LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY REVISITED AND RENEWED

The true difference between languages is not in what may or may not be expressed but in what must or must not be conveyed by the speakers.

Roman Jakobson

1. INTRODUCTION: THE PENDULUM IS SWINGING BACK

During the first half of the 20th century, linguistic relativity—not an explicit term but a common assumption in language research—prevailed well in American linguistics. It was the main characteristic of Boas’s works on American-Indian languages, Sapir’s writings on language and culture, and even Bloomfield’s “scientific linguistics.” It is easy to understand relativism in the Boasian and Sapirean traditions, since Boas and Sapir were both linguist anthropologists. Their expertise in anthropology, or their deep concern with local cultures, no doubt gave strong influence on their linguistic research. Bloomfield, as best exposed by his Language (1933), was different. When he claimed that linguistics was a “scientific” discipline, he referred to “natural sciences,” not in terms of content but in terms of methodology. Bloomfield’s methodology was rigorous: the approach must be inductive, the object must be observable (language is primarily speech), and the generalizations must be empirically verifiable. The end-results of Bloomfieldian research were meticulous, detailed descriptions of individual languages. One important generalization was that “languages are different.” Relativism is indeed the hallmark of pre-Chomskyan linguistics.

When the Bloomfieldian school lost prominence and was subsequently replaced by the Chomskyan school during the 1960s, three things changed: (a) empiricism was replaced by rationalism; (b) behaviorism was replaced by cognitivism; and (c) relativity was replaced by universality. When Chomsky (1957, 1965) took semantics back to linguistics (after it was neglected for a long time in the Bloomfieldian school), language scholars became hopeful and expected “more meaning” to come out in Generative Grammar. However, semantics remains in the periphery, because only syntax is placed in the center. Moreover, in the latest theory (Chomsky 1981, 1995) the generative enterprise has moved into deeper mentalism and higher abstraction, employing excessive formalism to accomplish this purpose. It was this dissatisfaction with Chomsky that sparked interest in the study of language in context (Lavandera 1988). Linguistic relativity is inseparable part of context-bound linguistics, for two reasons: (a) language and culture are closely intertwined, and in effect (b) linguistic relativity always goes hand in hand with cultural relativity.

The re-emergence of scholarly interest in linguistic relativity is like the pendulum swinging back: from relativity in the humanistic tradition, to universality in the generative school, and then back to relativity in context-bound linguistics. The movement can be seen as reviving old ideas in both European and American linguistics before Chomsky. However, an immediate note should be given on the difference between “old ideas” and “new ideas”

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1 More on Boas and Sapir will be presented in section 2 of this paper.
2 More comments on and critiques of the generative school are presented in my paper “Chomsky’s Universal Grammar: A Chronological and Critical Overview,” (Kadarisman 2007a).
concerning linguistic relativity. Pre-Chomskyan scholars mostly dealt with linguistic relativity as such, without taking linguistic universality into account. In contrast, post-Chomskyan scholars consider both relativity and universality to be equally essential entities of human language. (However, universality here is very different from universality in Universal Grammar. The former refers to universal parameters readily identifiable across languages and cultures; but the latter refers to highly abstract universal principles and parameters in syntactic theory.)

Gumperz & Levinson’s *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity* (1996), for example, is a volume containing 14 articles dealing with 4 major topics: (a) linguistic determinism or the interface between language and thought, (b) universals and variation in language and culture, (c) interpretation in cultural context, and (c) the social matrix: culture, praxis, and discourse. Each article in this volume views linguistic relativity from a different perspective, hence giving a partial picture of the subject. My own previous writings in linguistic relativity (Kadarisman 2005a, 2005b, 2007b), upon reflection, are also fragmentary, and fail to give the big picture of the subject. Therefore, the topic needs revisiting and renewing.

This paper intends to present linguistic relativity in a brief but comprehensive manner. It covers three interrelated sub-topics: (a) linguistic relativity from von Humboldt to Sapir, (b) linguistic and cultural relativity as revealed through Saussurean signs, and (c) universality and relativity in language and culture.

2. LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY FROM VON HUMBOLDT TO SAPIR

Linguistic relativity was first introduced in Europe in the beginning of the 19th century, and then took shape in America during the first half of the 20th century. It was Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), a German philosopher and linguist, who was first to note the close interconnection between language, society, and culture. “His idealization of one language, one society, one culture,” according to Gumperz (1996: 362), “had its origin in the romanticism of the period which coincided with the consolidation of the European nation states, … with a consequent yearning for the lost, allegedly simple, linguistic identities of the past.” Moreover, he believed that “languages differ from one another; thought and language are inseparable; therefore each speech community embodies a distinct world-view” (Slobin 1996: 70). This statement implies that “language is the formative organ of thought.” Indeed von Humboldt was the ‘first adherent of Whorfianism,’ which claims that man lives in the world of objects, but he does so exclusively as language presents them to him (ibid.). In brief, the Humboldtian notion of linguistic relativity was equal to linguistic determinism: language does shape the thought patterns of its speakers.

The European version of linguistic relativity also shows up albeit vaguely in de Saussure’s concept of *langue*. For him, *langue* or language is a system of arbitrary signs. Arbitrariness here pertains not only to the fact that there is no logical connection between *signifier* and *signified*, but also to the fact that language is not a name-giving process. That is, it does not suggest that the objects are there outside our collective mind waiting to be named or identified. Rather, signs (which constitute the linguistic system) are there in our collective mind as totality. The famous examples given by de Saussure (1916 [1959]: 115-6) are *mouton* in French vs. *mutton* and *sheep* in English. Synchronically speaking, in French the sign *mouton* refers both to the animal and its meat; but in English *mutton* refers to the meat whereas *sheep* to the animal. Similarly, *rumah* in Indonesian vs. *house* and *home* in English give the same illustration. *Rumah* refers both to the building and to the act of dwelling; but *house* refers to the
building while *home* to the act of dwelling.³ These illustrative examples lead to a tentative conclusion that we perceive reality in part through language, not always objectively as if it were laid bare in the outside world.

In America, linguistic relativism was a prominent characteristic of descriptive works by Franz Boas (1858-1942). These works were results of years of extensive research on American-Indian languages, often known by outsiders as ‘exotic’ languages. Well trained and deeply engaged in both linguistics and anthropology, Boas very clearly saw the important connection between language and culture. Whereas de Saussure in Europe, by analyzing French and other European languages, succeeded in constructing a coherent, highly abstract linguistic theory, Boas in the United States had to make strenuous efforts analyzing ‘exotic’ data of unknown American-Indian languages and yet eventually managed to come up with meticulous descriptions of these languages. Every language had its own description, for every language had its own unique structures. As noted by Sampson (1980: 59),

A characteristic of the school founded by Boas was its relativism. There was no ideal type of language, to which actual languages approximated more or less closely; human languages were endlessly diverse. This was absolute relativity, with no space left for universality. Furthermore, the description of a language for Boas was not a means of building linguistic theory. It was an end in itself, although it might be a useful first step toward understanding the culture.

The Boasian tradition had strong influence on Edward Sapir (1884-1939), who in turn left irrevocable intellectual imprint on his student Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941). Today any discussion of linguistic relativity or language and culture is almost always related to these two scholars. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis or the Whorfian Hypothesis for short has been an infinite source for discussing the topic. I have given a fairly lengthy discussion of the hypothesis (Kadarisman 2007c), and so in this paper I would like to re-present the essentials: (a) Sapir’s intellectual legacy, and (c) the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.

**Sapir’s intellectual legacy.** During the heyday of American Structuralism, Sapir’s humanistic ideas in linguistics were pushed aside by Bloomfield’s positivistic ideas in the field. It was the generative school that reintroduced and revived Sapir’s idea in phonology. When generative syntax had been firmly established after the publication of *Aspects* (1965), generative phonology took its turn through the publication of *The Sound Pattern of English* (1968). Just as syntax requires *deep structure* and *surface structure* to yield adequate description of syntactic data, phonology also requires *phonemic representation* and *phonetic representation* to yield adequate description of phonological data. For this purpose, Sapir’s ideas in “The Psychological Reality of Phoneme” (1933) are helpful. Phonemic representation refers to what the speaker thinks he says; and phonetic representation refers to what he actually says.⁴ Notice the modifier “psychological” (reality) in the title of Sapir’s article, which goes nicely with the modifier “mentalistic” (linguistics) in Generative Grammar (see Chomsky 1965: 4). Indeed, Sapir’s ideas in linguistics are strongly mentalistic and humanistic; he concerned himself not only with grammatical analysis but also with cultural aspects of language, including creative literature,

³ The English sentence *Father is in the house* is equivalent to *Ayah di dalam rumah*, whereas *Father is at home* is equivalent to *Ayah di rumah*. Notice that the lexical items house and home in English are converged into rumah in Indonesian.

⁴ I quote this statement from my lecture notes on the “Introduction to Generative Phonology,” taught by Professor Kenneth Rehg at the Department of Linguistics, University of Hawaii at Manoa, in Fall 1995.
religion, and mythology (Newmeyer 1986: 4). It was mentalism that united Sapirean and Chomskyan ideas—temporarily; but relativism makes them separate from each other—for ever.

