THE POWER OF SMALL TALK DISCOURSE AS MITIGATING CONFLICT IN DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN NTARAM

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This research analyzes explicitly the tiny talk (fatik) discourse used by the Ntaram (Manggarai) Flores community as a verbal force to mitigate conflict in plural communities (different religions) in Ntaram, Manggarai-Flores.

Method: This research chooses qualitative (interpretive) because the data collected and analyzed is in words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with informants, which were determined purposively. In addition, the observation method is used to observe the daily communication of the plural community in Ntaram. Data were validated through (1) data source triangulation and method triangulation. (2) Checking validity through Focus Group Discussions involving key sources.

Results and Discussion: Small talk (fatik) in communicating between people of different religions in Ntaram: (1) Small talk in the form of greetings. Ntaram people call “ite” which means we (first person plural personal pronoun). The word addresses the speech partner (second person personal pronoun). (2) Small talk in the context of greetings, such as nia ngaok, which means “noisy.” These pleasantries explain sociologically that the social behavior of the Ntaram people is cheerful and happy to accept anyone. (3) Typical terms of respect related to religion are ata sili mai wae and ata le mai tana golo. Ata silimai wae means people who come from the coast or riverbanks. (4) Ethics of Interrupting Conversations. Ntaram people have small talk about interrupting conversations ethically through small talk such as eta ulu keta ite and no ramping dite. Eta ulu keta means that I uphold your opinion above my head. These four types of pleasantries are most productively used in the context of building brotherhood amidst religious and ethnic differences in Ntaram.

Recommendations: The research findings recommend that (1) it is necessary to revitalize the small talk discourse in Ntaram in the form of content taught in schools. Thus, endemic inheritance is carried out well. (2) further research is needed regarding the antecedent factors that influence the harmony of multiethnic society in Ntaram. (3) Research in other areas must reveal how multicultural societies mitigate social conflict through small talk.

Keywords: Small Talk, Plural, Pragmatics, Ntaram, Meaning.

O PODER DO DISCURSO DE CONVERSA FIADA COMO MITIGAÇÃO DE CONFLITOS EM DIFERENTES COMUNIDADES RELIGIOSAS EM NTARAM

RESUMO

Objetivo: Esta pesquisa analisa explicitamente o discurso minúsculo (fatik) utilizado pela comunidade Ntaram (Manggarai) Flores como força verbal para mitigar conflitos em comunidades plurais (diferentes religiões) em Ntaram, Manggarai-Flores.

Método: Esta pesquisa opta pela qualitativa (interpretativa) porque os dados coletados e analisados estão em palavras, frases, orações ou sentenças. Os dados foram coletados por meio de entrevistas em profundidade com informantes, determinadas propostamente. Além disso, o método de observação é utilizado para observar a comunicação diária da comunidade plural em Ntaram. Os dados foram validados através de (1) triangulação de fontes de dados e triangulação de métodos. (2) Verificação da validade através de discussões em grupos focais envolvendo fontes-chave.
Resultados e Discussão: Conversa fiada (fatik) na comunicação entre pessoas de diferentes religiões em Ntaram: (1) Conversa fiada em forma de saudações. As pessoas Ntaram chamam de “ite”, que significa nós (pronomne pessoal da primeira pessoa do plural). A palavra se dirige ao parceiro de fala (pronomne pessoal de segunda pessoa). (2) Conversa fiada no contexto de saudações, como nia ngaok, que significa “barulhento”. Essas gentilezas explicam sociologicamente que o comportamento social do povo Ntaram é alegre e feliz em aceitar qualquer pessoa. (3) Termos típicos de respeito relacionados à religião são ata silimai wae e ata le tana golo. Ata silimai wae significa pessoas que vêm da costa ou das margens dos rios. (4) Ética de interrupção de conversas. As pessoas Ntaram têm conversa fiada sobre como interromper conversas de forma ética por meio de conversa fiada, como et/keta ite e sem rampas dite. Eta ulu keta significa que mantenho sua opinião acima da minha cabeça. Estes quatro tipos de gentilezas são utilizados de forma mais produtiva no contexto da construção da fraternidade entre diferenças religiosas e étnicas em Ntaram.

Recomendações: Os resultados da investigação recomendam que (1) é necessário revitalizar o discurso de conversa fiada em Ntaram na forma de conteúdos ensinados nas escolas. Assim, a herança endémica é bem executada. (2) são necessárias mais pesquisas sobre os factores antecedentes que influenciam a harmonia da sociedade multiétnica em Ntaram. (3) As investigações noutras áreas deve revelar como as sociedades multiculturais atenuam os conflitos sociais através de conversa fiada.

Palavras-chave: Conversa Fiada, Plural, Pragmática, Ntaram, Significado.

