

# **The Awakening**

## **Language in the Online and Offline World**

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## **COERCIVE STRATEGIES PERFORMED BY CHINESE AND JAVANESE CUSTOMERS IN HAGGLING OVER CELLULAR PHONES TOWARD JAVANESE SELLERS IN PLAZA MARINA, SURABAYA**

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### **Introduction**

In everyday life, people do negotiation every time and everywhere. This situation of negotiation is mostly done in business where buying and selling happen. In this research the writers use the term 'haggle' to describe the negotiation activity done by buyers and sellers. People may haggle in traditional markets, clothes shops, and for sure in cellular phone shops where haggling processes become the everyday routines.

One of the places where there are many cellular shops is Plaza Marina. In this place there are a lot of people buying cellular phones every day. Even, when the mall has not opened yet, there are some people already waited outside of the mall. Because there are so many customers coming to this place, it means that there are so many transactions dealing with buying and selling cellular phones. The seller will deal with some different ethnic groups that come to Plaza Marina to buy the cellular phone. In the observation, there are two major ethnics namely Javanese and Chinese who come to Plaza Marina as cellular phone customers. Meanwhile, the employees in the stalls are mostly Javanese although the owner is a Chinese. It is an interesting phenomenon when there are Javanese and Chinese customers trying to bargain cellular phone from a Javanese seller. It seems Javanese and Chinese customers have some strategies to bargain cellular phone from a Javanese seller.

In this research the writers analyze the coercive strategies performed by Chinese and Javanese customers in haggling over cellular phones toward Javanese sellers. It focuses on the comparison how these two ethnics employed the coercive strategies in haggling over cellular phones.

### **Coercive Strategies**

Negotiation is defined as a method of social decision making, one that is accomplished through persuasion and haggling (Druckman, 1977 in Gibbons, Bradac, and Busch, 1992, p.157). Since persuasion entails the use of message tactics, this part employs threats and promises that are the exemplars for understanding how language functions in a negotiation process.

To understand more how language functions in a negotiation process, researchers explore more about the role of language in negotiation. They find out that language operates at two levels: proposals at the logical level and semantics, syntax, and phonetics (words and sounds that constitute style) at the pragmatic level. Each of these levels is explored in negotiation process and illustrated by focusing on threats and promises in bargaining. Threats and promises are selected as exemplars because of their significance as key coercive moves.

Furthermore, in coercive strategy, there is perspective frame research on the role of threats and promises in negotiation. The approach is adhering to a social psychological perspective. It focuses on such factors as costs, rewards, and effectiveness of threats and promises. Coercion is defined as "the exercise of power through the use of particular tactics that aim to reward or punish the opponent" (p.160). Then, analysis of threats and promises indicates that the use of coercive tactics is a measure of last resort.

In language and related coercive strategy, threats are a specific request with a proposed punishment while promises are a request to a conditional reward (Putnam and Jones, 1982 in

Gibbons, Bradac, and Busch, 1992, p.161). Threats and promises can be explicit or implied. Implied threats and promises often omit the conditional punishment or reward. However, threatening through implication shows a desired action while it can allow negotiators to save face and to avoid potential damage to a relationship between the negotiators. Implied threats and promises can also make the bargainers to be flexible and to have a clear position. These threats and promises will be effective when negotiators have considerable common ground or mutual knowledge of each other's positions.

Then, threats and promises play roles in coercive strategy. In this part, threats intentions as a particular of belief. There are three strategies in coercive strategies. They are:

1. Lie:

Lie is "an utterance that the speaker intends to convey to the listener (speaker believes "W") when in fact he believes the opposite ("speaker actually believes not "W)"). In negotiation, bluffing is also a part of lie. Bluffing occurs when negotiator A wants negotiator B to believe that A has the capacity to implement a threat when; in fact, A does not have the capacity. A bluff can become a tricky message when its phonetic or pragmatic form makes the hearer believe that the threat is real when indeed it is not. A tricky bluffer may give a logically ambiguous utterance in which the speaker gives both "W" and "not W" as believable propositions.

