

How Does a Speaker Maintain Her Local Language in A Multilingual Speech Society? A Case Study of a Sasak Girl Staying in Central Java

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Abstract

It is generally known that some people can live in one place in their entire life while some others are not. In line with this condition, moving to a new place affects their life including their language. In regard to this situation, this paper aims to find out how a *Sasak* girl maintains her local language in a multilingual society. This study was conducted by using qualitative study in the form of case study. The data were collected through observation, recording, and interview while interactive model (data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion or verification) were used to analyze the data. At the end, the findings and discussions were also reviewed.

Keywords: language shift, language maintenance, multilingual speech society

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Introduction

Some people may enjoy living in one place but some others are not. There are some reasons why people need to move to a new place such as getting married, taking a job, wanting a new environment, continuing study, being migrants, or even natural disaster. In line with the moving with any reason, the language use in the new speech society will also different and adjust the new environment. Holmes (1992) mentions that economic, social, and political reasons are the factors which contribute to language shifts.

Paauw (2009), Cohn and Ravindranath (2014), Musgrave (n.d) mention that Indonesia is the fourth most populous nation in the world, with the estimated population of nearly 250 million. Besides, Indonesia consists of hundred islands, various races; ethnic groups so that it causes various languages. Regarding that case, Indonesia has a challenging step to apply Indonesian as the national language. Thanks to the 2nd Indonesian Youth Congress in 1928 for conducting "*sumpah pemuda*" or "youth pledge" which acknowledged "one motherland" and "one nation" and to uphold one "language of unity, the Indonesian language among many languages spoken in Indonesia.

Years after "youth pledge", Indonesian language uses throughout Indonesia as the language unity. Recently, the use of Indonesian language causes the declining use of some local languages such as the Javanese language. It has been explored by Musgrave (n.d) who states that "First language speakers of languages such as Javanese are declining as a proportion of the total population, but this is a slow process and no one would consider these languages as endangered by any accepted measure"

In line with Musgrave (n.d), Cohn and Ravindranath (2014) predicted in their paper that the increasing number of Indonesian speakers lead to the decreasing number of speakers for local languages. They added that the case mentioned will affect Indonesia from multilingual nation to a monolingual nation. What they suggest to avoid endanger language is by documenting the existing language. In this case, it can also be done to *Sasak* language.

Furthermore, David et.al (2009:158) state that "one crucial factor that can either help language maintenance or lead to language shift and eventually language death are the language policies of individual nations". The 2nd Indonesian Youth Congress in 1928 for establishing "youth pledge" can also be called as 'language policy since from that time, the Indonesian language is considered as the national language of Indonesia. Meanwhile, regarding to the local language endanger, David et.al (2009) found that the existing program that the selected countries applied to maintain the endanger language are school-based program in which the endanger language as the subject, children's programs outside the school, adult language programs, and the last is documentation and material development.

In line with the mentioned case, the case of a *Sasak* girl who is staying in Central Java, Indonesia, also need to shift her language since her language and the language use where she lives is different. The language use is Indonesian as lingua franca. Holmes (1992:78) defines "Lingua franca is a language serving as a regular means of

communication between different linguistics groups in a multilingual speech community". Thanks to the Indonesian language as lingua franca because the language spoken in central Java is the Javanese language. Because she attends a master study, she meets not only Javanese speakers but also speakers of other places such as speakers from Kalimantan Island, Sumatra Island, East Nusa Tenggara province and almost the entire Indonesia. Thus, she does not need to master the Javanese language because the Indonesian language is the alternative.

The need to continue her study in a city far from home leads her to shift her language into Indonesian. In 1991, Fillmore states that the continuing use of foreign language may cause lost to the first language; this is also happening to students who learn the second language. It is a common case in *Sasak* when migrant coming back from abroad, they may use the language they often use abroad such as Malaysian Language and forget some terms in their local language. Related to Malaysian language, it is often produced in Lombok island since many *Sasaknese* going to Malaysia for working as labour and coming back to Indonesia together with the influence of Malaysian language. This case related to the psychologist of the speaker.

