

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Background of the Study

Indonesia is very polygynous. There are many ethnic groups each with its own culture that has its own characteristics. One of the cultural characteristics is language. To this point, Brown (1987: 122) states that:

"A language is a part of culture and a culture is a part of language; the two are intricately interwoven such that one cannot separate the two without using the significance of either language or culture."

Everyday we communicate with other people through language. Whenever and wherever we want to share our feelings and thoughts and give response to what other people say, we use language. This shows that language cannot be separated from human life. Sapir as quoted by Lyons (1981:3) argues that language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols.

Communication can be achieved best through language. According to Halliday (1973) as quoted by Brown (1987: 202), language serves 7 different functions, mainly instrumental function, regulatory function, representational function, interactional function, personal function, heu-

ristic function and imaginative function. In this thesis, the writer deals with the interactional function which is to ensure social maintenance. The interactional function refers to communicative contact between and among human beings that simply allows them to establish social contact and keep channels of communication open. Successful interactional communication requires knowledge of some aspects. One of them is the ability to choose an appropriate level of language.

In real life, not every language has levels. In Indonesia, some regional languages, such as Javanese and Balinese have levels but some others don't.

In this thesis the writer reports the results of the writer's study on the use of Balinese language levels. The main concern is the use of three Balinese speech levels (basa kapara, basa madia, and basa alus) in informal contexts.

A Balinese ought to carefully choose the level of language he is to use. He must use different speech levels when speaking to friends, superiors or people he doesn't know well; otherwise, he might be regarded as impolite. To this point Montgomery (1986:101) says that language is sensitive to its context of situation.

In line with the statements above, Holmes (1992:245) claims that language varies according to its uses as well

as its users, according to where it is used and to whom, as well as according to who is using it. The addressees and the context affect our choice of code or variety, whether language, dialect or *style*."

According to Wayan Jendra (1976:23) the structure of a Balinese community is traditionally based on castes (or *wangsa*). There are two *wangsa* in Bali, mainly: *Triwangsa* (Brahmana, Satria, and Wesia) and *Jaba* (Sudra). A *triwangsa* has a higher status than a *Jaba*. The castes measure one's social status according to his descendance/ heredity. This kind of social differentiation is called social stratification; Trudgill (1995:23) claims that it is a term used to refer to any hierarchical ordering of groups within a society.

Wayan Jendra (1976:26-28) states that hundreds of years ago the Dutch came to Indonesia to exploit its natural resources as well as its inhabitants. To occupy our people they divided them into social classes. It happened also in Bali. To sharpen the gaps among castes, they ordered the Balinese people to use different language levels to other castes. The lower caste people had to use higher speech levels when talking to higher caste people, and the higher ones could use lower speech levels to the lower ones. Here is an example of the situation stated above.

Jaba : "Nawegang ragane jagi lunga kija?"

("Where are you going now?")

Satria : "Icang lakar luas ke Badung."

("I am going to Badung")

Note: 'Badung' is the common name for 'Denpasar'.

The Jaba spoke in 'basa alus' instead of "Jani jagi lunga kija?" ('basa madia') and "Jani lakar luas kija?" ('basa kasar'). The Satria replied in such a way instead of saying "Tiang jagi lunga ke Badung" ('basa madia') and "Titiang jagi lunga ke Badung" ('basa alus'). When the Satria replied in 'basa kasar', it might not hurt a Jaba's feeling because it was alright to use 'basa kasar' to a Jaba.

Knowing status differences among castes was a must for successful communication. Brahmana, the highest caste, was given to Hindu priests and their families. Their names were usually known as: Ida Bagus, Ida Ratu, etc. Satria, the second highest caste, was given to Balinese government officers, such as kings, ministers, and their families. They can be identified by their names, such as: Tjokorda, Anak Agung, I Dewa Ratu, etc. Wesia, the lowest caste in Triwangsa, was for traders or people whose job was in economic. Their names were usually begun with I Gusti. And Jaba was the lowest caste initialed as other Balinese common names such as: Putu, Kadek/ Made, Nyoman, Ketut, etc.

As the situation above has lasted for a long time, it becomes a tradition. According to Sugiarta, the writer's informant, nowadays, however, many Balinese people have a tendency to disagree with the use of Balinese speech levels. They argue that such tradition is not suitable because now people realize that every individual is equal so everybody should be respected whatever he is. However, it is not a simple matter to terminate the tradition immediately. It takes a long time and still many people, especially the olders and villagers, take account of castes in daily life.

