

## LINGUISTIC VARIETY AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION'S PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

This paper discusses about character building, knowing of language and multicultural education. The characters are not able to be developed through slogans, rhetoric, and lectures, but through natural activities which naturally reveal the attitudes, values and characters. One of the activities referred to is the use of kind of languages in society. The discourse about society cannot be separated from multiculturalism. Related with the rights and the existence of native speakers of each language, it is necessary to address the perspectives of multiculturalism differences in social and cultural interaction. Interaction process is allowing the formation of norms and values that lead to the bulding of character. Based on the scrutiny of the language varieties with different characteristics, can be identified a number of characters that can be grown and developed from the varieties of language. The character is identified through language diversity, the diversity of the repertoire, the mother language awareness, dynamism of diglossia, the characteristic choice of language, the role of Indonesian in the perspective of multiculturalism. The characters include democratic, respectful, caring social, religious, national spirit and patriotism. Thus, the varieties of languages can be a medium of education and building character within multiculturalism framework.

**Keywords:** *multilingualism, character, multiculturalism*

### A. INTRODUCTION

Character development is becoming a concern throughout the nation of Indonesia. This is caused by the reality that Indonesian human character, especially in the younger generation is becoming national concern. Hedonistic lifestyle of the younger generation and the instant life's pattern have also contributed to the degradation of moral value. This is a crucial issue of the nation, it can even be categorized as a humanitarian disaster, which despite the attention, still it is not a collective awareness.

Character cannot be built with discourse, rhetoric, and verbal expressions only, it will have to be conditioned through various means and approaches. Character development should be "noticed" from a variety of conditions in order for it to be comprehensively embedded on each individual who then together will form a community with strong character.

One of the conditions that can be used for the development of character is linguistic and cultural variety situation. Linguistic and cultural variety should be positioned as a means of character building. Language and cultural presence in every speech and cultural community has always been filled with value and can be translated into some aspects of character.

One of the pillars for building the Republic of Indonesia is the unity in diversity. Diversity/divergence which are born naturally need to be maintained and preserved by the principle of complementarity in order to create a humane and peaceful interaction, as well as fostering a sense of unity among the people. This is part of moral strength which is able to strengthening integration and reduce conflicts that lead to the disintegration of the nation.

The study of language and culture which is based on the structural view that only come to dissect the form, function, and meaning needs to be expanded in perspective. Axiological role of linguistic and cultural sciences, including a combination of both should be disclosed in more depth. It is through the axiological accuracy can we reveal the character of linguistic and cultural variety's owners.

In 2045 Indonesia plans on the *attainment of Golden Indonesia*, and by that time Indonesia is expected to enter the top 10 countries in the world with a high per capita income. This is an opportunity, and a challenge that requires qualified human resources and global competitiveness. Serious crisis concerning human resources in Indonesia is the decharacterisation which contributes to the emergence of problems in various sectors of development. If so, education and character development is absolutely necessary to create a qualified and competitive agent of development.

Through this paper the author tries to identify and describe the character of aspects behind the situation of linguistic variety implied in Indonesia. The identification and description is done in the perspective of multicultural education. This paper is also intended to inspire, and "sue" a number of phenomena to be discussed which then be explored through research or scientific study.

**B. CONCEPT****1. Linguistic Variety**

Etymologically, the phrase linguistic variety consists of the words variety and language. The word linguistic variety, based on etymology referred to above means “variety of language, which is actually a translation of the English word multilingualism. This concept refers to the use of several languages by a person or group of people.

The concept of linguistic variety is less familiar in sociolinguistic literature. Sociolinguists are more prevalent with the use of the concept of bilingualism, wherein the linguistic variety is included as a social phenomenon, although Mackey (in Fishman, 1970: 554) argues: "bilingualism is the property of individuals". Adler (1977) as quoted in Romaine (1995: 23), that it is not possible to distinguish between bilingualism (and linguistic variety) as individual phenomenon with bilingualism as a social phenomenon.

