

THE PRESERVATION OF *ABDI DALEM* CODE CHOICE AMONG THE MEMBERS OF *SAMMAN* RITUAL IN BERAJI VILLAGE SUMENEP, MADURA, EAST JAVA

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed to describe the influence of the *samman* tradition through the usage of the *abdi dalem* code choice, which was uttered by the ritual members, specifically in Beraji Village, in their daily conversations to preserve a language. The research applied a descriptive qualitative method that employed several works of literature, including (1) sociolinguistic, (2) language maintenance, and (3) code-switching and code-mixing, to explore the maintenance of the *abdi dalem* code choice within the daily discourse of ritual members in Beraji Village Sumenep, Madura. The data were purposive recorded samplings and transcriptions of inserted *abdi dalem* code choice within conversations among Madurese who were active as members of the *samman* ritual in Beraji Village. The data were collected through ethnographic observations and then used to conclude how individuals preserved the *abdi dalem* code choice in their daily discourse by utilizing the transcribed lyrics of the *samman* ritual as the main parameter. The results show that six *abdi dalem* words remain as parts of daily conversations among ritual members in Beraji Village, specifically when the discourse involves (1) a teacher and a student, (2) a mother and a child, or (3) elderly colleagues. The discussion elucidates the sociocultural relationship between *abdi dalem* words in the *samman* ritual and the honorific-generational implementation of the *abdi dalem* code choice among ritual members in Beraji Village Sumenep, Madura.

Keywords: *abdi dalem*, code choice, *samman* ritual, sociolinguistics, Sumenep

INTRODUCTION

The term *abdi dalem* originates from *Keraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat* (Yogyakarta King Palace), which refers to the people who dedicate their lives to serving the *Sultan* (King) (Asher, 2016). These people are known to be highly polite in their language, as Javanese *Kromo* dominates their code choice. However, *abdi dalem* is also a term used to address one of the nine social dialects in Madura, which are influenced by social status, age, cultural background, and place of residence (Rohaniyah, 2016).

The connection between Yogyakarta's and Madura's *abdi dalem* can be linked through their

similar concept of *Keraton* and the sultanate between the 16th and 19th centuries (Syukrie, 2015). Although Yogyakarta perceives *abdi dalem* as people, whereas Madura perceives it as a social dialect, both regions conceptualize *abdi dalem* as a cultural form of interaction with someone or something of a higher status.

Many studies have revealed a solid connection between culture and language, which can be categorized into two main dimensions: when culture leads to language shift within a society or when culture benefits the preservation of a language. Both dimensions cover a plethora of factors, from family to friends, education to technology, and habits to

tradition.

Language shift occurs when the language-speaking community chooses a new language to replace the previous language (Junawaroh, Nuryantiningsih, & Hidayat, 2022). Numerous factors, interrelated or not, could push the language shift to emerge. Wijana (2021) has asserted that the shift in the use of one speaker's language to another can be caused by population movements, colonialism, and social and economic reasons related to one another, where the substitution is slowly shown by changing the language used in daily life. Some other studies have also found a family factor that leads to the language shift. For instance, in Mozambique, urban middle-class parents choose to invest in the transmission of Portuguese to their children at the expense of their traditional Bantu languages due to the constant pressure from sociodemographic and politico-ideological forces (Chimbutane & Goncalves, 2023). The education system could also become a contributing factor to the language shift. The Scottish government's policy to reduce the Gaelic language as a subject in schools has triggered pessimism among the native speakers to the extent that they foresee the extinction of the language once the remaining elderly speakers die (Dunmore, 2021). Leinonen (2022) has further strengthened the institutional education factor by showing the inadequacy of positive attitudes toward preserving Kurdish minority dialects. They suggest that Turkish institutions should encourage the maintenance of minority dialects by teaching them at school. Language shifts could also happen due to inter-clan marriage, as shown by Zou (2020), in which the Chinese elderly use the Hakka dialect when speaking to their son or daughter but resort to Putonghua when speaking to their grandchildren. Inter-clan marriage is found to be one of the main factors of this situational dialect change because the grandchildren learn different dialects from their mother or father, whose origin differs from older people's direct descendants.

