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Doing leadership through sign switching in the Indonesian bureaucracy

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Doing leadership through signswitching in the Indonesian bureaucracy¹

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Abstract

In recent years the study of the relationship between talk and the doing of leadership has gained increasing attention from linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists. Even so, as with much research on organization talk, typically these studies focus on the micro analysis of situated talk in monolingual English speaking settings. In this paper I start to fill this gap by looking at how a boss moves between Indonesian and Javanese to do leadership. My empirical focus will be recordings of meetings made during five months of fieldwork in a government bureau in Semarang in the 2003-2004. I show that while Indonesian is used to do much transactional work, Javanese does both relational and transactional work, often in ways that differ to earlier accounts of Javanese usage. In interpreting this usage I suggest that the use of Javanese fragments – along with other leadership practices – help build debts that need to be repaid, typically by the carrying out of directives and the smooth and effective operation of this bureau.

Key words: Leadership; Practice; Indonesia; Bureaucracy

Doing leadership through signswitching in the Indonesian bureaucracy¹

Introduction

While leadership talk has received sustained attention since the late 1990s, remarkably little work has been done in non-English speaking settings and even less has been done in complex settings characterized by language alternation practices. In starting to fill this gap this paper adds to some ethnographic studies of leadership in Indonesia by focusing on how a boss in a government bureau enacts leadership through alternation between linguistic fragments stereotypically associated with Indonesian and those stereotypically associated with Javanese. I refer to these fragments as “sign” in the compound “signswitching” instead of “codeswitching” because using the former foregrounds current understandings of linguistic signs being part of quite open and complex semiotic systems rather than closed systems referred to as “language” or “code” (e.g. Agha 2007; Alvarez-Cáccamo 1998; Blommaert 2012).

I am especially interested in how relational and transactional leadership practices are achieved via signswitching in two meetings that were recorded during five months of fieldwork in this government bureau between September 2003 and February 2004. In a nutshell the relational aspect of leadership talk refers to what Tannen (1984) refers to as “rapport” talk or what Coupland (2003) refers to as “small talk”. Relational talk sits in contrast to transactional talk which is commonly about tasks, reports, evaluations, and so on (Angouri and Marra 2011; Holmes, et al. 2011; Vine 2004). I point out that while Ismail uses Indonesian to do a lot of the transactional work, he uses Javanese in ways that simultaneously do relational and transactional work while producing and regimenting hierarchical social relations within this bureau. While, much of Ismail’s leadership talk sits in contrast to local and widely circulating ideologies about Javanese usage I account for this innovation with

reference to ideas about honorification and reciprocity. After looking at scholarship on leadership talk and codeswitching, I then contextualize this study with reference to work on language use in Indonesia as well as the national political climate prior to and during this fieldwork. In the last two sections I look at Ismail and his staff's opinions about language and leadership before looking at how Ismail enacts leadership through talk.

Leadership as sociolinguistic practice

Fairhurst (2007: 1-3) has observed that during the last hundred years leadership scholarship has mostly been dominated by psychological work, although what leaders actually do has also become one focus of leadership research since the 1970s (Fairhurst 2007: 1-3). Since the late 1980s there has been an increasing focus on the doing of leadership, which rather than seeing leadership as a quality residing in an individual views leadership as a collective, situated and emergent social practice (Bolden 2011; Fairhurst 2007; Fairhurst and Grant 2010; Holmes, et al. 2011; Schnurr 2009; Wodak, et al. 2011). Many of these scholars point out that while there is a massive literature on leadership, the study of how leadership is actually accomplished through talk is still only fairly recent.

Holmes (2011: 189) points out that this is a little strange given that leaders are reported to spend around 60-80% of their time communicating in general and around 30-60% of their time talking with their subordinates. Even so, over the last 10-15 years sociolinguists have started expanding their focus on talk at work (e.g. Drew and Heritage 1992) to how talk figures in the doing of leadership (e.g. Baxter 2010; Fairhurst 2007; Fairhurst and Grant 2010; Holmes, et al. 2011; Marra and Angouri 2011; Schnurr 2009; Schnurr and Chan 2011; Wilson 2013; Wodak, et al. 2011). Central to this work is the idea that leadership is a social practice that involves a “doing” through social interaction (Fairhurst 2007: 6)

Among other things, these scholars have been examining various interactional manifestations of the continuum between the doing of co-leadership and distributed leadership (Holmes, et al. 2011), how leadership talk relates to ideas of front stage and backstage (Wilson 2013), how leadership talk contributes to consensus building (Wodak, et al. 2011), how situated leadership talk relates to wider circulating ideologies about leadership (Holmes, et al. 2011; Wilson 2013; Wodak, et al. 2011), and so on. An underlying theme in much of this work is the tension between doing relational work and transactional work, which has been a major focus of Holmes and colleagues (Angouri and Marra 2011; Holmes, et al. 2011; Schnurr 2009; Schnurr and Zayts 2011; Svennig 2011). Part of what makes up relationship talk or relational practice is the talk that establishes and maintains positive interpersonal relationships amongst work colleagues (Holmes, et al. 2011; Vine 2004). Relational talk sits in contrast to transactional talk which is commonly about tasks, reports, evaluations, and generally getting organizational tasks done (Angouri and Marra 2011; Holmes, et al. 2011; Vine 2004), with the quintessential transactional leadership practice often being found in the facilitation of meetings (Holmes, et al. 2011: 83). The forms that relational talk can take include humor, self-deprecation, swearing, and so on, while transactional talk can include directives, turn allocation, reporting, evaluation, planning, and so on (Angouri and Marra 2011; Holmes, et al. 2011; Vine 2004). Often leadership talk contains both types of talk, often within one utterance (Holmes, et al. 2011; Vine 2004).

While, the above scholarship represents a considerable research base, as both Bolden (2011: 262) and Holmes et. al. (2011) point out, there is much less work to be found in non-English speaking contexts, especially those where there may be a preference for top-down leadership. To date the majority of this research has focused on contexts in Hong Kong (Schnurr and Bernie 2011; Schnurr and Chan 2011; Schnurr and Zayts 2011) and Japan (Murata 2009; Tanaka 2011) and it seems that only Holmes et. al. (2011) have focused upon

multilingual contexts where signswitching figures in the doing of leadership. This paper thus seeks to make a small contribution to the field of leadership talk by focusing on the doing of leadership among a group of Indonesians in an Indonesian government office. I will be especially concerned how signswitching figures in the doing of relational and transactional leadership talk.

