

## Language, Gender and Sustainability

The present paper can be regarded as the summary of the findings of three years of intensive field research in Central Sulawesi. The title of the research project was „Language, Gender and Sustainability“. It consisted of four official parts (and one more or less unofficial one which was the subproject in Uganda).

Three of the four parts were linguistically orientated subprojects located in Namibia, the Ivory Coast and here in Indonesia. On top of these three subprojects there was a sociological subproject which task was supposed to analyze the differences and similarities in the other projects and provide these with non-linguistic information. Therefore, non-linguistic research became part of all subprojects to understand the local perspectives on development and the means of communication for negotiating developmental change within a local community which – in the case of Indonesia – has only been made possible through immense political and social change in the aftermath of the fall of the *Orde Baru* Regime in May 1998.

But I'm already a bit ahead. Let me come back to „Language, Gender and Sustainability“. The main objective of this research project was to analyze how new concepts and ideas are negotiated within a given community and which prerequisites have to be fulfilled in order to be able to discuss the new ideas and concepts and thereby create a communicative sustainability. Communicative sustainability is regarded to be the most important feature in creating an environment where everyone has the chance to take part in the negotiations in a given local community due to being informed – because only then they know what the subject of the negotiation is. However this is, of course, only true if the political and social climate of a community allows the participation of all in this process. In the long run acceptance of and awareness about new ideas and concepts will be achieved through the communicative sustainability if the new ideas and concepts are considered to be meeting the needs of the local community. If this is not the case the community as a whole can reject these ideas and concepts – but still based on negotiations.

The idea of taking the communicative sustainability into account as a prerequisite of negotiations of development has been phrased by Prof. Dr. Bearth. He spent quite some years of his life in the Ivory Coast among the ethnic group of the Tura. It was there, where he became aware of a unique means of introducing new ideas and concepts. It is the so-called *Konon*-system. Whenever outsiders come to a village and bring, of course, news along, they cannot just tell this news to everyone. The men of the village gather together and the just arrived outsider tells his news to the youngest one of this group who then passes this news on to the next older one, who does the same until every male member of the village is informed about this news. Everyone is involved – at least within the group of men – in this process. The news trickles down step by step which can be regarded as a means of implementing a certain amount of communicative sustainability in regard to the just arrived new idea.

The Indonesian system of *musyawarah* could be seen as such a means of communication creating communicative sustainability within the target area of the Indonesian sub-project.

The area under study was the 64 villages bordering the Lore Lindu National Park which was officially opened in 1993. This area was selected because the village population of these 64 villages were facing tremendous change due to the opening of the National Park. They had to diversify their economy because – all of sudden – the natural resources of the Park were not to be used anymore.

When I came here for the first time, we decided to take Toro, a village on the western border of the National Park as one of the main target villages of our study. The main reason for selecting Toro was that this village had already achieved some popularity through locally initiated development – which of course needed to be negotiated within the local community. Very much impressed by the negotiating process which was going on in the village of Toro I concentrated my research from the very beginning on the traditional *musyawarah*-system. While this means of communication was often misused under the *Orde Baru* Regime, it became after the fall of Soeharto in a new political environment a perfect means of negotiating new ideas and concepts which therefore can be compared to the *Konon*-system of the *Tura* but, still more importantly, it can also be considered to be a perfect means of creating communicative sustainability.

The village elite and the villagers alike confirmed in the interviews we took and the discussions we held that the traditional system of *musyawarah* has been consciously revitalized just to have a means of negotiating new ideas and concepts.

Even when villagers disapprove of what is happening within the village they still stress the importance of the *musyawarah* system:

### **Wawancara dengan – Ibu ibu (orang tua) (appendix 1)**

R Dengan adanya OPANT ini, apa-apa yang ibu harapkan kemudian kedepan? Apa OPANT ini supaya lebih aktif,  
So what do you expect of OPANT? You consider OPANT more active,

lebih maju,... mungkin ada ibu punya keinginan supaya barangkali ibu-ibu juga yang biarpun sudah tua juga aktif,

More progressive, ..., perhaps you have the wish to be active as well or to be asked to join OPANT again  
diaktifkan, diikutkan dalam OPANT atau bagaimana?

although you are already old?

Ibu Supaya selalu ada persetujuan dalam musyawarah apa saja ... jadi harus bersatu.

(Actually, I would like) That all decisions are taken by musyawarah, ... we have to unite (i.e. the decisions have to be taken unanimously).

R Oh, harus bersatu, harus lebih kuat dan musti ada musyawarah

So decisions have to be taken unanimously to be stronger and there has to be a musyawarah.