The inclusion of linguistic variety concept in the concept of bilingualism can be observed in the various opinions below.

- a. Einar Haugen (1966), bilingualism is the ability to produce complete and meaningful utterances in the other language.
- b. J. Wolff (1974), bilingualism is the use of two languages or more by a person or group of people (meaning the same as linguistic variety).

By analogy to the opinions of Hamers and Blanc (in Romaine, 1995: 23) who used the term bilingualism and *bilinguality*, we can also distinguish between *multilingualism* and *multilinguality*. The first refers to the ability, while the second refers to the habit; or it can be said that multilingualism as competence, while multilinguality as performance. Thus, linguistic variety is the habit of a person or group of people to use two or more languages according to its repertoire. The use of language (-language) in the community with linguistic variety (multilingualism) contains social value that can also be a container of character formation.

**2. Character**

The word character was adopted by the English adaptation of the form from the word character, which means 'attitude', 'character'. Character contains dichotomy of good and bad as a relative measure. The relative measure, still is contextual, although there are also a measurement of good or bad that is universal. It is the good-bad measurement that becomes the reference value for the individual in positioning themselves within a community.

Character can be divided into: (1) strong and weak character; and (2) good and bad character. Strong character, for example: tough, resilient, have high fighting spirit, or giving up. Weak character; for example timid, not taking any risks, lazy, quick to giving up, like easily giving up, and so on. Good character; such as honest, reliable, humble, and so on. Bad character, such as cunning, selfish, greedy, arrogant, and so on.

Those various characters appear in the language behavior in society with linguistic variety (multilingual). Good and a strong character need to be developed, or poor and weak character as far as possible be reduced otherwise through the awareness linguistic and cultural variety. Awareness is what then build language attitudes as a reflection of cultural attitudes. In other words, the character can only be developed through a variety of interaction activities; without interaction there will be no values and norms, and if so, there will never be a character and character development.

**3. Multicultural Education**

Multicultural education is a new concept in the world of education. Multicultural education is actually a reform movement in education. Reform movement is aimed at providing equal opportunities for students to excel. Banks (in Sutarno, 2007: 1-21) argues: "Multicultural education is an idea, the education reform movement, and the educational process which sole purpose is to change the structure of educational institutions so that students, both men and women, students with disabilities, and students who are members of racial, ethnic and diverse culture will have the same opportunity to achieve academic achievement in school."

Beyond formal education, multicultural education play a role in building linguistic variety awareness. In connection with the language as one of the elements of culture, it can be claimed that cultural variety can also foster linguistic variety awareness, which characteristics of the interaction among speech community members helped characterize the character, as well as forming the character. Multicultural education make room for differences, respect for differences, and reject discrimination. In this situation, the right to life of each language is treated by its speakers as stakeholders, and protected by the government as policy makers.

**C. LINGUISTIC VARIETY AND FORMATION OF CHARACTER****1. Typology of Diversity, Identifier of Speakers Character**

The nature of language as linguists put forward to justifies the assumption that there is a worldwide nature of language (universals language) (Greenberg in Malmkjaer & Anderson, eds. 1991: 279-284). However, a variety of micro-linguistic analysis also found that there is a distinctiveness/uniqueness of

language that appears on the rules of phonology, morphology, and syntax. The specificity defined in linguistic terminology is known as a type of language (language Typology).

Micro-linguistic analysis of course only get to the extent of finding the rules, and if there are exceptions (idiosyncrasy), soon a claim appears that the exception can be explained pragmatically, sociologically, or culturally. These conditions led to the birth of the macro linguistic or cross-linguistic field.

In addition to the exceptions that require explanations that cut across the field, the rules of a language can also be used to explain the character of the speaker. Character is formed because of the perspective/world view based on the shape of the lingual owned and used. This view can be derived to the questions about the possibility of tracing the character of speakers of a language which is formed by the typology of the language, as follows.

