

# Refined Language Maintenance among Members of Nobel Sasak Family at Bertais

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**Abstract**—This paper is attempted at investigating whether or not speech level is still used and maintained in the communication among members of the noble Sasak family, what the linguistic features of the refined language are maintained, and what factors affecting the maintenance of the refined language. The data were taken from interview with and recorded conversations of members of the noble Sasak family. At the Bertais community, Lombok several facts are responsible for the maintenance of refined language. The noble Sasak families still use the speech level in their daily communication. The study shows 53.33% of the noble family still use the refined language, while 13.33% of them have shifted to using common language, and 33.33% employ refined language and bahasa Indonesia. The linguistic features of refined language in the communication among members of noble Sasak family used are among others Nike, Niki, tiang, enggih, napi etc. The use of this refined language is mainly influenced by the position of family member in the communication either that is particular form of Sasak is mainly descended down from the elder.

**Keywords**—refined language; noble Sasak family; speech level; bertaismataram

## I. INTRODUCTION

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. For example the word “I” is differently uttered by each level. Raden uses word “kaji”, Menak uses word “tiang” and Jajar karang 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.

There are five major dialects that can be identified in Sasak namely *ngeno-ngene dialect*, *meno-mene*, *nggeto-nggete*, *kuto-kute* and *meriaq-meriku* dialect. Through dialect, the area or country where the speakers come from can be identified.

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-no), *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).

Nowadays the use of politeness form of Sasak seems to be degrading as a result of globalization and acculturation. This is pictured from the language used by teenagers. They tend to follow speech style that they hear and see on TV. That is why, the writer is interested to find out whether refined language is still applied among noble Sasak family who live at Bertais district and is surrounded by non-noble community.

This paper is intended (1) to investigate whether or not speech level is still used in the communication among members of noble Sasak family; (2) to investigate the linguistic features of refined language maintenance among members of noble Sasak family at Bertais; (3) to describe the influential factors that affect the use of refined language form in the communication among members of noble Sasak family.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Refined Language and Politeness Theory

Mahyuni (2006, pg. 34) views that politeness in Indonesian context, has been tackled according to different terms, such as speech level and linguistics etiquette due to those carries status meaning and cultural norms. In other words, speech level and linguistic features are interrelated in which they bear social status and cultural norms in the society. LoCastro (1990: 252) quoted from (Lang, 2003, pg. 26) points out that the term “politeness” is frequently confused with related folk terms like “etiquette” and “manners” and it has folk meanings that are not clearly distinguishable from its more technical or formal meanings. Therefore, definition of “polite” refers to good manners and social correctness. Someone is regarded to be polite if he has good manners and has socially correct behaviour as well as considerate of other people’s feelings. Further Frazer (1990) quoted from (Lang, 2003, pg 28) presents four views of politeness, as follows:

#### 1. The Social-norm View

The first approach assumes that each society has a particular set of social norms consisting of more or less explicit rules that prescribe a certain behaviour, a state of affairs, or a way of thinking in a context (Frazer, 2009) quoted from (Lang, 2003, pg. 28). The social-norm view includes etiquette, manners, or social rules, i.e. it deals with, what to do and what not to do. For instance, Indonesian tends to express his feeling indirectly, due to the fact that this is considered a good manner. Meanwhile vice versa will be regarded rude manner.

## 2. The Conversational-maxim View

The second view of politeness is the conversational-maxim view which relies principally on the work of Grice. Grice labels the following as the Cooperative Principle, which covers four maxims, those are:

- a. Quantity: (1) Make your contribution as informative as required (for the purpose of the exchange), (2) Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
- b. Quality: (1) Do not say what you believe to be false, (2) Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence
- c. Relation, be relevant.
- d. Manner: (1) Avoid obscurity of expression, (2) Avoid ambiguity, (3) be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity), (4) be orderly.