Furthermore; according to Sugiarta, the writer's informant, castes according to Wedha are the classifications of duties taken care of by individuals. Someone is called a 'Brahmana' if (s)he works in education or religion field. A 'Satria' is one who is in government or political field. A 'Waisya' is someone working in economic and trade fields. And a 'Sudra' is someone working in employment field.

At this times most Balinese people are not class-related in choosing speech levels to someone but they are more context-related. According to Giles and Powesland (1975:15) class-related speech is the level of speech regarded as the most prestigious variant of the language in a given culture and context-related speech is the level of

speech considered appropriate in certain socially-definable situations, usually the more formal and public, and can usually be found to some degree spoken by all social groups in that culture.

The Balinese people try to apply their speech levels (called *anggah-ungguhing basa*) more properly now. They seem to begin to pay more attention to whom they are talking to and the contexts (where they are talking).

The writer finds it interesting to study the phenomena above because Balinese people should pay attention to the role relationship of the participants and the contexts when talking to someone; otherwise, they are considered impolite. It is said also by Holmes (1992:1) that the way people talk is influenced by the social context in which they are talking. The writer would like to find out what sociological aspects which make Balinese people use different speech levels to others, especially in informal contexts. Moreover; they claim not to see castes as the most important aspect in communications anymore as it happened in the past.

According to Bagus in I Nengah Tinggen (1986:2), Balinese language has three levels, mainly: *alus singgih*, *alus madia (mider)* and *basa kasar*. These three levels are used for communication among Balinese in society. They are the subjects of the study under report.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

With reference to the background of the study, the problem of the study under report is formulated as follows: What possible reasons make Balinese people talk to each other in different speech levels in informal contexts?

1.3 Objective of the Study

This objective of the study is to answer the question stated in problem statement above, mainly: to describe some possible reasons which make Balinese people talk to each other in different speech levels in informal contexts.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study under report should give some contributions to sociolinguistic field, especially for linguistic teachers and students of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University. It is also expected to enrich their knowledge about one of our regional languages, Balinese language.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Realizing how broad the discussion of the study could be, the writer limited the study only on the reasons which make Balinese people talk to each other in different

speech levels in informal contexts.

1.6 Theoretical framework

1.6.1 Theory of Sociolinguistics.

According to Holmes (1992:1) sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society. It is interested in explaining why we speak differently in different social contexts, and they are concerned with identifying the social functions of language and the way it is used to convey social meaning. The writer makes use of this theory because the study under report is in the area of sociolinguistics and this study deals with one of many areas of sociolinguistics - speech levels.

1.6.2 Speech levels

Holmes (1992:245) claims that language varies according to its uses as well as its users, according to where it is used and to whom, as well as according to who is using it. The addressees and the contexts affect our choice of code or variety, whether language, dialect or style. This theory provides the writer some ideas to analyze why people use different speech levels in Balinese communities.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

There are some terms which need further explanation in order to enable the readers to understand when they are reading this study. They are :

1.7.1 "Basa alus singgih (alus sor)".

It is a Balinese language level which is used in formal situation and in attitude of respecting other people concerning to age, social status, etc.

1.7.2 "Basa alus madia (mider)".

It is a Balinese language level which is used to communicate with someone we do not know well or we have just met.

1.7.3 "Basa Kasar (Kapara/ biasa)".

It is a Balinese language level which is used in a very informal situation. The use of this level is usually based on closeness, status similarity, something in common.

1.7.4 Informal contexts.

They are the settings of social interaction where the conversation takes place. They are free from any force of using formal forms. The informal contexts can be at home, on the street, in the restaurant, etc.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction. It gives the readers some explanations about (1) background of the study, (2) statement of the problem, (3) objective of the study, (4) significance of the study, (5) limitation of the study, (6) theoretical framework, and (7) definition of key terms.

The second chapter reviews some literature related to the study under report. It discusses the theories that used in the study and the review of related study.

The third chapter refers to the research methodology. It discusses (1) the nature of the study and its design, (2) the subject of the study, (3) the research instrument, (4) the procedure of the data collection and (5) the procedure of data analyzing.

The fourth chapter is about the data analysis, the finding and the discussion.

The fifth chapter of this thesis writing presents the conclusion and some suggestions concerning the topic under study.