The most prominent factor in the language shift in modern times is advanced information technology. The myriad waves of information regarding foreign cultures through the internet have sparked the major interest of youngsters in learning about different languages and cultures. Korean drama series have affected Indonesian college students' inclusion of some Korean words in their daily conversation, albeit only when they know if the listener is also knowledgeable about the Korean language (Nurhayati & Nisa, 2022). Information technology has also influenced Indonesians to perform code-switching and code-mixing more frequently between the Indonesian language and English, which are initiated by eight distinct situations (Mewengkang & Fansury, 2021). The language events of code-switching and code-mixing occur not only in spoken form but also in written form.

In Madura, there are three main reasons for the decline of the Madurese language: the youth's interest in foreign languages, the lack of Madurese language use within households, and the migration of

people from other islands (Kusuma & Pratikno, 2022). These reasons are aligned with the finding asserted by Sari et al. (2019) that young Indonesians are more comfortable when they speak using their lingua franca, Bahasa Indonesia, within a multiethnic environment. This suggests that local languages such as Madurese is under the threat of steep decline due to massive social dynamics.

The abundance of elements that have the potential to encourage language shift has pushed many communities to perform language defense. Dexter-Sobkowiak (2023) has described language defense as the continuity of collective language use within a speech community in various domains of domestic use. In general, language defense is a collective decision by a speech community to continue using the language in many ways, all of which aim to maintain their language.

In contrast to the studies about language shift where numerous distinct factors are pinpointed, the studies regarding language maintenance have projected three consistent factors: family, society, and tradition. A conservative and cohesive family has proven to be a durable source of maintaining a language regardless of the surrounding environment. In America, Chinese immigrants maintain their language due to the parents' strict decision-making when dealing with dual language programs in schools (Wu & Linx, 2023). Still, in the same country, immigrants from various backgrounds preserve their language mainly due to the mother's role in teaching the language to the kids and continuing the use of the language in daily life (Chavez, 2022; Kotsi & Robles, 2023).

Besides the small-scaled family factor, society and tradition also assist in maintaining a language. Zikri and Fadlilah (2022) have shown that the Ocu language remains well-preserved based on the interactions between (a) street food vendors and customers, (b) the people in the Gelombang river tourism site, and (c) between parking attendants and customers. Moving to Sulawesi, the *ma'pasa' tedong* ritual in Toraja, through its dance and lyrics, is considered to be effective in shaping the people's characters, such as humility, politeness, and caring (Baan, Allo, & Patak, 2022). Traditions and rituals could even encourage people from different origins to feel like they belong to a specific culture by applying a high degree of emotional inclusion, as has been proven in Geneva by Gamba and Cattacin (2021). From a religious perspective, the Islamic preaching tradition in Madura helps maintain the politeness aspect of the Madurese language in general (Haryono, Wibisono, & Fadlil, 2022).

These studies show that culture is one of the strongest elements that could greatly assist in preserving a language. Therefore, the *samman* ritual in Sumenep, Madura, is believed to have a similar effect. The *samman* ritual tradition, in the view of the Madurese people, is a form of traditional art that always displays aspects of motion and sound. The ritual, in addition to containing elements of aesthetic

values, also contains religious values. Even the clerics argue that *samman* is part of the Islamic good deeds because the ritual procession always contains praise to God repeatedly alongside a message to be honest to parents (Juhdi, 2020). Moreover, if the hymns are practiced, contemplated, and deeply lived, they will almost certainly bring about an extraordinary inner enjoyment effect in the framework of leading to religious ecstasy. Thus, the whole procession of the *samman* ritual tradition, which has long been practiced for generations, has four important aspects: lyric, movement, formation, and symbols (Hidayat, 2007).

The *samman* ritual tradition still exists in the four districts on Madura Island. Despite the effort to pass the tradition down to the younger generation, the frequency of the ritual has decreased. One of the causes is predictable, namely the development of the era with its modernist culture and industrial development with scientific-technological discoveries that quickly penetrated the daily life of the Madurese people, so that traditional art forms, such as *samman*, becomes marginalized (Kusuma & Pratikno, 2022).