## 3. The face-saving view

The third approach to politeness is the face-saving view, popularly known as Brown and Levinson theory. Brown and Levinson (quoted from Lang, 2003. Pg 36) claim that linguistic politeness covers message, conversational implicature of Grice's maxims. They propose a politeness model that aims to cover the lack of Grice's Cooperative Principle. In other words, Grice has provided a foundation for Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, but Brown and Levinson's theory is different from that of Grice, as they explain that while the Cooperative Principles ignored social presumptive framework that refers to politeness. Therefore politeness theory of Brown Levinson is based on social framework of communication. Brown and Levinson (in Lang, 2003. Pg. 40) state that there are three main things involved in assessing the degree of politeness required. Those are (1) social distance; (2) power; and (3) absolute ranking of imposition. Therefore, language users are always interested in the effective transfer of an utterance produced.

According to the maxims of the cooperative principle, (a) is sufficient. Language is, however, often used more indirectly, as in (b). Sometimes certain politeness forms such as in (c) and (d) are applied as well.

Golfman (1956) in (Renkema, 2004, pg. 33) introduced the concept of *face*. By this he meant that the image of person is seen from his social contacts with others. Face has the meaning as in the saying "to lose face". In Golfman's opinion, every participant in the social process has the need to be appreciated by others and the need to be free and not interfered with. Golfman calls the need to be appreciated "positive face" and the need to not be disturbed "negative face". In the other word positive face refers to an individual's desire to be accepted and valued by others, and negative face pertains to one's want to have the freedom to act without being impeded.

## 4. The Conversational-contract View

This view has been criticized by Thomas (1995: 177) stated in Lang (2003. Pg.47) who says that "Fraser's model of politeness is very sketchy compared with that of Leech and Brown and Levinson and it is difficult to judge how it might operate in practice." Therefore, the conversational-contract view would not be suitable as a theoretical basis for this study.

## B. Sasak Speech Level

Speech level refers to the language used by particular graded society. Through speech level politeness is conveyed. Austin (2011, pg. 22) further states that politeness is encoded lexically in basic vocabulary, both open class and closed class items, through suppletion in sets of *biase*, *madie*, *alus* items plus a system of honorifics:

<i>biase</i> — low	eg. <i>Mate</i> "eye"
<i>madie</i> — middle	<i>penenteng</i>
<i>alus</i> — high	<i>penyerminan</i>

Honorifics: honour and humble eg. *Atur* "to give", *ican* "to receive"

Austin (2011, pg. 27) also found that there are three traditional Sasak social castes on Lombok, these three of castes use different vocabulary in communication.

1. *Mènak* 1<sup>st</sup> caste (the highest), cf. *Radèn prewangse* 2<sup>nd</sup> caste
2. *Jajarkarang* 3<sup>rd</sup> caste – commoners
3. *Sepangan* lowest caste, servants of *mènak*

## C. Language and Social Status

In Sasak, language and social status cannot be separated as social status can significantly influence the way Sasak speak in communication. (Mahyuni, 2003, pg.85) categorizes two kinds of social status which are not inheritable. Those are educational and religious status. Educational and religious level in the society influences the status of people in the society. The higher educational level people have the higher social status they are. So does with the religious level of people. These statuses

influence the use of a language. For instance; the way people talk to their teacher or to the Muslim scholar (Tuan Guru) is different from the way they talk to their friends. This is also clearly seen in how they speak to their teacher. They tend to use refined language.

Another social status that also influences the nature of Sasak social culture and the nature of language use is the term “noble” and “non-noble”. This social status is heritable. Commonly, nobles tend to speak refined language in their daily discourse instead of common language. On the other hand, non-noble tends to talk in common language.

#### D. Social Sasak Stratification

Social stratification refers to any hierarchical ordering group within a society. In Sasak, the stratifications were rooted in the past Sasak kingdom and stratified into the lowest to the highest strata. They are naturally based on the functions of each group’s ancestors in the past Sasak kingdom: *Jajar karang*, *Perwangse* and *Menak* classes. *Menak* class is then divided into two classes those are: *Menak tinggi* and *Menak menengah*. *Menak tinggi* are those whose ancestors were of the kings and the family of the king in the past Sasak kingdom and *Menak menengah* are those whose ancestors were high ministers or the kingdom’s functionaries. Each social stratification carries different title of its holders and they are addressed differently as well.