In addition, although most of the time she uses Indonesian to her all friends, she still maintains her local language when she speaks to her friends who are also coming from Lombok island, a place where her first language spoken. She still uses pronoun "*tiang*" (I am [in polite language] in *Sasaknese*) and "*side*" (you [in polite language] in *Sasaknese*) when speaks to her friend from Lombok. In regards to this case, this paper is intended to answer a question "how she can maintain her local language by using "*tiang*" and "*side*" only when speaking to her friends from Lombok?"

Review of Related Studies

In this part, it firstly looks at the studies has been done on the inter-ethnic interactions around the world related to maintaining the local language.

Cohn and Ravindranath (2014) state that the development of Indonesian language as a lingua franca leads Indonesian people to be whether highly multilingual society or move toward monolinguals. It is a confusing term whether Indonesian people shift their language of maintaining their language since even a language with over 80 million speakers can be at risk if the language is no longer use.

Nawaz, et.al. (2012) conducted a study about factors involved in language shift in Pakistan. The findings reveal that historical, cultural, economic, social and psychological factors are a complex and affected phenomenon which motivating and stimulating the language shift from the Punjabi language into the English Language.

Jagodic (2011) studied the processes of language maintenance and shift among the Slovenian community in north-eastern Italy. The findings reveal that if a community wants to maintain their language, not only language planning activities aimed at maintaining the language among the members of the community, but also specific attention to the strategies for the acquisition of new potential speakers within the wider society is needed.

Maya (2009) wrote in the dissertation about language shift and the speech community in Belize. By focusing on the causes and effect of the relationship between social and

linguistic especially focusing on age-based variation in the speech community, the findings show that: first, an externally-motivated change in the status of the sociolinguistic variable (ch) for a shift in the dominant language in the community. Second, variable deletion of intervocalic r is described for the first time as an internally motivated change, albeit progressing alongside contact-induced changes. Third, the behavior of the transitional generation (speakers aged 30-49) shows interesting characteristics with regard to these two variables as a result of shifting language ideologies in the village.

The study conducted by Maya (2009) has the similarity toward the current study in the form of dynamic language to be analyzed but has the difference in the form of a setting of the study and focus on the language shift and maintaining the language.

David, et.al (2009) studied the impact on language maintenance and teaching: focus on Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and the Philippines. The study focused on the language policy especially on language maintenance in some selected countries in ASEAN region. The findings indicate that some countries have language policies that benefit some of the minority languages; while others do not seem to be doing enough to stop the shift to the majority languages. This current study is closely related to the current study except in the setting of the study.

Method

This paper utilizes the qualitative method in the form of case study. It is a study of an issue explored by one or more cases by using a bounded system (Creswell: 2007). The subject of the study is a *Sasak* girl initiated K.A.H.I who is originally coming from Lombok Island, West Nusa Tenggara Province. In Lombok Island, there is an ethnic called *Sasak*. K.A.H.I is a *Sasaknese* because she lives and grows in Lombok. However, right now she is staying in central java, Java Island to continue her master study in Sebelas Maret University which lies is the Surakarta city, central java. It is known as the city of *Javanese* heritage.

Furthermore, the methods of collecting the data were observation, note taking and interview. Meanwhile, the model adopted for analyzing the data was an interactive model from Miles and Huberman (1984). The components of the interactive model are data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion or verification.

Findings and Discussions

Sociolinguistics situation in Surakarta, Central Java

Surakarta is the name of a city in Central Java, Java Island where Sebelas Maret University lies. K.A.H.I is studying in this university right now. Same as other places in Indonesia, living in Surakarta also use not only local language (*Javanese* Language) but also Indonesia language. Besides, many other local languages are also spoken by the newcomers who are staying in Surakarta for studying or working. However, it is a good preference for newcomers because not all newcomers understand *Javanese*. The interactions of native *Javanese* are dominated by the *Javanese* language. Besides, the interaction among *Javanese* and *non-Javanese* such as *Sasak* comers sometimes used *Javanese* mixed with Indonesian language but more often using Indonesian language. The use of Indonesian Language as lingua franca is according to one of the three acknowledgement of the 2nd youth pledge.

