

JAVANESE MAINTENANCE THROUGH THE WEBTOON COMIC *JAMU GENDONG MBOK DE*

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Abstract

Webtoon is an application from Korea which spreads around the world and each country can create domestic comics to be published in webtoon. In Indonesia, webtoon is very popular, especially for young generation. Uniquely, there are some Webtoon comics made by Indonesian comic artists which use regional language or use using mixed Indonesian and regional language. One of them is Jamu Gendong Mbok De comic. Therefore, the writers want to find out how Javanese language is maintained through Webtoon, especially in the analysis of Jamu Gendong Mbok De comic. This study is a qualitative descriptive research with the research subject is taken from Webtoon comic, Jamu Gendong Mbok De and the research object is in the form of conversations in that comic which use Java language or mixed Javanese and Indonesian language. There are 3 (three) findings as the form of language maintenance from that Jamu Gendong Mbok De comic; the use of code-mixing, the use of Javanese moral value, and the use of Javanese speech level.

Keywords : *Javenese; Language Maintenance; Webtoon; Young Generation*

1. Introduction

Javanese language is one of the communication languages used specifically in the Javanese ethnic environment. This language is a social language, which is used to interact between individuals and allows the occurrence of communication and transfer of information. Javanese language is a language used as a daily social interaction in Java, especially in Central Java. The Javanese language is the native language of Javanese society in Indonesia, especially in Central Java, Yogyakarta, East Java, and the surrounding area.

In its position as a regional language, Javanese language has functions as (1) the

symbol of regional pride, (2) the symbol of regional identity, and (3) the means of communication within the family and the local community

(Khalim in Tubiyono,2017). Javanese language has the same right as Indonesian. This is in accordance with the explanation of the 1945 Constitution which mandates the regional language (Javanese) will be respected and maintained by the state, including by central government or region (Alwi, 2000). Therefore, the Javanese young generation should maintain their language for the sake of continuity.

The Javanese language that used to be a great language, as time went on, its use decreases. Nowadays, young people in

Java, especially those who are still at school age, mostly do not master the Javanese language. This can be caused by the influence of various foreign cultures and the flow of information that goes through various means such as television, internet, and other media.

The development of an increasingly advanced era requires the public to obtain information easily and quickly that can be accessed online. Smartphone is already owned by almost everyone in all ages. There are several positive impacts of smartphone use for the users, such as: a) facilitating to access the information widely and quickly, b) facilitating communication, especially if it is used to create discussion forum, c) improving knowledge insight because of its easiness to find information. In this modern era, smartphone is not only as a means of communication but the smartphone also provides other sophisticated features, such as games, chat, and facebook.

One of the growing smartphone features is LINE. LINE is a free instant messaging application that can be used on many types of gadgets. By using the Internet network, LINE users can perform activities such as sending text messages, sending pictures, video, voicemail, and more. LINE was first released in June 2011 and is still popular until now.

One feature that can be enjoyed by teenagers through the LINE application is Webtoon. Webtoon is a free online comic that can be accessed by smartphone users to get interesting comic stories, including Indonesian comics. Webtoon continues to release on a set schedule and allows webtoon fans to read new and various comics every day for free.

Uniquely, there are some Webtoon comics made by Indonesian comic artists which use regional language or use using mixed Indonesian and regional language. The comics include *Komik Lieur* (using

mixed Javanese-Sundanese), *Jamu Gendong Mbok De* (using mixed Indonesian-Javanese), *Soekirman: Ramadan in Kampung Halaman* (using more in Javanese), and Dracko's Diary which uses Javanese script (*aksara Jawa*) for swearing. Therefore, the writers want to find out how Javanese language is maintained through Webtoon, especially in the analysis of *Jamu Gendong Mbok De* comic.

1.1 Theoretical Background

1. Language Maintenance

Attempts to maintain a language so as not to experience a shift is not easy at this time. This is because the increasingly easy language contact due to high population mobility. Therefore, it is required a careful planning to deal with the problem. Planning is a policy of giving consideration both conceptually and politically, to cultivate language problems at the national level in order to survive or develop. The language wisdom is a national principle. The policy is in the form of planning how to maintain, nurture, and develop a language in accordance with the function of language in the region.

