

THE ATTITUDE OF YOUNG JAVANESE LEARNING ENGLISH TOWARDS JAVANESE LANGUAGE IN RELATION TO THE MAINTENANCE OF MULTILINGUAL SOCIETY

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Abstract

Many Javanese are now worried about the future of Javanese language. The worrisome is based on the facts that - with the increasing use of the national language Bahasa Indonesia, and the introduction of English language as a local content at some primary schools, the number of Javanese children speaking fluent Javanese is decreasing. Linguistically, Javanese language is narrowing, so it is very necessary that efforts of maintaining it be taken (Purwoko, 2010). This study focused on the attitude of young Javanese who were learning English at an English education department towards Javanese language as their mother tongue. It aims at finding out how actually these young Javanese - while they are learning, using, and will be teaching English in the future which involves jobs such modeling, encouraging, and motivating students to learn and speak English - perceive their mother tongue. This is a descriptive research, which, following Gall & Borg (2005) aims at providing a clear, accurate description of individuals, events, or process. The samples were the students of English Education Department of College of Languages of Sultan Agung Islamic University (UNISSULA) Semarang who were selected randomly. The data were collected by questionnaire modified from Language Attitude Scale (LAS) focusing on 3 dimensions of attitude namely language loyalty, language pride and language norm. Despite the fact that they are proficient in English, learn and use English, and may work as English teachers someday, the finding shows that these Javanese still have a positive attitude towards their mother tongue.

Keywords: *Javanese language, young Javanese learning English, language attitude, descriptive*

INTRODUCTION

Many Javanese are now worried about the future of Javanese language. They say that unless systematic efforts are made to maintain the language, in the next 20 or 30 years, Javanese language will become extinct. The language, especially The *krama* and *krama Inggil* (the refined and high register) varieties of Javanese language is endangered. Javanese young generation tend to neglect them and are not able to use them correctly and appropriately. Their vocabulary mastery and translating ability are very poor (Subroto, Dwirahardjo, & Setiawan, 2008). Linguistically, Javanese language decreases so it is very necessary that efforts of maintaining it need to be taken (Purwoko, 2010). The native speakers of Javanese are reluctant to use the Javanese especially for the high variety for daily communication (Purwoko, 1994).

The worrisome is based on the facts that - with the increasing use of the national language - Bahasa Indonesia, and with the introduction of English language as a local content at primary schools, fewer young children now can speak Javanese very well. Many Javanese families in the cities which serve as the centers of Javanese culture as Yogyakarta and Solo, little by little shift their use of Javanese language to Indonesian as the first language in the family circle. Those families used to use Javanese *Krama* or *Krama Inggil* to older and respected people, but now they use Bahasa Indonesia. Young people are now more interested in learning foreign languages as English than learning their own local language. With the close association of English to modernity, business, and economy, Javanese will be left by Javanese young generation.

Young Javanese who are learning English may have different perception and feeling about their local language. This could be because day by day they are exposed to English. Besides, their learning English may also be motivated by integrative motivation which refers to a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other language group (Lambert, 1974).

Within this perspective, therefore, it is necessary to study the language attitude - which is defined as what the speakers of a language believe or feel about other languages in the country (Ferguson,

1996) – of the young Javanese who are learning English. The problem which will be discussed is therefore: what is the attitude of the young Javanese who are studying English towards Javanese as their mother tongue like?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Javanese Language

Javanese is the principal language of Java. It is a Sundic language of the Western Malayo-Polynesian branch of the Austronesian language family. It is one of the biggest regional languages in Indonesia. It has a big number of native speakers, more or less 70 million (Subroto, Dwirahardjo, & Setiawan, 2008). It is the second most spoken Austronesian language and it is the top thirteen language based on the number of speakers 1 (Cherny, 2010).

Javanese is closely related to Malay, Sundanese, Madurese, and Balinese. With respect to the geographical distribution, the language is spoken principally in the central and eastern regions of Java but with different variations or dialects. Javanese has some speech levels popular as *unggah ungguh*, namely *Ngoko*, *Krama* and *Krama Inggil* *Karma Alus*. *Ngoko* is the lowest variety. Javanese people use this variety when talking to someone of the same status. *Krama* variety is the middle level and is used when addressing second person who is fairly respected. While *Karma Inggil* is used for addressing older and respected persons as to parents, government officers, teachers etc. *Krama Inggil* is the highest level and the most refined variety. To address a second person -you- for example, Javanese may say 'kowe' for *ngoko* variety, *sampeyan* for the *karma*, and *panjenengan* for *karma inggil*.