EL PODER DEL DISCURSO TRIVIAL PARA MITIGAR EL CONFLICTO EN DIFERENTES COMUNIDADES RELIGIOSAS EN NTARAM

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Esta investigación analiza explícitamente el discurso tiny talk (fatik) utilizado por la comunidad Ntaram (Manggarai) Flores como fuerza verbal para mitigar conflictos en comunidades plurales (diferentes religiones) en Ntaram, Manggarai-Flores.

Método: Esta investigación elige cualitativa (interpretativa) porque los datos recopilados y analizados están en palabras, frases, cláusulas u oraciones. Los datos se recolectaron a través de entrevistas en profundidad a los informantes, las cuales fueron determinadas intencionalmente. Además, el método de observación se utiliza para observar la comunicación diaria de la comunidad plural en Ntaram. Los datos se validaron mediante (1) triangulación de fuentes de datos y triangulación de métodos. (2) Verificar la validez a través de discusiones de grupos focales que involucran a la población.

Resultados y Discusión: Pequeña charla (fatik) en la comunicación entre personas de diferentes religiones en Ntaram: (1) Pequeña charla en forma de saludos. La gente de Ntaram lo llama “ite”, que significa nosotros (pronomne personal de primera persona del plural). La palabra se dirige al interlocutor (pronomne personal de segunda persona). (2) Charla trivial en el contexto de saludos, como nia ngaok, que significa "ruidoso". Estas bromas explican sociologicamente que el comportamiento social del pueblo Ntaram es alegre y feliz de aceptar a cualquiera. (3) Los términos típicos de respeito relacionados con la religión son ata silimai wae e ata le tana golo. Ata silimai wae significa gente que viene de la costa o de ribera de los ríos. (4) Ética de la interrupción de conversaciones. La gente de Ntaram tiene una pequeña charla sobre interrumpir conversaciones de forma ética a través de pequenas conversaciones como et/a keta ite y no ramping dite. Eta ulu keta significa que mantenho tu opinión por encima de mi cabeza. Estos cuatro tipos de bromas se utilizan de manera más productiva en el contexto de construir hermandad en medio de diferencias religiosas y étnicas en Ntaram.

Recomendaciones: Los resultados de la investigación recomiendan que (1) es necesario revitalizar el discurso de las charlas trivias en Ntaram en la forma de contenido que se enseña en las escuelas. Por tanto, la herencia endémica se realiza bien. (2) se necesita más investigación sobre los factores antecedentes que influyen en la armonía de la sociedade multiétnica en Ntaram. (3) La investigación en otras áreas debe revelar cómo las sociedades multiculturales mitigan los conflictos sociales a través de conversaciones triviales.

Palabras clave: Charla Trivial, Plural, Pragmática, Ntaram, Significado.
1 INTRODUCTION

Understanding language is fundamental to understanding everyday life's realities (Hülür et al., 2024). Beyond that, language is a tool of cultural expression. It can objectify objects (naming) into a convention (Brednikova, 2021). Therefore, language becomes the most essential guide in everyday encounters. As Berger said (ibid), language is a community's central reality (paramount). Each language provides ethical relevance to communication behavior or can otherwise cause hostility (Dragomir et al., 2021).

The excitation of a language grows in the space of community dialogue (Candela, 2013). This implies the constitutive function and institutions of language at various levels of quality of social relations such as intimate, formal, causal, joking, severe, and others. This also means that language can form a community (Cassell & Bickmore, 2003). In such a context, understanding small talk discourse also means trying to understand verbal ethical actions (politeness) in daily communication in a community and how language constructs harmony in the way of life of a community.

The phenomenon of small talk in the Ntaram (Flores) community is a verbal mode of mitigating social conflict that has the potential to arise from religious and ethnic differences (Robot, 2023). This means that the language and way of speaking of the Ntaram people reflect the culture of the two communities. Ntaram people use the Manggarai dialect of Congkar. The term for the variant of the Manggarai language that lives in the Congkar District, covering the northern part of East Manggarai. The area where the Congkar language is used spans three sub-districts: Sambi Rampas District, Lengko Elar District, and parts of the eastern part of Lambaleda District.

Ntaram is the name of a community consisting of several villages (Nanga, Golo Wote, Golo Ngawan, Nelo and Ntaram). Geographically, Ntaram is located in the interior of East Manggarai (Golo Ngawan Village, Sambi Rampas District, Manggarai Regency - West Flores, East Nusa Tenggara Province). The distance from Borong (the capital of East Manggarai Regency) is 58 km. This distance is covered in 3.5 hours by bus or colt traveling along damaged and peeling paved roads. The sovereignty of Ntaram as a village can be referred to in the description of Braam Morris (1891: 182 in Dami Toda, 1999:193) regarding the districts under Pota (now the capital of Sambi Rampas District- writer). It is in the Congkar district. Braam Morris details it as follows: Tjongkar consists of 30 villages: Pisi, Tjenap, Mennie, Diroek, Pannis, Toenggal, Gilak, Lawie, Wangkar, Taram, Pasie, Wanang, Giling, Pota, Woega,
Ramboek, Kangoe, Koe-ieth, Djalieth, Watoe, Milim, Meran, Tiwore, Lioe, Nawal, Toedie, Sapie, Paiet, Goeneong, Setawangan.

