

VARIATION IN REJANG LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper was written to find out the variation in Rejang language which cover Rejang Kepahiang (RK), Rejang Lebong (RL) and Rejang Curup (RC). The aspects consist of phonological, morphological and semantic level that were viewed from descriptive ways. The result shows that it is difficult to predict how a particular language user speaks in a certain social context. It is linguistically caused by Rejang language and also influenced by the speakers, addresses, age, setting and context when the communication takes place.

INTRODUCTION

Background

This attempts to describe some of the variations occurring in Rejang regional dialects. It examines a small number of variables in which one or more are typically associated with Rejang speech and one or more are associated with either formal speech or informal speech. Each variable is looked at a number of social context and the frequency of using variations. Actually, Rejang has various variations which are hard to distinguish the original language, because from one area to another are, it cannot be clearly seen that there is a significant difference. The differences of variations in three Rejang language commonly called Rejang Kepahiang (RK), Rejang Lebong (RL) and Rejang Curup (RC) can be encountered in linguistic component including morpheme, lexical and semantics aspect.

Rejang variation might be significantly distinguished in the use of daily speech when a speaker of each dialect communicate each other. The variations are mostly understood by those people who involve in a real setting of communication, even though few differences could be found. In some expressions or word items, it can be found that some words used in a certain area might be taboo for another area or other dialects in a particular social context. According to Language file, (1991), semantic change from one another dialects can be found in a form of status of words. The change makes the meaning of words which are considered as taboo words in a certain place.

Formulation of the Problem

How does Rejang language differ to each other ?

The Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to give the input to the readers that Rejang language has variation. The variation can be seen from different linguistic component in which it can occur in phoneme, morphological and semantic elements.

The Significant of the Study

Language variation is one of linguistic phenomenon in which it can happen to every language. Probably, it cannot automatically be applied in the classroom activities. However, at least, it can give a great contribution the readers or teachers that Rejang language has variations that might be interesting for the further linguistic understanding in a certain language.

Method

The method that is used in this study are descriptive. It is based on the literature that is related to the language variation. For further description, the writer also did the observation in how the people use the variation

THE STUDY OF VARIATION

The scope of Rejang variation is restricted to the speech which is used by the natives when they are involving in a real communication. This also describes the homogenous in the linguistic habits encountered in a daily utterances between speaker and addressees. Naturally, language varieties are concerned with the description of the relationship of language to society in terms of global linguistic categories of a particular dialect and global social categories of a community. Hadson (1990) states that one thinks of language as a phenomenon including all the language of the world, the term varieties of language can be used to refer to the different manifestation of it. It can conclude the set of linguistic items with similar social distribution that can be illustrated in the general notion what would normally be called language, dialect and register.

Sneddon (2002) states that language varieties are restricted on a number of variables in which each comprises one or more informal variants and one or more formal variants. By informal variants is meant a form which is typically associated with informal and formal variants is meant a form generally regard as confined to formal speech and writing. The varieties of language is also determined by speech community who uses the same language, but then dialect used might be slightly different from each other. Fisherman (1972) cited by Al-Wasilah (1986) states that there are some implicit and explicit definition of language varieties as stated below:

1. Group of people usually live in the same area, speaking the variants of language, or the same standard language.
2. There is a group of human aggregates characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shred body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage.
3. A group of people who use the same system of speech signal is a speech community.
4. A speech community is a group of people who can all understand each other when they speak.
5. A speech community is one, all of whose members share at least a single speech variety and the norms for its appropriate use. A speech community may be as small as single closed interaction network all of who members regard each other in but a single capacity.

Basically, people tend to communicate to others if they think that they have some similarities in linguistic codes such as phonological, syntactical, and semantic systems. Thus, the varieties in a certain language are found in a form of linguistic domains which lead the people to feel flexible to interact each other, since the variations make them enrich the vocabulary stock.

1. Regional Dialect

Regional dialect is identical with the term regional varieties in the way a language that is spoken likely to be one of the most noticeable ways observing variety in language. A wide geographical area in which a language is spoken and particularly if that language has been spoken in that area for many hundreds of years, but it is noticeable to differentiate pronunciation, in the choices an forms of words, and in syntax which are considered as a distinctive features (wardhough,1996). Linguistically, there are various dialects that can be found in Rejang language.

One of the possibilities of dialect differences is used by geographical area. It is frequently found that each area has its own dialects as symbol of each geographical area. Hudson (1980) and (Mckay (2000) states that the most straightforward variety difference is based on geography which is sometimes called regional dialects. Regional dialect differences arise for various reasons. Some factors are the influence of geography itself and population which are constantly undergoing changes of dialect. In addition, political boundaries, settlement patterns, migration and immigration routes, territorial conquest, and language contact also have great influence of dialect differences. In line with this idea, McGinn (1997) points out that in the study of Rejang language that shows the evidence presented is compatible with the possibility of eventual union between comparative-historical phonology and dialect geography. However, Holmes (1992) says that dialects are simple linguistic varieties which are distinguishable in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

Within any particular language, there is variation from a speaker that shows some differences. Lantoff (2000) says that the variation from group to another group we say they are speaking different dialects. A dialect, then, is simply any variety of a language, the variety being characterized by systematic differences from other varieties of the same language. These differences are found in pronunciation, vocabulary, and aspect of grammar. Specifically, the differences in pronunciation are commonly known as accent illustrated in phonological components.

