

Situated Identities in a Minority Community: The Case of *Osing* in Banyuwangi, Indonesia

Due to recent, state-sponsored language and status planning efforts, **Osing** (ISO 639-3: *osi*) is currently experiencing a renaissance, resulting in increased language use and the emergence of a new Osing identity. Osing has gained enough popularity in recent years that people of other (non-Osing) ethnicities have begun speaking the language and adopting Osing cultural practices (Arps 2009). Based on sociolinguistic interview data, this paper discusses these *situated identities* of Banyuwangians as products of the commodification of Osing in the public sphere.

Indonesia has formally tasked local governments with promoting regional languages and cultures and to "create atmospheres conducive to speaking local languages, including the empowerment and establishment of local traditional institutions, in order to increase positive attitudes so that people have an awareness, pride, and loyalty to the local language norms." (Pusat Pembinaan dan Pemasyarakatan 2011). Osing is recently taught alongside Javanese and Indonesian in Banyuwangi schools (in all 25 *kecamatan* 'districts' as of 2017) and the local government recognizes Osing as a *language distinct from Javanese* and specific to Banyuwangi. Further, policymakers are embracing the opportunity to promote Osing culture by organizing Osing-themed cultural events and festivals as well as promoting the village of Kemiren as "*Desa Wisata Osing*" ('Osing Tourism Village') and as an *adat budaya* 'indigenous culture' tourist destination. As the government promotes Osing language and culture—elements of which are valued as **commodities** for achieving "*semua potensi yang ada di Banyuwangi*" ('the whole of Banyuwangi's potential') Banyuwangians have begun to *identify as* Osing, a stance which influences when and how the language is used.

In 2016–17 I interviewed 20 speakers throughout Banyuwangi regency, visiting areas with predominantly ethnic-Osing populations as well as non-Osing populations. Conducted in Indonesian, these sociolinguistic interviews were designed to learn about the lives and situated identities of speakers and to determine individual and overall evaluations of ethnic stereotypes (also known as "knowledging"; Goebel, 2015). '*Suku Osing*,' '*Orang Osing*,' and '*wong Osing*' are three common identity labels for Banyuwangians, evidenced in speech as well as in state-sponsored promotional materials. In interviews, consultants generally associate '*suku Osing*' with an essentialist view of identity and Osing ethnicity, while '*Orang Osing*' and '*wong Osing*' are situated identities which can refer to almost anyone in Banyuwangi, regardless of ethnicity—provided they speak Osing, participate in Osing culture, or (sometimes) simply live in or near an ethnic-Osing community. Crucially, a majority of consultants **equates** 'Osing' with 'Banyuwangi,' as shown in the following examples from three different interviews.

- (1) "*Orang Osing, itu-- maksudnya Orang Banyuwangi.*"
('*Orang Osing*' means '*Orang Banyuwangi*'.)
- (2) "*Kalau Orang Osing itu? Siapapun yang ada di Banyuwangi.*"
([the definition of] '*Orang Osing*'? Anyone [who lives] in Banyuwangi.)
- (3) "*Karena saya lahir di Banyuwangi, saya disebut dengan wong Osing.*"
(Because I was born in Banyuwangi, I am referred to as *wong Osing*.)

In explaining the difference between *suku Osing* and *wong Osing*, another consultant considers *suku Osing* to mean a person born in Banyuwangi, whose ancestors were *Orang Banyuwangi*. However, *wong Osing* can refer to a person who was born in Banyuwangi but whose ancestors were *not Orang Banyuwangi*—pointing to himself as such a person. As illustrated here, this research finds that the social expansion of *Osingness* in recent years is reflected in speakers' sociolinguistic identities: While "*Osing*" was primarily associated with an *ethnicity* as recently as 20 years ago, it now has a supra-ethnic, regional association with Banyuwangi at large. In interviews, consultants negotiate identities (their own and those of others)—determining who is and who is not *wong Osing* and *suku Osing* based on sociocultural factors and language ideologies—reflecting a very recent, state-sponsored recontextualization of *Osingness*.