

Language and Cultural Identity of the People of Bawean Island

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Abstract— The similarity of Bawean people's utterances to the Madurese lays on a reason that the Bawean people are often equally associated with Madurese. However, the Bawean people dislike being equally perceived as Madurese. The tradition of wandering, ethnic diversity and migrants on Bawean Island have been quite influential on their language and cultural identity. Through ethnography communication method that emphasizes the technique of 'thick description' to describe the characteristics of language and culture according to the Bawean people's perspective. The findings revealed that the Bawean people are not a homogeneous ethnic entity, bearing in mind that the Javanese, Kemas, Madurese, Bugis and ethnic people in Bawean acknowledge their ethnic origin. Most people equally seen Bawean people with Madurese, since there about 80% of similarities between the languages. Linguistically, the similarity of a number of vocabulary words in addition to some existing similarities in the narrative of the Bawean people and Madurese people show that Bawean language is a typical dialect of Madurese language. The tradition of wandering or migrating to neighboring country or island and as a community who came into known from a number ethnic groups settled in the island of Bawean, and all those ethnics finally unite the other into a single recognized culture. The recognition of a variety of languages as their own, the Bawean people are identifiable as a separate social community. The Bawean people feel themselves incomparable to Madurese. The Bawean people's awareness of cultural identity was meant to unite the various living ethnic groups whose language is typically spoken and known as Bawean language variety. This language is further identified as a medium from which the Bawean distinguish themselves from other ethnicities.

Keywords— *Bawean; variety of languages; cultural identity; social community*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Bawean people are a community from the island of Bawean, a small island in the Java Sea, located around 150 kilometers north side between the islands of Java and Madura. Administratively, Bawean Island belongs to Gresik regency, East Java, Indonesia. As a small island, identified as an island which relatively difficult to reach due to limited transportation, Bawean Island has not been popularly known as other archipelagic islands such as Bali, Java, Madura, Sumatra, Borneo, Sulawesi, Papua and many more.

In case we wish to trace from the division of cultural territory, Bawean people is typologically grouped into cultural area of Madura Bawean, and East Java. The East Java culture is further distinguished into 10 cultural regions, among others; Java Mataraman, Panaragan, Samin (*Sedulur Sikep*), Arek, Osing Culture, Tengger, Pandalungan, Madura Island, Madurese-Kangean, and Madurese-Bawean (Sutarto and Setyo Yuwono, 2004). The term for Madurese-Bawean culture consequently leads the Bawean people to be equally considered a typical Madurese ethnic identity. The tradition of wandering and people's similarity to Madurese, as a community of ethnic groups, indirectly affects the Bawean language and cultural identity.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Language and culture are an integral part of identity, and language tends to be used to mark identity. Language is verbal behavior which shows social characteristics, cultural background, and ecological properties of the living environment of the interacting audience (Gumperz 1972). The relationship between language, culture and identity is interrelated and quite complex in nature. Culture is identifiable through language, and language can express culture. Therefore people literally identify each other from culture and language. Because of that nature, people often time associate Bawean people with Madurese due to similarity both languages.

Cultural identity is a shared unity, as the way a person is in unity which enables him/her identify of similarities. Stuart Hall (1990: 393) in his work Cultural Identity and Diaspora describes cultural identity as being and as a process of becoming. Cultural identity is the way an individual feels and perceives his behavior as part of his group's culture. The similarity of

language does not necessarily make people feel they have the same cultural identity. I.e., Tengger people think differently from the Javanese, although the language is a variation of the Javanese language. Identity and interests hold two important dimensions of language-ethnic relations. In order for language to function as a boundary marker for ethnicity, the language needs to bear itself differently identified from other languages. Comrie (1990: 2) explains that it is quite difficult to decide whether two language variations must be considered different languages or only dialects differ from the same language, decisions are often based on political and social reasons rather than linguistic reasons.

