

# THE JAVANESE CULTURAL SHIFT SEEN THROUGH THE USE OF ADDRESSING TERMS AND KINSHIP SYSTEM IN THE DISTRICT OF YOGYAKARTA PALACE

Siti Mukminatun<sup>1</sup>, Rahmi D. Andayani<sup>2</sup>, Erna Andriyanti<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>English Education Study Program, <sup>3</sup>English Language and Literature Study Program  
English Education Department  
Faculty of Languages and Arts  
Yogyakarta State University

[Siti\\_mukminatun@yahoo.com](mailto:Siti_mukminatun@yahoo.com), [rahmiandayani@yahoo.com](mailto:rahmiandayani@yahoo.com), [ernaandriyanti@yahoo.com](mailto:ernaandriyanti@yahoo.com)

## Abstract

The purpose of this research is to describe 1) the styles of nominal address, 2) the domains of kinship, 3) the relationship between kinship relation and social stratification toward the address terms and kinship system, and 4) the shift of address terms and kinship system in the district of Yogyakarta Palace. This research was based on a field survey and employed a descriptive-qualitative method from structural, semantic, and sociolinguistic perspective. The data were words and phrases related to the address terms and kinship system which were collected from oral and written sources. The trustworthiness of data analysis was carried out through triangulation, peer checking and comparing with some related previous studies. The result shows four important points. First, there are three kinds of nominal address; high, mid, and low style. Second, the kinship domains found in the district of Yogyakarta Palace are (1) sultanate, (2) aristocracy, (3) palace kinship, (4) familial relationship, (5) social status, (6) social stratification, (7) neighborhood, (8) the power in the palace. Third, kinship relation and social stratification influence the choice of nominal address. The choice of address terms are generally based on some considerations, namely, the desire to show respect, and kinship relationship (Javanese: *awu*). Finally, the shift of address terms and kinship system was represented through (1) shortening nominal address, (2) increasing the sense of democracy, (3) broadening function, (4) upgrading social forms to have a social admiration and 5) decreasing social stratification.

Key words: cultural shift, address terms, kinship system, district Of Yogyakarta Palace

## Introduction

Bonvillain (2003) says that every culture has systems of belief about the world, including ideas about human beings, their abilities and rights, and the ways they interact with each other. These are not abstract or immutable systems arising purely from human minds. All of these things are maintained and reproduced through linguistic message. Meaning is never divorced from the society that creates it. In stratified societies the way people view others are expressed in and through language. One of the most sensitive features of language reflecting speaker's assessment of co-participants is the address terms chosen in a speech event. This is particularly shown in the use of address terms in the district of Yogyakarta Palace. In other words, this phenomenon

describes how a single feature of language use suffices to identify someone's membership in a given group (Tabouret & Keller in Coulmas, 1998).

The district of Yogyakarta Palace is a place where aristocrat, palace relatives, and *abdi dalem* live in unique social norms. In their interaction, all of them will address each other based on the norms which pay attention to social stratification. However, nowadays there is a change in which *abdi dalem* does not obey the norms of addressing system in the district of Yogyakarta.

Generally, in Javanese culture *abdi dalem* will address the palace relatives using their title. For example, a lady named Retno Gumilar with her title *Raden Ajeng* will have (1) Retno, addressed by

aristocrat to her; 2) *mBak Retno*, used by other palace relatives younger than her or ; 3) *Jeng Retno*, atau *Diajeng Retno*, used by a palace relative having higher social stratification seen from kinship relationship, and (4) *Ndoro Jeng Retno*, which is used by *abdi dalem* to show their loyalties and respect to *Raden Ajeng Retno*. Thus, all those address terms have a function to sign the relation between the addressor and addressee. Besides being addressed using title, Retno has been possibly called 'Retno', '*mBak Retno*', '*Bu Retno*', '*Bu Ageng Retno*', and etc. This situation happened in the district of Yogyakarta Palace. This results in the use of various address terms, in which more or less have changed. This may be caused by the consideration of simplification, the era of globalization, social class recognition, and so on.