Ntaram, in the modern sense, is an entity that refers to the syncretism of eight tribes, two religious traditions, and two forms of power structure. In other words, concretely, Ntaram village is no longer occupied. The town had long been abandoned by its residents and had blossomed into several small villages, namely Nanga, Golo Wote, Nelo, Golo Ngawan, and several other small villages. However, these small villages are under the name Ntaram. Of these small villages, only Golo Wote is called Ntaram Village. The name was deliberately given as a spiritual memory (plural culture) of the old town (Ntaram) they had left behind. More than that, the naming is a way of passing on the plurality values that the Ntaram people live and live to this day. Therefore, whoever is a foreigner or outsider asks the village where he first set foot there, and the answer he gets is ho’oi Ntaram (this is Ntaram). That phrase becomes the thesis for understanding the miracle of plurality in several villages in the name of Ntaram.

Ntaram was impressed. It is eccentric not only because it is uniquely located in the valley that stretches along the Golo Ngawan cliff but also because Ntaram can revive the traditions of plurality (tribes, religions, and traditions of power) (Robot, 2023). This means that when you mention Ntaram, you immediately associate it with eight tribes (Mbaru Mese Tribe, Mbaru Bongko Tribe, Mbaru Labal Tribe, Mbaru Weli Tribe, Mbaru Cangge Tribe, Mbaru Golo Tribe, Mbaru Munta Tribe, Mbaru Ajang Cengi Tribe), two deep religious communities. The connotation of the Ntaram people is called ata sili mai wae - people from the coast who are identified with Islam and ata le mai tana golo - mountain people who are identified with Catholicism, and two traditions of power, namely tu’a teno (original power tradition) and Adak (power tradition originating from the Kingdom Goa-South Sulawesi).

2 METHODOLOGY

This research conducted in Ntaram, Sambi Rampas District, Manggarai Regency, Flores. The background to Ntaram's choice of location was the synthesis of several tribes and religions and their survival together despite differences to this day. This research design is qualitative (Deméneghi et al., 2020). The selection of this method is a consequence of the data collected in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences that express the phenomenon of small talk. The qualitative approach emphasizes understanding phenomena based on social phenomena or human problems (Creswell, 1998:15). In this approach, researchers create a
complex picture by analyzing words, sentences, or a series of special pleasantries in a religious context.

Informants were selected purposively based on the researcher's considerations to obtain accurate research data. Informants were subjected to the following criteria (Ellisa & Azharia, 2020) suggested: (a) full enculturation. This means that the informant knows the ins and outs of his culture; (b) direct involvement. This means that the informant is an actor of that culture; (c) an unfamiliar cultural atmosphere, usually more accepting of cultural actions as they are, they will not mince words; (d) have sufficient time; (e) non-analytical, meaning, the informant says it as it is.

Data collection was carried out through (1) interviews. In-depth interviews aim to obtain data and information regarding small talk discourse. In-depth interviews also desire to obtain information about the narrative's context (place, time, person, and situation). (2) Recording. This technique is used to obtain speech data delivered naturally in particular situations. Recording is also carried out to obtain context data or information necessary by the researcher. (3) observation of the location and community that is the setting for this research. Documentation aims to (1) obtain written or recorded documents relating to a particular event and (2) photograph of narrative events.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study of small talk discourse that lives in a plural society is essential to discover how language (small talk) becomes a verbal instrument in maintaining a way of living together in different ways. This mode or maneuver allows the Ntaram people to survive side by side in various diversity. In communication that is sensitive to diversity, context is an essential element. Thus, small talk as a speech act needs to be understood at the semantic and pragmatic levels. Below, we will present the results of an analysis of the small talk discourse used by the Ntaram community in communicating, specifically in the context of diversity.

3.1 SMALL TALK IN THE FORM OF A GREETING

Phenomena that typically contribute to everyday reality in efforts to maintain harmony between Muslims and Catholics in Ntaram can be seen in small talk. Ntaram's typical use of small talk discourse arises from what is needed to maintain social harmony between them. In the verbal tradition of the Ntaram people, small talk in the form of greetings plays an essential role.
role in communication (Brednikova, 2021). Greetings reflect awareness of community differences, which makes them more sensitive to using (ethical) greetings and avoiding unethical greetings. One of the essential things in greetings is "who greets whom." This means that greeting determines who the person is greeting and who is greeting. These verbal symptoms reflect mutual respect in the context of social and family hierarchies.

