

# THE LANGUAGE OF TRADERS' COMMUNITY IN KLEWER TRADITIONAL MARKET SALA: A SOCIOLINGUISTICS ROLE IN PRESERVING TRADITION

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## Abstract

This paper aims to describe the realization of language use, recognize the verbal interaction patterns in trading and socializing and identify the determinants of language use by the Javanese community with their non-Javanese speech-partners. The study refers to the sociolinguistic theory, based on the qualitative research by the author in 2004. Supporting data collected is daily conversation at the research location. It is found that the language use by the kiosk-owners and their workers as the members of Javanese traders' community is closely related to their everyday social relations. The language used is Bahasa Indonesia, Javanese language and mixture of the both. The determinant factors of language use are divided into lingual and non-lingual factors. The lingual factors include *Sala* dialect, speech level, and Javanese language position as a mother tongue. The non-lingual factors include the multiculturalism relating to the speaker's diversity of their ethnic backgrounds, realization of social relationships among the speakers, and cultural traditions.

**Key word:** language use, sociolinguistics, cultural traditions, the city of *Sala*

## INTRODUCTION

That language indicates a nation is still axiomatic. Language which is used in spoken and written ways is a reflection of the speaker and the writer respectively. Linguistics as a discipline, by implication, gives plentiful

opportunity to its scholars for language study with the provision to language elements including the questions (what, who, why, when, where, and how) about the language to appear arbitrarily. The following is the excerpt from the language use which is often found in traditional markets.

X1: Ini berapa ini? (1)

A1: Yang satu setel?

X1: *Nggak, ya ini, ni.*

A1: Ini tiga lima. Ini cap *alus* ini, yang satu setel tiga tujuh setengah.

X1: (Ekspresi menolak) (5)

A1: *La* berapa, Ibu?

X1: Tujuh belas lima, '*ndak* nawar lagi saya.

A1: Ambil lima?

X1: Tujuh belas lima.

A1: Oh '*ndak* boleh. (10)

X1: Ini empat.

A1: '*Ndak* boleh. Yang ini *aja*, itu. Ini *aja*, Ibu. Ini dua lima.

X1: Satu ukuran ya?

A1: Ya. Ini mau dari Pekalongan? Laris lho, Bu. Aku *nek abis banyak-banyak'o*'.

X1: Kalo yang ini satu ukuran ya, Mbak? (15)

A1: Ya. Ada masih. Berapa itu? Pas saja *duatuju* lima. *Wislah*. Lainnya 'ndak boleh. Ini mau 'ndak? Dua lima, Bu.

X1: Ini, sama ini?.

A1: *La* coba. Ini baik, Pekalongan. *Baruuu aja ngirim*.

X1: *Udah* dua puluh itu.

A1: 'Ndak boleh. *Ambile'e* 'ndak boleh. (20)

X1: *Ki pira iki?*

A1: Tiga puluh. Baik lho, Bu. Ada *soklat*, ada *ijo*, biru. *Soklat* itu *manis'o'*.

X1: Dua puluh ya?

A1: 'Ndak boleh.

X1: Ambil empat aku. (25)

A1: Iya. *Udah*, dua tujuh-setengah, pas.

X1: How much is this? (1)

A1: One set?

X1: No, this one.

A1: This is a sleek-branded one, a set is three seven and a half.

X1: (Setting expression declined) (5)

A1: What do you think, Ma'am?

X1: Seventeen-five, I won't have any good deal more.

A1: You take five?

X1: Seventeen and five.

A1: Oh, no it can't be. (10)

X1: The four ones.

A1: No. Just take this, that one, Ma'am. This is two-five

X1: One size huh?

A1: Yes. How about this, from Pekalongan? The best-seller one, Ma'am.  
I've sold a lot for this one.

X1: So this is only one size, right? (15)

A1: Yes. There are lots for this one. I wonder how much it costs. Just take at two- seven and five for your deal. It's OK. About that one, will you? Two-five, Ma'am.

X1: This, the same one?

A1: Please, try. A good one, Pekalongan. Newly sent.

X1: Twenty for this one. Let's make a deal.