Then, what follows is the irony of fate. Chomsky established generative phonology and swept aside descriptive phonology by going back, among other things, to Sapir. Strangely enough, to launch counter-arguments against Chomsky, many linguists also refer back to Sapir, as can be seen in the scholarly works—presented alphabetically—of Becker (1995), Duranti (1997) Gumperz & Levinson (1996), Hudson (1980), and Hymes (1974). Becker (1995) keeps away from abstract universality and proposes the study of language and culture under Linguistics of Particularity. Duranti (1997) moves forward from “language in culture” toward “language as culture.” Gumperz & Levinson (1996) suggest “rethinking linguistic relativity,” through structural as well as cultural-functional approach. Hudson (1980) and Hymes (1974) argue that to accomplish descriptive and explanatory adequacy in linguistic analysis the inclusion of social and cultural context is inevitable. All these scholars are not happy with Chomsky’s context-free linguistics, and their proposal of studying language in context has been inspired by Sapir.

Sapir remains influential in linguistics, both for his originality as a scholar and his deeper insights into any subject he deals with. In discussing language and culture (1921: 207, 216), he reminds us that they are not always causally related, although “language does not exist apart from culture.” When he talks about language and literature (1921: 221-2), he observes that literary creativity can never go beyond the distinctive peculiarities of the language the literary artist works in. His statement that “all grammars leak” (1921: 38) suggests that the structures of human language are extremely complex, making linguistic analysis a highly challenging enterprise. These excerpts tell us, as noted earlier (Newmeyer 1986: 4), that Sapir’s linguistic ideas are relativistic and humanistic. It is these ideas that never stop giving inspiration to linguists who concern themselves with the study of language in context.

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. As previously noted in passing, any discussion of linguistic relativity or language and culture always refers back to Sapir and Whorf, as made obvious in the works of Carrol (1999), Hall (2002), Jannedy et al. (1994), Sampson (1980), and Trudgill (1974)—to mention a few. This clearly indicates that the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis—the term was invented by a later generation of linguists, not by the two scholars themselves—has become so popular and influential in linguistics that it can be regarded as a “synonym” of the topic on language, thought pattern, and culture. From Sapir\(^5\) (see Hall 2002: 20) we learn that language is less of a tool for us to deal with the objective world but more of a mental organ representing a particular social reality and at the same time shaping our thought pattern. Implicit in this statement are two things: (a) every language is unique, and (b) every culture is unique—and hence “linguistic relativity” and “cultural relativity.” Also implicit in the statement is some tendency toward linguistic determinism, or explicit in Sapir’s own words “human beings [are] very much at the mercy of a particular language” (see footnote 5).

\(^5\) Sapir’s oft-quoted statement is the following: Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but very much at the mercy of the particular language, which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is the ‘real world’ is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies lie are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached (Hall 2002: 20).
Following Sapir but going too far ahead, Whorf pushed Sapir’s idea toward total determinism. He states that “the world is presented in the kaleidoscopic impressions which has to be organized by our minds—and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds” (ibid.). Hopi, an American-Indian language, is a well-known example in Whorf’s argument. Hopi speakers, unlike speakers of major European languages, have their own distinctive view of space, time, velocity, and objects owing to the unique structures of their language. Whorf even comes up with a hypothesis that modern physics would look very different from what it is today if it had been developed by the Hopi. At this point, Whorf falls into trap; his linguistic determinism has moved too far so as to “invent” scientific determinism. Most linguists would go the other way around. “If the Hopi had developed physics then the Hopi world-view would have changed” (Sampson 1980: 88).

To summarize, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis falls into two categories: strong and moderate versions. The strong version states that one’s native language totally determines his/her thought patterns; whereas the moderate version states that one’s native language partly determines

![Diagram 1. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (Revised)](image)

his/her thought patterns. Total determinism leads to linguistic determinism, now considered obsolete and generally rejected; whereas partial determinism leads to linguistic relativism, widely accepted and—as to be demonstrated in this paper—empirically justified. While the hypothesis explicitly goes one way (i.e., from language to thought pattern and eventually to culture), language frequently shows up in culture-specific expressions. Sapir (1921: 207) himself observes that “language does not exist apart from culture, that is, from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of lives.” Accordingly, I would propose that language, thought pattern, and culture relate to one another not in a unidirectional way, but in a bidirectional manner, as shown in Diagram 1. Theoretically speaking, Diagram 1 can be seen as Saussure’s langue embedded within the culture, that is, langue to be defined as an abstract linguistic system existing within the collective mind of the speech community.

The revised version of the hypothesis needs two explanations. In the “language → thought pattern → culture” direction, language-specific features influence the speakers’ thought patterns, which in turn may accumulate and make up part of the cultural patterns. In the “culture → thought pattern → language” direction, cultural beliefs and values are deeply ingrained in the minds of individual members of the community, which in effect are reflected in communication through language-specific norms and expressions. The bidirectional influence between language, thought pattern, and culture is the major concern of the following section.
3. LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY AS REVEALED THROUGH SAUSSUREAN SIGNS.

Linguistic relativity is best captured by the neo-Bloomfieldian postulate: *every language is unique, structurally and culturally*. The keyword “relativity” in “linguistic relativity,” in my opinion, needs further investigation. Put back to its adjective (i.e., “relative”), the subsequent question is: relative to what? The answer is (a) relative to the language itself, and (b) relative to the culture. The former shows up in language-specific constructions, and the latter in language-specific expressions. Put another way, they are *constructions* which are language-specific

![Diagram 2. Linguistic Relativity Revealed through Saussurean Signs](image)

without being culture specific, and *expressions* which are both language-specific and culture-specific. The term “construction” refers to grammatical and lexical features, whereas “expression” refers to lexical and discoursal components. Language-specific constructions are revealed mostly through (i) *grammatization* and partly through (ii) *lexicalization*; whereas language-specific expressions are revealed through (ii) lexicalization and (iii) verbalization.

Schematically, the relationship between language and culture which in effect constitute linguistic relativity is represented by Diagram 2.

The terms used in Diagram 2 need clarifying. One important principle in European structuralism outlined by de Saussure (1916 [1959]) is that *language is a system of arbitrary signs*. A sign consists of *signifier* (form) and *signified* (meaning); and the relationship between them is *arbitrary*—that is, there is no logical relationship between form and meaning. In this context, the act of combining meaning and form to produce a linguistic sign may be termed *signification*. In Diagram 2, there are three types of signification: (a) *grammatization* or

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6 I use the term “grammatization” for ease of pronunciation in place of “grammaticization” and also for semantic clarity in place of “grammaticalization,” which may suggest making a particular construction grammatical. Both the terms “grammatization” and “grammaticalization” are used in several places in Gumperz & Levinson’s *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity* (1996).

7 I propose the term “signification” to mean producing a sign, following an existing form such as “unification” that means to produce or create unity. In this sense, “signification” differs from its original meaning as intended by de Saussure (1916 [1959]: 114), that is, the use of a sign in a particular utterance to refer to an object or entity outside
signification at the morphosyntactic level; (b) lexicalization or signification at the lexical or phrasal level; and (c) verbalization or signification at the sentential or discoursal level.

In Diagram 2, the well-known saying “language exists in culture and culture exists in language” is shown by the big overlap between the two circles: the small circle representing language and the big circle representing culture. The different colors in the diagram signify “relativity” in the following ways. The white area represents “language-specific construction,” which may be revealed either through grammatization or, partly, through lexicalization. The light grey area represents “language-specific expression,” which may be revealed either through lexicalization or verbalization. Additionally, the dark grey area represents non-linguistic, culture-specific entities and behaviors, such as local rituals and ceremonies (which involve language), and kinesics or gestures (which do not involve language). In the following I will discuss grammatization, lexicalization, and verbalization in order.

3.1. Grammatization

Prior to explaining grammatization, it should be noted in passing that language-specific constructions may occur at any linguistic level. In phonology, for instance, consonant clusters are widespread across languages, but each language has its own phonotactics or rules for constructing syllables. Word-initially, the consonant cluster [sky] is allowed in English as in skewed, but not in Indonesian or Javanese; in comparison [mr] is allowed in Javanese as in mringis ‘grin,’ but not in English or Arabic. In morphology, affixation is a common process of word formation. However, English has only the prefix and suffix (as in re-gain and modern-ize), whereas Indonesian has all the prefix, infix, suffix, and confix (as in ke-satu, g-er-igi, ribu-an, and per-adab-an, meaning ‘first,’ ‘toothed,’ ‘thousands,’ and ‘civilization,’ respectively). In syntax, “subject” is a universal syntactic function, but it differs in terms of prominence cross-linguistically. English is a subject-prominent language in that almost every sentence (except the imperative) requires a subject, as shown in example (1).

(1) When did you arrive?
The deletion of the subject you, together with the auxiliary did, would make the sentence ungrammatical and meaningless. On the contrary, in Indonesian this question may possibly be rendered as (2).