From codeswitching to complexity

Codeswitching practices have attracted sustained scholarly attention for more than thirty years (e.g. Auer 1998; Eastman 1992; Gafaranga 2007; Gardner-Chloros 2009; Gumperz 1982; Heller 1988; Jacobson 1990; Milroy and Muysken 1995; Myers-Scotton 1993).

Drawing upon some of this work and scholarship on semiotics and language ideology formation (e.g. Agha 2007; Inoue 2006; Miller 2004; Ochs 1996), here I wish to sketch out a number of inter-related themes that have emerged from this work.

The first is the idea that linguistic forms have indexical relationships with particular types of speakers, particular types of activities, particular settings, social relations, and so on. The production of these relationships can be broken down into relationships produced in local communities of practice – typically small scale – and those produced and recirculated in institutionalized one-to-many participation frameworks (Agha 2007), where an authoritative figure (the “one” of this framework) models semiotic behavior for a large group of onlookers, learners, and viewers (the “many”). Examples of these typically “larger scale” one-to-many participation frameworks include teacher (one) to students (many) in classrooms, the communication practices of other institutions (e.g. newsletters from local government to local residents), and mass media (e.g. print, radio and television). Often, the types of indexical relationships formed in these frameworks produces an ideology that creates social domains populated by stereotypical speakers in such a way that multilingualism means an ability to

carry out monolingual interaction in two or more languages (e.g. Creese and Blackledge 2011; Moyer 2011).

The second idea is that people draw upon their knowledge of these indexical relationships to do interactional work. This “recontextualization” (Bauman and Briggs 1990) of signs to index particular stances towards utterances and those involved in the interaction (Du Bois 2007) also contributes towards a more complex semiotic system whereby signs associated with different participation frameworks are merged through acts of recontextualization (Blommaert 2012). The third idea is that repeated acts of recontextualization amongst a particular constellation of participants eventually produce new semiotic configurations where the use of semiotic forms that are indexically associated with different languages but are not viewed by participants within these constellations as constituting codeswitching or language alternation (Alvarez-Cáccamo 1998; Gafaranga and Torras 2002; Goebel 2010; Maschler 1998; Swigart 1992). In short, repeated acts of recontextualization naturalize language alternation, while producing an emergent community of practice (Wenger 1998).

Related to the second and third ideas is the idea of complexity, which has emerged around discussions of superdiversity and semiotics (Agha 2007; Blommaert and Rampton 2011; Jørgensen, et al. 2011). In this work it is increasingly recognized that using terms, such as “codeswitching”, “multilingualism”, “plurilingualism” and so on tend reproduce older notions of bound linguistic systems (i.e. languages), rather than acknowledging that people have a wide range of linguistic competences to recognize and use features stereotypically associated with multiple and even dozens of languages (Agha 2007; Blommaert, et al. 2005a; Blommaert, et al. 2005b). What comes out of this work is that while knowledge of indexical relationships between different features and social domains is fragmented, nevertheless using

just enough features helps people do situation specific interactional work (Blommaert 2012; Blommaert and Backus 2011).

Complexity in Indonesia

Indonesia is an archipelago nation made up of more than 17,000 islands. Depending on who is counting and how language is defined there are between 400-1000 languages in Indonesia (e.g. Abas 1987; Dardjowidjojo 1998; Sneddon 2003). While many of Indonesia's languages are disappearing (Jukes 2010), many Indonesians' semiotic repertoires have been increasing since the mid-1960s (Goebel 2013). In general, many of Indonesia's 240 million people have competence to use or at least comprehend two or more semiotic systems commonly referred to as "language". Semiotic repertoires can range from competence to use or at least comprehend a local ethnic language (*bahasa daerah*), which is learned in the home and with peers, other local ethnic languages learned via involvement in one-to-many participation frameworks, a local vernacular variety of Malay, the national language taught in schools (Indonesian), the language of religious scripts (e.g. Quranic Arabic), a neighboring language, one or more foreign languages (taught in schools and universities), and for mobile Indonesians the language of a host community (e.g. Abas 1987; Dardjowidjojo 1998; Goebel 2010; 2013; Jukes 2010; Sneddon 2003). Characterizing this situation goes beyond traditional linguistic notions of multilingualism and typically requires a new vocabulary set and starting point. While the vocabulary set is still developing, the starting point is "complexity" (Blommaert 2012), which not only acknowledges Indonesians' numerous semiotic competencies but also the fragmented nature of these competences.

Of importance for this paper is the island of Java where there are around 70 million speakers of one variety of Javanese or another (Ethnologue 2013). Of all the languages in Indonesia, Javanese seems to have attracted the most sustained attention (for summaries of

this work see Berman 1998; Errington 1985; Goebel 2010). Sociolinguistic descriptions based on data gathered in the early 1970's pointed out the existence of a number of different vocabulary sets, which co-occurred to form speech levels (Wolff and Poedjosoedarmo 1982). These speech levels include *ngoko* (N), *madyá* (M) and *krámá* Javanese (K). These levels – are identifiable by the presence or absence of particular words and affixes (Wolff and Poedjosoedarmo 1982: 29). Table 1 provides examples of different vocabulary sets as well as examples of the affixation of morphemes and variation in phonemes. In addition to the main vocabulary sets there are two others which raise the status of one interlocutor in relation to another. The first, labeled *krámá inggil* (KI), literally ‘high Javanese’, consist of words and terms of address that honor or elevate the addressee and his or her actions (Wolff and Poedjosoedarmo 1982). The second set, called *krámá andhap* (KA), consists of words that humble the speaker and their actions.