Cultural identity concerns the community or a group of people who have a certain objective nature. This objective nature includes ancestors, history, territory, language, religion, culture, behavior patterns and so on. In the context of cultural identity, language is perceived or believed to be a language owned and preserved by its members. To clarify the role of language as a marker of group identity, the speaker must believe that he has distinctive characteristics, and the language used is different or separate from other languages. According to Wardhaugh (2006, pp. 220), there are no two languages that are similar enough to be considered to represent the same community group. Many cases show that the use of the same language by two or more groups does not guarantee that they are part of those groups, or constitute the same group. Sharing the same language does not guarantee the speakers share the same community group (Das Gupta 1975, p.470, Safran 1999, p. 81). This shows that what is important in distinguishing ethnic groups is the distinctive nature of their objective nature.

III. METHOD

This study uses the ethnography method that emphasizes 'thick description'. The main objective of this activity is to understand individual's life view from 'native' (local) perspective. Ethnography concerns observers to learn society through study (Spradley, 1979). The ethnographic method with thick description technique was used to enable the researchers illustrate characteristics of language and culture on the perspective of the Bawean Island people. This study aims to understand what is experienced by the people of Bawean Island in their socio-cultural context. Before the interview process, both observations and ethnographic records need to be referred to the objects. As the object interview, informants were those who know their language and culture very well, thus cultural leaders, traditional leaders, village heads and teachers were selected. The FGD (Focus Group Discussion) technically used to provide more valid data from participants, and these participants know the local culture and language of Bawean. Data analysis technically follows the analysis of domains, components and structural themes. By this analysis, this study hopes to reveal the cultural frame as a characteristic of the Bawean language, culture and identity.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Ethnic Variety in Bawean Island

The Bawean people have historically been a collection of ethnic nomads who settled on Bawean Island. They initially tended not to know the original 'cultural roots' of Bawean. They call Bawean culture a 'mixed' culture of various ethnic cultures that exist. The Bawean name already in the classical book of Negarakertagama called 'Buwun' is an oral narrative prose narrated about a legend whose story is considered by the community as a fact that really happened. The Bawean legends have almost been entirely narrating the figures from the neighboring land. I.e., The legend of Jujuk Campa tells the story of a Cambodian Campa state reinforced with her remains of keris, vessel, 'sekedub' and her grave in the village of Kumulasa. Waliyah legend Zainab tells the story of a woman spreading Islam from Java where her existence is much reinforced by heritage artifacts in the form of 'gelebung' (rice cooler vessel from pot), keris, spears, two ancient plates, and cemeteries in Diponggo Mosque. Evidence of other artifacts, i.e., Diponggo village is the only village in Bawean where the speakers linguistically tend to adapt a lot of Javanese language elements. The legend that is often told in the history of the Bawean community from this village is a figure named Umar Mas'ud from Madura fighting the government of the king ir kafir 'Bawean before Islam developed on Bawean. The legend 'jherat Lanjheng' (long grave), Purbonegoro grave, Cokrokusumo narrates about figures from outside the island. This shows that the Bawean people originated from various ethnic groups, such as Javanese, Madurese, Sumatran (Malay, Palembang), Sulawesi (Bugis and Mandar) and Kalimantan and several nations, such as Campa-Chinese, Arabic, and Indian. This ethnic diversity is observable from a variety of speeches and daily livelihoods. Bugis ethnics based on their daily activities are mostly fishermen, while the Sumatran ethnic community is known as 'Kemas' as a trader. This caused the people of Bawean not to be associated with the Madurese.

The similarity of the Bawean people with ethnic Madurese is closely related to the history of population and the spread of Islam on the island of Bawean. At first, Bawean island was allegedly inhabited by residents from Madura. Based on archaeological findings in the form of primitive stone tools and sea shells in limestone caves near the village of Patar Selamat, it was suggested that since 1350 the Madurese were suspected of having settled in Bawean Island (Vredendrecht, 1990, p. 14). This finding is confirmed by the historical record that on the island of Bawean the Islamic empire was established under the control of Sayyid Maulana Umar Masud (1601-1630) to the seventh generation of successors Panji Prabunegoro or also known as Raden Tumenggung Panji Tjokrokusumo (1747-1789). During these times, Bawean Island was under the authority of Madura with the king of Madura, and the last was under the control of Tjakraningrat IV of Bangkalan (Vredendrecht, 1990: 15-).

