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# PROCEEDINGS

## International Seminar

### LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT

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## **BÉLETER FOR TRANSFERRING LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL MORAL VALUES TO YOUNG MALAY AT PONTIANAK, KALIMANTAN BARAT.**

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*Balai Bahasa Provinsi Kalimantan Barat*

### **Abstract**

*Bahasa adalah alat komunikasi yang menyampaikan setiap perasaan penuturnya. Ia bisa menyampaikan perasaan sayang, cinta, suka, benci, kecewa, bahkan marah. Sebagai penutur multibahasa, orang Indonesia cenderung memilih untuk menyampaikan rasa marahnya dalam bahasa ibu atau bahasa pertama mereka. Hal ini bisa jadi disebabkan bahwa marah adalah rasa pribadi yang umumnya ditampakkan pada lingkungan pribadi. Pada lingkungan ini, marah adalah rasa yang kompleks karena tak melulu memperlihatkan ketidaksukaan dan ketidaksetujuan, melainkan juga kepedulian serta rasa sayang, termasuk rasa sayang ibu kepada anggota keluarganya. Marah bisa berbentuk tindakan apa saja, ada diam tanpa kata, atau sebaliknya merepet dengan seribu kata. Merepet ini bisa dalam bentuk beleter. Beleter merupakan cara marah yang lazim pada masyarakat Melayu Kalimantan Barat dan umumnya dilakukan oleh para ibu. Beleter bisa dimulai dengan banyak berbicara secara terus menerus sampai mengomel untuk menyampaikan rasa ketidaksukaan dan kekesalan terhadap sesuatu. Ibu beleter biasanya disebabkan oleh kekecewaannya terhadap anggota keluarga, khususnya anak. Anak yang kurang disiplin, kurang sigap, kurang peduli atau kurang kemauan untuk terus maju dan berkembang bisa menjadi bahan leteran. Bahan leteran yang disebabkan ketidaksamaan persepsi antara ibu dan anak menjadi media sebagai upaya dalam penyamaan dan pembentukan nilai moral. Nilai moral warisan orangtua ibu diteruskan kepada anak yang akan meneruskan kebiasaan suku dan mewariskan kembali nilai yang sama pada anaknya kelak. Pengalihan nilai budaya ini sejatinya juga dilakukan dengan bahasa yang sama sebagai wujud pemertahanan bahasa asli ditengah kegerusan bahasa ibu yang mestinya lebih dikuasai oleh anak dibandingkan bahasa gaul yang hanya bersifat sementara.*

**Key Words:** *béleter, Malay language, transferring language, transferring local moral values, idioms, proverbs, local moral values.*

### **1. Introduction**

Language is one of the most distinctive characteristic, which distinguishes humans from other living creatures. Language has been used as a systematic means of communicating ideas and expressing feeling, emotion and thought. Language is used for interacting with fellow humans. As we know, human beings cannot live alone, they interacts with fellow humans in their environment with language. Humans make friends, make family and have children to continue their life in earth. Moreover, Keraf (1994:3) stated that language serves to express self-expression, as a communication tool, as a tool to conduct integration and social adaptation, as well as a tool to hold social control.

Social control in form of shared cultural moral values exists in human environment. One can recognize customary habits, behavior, manners, arts, and other elements of social local culture through the language of the region. Therefore, the existence of local cultures and language depending on language function in the region. Regional language will remain alive for the people in the region still want to use it as communication tool, and as a means of artistic expression and culture.

In this view, languages, understood as the particular set of speech norms of a particular community, are also a part of the larger culture of the community that speaks them. Humans use language as a way of signaling identity with one cultural group and difference from others. Even among speakers of one language have several different ways of using the language, they speak vary between speech communities and each is used to signal affiliation with particular subgroups or ethnics.

