

**POLITE LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AMONG MEMBERS
OF SASAK NOBLE FAMILIES IN MATARAM**

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Abstract

This thesis is entitled *Polite Language Maintenance among Members of Sasak Noble Families in Mataram*. It attempted to investigate (1) what speech level is used in noble Sasak families who live in Mataram, (2) the linguistic features of Polite language maintenance among members of noble Sasak families in Mataram, (3) the influential factors that affect the use of Polite language form in the communication among members of noble Sasak family, and (4) the strategy used by the noble Sasak family in Mataram to maintain the Polite language. The data were taken from interview and observation with members of Sasak noble families and from daily conversations of some Sasak noble families members who live in Mataram. After analyzing the data, the researcher found that Sasak noble community found in Mataram mostly consists of *Perwangse*. *Perwangse* families used base Sasak *madie* as speech level in their daily communication (i.e .polite language). However, the percentage is only 33.33%. Meanwhile, the use of common language is more dominant with the percentage 50% and the use of Bahasa Indonesia is 16.67%. Linguistic features found in the data of the conversation above are mostly the use of pronominal clitics ,subject clitics, demonstrative, directive, personal pronoun and question. The use of language is mainly influenced by the position of family member in the family and also the language that is passed down by the older. In addition, the strategies used by the *Menak* family in maintaining polite language among their family members, namely: (a) Parents teach their children to use refined language since they were children; (b) Parents teach the vocabulary of Sasak polite language correctly;(c) Parents correct the words directly if the children make mistake; and (d) Parents always give an example of how to speak by using polite language properly.

Key words: *Polite, Language Maintenance Sasak Noble Families.*

PEMERTAHANAN BAHASA ALUS DIKALANGAN KELUARGA BANGSAWAN SASAK DI MATARAM

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Abstrak

Thesis ini berjudul *Pemertahanan Bahasa Alus Dikalangan Keluarga Bangsawan Sasak di Mataram*. Thesis ini bertujuan untuk menelusuri (1) jenis tingkat tutur berbahasa apa yang digunakan dikalangan anggota keluarga bangsawan Sasak di Mataram, (2) fitur linguistik dari pemertahanan Bahasa Alus dikalangan anggota keluarga bangsawan Sasak di Mataram, (3) faktor yang mempengaruhi penggunaan Bahasa Sasak Alus dalam berkomunikasi antar anggota keluarga bangsawan Sasak, dan (4) strategi yang digunakan oleh keluarga bangsawan Sasak untuk mempertahankan Bahasa Alus. Data diambil dari hasil wawancara dengan anggota keluarga bangsawan Sasak serta dari hasil pengamatan percakapan sehari-hari dari anggota keluarga bangsawan Sasak yang tinggal di Mataram. Setelah menganalisa data, peneliti menemukan bahwa keluarga bangsawan Sasak yang ditemukan di Mataram adalah Perwangse. Mereka menggunakan tingkat tutur bahasa madie (Bahasa Alus madie). Akan tetapi persentasinya hanya 33.33%. Sementara itu, penggunaan bahasa biasa (Bahasa Jamak) lebih dominan dengan persentasi 50% dan penggunaan Bahasa Indonesia yaitu sebesar 16.67%. Fitur linguistik yang ditemukan dalam percakapan antar anggota keluarga bangsawan Sasak yaitu penggunaan *pronominal clitics, subject clitics, demonstrative, directive, personal pronoun dan question*. Penggunaan Bahasa Alus dipengaruhi oleh posisi seseorang dalam keluarga dan juga bahasa yang diturunkan oleh orang tua. Selanjutnya, adapun strategi yang digunakan dalam mempertahankan Bahasa Alus dikalangan anggota keluarga adalah: (a) Orang tua mengajarkan anak-anak mereka untuk menggunakan Bahasa Alus sedari mereka kecil; (b) Orang tua mengajarkan penggunaan kosa kata Bahasa Alus dengan benar; (c) Orang tua memperbaiki kesalahan kata yang dibuat oleh anak secara langsung; dan (d) Orang tua selalu memberikan contoh bagaimana berbicara Bahasa Alus dengan benar.

