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DYNAMICS OF BALINESE LANGUAGE IN THE TRANSMIGRATION AREA  
OF LAMPUNG PROVINCE

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**Abstract**

This study examines the dynamics of Balinese language in one of the Indonesia's transmigration areas of Lampung Province. Field research, interviews, and data recording were directly conducted in the territory of the Balinese (trans)migrants in the province . This province is the first transmigration destination with the greatest number of Balinese (trans) migrants. The results of this study indicate that the languages of interaction used by Balinese (trans) migrants are Balinese, Javanese, and Indonesian. Various linguistic events are colored by the use of Indonesian and Javanese including perceptive events involving dreaming, praying, quarrelling, and traditional-story telling. This illustrates that the mastery and use of such language is embedded in a series of mental processes, emotional, and psychological in the subconscious of the (trans) migrants. Other linguistic characteristics that emerged from Balinese spoken at the transmigration areas in Lampung are 1) socio-culturally there is ethnic identification in the lexical level by means of pronominal usage of KITA and DIA, 2) phonological and morphological interference, 3) high occurrence of code switching and code mixing between Balinese, Javanese, and Indonesian. Regarding language maintenance, Balinese migrants have positive behavior toward its native language (Balinese) which caused its maintenance to be adequate. The learning of Balinese for the sake of its inheritance and mastery by Balinese ethnics in the area is done informally. In terms of language policy of the local government of Lampung Province, more weight is given to the development of Indonesian and Lampung language and literature while the other regional languages that co-exist in the province do not have clear status in terms of the pattern of their development.

*Key words: dynamics of the Balinese language, linguistic characteristics, language preservation, language policy*

## **1. Introduction**

Language dynamics that occur in Lampung province is a logical demand of the dynamics of its speech community. To what extent Balinese is capable of maintaining its existence in transmigration area is a significant phenomenon of language contact which is worth discussing. It is especially intriguing due to its theoretical, practical, and prospective contribution to linguistic theorizing. In addition, this study can widen our horizon of macro-linguistics particularly in the realm of language contact.

Lampung was chosen as the field site because the province has been the Indonesia's first transmigration destination area and also the first destination area for Balinese trans-migrants. The transmigration program was started in the era of Pre-Five year Development Plan in 1957. Fifty-three years is not considerably short span of time for Balinese language in Lampung to be separated from its origin. Over those years, it is not impossible for Lampung-Balinese to be different from Balinese in the other trans-migrant areas such as South East Sulawesi and East Nusa Tenggara.

This research is aimed at describing and investigating (1) language features including language choice, lexical and grammatical features of Balinese used by Balinese trans-migrants in their multi-domain interaction, (2) Balinese language maintenance comprising usage patterns, language attitude and inheriting system of the Balinese by the Balinese trans-migrants in Lampung, and (3) implementation of language policy in Lampung province.

## **2. Research Method**

The philosophical basis of this research is phenomenology which tries to uncover the phenomena of Balinese (trans-) migrants' sociolinguistic life based on their perspective without any standardization and limitation. This research is a descriptive-ethnography field research. In Lampung, there are six pioneering (trans-) migrants villages which were chosen as field sites, they are located in three different regencies. These six villages at the same time serve as the main destinations for Balinese (trans-) migrants. The three villages -

Rama Gunawan, Rama Dewa, and Rama Nirwana- are situated in Central Lampung regency; two villages Toto Mulyo and Mesuji are located in Tulang Bawang regency; and the last one is Rejobinangun Raman Utara village which is located in East Lampung regency.

The data of this research were in the form of spoken data, written data, and researcher's language intuition. Spoken data were collected from the (trans-) migrants' real life through participative observation, unstructured interview, and documentation. Written data were collected through questionnaire. Researcher's language intuition was used because the researcher is the native speaker of Balinese. The collected data then were analyzed through several steps, namely transcribing, identification, reduction, presentation, classification, and drawing conclusion.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

The results of analysis are presented in line with the specification of the problems and the steps of the analysis. The results of analysis can be elaborated as follows.

#### **3.1 Language Choice of the Balinese Transmigrants in Lampung**

In general, there are three languages spoken by the Balinese transmigrants in Lampung. They are Balinese, Indonesian, and Javanese. Significantly dominant is Balinese in Central and East Lampung regencies as used for interaction in the domains of household, intimacy, religious activities, and arts. Meanwhile, in the working domain, the use of Balinese, Indonesian, and Javanese is evenly balanced. The tendency to accommodation is on the domain of intimacy because on this domain the interlocutors come from different residents and ethnic affiliation due to the multiethnic composition of Lampung population.

