

# The Influence of *Unggah – Ungguh* as Javanese Culture in *Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa (GITJ) Kudus*' Communication Processes for Sustaining Local Social-Environment

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**Abstract.** *Unggah - ungguh* is a culture of communication among Javanese. The use of *unggah - ungguh* in *Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa Kudus (GITJ)* serves as a unique guide of communication. This study is a qualitative descriptive study with an ethnography communication approach which focuses on the use of *unggah - ungguh* as a guide for communication among the priest, church servants and congregation during the Sunday service. This study aims to analyze the influence of *unggah - ungguh* in *GITJ Kudus*' communication process. The data was collected from observation and interview methods. The result of this study shows that *unggah - ungguh* as Javanese culture influences the communication process in *GITJ Kudus*. The communication rule is still preserved for sustaining the local social-environment.

## 1 Introduction

Indonesia admits the existence of religions among the citizens where it has its own ritual or sacrament as an obligation for the congregation. A religion that is being embraced by human is attached with the local society's culture due to the use of language as its communication tool as language is a part of culture in the society. There are various languages spoken by Indonesian where each language has its own politeness degree and rule that are still preserved until now.

Javanese language, one of the languages spoken in Indonesia, consists of politeness and caste degree between the speakers. In this language, there is a term called as *unggah – ungguh*. Among the Javanese, it is often translated into the act of choosing proper language degree of politeness in communicating.

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Javanese *Krama* language is the highest language degree of politeness and is usually used by the younger person to the older person as an act of respecting. Javanese *Madya* language is the second degree and is in the middle between the three language degrees of politeness and it is usually used by peers. Meanwhile, Javanese *Ngoko* language is the lowest language degree of politeness in Javanese and is usually used by the older people to the younger people such as parents to their children [1].

One of the religions in Indonesia is Christian, which obligates its congregation to attend Sunday service. *Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa* (GITJ) Kudus in Kudus Regency, Central Java, is one of the few churches that still preserve the use of Javanese language and Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* as the communication guide in its services. The uniqueness of this church is that the priest who has the highest position as the leader of the church uses Javanese *Krama* language in delivering the sermon to the congregation. Not only that, the priest also chooses and changes the language degree of politeness into Javanese *Ngoko* language in certain situations. The priest has a strong reason behind the choice of changing the language degree of politeness that will be discussed in this paper. With the use of Javanese language and the Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* in various aspects of social life such as in GITJ Kudus' Sunday service, makes Javanese language and Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* worth to be studied and preserved.

## 2 Previous Studies

The author found some similar topic from the previous researchers. First, Siringoringo [2] did a research about ethnography communication in children Sunday service in *Huria Kristen Batak Protestan Maranatha* in Payung Sekaki district. Second, Nida [3] did a research about the shift of *unggah – ungguh* culture among young generation in Kudus regency. Third, Putri & Subiyanto [4] conducted a research about communication in Passover night tradition in the pandemic era by using the theory from Dell Hymes along with observation and interview.

The previous studies and this study has a similarity which studied about ethnography communication and Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh*. Even though there is a similarity between this study and the previous studies, however there is none that studied about the influence of the Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* in Sunday service.

GITJ Kudus uses Javanese *Krama* and *Ngoko* language alternately with its own purpose. The influence of Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* is the reason behind this phenomena. This topic has never been studied by the previous researcher, thus the author is interested in digging up more about the influence of Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* in GITJ Kudus' Sunday service.

## Theoretical Framework

Ethnography is a study of analyzing and describing a culture and a language. In order to analyze a communication pattern, Hymes proposed three units of analysis such as situation, event and act. Communicative situation is a context where a communication occurs such as in a ceremony, a fight, a lecture in a class etc. Communicative event is a basic unit used to describe communication that consist of the same topic, participant and language. Communicative act is usually bordered with the function of interaction, such as referential statement, request or order that are possibly resulted as verbal act and nonverbal act [5]. Dell Hymes stated that a communicative event consists of eight components. First, *setting and scene* that is related to time, place of the communication. Second, *participant* that relates to the participants in the communication. Third is *ends*, relates to the function of

communication. Fourth is *act sequence* that relates to communication component that explains a series of events in a communicative act. Fifth, *key* that relates to the tone, intonation and the emotional aspect of how the message is delivered. Sixth, *instrumentalities* that relates to the language used whether it is oral or written. Seventh, *norms* that relates to the rule of interaction. Eighth, *genre* that relates to the type of the delivering that can be in a form of proverb, poems, prayer, etc [6].