Small talk in the form of greetings, like greetings to the second person who should be you. Meanwhile, the word is a first-person plural pronoun, which means we (Aranguri et al., 2006). These pleasantries show that the person you are saying is part of them or part of their family. This greeting confirms that whatever their differences, they are one (ite). The use of ite in the tabe ite greeting aims to manipulate the emotions between the people involved in the communication event who are in one gradation or show an ingroup or a unity united by the awareness of ca naang agu ca wau (blood and descendants). It is challenging to find an equivalent of this greeting in Indonesian. Even if translated into Indonesian, tabe ite means "excuse us"; it feels odd and doesn't have the same meaning.

The use of greetings tabe implies the following meanings: first, to express feelings of the ingroup (one group). This is a form of verbal expression to convey an attitude of hiang tau (respect or respect for other people). Second, stating equality. In this context, the sender and recipient of the message play the same role during the communication process. The two only exchange roles throughout the communication process. Thus, communication is not just an exchange of messages but is a humanitarian ritual based on awareness of hiang tau (mutual respect). Use of greetings tabe ite, it is common for someone to want to pass several people. Also, it can be used, for example, to greet people entering the house or as an equivalent to good morning or good afternoon (Ellisa & Azharia, 2020).

Tabe ite is a form of pleasantries that contain ethical values to state that he is ata dia (good person). On the other hand, people who do not know tabe are considered ata data gauk (having negative behavior). People like this are usually labeled as toe pecing tabe ata, interpreted as someone without etiquette. In such a context, greeting tabe ite is a norm that reflects the verbal communication traditions of the Ntaram people. Thus, toe pecing tabe refers to efforts to respect hierarchy, both familial hierarchy and social hierarchy. Often, people who toe pecing tabe bilang or fines were given, which were called copel. Someone being fined (copel) is a form of repression or suppression of people who behave not by Ntaram norms, and it is hoped that with copel, someone can change because the toe tabe attitude tends to demean people and does not respect other people, which is the essence of the harmonious life of the Ntaram people.
3.2 SMALL TALK IN THE FORM OF GREETINGS: TABE (ITE), NIA NGAOK, AND MAME UTE

One of the functions of small talk in Ntaram is its use in greeting. Small talk in the form of "Greeting" opens the veil on the history and culture of where and who a person is in front of other people (Mohr et al., 2023). Culture's primary tool is language, which transmits beliefs, values, and norms. Language is a tool for people to interact with other people (Adegbija, 1989). Three types of greetings that are productively used in Ntaram are tabe ite (excuse me, sir); (2) nia ngaok, and (3) mame ute.

Another pleasantry used productively by Ntaram people is nia ngaok. These pleasantry come from two words, namely nia and ngaok. Nia means "where", while ngaok means "noisy". This greeting cannot be translated into Indonesian. If translated lexically, the meaning is extraordinary: where there is noise. In this way, the communicative value of the greeting is lost. This greeting is used by a guest to greet people in the house. This greeting has a collegial meaning to build a sense of familiarity between the people involved in the communication event. Therefore, this greeting is usually used by neighbors or by people they know.

Each word in Nia Ngaok's greeting has meaning and can be used in different contexts. For example: Nia naan jaran de miu? (where is your horse tied?), or nia naan beka daku (where do I keep my basket?). Meanwhile, the word ngaok, which means "noisy," can be used in many sentences: Neka bail ngaok (don't make a noise). In another context, the word caw is a euphemism for an argument. For example, ci ata ngaok tau sili cicing uma rebo (who was fighting at the garden boundary), or another example, one mai neki weki neka manga ata pande ngaok (when we gather and discuss, avoid quarrels).

Nia Ngaok's small talk has cultural meaning. Nia ngaok refers to one of the characteristics of the Ntaram people or Manggarai people, who like to gather with lejong. Lejon is the habit of visiting neighbors' houses in their free time to joke or discuss daily matters. The cawing that is meant in this greeting is not "noisy" in the sense of chaos, but cawing can be equated with being busy, having fun, and joking around. Nia Ngaok's greeting is more accurately interpreted; why doesn't it sound loud?