2. Evasion

Evasion is important in situations of goal incompatibility. Evasion is "an utterance to keep and to increase the hearer's uncertainty about the speaker's intention, especially about the willingness to follow on a threat or promises." The speaker produces an utterance that influences the hearer not to form a belief about whether the speaker intends "W" or "not W". When a negotiator does not have enough resources to support a threat or does not want to lie, he may use evasion to anticipate the opponent's actions and to maintain uncertainty.

3. Sentence structure of a threat

This strategy has two forms which are question-imperative form and explicit threats and promises. In question imperative form, it obligates the other negotiator to respond and produce more verbal compliance than do demands, imperative requests, need statements, or resource inquiries. This question-imperative syntax leads to a sequence of questions and answers that accommodates verbal responsiveness, especially when the negotiators know each other and the procedures are flexible. Then, there are also explicit threats and promises. They consist of outcome statements set in parallel threats in which the preferred outcomes are coded positively ("if you don't perform normally, I will penalize you") than in a null form ("if you perform normally, I won't penalize you").

### **Javanese Culture**

According to Koentjaraningrat (1985, p.179), Javanese accepts bargaining as an acceptable method for fixing a price for many products as agricultural and other products. The bargaining permits the buyers and sellers to have some adjustments to match with the changes of prices. Moreover, both buyers and seller in Javanese market usually have the knowledge of the local market condition. Free competition in the Javanese market can keep the general price stable although the sellers set the price independently. There will be only little differences in price when some buyers bargain the products.

Koentjaraningrat also states about norms and values that Javanese people uphold in their society. It is stated that they avoid public controversy as much as possible. Like in a meeting in a village, those who attend seem passive and no opposition is apparent (p.194). In addition, according to Hildred Geertz (1961 in p.248), there are two important viewpoints in traditional Javanese value (*kejawan* value) namely respect and harmony appearance of social relationship. Respect means all relation that the person makes. It happens in the society which is well structured and it is built within the moral responsibility. Moral responsibility here is to take care and describe the social, well-

formed characteristic, which is virtue. Then, “Rukun” says about the statement of harmonic social relation and minimizes as much as possible the conflict happens in society and individual in any form and situation. Therefore, Javanese have the view that respect and harmony in the society are important and they will tend to minimize conflict that happens around them.

### Chinese Culture

According to Chu (1998, p.235), asking something more is a usual thing and acceptable for Chinese people. When a Chinese buys some eggs and vegetables at a market, the seller is expected to put in some extra onions and carrots. A seller who does not do that cannot stand longer at the market. This expectation for some extra bonuses also happens in an international trade. Chinese sometimes expects something to be added for free when they buy something.

Moreover, Chinese loves discounts. Westerner may think that a professional should make a fair price and stick to that price. However, Chinese is taught to bargain since they are little. Sometimes they easily bargain just because they want to bargain. For example, an English plastic seller intentionally raises the price of his goods since he knows that the Chinese will bargain. He does this so he can set a limit to the Chinese to bargain the goods.

Chinese also believes about obligation. When brothers do business, both of them will give the best offer that they can give. When they are from the same province, they are obligated to give better price than the usual price. The condition from each person also influences the price that is offered. They think that the less rich person should get a better price than the richer person.

### Discussions

In the coercive strategies, there are three strategies namely lie, evasion and sentence structure of a threat. All of these strategies were performed by both Chinese and Javanese customers in haggling over cellular phone toward a Javanese seller.

Chinese customers performed all of the coercive strategies. The following table shows the frequencies and the most common strategies that Chinese usually had in haggling over cellular phone toward a Javanese seller.

Chinese customers	
Coercive Strategies	Occurrence
Lie	35
Evasion	1
Sentence structure of a threat	60

Table 1. The Coercive Strategies employed by Chinese customers

From the table above, it was found out that Sentence structure of a threat strategy was done mostly by Chinese customers in haggling over cellular phone toward a Javanese seller since it had the biggest occurrence which is 60 occurrences. Then, the second was lie strategy, which has 35 occurrences. The last was evasion strategy, which has only 1 occurrence.

