

THE USE OF SUNDAHESE ON IMPERATIVE SENTENCES FROM PARENTS TO CHILDREN

Sonya P. Suganda
Departement of Linguistics, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia
sonya.puspa@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In the life of every individual, it can be almost assured that he/she grew up in a specific linguistic environment. The language he/she acquired came from his/her closest environment since his/her childhood, which he/she then uses in his/her daily life throughout his/her adolescence. This language will then turn into his/her native tongue. Even so, there are many occurrences where a person grows up in two different languages. This normally happens to children of bi-national marriages or people who live in a region where both the national language and a local language are equally present.

The paper is based on the writer's personal experience, who grew up in two different languages, namely *Bahasa Indonesia* (Indonesian) and Sundanese. To her, Indonesian is a more dominant language because it has a wider area of usage. Sundanese is only used in her family and with her closest friends, and in a very specific context, i.e. while making casual conversations. The usage of Sundanese is also very restricted. The communication in Sundanese is mainly initiated by parents, delivered from parents to children, and not vice versa. The context in which the parents use Sundanese is only while producing imperative sentences, and not for conversational purposes.

This language phenomenon can be examined through various perspectives in linguistics, ranging from the perspective of language acquisition, dialectology, to sociolinguistics. This paper will examine the data using theories of sociolinguistics from Löffler (2015) on functiolect (language usage based on its function). The objective of the paper is to further classify the so-called “daily language” ‘*Alltagsprache*’, as one of the forms of functiolect. Qualitative approach is used in this paper, and the data were based from the writer's personal experience that was gathered from the familial environment of the writer.

Keywords: native language/tongue, Sundanese, imperative sentences, functiolect.

INTRODUCTION

A child who grows up in a normal environment will learn a lot from his or her parents. Good parents would certainly condition the home environment to ensure that their children can learn and obtain the necessary knowledge they will need for their future. Learning in this case is not only limited to that in the sense of learning to walk, to run, to hold objects or to perform kinetic activities. Learning in this regard is also related to language, namely the acquiring of one's mother tongue.

The process of acquiring one's mother tongue comprises several stages. Based on our own experience, a child of 0-6 months old would initially communicate by making sounds. In the subsequent stage (6-10 months), a child will communicate using words. As a child grows bigger, the form of language produced will be increasingly complex, and eventually he or she will properly master his or her mother tongue. The process in the acquiring of one's mother tongue works alongside the cognitive development process or referred to as *Maturation* (Roche 2008: 108)

In reality, we know that a person often has more than one language as his or her mother tongue/s. When we ask a person “*What's your mother tongue?*” and we expect a spontaneous answer, more than often the answer does not come easily. In a country such as Indonesia, for example, where regional languages are used in daily life in addition to Indonesian being an official language, growing up in two or three different language environments is not an unusual phenomenon. For Indonesians who do not live in the capital city, it is normal for parents to also teach and accustom their children to regional languages since their early age.

The same happened in my personal life. Being born in Bogor to my parents of Sundanese ethnic group, I grew up in the midst of Indonesian and Sundanese languages in my daily life. With the support of Sundanese from elementary school to high school, I had been increasingly exposed to the regional language. Yet when someone asks me “*What’s your mother tongue?*”, my answer would most certainly be Indonesian. The reason is that subjectively I feel incapable of mastering the hierarchy or *undak-usuk* of the Sundanese.

Sundanese is one of the languages in Nusantara that recognizes language hierarchy or *undak-usuk basa*, namely the ‘language levels’ that are reflected in the use of words based on the determined social hierarchy of the person spoken to or spoken of (Rosidi 2000: 678). Furthermore, Rosidi maintains that there are five levels in Sundanese, namely *basa cohag* or the rude language (used towards animals and in expressing anger), *basa loma* or amicable language (used with close friends), *basa panengah* or middle language (used when one speaks to a person of lower status that is not yet appropriate for the use of *basa loma*), *basa sedeng* or intermediate language (used for oneself or when spoken to a person of the same hierarchy as the speaker), and *basa lemes* or refine language (used to speak to a person of a higher status/ a person the speaker is not familiar with/ used to talk about a person of a higher status) (Rosidi 2000: 679).

