

# Contemporary Javanese Youth in Short Stories

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**Abstract:** High mobility of the youth has intensively exposed them into hybridization which commonly signifies new dimensions of their language. They challenge existing values, social categories and ideologies through their use of vernacular. This may project the contesting sociocultural situations which can stimulate newly deployed contemporary Javanese youth's identity. Therefore, investigating how young people's practices across spaces and the ways these practices are connected to local places or neighbourhoods is significant to do. This multi-dimension research which combined sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology gathered the data from short stories on two Javanese magazines published in 2017-2018. Narrative sequences from the stories were treated as the sociolinguistic landscapes which mirrored the constellations of sociocultural constructions experienced by the youth. The analysis revealed that the youth's life was projected within the academic contexts which reflected the urban atmosphere; romance was vividly told in metropolitan settings, as imagined community. Interestingly, digital literacy became the essential part of the youth's interactions which essentially upgraded the role of Javanese into global social networking. These implicate the pivotal roles of multilingualism awareness and digital literacy language on the youth's communication.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Global linguascape as one of the important aspects of globalization is commonly labelled by by processes of linguistic homogenization. The growing prevalence of English in globalizing communication indicates its homogenization over national even local languages, which may cause its reduced functions or even gradually vanish. However, globalization also generates processes of linguistic hybridization as a result of intensive contacts among the users of the languages due to their high mobility and vast technology innovations. The emergence of popular culture performed in different social media glaringly projects how such hybridization is essentially acknowledged within our daily life.

Similar phenomena also happen within Indonesian context but emerges in different fashions. The sense of hybridization of national language, Indonesian, has influenced the nature of local language such as Javanese. Despite its very rich cultural and values attached to the language and

philosophical dimensions reflected its use, Javanese has also predominantly occupies particular positions which indicate its locality with its unique hybridity. Migration of its users has exposed Javanese into urban spaces which enjoys the nature of globalization within Indonesian cultural contexts. The political position as a local language has been interrupted due to the users' adjustment to the urban life of metropolitan space, which actually in many cases involves globalization. Seen from this lens, Javanese has experienced both globalization and hybridization within Indonesian contexts. The tension between what is locally emergent and what is widely recognized is part of what makes the naming of these contemporary urban styles a very important topic for the study of language ideological contestation (Susilowati 2014; Susilowati 2013). Hence, it highlights the importance of investigating the interactional practices which can directly portray how particular discourse prioritizes certain languages, how hegemonic practices are delivered through the language use, and shared concerns

which may create solidarity among the communities. Seen from ideological point of view, local language often shows more vigorous features and signifies the processes of what is generally called ideological becoming. These ways are not definitely value free as the interactions may be diffused with both national language as well as global cultural expressions, in which ideological constructions take place. Within this particular sociolinguistic landscape, the interactions of the youth's language use and their identity project how they support or challenge existing norms and values which are traditionally acknowledged in innumerable ways. The processes of disseminating globalized norms into local contexts are also embedded with local values which contextualize the norms into local acceptance, as semiotic mobility (Paris & Alim 2017; Blommaert 2010; Coupland 2007; Blommaert 2018; Blommaert 2017). Embedding locality on globality is perceived as natural parts of globalization.

These constructions may be vividly projected into narrative sequences on short stories. Narration sequences naturally are characterized by features of daily life which are constructed in particular orders. Narration may also provide very detailed description how turn-takings take place to picture the flows of negotiated meaning-makings and constructions. Narration of short stories can project real life across time and places (Olmos 2017). The elements of short stories which consist of setting, character, plot, conflict, point of view, and theme commonly reflect, explicitly or implicitly, sociocultural aspects of a particular community (Hubl & Steinbach 2018). In many ways, figurative expressions are intensively employed for delivering messages to the readers. Short stories and other literary works written on any sociocultural setting can be written in any methodological and philosophical points of views, from structuralism to postmodernism (Greaney 2006). This proves how short stories as literary works not only project sociocultural constructions of a community but also represent methodological and philosophical trends. These facts strengthen the statement that narration can be approached across modalities (Lytra 2012) due to its multifaceted rich dimensions.