This research aims at identifying and describing 1) the styles of nominal address terms used in the district of Yogyakarta Palace, 2) kinship domains, (3) the relationship between kinship relation and social stratification and their influence toward the use of address terms and kinship system, and 4) the shift of address terms in the district of Yogyakarta Palace.

## **Literature Review**

### **Culture**

Riley (2007) says that the term 'culture' refers to a product of human activity and effort, the sum of knowledge which humanity has produced, accumulated, stored and transmitted throughout history. Tylor in Riley stresses that culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society. Similarly, Serrat (2008) looks culture as the totality of a society's distinctive ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge. It exhibits the ways humans interpret their environments. It can be concluded that culture is system, belief, shared

knowledge, and custom produced by society to manage their life.

The district of Yogyakarta Palace is a society which is managed with certain norms, customs, and social values. Thus, to function in this society, people must know and understand its cultural aspects.

### **Address Terms**

Address terms are the words speakers use to designate the person they are talking to while they are talking to them (Fasold, 2003). They are used to show someone's relation to others and can also be used to show the power and solidarity. Chaika (1982) says that address terms are used to attract someone and they must not be in the form of name. Oyetade (1995) defines address terms as words or expressions used in interactive, dyadic and face-to-face situations to designate the person being talked to. Thus, they are really a part of complete semantic systems having to do with social relationship.

In general, each language has a series of terms in addressing others or in having a conversation. Javanese has a complicated addressing system. In this society, someone must consider the relationship between speaker and hearer (Geertz in Holmes, 1992). They must be careful determining their social status (high, middle, or low) (Wardhaugh, 2006). The appropriateness of using address terms will determine the success of communication. Through addressing terms, it can be known whether the conversation will proceed or not.

The rule of address terms in a society is as complicated as the society. (Chaika, 1982). There have been many research focusing on the use of first name or not, for example Mr., Mrs., Dr., Father., and Professor + last name. Address terms also include the use of sir or ma'am, man, or boy, and your majesty. Some cultures, like Japanese use honorific. If someone is addressed using "Sir" while he answers

“Chris”, then he has a higher social status (Holmes, 1992).

## Second Person Pronomina

Personal pronomina is pronomina used to show the category of personal. In Javanese culture, the use of “You” has similarities with kinship terms which are quite unique, for example to (1) woman; *dik, jeng, dhiajeng, mbak, nimas, niken, mbok, biyung, ibu, bulik, budhe, eyang, den ayu, Gusti Bandoro Raden Ayu, ndoro jeng, Gusti Putri, Gusti Ratu, Mbok Ratu*, (2) villagers; *nduk, mbokne si gendhuk*, (3) man; *mas, kang* atau *kakang, kangmas* atau *kakangmas, dhik (adhi), dhimas (adhimas), man (paman), wo, siwo, wak, pak, bapak, bapa, denmas* atau *radenmas, bandoro raden mas, Kanjeng Raden Tumenggung, Kanjeng Sinuwun, Sampeyan Dalem, Panjenengan Dalem*, dan (4) peasants; *thole, bapakne si thole, mbokne si thole, dan cung ( dari kacung)*.

## Language System in Yogyakarta Palace

Address terms is closely related to politeness. The right choice of address terms is considered polite if it shows the relation between the speaker and the hearer.

Javanese has a unique culture. The community use levels of speech; (1) *ngoko*, (2) *krama madya*, dan (3) *krama*. The Javanese speaker usually put politeness clue in ‘*ngoko*’ and ‘*krama*’ with *honorifics*. Geertz in Wardaugh (2006) says that “*it is nearly impossible to say anything without indicating the social relationships between the speaker and the listener in terms of status and familiarity*”. Javanese speaker should determine the right language style before starting to speak.

