

MULTILINGUAL REPERTOIRES BEHIND MONOLINGUAL PERFORMANCES:
LANGUAGE IDEOLOGICAL ERASURE IN A *KRAMA* JAVANESE EVENT

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Abstract

In multilingual Indonesia, language users can still use their multilingual repertoires even in monolingual events that aim to maintain traditional local ethno-linguistic identity, often based on a prestigious variety of the local language (Kuipers 2008). I will illustrate this by discussing the use of multiple languages in an event exclusively centered on the use of the *krṅmṅ* speech level of Javanese: a high-school Javanese debate competition held in Semarang, Central Java. I will show that youth contestants from one particular high school use other languages and varieties, namely Indonesian and *ngoko* Javanese, as meta-languages in preparing their *krṅmṅ* Javanese debate arguments. This suggests, in this particular case, that the *krṅmṅ*-centric notion of refined Javanese identity and tradition is a performance accomplished based on discursive work involving the use of other languages or varieties that normally do not fit within this traditional language-ideological identity (*ngoko* Javanese is "coarse" whereas Indonesian is the national or "modern" language (Errington 1998)). Of course, the use of these other languages and varieties is ultimately put under language ideological "erasure" (Irvine and Gal 2000) once the youths perform at the event. Nonetheless, the Javanese debate is also located within a broader event (a Scout competition) that utilizes Indonesian and English. During the debate event, older non-contestants (such as organizers, host, and judges) have broader rights of language choice and can flout the monolingual *krṅmṅ*-only "interactional regime" (Blommaert et al. 2005) of the event, which mostly targets the youth contestants. Other participants largely misrecognize these divergences from the monolingual standard. This indicates that hierarchy of status and authority strongly influence the "order" (Blommaert 2007) of language use in the enactment of monolingual Javanese traditional identity in this event (cf. Goebel 2007). Thus, the *krṅmṅ*-based notion of Javanese identity in the Javanese debate is both social construct and performance, one based on the erasure of the interconnections between the different language forms in speakers' repertoires and enacted through differential status-based communicative rights.

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