As the part of realities within community, the youth's life is also socially, culturally, and ideologically constructed. Young Javanese communities own their unique lived experience which occurs within their millennial environments. As the representations of their lived experiences, two Javanese magazines 'Panjebar Semangat and 'Jaya Baya' magazines provide certain sections for

short stories special for and about the youth. The first has 'Cerita Cekak' and the second has 'Romansa', in which each deals with any topic and concerns with the youth's life. The settings, themes and the contexts of the stories are pretty much hybrid in terms of the diverse linguistic features which characterize metropolitan aspects of the youth. Therefore, focusing on young people's linguistic practices across urban spaces and the way these styles or practices are connected to local places.

The previous findings also demonstrate that the young people across different sociocultural sites employ any linguistic resources available to achieve their communicative goals. These young people demonstrate broader understanding which bridges the gap between traditional language contact studies and studies of multilingualism (Harris & Rampton 2011; Lytra 2012). Furthermore, research on contemporary urban speech styles has often, despite its emphasis on people's ability to employ various linguistic resources, focused on the use and development of the 'majority' language in questionnaire varieties or styles built on it (Cha et al. 2017; Garcia & Lin 2017; Thomas 2011; Race 2018; Domnwachukwu 2010; Susilowati 2014). Therefore, it is plausibly significant to investigate contemporary young Javanese in projecting their identity construction within different sociocultural spaces.

## 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 2.1 Multilingual Community

Within this global era, more people tend to be multilinguals. It is really a part of daily life to find people delicately switch from one language to another. The extensive use of communication technology creates borderless area which allows people from different parts of the world interact each other. The nature of communication tends to be 'here and now' as what happens in a particular part can be instantly accessed by people from different parts of the globe. Similarly, travelling from one country to another can be within minutes and hours at affordable fees. The ease of interaction among people opens a wider possibility being a multilingual.

Within Indonesian contexts, multiculturalism and multilingualism have long been a natural practice in daily routine. Indonesia is enriched by at

least 742 local languages owned by diverse ethnics spreading along the archipelago which has put Indonesia as the 26<sup>th</sup> most linguistically diverse country in the world. Despite its multilingual nature, the discussions and needs of multilingual education have just recently become academic concerns and public discourse, especially when it deals with policy makings. Multilingual Education proposed by UNESCO in 2003 opened up greater chance of execution of ME in Indonesia, in the forms of the use of mother tongue in elementary schools, bilingual and multilingual programs across the nation. Today, the ability to shift from one language to another is accepted as quite normal. Bilingualism and multilingualism are a norm in this global village.

However, multilingual can be problematic. It is often seen as personal and social problem. Personally, being a multilingual, especially in some western countries, can be the reason for being looked down because the main stream only gives prestige those who are monolingual of 'high class' languages (e.g. English, French). Wardaugh (1986: p 98) indicates that 'many multilinguals tend to occupy rather low positions in society and knowledge of another language becomes associated with inferiority'. Socially, it can cause loss of a particular language, especially those among immigrants. This, among other, can be the result of a bizarre policy which requires the immigrants to master and use a foreign language in their daily life and wipe out the language the immigrants bring. This kind of policy, later on, derives a methodological implication which strongly urges the avoidance of the use of mother tongue in different contexts.

To a certain extent, multilingual can also lead to diffusion. Certain linguistic features may spread out from one language to another as a result of multilingual situation. Vocabulary and syntactical structures resembles in pidginization and creolization. Within these diffusions, still, the use of particular linguistic features especially vocabulary may indicate a sharp different social class. Within this multilingual community, code switching takes place.

From a sociolinguistic point of view, there are two kinds of code switching: situational and metaphorical code switching. These concepts were derived from Gumperz's and commonly are accepted by sociolinguists (Swann, et al., 2004). Situational code switching is as a shift from one language variety to another which signals a change in the social situation to one in which different norms, interactional rights and relations between

speakers obtain. Metaphorical code switching involves the use of a variety not normally associated with the current social situation and brings with it the flavor of a different situation. Metaphorical code switching has its affective dimension as it may lead to different intentions of what lexically presents (Wardaugh, 1986).

From the previous research, we know that multilingual code switch because of two reasons. First, code switching is related to and indicates a group membership in a particular multilingual community 'such that the regularities of the alternating use of two or more language within one conversation may vary to a considerable degree between speech communities' (Aur, 1998 p. 3). This tends to be a sociolinguistic perspective in a sense that there is a relationship between social and linguistic structure. Secondly, multilingual code switch as they face intra-sentential constraints in the forms of syntactic and morphosyntactic consideration. This is a grammar perspective which may or may not be of universal kind.