Indonesia has so many regional languages which are trying to survive. They have right to be maintained and developed, same as the national language, Indonesian. However, it is not an easy thing to do because Indonesia upholds its national language as the unifying language of all Indonesian tribes.

It can not be denied that regional language has its own characteristic that shows how the region develop. It shows the cultural value that save its local wisdom. One of the maintained regional language is Javanese. Javanese has its own customs, both in verbal and non-verbal. The verbal customs, expressed by the language, has unique characteristic. It has

three levels of language, *ngoko* (the lowest), *krama madya* (the middle), *krama hinggil* (the highest). Javanese has those three levels to respect the recipients. Therefore, the use of each level depends on to who the speaker talks to. This uniqueness can not be substituted when the speaker speaks in Indonesian, because it will not get the sense.

Based on the explanation above, people need media to maintain the language. One of them is social media. Many young generations use social media to communicate in their daily life. It does not close the opportunity to get influences from outside of the environment, in the form of culture and language. So that, social media itself needs to have an effort to maintain the culture and language, one of the way is by publishing comics using regional language, just like what some comics did in Webtoon.

2. *Jamu Mbok De*

Written by Yoga Danu with some help from his team (Doni Kudjo as illustrator, Reza Aditia as IT staff, and Ilik Sas as strategy consultant), *Jamu Mbok De* is one of comics published in webtoon and it belongs to webtoon challenge comic. This comic was published since December 3, 2015 until September 5, 2016. The total episodes are 24, and it is not continued until now without any confirmation from the author.

This comic tells about the daily story of a woman who sells herbal drink (*jamu*) when people have forgotten about the benefit of *jamu* itself. Bringing Javanese atmosphere, this comic tries to maintain not only the culture, but also the language. Franz Magnis Suseno (1983:1) said that the peculiarity of Javanese culture lies in the extraordinary ability of its culture to be buffeted by other cultures but persist in its authenticity. It can be said that this comic is an effort to maintain the culture by combining the traditional and the modern one. There are some

characteristics shown in this comic as the form of efforts, such as:

a. *Jamu* (herbal drink)

Jamu is a traditional medicine made from natural heritage that has been passed down in a declining way from generation to generation for health. Most people consume *jamu* because it is believed to give a big enough contribution to health both for the prevention and treatment of a disease or in terms of maintaining fitness, beauty and improve body stamina (Shinoda, <http://biofarmaka.ipb.ac.id>, accessed on July 19, 2017).

In *Jamu Mbok De* comic, *Simbok* (the woman) sells the *jamu* by carrying it on her back and she walks from village to village. She makes many kinds of *jamu*, such as *jamu kesedihan* (for sadness), *jamu kebahagiaan* (for happiness), *jamu anti galau* (for confusion), *jamu anti alay* (for people who act too much), etc. She believes that her *jamu* can heals any kinds of diseases, both physically and mentally.

b. *Kebaya* and *Jarik* (Javanese Traditional Clothes)

Kebaya is Javanese women's traditional clothes that usually consists of *kebaya* (for the top), *jarik* or *tapih* (long cloth), *kemben* (as the belt), and *konde* (hair decoration). The character of *simbok* in this comic wears those kinds of clothes as her daily dress and it shows that she still maintains Javanese traditional culture.

The readers' responses vary and mostly talks about *jamu* and Javanese language. The way they react shows that this comic interests them so much, besides because of its story, also because of its culture. Many said that most people had forgotten about Javanese traditional culture because of the

advanced technology. Therefore, this comic reminds them that Javanese culture and language still exist.

2. Research Method

This study is a qualitative descriptive research with the research subject is taken from Webtoon comic, *Jamu Gendong Mbok De* and the research object is in the form of conversations in that comic which use Java language or mixed Javanese and Indonesian language. The technique of data collection is using documentation method. Documentation technique is used to find data about things that have been determined, by using this method, the writers can use free sentences.