2. Linguistic Items in Rejang Language

It is known that Rejang language has varieties in the use of daily speech. Even though it is still considered in the same basic root. Holmes (1992) states that one language might have a useful language of wider communication in particular contexts such as the market place which can indicate different varieties or codes in multilingual communities.

According to Hudson (1980) states that linguistic items comprise of lexical items, rules of various kinds of combining the pronunciation and meanings of lexical item in sentences, and constraints of various kinds on the rules. In term of this theory, the expectation of finding sociolinguistic statement which refers to individual lexical items, rules and constrains. Wardhaugh (1986) asserts that language variety is defined in items of a specific set of linguistic items or human speech patterns consisting of sound, words, grammatical features including geographical area or social group. In linguistic file, (1991) and Fromkin (1983), it clarifies more detail about variation at different levels of linguistic structure. They are phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic level. However, this study only attempts to discuss on three aspects; phonetic, and syntactic level are hard to observe. In other words, it needs deep research in order to obtain the data on them. So, the followings are descriptions of phonological, morphological and semantic level of Rejang language.

1. Phonological level

Rejang Lebong (RL)	Rejang Curup (RC)	Rejang Keph (RK)	English
Pitok	pitak	pitak	soil
Tilai	tilei	tilei	string
Bilai	bilei	bilei	day
Matai	matie	matie	eyes
Makmiai	mukmei	mukmei	eat
Cigai	cigeli	cigeli	finish
Titik	titik	titiek	small
Penock	pemaek	pedak	short
Supuae	supua	supua	broom
Bajau	bajau	bajau	shirt
Belau	beleu	beleu	new
Tuai	tuci	tuwi	old
Wok	wak	wak	uncle

2. Morphological level

Rejang Lebong (RL)	Rejang Curup (RC)	Rejang Keph (RK)	English
Gero	cokoek	ciposie	how
Gabok	busik	busik	drop in
Meto	meto	berayak	walk around
Medeak	medeak	mete	make a date
Ngeyan	sumcak	setosie	wife
Kakok	dang	kakak	brother
Elak	elak	selemo	fluc
Paseu	paseu	towong	bucket
Keleak	kanek	kemek	see
Sugeak	sugeak	kayo	rich
Keracek	keracek	keracak	clothes
Meninggga	mningga	matei	die
Tokoe	tokoe	mblei	buy
Keboe	koboe	ji'et	grave
Pengaten	pengeten	aduk	husband
Aceak	cabe	cabe	chilly

3. Semantic level

Based on the observation, it shows that there is only in a small number of semantic variation in Rejang Language. They are commonly encountered in RL and RK when the two natives involve in a communication. However, both speakers try to be careful to say the words, because the meaning of those words in a certain area are sometimes contrastive with another area. The problems can be seen in following examples.

Rejang Lebong (RL)	Rejang Kepahiang (RK)
<i>Tatak</i> means stumble	<i>tatak</i> means a dirty word
<i>Bakei</i> means sexual intercourse	<i>bakei</i> means a place for keeping paddy
<i>Ucawg</i> means a part of penis	<i>ucawg</i> means a sack made from cartoon

DISCUSSION

In phonological level, the variations of Rejang language occurs in a certain phoneme. For example, phoneme [o] in word *pitok* becomes [a] in word *pitak*. Another problem is the diphthong which is mostly found in three kinds of variation. However, the diphthong never takes place at the beginning of the phoneme, but they tend to occur in the second syllable or at the third syllable. In morphological level, some of the variations are totally changeable such as *gero* in RL becomes *cokoek* in RC and *ciposie* in RK. However, the variations only occur in the second syllable or in the third syllable especially in a certain phoneme, such as *kakok* in RL becomes *kakak* in RK. In semantic level, one word which has the same pronunciation in one area might be taboo for another area. Moreover, it has different meaning that the natives of each variations are awkward to use them. For example, the word *tatak* in RL means which someone touches his head unintentionally to something or stumbles something, he says that word. However, the word *tatak* in RK means dirty word. Therefore, semantic variation makes the users careful to use them, because it can make them embarrassed with the people who are from different area.

Historically, the existence of a language is caused by a phenomenon in a society occurring either in present or past. In the past, the ancestors tended to create any new names of particular items because of developing of the environment which made them postulate the names of the words based on willingness to show their characteristics. This also happens in the present in which the people tend to create new words based on the invention existing in human life. As a result, one language which has the same root can have various variations of naming and pronouncing the

words. This fact is linguistically illustrated in Rejang language showing that each geographical area has its own characteristics through language variation.

CONCLUSION

The observation shows that it is not possible to predict how a particular individual will speak in a certain social context. It is possible to make general predictions based on average over groups of individual who uses Rejang language. The variation of Rejang is also influenced by the whom are the speakers, addressees, in cases of age, setting, and context when the communication takes place. In addition, language variation is a kind of indication that each geographical area has an authority figure that makes the people different from others. This mainly occurs when they interact and communicate through a means of language variation

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