The above patterns of code switching, however, create some limitations. Aur (1998) shows that some structures of multilingual speech may be free from both grammar and from greater socio and ideological structures. Two patterns of code switching are then proposed. The first is discourse-related code switching, 'the use of code switching to organize the conversation by contributing to the interactional meaning of a particular utterance' (p. 4). The second is preference-related code switching, also labeled as participant-related code switching, which commonly requires extra conversational knowledge. Theoretically speaking, there is no clear-cut difference between the two because basically particular conversations may regulate discourse-related code switching and at the same time may take on preference-related code switching. Code switching can be also formally differentiated. Swann, et.al. (2004) made a distinction between intra sentential from intra-sentential code switching. The first refers to switches which occur within a sentence while the second is any switch which occurs at the end of sentences.

Code switch is not merely switching from a particular code to another, but it may play a symbolic role. Bhatt (2008) has showed that code-mixing and switching serves as a linguistic diacritic to signal 'difference' among various sectors of the middle class, especially between the English-knowing multilinguals and 'other' multilinguals'. It is further stated that there is a socio-linguistically significant generalization that 'members of speech

communities in vastly different societies use their linguistic resources sometimes to present a social identity, to set boundaries linguistically, to overcome the strong forces of conquest' (p.1). In an Indonesia context, for example, the use of Indonesian is regarded as more neutral and democratic than Javanese when younger Javanese wants to address older interlocutors. The existing three different Javanese speech levels require the young people employ 'krama inggil' or at least 'krama madya' to converse. The speech levels embed the socially stratified utterances with different symbolic role. The symbolic role of code switch can be traced at any medium of communication. Mass media, daily conversations among family members, offices, and schools as well as short stories and any other literary works can reflect the symbolic role of code switching in different ways.

## 2.2 Identity Constructions

Identity shibboleth has constructed extraordinary repertoires for community to interact in virtual domain. The repertoires include any resource people who may reflect on their communication. The repertoires are treated as the significant reflection of what people have acquired for effective communication. Furthermore (Blommaert 2013) argues that such repertoires can be "indexical biographies reflecting the social experiences of people to specific orders of indexicality (exposure, immersion, learning, informal acquisition) and the ways in which such experience reflect the social order and inscribe individuals into a wide variety of group membership". Furthermore, the order of indexicality are collective social phenomena which may drive the collective identity.

Sociolinguistically speaking, collective identity is the main driver guiding the dynamics of dialect. Blommaert argues that dialect is shibboleth for regional identity shared by people inhabiting particular region, currently or in the past; dialect indexes the local and regional (Blommaert 2018). Dialect pertains to change and innovation strongly □□ depends on degrees of social integration; the better people are integrated in the community, the more they will contribute to the innovation of dialect. At the same time, it underscores the importance of looking directly at interactional practice itself (rather than simply treating practice as a theoretical resource for the interpretation of non-interactive, quantitative or media data). In contexts where

dominant discourses prioritize a standard national language and the assimilation of immigrants, counter-hegemonic processes like the cross-ethnic use of originally migrant speech forms are often grounded in shared neighbourhood experience, where solidarities develop from common concerns and activities. Local language ideological discourses are often more robust than this, but close attention to what is hard-to-name and relatively tacit is crucial if we want to understand processes of ideological becoming

Within this particular sociolinguistic landscape, I consider the languageuse of young people and identity work in interaction, especially when the social media concerns. The idea of having online social media as the sociolinguistic landscape does enlarge the space for identity construction which can be themyriad of ways they align with or challenge traditional ethnic and socialcategories and hegemonic language ideologies through their use of standard/vernacular, their stylization practices or through global culturalexpressions, such as hip hop and other emblems of identities. I focuson the commonalities and differences in young people's linguistic practices across urban spaces and the ways these styles or practices areconnected to local places or neighbourhoods.By focusing on young people I am not only convinced by the assumption that itis among youth that languages begin to bend, pressed against the curveof history; but we are also driven by the opportunities and challenges increased mobility pose for adolescents linguistically and socially in ways that point to the future.