A1: No. I could not pay out such price to get the goods. (20)

X1: (In *Javanese*) For this, how much does it cost?

A1: Thirty. You know it is good, Ma'am. There are the brown, green, blue ones.  
The brown one is nice.

X1: Twenty, right?

A1: No.

X1: I will take four.

(25)

A1: You will. For twenty seven and a half, right.

(Field Record on March 21, 2004)

### Situational Context

Field: the process of buying and selling clothes at *Klewer* traditional market, located in a Javanese trader's kiosk.

Mode: the speech is made by setting hands in motion while selecting the goods and bargaining a deal. The prospective buyer is looking for items she wants and making offerings. The kiosk owner serves by offering several options and trying to maintain prices.

Tenor: The prospective buyer (X1) is a non-Javanese woman, aged 40s. The kiosk owner (A1) is a Javanese woman, aged 30s.'

The choice of language use in the interaction between the kiosk owner and prospective buyer above is Bahasa Indonesia (written hereinafter as BI) with a non-formal variety. It can be recognized from the use of some non-standard lexicons and subject deletion. The examples of non-standard lexicon are *aja* 'just', *kalo* 'if', *'ndak* and *'nggak* 'no', *udah* 'already'. The subject deletion can be observed in the speech line 18. The first speech line contains the choice of language including the mixture codes of BI and Javanese language (written later as BJ). The subject deletion can be viewed in the third speech. The deletion refers to a subject that has been presented previously (*ini* 'this'). The third speech also experiences the subject-phrase modification.

#A1: (Silakan) coba. Ini baik (kualitasnya), (buatan) Pekalongan. (Ini) baru (saja ada yang me)ngirim.

# A1: Please, try. A good one (for its quality), (made in) Pekalongan. (This is) newly sent.

Although the kiosk owner and prospective buyer use the same language, misunderstandings between both of them can occur. It can be observed in the speech lines 7 and 8. The way of the prospective buyers in revealing the numeral lexis that refers to the price she demands brings about confusion for her speech-partner. The data in the speech line 8 shows that the kiosk owner is trying to obtain understanding. The response from the prospective buyer in the speech line 9 directly makes the kiosk owner realize and bid a decision (line 10).

The conversation also shows that the use of BI as an option for the kiosk owner is still influenced by BJ, as her native language. The lexicon used by the kiosk owner is *alus* 'sleek' (line 4). The lexicon phonologically appears to BJ. If the kiosk owner said this lexicon in BI, it would be pronounced *halus* not [alus]. In the BJ lexicon, the sound /h/ is rare at the beginning of any syllable. *Alus* as BJ lexicon as the kiosk owner's choice is tied to specific term that refers to the goods (registers). The kiosk owner understands the register of *cap alus* is included with one type of her goods. It can be observed in this conversation between two speakers with different ethnic background that a native language use cannot be excluded by any means.

Such mixture code phenomena can be found in the next speech of the kiosk owner in the conversation above. Other BJ lexicon uses are *nek* 'if' (line 14) and *wislah* 'never mind' (line 16)

and affective particle *La* (line 6 and 18). Several other lexicons are a variety of interference as a bilingualism feature by the kiosk owner. The first is the use of particle by deleting the initial consonant sound and combining with a lexicon that precedes it. The conversation above contains two particles which have such deletion, that is, *kok* in *banyak'o'* (line 14) and *manis'o'* (line 22) and *we* in *ambile'e* (line 20). *Ambile'e* also experiences another form of interference before the addition of deleted particles *we* becomes *e*. *Ambile'e* is a mixture of the BI lexicon of *ambil* 'take' with BJ suffix *-e*. The second is the BJ phonological influence on a number of lexicons. The examples are the deletion of sound /h/ in *alus*, also *duatuju* 'two-seven' (line 17) for it should be [duatujuh] in BI, and *ijo* 'green' (line 22) for it should be [hijau] in BI, pronunciation of sound /s/ in *soklat* 'brown' in line 22 for it should be [coklat] in BI and diphthong sound /au/ to be /o/ on *ijo* 'green'.