The greeting nia ngaok is an ethical reflection of the essence of actual Ntaram people who uphold nai ca anggit tuka ca leleng (unity and harmony), which is the social philosophy of the Ntaram people or Manggarai people. However, Nia Ngaok's small talk also has a practical ethical function. If someone greets Nia Ngaok but there is no answer, then it is likely that the host is away from home.
An actual Ntaram person must be cheerful and like to gather. Therefore, the host is in conflict if it doesn't sound busy. Second, the greeting nia ngaok's reflects the strength of emotional ties because of the awareness of ca naang agu ca wa'u (awareness of one's descendants). Usually, this greeting is used only for close people and people who know the host well. Third, Nia Ngaok's pleasantries refer to manners when visiting guests. Nia ngaok may also refer to a directive speech act, indirectly ordering the speech partner (host) to clean up his house before receiving guests.

The form of small talk is mame ute. The word mame means "cook", while the phrase ute means "vegetable". Mame ute means "cook vegetables". In this connection, the phrase mame ute cannot be compared with the phrase "cook vegetables", nor is it a verb (to cook vegetables). However, small talk mame ute is an idiom that combines two words with different meanings to form a new meaning. As an idiom greeting, mame ute can be Synonymous with good morning, good afternoon, or good night. The small talk mame ute is a locational speech act that announces that the speaker has come to the house. It is common for speakers to use these pleasantries when they visit a neighbor's or conversation partner's house. On the other hand, these pleasantries are not utilized as greetings when you meet on the street or elsewhere.

The interesting question about this greeting is why you must use the expression mame ute (cook vegetables). This greeting or greeting is commonly used among homemakers. Greetings reflect the personality of the Ntaram people or Manggarai people, who like to gather to eat together. Inviting guests to eat together at their home is a form of baptism to become ata di'a (good person). This method is one of the paths to an actual Ntaram person. Respecting other people by entertaining them (inviting them to eat together) is an appreciation for them. Thus, it is clear that the mame ute greeting has nothing to do with the need for food for the person delivering the greeting.

Researchers' experience in the field shows that during interviews, informants always prepare drinks (coffee) and entertain researchers with lunch or dinner. If they cannot host the researcher on the occasion of the interview, they usually set aside a particular time to have a banquet together at their home. Eating together is an attitude that tries to show you are ata di'a (good people) and marking family relationships.

Researchers visited an informant (Sebas Nawus) this morning. He should have been notified of the researcher's arrival. After conducting interviews for almost three hours, Sebas Nawus felt very burdened because the researchers did not have time to eat together at his house. Therefore, he invited the researcher to dinner at his home a week later. The researcher also used
this opportunity for interviews. Sometimes, the interview activities were disturbed because the host invited the researcher to drink and eat.

The mame ute greeting reflects at least two things. First, the collective value of Ntaram which likes to gather, visit each other (lejong), and likes to entertain. They feel respected when foreigners or respected people stop by and take the time to eat with them; secondly, the greeting mame ute reflects respect (hiang tau) for other people. For them, ata meka (guest) is a king who must be respected and treated as well as possible. The hope is that the reward for them (the Ntaram people) is not wealth or other objects. Still, their desire to be accepted by the social environment, worthy of being called ata d’i’a (good people in the broadest sense, namely di’a nai - good-hearted, di’a nuk – think positively, and di’a gauk – behave positively) and that is one of the characteristics of an actual Ntaram person.

3.3 BASICS IN THE FORM OF NICKNAMES: SILI MAI WA E AND LE MAI GOLO LAND

Sensitivity to differences emerges most strongly in the use of pleasantries in the form of epithets. Ntaram people recognize two forms of nicknames for the Islamic and Catholic communities. The two categories of nicknames are ata sili mai wae paired with ata le mai tana golo; ata wuni is paired with panggol. This nickname takes the form of bipolar, which has a story of origin. In the Manggarai language, the most widely known term is the greeting wuni for religious people. Islam and designations call for Catholic people. Meanwhile, in Ntaram, this connotation is rarely used. Ntaram people use the greeting ata sili mai wae (religion characterized by Islam) and ata le mai tana golo to refer to beliefs characterized by Catholicism.

Lexically, the two connotations above can be explained as follows: Ata means several people (community), sili mai means coming from a low place, and wae implies water. So, the word seli mai wae can be interpreted as several people (communities) who originate or live in water areas (beaches, rivers) and at sea. Meanwhile, ata (several people or community), le mai means coming from high places, and Tana Golo means mountain land. Thus, ata le mai tana golo can be interpreted as people (community) from the mainland (inland).

As stated, the ata sili mai wae live on the coast and earn their living as fishermen and traders. Meanwhile, ata le mai tana golo (mountain people) always connotes people who live in the mountains (inland) and make their living as farmers.

