

LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFTING IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract: This study is intended to know how the Javanese family choose their language and maintain their mother tongue in Ruteng City. It is interesting to be done to find what exists in the urban family from Java in term of language use in their daily communication. It is designed as a case study in which the researchers focused on the interaction of a Javanese family with their family members, other relatives from Java and the local people. The result indicates that Javanese family has three languages to be used in their communication namely: Javanese, Indonesia and Manggarai. Javanese is used when they communicate with family members and other relatives from Java, Indonesian is used when communicate with neighborhood. They, even, shift the language into the Manggarai language in their communication with the local people.

Keywords: Language maintenance, language shift

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, people in Ruteng City, the capital city of Manggarai Regency, Flores-NTT have become increasingly full of traders and entrepreneurs from Java, Kupang and other cities around Indonesia. They come for different reasons and economy is the main issue of it. This moving people, basically have their mother tongue which they have already acquire since they were children. However, they, then, shift their mother tongue into other language step by step (Indonesian or the language used by the majority people in their new place).

Language shift is defined as the situation in which a speaker stops using his/her mother tongue and replaced it by the other language to communicate with others. It is a change from the habitual of using one language to another one (Weinreich, 1994). It is a social phenomenon and happens in heterogeneous society. It is caused by the changing of structure and desires of the society that drive people from speaking their own language to the new language which is spoken by the major society. This new language is adopted due to the result of contact with another language community. This process (language shift) is a continuous process, in which it happens from generation to generation (Fasold, 1984). It is true then language shift can be mentioned as one of some factors causes language loss or dies.

According to Campbell (in Janse, 2007), there are two main factors contributed in determining a language dies, namely: socioeconomic and socio-political. Socioeconomic factors consist of lack of economic opportunities, economic transformations speed, on-going industrialization, work patterns, migrant labour, resettlement, migration, etc. Among the socio-political factors are official language policies, discrimination, stigmatization, repression, war, etc.

The socioeconomic factor might give the biggest factor. In order to improve their quality of life especially in terms of economic and education, people prefer to move to other places which they recognize as good places to fulfil their dreams. For example: people move to other places to continue their study or get better job to support their life and prepare their future. This happens everywhere even in Indonesia.

This moving people, basically have their mother tongue which they have already acquire since they were children. However, they, then, shift their mother tongue into other language step by step (the language used by the majority people in their new place). They do it, so they can interact with their neighbour in the new place. Unconsciously, they tend to leave their mother tongue and learn the new language to communicate with people around them.

Environment as a place of living or staying provide many things including language. The Javanese and Kupang people who live in Ruteng have the environment which provides different language with their home town. It may bring a new problem for them. They may face difficulty in communication because they have

different language. Fortunately, they still have Indonesia as their lingua franca. They then decide to use Indonesia as the means of communication; even in some cases they learn Manggarai language. As the consequence, they will not have any enough opportunity to speak in their mother tongue even in their home.

As an example is Bambang Family. He has been in Ruteng since 20 years ago. He is married and has two daughters, Rolin and Lina. He lives in the place in which there are no other Javanese ethnic people (only his wife). In daily communication he uses Indonesia, in house and place of work. Sometimes, he uses Manggarai to communicate with his neighbourhood. He will use Javanese when he meets Javanese people, but it is hard because his chance to meet Javanese people is very limited. Furthermore, when he speaks to his daughter he is using Indonesia. None of his daughters understand and is able to communicate in Javanese language.

The example above gives a signal how a language is in the dying process. Language does not only play as a tool of communication, but also as an identity. Parents actually have a responsibility to teach their mother tongue to their children as one of their inheritance. So, that's why language maintenance is very important in this case.

Language maintenance is the degree where an individual or group of people continues use their language in multilingual community or among immigrant groups (Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 2002). It also refers to the situation in which people uses their mother tongue throughout their lifetime as the only language in daily use (Veltman, 1991).

Realizing that the phenomenon of language shifting and maintenance is important for Urban's family, this article, then, wants to describe this situation among Javanese Family Urban in Ruteng. It wants to show how they choose a language in their daily communication; how they try to maintenance their mother tongue and their attitude towards their mother tongue.

METHOD

This is a case study which functions to find the language used by Bambang's family, their effort to maintenance their mother tongue and their attitude towards their mother tongue. This case study is chosen to help the researchers understand the study object. It is done not to only get the information about the object of study but also describe on how they exist and why some cases involve in their speech community (Yin, 2003). To gather the data, the researchers recorded the interaction of Bambang's family at home, their interaction with their neighbour and other Javanese people when they are meeting.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Language maintenance and language shift involve in multilingual society. Those two terms cannot be separated. For Mr. Bambang maintaining mother tongue is very important as it is his identity. When he is at home and doing interaction with his wife, he uses Javanese. For example: "*Bu, lare-lare sampun bidal sekolah menapa dereng?*" His wife also responds in Java: "*sampun Pak*". Based on the data above, Mr. Bambang and his wife use Javanese when they are communicating at home. They have good attitude toward their mother tongue and use it even they live outside java for more than 15 years.

