

# Diction and Social Status in the Sasak Language

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**Abstract**— Having purpose to explain about varied diction in Sasak language that emerge towards different social status in Sasak community, by using purposive sampling technique, several people who have diverge social status in community and applied sasak language were concerned as the sample. This study was gathered through ethnography observation and interview, and it was analyzed by using ethnography communication and analysis interaction. The research finding showed that there were various diction used in Sasak language divided into two level of communication such as *alus* ('smooth, refined'), it was the high level of communication, and the last level was called by *Biase/ jamaq*, this level was implemented while talking with friend or someone who have low or ordinary speech level. These dictions above were applied towards different social status.

**Keywords**— *diction; social status; Sasak*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language is emerged from word, hence it can be defined that language is part of word (Thornbury, 2002, p. 01). So language mention in this article is directed to the word. For further detail, the word meant in this study will be lead into word choice or diction. Further, Ishihara & Cohen (2010, p. 42) said that language adjust with number of extra-linguistic contextual feature; one of examples is social status. Automatically, the word or diction chosen will reflect one's social status as well. Therefore, although the way you speak is possessed by your friends, interest, yet the vocabulary or word you chose always represent your status in society (Hanson cited from Avis-Riordan, 2017). Aware or unaware, while ones speak or talk, automatically, they will distinguish their own status among others and vise verse by choosing appropriate vocabulary that enable to represent their status. For example, one uses informal language such as slang word to connect oneself with definite group in order to mention that one is part of it. Or in other word, to respect ones' higher social status, people whose lower social status will choose formal word while talking to them instead of informal language.

Indonesia is endowed by a lot of culture difference as well as various tribes. It ranges from Sabang up to Marauke. The diversity is called by "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika". It is transferred in English as "Unity in Diversity". Referring the various diversities above, one of the local tribe populates in Lombok island namely sasaknese are interesting to be discussed. This tribe is very tolerant with diction usage, particularly with whom they speak, For instance, they will not say '*kamu*' (meaning 'you') if they speak with older people or someone whose have different social status because it is impolite, instead they will use word '*side*' (meaning 'you'). In order hand, while ones speak with someone who have completed the hajj – the pilgrimage to Mecca, ones cannot say '*aok*' (meaning 'yes'), but saying '*nggih*' (meaning 'yes'). Although the situation or place needs to use Bahasa (Indonesian Language) at that moment, yet the diction such as '*side*' (meaning 'you'), '*nggih*' (meaning 'yes'), etc. always be inserted in speech act. Relying these situations above, researcher intends to explain about varied diction in Sasak language that emerges towards different social status in Sasak community.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Diction (Words Choice)

According to Keraf (2006, p. 24) diction can be elaborated into three detail explanation, firstly, diction is meant as words in which it is used to express idea, how to use it, and what style that is appropriate with it. The second, diction concerns with the ability to differentiate properly the forms of word to be used in order to engage with certain society. It means that diction does not only concern with how to use vocabulary choice with proper grammatical rule, but also it deals with the norms in which it appears in society. Thus, words should be used based on the situation and condition faced at that time. The last, diction can be used properly if it deals with the acquisition of a huge number of vocabulary.

### B. Social Class and Caste

Class social contains a group of society which has certain similarity in social context such as economic, occupation, education, caste, and so forth. Even though, caste is argued as the social class, but there are one things that differentiate caste with others social class. According to Zuhdi (2012, p. xiv), social stratification is divided into three, these are close social stratification, open social stratification, and mixed social stratification. Firstly, close stratification is stratification in which each member of society

cannot move from one status to others such as caste; meanwhile open social stratification is stratification in which each member enables to move from one social status to others such as educational level, wealth, position, power, and so forth. Parsons (in Zuhdi, 2012, p. xv) mention five criteria that can be base for differentiating either low or high person's social status as follows; (1) Birth such as gender, nobility, etc. (2) Personal quality involved inelegancy, wisdom, power, skill, etc. (3) Achievement such as career in education level, position, etc. (4) Wealth concerns with person's achievement in collecting property. (5) Dominance deals with the ability to influence another person. And the last, mixed social stratification involved both of open and close social stratification above.