The delivery of speech after speech implies a level of understanding. The both parts develop this understanding although the both attempts to defend their own demand and request. The prospective buyer wants low prices and the kiosk owner wants the goods to be sold out and gain the profits. The level of understanding is also affecting the prospective buyers to participate in pronouncing the BJ speech (line 22).

## **SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY: AN APPROACH TO FUNCTION**

In linguistics, phenomena of the language use in everyday life that proves the speaker's identification with the impact of social and psychological situations can be included in the study of sociolinguistics and can be observed in the language use. Hymes (1974) provides a number of themes that characterize the

sociolinguistic study. The themes of these sociolinguistic study include (1) theory of language that describes not only the organization of grammar but also the flow of spoken language; (2) the grounded theory and methodology that include the questions not only about the structure but also function; (3) the speech community is determined by the way a group of people speak and not be interpreted in basis of the distribution of grammatical features merely; (4) competence is the personal ability to communicate in accordance with the context, not just revolve around grammatical knowledge and (5) language is something that forms the community that use the language and not just something that is created by humans.

Trudgill (1983) reaffirms Hymes' thought by stating that the study of language in a social context is a part of the main topics of linguistics. The study of linguistics can be an empirical evidence-based study about the language that is used in a social context. According to Trudgill such a study shows the use of sociolinguistics as a means of linguistic research (*a way of doing linguistics*) which focuses on how language plays a role in society (Trudgill, 1974). This way begins and is known through many Labov's studies about the relationship between language and social class. For the field of sociolinguistics, Halliday divides it into 15 subdivisions. Three of them that are related to the formulated problem in this writing are to study in the fields of language, socialization and transmission of cultures, ethnographic methodology-based linguistics and text-analysis based linguistic theory (in Depdikbud, 1995:30).

One of the advantages that can be achieved from sociolinguistic studies is the scholars can apply the result and the research's course of action itself to solve any certain social problems related to the certain community (Salzmann,

1993:190). In our public life, the social constraints faced by a certain society can be reflected through the way they speak.

### THE CITY OF SALA AND ITS JAVANESE SPEECH COMMUNITY

The conversation above appeared in actual fact in the traditional market, *Klewer*, which is located in the city of *Sala*. This writing is taken from the sociolinguistic study by the author with the topic of *Language Use in Klewer Market by Trader Community* (2004). At that time, the author found that the ethnic background-based study of language use by the trader community was never examined before, especially in the *Klewer* traditional market. The author does not intend to take sides to one particular ethnic community which is a majority. The use of non-Javanese term simply means to illustrate the diversity of the ethnic communities around *Sala* in addition to the existence of Javanese ethnic. More specifically, the author intends to take some pictures of the uniqueness from the group of people in using their language in a certain setting.

The city of *Sala* itself is quite unique and widely recognized as one of the Javanese cultural center. Under this label, the general distinctiveness is that the people in *Sala* are known for their gentleness. The people outside accept that the gentleness performs speech-behavior of the people in this city. Nevertheless, the generalization should be taken into some deconstruction since the city itself is full of case history from the past. The history has created the characters of this city's dynamics.

Beside the presumption as a center of Javanese culture that glorifies strata of the nobility, actually there are other predicates that the city has had since Dutch-colonization era. Two among them are brought together by the

people whose livelihoods were established during those times until the modern era. The two predicates are the city of *Sala* as the market town and the city of merchants (*sudagaran*). From the deep-rooted history of *Sala*, the status of merchant community (*sudagar*) even is as well-adjusted as the noble community (*priyayi*) due to their bargaining power in economy line of work had an impact on entire groups of people in the city of *Sala*.

In addition to Javanese ethnic, many of the trader community in this city are the immigrant-residents with several ethnic backgrounds. These people are known for their resiliency as nomads and traders. They are not only the Minangnese, Maduranese, and Banjarnese people as our local natives, but we can also find groups of people from outside of the Indonesian territory, such as the descendants of Arabians, Indians and Chinese people. With a multi-ethnic setting like this, the city of *Sala* community tends to manifest as a multi-lingual society.

Each and every ethnicity has a mother tongue. However, there are several studies that have revealed the existence of the BJ use among the ethnic immigrant communities (Markhamah 2000 and Saddhono 2003). This is related to the fact that Javanese is the largest community in the city of *Sala*. In linguistics view, within such circumstances people in the city of *Sala* can be classified as a BJ speech community.