B. Bawean Language and Culture Identity

The language similarity of the Bawean people to Madurese language is reflected in a large number of similarities in terms of their vocabulary and accent. In lexicostatistics, there are eighty percent (80%) of the two basic vocabulary words were found the same, in addition to the similarity on the aspirate sound /d^h/, /b^h/, /g^h/ dan /j^h/ at the beginning of the word (Wiryanti, 2016). Nevertheless, the Bawean people refused if they said the language was the same as the Madurese language. As an identity feature, it is very difficult or impossible to decide on two variations of speech considered to be only different dialects of the same language. Language as a community identity is often distinguished from other languages based on sociopolitical reasons rather than linguistic reasons (Comrie, 1990, p. 2).

According to the Bawean people, the level of similarity between their languages and the Madurese language was suspected of having intensive communication between the two tribes. The Bawean people insist that the Madurese language is different from the Bawean language. This is because there are a number of significant differences in terms of accent and certain expressions. In fact they consider the Bawean language to be softer" when people express such language, as follows.

Ya, saya bisa berbicara bahasa Madura. Komunikasi kita biasanya melibatkan campuran bahasa Madura dan bahasa Bawean. Anak-anak saya ... mereka berbicara bahasa Bawean juga di rumah. Meskipun sebagian besar waktu kita digunakan untuk berbicara bahasa Bawean, terkadang beberapa kata dalam bahasa Madura bisa saja terucapkan, terutama kalau ada kerabat datang dari Madura. Tapi biasanya dalam berbagai kesempatan saat kita menggunakan bahasa Bawean, nada suara dan kata-kata kita lebih 'lembut' daripada bahasa Madura. [Yes, I can speak Madurese. Our communication usually involves a mixture of Madurese and Bawean languages. My children ... they speak Bawean also at home. Although most of the time we speak Bawean, sometimes some words in the Madurese language can be spoken, especially when one of the relatives comes from Madura. However, usually on many occasions when we use the Bawean language, our tone of voice and words are 'softer' than the language of Madura]

Based on this statement, the Bawean people still insist on their language differences from the Madurese language in terms of the tone of their voice. Bawean is softer in tone than Madurese. This can be found in a number of Bawean language vocabulary where the stressing sound of this language is identical to be flatter, ie, the word 'knee' is pronounced / tɔt / whereas in Madura / tɔt /, the word 'neck' in Bawean / lèèr / in Madurese / lè'èr /. In addition, Bawean people can easily distinguish their language from Madurese in a number of specific terms, as follows.

Kalau Anda sungguh-sungguh mendengarkan, bahasa Bawean itu bukan bahasa Madura, hanya mirip. Tetapi kalau orang Madura ngomong, saya dengar sajasudah tahu, karena di sini banyak orang Madura, tapi kalau asli bahasa Bawean, orang Madura gak ngerti, seperti kata 'genit' ya, kalau bahasa Jawa kan 'letrek' atau 'kemayu', kalau bahasa Madura 'nglanye', nah kalau bahasa Baweannya 'nglajik'. [If you really listen, the Bawean language is completely different from the Madurese language, only similar. But if the Madurese speak the language, just listen, I understand, because there are many Madurese here, but if the Bawean language, Madurese do not understand, like the word 'flirtatious, which in Javanese is called 'letrek' or 'kemayu', hence in Madurese it is 'nglanye' where in Bawean language called 'nglajik']

Observing the differences between Madurese and Bawean languages is not easy, even for people who barely know the two language, people need to listen carefully. For the Bawean people, recognizing the Madurese language is enough just to pay attention to how they speak, however, on the contrary, the Madurese find themselves not easy to understand the original terms spoken in Bawean language, i.e. Words / flirtatious / in Bawean language 'nglajik', Madurese only know the term *nglanye*. Linguistically, the similarity over a number of vocabulary words and sounds of the Bawean and Madurese people indicate that the Bawean language is a variation of the Madurese language. On the other hand, language variation is closely related to social identity phenomena and language changes (Labov, 1966). Therefore, it is quite difficult to decide whether two speech variations need to be considered different languages or only different dialects of the same language. In terms of identity concern, the distinction between the two variations acts a differentiator between the communities is primarily caused by both political and social reasons instead of linguistic reasons (Comrie, 1990, p. 2).

