Sociocultural Aspects of Transgender Slang

Surana
Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia
Email: surana@unesa.ac.id

Abstract
This study examines the sociocultural aspects of waria's slang. Considering the current problems, descriptive method was used to describe the results of this study. The object of this study is the various language used by the transgenders in their daily communication. The data were collected, categorized, analyzed, and the results were presented in the form of description along with the examples. Sociocultural aspects that exist in *waria*'s slang can be the sociological, sociolinguistics, as well as the cultural aspects of the slang emergence among transgenders. Sociological aspects include the use of slang among transgenders inclusively. Those aspects are the use of speech unit in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and discourses. Furthermore, the establishments of *waria*'s slang are as follows: the sounds game, permutation, a play, replacements, additions, acronyms, and analogies. While the cultural aspects include waria's slang function within the culture among the society members, which for: humoring, bullying, unifying, and as a communication tool.

Keywords: slang language, transgenders, sociocultural

1. Introduction

Language as one element of the culture formation also deserves to be paid carefully attention; so does the language used by *waria*. This language has its own uniqueness. This uniqueness is associated with some sociocultural aspects on it (Blount & Sanches, 2014). This language is often categorized as a variation of a language that is so-called slang (Shivakumar, 2016).

Waria is a term in the society that has an extension of '*pria-wanita* (man-woman)'. *Waria* is previously known by the term of *wadam* which has an extension of *'wanita adam* (adam-ladies)'. From those two terms, it seems that the term *waria* survives until now to indicate men who behave and speak like a woman. *Waria* exists in every region. *Waria* is a part of the minority groups and organizations that possess organized activities. One example of those organized activities is an activity located in Yogyakarta. This activity is accommodated in an organization called IWAYO (Association of *Waria* Yogyakarta). Meanwhile, such groups are also sociologically conducted in other regions. These organized activities within a certain organization are almost held in every region by ther own organization's names.

As part of a language user community, *waria* has a language of its own, in addition to the language used for communication with the outside community members. Special

language spoken amongst these *waria* is commonly called as *Cant*. *Cant* is a kind of slang but it is deliberately designed to conceal something to another group. However, in this study, the special language '*cant*' will be replaced by the termof '*slang'* (Ediati, Maharani, & Utari, 2016).

Slang is a nonstandard words that are informal and arranged arbitrarily. Perhaps, it also derives from a certain mispronounce; e.g. reversed language pronunciation. These words almost exist on every society layer and are applied by certain groups. Kinds of sociocultural aspects within the cultural element which arise in the form of slang among *waria* are the issue that will be discussed in this paper. Finally, the focus of this discussion is only on the cultural aspect alone.

1.1. Research Questions

Drawing the background in mind, this study sought to answer the following two research questions for the guidance of this research:
1) What are the sociolinguistics aspects used by the transgender to communicate using *bahasa gaul* in their daily conversation?
2) What humor functions do the transgender use *bahasa gaul* to communicate in their daily communication among their community?

2. Review of Literature
2.1. Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics is an interdisciplinary science between sociology and linguistics, two fields of empirical science that are very closely related (Kleinschmidt, Weatherholtz, & Florian Jaeger, 2018). So, to understand what sociolinguistics is, we must first discuss what sociology and linguistics mean. Sociology is an objective and scientific study of humans in society, institutions, and social processes that exist in society (Swan & Deumert, 2018). Sociology seeks to find out how society came into being, lasted, and persisted (Swan & Deumert, 2018; MacSwan, 2019). Sociology studies social institutions and all social problems in society, so it will be known how humans adapt to their environment, how they socialize, and place themselves in their respective places in society. Linguistics is a field of science that studies language, or a field of science that takes language as an object of study (Svendsen, 2018). So, sociolinguistics is an interdisciplinary field of science that studies language in relation to the use of that language in society (De Vogelaer & Katerbow, 2017). Braber & Jansen (2018) explain that sociolinguistics determines who the speaker is, with which language variation, when, on what, and with which interlocutor. So, a language user will be seen with whose speech partner, what language, where, when, and what factors influence a person's language. According to the sociolinguistic view, language contains various kinds of social variations that cannot be solved by a structural theoretical framework, and it is too naive to call these variations only performance (Rampton, 2019). The task of a sociolinguist is to explain the relationship between the language variations and social factors, both situational and by implication (Smakman & Heinrich, 2017).