The data collection technique starts from collecting data from the conversations in comics by using documentation technique, then the writers analyze the data. After the analysis, the data are identified and classified according to the form of its language maintenance. The instrument used in this research is laptop and cellphone. The data analysis is using discourse analysis.

3. Findings and Discussion

Language is formed by rules that should not be violated in order not to cause interference and damage the communication. The recipient and sender of the language must master the language, so that communication can be done well (Wati, 2013: 24).

3.1. Language Maintenance by Using Code-Mixing

Indonesia is known as a multicultural country where the society is also multilingual. They speak more than one language. Their local language is their first language and Indonesian is their second language. In communicating with others, they sometimes mix both

languages. In linguistics field, this condition is known as code-mixing. According to Bokamba via Ayeomoni (2006: 91), code-mixing is the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from a co-operative activity where the participants, in order to infer what is intended, must reconcile what they hear with what they understand.

It means that in the process of communication both spoken and written, people need to use both code to achieve an understanding. For example in *Jamu Mbok De*'s case, the setting of the story is in Java, which its local language is Javanese. In the other hand, the target reader of this comic is not only Javanese. This is why code mixing between Javanese and Indonesian cannot be avoided.

There are several reasons why code-mixing can occur in both sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors. Ansre (1971), Bamgbose (1971), Cheng & Butler (1989) via Ayeomoni (2006: 91) stated that it happens because of bilingualism or language contact that results in lexical borrowings. Other causes, based on Kachru (1989), and Kamwangamalu (1989) via Ayeomoni (2006: 91), include modernization, westernization, efficiency, professionalism and social advancement. Knowing the fact that the use of Javanese decreases day by day due to modernization, an effort to maintain this language needs to be done. Code mixing is one of the ways to do it. If Javanese is the only language used in the process of communication where the use of Javanese decreasing, there will be no mutual understanding.

Another opinion why code-mixing happens is that as intra-group identity (Gumperz, 1982 via Ayeomoni 2006: 91). The writer of the comic tried to maintain the existence of Javanese as the identity of

Java by using it in a comic. However, knowing that Javanese people nowadays no longer use Javanese frequently, he used code-mixing in it. In order to make people understand, the writer also put the translation of the Javanese under the utterance.

The dialogue that shows code-mixing in the comic are:

a. Word

Mbok De: “*Ayo duduk sini sambil ngaso**” (*istirahat*)

In that dialogue, the writer used one Javanese word, *ngaso*, which means “break” or *istirahat* in Indonesian. The word is quite easy to remember and to pronounce that once again will make people more familiar with Javanese and in long term will use it for communication.

b. Phrase

Writer: “*Biar kelihatan lucu gitu lho, Mbok karepku** (*inginku*)

The writer mixed one Javanese phrase in that dialogue. The word mixed in that dialogue is also a familiar phrase from Javanese that derives from two words, *karep* and *aku* which means “what I want”.

c. Clause

Mbok De: “*HP mu itu kan bisa kamu urus nanti, toh HP mu ora bakal keluyuran nengdi- nengdi to nduk** (*Lagian HP mu juga ga bakal kemana mana*)

In this dialogue, the writer used code mixing, Indonesian and Javanese. By reading that dialogue, people will first understand the situation because it is stated in Indonesian and what happened in that situation, which is written in Javanese, was also well explained by the translation in * sign. People who read the Javanese code will understand and familiar with the diction written in the comic in this dialogue. In English, the dialogue means “*HP mu itu kan bisa kamu urus nanti, toh HP mu* (You can play with your phone later, in fact your phone) *ora bakal*

*keluyuran nengdi- nengdi to nduk** (doesn't have wings to fly).

3.2. Language Maintenance by Javanese Moral Value

The use of Javanese language in cultural context is a good way of maintenance. Javanese language and culture are *loro-loroning atunggal* (two becomes one) which should be mastered. The Javanese culture that shows its politeness, friendliness, and peacefulness should be balanced with the application of its language.

Actually, people have done some efforts to maintain Javanese language and culture by conducting some traditional competitions every year, which are usually to face Independence Day on August 17. If these activities are conducted continuously, Javanese culture along with Javanese language will be developed.

