Large scale endangerment of Javanese? Assessing enthnolinguistic vitality in an East Java village

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A note on Javanese

- Western Malayo-Polynesian, Austronesian
- 90 million speakers; 10th largest language worldwide
- spoken in Central and East Java, Indonesia (as well as Madura and Banjarmasin, Indonesia; Suriname; New Caledonia; Netherlands)
- Written tradition from c. 700 CE
- Three main speech levels: *Krama*, Madura, Ngoko (High, Mid, Low)
- Culturally centred on courtly cities of Surakarta/Solo & Yogyakarta

Javanese reported as increasingly vulnerable to language endangerment

(Florey 2005; Ravindranath & Cohn 2014)

Language endangerment scenario (Himmelmann 2010) created by:

- Effects of globalization and increased use of English
  - Government language policy
  - ‘Love local languages, use the national language, study foreign languages’ (Mencontai bahasa daerah, memakai bahasa nasional, mempelajari bahasa asing) (Undang-Undang 24/2009)
  - Zent; (2012): English in globalization
  - Viewed as ‘cool’, associated with sophistication, intelligence, prestige, wealth
  - “a place to expand their identities […] beyond the options available in Javanese and Indonesian national spaces” (p.149)

- Increased mobility and changing economic status
    - higher economic neighbourhoods tend to use Indonesian
  - Errington (1998): *Krama* codified by Dutch colonists, but ngoko remains uncodified/standardized
  - tends to the erasure of ngoko

- Pressures from Indonesian
  - Kurniasih (2006): Differences in class & gender in language choices
  - Women; middle class leading shift towards Indonesian
  - 57% middle class girls use only Indonesian (vs. 9% mid.cl. boys)
  - 88% of middle class mothers chose to speak only Indonesian to their children (compared with 39% of middle class fathers)
  - Smith-Hefner (2009): Social attitudes w.r.t. linguistic choices
  - Women gravitate towards Indonesian now & for future: more “participatory” and “relaxed”, allows for closer relationships (akrab)

- Specific loss of linguistic sub-systems: Javanese speech levels
  - Shift away from *Krama* (Errington 1998; Wohlgemuth & Kög 2005)
  - Poejoesoedarmo 2006; Smith-Hefner 2009; Zent; 2012; Setiawan s2012
  - Self-regulation: increasing insecurity of Javanese speakers’ ability to use *krama* ‘correctly’
  - Government policy of Indonesian
    - asymmetric speech level exchange more common; linked to intimacy
    - *krama* used between Javanese speakers who rarely interact; Indonesian inter-ethnically

Results

- Shift away from *Krama*: Difference in age & class
  - Can people in Paciran speak *Krama*?
  - ‘Cuma krama pasaran...iyo, gak...injih, mboten. […]Aliu temenan, jarang seng tao. Lauvek akeh seng amure lowehe tua’ [M31]
  - “Only ‘market’ krama, saying yes/no. For truly refined Javanese, it is rare that people can. More people can who are older.”
  - wong seng guru-guru, wong tuwo-tuwo, terus wong seng biasa [x] lungo nek daerah iyo. Nek wong kene dewe...jarang iso bojo jawo alus. [F26]
  - “Teachers, elderly, and those who travel different places. As for those who live only here, it is rare that they can speak refined Javanese.”
  - Are children in Paciran taught ‘krom’ when they are young?
  - kebanyakan ora... kebanyakan yo wes pelajaran soko sekolahan... dadi... wong nek omah itu hari-hari yo wes bojo iaso [F37]
  - “Most not. Most are taught in school, so at home it’s ‘regular’ Javanese”
  - Observed one mother/5 families consistently use *Krama* with their children

- Shift away from *Krama*: Indonesian as unmarked alternative
  - When do you use those languages?
    - bojo jawo alus patek negeri, dadi kudu ngomong anggo bojo indonesia
    - Nek nganggo bojo...caratua kurang sopan...bodo lek ngasso bojo jawo halas. [F26]
    - “High Javanese is not understood, so I have to use Indonesian. If I were to use everyday Javanese, in my opinion it’s less polite; it’s different than using refined Javanese.”
  - kalau ada toms biyaran...cakapnya bahasa Indonesia [F36]
  - “When there are guests. [I speak... use Indonesian.]”
  - anak e kan ciliik... ciliik-ciliik... dik ulangi bojo indonesi... ben halas [...] nek bojo indonesi kan ra ono toh bojo kasar [F27]
  - “Young children are taught Indonesian so that it’s polite. Indonesian doesn’t have ‘coarse’ speech.”

- Effect of globalization: English viewed as a pathway to success
  - Only higher class can attend university ➔ minority
  - Learning English and Indonesian in kindergarten perceived as positive, but are not necessarily aware of domain shifts in own language use. nek kene bahasa yang digunakan eb miss... wong indonesi... the eb... bahasa indonesi, nomer sji. [F27]
  - “Here the language that is used by Indonesians is Indonesian, number one.”

Conclusions

- The shift towards endangerment also observed in rural areas
  - [1] Younger speakers identify with both Javanese and Indonesian; Global English effect less pronounced, perhaps due to overall lower economic status
  - [2] Increased mobility leads to higher use of Indonesian
  - [3] Pressure from Indonesian as unmarked alternative; Shift away from *Krama* suggests that large-scale endangerment is occurring in Javanese

References