The previous findings also demonstrate that the young people in question and across sites employ whatever linguistic resources available to achieve their communicative goals. Furthermore, (Harris & Rampton 2011) argue that these young people are required drawing interalia on their heritage language(s) in interaction, demonstrating that in opting for a broader understanding of young people's language and identity management there is a need to bridge the gap between traditional language contact studies and studies of multilingualism. Furthermore, research on contemporary urban speech styles has often, despite its emphasis on people's ability to employ various linguistic resources, focused on the use and development of the 'majority' language in questionor varieties or styles built on it (e.g. Kern and Selting 2011; Quistand Svendsen 2010).Above all, Susilowati (2016) has revealed that particular group of urban youth has engaged their identity construction within social media which importantly



indicates their significant landscape of their sociolinguistic

### 3 RESEARCH METHOD

#### 3.1 Research Design

In line with the focus of the study, I employed multi-angle dimension in exploring my research focus. At the first stage, I used linguistic anthropology which focuses on the concept of sameness and differences, as well as ideology as the key elements in identity investigation (Ahearne 2012). In addition, the linguistic anthropology deals with the concept of indexicality which provides the contingent social categories of identity indirectly, which is associated with an orientation of on going interactions. Finally, linguistic anthropology is equipped with an indexical process to both cultural background and identity (De Costa 2016; Mirhosseini 2017; Silverman 2004). In addition, the present study also employs sociocultural linguistic approach, which was used for analyzing linguistics features on the language used by Javanese youth. Furthermore, multifaceted Javanese used in short stories methodologically required linguistic dimensions which could accommodate the richness of their language. As the issues of globality, locality and hybridity of Javanese are basically sociolinguistics in nature, this present study also used its principles in understanding how the sense of globalization, localization and hybridization of Javanese was found within its urban space as its sociolinguistic landscape.

#### 3.2 Data Source and Research Instrument

The main data sources of the present study were two nationally distributed Javanese magazines, namely "Panjebar Semangat" and "Jaya Baya". The first magazine was founded by a well-known Indonesian figure Dr. Soetomo on 2 September 1933 in Surabaya. The earlier versions of the magazine had been used as efforts for wrestling from Dutch colonialism. Virtual access to this magazine can be clicked from their web [www.panjebarsemangat.co.id](http://www.panjebarsemangat.co.id) in which the readers could access certain coverage of the publications. Full access to the online versions could only be gained through subscription. The second magazine, 'Jaya Baya', was founded on 1 Desember 1945 but there was no particular information on the founding fathers. Despite the

fact that technology has been used for communicating with the consumers, the content of the magazines were not virtually accessible.

The two magazines provided special spaces of literary sections for their young consumers, ranging from very young aged, teen and early adults readers. However, the spaces for the first two groups of readers were quite limited. Therefore, the present study focused more on the last group of readers and selected the short stories from 'Romansa' of 'Jaya Baya' and 'Crita Cekak' of 'Panjebar Semangat'. The sections concern with the youth's lives in different sociocultural settings and patterns. In terms of the contents, these short stories fulfilled the requirements of literary works (Greaney 2006), methodological matters (Taylor et al. 2016; Denzin & Lincoln 2018), and linguistic considerations (Heller 2011; Harris & Rampton 2011; Ahearne 2012)

For gathering the needed data, the present study subsequently required human as the research instrument as the data were in the forms of written texts, which were not possible to obtain through observations, interviews or any other research instruments. The hardcopy versions of 2017 and January-June 2018 issues were selected considering sufficient coverage and the freshness of the data.

#### 3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The stages of data collection and analysis were simultaneously done in the following fashions. Firstly, all the obtained short stories were read for classifying them in accordance with the theme as the mirror of their sociolinguistic contexts. Different sociolinguistic landscapes could project different cultural frames. Based on this, sociolinguistic contexts might be potentially derived. Secondly, any utterance which indicated representation of Javanese youth's identity construction were taken for further analysis in determining the processes of their identity construction within urban atmosphere. The projections of sameness and differences as well as indexicality were determined for locating the identity construction. As the next stage, the whole contexts of the stories were explored to obtain in what sociolinguistic landscapes the vibrant nature and glocality of Javanese youth emerged for escorting their Javanese identity construction. The results of the above analysis were discussed for justifying the potential propositions. Conclusion and recommendations were made on the basis of the findings.

