

Language Maintenance of “*Basa Walikan*” as a Slang by Malang People

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Abstract. The use of *Walikan* or Malangese slang language in daily communication among youth is hard to understand and consequently the local dialect will slowly disappear. This study aims to know why the use of ‘*Basa Walikan*’ as a slang in Malang is rarely used and how to maintain it. This study uses the qualitative method in which the data were collected by doing an observation and interview for people who use *Basa Walikan*. The participants are taken from Malang youth and adult people who still use ‘*Basa Walikan*’ in their daily life. Using narrative analysis by listening to the responses and experiences from the participants. The data were analyzed to respond to the two questions in this study. There are several contexts in which “*Basa Walikan*” is employed differently. To put it another way, the Malangese employed varies depending on the circumstances and locations. For instance, *Basa Walikan* is rarely used in an academic setting, but in a coffee shop, people speak “*ipok*,” which is English for “coffee,” and “*kane*,” which is English for “delicious / good” (used to refer to food / beverages). The findings of this study can be evidence to support the recent development of *Walikan* use in Malang, Indonesia.

Keywords: *Walikan*, slang, Malang, maintenance

1 Introduction

Indonesia has around 700 local languages which vary. According to the data from the language center, the total of local languages in Indonesia is 718 languages. And 90% of its total number spreads in the east of Indonesia. Almost all of the region has its own local language. For example, in East Java we have many local languages which are spoken based on the area. Old people in Malang still use the local language which already existed for a long time. However, there are also local languages which have become extinct. At least 13 Indonesian local languages have already become extinct. To prevent this from happening again, we have to maintain our local language so that it will still be used from generation to generation. For this study, the researchers decided to choose ‘*Basa Walikan*’ as an object because the researchers think ‘*Basa Walikan*’ is rarely used by Malang youth nowadays.

'*Basa Walikan*' is one of the slang languages from Javanese that can be found in Malang, East Java and Yogyakarta, Central Java. '*Basa Walikan*' has its own unique style based on its use. Malang and Yogyakarta have different forms or uses of this '*Basa Walikan*'. In Malang '*Basa Walikan*' is known as '*Osob Kiwalan*'. Nowadays, we can find that people rarely use that kind of slang from the local language. They tend to use language which follows the trend. Especially for youth, they always communicate with each other using language that sometimes is hard to understand. If they are not aware about this, slang from the local language will slowly disappear.

A study [1] gave a result that current development has impacts for every human life sector, and one of them is the local language and collected the data by internet searching and literature study. [1] Studied about the existence of '*Basa Walikan*' as a communication symbol of Gen-Z in Malang. Another study [2] found that by using the Malangese slang language as a representational system, the researchers possibly discover that a cultural difference may occur within the same society where most people share the same cultural values and speak the same language. Masduqi et al. found that '*Basa Walikan*' was a slang language which has a representational system. From those two previous studies, it is known that local language is important and should be maintained by local people. In this case, the researchers try to find out why '*Basa Walikan*' is rarely found in Malang public space and just few people use it. After knowing the reason, the researchers try to give a potential solution to maintain '*Basa Walikan*' so that it will not be extinct like another slang from the local language.

2 Literature Review

There were studies that are related to this topic which discusses *Basa Walikan*. Using the Malangese slang language as a representational system, we possibly discover that a cultural difference may occur within the same society where most people share the same cultural values and speak the same language [2]. In this case, not all Malangese people like to speak their own unique slang language although they were born and grew up in Malang and can speak the slang language well. Another study [1] gave a result that current development has impacts for every human life sector, and one of them is the local language. The decline of community pride in local wisdom is increasingly visible. [1] The study was conducted at Gadjah Mada University by using literature study and internet searching. Local languages are starting to be eroded by foreign languages which are seen as more efficient to communicate with people around the world. There is another study that was just conducted [3] it was found that there are three values of *Basa Walikan*, the first as Malangese identity which means the participants consider it as their identity as Malangese, the second as a cultural heritage which means *Basa Walikan* as a part of Malang culture, and the last as a symbol of solidarity. This study also suggests that *Basa Walikan* has to be preserved so the language will still exist until then.

2.1 Slang

Slang is a popular form of communication that is typically limited to certain social group members. As stated by [4], slang is a phrase that is only understood by other members of a particular social group. In other words, the term that a certain social community uses is called slang, and only members of the group are aware of the slang. Another definition from [5] slang is one of the phenomena of language variations that are used in order to social dynamic and language development in the realm of language. Nowadays, among young people in many areas, slang has become a popular social topic. In Indonesia, it can be said that every region and group has its own slang language from the cultural and historical which is unique. An example of slang in Indonesia has been studied [6] explaining that 'Jaksel language' is a kind of slang that teenagers in South Jakarta are familiar with. 'Jaksel' is a combination of English and Indonesian which can influence people who speak that language. Also conclude that even though there are social status distinctions caused by the usage of foreign languages in everyday discourse, these inequalities are generated by subjective perceptions held by each social actor. Considering that language is meant to be a tool for resolving conflicts and issues, it would be ideal if language usage could be adjusted to the circumstances and demands of the situation.

