

NO WORRIES ABOUT JAVANESE: A STUDY OF PREVELANCE IN THE USE OF JAVANESE IN TRADITIONAL MARKETS

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Abstract

This study explored Javanese in Semarang traditional markets to see to what extent it is prevalently used as a lingua franca in the capital city of Central Java, especially the traditional markets where it is assumed that Javanese is still used in transactions. It also proposed a challenge to Sneddon's study (2003:203) stating that in reality, speakers of many vernaculars in Indonesia are getting less and less as caused by lingua franca and language shift. The data were obtained through a short and simple questionnaire to be administered to traditional vendors at three traditional markets. Field note-taking on overheard use of Javanese was undertaken to support the findings. Frequency counts (percentage) were used in the data analysis to investigate the prevalence of use of Javanese, especially during transaction, the results of which were tabulated for ease of interpretation. The current study revealed that, in traditional markets in Semarang, Javanese is still prevalently used in transaction with respect to language functions, such as offering, requesting for increased prices, final deals. However, code-switching was dominantly used during the process of transaction. Javanese significantly was also overheard for different functional purposes as recorded in the field note. Therefore the study concludes that Javanese is prevalently used in traditional markets in Semarang. The study therefore somehow supports Sneddon's (2003:203) with respect to code-switching. Further studies are still encouraged especially the employment of ethnographic investigation.

Key words: Javanese, language functions, code switching, lingua franca

1. Introduction

This research responds to the current issues of the decaying process of the use of local languages of which Javanese is one. The issues have been very much of concern since it has been socially identified that families, though they live in Central Java, rarely use Javanese to their children in daily exchanges at home. If they ever use Javanese, it is limited to simple exchanges and does not reflect Javanese as it should be used, such as high level (by junior to senior). Meanwhile, the medium of teaching Javanese at School (Elementary, Secondary) is Bahasa Indonesia. This contributes to further decaying of the language in question. Javanese remains as a Subject of Study, rather than a lingua franca, as it should be for those who are Javanese, or live in Java.

As a subject of study, Javanese is obligatory for school students at all levels (SK Gubernur No 895.5/01/2005: Central Java Governor's Decree). With this Decree, Javanese is not any more elective. It is a must-be-taught subject, thus, it is unlike Mandarin, which is elective in appreciation of the Chinese ethnic upon the fall of Soeharto's regime. This Decree also invited a demonstration by students of Javanese Department of UNNES, since the government simply trained old teachers how to teach Javanese instead of recruiting fresh graduates of Javanese Department as civil servants (Suara Merdeka 2006). The demonstrators claimed that they were more capable in teaching Javanese than those with only one or two days of training. The students may have forgotten that training means 'project' in response to the governor's decree, which also meaning extra income generating for the government people.

The above fact reveals that Javanese teachers are abundance in number. Those with a degree in Javanese teaching who are already promoted as civil servants may be assigned to teach something else, rather than Javanese. That is also another problem. Still another problem is the unknown prevalence of Javanese use in the society. Is it true that Javanese is still in use?

A research on Speech Acts used in the transactions at Lamongan traditional market (Octavia, 2006) was conducted to investigate the types of speech acts employed during the transaction. This study has been considered relevant to the current study with respect to investigating whether such speech acts apply in the use of Javanese since Octavia used the same setting, namely at a traditional market.

This paper reports a survey conducted in find out the prevalence of Javanese use in Semarang traditional markets with the following research questions: (1) To what extent is Javanese used as a means of exchanges in Semarang traditional markets? (2) What language function is performed in Javanese? (3) What other linguistic phenomenon is apparent with respect to the use of Javanese?

A survey method was used in this research. A questionnaire using a Likert Scale Model (Sugiyono, 2008:137) was administered to find out the prevalence of Javanese use in three traditional markets, namely Johar, Bulu, and Karangayu markets assumed to represent other traditional markets available in the municipality of Semarang as the capital of Central Java. There were 75 respondents altogether from those three traditional markets, excluding five inconsistent responses. In administering the questionnaire, the researcher spoke Javanese of *Krama Inggil* (high level), switching to *Ngoko* (low level) when they were in difficulty, and skipping them when they responded in a language other than Javanese. This was done to make sure that the subjects were correctly selected. Field note-taking (observation) on overheard use of Javanese was undertaken to support the findings. Frequency counts (percentage) were used in the data analysis to investigate the prevalence of use of Javanese, especially during transaction, the results of which were tabulated for ease of interpretation.

2. Findings and discussion

With respect to the use of Javanese in traditional markets, nothing is to be worried. Javanese is still prevalently used. In attracting the attention of a potential buyers, for example, Javanese is still used with a Likert scale tendency of 86 %. Another tendency of 79 % applies to the prevalence use of Javanese in offering goods and services. In negotiation of prices, people tend to use Javanese (74 %). Meanwhile, in closing a transaction, (97%) of the respondents use Javanese, even simply say "Matur nuwun), meaning "Thank you." and 72% for opening a transaction.

Most vendors (92%) claimed that they still hear people use Javanese in the market whether it is used in transactions or any other human linguistic exchange as a clear indicator that Javanese is still used by the majority of people, doing their shopping activities at traditional markets.