In addition, the relationship between language and emotions can be viewed as being done or performed that is called "*emotive*". Taking this angle, it is commonly assumed that people, at least on occasions, "*have*" emotions, and that "*being emotional*" gains its own agency, impacting in a variety of ways on the communicative situation. This can take place extra linguistically (e.g. by facial expressions, body postures, proximity, and the like), in terms of supra segmentational and prosodic features, and in

terms of linguistic (lexical and syntactic) forms. (Caffi & Janney 1994; see also Fiehler 1990). Besnier (1994) also notions of what emotions are and how they function in private and public settings. In this view, language and emotion are two concurrent, parallel systems in use, and their relationship exists in that one system (emotions) impacts on the performance of the other (language). Both of them share their functionality in the communicative process between people.

In addition, Wierzbicka is able to document that "every language imposes its own classification upon human emotional experiences, and English words such as *anger* or *sadness* are cultural artifacts of the English language, not culture-free analytical tools" (1992: 456). Her analyses are good (and clear) examples for exactly this point, and her main argument is forcefully directed against most psychological theorizing within the James-Lange-tradition that starts from the assumption that emotions are bodily experienced feeling states, each categorically distinct, and built up in a clearly ordered sequence of events (see for recent critiques of this kind of theorizing from within psychology, though from quite different directions, Campos, Mumme, Kermoian & Campos 1994, Ellsworth 1994, Sarbin 1995).

Moreover, while at first sight Harré (1994) suggested to study emotion terms as part of a (decontextualized) lexicon sounds very much like Wierzbicka's study of word reference, his proposal to study the emotion vocabulary of a certain group of people promises a whole lot more. If references to emotions - in the realm of texts - position people with regard to one another (morally, aesthetically, and prudentially), they function as indexes to how emotions in discourse situations are displayed, that is, what emotions mean as discursive acts. Thus, employing emotionologies for the study of emotions as discursive acts orients us toward the study of language use in discourse situations. Stearns (1994, 1995) in coining the term "emotional styles".

An interesting point for venturing into the acquisition or the learning of emotionologies lies in Harré's affinity and flirtation with anthropological approaches to emotions which traditionally place emphasis on the cognitive and/or conceptual aspects of emotions (cf. Lutz & White, 1986; Lutz, 1988). In an apparent parallel with Wierzbicka, Lutz claims that "emotion can be viewed as a cultural and interpersonal process of naming, justifying, and persuading by people in relationship to each other" (Lutz 1988: 5). However, in contra- distinction to the former, the *anthropology of emotions* does not seem to claim psychological reality for the kind of conceptual analysis that is employed in the process of explicating the experiential, expressive, and regulative aspects of emotion displays. However, this leaves the question open, as Oatley formulated in his review of Lutz's works, "of what emotions might be constructed from" (Oatley 1991: 77), and how much this construction process can (and needs to) be described in conceptual/cognitive terms, and what role language and other symbolic systems might play in this construction process.

## 2. *Béleter* for Transferring Language

Mother tongue as the foundation of the development of regional culture is the first language that controlled and used in everyday communication within the family environment. Since childhood, we have been communicating with our mother language. We delivered all the thoughts, feelings and desires with our mother tongue. William (1998: 36-44) stated that when using the second or foreign language, the emotional component often gets lost; as a matter of course, writers (or speakers) feel more detached and relate to the language as a tool rather than as a means of cultural identification. Those however who have an equal command of both languages can benefit from the situation of bilingualism. They can choose either language according to specific purpose or feeling.

For these reason, mother tongue used to express the private feeling in family. It grows within the family environment. Members of the family with their role and commitment using their mother tongue can be a very strong foundation for the development of mother tongue. Since mother tongue is the first language that is learned by a person, a child learns the basics first language of parents and next of kin. Mother has a very important role in the acquisition and retention of language. Mother is the first teacher to their children. The mother who first taught his son or daughter to speak is also determines the first language will be taught to their children. First language obtained by the children is what is called the mother tongue. Mother tongue is considered as a basic way of thinking. Skill someone in his/her first language or mother tongue is very important for the subsequent learning process. Its application will be longer and have made an impression for the child.