In addition, sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that studies the relationship between language and community of speakers (Rodriguez-Ordones, 2019). This science

is a contextual study of variations in the use of community language in a natural communication (Heller, 2020). The variation in this study is the main problem that is influenced or affects the differences in sociocultural aspects in society. Sociolinguistics is the fruit of a long and tiring debate from various generations and streams. The peak of dissatisfaction of the people who later called themselves sociolinguists was felt when the Transformational school pioneered by Chomsky did not recognize the very heterogeneous social reality in society (Habyarimana, Ntakirutimana & Barnes, 2017). By Chomsky and his followers, heterogeneity in the form of different social status, age, gender, ethnic background, education, and so on is ignored as a very influential factor in determining language choices (Holmes, 2018). Based on this paradigm Sociolinguistics develops towards a study which views that language cannot be explained satisfactorily without involving the social aspects that characterize society.

2.2. Slang Language

Slang is the language used by certain communities so that it is rarely known by other language groups or communities (Trimastuti, 2017). The use of slang is sometimes intended so that other people do not understand their language (Saliyeva, 2018). Saliyeva (2018) explains that slang, as an informal language variety, is used by teenagers or certain social groups for communication within their group with the aim that people outside the group do not understand. Slang is generally a unit of expression or words that have undergone various types of changes in form and meaning (He, Fatahalian, & Foley, 2018). The forms of slang include jargon and *prokem* (Amir, 2017). Jargon is a short phrase or sentence and is usually introduced quickly by people who have great influence such as state leaders, artists, and figures in certain fields (Hasibuan, 2020). An example of jargon is "*wani piro*" which was introduced by one of the cigarette advertisements. Meanwhile, *prokem* is a form of slang that is formed by means of affixation, reversing the word order, and by giving an insert (Hasibuan, 2020; Samatboyeva, 2021). Therefore, slang in the form of this program is difficult to predict. This is because the process of change is usually sporadic or haphazard so that the original word form changes its sound, it is not easy to understand, and becomes strange, and feels foreign and funny to some people (Samatboyeva, 2021).

3. Methods
3.1. Design

This study is a content analysis (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009) that explored conversation analysis on a text based on a book of *Bahasa Gaul* of transgenders. The objective of this study is variations of address and speeches used by transgenders in their community to interact in dayly interactions. Qualitative approaches were used to analyze data emphasizing on the conversational analysis.

3.2. Data and Source of Data

The source can be divided into two categories (substantive or locational) based on its correlation. Substantive source (or usually known as sample) is a set of discourse since it is quite representative and always chosen by the researchers. In this study, the

book of *Bahasa Gaul* by Sehertian is used as substantive data. While locational source is the speaker; the person who gives the data along with the substantive data and usually known as resource person. The data context is various discourse, sentence, and clause which is used by the *waria.*

