

Language, Identity, and Cultural Tourism: An Ethnolinguistic Case-Study of Kampung Naga Tasikmalaya, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT : The present study aims to explore the relationship between culture and identity of Kampung Naga's people on the one hand and tourism, especially cultural tourism, on the other. Based on our research, cultural tourism is significant in contributing to the construction and maintenance of Sundanese identity as friendly people with an interesting way of life, language and culture. This can be seen from, among other things, the daily activities of people of Kampung Naga with its uniqueness and authenticity, which are essential qualities for attracting tourists. Thus, the promotion of tourist sites and activities through the use of some aspects of Sundanese culture plays an important role in enhancing the way in which the tourist attractions are managed to better the mapping of tourism in West Java. This leads to a conclusion that tourism industry, through the use of various cultural aspects, may become one of the ways the concept of a community is explained, for the sake of the cultural tourism promotion, along with its symbols of identity. In the end, this study also recommends that the possible negative impacts of tourism can be anticipated by optimally making use of local indigenous knowledge.

KEYWORDS: *Kampung Naga, ethnolinguistics, Sundanese, identity, tourism*

I. INTRODUCTION

The people of Kampung Naga who belong to a larger community in West Java called the Sundanese—although in some aspects have similarities with other Sundanese people—still have their own cultural peculiarities, which to some extent are significantly different from the others. One of them is their traditional simple life which is very close to nature, causing them to reject some aspects of modernity like electricity, and of course, any form of instrument or appliance that requires electricity to operate. They are accustomed to using traditional small torches or kerosene lamps called '*damar*' or '*cempor*' respectively at night.

This attractive and unique place is located not far from the main road connecting the Regencies of Tasikmalaya and Garut, West Java, Indonesia. Like in many other parts of West Java, the people of Kampung Naga are blessed with fresh air, scenic landscapes, and fertile soil that are suited for commodity crops such as rice, fruit and vegetables. They live a peaceful simple traditional life without any modern gadgets in a beautiful village surrounded by green rice-fields, splashing clear-watered stream and lush trees such as bamboo trees around the village. These trees produce all materials needed to construct their wooden houses which are walled with plaited bamboos.

All these particularities have led the people of Kampung Naga to become aware of what have made them who they are. At the same time, these also have made visitors or people from other places to become more interested in Kampung Naga and its people. This condition reflects mutual understanding between the people of Kampung Naga and the visitors (Koentjaraningrat, 1990; Riley, 2008; Ekadjati, 2014; Sumarlina, 2017a). The main objective of this study is therefore to re-consider the interconnected roles of language, culture, and social identities as the underlying significance in enhancing tourist activities in West Java, especially in Tasikmalaya Regency.

II. ETHNOLINGUISTICS AND TOURISM

Ethnolinguistics pertains to the study of language on the one hand, and society with various aspects of culture on the other hand. It is also closely related to social identities which are inseparable from their cultural background, including their local vernacular, as stated by Riley (2008) as follows:

The main areas of ethnolinguistics include the relationship between language and culture, communicative practices, and cognitive models of language and thought. The ethnolinguist tries to describe and understand the role of language in shaping the ways in which members of a group relate to the world, to one another and to others. These ways of knowing and being are the stuff which identities are made of. Identities, that is, consist of meanings, and specific configurations of meanings can be implemented functionally as roles through the community's communicative practices. (Riley, 2008, p. 11)

Therefore, in relation to tourism activities where "members of a group relate to the world, to one another and to others," language plays a very important role, as revealed by Phipps (2006) as follows:

Tourism concentrates multilingual and intercultural experiences significantly. It does so at times of great symbolic significance to tourists, times that are anticipated and that are associated - socially, culturally and often personally - with happiness. In order to survive in the multilingual, intercultural worlds of tourism, being able to speak the language is an obviously advantage. (Phipps, 2006, p. 15)