(2) Kapan datang?
when come

Example (2) is a perfectly acceptable utterance in Indonesian, showing that subject deletion is syntactically permissible, so long as the subject is readily recoverable from the context.

The above examples of language-specific constructions in the areas of phonology, morphology, and syntax are part of the inherent structure of each language. They are examples of linguistic relativity which are relative to the language itself. Within American Structuralism, referring particularly to the application of Bloomfieldian assumptions in the field of foreign language teaching, language-specific constructions are the major concern of Contrastive Analysis (CA), that is, comparing and contrasting the structures of L1 and L2 to find out the similarities and differences. Proponents of CA, most notably Fries (1945) and Lado (1964), hypothesize that the similarities facilitate learning an L2 whereas the differences are main

the language. For de Saussure, “signification” or the act of signifying is synonymous to “reference” or the act of referring as understood in today’s Semantics and Pragmatics.
sources of difficulty. CA and CA hypothesis are thus vivid examples of Applied Linguistics—
direct application of linguistic principles in foreign language teaching.

Part of linguistic relativity is **grammatization**; it is proposed here to help explain
language-specific constructions which are relative to the language itself, with a specification that
it involves realizing particular concepts as grammatical markers. More clearly, universal
concepts such as *space, time, number, person,* and *gender* (a linguistic term for “sex”) may be
realized differently as language-specific grammatical markers across languages. For the sake of
brevity, let’s take *time* and *gender,* and see how these two concepts are grammatized in different
languages.

While “time” is a universal concept, it is not always incorporated as *tense* into the verb
system of human language. Indonesian, Javanese, Balinese, and Sundanese, for examples, are
tenseless languages. Therefore, since there is no tense in the verb system of these languages, the
notion of time must be expressed through temporal adverbs. On the other hand, in European
languages such as English, German, and French, tense permeates deeply into their verb systems.
The difference noted here shows up clearly in examples (3) and (4).

(3)  A: Do you smoke?
     B: I used to.
(4)  A: *Anda merokok?*
     B: *Dulu.*

The notion of “smoking in the past which does not prevail in the present” is expressed by the
auxiliary verb *used to* in English, but by the temporal adverb *dulu* in Indonesian. Notice also the
presence of the subject I in English and the absence of the subject in Indonesian, reaffirming
subject prominence in English. In fact, the “hidden problem” in the Indonesian translation of
example (3) lies in the use of *Anda* in the question. While *you* in English can be used to address
any second person, *Anda* is only a partial equivalence of *you.* The second person pronouns in
Indonesian make up a complex system accommodating the social factors and revealing the
cultural values, and therefore the choice of a second pronoun in verbal communication has to
observe Indonesian sociolinguistic and sociopragmatic rules (Kadarisman 2005b).

Like time, “sex,” distinguishing animates into male and female, is also a universal
concept. Time is incorporated as tense into the verb system, whereas sex is incorporated as *gender* into the nominal, verbal, and adjectival systems. In the present discussion, examples are
limited to the nominal system. The concepts “male” and “female” are ‘translated’ as *masculine* and *feminine.* In addition, *neuter* as a gender category means “neither male nor female.” Just
like time, gender is grammatized in some languages but not in others. Nouns in Arabic, French,
and German, for example, have grammatical markers signifying “masculine” and “feminine.”
In addition, German also has a grammatical marker for “neuter.” Table 1 shows gender markers
in these three languages.

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8 The incorporation of *gender* into the nominal, verbal, and adjectival system obtains in a language such as Arabic.
9 I am very grateful to Fisilmi Kafati Ramadhaní, S.S. (a lecturer of French at Politeknik Negeri Malang) for
providing the French examples, and to Sri Prameswari Indriwardhani, M.Pd. (a lecturer of German at the German
Department, Universitas Negeri Malang) for providing the German examples.
Table 1. Gender-marking in Arabic, French, and German

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Masculine Nouns</th>
<th>Feminine Nouns</th>
<th>Neuter Nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>indefinite</td>
<td>definite</td>
<td>indefinite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>maktab</td>
<td>al-maktab</td>
<td>hujrah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a table</td>
<td>the table</td>
<td>a room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>un livre</td>
<td>le livre</td>
<td>une table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a book</td>
<td>the book</td>
<td>a table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>ein tisch</td>
<td>der tisch</td>
<td>eine lampe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a table</td>
<td>the table</td>
<td>a lamp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples in Table 1 are confined to singular nouns. In Arabic, the suffix –ah as in hujrah ‘room’ indicates that the noun is feminine. In contrast, the noun maktab ‘table,’ having no suffix–ah, is a masculine. The contrast between masculine and feminine shows up clearly when the nouns are agents or indicate agency, such as ka:tib ‘male secretary’ vs. ka:tib-ah ‘female secretary’ and ta:lib ‘male student’ vs. ta:lib-ah ‘female student.’ In French and German, the gender is expressed by means of articles, both definite and indefinite articles. The contrast between masculine and feminine in French is shown by the use of un vs. une before indefinite nouns, and by le vs. la before definite nouns. Similarly, in German the contrast between masculine and feminine is shown by the use of ein vs. eine before indefinite nouns, and by der vs. die before definite nouns. In addition, to indicate neuter, German uses ein (the same as the masculine marker) and das before indefinite and definite nouns respectively.

A closer look at the data in Table 1 should remind us of the Saussurean principle of arbitrariness, for three reasons. First, gender is realized as a morphological affix in Arabic, but as articles in French and German. Secondly, in Arabic and French, gender categories are confined to masculine and feminine, but in German they include these two categories plus neuter. Third, gender in language is very different from sex in the real world. Either kind of sex (i.e., male or female) is readily identifiable in most animate beings through observation; but gender as part of the linguistic system is truly arbitrary. Notice that the noun ‘table’ is masculine in Arabic, feminine in French, and neuter in German. No logical explanation can be given to this arbitrary ‘table’ example.

In contrast with the three languages above, gender is practically not grammatized in languages like English or Indonesian. The suffix –ess as a feminine marker in English, as in host-ess or poet-ess, has now become out of use. This suffix is part of the system which, sociolinguistically speaking, makes English a sexist language: putting women inferior to men (Chaika 1982). Therefore, present-day speakers of English prefer using the gender-neutral words poet or host when referring to a woman. Likewise, the masculine-feminine contrast which shows up in Indonesian words such as seni-man vs. seni-wati (male artist vs. female artist) and warta-wan vs. warta-wati (male journalist vs. female journalist) is now considered obsolete. Moreover, pairs of words of this type are very small in number, so that they will never bring gender into the linguistic system. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that English and Indonesian are genderless languages.

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10 This is a general rule in Arabic; I am fully aware that there are countless words in the language which have no suffix –ah, but by convention they are feminine.
At this point, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (i.e., language partly determined thought pattern) obtains good illustrative examples. Speakers of English are “forced” by the language to use *subject* and *tense* when they produce utterances. Speakers of Arabic, French, and German are “forced” to distinguish gender categories when they use nouns in their speech. Speakers of Indonesian are “forced” to choose the appropriate second pronoun in addressing their interlocutor. Speakers of a multi-level language, such as Javanese (to be explained shortly), are “forced” to choose the appropriate speech level in a given communication context. These examples lend evidence that determinism obtains at the structural level. But to what extent language determines its speakers’ thought pattern or their way of reasoning requires further investigation.

3.2. Lexicalization

Lexicalization partly represents language-specific construction but mostly represents language-specific expression. The former, like grammatization, is relative to the language itself, whereas the latter is relative to the culture. Slobin (1996) is probably the first scholar to investigate how the notion of *space or direction* is expressed differently across languages. Along this line of reasoning, I would like to point out how Indonesian and English differ from each other in expressing space or direction. Consider the following colloquial Indonesian example.

(5)  
(a) *He, ngapain di situ?*  
(b) Hey, what are you doing there?

The Indonesian question (5.a) can be directed to (i) someone doing or engaged in something at a distance, (ii) someone doing something (e.g., sitting on a branch) on a tree, or (iii) someone doing something down in a river. On the other hand, the English sentence (5.b)—the closest equivalent of (5.a)—is appropriate for situation (i) only. For situations (ii) and (iii), English requires the use of adverbial particles *up* and *down*, as shown in (6.a) and (6.b).

(6)  
(a) What are you doing *up* there?  
(b) What are you doing *down* there?

Notice that the notion of space or direction expressible in English is not expressible in Indonesian. English two-word verbs, better known as phrasal verbs, are other good illustrative examples. As shown in Table 2, the selected phrasal verbs all contain adverbial particles expressing direction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Two-word Verb</th>
<th>One-word Verb</th>
<th>Indonesian Verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>go in</td>
<td>enter</td>
<td>masuk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go out</td>
<td>exit</td>
<td>keluar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go up</td>
<td>ascend</td>
<td>naik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go down</td>
<td>descend</td>
<td>turun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go away</td>
<td>vanish</td>
<td>menghilang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I am fully aware that the data presented in Table 2 are oversimplification of the complex lexical systems in both English and Indonesian. The main concern here is pointing out adverbial particles in English (as part of the two-word verbs), which explicitly convey the notion of
direction, literally or metaphorically, that is not expressible in Indonesian. Notice that the combination of the verb go with the adverbial particles in, out, up, down, and away in the first column produces phrasal verbs with different meanings, as shown by their one-word synonyms in column 2. In contrast, such adverbial particles are absent in Indonesian, as can be seen in examples (7.b) and (8.b).