### 3 Research Methods

This study is a descriptive qualitative study with ethnography of communication approach [7]. In collecting the data, the author conducted an observation and interview with the Pdt. Herin Kahadi Jayanto, the priest of GITJ Kudus. The data was taken from the language usage in GITJ Kudus during the Sunday service on 25 March 2022. The observation was done by observing the Sunday service. The author also did an interview with the priest in order to dig the information of the how the Javanese culture of *unggah-ungguh* influences the communication during the Sunday service in GITJ Kudus.

The first step was to look at the use of Javanese language degree of politeness during the Sunday service. In the first step, the author categorized the Javanese language degree of politeness used by the priest and church servants. The interview's result was used to support the data taken from the observation. The second step was using Dell Hymes' theory to analyze the communication pattern during the Sunday service. The third step was to describe the result in the form of description.

### 4 Result and Discussion

Based on the collected data gained by observation and interview with the priest the author found the implication of the Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* during the Sunday service. The author focused on three events mainly *Timbalan Pangibadah*, *Pamedharing Sabda*, and *Pangaken Pitados*.

#### 4.1 *Timbalan Pangibadah*

Some people who are desired to serve God and others tend to sign themselves into part of church servants which are divided into various kinds. One of them is *Pelados Pepujen* (PP) or worship leaders. The main task of PP is to welcome the congregation who attend the Sunday service. The greetings are also meant to persuade the congregation to prepare themselves into the presence of God. "*Para sadhèrèk ingkang dipun tresnani Gusti Yésus Kristus, dinten punika kita lumebet ing Minggu kaping sekawan Pra-Paska*". This is an example of greeting from PP as the mean of *pelados* or servants, which to serve the congregation who come to the Sunday service. PP in GITJ Kudus choose to use Javanese *Krama* language as an act of respecting the congregation, priest and the church assembly. In this occasion the PP place themselves in the position of 'servants' or in the lower position, thus they use Javanese *Krama* language as the tool to communicate. The use of Javanese *Krama* language by PP can be pictured as an act of respect given by themselves to the congregation that is influenced by the existence of Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* as the local culture in Kudus regency, Central Java. PP summon the congregation with "*para sadhèrèk ingkang dipun tresnani Gusti Yésus Kristus*". By mentioning *Gusti Yesus Kristus*, they implicitly remind the congregation about their main goal of coming to the Sunday service which is to praise and worship Jesus Christ. This event is usually accompanied by slow music played by the music team in order to make the congregation become more

spiritually ready to attend every series of events in the Sunday service. The main goal is to prepare the congregation to be ready to come into the presence of God in the Sunday service. *Timbalan Pangibadah* consists of communicative situation which always done in the beginning of the Sunday service. PP can be women or men who always stand up at the stage with microphone in front of them. There are also communicative act and communicative events found in this event such as the greeting said by the first PP and second PP. The PP usually consists of 3-5 people, however during the pandemic era, they become 2 people only. The utterances said by the PP are alternatively uttered from one person to another followed by PP leads the congregation to sing “*Gusti Kang Murbeng Dumadi*”. In *Timbalan Pangibadah*, the culture of *unggah – ungguh* among the Javanese in Kudus regency serves as a guide of communication.

## **4.2 Pamedharing Sabda**

The goal of this event is for the priest to deliver God’s gospel and also elaborate it based on the Holy Bible. *Pamedharing Sabda* consists of sub-series such as *Pandongga Épiklésé*, *Pamaosing Kitab*, and *Khotbah*. *Pandongga Épiklésé* leads by the *Pelados Pandonga* by using Javanese *Krama* language, followed by reading some verses of Holy Bible together with the congregation. The chosen verse is suited by the topic and theme brought by the priest. Even though the theme should be chosen by the church calendar, however in GITJ Kudus, Pdt. Herin stated that every church has its own religious struggle, thus he often chooses the topic and theme based on GITJ Kudus’ condition.

### **4.2.1 The Priest’s Utterances to the Congregation (The Shift in Role as a Servant)**

In every church, priest has the highest position because they serve as the leader of the church. However, the author found a uniqueness in GITJ Kudus. Pdt. Herin, uses Javanese *Krama* language while communicating with the congregation in *Pamedharing Sabda* as an act of humbling himself. This relates to the meaning of priest as a servant of God who also serves the congregation. He claims that priests have broader meaning than just a social status as priests, however, priests have to be able to position themselves in a lower position than the congregation which in line with the goal of becoming priests, that is to serve others. Pdt. Herin was born and live in Kudus regency that is filled with the Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* as the guide in behaving and communicating. By using Javanese *Krama* language to deliver God’s words means that he uses the Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* as a guide for communication during the Sunday service. Uniquely, he doesn’t continuously use Javanese *Krama* language while communicating with the congregation.

The use of Javanese *Krama* language by Pdt. Herin acts as giving respect to the congregation, as well as positioning himself lower than the congregation. During the interview, he explained that the use of Javanese language in Sunday service is hoped so the Javanese language still be preserved until the next generation.