In the worlds of tourism, along with all the facilities and tourist attractions, language is undoubtedly inseparable from culture. Being able to speak an international language, especially English, is highly beneficial in order to be able to enjoy a trip optimally. Besides, knowing about the expressions used in daily conversations with the host or local people is also an advantage, since it will be very helpful in understanding others. In this context, Herder in Riley (2008) stated that language for the speech community is at one and the same time the tool to communicate with others, the contents and the form of human thought. What is in one's mind can be expressed through language in various ways or forms. Every act of knowledge is only possible through the medium of language. Further, Herder (2008) explains that the interdependence between thought and language implies that the modes of thought and the culture of a community can only be studied and analyzed in and through their language. This is in accordance with Duranti's opinion (in Riley, 2008, p. 8-9) which indicates that language is a cultural resource and speaking is a cultural practice. Previous studies in the area of cultural tourism in relation to language have been on the topics namely: photographic messages of nature-based tourism experiences, the commodification of culture, a study of linguistic and visual resources on tourist websites, culture as a tourism resource, and semiotic construction of a holiday country (Vespestad, 2010; Shin, 2010; Kelly-Holmes, Pietikäinen & Moriarty, 2011; Debes & Alipour, 2011; and Bertoša, Muhvić-Dimanovski & Horvat, 2011). This study shows that we are of the opinion that there are some other elements of which roles are also important in supporting the study of a community's culture and the way they express their identities, namely behavior and belief.

III. LANDSCAPE AND CONTOUR, PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS, AND TRADITION IN KAMPUNG NAGA

Kampung Nagais not only very famous for its unique cultural aspects, but also for its gorgeous surroundings with fresh air, various green trees and panoramic sceneries all around. That is why it becomes one of the attractive and popular cultural tourism sites in Tasikmalaya. Besides, it is also easy to reach and not far from other tourism resorts in the southern parts of West Java.

3.1 Landscape and Contour

Like Sundanese people in some other mountainous parts of West Java, the people of Kampung Naga are blessed with a combination of abundant supply of water from the streams nearby, fresh air, cool climate and fertile soil. Aside from rice, various fruit and vegetables, they also grow many kinds of wood trees, coconut trees and bamboo trees to meet their primary needs, like houses and simple traditional furniture. Near their house, they often grow vegetables and other small plants such as those that may be used as herbal medicine. Alongside their garden, they also have ponds (*balong*) in which various kinds of fish, especially carp (*lauk mas*) are bred. They keep their livestock, like goats, in certain places at the edge of the village or at least far from their house in order to make the environment clean. This indicates that they are aware of how to live a good and healthy life. To meet their daily needs, they can find most of them inside or all around the village. This is the reason why they do not go to the market very often.

The view of Kampung Naga countryside has made the dreams of visitors come true because the rural landscape is so astonishing that from time to time the number of visitors always increases significantly. Along with the improvement of infrastructure and other facilities, the cultural diversity, especially the one related to tourism is expected to be able to make the local color acknowledged and promoted.

The contour of the village is suitable for visitors who like outdoors activities because although it lies at the side of the road connecting Garut and Tasikmalaya, to reach Kampung Naga they have to step down more than 430 stone steps. It is not a resort for those who like to sit on a sofa or watch the wide-open sea. It is a kind of ecotourism which needs a good stamina because going down on a steep piece of land by using stone stairs is a

little bit exhausting, and a greater effort is needed when the visitors return from the village because they have to go up by the same stone stairs. However, all these efforts pay off, since Kampung Nagais the only place in Tasikmalaya Regency with such stunning characteristics, not only because of its natural beauty, but also its unique tradition.

3.2 Tradition in Kampung Naga

It is essential to say that belonging to one community, such as Kampung Naga people, influences one's attitude, belief and behavior in everyday life, in accordance with the codes and norms in the given society. It is also important to point out that certain attributions differentiate societies from one another, or differentiate a community like Kampung Nagapeople—regarded as more traditional and unique—from a bigger society to which they also belong, namely the Sundanese people of West Java, generally regarded as more modern. One of the characteristics of Kampung Nagapeople is the role of their leaders who are mostly the elderly with a certain power to guide them and decide matters related to their daily life.

Tradition in its broadest sense refers to knowledge as well as patterns of behavior transmitted from generation to generation. More specifically, it means a particular rule in a community (Mulyana & Rakhmat, 2005; Ekadjati, 2014; Sumarlina, 2017), for instance, the tradition of building a house in Kampung Naga, which has never changed since hundreds of years ago. Tradition sometimes does not only oblige the local people but the visitors as well. For instance, Kampung Naga prohibit the coming of visitors on certain days.

Tradition and modernity are—in a sense—contradictory, but these concepts are, of course, interrelated. In the world of tourism, it is not always easy to discuss something traditional without considering other things considered modern (Weaver & Oppermann, 2000; Theobald, 2005; 2007; Sumarlina, 2017). For example, one aspect of the traditional way of life of Kampung Nagapeople who reject electricity. Their determination in rejecting electricity is in our mind means rejecting one thing that is essential in our modern life. Therefore, people outside Kampung Naga are of the opinion that this unique community is traditional on the ground that they do not accept one of the characteristics of modern life, namely electricity, although they live in the same era as we do.