More surprisingly, traditional market vendors use Javanese with their family members at home (78.6%), measured by Likert Scale Tendency. They also claimed to use Javanese among neighbors (56%). In their transactions, *Krama Inggil* Javanses (42.6%) and *Ngoko* Javanese (57.4%) are normally used. However, we should not be over excited to see the above tendencies of the prevalence of Javanese use. There is a warning that code-switching is of high rank. People tend to code-switch from Javanese to Indonesian (80%). Amazingly, most vendors tend to agree that they code-switch back to Javanese with comfort (97%), meaning that most of them do not stay speaking Indonesian for the rest of the transactions. Such a phenomena of code-switching (mixing) is common in at least a bilingual society with purposes, such adaptation, ease of communication, and other personal wishes. This finding supports a previous study by Puspokusumo (2009).

Such a situation, code-switching, can be a time bomb that can explode at some time in the future; this is where no one would ever use Javanese in any form. Javanese at this point may still exist as a subject of study at s school for the students just to pass the test without any active linguistic competence and performance. It is further supported by lack of external Javanese exposure as all the electronic media of news and entertainments employ Bahasa Indonesia, as the national language in their broadcasting. Javanese newspaper (if any) is very limited in number. Bahasa Indonesia.

Another warning has actually been noticed. At a wedding ceremony, Javanese is normally used as a means of describing the wedding reception in order to resemble that of Royal Family (Sukarno, 2008). However, it was arguably critical with respect to how many of the audience (mostly of Javanese ethnic background) really understand the message, such as: "...*yen kacandra pinanganten putri, bangkean hanawon kemit, pratanda yenta wasis nuju prana mring kakung amargi prigel olang kridaning asmara.*" (Kadarisman, 1999), which actually means '...characterized as having a bee-like hip, the bride is fully capable of pleasing her husband since she is skillful in sexual performance. This is just another time-bomb if no body understands what the Javanese master of reception says. Such a form of Javanese text can be archaic at one time or another in the future.

The researcher's observation on overheard Javanese, recorded in his field note yields a wonderful result. During a period of one and a half hour hanging around at each of the three markets under study, he overheard Javanese being used in almost all situations, such as initial greetings, political chats, trading issues, government's policies, children's education, family matters, and many more as outlined below:

Overheard Talks in Javanese

Category	Utterance	Meaning
Greeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piye kabare? ra tahu ketok ki! • Wingi sidane piye? • Kake'ane ki, kabare piye? 	How are you? What did you do? Well, shit!, how ya doin?
Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walah, milih wali kota..ra'no biayane, preks. • Nek rung dadi no janjine... 	Voting a mayor? No money, no way A lot of bullshit promises
Trading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dagangan ra payu blas, mangan apa ki? • Lagi wingi lo, rego munda'e ora umum. 	No sales at all. Nothing to eat. Just yesterday, prices rocketed
Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gawe pasar sanding kuburan, sapa arep tuku • Garu'an terus; kon dodol ning endi to? 	Market near the grave yard, who the hell will buy? Where shall I sell?
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sekolah jarene gratis...ana ae urunane. • Jalal mentrine ki kon nggarap uan.. 	Free education? No way...contribution goes on. Let the minister do the national exam.
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kake'ane, roba-rabi ae! • Anakmu ndak sida dadi karo sing keru? 	Shit! Married and married. Your daughter, married with her last boyfriend?

The above table just records few utterances in Javanese performed to represent a number of situations and issues. There are actually more utterances but they seem to be similar in nature. As noted, most people use *Ngoko* Javanese to express their emotion about an issue. This is understandable because *Krama* Javanese is only used in formal situation or between newly introduced individuals. Even a newly introduced individual may switch to *Ngoko* Javanese in order to look friendly or again when talking about one's feeling or emotions.

It is also another warning with regard to the use of Javanese. The overheard use of Javanese seems to represent the undereducated forms of Javanese. The researcher is pretty sure that such forms of Javanese as noted above are never taught at schools. Such forms, however, do exist in the society, and therefore need to be sociolinguistically handled to represent a special discursive practice. Pedagogically speaking, there must be a kind of reformulation of the Javanese school curriculum, which, as far as the researcher knows, is still limited to the memorization of non-communicative lexical items apart from lack of Javanese classroom exposure. This results in a pick-up Javanese as spoken by lay-people, and thus, undereducated forms.

3. Conclusion and Suggestions

We should not worry about the prevalence of Javanese use in Semarang traditional market, at least at the moment since the findings clearly indicated that this local language (Javanese) is still very much in use, not 100% though. The Likert scaling model used in the current study indicated positive attitudes in the use of Javanese at home and at business transactions in the market. However, the high tendency of the use of code-switching into and from Bahasa Indonesia is in need of special attention. It is not impossible in the future that Bahasa Indonesia will take over Javanese. It all depends on how the government implements its governor's decree of stipulating the obligatory teaching of Javanese at all levels of basic schooling.

Therefore, the following issues are suggested, namely: (1) local government need to issue another decree of the use of Javanese outside the formal office setting; (2) schools are also encouraged to hold speech, writing, debate contests in Javanese; (3) Javanese teachers are encouraged to use Javanese in teaching Javanese. Traditional Javanese Arts Performances are to be held on a regular basis; (4) finally, cartoonists should be encouraged to create and promote local figures (Gatotkaca, Bima, Arjuna etc.) instead of the foreign figures (Doraemon, Batman, Superman, etc.).

Last but of no least importance is that further researches are still needed to investigate the types of language forms employed in all transactional language functions in a discourse analysis. This will encourage Javanese language teachers to focus on more handy use of Javanese forms, rather than teaching complicated lexical items, such as "What do you call **sibling of a wall lizard**?" Of course it is *Sawiyah*, right? But, when will you use this word?

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