## 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present study gathered the data from the special sections of two Javanese magazines, 'Romansa' and 'Cerita Cekak' which provided short stories about the youth. There were 72 short stories which were then reduced into 42 short stories potential for further analysis by considering varieties of sociocultural patterns found on settings, plots, theme, characters. The collected data showed that the short stories from the two magazines include quite diverse ranges of topics. The coverage of the topics all concerns with the youth of life, especially on love stories.

The settings of the stories can be categorized into two broad areas, projections of life on academic and non academic areas. Within academic spheres, the stories explore the activities of university life, students' economical problems and students' romances. To project students' academic life, the stories show how university students enjoy struggles to perform their activities for attaining skills and quality as global citizens. Economical problems were rarely taken as the main theme but circulated within other topics or themes. In many ways, social problems were wrapped for endorsement of solving economical difficulties. For non academic areas, the topics were much richer in terms of the settings where the stories took place; the characters travelled from one site to others for narrating their identity constructions in different stages of sociocultural contexts, attached by particular semiotic mobility (Blommaert 2017; Blommaert 2013).

The more detailed analysis revealed that the youth's life was projected within urban atmosphere, which indicates how the youth perceived vibrant surroundings as their imagined community (Dovchin et al. 2018; Paradowski 2015; De Costa 2016). Urban sociolinguistic landscapes were closely associated with metropolitan contexts of big cities, such as Jakarta or Yogyakarta. However, the two cities were characterized by different features. Yogyakarta was described as authentic Javanese, genuinely traditional and undemanding life where people from different geographical areas hunted for higher quality of education. In contrast, Jakarta was described as vibrant metropolitan and globalizing world in which people having sufficient education were seeking for better life. The differences between the two metaphorically functioned as sequenced narration of identity shifting from academic struggles in Yogyakarta to the dynamically challenging and contesting life of Jakarta. The two spaces had clear-cut sociocultural functions which

portrayed the dynamic constructions of the youth's identity trajectory.

The socioeconomic background of the characters might include both the lives of low and middle levels. The low level was associated with unfortunate persons from rural areas having low educational background. This relation, however, did not create a sort of stereotyping as the low people were connected with other positive characteristics, such as humble, highly motivated, and passionate. The middle level was commonly referred to economically stable families who were perceived as the results of long struggles for overcoming their poor life and difficult times. In some cases, being middle class people was more challenging to respond to the needs of lower class people; they were expected to be more tolerant, open mind, and helpful.

In addition, digital literacy became the essential part of the youth. The shorts stories which situated into both rural and urban contexts exposed how the youth performed their digital literacy on their daily interactions with different ranges of interlocutors. Delivering their messages on social media necessitated knowledge and skills of communication technology, especially on the use of gadget and more importantly language styles used on social media. The emergence of code switchings from different languages on their conversations clearly indicated essential role of multilingualism awareness for smoothness of their virtual interactions. This entails other relevant aspects of language use which include communication skills across culture and politeness.

It is interesting to note that exposing different socioeconomic background was posited as the gate for escorting the narration of being Javanese, who were able to speak appropriate speech Javanese levels for different social purposes despite their multilinguality. The data from most short stories highlighted the significant roles of Javanese as a part of their contemporariness; how hard the youth had been accommodating 'others' to be global citizens, they put 'self' as the significant part of their identity narration. From these data, it can be concluded that the youth identity on short stories have been successfully gone through stages of both globalization and localization simultaneously (Linares 2016; Blommaert 2008; Blommaert 2013).

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

From the above discussions, I can conclude several points. First, the narration the youth identity

eventually absorb the vibrant nature of urban spaces. Metropolitan and hybridity of the spaces substantially were treated as the signifiers of globality within Indonesian contexts, which could be treated as the features of the youth's contemporariness. Secondly, putting both academic and non academic settings as the sociolinguistic landscapes have created smooth bridge how the youth contextualized their contemporariness on their surroundings. This indicates cleverness of putting their academic manner within realistic daily interactions, by applying the principles of being Javanese. Thirdly, as the millennial generation, the youth in short stories also projects their digital smartness in delivering their communication across cultures. Being multilingual youth can be beneficial in endorsing them become good global citizen.

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