PATTERNS AND VARIATION OF ADDRESS TERMS IN COLLOQUIAL INDONESIAN

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Colloquial Indonesian has two pronouns for addressing friends of a similar age or younger persons, namely kamu and elu (or its variants, lu, elo, and lo). This article examines variation in the use of these terms by two pairs of teenagers involved in romantic relationships. Based on data from contemporary fictional narratives, it suggests that both terms can signal distance and unfamiliarity as well as closeness and intimacy. The article shows that term shifts correlate with changes in the relationships, as marked by conflicts or intimacy. It argues that the shifts reflect the individuals’ continual assessment and reassessment of their position within the relationships. It also suggests that the shifts indicate the individuals’ understanding of the differences in the terms’ expressive values, as well as their personal intent and social orientations. Address choice is thus dynamic in that shifts parallel changes in an individual’s relationship with an interlocutor.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to describe patterns of address in colloquial Indonesian through an examination of the variation in the usage patterns of the terms kamu and elu among young urban speakers. More specifically, it attempts to identify possible factors behind the shifts between the terms in the speech of individuals (intra-speaker variation). Both kamu and elu are terms commonly used to address friends and younger persons, including children. Kamu is derived from standard Indonesian, while elu (and its variants lu, elo, and lo) is a term from the colloquial variety of Indonesian spoken in Jakarta (though originally from Hokkien Chinese). The terms ‘young’ and ‘urban’, as used here, refer to Jakartan high school educated speakers whose colloquial speech style has been popularised through visual media such as films, television, teen magazines and fiction – a style often mistakenly labelled by foreign learners of Indonesian as ‘Indonesian slang’.

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It has been noted that in conversation some speakers shift from one form of address to another when quoting what is said to or by others, while other speakers appear to do so randomly (Sneddon 2002). This article focuses on a different type of shift, namely that which is influenced by factors such as changes in an individual’s relationship with an interlocutor. By utilising fictional narratives as data, it is proposed that shifts in the choice of address form signal an individual’s self-distancing strategy or a move closer to a desired position relative to the interlocutor, thus suggesting a continual assessment and reassessment of her/his position within a relationship. Moreover, the choice of term is explicable not only by appealing to normative use, that is, to rules that determine which term correlates with which situation. In the colloquial speech of young Jakartans, both kamu and elu are normative terms for addressing friends of similar age and younger persons; however, this alone does not explain why in different circumstances an individual may shift from kamu to elu or vice versa. Whilst speakers know that they can use either term to address their peers, how they judge each term’s expressive values may vary. Hence their choice of term is made according to their assessment of a situation relative to their perceived position vis-à-vis the interlocutor, as well as their personal intent and social orientations. Consequently, different individuals may choose different terms for a similar situation. For example, in the narratives under study, one pair of speakers use kamu for signalling intimacy, while the other pair choose elu for the same purpose.

**COLLOQUIAL INDONESIAN**

The address terms discussed here are used in the colloquial variety of Indonesian that has been referred to by various scholars as bahasa tak baku ‘non-standard language’, bahasa informal ‘informal language’, bahasa gaul ‘social language’, bahasa ABG ‘teen language’, bahasa remaja ‘youth language’, ‘informal Jakartan Indonesian’, and ‘colloquial Indonesian’. Whilst these are not equivalent names, they nonetheless capture three of this language variety’s key characteristics, namely that it is non-standard, predominant in casual interaction, and is largely associated with the Jakartan youth. For convenience I use ‘colloquial Indonesian’, following Ewing (2005), who characterizes this language variety as ‘interactive, unplanned, and crucially, emblematic of relaxed interpersonal relations’ (p. 227).

There are at least two inter-related reasons why a study of address terms in this language variety is worthy of consideration. First, the variety is pervasive in popular media, particularly those aimed at the youth, yet until recently, it has been little understood. Indonesian grammar textbooks and the teaching of Indonesian as a foreign language in
and outside of Indonesia have traditionally focussed on the standard variety, that is, the variety used in formal speech and writing. Yet standard Indonesian constitutes only a part of a competent adult speaker’s linguistic repertoire, and although knowledge of this variety is undoubtedly useful for learners in communicating with Indonesians, it is unlikely that their informal exchanges will be conducted entirely in this variety. Sneddon (1990, 97), for example, noted sixteen years ago that Australian students who had visited Indonesia and met Indonesians in informal situations often complained that the language they learned in Australia was not “real” Indonesian. Nowadays students have greater exposure to colloquial Indonesian not only from visits to the country but also through media and technology, such as contemporary films, satellite television and the internet, so that the need for greater knowledge of this language variety also increases.