In most Javanese community, there is a system of social strata as the influence of Mataram traditional power as anthropologist Clifford Geertz describes in his book, *Religion of Java* (1960). In his research, Geertz also finds the pattern use of BJ-based speech among the social groups' native speakers that is the noble-persons and peasants. The presence of speech level use in one area indicates the area applied coating system in the basis of class and social

status of the community. The status-based language use then leads to the diversity of language use by the BJ speech community.

### **THE PEOPLE IN THE *KLEWER* MARKET AND THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN THE COMMUNITY**

Community can be understood as a group of people who occupy the same area and often has a purpose, social rules or the same kinship ties. Thus, each community has a habit of behaving differently from each other, including the language use. This is because the interests and issues that bind together the individuals to join in a particular community are different from that of other communities. Sense of togetherness among the members of the community can encompass a variety of interests, whether economic, social, or cultural ones.

A traders' community is one community that is common in our everyday life. Members of this group are those whose livelihoods are trading. They gather and carry out activities in one area, such as the traditional market. In addition to the economic and social functions, the traditional market happens to reflect social reality of a pluralistic life.

Language becomes a significant thing to support social interaction among them as well as their interests in trading. Herein we find their certain uniqueness while they use everyday language during their activities as traders in the traditional market. The traders' community in the traditional markets is known as the people who speak fluently. This expertise is essential to sell the goods. They should skillfully get accustomed to serve and convince the prospective buyers.

The activity in the *Klewer* Market started with activities of buying and selling clothes in Slompretan area and then moved to another area around Banjarsari. The sort of goods was *batik*

clothes and used clothing. Around 1955, buying and selling activities commenced in the area that is now occupied. However, these activities were not been accommodated in a building spot. In trading their goods, the traders just held or swung their goods as they pleased. The Javanese people call this situation with the term of *pating Klewer* or *kleweran* (Soedarmono, 2000). These terms refer to the way the traders spread their commodities around.

Physically, *Klewer* Market was built in 1970 and inaugurated in 1971. *Klewer* Market consists of two floors with an area of approximately 13,500 square meters and contains 48 shops and 2223 kiosks. The total number of traders with the kiosks has been up to two thousand people. This amount does not include the merchant who is not classified into kiosk-owners, like those who occupy the area along the path and the souvenirs sellers.

Thus, it is apparent from the quoted conversation above that language plays important role while the *Klewer* Market traders' community presents their roles. Facing multi-ethnic and multi-language in the environment is clearly a challenge for the traders. The capability of dealing with language should be coupled with the mastery of vernaculars that can link the traders with other people with different native languages.

On the lingual situation, some certain uniqueness in the BJ use relate to dialect and registers for the variety of the speech level. The roles that the Javanese community traders present in language use certainly can enhance the intended general distinctiveness that the people in *Sala* are known for their gentleness. The impression from the gentleness that performs speech-behavior of the community surely can help increase the multicultural

awareness as well as the trader community earnings.

### **THE PATTERNS REALIZED WITHIN VERBAL INTERACTION**

The patterns that fill the transactional discourse structure are the part of a system. Speech after speech, the speakers who are involved in this discourse bring to the fore the system they are following. The system reveals their locality, culture and tradition where the action is.

