

Khitanan in Javanese Society (Ringin Agung-Kediri Village): Antropological Linguistic Study

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Abstract—*Khitanan* is one of the ritual traditions that celebrated by the Javanese people with the aim of obtaining safety or expressing gratitude for something that has been achieved. This study aims to examine the procession of *khitanan* according to Javanese culture as seen from the meaning of event of *khitanan* that included the procession, the function, and the myths in *khitanan* from the perspective of anthropological linguistics. The research method used is descriptive qualitative research model of Gormon & Clayton to report the meaning of event from the observation and to obtain direct information. Sources of data in this study are verbal expressions and behavior patterns of the Ringin Agung-Kediri community during the process of *khitanan*. The subjects of this study were community leaders, religious leaders, some parents whose sons were circumcised, and the village community of 20 people. Data collection techniques in this study are observation, documentation, interviews, and literature study. The study has shown that the meaning of *khitanan* by the Javanese people in Ringin Agung-Kediri village was influenced by their religion and namely Islam. It is also affected by their ancestors teaching. The practice of *khitanan* itself are divided into three stages, namely, preparation (looking for a good day), *ges* (day of the *khitanan*) after *ges* (day after *khitanan*). In addition, the practice of *khitanan* can also create perception about the environmental social life. Thus, the people of Ringin Agung Kediri have made the practice of *khitanan* as cultural event to demonstrate their self-identity and the existence of their ancestral cultural heritage.

Keywords: *khitanan*, ritual traditions, meaning of event.

I. INTRODUCTION

Generally, culture contains aspects of human life both in traditional and social contexts. According to [1] is a whole system of ideas, actions, and human work in the context of community life which is made self-owned by learning. Humans as social beings cannot be separated from the need to interact with each other so that in interacting humans need a medium to express the ideas, intentions, and purposes. One of the mediums to express ideas is through language. Language is the most important means of communication in human life, even though language it can express, shape, and symbolize cultural reality [2]. According to [3] language is a core part of a culture because without language, the culture of society cannot be realized and developed. When people speaking through the language, the speakers will not eliminate the cultural elements of the people who own the language because

language is actually a cultural event that has a positive relationship that mutually influences and shape language and culture [4]. According to [5], said that language cannot be separated from the socio-cultural facts of the people who support it because language and culture are two bound phenomena, what is seen in culture will be reflected in language. So that, through language it can be seen how to behave in a society with its culture because it is reflected in the form of the language.

This research focuses on the one of culture event that celebrated in Ringin Agung village, Kadung District, Kediri regency, East Java Province of Indonesia which has a culture event of holding traditional ceremonies to obtain safety and as a form of gratitude to God that called *khitanan*. According to the village leader of Ringin Agung-Kediri, *khitanan* has several dimensions of meaning especially for his people. Medically, *khitanan* is a small operation by cutting the "kucur" aka the skin covering the male genitals. From the health point of view, the existence of this skin can actually hinder the process of cleansing the vital organs after peeing because if the cleaning not complete in that part, will clearly be a source of disease that is very dangerous to the vital organs. In socio-religious terms, especially for Muslims, the process of *khitanan* is a religious practice as has been exemplified since Prophet Ibrahim AS. The elimination of the scrotal skin is directly related to the purification of the body as an essential condition for the implementation of worship, especially prayer. As we all know, urine is considered unclean which can invalidate one's ablution. Therefore, after urination, genitals must be thoroughly cleaned from the remnants of urine in order the cleanliness of genital is more guaranteed.

Khitanan can be interpreted as an initiation ceremony, the transition of humans who are in crisis so that they can be in a new level of life [6]. The transition referred to in *khitanan* is the transition of a boy to adulthood, so that the ceremony is conducted when the child is 10-16 years old. For the people of Ringin Agung-Kediri village, the process of *khitanan* is not only an ordinary ritual, but also substantially has the meaning of socio-cultural values for the better life in the future. For example, *khitanan* has a very sacred meaning because it is a tradition that can give birth to new individuals in social and religious aspects.

The practice of *khitanan* in Ringin Agung-Kediri is also inseparable from religious influence. It is because almost all of the people are Muslim. In Islam, based on the hadith of the Prophet, the practice of *khitanan* in boy is an honor because it is obligatory. Therefore, in the procession of *khitanan* ceremony, there are many symbols and values from the utterances that characterize the culture of the local community. One of the examples is the ritual activity of the human life cycle ceremony with the aim of purifying or usually called *pengislaman* or *ngislamake*. For them, *khitanan* is a statement of confirmation as Muslims because it can maintain a healthy body and mind in Islam.