Table 1 *Examples of words and affixes indexical of Javanese speech levels*

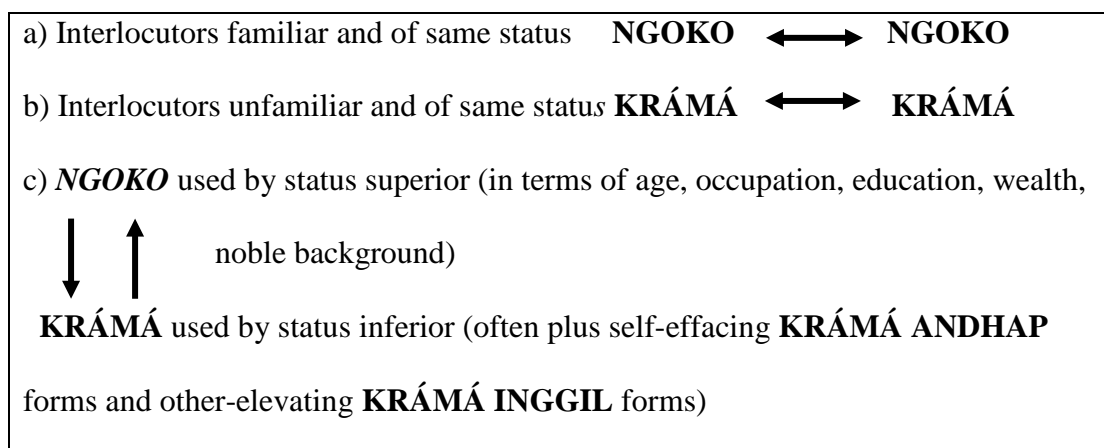
Krámá	Madyá	Ngoko	Gloss
meniko	niki	iki	this
	niku	kuwi	that
	niko	kaé	that over there
menopo	nopo	opo	what
wonten	enten	ono, nèng	there is/are, in/at/on
badhé	ajeng	arep	will/wish/intend

Adapted from Wolff and Poedjosoedarmo (1982:30)

What makes the study of Javanese so fascinating to many scholars is the asymmetrical exchanges of the type shown in Diagram 1. In later analysis, Errington (1998) has noted that

such distinctions are often framed in terms of *básá* “polite” and *kasar* “basic”: with the former encompassing M, K, KI, and KA forms and the later covering N forms. In this work *ngoko* is described as the language of the self, thought, and as the language used among familiars and friends. It is also used in alternation with *básá* to indicate that the speaker is modeling other’s speech or thought (Errington 1998). With a vocabulary of around one thousand words, *básá* forms have been described as the language used among strangers (e.g. Bax 1974; Errington 1985; Smith-Hefner 1983; Wolff and Poedjosoedarmo 1982), the language of formal speeches and ceremony, and that used for conversations amongst or to nobility (e.g. Errington 1985; 1988; Wolff and Poedjosoedarmo 1982:17-39), and the language which presupposes a different type of social relationship than inferred by NJ usage (e.g. Errington 1998). What seems common in these studies is that it is not an all or nothing affair with participants using just enough forms from these sets to achieve particular interactional stances.

Diagram 1 Symmetrical and Asymmetrical Exchanges of Javanese



While the work of Bax (1974), Smith-Hefner (1983), Errington (1985), and Goebel (2010) suggests that the types of symmetrical exchanges shown in a) and b) of Diagram 1 may be just as common as the more widely known and studied asymmetrical exchanges in c),

nevertheless the pattern in c) – which is based on Solo and Yogyakarta usage patterns – has become widely known through involvement in one-to-many participation frameworks. In the 1990s – the time when many of the participants in the current study engaged in schooling and tertiary education - examples of pattern c were not hard to find if one listened to the national radio, RRI, or national TV broadcaster, TVRI. In materials used in schools in Java other examples could easily be found (e.g. Soeparto D and Soetarno 1990; Soetarno 1989). Typically these models didn't include the use of Indonesian, which helped to emphasize the indexical relationship between ethnic languages, such as Javanese, and intimate contexts where relational practice are common. This contrasts with the indexical relationships between Indonesian and unfamiliarity, lack of intimacy, knowledge, modernity, the practice of teaching, governance, and so on.

In concluding this section it also needs also to be pointed out that linguistic practice is part of a wider semiotic system. This system includes ideologies that link ideal persons with linguistic exchange. For example, the ability to use KA, KI and K forms is also an index of what type of person the user is, with someone who has mastery over these forms being seen as more *alus* “polite” or “refined” than a speaker with less mastery with the other extreme being someone who is *kasar* “unrefined” because they only have competence to use N forms (Geertz 1960: 248–259). There are also ideologies about reciprocity whereby those who mutually exchange *ngoko* Javanese or those who asymmetrically exchange *ngoko* for *krámá* expect or create contexts which presuppose some type of debt (Dewey 1978). Often these debts are repaid – or more precisely – partly repaid through other non-linguistic practices, such as labor in the home or at work, assistance to friends in need, patronage, and so on. In this sense, different features of Javanese also have indexical relationships with other social practices. Thus, the usage of different features can potentially invoke these types of

relationships, a point which participants in the current study made during a number of interviews.

Fieldwork and widely circulating ideologies about leadership

My data was gathered during fieldwork carried out from September 2003 until February 2004 in a government department within Central Java's provincial bureau of regional autonomy, which was located in Semarang, the capital city of Central Java. I initially visited this department each day for around half a day (alternating between mornings and afternoons) to identify who might be willing to participate and where and when I might make recordings. During this initial period I also talked with staff about when was my presence least likely to interrupt their everyday duties, which turned out to be the last hour of working day. Accordingly, I visited this office a few times per week during the last hour of work.

While I was well aware that establishing relationships in this office over a short period might prove more difficult than in the neighborhoods I had previously worked, the task of establishing rapport and trust was also further complicated by the rapid political transition that had been underway in Indonesian since 1998, when the New Order regime ended. This transition included fiscal and political decentralization, the running of free and fair elections (with a presidential election slated for August 2004), the lifting of media censorship, and so on (Aspinall and Fealy 2003). During this time ideas about what represented corrupt practices and thus who could be categorized as corrupt was being negotiated in the media as part of the ongoing election campaign. When it came to corruption bureaucrats and politicians alike were frequently in the media gaze and indeed for historical reasons bureaucrats were often directly linked with politics and politicians. This was so because during the New Order period all bureaucrats had to be members of and vote for the government party, *GOLKAR*. To get some sense of just how often these ideas were repeated

in the public sphere we can look at the front page stories of the Semarang based newspaper, *Suara Merdeka*, which according to one source has over 100,000 subscribers (Ririn Risnawati and Sri Syamsiyah Lestari Sjafiie 2012: 285). From August 2003 front page stories about corruption increased from around 3% of all stories to a peak of 22.6% in December, before falling to 6% by February 2004.