Second, descriptions of the Indonesian address system deal almost exclusively with the standard variety (see Jenson 1988; Kaswanti Purwo 1984; Kridalaksana 1974; Mintz 1994, 77–94). Generally they provide the inventory of terms, in which personal pronouns and pronoun substitutes, such as proper names, kin terms (including borrowed ones), and titles, are detailed. Address choice is accounted for mainly in terms of normative use – that is, which terms correlate with which speech situations, taking into consideration factors such as age, gender, rank or profession, social status, ethnic group and social distance. More recent studies, such as Budiyana (2002) and Aziz (2003), include kamu and elu in the inventory and note that both pronouns tend to be used by young close friends in informal contexts; however, neither study deals with the question of variation, so that possible reasons why a speaker may switch terms when speaking to the same interlocutor remain unexplored.

Studies by Sneddon (2002) and Ewing (2005), although not solely dealing with address terms, are more relevant for our current purposes. Ewing’s study, based on data from casual conversation among adult speakers from various parts of Indonesia, mentions that speakers identify the difference between kamu and elu as being a regional one. Kamu is generally considered an appropriate term for addressing close friends, casual acquaintances, children, and also animals, while elu serves a similar purpose but is associated mainly with Jakartan speakers.

Sneddon’s study on the speech of Jakartans found that variation between kamu and elu is common among youth. Both elu and its variants (the distinction between which is not considered here) are the most frequently used second person pronouns in conversation (additionally, elu is used for general ‘you, one’). Kamu is also used but far less frequently. Sneddon notes that some speakers tend to shift from elu to kamu when quoting what is said by and to others – a type of shift referred to by Ervin-Tripp (2001, 48) as rhetorical
shift. However, other speakers do not make such a differentiation, so that the shift between *elu* and *kamu* appears random.

This article attempts to offer an explanation for the seemingly random shifts in the exchanges between two intimates and suggests that shifts can be effected by changes in the individuals’ relationship. Junctures in the relationship such as the establishment of intimacy as well as conflicts will be shown to be possible points at which shifts occur. The term chosen by an individual at different points in the relationship reflects her/his interpretation of the term’s range of expressive meanings. Yet, this interpretation is not uniform across all individuals, as is evidenced by the variation in the choice of term by the two sets of participants in the narratives under study here.

Although conversation is a good source of naturally occurring speech, to a large extent it is only a snapshot of an individual’s speech, that is, it captures speech within a particular verbal interaction at a particular time. As such, the relationship between participants over the duration of the conversation tends to remain constant, and therefore variation in the terms used towards the same interlocutor may at times appear random. Fictional narratives, although not spontaneous or unplanned, provide an interesting alternative to conversation in that they generally depict characters and events over time, allowing readers to trace the development and changes in the characters’ relationships.

This article utilizes two such narratives from different media: the script from the popular teen film *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* ‘What’s With Love?’ (henceforth, *AADC*), published in 2002 (the same year the film was released), and the teen novel *Eiffel I’m in Love* (henceforth *Eiffel*), published in 2001 and adapted into a film in 2003. These two fictional narratives are selected for the following reasons. The novel *Eiffel* is one of the highly popular teen novels, as evidenced by its seven reprints in the three years following its initial publication and also its adaptation to a film. As films, *AADC* and *Eiffel* have enjoyed great success in Indonesia and marked a resurgence of public interest in teen films after a long vacuum in the film industry due to the industry’s inability to compete with popular Hollywood action films.

The success of these narratives is due not only to the fact that they deal with teenage love and friendship, but more importantly, that the teenage interaction is presented through colloquial speech. Both *AADC* and *Eiffel* depict the lives of teenagers in the capital Jakarta who communicate with their peers in a style that represents not only informality but also, more significantly, a modern and urban youth identity that young speakers outside of the capital aspire to and emulate.
STYLE AND TERM SHIFTING

Language style, according to Bell (2001, 139), is essentially about the question ‘Why did the speaker say it this way on this occasion?’ It is a question that seeks an explanation for the particular choices a speaker makes in a particular speech situation. In other words, the question of style concerns the difference or distinctiveness in the speech of an individual speaker (Irvine 2001). Accordingly, stylistic variation involves variation in the speech of the individual or ‘intra-speaker variation’ (Schilling-Estes 2002, 375). The shifts between kamu and elu are located within this type of variation.