Unlike in the Central and East Lampung regencies, in the Tulang Bawang regency, Javanese becomes very dominant language used by the Balinese trans-migrants for their interactions in the household, intimacy, and working domains.

The language choice patterns by the Balinese trans-migrants in Lampung in various verbal events—even including verbal events sensitive/suspect to Balinese usage such as dreaming, praying at home, quarrelling, and traditional storytelling—are greatly mixed with Indonesian and Javanese usages. It tells us that the proficiency and usage of those languages has been mentally, emotionally, and psychologically entrenched deeply in the mind of the trans-migrants.

### **3.2 Language Features of the Balinese Transmigrants in Lampung**

In general, it can be said that there is a decreasing exposure towards Balinese language due to limited facilitation of domain of language use. It resulted from high frequency of contact with non-Balinese ethnic. The proficiency of the transmigrants, especially children, in using Balinese—either in terms of writing or pronunciation—has undergone devaluation. There is a differentiation of understanding of *alus* vocabulary between Balinese in Bali and Lampung. It results from the limited knowledge of the vocabulary and extensive influence from Javanese language. For example, based on questionnaire of lexical items, the word *buntut* and *iwak*, and *ulo*. The word *ulo* *alus* vocabulary but it has got an influence from Javanese language. There is a change of phoneme [a] becomes [o] from word *ula* [ulə] becomes words *ulo* [ulo].

In relation to the spoken usage, adults can still recognize and use proper Balinese speech levels in their communications. Nevertheless, it is unlikely for the youths and kids. Their proficiency in the Balinese speech levels is noticeably low. This is as a consequence of the lacks of exposure towards Balinese language in addition to the usage complexities of the speech levels themselves. Logical consequence for such fact is the emergence of more neutral common variety usage. The Balinese trans-migrants' proficiency in Balinese is reflected in the comprehension differences predominantly the high register/refined Balinese. The Balinese trans-migrants believe that there are other than those refined Balinese words commonly used in their everyday interactions.

Based on the observation, socio-culturally, in lexical level there appears a concept of differentiating between *KITA* and *DIA*, which are considered as asymmetries form. *KITA* refers to and is related with Balinese trans-migrants and everything associated with them with all their cultural aspects. Meanwhile *DIA* is everything associated with non-Balinese, in this context is Javanese trans-migrants. It refers to their attitude, behavior, and adaptation which are not related to Balinese Hindu. It is on this level that an understanding and awareness of multiculturalism ethic have to be emphasized.

Balinese trans-migrant in Lampung is bilingual community. In general, it is said that every bilingual who does not have a balance level of mastery of the languages their repertoire, they will commit interference. It is such a phenomenon that occurs in Lampung. The discussion of interference comprises of phonological and morphological interference.

Based on the analysis from the questionnaire, it is found that there are differentiations in writing of such vowels as: [a] into [o] as in the word *teka* [təka] pronounced as [təko], word *ia* [iya] as [iyo]; [i] becomes [e] as in the word *jait* [jait] pronounced as [jaet]; and [u] changes into [o] in the words as *belus* [bəlus], *gugut* [gugut], [ikut], *jagur*[jagur], *ulung* [ulung], *labuh* [labuh] to be pronounced as [bəlos], [gugot], [ikot], [jagor],[ulong], [laboh] respectively. It can be concluded that there are changed from low vowels to middle vowels and from high vowels to middle vowels.

Based on the data, there are also found some patterns of word formations. The formation of new words is the combination of Indonesian and Balinese base with Balinese and Javanese affixes. The words result from morphophonemic processes.

#### **a. nasalization in < η - + base> dan < η - + -in>**

Based on the data, base form that can be attached by prefix η- is verb, adjective, and noun base.

example:

*Ia matakon ajak Dewa Indra dija Drupadi, Nakula, Sahadewa, Arjuna dan Bima. Indra njawab yen konyane ada di neraka.*

' He asked for Dewa Indra where were Drupadi, Nakula, Sahadewa, Arjuna and Bima. Indra answered that they all were in hell'

The word *njawab* on sentence (1) derives from the word *jawab* (Indonesian) which is a verb attached by prefix *nj-* becoming *njawab*. The morphophonemic rule should be *nj-* becomes /ny/ if it is preceded by /c/, /j/, and /s/ and these consonants are assimilated. However, it is not the case here. The consonant /j/ is not assimilated. It can be assumed that there is interference from nasal prefix pattern of Javanese. The use of word *njawab* shows that there is interference Javanese nasal construction to the use of Indonesian lexical item.