(7) (a) He went down to the first floor to pick up the mail.
    (b) Dia turun ke lantai satu untuk mengambil surat.

The English verb went down and the Indonesian verb turun sound natural in the given context. If they were to be replaced by descended and pergi ke bawah respectively, the sentence in each language would sound awkward, semantically and stylistically.

(8) (a) ?He descended to the first floor to pick up the mail.
    (b) ?Dia pergi ke bawah ke lantai satu untuk mengambil surat.

As shown by examples (7.a) and (8.a), phrasal verbs in English are more frequently used in everyday speech than their one-word synonyms. This is strong evidence that space or direction is always lexicalized in English, but not in Indonesian.

This type of lexicalization belongs to language-specific construction or relativity to the language itself, whereas the other type of lexicalization belongs to language-specific expression or relativity to the culture. The ‘rice’ example, used in my previous papers (Kadarisman 2005a, 2005b), is a vivid example of what I call “unequal lexicalization.” (I apologize for ‘recycling’ the example.) The same object “rice” is perceived differently by Indonesian speakers and English speakers. In my opinion this is due to differences in cultural intimacy. Rice, being the staple food for Indonesians, is culturally intimate to them. Therefore, the different states of rice, revealed by the English gloss in Table 3.a, are lexicalized differently in Indonesian. Conversely, for English-speaking people, rice is culturally distant. As a result, the different states of rice are ‘not perceived’ by the language. The object is simply perceived in its totality in English: rice.

Going from 4 lexical items in Indonesian into 1 lexical item in English is known as convergent, while the other direction (going from 1 lexical item in English to 4 lexical items in Indonesian) is termed divergent (Lado 1957). The following set of examples (in Table 3.b) should shed more light on unequal lexicalization.

In Table 3.b, the V-O constructions in Indonesian are given their equivalents in English. Notice that it is a case of divergence. That is, the Indonesian verb meramal has three equivalents in English: forecast, predict and foretell. The different meanings of the three English verbs are given in the last column, cited from Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1978). The dictionary definitions tell us that the three notions of telling a future event are lexicalized differently, probably owing to different degrees of using knowledge and reason—going from the highest to the lowest: forecast, predict, foretell. The use of knowledge and reason has been for long a prominent characteristic of modernity in Western cultures, including English culture. In

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indonesian</th>
<th>English gloss</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>padi</td>
<td>rice plant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gabah</td>
<td>unhusked rice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beras</td>
<td>husked raw rice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nasi</td>
<td>husked cooked rice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.a. Unequal Lexicalization (Convergent)
contrast, Indonesian joined modernity only at the beginning of the 20th century. Therefore, the description of a future event is lumped together into one lexical item: meramal.

Table 3.b. Unequal Lexicalization (Divergent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indonesian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Dictionary Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>Object</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cuaca</td>
<td>forecast</td>
<td>to say, especially with the help of specific knowledge, what is going to happen in some future time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kekacauan politik</td>
<td>predict</td>
<td>to see or describe (a future happening) in advance as a result of knowledge, experience, reason, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kematian sang raja</td>
<td>foretell</td>
<td>to tell what will happen in the future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presented next is the unique verb formation in Javanese. Following the death event in a Javanese Moslem family is a religious ritual called tahlilan: giving a solemn feast where Arabic prayers are recited with the purpose of asking Allah the Almighty to forgive the worldly sins of the deceased. Following the death event, tahlilan is given on the 3rd day, the 7th day, the 40th day, the 100th day, one year after, and 1000th day or three years after. As shown in Table 4, the

4. Javanese-Specific Verbs Related to Tahlilan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>English Gloss</th>
<th>Javanese Number + Days</th>
<th>Derived Verbs</th>
<th>Cultural Notes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>three days</td>
<td>telung dina</td>
<td>nelungndinani</td>
<td>on the 3rd day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>seven days</td>
<td>pitung dina</td>
<td>mitungndinani</td>
<td>on the 7th day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>forty days</td>
<td>patangpuluh dina</td>
<td>matangpuluhi</td>
<td>on the 40th day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>one hundred days</td>
<td>satus dina</td>
<td>nyatusi</td>
<td>on the 100th day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>one year = last year</td>
<td>setahun = pendhak</td>
<td>mendhaki</td>
<td>one year after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>one thousand days</td>
<td>sewu dina</td>
<td>nyewoni</td>
<td>one the 1000th day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Javanese verbs (all meaning doing tahlilan on a given day) are derived from the NP “number” + (“day”), by nasalizing the first consonant and adding the suffix –ī. The derivational process in (1) and (2) takes the number + day (i.e., telung dina and pitung dina) as the stems to produce the verbs nelungndinani and mitungndinani. On the other hand, in the remaining examples—except (5), the derivation process takes only the numbers as the stems: patangpuluh ‘forty,’ satus ‘one hundred,’ and sewu ‘one thousand’ to produce the verbs matangpuluhi, nyatusi, and nyewoni. In (5), the derivational process takes the synonym pendak ‘last year’ to produce the verb mendhaki. Morphologically, the verbs in the third column are truly Javanese-specific in that even Indonesian does not allow this derivation. For example, seratus hari ‘one hundred days’ can not serve as a stem to produce the verb *menyeratusi—cf. nyatusi, which is morphologically well-formed in Javanese.

11 Today the English phrase weather forecast is translated into prakiraan cuaca in place of the Indonesian older form ramalan cuaca. However, the verb memprakira cuaca does not obtain common usage yet among the majority of Indonesian speakers.
Finally, compounds are presented as the last topic to be discussed under section 3.2., Lexicalization. A compound is usually distinguished from a phrase in terms of meaning. The meaning of the latter is always straightforward, directly analyzable from its components (e.g., a green house = a house that is green; orang tua ‘an old person’ = orang yang tua ‘a person that is old’), but the meaning of the former is not so (e.g., a greenhouse = a building with glass walls and roof, for the cultivation and exhibition of plants under controlled conditions; orang tua = a parent, i.e. father or mother). As seen from both relativity and universality points of view, compounds comply with both perspectives.

Table 5. Compounds Revealing Linguistic Relativity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Indonesian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Indonesian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>anak tangga</td>
<td>stairs</td>
<td>belimbing</td>
<td>star fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ibu jari</td>
<td>thumb</td>
<td>kemiri</td>
<td>candle nut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>kawin lari</td>
<td>elope</td>
<td>serai</td>
<td>lemon grass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>matahari</td>
<td>sun</td>
<td>sukun</td>
<td>breadfruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>rumah sakit</td>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>terong</td>
<td>eggplant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the relativity perspective, a compound in one language is not always a compound in another, as shown in Table 5. The Indonesian compounds listed alphabetically in the second column have English single-word equivalents in the second column. In contrast, one-word names of Indonesian fruit and vegetables listed in the fourth column have compound equivalents in English. In a previous paper (Kadarisman 2005b), I call these compounds “creative lexicalization” in English. As a translation, each of these compounds conveys the meaning of the Indonesian word in a creative way: (1) star fruit = fruit when cut off into two halves looks like a star, (2) candle nut = nut that looks like candle, (3) lemon grass = grass that tastes like lemon, (4) breadfruit = fruit that looks like bread, and (5) eggplant = plant that looks like an egg.

From the universality perspective, a few compounds of the same meaning happen to be lexicalized in the same or similar way in both languages (see Table 6). The Indonesian compounds kepala batu and tulang punggung have exactly the same compounds in English:

Table 6. Compounds Revealing Linguistic Universality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Indonesian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>jantung hati</td>
<td>sweetheart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>kepala batu</td>
<td>stone-headed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>masuk angin</td>
<td>catch a cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>rumah tangga</td>
<td>household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>tulang punggung</td>
<td>backbone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

stone-headed and backbone. Likewise, jantung hati and rumah tangga are lexicalized in similar compounds in English: sweetheart and household. Finally, masuk angin and catch a cold convey similar concepts in a similar way, semantically but not lexically. Looking at these data, I would assume that humans as thinking beings, regardless of their cultures or ethnicity, probably undergo the same inner mental experience or outer physical/social experience and express this experience in the same way.
Universality also shows up in the translation of English compounds into Indonesian compounds having the same or similar forms, as shown in Table 7. My assumption that the translation goes from English to Indonesian is based on knowledge and observation that most of these words are related to inventions in modern technology or to Western education, politics, and way of life. The English compounds in the second column are re-lexicalized in Indonesian producing exactly the same compounds. That is, air means udara, and port means bandar; so airport means bandar udara. The remaining compounds in columns 2 and their translations in column 3 can be analyzed in the same way. On the other hand, the English compounds in column 4 are re-lexicalized only half-way in Indonesian. From each compound, only one morpheme is lexicalized the same way in Indonesian: board = papan, fire = api, house = rumah, ship = kapal, wall = dinding. Together with examples in Table 5 (where a compound has a one-word equivalent), the half-way equivalents in Table 7 provide more evidence in support of the arbitrary principle. There is no logical explanation of why these compounds behave the way they do.