One region still known to have preserved the ritual to this day is Beraji Village in Sumenep. Although all *samman* rituals are common in their purpose, the one in Beraji Village is unique due to the content of its chants. Despite its consistency through time, the diminishing number of the ritual's members in Beraji Village confirms a visible marginalization.

The marginalization of the *samman* ritual is aligned with the significant shift towards regional languages, especially the Madurese language. The knowledge of Madurese language levels is not understood by children and adolescents, so they no longer implement refined Madurese (*engghi-bhunten* and *abdi dalem*) in spoken language towards older people (Hodairiyah et al., 2021). The lyrics in the *samman* ritual contain high-level diction, including the *engghi-bhunten* and *abdi dalem* words. *Engghi-bhunten* is used to communicate with someone older or with a higher status (Faizal, 2022), while *abdi dalem* is used to communicate with a higher divine deity like God. The use of *engghi-bhunten* has been analyzed several times by previous studies (Anwari & Kurniawati, 2023; Afiansyah, 2023; Rohmah, Martutik, & Roekhan, 2023; Diana & Jannah, 2023), but there are very few articles regarding the *abdi dalem* utterances. Therefore, the preservation of the ritual could directly contribute to the preservation of *abdi dalem* in the Madurese language. The research focuses on the relationships between the *samman* ritual and the preservation of Madurese language by listing the *abdi dalem* utterances within the *samman* tradition, followed by pinpointing the *abdi dalem* words within the *samman* tradition that are still used by the ritual members in Beraji Village in daily conversation as a proof that the tradition contributes to the language preservation. Furthermore, the research aims to find any honorific functions of *abdi dalem* in relation to the interlocutors' relationship.

METHODS

Two sets of data are presented in the research by employing ethnographic observations. The first one is the actual lyrics from the *samman* ritual. The lyrics are obtained from the transcription of a recording taken throughout the routine ritual that takes place in Beraji Village, within the Gapura Subdistrict, Sumenep Regency, every Monday evening.

The second data set is transcriptions of daily conversations among Madurese containing *abdi dalem* words, which are captured during a 30-day ethnographic observation in November 2022. The Madurese people involved in the conversation are 20 active members of the ritual whose ages range from 17 to 80. The transcriptions are retrieved through note-taking and recording with random sampling regarding the time and location of the observations to accommodate the participants' availability (e.g., sometimes at school in the morning, sometimes at home in the afternoon).

The research applies a descriptive qualitative approach. The lyrics from the *samman* ritual are fully interpreted in English. Then, the *abdi dalem* words are selected and comprised in a table in comparison with their casual form. The daily conversation transcriptions serve as evidence that these words are still used by Madurese people in Beraji Village despite the scarcity of the event. Categorization is applied to the *abdi dalem* code choice as a component of the daily discourse based on the interlocutors.

From the 30-day observation, 43 excerpts of conversation contain *abdi dalem*. Some of these excerpts are displayed in the results section to represent any occurring honorific or generational pattern regarding the use of *abdi dalem* code choice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The arrangement for the implementation of the *samman* includes (1) Opening (*Mukhaddimah*), the activity is in the form of opening remarks to start carrying out the *samman* using Arabic; (2) Recitation of holy verses, based on the order of surahs/verses from the previous gathering; (3) *Samman* chants: Chanting and singing in Madurese; (4) *Arisan*: the form of collecting funds for gathering purposes in general; (5) Workshop: Serving food by the host; and (6) Closing and prayer using Arabic. The lyrics taken for the research focus on the ritual's third activity, where the people chant and sing in Madurese.

The other words in the lyrics mostly belong to the *engghi-bhunten* category, which signals respect for older people and people with higher status. The *abdi dalem* category is used to communicate with a higher divine deity such as God. However, the *abdi dalem* words are still uttered in daily casual conversation, although the context is not religious.