The basic concept in this language hierarchy (*undak usuk basa*) is that the person spoken to will determine the register or choice of words to be used in a conversation. With Indonesian, I have sufficient registers when I speak to a professor, to a colleague, a schoolmate, and even to a beverage street hawker. With Sundanese language, my registers are limited to *basa loma*, *basa panengah* and *basa sedeng*.

Below are some examples of the differences in Sundanese choice of words based on the language hierarchy (Kats & Soeridiradja 1982: 7):

Meaning in Indonesian/English	Rude	Medium	Refine
tahu/know	<i>nyaho</i>	<i>terang</i>	<i>uninga</i>
membeli/buy	<i>meuli</i>	<i>meser</i>	<i>ngagaleuh</i>
berkata/say	<i>ngomong</i>	<i>nyanggem</i>	<i>sasauran</i>
lupa/forget	<i>poho</i>	<i>hilap</i>	<i>lali</i>
sakit/ill	<i>gering</i>	<i>udur</i>	<i>teu damang</i>

In my daily life, normally my parents spoke Sundanese not in the entire conversation from the beginning to the end. The dominant language used in my daily life is Indonesian. However, in various occasions, my parents, especially my mother, would insert several Sundanese words or sentences. In a bilingual situation, this phenomenon is referred to as interference, namely the use of an element of a different language by a bilingual speaker individually in a language. Interference may appear in various media, styles, types, and contexts (Kridalaksana 2008: 95). Below is an example of an interference in a daily conversation:

Let us observe the conversation between a mother and her five-year old son (born in the US and grows in a bilingual environment of Indonesian and English):

Mother: “*You have to finish your sayur sop*” (*You have to finish your soup*)

Son: “*But mom, I dont wanna abisin*” (*But mom, I dont wanna finish the meal*)-

Another example:

A conversation between a lecturer and a student who was preparing to attend a conference:

Lecturer: “*Kamu sudah upload makalahmu?*” (instead of using the Indonesian equivalence: ‘*mengunggah*’)

Student: “*Belum bu. Nanti malam ya*”.

The above examples indicate that what matters most in a language is that the person spoken to understands what the speaker tries to convey or the intention of the utterance. Except in the formal language type, if interference occasionally appears in our daily speech, it should be seen as commonplace. In our daily conversation, sometimes the understanding of the intention of the utterance is prioritized over the accuracy of the language grammatically.

Let us revisit the acquiring of my mother tongue in my own experience that led to the question of why my mother inserted Sundanese in her Indonesian conversation, and why she used Sundanese particularly in utterances constituting instructions and prohibitions. It is even more interesting to me when I realize that my siblings and I still remember those instructions and prohibitions in Sundanese even after so many years have lapsed.

METHOD

My interest in the above case urged me to investigate further the interference phenomenon that is related to types of *-lekte* proposed by Löffler (2015). This paper was written using qualitative research approach, and was conducted by bibliographical study.

ANALYSIS

For the purpose of this research, I collected several utterances that had used to be made by my parents, especially my mother, by personally asking and collecting them from my siblings. The obstacles I had during this stage was that some of my siblings had simply forgotten them. I asked them this question “*ingatkah kalian tentang ucapan yang dulu sering diucapkan oleh mamah, yang sifatnya perintah atau larangan, dan dalam bahasa Sunda?*” (Do you still remember the words that used to be uttered by our mother that consisted of instructions or prohibitions in Sundanese?). I received the feedback of this question that I used in making the following classification:

A. Instructions:

- *Ari ngagawean nanaon teh, kudu tarapti geura* (translation: if you do something, you should do it thoroughly)
- *Ari jelema hirup teh kudu muntangan ka Alloh* (translation: human beings must rely on Allah).