In addition, in daily life of interaction, mother can teach mother tongue or native languages in many different ways and situation. She expresses feeling and emotions. She shows her love, care, happiness, sadness, excited, even anger. In Malay tradition, mothers can show her dislikes in some ways that are silent or the vice versa, talk many words and being fussy. She can speak incessantly about one topic that is caused her anger or dislikes. When she speaks incessantly in dislike or angry feeling that is called

*béleter*. *Béleter* is talking too much, being fussy, or speaking incessantly about displeasure. Mostly, *béleter* is in Malay language that is the first language for Malay people in Pontianak, Kalimantan Barat. There are many things to do in *béleter*, such as: commenting others' habit to sampling children to do or not to do, besides teaching children how to do something in order to share same moral values of life.

Based on the author's personal experience that is Malay and since childhood has been taught communicating in Malay Pontianak, her mother also taught the mother tongue in many condition. She taught to express feeling in sad, happy, likes, pleasure, even displeasure and angry condition. She became a model of Malay speaker including how to act and response. When mother was angry, usually she *béleter*, a way of showing her dislikes, advice, and moral values' taught. She used Malay expression to be angry, that was recorded and acquired by her children in this case the author. Since that time, author or other young Malay in their own family whom being *leter* by their mother have imitated dictions or vocabularies of Malay that were used for angry, afterward, when the author or young Malay are getting older and become angry later, he/she will use the same language to express his/her emotion.

### 3. *Béleter* for Transferring Cultural Moral Values

*Béleter* is not only about expressing anger in Malay, but more than that, *béleter* shares the Malay moral values to the person who is being *leter* that is young Malay in this case. Young Malay needs to learn many things and aspects of life. They need samples and guidance how to do something or what should they do in this life. When mother got angry to her children since they are not doing in the right way or based on Malay tradition, she gives sample of that guidance. Ideally she does not use the words which will hurt the children's feeling. She will motivate the children by using idioms and proverb in Malay through *béleter*. Even mother speaks the truth, when it is done through *béleter*, she repeats it again and again, incessantly, continuously, in the morning and afternoon or when she meets the reasons of being her *béleter*. Those make the children learn, and likes or dislikes, follow her mother's taught, then follow the same shared moral values.

Idioms and proverb are two things that are repeated in *béleter*. According to Webster Dictionary, idioms are the language peculiar to a people or to a district, community, or class. It is also defined as a style or form of artistic expression that is characteristic of an individual. Webster defined proverb as a brief popular epigram or maxim. Epigram is a concise poem dealing pointedly and often satirically with a single thought or event and often ending with an ingenious turn of thought, while maxim is a general truth, fundamental principle, or rule of conduct; a proverbial saying.

Those definitions are harmonious in Malay tradition. *Béleter* which is full of idioms and proverbs reflects a peculiar of Malay tradition and fundamental principles of life in Malay culture in Pontianak, Kalimantan Barat.

The sample of idioms and proverb in *béleter* to young Malay at Pontianak, Kalimantan Barat are as followed:

Idioms	Meaning
Besak hati (big heart)	Happy
Muke duwak (have two faces)	Liar, hypocrite
Terang hati (lighted heart)	Smart, clever

Figure 1: Sampels of Malay Idioms that is used in *béleter*.

Proverbs	Meaning
Aek kepala léléh ke téngkok (water stream down from head to neck)	Like father like son
Dunié kaki kéreté, sekali orang sekali kité (Life is like a cart tire, once is others' turn, another is our turn)	Be patient, life is always up and down
Bagi samé adel, potong samé panjang (divide fairly, cut precisely)	Please do, act and decide fairly
Jadi cuka tak masam, jadi garam tak masin (become vinegar is not sour, become salt is not salty)	Do something unserious
Malu makan, perut lapar (feel afraid to eat, be hungry)	You will fail and not success if you do not try and your best and work hard
Masuk tak genap, keluar tak ganjil (Insert is not even, outside is not odd.)	Person is not counted or considered not important

Basé tak mahal (Politeness is not expensive)	Behave because you do not need to pay for becoming polite and nice
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Figure 2: Sampels of Malay Proverbs that is used in *béleter*.