Based on the interlocutors, the *abdi dalem* code choice emerged in three social relationships, which

can be categorized as pedagogical honorific, parental honorific, and generational implementation, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1 The Lyrics in Samman Ritual

Original lyrics	English translation
<i>Duh kanjeng nabi abdina, dhak ka ajunan onggungghu ngamponga. Ngamponga onggghu paraddhuna, dhak ka ajunan onggghu samporna</i>	O Prophet, we really ask for your blessing and guidance, because prophet's guidance surely (the blessing) is perfect
<i>Ecaretaahghi mangken Abdul Mutholib e nagara Makkah</i>	It is told now by Abdul Mutholib in the nation of Mecca
<i>Ecatora mangken neng e nagara Onian laep raja</i>	It is told now that there is a major crisis in the nation of Mecca

The lyrics contain six *abdi dalem* words, as seen in Table 2.

Table 2 *Abdi Dalem* Words in *Samman* Ritual

Abdi dalem form	Casual form	Meaning
<i>Abdina</i>	<i>Sengkok</i>	I
<i>Ajunan</i>	<i>Bekna</i>	Your Highness
<i>Paraddhu</i>	<i>Ekhlis</i>	Ask for blessing
<i>Mangken</i>	<i>Satea</i>	Now
<i>Ecatora</i>	<i>Ecaretaaghi</i>	Be told
<i>Laep</i>	<i>Mesken</i>	Crisis

The *abdi dalem* code choice functions as pedagogical honorifics when it is uttered by students to their teachers. The term 'pedagogical' here does not refer to a method of teaching, it refers to the interlocutors' relationship in an educational setting. There are 18 excerpts captured in this category, some of them are presented as follows.

Data 1

A conversation between a teacher (T) and a student (S):

S: *Abdina ngatoranaa longghu dha' ka ajunan mangken.*

(I'd like to give you an invitation now.)

T: *Iye Iye.*

(Yes, yes.)

S: *Nyuuna paraddhu kyae.*

(Please give me your blessing.)

Four *abdi dalem* words are uttered within Data 1, namely *abdina*, *ajunan*, *mangken*, and *paraddhu*. The student speaks with a teacher, someone older

and of a higher status, so the student should normally use *enggi-bhunten* to convey respect, as presented by Nurcahyo, Sukarno, and Salikin (2023) in their research in Al-Azhar Islamic Boarding School. However, the student in Data 1 diverts to *abdi dalem* instead, which means he respects the teacher a lot more since these words are normally used to speak to a higher being. The discourse also proves the preservation of *abdi dalem* forms due to the *samman* ritual since this conversation takes place in a school, which encourages the students to join the *samman* ritual. The student in this conversation is also an active member of the weekly ritual.

Data 2

A conversation between a teacher (T) and a student (S):

S: *Ajunan badhi adahar?*

(Are you going to eat?)

T: *Iye Iye.*

(Yes, yes.)

Similar to Data 1, Data 2 also shows the utmost respect from a student to a teacher by addressing the teacher as *ajunan*, which is similar to 'Your Highness'. This rule is consistent in all other excerpts in the pedagogical honorific setting.

Not only being implemented as pedagogical honorifics, *abdi dalem* code choice is also used as parental honorifics. Interestingly, the data present 21 excerpts, which entirely involve mothers and their children, with zero presence of a father, even though the families involved in this research are active members of the *samman* ritual. Further interview-based research is needed to pinpoint the reason behind the absence of masculinity and the dominance of femininity in implementing *abdi dalem* as a parental honorific. Some of the excerpts are presented in Data 3-6.

Data 3-6

A conversation between mother (M) and child (C):

3. M: *Bekna ngakan dimma?*

(Where do you eat?)

C: *Abdina adha'ar e depor.*

(I eat in the kitchen.)

4. M: *Bekna dimma atemmu ben abahna?*

(Where did you meet your father?)

C: *Abdina apangghi sareng abah neng pasar.*

(I met father at the market.)

5. M: *Bakna ningale abahna?*

(Did you see your father?)

C: *Abdina mirsani abah e masjid.*

(I saw father at the mosque.)

6. M: *Bakna ngucak apa ka santre?*

(What did you say to the santri?)

C: *Abdina ngatorraghi kalangkong ka santrre.*

(I express my gratitude to the santri.)

