

## The Javanese People's Attitude Towards Sundanese Language

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### Abstract

The present study entitled *The Javanese People's Attitude towards Sundanese Language* aims to find out the Javanese people's attitude towards Sundanese language and their reasons to have such attitude. This research is a case study which involved five Javanese people working in a catering service company in Bandung as the respondents of the study. Data were collected from observation, questionnaires, and interviews. To analyze the data, some theories were applied; the theory proposed by Garret (2010) was utilized to analyze the components of language attitude that determine whether the attitude is positive or negative, whereas the theory from Holmes (2001) was employed to investigate the reasons why they have such attitude. Based on the data analysis result, it shows that the respondents tend to communicate in Sundanese language in their daily conversation. It also can be seen from the percentage of Sundanese language they used (28.06%) indicating that it is higher than the percentage of Javanese language used (3.96%). Regarding to the respondents' attitude towards Sundanese language, the findings refer that most of them have positive attitude due to their approval to use Sundanese language in their daily conversation.

**Keywords:** *Javanese, Attitude, Sundanese Language*

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia consists of many islands. Every island and even every city must be having different culture and language that differ one another as their identity. As De Kuthy (2001) states that "since language is a social phenomenon, it is natural to assume that the structure of a society has some impact on the language of the speakers of that society."

Java Island is one of the biggest islands in Indonesia that has varieties of cultures and languages. The most well-known languages in Java Island that people can easily notice are Javanese and Sundanese language. Bandung, as a part of Java Island, has an important role to contribute the varieties in language. As a strategic and popular place, it invites many people from different ethnics to live there. One of them is the Javanese people. They come to live and work there because they assume that Bandung is a good place to keep them survive. Many of them were born in Java and yet they choose to spend their life time in

Bandung. They live in Bandung for years and because of that, they now can speak Sundanese even though the use of its language is not always correct.

This fact leads the Javanese people to speak two languages which are Sundanese and Javanese. This phenomenon is called as bilingualism. Generally, bilingualism means being able to speak two languages. As in case above, the Javanese people who are surrounded by most Sundanese people living for so long in Bandung are used to speak both Javanese and Sundanese. They speak Javanese and Sundanese language depending on where they are engaged to, for example they use Sundanese language with their friends in their work environment while they speak Javanese with their family at home.

According to Apple and Mysken (2005), language contact necessarily leads to bilingualism. Therefore, bilingualism and language contact cannot be separated because it connects each other. There are two

types of bilingualism, namely *societal* and *individual* bilingualism. Societal bilingualism occurs when the people in a society are faced two or more languages, while individual bilingualism occurs when there is only particular person who uses two or more languages. In addition, language contact in the simplest definition is the use of more than one language at the same time in the same place. For example, if two people from different country meet in a place, there is a possibility that their language to interact each other is in contact.

In relation to the case above, Garrett (2010) presents three components of attitudes towards language. The first is the cognitive component which contains beliefs about the world. The second is the affective component which involves feelings about the object. The third is the behavioral component which concerns on the predisposition to act in certain ways that are consistent with the cognitive and affective component. The example of these three components can be seen to see

someone's attitudes towards Sundanese language. From the cognitive component, it can be seen that he/she believes that learning Sundanese language can give him deeper understanding of Sundanese culture. From the affective component, he/she can be considered to have positive attitude towards Sundanese if he/she is enthusiastic about being able to read literature written in Sundanese. From the behavioral component, he/she spares his time to gather with Sundanese community.

Thus, this study focuses on five Javanese people's attitude towards Sundanese language and the reasons why they have such attitude. A qualitative method has been used for this study.

In analyzing the data, two main theories were applied; the theory of attitude to language by Garret (2010) has been used to reveal whether it is positive or negative attitude that they have towards Sundanese language and the theory proposed by Holmes (2001) has been used to discover the reasons why they have such attitude.

## **FINDINGS**

Based on the data analysis result, the findings show that the five Javanese people as the respondents have positive attitude towards Sundanese language regarding to the social factor such as to build a good communication with the native speakers in their living and working place. It is supported by the percentage of the use of Sundanese language (28.06%) that is higher than the use of Javanese language (3.96%).