“*Pramila samangke, nalika badhe lumebet ing tanah prasetyan bangsa punika kedah dipun tetak, Tetak punika pratandha prasetyanipun Allah dhateng Abraham ingkang kedah dipun tetepi turun-tumurun salaminipun (Pr 17:9-17). Ing nalika generasi Israel dipun tetak dening Yusak, tetak punika nggadhahi teges kados ingkang sinerat ing 5:9, “Ing dina iki kanisthaning Mesir wus Sunbirat saka sira.”*”

He added that the application of Javanese *Krama* language and Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* is expected for the congregation to also give respect to the older people as

if it is an obligation to every individuals. In the above sermon, he talks about Joshua. During the sermon, he tends to use the example of Holy Bible's characters to teach about life principles. The theme and topic above was taken from the Joshua 5:9-12 and titled as "*Rukun Lan Gelem Ngapura Iku Tandha Urip Ing Kratoning Allah*". The title of this sermon has its own meaning, he teaches the congregation to live humble and easily ask for forgiveness inside and outside the church.

There are some greetings used by him such as "*kita*" to call himself and the congregation. In the sentence "*Sumangga kita sami ngrumaosi bilih kita punika inggih tiyang-tiyang ingkang piningan pemenuhaning prasetyanipun Gusti*", the word "*kita*" is used to position himself as a part of the congregation. Second, this related to the kind of sentences used in the sermon, which is sentences of invite and order. This can be seen in the sentences used by Pdt. Herin which tend to include persuasive and imperative sentences to deliver the message from the Holy Bible on lives that are worthy before God. These kind of sentences are related to the theme, where he asks the congregation to change their lives to become a new life and to leave the past behind. The concept of new life is a life according to the will of God. The next sentence is the example of imperative sentence, "*Awit Gusti Allah punika maringi pangapunten dhateng manungsa dosa ingkang mratobat, kita inggih kedah paring pangapunten dhateng sesami kita*". Third, the tone of the sermon is delivered seriously but in a relaxed and friendly manner.

#### **4.2.2. The Priest's Utterances as a Bridge between God and the People (The Shift in Role as God's Representative)**

Besides using Javanese *Krama* language in delivering the sermon, there is a shift in the language degree of politeness when Pdt. Herin positions himself as a bridge between the congregation and God as Pdt. Herin also uses Javanese *Ngoko* language in delivering the blessing prayer from God to the congregation.

*"Pangeran Yehuwah muga maringana berkah marang kowe, lan ngayomana kowe: Pangeran Yehuwah muga nyunarna cahyaning wadanane marang kowe, lan maringana sihrahmat; Pangeran Yehuwah muga karsaa nungkulake wadanane marang kowe, lan maringana tentrem rahayu."*

The greeting of '*Pangeran Yehuwa*' which refers to God has meaning of '*Pangeran Yehuwa*' is God the ruler of kingdom of the Heaven and earth. The author also found sentences of hoping uttered by the priest that can be seen with the use of "*muga*". Blessing prayer consist of three sentences that consist of the word *muga*. The example of the sentences of hoping is "*Pangeran Yehuwah muga maringana berkah marang kowe, lan ngayomana kowe*". The blessing prayer is uttered seriously in a concise manner.

The blessing prayer is taken from the Book of Numbers 6:24-26 and is used by the priest as an individual who bridges between God and the congregation. The blessing prayer is then followed by "*Amen*" from the congregation. The blessing prayer is delivered by the priest with his two hands facing down upon the congregation and is received by the congregation standing up with their hands opened. The use of Javanese *Ngoko* language in the blessing prayer is also influenced by the Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh*. The use of Javanese *Krama* language by Pdt. Herin when delivering his sermon serves as an act of respect towards the congregation, as he positions himself being in a lower status. However, when praying the blessing prayer Pdt. Herin positions himself of a higher status than the congregation but still lower than God.

The blessing prayer has its purpose that is the blessing from God, given to the congregation who attend the Sunday service by the priest. The symbol of head facing down

is an act of honor towards God from the humans as an individual who submits before God. The act of uplifting his two hands facing down upon the congregation serves as an act of delivering God's blessing to the congregation, followed by the congregation standing up with their hands opened while bowing their heads down. These activities have meaning mainly serves as an act of honor towards God and as an act of receive God's blessing. GITJ Kudus has its own rule, if the priest is unable to pray the blessing prayer then the rules are changed. First, Javanese *Ngoko* language is no longer used but Javanese *Krama* language is used. Second, the replacement doesn't have the right to uplifting his two hands. This is caused by the limitation where priest is the only one who holds the authority from God.