Furthermore, in relation to caste in Sasak social class, according to Mayerhohoff (2006, p. 123), Sasak has several traditional class system: the first and highest class are the *menak*, the second and smallest class is called the *prewangse*, the third class is mentioned as *jajarkarang*, and the lowest class is known as *sepangan* (it is the traditionally servants of the *menak*). And based on the social class above, generally, Sasaknes acquire three communication levels in Sasak language. The first level is called by *biase/jamaq*, this level is used while talking with friend or someone who have low or ordinary speech level. Secondly is mentioned as *madie*, it is used in the middle level of speech. And the last one is *alus* ('smooth, refined'), this is the high level of communication.

### III. METHOD

This study used quantitative approach with ethnography design. Purposive sampling technique was considered to gain the sample. Hence, several people who have divergent social status in community and people who applied Sasak language were concerned as the sample of this study. This study is focused in Mataram where the researcher lives and the participants are limited towards someone that is nearer the researcher. Besides, the researcher also takes role as an active participant in the interaction, so the data is also derived from researcher's experience when hearing and using diction in Sasak language. Craswell (2012) mentions this method as participant observer. Furthermore, to obtain the data collection, ethnography observation, recording, and interview is applied. And by using ethnography communication and analysis interaction, the data was analyzed.

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After conducting observation, it has been found that there are several dictions (words choice) mostly used by person in Sasak to show their identity as certain social status. Moreover, this study also will discuss about why the choice of words usage (diction) change.

Based on the data recording, two dialogue models that frequently appear in Sasak daily interaction are mentioned to compare diction usage among high and low social status in Sasak Society.

#### **Dialogue 1: interaction between someone who have honorific title that is Hajj and Samsat employee.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>HU:</b> <i>Mbe tao-d?</i><br>[where you?]  | "Where are you?"  |
| <b>SE:</b> <i>niki maseh leq Pemenang.</i><br>[this in Pemenang]  | "this is in Pemenang"   |
| <b>HU:</b> <i>o.....h, anu salam pak ustaz onkat-n, ndek arak pengajian lemak ngkah lebaran topat uin bada tiang leq Jum'at niki.</i><br>[oh-IJ anu-IJ teacher say greeting, there is no meeting tomorrow after <i>ketupat</i> celebration, he said to me in this Friday] | "oh, teacher greets you and he said there is no meeting after <i>ketupat</i> celebration tomorrow, he gave me this information in Friday" |
| <b>SE:</b> <i>berarti ndek narak lemak leq niki.</i><br>[so, there no tomorrow in this]   | "so, there is no meeting, is it?"   |
| <b>HU:</b> <i>nggih ndek arak lemak</i><br>[yes no tomorrow]  | "yes, there is no meeting"  |
| <b>SE:</b> <i>o..... [IJ]</i>   |   |
| <b>HU:</b> <i>lemak ngkah lebaran topat, salam leq batur-batur niki.</i><br>[tomorrow after <i>Ketupat</i> celebration, greet to your friend this]  | "after <i>Ketupat</i> celebration, greet to your friend"  |
| <b>SE:</b> <i>makasi wan.</i><br>[thank you, wan]   | "Thank you"   |
| <b>HU:</b> <i>nggeh sama-sama</i><br>[yes you are welcome]  |   |
| <b>SE:</b> <i>nggeh-nggeh silaq.</i><br>[yes, let's]  | "Yes, you are welcome"  |
|   | "yes please"  |
- \*HU = Hajj U (A Muslim who has gone to Macca and completed hajj )  
 \*SE = Samsat employee  
 \*IJ = Interjection

### Dialogue 2: interaction among general friendship.

**KY:** *di, e...inget-m pire DR Rus tie, nde-m tao?*

[Di, e-IJ remember-you how many license plate Rus that, do not know?]