B. Prohibitions:

- *Ari ulin teh ulah kancolah teuing* (translation: don't be overly active/move too much when you play)
- *Ari ulin teh, ulah sok kamalinaan* (translation: don't forget the time when you are at play)
- *Ari jadi awewe teh ulah sok raradutan* (translation: as a woman you must maintain neatness)
- *Ari keur kamana-mana, ulah sok cileureun* (translation: you must not lose your focus/concentration when you're on the road).

The above utterances seem to be trivial. However, interestingly my siblings and I still remember them well. There were certainly other instructions/prohibitions in addition to those in the above examples. Somehow those instructions/prohibitions were stuck in my mind and in the minds of my siblings. perhaps because of the content or message they conveyed, or because they were conveyed in Sundanese. Judging by the translation, the messages were not anything special, and were normally dealing with typical activities of children, namely playing.

In the above exposure of instructions and prohibitions in Sundanese, instructions normally contain the word “*kudu*” which means ‘must’ (Tamsyah 2003: 139). For prohibitions, normally the word “*ulah*” is inserted, which means ‘don’t’ or ‘must not’ (Tamsyah 2003: 266). This paper does not only answer the question of “why these instructions/ prohibitions appear in Sundanese?”, but also studies the types of lects involved in those utterances.

According to Löffler, language is divided in two types, namely spoken language (*gesprochen*) and written language (*geschrieben*). This paper studies data obtained from spoken language since the utterances of the parents to their children were delivered directly in person when conversations took place, and were not delivered through any written media. There are seven types of spoken language, namely:

1. sociolect (language variation based on the social group of the speaker)
2. dialect (language variation based on the geographic area)
3. functiolect (language variation based on the function)
4. mediolect (language variation based on the medium)
5. idiolect (language variation based on the individual characteristics of the speaker)
6. situlect (language variation based on the type of interaction and situation)
7. genderlect (language variation based on gender)

The type of lect that matches the above examples of spoken instructions/prohibitions in Sundanese is functiolect, since the form of language used is adjusted to the function of the utterances. The basic concept of functiolect was initiated by Karl Bühler who was known for his Organon model (Löffler 2005: 94). In that work, Bühler maintains that punctuations have three functions, namely representation function (*Darstellungsfunktion*), expressive function (*Ausdrucksfunktion*), and conative function (*Appellfunktion*). In *Darstellungsfunktion*, the relation that is emphasized is that between the speaker and matters or things, whereas in *Ausdrucksfunktion* the aspect of self as the subject of the speaking action is given an important attention. In *Appellfunktion*, the aspect that is emphasized is the relation between the speaker and the person spoken to.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that utterances constituting instructions and prohibitions delivered from the parents to their children are parts or examples of *Appellfunktion*. The parents intend to convey messages to their children that constitute instructions or prohibitions. These instructions and prohibitions were delivered in Sundanese although the conversation took place in Indonesian. It serves as an example of an interference referred to in the Introduction. Based on the area of the appearance, functiolect is classified as follows (Löffler 2005: 96):

1. Daily language. This language appears in daily life. The relation between the speakers is informal and social-collegial.
2. Literary language. This language is used in literary work and is a ‘beautiful language’ that may take the forms of prose, poetry, lyrics, etc.
3. Scientific language. This language is used in science and is scientific by nature.
4. Administration language. The relation between the speaker in this case is authoritarian, and therefore the language used also tends to follow the pattern of such relation. Normally administration language takes the forms of orders or instructions.
5. Journalistic language. This language comprises all types of language as specified above.

Judging by the classification based on the area of the appearance of functiolect, utterances constituting instructions or prohibitions in this paper can be categorized into utterances found in daily life (*Alltag*). The language used is included under daily language that in German is known as “*Umgangssprache*”. Normally people also refer it to “*Gebrauchssprache*” or ‘general language’, “*Zweckprache*” ‘purpose language’ and “*Normalsprache*” ‘normal language’ (Löffler 2005: 96).

