

Article

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Multilingualism in Kemujan, Karimunjawa, Indonesia

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Abstract

Karimunjawa can be studied not only from social aspect but also from multilingualism. This paper aims at investigating the languages living in Karimunjawa and their vitality. The study is focused on Kemujan island whose languages are Javanese, Buginese, Maduranese, Mandarese, and *bahasa Indonesia*. To see the vitality of them, I used UNESCO check list, observation, and interview. Referential and distributional methods were used to show how languages were used, language contact, and language vitality. The result indicates that *bahasa Indonesia* is the first dominant, Javanese is the second dominant, Buginese is the third, Maduranese is the fourth, and Mandarese is the least dominant.

Keywords: multilingualism; Karimunjawa; Indonesia:

1. Introduction

Multilingualism and plurilingualism are terms that may overlap each other. They convey two similar meanings in terms of the languages someone is capable of. Both terms may imply an ability of more than one language. They are different in terms of the scope of the ability. Plurilingualism refers to individually-based ability, while multilingualism refers to publicly-based one. If we refer to Council of Europe (2001) in Otwinowska-Kasztelanica (2012:38), plurilingualism refers to someone's ability to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds, while multilingualism refers to knowledge of different languages

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of people as a social group. This implies that plurilingual people will be automatically multilingual and pluricultural in the sense that they understand the cultural values represented by the languages they know. What is accepted and what is not accepted represented by the language can be the bases for consideration in using language. As plurilingual, maybe a person does not have the same degree of abilities of different languages s/he knows. S/he may be really good at a certain language, but not really good at another one. In other words, some people may have both production and comprehension ability of a certain language, but some others may have only comprehension.

Multilingualism can be gained not only naturally but also educationally. Someone may be multilingual because of their parents exposing him or her to more than one language, while others may be multilingual because they learn more than one language formally. Multilingualism may refer to a situation where one person can speak more than one language. People in Indonesia tend to be minimally bilingual. They can speak at least two languages. They can not only speak their local languages but also *bahasa Indonesia*. For those who can speak more than their local languages and *bahasa Indonesia*, they are multilingual. That they learn foreign languages can make them multilingual people.

In this case, multilinguality is obtained due to third language learning. The third language is learnt after local languages and *bahasa Indonesia*. The third language learnt can be a foreign language or other languages after first and second language is learnt. The third language is learnt because of some reasons among other things educational reason or job or institutional reasons. For example, English is learnt because someone works in an institution which requires English. Another example is when someone works in English speaking countries or overseas. In order to communicate with those living in the countries, s/he has to be able to speak English. According to Braunmuller and Ferraresi (2003:3), multilingualism may be caused by some reasons, one of them is that the person must involve in trade, court, or another that requires them to speak other than their language.

Multilingualism in Karimunjawa[†] is not gained by educational process but it happens naturally due to their ancestor's migration to Karimunjawa. Now, Karimunjawa people are multilingual because of their interlingual contact among the speakers of different ethnic languages. Even, now they marry someone from different ethnic groups, for instance, Javanese marries Buginese people, Maduranese with Buginese people, Javanese with Maduranese. This phenomenon raises some problems related to how they can understand each other, whether

[†] Karimunjawa as a part of Jepara Regency of Central Java, Indonesia, is located in the north coast of Central Java.

there is a dominating or minor language, how their children acquire their first language and what language or whose language they learn, what language policy they have.

Multilingualism in Karimunjawa has not been studied yet. Therefore, this paper is trying to study the multilingualism Karimunjawa especially in Kemojan island and very specifically Batu Lawang area. Since in this area, intercultural marriage looks more dominant than the other areas. Based on the information from the respondent, intercultural marriage can be found pervasively in Kemojan area.

If we browse internet, we can find many studies on multilingualism in different countries or region, for example, not only Malaysia, Australia, but also European countries and even African countries. For example, Williams (2016) studies South African youth people in hip hop culture. The migrants living in Karimunjawa originally are from Borneo, Celebes, or Madura. They brought their local languages to Karimunjawa that make people in Karimunjawa speak more than one language. They can speak Javanese, Maduranese, Bugis, Bugis, or Bau. If we can see in Karimunjawa that people there can speak more than one language, the question that may be raised is how they interact each other and how they maintain their local languages, and when they marry people from different ethnic groups, what family language policy they have.