Language issue in a cultural context may not only bound by the matter of vocabulary similarity. Language represents the concept of thought and event where people interpret the world. As members of the community, individuals need to realize specific norms and practices of their use. For the Bawean people, accent is a property distinguishing theirs from Madurese language. Typical accent and some identical expressions have been the distinguishing aspects of Bawean language over the Madurese and people's identity. In the context of cultural identity, belief and feeling factors were expressed through linguistic aspects as the main concerns to differentiate theirs from others. Language as an identity marker should have a distinctive property.

The Bawean people ethnically consider themselves Bawean people to live on the island as a 'mixed' community. They realize that being Bawean is a society composed of various ethnic groups. There is no culture of one ethnicity which stands out over other ethnic cultures. Madurese ethnicity may be assumed to be the most dominant in Bawean, in fact Madurese culture does not

necessarily become more prominent on this island. Even Madurese on Bawean prefer to call themselves Bawean people. This reality is reflected in the absence of Madurese cultural customs that developed and showed its existence as a Madurese culture.

Bawean adalah etnis sendiri, yang dikenal dengan 'boyan' jika di luar negeri. Itu artinya etnis Bawean sudah diakui termasuk di luar negeri. Asalnya dari perpaduan antar etnis dari beberapa suku.....Saya orang Madura, dari segi watak, watuk dan wahingnya itu keras. Lebih baik katetempolang daripada kotemata. Jadi kalau masalah wanita tidak ada ampun. Nyawa taruhannya. Tapi hampir tidak ada orang Madura di sini yang melakukan pertumpahan darah/ Artinya dapat menyesuaikan diri. Ngremo karapan sapi juga tidak ada. Hanya saja dari segi bahasa lebih dominan tapi berbeda. Palembang budayanya juga tidak masuk Bawean, sudah membaur.....Tapi kalau dari segi tradisi dan kesenian lebih dekat dengan Melayu....dari keunikan itulah terbentuk budaya Bawean. [Bawean is a different ethnicity, where if they are abroad it is known as 'boyan, meaning the ethnic Bawean. They have long been known including abroad. Originally from a combination of ethnic groups from several tribes I am a Madurese, in terms of character and wahing, Madura is categorized as hard. Then it is better for katetempolang than kotemata. In this case, the problem that links women without negotiation and tolerance is life as a bet. But almost no Madurese here do bloodshed. That means Madurese can adjust. There is also no Karapan Sapi. Only in terms of language are more dominant but different. The Palembang culture does not affect Bawean, it has blended..... But in terms of tradition and art [the Bawean people] are closer to Malay ... based on the uniqueness that is in fact the Bawean culture was established].

The Bawean people consider themselves to show a different ethnic identity from other ethnic groups. The term 'boyan' is a typical self-representation about their ethnic identity. They realized that it was an ethnic group formed from various ethnic unions. There are no more Madurese in Bawean who are principled to die 'katetempolang' rather than bear the shame of 'kotemata', because of that principle, there is no any bloodshed event. Madurese who become Bawean people share similar principle and should be able to adapt to the Bawean custom, which consequently they do not develop their own culture, likewise 'ngremo' 'kerapan sapi' or to hold bull racing festival, where we do not find it on Bawean. Although in terms of the language use they bear similarity, however, there are actually differences (from Malaysian and Indonesian). The Palembang culture also did not develop on Bawean (although, the trade system was once controlled by Palembang people), the Palembang people had blended in not showing Palembang characteristics. The Bawean people are more likely to be called the people who come from a collection of 'migratory' tribes who settled in the island, according to Bawean figure as follows.

Biasanya setiap suku itu identitasnya dari wajahnya saja sudah terlihat, akan nampak....tetapi tidak di Bawean, karena ada yang keturunan Arab, Cina, India dan suku bangsa lainnya, Bawean itu multikultural [Usually each tribe can be identified based on the face of the community. However, this does not apply to Bawean, which lives with various Arab, Chinese, Indian and other ethnic groups. Bawean is multicultural].

