

**LANGUAGE CHOICE PERFORMED BY JAVANESE CHILDREN
AND TEENAGERS AT KALASAN SUBDISTRICT,
YOGYAKARTA INDONESIA**

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ABSTRACT

Javanese language is geographically spoken in wide areas; however, it seems that its speakers began to give up using it. This can be seen that the quality of its usage among the young Javanese is deteriorated. This phenomenon mainly happens in the urban areas where the young Javanese tend to use Indonesian language rather than Javanese language. They think that Javanese language is complicated requiring its speakers some regulations and etiquettes, thus they tend to use Indonesian language that is considered as neutral and easy. If this language attitude occurs for a long period of time, the Javanese language will be abandoned by its speakers or die. The research sample is taken by restricted random sampling technique. They are 244 children and teenagers (between 5 to 15 year old) living in some housings in Kalasan regency. They are chosen from the genuine Javanese family whose parents and grand parents are Javanese in nature. The research data is all information about language choice of Javanese and Indonesian language done by the subjects of the study in the domain of their houses, schools, and public places spoken to parents, teachers, schoolmates, friends at home, neighbors, aunts and uncles, guest or visitors, grand-mothers and fathers, and strangers. The data is taken by survey questionnaire. Based on the field data, most of the subjects choose Indonesian language when they communicate with parents, teachers, schoolmates, friends at home, neighbors, aunts and uncles, guest or visitors, grand-mothers and fathers, and strangers. Most of them speak in Low level Javanese (ngoko) to parents, schoolmates, friends at home, neighbors, aunts and uncles, grand-mothers and fathers. They rarely use Middle level Javanese (madya) and High level Javanese (krama).

Key Words: *Javanese language, Low level Javanese (ngoko), Middle level Javanese (madya), High level Javanese (krama), Language choice*

1. Background

The Javanese language embraces wide areas of speech communities in Indonesia and abroad. It is spoken mainly in Java, in south

Sulawesi, Irian Jaya, Maluku, and other regions in Indonesia. It is also spoken to a lesser extent by Javanese emigrant communities in Singapore, Surinam and New Caledonia

(Grimes, 1988: 504).

Javanese language is widely spoken in Indonesia, however it seems that this language begins to be abandoned by its speakers, especially by young generation of Javanese. They tend to consider that Javanese language is difficult to learn, as it has many complicated rules. Therefore, they are fond of conversing in Indonesian language which is considered easy to use and very democratic. Thus in using Indonesian language, they do not need to apply honorific language that is always applied in Javanese language.

Javanese language is taught in elementary schools and junior high schools in some cities in Java Island, however, it is not a compulsory subject. Most schools teach this language as a local content subject. It means that this language has limited time allotment for its teaching. If this language attitude goes on for the next few years, the Javanese language will gradually die or abandoned by its speakers.

The language phenomena described previously could not be avoided, because the choice of using Indonesian language in daily activities gives much easiness and advantageous for young Javanese. Indonesian language has enabled them to communicate nationally in this era and it is almost applied in all aspects of activities of today's Javanese generation. It has dominated aspects of life of the Indonesian people in general and Javanese society specifically. This can be proven that it is utilized in the fields of education, social and culture, telecommunication, politics, economy, law, and others. By studying this fact, there is a reasonable argument that if Javanese children can master Indonesian language early, they will be easy to study at school, to communicate with other children of different ethnic language backgrounds, easy to enjoy TV shows or programs and read or understand books and many others.

The above issue relates to what is called

as a language choice inducing to the first indication of language shift of the Javanese language into Indonesian language. It is in accordance with what Trudgill (2002: 138) stated that in the process of language shift, the native speakers of a language will shift to use other languages through an intermediate process called bilingualism in order to adopt those languages gradually. The language shift done by the speakers has some reasons and the process of the shift will kill the previous language steadily. If the speakers change or shift their language completely to the new language, in this case, the new language has killed their previous language in which its action is known as language murder. *Sanskrit* language was once used in Java and is dead today. This language is only found in old literatures or writings in libraries. The death of languages also happens in some other countries such as the death of Cornish, Dalmatian, Livonian and Manx. There are also some languages that are dying, such as German language in French, Danish and Italian language in French, and Latin languages in Albania.

Language shift and language maintenance are language phenomena studied under Sociolinguistics. Language shift is a language phenomenon in which language users gradually turn to use another language because of some reasons. According to Holmes (1992: 57), there are some influencing factors language shift such as immigration, politics, and social changes. Fasold (1994: 215-218) also stated that factors contributing to language shift are migration, industrialization, obligation to use a certain language at schools and the language policy of a government.

Language shift or language maintenance is the result of long term language choice. It is a sign of the beginning process of abandoning a language, if an individual and society begin to choose language other than their previous language (or mother tongue) (Fasold, 1994: 213). Furthermore, Fasold stated that language shift is not influenced by age groups, though

language shift itself can influence next generation of a certain language speakers. However, this language phenomenon is language attitude of those language speakers. The condition that enables language speakers to shift language is bilingualism. For this, Fishman (1972: 111) stated that language shift phenomena are not the result of other language's interferences, but are affected by the degree of bilingualism.