3.3. The procedure of the study

This study was conducted in three steps including preparation, conducting, and finishing. This study is a descriptive study in which the object is the various language used by the *waria* in their daily communication. Those *waria* are the members of IWAYO (*Ikatan Waria Yogyakarta*) based in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The data were collected through reading protouls of the book Bahasa Gaul. Then, the data were categorized and analyzed by using identity and distributional method. These methods used to find the sociocultural aspects in *waria's* slang. The results of this study were presented in the form of description along with the examples with no symbols.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data of this study were analyzed using inductive content analysis (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Adopting Zhang & Wildemuth (2009) this study applied four steps of analysis as follows. First, after the conversation analysis was done, the researcher identified numeric and texts. Both were concerted into narrative data. Second, referring to the research questions of this study, the researcher identified themes and units of analysis of the concerted data. The words, phrases, sentences that contained themes on bahasa gaul and humors were selected as the units of analysis. Third, the researcher made the coding system that consisted of number, themes and cources of data. Accordingly, the coding system was applied to all themes in the units of analysis the researcher already obtained. This way the researcher found number of data and proper unit of analysis containing correct contents and fitted to the research questions. If improper units of analyses appeared, the data were corrected or dropped. Fourth, the researcher verified each data to be the final results for the data presentation (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Based on this process of analysis, the research questions of this study were answered.

4. Results and Discussions

In this results and discussions, the sociocultural aspects of *waria*'s slang covering cultural and functional aspects will be explained as follows:

4.1. Sociocultural Aspects

Sociological aspects that influence the occurrence of slang among *waria* could come from outside or within the *waria* communities itself. For example, the influence from the outside, they generally require outside group recognition to be recognized as a separate community. They also want to be recognized by their existence and identity. For all of those achievements, they are trying to make it happen by doing activities such as 'the prettiest *waria* competition,' and doing sport along with other communities. Sociologically, those activities mentioned are committed to show that they exist, and

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their existence is recognized by the outside group. Otherwise, intern influence of the slang occurrence derives from slang that is created by themselves in the use of communication between them. Sociolinguistic existence of this slang can be regarded as a part of a unique language.

Basically, in terms of shape, slang is not the language nor dialect, but rather an expression or word (Anderson & Trudgill, 1990; Rahayu, 1996). Meanwhile, based on its function, slang can relieve seriousness, and is a social game. The same thing was said by (Poedjoedarmo, 1984) that slang only emerges to freshen the atmosphere and intimate relationship in a certain association. In addition, slang is often used as a symbol of solidarity and a speaker's membership to a social group or a particular group (Purnama, 1983). Slang expressions are quite aggressive, rude, wild, and low. Slang is also served to convey aggression, to create and maintain social position, and to show their maleness among men (Rahayu, 1996; Spears, 1981).

Slang is sometimes interpreted as a non standard language used by a group with the intent to conceal something. On the other hand, in this paper, slang is interpreted as expressions included in the various non-standard languages used by certain social group, usually young people, by the aim that other groups know and understand what the slang is created for. In this study, slang is used by *waria*. Slang among *waria* can be a word, group of words, abbreviations or acronyms, a play, and so forth.

4.2. Cultural Aspects: The Function of Slang among Waria

Speaking people certainly has an intention in every their words, both related to the languages and words they choose. Likewise speaking people, *waria* also choose a visual means to express their intentions. Slang among *waria* is an option and it is raised to carry out certain functions.

Language created by these *waria* is anonymous, so that there are no strict rules of the slang formation. The creators of *waria* language are bound in an association called Iwayo, especially for *waria* in Yogyakarta. This association is formed as a solidarity event for *waria*, as well as bonding to accommodate groups' needs/matters and activities of its members.

The routine of the *waria* is o meet twice a week (on every Wednesday dan Sunday) in the secretariat and field to practice sports and so forth. Daily routine of *waria* are working as hairstylists, singers, and a small portion of students in the afternoon. Profession in barbershop is mostly occupied by *waria* during the day.

At night, *waria* is always gathering in a place that is usually used together respectively. Places that are commonly used as a platform to meet and to congregate at night are at Tugu station area, around Mandala Krida Stadium, Cik Di Tiro Street, North Square, and around Yogyakarta Malioboro (for Yogyakarta *waria)*. The place is frequently visited by most of the *waria* is the left and right area of Tugu Station. In this place, dozens of *waria* always gather every day. This special place is also often used by prostitutes, especially in the area of Pasar Kembang Street.