Through transmigration programs of the central government in 1970 to 1990 (Fearnside, 1997) now a number of Javanese speakers are found in other islands of Indonesia (Hidayat, 2011). Approximately 7.5 million Javanese speakers reside on the island of Sumatra as in Sumatera Utara and Lampung provinces. Other Javanese settlements include Papua, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Maluku. In addition to these regions, Javanese is spoken in the former Dutch colony of Suriname, New Caledonia, Madura, Bali, Lombok, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Netherlands (Hinnebusch, Year NA).

Javanese language has a very distinct orthography called *Aksara*. The traditional Javanese orthography is over 1,200 years old and is believed to have evolved from a Pallava script of southern India (Coulmas, 1999). Variants of this script are also used to write Sundanese, Madurese, Balinese, and Sasak. The *Aksara* script is a syllabery orthography consisting of twenty consonant graphemes, each with an inherent [o] but written as [a] as ha na ca ra ka da ta saw a la

The role of Javanese language has changed a lot during the last 30 years. In 1980s, for example when I was about 13 years old, I could witness that Javanese was used very widely in the community both in formal and informal situations. The village leader would speak in Javanese when he addressed his people in meetings and gatherings. Even, when the Regent was visiting the villagers, and he had to make speeches, he would use Javanese. Such practices are rarely found there now. The Village leader, even the lower level as The Chair of the neighborhood unit (RT) will use Bahasa Indonesia or at least a mix of Indonesian and English during meetings with his people.

Language Attitude

There are two theoretical approaches in the study of language attitudes (Appel & Muysken, 1987). The first one is the *behaviorist* view and the second one is the *mentalist* view. The behaviorists believe that attitudes must be studied by observing the responses to certain languages, as their use in actual interactions. While the *mentalists* believe that attitudes as an internal, mental state, which may give rise to certain forms of behavior can only be described as 'an intervening variable between a stimulus affecting a person and that person's response' (Fasold, 1987).

At a general level, attitude is a disposition to react favorably or unfavorably to a class of objects. This disposition is often taken to comprise three components (Edwards, 1994). They are: feelings (affective element), thoughts (cognitive element) and, following upon these, predispositions to act in a certain way (behavioral element). That is, one knows or believes something, has some emotional reactions to it and, therefore, may be assumed to act on this basis. Attitude includes belief as one of its components. To gauge attitude, one would require further probing into the respondents' feeling about what they believe about a language, for example they believe that Javanese language will or will not help them to get success. With this perspective, describing an attitude towards a certain language is in fact describing someone's belief on the language.

There are three elements of language attitude (Garvin & Mathiot, 1956). The first is language loyalty. It reflects the desire of an individual educated speaker as well as that of an entire educated speech community to retain its language and, if necessary, to defend it against foreign encroachment. The second one is language pride which is defined as the possession of a form of folk speech as well as of a standard language which becomes the source of pride for the speakers. Some positive attitude such as pride is a prerequisite for the desire to develop one's language into a standard. This attitude of pride will usually be focused on one or the other real or alleged property of the language. And finally, the attitude of awareness of the norm expresses the standard language speakers' disposition and frame of mind toward the codification of their language, its value, its desirability, even its necessity for the cultural evolution of society. The concept of such a norm can be either highly puristic, calling for an etymological purity in language, style and elegance of expression of the *puristic attitude* or lax, careless, even sloppy with a tolerance of unnecessary loans in the standard language.

Language attitude may be influenced by several factors. Jendra (2010) summarizes the factors into 4. The first is the prestige and power of the language. More prestigious and powerful language tend to stimulate better attitude towards the language. The second is the historical background of the nation. For example, some Middle East people may not want to study English because they learn from their history that western people were colonialists. The third is the social and traditional factor. A higher variety of the language is normally considered as a better form than the lower one. And the last is the language internal system. Easy grammar and pronunciation for example will tend to be responded positively.