While these figures do not provide a sense of how ideas about leadership were represented – this is an ongoing project – I have been fortunate enough to locate some ethnographies of leadership in Java which can help fill this gap (Antlöv 1995; Antlöv and Cederroth 1994). This work suggests that there are five types of leaders and leadership practice, though typically they are not mutually exclusive and a common theme is the link between power and leadership and the idea that if a leader needs to demonstrate power or explicitly give directions, then this is a sign of powerlessness and inability to lead. Of particular relevance here are two types of practices. The first is where leadership practice is characterized by the buying of loyalty through patron-client relations. In this case, leaders' directions are followed because of prior or promised financial help and the more general generosity of a leader in their dealings with members of a particular community (e.g. Antlöv 1994).

The second type of leadership practice came to prominence during the 1966-1998 period, known as the New Order period, through the spread of the state-sanctioned ideology (*Pancasila*), which was taught in schools and implemented as training for bureaucrats (Mulder 1994). This ideology built upon long-standing reverence for old-age, parents, and religious teachers whereby children and other novices had a moral and religious obligation to be obedient and follow advice and directions of those who are older (Mulder 1994: 59-60). During this time leaders were known for their ability to give *perintah halus* (Antlöv 1995: 8), which is literally “refined and polite directives” where the “refined” aspect refers to a type

of “indirect or off-the record utterance” and the “polite” refers to the use of *krámá* like language. As Mulder (1994) points out, this style of leadership came to prominence precisely because the state also had control of the means of educating its population.

These above-mentioned circumstances and the fact that, Ismail, the head of department was promoted and moved to another location in January 2004 meant that I was unable to make recordings in settings other than two staff meetings and a farewell party. Even so, these three sessions allowed me to make five-and-a-half hours of audio-video recordings and I was also able to record ten hours of interviews, and participate in and observe many face-to-face conversations in the office setting over my five month stay. After making these recordings I needed to transcribe and indicate on the transcript which language was which. This was done using information from a ‘native speaking’ research assistant, Javanese and Indonesian dictionaries (e.g. Echols and Shadily 1992; Prawiroatmojo 1989; Prawiroatmojo 1993; Sudaryanto 1991), my own knowledge of Javanese and Indonesian, and post-recording interviews with participants using transcripts of talk from the two recorded meetings as stimulus for discussions about language usage.

Local ideologies about leadership and language

Here I will focus on ideologies about leadership and interaction that were gleaned from my observations, conversations and recorded interviews with Ismail and his staff whose actual talk I will examine in the next section. I’ll start by pointing out that Ismail had a detailed philosophy on how to do leadership, which included the need to clearly communicate his role as a facilitator, innovator, and motivator rather than as someone who would work at the technical coal face. He was especially concerned about creating an environment in which staff enjoyed their work. He noted that in practical terms this played out in a number of ways, including: joint decision making in meetings and elsewhere; through encouraging a relaxed

and humor-filled work place; through his continuous positioning of his staff as experts by asking for solutions to problems, and then positively and often publically (in meetings) evaluating the solutions offered by his staff. Ismail pointed out that in doing so he would increase his staffs' confidence in their abilities, while also increasing their productivity, and loyalty to him. In this sense, positioning and public positive evaluations were seen as performing some important relational work.

While positioning staff as knowledgeable experts in meetings and other office contexts was an important aspect of relational work, this leadership practice was part of a larger set of strategies. Some of these other strategies very much mirror the patron-client practices noted in the previous section. In an interview recorded in early November 2003 Ismail pointed out that it was extremely important to look after the financial needs and general well-being of his staff and their families. He saw this aspect as one important practice that helped to differentiate leaders from bosses. It is also important to note here that patronage was not just about directly giving money or a meal, but it was also the provision of opportunities to earn extra money. These opportunities were quite varied and included: offers to teach professional development courses that Ismail was involved in delivering, standing in for Ismail to give keynote addresses and receive the honorarium, paid professional development (where staff could save some of the living away from home allowance or enjoy facilities and food that they normally wouldn't at home), or being invited to work overtime on special paid projects.

Ismail also noted that in the case of special paid projects, he would involve other public servants from outside his immediate section as a way of enticing his own staff to become involved. As he went on to note, all of these opportunities to earn extra money were also important opportunities for their own professional development into leaders themselves. In addition, he noted that at meetings he would often tie his staff's work with their own personal

financial needs. For example, in recounting one meeting that I recorded, he noted that the jovial title of the meeting “Will we have Lebaran or not” referred to the need to tie up all projects and their budgets before Lebaran (the end of the Islamic fasting month). This process was linked with staffs’ own financial needs because as a section they needed to know how much money there would be for bonuses which were to be paid to employees at Lebaran. Here we also see the co-occurring and inter-related nature of relational and transactional work.

Like his contemporaries in other departments within this bureau and his sub-heads, Ismail emphasized the importance of using different languages for relational and transactional work, though his ideas diverged from the opinions of his staff. Ismail often noted that he would use *krámá* Javanese to his staff when asking for help, when giving directives or when trying to position them as experts. In contrast, he noted that he would typically use *ngoko* Javanese or fragments mixed with Indonesian when talking with his staff, when trying to index friendly relations or when providing negative feedback to staff who had continued to under-perform despite a number of warnings.

In sum, Ismail had a very complex philosophy about the doing of leadership which included the use of patronage, the provision of training opportunities for staff, the need to provide positive feedback, the need for humor, and nuanced ideas about how to do much of this transactional and relational work by moving between Javanese and Indonesian. How Ismail actually uses language is the topic of the next section. I should also point out that in contrast to the distinctions made around different types of *krámá* Javanese discussed earlier, members of this bureau lumped *krámá inggil* and *krámá andhap* together and typically referred to them as *krámá* Javanese, which was contrasted with *ngoko* Javanese.

Doing leadership

At the time of this research Ismail had been the head of one section within the bureau of regional autonomy for nearly three years. Over this period it seemed that a number of alternation practices had become normalized to the extent that they did not attract any participant commentary in situated interaction. Typically, these normalized alternation practices involved alternation from Indonesian to Javanese (both *ngoko* and *krámá*) or Javanese to Indonesian within one intonational unit: that is, where an utterance was bounded by silence. In my transcripts I use numbers in brackets to indicate pause, periods to indicate micro-pauses, equals (=) sign to indicate latching, parenthesis ([]) to indicate the beginning of overlapping talk, a series of colons represents vowel elongation, and three question marks inside parenthesis indicate an untranscribable word. In Ismail's talk it was quite common for Javanese to be doing the bulk of the relational work, although there were many instances where Javanese was also used to do transactional work or indeed both transactional and relational work simultaneously. Ismail used fragments of Javanese when talking directly to individual staff as well as when addressing a whole group of staff. Ismail had by far the most turns at talk and his turns were also typically very long. As we might expect of a boss, much of his talk contained evaluations, directives, and suggested courses of action. While Ismail alternated between Javanese and Indonesian in interaction with his staff, this type of alternation was rarely reciprocated by his staff in meetings.