Ervin-Tripp (2001, 49) identifies three types of shifts: (a) shifts induced by a change of speech participants, whereby the speaker shifts terms to accommodate different interlocutors, (b) rhetorical shifts (e.g. the shift from elu to kamu when quoting), and (c) circumstantial shifts (e.g. induced by a change in the speech production, such as the contrast between speech and writing). The shifts to be described here do not seem to belong to these types. First, the shifts that occur in AADC and Eiffel occur within the context of interaction with the same interlocutor, so that they can be considered as an effect of accommodation, but not in the sense of accommodation of different interlocutors. Rather, it is accommodation of the same interlocutor in different situations. Second, with the exception of one instance in Eiffel, the shifts do not signal rhetorical moves such as in the case of the speakers in Sneddon’s study. Third, they are not affected by a change in the speech production, but rather by changes in the interpersonal situation. As will be shown, the shifts between elu and kamu serve the strategic purpose of converging with or diverging from the speech style of the interlocutor.

In his study on Indonesian address terms, Kridalaksana (1974) presents a number of factors that may induce shifts, four of which relate to participant contact, summed up as follows. Essentially, a change in the nature of the contact, such as an increase or decrease in the amount of contact, ‘makes it necessary for the speaker to reconsider the various choices in second participant terms’ (Kridalaksana 1974, 20). A shift may occur, for example, when there is a decrease in social distance due to more frequent communication. A shift may also occur because of what Kridalaksana calls ‘factors of respect and friendliness’ (Kridalaksana 1974, 20), that is, with increased contact, certain terms that are initially considered appropriate may be avoided. For example, a person who customarily addresses an interlocutor with the impersonal term saudara ‘you’ may drop this term as s/he becomes friendly with him/her because of the perceived neutrality and impersonal tone of the term. Conversely, a person may shift from using a friendly term to an impersonal one in formal occasions.
Kridalaksana’s observation suggests that participant relationships and term choice are not static; that is, contact between individuals may increase or decrease and terms may shift accordingly. This observation finds support in a study by Schilling-Estes (1999) on the usage patterns of English discourse markers such as *y’know* and *I mean*. The study shows that the usage patterns of these markers by two interlocutors, an African American and a Native American, vary according to where they position themselves in the relationship. The patterns suggest that the speakers sometimes position themselves as good friends who uphold their friendship, and other times as individuals from two distinct ethnic groups. As will be shown, the patterns of address in AADC and Eiffel also vary according to how a character assesses her/his position relative to her/his interlocutor at particular points of their relationship.

However, Kridalaksana’s overall analysis of how a term choice is arrived at is less helpful for explaining the shifts between *kamu* and *elu*, primarily because it calculates the choice according to three pre-determined categories of social distance argued to be of paramount consideration: ‘distant’, ‘intermediate’, and ‘close’. For example, under the category ‘distant’ are terms such as the impersonal *anda* ‘you’, *tuan* ‘sir’, *nyonya* ‘madam’, and *nona* ‘miss’. In the ‘intermediate’ category are terms such as *pendengar* ‘listener’, the impersonal *saudara* ‘you’, and the occupational title *dokter* ‘doctor’. In the ‘close’ category are pronouns (e.g. *engkau* ‘you’), proper names, kinship terms (e.g. *bapak* ‘father’), the deictic term *situ* ‘there’, and N+ku forms (e.g. *Tuhanku* ‘my God’). According to this categorization, *kamu* and *elu* belong to the same category of ‘close’ because both index close relations. How then are the shifts between these terms to be accounted for?

In the remainder of this article, I hope to demonstrate that whilst the shifts between *elu* and *kamu* indeed reflect changes in participant contact, they additionally suggest an individual’s understanding of the differences between the language varieties from which the terms are derived and her/his interpretations of the different nuances of meaning that each term can express because of this difference.

**KAMU, ELU, AND DIGLOSSIA**

As noted by Sneddon in a number of publications (Sneddon 2001, 2002, 2003), the Indonesian language exists in a diglossic situation, with the standard (High) and the non-standard (Low) varieties serving different functions. Standard Indonesian is the language of government administration, education, most of the mass media, and other formal settings, while colloquial Indonesian (as a term for various regional spoken language varieties) is used in informal everyday interactions. The colloquial variety considered
here is fast becoming the standard colloquial, due in no small measure to the influence of the media (Sneddon 2003, 11).