To recapitulate, lexicalization demonstrates the prevalent force of relativity but at the same time reveals the hidden force of universality. English, being so rich with adverbial particles, excels in expressing the notion of space or direction, which is often unexpressible in Indonesian. The case of convergence and divergence shows that an object is often perceived differently across cultures, hence producing unequal lexicalization. Truly language-specific and culture-specific lexicalization, as in the case of Javanese verbs related to tahilitan, is an extreme case of linguistic relativity; and yet the affixation process producing these verbs is a universal morphological process. The mutual push and pull between relativity and universality is most obvious in compounds. Each language has its own way of lexicalizing a concept; and yet there is also general universal force dictating lexicalization, resulting in synonymous or similar compounds across languages.

### Table 7. Compounds Revealing Linguistic Universality through Translation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Indonesian</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Indonesian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>airport</td>
<td>bandar udara</td>
<td>blackboard</td>
<td>papan tulis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>cold war</td>
<td>perang dingin</td>
<td>firework</td>
<td>kembang api</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>honeymoon</td>
<td>bulan madu</td>
<td>greenhouse</td>
<td>rumah kaca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>skyscraper</td>
<td>pencakar langit</td>
<td>steamship</td>
<td>kapal api</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>software</td>
<td>piranti lunak</td>
<td>wallpaper</td>
<td>majalah dinding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 The Indonesian compounds may also have been translated from Dutch. This needs further confirmation from Indonesian linguistics scholars who are well-versed in Dutch.
and hence language-specific expressions. By “cultural universals” I mean general beliefs, values, and practices which are common across cultures, such as—going from concrete practices to abstract values or beliefs—greetings, good manners or courtesy (basa-basi), apology, deference (respect), rhetorical pattern, and expression of religious beliefs.

Among these cultural universals, I have discussed greetings, apology, deference, and expression of religious beliefs (Kadarisman 2005a, 2005b). As with the ‘rice’ example, I will partly ‘recycle’ two previous topics and take two others. Again, moving from the concrete higher up to the abstract, this section will discuss (a) courtesy, (b) apology, (c) deference, and (d) specific expressions revealing collectivism and individualism.

3.3.1. **Good Manners or Courtesy**

The two terms here are equivalents of the Indonesian term *basa-basi*. With reference to Jakobson’s (1960) phatic function, courtesy in larger discourse can be seen as the phatic function of language from a sociolinguistic perspective. In Indonesian context, when an Indonesian meets a friend or an acquaintance, the courtesy is verbalized in (9.a) or (10.a), with (9.b) and (10.b) as the closest linguistic equivalents in English.

(9)  
(a) *Mau ke mana?*  
(b) Where are you going?

(10)  
(a) *Dari mana?*  
(b) Where were you from? / Where have you been?

Notice the emphasis on *linguistic* in the phrase “the closest *linguistic* equivalents in English” above. It means that both Indonesian utterances in (9) and (10) are linguistically translatable into English, but they are culturally rejected. In other words, what sounds good and natural in Indonesian culture sounds intrusive in English culture, because in the latter it is considered to be interference with privacy.

In English, utterances in (11) are similar examples of courtesy.

(11)  
(a) *How do you do?*  
(b) *Have a nice day.*  
(c) *Have fun.*

Utterance (11.a) is spoken to somebody one meets for the first time; utterance (11.b) is spoken to someone who is about to leave; and utterance (11.c) is spoken to someone who is about to go to the movie, the theatre, or a party. Despite their simple forms, these three utterances are not translatable into Indonesian.

In sum, examples (9) through (11) suggest that in Indonesian or English culture, people want to sound friendly to one another, but they do so by producing culture-specific utterances. Investigation of courtesy in other cultures should enrich examples of how courtesy are verbalized, either similarly or differently, through culture-specific expressions.

3.3.2. **Apology**

Like courtesy, apology is a universal characteristic of human society. But where and when people apologize may differ from one culture to another. In Javanese, being apologetic is culturally desirable and preferable, as can be traced back to the 19th century classical literary works. In the well-known *Serat Wulangreh* (a treatise on moral guidance) by King Pakubuwana IV (1768-1820), the first three lines of the opening stanza read

(12) *Pamedhare wasitaning ati*
Cumanthaka aniru pujangga  
Dahat mudha ing batine

...  
This is a revelation of the heart:  
I pretend to be a great poet,  
Though I am very ignorant in mind

Even the most outstanding court poet of Java, Ranggawarsita (1902-1873), kept maintaining the apologetic attitude. The first stanza of his Serat Cemporet (a story of the old wise man Cemporet) contains the following lines:

(13) *Ringa--ringa pagriptane*  
*Tan darbe lebdeng kawruh*  
*Angruruhi wenganing budi*

...  
My writings split up in many directions;  
Though I am of very poor knowledge,  
I am trying to open up the gate of the mind

As shown in examples (12) and (13), apology commonly occurs at the beginning of a classical literary work, where the poet admits that he is ignorant in the field or topic he is about to dwell into. In this way, he is in fact playing with the local rhetoric: the lower you humble yourself, the higher others will pay tribute to you.

While classical literature is now much neglected and verbal art performance maintaining the great literary tradition is constantly pushed aside by modern entertainments, the long tradition of apology seems to remain deeply rooted in Javanese culture. At the end of formal or informal public speech, apology is culturally obligatory; whereas at end of written academic discourse, apology is optional. In this context, my favorite example is the last paragraph of the Preface in Errington’s book *Language and Social Change in Java* (1985).

(14) To the many others to whom I am obliged, but cannot name here, and to those who do not wish to be named here, my thanks. *Manawi wonten kalepatan salebeting karangan punika, kula nyuwun pangapunten.*

An English translation of the Javanese sentence in (14) would be

(15) Should there be any mistakes in this book, I would apologize (to the reader). The reason why Errington did code-switching at the end of his Preface should be obvious: expressing apology in Javanese, even in academic discourse, is linguistically and culturally permissible. If the Javanese sentence in the Preface were to be replaced by its English translation in (15), the result would be confusion to an English-speaking reader, because such an apology is totally alien to present-day English academic discourse. Placing apology in this context is culturally rejected.

In Indonesian context, following the end of observing the fasting month of Ramadan are the *lebaran* days, in which an apology shows as inseparable part of the *lebaran* greeting.
Selamat Idul Fitri
Mohon Maaf Lahir dan Batin

The greeting prevails specifically among Indonesian Moslems who observe the fasting month, but generally also among members of Indonesian society regardless of their religions. Literally, the greeting is translatable into English.

Happy Idul Fitri
*I apologize for my outer wrongdoings and inner sins.

However, among Moslems living in an English-speaking country only the first line of the translation prevails. The second line, the apology, is an Indonesian-specific expression. In effect, the apology as part of the lebaran greeting is linguistically translatable into English, but it is culturally rejected. Interestingly, the apology is rejected not only in English culture but also in Arab culture, from which the lebaran greeting originates.

'Eid Mubarak
*‘Afwan min fadlikum za:hiran wa ba:tin

The Arabic translation of the Indonesian apology is grammatically and stylistically well-formed, but it does not prevail in Arab culture. Examples (12) through (18) presented and discussed in this section lead to a conclusion that apology is a universal notion, but its linguistic manifestation differs across cultures.

3.3.3. Politeness and Deference

People in all cultures are intrinsically motivated to behave politely in social interaction, because they need social acceptance. Some members of the speech community—those who are older in age or higher in social status—deserve respect or deference from others. Politeness and deference are thus universal characteristics of human society; however, like courtesy and apology, they may be verbalized differently across cultures. In this regard, the difference between mono-level and multi-level languages is of particular interest. In a mono-level language, respect or deference toward others may show up linguistically through refined intonation, lower rate of speech, and formal style. Consider examples (19.a) and (19.b).

(a) Saya tidak diberi uang.
(b) Aku nggak dikasih uang.

‘I was not given (any) money.’

Utterance (19.a), being more formal than (19.b), is probably spoken with lower rate of speech and more refined intonation among adults in a formal situation, whereas utterance (19.b), sounding very informal, is an example of casual speech typical among close friends and intimates, regardless of their age. The formal vs. informal distinction shows up in the use of different lexical items: saya : aku ‘I,’ tidak : nggak ‘no,’ and diberi : dikasih ‘was given.’

Similarly, part of English courtesy, as shown in (20), is expressed along different degrees of formalities.

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13 The star (*) at the beginning of the apology in English and in Arabic (translated from Indonesian) indicates that the expression is culturally rejected.