In *Pamedaring Sabda*, the communicative situation is the priest stands at the stage in front of the congregation. All of the church servants are no longer permitted to be in the stage, they must go back to their chairs along with the congregation. *Pamedaring Sabda* is always attached to every Sunday services and it is irreplaceable. Some communicative acts and communicative events can also be seen in this event. First, *Pelados Sabda* start with reading some Holy Bible verses suited with the theme from the priest, followed by the chanting from the congregation. Then, the congregation answer with "Amen, hallelujah! Pínuji Paduka" that is said three times. Second, the priest starts to deliver the sermon and when it is done, it is followed by *wekdal ening*. *Wekdal ening* is where the situation becomes silence for a while before continuing to the next events. *Wekdal ening*'s purpose is for the congregation to have a silence moment in order take the sermon in and reflect. The next sub-event is *Pandongga Pananggap Sabda Saha Syafaat* which consists of intercessory prayer for country, government, society and church.

### 4.3 Pangaken Pitados

*Pangaken Pitados* consists of the confession of The Apostles' Creed. The influence of Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* is also shown through the usage of Javanese *Krama* language in the confession of the creed. Before uttering the *Sahadhat Kalih Welas* or The Apostles' Creed, the Church Assembly (*Pinisepuh / Majelis*) asks the congregation to also utter the words of confession in Javanese *Krama* language.

*MJ: Para Sedhèrèk ingkang kinasih, Sabdanipun Gusti ing dinten punika ngiyataken kapitadosan kita. Pramila sumangga kita sami sesarengan ngucapaken Sahadat Pangaken Pitados Rasul.*

It is then followed by the congregation to utter *Sahadhat Kalih Welas* together, led by the Church Assembly.

#### **SAHADHAT KALIH WELAS** (*inggih punika Pangaken Pitados Rasuli*)

1. *Kawula pitados dhateng Allah Sang Rama, ingkang Mahakawasa, ingkang nitahaken langit kaliyan bumi.*
2. *Inggih pitados dhateng Yesus Kristus ingkang Putra ontang-anting, Gusti kawula. etc.*

*Sahadat Kalih Welas* serves as a confession of who God is, who Jesus is and who the Holy Spirit is. Thus, it is irreplaceable in every occasion including in a funeral ceremony. The communicative situation is done in a solemn and calm situation. The communicative events and communicative acts are done by the priest, church servants and congregation led by the church assembly.

#### 4.4 Pangibadah Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa Kudus

In *pangibadah*, there are series of communication components. As well as in GITJ Kudus, it has components that can be analyzed with the theory from Hymes.

S (*Setting*): *Pangibadah* is held every Sunday located at *Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa*, Kudus Regency. The series of events are done in a formal and sacral situation.

P (*Participants*): The participants of *pangibadah* are from the congregation of *Gereja Injili di Tanah Jawa* Kudus together with the church servants and the priest. The church servants serve to lead the congregation into the presence of God. The priest serves as a servant as well as leader of the service.

E (*Ends*): The goal of *pangibadah* is to spread the gospel of God in order to strengthen the congregation's faith. Moreover, *pangibadah* also serves as a place for the congregation to do their obligation in attending Sunday service.

A (*Act of Sequence*): The communication in *pangibadah* consists of verbal communication such as worship, prayer, gratitude, and appreciation of faith.

K (*Key*): The intonation of communication tends to be in the lower tone because *pangibadah* needs to be held in a solemn and calm situation.

I (*Instrumentalities*): The means of speech in communicating are oral and written languages that have guidelines from the Holy Bible and hymn.

N (*Norms*): The norms of communication in *pangibadah* is led by the church servants and the priest. The communication position is the priest – the congregation – God, however the position of the priest might change. When the church servants and the priest interact with the congregation, they tend to use *Krama*, this communication tends to be a one-way-communication nevertheless, there is still a two-way-communication when the congregation answer with "Amen".

G (*Genres*): The type of speech events in *pangibadah* is various from prayers, verses, *pitados rasuli*.

## 5. Conclusion

The Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* is a culture among the Javanese which prioritize the use of certain language degree of politeness. In this study, the author found the influence of the Javanese culture of *unggah – ungguh* in GITJ Kudus' Sunday service. While delivering *sabda*, the priest uses Javanese *Krama* language that consist of persuasive and imperative sentences. While praying for the blessing prayer, Pdt. Herin uses Javanese *Ngoko* full of sentences of hoping. The shift is mainly caused by the change of role from the priest. The situation of all series events are done in a solemn and calm situation. The communication process is a one-way-communication that is dominated by the church servants and the priest. However, there is still a possibility of two-way-communication when the congregation is being asked to answer in certain situations.

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