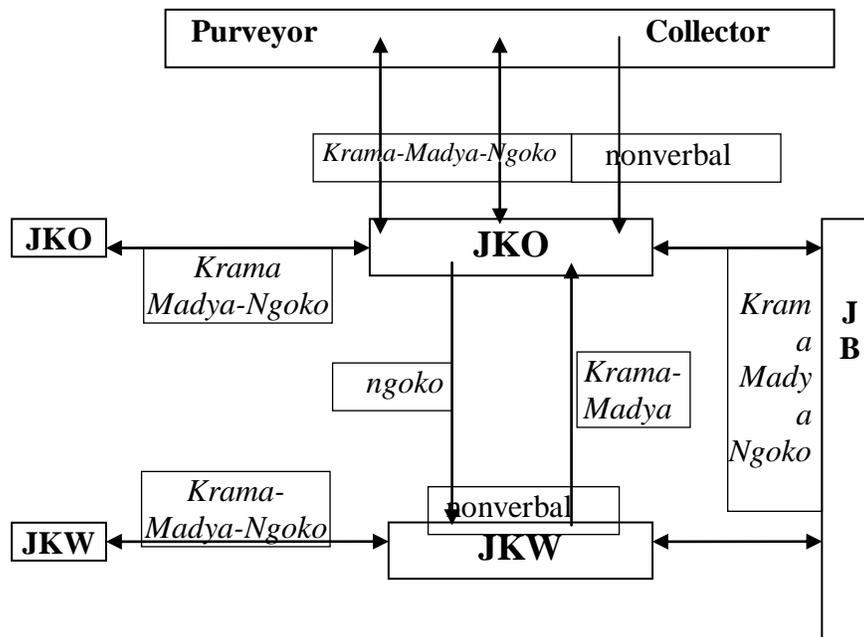
The kiosk owners often have verbal interaction with their workers. The kiosk owner and the worker co-exist within one group as the community members of Javanese traders. This group is classified into the Javanese kiosk owners (hereinafter written JKO) and Javanese kiosk workers (JKW). Based on these findings, the group has interactions with other Javanese

and non-Javanese groups as their specific speech-partners. The interaction occurs because of the social relationships they realize in regular and repeated ways.

The other groups in *Klewer* are buyers, purveyors of goods and collectors. A purveyor is a person who offers goods to resale in the kiosks. The kiosk owner has the authority to determine whether or not the goods are acceptable. The products are offered by a variety of ways. A purveyor may entrust to the kiosk owners so the goods are sold in cash. Or, a purveyor may offer to sell goods in credit so the kiosk owners have to pay per month, per week or depending on their agreement. The second is the common option that most of the kiosk owners take. Thus, a purveyor then may switch the role as a collector. Purveyor and collector groups consist of people with diverse backgrounds, from Javanese and non-Javanese ethnicity.

## 1. The Scope of BJ Use

Figure 1. Scope of BJ Use



From Figure 1, the use of BJ tends to be in the parts of JKO and JKW. In various circles, JKO has variation choice to interact verbally with one speech-partner. JKOs have the authority to position themselves to face their speech-partners.

With JKWs, JKO positions tend to have condition with a language choice of *ngoko* variations. With their fellows of other JKWs, a JKW adjusts BJ variation option based on several things, such as age and level of relationship. In interacting with the purveyor and

collector, JKO has the authority to choose the three BJ speech levels. The same thing happens to JKO's interaction with Javanese buyers (JB).

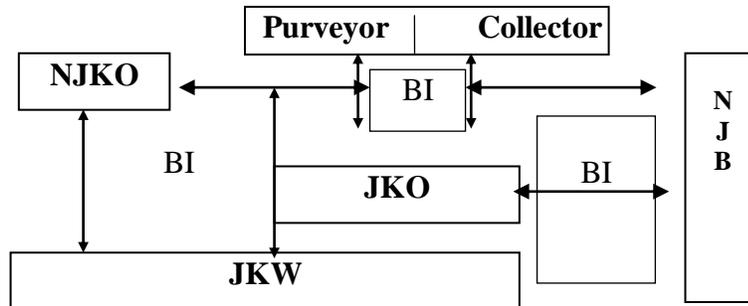
Meanwhile, such authorities in choosing BJ variations that JKO owns are not owned by JKWs. With JKOs, the JKW's BJ variation choice is between *krama* and *madya*. Alternatively, from a number of observations, the JKW's responses to the JKO's speech tend to need not in verbal way. This phenomenon occurs because most of the speech that JKOs deliver to JKWs is imperative.