The next three excerpts are extracted from a staff meeting that I recorded in December 2003. This meeting was held on a Sunday morning and was called at short notice by Ismail after he had been asked by his boss to check final preparations for an important event that his department was coordinating the following Tuesday. Eleven of Pak Ismail's fourteen staff were present. Excerpt 1 represents the official start of the meeting.

Excerpt 1 Chairing a meeting and indexing respect

Ismail

1	oke . a: . baiklah teman teman . kita	Okay, ah, right then friends, we [will]
2	mulai aja (0.8) jadi: ringkas kata saya	just begin. So my first words are
3	pertama . <u>MATUR NUWUN</u> atas	<u>THANKS</u> friends for your attendance,
4	kehadiran teman teman sekalian . di	in the middle of our day off we can, ah,
5	tengah tengah hari libur ini kita bisa	meet and get together. Ah, especially in
6	(0.3) a: ketemu . kumpul (0.7) a:	relation to the preparations for our, ah,
7	khususnya yang terkait dengan persiapan	large task [which is] to prepare for the
8	. a: tugas besar kita (0.8) untuk	facilitation of the [meeting] of the
9	mempersiapkan pelaksanaan BKKBN	National Coordinating Body for Family
10	(1.0)	Planning.

On line 3 of Ex. 1 we see Ismail using *matur nuwun* “thanks” which is an utterance stereotypically associated with self-deprecating *krámá andhap* (bold underlined caps). While Ismail knew and used the Indonesian equivalent in other contexts, he nevertheless regularly used this formulaic utterance throughout this and other meetings, both to thank the whole group of staff for attendance and their efforts, and as the final sequence of evaluating and thanking individual staff for their efforts. While saying thanks to staff has been regularly shown to be relational work in the leadership studies cited earlier, the use of *krámá andhap* (KA) to do this also does further important relational work by indexing Ismail’s respect for his staff: a point he noted in a number of interviews as well.

The self-deprecating practice of giving KA doesn’t sit with either local ideologies or earlier descriptions and prescriptions about usage, especially the idea that respect is given to those of higher status rather than the reverse. Even so, situationally elevating his staff in this

way put staff in his linguistic debt while complementing the transactional work done in Indonesian (e.g. letting staff know the reason for this meeting). That is to say, by giving respect he could also trope on the associated ideology that something needed to be reciprocated: in this case staff practices such as finishing final preparations for the event they will be hosting. In a sense, using KA helped frame the meeting as one where reciprocity was expected and indeed in interviews a number of staff noted that Ismail used *krámá* (K) forms in this way so that staff would comply with his wishes.

Another feature commonly used by Ismail to do similar relational and transactional work was his use of other-elevating *krámá inggil* (KI) Javanese (bold double underline caps), especially the second person pronoun, *panjenengan*. In addition to using this for individuals he also addressed his staff in general with this term by following the term with *semua* “all”, as seen in Excerpt 2. This talk occurred about half an hour into the meeting and after Ismail reminded staff that they really need to be prepared and do a good job because these were the explicit instructions from his boss.

Excerpt 2 Addressing everyone while indexing respect, closeness, and informality

Ismail

1	yang perlu . a.: <u>PANJENENGAN</u>	What <u>YOU</u> all, ah, need to know, is that
2	semua ketahui (0.8) target final	I hope that our final internal sectional
3	persiapan internal kita bagian (0.5) baik	preparations, both administration and
4	itu administratif . maupun koordinasi .	coordination are all finalized today. Why
5	saya berharap hari ini . semua sudah	does this need to be finalized today?
6	final (0.5) kenapa hari ini semua sudah	Because on Monday we will be all busy
7	final (0.5) karena besok senen (0.6) kita	or working with the team from the
8	tuh . disibukkan atau kita akan	central government, right? It is

9	terkonsentrasi dengan tim pusat (0.9)	physically not possible to divide up
10	kan begitu (1.4) tidak mungkin secara	[tasks then].
11	pisik . itu dibagi bagi . nek pikiran .	If [we] think “maybe tomorrow we can
12	mungkin esok iso dibagi bagi (0.6) ah	divide up tasks, ah, we can have a
13	kita rapat dengan tim pusat sambil	meeting with the central government
14	mikirké a: persiapan yang lain . tapi	team while thinking about, ah, other
15	secara fisik itu tidak mungkin .	preparations”, but this is physically impossible.

As with Ex. 1, the use of a Javanese second person pronoun stereotypically associated with elevating and giving respect to the addressee is not a matter of not knowing the Indonesian equivalent. This is so because Ismail actually used other second person pronouns in this and other meetings. An example of this can be found with his use of *teman teman* “friends” on line 1 of Ex. 1. As with Ex. 1, here Ismail is situationally elevating his staff to do both relational and transactional work. He does this by continuing to keep his staff in his linguistic debt. This debt continues to trope on the ideology of reciprocity that is associated with asymmetrical exchanges of this type whereby what is hoped to be reciprocated here is work on final preparations.

As we move through this talk we see that Ismail also uses some features stereotypically associated with *ngoko* Javanese (in bold font) on lines 11 and 13 when speaking to all present. As with his use of *krámá* features, it seems that these *ngoko* (N) fragments are also helping to do both relational and transactional work. In relational terms, the use of N aligns with indexical associations between N and interaction among familiars and intimates and general informality or unguarded speech. In using these features, Ismail thus creates while reproducing an intimate, familiar, and informal context. In transactional terms, this usage

tropes on two ideologies, both of which go in the same direction of achieving transactional outcomes. The first ideology is that every day social practices and obligations associated with those who exchange N include helping out when required. The second relates to the ideology that superiors can speak in N to inferiors and this is part of a larger relationship where a superior asks for things to be done and gives some sort of patronage in return. In this case, patronage will be an honorarium given to all those attending the event being planned, including the staff here.

