

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Language has an important role in human activities. Language, as a means, can be used to communicate ideas and feeling to other people. People maybe happy or sad because of messages which are conveyed by language. Moreover, language may convey several social informations of the user, for instance the educational achievement and regional origin of the user (Gumperz cited in Praide, 1972:203)

One kind of human activities that uses language as its medium is comedy. In comedy, body language (gestures) is used besides verbal language which both function as medium of expressing humor or jokes. And in this study the writer limits to verbal language only.

In this country there are numerous groups of comedians one of which is Srimulat group. Historically, Srimulat used to be one large group, but later it was broken into several groups which can be found in Surabaya, Jakarta, Semarang and Solo. The groups have not survived except one, that is The Surabaya Srimulat group. This paper will deal with Surabaya Srimulat, especially in the way the comedians of Srimulat manipulate language to generate humor.



In choosing this topic, the writer was inspired by an article written by Dede Oetomo. The title of the article is "Bahasa Srimulat: Jawa Wurung, Indonesia Nanggung." In that article Dede Oetomo stated that in Surabaya Srimulat there are two languages used, Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia which are often mixed. Oetomo added that according to Javanese people, the two languages have different characteristics. Bahasa Indonesia on one hand is thought to be formal, rational and infertile language. On the other hand, Javanese is thought to be an informal and fertile language and more suitable to generate a sense of humor. For example, there are several words that mean "eat" in Javanese, from rude to refined; nguntal, maem, mangan, nedho, and dhahar. Those words have different connotative meaning, each connoting a progressively higher relative status of the listener (addressee) with respect to the speaker (addresser) (see also Geertz 1960 cited in Pride, 1972:167).

Based on the fact that in Srimulat two languages are used which are often mixed, the writer assumes that code switching must occur there.

Furthermore Dede Oetomo wrote that in the past, originally Srimulat used Javanese as a medium of communication. That phenomenon nowadays can still be found in Wayang, Ludruk, and Kethoprak which use Javanese as its medium of communication. Wayang, Ludruk, and Kethoprak

are some kinds of Javanese traditional arts.

To explain why nowadays Srimulat's comedians use Bahasa Indonesia besides Javanese, several reasons are proposed. Some people say that it is due to Srimulat's appearance on the state television (Jakarta station), a nation wide TV broadcasting. The comedians of Srimulat have to speak in Bahasa Indonesia to make more viewers understand them. Maybe this reason can explain the use of both Bahasa Indonesia and Javanese by the comedians of Srimulat when they have their performances on television, but it cannot explain for the performances of Surabaya Srimulat in Aneka Srimulat building behind the THR Surabaya Mall.

If we pay attention to the audience of Surabaya Srimulat in Aneka Srimulat building, Oetomo explained, most of them are familiar with Javanese. Furthermore, if the Srimulat's comedians only use Javanese and its varieties in their performances, the audience will understand them. The fact shows that Surabaya Srimulat does not only use Javanese, but it also uses Bahasa Indonesia.

To explain that phenomenon, Dede Oetomo stated that actually that phenomenon is a reflection of the audience of Srimulat and society in general. Most of comedians of Srimulat and its audience come from lower middle class. In everyday life, they, especially the young people, usually speak in Bahasa Indonesia mixed with Javanese.

Because of the economic growth and development in the new era (since 1966), lower middle class people always try and sometimes are pushed to move up to higher class (upper middle class). As a consequence, they are trapped in a transitional condition, between Javanese tradition (kejawaan tradisional) and modern Indonesian (Indonesia modern). As the first generation who enjoy this condition, everything they do seems unsure, uncertain or fearful (gamang).

Furthermore, Oetomo explained that people who come from lower middle class realize that they must appear as people coming from upper middle class. As a result, they try to imitate the way of life of the upper middle class, for instances in the way of clothing, choosing furniture for their homes and also in choosing varieties of language. Unfortunately, Oetomo added, not all of them have "arrived psychologically" meaning they are not completely successful.

Javanese, as many other languages, has several language levels such as "ngoko" (the plain), "kromo" (the fancy) and "kromo inggil" (the elegant) (Peter Farb, 1973:48).