2.2 Slang in Malangese

There is one popular slang in Malang which people often know as '*Basa Walikan*' or '*Osob Kiwalan*'. [7] believed that Basa Walikan was a secret code in the war. Walikan means "reserve" in Javanese and refers to the world reversal. We also can find the '*Basa Walikan*' in Yogyakarta, but the use and the structure is different from Malangese. Instead of using *aksara Jawa*, *Walikan* Malang achieves its goals through semantic shifts and word reversals based on Javanese, Indonesian, and locally created words. According to [3] *Walikan* provides a mark that is exclusive to insiders, making it simple for them to be recognized both collectively and individually. The sense of intimacy that develops while utilizing this language deepens the sense of intimacy among citizens, turning it into a sign of unity. However, study [8] shows that, in contrast to its matrix languages, Indonesian and particularly Javanese, *Walikan's* address practices have changed in terms of sociocultural values. The complex socio-linguistic hierarchy in Javanese pronouns is not entirely present in *Walikan's* address words, which is a significant distinction between *Walikan* as a register in Malang *Ngókó* Javanese and the *Madyò/Kròmò* Javanese. *Basa Walikan's* existence in Malang's linguistic landscape is a breath of fresh air for local and minor language positions in public settings. The linguistic landscape of Indonesia is not simply monolingual (Indonesian exclusively), but it can also include regional linguistic characteristics. They can be utilized to establish connections of understanding, exhibit local pride, and promote solidarity among citizens as well as between the government and the community [9].

2.3 Language Maintenance

Language maintenance as a circumstance in which a speaking group continues to use its native tongue in spite of a number of conditions that could tempt them to switch to another. Language maintenance is also known as language preservation which comes from the word 'preserve' [4]. The aim of this is to avoid language death, so language maintenance must be planned. As [10] stated, language maintenance is characterized as "relative language stability in terms of the number and distribution of speakers, proficient use by children and adults, and retention in specific domains. According to [11], there are three major factors of language maintenance. First, status, especially economic status which is a prominent factor in virtually all studies of language preservation. Second, demographic, they are worried about both the size and geographic distribution of language minorities. And last the third is institutional support, which refers to the extent to which the language of a minority group is reflected in the many institutions of a country or society. It is true that the minority language which is used in cultural organizations, government agencies, churches and so give a better result in the process of language preservation. There are some studies of language maintenance with the strategy that is used in the process. For example, a study by [12] found that the parents believed in maintaining the child's native language (Korean) by engaging the child in a variety of Korean culture – focused events and activities. Also another activity which is done by the mothers is teach the Korean language to the child at home and tell bedtime stories in Korean. The language that has to be maintained not only for mother – tongue or native language but also slang that spread to one area.

3 Methods

This study used the qualitative method. Qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings that people attribute to them. The study was based on observations of the participants including audio or video recordings and text analysis [13].

The data from participants recorded through the audio recorder about conversation spoken by Malang people while interacting with others. Participatory observation was employed to explore how Malang people and youth use *Basa Walikan*.

To answer first and research questions, the data were collected by doing an observation to find people who still use '*Basa Walikan*'. The researcher did the observations in three different places. The first observation took place in a family environment, which looked at the closest people to what language they use in their daily conversation. Second, the observation took place in the research's college environment. That location provided an insight for the researcher about the languages that college students always use for their daily interaction. Last location was a coffee shop in Malang, which we know that youth and adults always go to the coffee shop just to chit-chat or may be doing some activities there. The first in interview section was also conducted to explore why they still use '*Basa Walikan*' in their daily use of language, how they think about the maintenance of '*Basa Walikan*' and what are their opinion to maintain this '*Basa Walikan*' so that the slang can still be

used by people in that area. The researchers gave the participants some questions about their use and opinions about '*Basa Walikan*'. The questions such as :

- Are you familiar with '*Basa Walikan*' and if so, what do you know about it?
- Do you often / still use '*Basa Walikan*? At what time?
- In your opinion, is '*Basa Walikan*' rarely used by Malang people? If so, what are the factors behind that, especially by Malang youth?
- What do you think about the potential solution that can be done to preserve and maintain '*Basa Walikan*' in order to be used in daily life as an icon of Malang?

Not only that, the researchers also ask about the importance of '*Basa Walikan*' as the one of Malang identity. The data from the observations was analyzed using [14] qualitative analysis method. Taking field notes by collecting the audio recordings, then the sorting session done to create a consistent and perceptive analysis. Another analysis that can be used for this research data is discourse analysis because the researcher listens to the conversation from the Malang people while communicating with others. Another data from the interviews section were analyzed by using narrative analysis by listening to the experience of the participants.