The same thing also happens when Mr. Bambang interacts with other people from Java.

Mr. Bambang: *Pripun kabare mas? Suwi ora ketemu. Riyayan wingi mudik nang Surabaya?*

Mr. Mali: *inggih mas, riyadin kepengker mudik kalihan rayat kulo kalih are-are.*

Mr. Bambang and Mr. Mali use Javanese when they met. They still use their mother tongue to communicate in Java when they met other people from Java. When Mr. Bambang communicates with his children, he still uses Javanese. For example: "*dek, pr-mu wes digarap opo durung? Mengko didukani gurumu lo ne kora digarap*". His children always respond his talk in Indonesia. For example: "*sudah bapak*". The children understand what is meant by Mr. Bambang but are not able to responds it by using the same language. This fact indicates that Mr. Bambang wants to teach his children about Javanese as their mother tongue and they have to

keep it. However, the environment does not provide enough circumstance for it. Their children were born in an area where Javanese is not the major language spoken by the speech community.

Their children meet people who have Manggarai language as their mother tongue every day. To be accepted in society, to have friends the children uses Indonesian language to communicate with friends, teachers every day. They do not have more chance to learn and practice Javanese in their daily life.

However, when Mr. Bambang communicates with his neighbour, he always uses Indonesia even sometimes he shifts his language into Manggarai language. For example: "*selamat pagi kraeng tu'a. ngo nia ite?*" Here, Mr. Bambang greets a man who is older than him by using Indonesian language. He also shifts the language from Indonesian to Manggarai. Shifting the language in that context is done by Mr. Bambang to show familiarity and respect.

Mr. Bambang uses the word *kraeng tu'a* and *ite* to show respect to the older and he does greeting to show that he is familiar with the man and has a good relationship in their daily life. Another example: "*adanya Cuma uang sepuluh ribuan. Toe manga seng koe*". Here, Mr. Bambang shifts the language to emphasize his mean. *Toe manga seng koe* emphasizes the first utterance *adanya Cuma uang sepuluh ribuan*. This situation always happens every day. Mr. Bambang and his family use Javanese, Indonesian and Manggarai in their daily communication.

For communication, Bambang's family has three languages to be chosen: Javanese, Indonesian and Manggarai. Javanese as the mother tongue of their family is used when he is communicating with his wife, children and relatives from Java. He can use Javanese along the conversation when his opponents are his wife and his relatives (the same age or the older). It is because those people are able to respond his talk in Javanese. However, when the communication happens between him and his children, he does not have enough space to practice Javanese with his children. His children are not able to catch the point of conversation if he speaks everything in Javanese. To his children, Mr. Bambang cannot use Javanese in the whole of conversation but he needs to use Indonesian to make his children get the point of conversation.

Indonesian language is used when Mr. Bambang communicates with his children and neighbour. This language is mostly used by him and his family. This language is a lingua franca which connects Bambang's family who has Javanese language with the society around them who have Manggarai language as their mother tongue. However, to build good relationship with people around them, Mr. Bambang also uses Manggarai language. This language is mostly spoken by people around him. He needs to understand it because he will always have contact with them. By understanding their language, Mr. Bambang will understand the society and be easy to adapt the situation in the environment.

Having Indonesian language and shifting language in doing communication is good for Mr. Bambang and families. It helps them to create good relation with people around them. However, their limited chance to speak in Javanese as their mother tongue gives negative impact for the existence of their mother tongue. For Mr. Bambang, he still has knowledge and ability in using his language. However, for his children, they will not have it lasting. They will lose it one day as they do not have enough time to practice them as well as Javanese is not the majority language in Ruteng.

Mr. Bambang and his family's attitudes toward their mother tongue is not bad. They try to keep it by practicing at home with the other family members and relatives. Yet, the environment does not provide enough chance for them to practice it in every situation and time.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Language shifting and maintenance cannot be separated. They connect to each other and happen in multilingual society. Maintenance mother tongue is very difficult for urban people for some reasons: first, the population of people who use the same language with them is small; second, even they are able to have contact with people from the same area they are difficult to communicate in their language because they just meet sometimes; third, the society around them speak another language which push them to learn or even shift the



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language with the language of the speech community. If the urban people shift the language, it is very possible for them to loss their mother tongue.

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