Nicknames ata sili mai wae and ata le mai Tanah Golo are typical identities constructed by that community. Social processes influence identity formation and maintenance. In other words, the connotations of ata le mai tana golo and ata sili mai wae were formed by the history
of the meeting of eight tribes and the beliefs held by each of them. Throughout history, a unique identity emerged (*ata sili mai wae* and *ata le mai tana golo*) that differentiated the two. This unique identity is the main characteristic of the communication activities of the Ntaram people. These key characteristics consistently govern how individuals in both communities live daily (Mak & Chui, 2013). This type of communication becomes a reference for understanding each other and how to treat them. It is also unique that this greeting containing a particular identity is structured in a euphemistic form that is not found in different areas in Manggarai. A form of nickname that is unique to Ntaram and only applies here and now.

The argument that needs to be put forward in this regard is *first*, the connotation of *ata sili mai wae* and *ata pale cee*, or *ata dise* and *ata dite* is only a source of typification or as a reference for individuals for the two communities to plan their ethical behavior when they communicate. Connotation is very important as a differentiator so that mutual understanding grows and awareness grows that they are different. But different doesn't have to be contradictory. This means that togetherness does not have to be the same. In other words, the distinguishing element refined as a request is how one community treats another according to the identity it understands. Therefore, differences are maintained as a social necessity so that each community exists and tries to reflect itself throughout time (Mullany, 2006).

*Second*, it must be acknowledged that this is the superiority of the Ntaram people in preserving harmony between religions. They create euphemistic (subtle) connotations and do not refer to the adopted religious idiom. The term *Ata sili mai wae* (people who come from the coast) refers to people who live on the beach or people who work as fishermen, and *ata le mai tana golo* (*ata pale cee*) connotes mountain people who make their living as farmers. So, the connotation refers more to territory or area. The connotation is far from an assessment that can give rise to certain stereotypes.

*Third*, this nickname is only used within one's circles (internal Ntaram society). In this connotation, there is no content of insulting other communities from different religious denominations or ethnicities. However, when a Ntaram person leaves the Ntaram area and enters someone else's location, he always uses an identity *or wuni* (which gives more Islamic characteristics). Meanwhile, in other regions (in Manggarai), connotations are found to be much more vulgar and seem very stereotypical. For example, *Panggol* (cross) and *Wuni* (abstinence from eating pork), *Panggol* and *Ndoget* (a way of praying by kissing the ground and raising the buttocks). The connotation tends to be derogatory because it refers to a particular religious identity and is given a negative meaning. For researchers, this type of connotation contains
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The social consequences of these two euphemisms indirectly create space for differences due to religion, or at least the two forms of euphemisms can develop a sense of exclusivity between the Islamic community and the Catholic community in Ntaram. Therefore, truth claims become unimportant in Ntaram. This greeting is constructed together to maintain differences as a reality. In this last context, it can be understood that the greetings *ata le mai tana golo* and *ata sili mai wae*, no matter how simple, contain messages that may be metacommunicative in nature. First, the greeting internally includes a message about the importance of differences in the existence of the Ntaram people. Second, regarding the first point, this greeting contains a message about the importance of respecting differences in the context of harmony between individuals in the two communities.
At a "welcoming new" event (first communion reception for Catholic children) in Ruteng (capital of Manggarai Regency), which is predominantly Catholic, the following sentence was heard: *Lelo di’a koe piring situ, neka kalok agu piring dise ata wuni* (pay attention take care of those plates, don't mix them up with the *Wuni people's plates*). Or, the following sentence: *han ho'o latang ise ata Wuni* (this food is specifically for *Ata Wuni*). *Wuni* refers to people who abstain from eating pork and is widely known as a label for followers of Islam. This connotation is considered neutral, although there is a possibility that this kind of connotation appears as a form of stereotyping.

*Ndoget* said it is a term used by Manggarai people in general. This connotation is generally used in areas where the majority is Catholic, especially in areas where Islam is considered the religion of immigrants. On the other hand, in Ruteng and several other places in Manggarai, the connotations of *ata sili mai wae* (Islam) and *ata le mai tana golo* (Catholic). This is possible because Ruteng, as the district capital, was converted to Islam later compared to Islam in Pota, Reo, Lamba Leda, Congkar, Ntaram-Nanga, and several areas in the interior of East Manggarai. Likewise, the connotation that Catholics don't like is *Kaper*. This connotation refers to people who worship idols, including worshiping statues or believing in vain. Among the Ntaram people, the connotation of *Caper* does not come to the fore.

In the case of Ntaram, *Kaper* does not have a negative connotation. This is possible because Islam and Catholicism were born from the *Kaper religious tradition*. In other words, *ata le mai tana golo* and *ata sili mai wae* are variants of *Kaper*. Another piece of evidence that these two religious traditions originate from *Kaper* is that these two communities still carry out various totemic ceremonies, such as the *signing ceremony* (healing the sick in swamps or springs).