The parental honorifics shown in these data are consistent with the use of *abdina* to replace *sengkok*, which refers to 'I'. No other *abdi dalem* code choice is uttered in these conversations, even though the word '*ngatorraghi*' in Data 6 can alternatively be replaced by '*ngatora*', which is the *abdi dalem* word for 'tell/say'. This shows an inconsistency regarding the implementation of *abdi dalem* within family contexts.

The parental honorific excerpts also indicate that *abdi dalem* is only used as a pronoun for the addresser, not the addressee. Not once does the child address the mother as *ajunan*, unlike the pedagogical honorifics where students consistently address their teachers as *ajunan* to symbolize respect.

All the excerpts in Data 3-6 from this category only include the word *abdina* as the *abdi dalem* representation, which proposes another possibility. Instead of being a case of inconsistencies, the absence of other *abdi dalem* words in the parental honorifics may hypothetically be intentional. Further research is required to dissect the real rationale behind *abdina* as the solitary *abdi dalem* word in the parental honorifics paradigm.

The last category regarding the use of *abdi dalem* in daily discourse is the generational implementation where the code choice is uttered among people in a specific age group, regardless of their relationship. In other words, it serves as a non-honorific code choice.

Data 7

A conversation between colleagues Mas'od (M) and Abdur (A):

M: *Ecatora sanontho padha malarat.*

(Many people told me that they are in financial difficulties at the moment)

A: *Iye, padha laep kabbbhi.*

(Yes, they are all facing a crisis)

Two *abdi dalem* words are uttered within Data 7, namely *ecatora* and *laep*. This conversation happens between two regular members of the *samman* ritual whose ages are around 60. They talk about the common financial difficulties that arise due to the rise in prices of basic needs. Since they are the same age, they should normally use the casual form of the words, but they chose *abdi dalem* forms instead. The data once again prove that the lyrics in the *samman* ritual have a contributive effect on the preservation of *abdi dalem* words within daily discourse.

What sets the generational implementation apart from the pedagogical honorifics and the parental honorifics is that no *abdi dalem* code choice is used to symbolize respect to the addresser (*abdina*) and the addressee (*ajunan*). The *abdi dalem* in this category

solely serves as an alternative code choice with no indication of an aspect of 'politeness'.

These dialogues clearly show well-preserved *abdi dalem* words that are still uttered by the people in daily life within several different interlocutors' relationships. It is essential to note that these people are active members of the *samman* ritual. Therefore, they are familiar with the words and their meanings.

CONCLUSIONS

The research illustrates that the *abdi dalem* utterances within the *samman* tradition are the lyrics originally intended for use during the *Samman* ceremony, where purposive recorded samplings are captured during the ceremony, and the words are subsequently transcribed from that audio. The transcriptions of *abdi dalem* terms are also found in the everyday discourse of the *samman* community in Beraji Village. The act of taking notes allows for the recapture of some of the dialogues.

As a demonstration of the contribution that the tradition gives to preserve a language, there are six *abdi dalem* words within the *samman* tradition that are still used by the ritual members in Beraji Village in their daily conversations. The code choice only appears in three situations based on the interlocutors' relationships: (1) a teacher and a student, i.e., the pedagogical honorifics; (2) a mother and a child, i.e., the parental honorifics; and (3) elderly colleagues, i.e., the generational implementation. Each category demonstrates unique characteristics when using the *abdi dalem* code choice. It serves as a symbol of respect and politeness in the pedagogical honorifics and the parental honorifics. However, the code choice only functions as an alternative to generational implementation.

The results show several unidentified sociocultural rationales regarding the different uses of *abdi dalem* in each category. Further research is required to pinpoint (1) the reason behind the absence of masculinity in parental honorific situations, (2) the reason behind the inconsistency of *abdi dalem* in parental honorific situations, and (3) the possible extended function of *abdi dalem* in the generational implementation where the code choice can hypothetically serve as an identity marker among active members of the *samman* ritual. As for now, this research proves that the *samman* ritual has contributed to preserving the *abdi dalem* code choice among its active members in Beraji Village, Sumenep, Madura.

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