**ZD:** *aneh, lupa-k*

[aneh-IJ, I-forgot]

**KY:** *aok...suru-n tecekan uni-n*

[yes, ask-he check said-he]

**ZD:** *o...wah-n kene menu?*

[o-IJ have-he said that]

**KY:** *aok..coba anuan. Mbe tao-m ni, di?*

[Yes, try do. Where you?]

**ZD:** *leq Ranjok*

[in Ranjok]

“Di, do you remember Rus’ license plate, don’t you?”

“ I forgot it”

“yes, he ask to check it”

“oh,,Did he said it?”

“Yes, try to check it. Where are you?”

“In Ranjok”

### \*KY & ZD = Person’s name

From the first dialogue above, the most commonly used words choice (diction) in Sasak society to show weather someone has low or high social status are *niki* (this), *nike* (that), *nggeh* (yes), *tiang* (I) and *silaq* (please). They are called by refined Sasak (*Base alus*). These words indicated speaker or/and interlocutor has high social status in community. However, in the first dialogue above, the speaker involves in low social status, and to respect interlocutor high social status as hajj, he uses refined Sasak (*Base alus*). Additionally, there are other diction that ordinarily heard and used by researcher as part of Sasak community such as *plinggih*, *plungguh* (you), *lumbar* (go), *sampun* (finish), and *napi* (what) in which these additional words choice above cannot be covered into recording has be done previously. Meanwhile, when speaker and interlocutor have the same social status as an example in second dialogue, the words choice such as *niki* (this), *nike* (that), *nggeh* (yes), and *silaq* (please) replace into *ni* (this), *tie* (that), *aok* (yes), and for the word *silaq* (please) sometime is erased or changed into *nteh* (please).

More than these words choice found above, actually there are a lot of diction in refined Sasak (*Base alus*) that can be used (see Wilian, 2006, p. 39) by Sasak person to show their identity as high social status, yet they are just limited to the use of personal pronoun as mentioning above. There is another form that still is uttered such as *lumbar* (go) categorized into verb, but it is almost infrequently used anymore. This situation commonly appears especially in Mataram where the researcher lives. According to Hidayat (2009, p. 256) the limitation of refined Sasak (*Base alus*) usage is caused by internal conflict happen among people in Sasak community. Further, the use of Bahasa by parents in Sasak family also triggers the diction usage in refined Sasak (*Base alus*) becoming finite; whereas the children as the next generation that should continue the use of refined Sasak (*Base alus*) are no longer accustomed to use it. Hence, most diction in refined Sasak (*Base alus*) is not used anymore.

Besides that, the diction usage of refined Sasak (*Base alus*) among menak family becomes limited. It is proven by the result of the observation in which researcher is rarely to find Menak family that speaks by choosing refined Sasak (*Base alus*) words. In other hand, the result of interview conducted towards Menak family which has title ‘*Datuk*’ also prove that she speaks in their family or another person by using common Sasak (*Sasak Jamaq*) mixed with *Bahasa*. Then, to make sure this interview result, researcher does the interview with menak family that has title ‘*Lalu*’, and the result obtained is similar with the previous interviewee. Moreover, the researcher’s observation result as well is supported by another researcher that conducted study about polite language maintenance among members of Sasak noble families in Mataram. In her study, she said that only few noble families who actually speak by using polite language, most of them in Mataram communicate with their family member in everyday interaction by switching polite language (*Base alus*) into common language (*Sasak Jamaq*) or/and *Bahasa* (Wahyuningsih, Mahyuni, & Nuriadi, 2016, p. 47). Therefore, researcher makes conclusion that the words choice that is mostly used among menak family is no longer utilized anymore in daily conversation, but it is not impossible that there are some family that cannot be covered into this study still utilize it. Later on, the diction of refined Sasak commonly utters into Muslim who has completed hajj after doing pilgrimage to Mecca. Mayerhohoff (2006, p. 123) argues that Muslim who went to Mecca and has title ‘hajj’ is categorized into *menak*. Eventhough someone does not come from highest class, the diction in refined Sasak will be uttered to him/her if he/she has completed hajj. The diction usage is not common language of Sasak anymore, and the interlocutor that interacts with him/her as well as treats him/her by diction in refined Sasak such as *niki* (this), *nike* (that), *nggeh* (yes), *silaq* (please), and additionally *plinggih*, *plungguh* (you), *lumbar* (go), *sampun* (finish), and *napi* (what). This is occurred because Sasak society is very respectful to someone who done pilgrimage to Mecca.