- a. Is there any differences between the character of the speakers with tonal language typology with the non-tonal language typology?
- b. Is there any character differences between a language speakers with agglutinative typology and that of isolation language?
- c. Is there any differences between the character of a language speakers with sequence of words (word order) SVO typology to SOV word sequential language, or VOS?

All three of the above questions posed to simply remind the experts and researchers of language that there is a typology, phonology, morphology, and syntax that can be used, either antropologically and semiotically to make claims about the character of the speaker. This requires inductive and deductive ways of working together in order to avoid claims that are premature.

It is too early to say that people with SVO language typology tend to be more interested in subject, too early as well to classify him into a community that is subjective. Or conversely, people who have VSO language typology tend to prioritize work, and he is claimed to be characterized as hard-working, diligent and tenacious. It may be more appropriate if the claims be made assumptions to be proven later through a scientific approach.

Linguistic tasks, in addition to dissect regularity and irregularity (idiosyncrasy) in a micro level, also proves that the micro system is related to the behavior of the speech community. Thus, it is not only the typology of word order as described above which may be the entrance to examine the character (culture) individual and community character, but also other typologies in the level of syntactic and phonological typology, as well as morphological typology.

## 2. Formation of Character Due to Repertoire Diversity

Everyone has a repertoire of verbal or riches language used by the rules of sociolinguistics. Linguistic repertoire may be the number of vocabulary and the level of awareness of norms of a language that is owned by someone, can also be controlled by the number of languages a person understands. In terms of competence, the repertoire is owned by individuals, but the use of the repertoire by individuals to communicate in a social context indicates that the repertoire becomes community property.

People of different languages have different ways of interacting (Wierzbicka, 1991: 2-4). In a society with linguistic variety, indispensable power of accommodation to differences that could potentially conflict is reduced as much as possible so that the interaction takes place in harmony on one side, and on the other side of each, right to exist as other cultural elements.

Linguistic variety leads to several other phenomenon, such as: language choice, language attitudes, language competition, shifting and durability, diglossia and poliglossia, presence of these phenomena can form the character of the people linguistic variety, as described below.

### a. Mother tongue Awareness

Linguistic variety which consists of the individual and society with linguistic variety is a condition that is formed by the process of expanding the repertoire of the first language (L1) or native language (mother tongue) to L2, and so on. L1 is controlled by a person through the process of acquisition, while L2, and so on are mastered through learning. Mastery through acquisition begins with the natural use and followed mastery of the rules intuitively, otherwise mastery through learning tends to start from the introduction of rules and followed by usage.

The presence of the mother tongue and other languages in a society with linguistic variety intuitively give birth to positive attitude towards the language. A positive attitude, among others, maintain and provide vitality to the mother tongue, and at the same time other languages also have the opportunity to live, also means giving the opportunity to others to also maintain their mother tongue. Provides an opportunity for each native speaker of a language to foster mutual respect and democratic character.

This character grows very naturally as the nature of language use. Character is built and developed in every nation without needing a lot of rhetoric through lectures and tutorials without action. The character should be built through the sustainability of various activities that are interactional. The use of language in a

society with linguistic variety is an interactional activities that show how speakers addressing the hearer, first language hearer, which is shown by way of interacting between the speaker and the partners, which would be a strengthening of the character.

Each language has a specific semantic systems. This distinction is not often conflicting semantics as a consequence of cross-language semantic differences. Lingual same shape on a number of languages often have a referral form different objects or concepts across languages. Differences can foster mutual understanding, in addition it is important to realize that every language user is to be creative and adaptive in the use of language, including the use of contextual characteristics.

**b. *Diglossia dynamics***

Linguistic variety in general tend to have diglossia. The diglossia of linguistic variety is a situation that shows the difference in prestige across languages; particular language is considered to have a high position (T), while other languages is viewed is a minor (R). Diglossia is a condition that awaken every language speakers to accept the prestige language.