According to Trudgill (2002: 138) language shift and language murder can abolish languages in certain areas. Some of the factors such as giving a higher status to a certain language for the reasons of economic, social, and religious contributing to killing some dialects. For example, the appointing of Tahiti dialect for higher status in politic and culture in Polynesia caused the death of Tuamotuan dialect which was previously the origin language of Tuamatu (Muhlousler, 1987).

Although language shift and maintenance are old issues, they are still interesting to be investigated. This research is a little attempt to illustrate how far Javanese native speakers in Kalasan sub district maintain their Javanese language as reflected by the language choice conducted by children and teenagers in their daily communication. This study is inspired by the previous researches: language shift and maintenance conducted by Garner (1985) to the Swedish and Russian immigrants in Melbourne and the research conducted by Wijayanto (2001) about language choice used by fifteen-year-old girl of Javanese descendant living in South Borneo.

2. Research Method

This study applies descriptive qualitative approach. The problem of the research is limited to the language choice done by Javanese teenagers living at Kalasan sub-district, in Sleman regency–Yogyakarta, Indonesia. There are 244 children and teenagers (between 5 to 15 year old) living in some housings in Kalasan whose parents, grandparents, and great grand-

parents are Javanese origin. The samples were taken by applying restricted random sampling technique.

The data are gathered through survey by applying participatant observation and helped by survey questionnaire (Mahsun, 2005: 223). The survey questionnaire is closed-type questionnaire. They are to be completed by the subjects of the study themselves (for teenagers) and helped by their parents (for children). The data any information about language choice and usage used by the samples of the study with their parents, teachers, friends, neighbors, visiting guests, aunts, uncles, grand-fathers, grand-mothers, and strangers in the domains of familis, schools, and public places. The data obtained from the survey is analyzed by quantitative analysis suggested by Mahsun (2005: 248-249) and Fishman (1972).

3. The Findings

Most of the subjects or samples of the study speak in Indonesian language when they communicate with their parents, teachers, friends, neighbors, visiting guests, aunts, uncles, grand-fathers, grand-mothers, and strangers at the domains of their homes, schools, and other public places. Their language choice is described in the following paragraphs.

3.1 At Home and Neighborhood

When they are in the domain of their house, most of them use Indonesian language when they communicate with their parents. Out of 244 samples, there are 176 persons (72,13%) who use Indonesian language, there are 5 persons (2,05%) who apply Indonesian language and low level Javanese language (*ngoko*) by turns, there is 1 person (0,41%) who speaks in Indonesian language and middle level Javanese Language (*madya*) by turns, there is 1 person (0,41%) who speaks in Indonesian language and high level Javanese Language (*krama*) by turns, there are 47 persons (19,26%) who apply low level Javanese

language (*ngoko*)), there are 8 persons (3,28%) who speak in middle level Javanese Language (*madya*), and only 6 (2,46%) persons who can speak High level Javanese (*krama*). When the percentages of their language choice are compared in raw, 72.13 % of the children and teenagers apply Indonesian language and only 27.87% of them apply Javanese language.

When teachers happened to visit the houses of the subjects of the study, they tend to communicate in Indonesian language. It is based on the data that there are 224 persons (91,80%) who speak in Indonesian language, 9 persons (3,69%) speak in low level Javanese (*ngoko*), 3 persons (1,23%) speak in middle level Javanese (*madya*), and 5 persons (2,05%) speak in high level Javanese (*krama*), 1 person speaks both in low level of Javanese (*ngoko*) and Indonesian language by turns.

Indonesian language is also widely used when they are playing in the neighborhood with their friends who are Javanese descendants in nature. There are 142 persons (58,19%) who speak in Indonesian language, 89 persons (36,48%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*), 13 persons (5,33%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*) and Indonesian language by turns.

As they communicate with their neighbors (Javanese and adult) in their neighborhood, most of them speak in Indonesian language, that is 190 persons (77,87%) speak in Indonesian language, 34 persons (13,93%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*), 7 persons (2,87%) speak in Middle level Javanese (*madya*), and 10 persons (4,10%) speak in High level Javanese (*krama*), 2 persons (0,82%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*) and Indonesian language by turns.

They mostly speak in Indonesian language when they talk with their classmates who visit the subjects' houses. There are 175 persons (71,72%) who speak in Indonesian language, 57 persons (23,36%) speak in Low

level Javanese (*ngoko*), 2 persons (0,82%) speak in Middle level Javanese (*madya*), and 3 persons (1,23%) speak in High level Javanese (*krama*), 6 persons (2,46%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*) dan Indonesian language by turns.