Another example is the way they build their house. They only use materials found in their area, mostly wood and bamboo. All of the houses in Kampung Naga are built in the same way with the same architectural design. The total number of the houses is always the same from ancient times until now, because whenever the population increases, some of the people have to leave the village and move to other villages nearby, outside Kampung Naga. But at times, they still return to Kampung Naga whenever there is a sacred ceremony.

IV. THE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE OF KAMPUNG NAGA

In general, culture—which is not limited to a set of works of art—consists of the totality of social knowledge and has to be transmitted from generation to generation, as has been explained by Riley (2008) as follows:

Culture is the sum total of the information, beliefs, values and skills one needs to share and apply in the society and situations in which the individual lives: what I need to know in order to 'make sense' in and of those situations in the same ways as my fellows and to communicate and behave in ways they find appropriate. The communicative practices through which culture is transmitted are themselves part of culture. (Riley, 2008, p. 40)

Like other Sundanese people who live in West Java, Indonesia, the people of Kampung Naga use Sundanese language for everyday communication. There is *undak usuk* in the Sundanese language system, which is a kind of language stratification, in which there are three strata, namely the high, the middle and the low. The high type is used when someone is talking to a person with higher social status. The middle type is used with peers. The lower type is used in everyday conversation with friends or people of lower social standing. It is interesting to note that the lower type is often used in orders, prayers and mantras as follows: "*Mimitina kudu ngaturan tuang heula ka nu boga ieu susukan, sabab eta cai pangdatangna ka dinya ku tingkah polah eta aki atawa bapa*" (Sumarlina, 2017, p. 105). It translates as: "at first (we) must give 'food' to the 'owner' of the stream, because the water is flowing under the control of 'grandfather' or 'father' here".

This expression illustrates their language, belief, culture and identity. The use of lower type shows that the elderly people have higher social status than the farmers, but they regard their grandfather and father as respectful people. In addition, although they have passed away a long time ago, they still have the power to help them in many aspects of life. The phrase *ngaturan tuang* is a high type of Sundanese and is used to show respect. It means "to give or serve some food" to the people they admire. The noun phrase *tingkah polah* literally means "behavior or action," but implicitly means "control or power." The construction of *tingkah polah eta aki atawa bapa* of which the literal meaning is "the behavior or action of grandfather or father" also indicates the patriarchal structure of the community where the control is in the hands of men. Besides, this construction implicitly means that the power of their ancestors has helped them in their daily activities by making the water

flow so that it is easy for them to cultivate their land, as mentioned above. Their ancestors can do so because they are regarded as the owner of the stream with invisible power. Their language also indicates a mix between their ancestors' belief and Islam. In their prayers they use old Sundanese expressions and also some Arabic words at the same time. The images of Kampung Nagapeople are formed by the reflection of their daily activities including the use of words and phrases in those prayers.

As illustrated above, language—in the form of various expressions or discourses—stores many kinds of cultural aspects as our knowledge, and it thus plays a very important role in constructing images of a community. Therefore, it also helps promote the site, because tourism and imagination are involved in any holiday activities as revealed in many reviews which have been employed to promote tourism to a variety of different destinations (Dann, 1996, 2002; Cutting, 2003; Theobald, 2005; Black, 2006).

What we think is important to mention here is that all aspects of the life of Kampung Nagapeople—which are of course related to their identities—also have something to do with the concept of social identities as the source of elements for developing cultural tourism. What we mean by elements here are the tangible things, such as their houses (the architecture and materials), traditional tools for working, and handicrafts as well as the intangible elements namely their beliefs, thoughts and togetherness that unite the people, relate one another, and connect them to the others. Even though Kampung Nagapeople have their own peculiarities compared with the rest of Sundanese people, they still respect the norms and values they have in common (Maria et al., 1995; Rif'ati et al., 2002; Saringendyanti, 2009; Sumarlina, 2017a, 2017b).

V. KAMPUNG NAGA TOURISM AND THE SYMBOLS OF IDENTITY

Tourism is closely related not only with the culture as a whole, but also with the elements comprising it, like language and identity that become the discussion of sociolinguistics and ethnolinguistics because language and social identities represent a culture (Barker, 2000; Holmes, 2001; Coulmas, 2002; Bateman, 2006; Jourdan, 2006). That is why the discussion of cultural tourism cannot be separated from that of social identities, and also the symbols that represent them, which become the study of the use and interpretation of language expressions and signs within a certain society, because cultural tourist attractions among other things depend on language expressions, many kinds of cultural signs that represent “something” to “someone” (Dann, 1996; Holmes, 2001; Coulmas, 2002; Danesi, 2004; Theobald, 2005).