Sulistyawati (2004) said that in increasing the sense of democracy, Yogyakarta Palace Community speak Bagongan Language. It is a mixed language of *Krama madya* and *Krama Inggil*. As stated in Kedaulatan Rakyat Online (2010) this language is quite

simple, consisting 11 words, they are *henggeh (iya, ya), mboya mboten, tidak, menira (kula, saya), pekenira (sampeyan, kamu), punapi (apa, apa), puniki(iki, ini), puniku (iku, itu), wenten (ana, ada), nedha (sumawi, mari), seyos (sanes, bukan), besaos (kemawon, saja)*.

## Address Terms, Politeness, and Social Stratification in Yogyakarta Palace

Social stratification and social class are two different terms. Both are usually used interchangeable so that it makes people confused. Social stratification is the hierarchical structuring of groups within society, reflecting inequality among sectors of a population. Inequality may be based on many factors, including income, occupation, education, and access to social, economic, and/or political power. Generally, social stratification is related with problems of distance or social polarisation. Meanwhile, social class is narrower than social stratification. It refers to one level in a social stratification. People, from the same social class, have possibly the same political orientation, value, and social behavior (Bonvillain, 2003).

Yogyakarta Palace community is characterised with a unique social stratification. This community is classified into two groups, aristocrat (those who have blood relation or kinship with Sultan) and *abdi dalem*. Based on this classification, Sultan stays in the highest position.

The existence of social stratification in Yogyakarta Palace community influences the form of address terms used in social communication. Sulistyawati, in her research on name and title in Yogyakarta Palace (2004), says that the existence of social stratification is reflected in the use of name and title used in Yogyakarta Palace.

Sultan as the highest ruler is always addressed by aristocrat and *abdi dalem* with *Sampeyan Dalem* in any situation. No one is allowed to use this address term.

Someone will be considered impolite if he uses that address term for his own. Naming system in Yogyakarta Palace is based on someone's position and power. Thus, addressing system is a cultural identity of Yogyakarta Palace community.

Holmes (1992) states that being linguistically polite involves speaking to people appropriately in the light of their relationship to others. Inappropriate linguistic choices may be considered rude. Making decisions about what is or not considered polite in any community, involves assessing social relationships along the dimensions of social distance or solidarity, and relative power or status. Thus, someone must understand the social values of a society in order to speak politely.

Related to the social stratification in Yogyakarta Palace community, it is not appropriate for aristocrat addresses Sultan "dhimas", although he is older than Sultan. He must address Sultan "Sampeyan dalem". Similarly, KRT. Puntodewo, as the descendent of HB VII, addresses Sultan HB X "Sampeyan dalem".

Yogyakarta Palace Kinship system is principally the same as Javanese in general, that is based on genetic and blood relation using bilateral principle (considering man and woman) (Tashadi, 1983 in Sulistyawati (2004). Blood relation can be traced to seven or ten generation.

Besides being familiar for politeness aspect, Yogyakarta Palace community is characterised as the community which respects the sense of democracy. This is shown by the use *Bahasa Bagongan*. This language is used to develop the unity among aristocrat and *abdi dalem*. This language does not recognize the level of speech like *krama inggil*, *madya*, and *ngoko*.

## Research Method

This research employed a descriptive-qualitative method. The data were in the form of words and frase realizing address terms and kinship system

in the district of Yogyakarta Palace in the written and spoken form. The data reported in this paper focused on the address terms used in the communication among between Sultan, aristocrat, palace relatives, and *abdi dalem*. However, they did not consider the context where they were used. In the process of data collection, the team used some techniques, namely informal interview, and survey questionnaires. The data were collected by distributing the questionnaire and interviewing the respondents involving aristocrats, palace relatives, and *abdi dalem* in the district of Yogyakarta Palace. Thus, the instruments of the research were the research team as the main instrument and the secondary instruments were in the form of data sheets, interview guidelines, and questionnaires.

To check the trustworthiness of the data analysis, the team applied triangulation, such as researcher triangulation, method triangulation, theory triangulation, and source triangulation.

