

Phonological Changes of Place Names in Java

I Dewa Putu Wijana

Faculty of Cultural Sciences Gadjah Mada University
Yogyakarta, Indonesia
idp_wijana@yahoo.com

Abstract— This paper is intended to describe various types of phonological changes which constitute one of important causes for the Javanese speakers failing to identify the meaning of several place names which exist in their surroundings despite the rare use of Old Javanese, Sanskrit, and other foreign borrowings. The phonological changes include sound deletion, sound substitution, sandhi, and sound addition. The interpretation failures are actually an overt indication of the decline use of Javanese among its younger speakers because this local language cannot compete with Indonesian, the national language, and other much more powerful foreign languages. Accordingly the Javanese teaching for the younger generation should be whipped up in order to maintain its existence, and avoid this language from extinction.

Keywords— *sound change; place nam;, borrowing, language extinction*

I. INTRODUCTION

Javanese up to now certainly remains the biggest local languages spoken in Indonesia. Nearly half of the Indonesians constitute the native speakers of this language. However, the government language policy do not adopt Javanese to be the national and official language of Republic of Indonesia. The Indonesian elites prefer to chose Indonesian, one of Malay dialects to be symbol of struggle and solidarity of the nations against foreign colonialism. The wide use of Malay and the complicated Javanese speech levels are two of among many other reasons that underlie such a choice. This condition will discreetly influence the quality and quantity of the use of Javanese among its native speakers, including the Javanese younger native speakers who will inherit and continue the use of Javanese from their predecessors. A lot of young aged Javanese speakers nowadays are indicated to be not fully mastering their native tongue, and replace it with Indonesian (the national language) and other more promising foreign languages, such as English, French, Germany, Javanese, Korean, etc. Even more apprehensively, many Javanese younger generation, especially those who are living in urban areas do not use Javanese, although they still comprehend the use of it passively for listening and might be very restricted reading. They consider that knowing Javanese does not assure their career prospect of their future life. The declining use of Javanese can be seen from various phenomena. One of them is the misinterpretations that are often done by the Javanese people in analyzing and interpreting the meaning of place names existing in Central Java and East Java. The following lines are merely descriptions of such phenomena.

One of my former postgraduate students in Gadjah Mada University through a short message service (SMS) told me that she would investigate the place names in Gunung Kidul, the recent post of his husband because she felt very attracted with some of the place names interpreted by the villagers. For example, “*sureng*” [sureng] is interpreted as an acronym of [asu irɔŋ] ‘back dog’, which consists of “*asu*” ‘dog’ and “*irɔŋ*” ‘black’. This interpretation is surely misleading in two respects. Firstly, the village’s name is wrongly pronounced because it must be [sureng], instead of [surɔŋ]. Secondly, that name must be analyzed to become “*sura*” [sura] ‘brave’ plus preposition “*ing*” ‘against’. By external sandhi process, the combination of [a] and [i] will result [ɛ]. This phenomenon indicates that the Javanese villagers cannot recognize the relic old Javanese “*sura*” ‘brave’ and syntactic combination widely known as “*tembung garba*” (Daryanto, 1999, 110-111). These, in turn, cause them to fail to comprehend their village’s name. They also never consider that their village’s complete (full) name is *Sureng Juritan*, in which the final part consist of “*jurit*” ‘troop’ and {-an}, a Javanese suffix which means ‘place of’. So, the complete phrase of the village’s name semantically refers to ‘the living place of brave troops’. The second example of similar phenomena is shown by the name “*Kasembon*” [kasɛmbɔn] which is misleadingly interpreted in the local government website as the acronym of “*kasengsem ing babon*” [kasɛŋsɛm ɪŋ babɔn], which means ‘deeply mad of a woman’. This interpretation is certainly wrong. Because a lot of place names refer to names of vegetation, “*kasembon*” [kasɛmbɔn] is much more logical to be interpreted as ‘a place where plant of *sembu* [sɛmbu] grows’. The word “*kasembon*” is morphologically derived from {ka/-an} plus “*sembu*” a sort of plant that produces bad smell’. Through phonological process (sandhi), the coalescence of the base’s final vowel [u] and [a], part of confix, will yield [ɔ]. The third example is taken from a speech given by a mullah/proselytizer in *Halal Bihalal* (asking for and giving forgiveness) occasion held in Purwotani Baru house complex. The mullah failed to analyze the place name “*Wijilan*” in trying to seek the philosophical meaning of place names around the Yogyakarta Palace. He said that this word was formed from “*wiji*” ‘seed’ and “*lan*”. He did not realize that the base of this place name was derived from old Javanese “*wiji*” [wijɪ], which means ‘come out’ and {-an} to simultaneously refer to ‘palace entrance’. All of these three metalinguistic failures reflect the decreasing proficiency of the recent Javanese speakers toward their native tongue. They neither just fail to comprehend the old