Ibu Musyawarah.

Yes, there has to be a musyawarah.

R Jadi ada apa-apa tidak diputuskan saja...

To make sure that there are no decisions taken just like that.

Ibu harus melalui musyawarah.

... it has to be through musyawarah.

R Harus melalui musyawarah ya dibicarakan bersama, semua tahu...

So it has to be discussed together in a musyawarah so that everyone knows.

Ibu Kalau ada keputusan itu semua dengar ...

If there is a decision taken all should know ...

R .... ya, kalau ada keputusan semua dengar, sudah disetujui, sudah dimusyawarah, apa yang diputuskan semua

... Well, the decision should be transparent agreed upon debated and made accessible to all

dengar. Kalau begitu semua bisa melaksanakan kalau ada keputusan.

If it is that way everybody can act in accordance with the decision taken.

#### -4. Teil-

R Kalau ada keputusan apa, sebaiknya itu dimusyawarah, ya diputuskan bersama apa semua, selama ini apa ada

So decisions should be debated and taken unanimously. Have there so far been any decisions taken not through

Keputusan-keputusan organisasi perempuan apa tidak lewat musyawarah?

musyawarah?

Ibu Sekarang lewat musyawarah juga, iyo,...

Now everything is dicussed.

R Sudah lewat musyawarah.

Everything is discussed.

Ibu Ya, musyawarah.

Yes, it is discussed.

R Cuma apa biasanya ibu juga ikut dalam musyawarah itu?

But did you take part in the discussion?

Ibu So tidak, so tidak mampu lagi kita.

Not any longer, because we are not capable of doing so any longer.

R Oh, hanya karena itu, jadi bukan karena...

It is because of that and not because of ...

Ibu ... ya, tapi juga ada dengar-dengar juga ...

Yes, but we still hear what's going on ...

R Jadi setelah mereka yang ikut itu ...

So, when those who take part ...

Ibu ... ya-ya

... yes, yes

R Atau barangkali ibu mau suka pigi (colloquial) tapi karena tidak diundang atau apa, tidak dikasih tau bagaimana?

Or is it that you actually would like to go there but just don't get invited anymore, or not being informed about it or how is it really

Ibu Ya, memang sebenarnya tidak diundang.

Yes, that's right we are not longer invited.

R Sudah tidak dikasih ikut lagi. Cuma siapa yang ikut ...

So you are not asked to join any more. So who are those who come together ...

The revitalization of the traditional *musyawarah* system has been strengthened by putting new ideas and concepts into a local perspective. The concept of a sustainable use of natural resources has been integrated into the local language *mojogai iki* and into the traditional believe-system of the village. The translation into the local language *Kulawi Moma* makes the new concept of sustainability less frightening because everyone knows what is meant. The integration into the local believe-system makes it more tangible and acceptable.

To be able to make as many villagers as possible taking part in the *musyawarah* the village of Toro has begun to build up local institutions like OPANT – the women's organization, or FOHTKA – the youth organization and linked one with another.

Although the integration of the new concepts into local language, local knowledge and local structures strengthened by the setting-up of local institutions created a perfect platform for letting everyone take part in the *musyawarah*, there seemed to be a large part of the village population not involved in the process of negotiations – and therefore unable to reach a certain level of communicative sustainability in regard of the negotiated development.

To see whether this surmise was true or not we put together the following questionnaire which was filled in by every head of household and their spouses:

**(Appendix 2)**

## **„Language, Gender and Sustainability“ Questionnaire**

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Address : \_\_\_\_\_

Dusun : \_\_\_\_\_

Age : \_\_\_\_\_

Religion : \_\_\_\_\_

Education : \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnic : \_\_\_\_\_

Mother Tongue : \_\_\_\_\_

Sex : \_\_\_\_\_

Are you actively participation in local institutions?  
: \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, in which institutions?  
: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have one or more official function in the local village institutions?  
: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Questions:**

- What is a National Park?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is the advantage of a National Park?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Do you thin that a National Pak is usefull?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Do the National Park here has any negative ?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Dio you know the term „sustainability“?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What means „sustainability“?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Do you think that „sustainability“ is important?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- If yes, why?  
\_\_\_\_\_



- in dörflichen Belangen                      yes                      no

- Is women’s empowerment a topic of discussion in your family?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Do male/husbands accept women’s empowerment?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Where do you know the concept of women’s empowerment from?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Did the role of women changed in the village recently?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- If yes, why?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Do you know the *Adat* of your ethnic group?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Wwhat is the traditional position/role of women (in the *Adat*)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is briefly the most important role of the *Adat*?  
\_\_\_\_\_