To measure someone's attitude towards a language and/or its speakers, there are two methods to be applied, namely direct and indirect methods (Jendra, 2010). A direct method is a method used in measuring language by giving attitudes by asking questions in an interview by a questionnaire to fill in by some respondents. A respondent has to rate a statement to show an agreement or disagreement on the issue presented with the choices presented in a scale named Language Attitude Scale (LAS) (Taylor, 1973) from Scale 1: "Agree" to Scale 5: "Disagree", by using semantic differential scaling as unclear - clear, fluent - not fluent, educated - uneducated.

An indirect method, on the other hand, is a method to measure someone's language attitude which is applied in a way that the participants are not aware that the attitudes are being measured. The most popular type is named the matched guise. Researchers that use this method did an experiment to get their informants judge speaker's personalities based on a recorded speech they hear.

METHOD

This research adopted descriptive qualitative as the method. Descriptive research aims to provide a clear, accurate description of individuals, events, or process (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005). Descriptive research involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data in order to develop a precise description of a sample's behavior or personal characteristics. The analysis is done qualitatively by interpreting them.

Forty eight students of semester 5 of English Education Department of Sultan Agung Islamic University were randomly selected as respondents of the study. They represented the young Javanese learning English. The research applied direct method of collecting data. The observation of language attitude of the respondents was done by giving them questionnaire to fill in. The questionnaire consists of 2 main parts namely the respondent's identity (Part A), and respondent's attitude towards Javanese language in the form of Language Attitude Scales. There were three sub parts of language attitude scale. The first part measured language loyalty with 9 statements to respond, and last measured language norms with 7 statements to respond. The respondents were required to rate each of the statement based on their agreement to the statement in five scales from Scale 1 "Strongly Agree" to Scale 5 "Strongly Disagree" by giving a thick (a 'V' sign) on the subsequent box of row.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

All respondents admitted that they were proficient in Javanese, Indonesian and English. A few of them were even proficient in another foreign language namely Arabic. When they were asked to rate the languages that they were proficient in with the order from the most proficient to the least proficient among the language choices of 1) Javanese, 2) Indonesian, 3) English, and 4) a foreign language other than English, 61.36% of the respondents rated Javanese as the language that they were most

proficient in, 34.1% rated for Indonesian, 2.27% rated English, 2.27% rated a foreign language other than English.

The respondents were young people of 21-23 years of age who were studying English at English Education Department of College of Language of Sultan Agung Islamic University. Their attitude towards Javanese was observed directly by using questionnaire that includes three parts of attitude namely language loyalty, language pride, and awareness of language norms. The followings are the score of each element of attitude.

The language loyalty

No	Statement	Score	Remark
1	I am a Javanese and I can speak Javanese language.	1.96	Positive
2	I prefer to use Javanese for everyday communication.	2.19	Positive
3	I feel very concerned to know that many young Javanese can not speak Javanese.	1.52	Positive
4	The habit of using Javanese language should be implanted to Javanese young people.	1.6	Positive
5	Today, Javanese language has no function. (<i>negative statement</i>)*	2.98	Positive
6	Javanese people should not use Javanese anymore (<i>negative statement</i>)	1.79	
7	Schools don't need to teach students Javanese language. (<i>negative statement</i>)	1.67	Positive
8	My interest in learning English has made me leave Javanese language. (<i>negative statement</i>)	1.98	Positive
9	According to me, young people today need to be proficient in Indonesian and English only. (<i>negative statement</i>)	1.75	Positive
The average score of language loyalty		1.94	Positive

* the scaling of the negative statement was reversed.

The above table shows that young Javanese who are learning English still have loyalty to Javanese language. For all of the positive statements, all of the scores are lower than 3. It means that the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statements. Even when they were required to rate statement saying that the Javanese people should implant the habit of using Javanese, the average score is 1.65. The consistency of the attitude is also proven by the negative statements. Except statement 5 which says "Today, Javanese language has no function", respondents rated low. For example, when they were required to rate the statement that Javanese people should not use Javanese anymore, the average score is 1.79 indicating they did not agree with the statement. Similarly, responding to statement saying "My interest in learning English has made me leave Javanese language", the score is 1.98, which means that they did not agree. However. Statement 5 saying that "Today, Javanese language has no function", the score is high very close to 3 which means that the respondents were almost undecided.