Based on the fact that there are some varieties of Javanese, it is possible that code switching happens within the different levels of Javanese varieties among the Javanese speakers. If nowadays the comedians of

Srimulat use also Bahasa Indonesia besides Javanese, as reported by Dede Oetomo, the writer assumes that the possibility of code switching is greater.

Based on the writer's observation, comedians of Srimulat sometimes also use English to generate humor. Because of that, code switching may occur from English to Javanese or Bahasa Indonesia and vice versa. Furthermore, there are several examples of code switching where English is involved in the analysis (Chapter III). These examples are used as addition to the major topic.

Saville-Troike (1982) wrote that there are various functions of code switching and of them is to generate humor (p.69). Another way that the writer supposes to be the source of humor is what in Javanese is called by plesetan. The English term for plesetan is pun. An example of pun (plesetan) is altering a word into another so that the new invented word or phrase conveys different meaning, such as during the Gulf War 1991, in certain newspaper the name of the United States' President at that time, George Bush, was deliberately written as Ghost Bush, and one of his minister, James Baker, was altered to James Banger. Banger is a Javanese word which means bad odor (Pratamawati, 1992:6).

In this thesis, humor is limited to Indonesian culture in general and Javanese culture in particular. The writer realizes that something which is considered humorous in certain culture or language may not be humorous in any other culture or language.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study above, here the writer would like to deal with two major problems.

1. a. Does code switching function as the source of humor in comic performances of Surabaya Srimulat ?  
b. When do the comedians use Bahasa Indonesia and when they use Javanese ?
2. Does pun (plesetan) also function as the source of humor in comic performances of Surabaya Srimulat ?

### 1.3 Significance of the Study

This study describes the language used by the comedians as the source of humor of Surabaya Srimulat whis is part of Indonesian culture. For the Sociolinguistics study, this thesis is expected to give additional information about the language used in comedy performances (humor). And for Surabaya Srimulat, this study may help the group to gain recognition as a professional group of entertainment.

#### 1.4 Theoretical Framework

The term code according to Saville-Troike (1982) is defined as language or varieties of the same language (p.61). More detailed definition of the term code is stated by Nancy Tanner. According to her, what is meant by code is what is commonly understood by the term language and intra language distinction or varieties, that is speech level, dialect and styles (Tanner cited in Pride, 1972:126).

About code switching, Fishman wrote that code switching is the practice of changing from one dialect or language to another (cited in Palmer, 1981:65). Furthermore, Saville-Troike (1982) defined code switching as the changes in languages or varieties of the same language within a single speech event. Saville-Troike also stated that code switching maybe used to generate humor (pp.61-69). Here the writer follows Saville-Troike's theory, because that theory has broader meaning than Fishman's. At least the word dialect in Fishman's theory has been covered in the phrase varieties of the same language of Saville-Troike's theory.

According to Erica McClure, there are two formal properties of code switching: code changing and code mixing. Furthermore McClure explained that :

Code changing, generally motivated by situational and stylistic factor, is the alternation of languages at the level of major constituent (e.g. NP, VP, S). The code change is a complete shift to another language system. All functions, words, morphology and syntax are abruptly changed.

Code mixing, the other type of code switching, is the individual's use of opposite language elements which cannot be considered to be borrowed by that individual, it occurs when a person is momentarily unable to access a term for a concept in the language which he is using but can access it in another code, or when he lacks a term in the code he is using which exactly express the concept he wishes to convey (cited in Duran, 1981:86).

To clarify what is meant by code mixing, in this paper the writer would like to follow a theory written by Rene Appel and Pieter Muysken (1987). They stated that code mixing is intra-sentential code switching, code switching which occurs within a sentence (p.118).

As stated by McClure above, code changing in particular and code switching in general, are motivated by situational and stylistic factor. About situational factors, Blom and Gumperz wrote that situational code switching occurs when language change is accompanied by change of the topic or participants or any time the communicative situation is redefined (cited in Saville-Troike, 1982:62-63).