In *Jamu Mbok De* comic, the writers found some conversations that contain Javanese value, both in the form of songs and proverbs. Besides, the character *Simbok* is displayed as a wise person who always give *wejangan* (suggestions) to other people for the sake of their goodness. Her *jamu* (herbal drink) is also displayed as a medicine to cure people's feeling when they feel sad, dissappointed, miss someone, and etc. The data below will explain about how *Jamu Mbok De* tries to maintain Javanese language from local wisdom.

a. *Wejangan* (suggestion from older person)

Javanese elderly likes to give *wejangan* to younger people, such as their children or their grandchildren. In Javanese culture, *wejangan* has deeper meaning than ordinary suggestions or advice, because it contains Javanese cultural value that should be implemented in younger people's lives so that they do not influenced by outside factors that can damage their culture. These are the

examples of *wejangan* as seen in *Jamu Mbok De*:

1) Mbok De gives *wejangan* to her son
 “**Sakjane** kebahagiaan itu bisa kita ciptakan sendiri, pengaruh orang lain pasti ada, Cuma hanya beberapa persen saja. Jadi buat apa kita khawatir dan bersedih.” (Actually, happiness can be created by ourselves, there must be some influences from other people, but it is only few per cent. Therefore, there is no use to be worried and sad.)
 (Jamu Gendong Mbok De eps. 1)

2) Mbok De gives *wejangan* to Iyem, the young woman who are separated from her husband.

“**Kamu sing sabar yo Yem. Selalu berdoa untuknya.**” (Be patient, Yem. Always pray for him.)

(Jamu Gendong Mbok De eps. 3)

3) Mbok De gives *wejangan* to Bejo, the young man who is desperated and needs support.

“**Tidak semua kebahagiaan itu dicapai dengan mulus. Ada saatnya kita belajar, ada saatnya kita berhasil. Kabeh ono titik wancine.**” (Not all the happiness can be pursued easily. There is time when we have to learn. There is time when we are successful. There will be the right time for it.)

(Jamu Gendong Mbok De eps. 2)

b. Traditional Song

Javanese is rich of traditional songs that are still maintained very well by the parents. They sang the songs to the little children to entertain or for lullaby, for example *Sluku-Sluku Bathok*, *Bebek Adus Kali*, *Lir-Ilir*, etc. In Javanese, songs contain hidden meaning which actually it is rich of value. Unfortunately, not all the people aware about it. At least, those songs are still sung until now, although they are overlap with the

Indonesian children songs or even English songs. These are the examples of songs as seen in *Jamu Gendong Mbok De*:

1) When Mbok De is going to Paijo’s home, she sings “**Suwe ora jamu. Jamu godhong telo.**” (It is long time not drinking *jamu*, made from cassava leaves.)

2) The opening song in eps. 15 “**Walang kekek, menclok nang tenggok. Mabur maneh menclok nang pari. Ojo ngenyek mas karo wong wedok. Yen ditinggal lungo setengah mati**” (The grasshopper, is stopping in *tenggok*. Then flies again, stops on the rice. Do not mock the women, dear men. If you are left (by the women), you will not be able to live.)

The examples above show the Javanese value through songs. The songs are in the form of traditional poetry which each verse of which consists of two couplets, the first suggests the second by sound or other similarity. The main meaning of that traditional poem is in the last two couplets, for example “Ojo ngenyek mas karo wong wedok. Yen ditinggal lungo setengah mati”, while the first two are the starter that are made by the sound.

c. Proverbs

Beside traditional songs, Javanese is also rich of proverbs, which have good value in them. The proverbs are getting decrease since many people do not use them anymore in their daily communication. People tend to use Indonesian proverbs which are more familiar because they learn about it since they were in elementary school until they were in senior high school. While Javanese proverbs are only taught in Javanese lesson, especially in elementary school. As the results, many people have forgotten about those proverbs. *Jamu Mbok De*

serves some proverbs as the form of Javanese language maintenance.

- 1) As seen as the tagline of Opung (Ojek Kampung), the reader can read clearly "*Alon-alon asal kelakon.*" (Slowly but sure to reach the destination.)
- 2) Mbok De's husband gives *wejangan* to his son by a proverb "*Obah ngarep, kobet mburi.*" (Struggling first before we reach our success.)