The language pride

No	Statement	Score	Remark
1	I'm happy to hear speeches, lectures, or discussion conducted in Javanese.	2.67	Positive
2	I'm happy to hear that many foreigners learn Javanese language.	1.69	Positive
3	I'm happy to see Javanese speaks Javanese language.	1.63	Positive
4	Javanese language is rich of noble values of the nation.	1.52	Positive
5	Javanese language can live side by side with both Indonesian and English.	1.65	Positive
6	I'm certain that Javanese language won't die.	1.96	Positive
7	The Indonesian people will lose something very valuable if Javanese language dies.	1.65	Positive
The average score of language pride		1.82	Positive

Similar to the language loyalty, the average scores for language pride all are positive. Most respondents rated the statements of language pride either *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* (Scale 1 to 2). The respondents were proud of the Javanese language and felt positive with it. The respondents agreed that Javanese language will be able to live side by side with Indonesian and English, and they were

certain that the language won't die. They also agreed to say that Javanese language is rich of the nation's values. Javanese language is valuable for the Indonesian people.

The awareness of language norms

No	Statement	Score	Remark
1	I know that Javanese language has levels or varieties of <i>ngoko</i> , <i>krama</i> , and <i>karma inggil</i> .	1.54	Positive
2	The varieties or levels in Javanese language need maintaining.	1.56	Positive
3	The use of <i>krama inggil</i> to people of older age or higher status has made Javanese language not egalitarian. (<i>negative statement</i>)	3.15	Negative
4	" <i>Bapak nonton TV</i> " is an appropriate variety of Javanese. (<i>negative statement</i>)	2.35	positive
5	" <i>Ibu lagi pergi ke kantor</i> " is more practical than " <i>Ibu nembe tindak kantor</i> ". (<i>negative statement</i>)	2.96	Close to neutral
6	When speaking to friends, we should use <i>krama inggil</i> . (<i>negative statement</i>)	2.44	Positive
7	<i>Krama inggil</i> should only be used in traditional events as wedding ceremonies. (<i>negative statement</i>)	2.58	Positive
The average score of language pride		2.37	Positive

)* the scaling of the negative statement was reversed.

The data show that different from language pride and language loyalty, the average score of the awareness of language norm is much higher. Statement 3 is even above 3 which means that into certain extent the respondents agreed that *karma inggil* has made Javanese not egalitarian. This show that despite the loyalty and pride to Javanese language, respondents were not fully aware with the norm of the Javanese language, and especially concerning with *karma inggil* variety, the young Javanese learning English have a negative attitude.

However, as a whole the finding of the research should answer the worrisome of some people concerning the future of Javanese language. More specifically, it confirms the people that learning English—or perhaps another foreign language- will not make the young Javanese change their attitude towards Javanese language. The young Javanese are still loyal to their mother tongue because they believe that Javanese language can still function very well and can live side by side with both the national language Bahasa Indonesia and an international language such as English.

Although the respondents are proficient in English and at that time they were preparing themselves to be English teachers which means that they would make a living with English in the future, and more importantly they would have to motivate and encourage their future students to learn and speak English, their loyalty and pride towards Javanese do not subside.

The finding is relieving because it can serve as a proof that when people are learning another language -which is perhaps more superior and powerful - their attitude towards their local remains positive. The introduction of English for students of elementary schools for example will not automatically mean that they leave the Javanese. What we need to do now- rather than blocking the practice of English teaching at schools- is encouraging and facilitating the situation in which the languages can live side by side. In this case, the establishment of multilingual society with shared respects among different language users will establish. In whatever reasons, multilingual society will offer more benefits to the society as a whole than the monolingual one. Javanese people are multilingual people who must be open so that they can think globally, but at the same time use and maintain the values, cultures, language and history of the local.

CONCLUSION

The attitude of young Javanese learning English towards Javanese language is positive. This was proven by the finding of the research on language attitude of the young Javanese who were taking English education department at College of Languages of Sultan Agung Islamic University. The loyalty to and the pride for Javanese language as well as the awareness of the language norm are positive. Javanese language can live side by side with both the national language Bahasa Indonesia and the international language such as English. This is good since in a multilingual society, more than one language should be able to live and function well.

The respondents of the research were young people. In the future, similar research may be conducted to respondents of younger ages as students of senior high schools or junior high schools.

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