In addition to regularly using N features in this way, Ismail also often recounted proverbs or his experiences using N fragments. While he addressed all of his staff on these occasions, by far the most common way in which Ismail used N and K features was when he was directly addressing his staff. This was typically achieved through reference to their name, through gaze, through their sequential place in a conversation, or through a combination of these, as in Excerpt 3. Excerpt 3 is taken from early in the November meeting, the first one I had officially attended and recorded. The talk occurs after a discussion about a meeting of heads at the tourism bureau that day, which is followed by Ismail questioning Yono about what time the meeting starts.

Excerpt 3 Addressing individual staff in a meeting using Javanese

Ismail

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | itu undangnyanya: kemarin . sudah | Has the invitation from yesterday been |
| 2 | diturunkan <i>pak</i> nda (0.3) | sent [to us] or not <i>Sir</i> ? |

Yono

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 3 | saya cek ya dulu <i>pak</i> . jam (PINTEN?) | I'll check first <i>Sir</i> , (WHAT?) time. |
| 4 | (0.3) (while getting up and walking | |

5 around the table)

Ismail

6 ya.: nggak . nanti gini aja *mas* (while Yeah, no, later, lets just do this *Older*
7 signalling with his hand) = *brother*,

Yono

8 = (stops walking
9 around the table and moves back to his
10 seat) =

Ismail

11 = nanti a: *mas* karno kan nanti later *Older brother* Karno will have a
12 kesempatan pertama melakukan . ada chance to carry out the tasks associated
13 yang terkait dengan subag satu . with Section 1, YOU support [him]. That
14 PANJENENGAN supor (1.0) rapat itu . meeting, is a continuation meeting?
15 rapat lanjutan? (.2)

Yono

16 **INGGIH** = **YES.**

Ismail

17 = yang pariwisata = The tourism [department].

Yono

18 = **INGGIH** **YES.**

19 =

Ismail

20 = tolong *aku* diwakili = Please represent *me*.

Yono

21 = nods head = Yes.

Ismail

22 = nanti Later [at] nine o'clock, do the follow up

23 jam sembilan ditindaklanjuti **ra opo opo** [meeting] **that will be alright.**

24 (0.3)

Excerpt 3 offers a number of interesting examples of Ismail using different features of Javanese to directly address individual staff while also changing from doing transactional work to relational work. Starting with his use of second person pronouns, we see that on line 2 Ismail addresses Hariyono with the kin term *pak* “sir/father”, then *mas* “older brother” (line 6)², which is then followed by the other elevating KI form *panjenengan* on line 14. Each of these terms of address are used in conjunction with transactional talk, such as a request “Has the invitation from yesterday been sent [to us] or not Sir” (lines 1-2) advice “Yeah, no, later, let’s just do this Older brother” (line 1), and a directive “you support [him]” (line 14). Even so, as with my earlier analysis, it is harder to separate the transactional from the relational once we turn to the use of Javanese fragments.

In starting to interpret this talk we can draw on Ismail’s own comments after the meeting where he noted that he used *pak* to index respect towards the addressee in their role as a bureaucrat, and *mas* to index a type of solidary or family-like relationship. This reflexive commentary seems to fit with usage here and elsewhere and it also helps account for why *mas* is used to address and refer to both those who are younger (Yono) and older (Karno on line 11). In a sense, while the association of *mas* with “older” are not present, the association

with familial social relations is retained. In transactional terms Ismail's talk in line 1-2 seems to get an immediate response from Yono, although it appears that Ismail did not wish for Yono to go and physically check what time the meeting started (re his talk on line 6-7). In line with Ismail's own explanations and his staff's explanations about the use of *panjenengan* noted earlier, here Ismail appears to be putting one staff member, Yono, in his debt. This debt continues to trope on the ideology of reciprocity that is associated with asymmetrical exchanges of this type whereby what is hoped to be reciprocated here is support for Karno. Taking a sequential look at Yono's responses allows us to see Yono starting to repay this debt through the use of the *krámá* form *inggih* "yes" (bold caps) on lines 16 and 18. If we fast-forward into the meeting, we also see Yono reciprocating by supporting his sub-section boss, Karno, through reporting on the progress of preparations. We also see that this type of asymmetrical exchange seems to be characteristic of exchanges between Ismail and Yono where Ismail can and does use N to Yono, but Yono typically uses Indonesian or Indonesian and K.

The indexing of respect as an inter-personal stance is temporary because from line 20 Ismail starts to use fragments stereotypically associated with N. This potentially produces two stances vis-à-vis N's indexical relationship with both symmetrical exchanges in familial or intimate settings and asymmetrical exchanges in settings where there are differences in status. In reciprocity terms too, this usage tropes on two ideologies, although both go in the same direction of achieving transactional outcomes. The first ideology is that every day social practices and obligations associated with those who exchange N include helping out when required. The second relates to ideology that superiors can speak in N to inferiors (and expect to be spoken to in K). Asymmetrical exchange is part of a larger relationship where a superior asks for things to be done and gives some sort of patronage in return. In this case, patronage

will be potentially a future honorarium given to Yono when he attends other functions on Ismail's behalf (see Ex. 4).

In Ex. 3 Ismail changes his stance from one of respectful social relations to one of friendly social relations. This signswitching occurs as part of an overall asymmetrical pattern of exchange. This pattern of using different Javanese fragments to index different stances within a wider pattern of asymmetrical exchange was a constant feature of talk between Ismail and his staff. If we fast-forward from this excerpt to around forty-five minutes into the meeting we again see this asymmetrical pattern. In this talk Yono not only responds in Indonesian and K (but no N), but he also follows Ismail's directive from Ex. 3 by excusing himself from the meeting. Here we also see Ismail again using an utterance that has fragments of K and N when directly talking with Yono, in this case to make a joke about an honorarium. This talk follows two previous sequences of humor which involved a number of staff and invoked laughter from all.

Excerpt 4 Mixing krámá, ngoko, humor and promises of patronage

Yono

- 1 sekaligus (0.3) anu pak (0.2) mohon ijin At the same time, um Sir [I] request
2 sesuai dengan [(???) pak permission as earlier discussed with you.

Ismail

- 3 [oké oké = OK, OK.

