Language and Social Class: *The Differences Between Traditional Market and Mall*

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Abstract—**This study investigated some features of language use in two contexts: traditional markets and modern market, or more commonly known as malls. The data of language use and physical appearance as the class markers were gathered through observation and interviews with the traditional market and the mall in one of a large city in Indonesia. The findings show that in terms of language use, there were no significant differences found. This is probably due to the proximity in the location of the traditional market and the mall; that is, both are located in the relative distance to the dense population of the city. However, in terms of physical appearance, the visitors of the traditional market and the mall showed rather telling cases in displaying their social class.**

Keywords: Indonesian language, mall, social class, Sundanese, traditional market

I. INTRODUCTION

In human society, individuals will differ from one another in the way they communicate, behave, and dress up. It can be associated with particular groups of people in terms of sex, developmental level and social class (Guy, 2012). Grouping people together according to their social rank or economic condition is the general notion of a social class system. People of these classes are distinctive not only in their possession of wealthier assets, power, favorable regard, educational qualification or status but also in their speaking manner, style or language use (Rahman, 2014). In many societies, the interaction between language use and social class has become a major issue in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics which could be classified by prestige, wealth, and power (Snell, 2014; Guy, 2012). The major concern is how language variation acts as an instrument for social and racial stratification because it has a different process and result (Aliakbari & Allahmoradi, 2014).

The issue of interaction between language and society has been explored by some sociolinguists to know how social stratification impacts various aspects of language. In the same ways, some studies of language variation in sociolinguistics try to make a connection between the social selves of the individuals and the kind of language they use, which believed to be the representation of the context (Khan & Qadir, 2018).

Social class is defined as both reflecting and causing major social, economic, and cultural differences in terms of income (pay package, salary, and dividends), wealth (what we own, such as housing, money in the bank), status, education, and lifestyle (Hill, 2018). Social class also becomes a part of social stratification which has a particular position within a class stratification system (lower class, working-class, and middle class) (Schwadel, 2016; Vitt, 2007).

In the social stratification, people might determine someone's social status not only by socioeconomic and demographic factors, but also it might be based on the physical appearance or physical attractiveness (Wang, Crosnoe, & Gordon, 2017). Physical appearance has always played a role in how people are treated in a society because it might affect someone's personalities, job, and position that occur in everyday life. The word "good" or "bad" of someone's attractiveness might affect their socioeconomic prospects, especially in particular places (Wang et al., 2017). According to Rhode (2010), the role of physical appearance in socioeconomic inequality has become a major source of legal action in the U.S and it includes on some core issues in psychology, sociology, and related disciplines such as the link between self and others and the implication of the link for the individual life course and social life more generally. Judgments based on physical appearance are omnipresent and consequential. Appearance is the first of information available to others in face-to-face interactions and it can influence the perception of someone's status in society (Naumann, 2009).

A mall is a group of stores located in a single building planned, designed and built for retailing and retail-related issues and they are managed as a single unit by institutionalized center management (Levy & Weitz, 2006; Lambert, 2006; Teller, 2008). The management of a mall is designed to attract tenants and also consumers to sell or buys some products in the Mall (Teller, 2008). A mall also retail formats such as supermarkets and hypermarkets which provide the consumers more convenience, and it has a variety of products and different packaging (Anwar, 2015).

In contrast to Mall, a traditional market can be assumed as a group located along and close to the street of a district, town or city center (Teller, 2008). According to Sadilah (2011) traditional market is an outdoor place where buying and selling transactions between merchants and the customers occur. Traditional Market usually do not create such management and concept. It has several stakeholder groups that sell the products, for example, people who live there, politicians and landlords which can influence the development of the agglomeration environment (Warnaby, Bennison, Davies, & Hughes, 2004; Teller, 2008). The infrastructure of the traditional market also different from malls. Furthermore, traditional markets and

shopping malls could reflect the society's life, marked by society's social economy domination as the environments where markets are set up. The consumers also have different points of view which becomes a consideration for them to go to the traditional market or mall. According to Teller (2008), there is the conceptual instrument which can become the consideration for the consumers: distribution (i.e. accessibility, parking, orientation, and infrastructure); assortment and pricing (i.e. tenant mix, atmosphere, and merchandise value); and communication (i.e. public relations, promotions, and advertising).