This research applied purposive sampling, that is the selection of the sample of this research was based on the purpose of the research. This technique was done by taking the data from *Ndalem Kaneman*, *Ndalem Notoprajan*, *Ndalem Suryoputran*, dan *Ndalem Brontokusuman*. Questionnaires were given to the informants from these four *ndalem*. If the result of the questionnaires was almost the same, the process of collecting the data using questionnaires was stopped.

## Data Analysis

The analysis was intended to know the shift of address terms and kinship system through rechecking and matching the analysis with the experts' theory. The analysis was based on structural linguistic approach, semantic approach, and sociolinguistic approach.

1) Structural linguistic approach is used to analyse the shift of address terms and kinship system from the view of words and phrases. This is to know how the

forms of address terms and kinship system and their shift

## 2) Semantic approach

This approach was used to analysis the types of address terms and kinship system.

## 3) Sociolinguistic approach

This approach is used to analyse how language style related to the use of address terms and kinship system shifts along with the time and fast growth of technology. In addition, this approach can reveal the relationship of language style and sociocultural context and the situation of the speaker. In communication interaction, the speakers and hearers always consider to whom they speak, when, and what they are talking about.

## Triangulation

To achieve the trustworthiness of data, the team checked the accuracy of the data by consulting to *abdi dalem* and the palace relatives of Hamengkubowono VII, for examples, R.M. Dinu Satomo, R.M. Suyamto, GPH. Hastonegoro, KRT. Puntodewo, dan R.A. Semplah. In addition, the researcher also rechecked the data from the researcher's colleague, R.A. Rahmi D Andayani, M.Pd.

## Research Findings

### 1. Nominal Address Terms

Styles of nominal address terms in Javanese language and culture in the district of Yogyakarta Palace include high variety of address terms, middle, and low. These consist of varieties related to family domain, neighborhood, occupation, and kinship domain. The nominal address terms under family domain are used in accordance with their social status and stratification. Meanwhile, neighborhood domain focuses on social stratification and social status, age, and gender, Finally, kinship domain stresses on someone's position and title in that kinship.

### a. High style

High style is used by people having social stratification whose age is younger than those in lower social stratification. Those are reflected in the use of address terms by (1) palace relatives with Sultan (king), (2) palace relatives with other palace relatives, and 3) aristocrat with sultan, 4) *abdi dalem* with sultan, 5) *abdi dalem* with palace relatives, 6) *abdi dalem* with aristocrat, 6) *abdi dalem* with aristocrat.

High style includes (1) *Sampeyan Dalem Inkgang Sinuwun Kanjeng Sultan Kaping Sedoso*, (2) *Ngarsa Dalem*, (3) *Bapak Dalem*, (4) *Gusti Kanjeng Ratu*, (5) *Kanjeng Ratu Pembayun*, (6) *Pangeran Lurah*, (7) *Kanjeng Gusti Pangeran Haryo*, (8) *Kanjeng Raden Tumenggung*, (9) *Mbakyu Ratu*, (10) *Kanjeng Raden Tumenggung*, (11) *Panjenengan Dalem*, and (12) title + name.

### b. Middle Style

Middle style is used by (1) Sultan to palace relatives, (2) palace relatives to other relatives, (3) Sultan to aristocrat, (4) aristocrat to other aristocrat. The examples of middle variety are (1) *Dhiajeng* (Jeng), (2) *Dhimas* (mas), (3) *Kamas* (mas), (4) *Rama*, (5) *Nakmas*, (6) *Nakjeng*, (7) *Rama* + title, (8) *Mbakyu* + Name + Title and her position in kinship system, (9) *Kanjeng*, (10) *Bu Ageng*, (11) *Bu Alit*, (12) *Rama Ageng* (shortened into *rama*), (13) *Rama Alit* (generally shortened into *rama*) and (14) *Jeng* + name (*Jeng Anik*). Therefore, address terms which are commonly used for this group is T (title) or title without name or kinship terms, or title + kinship terms.