Khitanan, which is one form of the culture event of an ethnic community can be studied in anthropological linguistics. [5] defines anthropological linguistics as a branch of science that studies the language as a source of culture and speaking as a cultural practice. Safitri et.al explained that *khitanan* as one form of the cultural phenomenon that is contained many of meanings can be observed through anthropological linguistics to find the hidden meaning and language facts behind the use of language, the use of different language forms, the use of registers and styles. Thus, anthropological linguistics is one of the sub-field linguistic that studies language in relation to the culture of the speaker's community which aims to gain an understanding of the culture of the community.

In line with *khitanan* as cultural phenomenon, [7] explained in his journal about *khitanan* in non-Muslim boys in Medan. He said that there are also many non-Muslim men who conducted the tradition of *khitanan* with the aim of cleaning the dirt stuck to the tip of the penis and avoiding various kinds of diseases. The reasons for non-Muslim male conducted *khitanan* can also be categorized into two categories, namely health and cultural reasons. In terms of health, *khitanan* is useful for preventing dangerous sexual diseases and is felt to make it easier to keep the penis clean. From a cultural perspective, the Nias tribe is one of the tribes that requires men to practice *khitanan*. *Khitanan* in the Nias tribe is considered to be a mouth leader or in other words, Nias men may only give their opinion in a formal forum when they have already performed *khitanan*. The sanction that can be obtained if a Nias man is not *khitan* is shame and also being excluded from the environment where he lives.

Another research about *khitanan* also have conducted by [8] in Gresik, East Java Province. She showed that *khitanan* in woman has three meanings for her family namely meaning of religious, tradition, and social.

Regarding all those suggest that studying *khitanan* is important to conduct. In addition, some studies on *khitanan* have found out that the meaning of event of the *khitanan*. As a culture event, *khitanan* can be studied by anthropological linguistics to examines the language from the perspective of anthropology, culture, and language to find the meaning and cultural understanding behind its use, [9].

II. METHODS

This research was conducted in the village of Ringin Agung, Kepung District, Kediri Regency, East Java Province. The determination of the research location is based on several

considerations related to the problems to be studied relating to the socio-cultural value of *khitanan* and the process is still being conducted from generation to generation. The research method used is descriptive qualitative research model of Gormon & Clayton to report the meaning of event from the observation and to obtain direct information. The sources of data in this study are verbal expressions and behavior patterns of the Ringin Agung-Kediri community during the process of *khitanan*. Sources of data in this study are verbal expressions and behavior patterns of the Ringin Agung-Kediri community during the process of *khitanan*. The subjects of this study were community leaders, religious leaders, some parents whose sons were *khitan*, and the village community of 20 people. Data collection techniques in this study are observation, documentation, interviews, and literature study. To analyze the data that has been obtained, researchers use qualitative descriptive data analysis techniques [10], including: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The difference between the practice of *khitanan* based on the Islam and the traditions of the Javanese people is that in Islam there are no various rituals that must be performed because Islam recommends that *khitanan* be practiced medically. Meanwhile, in Javanese society, when they practice *khitanan*, there are various rituals that must be performed by Pak Calak. *Pak calak* is a person who has the expertise to circumcise (not a doctor or nurse). With the various rituals that are conducted during the practice of *khitanan*, there are various meanings contained in the circumcision process.

A. Meaning of *Khitanan*

Epistemologically, the lexicon of *khitanan* comes from the Arabic word *khatana*¹ which means cutting. In the Islamic encyclopedia, the word *khatana* means to cut, *khatn* which means "to cut off some special objects from special limbs as well". Semantically, the meaning of *khitanan* is interpreted as an Islamic procession by cutting the genital. For the Ringin Agung-Kediri people define *khitanan* as transition between children and adolescents or in Islam it is called *baligh*. *Baligh* means that one of the requirements for someone who must obey religious laws and regulations. Age of *Baligh* is understood as the age when a person has full awareness of thoughts and knowledge of good and bad deeds, can distinguish right and wrong [11]. This is what makes Ringin Agung-Kediri people sociocultural to interpret *khitanan* as an Islamic procession or *ngislamake*. *Ngislamake* defined that a child has become a teenager and has the same responsibilities as an adult (religiously) after being circumcised. Religious obligations must not be abandoned and religious prohibitions must be abandoned. From the *ngislamake* process will has other consequences in social life because it has an obligation as an adult. For example, the boy will be the representative of his father when there is a festival or *tahlilan* or a meeting among the communities. For Ringin Agung-Kediri people, *ngislamake* is a serious procession, so celebration is needed. The essence of the celebration of *khitanan* is actually the salvation of prayers offered to God so that the *khitanan* procession can be succeed, the wound dries up quickly and heals so that the boy can immediately do his usual activities. However, there is also hope that a boy who is in his age of

maturity can become a boy who is obedient to worship, participate and become a pious boy for his parents, and one day he can become a useful human for his family, society, nation, and Islam.