14 My opinion that the Arabic translation of the apology is grammatically and stylistically accepted but culturally rejected is reconfirmed by Dr. Nurul Murtadho, a lecturer at the Arabic Department, Universitas Negeri Malang.
(20) (a) How are you?
(b) How are you doing?
(c) What’s up?

Utterance (20.a) sounds formal, (20.b) less formal, and (20.c) the least formal. The first two utterances may have equivalents in Indonesian: (21.a) and (21.b), but the last utterance does not.

(21) (a) Bagaimana kabarnya?
(b) Gimana kabarnya?

Examples (19) through (21) show that formal style is used to convey respect or deference, whereas informal or casual style is used to convey intimacy.

It should be noted in passing that, as shown in (19), the formality distinction that is lexicalized in Indonesian is neither lexicalized nor verbalized in English. That is, the English equivalent in (19), I was given nothing, is used in both formal and informal situations. Similarly, the formality distinction in (20), How are you? vs. What’s up?, is verbalized in English but not in Indonesian. Briefly, lexicalization and verbalization as means of producing linguistic signs are arbitrary.

Moving ahead, formality distinction obtains not only in mono-level languages—as shown in Indonesian and English examples above, but also in a multi-level language such as Javanese. The two Indonesian utterances in (19) are translatable into Javanese in (22), in the ngoko ‘low’ form.

(22) (a) Aku ora di-wenehi dhuwit
(b) Aku gak di-weki dhuwit

I not PASV-give money

‘I was not given (any) money.’

Like the Indonesian utterances in (19), the formal vs. informal distinction between (20.a) and (20.b) also shows up in the use of different lexical items ora : gak ‘no’ and diwenehi : diweki ‘was given.’ Notice that in (19) the informality distinction in Indonesian shows up in three pairs of lexical items, but in (22) the informality distinction in Javanese shows up only in two pairs lexical items. Again, even in genetically related languages such as Indonesian and Javanese, lexicalization is partly arbitrary.

The major purpose of providing examples in (22) is to inform the reader that speech levels in Javanese are not the same as different degrees of formality in other languages. Even in one speech level, such as ngoko, different degrees of formality show up. In fact, Javanese speech levels are designed to accommodate different degrees of deference rather than formality (Poedjosoedarmo et al. 1979). There are three speech levels in Javanese: ngoko ‘low,’ madya ‘mid,’ and krama ‘high.’ To illustrate, the ngoko utterance (22.a), repeated below as (23.a), is compared with its madya and krama counterparts.

(23) (a) ngoko: Aku ora di-wenehi dhuwit
(b) madya: Kula mboten di-sukani yatra
(c) krama: Kula mboten dipun-paringi yatra

I not PASV-give money

‘I was not given (any) money.’

Much has been explored and explained concerning Javanese speech levels (see Poedjosoedarmo et al. 1979; Suharno 1982; Uhlenbeck 1950 [1978]). Therefore, I will not add redundancy to previous research. The main concern here is to point out how the notion of deference is lexicalized and verbalized in Javanese. Using Saussurian terms, politeness penetrates Javanese
lexicon or the paradigmatic axis, producing separate lexical items showing different degrees of
politeness: ngoko, madya, and krama. Examples in Table 8 are taken from lexical items in (23).

**Table 8. Lexicalization of Politeness in Javanese**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
<th>Javanese</th>
<th>Lexical Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ngoko ‘low form’</td>
<td>Madya ‘mid form’</td>
<td>Krama ‘high form’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>aku</td>
<td>kula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not</td>
<td>ora</td>
<td>mboten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was given</td>
<td>di-wenehi</td>
<td>di-sukani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>money</td>
<td>dhuwit</td>
<td>yatra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Javanese lexical items in Table 8 fall into two major categories: content words and
structure words. The content words comprise a noun and a verb, and the structure words
comprise a pronoun and a negative device. The noun dhuwit ‘money’ in ngoko changes into
yatra in madya and krama. The passive verb di-wenehi ‘was given’ in ngoko changes into
di-sukani in madya and dipun-sukani in krama. Notice that the passive marker di- in ngoko remains
the same in madya but changes into dipun- in krama. The pronoun aku ‘I’ changes into kula in
both madya and krama; and the negative device ora ‘not’ in ngoko changes into mboten in both
madya and krama.

What does this lexical analysis tell us? Both content and structure words in ngoko have
different forms in madya and krama. Sociolinguistic research ((Poedjosoedarmo et al. 1979)
reveals that the number of Javanese words having different madya and krama forms are less
than 1000, or about 1% of the Javanese lexicon. However, as partly shown in Table 8, all structure
words have their madya and krama counterparts. Since almost every sentence contains structure
words, the ngoko-madya-krama distinction in Javanese becomes very conspicuous. Therefore,
when Javanese speakers move up and down along different speech levels, the term code-
switching appropriately applies, because the different speech levels are indeed different codes.

Referring back to the ngoko, madya and krama utterances in (23), these are examples of
how politeness is projected or verbalized along the syntagmatic axis. The three Javanese
utterances are lumped together in their English translation: *I was not given money*. Thus
semantically, the three utterances have exactly the same propositional meaning; but
sociolinguistically, they have different social overtones. As a result, among Javanese speakers,
acceptability (sociolinguistic appropriateness and pragmatic politeness) becomes more
prominent than grammaticality. The Javanese term netepi unggah-ungguhing basa or ‘observing
the rules of going up and down along the speech levels’ (Padmosoekotjo 1986) is the local
concern with language-specific politeness. Every Javanese, especially among younger
generations today (Kadarisman, forthcoming), knows how to speak ngoko, but not krama.

The general rule of using krama is “humbling oneself and elevating others.” To
illustrate, the ngoko verb weneh ‘give’ has two forms of krama: (a) caos (termed krama andhap
or the krama form used to humble oneself)\(^\text{15}\), and (b) paring (termed krama inggil or the krama
form used to elevate others). Setting the affixation aside for the sake of clarity, I would like to

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\(^{15}\) In this sense, a synonym of caos is *atur* and *unjuk* (Poedjosoedarmo et al. 1979: 129). As I set aside affixation in
elements (24), I also set aside the synonyms, for the sake of clarity.
give English examples (24) using the two forms of krama to show linguistic acceptability in Javanese.

(24) (a) I caos the book to Pak Soenjono
(b) Pak Soenjono paring the book to me

The common error made by present-day Javanese speakers is

(25) *I paring the book to Pak Soenjono

By producing utterance (25), I violate the sociolinguistic rule of appropriateness and the pragmatic rule of politeness. The utterance is sociolinguistically inappropriate because I am insensitive to the social meaning of paring; and it is pragmatically impolite because I unknowingly elevate myself and in effect put Pak Soenjono down. Errors of this type can be very embarrassing, making Javanese speakers who cannot speak krama fluently prefer using bahasa Indonesia instead. This “linguistic feeling” is truly language-specific and culture-specific, as a result of lexicalizing politeness in the lexicon and verbalizing politeness along different levels of syntactic planes.  

3.3.4. Specific Expressions Revealing Individualism and Collectivism

Cultures fall into two major categories: individualistic and collectivistic cultures (see Chaudhary 2004). The individualistic culture (such as English culture) gives prominence to independence and responsibility, whereas the collectivistic culture (such as Indonesian culture) gives prominence to togetherness and social harmony. The following is a brief account of how individualism and collectivism are verbalized as culture-specific expressions.

In the present discussion, the term “individualistic culture” is confined to English culture or the culture of English-speaking communities. Therefore, specific expressions revealing or characterizing individualism are limited to English. The proverbial expression in (26) probably best captures the spirit of individualism.

(26) Every man for himself.
This expression explicitly means that every person should take care of themselves before worrying about others, and implicitly exalts the value of independence and responsibility. The everyday expressions

(27) (a) Be yourself, and
(b) Be on your own

qo along with expression (26) very nicely. Utterance (27.a) suggests prominence on individuality, and hence independence. Utterance (27.b) suggests that everyone should rely on oneself, and hence responsibility. Independence implies notions such as privacy and individual rights. Responsibility toward oneself is lexicalized in adjectives containing the ‘prefix’ self-, such as self-dependent, self-reliant, self-supporting, self-sufficient, self-made, and self-educated; whereas responsibility toward others implies social and political notions such as egalitarianism and democracy.

16 I would assume that speakers of Balinese, Madurese, and Sundanese experience the same or similar “linguistic feeling,” considering that the these sister languages also have the low and high forms.
17 I am very grateful to Kendra Nicole Staley, M.A., an American volunteer who presently teaches English at the English Department, Universitas Negeri Malang, for providing expressions (26) and (28), which keep the balance between individual freedom and teamworking; for providing sentence (32) as a natural English paraphrase of the Indonesian expression in (31); and for giving reconfirmation of specific expressions characterizing individualistic culture.
However, individualism in English culture is not everything; it also allows and appreciates teamwork.

(28) There is no I in team.

Literally, expression (28) means that there is no letter i in the word team. Conventionally, it means that teamwork is about working with others. Teamwork in playing games (such as soccer or basketball) to win a match is a physically observable example; and teamwork in managing business companies in competition with others to obtain the best profit is a less observable empirical example. In this context, the Darwinian maxim fits very well.