Diglossia is relative. The high-low prestige of a language is not static. Diglossia is dynamic according to the function and social role of each language on the use of domains within a speech community. Diglossia reflects the relative absence of language hegemony, thus there is also no inter-user language hegemony in society with linguistic variety.

Awareness of the dynamism of diglossia can shape the character of social care. Characteristic of social care is accepting differences and not being discriminatory. The difference is not used as instruments to glorify one group and debasing/degrading the language user/group of other languages. We can learn from diglossia relativity to strengthen awareness of the relativity of the social hierarchy of individuals or groups. Thus, the dominant group does not feel powerful and superior, and the minority groups will not be inferior nor fettered by helplessness.

The character also appears in the social care community that maintains linguistic variety. Surviving the linguistic variety can certainly foster an attitude of tolerance. Maintaining linguistic variety is resulted in providing a space for language and the right to live and evolve naturally, as well as placing speakers as part of the totality of the cosmos.

Diglossia relativity can sensitize speakers (-language) about the role of social relativity of each individual within a community. Each role is important or not, it is not permanent. Someone has an important role in certain domains, but not the case when he goes to the other domain. That kind of eality can dampen arrogant and selfish attitude.

**c. *Characteristics of Language Selection***

Society with linguistic variety will find it difficult to avoid language options, which include: mixed code, code switching, cross code, a choice of mixed code (code mixing) and transfer code (code shifting) is a communication strategy to obtain harmony. Harmony interaction that is constructed through language choices can build creative character, especially the creativity of language.

Creativity of language as a distinguishing feature between man and beast is the originator, as well enricher of other creativity. Creativity is precisely what characterizes the difference between a smart individual with an intelligent individual, which is simply to say that the smart people are not necessarily smart; smartness is characterized by the creativity that can be started from the creativity of language.

Choice of mixed code and code switching in the direction of interfering diglossia situation code or code switching up (to the language which is high) can describe the hubris user. A mixed choice and code switching code does not need to happen if the user has the will to use it for the purposes of increasing choice prestige. Conversely choice had to be done if there is a semantic constraints. Constraint is in the form of unavailability of a lexicon in a language that is being used. Thus, speakers are forced to choose another language lexicon to convey meaning. Similarly, specific insight that can only be described in a specific language to encourage someone switched from code (language) that is being used to other cod.

Other options such as cross-code (code crossing) is not based on the reason of communication harmony. but the reason to put one as part of a group/community. The desire to be the "insider" or in group/insider in an extreme way is a rare choice, except if one who isin a situation of interaction is learning a second language. Nevertheless, the choice of this language can be an integrative model of the development of attitudes and behaviors and dampen disintegrative in all levels of the community, including the community as a nation.

**d. *Linguistic variety as the grace of God***

This subtitle may be considered excessive in the context of the conversation of linguistic variety. But in the context of the development and character education in Indonesia, it is becoming very important, especially with regard to the core competency in KK 2013. Formulation number 1 (KI.1, competence of spiritual attitude) in KK in 2013 showed that all the learning material is based on the awareness of the grace of God Almighty.

In connection with linguistic variety, awareness of God's grace is indisputable. Thus, linguistic variety can build a religious character. Accordingly, linguistic variety should be the topic of learning, both in formal education, informal, and non-formal. By making linguistic variety as the topic of learning, the students are made aware of diversity, as well as the grace of God, as well as wealth, strength, perfection, and beauty. Linguistic variety is considered wealth due to a large number, as the strength of a container as a variety of cultural expressions, as perfection, as complementary functions and roles, and as a beauty because of the different views, even typical

### 3. Role of Bahasa Indonesia

Bahasa Indonesia (BI) has a very important function and position in the life of the nation. BI is the main option for overcoming the difficulties of communicating among different speakers of local language, because it is categorized as a lingua franca BI. The function of lingua franca evolved into strategic functions relating to the life of the nation, and get a position as a state language and the national language.

In its capacity as the national language, Bahasa Indonesia serves as:

- (a) the symbol of national pride;
- (b) a means of unifying the various regional languages of different tribes;
- (c) symbol of national identity;
- (d) means of transport among regions.