The people of Ringin Agung-Kediri are more familiar with the term *khitanan* because the entire people in the village is Muslim so they prefer the word *khitanan* rather than other words such as *sunatan*. They prefer the word *khitanan* because the history of the establishment of Ringin Agung village was formed by immigrants who were soldiers of Prince Diponegoro who were powerful and were able to knock down the enormous Banyan tree by using his cigarette smoke. Then he founded an Islamic boarding school where the Banyan tree grows. With this Islamic boarding school, local residents began to know Islam and send their children to the Islamic boarding school. There is an unwritten rule in the Ringin Agung-Kediri community that has been maintained until now, which is sending their children to the Islamic boarding school until they reach adolescence. This is what causes the influence of Islam to be very strong in the Ringin Agung community. In addition, when using the word *khitanan* in celebrating an event, there is a prohibition that is widely believed by the local people to not allow music, puppet shows, leathered horse or other arts to be held in Ringin Agung village.

From the description above, it can be seen that the meaning of *khitanan* is considered as an Islamic procession by the Ringin Agung community. This view is in accordance with the use of the lexicon of *khatana* which comes from Arabic rather than *khitanan* in society. It can also be seen how the people of Ringin Agung see that the responsibility of the afterlife is not the responsibility of children. When a child is circumcised by society, he will treat and respect him like an adult.

B. Procession of *Khitanan*

The procession of *khitanan* in the Ringin Agung-Kediri community consists of several stages. These stages include:

Selection of the Day

Selection of the day or in Javanese 'milih dino' is the process by which the parents of the child to be circumcised determine the day of the *khitanan*. Usually parents or representatives of parents meet *Pak calak*. *Pak calak* is a person who has the expertise to circumcise (not a doctor or nurse). Usually to determine the good day when the *khitanan* is conducted is the day of birth of the child to be circumcised which is called *weton*.

Khitanan Day

On the day of *khitanan*, or local residents call it *ges*, it is usually conducted after sunset and tied up with the *genduren* "kenduri or tahlilan" which is attended by families and people from the surrounding environment. *Genduren* is intended as a gratitude that the celebration of the *ges* is succeed and at the same time to pray for the circumcised child. After the procession, the circumcised child is given *sangu* (money). After that there is a *jagong* (visiting) usually by the mothers. *Pak calak* will wait for the circumcised child to urinate. The moment of urinating after being circumcised is a time that is feared by all children because they will see for the first time their circumcised genitals. Besides teaching them how to remove bandages, *Pak Calak* also motivated the child not to be afraid. This culture event is usually attended by village elders,

neighbors, relatives, and main families. After the *khitanan* is finished, the guests will usually be brought a variety of snacks or food that called *beseakan*. The various of *beseakan* that brought home by the guests after *khitanan* is called *berkat*.

After *Khitanan*

After *khitanan*, *Pak Calak* usually comes 2 days after *ges* to treat, change the bandage, and tell the child's condition to his family. The climax of the day after *ges* (*khitanan*) is that the *sepasar* (kenduri or tahlilan) is held 5 days after to be grateful that the child remains healthy during that time. *Sepasaran* is also a symbol which means that the circumcised child is allowed to wear pants (because from *ges* until 4 days after that the circumcised child must wear a sarong).

C. The Myth of *Khitanan*

The Ringin Agung-Kediri people views that there is goodness from the practice of *khitanan*. This belief is influenced by myths about the practice of *khitanan* if it is not conducted medically will have a positive influence. The belief also makes people maintain the existence of the practice of *khitanan* until now. There are several myths that are beliefs about *khitanan* by people of Ringin-Agung Kediri. One of them is if the child cries when he is circumcised, the child will marry a widow. Like being scared by neighbors or maybe their own families and this myth still exists today. Another myth is a man not yet khitan, it will give him less pleasure in having sex with his partner than a man who has been khitan. There is also a myth about being khitan by ghost. In general, the function of the myth is used by older people or their families to prohibit the child from crying when circumcised because at the time of the 'ges' there are many people who will come and usually when the child cries when circumcised it will be the talk of their environment. All of those myths is never proven, Safitri et.al. (2016) stated that the myths of *khitanan* is only opinions from previous people to create folklore and as a form of threat so that someone is not afraid to be circumcised. She also stated that the benefits of the myth of *khitanan* are useless because can make a boy fear and cry.