(29) Survival of the fittest by means of natural selection.

Maxim (29) pertains both to individual and collective efforts to accomplish set-up goals or win a competition. The phrase “natural selection” suggests that naturally the weak will drop off along the way, but the strong will survive toward the end. Taken as a neutral (not a negative) saying, maxim (29) contains much truth about success in life: success in passing educational exams, success in obtaining good jobs, and success in winning any kind of competition.

Turning into the collectivistic culture, I cannot find an expression in Indonesian that best conveys collectivism. Therefore I turn into Javanese.

(30) Mangan ora mangan kumpul.

‘With or without meal, (the important thing is) getting together.

The deeper meaning of expression (30) is ‘financial welfare is less important than social harmony.’ In Javanese, and also in Indonesian, the notion of ‘socially harmonious’ is lexicalized as an adjective: rukun. The notion of rukun pertains not only to informal social affairs but also to government administration. The lowest level of administration in a city or town is kelurahan ‘village,’ consisting of approximately 15 rukun warga (RW), each sub-divided into 7 or 8 rukun tetangga (RT). Notice the adjective rukun ‘socially harmonious’ in the administrative terms RW and RT, loosely interpretable as ‘Large Neighborhood Community’ and ‘Small Neighborhood Community’ in English. Culturally speaking, RW and RT imply that the neighborhood community should live together in social harmony.

Another popular term exalting the value of “togetherness and social harmony” is gotong-royong, literally meaning ‘mutual cooperation.’ However, this literal meaning does not capture the spirit of collectivism; what is culturally implied in gotong-royong is ‘collectivistic responsibility and sacrifice.’ While the adjective rukun slightly penetrates the administrative system, the abstract noun gotong-royong deeply penetrates the political system in Indonesia.

Prior to the national independence, when Soekarno gave elaboration of the proposed national philosophy Pancasila ‘five principles,’ he further stated that it could be reduced to Trisila ‘three principles,’ and eventually condensed to Ekasila ‘one principle,’ namely, gotong-royong. It was interesting that one founding father of the nation, well-educated during the Dutch era, considered gotong-royong to be the most important principle underlying the national politics. During the early 1960s, Soekarno also called the House of Representatives DPRGR, or the Gotong Royong House of Representatives. Similarly, during the Soeharto regime, among the socio-political organizations playing crucial roles in establishing Golkar—then the dominant government party—were KOSGORO (Kesatuan Organisasi Serbaguna Gotong Royong or Multi-purpose Organization of Gotong Royong) and MKGR (Musyawarah Keluarga Gotong Royong or Deliberation of the Gotong Royong Family). When Megawati Soekarnoputri, Soekarno’s eldest
daughter, was the president, she named her ministerial cabinet *Kabinet Gotong Royong.* When SBY & JK were running for presidency & vice presidency in 2004, their political slogan was *Bersama Kita Bisa,* meaning ‘Together We Can (Accomplish our National Goals),’ which clearly conveys the spirit of *gotong-royong.*

Finally, collectivism is often conveyed through the word *keluarga* ‘family.’ In English culture, the word *family* is used to refer mostly to the nucleus family and occasionally to the extended family—in the literal but never in the metaphorical sense. On the other hand, the metaphorical use of *keluarga* or *keluarga besar* ‘big family’ in Indonesian context is pervasive.

(31) *Kita semua, keluarga besar Universitas Negeri Malang, ...*

We all, *the big family of State University of Malang, ...*

A direct English translation of *keluarga besar* into *big family,* as shown in (31), is rejected, not linguistically but culturally. To obtain the best equivalent of in English, example (31) must be paraphrased into

(32) *State University of Malang is like one big family.*

Notice that, stylistically, the phrase *keluarga besar* in (31) is used as a metaphor, but the phrase *big family* in (32) is part of a simile. The pervasive metaphorical use of *keluarga besar* in Indonesian context is culturally motivated by the local value of “togetherness and social harmony.” Like *rukun* ‘social harmony’ and *gotong royong* ‘collectivistic responsibility and sacrifice,’ the term *keluarga*—derived into *kekeluargaan* ‘in a familial manner’—also penetrates Indonesian politics. Concerning the national economy, Chapter 33 Article 1 of the 1945 Constitution states

(33) *Perekonomian disusun sebagai usaha bersama berdasar atas asas kekeluargaan.*

‘The national economy is to be managed as a collective enterprise based on the familial principle.’

Historically, the idea of *ekonomi kekeluargaan* ‘familial economy’ was proposed by Mohamad Hatta, another founding father of the nation. In practice, this is well-known as *ekonomi koperasi* or ‘cooperative economy,’ in which community members are expected to get involved in achieving their individual welfare through a collective enterprise.

The specific expressions (revealing individualism vs. collectivism discussed in this section) clearly show that different cultural values reflect themselves partly through culture-specific and hence language-specific expressions. A crucial question arises: what is the universal cultural parameter here? In my opinion, the parameter is to be stated as follows: *Individuals live together in a community.* This is a universal fact about human society. In individualistic cultures, the major concern is “individuals,” but in collectivistic cultures the major concern is “living together.” In the former, the community prevails through accomplishments made by the independent and responsible individuals; in the latter, the community prevails through living together in social harmony and making collectivistic accomplishments. This is idealization of individualistic and collectivistic cultures. In reality, what truly prevails in each type of culture is probably a tendency toward the ideal.

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18 I am particularly thankful to Dr. Hariyono, a lecturer at the History Department, Universitas Negeri Malang, for reconfirming all the data in Indonesian politics bearing the culture-specific term *gotong-royong.*

19 SBY & JK is the abbreviation of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Jusuf Kalla, who were elected president and vice president in 2004.
4. UNIVERSALITY AND RELATIVITY IN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Language as the species-specific property of the human race is no doubt universal; all humans speak a language. But as a specific property of a social and cultural group, language may vary according to the given physical and social environments as well as the local cultural norms. The universality of language is best captured by Chomsky’s (1968) metaphor: *language is a mirror of the mind*; and the relativity of language is best captured by Chaika’s (1982) metaphor: *language is a mirror of the society and the culture*. Along this line of reasoning, the discussion in section 3 of this paper, (Linguistic and Cultural Relativity as Revealed through Saussurean Signs), leads to a generalization: linguistic relativity is best seen as variation along universal parameters. The previous section demonstrates and argues how mental concepts are grammatized or lexicalized, and how social or cultural concepts are lexicalized or verbalized. The concepts—mental, social, or cultural—are assumed to be universal; but grammatization, lexicalization, and verbalization vary across languages, producing linguistic relativity. In section 3, prior to discussing grammatization, I pointed out that there are universal parameters belonging to language *per se*, not manifestation of external universal concepts. Better known as units of linguistic analysis, these universal parameters include phoneme, morpheme, word, phrase, sentence, utterance, and text or discourse.

Linguistic variation, another name of linguistic relativity, can be explained by referring to units of linguistic analysis or universal parameters above. That is, how a particular linguistic unit varies or undergoes parametric variation across languages. Alternatively, linguistic variation can also be explained by referring to particular structural levels or linguistic areas: phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and discourse levels. Along this line, there appear all types of variation, from phonological to discourse variation. With reference to micro-linguistics or context-free linguistics (covering phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics), there is nothing new in the present proposal. As noted by Katamba (1993: 56), “differences between structural patterns found in different languages appear to occur within a fairly restricted range. There are parameters within which most differences between languages occur.” He further states, “The study of range of patterns within which languages may vary is the domain of language typology” (emphasis in the original). Comrie’s book *Language Universals & Linguistic Typology* (1981) presents in-depth and thorough analyses of how typological variation (within which linguistic relativity occurs) is confined within universal parameters.

Interestingly, linguistic analysis can often go deeper to see variation within variation. In terms of the word order parameter, for instance, both Indonesian and English are SVO-type languages. However, subject-prominence is typical of English, but not of Indonesian. Similarly, gender marking in Arabic, French, and German is explicit. However, in Arabic it is grammatized as a suffix, but in French and German it is grammatized as articles. As noted earlier, these two different ways of gender marking serve as good evidence in support of the arbitrariness principle.

It has been well-known linguistic facts that (a) “time” is incorporated as tense in the verb system; (b) “number” is incorporated as singular-plural or singular-dual-plural distinction in the nominal, adjectival, and verbal systems; and “sex” is incorporated as gender in the nominal,
adjectival, and verbal systems.\(^{20}\) (Following the principle of arbitrariness, tense and gender in the language system are often markedly different from “time” and “sex” in the outside world.) However, the lexicalization of “space” as adverbial particles (in English) is, to the best of my knowledge, a new discovery in the domain of linguistic relativity. Further research may reveal how other universal mental concepts are grammatized or lexicalized differently across languages.

