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JOKO OR JOHN: NAME AND IDENTITY OF ENGLISH TUTORS IN KAMPUNG INGGRIS, PARE, INDONESIA

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Abstract

Since name is one factor which shapes a person's sense of identity, the exploration of the choice of names can shed a light to self-boundaries and identity. Thus, this study aims to show connection between Western names chosen and used by English tutors in Kampung Inggris and their feeling of identity and self. Drawing on data collected from English tutors in Kampung Inggris, Pare, ethnography is applied as its method. Observation and random interview are done to help gathering the data. The findings show the important role of the choice of using Western names in shaping their identity reflected from the desired image to be displayed to others. First, they see Western names as a symbol of modernity and thus give them the sense of being modern and part of global citizen; second, English names used as strategy management to present themselves as 'competent' English tutor.

Keywords: Identity; Western Name; English Tutor.

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1. Introduction

Name plays an important role in shaping a person's identity, since name is a projection of self-representation, self-recognition, self-description, self-esteem, self-awareness, self-knowledge and many more facets of identity. It is also widely agreed that a name serves as a label for people to recognize, acknowledge, and remember one another. Instead of being called "you", "mbak", "mas", or "hei", a name gives a unique identity to people. Traditionally, a name is given to a child at birth by his/her parents. Thus, name is a portrayal of cultural aspects, such as ethnic tradition, religion, ancestry, gender, social class and birth order (Seeman: 1980). However, when cultural background attached to a certain name becomes a burden, a person will resist that name and change his or her name in a particular social environment (Prabasmoro: 2006, 69).

Globalization, immigration, technology and intellectual development as well as multiculturalism enable people to redefine their identity and sense of belonging. Identity is not a single and stable unity. It changes as people gain experience along with their personal growth. Hall in Rutherford

(1990: 225) mentions that identity is a flexible construction, a process which cover not only about “being” but also “becoming”, a principle difference between “who we are” and “what we become”. Thus, “identity” isn't something that people just born with or that is static throughout life; it's constantly in flux because society is constantly changing and so are the people in it. As globalization urges members of society to be global citizens by blurring geograpical and cultural borders, identity is constantly enacted, negotiated, maintained, and challenged through communicative practices.

Kampung Inggris located in Kediri is the example of multicultural society which has unique characteristics. In his research, Geertz in Ibrahim (1997, 60-61) described that the interactions in Kampung Inggris happened among people (teachers and students) from various backgrounds; religious and secular, locals and people outside the region. These people are tied by the need to learn and practice English. Interestingly, many English tutors around Kampung Inggris do not use their original names both in daily and professional life. Instead, they create other names which have western impression. The practice of getting another name for oneself may not new phenomenon; in many countries people often get another name in another language other than their native. For example, during new order era, Chinese Indonesians are obliged to change their names into something more “local” in order to get equal treatment as Indonesian citizen. In this sense, identity is not given, but a process; it is constantly under construction through interactions with others and with us. Wiley in Cheang (2008) explained identity process as follows

Identity is not a distinct trait, or even a collection of traits possessed by the individual. It is the self as a reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography. Identity here still presumes continuity across time and space: but self-identity is such continuity as interpreted by the agent.

In other words, individual manages to negotiate his or her identity to redefine their sense of self and clarify their roles and positions in society. It is interesting to see English tutors in Kampung Inggris as the embodiment of the intersection of various cultures in multicultural society in globalization era. Therefore, this paper examines how English tutors in Kampung Inggris articulate their identity and self-connected with their choice in using western names in their daily and professional life.

2. Methodology

Ethnographic approach is employed in conducting this research. Ethnography is a description of people and their actions or behavior. It describes the everyday, routine of culture. Kirk and Miller (1986: 9) further said that ethnography involves participation and observation of the other. Therefore, the data of this research drawn from random interview with English tutors in Kampung Inggris and also observation of their daily and professional life.

For this study, the researcher conducted one-month observation and interview toward English tutors in Kampung Inggris, Pare, Indonesia. The observations were done particularly when English tutors taught in the classrooms and also when they conducted meetings, both formally and informally, with their fellow tutors and members of society around them.

Since identity is more like a list of beliefs about oneself, the name people choose to present themselves to surrounding determine what aspects they choose to present to others. This may seem like casual choices, but in fact the way we use our name constitutes an important part of the impression we want other people to form of ourselves. Therefore, the interview is focused into two aspects; first is the reason behind the choice of Western names instead of their given names, and the second is what kind of identity they want to impose to others by that names.

3. Results and Discussions

Common Western Names used by English Tutors

From the interview conducted to several English Tutors in Kampung Inggris Pare, it is obtained the information about the decision on using western names instead of their given one. Most of those who decide to change their names claimed that western names they currently use are self-invented or recommendation from friends. There are several reasons for their preferences of western names. Some claim that there is no special reason behind their choice other than they like the pronunciation of that western names, some said that the names sound closely as their given names, only the western one sound more 'modern'.