One reason for the existence of these forms of multilingualism was that it was simply a necessary precondition for mastering the various tasks in everyday life (e.g the need for trade using languages other than one's own in the fields of trade, jurisdiction, the church or in book-keeping) (Braunmuller and Ferraresi, 2003:3)

Karimunjawa, one of the cantons of Jepara regency, consists of 27 islands resided by different ethnic groups not only Javanese but also Maduranese, Butonese, Wakatobinese, Mandarese, and Buginese. Kemujan as one of the islands has more various ethnic groups than the others. The different ethnic groups bring different languages from their original regions. For example, Bugis ethnic group brings Bugis language, Maduranese has Maduranese language, Bau-bau ethnic group brings Bau-bau language. The migration of Bugis ethnic group of Kemujan migrated from Borneo (Kalimantan) island happened in the 15 century (Kesuma, 2004:136) because of some factors like conflicts. They travelled from their home towns to Karimunjawa to find a better place for living.

In Karimunjawa, we found Javanese people having different languages and cultures. We can imagine how they interacted each other in their first meeting. The Javanese maybe had mutual comprehensibility with Maduranese.

However, what happened when Maduranese spoke to Buginese people. They have different systems of sounds, forms, and meaning. I can imagine the difficulty happening during their first meeting. The difficulty happened in the past. Now, they are living side by side; besides they married people from different ethnic groups. In Karimunjawa, we can see Javanese people marrying Buginese people, Maduranese marrying Buginese people, etc.

However, now they are living in the same island harmoniously. They have spouse from different languages and cultures, of whom they can live and grow their children with. From this phenomenon, we can see that there is a dynamic process happening to their language whether their native language is still maintained or no more exists. Another question is whether there is a dominating language. If yes, which language is dominant, and then, what happens to the other languages. Do they still use their native language? If yes, how they use and when they use their native language are the interesting questions in this research. Are there other languages used in their communities?. If yes, in what occasion and what purpose is the language used?

Discussion about Karimunjawa has been done by many researchers having different perspectives from this study. Rohwulaningsih, et al (2014), Rohwulaningsih (2015) studying social and cultural values in public education in Parang island of Karimunjawa. She investigated how social and cultural values influence the education levels of the society in Karimunjawa, especially Parang island. Another study conducted by Suliyati (2016) studying Karimunjawa from sociological perspective, while this study studies it from socio-linguistic perspective.

The phenomena in Karimunjawa can be studied from different angles. This research studies it from sociolinguistic aspect. Ther theories used are related to multilingualism, language contact, language vitality, family language policy, language attitude, language choice, language shift, language maintenance, language attrition.

Since people of Karimunjawa can not only use Javanese but also other local languages owned by the peole migrating from Celebes or Madura, this research focuses on how multilingual society of Karimunjawa can live side by side with different languages. Language contact happens in the society. When they speak with people from different languages, how they can construct mutual understanding among them. The fishers from different regions with different language migrated to Karimunjawa since the 15th century, meaning that it happened since a long time ago.

2. Methods

Investigating multilingualism in Karimunjawa especially Kemujan island, I used observation and interview. I observed the use of languages in Kemujan island especially Batulawang area where migrant languages are living there side by side with Javanese. The observation was supported by note-taking and recording techniques. Then, interview was used to confirm the multilinguality of the society of Kemujan including Batulawang.

To analyze the data, I used referential and distributional methods. The referential method was used to identify the languages spoken by the people in Kemujan, while distributional method was used to confirm the availability of language contact of different languages.

3. Results

Migrant languages found in Karimunjawa especially Kemujan are dependent very much on the people migrating there. They were brought by the fishermen who wanted to make better living since Karimunjawa has beautiful scenery and full of natural resources especially tourism and fisheries. The languages living in Kemujan are *bahasa Indonesia*, Javanese, Buginese, Maduranese, and Mandarese.