Javanese words nor to identify the morphological process together with the phonological changes occurring therein. Accordingly, this paper intends to describe various types of phonological changes which possibly happen in relation to place names found in middle and East Java. The result will expectedly be able to lessen the failure of the Javanese speakers belonging to younger generation in comprehending place names that exist in their surrounding. This research also constitutes an effort to bring them closer to their native culture in order to increase their language comprehension regarding the place names which so far they fail to understand. No matter how little the contribution this research might bring, it will give support for the government in preserving the use of Javanese amidst the negative impact of the use of Indonesian and more superior foreign languages in the global era.

Sound changes in Javanese have been discussed in many references, but none of them relate the linguistic phenomena with place names. The discussions are mostly in connection with morphological processes of Javanese words, such as those found in Javanese grammar books (Subroto, Soewito, Sudaryanto, Arifin & Sukardi, 1992, 35-39). Even though Prihadi's dissertation (2015) extensively discusses sound changes of place names found in Yogyakarta Special Region (*Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta*), most of its descriptions concern with sound changes caused by morphophonemic processes, while those which are related to the changes as the effects of speech situations, such as, "*sambego*", which becomes *Mbego*, "*kadirjo*", which changes into "*dirjo*", "*segorjaya*", which becomes "*gdrjaya*", etc. are left unnoticed. Meanwhile, Adrisijanti's research (1997) reveals several names found in the relique of Islamic kingdoms in Yogyakarta and Surakarta. Because of her archaeological approach, the phonological changes which occur on those place names do not become her focus of attention, eventhough she describes the meaning or the referents of those places. The other researches' investigations are related to the place names in West Java (Kadir) and North Sumatera (Perdana) without the linguistic aspects, especially the phonological issues of the names being taken into consideration.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

As far as the sound changes are concerned, there are two tendencious premises that should be taken into account. These premises are: 1) the sound system of a language tend to be symetric. The language which has 4 kinds of stops: bilabial [p,b], apicoalveolar [t,d], laminopalatal [c, j], and dorsovelar stops [kg] will tend to have 4 kinds of nasal sound [m], [n], [ɲ], and ŋ, as seen in Indonesian, Balinese, Madurese, etc. on the other hand, Language which only has three kinds of stop: bilabial [p,b], apicoalveolar [t,d], and dorsovelar [k,g] will tend to have three kinds of nasal [m] [n], and [ŋ]. 2) the sound tends to be influenced by its environment (Samsuri, 1980, 131; Wijana, 2016, 9-11). For example clusters *mb*, *nd*, *mp*, *nt*, etc. will tend to be more easily found than those of *nk*, *tg*, *gm*, etc. Meanwhile, there is also another principle that is called "principle of ease of articulation". This principle states that the speakers of all languages tend to produce (articulate) their utterances as easy as possible (Wahab, 1991, 28-29). By this principle, the languages of the world are full of phonological processes, such as assimilation ["*sabtu*" > "*saptu*" 'Saturday' (Javanese); "*tak bulat*" > "*tambulat*" 'not round' (Indonesian)], contraction ["*mengko dhisik*" > "*kosik*" 'just a moment' (Javanese); "*tidak ada*" > "*tiada*" 'do not exist' (Indonesian), etc.], clipping ["*laboratorium*" > "*lab*"; university > *uni* (English), etc.]; deletion ["*bahasa*" > "*basa*" 'language' (Indonesian); "*di rumah*" > "*jumah*" 'in the house' (Balinese); cafeteria > cafe (English), etc.]; addition ["*class*" > "*kelas*" 'class' (Indonesian); "*trap*" > "*terap*" 'apply' (Javanese), etc.], sandhi ["*ke laut*" > "*kelod*" 'to the sea' (Balinese); "*daun*" > "*dɔn*" 'leaf' (Balinese), etc.]. These sound premises and principle are in line with the sound changes occurring in many place names in Central and East Java. Accordingly, the inability of some Javanese speakers, especially those who belong to the younger generation, to recognize several name places they live nearby is an overt indicator that they are no more fully pledged in their native tongue, and constitutes one of convincing hints for the decline of Javanese use in the future. As such, this paper is proposed to bring back the Javanese speakers close to their mother language, and the decease of Javanese use can be avoided.

