

LANGUAGE VARIATION IN TRADITIONAL RITUAL OF DREADLOCK HAIR CUTTING IN DIENG BANJARNEGARA

An Effort to Preserve Language and Culture

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Abstract

As a multilingual country, Indonesians are accustomed to change from one language to another in one speech event. This multilingual phenomenon is also happening in Dieng Plateau of Banjarnegara Regency, Central Java. The use of more than one language is also shown in the “ruwatan” of hair cutting of dreadlocks hair that is routinely held once a year by the local community. The data of this qualitative research is taken from the interview, record and library. The results show that there are at least two languages used in the ritual, namely Javanese and Arabic. The Javanese language is used as the medium of instruction throughout the ceremonial ritual, the recitation of the mantra in the form of prayer in the Javanese language, as well as in the “tembang” sung during the ritual procession. Meanwhile, the Arabic language is used as the language of instruction in prayer readings.

Keywords: multilingual community, language variation, Dieng, dreadlocks hair

Introduction

Indonesians as a multilingual are used to switch from one language to another or mix a variety of languages with other languages in a speech event. This phenomenon occurs not only for the people residing in big cities, but also for those residing in villages. At least the Indonesian society mastered the Indonesian language and local language in which the speech community is domiciled.

The impact of mastery of more than one language or code in a speech community is that they could select one of the languages or variations of their linguistic repertoire. Holmes (2001, p. 21) as quoted by Mutmainnah (2016) argues that there are several social factors considered by a multilingual when he chooses a code in a communication event: to whom he speaks, the social context, the function and purpose of the conversation. In addition, there are other social factors that support in code choice, there are: social distance between

speakers, the relationship status of the speakers, the level of formality, and the function or purpose of a speech event.

Regarding to language choice, Fasold (1987) in Molina (2009) states that there are three types of language choice by a bilingual or a multilingual:

- a. “Whole languages,” or the choice between two languages in a conversation: i.e. code-switching.
- b. Code-mixing, “where pieces of one language are used while a speaker is basically using another language”; these pieces can be single words, or short phrases.
- c. Variation within the same language. In these cases, a speaker must choose which set of variants to use within a single language in any given situation.

More interestingly, this multilingual phenomenon is not only happening in big cities in Indonesia, but also occurs in almost

all regions, including in rural areas. This is due to the mobility of the community, the ease of moving from one region to another, and the ease of communication with the outside world using various modern media such as telephone, internet, and so forth. This multilingual condition also occurs in Dieng village, Banjarnegara. This area is one of the tourist destinations in Central Java.

In an effort to promote their area, Dieng society still upholds their local language. The Javanese language in Dieng dialect is not only used in the communication among local society, but also used in rituals, including the ritual of dreadlocks.

Methodology

A qualitative descriptive approach with ethnographic methods is used in this research of the language used in traditional ceremonies of gimbal (dreadlock) haircut in Dieng village. This study aims to provide a systematic and factual description related to the data and its relationship with the phenomenon studied (Djajasudarma 1993, p. 9).

The main data in this study is the speech used in the ceremony of gimbal haircutting held in Dieng village, Banjarnegara, Central Java. Data taken from the interview, record and library.

Findings and Discussion

1. Dreadlock Haircutting ceremony

The dreadlock hair cutting ceremony (also called “Ngruwat”) is held in Arjuna temple complex. This ceremony is conducted once a year by the government of Banjarnegara and the entire Dieng residents. This ceremony is packed in an event called “Dieng Culture Festival” (DCF) to perform the “Ngruwat (ceremony to release the bad luck)” of the dreadlock Diving Ceremony. The ceremony is believed to be a prayer to the God or request that the haired children of Gimbal (dreadlock hair) survive

reinforcements or calamities (Nugroho, 2014, p. 21). This event is packaged in such a way as to attract local and foreign tourists.

The implementation of the *ngruwato* of the dreadlock hair traditional ceremony in Western Dieng Village which is an annual agenda involving several actors. At the 2017 Dieng Culture Festival (DCF) event, a number of important Central Java officials also attended, including the Central Java Governor Ganjar Pranowo and the Regent of Banjarnegara. In addition, the event was also enlivened by entertainment, such as bringing the artist capital of Katon Bagaskara. The ritual that is packed in the DCF aims to increase tourism in the Dieng plateau and to introduce local cultural treasures in the international environment.