3.1 Bahasa Indonesia

Bahasa Indonesia is the most dominating language. It can be stated that almost all generation in Kemujan can speak *bahasa Indonesia*. It is also used in both formal and informal. In formal situation, it is used at school when teachers are teaching their students not only senior high schools but also kindergarten. This is based on the observation conducted at Safinal Huda Junior and Senior High schools and RA Bustanul Mukminin at Kemujan. In informal situation, for example at home, *bahasa Indonesia* is used by parents speaking to their children. One of the families using *bahasa Indonesia* at home is Muhsin's family. The parents are intercultural. The husband is Mandarese, while the wife is Javanese. They speak *bahasa Indonesia* to their son.

3.2 Javanese and other ethnic languages

Javanese can be considered as a dominating language in Kemujan since it is spoken not only by Javanese but also non-Javanese people. Buginese as the second dominating Language is mostly used by the people living in Batulawang

area. They may marry the people from the same ethnic group that is Buginese but also different ethnic groups like Javanese or Maduranese. There is a person called himself as “Jambu” from Javanese, Maduranese, and Buginese. He has four languages namely *bahasa Indonesia*, Javanese, Buginese, and Maduranese. Maduranese as the third dominating language is spoken by people originating from Madura. Only a few people speak Mandarese namely the village chief secretary (*Carik*) and Muhsin, the head master of Senior High School Safinatul Huda. Since Javanese is a dominating language, it is used in an event attended by all the people of Kemujan, even though they are not only Javanese people. It happened when there was Isro’ Mi’roj ceremony in the biggest mosque in Kemujan. In the event, *bahasa Indonesia* was used by the village chief representative in delivering speech. The rest was conducted in Javanese. When interviewed, the person from Mandar said that even though he can not speak Javanese fluently, he can understand it.

4. Discussion

In multilingual society, there are some phenomena that can be seen. First, in multilingual society languages have different roles and vitalities depending on some factors among other things the number and attitudes of the society. The languages used in Kemujan are *bahasa Indonesia*, Javanese, Buginese, Maduranese, and Mandarese,.

Bahasa Indonesia, as mentioned above, is the most dominant language. If we look at UNESCO questionnaire, we can confirm that *bahasa Indonesia* is getting stronger in Kemujan, Karimunjawa. It has a strong function since it is not only used in education but also in communication among friends and even among family members since it is learnt as the first language. Parents teach their children *bahasa Indonesia*. In order to teach it, they use it at home as daily conversation exposed to their children.

In multilingual society, there is a language which is dominating and less dominating. The domination may result from some factors, for example, government language policy, family language policy, human attitudes toward language, and socio-psychological aspects of the language use. In Kemujan, *bahasa Indonesia* is a dominating language since it is used in almost all settings of place or situation. For example, it is not only used at school but also at home or play grounds.

In terms of attitudes, people in Kemujan have different attitudes toward *bahasa Indonesia*, Javanese, and their ethnic languages. For *bahasa Indonesia*, they believe that they must master it since *bahasa Indonesia* is needed for communication in different background and purposes. They can use it with people from different regions with different purposes. For Javanese, especially for non Javanese, for example Buginese, they try hard to learn Javanese. In Kemujan, there are many people speaking Javanese eventhough they are not Javanese, for example, Sakim, Maduranese, Tajukding, Jambu (Javanese, Maduranese, Buginese), chief's secretary (*Carik*) Kemujan.

5. Conclusions

Multilingualism implies language contact, dominating and non-dominating languages depending on the number and attitudes of the speakers. Eventhough there are many communities belonging to the same ethnic group, if they do not want to speak of the language characterizing the communities, they do not support the vitality of the language. *Bahasa Indonesia* as the national language is getting stronger and stronger. It is now learned as the first language. Javanese is relatively still strong since not only Javanese but also non Javanese people can communicate in Javanese language. Buginese is after Javanese then followed by Manudarinese and Mandarese.

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