**b. <ma- + dasar>**

Based on the data, there are found some word that are formed with the pattern of *ma-* + base.

example:

Sampai saat ini I Kambing *mabuntut* pendek bertanduk.  
' Recently I Kambing has short tail and horn'

The word *buntut* is Javanese word which means 'ekor (tail)'. This word get Balinese prefix *ma-*. The prefix *ma-* does not change if it is attached to base initialized with consonant. It functions to derive verb with the meaning 'having as stated on its base'. Therefore *mabuntut* has a meaning *memiliki buntut/ekor* 'having tail'

**c. <dasar + -ne>**

On the data there are also found the use of suffix *-ne* on the process of word formation.

example:

Sebagai *gantinne* Yudistira ia angkat pangeran Parikesit.  
' Sebagai pengganti Yudistira, ia mengangkat Pangeran Parikesit'  
' He chose Parikesit Prince to replace Yudistira'

The word *gantinne* derives from the base *ganti*. It is Indonesian word. It is attached with Balinese suffix *-ne*. This suffix does not change if it is attached to base ended with consonant. In standard Balinese this suffix has the form *-nne* as allomorph if it is attached to the base ended with vowel.

The phenomenon above shows that Balinese trans-migrants as the speakers of Balinese language are very accommodative to the influence of the surrounding languages,

such as Javanese and Indonesian. The word formation processes also indicates that there is mutual interference in the level of lexico-grammar and morphology.

There are also a high occurrence of code-switching and code-mixing in Lampung. The code-switching takes the form of situational and metaphorical code switching. The code-mixing occurs in phrase and word level. The languages that are code-mixed are Balinese, Javanese, and Indonesian.

### **3.3 Language Maintenance by Balinese Transmigrants**

After the transmigration program has run for more than five decades, Balinese language is considered to be well-maintained. Interrelated factors supporting the condition are (1) the use of Balinese in the important domains, i.e. household, religious life, and art performances; (2) the transmigrants' strong loyalty and great pride in Balinese cultures as well as language; (3) separated settlement from non-Balinese people; (4) supporting socio-politico and religious conditions, for instance the existence of *Khayangan Tiga* temples, *subak*, and other groups (*sekaha*) in the villages. (5) adequate institutional supports from, to say some, *PHDI* and *WHDI* having active role recently, mass media, such as BALI TV, as social institutions reflecting and introducing the life of the transmigrants' origin; and (6) intensive and easy contact to the original land in this modern era with the help of land, water, and air transportations, as well as the entrance of people and stuffs from the original land, which still holds their Balinese identity, such as religion and art teachers, Hindu priests, ceremonial stuffs/equipments, dance, shadow puppets, and Balinese traditional instrument from VCD.

In connection with the transmigrants' language attitude. The study reveals that there are positive attitudes towards Balinese language. The transferring and mastery of the language as the mother tongue of the Balinese ethnics in Lampung run informally, meaning that Balinese language is not taught at school but is integrated in the Hinduism subject. Balinese language and inscription subject themselves are taught in an informal way at *pasraman* (religious camp) in Lampung.

### 3.4 Language Policy in Transmigration Area

Balinese language as both mother tongue and local language has a strong foothold in the law as stated in Chapter XIII of Article 32 paragraph 2 of 1945 Constitution, stating that: the State respect and preserve local languages as national wealth. In addition, in Bali as the area of use of Balinese language, the language has had a local legal status, i.e. The Local Regulation of Bali Province number 3 of 1992 on Balinese Language, Literacy and Literature. However, the existence of local languages including Balinese in migration areas, particularly in Lampung Province has not been regulated as of its legal status.

In Lampung Province, there is a pronunciation reform (codification) because of interference from Javanese and Indonesian languages. The low mastery of younger generations and young children towards the speech levels of Balinese in relation to the increasingly reduced exposure to the Balinese language and the complexity of the use of speech levels itself leads to the development of more neutral varieties in Lampung.