2. Prayer and *Tembang* in Cutting Gimbal Ritual

Before the ceremony of Gimbal hair cutting begins, a religious leader who is a leader in the ritual of dreadlocks hair cutting first prayed to God Almighty in order to plead the safety and health for the children with dreadlocks hair who are join in the ceremony. During the ceremonial procession, the emcee uses Javanese as the medium of instruction, as seen in the following (Febrianda, 2015).

“Sederek sedaya, kula atas naminipun ing kang gadah hajad, dalu punika sederek sedaya dipun aturi lenggahan wonten ngriki. Dahare caboten, sarehne Naja (nama orang yang mempunyai acara) bade anetakaken gembelipun, para sederek sedaya kula aturi maringi idi pangestu lan wilujeng”

In this ritual, the mantras and prayers are sung in Javanese and Arabic (according to prayer in Islam). The Javanese language is used as a hereditary language used in this ritual. In addition to the Javanese language, Arabic is also used in reciting prayers for children with dreadlock hair. The switching

language of the Javanese language as a hereditary language is used as a ritual introduction language to Arabic as the medium of instruction for prayer is performed in accordance with the purpose of different speech.

The recitation of this prayer aims to appeal to God, the ruler of nature and its contents to provide salvation and be kept from distress. The contents of the prayer sung in the ritual of the ritual of the dreadlocks contain the pleas of God to forgive sin, to abstain from all bad things, to give their grace and guidance and the great fortune. Therefore, the main goal of the community in Dieng organizes this annual ritual is not only to thanks for all the gifts of God but also plead for protection from Allah, keep away from all distress and get the abundant fortune, so as to bring peace, salvation and prosperity (Qiro'ah, 2014).

During the procession “Ruwatan” performed, *Rumeksaingwengi* song is always accompanying. The *Rumeksaingwengi* is a Javanese traditional song, is a hymn that contains prayers so that we always avoid the calamity during the ceremony. Thus, we are required to always worship, believe and piety to God. The explicitly functions include healing all sorts of diseases, speeding up mate for spinster, rejecting reinforcements at night, winning in war, facilitating noble ideals (Nugroho, 2014). Here is a footage of the song *Rumeksaingwengi*.

Ana kidung rumeksa ing wengi, Teguh hayu luputa ing Lara
 (There is a guarding song at night, Strong survived free from disease)
Luput abilahi kabeh, Jim setan datan purun
 (Free from all calamities, the evil demon devils are not pleased)
Paneluhan tan anawani, Miwah panggawe ala
 (Not even the sake of daring, nor the evil deeds)

Gunaning wong luput, Geni atemahan tirta

(Science of the guilty person, Fire and also water)

Maling adoh tan anangarahing mami, Guna duduk pan sirna

(Thief was far no one was headed for me, magic utilities disappeared)

.....

Lan den sabar sukur ing ati, Insya Allah tinekan

(Be patient and grateful at heart, *Insya Allah* achieved)

Sakar sanireku, Tumrap sanak rakya tira

(All your goals, And all your relatives)

Saking sawabing ngelmu pangiket mami, Dukaneng Kalijaga.

(From the power that binds me, When in Kalijaga)

Based on the poem of *Rumeksaingwengi*, it can be seen that the meaning in each verse is full of prayer. The prayers are sung during the ceremonial procession using Javanese language which aims to gain blessings from God and also avoid from danger.

The basic language used in this hymn is the Javanese language. However, there is a code mixing on several lines of song lyrics, as in the lyrics of “*Lan den sabar sukur ing ati, Insya Allah tinekan*”. In that lyric, there is a phrase *Insya Allah* which is an Arabic language. In this hymn, this phrase is not translated in Javanese language.

Conclusion

There are at least two languages used in rimbatan ruwatan cutting gimbald performed once a year by people in Dieng village, Banjarnegara, Central Java. The Javanese language is used as the language of instruction during the ceremonial procession. This Javanese language is also used in reciting prayer mantras and in chanting of songs that are sung during the procession. In addition to using Javanese, Arabic is also used in prayer readings. Arabic is used related to the religion of the local community, namely Islam.

During ceremony, code switching and code mixing are happened. The switch and

mix of languages are happened in Javanese and Arabic language.

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