Currently, the practice of *khitanan* in boys is an obligation that must be conducted by the Ringin Agung-Kediri community because it is related to their religion, namely Islam. They argued that a person who is not circumcised is not legal to become a Muslim and his worship is not accepted so that a person who is not circumcised cannot become a priest in the mosque because the implementation of prayer requires the purity of the body, place and clothes.

Regarding of Islam, a person must purify himself when conducting worship, Suryono as *Pak Calak* (a circumcision person, not a doctor) in the village of Ringin Agung-Kediri stated that cutting the foreskin on the male genitalia is to avoid residual urination. This is in accordance with the Islamic belief regarding the kinds of unclean which prevent worship. According to HR Bukhari no. 218, all Muslims must purify after urinating or defecating because if they do not purify that person brings impurity (leftover urine) so that worship is not acceptable. Based on this, the villagers of Ringin Agung-Kediri have to do *khitanan* for boys who are considered old enough to become a legitimate Muslim and become a more mature person in social life. This statement is also supported by MUI [12] has explained, to conducted *khitanan* there are two times, the obligatory time and the mustahab time (sunnah).

The time that is obligatory is when a child reaches puberty (baligh), while the mustahab time is before puberty.

The results showed that the *khitanan* process had several of values for the people of Ringin Agung-Kediri, namely social, cultural, religious, health, morals, and aesthetics values. From social values include the value of togetherness, the value of obedience, the value of group identity, and kinship. From cultural value include sacred values and purity values. Religious values can be seen in the meaning associated with conducted religious orders with the aim of asking God for protection and salvation which is called *pengislaman*. The value of health, which means cleaning the genitals from the remaining dirt of urine to avoid disease. From moral values, it means that boys are taught the manners and regulations that must be obeyed by every boy in social life. And The aesthetic value is reflected in the makeup and clothes of boys who conducted the *khitanan* process.

The practice of *khitanan* on boys is a tradition that cannot be abandoned for the Ringin Agung-Kediri community. This is related to the teachings of their ancestors so that it becomes an obligation that must be conducted by the community. [13] stated that the practice of *khitanan* is a form of self-existence for society. This self-existence can be realized by continuing to maintain the cultural tradition of *khitanan*.

Regarding the theory of relation language and culture, [14] stated that language affects the way of thinking. Based on this theory, with language, people communicate with themselves with other people, while when thinking, they can solve various life problems they face. Thus, the practice of *khitanan* in the Ringin Agung-Kediri community can create perceptions related to the social environment. They view the practice of *khitanan* as the process of internalization, objectivation and externalization.

On the process of internalization, the people of Ringin Agung-Kediri identify themselves with the social institutions or organizations in which they live. The people of Ringin Agung-Kediri get knowledge about the practice of *khitanan* from their parents or ancestors. On the process of objectivation, the community conducted social interaction in an intersubjective that has been institutionalized. Knowledge of the practice of *khitanan* at this process is influenced by the existence of the *Kyai* who views the practice of *khitanan* as an important practice. And On the process of externalization, individuals adjust to their socio-cultural world as a human product. The Ringin Agung-Kediri community reconstructed their knowledge and their belief about the practice of *khitanan*. The belief the practice of *khitanan* in not necessary conducted medically.

IV. CONCLUSION

This research showed that the meaning of *khitanan* by the Javanese people in the Ringin Agung-Kediri village is influenced by their religion and also affected by their ancestors teaching. The practice of *khitanan* for people in Ringin Agung-Kediri village is interpret as a very religious term, namely the

process of someone to become a complete Muslim or it is called *pengislaman*. Literally the word means entering Islam, but the deeper this meaning contains a very large responsibility from the child who is circumcised, from a religious perspective (relationship with Allah SWT/worship) and from a social perspective (relationship with society / socializing). The process of *khitanan* itself is divided into three stages, namely, preparation (looking for a good day), *ges* (day for conducting *khitanan*) after *ges* (day after *khitanan*). And the myth about *khitanan* that is belief by the people generally to prohibit the child from crying when circumcised. Therefore, the practice of *khitanan* is an obligation that must be conducted by the Ringin Agung-Kediri people because can also create perception about the environmental social life that made the practice of *khitanan* as cultural event to demonstrate their self-identity and the existence of their ancestral cultural heritage. For further research in which anthropological linguistics is studied, in order the practice of *khitanan* in Javanese people should be further analyzed.

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