The three strata in Sasak correspond to the level of speech namely *Jamaq* (the low), *Tengaq* (the middle) and *Utame* (the high). The *Jamaq* level is the lowest speech in Sasak and considered as the common one, *Tengaq* is the mid-level and *Utame* is the highest one. The rest two are considered as *Alus* or *Halus* in Indonesian language refined. The *Jamaq* level in Sasak is informal and sometimes considered impolite if it is used to speak to the noble class people. It is a common or an ordinary level that people use to converse with close friends, younger family members, and lower strata people and subordinates. It is used to indicate intimacy, close relation, and informal communication. The *Tengaq* or sometimes called *Madya* level is used by subordinates to superiors, the younger people to the elders, and the lower strata people to the higher ones and also spoken by the Sasak people who are not familiar to each other yet. In addition, this level of speech also addressed to an individual at the very first meeting. It is used to show distance, difference and formal communication. In other case, *Utame* level is considered as the highest level of speech in Sasak. It is a very formal communication and prestigious context of communication. The *Utame* form comprises the high form of words and it is used to show high degree of politeness to the addressees (Farmasari, 2006: pg .65).

### 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 noble sasak family 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 refined language 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

Noble Sasak is originally classified into two social stratifications those are *Menak*, *utame* and *menak madie*. Both of *Menak* names are always followed by title such as *Raden Nune*, *Raden Dende*, *Lalu* and *Baiq*.

After conducting this study, it is found that the noble Sasak community who lives in Bertais is mostly *Menak* or *Perwangse*, which is consist of 40 families. *Perwangse* is come from the word *Wangse*. The word *Wangse* means *Bangsawan* in bahasa Indonesia (noble people). *Perwangse* in Sasak is a social group that exist because of two causes. Firstly, it is caused by marriage. *Perwangse* is *Datu*’s (king) descendants who are supposed to be categorized into *Datu*, since Sasak tribe is patrilineal or following the male line (father). However, from *adat* (tradition) point of view these children cannot be categorized into *Datu* because only the descendants from internal group marriage (*Datu* with *Dende*) that can be said to be the member of the group. On the other hand, these descendants cannot be categorized into *Jajar karang* because their father is the highest noble group. So they are grouped into a particular group called *Perwangse* or *Perbape*. Secondly, it is caused by the decreasing of social status or *susut* because of certain causes. A *Raden* can be returned into *Perwangse* by the will of *Datu* (King) because of the man is considered to be coward. For instance, that *Raden* is not joining the battle against other village.

Meanwhile *Jajar karang* or *bulu ketujur* are those whose ancestors were courtiers during Kingdom era. They do not hold any titles in relation to nobility. However it is found that *Perwangse* in Bertais bears title such as *Lalu* and *Baiq*. The title that was being borne by *perwangse* in Bertais is not coming from the blood line; however, it was given by the local leader in the past to

their ancestor because of their merit and loyalty to the government. This statement is also supported by Van Der Kraan in Marwan (2010) who stated that Sasak stratification is divided into three levels, those are *Triwangse* which is known as *menak Bali*, *Perwangse* or *menak Sasak* and *Jajar Karang*. Therefore, *Perwangse* or *menak Sasak* always has title before their name. In my opinion, *Perwangse* family in Bertais did not know the stratification of noble group; since they know *Perwangse* is *Menak* so they mentioned their self as *Menak* only, without knowing in which group they are belong to. So I categorize them into *Menak biase/Menak madie* based on their title.

#### A. Family Communication of Menak and Refined Language

##### A. 1. Language of Parents in Menak Family

In Sasak, culturally the position of woman and man is not equally positioned. It reflects in the language used between husband and wife. The language choice used by a wife when speaking to her husband tends to be more polite than the language choice used by husband to his wife. The following extract is an example of language used by husband (L) who works as civil servant and wife (C) is a house wife. In daily communication, this family uses refined language.