When they talk with their parents' guests (adult, Javanese not neighbor) most of the children speak in Indonesian language, namely, there are 218 persons (89,34%) who speak in Indonesian language, 13 persons (5,33%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*), 1 person (0,41%) speaks in middle level Javanese (*madya*), 10 persons (4,10%) speak in High level Javanese (*krama*), 1 person (0,41%) speaks in High level Javanese (*krama*) and Indonesian language by turns, and 1 person (0,41%) speak in other language.

3.2 At Public Domain

3.2.1 Schools

When the subjects are at their school environment with their parents, they communicate in Indonesian language mostly. This can be indicated that there are 217 persons (88,93%) who speak in Indonesian language to their parents. There are 17 persons (6,97%) who speak in low level Javanese (*ngoko*), There are 4 persons (1,64%) who speak in middle level Javanese (*madya*), and there are 3 persons (1,23%) who speak in high level of Javanese (*krama*).

Most of the subjects of the study communicate in Indonesian language. The reason is clear that they are in formal setting, therefore they have to use formal language that is Indonesian language. There are 236 students (97,72%) speak in Indonesian language with their teachers, 4 students (1,64%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*), 2 students (0,82%) speak in High level Javanese (*krama*).

3.2.2 Other Public Places

Based on the data of language use in the

domain of public places with the participants of their parents, most of the children and teenagers speak in Indonesian language. This is indicated by 206 persons (84,42%) who speak in Indonesian language to their parents. As many as 25 persons (10,25%) like to speak in low level (*ngoko*). There are 6 persons (2,46%) who speak in middle level Javanese (*madya*). There are only 3 persons (1,23%) who speak in high level Javanese (*krama*), and the other 3 persons (1,23%) who speak in both Indonesian language and Low level Javanese (*ngoko*) by turns.

With the participants of their teachers, they mostly speak in Indonesian language at public places. There are 234 students (95,90%) who speak in Indonesian language, 1 student (0,41%) speaks in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*), 1 person (0,41%) speaks in Middle level Javanese (*madya*), and 6 persons (2,46%) speak in High level Javanese (*krama*).

They sometimes meet their friends in public places, like hospital, supermarket and the like. Most of them communicate in Indonesian language. There are 159 persons (65,16%) who speak in Indonesian language, 78 persons (31,97%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*), 1 person (0,41%) speaks in middle level Javanese (*madya*), and 6 persons (2,46%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*) and Indonesian language by turns.

They mostly speak in Indonesian language when they meet their neighbor in public places, that is 199 persons (81,56%) speak in Indonesian language, 27 persons (11,06%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*), 7 persons (2,87%) speak in Middle level Javanese (*madya*), and 9 persons (3,69%) speak in High level Javanese (*krama*), 2 persons (0,82%) who speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*) and Indonesian language by turns.

Communicating with their aunts and uncles in the subject's houses, and public places, is mostly done in Indonesian language. This is

based on the data that there are 192 persons (78,69%) who speak in Indonesian language, 30 persons (12,29%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*), 5 persons (2,05%) speak in Middle level Javanese (*madya*), 10 persons (4,10%) speak in High level Javanese (*krama*), 3 persons (1,23%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*) dan Indonesian language by turns. 1 person (0,41%) speaks in High level Javanese (*krama*) dan Indonesian language by turns, dan 3 persons (1,23%) speak in other languages.

Although their grand-fathers and grand-mothers are Javanese in origin, however, the subjects of the study rarely apply Javanese language when they do communication with them. Out of 244 persons, there are 178 persons (72,95%) who speak in Indonesian language with their grand-fathers and grand-mothers, 37 persons (15,16%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*), 4 persons (1,64%) speak in Middle level Javanese (*madya*), 17 persons (6,97%) speak in High level Javanese (*krama*), 5 persons (2,05%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*) and Indonesian language by turns, 1 person (0,41%) speaks in Middle level Javanese (*madya*) dan Indonesian language by turns.

Communicating with strangers is mostly done in Indonesian language that is out of 244 persons, there are 240 persons (98,36%) speak in Indonesian language, 2 persons (0,82%) speak in Low level Javanese (*ngoko*), 1 person (0,41%) speak in Middle level Javanese (*madya*), 1 person (0,41%) speaks in High level Javanese (*krama*).

4. Conclusion

Based on the data, it is revealed that most of the subjects of the study speak in Indonesian language when they communicate with their parents, teachers, friends, neighbors, guests, grand-fathers and grand-mothers, aunts and uncles, and strangers. They apply Indonesian language as much as 82% in their total com-

munication. They only converse in Javanese language as much as 17,4%. When this later number is elaborated, the usage of Javanese language can be described as: Low level Javanese (*ngoko*) is applied as much as 13 %, Middle level Javanese (*madya*) is applied as much as 1,5%, High level Javanese (*krama*) is applied as much as 2, 9 %, and 0,6% is the combination of applying Javanese language, Indonesian language and other languages by turns.

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