### c. Low style

Low style is commonly used by (1) Sultan to *abdi dalem*, (2) aristocrat to *abdi dalem*, and (3) *abdi dalem* to *abdi dalem* having the same position. The examples of low style are (1) *Mas*, (2) *Dhik*, (3) *Pakdhe*, (4) *Budhe*, (5) *nickname*, (6) *Bapak*, (7) *Ibu*, (8) *Mbak*, (9) *Bulik*, (10)

*Paklik*, (11) Title + name. In this social class, address terms used are kinship terms as a substitute for “you”, and usually using first name.

## 2. Domains of kinship

Based on data analysis, domains of kinship include (1) sultanate, (2) aristocracy, (3) palace relatives, (4) familial relationship, (5) social status, (6) social stratification, (7) neighborhood, dan (8) the power in the palace..

Sultanate domain is shown in the relationship between sultan and palace relatives, aristocrate, and abdi dalem. Aristocrat domain refers to the relationship between aristocrat and other palace relatives. Palace relatives deal with the relationship between palace relatives and other relatives. Familial domain refers to the relationship in each family. Domain of social status includes the relationship among kinship domain. Social stratification domain refers to the relation between the social stratification, namely sultan-aristocrat, Sultan – palace relative, palace relatives - *abdi dalem*. Familial domain refers to the relation between abdi dalem and other speech communities.

## 3. The influence of social status, age, and social stratification toward the choice of nominal address in the district of Yogyakarta Palace

Social status, age, and social stratification influence the addressing terms and kinship terms in the district of Yogyakarta Palace. Social status determines the form of address. For example, when Sultan addresses aristocrat, he not only uses title + name as he usually does to abdi dalem. He uses address terms like ‘*Rama*’, ‘*Dhimas* + title’. This reflects Sultan’s respect to aristocrat although it is possible for him to address using first name.

Personal relation is also reflected in the use of address terms. For example, palace relatives address other relatives in

the same family using first name (*jangkar*) while with those in the different family they use name + title.

Age also influences the address terms. However, sometime consideration is based on kinship position (javanese-awu). For instance, Sultan addresses “*Dhimas Yudo*” although Sultan is younger than him. This phenomenon is influenced by Javanese culture in which the address terms are usually based on the family position (*awu*). The influence of social stratification can be seen from the relationship between *Pak Wito* (orang kebanyakan) dan *Bu Wito* (wayah dalem). In this position, *Pak Wito* addresses his wife ‘*ndara*’ (shortened into ‘*Ra*’).

## 4. Cultural shift seen through the use of addressing terms and kinship terms in the district of Yogyakarta Palace

Any language change or revival of an abandoned address term reflects a change in a human relationship. In other words, such a change or revival is driven by the intensive contact with other people. Based on some sociolinguistic analysis and explanation, any society which is undergoing social change may show some change in its language. The changes of address terms in the district of Yogyakarta Palace include the following elements.

### a. increasing the sense of democracy

Sultan is the highest ruler in a palace. Along with the growth of egalitarianism situation, he tries to be closer to *abdi dalem*. Few years ago, in addressing *abdi dalem* Sultan used to say “*para abdi dalem wis padha siaga?*”. Then, *abdi dalem* responded “*sendika dalem*”. However, nowadays Sultan often addresses them with ‘*co-konco*’, means friends. Thus, Sultan treats them as the same friends or closed friends. This is stressed by *Rama Tirun* or KRT H Jatingrat, one of palace relatives (Prabowo, 2011). In addition, Soepomo Poejosudarmo conducted a research on

Bahasa Bagongan as the identity of Yogyakarta Palace.

b. Shortening nominal address

Addressing terms having been shortened are; *ra* (ndara), *mas* (Dhimas), *Jeng* (nak jeng), *mas* (nak mas), *ca* (kanca) and *le* (thole), *mbakyu ratu* (kanjeng ratu). This situation shows that people generally want something simpler and to look close to others. In addition, shortening the address terms reduces the distance and add solidarity among the speakers.

c. Broadening function

'*Mas*' which is the shortened form of '*kakangmas* atau *kangmas*' is used to address man in general not only older brother. This is not the same as "*Kamas*" which is specifically used by people in Yogyakarta Kingdom.

d. upgrading social forms to have a social admiration.