The examples above show the Javanese value through proverbs. Javanese proverbs usually consist of unfamiliar words that are not used in daily life. However, the hidden meaning in those proverbs contain Javanese moral value that should be maintained by the speakers.

3.3. Language Maintenance as a Means of Communication

Using language for communication, people must understand what the purpose is, and who the addressee is. It is because the people have to choose the right words to meet their communication purpose. If people choose the wrong words, they will be deemed impolite. In Javanese culture, being polite and showing deference are important, especially when a person talks to older people. Therefore, Javanese is rich of vocabularies which are ranged in several speech levels, such as Ngoko Krama Madya, and Krama Hinggil. A Javanese must master the words in those different speech levels to meet the communication purpose. She/he must also understand when she/he uses a certain word instead of the other.

Unfortunately, these days, young generation of the Javanese prefers to use Indonesian rather than to use Javanese for communication (Farahsani, Jaya, & Rini, 2016: 192). It is because Indonesian is easier to use and Indonesian does not have any speech level. Therefore, Indonesian can be used to communicate to younger, peer and older people without worrying to be deemed impolite or disrespect.

The lack of Javanese use in daily communication is becoming worrying for the language survival. To maintain Javanese, there are several ways to do. One of it is through online comic such as Webtoon. Webtoon is very popular among young generation. Therefore, Javanese maintenance will be easier to hit the target, which is the young Javanese generation, by using the online comic. One of comic in Webtoon that use Javanese is Jamu Gendong Mbok De. Jamu Gendong Mbok De showed several Javanese maintenance aspects. One of them is how Javanese is used in communication to meet the purpose of the speakers. In this case, it relates to how Javanese speech levels are used in the dialogue among the characters.

Speech level means "Replacement of vocabulary with sometimes radically different forms in the different styles associated with different social groups or castes". (Meyerhoff, 2006: 123) the replacement of vocabulary is due to showing politeness or showing respect to other people. In Javanese, to communicate to older people, the Javanese uses Krama Hinggil. To communicate to peer uses Ngoko. The other varieties of Javanese levels are used depending on the situation and the speakers involved.

The dialogue among Jamu Gendong Mbok De showed Javanese speech levels. The speech level that could be found is as follows:

- 1) Krama Hinggil was used to communicate to older people and/or respectable people
Bu Paidi: "... *wah kebetulan simbok rawuh, Paijo murung terus dari beberapa hari lalu*"

Rawuh is a Krama Hinggil word for "come". It shows politeness. It means that Simbok character is considered as older than the speaker (Bu Paidi) and as a respectable person since Simbok might have a solution to Paijo's problem.

- 2) Krama Madya was used to communicate to younger people in certain situation.

Mbok De: “*Sampun maem Le?*”

Mbok De was talking to her son. Sampun is a Krama Madya word for “already”, and maem is child’s speech for “eat”. The use of krama madya word with child’s speech to communicate to younger people showed that the older person was teaching politeness and showing affection to the younger person.

- 3) Ngoko was used to communicate to younger people, peer and to do self-talk.

Mbok De: “*Ncen kitab iki ora mung ngajari meracik jamu warisan leluhur tok... iki soal lelaku urip*”

In this dialogue, Mbok De was performing self-talk. She was talking about the function of a traditional book that she was reading.

4. Conclusion

Javanese language is one of the communication languages used specifically in the Javanese ethnic environment. It used to be a great language, as time went on, its use decreases. This can be caused by the influence of various foreign cultures and the flow of information that goes through various means such as television, internet, and other media.

The development of an increasingly advanced era requires public to obtain information easily and quickly that can be accessed online. One of the applications that can be accessed online is LINE. One feature that can be enjoyed by teenagers through the LINE application is Webtoon. Webtoon is a free online comic that can be accessed by smartphone users to get interesting comic stories, including Indonesian comics. Uniquely, there are some Webtoon comics made by Indonesian comic artists which use regional language or use using mixed Indonesian and

regional language, for example *Jamu Gendong Mbok De* comic.

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