## **DISCUSSIONS**

The findings above are in line with Appel and Muysken's (2005) theory of Language Contact and Bilingualism. They state that Language Contact may lead to Bilingualism and drag the speaker to be a bilingual. The five Javanese respondents were in contact with non Javanese people who were also the native speakers in Sundanese. Because of its contact in the working place, they become bilingual to speak both Sundanese and Indonesian. In addition, Appel and Muysken (2005) also differentiate two types of

bilingualism which are Individual Bilingualism and Societal Bilingualism. Individual bilingualism occurs when there is only particular person who uses two or more languages, while societal bilingualism occurs when the people in a society use two or more languages. Thus, the Javanese respondents can be categorized into Societal Bilingual because they speak two or more languages (Indonesian, Sundanese, and Javanese) in a group of a society in their working society even though they are the minority group.

The findings also conclude that the Javanese respondents have positive attitudes towards Sundanese language. It can be seen that all the Javanese respondents had all the components of language attitudes as proposed by Garret (2010). The affective component that determine that the Javanese respondents have positive attitude towards Sundanese language was shown by their approval towards Sundanese language that contains their feelings to feel happy to use

Sundanese language in their daily communication. It is supported by their action through the behavioral component. It was proven by their act to continue speaking Sundanese language in their daily communication with the native speaker and even the Javanese friends in their living and working place. The cognitive component was shown by their understanding of Sundanese language. Nevertheless, even though most of the Javanese respondents feel that they understand well the meaning of Sundanese language that they use, it does not prove that their knowledge about Sundanese language is good enough. The fact that most of them speak Sundanese language inappropriately by using some words that have inappropriate meaning is in line with Baker's theory (1992) that state feelings and beliefs may not always go in hand, but one can express the positive attitude towards a language, at the same time, covert negative feelings about it. Moreover, the findings also reveal that the Javanese people have positive attitude

towards Sundanese with the covert prestige. Attitudes toward language are also divided into two kinds which are overt and covert prestige (Holmes, 2001). According to Holmes (2001), overt prestige is the positive attitude toward the standard speech variety. This standard speech variety is considered to be the best way to speak in the community. The standard speech variety of Sundanese language is the formal language or what is called as the *Ragam Hormat/Lemes*. On the contrary, covert prestige is the positive attitude toward the vernacular or non standard form of language. In the present study, the Javanese people tend to use the non standard or informal form of Sundanese language because they simply want to express their sociability among their friends in their working environment.

Their positive attitude towards Sundanese language is strongly influenced by the social factor. It is in line with the theory proposed by Holmes (2001). According to Holmes, there are two factor that lead people to have attitude towards certain language

namely social and political factor. Social factor deals with the social issues while political deals with structural issues. The five Javanese respondents have positive attitude towards Sundanese language simply because they want to build a good communication with the native Sundanese language.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

There are two points that can be concluded. Firstly, concerning the Javanese people's attitude towards Sundanese language, the majority of Javanese respondents tend to have positive attitude towards Sundanese language. This attitude is represented by the three components of language, namely cognitive component, affective component, and behavioral component proposed by Garret (2010). Their positive attitude towards Sundanese language was strongly determined by the affective component showing their feelings to feel happy speaking Sundanese language. It is also supported by the behavioral

component which identified their action to use Sundanese language more often in their daily communication. This statement is referred by the percentage of the use of Sundanese (28.06%) in their daily conversation indicating that it is higher than the use of Javanese (3.96%). In addition, the positive attitude of Javanese people can also be seen as covert prestige because they mostly speak using informal Sundanese even in a form of inappropriate words of Sundanese. In this case, the Javanese people tend to use the non formal of Sundanese because their knowledge about Sundanese language is still limited in accordance to their educational background that most of them are only graduated from elementary school.

Secondly, their attitude towards Sundanese language is only influenced by the social factor. They claimed that they used Sundanese language because they wanted to show their solidarity and their respect to their friends in their environment who mostly come from Sundanese.

Further study related to language attitude may focus on different language object. For example, the attitude of Indonesian students who study abroad towards their national language because they may be influenced by the language where they are living and studying.

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