III. METHOD

All data used in this research paper constitute places names of villages found mainly in Yogyakarta Special Region Province, and only a few of them are taken from outside of this province. The place names which are transcribed phonetically are further classified according to the phonological changes consisted within whether they belong to deletion, addition, substitution, or sandhi. The meanings of Javanese, old Javanese and Sankrit words which nowadays are rarely used, will be confirmed with important sources, namely, Javanese dictionary (Poerwadarminta (1939), Old Javanese Dictionary Zoetmulder (1982), and Gonda's text book "*Sanskrit in Indonesia*" (Gonda, 1973). To strengthen the argumentation, a comparison with the place name change phenomena occurring outside East and Central Java is considered necessary to carry out.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

With regard to various sorts of phonological changes happening in places names in East and Central Java, in order to follow the sound premises and phonological principle, these linguistic processes can simply classified into 4 types. Those types are deletion, substitution, sandhi, and addition. The following sections will consecutively discuss these processes in relation with place name changes occurring untill recently in many states, districts and regions in Java.

A. Deletion

Up to now, no one can exactly define how many types of style one language possesses based on its degree of formality. Joss (1962, 13) for example, states that there are at least five kinds of style, namely frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate. For the sake of ease of the description, the language style will be differentiated into two types, namely formal and informal style. With this classification, the name of places, can also be distinguished into two types, formal and informal name. Formal names are commonly longer than the informal ones which are yielded from deletion processes. Most of the deletion processes constitute one or more syllabic omission, initial (1;2;3;4) , middle (5;6;7) as well as final (8;9;10).

- (1) Sambego > Mbego ‘place for meditation’
- (2) Sambirɔɔ > Mbirɔɔ ‘name of medicinal plant’
- (3) Sambisari > Mbisari ‘flower of “kesambi” plant’
- (4) Kadirɔɔ > Dirɔɔ ‘like a king’
- (5) Brɔmɔnilan > Brɔnilan “name of plant”
- (6) Purwɔ(a)martani > Purwɔmartani ‘the beginning of life’
- (7) Minɔ(a)martani > Minɔmartani ‘the fish of life’
- (8) Minɔmartani > Minɔ ‘fish’
- (9) Purwɔmartani > Purwɔ ‘the beginning of life’
- (10) Tamanmartani > Taman ‘The Garden of life’

In very rare cases, the syllabic omission may involve initial and middle syllable simultaneously, such as shown by (11) below:

- (11) Sôgoroyoso > Gôroso ‘peaceful sea’

If the syllable being omitted is a representation of a bound morpheme, a semantic change will occur. Nevertheless, the semantic distinction is synchronically no longer recognized by the speakers. For example, the deletion of middle syllable of {-a} which is actually a bound morpheme that means 'not' in many villages end with martani 'dead' in Kalasan district, is no longer realized by the Javanese natives even though the previous forms express contradictive meanings 'life'. Consider (12) to (14) below which respectively mean 'the beginning of life'; 'the fishes of life'; and 'the water of life'. This word is derived from amartya 'life' (Zoetmulder, 1982, 28):

- (12) Purwo(a)martani > Purwomartani ‘the beginning of life’
 (13) Minɔ(a)martani > Minomartani ‘fish of life’
 (14) Tirtɔ(a)martani > Tirtomartani ‘water of life’

The deletion process may also be caused by a morphophonemic process. Japanese words ending with [ɔ] usually change their final sound into [a] before being attached with other suffixes starting with vowels. With regards to place names, the suffix most frequently involved is {-an} which grammatically expresses 'a place'. If the base words ending with [ɔ] are directly attached with {-an} the double or long [â] will turn into single or short [a], as shown by (15), (16), and (17) below:

- (15) Danuređja > Danuređja + -an > Danurejan ‘place of a nobleman names Danurejč’
 (16) Singčsuto > Singčsuta + -an > Singčsutan ‘place of an official names Singčsuto’
 (17) Tambakbčyo > Tambakbaya + -an > Tambakbayan ‘place of people who keep peace’

So, the rule can be formulated as follows, in which # indicates the linguistic element preceding the base:

$$\# \circ > \# a + -an > \# an$$

It seems important to note that the vowels being harmonized are restricted to the ones belonging to part of the word to which the suffix –an is attached. See (18), (19) and (20) below:

- (18) Rəṭəwɨjɔɔ + -an > rəṭəwɨjayan ‘victorious carriage’
 (19) Pəṭəwɨjɔ + -an > pəṭəwɨjan ‘place for the second crop’
 (20) Nəṭəprɔjɔ > Nəṭəpraɨjan ‘place for government officials’

The vowel [ɔ] of the first word in (18), (19), and (20) never changes into [a] because (21), (22), and (23) are never used in formal modern Javanese:

- (21) *Ratawijayan

- (22) *Palawijan
(23) *Nataprajan

The place name elements being deleted can relatively be long. The short name “Yogya” and “Solo” resulted from “*Ngayꦗꦚꦏꦂꦠꦺꦤꦒꦶꦤꦶꦁꦂꦠ*” and “*Surꦕꦏꦂꦠꦺꦤꦒꦶꦤꦶꦁꦂꦠ*”. Firstly, “*Hadiningrat*” is omitted, followed by “*Nga-*”, and “*kartꦠ*”. Finally, sound change occurs, “*Yogya*” becomes “*Jogja*” and “*Surꦕ*” becomes “*Solo*”. The phonological changes from [y] into [j] (semivowel into stop) and [u] into [o] [vowel harmony] and [r] into [l] [trill into lateral] are not very difficult to explain. All of these will be explained in the following section “sound substitution”. For ease of articulation, to syllabic formulation “*kōra*” often changes into cluster “*kra*”, such as “*kōradenan*” into “*kradenan*” ‘place for nobleman’ and “*kōrakitan*” into “*krakitan*” ‘place to assemble’.

B. Sound Substitution

The sound substitution of place names is found to be involving several places in Central and East Java, such as shown by (24), (25) and (26):

- (24) Suro > Solo > Solo ‘bravery’
 (25) Yōgya > Jōgja
 (26) Surōdiran > Sōrōdiran > Solodiran ‘place of bravery’

In (24) there is a sound substitution of [r] trill which is more difficult to pronounce into lateral [l]. In language acquisition theory, [r] is acquired later than [l] in all languages possessing both sounds. Meanwhile, stops are sounds that are acquired before fricatives, nasals, and semivowels. Accordingly, in formal situation “*Yogya(karta)*” is pronounced “*jɔgja(karta)*”. In (25) Solodiran is a small village located in Manisrenggo district, Klaten, Central Java. The name of this place means ‘place of bravery’ and “*Surɔdirɔ*” itself constitutes a Javanese slogan commonly used for driving out black magic power. Sound substitution also occurs in village place names in Singaraja (Bali). In formal situation, the place name is [Baɲuning], that means ‘clean water’, from [baɲu] ‘water’ and [nɪŋ] ‘clean’. However, in daily use, people pronounce it [Bɔjunɪŋ], in which phonologically tense [a] is replaced by lax schwa [ɔ] and laminalpalatal nasal [ɲ] by its stop [j]. Because Javanese phonological system does not allow voiced stops to occur in the final position, the voiced stop of every borrowing will undergo devoicing, such as in (27), in which the voiced glottal stop [g] changes into voiceless glottal stop:

- (27) $KE(rk) WE_g > KEwEk$ ‘road to the church’

C. Sandhi

Sandhi is a phonological process in which the combination of two vowels resulting other vowel whose articulation is in between the articulation of vowels being combined (Kridalaksana, 1992, 190; Wijana & Rohmadi, 2006, 94). For example, the combination of [u] and [a] will result [ɔ]; [o] and [a] will result [ɔ]; [i] and [a] will result [ɛ]; and [e] and [a] will result [ɛ]. Consider (28) to (37) below:

- (28) Temu + -an > Temɔn ‘place for medicinal plant’
- (29) Sindu + -an > Sindɔn ‘river place’
- (30) Jambu + -an > Jambɔn ‘place of jambo tree’
- (31) ka-/ -an > Sɔmbu > Kasɔmbɔn ‘growing place for ‘sɔmbu’ plant’
- (32) Mantri + Jɔro + -an > Mantrijɔrɔn ‘place for internal low ranking government employee’
- (33) (Ng-) + ijo + -an > Ngijɔn ‘green place’
- (34) Wirɔkɔrti + -an > Wirɔkɔrtɛn ‘place for the brave’
- (35) Mundusari + -an > Mundusarɛn ‘the plover of mundu (name of plant)’
- (36) Surɔkɔrti + -an > Surakɔrtɛn ‘place for the brave’
- (37) bɔngle + -an > bɔnglɛn ‘growing place for ‘bɔngle’ plant’.