Sneddon (2002, 154) suggests that Indonesian only partly fits the definition of diglossia because, although it meets most of the criteria as defined by Ferguson (1959), the distinction between the standard and non-standard is not always clear-cut. For example, two items of similar referential content but from different varieties often co-occur in the speech of the same person in the same context. *Kamu* and *elu* are a good example.

Although *kamu* and *elu* are both used in colloquial Indonesian, the fact that they are from different language varieties brings important implications to do with the difference in meanings perceived to be expressible by each. Lee (1992, 165) succinctly articulates these implications in his writing on language variety, discursive style, and ideology:

> The central question is whether the differences between linguistic [dialect] varieties – specifically between standard and non-standard varieties – are simply a matter of superficial contrasts, or whether there are more important differences having to do with the kinds of meanings expressible in different varieties. It is, of course, a commonplace that there are marked ideological differences associated with the use of a standard and a non-standard variety [...]. The question at issue, however, does not have to do with the general ideological meanings that are signalled by the use of a particular code but whether the codes themselves are oriented towards different meaning potentials.

Two characteristics of standard Indonesian are of particular relevance in relation to the use of *kamu* in colloquial speech. The first is that, as this language variety is used in formal situations, it is conventionally associated with social distance, politeness, or topics considered formal or ceremonial. *Kamu* in colloquial Indonesian also inherits these features and may therefore be used to signal any of these notions when used by individuals of a similar age but who are not familiar with each other. A shift to *elu* may occur as they acquire greater familiarity with each other. Conversely, two participants who customarily address each other with *elu* may shift to *kamu* in formal situations (e.g. a meeting) or when talking about a topic considered formal or ceremonial such as a marriage proposal. A good example of such a shift is found in *Eiffel*, in which Adit, one of the main characters, shifts from *elu* to *kamu* when he proposes to his girlfriend, Tita.

The second is that, as standard Indonesian is the language of education and of most literary genres, it can serve as a linguistic resource to be drawn upon in fulfilling one’s
educational or literary aspirations. The use of *kamu* therefore may suggest an individual's orientation towards intellectual or poetic pursuits, as exemplified in *AADC* where Rangga, one of the main characters, who is the son of an academic with a great interest in Indonesian literature and a talent for poetry writing, consistently uses *kamu* towards his girlfriend, Cinta. Although this term may also be used by those who may not share a similar orientation, its consistent use by a character such as Rangga represents a self-identity that is grounded in an educated family background and a personal interest in poetic language.

These are obviously not the only possible interpretations of *kamu*, as this term is also often used in abusive or conflict situations. For example, to order someone of similar age or older to get out one may say: *Keluar kamu!* ‘Get out you!’ (*kamu* being used in this instance to scold or snarl). However, this usage is not realized in the two narratives. The closest instance to it being used with a negative connotation is in *AADC*, where Cinta responds to Rangga’s insult by saying: *Apa kamu bilang?! ‘What did you say??’* (Prananto 2002, 46). But even in this instance, *kamu* is far from being used as an abusive term.

The following describes the shifts between the terms in each narrative in more detail.

**AADC**

Released in 2002, *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta* ‘What’s with Love?’ (*AADC*) is a film about teenage love and friendships, with a political twist. The leading character, Cinta (meaning ‘Love’), is a sociable, pretty, and assertive Jakarta high school student from a privileged family, adored and admired by her peers. Her first contact with fellow student Rangga takes place following a poetry competition in which his poem won first prize (she also entered but did not win). As chief editor of her school magazine, Cinta is to interview Rangga about his achievement. Rangga, son of an economics professor, sacked for his mild criticism of government corruption, has a quiet demeanour and is a recluse. The connection between the two develops as Cinta learns of Rangga’s interest in literature and his talent in poetry writing. The film portrays the ups and downs of the relationship, ending with Rangga going away to the US to follow his father, who has been offered a university appointment. Rangga’s departure is, however, sealed with a promise to return to Cinta.

At the beginning of the story, the contrast in personality and social orientations between the two characters is matched by the difference in the terms they use to address their peers. Cinta, being a sociable and assertive individual, always addresses her fellow
students, including Rangga, whom she has just met, with elo and lo (variants of elu). Meanwhile Rangga maintains the use of kamu throughout, including when addressing Cinta. The dialogue in (1) is taken from the segment where Cinta meets Rangga in the school library for the interview. However, Rangga, whose poem had actually been entered into the competition by someone else without him knowing, refuses to be interviewed:

(1) (Prananto 2002, 19):

Rangga: Cepetan. Mau ngomong apa? hurry up want say what ‘Hurry up. What do you want?’

