesson for any people particularly the people in power not reiterate the same mistake. The embarrassing case is gone and it is good to see the future of this country from a more delightful perspective believing that they in power can do things better for their people's better lives.

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