Meanwhile, Javanese customers also performed all of the coercive strategies. The table below shows the findings:

Javanese customers	
Coercive Strategies	Occurrence
Lie	5

Evasion	2
Sentence structure of a threat	51

Table 2. The Coercive Strategies employed by Javanese customers

From the table above, it can be seen that all of the strategies are performed by Javanese customers. The table shows that sentence structure of a threat strategy was mostly done by Javanese customers since it had 51 occurrences. This sentence structure of a threat strategy dominated in the haggling process. Then, lie strategy got the second most frequently-used strategy. It had 5 occurrences. Then, the last frequent strategy is evasion which had 2 occurrences. All of these facts show the frequencies and the most performed strategy by all Javanese customers.

From Table 1 and 2, the writers found out that there are differences and similarities in the performance of coercive strategies in the haggling process. Chinese and Javanese customers have performed all of the strategies and this is the table:

Coercive Strategies	Chinese Customers (Occurrence)	Javanese Customers (Occurrence)
Lie	35	5
Evasion	1	2
Sentence structure of a threat	60	51

Table 3. The comparison between Chinese and Javanese customers

There are some differences in the strategies employed. The first difference is that the Chinese customers performed more in lie and sentence structure of a threat. However, there were a significant number of differences in the occurrence of lie strategy. Among the three coercive strategies, it can be implied that the Javanese customers highly depended on using sentence structure of a threat in order to get lower price. Meanwhile, the Chinese customers did not solely use and depend on using sentence structure of a threat, but also lie strategies which was proven to be way much higher than that is performed by the Javanese customers.

It can be seen from Table 3 that the Javanese customers mostly did the coercive strategy in sentence structure of a threat. Nevertheless, the Javanese had less number of occurrences in performing coercive strategies than the Chinese customers like in lie and sentence structure of a threat. Then, the number of occurrences of evasion strategy was more than the Chinese customers. In relation to these findings, Koentjaraningrat (1985, p.194) stated that Javanese people avoid the controversy as much as possible in public. This statement can explain the reason why the Javanese customers had less number of occurrences in their phase and their number of strategy. Moreover, the avoidance of controversy made the Javanese customers can accept easily to the offered price of the Javanese seller. Furthermore, the theory from Koentjaraningrat also explains the occurrence of evasion, which is higher than the Chinese customer. Evasion strategy performed utterances that maintain uncertainty toward the Javanese seller of either wanting a cellular phone or not by asking other cellular phones before the Javanese customers haggled the price of the previous cellular phone. At first, the Javanese customers asked and haggled over the price of a cellular phone that they intended to buy. As the Javanese seller could not lower the price the Javanese customers would shift the focus of conversation by asking other cellular phones. This showed the avoidance of controversy of the Javanese customers before they go back to haggle the cellular phone.

On the other hand, Chinese customers also had more number in coercive strategies of lie and sentence structure of a threat. This shows that Chinese love to bargain as stated by Chu (1998, p.235). In the early age, they were already taught to haggle. They are easily to haggle something because they want to. Besides that, Chinese love discounts and love to get some bonuses or additional things. Not only do they love to bargain, but the Chinese people also, tend to use

strategies (p.242). The Chinese customers showed more frequent strategies in struggling to haggle over the price of cellular phone and get them cheaper. This concept gives the explanation in the behavior of Chinese customers in haggling over cellular phone towards a Javanese seller.

Besides the differences, there are similarities of coercive strategies performed by Chinese and Javanese customers in haggling over cellular phone toward a Javanese seller. The similarities that the Chinese and Javanese customers had were both of them performed all of the coercive strategies. Then, both of them had sentence structure of a threat strategy as their most frequent strategy. This indicated that sentence-structure of a threat strategy is the most common way of haggling over cellular phone from these two different ethnics. Besides, both of the customers had the same rank of occurrences from the most frequent strategy to the less frequent strategy like sentence structure of a threat, lie, and the last is evasion.

### **Conclusion**

Concerning to the coercive strategies (Gibbons, Bradac, and Busch, 1992, p.161), both the Chinese and Javanese customers performed all of the three strategies namely lie, evasion, and sentence structure of threat. Based on the findings, both of the Chinese and Javanese customers performed the sentence structure of threat as the most frequent strategy. Then, the Chinese customers performed more in lie and sentence structure of threat strategy than the Javanese customers. Moreover, it can be implied that culture plays an important role in shaping the haggling behavior and in the use of strategies while haggling.

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