Cinta: Madiing mau wawancara elo. school.mag want interview you ‘The school magazine wants to interview you.’

Rangga: Buat apa? for what ‘What for?’

Cinta: Ya profil elo sebagai juara lomba … yes profile you as winner competition ‘Well to have your profile as the winner of the competition …’

Rangga: Tadi saya kan sudah bilang, saya bukan pemenang. before I DM already say I not winner ‘I’ve already told you, I’m not the winner.’

Cinta: Terserah elo! Pokoknya menurut juri, elo juara-nya! up.to you in.short according to judge you winner-the ‘Well, say whatever you want! According to the judges, you’re the winner!’

Aware that Cinta is offended by his refusal, Rangga retorts:

(2) (Prananto 2002, 32):

Rangga: Kenapa sih kamu? Tersinggung gara-gara Why DM you be.offended because saya enggak mau kamu wawancarai? I not want you interview ‘What’s wrong with you? Offended because I didn’t want you to interview me?’

The antagonism between the two characters begins to dissolve when Cinta returns Rangga’s much loved book (of poetry), which he had accidentally dropped upon leaving
her after their first meeting. Relieved to find his lost book, Rangga thanks her. Cinta, who at this point is in love with Rangga despite his previous hostility, responds to Rangga’s change of heart by making a cheeky remark about his attractiveness. This remark signals a turning point in their relationship, in which hostility is replaced by intimacy. It is also the point at which we see a shift in Cinta’s address style, from elo to kamu – a style that emulates and converges with Rangga’s.

(3) (Prananto 2002, 39):

Rangga is quick to notice this shift and responds as follows:

(4) (Prananto 2002, 39):

Rangga’s response suggests not only his recognition of Cinta’s shift of term, but also more significantly, an awareness and acknowledgment of her move towards him.

However, the shift is not permanent. In times of conflict, Cinta reverts to elo, as illustrated below:
The shift from *elo* to *kamu* and vice versa by Cinta occurs a number of times in the film, each coinciding with a conflict or reconciliation, but gradually stabilizing into *kamu* as the relationship becomes established. The shift back to *elo* by Cinta at conflict points indicates a self-distancing strategy and signals a retreat to her identity as an independent individual who is distinct from Rangga. Conversely, her shift from *elo* to *kamu* suggests an alignment with him and a strategic move toward the desired position.

The convergence between Cinta’s and Rangga’s styles are captured at the end of the film through their verbal expression of love, in which *kamu* is used by both, as shown in (6).

(6) (Prananto 2002, 117):

Cinta: *Jangan pergi, Rangga. Please... Saya... saya sayang kamu.*

Rangga: *Saya juga sayang kamu, Cinta. Sayang sekali.*

The shift illustrated above supports Kridalaksana’s observation that speakers may shift style in order to decrease their social distance as they acquire greater familiarity with each other or increase it for certain purposes. A shift resulting in a stylistic convergence such as in AADC serves, in Coupland’s (2001, 197) words, to narrow the ‘cultural and social divide between identities’.
But why does the shift go from *elo* toward the standard-derived term *kamu*, rather than the other way round? The answer perhaps lies in how the identities are presented in the film. Both Cinta and Rangga are portrayed as characters with a shared passion for poetry, a literary genre that is predominantly written in the standard. Between the two characters, it is Rangga who wins the poetry competition, much to Cinta’s envy. It is also his poetic talent that Cinta aspires to. Thus her converging to his style is reflective of this personal aspiration. In this respect, then, the shift represents a convergence of style as well as of one’s personal interest and cultural orientation, and those of the interlocutor.

**EIFFEL**

Originally a novel written by 15 year-old Rachmania Arunita, *Eiffel* is a story about the love between Tita, a 15 year-old high school student and daughter of an upper middle class couple, and Adit, 18, the only son of the couple’s best friend. Tita was only 5 and Adit was 8 when Adit’s father moved to Paris, following his separation from his wife. The two teenagers meet again for the first time in 10 years when Adit’s father decided to visit Tita’s family in Jakarta. Tita and Adit erroneously believe that the purpose of the visit is to realize their parents’ long ambition to match them. Tita, who has a boyfriend from the same school, initially resents Adit’s presence but gradually falls in love with him as she learns of her boyfriend’s deceit and Adit’s faithful attention to her. The story culminates with Tita’s happy visit to Paris, which affirms the pair’s relationship.