Kata kunci: *Bahasa Alus, Pemertahanan Bahasa, Keluarga Bangsawan Sasak*

INTRODUCTION

In general, most of the society in Lombok only apply two forms of languages in daily communication known as *bahasa sasak biase/jamak* (ordinary form) or *aok-ape (yes-what)*, *sasak alus (high level)* or *tiang-enggih* (me-yes). Meanwhile, *bahasa Sasak sangat halus* (the highest style) that is commonly known as *kaji meran* (I-yes) is only used by *datu raden* (king or noble people) (Wilian, 2006:35).

Sasak society consists of three levels, namely “Raden” (prominent noble), “Menak” (ordinary noble) and “Jajar Karang” (commoner). Based on this stratification, each level applies different form of language in their daily communication. “Raden” (prominent noble) and “Menak” (ordinary noble) apply refined language, while Jajar Karang “commoner” apply common language (Mahyuni 2006:43) . For example the word “I” is differently uttered by each level. *Raden* uses word “kaji”, *Menak* uses word “tiang” and

Jajarkarang uses “aku”. In particular situation, the use of demonstrative “Nike/Niki/Ene/Ino” to point an object for example, signifies power difference. “Nike/Niki” is used among *noble* community, while “Eno/Ino” is used among *non-noble* community or commoners.

Nowadays, we find many nobles speak ordinary language (*Base jamak/biase*) and even they tend to use abusive language, which is not in accordance with their title. Nobility is identical to the good behavior or attitude, refined and gentle speech as the characteristics and identity of the nobility itself.

In reality, the fact shows the opposite. During the observation, obviously in some areas in Mataram, those who hold the title of nobility do not show or use polite language when they communicate with their fellow communities, even more with the ordinary people that in fact the common people from the *Jajar Karang* class. They tend to use abusive language and some of them tend to underestimate the common people. Sometimes, nobility is more dominant to use Indonesian than Sasak language; either because they do not know the meaning of *Base alus* itself or they were never taught by their parents before. Instead, the people who do not hold the title of nobility, can use the polite language (*Base alus*) more delicate than those. They should actually be able to communicate using polite language better than those of non-nobility. Therefore, based on this situation, the researcher wants to identify whether there is any nobility in Mataram which still uses the refined language (*Base alus*) and how they maintain this polite language (*Base alus*) so as not to become extinct.

On this occasion the researcher will use the theory presented by Mahyuni (2006: 111) in his Speech Style

and Cultural Consciousness in Sasak Community as the frame work. Researcher will analyze the data that will be obtained in this study using lexical items namely: 1) Demonstrative pronoun Such as *niki, nike, deriki, derike*, (this-that), *se (meniki) se (menike)*. 2) Personal pronouns Such as *tiang, pelungguh, pelinggih*. 3) Questions such as Yes-No questions WH questions. 4) Directives such as *Silaq, aloh*. The use of lexical items described above will be useful to analyze the use of polite language maintenance among members of noble Sasak family in Mataram.

In addition, this study will use the speech styles that have been discussed of Mahyuni (2006:96) about speech style to determine whether the speech style also affects speech level. In this case the researcher only take a theoretical discussion among noble speech level only, so that it can be directly used in research the use of polite language Among Members of Noble Sasak Family in Mataram, mainly to answer the research question about the speech level.

METHOD

This study employed qualitative descriptive research. Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. The population of this research is limited to parents-children of Sasak families who live in Mataram and who speak Sasak as their mother tongue. The researcher chooses 18 noble families randomly in which the polite language communication will be observed. Random sampling is chosen because it gives opportunity to every individual to have the same probability (Gay, 1998: 126).

In addition, the researcher would explain the method of collecting data in research of polite language maintenance

among members of noble Sasak Family in Mataram. There are two kinds of data that will be used, namely: (1) Primary Data and (2) Secondary Data.

In order to obtain reliable data, researcher applied these method and techniques below: (1) Non-participant observation, (2) audio-recording, (3) note taking and (4) interview.

Moreover, to assist the researcher to meet the valid and reliable result and to facilitate the researcher to present detail elaboration of analytical data, the procedure of data is crucial thing to be enumerated. The enumerations of the procedure are as bellow: (1) the first step, the data will be firstly described which means that the kinds of the data are differently taken based on the needs of the study; (2) The researcher will identify the whole data that has been collected; (3) the data then would be classified into some parts according to the research questions; and (4) the all data will be finally displayed as the finding in this study.