Since 1951, UNESCO has recommended the use of mother tongue as the language for education. However, in Lampung, Balinese Language is not taught in schools, but it is usually inserted in Hindu religion lesson. The language and Balinese script teaching itself is conducted in non-formal institutions such as *pasraman* in Lampung. It is due to the limited availability of skilled teachers in teaching Balinese language at school and in non-formal institutions such as *pasraman* in Lampung. The absence of the Balinese language textbooks also poses a problem for the teachers and students to obtain adequate materials for Balinese language lesson.

In Lampung, language prestige planning on Balinese Language has also been introduced through the elite Balinese trans-migrants group in Lampung. What is meant by elite are those among other religious leaders, government officials, civil servants. Main figures among migrants, such as: *Kelian*, *sekeha chairman*, *priests* have also begun to use Balinese language in formal occasions such as community meeting or religious discourse.

#### **4. Novelties**

Based on the analysis and review of previous literatures, some novelties found as follows:

- 1) The pattern of language choice of the Balinese trans-migrant community in Lampung in various languages events is greatly mixed with Indonesian and Javanese languages, including language events which are sensitive to the use of Balinese language as dreaming, praying at home, fighting, and telling traditional stories.
- 2) The ability of the migrants in using Balinese language, especially the children, has been devalued both in grammar and spelling. The mastery of Balinese speech levels of younger generations and children is very low. The logical consequence of the fact is the development of the use of a more neutral common register. Degradation of mastery concerning the lexicons of Balinese trans-migrants in Lampung (particularly children) can be generalized to mainly occur on words categorized as greeting forms, activities, and quality and condition.
- 3) The linguistic characteristics spoken by Balinese trans-migrants in transmigration area in Lampung are marked by a quite high occurrence of code switching between Balinese, Javanese, and Indonesian, and mutual interference in the form of morphological interference of word formation processes with base derives from non-Balinese language.
- 4) The trans-migrants have a positive attitude towards Balinese language. Inheritance and mastery of language as a native language of the ethnic of Bali in Lampung take place informally.
- 5) The appropriate model in the maintenance and development of Balinese in migration areas is needed, that is, through government policy product formed by mixed approach. This approach is suitable for use in transmigration areas. The mixture form of two approaches: top-down and bottom-up can accommodate local issues faced without leaving the rules set by the government. For the purposes of coaching and development

of local language and literature, Local government of Lampung Province should also pay attention to the life of local languages existing and living in Lampung by taking into account the aspect of multiculturalism and especially its use as a language of instruction in schools at the elementary level (kindergarten and elementary school). By bottom-up, the speech community is also obligated to use their mother tongue, especially for children during pre-schooling.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

From the data analysis on the language choice of Balinese transmigrants in Lampung Province, it can be concluded that.

- 1) The use of Balinese language by Balinese trans-migrants in their interactions in various domains in the districts of Central and East Lampung is still dominated; In Tulang Bawang regency, the choice on the use of Javanese is dominated for Balinese transmigrants in communicating within family interaction, intimacy, and work. The pattern of language choice within the Balinese trans-migrants community in Lampung in various languages events is greatly mixed with the use of Indonesian and Javanese languages, including the language events that are sensitive to the use of the Balinese language. Other linguistic characteristics emerging from Balinese transmigrants' speech at transmigration areas in Lampung are 1) socio-culturally there is ethnic identification in the lexical level by means of pronominal usage of KITA and DIA, 2) phonological and morphological interference, 3) high occurrence of code switching and code mixing between Balinese, Javanese, and Indonesian.
- 2) The condition of the Balinese language maintenance in transmigration areas in Lampung province is quite well. Balinese Transmigrants have a positive attitude towards Balinese language. The Inheritance and mastery of the language as a mother tongue language of the ethnic of Bali in Lampung take place informally.

- 3) In terms of policy orientation of the regional language, focus is mainly given to the maintenance and development of language and literature of Indonesian and Lampung language. As for the existence of other local languages in the province, the process and pattern of the development have not been given special attention to.

## 5.2 Recommendation

The existence of local languages, including Balinese, in the area of migrants needs a proper attention from the local government considering these speakers have great potential in maintaining the existence of the language. To guarantee the legal status of the languages, it can be recommended to local governments of Lampung province in order to have Regional Regulation to regulate the presence of the local languages, including Balinese, which exists and develops in the area.

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