Similar to *AADC*, the beginning of *Eiffel* also sees the main characters in an antagonistic relationship. Both Tita and Adit resent being matched, and both find each other’s presence annoying. However, unlike in *AADC*, where the discord between the characters at the beginning of the story is marked by the use of two different terms, the personal distance and unfamiliarity between the characters in *Eiffel* is signalled by their use of *kamu* to each other. For example, Adit says at his first meeting with Tita:

(7) (Arunita 2001, 20):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adit:</th>
<th>Jadi kamu yang nama-nya Tita?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>so you who name-the Tita</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘So you are Tita?’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As their contact becomes more frequent and closer, the shift to *elo* or *lo* occurs and is basically maintained through the rest of the story. Below is an example of the use of
this term by Tita (here trying make Adit show his romantic side by expressing his love on Valentine’s day):

(8) (Arunita 2001, 354):

Tita: Lo ngapain kek Dit. Ngajak gue
you do.something PRT Dit ask.to.do.something I
kawin kek, ngomong cinta kek. Ini 14 Februari.
marry DM talk love DM this 14 February

Naluri kerromtisan lo harus jalan, dong.
instinct romantic you must walk PRT

‘You should do something Dit. Like, ask me to marry you, or say you love me or something. This is 14 February. Why don’t you show your romantic instinct?’

Unlike in AADC, where Cinta’s return to elo occurs at conflict points, almost no shift back to kamu occurs in Eiffel, with the exception of an instance towards the end where Adit asks Tita if she wants to be his wife, as shown in (9).

(9) (Arunita 2001, 354):

Adit: Tita, malam ini kamu cerewet sekali, tapi apa
Tita night this you hard.to.please very but do

kamu mau jadi cewek yang selalu nungguin
you want become girl who always wait.for

gue pulang kerja di rumah?
I come.home work at home

‘Tita, you’re so hard to please tonight, but will you be the girl who always waits for me at home when I come from work?’

This shift is rhetorical and is triggered by the shift in topic, from a casual lovers’ chat to a marriage proposal – a topic considered formal and ceremonial and for which kamu rather than elo is considered appropriate.

The use of kamu at the beginning and in the marriage proposal draws on the meaning possibilities of this term that are associated with social distance, politeness and formality. Elo or lo, on the other hand, is used to suggest intimacy (including lovers’ quarrels) and a narrowing of social distance. The absence of shifts back to kamu may be partly attributed to the portrayal of the characters as sociable and mobile teenagers, but with no strong interest in particular intellectual or literary endeavours that require a linguistic
differentiation as in the case of Rangga in AADC. Nonetheless, the rhetorical shift to kamu in the marriage proposal suggests an awareness of the different expressive content of the terms as well as a reassessment of the suitability of a previously chosen term in light of a new topic.

The patterns of address in the two narratives are clearly dissimilar. AADC begins with a discordant pattern of kamu and elo, reflecting the personality contrast, distance, and unfamiliarity between the two characters. The gradual convergence into kamu suggests the synchronization between the personalities and the establishment of intimacy. Eiffel, on the other hand, shows almost a reversed pattern, with kamu being used at the beginning by both characters to mark distance and unfamiliarity, and shifting to elo when the relationship and intimacy develop. There is thus no single pattern that can be established as the norm of either a distant or close romantic teenage relationship.

**CONCLUSION**

The difference in the usage pattern of kamu and elo in the two narratives suggests that, while a term, by virtue of the language variety from which it is derived, may have certain meaning associations, how these associations are understood and interpreted by individuals in relation to their own situation may vary. In addition, that kamu and elo are considered to be the appropriate terms for addressing one’s peers is a normative notion, but how speakers choose between them cannot be determined solely by this norm. Speakers continually assess and reassess their own situation and their relationship with the interlocutor, and with each shift they realign or reposition themselves within that relationship.

Address choice is thus dynamic in that it is not guided solely by the norms that determine which term fits which situation; rather, it is a creative act whereby speakers create their expression of identity in line with their personal intent and preferred social orientation while still operating within the normative bounds (Coupland 2001, 200). Terms may shift in the same way that the nature of one’s relationship with an interlocutor may change over time.

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ENDNOTES

1 Speakers who use kamu usually also use saya for ‘I’, while those who use elu tend to use gua or its variant, gue for ‘I’.

2 In the excerpts, the dot (e.g. ‘hurry.up’) means that the single item in the other language is translated into English with more than one word - these cannot be separated and have equal value.

The placement of elu and its variants after a noun or noun phrase indicates a possessor.

Glossed as DM (discourse marker) are particles serving various functions in discourse.

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