According to Löffler (2005: 97), daily life area is a category that relates to social life and is non-scientific. Due to its informal nature, people tend to ignore it as a branch of study in linguistics. Currently, sociolinguistics pursues to conduct scientific studies on this scientific area of “daily” nature. One way is by classifying the characteristics of daily language.

The major culture normally dominates in daily language. Since the official language in Indonesia is Indonesian (*Bahasa Indonesia*), it could be said that the culture or language that dominates in this country is Indonesian. In Jakarta for instance, conversations among the city people are normally conducted in Indonesian. Yet, since there are also quite a number of outsiders that come from other

cities to Jakarta, these people often insert several words in their own regional language in their Indonesian conversation. Löffler refers to it (2005: 97) as “*kleinsträumige subkulturelle Unterschiede*” ‘a minor subculture difference’.

Several characteristics of daily language (Löffler 2005: 99) are namely:

1. The tendency to use short sentences, parataxis [a combination of sentence with sentence, clause with clause, phrase with phrase, or word with word, without any connector (Kridalaksana 1993: 173)], and the use of interjection [the form that cannot be provided with any affix and does not have any syntax with other forms, that are often used to express emotions (Kridalaksana 1993: 95)].
2. The freedom in sentence construction. In this case what matters most is the “result” instead of the “explanation”. For instance, the sentence “*wie warm das ist, der See*” ‘how warm is this lake’. Actually, a correct sentence in German should sound “*wie warm ist der See*”. When a person dips his foot on the lake and feels the warmth in his foot, he would spontaneously think about the warmth. The result is a pleasant or comfortable feeling due to the presence of the sun on that day. This utterance indicates that for Germans what is most important to inform is the warm weather on that day which is not solely due to the lake.
3. In daily conversations, there are utterances that are assimilated, for instance in German “*wir ham*” instead of “*wir haben*”.
4. In the lexical semantics, people often use words that can be used for any context (*Allerweltwort*), for instance “*machen*” ‘to make’, “*tun*” ‘to do’, and “*Ding*” ‘thing’.

In general, Löffler emphasizes that compared to the format of formal language, the typical characteristic of daily language is the casualness (*Lässigkeit*) and its focus on the affective aspect (*Affektbetonung*). This casualness is formed following the pattern of relation of the persons involved, which is casual. Due to the casual relation, no strict or formal language behavior is required in this language. The requirements for the success of daily language according to Löffler (2005: 99) are as follows:

“ein gemeinsames Wissen über die Eindeutigkeit einer Situation und die gemeinsame Erfahrung sowohl der großen Welt Dinge wie der privaten Gefühle”

‘both the speaker and the person spoken to have the same knowledge of a clear situation, and the same experience that is related to concrete things, and personal feelings’.

Based on the above description, it is apparent that there are a number of important aspects of the creation of daily language. Both the speaker and the person spoken to must have the same understanding of the ongoing situation. If one of the persons involved in the conversation makes a mistake in understanding the context, there would be potential obstacles in creating the “casual” conversation, since each person will compete in explaining his or her position or opinion in the conversation. Both parties also have to have the same understanding of the norms or values that apply in the conversation. In a culture, it may be considered impolite to interfere a conversation, whereas in another culture interfering a conversation is considered a sign of interest in the topic of the conversation. These matters contribute to and support the success of a daily language conversation.

It is highly possible to reduce the format of language if the people involved in the conversation meet the above requirements. They no longer need to use long sentences to express their opinions or thoughts. A person can communicate even by “silence”. Being silent does not always mean that a person is reluctant to answer or does not have any answer. Silence may also indicate approval or even anger.

Examples of reduced formats of language due to similar points of view in perceiving a situation are private codes (*familiäre Privat-Codes*) that are used in families (Löffler 2005: 99). No wonder sometimes families have specific formats of utterances that are only found in those families. If they use these codes, they know the background and situation due to the common experience that they share.