FINDINGS

From 18 families (samples) that had been investigated, most of them originally came from some places in central and east Lombok (i.e. Kopang, Darmaji, Praya, Kaliaji, Padamara, Rarang and Mantang, Barebali, Langko, Janapria, Sekotong, Masbagik)

It was found that not all the *Menak* families in Mataram used Sasak polite language (*Base alus*) in communicating with family members in everyday conversation but only few families who actually used it. Most of the noble families in Mataram used to switched the languages, such as they switched Sasak polite language (*Base alus*) with common language (*Base jamak*) and Bahasa Indonesia when they spoke. It was particularly happened when the husbands spoke to their wives.

They tend to use Sasak common language (*Base jamak*), while their wives should use polite language (*Base alus*) when communicate with their husband.

The parents in Sasak noble family did not teach Sasak polite language (*Base alus*) to their children, due to limited vocabulary and they were afraid of making mistakes in applying sentences or words. Therefore, most of them used Bahasa Indonesia when communicate to their children. In social life in the community, based on observations, it was identified that they tend to use refined language (*Base alus*) when they talked to *Menak* community, because they did not want to be called as *Sasak Lebung* (which means people who did not know and understand Sasak language). They used polite language (*Base alus*) as a respect to their interlocutors, especially if the interlocutor was a *Lingsir* people (elders). Meanwhile, some of *Menak* when talking to ordinary people used the common language (*Base jamak*) because they assumed that there was no expense when talking to ordinary people. Sometimes, they inserted the polite language (*base alus*) when talking to older *non-menak* people, however the use of refined language (*base alus*) was just limited to the use of personal pronoun such as *tiang*, *inggih*, *nike/niki*.

Not all of the noble families used refined language in their communication with their family members. Only some of families used it. Most of their children tend to respond in *Base alus* when talking to their parents.

Menak families in Mataram worked as civil servants, private sector employees, traders, retired civil servants and teachers. Their educational background also varied from high school to university. From the table above, it was clearly identified that the *Menak* family which used polite language (*base*

Alus) was only six families, *Menak* family which used common language (*base jamak*) was nine families and *Menak* family which used Bahasa Indonesia was three families. Bahasa Indonesia tends to be used in young families because they assumed that it was easier than polite language (*base alus*). They also tend to be afraid of making mistakes when using polite language (*base alus*), due to limited vocabulary. According to them, Bahasa Indonesia was the safest language to use within the family, at school or at the workplace.

Likewise with highly educated people, not all of the *Menak* people above were able to understand polite language (*base alus*). Higher education does not guarantee that they can speak refined language (*base alus*). This is caused by the diversity of social environment and the parents who do not teach polite language (*base alus*) to their children.

The Percentage of Language Use in Daily Interaction among Members of Sasak Noble family

Language	Number of Respondents	
	Participant (P)	Percentage (%)
Polite Language	6 Families	33.33
Common Language	9 Families	50.00
Bahasa Indonesia and common language	3 Families	16.67
Total	18 Families	100%

From the data shown above, 33% of the *Menak* families in Mataram use refined language (*Base alus*) and most of

them are from Central Lombok, then nine families or 50% of *Menak* families use common language (*Base jamak*) when communicate with their family members, while the rest, 16.66% or 3 families use Bahasa Indonesia mixed with common language (*Base jamak*). Thus, it can be concluded that the use of refined language (*Base alus*) among the *Menak* families in Mataram is only 33% and the use of common language (*Base jamak*) is still more dominant to use.

Traditionally, the use of appropriate language for appropriate people is a part of Sasak culture. Therefore, the choice of language variation and speech styles in the community is influenced by the speaker and the interlocutor's social aspects covering (1) Heritable status; (2) Level of education; (3) Age; (4) Religious concern; (5) Family; and (6) Intimacy. The difference of those six aspects results in different diction used in communication with other people and even within a family as shown in the following table.