The first is the names which do not have correspondence or similarity with their birth names. For example a tutor named Riza who prefers to be called Robert, and Harun who introduces himself as Jack. Those who choose these kinds of names said that they just like the pronunciation of names. They also claimed that these names are 'common' western names. The global trend has its influence on people's preference. There is no doubt that many people are influenced by the same source: American movies and pop musics. One respondent said that as Holywood movie addicts, he often finds main characters named Jack in the movie, such as captain Jack Sparrow in Pirates of Carribean or Jack Dawson in Titanic.

Another tutor named Agung chooses Chris to be his current names because he is impressed with English native speaker named Chistian who once taught in the institution he works. Gerritzenicos (2008: 2) in his research argues that Christian, along with other names like Christina, David, Lucas, Thomas have strong international position. He further explained that most international names belong to general western name stock and spread under the influence of Christianity. it can be said that, among English tutors in Pare, religion identity is not the main consideration in choosing name since Agung, a devout moslem uses Chris which connected with Christianity.

Second finding is the list of names with western impression which sound closely as a person's birth names. Most of them prefer these names because they offer new identity that according to them "basically it's me minus things I don't like about my name". For example, a man named himself Mr. Why because it sounds closely to his name, Wahyu. Actually, Wahyu is common name in Indonesia that used by both male and female. This very fact makes him feel not special by being Wahyu since there are so many people possess the same name. Therefore, although 'Why' is not really a name, he uses that to identify himself since that name makes him special and easily recognized. Another example is Dwi Ana, a female English Tutor who is more comfortable to be called Diana because this one word name is more simple and modern, and sound similar with her original name.

Third finding refers to the names that are modified and altered to meet the need of being more contemporary, for example, Yuli becomes Julie and Ari Becomes Arie. For some people, those changes seems insignificant, but in fact they still indicate people's perspective about their names. Although the ending 'ie' in Julie and Arie is still pronounced as /i/, it mostly used in International names like Natalie or Charlie. Therefore, the addition of 'ie' in the end of the original names can be seen as their effort to give a touch of modernity in them.

Western Names as Mean of Self-Presentation

Generally speaking, self-presentation refers to the situation when an individual consciously or not tries to control his or her image given to others. However, self-presentation is two-sided process, which while individual attempts to control his or her image, the others' impression formed may not necessarily be consistent with the initiator (Billow in Cheang, 2008). Based on the interview and observation done, there are some indications to illustrate the ability to exercise self-decision in using western names with a purpose linked with impression they want from others. Although no one admitted openly they chose western names to purposefully project an image of themselves toward others, when asked about impressions they form from their names, they were able to describe the image they have in mind. All these images are generally desirable, positive and connected with their position as English tutors in Kampung Inggris.

The first image that they want to convey by using western name is a sense of being modern. Modernity often associated with globalization in which global culture is becoming increasingly standardized and uniform. The names chosen by English tutors indicate the melting of local-global borders. People cannot easily define the cultural background of others based on name. By creating those names, these English tutors want to change their position from being part of traditional, local society into more 'modern' global society. For example, Abdul Hanan deliberately changes his name which is derived from Arabic into Mr. Hans. In Indonesia, naming the children with Arabic names and language is a common practice for moslems to give Islamic identity to the children. By choosing international name, Hanan wants to blur his distinct religion identity and become global person.

It is interesting, though, to understand that according to these tutors, being modern and global can be associated with one's social status. Most of respondents agree that the reason behind their choice in using English names is to increase their social status. It means, it is believed that name is one aspect to determine a person's social status. Therefore, those who have local names which commonly associated with 'simple people from village' or from middle class society, can escape from those stereotypes by changing their names into something more modern. From this explanation, it can be inferred that this society acknowledges western names are associated with more complex and advanced culture.

Lastly, western names are used by English tutors because they want to present themselves as a competent tutors. McFarland et al. in Cheang (2008) explained that names can be a tool to do self-presentation that he defined as 'self-promotion', that is to "verbally demonstrate the possession of desirable qualities, such as competence, reliability, and so on." One interviewee said that western related names are chosen to attach the image of Kampung Inggris as part their identity. It is widely known that Kampung Inggris, Pare is a place for students from all over Indonesia to learn English. With the rapid growth of English courses in this area, the competition among tutors also increased.

Therefore, the act of adopting International names and abandoning local names is seen as a strategy to promote their skill, and ability to be English tutors.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Other than simply being a label, names tell a lot more information and bear the function in portraying a person's identity through the image represented from that name. through the choice of name, a person can highlight a certain identity they want to show to others and become the subject of his or her identity construction. This study illuminates that English tutors in Kampung Inggris, Pare, Indonesia negotiate their identity by using western names in both daily and professional life. Western related names represent their effort to be part of global society and strategy to be acknowledged as competent tutor. The researcher believes that these tutors' efforts in searching new way in presenting their ideas about themselves through the act of naming reveal the way they identify themselves as individual in this globalized world.

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