

Language and Language Variety as Metaphors: Evidence from The East Javanese Folk Theater

Fernando C., author

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Abstrak

This paper reports on the results of a study conducted with a view to finding out the pragmatic forces behind the choice of a language or a language variety over another, and, additionally, to getting insights into factors that influence code choice. The underlying assumption is that a language or a language variety can be seen as a metaphor, which conveys a certain pragmatic meaning, depending on who speaks to whom, where, when, about what, how and why.

Data for the study was drawn from tape recordings of ludruk, an east Javanese folk theater, which differs from many other forms of drama in that dialogs are not set and memorized and that therefore players have to invent, make up or "recite" their lines without preparation. The rationale for choosing ludruk dialogs as the topic of the study is that, being impromptu, they very much resemble natural, everyday conversations and thus their rules of speaking can be expected to very much reflect those in natural, everyday discourse, if not exactly the same.

While Indonesian, the national language of Indonesia, is also used in ludruk performances -- a recent phenomenon and especially in television performances for audience nationwide - the traditional language of ludruk is Javanese, specifically the eastern dialect of this language. Madurese, the language of the ethnic group on the island of Madura and much of the eastern part of East Java Province, is sometimes used in a performance, but?