Meanwhile, for non menak family to show their respect to their parents or older person will utter clitic-d (you) such as *wah-d ngelor?* (Have you eaten?). The clitic-d (you) refers to Sasak pronoun *side* (you) and it is the polite form of clitic-k [*kamu*] (you). And from that example also, it is showed the word choice ‘*ngelor*’ (eat) that indicat common language in Sasak, but it has higher level of politeness than the word ‘*mangan*’ (eat) in which it is frequently uttered among friends. In Mataram, when you utter the word ‘*kamu*’ (you) to someone who is older than you, so you will be judged as disrespectful person in community. Moreover if

the word '*kamu*' (you) is shown to your own parents, you will be deemed to be a rebellious child. There is expression commonly uttered by society while seeing a child says '*kamu*' in interaction with parents that is "wah *banin kamu-kamuan dengan toan, lemaq ngonek-ngonek banin panjak dengan toan*", it meant that when a child is brave to talk by replacing '*side*' into '*kamu*' to his/her parents in conversation, later he/she is brave to do bad thing towards his/her parents. Whereas when one does not choose the word '*ngelor*' in interaction with older person, it is not automatically, he/she is judged as disrespectful person as in uttering the word '*kamu*', but he/she will be considered as impolite person.

Further, if the level of social distance is high towards someone eventhough he/she is not *menak* family, the diction usage in refined Sasak (*Base alus*) as naming above are generally applied. Brown & Levinson (cited from McKay & Horberger, 2009, p. 309) proposes that one has desire to be unintruded upon someone. Hence, the use of words choice such as *niki* (this), *nike* (that), *nggeh* (yes), *silaq* (please), and additionally *plinggih*, *plungguh* (you), *lumbar* (go), *sampun* (finish), and *napi* (what) have purpose to avoid someone's negative-face (see Schiffirin in McKay & Horberger, 2009, p. 310) because the social distance occupied by someone enable to cause misunderstanding so that a strategy is needed to prevent it and one that can be utilized is by adding diction named above in the conversation.

## V. CONCLUSION

The diction or words choice that utilized by Sasak people are divided into two, these are refined Sasak (*Base alus*) and common Sasak (*Sasak jamaq*). The diction in common Sasak language can be found easier in everyday communication among someone who has similar social status, meanwhile the diction in refined Sasak is difficult to find right now. It is limited only in personal pronoun such as *niki* (this), *nike* (that), *nggeh* (yes), *silaq* (please), and *plinggih*, *plungguh* (you).

Secondly, the words choice like *niki* (this), *nike* (that), *nggeh* (yes), *silaq* (please), and *plinggih*, *plungguh* (you) are more often to utilize into hajj, someone who has social distance, and few *menak* families that still maintains their refined Sasak. Meanwhile, the diction in Sasak common language such as *aok* (yes), *ape* (what), and so forth enable to utter among close friend, older person or parents, etc., but never adding the word '*kamu*' or clitic-k (you) in your conversation with older person or parents because it will be judged as disrespectful thing.

Finally, the use of proper diction towards certain social status in Sasak is very important because if one cannot apply it appropriately, he/she will be considered as the person who does not know how to behave towards someone or in Sasak's expression '*nden tao bebase*'.

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