*Abdi dalem bekel* is usually addressed with 'Ca'. However, to show a high impression they are addressed with '*Mas Bekel*' atau "*Raden Bekel*". Murtini, *abdi dalem*, who addresses her son with "*mas Dilo*". This address term is expected to give a high impression. Other example is shown by the use of addressing palace relatives with first name (*jangkar*). In the culture of Yogyakarta Kingdom, this is regarded impolite.

e. Decreasing the status

As stated in the literature review, addressing system in the district of Yogyakarta Palace must be based on the recognition of title and name. However, due to the lack of this knowledge, *abdi dalem* addresses Raden Ajeng Rahmi as "*den*". She does know that "*den*" is similar with "*Raden Rara*", which is lower than *Raden Ajeng*.

## Conclusion

From some sociolinguistic perspectives, this paper briefly reviewed the cultural shift seen through the use of address terms and kinship system in the district of Yogyakarta Palace.

Based on the research findings, this research reaches several conclusions:

- a. The styles of nominal address used in the district of Yogyakarta Palace include high style, middle style, and low style. High style refers to address terms related to family domain, neighborhood domain, occupation domain, and kinship domain. The use of nominal address related to family domain is matched with kinship relation and social stratification. Family domain focuses on social status, social stratification, age, and sex. Then, kinship domain emphasis on someone's title and position in the kinship system.
- b. Domains of kinship include (1) sultanate, (2) aristocracy, (3) royal family, (4) familial relationship, (5) social status, (6) social stratification, (7) neighborhood, dan (8) the power in the palace..
- c. Social status, age, and social stratification influence the addressing terms and kinship system in the district of Yogyakarta Palace. Address terms are in fact social identifications of people and signification of human relations in a particular society.
- d. The cultural shift through the use of address terms and kinship system in the district of Yogyakarta are in the form of increasing the sense of democracy, shortening nominal address, broadening function, upgrading social forms to have a social admiration, and decreasing social stratification.

## References

- Anonymous. "Bahasa Bagongan Jangan Ikut Punah". 2010. Retrieved on 20 September 2011 from <http://www.kr.co.id/web/detail.php?sid=209485&actmenu=39>
- Bonvillain, Nancy. 2003. *Language, Culture, and Communication*. 4th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Chaika, Elaine. 1982. *Language The Social Mirror*. London: Newbury House Publisher Inc.

Coulmas, Florian. 1998. *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*. Blackwell Publishing.

Oyetade. 1995. "A Sociolinguistic analysis of address forms in Yoruba". *Language in Society* 24: 515–535. Cambridge University Press.

Prabowo. 2011. "Inilah keuntungan menjadi abdi dalem ngayogyakarta" Retrieved on 25 September 2011 from <http://news.okezone.com/read/2011/07/11/345/478464/inilah-keuntungan-menjadi-abdi-dalem-ngayogyakarta>

Fasold, Ralph. 2003. *The Sociolinguistics of Language*. USA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Fishman, Joshua A. 1972. *The Sociology of Language: An interdisciplinary Social Science Approach to Language in Society*. Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers.

Holmes, Janet. 1992. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. London: Longman.

Riley, Philip. 2007. *Language, Culture, Identity*. New York: Continuum.

Serrat, Olivier. 2008. "Theory of Culture" retrieved on 20 September 2011 from <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Information/Knowledge-Solutions/Culture-Theory.pdf>

Sulistyawati. 2004. "Nama dan Gelar Masyarakat Kraton Yogyakarta". Penelitian Dana Masyarakat.

Faculty of Cultural Sciences,  
Gadjah Mada University.

Wardaugh, R. 1986. *Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.