While as the language of the country, Bahasa Indonesia serves as:

- (a) the official state language;
- (b) the official language of instruction in educational institutions;
- (c) language of development;
- (d) the language in the development of culture and science technology.

The functions mentioned above awaken every Indonesian citizen to put Indonesian as the identity of the Indonesian nation. This awareness then shaping the character, a sense of pride and love of country.

As the nation's identity, in addition to the flag, state emblem and national anthem (Law. No. 24 of 2009), Indonesian gives complexion ness on every citizen. This does not mean that the Indonesian language is the only language recognized under the Act of 1945, as the purpose of the Youth Pledge in 1928, "We are sons and daughters of Indonesia uphold the national language, Bahasa Indonesia." Formulation of Youth Pledge had the intention that in addition to Indonesian as the national language, there are other languages which have the function of locality

Language which has the function of localities, among other is regional languages. Local languages in Indonesia secured its existence by the state. There are a lot of regional languages in Indonesia, which too means there are many areas of culture, of course, supports the existence of Indonesia as the national language. It is on the basis of the spirit of unity that later emerged nationality (nationalism) and patriotism. The spirit is sustained by the symbol of pride and national identity, including Bahasa Indonesia, is expected to dampen social conflict that might lead to the disintegration of the nation as a denial/negation of the spirit of national unity.

### D. MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS

Awareness of their own culture and relating it with the culture of people/groups gave birth to a dichotomy in group vs. out group. This dichotomy allows the birth of awareness of multiculturalism. This awareness is important to reduce a variety of cultural diseases, like: stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination (cf. Sihabudin 2011: 117-128).

Awareness of multiculturalism, as well as awareness of linguistic variety, gave birth to the concept of identity. This concept is very important in the communication across languages and across cultures. In terms of speaking in public with linguistic variety, the identity of "me/us" are to be interpreted and understood in the context of the existence of "them" so it will be resulted in the concept that bridges the two, the "we". If the good, superior, and dignified ones are only "us", then we indirectly sprang "they", which is certainly in a semantic opposition of ugly, bad, and not dignified. Such behavior appears to negatively labeling or label to another person or group. This is referred to as a stereotype.

In the context of linguistic variety, stereotypes need not occur if any speakers and users of language live seriously the function of each language. Major languages, a small language, even languages that are endangered also has an expressive function for speakers. Stereotype may be directed to the owners of the culture of a community, but not to the various elements of their culture.

Stereotypes occur due to the failure of the process of acculturation. Failure in process of acculturation also display symptoms of prejudice and discrimination. In social life it is often a process of generalization that is based on facts and data that are limited to the existence and behavior of a community. Generalization leads to

the placement of the group itself in opposition to other groups that give the impression of discriminating negatively (discrimination).

Various cultural diseases as mentioned above occur due to the limitations of social competence and cultural competence. These competencies include the ability to interact socially and cultural interaction. The ability to interact is a form of cultural adaptability as part of the multicultural awareness, including awareness of diversity and language differences. It is closely linked with the principles of the UNESCO activity initiated education, which one of them is learning to live together (learning to live together). This principle emphasizes the ability to adapt to a wide range of diversity, both among individuals and among communities.

## E. CLOSING

Linguistic variety, character development, and multicultural education are the three elements of a system in the development of character. Awareness of multiculturalism and linguistic variety provide space for the development, and the situation linguistic variety can naturally form the character of the speaker. Linguistic variety can build awareness of multiculturalism and solidarity attitudes and antihegemony; attitude must be developed in the context of character development.

Linguistic variety and multiculturalism support the spirit of diversity which is the identity of the Indonesian nation. Therefore, true multiculturalism and linguistic variety should continue to be developed to strengthen the Indonesian identity. This is where all people learn to become themselves, a nation, be it culturally, politically and socially. Thus, the hope to reach the dream of being "Golden Indonesian" has become a necessity, and not an impossibility.

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