The idioms and proverbs above as shown in figure 1 and 2 as samples of *leteran* when a mother *béleter*. The idioms are used by a mother when she *béleter* to ask the children or young Malay to be *besak hati* (big heart) or happy and do not become *muke duwak* (have two faces) or hypocrite. She also hopes the young Malay as her children become *terang hati* (lighted heart) or smart and clever in acquiring and learning many values for his/her life or studying at school.

Moreover, the proverbs samples also teach the children about the quality of Malay life about people's judge about us as human. Mother *béleter* to ask the children always do the right thing. Since it also indicates the goodness of their selves, it is preventing family from shame because of the bad manner or habit of the children. That is shown in proverb *Aek kepala léléh ke tengkok* (water stream down from head to neck) which means if you are good and nice, others will consider that your parents are good, and vice versa if your characters are bad, those indicates your parents have bad characters also. In English this proverb popular with 'like father like son' translation. The demand of keeping 'good name' of the family also becomes a reason why the children should always be polite *Basé tak mahal* (politeness is not expensive) that teaches the young Malay to behave since it is free. They do not need to pay for their politeness.

In addition, if the young Malay is appointed or selected becoming a leader, mother will *béleter* to remain her/him to do and lead well. He/she always should be fair when he/she solve or judge a problem, to *bagi samé adel, potong samé panjang* (divide fairly, cut precisely). The young Malay should always do something serious, do not *jadi cuka tak masam, jadi garam tak masin* (become vinegar is not sour, become salt is not salty). When the young Malay is down, mother *béleter* to remain her/him that *dunié kaki kéreté, sekali orang sekali kité* (life is like a cart tire, once is others' turn, another is our turn), so they will always be patient and not easy to be down, since life is always up and down naturally. Mother also encourage young Malay through *béleter*, for example with this proverb *malu makan, perut lapar* (feel afraid to eat, be hungry) so they will not become *masuk tak genap, keluar tak ganjil* (insert is not even, outside is not odd). That means the young Malay should work hard and always try their best in order to meet their success and not considered as unimportant person that is counted to make a change.

The teaching of local moral values that are shown in idioms and proverbs which is taught incessantly through *béleter* is very important part of a person's identity. Children as young Malay need to learn the *leteran* as "rules" of their culture and the language. It will help young Malay preserve a Malay identity and language that enriching national (Indonesia) identity and culture. This gives them a feeling of personal worth and self esteem, as UNESCO stated that 'The Mother tongue is the foundation of building a person's identity' (from UNESCO Education Today newsletter, July - September, 2003- The mother-tongue dilemma.)

#### 4. Conclusion

Language is a communication tool that conveys every feeling of speakers. It can convey a feeling of affection, love, like, dislike, hate, disappointment, even anger. As multilingual speakers, Indonesian people tend to choose to express his anger in the mother tongue or first language. This could be due anger as personal feeling that is generally revealed in a private environment. In this environment, anger is a complex feeling due not merely to show displeasure and dislike, but also caring and compassion.

Anger can be shown as gibber with a thousand words in form of *béleter*. *Béleter* is a common angry manner in Pontianak, Kalimantan Barat. Especially, in Malay community, *béleter* is generally done by mothers. *Béleter* is not only about expressing anger in Malay, but more than that, *béleter* shares the Malay moral values to the person who is being *leter* that is young Malay in this case. Young Malay needs to learn many things and aspects of life. They need samples and guidance how to do something or what should they do in this life. When mother got angry to her children since they are not doing in the right way or based on Malay tradition, she gives sample of that guidance. She will motivate the children by using idioms and proverb in Malay through *béleter*. She repeats idioms and proverbs again and again, incessantly. Those make the children learn and remember, and likes or dislikes, then follow her mother's taught which means follow the same shared moral values that are attached in *leteran*.

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