## 2. The Scope of BI Use

The use of BI can be found in the work atmosphere. It is mainly found when these groups interact with other community members as well as buyers from out of Java island. The use of BI by JKO and JKW does not last continually but in certain situations like when

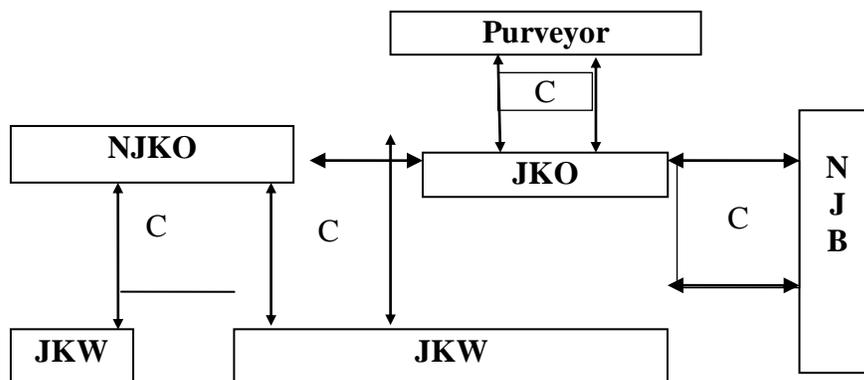
using the register or being carried in the context of the speech situation while the JKW helps the JKO serve the non-Javanese buyers (NJB). The use of BI by the JKO and JKW inserts and tends to be mixed with the use of BJ.

Figure 2. Scope of BI Use



### 3. The Scope of mixture language use (BJ and BI)

Figure 3. Scope of BI and BJ mixture use



Among the community members, the diversity of ethnic backgrounds can be found. Some kiosk owners are those who are from outside of Java area, the Chinese and Arabians. Their elder generations had long dwelt in the land of Java, especially in the city of *Sala*. They are familiar with the BJ use in their environment that some have mastered BJ very well, especially in speaking.

The choice of a mixture of BI and BJ is widespread in the working situation, which involves the relationship between JKO with NJB, JKW with NJB, JKW and JKO with NJKO and

NJKW. The mixture of BI and BJ use happens in accordance with their role in their business. The same thing is displayed in the relationship between the JKO and the groups of purveyor and collector. A wide space for the mixture language use is provided by JKO and JKW in order to serve NJB.

### CONCLUSION

It can be learned from the everyday language use by the Javanese traders' community in *Klewer Sala* that their regulated and repeated verbal interactions with the ethnic

Javanese and non-Javanese ethnic in socializing and trading reveal the choice of language use by this community. The choices are BJ, BI, and a mixture of both. The determinants then can consist of lingual factors as *Sala* dialect, speech level variation in BJ, and language status of native language (BJ) and second language (BI). The use of *Sala* dialect in BJ use relates to the location of *Klewer* in the heart of the city of *Sala*. Thus, the speech level still cannot be ignored by the speakers. The evidence is the use of respect variations to the elders, more powerful ones (in this case between employer and worker) and buyers. However, common usage of *krama* variations is not fully spoken so completely that it can be shifted into *madya* variations.

The non-language determinants in the language use between the community their speech-partners are their ethnic backgrounds, social relationships among them and the roots of cultural tradition. Within their diverse ethnic backgrounds, most of the community members still maintain their native language. The proximity of the relationships in fact identifies the language use. The last but not less important factor is the root of cultural tradition that the community still maintains its existence in *Klewer*. The evidence can be found in general look of their principles of trading (by serving the buyers considerately) and the goods (batik clothes) as well as BJ use. This is a small picture of a proof that the phenomenon of language use in traditional markets. Many learning processes can be explored and exploited for the sake of economic, social, and cultural nation.

Relating to the contribution of the community role in preserving the cultural traditions, the local government in the city of *Sala* has considered significant policies to the local cultural preservations including the traditional markets. It

relates also to the attempts to set back the strong characters that have been built through the history. To introduce this, the mayor of the city puts the slogan of "*Sala* in the future is *Sala* in the past". Beyond the symbols of the past heritage, the strong characters as "the city of merchants" affect the character building for being self-supporting community. The mayor, Joko Widodo, has been proven to be successful in this. One of the awards in 2007 that the mayor gained is from Central Java Chamber of Commerce for his excellent remark on siding with the small medium enterprises community through his management of the street vendors in a sociable ways as well as the traditional market revitalization. Herein, we can be aware more that language use has its imperative role to help build the social, cultural and economy characters of the city.

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