5.1 Symbols of Identity

A symbol stands for its referent in a conventional way. In other words, a symbol is a sign which is designed to encode a referent by convention or agreement. The word *white*, for instance, can stand for cleanliness, purity, and innocence. Words in general are also symbols (Danesi, 2004). Thus, Sundanese words can be considered as symbols that become part of the Sundanese people's identity. Among the Sundanese people, especially the Kampung Nagapeople, the word *damar* or *cempor* (which means small kerosene lamp or small resin torch) is the symbol of simplicity, indigenous knowledge, and at the same time hope and guide for life, especially when one feels darkness all around. This is expressed in the saying: “*damar najan leutik enyayna tapi bisa nyaangan nu keur poekeun*” (“small resin torch, even though it is small it can give light in the darkness or to those who are feeling dark all around”). Kampung Nagapeople reject the use of electricity and they depend on the small light of the *damar* or *cempor* when the night comes. For these people, night time is the time when they can really take a rest after working hard during the day. Due to the absence of electricity, they do not have electrical equipment at home. Instead, they live a simple, natural life.

From tourism point of view, even though Kampung Nagapeople are small in number compared with the whole Sundanese people all around West Java, they are like a *damar*, a small light that gives a unique color in the world of tourism. Their uniqueness is like an eye-catching attractant or bait that has a special strength in alluring visitors (Richards, 1996; Weaver & Oppermann, 2000; Theobald, 2005; Sumarlina, 2017a). Their being different from other Sundanese people can satisfy the hunger of authenticity, because although they live in the twenty-first century, they live happily in a very traditional way of life.

In connection with the use of Sundanese language, symbolism often appears in many kinds of interactions. Symbolism is the result of interaction between the text and the reader; it is an optional interpretative strategy which the reader may choose to adopt. Thus, symbolism can be seen as an example of textual implicature, which invites the reader to explore possible meanings in a usual way (Black, 2006, p. 124-125). A Sundanesaying like *beunang laukna herang caina* (which means “the fish is caught, the water is still clear”), which expresses local indigenous knowledge, may have several interpretations, depending on the context and the knowledge of the reader, besides the cultural background, since meanings are often culturally conditioned. In Kampung Nagacommunity, people breed fish in the ponds (*balong*) near their house. If someone does not catch the fish accordingly, the water in the pond will become very dirty, and the fish may not be caught. Therefore, the above mentioned saying can be generally interpreted as solving a problem in an excellent way. However, concerning the efforts to develop tourism, we are of the opinion that the saying may be interpreted as successful in attracting tourists without having any negative impacts, because tourism does not always have positive impacts

to the local people. Very often, visitors leave behind rubbish on the location. Another example is that an art performance is not conducted properly because many parts are edited for the sake of time efficiency. This problem, although disputable, has made some artists, especially those involved in dance, dramatic, and other traditional performances feel uncomfortable. The other negative aspect that may appear is the damaging impact on the environment.

5.2 Identity and Tourism

As has been described previously, the symbols that help construct the images of a community lie at the heart of the community's soul, in a sense that all of its members are aware of the importance of being themselves. Being different from others, being unique, and being authentic are beneficial in supporting the development and the promotion of certain cultural tourism sites (Richards, 1996; Weaver & Oppermann, 2000; Theobald, 2005; Page, 2007).

As also mentioned earlier, it is correct to say that belonging to a community gives nuances to one's attitudes, beliefs and codes. On the other hand, the attitudes and behavior of the individual members can also influence the community. It is also not wrong to say that such attributions differentiate communities from one another, or a smaller community from a bigger one, such as Kampung Nagacommunity being a part of the greater Sundanesesociety. In other words, Kampung Nagapeople are Sundanese, but only few of Sundanesepeople belong to Kampung Nagacommunity (Scott, 1996; Jourdan, 2006; Riley, 2008; Ekadjati, 2014; Sumarlina, 2017a).