The characteristic of the 18 noble families in Mataram related to the use of polite language is: In communicate with other people; they are not really able to use polite language. Their vocabulary was limited to the use of polite language of the ordinary or common words use, such *as tiang, nggih, silaq, rauh, sungkan, lumbar, melinggih, wikan, menengan, nike, niki*. Therefore, they could not use the other or more specific polite language or on the other word we could say that they switched their language with common language (*base jamak*) and sometimes Bahasa Indonesia.

Linguistic Feature

After analyzing some samples of the conversation above, in terms of linguistic features found in the data of the conversation above are mostly the

use of pronominal clitics (*de,em,e,n*), subject clitics (*ke*), demonstrative (*nike,niki*), and directive (*silaq*), personal pronoun (*tiang,pelinggih*) and question (*napi,wikan,mbe*)

Method/Strategy Used to Maintain Sasak Polite Language in the Family

As had been described in the discussion above, it could be seen that only a few *Menak* families who used Sasak Polite language (*base alus*) in their daily communication, not as expected by the researcher that polite language (*base alus*) would be used by all *Menak* family in Mataram. In fact, from the observation and investigation, some families are still used Sasak polite language (*base alus*) in order to maintain Sasak polite language as the characteristics and identity of Sasak tribe. From the results of questionnaires and interviews conducted by the researcher, there are some strategies used by the *Menak* family in maintaining polite language among their family members, namely:

1. Parents teach their children to use polite language (*base alus*) since they were children and apply it as a daily communication.
2. Parents teach the vocabulary of Sasak polite language correctly, such as verbs, adjectives, nouns, and apply it in a correct sentence, so that the children will be able to make meaningful sentence in refined language.
3. Parents correct the words being used directly if the children make mistakes in their speech/conversation.
4. Parents always give an example and being a model to their children of how to speak by using polite language properly.

It is expected that by the strategies above, the children will be able

to maintain what they had got and been taught by their parents, so that one day they will do the same to their next generation. The parents think that who else is going to maintain and preserve their language and identity as a Sasak people if not themselves.

The Appearance of Polite Language

Menak people are identic with the use of polite language (*base alus*) and polite behavior to reveal his true identity. They tend to use refined language (*base alus*) when speaking to fellow nobles or with new people they meet. Based on observations, the use of polite language (*base alus*) in normal circumstances runs well, however, when the situation is different, for example when someone is upset then the use of polite language (*base alus*) will disappear altogether. This can be seen in extract 14, conversation when the mother scolded her son with rude/impolite words and used the words that should not be used, especially by parents to their children, because the children will follow the behavior and utterances made by their parents. As a human being, either nobility or not, we cannot be separated from the emotion and sometimes we made mistakes in our speech and behavior.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data of polite language maintenance among members of noble Sasak family in Mataram above, the researcher concluded that:

Noble Sasak community found in Mataram mostly consists of *Perwangse*. *Perwangse* families used base madie speech level in their daily communication (i.e polite language). However, the percentage is only 33.33% or only 6 families from 18 families being surveyed. Meanwhile, the use of common language is more dominant

with the percentage 50% and the use of Bahasa Indonesia is 16.67%.

Linguistic features found in the data of the conversation above are mostly the use of pronominal clitics, subject clitics, demonstrative, directive, personal pronoun, and question.

The use of language is mainly influenced by the position of family member in the family and also the language that is passed down by the older. Common language tends to be used by the young couple since they regard that common language is easier to understand by most people and also because of insufficient vocabulary of polite language that they have from their elder. *Menak* families who used daily language reflect the position of someone in the family especially between wife and husband. Meanwhile, the language between children, some of them still used polite language while the other often does not show the difference between the the younger and the elder.

There are some strategies used by the *Menak* family in maintaining polite language among their family members, namely: (a) Parents teach their children to use polite language since they were children and apply it in a daily communication; (b) Parents teach the vocabulary of Sasak polite language correctly; (c) Parents correct the words directly if the children make mistakes; and (d) Parents always give an example of how to speak by using polite language properly.

In conclusion, not all the noble families in Mataram used Sasak polite language (*base alus*) as expected by the researcher. In fact, they are more likely to use Sasak common language (*base jamak*) and sometimes they tend to use rude/impolite words that actually should not be uttered by *Menak* people which are identical with the polite manner both in speaking and behaving.

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