About pun or plesetan which is supposed to be the source of humor, as long as the writer knows there is a little study on it and the writer has not found the definition. In Indonesia, humor itself, as a linguistic phenomenon, actually has not been studied much in Linguistics (Soejatmiko, 1988:1). But the writer would like



to explain it through a grounded research which was then developed into theories based on data which were accumulated (Martin & Turner cited in Faisal, 1990:108).

Another important thing, in this study is that the writer follows Soejatmiko's idea who stated that humor and joke are synonymous, and so are among the words funny, humorous and comic (Soejatmiko, 1988:16).

## 1.5 Methodology

### 1.5.1 Working Definition

Language is a means of communication that uses arbitrary vocal symbols.

Bahasa Indonesia is the national language of Indonesian people. Most Indonesian people, including the writer, treat this language as a second language after their mother tongue or regional language.

Javanese is one of the regional languages in Indonesia. Most of its speakers, who use it as mother tongue, live in Java, especially, in central Java and east Java. This language is the writer's mother tongue.

English is an International language. In Indonesia, English is one of the foreign language which is taught in many institutions, particularly in educational institutions. English is taught from junior high school until university or college.

To determine whether certain utterances include in Javanese, Bahasa Indonesia or English, the writer did it based on experience, since the writer has known those three languages. Javanese is his mother tongue, Bahasa Indonesia is his national language which he has studied since in the elementary school, and English is the first foreign language that he has studied since junior high school.

Humor are events on stage which are able to evoke laughters from the audience.

Comedy is a stage art which entertains audience through jokes or humor. In Bahasa Indonesia comedy is translated into lawak.

A comedian is an actor or actress who takes part in comedy performance. In Bahasa Indonesia, comedians is translated into pelawak.

Surabaya Srimulat ia a name of comedy group which is situated in Surabaya. This group continuously performs its comic performances everynight at Aneka Srimulat Building behind the THR Surabaya Mall. Further information of Srimulat can be found in the following chapter.

### 1.5.2 Location and Population

The location of this research is at Aneka Srimulat Building behind the THR Surabaya Mall, in Jl. Kusumabangsa Surabaya, where Srimulat holds its performances every-

night.

The population is the comedians who produced utterances that evoke laughters from the audience. An utterance or a speech is considered funny or humorous if it can evoke laughter from the audience.

### 1.5.3 Sampling

In this research the sample is an utterance used in Srimulat's performances. For this sample, the writer recorded seven performances or a whole week performances. A whole week performances are chosen because the Srimulat presents its varieties of comic performances continuously everynight in a week.

Performances of Srimulat here are limited only to those presented by the original comedians of Surabaya Srimulat. So the humor is expected to be original. These kinds of performances are chosen because sometimes Srimulat's performances are supported by comedians or even singers from outside group.

### 1.5.4 Techniques of Data Collecting

There are two techniques used to collect data in this research, interview and recording.

#### 1. Interview

This technique is used to get some informations about Srimulat as a comedy group, such as the number of

comedians and educational background of the comedians. For that, the writer interviews the coordinator of Surabaya Srimulat, as the key informan.

## 2. Recording

A tape recorder is used to record utterances of the comedians of the Surabaya Srimulat when they present their jokes and the reaction of the audience in the form of burst of laughters. The recording is taken while attending the Srimulat's performances.

The problem that the writer got as long as a week recording was on the Saturday night. The situation outside the Aneka Srimulat Building at that time was very noisy, especially from the open air music performance. As a result, the Srimulat's performance was disturbed by the sound of music and automatically that noise from outside was also recorded.

### 1.5.5 Technique of Data Analysis

The data analysed are recordings of the Srimulat's performances. From seven times of recording or seven cassettes, one of them is bad or noisy due to the noise from outside the Srimulat's building. So, there are only six recordings left to be analysed.

1. The first step is to transcribe the recordings of comedians' utterances, particularly which evoke laughters from the audience, into written text.

2. The second step is determine which utterances contain code switching and pun or plesetan.

Then, it is continued by giving some descriptions to some examples of code switching that will be presented in this paper, including when the comedians use Bahasa Indonesia and when they use Javanese. Some examples of code switching where English is involved are presented here. These examples are used as additional information to the main topic. Finally, some descriptions are also given to some examples of pun (plesetan) which, then, ended with a conclusion of what pun or plesetan is.