What we would like to point out here is that individuals as members of a community come to identify themselves in relation to the community to which they belong; the community composed of people with similar ways of behaving, communicating and thinking, who also have the same history and ancestors (Barker, 2000; Ignjic, 2001; Jourdan, 2006). Thus, the members of Kampung Nagacome to identify themselves on the basis of the facts mentioned before. They have the same history. Therefore, they have the same ancestors, to whom they refer as *aki-nini* or *karuhun* of the village. Besides, they also have loyalty to the convention whereby individuals affirm their will to continue a common life. All these are related to their pride, character, and also identity which are embodied in the way of life, symbols, ceremonies and customs of that community. They may include the obvious attributes such as traditional weapons, tools for working, clothes, traditional head band or *iket*, and handicrafts. Other important things to contribute in constructing social identity of Kampung Naga are the landscape, the shape and materials of their houses, and the way they travel in or outside the village (Koentjaraningrat, 1990; Jourdan, 2006; Riley, 2008; Ekadjati, 2014; Sumarlina, 2017a).

Identity plays a very important role in the development of Kampung Nagatourism. The identity construction of this community can be based on their language, belief, and also their tradition. We conceptualize the identity of the Kampung Nagacommunity as socially transmitted representational elements which are different from that of the other people outside the residence of these people. To make it clear, the people of Kampung Naga, for instance, reject the use of electricity and all kinds of electric apparatus. This prohibition, which we consider as one of the representational elements of these people, is transmitted from generation to generation until now.

For people outside Kampung Naga, this is a unique way of life of Kampung Nagacommunity which may raise a question how they can live in this modern world without electricity. We may ask what kind of life that they enjoy at night being separated from the whole world outside. This question may produce a lot of imagination that in turn will change potential visitors to real tourists who are keen on seeing and experiencing the real life of Kampung Nagacommunity with their distinct characteristics. In so doing, the peculiar life of these people may create an imagined community through their respect to the perceived moral values of a bigger society, namely the Sundanesepeople who are very much interested in natural and culture preservation. However, Kampung Nagapeople show their moral values in their own way, which is very much different from other Sundanese communities in West Java, Indonesia. This may be caused by their history or heritage (Koentjaraningrat, 1990; Saringendyanti, 2009; Ekadjati, 2014; Sumarlina, 2017a, 2017b).

A community's history may become one of the elements that are combined to form a community's identity. Other elements include beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and way of life. All these are of significant importance in attracting visitors to the village and also some other tourism sites nearby, including handicraft centers.

Despite the fact that they come from the same province, when Sundanesepeople outside Kampung Nagavisit that place they will feel some differences, even though they speak Sundanese. In fact, the people of Kampung Nagaare also Sundanese, but they have some distinct characteristics. Thus, the differences and similarities are the things that come from both sides. What we are or who we are, is closely related to identities which, again, are the things that is not only us to decide.

Concerning such matters, Riley (2008) has stated that interactions with others have an impact on how individuals within a community conceive their personal identity, and by the same way also on how the community and its people are perceived by others. Whether we agree or not, each of us is frequently surrounded by others “who are telling us *who we are*”:

Our identity is not just something we can decide on ourselves. Because it is at least partly social, our identity is decided on—‘constructed’—by other people. And if they are in a position of relative power [...] they can take decisions for us, and even if those decisions are for our own good, there is a risk that we may not approve of them. (Riley, 2008, p. 2)

It seems that individual or personal identities are mostly constructed through the interactions with other people, and these people, directly or indirectly, decide or determine who we are largely by the ways they perceive and treat us. Social identities are constructed nearly the same way. They are constructed through the representations which people from inside and outside the community think or produce. In addition, the way through which we see ourselves is frequently decided or influenced by the way other people see us, and these social identities play an important role in shaping elements of culture (Barker, 2000; Jourdan, 2006; Page, 2007; Riley, 2008; Macleod, 2010).

In relation to tourism, what we would like to point out here is that promotion, be it right or wrong, provides images as the means by which local people can be encountered, described, even identified through their beliefs, myths and traditions. Sometimes what other people think of a community is not exactly who they are. Sometimes, too, there is also a kind of elaboration or even mystification in order to attract tourists. Rural areas, for instance, are often represented as places with interesting, old-fashioned inhabitants rather than resorts with original conditions.

VI. CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the relationship between language, identity and cultural tourism is an interesting area of research because identity, supported by language, is often elaborated partly for the sake of tourism promotion. The symbols of social identities, which are considered unique and authentic, indicate the people’s way of life and their cultural background which is, of course, different from that of others. Their behavior and the language that they use reflect their beliefs and thoughts. Therefore, cultural tourism, which is closely related to the culture of a society, may become the most common way that the Sundanese culture, especially the Kampung Nagaculture, is represented to the rest of the world. Therefore, it is also expected to enable further elaboration for tourism enhancement, and in turn, for the people’s welfare. However, the negative impact of tourism which may appear hopefully can be solved by making use of local indigenous knowledge optimally.

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