Löffler maintains that concrete language realization in daily life differs nationally, territorially, regionally and in groups (Löffler 2005: 99). In the case of my family as an example, I can add a smaller environment, namely family. Daily habitual use of language in a family would not always be the same in other families.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that language has varieties in the manifestation. Language can be rich when it is enriched by the user. A language user who has varied backgrounds turns a language into a highly varied one that leads to formats such as sociolect, dialect, genderlect, politolect, etc. that are quite interesting to study.

Judging by the function, the language format as found in my family constitutes a functiolect as it is essentially closely related to the language function as proposed by Bühler, namely the Appellfunktion. Appellfunktion or conative function emphasizes on the relation of the speaker and the person spoken to, and implies an important demand or instruction the parents intended to deliver to their children.

The form of the use of Sundanese in instruction and prohibition sentences uttered by the parents to the children also constitutes private codes among members of a family. The typicality of the form of utterances is not only found in major language groups, but also in the smallest environment, namely family. The private codes do not always have to be confidential, since when they are uttered in front of other people who understand Sundanese, they will also understand them. However, for children it is an indication of a serious matter when their parents give instructions or prohibitions in Sundanese. Children are not allowed to ignore it as it is considered highly important for the parents and that they intend to convey it to the children. The children in a family form what is referred to by Löffler as “*gemeinsames Wissen*”, namely the same knowledge about a context or situation that they face, that other people do not know.

The use of Sundanese in instruction and prohibition sentences is also a form of subculture in conversations. Culture does not only mean “things that are made” such as arts, literature, architecture, etc., but can also appear in the form of behaviours or ‘*Verhaltensform*’ (Kuße 2012: 25). The said behavior refers to all forms, one of them is language behavior. What is interesting about culture is that through culture we are aware of what is meaningful for ourselves. Through culture, we learn that something is important for us. We realize that one thing is important since the culture states that way. The example provided by Kuße (2012: 30) involves bread. Bread in daily life is considered something common that does not have any deep meaning. Bread is normally consumed for breakfast, and can also be considered a snack. On the other hand, in the Catholic mass, bread is viewed as having a special significance as it represents the body of Jesus.

Likewise is the use of Sundanese in instruction or prohibition sentences. The essence of instructions and prohibitions delivered by parents to children is the intention of the parents to keep and protect their children. For these parents, such important instructions will lose the effectiveness when delivered in Indonesian. Instructions in these sentences are considered so important that the parents, especially the mother, decided to say it in the language that she mastered most, namely Sundanese. By using this regional language, the parents intended to create something of non-language nature (*außersprachlich*), namely an emotional bond between the parents and the children, and a bond of identity being part of the Sundanese community.

REFERENCES:

Kats, J & Soeridiradja, M. (1981). *Tata bahasa dan ungkapan bahasa Sunda*. Bandung: Djambatan.

Kuße, Holger. (2012). *Kulturwissenschaftliche Linguistik. Eine Einführung*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht.

Kridalaksana, Harimurti. (2008). *Kamus linguistik*. Jakarta: Gramedia.

Löffler, Heinrich. (2005). *Germanistische Soziolinguistik*. Berlin: Erich Schmidt.

Roche, Jörg. (2008). *Fremdsprachenerwerb-Fremdsprachendidaktik. 2. Auflage*. Tübingen&Basel: Francke.

Tamsyah, Budi Rahayu. (1996). *Kamus lengkap Sunda-Indonesia, Indonesia-Sunda, Sunda-Sunda*. Bandung: Pustaka Setia.

Rosidi, Ajip (ed). (2000). *Ensiklopedi Sunda. Alam, manusia dan budaya*. Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya.

Biodata:

Sonya Puspasari Suganda
Department of Linguistics, Universitas Indonesia
sonya.puspa@gmail.com
S1- German Studies, Universitas Indonesia,
S2- German as Foreign Language, Kassel University, Germany
Applied Linguistics