##### Extract 1

L : Can, arak dengan belanje ni.  
Can, there someone buy DEM  
(Can, there is someone who wants to buy something)

C: **Tiang tunas** tulung pak **side serioq-an tang**. **Tiang** nyeke **tang** ngeme.  
1SG ask help sir 2SG look-BEN 1SG. 1SG CONT 1SG cook  
(Could you please do me some favour to check it for me? I am cooking right now)

L : **Aok** aneh

(Ok)

C : **Nggih** terima kasih.  
(Ok thanks)

In the first extract, it shows that (L) the husband uses the word “Aok” to reply her wife (C). “Aok” is considered as a word from common language. The equivalent comparison of “aok” is “nggih” in refined language. Besides, (C) the wife applies strongly polite terms such as “tunas”, “serioq” and “tang/tiang” when she is speaking to her husband.

##### A. 2 Language of Children in Menak Family

Language of children in Menak family is strongly influenced by age of family member. The older person in a family is called “kakak” and the younger is called “adik”. When speaking to his “kakak”, “adik” tends to apply refined language to show his respect. Meanwhile, “kakak” uses common language to respond his “adik” utterances as can be seen in extract 2 below.

##### Extract 2

I : Kak yati, mbe brosur bale **nike? tiang tunas** sekedik  
Elder sister, where brochure house DEM? 1SG ask little  
(Sister, where are the brochures? May I have some?)

Y: Jari apak- em? Dendek piyak kedekan kadu brosur ni, ke-mahel  
For what-PCL2SG? NEG make toy use brochure DEM, INT- expensive  
sik te-piak silin laun bapak Faris.  
REL PASS-make angry later Mr. Faris  
(What for? Do not make this brochure as a toy. It is expensive to make it and Faris' father will be angry)

I : Ndek kak, **tiang** yak beng batur tiang sak lek Praye.  
NEG sister, 1SG FUT give friend 1SGPOSS REL PREP Praye  
(No sister, I will give it to my friend in Praya)

A : **Tiang** endah kak Yati, sekedik. Yaq ke- beng batur begawean tiang endah.  
1SG also sister Yati, a little. FUT PCL 1SG-give mate work 1SG also  
(Me too sister, give me some. I will give it to my work mate)

Y : Aok wah bareh ke- endengan lek bapak Faris.  
Ok later PCL1SG- ask PREP Faris' father  
(Ok, I will ask for some brochures to Faris' father later)

The second extract shows the conversation among two younger brothers and their elder sister. Y is the elder sister, A and I are the younger brothers. A and I use certain words in order to show respect to their elder sister. In addressing them, they put “kak” before the name of their elder sister. Besides, they also use “tiang”, “nggih”, “nike”, “tunas” in their utterances.

##### A. 3 Children-Parents Communication

Children-parents language is strongly influenced by the biological and mental bond between them. It is portrayed in how mother addresses his son or daughter to show the affection and emotional connection between them. Through the language,

parents also pass down the cultural value in a language, as seen in the following conversation between son (Adi) and his mother (Inaq).

### Extract 3

- I : **Tatik**. Aloha tutut kakak-em  
 Son, go pick up elder sister/brother-2SG  
*(Son, just go pick your elder sister up)*  
 A : **Nggih naq**, mbe taok kak Nanik? Lek bale kak Tini ato  
 Ok Mom, where place elder sister Nanik? PREP house elder sister Tini or  
 masih lek Shindu?  
 still PREP Shindu?  
*(Ok mom, where is she? Is she still at Tini's house or in Shindu)*  
 I : Wah ulek jok bale kak Tini. Ni sempaitan bajo ni,  
 jari kakak-em.  
 Already go home PREP house elder sister Tini. DEM give driedfish DEM  
*(She has already come back to Tini's house. Give this dried fish to her)*  
 A : **Nggih**  
*(OK)*

The third extract shows the conversations between *I* and *A*. *I* is Mother and *A* is her son. In addressing her son, *I* (mother) uses the word “tatik”, a term used by Menak family to call their son. Meanwhile, *A* (son) uses refined language to reply his mother. It shows by word “nggih”. Sometimes to address a son, parents also use common pronominal clitics for 2SG such as “em”.