Waria, as humankind, generally would require an interaction with others in order to fulfill all their needs. They also made contact with each other socially. Thus, *waria* can

be as no only individual beings but also social beings even within a selective interaction.

Interaction that is often committed by the *waria* is being interacted only among *waria* itself. However, in their dating, *waria* only serve against the men for fun and a few gay. They do not want to date with a fellow *waria*, especially among women.

Interactions and social contacts made amongst them, *waria* have a distinctive language that is usually only understood by them alone (although in its development this limitation getting loose). This language is used other than to communicate well for cooperation. This language is specially created for the creativity of its members as well as an integral tool among members. From this description it can be said that the language of *waria,* reviewed from its function, is a special secret language used to communicate among *waria*. Moreover, the functions of *waria* slang for them are as follow:

4.2. Humor Function

The function of humor in slang among *waria* can be seen from the examples that are looked and sounded more interesting, as follows:

(1) *mekong* 'eat'
(2) *mina* 'drink'
(3) *minang* 'drinking alcohol'
(4) *teges* 'three'
(5) *seretong* 'a hundred'
(6) *mongta* 'five hundreds'
(7) *serini* 'a thousand'
(8) *mongta retong* 'a half million'
(9) *sejetong* 'a million'
(10) *Endang S. Taurina* 'very tasty'
(11) *Farid Harja* 'very bitter'
(12) *kemande Anjas* 'where have you been'
(13) *Xanana Gusmao* 'over there'
(14) *ewonglah akika* 'marry me'
(15) *harum duta akika* 'I do not have money'
(16) *akika malaysia ah ngobras samsara diana*
     'I have no feeling to talk with her/him'
(17) *matahari lo picek ye! Organda lagi tinjauan dibangunin*
     'Blind eyes! You wake sleeping people up'

This function also dominates slang humor among *waria*. This function indeed proves that slang is now experiencing a shift function, in which used usually to keep secret among most of the *waria*; it has recently become the lingua franca, especially among young people.

Bullying Functions

Function mocking the slang in kalngan *waria*, among other things look at an example:

(18) *bawang* 'bad smell'
(19) *bejong pelong* 'testicles'
(20) *mabar* 'drunk'
(21) *meong* 'gambling'

From the example above, it can be expected that the function of slang among *waria* is to offend someone. For example, a person who has bad smell will be bullied using the word *bawang* which connotes the smell. Furthermore, a drunken person usually feels offended when they are called as a drunk, but when called them with *mabar*, with the same meaning, they will not be offended.

4.3. Communication Functions
Clear communication functions appear amongst *waria*. The creation of this language cannot be separated from their demand to be able to communicate specifically among members of *waria*. This language is also intended to keep things hidden that can only be known by his fellow members only. By creating this special language, they also want to show their identity that emerges differently than the other ordinary people.

4.4. Unifying Functions
Unifying function of slang amongst *waria* can be seen at the perception and feeling of camaraderie with those who are willing and able to use the *waria* language. The use of that language is aimed to unite them with solidarity of using the same language.

Sociocultural language functions that can be performed by slang among *waria* include functionality to convey secret messages, jokes, bullying, and refine phrases that are considered taboo or that could cause embarrassment (euphemistic sense). In addition, slang is often used as a symbol of solidarity and speakers membership to a certain social group or a particular spoken group.

5. Conclusion
Sociocultural aspects that exist in *waria* slang can be in the form of sociological, sociolinguistics, and cultural aspects from the slang created among *waria*. Sociological aspects include the use of inclusive slang among *waria*. Moreover, sociolinguistics aspects include the use of language units such as words, phrases, sentences and discourses. After that, the *waria* slang can be created by these ways: the sounds game, permutation, a play, replacements, additions, acronyms, and analogies. Meanwhile, cultural aspects of *waria* slang include the functions of *waria* slang within cultural among society members are as follows: humouring, bullying, unifying, and communication functions.

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