Yono

- 4 = ke pariwisata [to go] to the tourist [department meeting]
5 (0.7) (gets up to leave)

Ismail

6 ya (0.7) **MONGGO** (1.4) **nek nek ono** Yes. **PLEASE GO AHEAD. If, if, there**
7 **honoré** (0.3) **koyo wingi meneh yo mas** **is another honorarium, like the other**
8 ya [**day yeah brother yeah.**

Rus

9 [laughs (followed by laughter from all)]

Ismail

10 [**aku dikandani engko bagi loro** (said **Let me know, later [we] will divide it**
11 while laughing) **into two.**

There are a number of interesting points to be made about the talk in Ex. 4. First we see Yono follows Ismail's earlier directive in N about representing him at a meeting appears to be followed (lines 1-2). We also see that Ismail continues to directly address Yono with N and K (lines 6-7 and 10) to make a joke about honorarium. While the joke is that at this meeting there will not be an honorarium and that Ismail does not ever ask for a share, one of the underlying messages of Ismail's talk here seems to be that following directives does attract patronage, as in the past (e.g. *koyo wingi* "as in the past" on line 7). In this sense, joking does relational work, while also setting up the conditions for future transactional work (via promises of patronage). That this talk is also carried out in K and N also invites further interpretation.

As with my earlier interpretations of Ismail's *krámá* usage, here the use of *monggo* (line 6) indexes a stance of respect which also produces a need for some type of reciprocity in the future. While Ismail's talk is not literally doing transactional work via instructions, the use of N here continues to potentially index two stances vis-à-vis N's indexical relationship

with both relational and transactional work because the use of N here continues to trope on two ideologies. The first is the indexical relationships between everyday social practices and obligations (e.g. helping out) that are associated with N usage. The second is the ideology that superiors give some sort of patronage for deference behavior. If we look back to lines 1-2 and 4 we see that Yono continues to use Indonesian, while Ismail continues to use N. The continuation of asymmetrical patterns of exchange thus seems to help frame interaction as hierarchical. This framing thus also indexes an asymmetrical context that is associated with the provision of patronage in return.

So far I have examined how the use of N and K figure in transactional and relational talk, including talk that seems to have produced organizational outcomes and individual actions. There were, of course, a number of instances where Ismail's prior leadership practices did not seem to produce desired outcomes or actions. In the last two excerpts I will follow how Ismail deals with these types of cases. These two excerpts are taken from the Sunday morning meeting that Ex. 1 was extracted. Excerpt 5 starts around fifteen minutes into the meeting and is preceded by Karno's summary of what has been done and what needs to be done.

Excerpt 5 Using ngoko to invite a tardy progress report and to mute criticism

Ismail

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | <i>oké</i> <u>MATUR NUWUN</u> (1.0) | <i>Okay</i> <u>THANKS</u> [for the report]. |
| 2 | yang lain barangkali (0.7) dengan | Maybe there is someone else, with your |
| 3 | pengalamannya masing masing (0.5) tapi | own respective experiences. But at the very |
| 4 | paling tidak (0.5) (points to wall were | least, if it is the screen like the wall there |
| 5 | LCD is currently projecting) nek layaré | has to be a [better] experience. |

6 **setembok kuwi kuduné ono sing keroso**

7 (1.94) (smiles & looks over to Mugi and

8 Karno first then continues to Rus before

9 then turning gaze to LCD projection on

10 wall).

Rus

10 ya **pak** begini (0.4) saya siap menjawab Yes it's like this **Sir**. I am ready to answer

11 pertanyaan **pak** Ismail tentang layer **pak** . your question **Mr**. Ismail about [the] screen

12 saya sudah dua kali? (0.8) a: ke biro **Sir**. I've already twice, a: to the general

13 umum dan itu nota dinas sudah ditanda bureau and the memo was signed by **Mr**.

14 tangani **pak** trisno . tapi sampai Trisno. But up until now, there hasn't been

15 sekarang? (0.8) belum ada realisasinya . any progress. And I've already asked for

16 dan saya pernah minta tolong **pak** **Mr**. Muliono's help as well, about "**what is**

17 muliono juga (0.7) untuk . **piyé carané** **the way to** get the screen". As it turns out

18 **iso** realisasi meja layer itu (0.8) ternyata the general bureau until even now hasn't

19 biro umum sampai sekarang pun belum . yet, hasn't yet replied **Sir**, thanks.

20 belum ada jawaban **pak** (0.8) makasih .

Ismail

21 **rencanané . terus solusiné piyé** (0.6) **Your plan, and what about a solution.**

22 (looks at Rus)

Ismails signswitching from Indonesian (on lines 1-4) to N (lines 5-7) changes the participation framework from one of addressing all of his staff to one where Rus was being indirectly invited to respond. In addition to transactional work, the use of N here also seems

to be doing relational work. This is so because the use of N continues to index two potential contexts – the first relating to intimate contexts and the other hierarchical – together with the interpersonal obligations associated with persons involved in such contexts. This interpretation of N usage can be further fleshed out with recourse to participants' own post-conversation interpretations of their talk.

Ismail noted that in this particular section his use of N was a strategy of helping him remind Rus in a friendly non-threatening way about his previously assigned task of organizing an LCD screen, and then to maintain a 'friendly' frame and encourage solutions from him when further pursuing the issue (line 21). As he noted, had he done this in Indonesian it may have been interpreted as a criticism of Rus in front of colleagues, which may have embarrassed him and lead to an uncooperative or inefficient relationship in the future. According to Rus he interpreted Pak Ismail's use of N as a way of being friendly, while Rus' colleagues noted that Ismail's use of N was a way of gently reminding Rus about his task. Note also that Rus does not reciprocate N usage on line 10, but uses Indonesian. Thus as with his interaction with Yono, exchange patterns are asymmetrical insofar as that Ismail appears to have rights to address Rus with N while Rus typically does not have rights to address Ismail in N, though as we can see on line 17-18 he does use N when representing past interaction with other staff. In this sense, the overall frame is one of hierarchical social relations.

Below I present one final excerpt which provides another case where the stance indexed by N seems to clearly align with its association with hierarchical social relations. Excerpt 6 follows directly on from Ex. 5, although to save some space I have deleted twelve turns that occurred between Rus and Dono, Ismail and Rus, and some comments made by Gatot and Mugi. The content primarily being an explanation of the steps Rus has taken including approaching the public works department for assistance and the shape of the LCD screen.