Some terms of *Javanese* such as the expression of surprising are often spoken by the native *Javanese* mixed with the Indonesian language. However, those terms are familiar and understood by non-Javanese since they are often spoken. The living of non-Javanese such as *Sasaknese* in Surakarta seems to be easy since Indonesian can be used and understood everywhere in Surakarta city. As has been mentioned, Indonesian language as lingua franca eases the communication.

Description of Sasak language being maintained

K.A.H.I is the initial name of a girl being investigated since her language is unique. Every person may bring her language wherever she goes at least the dialect but K.A.H.I has the special one. She just maintains her *Sasak* Language when she speaks to her friends from Lombok who also understand *Sasaknese* by speak pronoun "*tiang*" and "*side*". For example: *tiang sudah datang, side dimana?* "I already come, where are you". The words "*tiang*" and "*side*" are *Sasak* Language, meaning that "I" and "you". The entire language "*sudah datang, ...dimana*" are the Indonesian language. The unique case of K.A.H.I is when she speaks; the use of "*tiang*" and "*side*" that she uses to her *Sasak* friends only will be automatically changed into full Indonesian language in the sentence above when she spoke to non-*Sasak* friends. The pronoun of "*tiang*" and "*side*" is the language that she maintains when she lives in multilingual speech society.

How to maintain the Sasak Language in multilingual setting

After being together in one university for a year and a half, the researcher who is also a *Sasak* person observes, takes notes, and casually interviews K.A.H.I about the language that K.A.H.I. used. The interesting fact is revealed that the use of pronoun "*tiang*" and "*side*" are the *Sasak* language use which dominating the conversation every K.A.H.I, the researcher, and other *Sasak* friends meet. The other language use is Indonesian.

When K.A.H.I being asked the reasons why she uses the only pronoun "*tiang*" and "*side*" of her *Sasak* language while the rest are Indonesian language, she said that it is because of the reflection, habit, respectful, and knowing the interlocutor who is also the *Sasak* speakers. She never thinks the pronoun that she will use before speak but is a reflection in her mental lexicon to use that pronoun. It is also because of the habit she often used since she fully uses *Sasak* language in her motherland. The mental lexicon, the habit, the reflection that K.A.H.I has is in contrast to Fillmore (1991) who states that the continuing use of foreign or another language may cause loss to the first language.

On the other hand, the use of pronouns "*tiang*" and "*side*" are polite pronouns because there are also the similarities between *Sasak* language and Indonesian language. "*tiang*" and "*side*" in Indonesian language are "*Aku*" and "*kamu*" which are also found in *Sasak* language but in impolite pronoun. That is why K.A.H.I said that using pronoun "*tiang*" and "*side*" are to respect the interlocutor who also understands the meaning of that pronoun, especially the native of *Sasak*.

Furthermore, K.A.H.I states that the use of pronoun "*tiang*" and "*side*" is one of the ways to maintain her local language in the multilingual speech community she is

living right now. She often said that she is very glad when meeting the *Sasak* friend in and outside the university. Even she cannot speak full *sasaknese* because *none-Sasaknese* cannot understand, she is very glad to use those pronouns when meeting her *Sasak* friends. *"It is like home to speak using my own local language"* she often said. *"There are some expressions that can only be making senses in my own local language"* she added. In short, local, national, and foreign languages are important to be mastered but the feeling of using each language is different.

Although K.A.H.I does not apply the ways to maintain certain language as David et.al (2009) mention, the use of the polite pronoun represents the effort to maintain her local language among many languages use. It can be called as the living documentation because of every pronoun mentioned, she always uses her local language.

Conclusions

Multilingual society is identic in this modern era since the moving people are very easy recently. Regarding the case of K.A.H.I, some points can be concluded such as the local language can be maintained although by using just pronouns of her local language. The local respectful to our interlocutor and maintain our own habit to be polite can lead us to use a polite reflection as K.A.H.I does. The unity of language is important but give honour to our local language is also needed since every place has their own ancient who brings our place as good as where we are living today.

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