It is also interesting that even though Islam is currently developing rapidly in Ntaram, the vocabulary and connotations of Islam have remained the same. The Catholic community only knows the connotation of *sili mai wae* for its Muslim brothers and sisters. Likewise, the Islamic community only uses the connotation of *le mai golo* for their Catholic brothers. The persistence of this connotation is possible because the Ntaram religious traditions are endemic (embedded) in their traditions or customs. Therefore, as long as their customs and understanding of those customs do not change, the forms of connotation and euphemisms related to religion do not change either.

Such small talk is an illocutionary speech act that reflects the value of *hiang tau* (mutual respect). *Hiang tau* is not just a humane camouflage; more than that, *hiang tau* (respect for others) reflects the image of humans as creatures of *Murin agu Ngaran* (God is the Owner). On
the other hand, shows such as Ndoget and Wuni (Islamic) Punggol and Kaper (Catholicism) are not found in Ntaram. Nicknames like this generally live in Catholic-majority areas such as Ruteng and Muslim-majority areas such as Pota and Reo. Moreover, Catholic communities or Islamic communities are geographically and historically different, so they tend to use negative connotations.

In essence, the form of refinement (euphemism) atasi mai wae for the Islamic community and atale mai tana golo for the Catholic community is a form of objectification of the differences between the two communities. Thus, these differences indirectly recommend the awareness of individuals in both communities to promote ethical communication behavior between them (Ramenzoni, 2023). In other words, connotation provides objectification of disagreements with a unique identity. This identity is one of the references in the communication behavior of individuals in the two communities. However, the genealogical ties of ca naang agu ca wau (blood and descendants) and the philosophy of life of nai ca anggit tuka ca leleng overcome the differences in the religious traditions they adhere to.

3.4 SMALL TALK IN THE FORM OF POLITENESS

Ntaram people uphold linguistic ethics, especially those related to aspects of morality. The most productive pleasantries used are koso isung, bowo dea, cepa. These pleasantries are directive siloxy speech acts that command the speech partner to do something (Mohr et al., 2023). A form of small talk typical of Ntaram is rubbing isung. Lexically, the word koso isung means rubbing one’s nose because of a cold. In ethical cases, this term refers to a sitting posture that does not intentionally reveal the genitals. Say a mother accidentally shows an inappropriate way of sitting (exposing her genitals) while her husband and a guest are around her. When he tries to remind him to correct how his wife is sitting, the husband will say: koso isung. If it is too difficult to do verbally because he is worried the guests will hear it, then the husband can do it non-verbally by repeatedly rubbing his nose until the wife can catch the signal. This type of small talk is complicated for foreigners to understand. It is difficult to connect the word koso isung with genitals. There is no similarity in shape or model between the nose and genitals.

The basics of koso isung are often combined with the term bowo dea (spill rice). This term is usually used specifically for women who sit inappropriately or accidentally show their genitals. No connection can be found between the use of symbols between the words bowo dea and female genitalia. However, associatively, the two terms may have connectivity. This means
that *bowo dea* is disappointing. Likewise, showing genitals is disappointing and very detrimental to the feelings of the person concerned.

The use of *cepa* as a euphemism for sexual relations or intercourse is possible because the two words have an associative meaning relationship. The word *cepa* is a medium that marks the intimacy of a relationship between two people or a number. The habit of *fasting* is generally found among women. Likewise, sexual relations are a form of intimate relationship. In other words, both the *cepa* process and the sexual intercourse process express intimacy or a very close relationship.

### 3.5 SMALL TALK INTERRUPTS THE CONVERSATION

The path to *ata dia* or "good person" in the view of the Ntaram people is only achieved if someone can manipulate negative emotions in such a way that they become positive actions. A Ntaram is asked to master the practice of good speaking, conveying opinions appropriately and politely, and, especially, interrupting other people's conversations politely.

Ntaram people know two pleasantries that are commonly used to interrupt a conversation. *First, eta ulu keta ite* (I hold you above my head), and *second, neho rampong dite'n* (just interrupting sir's conversation). These two forms of small talk are classified as directive illocutionary speech acts, which ask the speaker to pause the conversation because the speaker wants to propose something. This type of speech act includes directive illocutionary, subtly asking the interlocutor to stop speaking because he wants to convey a different opinion.

*Eta ulu keta ite* small talk is usually used when someone interrupts another person's conversation, and he conveys thoughts or opinions that may be contrary to the speaker's way of thinking. This means the speaker has a different opinion on the discussed topic. The expression *eta ulu keta ite* is a verbal etiquette for interrupting a conversation to respect the speaker. Before conveying these thoughts, the speaker says *eta ulu keta ite* (I hold the lord above my head).