In macro-linguistics, also known as the study of language in context (including primarily pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and ethnolinguistics), linguistic investigation should see how universal sociocultural concepts are lexicalized or verbalized differently across languages. In this paper and others (Kadarisman 2005a, 2005b, 2007c), I have pointed out how (a) greetings, (b) courtesy, (c) apology, (d) formality, (e) politeness, (f) religiosity, and (g) culture-specific values are verbalized differently. The differences here fall into four categories. (1) What is expressible in one language may not be expressible in another, e.g., Have a nice day and Have fun are expressible in English but not in Indonesian. (2) The occasions in which a sociocultural notion (e.g. apology) can be verbalized differ across cultures, e.g., Mohon Maaf Lahir dan Batin as part of the lebaran greeting is widespread in Indonesian culture, but alien to English and Arabic cultures. (3) A sociocultural notion may penetrate deeply into the system of one language but not that of another, e.g., deference is lexicalized and verbalized in Javanese (producing different speech levels) but not in Indonesian or English. (4) Culture-specific values reflect themselves in culture-specific and language-specific expressions.

Referring specifically to apology and deference, the investigation can go further by asking the questions (a) why apology so frequently occurs in Indonesian culture, and (b) why deference so deeply penetrates the Javanese linguistic system. In Indonesian context, to preserve social harmony—a prominent value in the collectivistic culture—people need to renew the spirit of being together from time to time. The lebaran days provide an ideal occasion for this purpose, and accordingly people open their hearts to one another, repeating the cliché Mohon Maaf Lahir dan Batin (I apologize for my outer wrongdoings and inner sins). Going through this annual ritual, people would feel personally clean and socially refreshed. The social harmony is expected to be renewed by revitalizing the spirit of the individual members of the community.

The verbalization of deference in Javanese is a similar phenomenon. The local philosophy exalts the principle of empan papan, literally meaning ‘well positioned.’ That is, everyone in the community is supposed to behave according to his/her social position (Magnis-Suseno 1984). The social behavior here includes both linguistic and non-linguistic behavior. Linguistically, the different speech levels in Javanese accommodate the principle of empan papan. The second persons are projected as three different pronouns (i.e., kowe, sampeyan, and panjenengan) and spoken to accordingly: (a) kowe is spoken to in the ngoko ‘low’ form, (b) sampeyan is spoken to in the madya ‘mid’ form, and (c) panjenengan is spoken to in the krama ‘high’ form. These general rules are oversimplification of Javanese as a sociolinguistic fact. My point here is to suggest that the principle of empan papan penetrates deeply and grips the totality of the Javanese language. To me, this is the best evidence in support of linguistic relativity.

Words of caution are necessary at this point. While language often reflects cultural norms or local values, language and culture, as noted by Sapir (1921: 218), are not causally related. “Culture may be defined as what a society does and thinks. Language is a particular

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\(^{20}\) The singular-dual-plural distinction obtains in a language such as Arabic—in the nominal, adjectival, and verbal systems. Similarly gender in Arabic also pertains to the nominal, adjectival, and verbal systems.
how of thought.” The totality of cultural experience may influence, but does not totally determine, the society’s linguistic behavior. However, some determinism, as pointed out earlier, obtains between language and thought. Referring back to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, the moderate version prevails: language partly determines individual thought patterns, which in effect make up part of their culture. As shown in the previous discussion, “partial determinism” varies across languages. If signification (i.e., grammatization, lexicalization, or verbalization) penetrates only the structural system of language, such as “time” becoming tense in English, then the influence of language on thought pattern is small. On the contrary, when signification penetrates the language in total, such as “politeness and deference” becoming different speech levels in Javanese, then the influence of language on thought pattern as well as cultural behavior is enormous. In this case, linguistic relativity is true reflection of cultural relativity.

The argument presented so far is to emphasize the fact that linguistic relativity, both in micro-linguistics and in macro-linguistics, is best explained as variation along universal parameters—both linguistic and cultural parameters. The best evidence of the mutual push and pull between universality and relativity, in my opinion, is translation: reproducing a source language (SL) “text” into an “equivalent text” in the target language (TL).21 The fact that translation is possible—in fact “translation” has become an independent discipline and a financially rewarding profession for many—indicates that “what can be verbalized in the SL can be re-verbalized in the TL.” This is the signified, carrying the resonance of universality. However, how the SL text is reproduced in the TL is another matter. Notice the modifier “equivalent” in the phrase “equivalent text” above,22 implying that reproducing the “same text” in the TL is impossible, because each language has its own unique features and structures. This is the signifier, carrying the reverberation of relativity.

Finally, universal linguistic parameters, as revealed through decades of arduous linguistic research, are conspicuously there in the discipline ready for use to measure variation.23 However, universal parameters representing sociocultural concepts which are common in all societies need further exploration and identification. Future research on linguistic relativity should be geared toward this direction.

5. CLOSING REMARKS

To obtain the balance between universality and relativity in linguistics, a close look at other disciplines, particularly the natural sciences, should help. I am particularly interested in the modifier ethno-, signifying “ethnicity” or “ethnic group” and hence “particular culture.” In the natural sciences, there is no *ethnophysics, for the obvious reason that the physical properties of matters and how they are organized are the same everywhere. The laws of physics are therefore universal. Similarly, there is no *ethnochemistry, since the chemical structures of every substance are the same everywhere. Chemical formulas are thus universal. However, in biology, in addition to botany there is ethnobotany, and in addition to zoology there is ethnozoology. While ethnozoology is still at the periphery of the mother discipline, ethnobotany, which studies

21 I use the term “text” to refer to both the spoken and written form of language.
22 The term “equivalent” (text) in the target language is explicitly used in the definitions of translation, for example, by Catford (1965) and Nida & Taber (1974).
23 Here I am not referring to universal principles and parameters in UG, since, as noted earlier, some of them are not empirically justified. Moreover, UG principles and parameters are confined to syntax, for UG theory considers language only as a mental fact, never as a social or cultural fact.
how some local plants are cultivated and used by local people to make themselves live and survive better, is a well-established discipline in biology. What does this mean? Even the natural sciences, which deal with universal laws in nature, allow some local influence: plants that grow in particular soil with a particular climate or weather temperature may have specific properties that are useful to local people.

By comparison, in the field of linguistics there is no *ethnophonetics, *ethnophonology, *ethnomorphology, or *ethnosyntax. Phonetic features, whether they are based on auditory perception (as in Jakobson et al. 1951) or on articulatory production (as in Chomsky and Halle 1968), are universal; for phonemes are by nature bundles of universal distinctive and non-distinctive features. Similarly, linguistic universality pertains to segmental and suprasegmental phonemes and their patterning; to morphemic components and word formation processes; and to phrasal and sentential components and how they are produced. Linguistic forms and structures, regardless of their complexity, always yield to structural analyses at the phonetic, phonological, morphological, and syntactic levels. Each linguistic level deals with universal features/components and their patterning. In contrast, there is ethnosemantics, since meaning can be local. In the Javanese traditional calendar, each day—always a combination of a week day and a pasaran day—is believed to have its own value. In this respect, when some Javanese assign specific meaning to a particular day, this can only be explained by referring to the system of their local beliefs. Similarly, there is also ethnopragmatics, since politeness can be culture-specific and language-specific. To be linguistically polite in Javanese culture, the speakers are required, in addition to observing universal principles of politeness, to make the appropriate choice among speech levels in a given context.

Whereas ethnobotany never goes so far as to make the mother discipline *ethnobiology, ethnosemantics and ethnopragmatics, together with ethnopoetics (the study of poetic performance by taking local knowledge into account), manage to make the mother discipline ethnolinguistics. In fact, the term ethnolinguistics is much more popular than its three sub-disciplines (see Crystal 1991: 126); it is a branch of linguistics that studies language in relation to ethnicity and local cultures. In other words, it is a branch of linguistics that accommodates relativity. (Along this line of reasoning, notice the modifier socio- in the well-established sub-discipline sociolinguistics, which studies language and its use in the society.) Finally, to obtain the balance between relativity and universality, the neo-Bloomfieldian postulate must be attached to a statement of universality. Every language is unique, structurally and culturally; however, the way languages express their unique features can always be seen as variation along universal linguistic or cultural parameters.

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24 I am grateful to Dr. Mohamad Amin, a lecturer at the Biology Department, Universitas Negeri Malang (UM), for reconfirming the existing terms “ethnobotany,” and also “ethnozoology.” In fact, at the Biology Department UM, ethnobotany, but not ethnozoology, is given as a separate course, indicating that it is a well-established sub-discipline in the field of biology.

25 In addition to the seven week days: Akad, Senin, Selasa, Rebo, Kemis, Jumuah, Setu (i.e., the synonyms of Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday), the Javanese also have the 5 pasaran days: Legi, Paing, Pon, Wage, Kliwon. Moreover, they believe that each week day and each pasaran day have their own values, namely, 5, 4, 3, 7, 8, 6, 9 for the weeks days, and 5, 9, 7, 4, 8 for the pasaran days. Each day in the Javanese calendar is a combination of a week day and a pasaran day, e.g., Setu Pahing or Saturday Pahing, with the value of 9 + 9 = 18.
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