The main objective of the questionnaire was to see if the respondents could answer the questions about things related to development (like sustainability itself) or the National Park and the terminology used for it (like *pelesterian*) or the local institutions taking care of the dissemination of the negotiated concepts. The results of the 50 questionnaires (picked randomly) is as follows:

**(Appendix 3)**  
**Questionnaire Analysis of Toro (50 respondents)**

No.	Item of questions	Toro
	<b>Whether they know about:</b>	
1.	The meaning of The National Park	21
2.	The purpose of The National Park	24
3.	The importance of The National Park	46
4.	Disadvantage of The National Park	0
5.	‘ <i>Pelestarian</i> ’	38
6.	The definition of <i>Pelestarian</i>	22
7.	The importance of <i>Pelestarian</i>	42
8.	The existence of local institutions in which the new concept such national park, <i>pelestarian</i> is dicussed	39
		Adat (14), OPANT (11), local

	Which institutions?	government (3), NGO (1) the rest have no idea
	<b>Whether they:</b>	
9.	Discussed the <i>Pelestarian</i> concept in households	29
10.	Heard about <i>Pelestarian</i> in mass media: TV, radio, newspaper etc.	28
11.	Informed about <i>Pelestarian</i> by local institutions	31
12.	Allowed to involve in discussion about the concept <i>Pelestarian</i>	31
13.	Allowed to make decisions in <i>musyawarah</i>	28
14.	Discussed about women empowerment in households	32
	The source of information of Women empowerment	21 respondents mention OPANT as the source of women empowerment socialization, the rest are informed by mass media, PKK, NGOs, adat, local Government etc some do not know
15.	Women's involvement in decision making process	46

Compared to villages where there is no locally oriented integration of new concepts and ideas and no local institutions regulating the *musyawarah*, the knowledge about the development process in Toro is quite high, even when paradoxa like not being able to define *pelesterian* (sustainability) but still stating that it is very important.

However, in general the answers show that the revitalization of the traditional *musyawarah*-system is a perfect means of creating communicative sustainability, if – like in Toro – the political and social environment is in favour of such a development.

Results from Toro have been confirmed in contrast to villages where *musyawarah* is still not in use by the questionnaire of Kaduwaa, a village on the eastern border of the National Park, where the long neglected system of *musyawarah* has been revitalized as a means of implementing new ideas.

#### (Appendix 4)

#### Questionnaire Analysis of Kaduwaa (50 respondents)

No.	Item of questions	Kaduwaa
	<b>Whether they know about:</b>	
1.	The meaning of The National Park	30
2.	The purpose of The National Park	31
3.	The importance of The National Park	42



4.	Disadvantage of The National Park	4
5.	' <i>Pelestarian</i> '	22
6.	The definition of <i>Pelestarian</i>	17
7.	The importance of <i>Pelestarian</i>	39
8.	The existence of local institutions in which the new concept such national park, pelestarian is dicussed	25
	Which institutions?	LKD (17), LPM (local government) (6), TNC, BPD, adat, KKM, NGOs (1), the rest have no idea
	<b>Whether they:</b>	
9.	Discussed the <i>Pelestarian</i> concept in households	27
10.	Heard about <i>Pelestarian</i> in mass media: TV, radio, newspaper etc.	31
11.	Informed about <i>Pelestarian</i> by local institutions	30
12.	Allowed to involve in discussion about the concept <i>Pelestarian</i>	32
13.	Allowed to make decisions in musyawarah	28
14.	Discussed about women empowerment in households	33
	The source of information of Women empowerment	Only 4 respondents mention PKK, the rest got information from the meeting held by local Government, adat, gender socialization by NGOs, mass media and CARE training and some have no idea
15.	Women's involvement in decision making process	36

Our preliminary analysis is on shaky grounds since we only have been able to take 50 samples into account.

Still, we are able to state the following facts:

- People who are directly involved in the local institutions are familiar with developmental topics and the terminology involved and possess due to their involvement in the local institutions are perfect communicative sustainability
- In general man are more involved than women
- Many of the villagers have heard about new concepts and the terminology involved. Even unable to explain the underlying ideas a certain communicative sustainability has been achieved

- Where local features (like language and knowledge) and local institutions support the dissemination of new concepts through *musyawarah* the level of communicative sustainability is higher.

Based on the findings we are able to state that *musyawarah* can be seen as a functioning means of implementing new ideas and concepts and should be used to involve as many as possible in the process of negotiating development in order to approve or disapprove of developments or at least create awareness which is only possible on a communicative sustainable basis.