4 Findings

4.1 The Use of *Basa Walikan* in Malang

The researchers began this study by doing observations. This observation takes place in many locations. In the university environment, '*Basa Walikan*' is rarely used by Malang people because in this environment, there are many people from outside Malang city. For example, this phenomenon makes Malang people as indicated in the university are influenced by using another language like '*Jaksel* accent' such as the terms '*lo gue*', 'which is', 'literally', etc. This can be caused by the language that South Jakarta students who studied in the university influenced Malang students to speak with the '*Jaksel* accent' In further observations from different locations, the researchers found that there are so many Malang people who still use *Basa Walikan* in their daily conversation. For example in a coffee shop, the men from Malang still use *Basa Walikan* during their conversation. For example, '*ipok*' means 'coffee' in English; '*kane*' means 'delicious / good' (food / beverages); '*orip?*' which means 'how much does it cost?' in English; etc. Those are the examples of '*Basa Walikan*' that are used by Malangese in the coffee shop. We can conclude that '*Basa Walikan*' is used differently in each location. In other words, this Malangese used depends on the situations and places.

After doing the observations, the researchers interviewed four Malang people, two from Malang youth and other two participants classified as adults. All of the participants are familiar with *Basa Walikan*, which they know that *Basa Walikan* is basically from Malang and usually used by Malang people in their daily conversations. The first participant said that they still use *Basa Walikan* in their daily conversations with their friends. Different from the second, third, and fourth participants, they

rarely used Basa Walikan in their conversations and tend to use Bahasa Indonesia more. Furthermore, the impact of the existence of a new language may be negative because the use of local language is beginning to decrease. Another factor of the rarely used 'Basa Walikan' is the difficulties of understanding 'Basa Walikan' by newcomers from different cities so that Malang people tend to use the national language more.

4.2 Maintaining *Basa Walikan*

The interview session with the first participants give a result that the participant still use Basa Walikan when speak with friends, such as '*umak*', which means '*kamu*' in Indonesian and 'you' in English, '*oyi*' which means '*iyu*' in Javanese and '*iya*' in Indonesian, '*ayas*' which means '*saya*' in Indonesian and 'I' in English, etc. The participants also said that using Basa Walikan not only speaks in real – life but also in social media, such as chatting with friends. But the other three participants believed that they rarely use Basa Walikan in their daily use. Some reasons can be explained because their environment is no longer using *Basa Walikan*, they often socialize and communicate with people from outside Malang.

From those participants' perspective, the potential solutions that can be done to maintain *Basa Walikan* is giving an education of *Basa Walikan* in every school in Malang. This also can be called socialization, which can be done not only in school but in every event. Another potential solution is to publicize this local language in every social media, which we know that every part of our life is on social media. In social media, people can be more interested in watching maybe a video or audio visual which talks about Basa Walikan. If we can make the media more insightful, it is possible that *Basa Walikan* will be known more by people around the world. The last potential solution is taken from the participants, Malang people can make some poster in every corner of Malang tourist destination which include the information about Basa Walikan, it can be from the history of *Basa Walikan*, the examples, and how to use *Basa Walikan* in a right way.

5 Discussion

From the result of this research, it is known that Basa Walikan is rarely used by Malangese in the university. The university students that come from Malang tend to use the national language and Jaksel accent as stated in the previous section. This because of the population in one environment influenced Malangese to not use their Malangese slang as a local dialect.

The researchers agree with the result which shows that the reason behind the rarely used of Basa Walikan is from the outsider Malangese influenced Malangese to use another language such as *Jaksel* accent. Not only that, researchers also argue that *Basa Walikan* is not popular anymore as it was. Because of that, the language maintenance of *Basa Walikan* should be done due to the existence and preservation of Malang slang or local dialect. The researchers believe that the effort to maintain this local dialect will be more successful if Malangese unite and focus on the goals, preserve the *Basa Walikan*.

To compare with the previous study, which [4] held, this study is more focused on the factor and the reason behind the rarely used *Basa Walikan* nowadays. In [4] study shows the Malangese's perceptions of *Basa Walikan* which is not explained in this study. Another result of the [4] study shows that the language maintenance of *Basa Walikan* should be done because it is important to preserve the local dialect based on the area. This part in this study is relevant with our study because both explained about the importance of preserving language. Our research also finds ways to maintain or preserve *Basa Walikan* to be more known, especially Malang youth and will not become extinct time by time.

6 Conclusion

In this study's analysis, the researchers discovered that '*Basa Walikan*' is no longer used in daily life speaking by Malangese. It can be said that the major reason of this phenomenon happened is because there are so many people out of Malang living there, which can influence Malangese to speak another language. Because of that, the use of this slang has decreased and is not popular anymore. We know that in this modern era, people tend to use language which is trending to communicate with other people. However, there are still some Malangese who use '*Basa Walikan*' to speak in their daily life because people around them also use that kind of slang.

As the researchers who look at this phenomenon, this is a thing that has to be fixed. Take a look at the purpose of '*Basa Walikan*' as a symbol, identity and icon of Malang. *Basa Walikan* is one of the slang words from the local language that has to be maintained, especially by Malang people. In this study, the researchers found the answer to the research questions which have been discussed in the previous section. There are some ways that can be done to preserve and maintain '*Basa Walikan*'. The researchers suggest that Malangese, whether from kid until age can contribute to make '*Basa Walikan*' popular again. Especially for youth, they have an important role to preserve every part of the culture such as language.

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