Excerpt 6 Using ngoko to give directions and mute criticism

Ismail

- 1 = oké kita kita nyimpang sedikit . dari Okay we'll we'll change directions a little.
2 dari materi . tapi terkait dengan layer from the material . but linked with **the**
3 **kuwi** (0.9) a: . layarnya itu bentuknya screen (0.9) A:: the screen's form is **from**
4 **seko duwur ning sor opo ning sor top to bottom or from bottom to top**
5 **ning duwur** (???) *mas* rus' = (???) *Brother* Rus?

Rus

- 6 = a: bawah A: bottom to
7 ke atas . top.

Mugi

- 8 narik ya geser geser (0.5) Pull it and shove it around yeah.

Ismail

- 9 ah tuh . pengembangan' (0.5) *lah* Ah there we are, a solution. *Now* the
10 prinsipnya begini . a: . konfirmasi **ning** principle is this, ah, confirm **at** [the]
11 biro umum **meneh** . **nek ketoké urung** general bureau **again**. **If it looks like**
12 **ono**: . tanda tanda jaman (1.2) **takoké** **there isn't any**, sign of a date, **ask outside**
13 **jobo ning mebeleré** . **pesenké** . **at a furniture shop**. **Order it**. A basic
14 sederhana **waé** . **ora sah sing apik apik** [table] **will do**. [Its] **not necessary for a**
15 . **pokoké mejo** . **kaé iso di::pasang** = **good** [one]. **As long as it's a table, it can**
be attached.

Rus

- 16 = **YES**.
17 **INGGIH** =

Ismail

18 = **ono rodané** . *aku* setuju **With wheels. I agree. At the most**
 19 (0.8) **wis larang larangé** . paling . **expensive, at the most three hundred to**
 20 **telung atus tekan limang atus =** **five hundred.**

Rus

21 = *iya* **Yes, yes, but BEGGING YOUR**
 22 *iya* . cuma **NUWUN SEWU** *pak* **PARDON Sir, it can't be done very**
 23 (Ismail looks at Rus) . waktunya tidak **quickly (??? ??? ???).**
 24 bisa cepat sekali (??? ??? ???) (smiles)
 25 =

Ismail

26 = **yo kuwi** . **sing** penting **kuduné =** **Yeah that's right . what's important [is**
 there] **must.**

Rus

27 =
 28 **INGGIH =** **YES.**

Ismail

29 = **ono ono aksoné** (looks to **be be action.**
 30 Rus and back to wall) lah =

Rus

31 = **INGGIH =** **YES.**

In Ex. 6 we see that Ismail uses both N and Indonesian to index a number of stances. On lines 1-3 we see that, as with earlier talk, Indonesian is primarily used to do transactional work (in this case officially setting aside meeting time for a side issue). The use of the N fragment *kuwi* “that” helps to continue to index the talk to all as informal and intimate. From

line 3 onwards, however, Ismail uses N to again directly address Rus, this time assisted by use of the kin term *mas*. While intimacy continues to be indexed through the use of N from line 3, the relational aspect of this interaction seems to become fronted through Rus' recognition of the talk as "instructions" by way of his using the K form *inggih* "yes" from line 17 onwards. It is also interesting to point out here that in contrast to his earlier talk with staff where typically he used just N fragments, here there is a lot more N. In a sense, where Ismail needs to be more careful not to upset staff, he uses more N as an index of friendliness.

Conclusion

There are now many fine-grained studies of leadership talk that show the importance of both relational and transactional talk in the doing of leadership. Even so, there has been far less work done in settings characterized by complexity and linguistic diversity, especially where leaders can and do move between different sets of semiotic resources to do relational and transactional work. In this paper I have tried to fill this gap by looking at how one Indonesian bureaucrat, Ismail, uses signs stereotypically associated with Javanese and Indonesian to enact leadership. In drawing upon interviews, observations, and recordings of talk gathered during five months of fieldwork in 2003-2004, I was especially concerned with how this bureaucrat used semiotic fragments of Indonesian and Javanese to do relational and transactional work. I focused my analysis upon talk from a series of meetings and I found that fragments of Javanese were used to index numerous interpersonal stances as well as to simultaneously do both transactional and relational work.

In contrast to both local and widely circulating ideologies about Javanese usage, Ismail used self-effacing and other-elevating *krámá* forms with his staff to index respect for their technical expertise and to thank them for their efforts. As Dewey (1978) pointed out in the 1970s, honorification practices also require some sort of reciprocal behavior, whether it be

immediately or sometime in the future. In the case at hand, Ismail's honorification of his staff was a type of patronage which helped to build a debt (which was also built up through other patronage practices). Staff repaid this debt through the carrying out of directives and daily tasks associated with their post. In this sense, the use of Javanese did both relational and transactional work.

Ismail used many more *ngoko* Javanese forms than *krámá* in his talk with staff and this usage also simultaneously did relational and transactional work. He often used these forms to index a friendly or collegial workplace when addressing all staff, while when used directly to individual staff *ngoko* forms were used to index interpersonal stances, such as friendship or to veil criticism. As with the use of *krámá* forms, this usage also helped to build debts by way of *ngoko*'s indexical relationship with social practices associated with *ngoko* usage, such as the provision of labor or help on certain tasks. While Ismail's use of Javanese seemed to contrast with both local and widely circulating ideologies about usage, especially ideas that superiors should give *ngoko* to staff while staff should use *krámá* forms, nevertheless his repeated use of *ngoko* in this way and his staff responses not only showed a continuity with this ideology but it also helped to regiment hierarchical social relations. This is so because Ismail appeared to have the rights to use *ngoko* and Indonesian with his staff in meetings while they only ever replied with Indonesian or Indonesian and *krámá* forms.

While interviews with Ismail about his language use showed that signswitching held a special place in his leadership repertoire, it should be remembered that this was just one among the many tools he used to enact leadership and to do relational and transactional work to ensure that his staff worked to their fullest potential. Holmes and Marra (2006: 133) have observed that effective leadership is measured by promotion and peer assessment: Ismail seemed to score high on both accounts. His leadership practices not only achieved the important business of the bureau, but they seemed to endear him to his staff, who upon his

promotion to another department across town threw him a farewell party with many shedding tears and later noting that their new boss was unlikely to fill Ismail's shoes.

Notes

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2. I should also point out that while the kin terms *mas* and the term for self-reference *aku* (line 15) is now quite widespread and not exclusively associated with Javanese, both still have origins in Javanese systems of reference (see e.g. Errington 1985). To signal this ambiguity in provenance I have used bold italics.

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