*Eta ulu keta ite* can be loosely translated as “sorry! Allow me to interrupt, sir.” Two elements contain ethical appeals in these verbal pleasantries. *First, eta ulu keta ite* means he respects the thoughts or opinions of the person concerned, even though in certain parts he denies them. *Second, a compromise atmosphere is maintained so that differences of opinion do not cause conflict. In short, the saying* *eta ulu keta ite* the delivery form is a compromise, but the content (opinion) is contradictory. Thus, a person is accepted not only because his opinion is important but also because the way that person conveys his opinion is essential. For the Ntaram people, opinions and how they express them are equally important. Therefore, every good
Ntaram person must know and be skilled at politely conveying opinions in front of many people. Differences of opinion must be managed in a polite way. Sometimes, small talk is often convoluted to prioritize politeness in conveying opinions until the content becomes unclear.

Verbal etiquette of cutting off the conversation by saying *eta ulu keta ite* appears as a reflection of the attitude of *hiang tau* (mutual respect), but it is also a reflection of the reality of the hierarchy of power (*raja, Dalu, Gelarang* – nobles on one side, and *leke tabal* – ordinary people on the other). The Ntaram people recognize the hierarchy of *ka'e* as descendants of nobles and *leke tabal* or commoners. The hierarchy forced them to pay as much respect to others as they did to the king. Thus, the expression *eta ulu keta ite* shows a very respectful attitude toward the thoughts of someone expressing an opinion.

This style of communication gives the impression that the speaker's position (communicator) is higher than that of the listener. The speaker is domineering and indoctrinative. This style of cutting conversations illustrates the social reality of Ntaram, which still adheres to the Ntaram power structure, which recognizes a hierarchy of *ka'e* (nobles) and *leke tabal* (commoners).

Talk interrupted the conversation with an exclamation of *neho rampong dite* or *neka coo lain lite* has the same aim, namely expressing politeness or is a form of ethical action as a manifestation of a *no-nonsense attitude* (mutual respect) between each other both in familial relationships and in relationships of power. Apart from that, this polite style of interrupting conversation illustrates that it is essential to have a communicative way of conveying conflicting and supporting thoughts that do not hurt or negate other people's thoughts. This reflects the linear relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor.

*Kewor* means disrupting the conversation. In this case, someone does not express an opinion that is in line with the theme being discussed, but he tries to include another topic of discussion. Also, conveying the opinion without being preceded by speech *neho rampong diten* or *eta ulu keta ite*. In other words, someone responds to the conversation with an unclear theme and deliberately confuses the conversation. The Ntaram people consider this method to be unethical. Therefore, everyone is asked to avoid such methods of interrupting other people's conversations. In fact, since childhood, children in Ntaram have been taught to speak and listen regularly. When he should talk and how he interrupts people's conversations are behaviors that Ntaram people have to consider.

Likewise, respect is given, and ethical actions are required to avoid destroying social relationships (Lupa & Uran, 2023). Moreover, togetherness in the case of Ntaram is togetherness, which *ca naang agu ca wa’u* (blood and ancestry) is the basis for harmony in the
social life of the Ntaram people. Therefore, togetherness must be maintained as a gift, while division is a disaster. Thus, it must be avoided.

Another expression that corresponds to kewor is reborek. The expression reborek relates to the way someone deliberately forces to disrupt a conversation situation. This method aims to make the conversation aimless and not produce a specific agreement. Apart from that, the Ntaram people have a distinctive verbal style for saying goodbye when a meeting or event is still in progress. Leaving an event or separating from a formal atmosphere during a ritual is considered unethical. However, if this has to be done because of a very urgent matter, then the Ntaram people say: neka rugi, hese diit di aku' n (don't be angry, let me stand up first). Loosely, this expression can be combined with: "Sorry! I'll take my leave first." The expression that states the same thing is different from other regions. In Manus (14 km) south of Ntaram. Manus people use the expression aku beru asun (let me chase the dogs away).

This expression is not used in Ntaram. This is possible because some Ntaram people live in the Wuni tradition, which forbids pigs and dogs. Therefore, the word ngarat has a positive value in other areas but is very insulting to the Ntaram people, such as the word ngarat, which is related to the greedy behavior of dogs. The use of certain words in Ntaram becomes very sensitive and influences the actions and responses of other people. How, for example, the use of profanity can affect someone's actions.

4 CONCLUSION

The Ntaram people (Manggarai-Flores) have special language pleasantries to maintain unity in religious and ethnic differences. In such a context, small talk becomes an element of strengthening brotherly relations in these differences. The four types of small talk that are most productively used in the context of maintaining togetherness in differences are small talk in the form of greetings such as the greeting ite for the second person, which should be you, small talk in greeting, namely nia ngaok and mame ute, small talk related to respect, namely ata sili mai wae and ata le mai gtana golo, Cela (cutting off the conversation) is the ethical verbal behavior of interrupting someone's conversation in a discussion or traditional conversation.

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