It is a local custom to recognize the identity of other tribes just by recognizing their faces. However, the Bawean people are the other way around, they can hardly be recognized by face, bearing in mind that many Bawean people are of Arab, Chinese, Indian and other ethnic descent. Not surprisingly, the Bawean people are multicultural. The diversity of the tribes and the various cultures that have been established on the island has made the Bawean people do not question the differences between immigrant culture and native culture. They adopt culture and cultivate it for their culture. They recognize the diversity between tribes that coexist and interact harmoniously. Each tribe in Bawean bear themselves as Bawean people.

The wandering tradition is quite influencing the cultural behavior of the Bawean people. When they returned to Bawean Island, regional culture or monitoring was carried along. This is reflected in the language and culture of people returning from overseas. This reality is quite dilemmatic for the people of Bawean Island to express their language and cultural identity. The Bawean people expressly state that their language is different from the Madurese language. Nevertheless, the Bawean people will consciously acknowledge the similarity of their language to the Madurese. Especially for the Bawean people, the level of similarity with the Madurese language is nothing more than an element of absorption language. Madurese language for Bawean people is one of the regional languages in Bawean, regional languages of ethnic immigrants, as well as Javanese, and Malay.

For the Bawean people, when a person listens to Madurese utterances being spoken, a Bawean person would immediately understand the language used was Madurese, even though they were not directly confronted. This shows a high level of understanding. Understanding refers to people understanding each other in term of speech, which consequently they both speak the same language. The level of understanding is an important clue that determines whether two communities speak the same language (Voegelin and Harris 1951; Wurm and Laycock 1961). Speech community is a separate and integrated social group. In the language of the Bawean people, individuals recognize a certain variety of speeches that belong to them and maintain the distinctiveness of the variety from a variety of spoken words around them. If the two speech speak communities are two kinds of speeches that share consistent and measurable linguistic differences, however, the two varieties can be mutually understood unequally, then that variety is typical of dialects from one language. The high level of understanding of the Bawean people from the Madurese language indicates where the Bawean people are the typical of bidialectal community. Bidialectal characteristics engages people out of many dialects where in a conversation of each speaker normally speaks their own dialect. Through his mother tongue, Bawean people acknowledge characteristics of the Madurese language dialect. In addition, the Bawean people

do not need to learn Madurese language; they have already been able to adapt their dialect to the Madurese language dialect. Linguistically, the similarities between Bawean language and Madurese are a typical variant of similar language. As part of the Madurese cultural area (Sutarto and Setyo Yuwono, 2004), the Madurese is a realization of the Madura-Bawean variant / dialect.

From a variety of various living cultures, the Bawean people hardly recognize their original culture. Wandering traditions and a label for society who have now come into existence out of several ethnic groups settled in Bawean Island which at the end are acknowledged to be the Bawean people. Islam as the only religion in Bawean and the tradition of wandering into the neighboring countries like Malaysia and Singapore greatly influence the Bawean people's speech variation and Malayic cultural elements in addition to Islamic nuances.

V. CONCLUSION

The Bawean people are not a homogeneous ethnic entity, because Javanese, Kemas, Madura, Bugis people in Bawean still maintain their ethnic origin. Ethnic diversity on the island of Bawean and wandering traditions maintained from time to time have a socio-cultural impact that is unique to Bawean people. The terms associated with mixed culture and openness to other cultures are one of the characteristics of Bawean people's culture. Psycho-sociologically, the Bawean people do not take seriously about indigenous culture as a culture of their ancestral heritage. For Bawean people, adopting culture and adjusting it based on the situation of the diversity of the people that exist is the most important point. The characteristics of the wandering tradition, and not willing to be aligned with the Madurese people, from the recognition of a variety of languages as their own, Bawean people can be classified as a separate social community. Therefore, the Bawean people can never be identical to the Madurese, and vice versa, despite the similarity in language and physical characteristics. Bawean people's awareness of cultural identity aims to unite diverse tribes. Bawean language as a manifestation of Bawean's unique form connects ethnic groups that exist and play a role in integration, and equality between different ethnic groups.

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