In examples (28), (29), (30) and (31), the combination of [u] and [a] yields [ɔ]. Meanwhile, the reversed combination [a] and [u] is impossible to find because no Javanese suffix expressing place starts with [u]. In (32) and (33) the combination of [o] and [a] yields [ɔ], and because of the same reason the reversed combination [a] and [o] is not found. Finally, in (34), (35), and (36) the combination of [i] and [a] results [ɛ], as well as the combination of (e) and [a], as shown by (37). Only one example shows the combination of [a] and [I], i.e. SurEng (juritān) as result of “external sandhi” between word ending with [a] *sura* ‘brave’ and one (preposition) beginning with [I] *Ing* ‘against’. In short, the rule of sandhi in Javanese can be described as follow:

$$1. \begin{array}{c} \#i \\ \diagdown \quad \diagup \\ + [a] > [e] \\ \diagup \quad \diagdown \\ \#e \end{array}$$

$$2. \#a + [i] > [e]$$

$$3. \begin{array}{c} \#u \\ \diagdown \quad \diagup \\ + [a] > [o] \\ \diagup \quad \diagdown \\ \#o \end{array}$$

Because Javanese phonological system has no diphthong, all diphthongs existing in the borrowings are changed into monophthong in which the changes also follow the rule of sandhi. Consider (37) and (38):

(38) Kuli trein > klitrEn ‘train labour’

(39) Malbowrow > Maliyoboro ‘name of the biggest street in Yogyakarta’

In (38) the diphthong [ei] is simplified to become monophthong [e], and [ɔU] in (39) Malborow (spelled as Malioborough) to become [ɔ]. Meanwhile the change kuli to become kli belongs to vowel deletion. So, the noncluster syllables kuli become monosyllabic cluster kli because cluster kl is frequently found in Javanese words, such as klungsu ‘tamarind seed’, kloso ‘mat’, klambi ‘shirt’, klakap ‘shut up’, etc.

D. Addition

Addition process can be found when a vowel with high tongue position combine with other vowel of lower position as long as the following vowel is not [a] as part of {-an}. For example, the combination of [i] and [ɔ] which will result [y] in [40] and [41] below.

(40) Si(h) + ɔnoharjo > Siyɔnoharjo ‘gracious prosperity’

(41) Wi(h)ara > Wiyoro ‘Buddhist temple’

Addition process can also be found when foreign names want to be naturalized, such as what is found in the following (42):

(42) Lɔj + [i] (KecIl) > Lɔji KecIl

“Lɔji” in “Lɔji KɔcIl” which means ‘small Lodge’ is derived from English word “lodge” ‘a small house at the main entrance for the person whose job is to watch who enters and leaves the building’ (Hornby, 2010, 874). Because the canonical Javanese syllabic pattern in which most words contain two syllables, this foreign word undergoes additional process to become “Lɔji” without any semantic change. “Mal” as the part of “Marlborough”, name of a nobleman who had been living a long the recent biggest and the most crowded street in Yogyakarta around 1811-1616, during the British invasion, is lengthened into “Malio(boro)”. See (43):

(43) Mal(bɔUrɔU) > Maliyoboro.

V. CONCLUSION

Everything which has been described above clearly shows that the complicated Javanese sound changes of place names which include deletion, substitution, sandhi, and addition are part of many factors that cause the Javanese younger generations to fail to identify the meaning of several place names found in their surrounding. The other factor is the Old Javanese, Sanskrit, and Dutch that are rarely or more precisely no more used in daily speech. All of these happen because the Javanese language cannot compete with Indonesian, the national language and other more powerful foreign languages, such as English, French, Japan, Korean, etc. in

the global era. The Javanese speakers who belong to younger generation are more interested in studying the more global foreign languages than their own native language. This phenomenon is essentially an overt indication of the beginning of Javanese decline which will be shortly followed by the decline of Javanese culture. Accordingly, every Javanese community member should take strategic steps to prevent the language from extinction. One of those steps is Javanese teaching to every speaker starting from early age. By doing this, the Javanese younger speakers will learn, understand, and appreciate the heirloom and glory of the Javanese culture passed down by their ancestor.

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