### B. Menak Family, Refined Language, and Bahasa Indonesia.

Generally, *Base Sasak* is slightly mixed with Bahasa Indonesia by many people. It is clearly seen in the use of children addressing their parents. They do not only use terms “inaq” but also “Mak” and “Ibu” as illustrated in the following conversations.

### Extract 4

- U : **Ibu** mbe taok kunci Honda **tiang**?  
 Mom where place key Honda 1SGPOSS  
*(Mom, where is my motorcycle key?)*  
 M : Dek-ko taok, mbe taok e kolok? Kan **side** sak kadu Honda  
 NEG-PCL1SG place, where place put? 2SG REL use Honda  
 uik.  
 yesterday  
*(I don't know, where did you put it? You rode it yesterday)*

### C. Menak Family and Common Language

There are some Menak families who apply common language or Bahasa Indonesia in their daily communication since common language and Bahasa Indonesia are easier to understand than the refined one. The use of common language is usually found in the young family.

#### C. 1 Children-Parents Communication

Common language in Menak family is usually used by the young couple. This is caused by the word of refined language that were passed down by their parents are not sufficient and easily forgettable due to its lack of exposure at school environment and in the society in general, as shown in extract 5 below.

### Extract 5

- I : Mamik **jok mbe**? Milu Ipank.  
 Father PREP where? Join Ipank  
*(Father, where are you going to go? I want to join you)*  
 M : Yak ke-lalo jok Lingsar, dende milu, panas ni, to tame  
 FUT PCL1SG-go PREP Lingsar, NEG join, hot DEM, go in  
*(I will go to Lingsar, don't follow me, it is hot, go inside)*  
 I : Milu bae mik dek arak kance Ipank lek bale, mamak ye  
 Join Father NEG exist with Ipank PREP house, Mom 3SG  
**lalo** jok peken.  
 go PREP market.  
*(Can I join you father? there is no one at home, Mom goes to market)*  
 M : Antih bae mamak-em bareh bae ulek en.  
 Wait just Mom-PCL2SGPOSS later comeback  
*(Just wait your Mom, she will come back soon)*  
 I : **Ape** mamik ne ke-pelit. **Aok wah** bilin wah Ipank  
 What father INT-stingy. Ok leave Ipank  
*(What a stingy father. Ok then, just leave me)*



M: Lamun dek panas kanggo-em milu anak'e.  
If NEG hot may-2SG join kid-PCL1SGPOSS  
(If it is not hot, you may join me my kid)

The Father (M) works in a private company as an employee and he is 30 years old. I is the son; He is 8 years old. The common language use is reflected through word chosen by the father and the son. The son (I) uses the word "jok mbe" instead of "mbe lumbar" and uses "aoq" instead of "nggih". Besides, he also chooses to use "ape" instead of "napi".

From the conversation above, it can be seen that this family does not use refined language. They use very common language even when (S) younger sister speaks to her elder sister (N). (S) uses PCL "-em" to address her elder sister. The use of this address term is considered impolite to the elder.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

After analysing the data of refined language maintenance among members of noble Sasak family at Bertais, the writer concluded that noble Sasak family found in Bertais which mostly consists of *Menak* still use speech level in their daily communication however, there are some *Menak* family who mix the use Bahasa Indonesia and refined Sasak. Linguistics features that are mostly found are mainly represented by particular address forms or terms *inggih*, *tiang*, *napi*, *niki*, *nike* and so forth. The influential factor that affects the use of refined language is mainly influenced by the position of family member in the family and also the language that is passed down by the elder.

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