II. METHOD

Qualitative design in the form of the descriptive method was employed in this research to describe the differences between the traditional market and mall visitors. The qualitative research finds information about someone's perspective, belief, or attitude towards past events or present circumstance (Best, 1970 as cited in Cohen & Morrison, 2007). A case study was conducted in this research. A case study is a specific, holistic, often unique instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle. The case can be a person, a group, an organization, or an event (Creswell, 2012). The study was conducted in one traditional market and mall in one city in Indonesia ten random people who visited the market and mall with the criteria; the range of age which is from 16 to 50 years old, and how they dress up.

Two instruments used to find out the differences between the traditional market and mall visitors. The instrument was observation and interview. The observation sheet used is adopted from the criteria of the traditional market and mall visitors (Teller, 2008). Based on the data gathered from the observation and interview, it can be drawn that there are some differences between the attitudes, behavior, and perceptions among people who come to the traditional market and mall.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The language used in the traditional market, most of the participants are using both Indonesian and Sundanese in communicating with the sellers and in daily life. The use of Sundanese is apparent because it is dominant in society. The sellers usually persuade the consumers to make them interested to buy the product in that store, as can be seen in the excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1
Misalnya, "boleh teteh masuk dulu", "boleh teh lihat-lihat dulu", "cari apa teh barangkali ada yang cocok, ya pokoknya kaya gitu.

The seller would say for example, "Miss, please look inside (the store)", "you can look around", "we may have what you need", something like that.

The excerpt above shows the special features of the traditional market and the economic activities reflected in language use. To attract customers, the seller has to directly advertise their products because the economy in the traditional market is not advertised by branding marketing which is commonly found in the malls where at least some of the items

are advertised through mass media (Kamakura & Mazzon, 2013).

Meanwhile, in the shopping market or mall, some of the participants faced difficulties when they communicate with the sellers in the shopping mall rather than in the traditional market. The use of Indonesian is more dominant in communication because they often did not know where specific items were. Besides language use, there is physical appearance. Physical appearance in the traditional market is more casual and the participants stated that they do not concern with their style (wearing sandals, pajamas). Meanwhile, in the shopping market or mall, the participants in the mall are more concerned about how they dress up for the convenience and prestige (Anwar, 2015; Teller, 2008; Wang et al., 2017). This can be seen in the excerpt below:

Interviewer: *terus kalo misalnya teteh ke pasar sama ke mall menggunakan pakaian yang beda apa sama?*
R: *Iya beda, kalau ke mall sama kayak baju kerja*

Interviewer: When you go the traditional market and mall, do you put on different attire?
R: Yes, they are different. When I go the mall, I put on clothes like I would to work

The visitors were also asked about the frequency and their purpose of visiting the mall. The three participants stated that they visit the mall three times a week. Their purpose varied. It could be for shopping, hanging out, or watching movies. When asked about a preference to buy clothes in the traditional market and mall, the participants that we interviewed in the traditional market prefer to buy clothes in the traditional market. Meanwhile, the participants in the mall said that it depends on their needs. In the mall, the payment method varies, and some of the participants usually use both cash and debit. Meanwhile, in the traditional market, the participants only use cash for the payment which is also a social marker.

Apart from differences in language use and physical appearance, there are also structural and conceptual differences between the traditional market and mall. The ownership in the shopping mall was owned by a commercial company, which owned by a private company. The ownership in the traditional market was owned by a company and under the government's control. There are also "*paguyuban*", meaning community, which concentrate the sellers in each kind of products. The name of the owner is PT. Bangunbina Persada. The management in the shopping mall has the authority to manage and each store is responsible for the company. The management in the traditional market has its management to manage and provide the facilities, but the sellers have the right to manage their store. Cooperation between tenants in the shopping mall was a contract based, usually per year about one billion. But it depends on the size of the place needed. Cooperation between tenants in the traditional market, the seller can buy or rent the tenant. The sellers who buy the tenant should pay with cash. Meanwhile, the sellers who rent the tenant can pay installment per month or per year. The location of outlets in a shopping mall

and the traditional market has the same authority, which was planned by the center management but the sellers can decide the location. All of these features indicate social class (Dowarah, 1994; Guy, 2012; Hill, 2018)

IV. CONCLUSION

From the study, it can be concluded that here are the differences between traditional market and mall visitors that indicate social stratification (Schwadel, 2016; Vitt, 2007). In terms of language use, visitors tend to use Sundanese more frequently when they visit the traditional market. In terms of physical appearance, the visitors in the traditional market tend to wear casual clothes, meanwhile, in the mall, the visitors tend to be well-dress up. Besides, the management in the mall tends to be more organized than in traditional markets, such as the design, facilities, security, signs, and so on. Seeing from the observation and interview, someone's social class could not only determine by their language use and physical appearance because there are so many considerations, such as the amount of wealth, income, and the level of education.

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